

NEWS & LETTERS

"HUMAN POWER IS ITS OWN END"—KARL MARX

Vol. 49 — No. 2

MARCH 2004

50¢

WORKSHOP TALKS

Chasing jobs away

by Htun Lin

Bush's chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers recently said that American jobs going offshore to other countries is "a good thing for the economy." He had an accurate point in his inverted world: Capitalists have been enjoying windfall profits through ever-increasing productivity as well as moving jobs offshore while jobs continue to be lost in the other world where we workers live.

Our labor leaders have allowed thousands of Wal-Mart stores to open and not a single store in the U.S. is even unionized. A few years ago even some unionized HMOs urged union leaders to organize the cut-throat HMOs which remained non-unionized.

Safeway has similarly complained that Wal-Mart is a killer competitor because it is non-unionized. That's why all the grocery chains have united to bargain with the union as a bloc, while our unions continue to be oblivious to the importance of uniting in solidarity for this kind of class warfare. James Hoffa Jr. recently backstabbed striking grocery workers when the Teamsters withdrew picket support at a critical moment.

It figures that President Sweeney of the AFL-CIO and Hoffa of the Teamsters have now endorsed John Kerry. They waited to find out who the likely winner would be. They endorsed a Democratic candidate who didn't stand up to Bush on the invasion of Iraq or on the USA PATRIOT Act, and didn't stand up against unfair trade agreements like NAFTA.

Many of us can't remember the last time we've seen our union leaders on the shop floor between contracts

(Continued on page 3)

BLACK/REDVIEW

Haiti 1804-2004

by John Alan

January marked the 200th anniversary of the 1804 Haitian Revolution that created the first Black and independent nation in Latin America. The media has paid little attention to Haiti's history, focusing instead on the current upheaval in which President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was forced from power by an insurrection led by forces ranging from former army coup leaders and paramilitary thugs to disaffected groups of his own ex-followers.

The real danger is that leaders of the military and paramilitary death squads which terrorized Haiti for decades before Aristide's election in 1994 will return

to power. Though Aristide largely failed to deliver on his promises to reverse poverty and corruption, the politics of much of the forces arrayed against him are far worse. The overthrow of Aristide and the Feb. 29 decision of the U.S. to intervene have overshadowed this year's celebration of the 200th anniversary of the great Haitian slave revolution, led by Toussaint L'Ouverture, that freed Haiti from French imperialism in 1804.

HAITIANS' WAR AGAINST SLAVERY

If one looks back into Haitian history, one finds that Haitian slaves were engaged in a permanent war against their enslavement. Fourteen years before Haiti became an independent nation, on the night of August 22, 1791, slaves built "a wall of fire" on the northern plains of Haiti.

According to historian Martin Ros: "The voraciousness of the flames turned night into day. Further, the immense fire created enormous gusts of wind that, in turn, drove flames on, causing them to rage at incredible speed through the woods, over the plantations, into sheds filled with cotton, over the fields thick with sugar cane, straight through the coffee plantations and sugar mills, and into the gigantic warehouses of the masters of the island" (*Night of Fire*, p. 1).

The Haitian slaves were destroying objects of their oppression—the tremendous wealth their labor had created for their French masters. In other words, they

(Continued on page 8)

HAITI AFTER ARISTIDE AND U.S. INTERVENTION

Watch for a full analysis in the next N&L of the departure of Jean-Bertrand Aristide and the introduction of U.S. Marines as well as what's next for the Haitian people.

Bush lies and scapegoats to save his presidency

by Jim Mills and Andy Phillips

What do you do if you get caught lying about the existence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, in order to invade the country at a cost of over 29,000 dead and wounded? What if you promised that giant tax cuts for the rich and a hopeless half trillion dollar budget deficit would lead to prosperity, but employment and a decent standard of living remain out of reach for most? What do you do if your likely challenger in the upcoming presidential election is garnering strength in polls while your approval ratings keep falling? If you're George W. Bush, you point at gay and lesbian America and shout, "There's the problem!"

In launching his official campaign on Feb. 24, Bush moved the agenda of the Christian Right to the top of his platform with an initiative to rewrite the U.S. Constitution to ban gay and lesbian marriages. The formula of a scoundrel, scapegoating gays and lesbians should be seen for what it is, a gambit to save his presidency while destroying the lives of millions. If the amendment clears Congress and the states, no one will be safe from religion-based social and economic policies.

Whether the frontrunner John Kerry speaks up for gays and lesbians and against the politics of superstition and prejudice remains to be seen. In reaction to Bush's announcement, both he and runner-up John Edwards stated a personal disdain for gay marriage while opposing a constitutional ban, hardly a hopeful sign for posing a real alternative to Bush's fundamentalist politics. Already the inchoate Democratic message of opposing the invasion of Iraq was changed into a pitiful effort to offer a better military leadership. Whatever may unfold in the next eight months, an



On the San Francisco City Hall steps, a protest for gay and lesbian marriage and against Bush's proposed constitutional ban on them.

opportunistic and reactionary administration is looking all the more unsavory to more and more people, especially youth.

LIES, LIES, LIES

Within weeks of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, an outlet for propaganda about Iraq as a terrorist threat was set up in the Department of Defense. The administration seized upon legitimate fear of more machinations by Osama bin Laden to paint Saddam Hussein as an imminent national threat, even alleging a connection between the two. The fact is, however, that the first meeting of the

(Continued on page 10)

Dissaffection behind Iranian election boycott

The conservative clerical oligarchy in Iran achieved a victory in the Feb. 20 elections for parliament, mostly because it was obvious that these were not free elections. About 2,000 candidates were disqualified by the Guardian Council, including 80 incumbent, reformist parliament members. Those who believed in Islamic reform called this election a "historical fiasco" since voters' choices were limited. The candidates loyal to Iran's Islamic rulers regained control of parliament and won more than 130 of the first 194 seats declared for the 290-seat assembly.

Total turnout was estimated between 40% and 50%. In the capital Tehran only 30% of eligible voters came to the ballot. Though Ayatollah Ali Khamenei ordered people to vote because it is their "Islamic duty," the turnout was the lowest in 24 years. Some voted only because a voting stamp on identification cards is necessary for travel, education and finding jobs.

A week before elections, reformist lawmakers sent a polite but strongly worded five-page letter to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei to complain that this election was neither free nor fair and hurts the image of the Islamic Republic. But any challenge to a ruling by the Supreme Leader is considered "making war on God" and forbidden. Therefore just before the election, judiciary agents searched and closed an office of the main reformist party, the Islamic Participation Front. They also closed the two most prominent reformist newspapers, *Sharq* and *Yas-e-nou*, which published excerpts of a letter critical of Khamenei.

Why did the hardliners decide to go against the reformists now?

A TURNING POINT ARRIVES

Practically speaking President Khatami's reforms have come to an end. What was at stake was not people's freedom but a power struggle which reformers lost, and now the hard line faction dictates to the others in this government.

Khatami and the other reformers once claimed that they want to rescue the Islamic regime from religious dictatorship and establish an Islamic democracy. This "Islamic Hegelian" believes that ideas drive history, but forgets or denies that for those ideas to be realized, they need to be taken to the streets and not stay in the

mind of the intellectual. Thus poor voters participated in the boycott not because of the reformists' urgings, but because of disillusionment with the Islamic Republic and all factions of the Islamic regime.

Last summer's uprising was a clear indication of the people's demand for real change and for democracy and freedom. This election also ended the illusion that the Islamic Republic could be reformed from within. During the last few years, some of the reformers realized this, separated themselves from this regime, and demanded a separation between religion and the state.

Most people blamed Iran's economic and political crises on all factions, reformists included. President Khatami failed to deliver promised reforms and his government accomplished little. With 20% unemployment, plans for privatization and attracting foreign investors failed. This reflected the crisis in the world economy but also is rooted in the fact that 80% of the economy is bogged down by inefficient, corrupt, state-run institutions which are a continuation of the Shah's totalitarian state policy on oil.

LABOR STRUGGLES

The Iranian people observe that while they are getting poorer day in and day out, the rulers can have everything while claiming to serve the people. This corrupt state is not only anti-women and anti-freedom, but also extremely anti-worker. In January, 1,500 workers in the Nazkhaton copper smelting plants in the village of Khatoon-Abad and the city of Shahr-e Babak (in Kerman province) organized work stoppages and sit-ins. These lasted eight days before the Islamic regime's special guards from Tehran were deployed to Khatoon-Abad. They attacked the demonstrators by

(Continued on page 9)

ON THE INSIDE

FROM THE WRITINGS OF RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA
• Lessons of Iran's revolution ... Page 4
ESSAY • 'Intrinsic Value' Page 5
EDITORIAL • International Women's Day 2004 Page 9

Women in the Civil Rights Movement

by Olga Domanski

The convergence of two events—the publication of two Marxist-Humanist studies of the revolutionary Black dimension, *American Civilization on Trial* and *Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles*, and the beginning of Women's History Month—at the moment I was reading a short article about Mary Hamilton, who had been a Freedom Rider in the 1960s, became a powerful reminder for me of the crucial role women had played in the Civil Rights Movement that changed the face of the U.S. It inspired me to take a new look at the pamphlet *News and Letters Committees (N&LC)* had published in 1961, *Freedom Riders Speak for Themselves*, coauthored by two Marxist-Humanist women, one Black, Mary Hamilton, and one white, Louise Inghram, together with other fellow-Freedom Riders with whom they had shared the prison sentences meted out for daring to challenge the segregation laws of the deep South.

WOMAN AS REASON

The 1960s initiated a new epoch of youth revolt, white and Black, throughout the land as new forms of struggle from sit-ins and teach-ins to Freedom Rides, Freedom Marches and Freedom Schools were created to challenge racism in the U.S. There was no question that Black was the color that made the 1960s so exciting and fired the imagination of the whole nation and, indeed, the whole world. What was not as quickly recognized was the crucial form of Women's Liberation that arose in this battle against the South's century-old segregation laws.

WOMAN POWER UNLIMITED

One of the most powerful sections of *Freedom Riders Speak for Themselves* is the discovery recorded there of an organization that called itself Woman Power Unlimited. It was formed by Black women in Jackson, Miss. to make life a little easier for the Freedom Riders in Hinds County Jail, and when they were released to give them food and clean clothes and a place to wash. It destroyed the lies spread in the press that the Southern Black population was "hostile" to the Freedom Riders.

What stands out in the way this pamphlet was written are not only the horrors of the conditions the Riders suffered, but the new relations they were forging within the Black South. Unseparated from that, it focuses not only on the concrete battles all these courageous fighters were engaged in, but also on the theories of liberation they were searching for. It is what you see

in the section that reports the enthusiasm with which the riders greeted the issue of *N&L* devoted to their struggle, not because the stories were about them, but because the editorial in that issue on "The State of Civil Rights, USA 1961" had connected their struggles to the history of Abolitionism and made it clear that Marx's Marxism is the absolute opposite of the Communism the riders were accused of espousing.

SUPREME COURT VICTORY

After that Freedom Ride had ended, Mary became a field secretary for CORE (Congress of Racial Equality), organizing everywhere throughout the South. She later became CORE's first woman southern regional director. She wound up serving a month in jail in Gadsden, Ala., charged with contempt of court for refusing to answer when she was called by her first name and insisting on the courtesy of being addressed as "Miss Hamilton"—the honorific by which white defendants were addressed. The case won national attention when the Supreme Court, ruled for her in the 1964 landmark case (*Ex parte Mary Hamilton*, Ala. Sup. Ct., 7 Div. 621).

In 1963, two years after *Freedom Riders Speak for Themselves* and as the Civil Rights Movement continued to escalate to an ever higher stage, N&LC published a Marxist-Humanist statement to mark the 100th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation. It showed, first, that throughout its history, the Black masses in motion had put American civilization on trial—the title it was given—and second, past history is inseparable from history in the making.

When I saw Mary Hamilton again, many years later at a CORE convention in Chicago in 1999, she was excited to learn that N&LC was working on a new kind of Marxist-Humanist statement on the Black dimension that would speak to *American Civilization on Trial*, not simply by updating its conclusions, but by re-creating its dialectical methodology in light of the struggles, contradictions and questions facing us today.

She was looking forward to participating in the discussion around it, but never lived to see *Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles* come off the press. She succumbed over a year ago to the cancer she had been battling for seven years. Yet she lives on vibrantly in the battles she fought and recorded as a Freedom Rider and in the history she helped to shape that remains for all of us as the true history of American civilization on trial.

Demand justice for murdered women

SAN FRANCISCO—Mourning Mothers supported a Valentines Day pilgrimage to Ciudad Juarez, the Mexican town that shares a border with El Paso, Texas. A Bay Area contingent including seven Berkeley High School students joined the massive march on Juarez, sponsored by Amnesty International, Code Pink, and



News & Letters/Urzuja Wislanka

dozens of other groups. Local demonstrations began on Feb. 13 at the Mexican Consulate here (see photo).

Since 1993, more than 320 women have been murdered in Ciudad Juarez. Of these deaths, approximately 100 have been sexual-torture killings of young women, ages 12 to 19. At least 450 more women are missing.

Jane Welford of Berkeley Women in Black, who co-organized the Mexican Consulate protest, said, "No one is taking responsibility for solving these cases—not the police, not the public defenders office, not the U.S. corporations who are exploiting these desperately poor women. Sixty percent of the victims are sweatshop workers, yet the managers of these U.S.-owned maquiladoras deny any responsibility for the security of their female employees."

Swaneagle Harijan, another protest organizer, said, "What we are demanding is police, Mexican government, and corporate accountability in solving these murders, and an end to global trade rules that put profits before the lives of workers."

—Mary Bull

WOMEN WORLDWIDE

by Mary Jo Grey

For the second time this year, Bush took advantage of a Congressional recess to override outspoken opposition, Feb. 20, and sneak in the appointment of a right-wing judge to the federal appeals court. While Alabama attorney general, William H. Pryor Jr. was a rabid opponent of legalized abortion and advocated greater fundamentalist Christian influence in government. In an argument before the U.S. Supreme Court, he insisted that if a Texas law outlawing sex between homosexuals was overturned, it would open the way for legalized "prostitution, adultery, necrophilia, bestiality, possession of child pornography and even incest and pedophilia." Pryor will serve on the appeals court until at least the fall of 2005.

The fifth Global Women's Strike is set for International Women's Day. It has brought together women in over 60 countries demanding a world that values all women's work and every life. It has been part of a movement against war and occupation, and called for military budgets to be used for basic survival needs—water, food, health care, housing, education and safety from domestic violence.

'Victories for women and death threat on me'

BAGHDAD—For millions of women in Iraq, the verdict has already been given. They are second rate citizens who should be ashamed of their mere existence, and should cover up and be thankful to get what they are allowed.

February witnessed the beginnings of a women's movement in Baghdad. All of this started when the Governing Council (GC) proposed resolution 137 that gives action to Islamic Sharia to rule every single detail of the civil law and eventually our lives. It also overwrites modern amendments that came around as a result of the struggles of the Iraqi women's movement.

By the second week of January, more than 100 women demonstrated in Al Firdaws Square denouncing this resolution. These women belonged to different organizations. Some of them were affiliated with members of the GC that did not agree with the resolution. Their announcements were clear although quite moderate and timidly touched on the women's issue. Still, this was one of the first pulses to a women's opposition that could not be scared off or oppressed by the Islamic Sultans enthroned on some of the seats of the GC.

At a later demonstration, I started my speech with a warning that the times of inequality between women and men cannot continue. Social, economic and especially political inequality cannot be tolerated anymore. Representation is an important issue, but what would 50% representation do for us if the policies were not women friendly.

The best example for that is Resolution 137 that exiles a woman back into the dark ages where she has absolutely no rights under the laws of Islamic Sharia. This resolution proves the failure of the Governing Council's accountability in defending the interests of women in Iraq. In fact, it proves them to be the first enemies of women. We should get together and announce our political struggle and solidarity to start a new era—an era of equality for women.

I took the chance to demand a secular constitution based upon equality not on dividing lines based on ethnicity, religion and gender.

The next day I found in my email inbox an Arabic email with a strange title. I re-read the title many times until I was sure I read right. It said: "Re: Killing Yanar within a few days." In a small paragraph the Army of Sahaba (Jaysh Al-Sahaba) express their dismay of my women's activism. They decide that I will have to be killed because I am a converted Muslim unless I refrain from doing what I do.

I decided to go immediately to the central headquarters of American troops in order to see what they could do for me. I was told that Colonel Brown would be the best person to see.

The answer that I received was that I will have to wait. After I expressed how upset I was, they said he

has more important things to deal with. I told them my life was important too.

I received a second threat a few days ago. This time, the title was: "Assassination of Yanar Mohammed." It is from the same sender of the last threat. He elaborates on exploding me and the women around me, this time, "just the same way they exploded people in Erbil and Baghdad."

After staying home for a couple of days, I met around 40 women in a very fruitful meeting. They are bank employees whom the police and the Finance Ministry are harassing in order to do a cover up on the administrative chaos/corruption and failure in changing the old currency to a new one.

We organized them into a committee that will be a beginning of a future union that protects them from their exploitative employers.

Our OWFI lawyer Paleh Maghtouf is defending the ones that the Iraqi police had put into prison. Their next step will be a demonstration and possibly a strike at a later point.

Please tell all the good friends that supported me that I'm doing well and that we just cannot quit our fight that easily. We are here to do more and more.

—Yanar Mohammed

Celebrate Women's History Month in the Marxist-Humanist archives ...

Notes on Women's Liberation: We Speak in Many Voices (1970)

Only in fighting for our own freedom, building and developing our movement, working out our own theory, can we ensure that revolution, when it comes will bring a total transformation of all human relations.

Working Women for Freedom (1976)

Working class women have a very special reason for their passionate interest in revolutions, not simply because they're exciting events, but because they show working class women in motion as shapers of history.

Rosa-Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution (1981)

You will have to learn to hear us...that you are not the font of all wisdom — or of revolution. You will have to understand that our bodies belong to us and to no one else — and that includes lovers, husbands, and yes, fathers.

To order, see page 7

Defend Yanar!

Yanar Mohammed, head of the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq (OWFI), is highly regarded in the world today for her brave efforts in defending women's rights in Iraq.

Since the recent introduction of Law Number 137 by the Iraqi Ruling Council to remove the previous Personal Status Code and replace it with Sharia law, Yanar has exposed the serious threat to women's lives and rights if Sharia is imposed and organized women and men in opposition to it. As a result, she has been threatened with death by the Army of Sahaba (Jaysh Al-Sahaba).

We, the undersigned, are outraged at the threat to Yanar Mohammed's life and hold the U.S. government primarily responsible for the abysmal situation it has created, which threatens the life of and affords no protection to Yanar Mohammad.

We unequivocally defend her and OWFI's activists in Iraq, defend secularism, namely the separation of religion from the state and educational system and full equality for women, and strongly denounce Islamic terrorist groups.

Nadia Mahmood <nadia64uk@yahoo.com>
Houzan Mahmoud <houzan73@yahoo.co.uk>
www.equalityiniraq.com

Bitter end to L.A. grocery strike

As we go to press, strikers on the weekend of Feb. 29 have ratified a settlement, however reluctantly, establishing lower wages and health benefits for new hires. We will have more from grocery workers in our next issue.

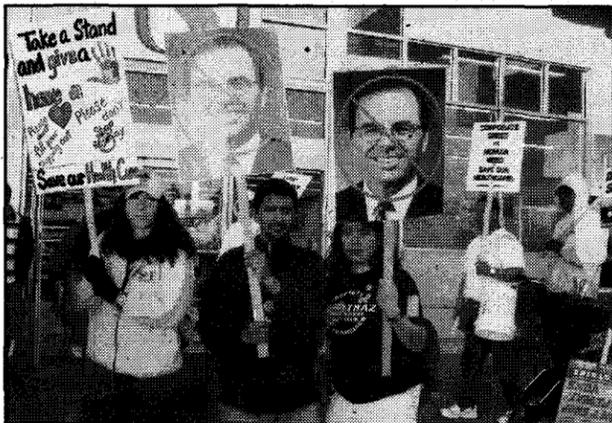
LOS ANGELES—On Feb. 22 the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) and the grocers were in the twelfth day of negotiations as pressure mounted for the grocery chains to settle the five-month-long strike in Southern and Central California. The federal mediation service has reported that the grocers' claim of needing to slash workers' benefits and wages to compete with Wal-Mart had been greatly exaggerated.

Three days earlier, union leaders organized demonstrations with civil disobedience, briefly blocking entrances at Vons in Los Angeles, Santa Monica, San Pedro and Mission Viejo. Over two dozen protesters were arrested.

The strength of the strike is the rank-and-file workers standing firm for their rights, daily picketing in this marathonic strike. But one worker on the picket line asked why the tactics while the corporations operate in secret. The element of surprise is lost.

Three weeks ago, in a show of support, 30,000 union workers marched to a Vons grocery in Inglewood, a suburban city adjacent to Los Angeles. Various union members wore T-shirts and carried banners and signs of their union locals. Marchers included teachers, nurses, fire fighters, University of California workers, garment workers, farm workers, communications workers, grocery workers, janitors, Teamsters, longshoremen and warehouse workers, construction trade workers, government employees and immigrant workers.

The march climaxed at a rally where religious, political and union leaders addressed the crowd. One speaker said, "We're fighting for affordable health care all across the U.S." Another said companies are attempting to turn this country into Third World status, and another said: "This kind of corporate misdeeds brings about revolutionary actions." The States Attorney of Califor-



News & Letters/Uszula Wiselanka

nia spoke about filing state charges against the grocery chains for illegal conspiracies, in other words, the secret pre-agreement between the three chains to share revenues during the strike.

Various unions donated or loaned from \$25,000 to \$500,000 to the diminishing UFCW funds. They included the California Teachers Association, three locals of ILWU, and United Nurses of California. Trade unions from London, Germany and elsewhere sent statements of solidarity.

During the strike and lockout, there has been no direct worker participation. A worker on the picket line

I spoke to agreed that strike strategy and tactics must be decided by, and not just for, the rank-and-file workers. The early decision by union leaders to lift the picket lines from Kroger/Ralph's stores (who locked out their workers) looks large today as Ralph's has less incentive to meet workers' demands. Without pickets, they are doing business as usual—except with non-union, lower wage replacement workers.

—Basho

RMS strike no game

MEMPHIS, TENN.—We're from the RMS Equipment Company in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada. We are members of United Steelworkers Local 80. We've been out on strike since May 14, 2001. We make the machines that build the tires for Goodyear, Michelin, Cooper Tire, and other tire companies.

The last time we met with the company for negotiations was Sept. 27, 2001. The company came demanding concessions: they wanted a \$3-\$5 cut in pay; they wanted to get rid of language in our contract that was union-oriented; they wanted to replace Veterans' Day with a floater because it was more convenient for them than during the week. As far as we were concerned, that was a sacred cow that was not going to be removed. They also wanted to contract out goods and services whenever they deemed necessary.

RMS made an alliance with a Chinese company and 50% of the work went over to China. We were informed of this two weeks into the strike. It was obvious they had planned this at least six months in advance, before we had even started to negotiate. They're still making machinery with the salaried people and the engineers.

We're here in Memphis because Michael Heisley is the owner of our company and the owner of the Memphis Grizzlies. We traveled 18 hours and over 1,000 miles to get here, so we could let fans coming to the Grizzlies game know about Michael Heisley and our struggle at the RMS Equipment Company.

We've gotten a lot of support from local people and from the Ontario Federation of Labor. The Steelworkers have been supplying us with a strike fund, so we've been able to manage. We're not getting the same money by any means, but no one has lost a home, no one has lost a vehicle. When people can't make a payment, we make sure they're not in difficulty.

We've been getting food baskets from some organizations and gift certificates. So we've been very lucky with the support we've received. If people want to send us donations, our office address is: 141 King Street East, Kitchener A2G2K8, Ontario, Canada. People can address mail or letters of support to Peter Cook, president of the local.

Michael Heisley is not going to beat us. We made a commitment to see this through to the end and that's what we're going to do. When they demanded concessions, they were trying to break the union, trying to crush us. This is our third winter, our third Christmas, and we've shown we're not just going to walk away.

—Peter Cook

NY Chinese workers

NEW YORK—The Chinese Staff and Workers' Association of New York City celebrated on Feb. 22 the Lunar New Year (Year of the Monkey) with a tribute to the "many challenges and victories by working people during this past year." This included their assistance to 2,000 displaced workers for health insurance benefits and job training under the 9/11 Fund relief program.

CSWA brought together Chinese and Latino DKNY workers and launched a national boycott of DKNY in support of a million-dollar class-action lawsuit against Donna Karan for illegal and inhumane conditions the business promoted in midtown Manhattan factories.

CSWA declared, "This campaign was successful because we recognized workers as agents for change rather than treating them as victims." We continue boycotting DKNY because of their failure to reinstate the displaced workers.

Restaurant workers have taken a stand against illegal firing, intimidation and tip stealing. Workers from the New Silver Palace, Jade Plaza and King Chef were awarded millions of dollars this year in a settlement.

—Shella G.

Strikes in Germany blunt class struggle

Since January the German trade union for the metal and electronics industries (IG Metall) has been on strike for higher wages. Thousands of workers, mainly in the auto industry and on the docks, followed IG Metall's call by going out on strike for 10 days in January and February. The climax came on Feb. 5 when 90,000 workers left their workplaces. The strikes were still occurring as of late February.

It is important to note that these are largely "warning strikes"—that is, each strike is only for a few hours a day. The results so far have been modest.

Under the collective wage system in Germany, agreements must be made between IG Metall and the organization of entrepreneurs for these industries (Gesamtmittel) in each collective bargaining area. So far an agreement in one bargaining unit has been completed, in Baden-Württemberg, where the largest plants of Daimler-Chrysler are located: It calls for wages to increase by 2.45% over 27 months, which is not even equal to the rate of inflation.

'GERMAN SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP'

In addition, IG Metall and Gesamtmittel agreed to allow bargaining parties at each factory to increase or reduce working hours without compensatory wage increases, thereby canceling overtime premiums and special bonuses. The aim of this is to prevent layoffs. Newspapers like the *Bild-Zeitung*—a newspaper with the largest circulation in Germany—have applauded the agreement as "a sparkle of German social partnership."

IG Metall is now trying to extend this agreement to other collective bargaining areas. This should not be difficult, because of the modest rise in workers' wages and the attack on the principle of area-bound labor agreements by the entrepreneurs. Only those who want the area-bound system to be completely annulled are disappointed, like some members of the Christian Democratic Party, the Liberals and one of the most conservative newspapers, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.

Trade unions all over the world have to play their role within the capitalistic game if they want to be powerful. But in Germany the trade unions have traditionally been important pillars of capitalistic domination. They followed the policy of strict consensus (Burgfrieden) during World War I, and agreements with entrepreneurs undermined revolutionary moments in 1918-19. Above all was the consolidation of powers (Gleichschaltung) during the Nazi period. The German trade union movement was also largely indifferent to the revolts of 1968 and even condemned wildcat strikes.

The trade unions in Germany remain big and powerful. (IG Metall has about 2.5 million members, while the national labor federation, the DGB, has 7.5 million.) But despite their power, they are trapped in the tradition of a post-National Socialist, social partnership.

This is not meant as a characterization only of institutions and their leaders, but of a "German ideology" which concerns the whole population. There is a left-wing trade union movement (see www.labournet.de), but it is ridiculously lacking in offensive approach when compared with trade unions in France, Spain or Italy. Needless to say, the German form of capitalism today is much more differentiated than in the period of National Socialism and its differences with other countries are less evident than in previous periods, not least because the "German model" has been exported to other countries.

In times of prosperity the trade unions' task of class compromise is easier to perform than in times of crisis, which is more or less the case in Germany today. Today's crisis is reflected in everyone's permanent fear of losing their social and economic basis and of the termination of "social peace." At this point the trade unions are participating in the difficult job of administering misery.

DIVISIONS IN FAILED STRIKE

Last summer IG Metall directly encountered these fears when it called for a strike to demand a 35-hour work week in eastern Germany. (There are still major differences in labor rules between the so-called new and old federal states in Germany.) The strike ended with a total defeat of the trade unions. Workers in western Germany did not strongly support this strike and even many workers in eastern Germany gave up, fearing the loss of their jobs. A furious public also condemned the strike. The popular former prime minister of Baden-Württemberg, Lothar Späth, openly proclaimed: "End the class struggle!"

At the same time, opposition outside the trade unions against neo-liberal reforms of the welfare state—deregulation of the job market, less unemployment insurance, and a decline of health insurance—is becoming more radical. On Nov. 1 almost 100,000 people in various political groups demonstrated against the policies of the Social Democrats and the Greens. But still the dominating actors, like the large European-wide anti-globalization campaign, are fighting against "big money," "Americanization" and for the traditional (German) model of the welfare state. The struggle against capitalism is still not on the agenda in Germany.

—Simon Birnbaum

WORKSHOP TALKS

(Continued from page 1)

or between elections. While they were sleeping, corporate America went off shore.

Looking for the cheapest labor available around the globe is something capitalists have been doing since its very dawn. As the capitalist speeds up workers in order to maximize his extraction of surplus labor, the more he faces the decline in the rate of profit.

SEEKING CHEAP LABOR

By forcing less workers to produce more in less time, the capitalist is eliminating the source of capitalist value: living labor. His temporary solution is to go in search of cheaper labor elsewhere. Otherwise capitalism will die.

Alienated labor is the source of the fundamental estrangement between thought and reality under capitalism. That estrangement occurs not only in the economic sphere but also in all spheres of thought and in all aspects of our lives.

For us workers, the worst violation of all is the current onslaught by corporate America to decouple workers from workers' health benefits. It is the worst kind of inversion of thought and reality to claim that the well being of workers depends on the company's health, while they are killing us doing it.

Free trade crusader George Will wrote that the disappearance of whole categories of jobs could be desirable. He invoked the late UMWA leader John L. Lewis once saying that he hoped to see the day when no man would make his living by going underground. Will forgot to mention that when the mine owners introduced automation into the mines, they did not eliminate the deadly job of coal mining. The "man killer" continuous miner made the profession even deadlier.

MAKING KILLER JOBS MORE DEADLY

Other labor leaders such as Walter Reuther of the UAW blindly welcomed automation, saying, "You can't fight progress." Containerization at the docks eliminated the majority of longshore jobs. Even so, President Espinosa of the ILWU claimed victory when in the latest contract companies allowed union jurisdiction over any new jobs created by automation—as if automation "creates new jobs" while "old" jobs go overseas. A worker once joked, "Of course Bush has created millions of new jobs. Overseas."

In production, as it is in war, we keep dying so that they can keep expanding. Capitalism has always needed to expand to offshore regions in order to survive. The only way to put an end to "offshoring" is to put an end to capitalism itself.

FROM THE WRITINGS OF
RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA
MARXIST-HUMANIST ARCHIVES

EDITOR'S NOTE

Twenty-five years ago the Iranian revolution exploded, which was one of the most important—as well as tragic—revolutions of the 20th century. In light of the convergence of its anniversary with Women's History Month, we reprint here excerpts of Raya Dunayevskaya's "Iran: Unfoldment of and Contradictions in Revolution." It was written on March 25, 1979, shortly after mass protests by Iranian women tried to prevent the revolution from being usurped by reactionary fundamentalists under the control of Ayatollah Khomeini. The full text of the essay can be found in *Marxist-Humanist Writings on the Middle East* (Chicago: News and Letters, 2003).

A whole host of specters are haunting Khomeini's "Islamic Republic" before ever it is officially established. There is the specter of a full social revolution in the very unfoldment of the Iranian Revolution which, after all, witnessed a series of the greatest, most powerful and sustained mass mobilizations for months on end before the three days of insurrection. Clearly, Feb. 9-12 had not only driven the Shah and his stooge, Bakhtiar, from the throne, but the manner in which the workers ended their general strike to return to work without returning their guns, as the Ayatollah had commanded, showed that only Chapter 1 of the Revolution had ended. It put a special emphasis on the complaints of his appointed Prime Minister, Bazargan, about lack of production. As the Deputy Prime Minister, Entezan, put it: "Despite the Ayatollah's commands, none of the major industries in the country are functioning because the workers spend all their time holding political meetings."

As if Workers' Councils, Neighborhood Committees, anjumeni, many new forms of spontaneous organization, and youth dominant in all, did not take on the apparition of a dual government, there came, with the celebration of International Women's Day, a mass outpouring of women, bearing the banner, "We made the revolution for freedom, and got unfreedom," which may very well have opened Chapter 2 of the Iranian Revolution. It is true there had been other outbursts of criticism of Khomeini from the Fedayeen. But whereas Khomeini's friend, Arafat of the PLO, persuaded them to call off the march to Khomeini's headquarters(1) and, instead, hold a rally at Tehran University, the Women's Liberationists took to the streets.

No doubt Khomeini was ignorant of the fact that March 8 was International Women's Day and the Iranian women intended to make their celebration of the past a claim on the present and future when he issued the March 7 order for the women to wear the chador. But his mild retreat—the claim that it was a "duty, not an order"—hardly succeeded in exorcising the new specter. Quite the contrary. Though the Ayatollah criticized the goons who attacked the march, tried to stone the women, and shot three, the women felt that those goons were in fact practicing what the Ayatollah preached as "Islamic law"....

Nor was the Ayatollah calmed by the fact that the Women's Liberationists produced a schism in the Fedayeen (and to a lesser extent also in the Mujahideen). For, while a good part condemned the actions of the women, others formed a human chain on both sides of the march to protect them from further harassment. That certainly was a great advance over the beginnings of the Portuguese Revolution in 1975(2) where the Left males attacked women's demonstrations with impunity. 1979 in Iran showed, at one and the same time, that male revolutionaries would not permit attacks on women revolutionaries, and women were striking out on their own as a way of deepening the content of revolution.

Finally, the Women's Liberationists focused on their internationalism, not limited to the invitations to Kate Millett from the U.S. and Claudine Moullard from France (who had come to express their solidarity with the Iranian women revolutionaries). The more crucial point is that the Iranian women felt that **literally millions** throughout the world were with them.

It is this that so frightened the Ayatollah that he dared call the Women's Liberationists "agents of imperialism"....[It is] a symbol of how he intends to roll the clock backward in his attempt to exorcise all these specters as he must first try to stop those fighting for self-determination with guns in hand—the Kurdish rebels.

Under these circumstances of ever new forces of revolution, for male revolutionaries to disregard how total the revolution must be if it is to uproot the exploitative, racist, sexist society, and once again try to subordinate women's struggles as a "mere part of the whole" (as if the whole can be without its parts), is to play into the hands of the reactionaries, be that the "secular" Bazargan government, or Khomeini who is trying to "institutionalize" his Islamic "revolution," that is to say, confine it to where he can steal the fruit of the revolution—freedom—and leave the masses who made it at the bottom as in any and all class societies....

There is no point in underestimating the power of the Ayatollah Khomeini....[the] **counter-revolution is right within the Revolution**. He knew how to hit

at the women, mobilizing a few thousand to march with their chadors against the women who were protesting a great deal more than dress.(3) What the Women's Liberationists learned here was that not all women are sisters. It is, after all, a slander to make it appear as if it were a mere question of women against men. "Sexual politics" is anything but that; the male chauvinism exposed, **and that included of the Ayatollah Khomeini**, was the limitation of the freedom of humanity, the abrogation of the civil rights—political, social, economic, intellectual, **class**.

In the latter case—the most worrisome for the Ayatollah—it was the way the workers, in this case the printers, united with the Youth on what seemed most abstract—works on philoso-

phy of revolution, on politics, strategy, on internationalism, to satisfy their thirst for knowledge of all to do with revolution. Thus, in the very midst of revolution when the general strike was at its height, the printers decided to work double shifts so that they could satisfy that thirst. As one eyewitness report describes it: "Books are flowing at the people as fast as soldiers' bullets...they read everything about revolution. All Marxian books that have been translated into Persian are being reprinted and spread hand to hand and house to house:

"Capital, The Civil War in France, Communist Manifesto, What is to Be Done?, State and Revolution, Imperialism, Wretched of the Earth, Black Skin White Masks, Dying Colonialism."(4) A further account reported a new translation of Marx's 1844 Essay on Alienated Labor and innumerable leaflets....

THE MAIN ENEMY IS AT HOME

The workers in revolution need no "vanguard parties" to tell them that the main enemy is at home, that the conflict between labor and capital is irreconcilable, and that native capital has such overwhelming tie-ins with imperialism that, if its life is threatened, the capitalists will certainly ask for imperialism to come to their aid in bringing on full counter-revolution. But under no circumstances does that mean any slackening of the workers' own self-activity, self-organization, self-development, thus deepening the revolution. Thus, no sooner had Bazargan tried to reassert his full authority by a takeover of the oil industry than some of the workers' leaders at once resigned from the workers' committees in protest....

This type of worker opposition, if it will once again develop a mass base, is the way to stop the attempted counter-revolution, **provided** that we, as revolutionaries, in turn, do not forget that to speak only of anti-imperialism as if imperialism alone was responsible for the counter-revolution in Chile, in Argentina, or anywhere else for that matter, is a deviation. **It is a deviation very welcome to and indeed calculated by the indigenous capitalists.**

That is to say, native rulers will say anything, anything at all, so long as thereby the class struggle at home can be subordinated to fighting everything "foreign" as Enemy No. 1. What World War II showed us was that, outside of Hitler himself, none were more adept at playing the nationalist game than Peron, and, contrary to Hitler,(5) he succeeded in so fooling the Left with his "anti-imperialism" that many hailed him as a "revolutionary." To this day, Peronism has so brainwashed the trade union movement that it followed him to the end.

Or look at the Trotskyists this very moment in Iran who, while correctly fighting U.S. imperialism, are so blinded by their position that Russia is still a "workers' state" rather than the **other** nuclearly armed power reaching for single world domination, that they only lay the ground for "The Vanguard Party"—Tudeh—who are even louder in their declamation against U.S. imperialism, as if it weren't Stalin's Russia that had occupied Iran at

In celebration of Women's History Month

Lessons of the Iranian revolution

the end of World War II as U.S. imperialism and Great Britain helped keep Iran in tow during World War II.

Or look at how Khomeini is using the slogan of anti-imperialism to usher in his bourgeois Islamic republic, to keep Kurdistan within Iran rather than granting the Kurds, and the many other minorities hungering for self-determination, their freedom....

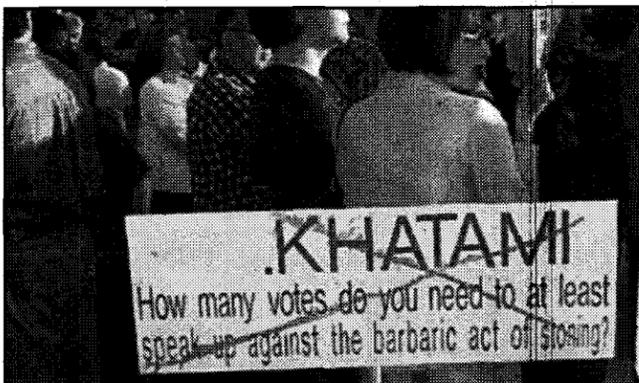
And, unfortunately, the Left, too, had unfurled no new banner of freedom, and some are willing to settle

for much, much less, being part of State Administration, that is part of the new ruling bureaucracy while shouting "anti-imperialism."

Of course, U.S. imperialism is the most gigantic, militaristic, nuclearly armed Titan in the world. Of course we, as American revolutionaries, must work to see that it never reestablishes itself in Iran or anywhere else. And, of course, we must point to the fact that the rush to the present Middle East treaty was induced precisely by the fear of the consequences of the Iranian Revolution.(6)

Nevertheless, we must not permit the indigenous Iranian counter-revolution to hide under the slogan of anti-imperialism, as some in the Left are trying to do by branding not only U.S. imperialism but Kate Millett and, indeed, the whole women's revolutionary movement as if they are "agents of imperialism." Nothing could assure the victory of the counter-revolution more than that kind of "anti-imperialism."

(Continued on page 9)



Recent protest in Los Angeles against the Islamic Republic of Iran

Dialectics and revolution

This is the 25th anniversary of the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Some have clever analyses now, 25 years later. Yet what is still missing is a projection of the dialectic in real time that captures the unfolding of the freedom idea in revolution that also distinguishes itself from the counterrevolution.

Counterrevolution is not only external to revolution. The counter-revolution also comes from within the revolution. Such was the counter-revolution of Khomeini's IRP which has helped to shape today's retrogressive world of permanent war and terror. If we don't take another look at that, we will be stuck in the problematic that revolution faced: what is revolution, and what is counterrevolution.

The 800-pound gorilla casting a pall over any discourse on the possibility for revolutionary change is the single party totalitarian state whether it be a Stalinist Ba'athist Party or the Party of God that has come from within the revolutionary process itself. Dunayevskaya's articles, written as the revolution was unfolding, reveal how a philosophy of revolution, a philosophy of freedom that aims to break down all the alienating fragmentations of class, gender and race is projected in real time, in the revolutionary process.

From the start Dunayevskaya was warning against Khomeini "using the slogan of anti-imperialism to usher in his bourgeois Islamic Republic" while branding the "whole women's revolutionary movement as...agents of imperialism." In other words, theory is a different concept, a living entity in the world, which cannot be separated from the unfolding of the idea of freedom.

The loudest, most rhetorical, most vociferous shouts of anti-imperialism (Death to America, Death to the Great Satan) helped cement the counterrevolutionary regime with the taking of low level employees at the U.S. embassy hostage. That also signaled the all out attack on real revolutionary forces, whether workers, youth or women, who challenged Khomeini with their marches and slogan "at the dawn of freedom we have unfreedom."

The account by Ladan Boroumand and Roya Boroumand, "Terror, Islam and Democracy" (*Journal of Democracy*, April 2002) is a contrast to Dunayevskaya's account. The Boroumands also point to the hostage taking as the turning point in the counterrevolution, which quelled all forms of opposition within Islam. They also show how that was a turning point for the whole global movement of politicized Islam with an affinity for the Western concept of terror and the single party state. Their perspective is from that of bourgeois democracy, but Dunayevskaya's account also takes the measure of bourgeois democratic intellectuals like Bani-Sadr who ended by being eaten by the revolution because he didn't challenge Islam with the self-determining forms that came from the masses.

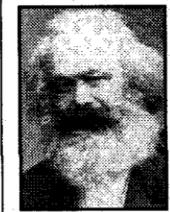
How can anyone in light of this history speak of being on the side of an undifferentiated opposition to U.S. imperialism in Iraq? There are all kinds of tendencies opposing the U.S., which covers over the real forces that are dimensions of a revolution. One such dimension is the continuing role of women who are challenging the occupation from the perspective of broadening freedom and self-determination. Look at the mostly ignored demonstration of women in Iraq on Jan. 14, which challenged the occupation for declaring the replacement of Iraqi Civil Status law in family matters with religious law: Islamic Shar'ia. Nadia Mahmood, of Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq, reports that "women representing over 80 organizations spontaneously gathered in the streets of Baghdad to protest the declaration. Protesters carried placards reading 'No to discrimination! No to differentiating women and men in our new Iraq!'"

—Ron Brokmeyer

REVIEW ESSAY

by David Mizuno'Oto

Recently I watched a PBS program that likened ecosystems to the economy. A series of field guides would show a natural process taking place, then compare it to a corresponding category in the human economy.



Marx's Concept of Intrinsic Value: on the unity of value, fetishism and capitalist production in Capital

by Andrew Kliman
A News and Letters
Publication, 2003
32 pp. \$2

The first guide asked, "What is an economy?" She answered that it's a system for producing, distributing and consuming goods or wealth. Wealth for a plant or animal in the natural world, she continued, depends on two basic currencies: energy and nutrients. But they have to be put into usable form. Luckily an immense workforce is on hand to perform the needed tasks. As each creature does its job, goods and services are exchanged throughout the system. Although this all goes on with great stability the natural economy, like the "human economy," she said, is dynamic and subject to change. Whole species can be "swept aside" by a competitor just as whole industries can be swept

aside by competitive forces and market situations. Another guide remarked that there is no more job security in the natural world than there is in "human society."

To make sure viewers didn't miss the not-so-subtle subtext, **capitalism is natural**, the script was replete with terminology like "boom and bust years" to describe cycles of heavy rainfall and drought, and "capital reinvestment" to name the process by which bunch grass stores energy in its roots.

Not surprisingly, during the segment in which a researcher showed that plants grow faster and larger the greater the biodiversity, no mention was made of the fact that the capitalist economic system, considered by the program to be such a wonderful homology of the natural world, is the very system that drives agribusiness to replace rainforests and other biodiverse systems with monocrops.

In capitalism goods and services are commodities with a dual character: they are use-values but they are also bearers of value. That's one reason the analogy between natural economy and "human economy" broke down fairly early in that program—right about when the first guide compared "swept aside" species with permanently laid off workers.

VALUE AND EXCHANGE VALUE IN MARX

Why does value make such a big difference between the "natural" economies and capitalist economies? To answer that let's take a look at Andrew Kliman's pamphlet, *Marx's Concept of Intrinsic Value*. The key quote from *Capital, Vol. I* is right on the cover: "[E]xchange-value appears to be something accidental and purely relative, and consequently intrinsic value, i.e. exchange-value that is inseparably connected with the commodity, inherent in it, seems a contradiction in terms. Let us consider the matter more closely."

By this passage we may excuse some readers for concluding that exchange-value is intrinsic value—I confess I was one such reader—and yet admonish them for stopping short. Indeed it does appear that Marx intends to demonstrate that the contradiction in terms is illusory and that we will find that exchange-value is in fact intrinsic to the commodity.

Kliman shows that Marx does nothing of the sort, because Marx shows that value, not exchange value, is intrinsic to the commodity. A good portion of the pamphlet is devoted to showing that despite the extensive discussion of exchange ratios in chapter 1 of *Capital*, Marx is actually conducting an investigation into **what it is that makes two commodities equivalent**.

The question is not about what commodity one trader is willing to accept in return for his commodity, i.e. what some commodity is worth to him personally. The question is, what is it that makes this commodity **objectively** equivalent to that commodity?

Perhaps one is prompted to reply: what makes them equivalent is that each would get you the same amount of money. But that only makes me wonder what it is about this \$20 bill that allows me to exchange it for two bottles of wine or ten toothbrushes or a pair of pants. The money doesn't make the commodities equivalent, but it does show that they are equivalent. We still don't know **why** they are equivalent.

Is it worth the trouble to find out why? We have a working knowledge of use-value and exchange-value. Isn't that enough?

Kliman shows that it is just such a limited view that led many economists to attack Marx on the mistaken grounds that his value theory contained a fatal flaw: the so-called transformation problem in his account of the relationship between commodities' values and their prices. Where the former expresses value, measured in labor-time, the latter expresses price at the market.

What is the perceived problem? The quote Kliman selected from the economist Ladislaus von Bortkiewicz's critique of Marx provides a clue: "value is merely the index of an exchange relationship and must

'Marx's Concept of Intrinsic Value'

not be confused with... 'absolute value.'" He therefore argued that the value invested in production must be transformed into the "price invested" when prices differ from values, which Marx did not. Because Bortkiewicz reduced "value" to exchange-value, however, he felt the need to "salvage" Marx's theory by developing two isolated systems: one for value, one for price.

This duality is more striking and consequential in Nobuo Okishio's argument against Marx's law of the tendential falling profit rate because price turns out to be irrelevant in Okishio's mathematical formulations. Kliman showed in his critique of Okishio in *News & Letters* (April 1996) that price cancels out of Okishio's profit rate equation because input and output prices are of the same magnitude.



Kliman went on to argue that due to the labor process involved in production, input and output prices are not necessarily the same. The intrinsic value that forms an objective part of the product is not taken into account in the equations, or else it is somehow suppressed. At any rate, what remains is a ratio of material output to material input.

In other words, the material profit rate is identical to the price/value profit rate in Okishio's system. But how can this be? Something must be wrong here. For only a society of pure use-value can obtain such a "physicalist" rate of profit. Okishio never lived in that world and neither do we. Let us return to the pamphlet to "consider the matter more closely."

AS WHAT DO COMMODITIES EXCHANGE?

We were in the process of finding out what makes two commodities equivalent. We know it isn't exchange-value—the exchange-value of one commodity is simply the other commodity. It does no good to say that what makes this pair of pants equivalent to that bottle of wine is the bottle of wine. It can't be use-value except perhaps under totally contingent circumstances, like using a shoe to pound a nail. We've pretty much ruled out money, although we may suspect it's a lot like money.

Marx gives us a clue in *Capital, Vol. I*: "[A] common element of identical magnitude exists in two different things... Both are therefore equal to a third thing, which in itself is neither the one nor the other."

By a process of elimination Marx finally gets to the one property left to the commodities, that they are products of labor. What makes them qualitatively equal is that they are congealed quantities of an identical "social substance," "human labor in the abstract."

Marx here equates the commodity to its intrinsic value in the same way he called it a use-value or exchange-value when it assumed those value-forms.

Thus value is abstract human labor in its "coagulated form." As an objective property of a commodity it is **dead labor**. Marx uses the expression "dead labor," to emphasize that he regards intrinsic commodity value not as something that imbues a product with warm, human qualities, but rather just the opposite. Any love, skill, sweat and toil poured into it has been transformed into something dead and utterly characterless.

Even when abstract labor is in its "living" form, that is, when the worker is on the clock and doing her job, it's already dead labor. It never has anything more than a "phantom-like objectivity." But that's just the problem—it has objectivity. Value really exists whether a worker feels exploited or not.

I once chided a friend for playing chess during working hours. He retorted, "The point is, I'm putting in the time." He was right to suspect that in some sense he was still "on the job" and that, despite the leisure of

the moment, he was being forced to participate in a system inherently hostile to workers. But even if he were chronically overworked and underpaid, he would have to go beyond his experience and dig into Marx to see how the system flows from value production.

PRODUCTIVITY AND PROFIT

In his paper "A Value-theoretic Critique of the Okishio Theorem" (which appeared in a book entitled, *Marx and Non-Equilibrium Economics*), Kliman expressed Okishio's theorem as follows: "[G]iven constant real wages, new techniques adopted by profit-maximizing firms to raise their own profitability are so productive that they cannot, in the end, lower the profit rate." Techniques "so productive" that the profit rate cannot fall practically guarantee work speedup and suppression of wages.

Okishio's neglect or dismissal of the commodity's intrinsic value allowed him to show mathematically that profit rate and productivity are one and the same. But where in productivity is the essential "something for nothing" element of profit? If output is doubled in a given amount of time, inputs, wear and tear, etc. are doubled as well. Innovations that improve efficiency cost extra and the boost in profits only lasts as long as it takes competitors to catch up. In short, the "something for nothing" derives not from the quantity of goods but from each individual commodity, and only because value is created in production.

How economists who reject Marx in favor of Okishio can even believe in the concept that profit is ultimately reducible to a physical or quasi-physical magnitude defies rationality. Equally disturbing are scholars who arrogate to themselves wisdom of "advancements" in economic theory that the unfortunate 19th century Marx presumably could not have envisioned.

When Okishio or one of his followers says, in effect, that the capitalists' own self-interest insures that the (value/price) profit rate will not fall, they sound as if Marx hadn't thought about that. But Marx wrote in chapter 15 of *Capital, Vol. III*, "No capitalist voluntarily introduces a new method of production, no matter how much more productive it may be, and how much it may increase the rate of surplus-value, so long as it reduces the rate of profit. Yet every such new method of production cheapens the commodities."

Marx knew way ahead of Okishio how capitalists think. Moreover he knew they would mistake rising productivity for rising profit rates. It is beyond me how 20th and now 21st century Okishiophiles could think like 19th-century capitalists and believe they have left Marx in the dustbin of history.

Those Marxists who think they have refuted Marx by intoning, "The falling profit rate is a **tendency**, not a law," should read in chapter 14 of *Capital, Vol. III* where Marx wrote, "There must be some counteracting influences at work, which cross and annul the effect of the general law, and which give it merely the character of a tendency, for which reason we have referred to the fall of the general rate of profit as a tendency to fall." Marx was well aware of the various tactics used to defray that "tendency to fall," e.g. intensifying exploitation and cutting wages. It is precisely the existence of such counteracting influences, and the fact that they have had to become increasingly sophisticated, violent, and prone to produce crises, that, far from refuting Marx, lends him even more credence.

Yet it didn't really matter to Marx whether the falling profit rate had the status of law or tendency. What mattered was the horrendous damage being done to workers, poor folks, even to capitalists themselves. The point was not to figure out ways to counteract a numerical result, but to change the system that gave rise to those results in the first place.

Kliman has shown that thinkers who fancy they have gone far beyond Marx's value theory have only managed to leave in its place some dangerous "pieces of cleverness," if I may take a phrase from Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* slightly out of context. For their value theory is all about object-to-object relations. On the other hand, those who stay with Marx on his journey into the commodity can see a perverted and alienated subject-object relationship between laborers and their products.

A worker who grasps that relationship and the intrinsic value it generates is on his way to forming the subject-to-subject relationships that can lead to the fundamental changes we sorely need. This pamphlet may be of assistance in such relations out.

Coming This Spring In
Chicago, New York,
Los Angeles, Detroit,
Memphis, and the
San Francisco Bay Area

A series of seven open discussions on Alternatives to Capitalism

This series of discussions will explore Marx's critique of capital, as developed in such works as his Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, the Grundrisse, Capital Vol. I, and his "Draft Letters to Vera Zasulich" as part of our ongoing effort to work out a liberating alternative to capitalist alienation and dehumanized social relations. To join us in this collective theoretic project to work out an alternative to the domination of capital, contact the local of News and Letters Committees nearest you (see directory, page 11).

REVOLUTIONARY BLACK DIMENSION

John Alan's book, *Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles*, demonstrates both the continuity of Marxist-Humanist thought, going back at least to the '40s, and its ongoing, capacity to illuminate the fundamental liberation struggles of 21st century America. Seizing on the inseparability of race, class, and gender in the projection of a new humanism for our time, Alan offers the needed alternative to so many futile debates on the Left about which terms have priority and how they are related. The minute you treat them as separate moments, all the king's horses and all the king's men are no avail. Alan elegantly presents them together, at the same time showing how Black freedom struggles have always been and continue to be the central clue to American history. Only a crass theory of "special interest groups" could fail to see that the Black struggle is "the touchstone of the whole of American development." Thank you, John Alan.

**Tom
Spokane, Wash.**

I look at *Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles* from the perspective of the soured Iranian Revolution. The Iranian Left had a lot of discussions on nationalism during the revolution. We started with a discussion of Marx's essay "On the Jewish Question" as minorities came under attack by Khomeini. This book would have saved us a lot of time. The Black question has an international dimension because, as this book shows, when Black people emancipate themselves it helps to create a new kind of human being everywhere. John Alan's book really compresses the great history of Black people against the way that history is used by Bush and other rulers. All non-Blacks, especially whites in the U.S., should read this book.

**Iranian exile
Hayward, Cal.**

I don't understand your concept of "Black masses as vanguard." I don't see the idea of a vanguard party as an elitist concept. It is the consciousness of the working class. Just as the bourgeoisie has a general staff, the working class needs their general staff. The masses don't act mindlessly but those acts have to be put in context. Leadership can be along the lines of the masses.

**Leftist
Berkeley, Cal.**

Our struggle is against racism and we see all problems in those terms. As we struggle we touch all other struggles. We have to fight racism first and unless we do, nothing else counts.

**Longtime Black activist
Oakland, Cal.**

The revolutionary strivings of the Black masses seem to be seen only in *N&L*. Reality politics puts off the revolutionary idea and winds up having nothing to do with the aspirations of the masses. The call for a total uprooting that you see in the pages of *N&L* is what is truly realistic.

**Retired
Detroit**

John Alan's book shows how the Bush administration, in appointing people like Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice to important positions, was using race as a symbol to cover over real problems.

**Black student
San Francisco**

Race is a false concept in the sense that capitalism is a false concept and we don't have a grasp on how much it influences us and holds us back. Racism creates a monolithic view of Blacks. We are linked to Colin Powell in being descen-

dants of Africa but we don't come from the same class and experiences. People ask what the Black community thinks about something and I ask, What Black community? There are many of them, all different.

**Black woman
Oakland, Cal.**

American Civilization on Trial shows the historical context for understanding Black liberation struggles. The Left ignores that at its peril, as can be seen in the way the anti-war movements did not grasp the widespread African-American opposition to the Iraq war, and failed to build upon it.

**Radical lawyer
Flint, Mich.**

HELP NEEDED

I noticed in a recent issue someone incarcerated in Ohio asking for assistance in getting copies of your two new books on the Black struggles in the U.S. Someone may well have already come forward to pay for copies for him, but if not would you put the donation I'm enclosing toward helping with that, either for him or someone else who needs a donor? People on the outside know little of the lives of the incarcerated. There are so many injustices that it is impossible to work on all of them, except in a general sense like this.

**Longtime reader
Canada**

**MARXISM AND
BLACK LIBERATION**

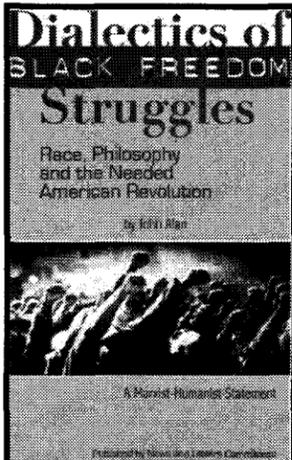
The article in Raya Dunayevskaya's Archives column in the January-February *N&L* was especially important to me because it showed that Blacks are not the only ones who suffer from discrimination. So do other minorities, like people from the Middle East now. It hit home when she pointed out that the later the bourgeois revolution, the more incomplete it is, because the class differences are more developed. That is something Third World revolutions have had to face. She is right that the unemployment inherent in the social crisis makes the proletariat more vulnerable to a fascist appeal against minorities. That archives column also showed that while a revolutionary like Lenin went back to Hegel to solve his problems he also looked to the Black situation in the U.S. and found a relation to the National Question he was dealing with.

**Iranian exile
California**

Raya Dunayevskaya's column in the January-February issue made me appreciate Dunayevskaya's break with Trotskyism. While it was a ground-breaking work at the time, I feel that it lacked the full expression of Marxist-Humanism's idea of the self-developing Subject as Reason. I believe there were still some remnants of vanguardism and economic determinism that didn't show themselves in *American Civilization on Trial*, *Black Masses as Vanguard*, a work that was fully Marxist-Humanist. I felt more care should have been taken in the "Editor's Note" to differentiate Dunayevskaya's thought before and after the founding of News and Letters Committees, to show readers the movement and development of her ideas.

**Brown Douglass
Memphis**

It was remarkable to see how early Dunayevskaya, in the 1940s, anticipated the later Civil Rights Movement on the basis of Black proletarianization in the South and North. It was only in the 1990s that historians began to catch up by



READERS' VIEWS

exploring the roots of the Civil Rights Movement in Black participation in union organizing in the South. However, where Dunayevskaya saw the impetus coming from the self-movement of the Black masses, many of the historians put an undue emphasis on the role of the Communist Party in that organizing. *American Civilization on Trial* and *Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles* show, on the contrary, the CP's betrayal of the masses, and the battle of ideas between different strains of Marxism.

**Franklin Dmitryev
Memphis**

THE U.S. ELECTION 2004

The Youth column by Brown Douglass in the last issue, "On the limits of electoral politics," was written before Howard Dean started on his downfall. While showing why Dean gained so much momentum among the youth, he made good points that turned out to be true, especially the question of "anybody but Bush." We all know where just taking that ground can lead you.

**Mojo
Chicago**

I noted that both presidential candidates, Dean and Edwards, used the expression of "two worlds" in America in talking about the growing chasm between the rich and the poor. Of course, they didn't follow that up with the proper corollary, that in order to correct that situation, what is required is the total uprooting of the capitalist system.

**Old radical
Detroit**

Looking at the situation from here, it seems that Bush will win. My basis for that conclusion is the smashing of the Democrats in California, the intervention of Arnold Schwarzenegger against gay marriages, and the location of New York for the Republican convention. Given the close call in the last election, a Republican success in California would be sufficient to secure the defeat of the Democrats for a decade or more. Yet, even if the Democrats win, what will be the nature of that victory? In essence, the U.S. is and will continue to be a one-party Big Brother state. What then are we to do? We need to look at the advice of the Italian Marxist, Gramsci, who suggested that we should hope for the best but prepare for the worst. The only weapons we have are our thoughts and words. Let's organize to use them well.

**Patrick
England**

THE MIDDLE-EAST SCENE

The recent Iranian election for the parliament has shattered any hope for reform in Iran. The disqualification of about 2,500 on charges of disloyalty to the supreme leader means the minority conservative group known as the Council of Guardians has succeeded in closing the door on the aspirations of the Iranian masses for democracy. The masses have been brought face to face with the ruling clergy and can have no doubt that the reformist struggle of President Khatami has failed. What is also brought forward is the determination of the people to end the stage of unfreedom in Iran.

**Manel
California**

The rapprochement between India and Pakistan promised reduction of nuclear warfare threats. It is welcome because the region is such a flashpoint. But the danger of a potential Islamist takeover of control is real and shows the weakness of piecemeal reforms which lead only to further entrenchment of bureaucracy. It is why Marxist-Humanism always shows the importance of the "two worlds" within each country.

**Observer
Detroit**

LESBIAN & GAY MARRIAGE

Our Governor Schwarzenegger is living up to his own caricature of a simple-minded body builder on steroids playing a cartoon character. Commenting on San Francisco issuing marriage licenses to gay and lesbian couples on "Meet the Press" he said: "All of a sudden we see riots, we see protests, we see people clashing. The next thing we know, there is injured or dead people." He echoed the handful of social conservatives who did protest, calling issuing licenses "anarchy."

Our neighbors who have lived together for years were part of the now thousands who got married in order to publicly declare their affection and commitment to each other. They joined hundreds of others to queue up in lines many blocks long waiting patiently for a chance to fill out forms for the marriage license bureau. If this is anarchy, I wonder what orderliness looks like.

**Neighbor
California**

The atmosphere in the City Hall is so joyous with the over 3,800 gay and lesbian marriages so far that this is called "the Winter of Love" in San Francisco.

**Observer
San Francisco**

VANGUARDISM

Congratulations on the demystification you are doing on the retrogressive nature of so-called progressive movements, which is articulated by elements of the vanguardists over here. The Left's flirtation with fundamentalism has damaged much political progression in the European Social Forum. The Left right now is unable to take a total view, let alone discuss human liberation. Global Resistance as an organization is now politically defunct for that reason.

**George
Britain**

KOSOVA DEBATED ANEW

Together with my sub renewal, I enclose an article from another journal I subscribe to, *New Unionist*. It concerns the great power oil pipeline machinations in the Balkans. The reason I'm sending it to you is that in it the Kosova Liberation Army appears in the role of cat's paw to the U.S. and British imperialists. I was surprised when some five years ago, you were promoting the KLA as the answer to the plight of the Albanian Kosovars. While your arguments were very logical, I found it hard to imagine these nationalists and bandits being the solution to any problem. Now it appears that they dwell in the same cesspool as the CIA, Al Qaeda, the British secret service and other such agents of terror and imperialism.

**S.K.
Massachusetts**

Editor's Note: There has never been any credibility to charges that the KLA was a tool of the CIA, Al Qaeda, or any other global terrorist network. The KLA—while it existed—was an armed movement that became recognized by the vast majority of Kosovars as their best defense against genocide.

The U.S. State Department did characterize the KLA as a "terrorist" group, a term later adopted by some on the Left. Those leftists, including the *New Unionist*, who promote this term have a lot to answer for.

As we said at the time, "When the Left cannot even extend support to those facing genocide, it has forsaken its ability to say anything meaningful about human liberation...Perhaps no event since the Hitler-Stalin Pact of 1939 has shown how total is the ideological pollution in the Left."

People can read for themselves our analyses of the situation in Kosova by ordering "Kosova: Writings from News & Letters, 1998-1999" for \$3.50 from us.

TO OUR READERS

We greatly regret the typographical errors that appeared in last month's article "Marxism and Black liberation," in our Marxist-Humanist Archives column, "From the writings of Raya Dunayevskaya." Readers can find a correct version on the *News & Letters* web site, or by writing to us at News & Letters, 36 S. Wabash, Rm. 1440, Chicago, IL 60603.

TOTALITARIANISM

Tom More's essay on "The fate of totalitarianism: Marxist-Humanism in conversation with Orwell, Sartre, and Adorno" (January-February *N&L*) was difficult reading, but his gist was clear: a one-dimensional view of totalitarianism leads us to either tail-end or support U.S. imperialism, as does Orwell, who maintained the view that it cannot be fought. Raya Dunayevskaya opposed all forms of totalitarianism earlier than those other thinkers did, and always saw a pathway out in the mass struggles and aspirations for total freedom.

Dan B. Michigan

In his essay, More asks a lot of questions about Sartre and Adorno distancing themselves from the actual movements of their day. He calls it a degenerated form of "second negation." The way the dialectic can be truncated is made very clear in this article. A worker would appreciate seeing the way the Hegelian dialectic is not separated from everyday concerns of workers in their movement. Negation of the negation can be truncated in many different ways. Yet Marxism is Hegelianism, despite all the epigones. Marx tried to make that point in his writing.

Htun Lin Oakland, Cal.

More says that the absolute of capitalism can't be separated from new beginnings coming from below....He says that the subject is going to emerge. Yes, it will. But he leaves out the question: What happens after? The absolute as new beginning is based on asking that question. Why did Poland accept globalized capitalism after Solidarity or the Iranians get stuck with a theocracy after their revolution? The absolute negativity that is in the movement is not fully comprehended in what is new. I think Tom More fudges the question by adding "the standing possibility of retrogression notwithstanding." Instead of seeing the question of "What happens after?"—which we have to answer now before the revolution—explicitly within the movement from theory to practice

and our concept of the absolute. The ability "to hear the voices from below" and a "penetrating explanation" of our current world-historic situation is good but not good enough. The dynamism of the dialectic needs to be expressed in and for itself as the opposite to all forms of totality that hem us in.

Ron Brokmeyer California

HEARING WORKERS

The article by Georgiana on "Misery of health cuts" in the last issue was selected by the striking workers of Vons, when I showed them that issue of *N&L*, as the one which "says it like it is." Workers always hear their own voices clearly when a writer speaks their language.

Manel Los Angeles

Our California Nurses Association dues were raised to fight a rival union, SEIU. I'm glad the two unions finally reached a "mutual cooperation agreement" as Htun Lin described it in his column in the January-February issue. But wouldn't you think the money would now be used to give the union more of a presence at the wards and clinics? That is not the case. We won the right to have quality of care monitored by our union, but the liaison positions created to ensure it are spread too thin. The union either exists to fight for its members in the workplace or it is nothing.



CNA nurse Oakland, Cal.

At the Local 640 warehouse workers union meeting at East L.A. College, the workers have asked the union leaders to prepare the union to vote for a \$10 surcharge in union fees for the emergency fund, to be used in case they have to join the striking supermarket workers. While they say the new talks between the union and management are a hopeful sign, they noted that the union has

approved \$1 million for house and rent payments for striking members. The striking supermarket workers need everyone's support because they are really holding the line for all of us in our fight against the "free fall" of human conditions everywhere today.

Supporter Los Angeles

'MAD COW' & CAPITALISM

The article on "mad cow disease" in the January-February *N&L* really brought out the way the capitalist food industry tries to turn animals into machines and treats them accordingly. But the sentence, "Disease is an unintended consequence of a system that disrupts natural cycles, subordinating everything to the drive for ever-expanding production," is misleading. Disease has always been part of the natural cycle: wolves prey on weak, sick caribou, feeding themselves and indirectly contributing to a healthier herd. Disease may kill off individuals but benefit a species, or harm one species but benefit the environment as a whole. Disease in the context of capitalism plays a very different role. I'd like to see Marxist-Humanists explore its ramifications in greater detail. The analysis of its commodification can help us realize how totally capitalism perverts life on earth and how total is the needed uprooting.

Susan Van Gelder Michigan

WOMAN AS REASON

The "Woman as Reason" column in the January-February issue was striking in that the new constitution in Afghanistan challenges those that thought they knew what democracy meant. This new constitution denies rights to their own citizens, notably women. That was also the case with the U.S. constitution, which was based on a compromise that allowed slavery and gave slave owners the right to represent the slaves as three-fifths of a human being. The Afghan constitution comes from those whom the U.S. has armed, and who are now writing the meaning of democracy in Afghanistan as they see it. It makes it clear that the only genuine

support for democracy comes from the "second America" together with the "second Afghanistan."

Women's liberationist California

I believe what is plaguing this country now is that those in control are trying to restore the boundary between man and woman. Bush wants to make America a "man again" which I would interpret as making Americans brutal. The line between being a man and woman supposedly makes a man more "masculine" and a woman more "feminine." But what does it mean that one of the U.S. troops being brought up on charges in Iraq for mistreatment of POWs is a woman? All being equally brutal is not what would make us all human.

Correspondent Oakland, Cal.

WHAT JUSTIFIES BUSH'S WAR?

The *N&L* January-February lead analyzed well what the joy of the Iraqi masses at the capture of Hussein meant—and what it does not mean. Hussein's downfall cannot justify Bush's war on Iraq. Kevin Michaels showed just how phony Bush's attempt at justification is. His aura is wearing very thin. Deficit spending reveals the new thin of U.S. imperialism, as it amasses capital from Europe and Asia.

Longtime N&L supporter Michigan

YOU CAN BUY NEWS & LETTERS AT THESE BOOKSTORES

- Fourth Avenue Smoke Shop, 832 SW Fourth Ave., Portland, OR 97204
- Left Hand Book Collective, 1200 Pearl St., Basement, Boulder, CO 80302
- Solidarity Books, 8404 Springhill Ct., Indianapolis IN 46260.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS FROM NEWS & LETTERS

BOOKS

By RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

- The Power of Negativity: Selected Writings on the Dialectic in Hegel and Marx** by Raya Dunayevskaya.....\$24.95
- Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today** 2000 edition. Foreword by Joel Kovel.....\$24.95
- NEW! Philosophy and Revolution: from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao** 30th Anniversary issue, 2003.....\$20 until April (\$24.95 after)
- Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution** 1991 edition. New author's introduction. Foreword by Adrienne Rich.....\$12.95
- Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future** (1996 edition).....\$15.95
- The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism: Selected Writings by Raya Dunayevskaya**.....\$8.50
- The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism: Two Historic-Philosophic Writings by Raya Dunayevskaya** Contains "Presentation on Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy of June 1, 1987," and 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes".....\$3 paperback, \$10 hardcover

By CHARLES DENBY

- Indignant Heart. A Black Worker's Journal** 1989 edition includes Afterword by Raya Dunayevskaya.....\$14.95

By KEVIN ANDERSON

- Lenin, Hegel, and Western Marxism: A Critical Study** First full-length treatment of Lenin's studies of Hegel.....\$15.95

PAMPHLETS

- NEW! 40th anniversary edition of American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard, and**
- Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles: Race, Philosophy & the Needed American Revolution Special**.....Both for \$15, including postage.

- NEW! Marxist-Humanist Writings on The Middle East** Selected writings by Raya Dunayevskaya 1961-1982 and *News & Letters* 1988-2002.....\$5
- Bosnia-Herzegovina: Achilles Heel of Western 'Civilization'** (Expanded edition).....\$5
- Kosova: Writings from News & Letters, 1998-1999**.....\$3.50
- Explorations in Dialectical and Critical Theory** From Hegel to Derrida and from Marx to Mészáros.....\$5
- NEW! Marx's Concept of Intrinsic Value** by Andrew Kliman.....\$2
- Marx's Capital and Today's Global Crisis** Includes critiques of Ernest Mandel and Tony Cliff.....\$2
- The Coal Miners' General Strike of 1949-50 and the Birth of Marxist-Humanism In the U.S.** by Andy Phillips and Raya Dunayevskaya.....\$2
- 25 Years of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S.: A History of Worldwide Revolutionary Developments** by Raya Dunayevskaya.....\$1.50
- Myriad Global Crises of the 1980s and the Nuclear World since World War II** by Raya Dunayevskaya.....\$2
- Theory and Practice, by Rosa Luxemburg** First English translation.....\$2
- Nationalism, Communism, Marxist-Humanism and the Afro-Asian Revolutions** by Raya Dunayevskaya.....\$1.25
- Voices from within the Prison Walls** by D. A. Sheldon. Prisoners' views of (in)justice system and organizing from within.....\$8 For pamphlet plus donor copy for a prisoner.....\$16
- The Revolutionary Journalism of Felix Martin (Isaac Woods)**.....\$8
- Working Women for Freedom** by Angela Terrano, Marie Dignan, and Mary Holmes.....\$2
- Dos ensayos por Raya Dunayevskaya**.....\$2
- News and Letters Committees Constitution**.....37¢ postage

- Marxist-Humanist Literature Catalog for 2000-01** A full list of publications (includes many not listed here) available from News and Letters Committees.....60¢ postage

ARCHIVES

- Guides to Collection and Supplement to the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection: Marxist-Humanism: A Half Century of Its World Development** Full description of 15,000-page microfilm collection.....\$4.50
- The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection-Marxist-Humanism: A Half Century of Its World Development** A 15,000-page microfilm collection on 8 reels available from Wayne State University, Detroit, MI 48202.....\$165

NEWSPAPER

- News & Letters subscription** Unique combination of worker and intellectual published 10 times a year. (Request information about gift subscriptions.).....\$5/year
- Bound Volumes of News & Letters** 1970-77, 1977-84, 1984-87, 1987-94, 1994-99.....\$30 each *N&L* is also available on microfilm from Pro Quest, 300 Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106. *N&L* as well as other Marxist-Humanist literature is available on audio tape.

Mail orders to:

News & Letters, 36 S. Wabash, Room 1440, Chicago, IL 60603, Phone (312) 236-0799

Enclosed find \$_____ for the literature checked. Please add \$2 postage for each pamphlet, \$4 postage for books. Illinois residents add 7% sales tax.

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Email Address _____

Indonesia continues its vicious oppression in Aceh

Indonesia is continuing to kill, torture and imprison people in the province of Aceh, where martial law has been in effect since last May. Foreigners, journalists and humanitarian organizations are banned from Aceh, and the military abuses continue without witnesses. Anyone who opposes martial law is accused of being a member of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), the guerrilla movement that is seeking independence.

One activist there told me, "The government says Aceh is now safe, yet people disappear and get tortured every day." The commander-in-chief of the Indonesian military stated recently, "The main enemies of the military are human rights and democracy. So whoever opposes the military operation in Aceh is a separatist."

MILITARY USES ANY MEANS

Recently, the Indonesian Red Cross and the International Committee for the Red Cross were permitted back into Aceh. They were quickly infiltrated by the army and used to kill innocent civilians, particularly in East Aceh. The army even fortified ambulances and used them to conduct military "sweeps" for guerrillas in the villages. The Red Cross has since withdrawn its workers again. As a result, many people in the villages, forests and other remote areas are not getting any medical services at all.

Indonesia has arrested and detained more than a thousand Acehese on allegations that they support GAM. Almost all those arrested are civilians (actual GAM fighters are shot on sight), including community leaders, peaceful activists, family members of GAM fighters, and people who simply have the same name



as GAM fighters. Many imams (religious leaders) in the villages are arrested for performing their duty to wash the dead bodies of GAM fighters.

Over 500 of those arrested have been convicted of "crimes against the state" (*makar*). This includes villagers who, when the military asks where GAM is hiding, say that they do not know, and shopkeepers who merely sold GAM some rice. Also convicted were the former negotiators for GAM, whom the government earlier engaged in peace talks—they got 11 to 15-year sentences; M. Nazar, student leader, four years for speaking at a rally; and Cut Nur Asikin, a woman community activist, 11 years. Because of martial law, Nazar was not released Dec. 27 as the law required; instead, he became a hostage of the military.

TRIALS, INTIMIDATION

People arrested by the military are brought to military posts, investigated and charged by the military. Then the police pass the charges on to the civilian authorities, who prosecute them in sham trials. The vast majority of those charged do not have lawyers; no one outside the capital city can get a

lawyer. Others have lawyers who are actually working for the prosecution and advise them to confess to being GAM, even though they are not, under the threat of getting heavier sentences if they do not confess. The few honest lawyers are subject to constant intimidation from the military, and are in physical danger while doing their jobs. One lawyer told me, "I want to visit the

victims, but if I do, I become the victim."

At the trials, some as short as 20 minutes, there is only one witness for the prosecution—the arresting military officer—and no witnesses for the defense. People awaiting trial are routinely beaten with planks, or cut with knives and their wounds rubbed with alcohol and vinegar. One man in Lhok Seumawe was tortured to death and then hanged in his underwear; the police told the media he killed himself, but could not explain how he got the wounds and the rope.

About 140 people who have been sentenced to three years or more have been transferred to notorious prisons in Java, far away from their homes and families. Without their families being notified, they are taken to Java in chains, some of them barefoot, and thrown into trucks. The military forces them to lie on the floor and sits on either side with their feet on the victims' bodies. They are being sent all over Java and mixed in with the general prison population. In Ambarawa Prison in Central Java, all political prisoners from Aceh are tortured daily. One prisoner sent his family a message that he was fed only rice containing worms. Conditions are undoubtedly worse in Nusa Kambangan, an island prison for murderers, etc.

BOB DOLE FRONTS FOR TORTURE

The Indonesian government recently hired former presidential candidate Bob Dole as its lobbyist to create a better image for itself in the U.S. When BBC News asked him about Aceh, he professed not to know there was any killing there, and when pressed, said, "Don't sink the whole country because of a problem in one little place."

Please send letters protesting martial law and human rights violations in Aceh to Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri, c/o Indonesian Embassy, 2020 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036; Fax: (202) 775-5365, with a copy to Aceh Center, achehcenter@yahoo.com. Contact Aceh Center (717-343-1598) for information or to offer support.

—Reyza Zain

Chicago police killing of Darryl Hamilton

CHICAGO—Darryl R.L. Hamilton, affectionately known as Man-Man to his family, friends and neighbors, was chased, then gunned down and murdered Tuesday, Dec. 2, 2003 at approximately 9:30 p.m. A Chicago Police Department Rookie-Probationary Officer with less than one year active duty shot and killed Man-Man at 7000 South Dorchester Avenue.

After being cornered on the side of Enrico Fermi Elementary Schoolyard, 18-year old Darryl was shot nine times in cold blood, once in the right shoulder, seven times in the back, and one time in the back of the head. Eyewitnesses say the incident was captured on a surveillance camera mounted on the side of the school building. After the shooting Darryl was dragged, laid face down, a gun put under his body, bleeding and dying for more than an hour before a Fire Department ambulance arrived to pronounce him dead.

Family members arrived at the scene and tried to approach Darryl but they were restrained and prevented from reaching him. After police promises to allow the family to see Darryl and get help for him were not kept, they became distraught and burst through the police line.

Immediately Ms. Johnetta Davis, Mother Dorian Hamilton, and Darryl's sister and 15-year old younger brother were handcuffed, arrested, and charged with disorderly conduct. They were thrown into the back of a police wagon and detained at the Cottage Grove police station until 1:30 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 3 before

any of them were released.

Witnesses say that a group of white Chicago Police Department sergeants entered the school, set off the fire alarm, and ordered the custodian to open the door to the security office. He refused and later was ordered by an unknown Chicago Public School official to open the door for police. They removed the surveillance tape and viewed it as family, friends, and neighbors watched them through the school windows. They exited the building with the tape in hand.

After the Hamilton family complained on Jan. 10, their front door was burst down and their home stormed into and ransacked by 20 police officers. An uncle, Michael Hamilton, was attacked and arrested, and another uncle, Carl Hamilton, was attacked by officers at the Area 2 Third District Police Station. A gun was placed in his mouth, his tooth broken, and he too was then arrested.

Ms. Bessie Hamilton, Darryl's grandmother, described the home invasion and physical mistreatment as the equivalent of rape.

Please give this family and community your support by demanding justice for Darryl Hamilton, a victim of Chicago Police Department killer cops. Please call churches, elected officials, community leaders, organizations, ministers, and local social service agencies to aid and assist Darryl's family.

—Ms. Toni Stith, Parent Advocate
"For My Child" Organization

In memory of Larry Darnell Harper Jr.

CHICAGO—Larry Darnell Harper Jr., 24, was killed in a robbery on Dec. 16, 2003. Larry is the son of Gwendolyn Hogan, whose husband Kelsey Hogan was killed in 1999 by an off-duty Cook County corrections officer. The disinterest and disrespect with which the Chicago Police Department treated Larry's murder—not responding to calls from the family for assistance—demonstrates once again why the police are held in such low regard.

At the Police Board hearing on Jan. 15, Larry's fiancée Patricia Streeter pointed out that she hadn't been contacted by police detectives in the month since his killing. This is despite the fact that the killers had taken Larry's wallet with his identification, his cell phone—upon which they or somebody called his home—and his house and car keys. As Patricia stated, "I don't even know if it's safe to go back to my house."

Gwendolyn spoke at the meeting as well. She said, "I had to come here five years ago because an officer killed my husband. Now I have to be here again. I know who killed my husband. I don't know who killed my son, but it is shameful that I have to come here to try to get you all to do your jobs." As often happens, the police had finally contacted the family on the day of the Police Board meeting. Perhaps they do that to spare themselves public embarrassment. It only serves to make them look even worse.

I attended the Memorial Service for Larry at First Corinthian M.B. Church. Larry leaves behind five children. He and Patricia were to be married in April. As heartbreaking as it was, it was still wonderful to see the way hundreds of friends and community members turned out to honor him and to support his family in their moment of grief. Larry had clearly touched a lot of people with his humor—he seemed to have an end-

less supply of jokes at the ready—his sense of style, and his essential humanity.

It was also very moving to see how Gwen, in the midst of her own sorrow, was so intent on reaching out to the other people there who were facing the dangers of everyday life in Chicago. It is amazing that this woman who has lost so much still finds the strength to reach out to others, as she did at Larry's service, and as she has at so many demonstrations over police brutality, Mumia Abu-Jamal, the war in Iraq. No one should have to be as strong as Gwen has had to be. More than sympathy, she deserves our gratitude and our renewed efforts to make this world a better place.

—Gerard Emmett

The Power of Negativity

THE POWER OF
NEGATIVITY



"It never fails that, at momentous world historic turning points, it is very difficult to tell the difference between two types of twilight—whether one is first plunging into utter darkness or whether one has reached the end of a long night and is just at the moment before the dawn of a new day."

—Raya Dunayevskaya,
The Power of Negativity

To order, see page 7.

BLACK/REVIEW

(Continued from page 1)

were emancipating themselves by destroying the plantation system of slave labor.

Toussaint L'Ouverture, the future Governor General of Haiti, was at the "Wall of Fire" not as burner, but as a coachman who saved his master's life. Indeed, Toussaint's spontaneous humanism during this bloody conflict between Black slaves and their white masters who had tortured them in slavery was very, very rare.

"Santhonax, one of the French commissioners, wrote in his diary: 'Toussaint is the real leader of the Negroes, and the white inhabitants, who have become reconciled, regard him as a friend...No personal vanity ever separates Toussaint from anyone else on the island. His whole mode of living is republican simplicity...' (Mercer Cook, *An Introduction to Haiti*, p. 127).

With poorly armed and untrained former slaves, Toussaint used guerrilla tactics to defeat the French and British troops in Haiti. The success of his tactics was appreciated even by enemy officers, one of whom said: "One never knows where his army is, what it subsists on, how he manages to recruit it, in what mountain fastness he has hidden his supplies and his treasury. He, on the other hand, seems perfectly informed concerning everything that goes on in the enemy camp" (Cook's *An Introduction to Haiti*, p. 126).

FREE HAITI'S DILEMMA

When Napoleon took power in 1799, Haiti was a colony of France only in name. Toussaint had taken over all the functions of government from French authorities. He selected seven white planters and three mulattoes to write a new Constitution that abolished slavery and made him the Governor General for life, having the power to appoint his successor.

In addition to the abolition of slavery, Haiti's new constitution "ordered all males from 14 to 55 years old to enroll in the militia, recognized Catholicism as the state religion, attempted to rescue the plantations from economic collapse and permitted the importation of blacks to augment the decimated population" (Thomas O. Ott, *The Haitian Revolution, 1789-1804*).

The new constitution turned out to be the beginning of a plan to rebuild Haiti's previous plantation economy and bring it back into the world market after the slaves had destroyed it by fire. Toussaint encouraged hundreds of émigré white planters to return by assuring them they would regain net profits from their land. The former Black slaves didn't agree or submit to this new enslavement. They ran away and were brought back by Toussaint's military forces.

To reveal a retrogressive dimension in Haiti's revolution may annoy some. But it did happen, and was bound to happen, when the social relations and purpose of the old society is still the goal of the new society. Haiti could not establish a new humanist society and yet still continue production of the same commodities for the world market that the master class did before the revolution. Toussaint L'Ouverture died in prison in Jura, on the French-Swiss border, of exposure and starvation in April 1803. The question that faced him, how to establish a new society in the face of the world market, is one we are still facing today.

EDITORIAL

Women's worldwide struggle for freedom

There can be no better month than March, Women's History Month, and International Women's Day, March 8, to see that women's worldwide fight for freedom is one of the greatest challenges not only to degenerate capitalism, but to all obstacles standing in the way of a new human world.

That is clear when we look at women's struggle against politicalized religion be that Israeli and Palestinian women fighting Sharon; Muslim women fighting a politicalized fundamentalist Islam; or women in the U.S. fighting the likes of Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell and their man in the White House, Bush, whose reign has been a disaster for women around the globe.

It is clear when we see women's multifaceted opposition to war. Women were in the lead in the international as well as local protests against the U.S. invasion of Iraq—the largest anti-war movement in history. Women were the vanguard in protesting the war in Afghanistan and continue fighting a U.S. policy that sacrifices women's freedom for political expediency and capitalism's inhuman direction.

Lessons of Iran 1979

(Continued from page 4)

Each revolution discloses something new and unique and challenging. The new in the Iranian Revolution reveals both new strength and new weakness. Surely the sustained mass mobilizations in so despotic a land, armed to the teeth and primed by Nixon since 1972 to take over the U.S. policeman's beat for the whole Middle East, was nothing short of a miracle, especially when you consider that the Shah extended that Great Illusion to believe he would be pivotal to the final confrontation between the two nuclear Titans: the U.S. and Russia. Moreover, they were so spontaneous that even the Left that always likes to take credit for vanguardism had to admit that not only were they not organized by any party, but they seemed to be organized by "nobody."

Yet it would be wrong to think either that it was only spontaneity that was at work, or that "nobody" organized it. Were it so, Khomeini, for whom one million poured out to welcome back, could not proceed so brazenly and so rapidly to try to saddle the Revolution with what he calls "Islamic Republic" and "Islamic moral code," and we already saw it at work not only against the women but against the lifestyle of a whole new generation of revolutionary youth who are the very heart of this revolution.

Nor should we entertain any illusion about the "superiority" of the secular middle-class intellectuals who think that because they see Khomeini as "symbol," not philosopher of revolution, that some "greater intellectual" than he will win in the end. There is but one grain of truth in that pretension, and it concerns not intellectuals, but theory. There is no doubt that the great weakness of the movement now, and not only in Iran, is the lack of theory, a theory stemming from a philosophy of total liberation such as was and is Marx's Humanism, his whole new continent of thought from the moment he broke from bourgeois society in 1843 until his death, 1883, that is to say, from his *Humanist Essays through Capital and the Paris Commune to his Ethnological Notebooks*....

We have, after all, 62 additional years of experience, have seen Russia and China also become transformed into their opposite, with both vying for U.S. imperialism's alliance! Surely we cannot behave as if nothing had happened in all those decades of maturation, aborted revolutions as well as revolutions transformed into opposite....

Let us extend our solidarity to the embattled revolutionaries—the new generation of revolutionary students as well as workers; Women's Liberationists as well as national minorities fighting for self-determination. Let us extend the activities here to stop the interfering hand of U.S. imperialism hungering for oil and the strategic location for its nuclear global aim.

The struggle continues.

NOTES

1. That this is not the first time Arafat helped stifle an ongoing revolution was seen clearest in Lebanon. See *Political-Philosophic Letter No. 6*, August 1976, "Lebanon: The Test Not Only of the PLO but the Whole Left."*
2. See "Under the Whip of the Counter-Revolution: Will the Revolution in Portugal Advance?", *N&L*, Jan.-Feb. 1976.
3. See *New York Times* (3-11-79) which lists eight of the demands.
4. See "Eyewitness report: Iran's ongoing revolution" (*N&L*, March 1979) which further describes "the self-activity, self-organizing and creativity of the masses of the people."
5. Some in the Arab world were so desperate about ever ridding themselves of Western imperialism that they couldn't resist even Hitler's blandishments. See "U.S. and Russia Enter Middle-East Cockpit," by Raya Dunayevskaya (*News & Letters*, Detroit).* Lucien Rey, in "Persia in Perspective" (*New Left Review*, Summer 1963) rightly calls attention to the fact that there is a "counter-revolutionary anti-imperialism."
6. See the Editorial "Egypt-Israel: U.S. Imperialism's Middle-East Outpost" (*N&L*, April 1979).

* Available in *Marxist-Humanist Writings on the Middle East* (Chicago: News and Letters, 2003)—Editor.

The search for women's history has always been about what our past can tell us about how to fight back today. Women's voices are now heard more clearly. Through much agitation, they have created new departments in human rights organizations like Human Rights Watch that focus on and publicize violations of women's rights as they attempt to deepen what "human rights" means.

The dialectics of liberation reveal the reality that women refuse to be victims, they fight back in creative ways that point to new human relations. For example: women in Sri Lanka did what their leaders couldn't when Sinhala women worked with Tamil women, speaking in one voice against violence and rape.

We recorded in the pages of *N&L* how women in Serbia risked their lives in reaching out to their sisters in Bosnia, and later in Kosova, and vice versa. And recently, women in Iraq—Kurdish and Arab, Sunni and Shia Muslim, and Christian—demonstrated against the U.S.-appointed Iraqi Governing Council's introduction of Resolution 137, and won repeal of the Resolution which would have replaced existing civil law with Islamic law, Sharia, thus stripping women of the rights they fought for and won in Iraq decades ago. The struggle will continue, for women lost the fight for a 40% representation in the future national assembly. The new constitution provides only 25%, though women are in the majority in Iraq.

All of these struggles overlap and bring into view other questions such as rape as a weapon of war; rape within the U.S. military (including U.S. soldiers in Iraq raping women soldiers and Iraqi women); prostitution and the trafficking of women and children; outright slavery, both sexual and labor; the feminization of poverty, which is now a global phenomenon; and the sexual politics of AIDS. The fact that we know about each of these horrors has to do with women's revolutionary agitation; and in each case, women fight back.

Women resist under the most dire circumstances. Nawal El-Saadawi pointed out at the World Social Forum that women's resistance means fighting those who try to prevent women from thinking, organizing, "or seeking ways to resist." Weapons used to keep women down include "The repeated banning of books and articles, TV programs discussing the situation of

women, criticizing religious fundamentalist thought, exposing patriarchal values and practices, extolling...real democracy...or defending the rights of women." "Hence," she points out, "the accusations of apostasy, the threats of assassination and the campaigns of character assassination launched against activists...who dare to defend the rights of women."

What El-Saadawi describes is what Iraqi feminist Yanar Mohammed is experiencing and why supporting her is so crucial (see page 2).

Women in different countries are living under fascism, where speaking out for women's rights, or trying to live a human life, is an invitation for a prison sentence, a beating, or death. That is also why the cause of the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) demands our support.

Despite dire circumstances RAWA survives as an organization. Their condemnation of

all sides in Afghanistan is unbending. They say of the U.S. war that was supposedly to liberate them: "Under the Taliban, if a woman went to market and showed an inch of flesh she would have been flogged; now she's raped." Karzai's government "has done nothing for women." Their critique of cultural relativists is devastating: "Feminism does not need to be imported; it has already taken root in Afghanistan. Long before the U.S. bombing, progressive organizations were trying to establish freedom, democracy, secularism and women's rights."

The maturity of women's struggles in 2004 shows that Marx was right when he wrote in his *Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* that "on the basis of [the man/woman relation] we can judge the whole stage of the development of humanity." Marx wasn't only exposing the alienations, frustrations, and exploitation of capitalism; to him the man/woman relationship showed how total a revolution was needed.

What women are struggling against—from Bush's attack on women's control of our own bodies to religious fundamentalism's attempt to push women back into the dark ages—reveals the retrogressive times we face. But this has not stopped women from fighting for freedom, it has only deepened their struggle. In that struggle for freedom, for new human relations, a glimpse of the new society that is our goal is revealed.



Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan celebrate International Women's Day in 1999.

Prison journalists punished for exposing truth

Prison administrators in two states have disciplined convicts whose reports of adverse prison conditions were published in national magazines and newspapers. In Texas and Florida, state prison officials charged prisoners with "establishing and/or operating an unauthorized business enterprise" when they wrote articles for publication in newspapers and magazines and got paid for doing it.

On March 18, 2003, a Texas prison disciplinary committee found William B. Sorens guilty of operating a business from the John. M. Wynne State Prison in Huntsville. Sorens' "business" was writing magazine stories for pay.

The effect of the disciplinary committee's ruling was to extend Sorens' first possible release date from December 2005 to December 2006. "I was, in effect, sentenced to one year for writing," said Sorens who is serving a 60-year sentence.

Sorens had written "Hardcore Hate," a story about racial hatred among Texas prisoners. His story ran in *Playboy* in 2001. Earlier this year, Sorens sold a story about prison censorship to another national magazine. Sorens also writes for *Straws in the Wind*, a semi-monthly newsletter published by Rev. Lloyd Palmer of Albert Lea, Minn. "Occasionally, I'll send him \$25 or something for postage or writing materials," Palmer said.

RETALIATION

In Florida, state prisoner David Reutter was charged with "running a business" after he sold a story about the dismal conditions in a Florida state prison. In 1993, Reutter was a prisoner at Florida's Glades Correctional Institution, a dilapidated facility built in 1934 near the Everglades. Reutter complained that the prison was overcrowded, infested with rats, and in need of repairs—the windows were broken, screens ripped out, electrical wiring was exposed, the roof leaked, and raw sewage accumulated beneath one dormitory building.

After submitting complaints and grievances which

prison officials ignored, Reutter filed a lawsuit. On June 5, 2002, without admitting wrongdoing, the state of Florida agreed to settle the lawsuit and pay Reutter \$3,000.

Reutter, who remains imprisoned in Florida, then wrote the Glades story which appeared in the April 2003 issue of *Prison Legal News*, a monthly magazine based in Seattle. (The magazine pays its prisoner-writers the pittance sum of \$10 for stories such as Reutter's.) Thereafter, Florida prison officials charged and convicted Reutter of running a business by writing and selling news stories. He was sentenced to 90 days of solitary confinement and forfeiture of 45 days good conduct time.

After *Prison Legal News'* editor arranged for an attorney to handle Reutter's challenge to the disciplinary conviction, Florida prison officials retaliated by barring distribution of incoming issues of the publication to all subscribers in the state's prisons.

In June 2002, the federal courts released Texas prisoners from 29 years of oversight. Unfettered by federal control, Texas prison officials quickly took steps to limit the prisoners' ability to communicate. Previously, Texas prisoners were allowed to purchase typewriters and rudimentary word processors through prison stores. Now such sales are forbidden.

NEW RESTRICTIONS

Previously Texas prisoners who had purchased a word processor or typewriter were allowed to send the unit out for repairs when needed. Now prisoners may send out the unit for repairs but prison rules forbid the repair shop to return the unit to the prisoner.

Previously the 150,000 Texas prisoners were allowed to correspond with other prisoners. Now the new correspondence rules forbid prisoner-to-prisoner correspondence even when the purpose of the correspondence is to formulate relief from oppressive conditions of confinement.

Previously Texas prisoners were allowed to purchase as many postage stamps as needed to send their letters to family and friends and to send their legal papers to their attorneys and the courts. Now new rules drastically limit the number of postage stamps a prison may purchase and possess.

The Reutter and Sorens matters provide clear evidence of the increasingly oppressive mindset of prison administrators. Texas officials, never willing to admit they made a mistake, say they will defend Sorens' disciplinary conviction even if the case goes to court.

—C. C. Simmons

Iran elections

(Continued from page 1)

helicopter. Machine guns killed at least four workers and injured 40.

The fact is that all factions in the Islamic regime are not going to tolerate struggles against the establishment, and people are aware of that. The people's disillusionment with the Islamic Republic is a big step toward change. Now support for the next stage of Iranian struggles for freedom and independence is crucial.

—Alireza

Bush lies and scapegoats to save his presidency

(Continued from page 1)

Bush administration's national security team in January 2001 hatched the invasion of Iraq.

Confident of his ruse during the buildup to the invasion, Bush told the country that "facing clear evidence of peril, we cannot wait for the final proof—the smoking gun—that would come in the form of a mushroom cloud." Three days before hostilities on March 20 of last year, he asserted that "intelligence gathered by this and other governments leaves no doubt that the Iraq regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised." Even the elitist Bush can't expect the public to forget these declarations—so they were reinterpreted. Bad intelligence was supposedly behind those words.

The truth is, according to one former CIA analyst, the decision to invade Iraq did not rest on information from the CIA because no reliable information was available to justify a claim about weapons of mass destruction. In the service of counterrevolution, an agency like the CIA can render whatever "truth" its master wants. So when, in August 2002, Vice President Cheney referred to intelligence from the spring, intelligence that did not exist, his lap dog at the agency George Tenet produced the evidence needed, postdated back to the spring of that year.

Now that weapons of mass destruction have not materialized during a year of occupation, Bush has resorted to broad statements about "weapons of mass destruction-related program activities." These were debunked by David Kay. Upon resigning as Bush's chief weapons inspector in Iraq at the end of January, he expressed his conviction that "there were not large stockpiles of newly produced weapons of mass destruction" nor "the people, the documents or the physical plants that you would expect to find if the production was going on" (*New York Times*, 1/26/04). The administration chose not to slander Kay, but to blame the CIA. Secretary Powell, again in a fit of naiveté, said, after Kay's report, that he would probably not have supported the war had he known the facts. The uproar that followed forced Powell the next day to say that he still believed the war to be justified.

Bush, above all else, does not want Iraq to be an election issue, which is why there is dogged determination to stick to the impossible and to turn over the government to Iraqis by the end of June. (See "Our Life and Times," page 12.) It is also why the commission appointed by Bush to investigate intelligence failures (itself a distortion since his people suppressed the unresponsive intelligence) is not to report until next year, after the election.

ECONOMICS OF FEAR

Amidst the lying, a poll by CNN-Time revealed that only 44% of the people said that Bush could be trusted. Other polls showed that John Kerry would overwhelmingly defeat Bush if the election were held today. But Bush has an election war chest of \$150 million that is just beginning to be tapped to dissemble and obscure. There's a lot to obscure besides the lies about Iraq, for instance about the economy.

Bush's \$2.4 trillion budget has a record \$521 billion in deficits—and this does not include another \$60 billion projected to cover costs of the Iraq war. The trade deficit last year totaled \$490 billion, so huge that the International Monetary Fund warned it could destabilize the entire world economy.

Runaway jobs and automation have led, since Bush took office, to over three million jobs lost, the longest sustained job loss since the Great Depression. His tax plan, which redistributed more wealth to the rich, and low interest rates were, according to Bush, going to add 510,000 new jobs, plus one million more expected during the economic recovery. Instead a paltry 221,000 jobs have been created since June.

Both the job outsourcing and speed-up of the remaining work force raised productivity. The huge and constant layoffs in the last three years, which are still continuing, created such fear in workers that they drove themselves to do the work required, often working 16-hour days. The results are now showing up in medical records with a skyrocketing epidemic of stress and depression cases.

Looking beyond the term of one Republican president, the deep, intractable problems in capitalism are apparent, and those problems show up most harshly in the lives of Black workers and their families. Black family income compared to white fell between 1968 and 2002, from 60% to 58%. And Black unemployment is twice that of white, a wider gap than in 1972. One in nine African Americans cannot find work. Where the gaps are narrowing, the pace of improvement is so slow that parity lies a generation or more away.

Furthermore the working poor (or one in four workers) are staffing the low-wage jobs abounding in the new economy, and they are motivated mostly by fear of

getting fired for being late, staying in the bathroom too long, or missing work to stay home with a sick child. In sum, capitalism is failing to meet people's needs.

A great hue and cry went up when N. Gregory Mankiw, chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, stated that in the long run the outsourcing of jobs, and the misery accompanying it, was a good thing for the economy. But the fact is that it is good for capitalist economics because it serves capital. What must be understood is that capital has but one function—to reproduce itself. It does not care one whit for human beings. It lives for the bottom line, and the bottom line only.

WHO SPEAKS FOR US?

So who speaks for those being ground up by moribund, globalized capitalism? And who is willing to take on Bush's lies? Both Kerry, the likely nominee, and Edwards voted to go to war a year ago, and unfortunately a few weeks into the primary season the field of debate

has been narrowed to a question of who holds the best militarist credentials. Kerry the combat Naval officer in Vietnam has blocked out Kerry the spokesman for Vietnam Veterans Against the War in the 1970s. But the enthusiasm for the Dean anti-war stance among youth as well as the mammoth global anti-war mobilization, also of a year ago, are helping to maintain focus on Bush's lies.

Against the public's unwillingness to forget the lies, channeling the debate has been the responsibility of corporate media, the same press that had a hard time finding the five or six million around the world who marched against the war a year ago. The press's pursuit of Bush's Air National Guard records, to verify whether he

was a Good Ole Boy or a privileged draft dodger, has served as a crafty detour away from a debate on the perils of militarism as a national policy. The handling of the Dean campaign is another example of a prejudicial capitalist press. Following a poor showing in Iowa, the networks repeated ad nauseam the scenes of Dean exhorting his campaign staff rock concert-style. Attached were inferences and commentary alleging instability in the strongest anti-war candidate.

If the media seems right-wing friendly, it shouldn't be surprising. Through media consolidation, out of dozens of outlets, there are now only six, and a simple listing of them will show the unceasing monopolistic trend. They are Viacom-CBS-MTV; Murdoch-Fox TV-Harper Collins-Weekly Standard-New York Post-London Times-Direct TV; GE-NBC-Universal-Vivendi; Time-Warner-CNN-AOL; Disney-ABC-ESPN and the largest, Comcast, which in Philadelphia also owns a baseball team, a stadium and the cable sports channel.

A lock on the press should be troubling. In recent years, national election campaigns have exposed totalitarian impulses. Ominous signs have appeared again. The USA PATRIOT Act paints dissent with the brush of terrorism, and the Attorney General hopes to use it to stifle resistance to Bush's policy of permanent war. Government surveillance and repression of social justice activists has been on the rise.

Federal authorities sought testimonies and records, including names, from an anti-war conference in November put on by students at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa. Twelve people were arrested the next day in an associated, non-violent protest to "Stop the Occupation! Bring the Iowa Guard Home!" at Camp Dodge. The campus chapter of the National Lawyers Guild which hosted the event was targeted as well. A gag order prevented university employees from discussing the investigation. A storm of protest compelled withdrawal of the grand jury subpoenas on Feb. 10.

Ground gained

NEW YORK—The New York State unemployment insurance appeals board was ordered by the state's Labor Department's top lawyer, Jerome Tracy, to reverse a two-year-old ruling. The ruling had barred jobless benefits to gays involved in long-term relationships, who quit their jobs to stay with partners who obtain out-of-state work.

Many believe the policy reversal was influenced by the Empire State Pride Agenda Advocacy Group pressuring Governor Pataki.

Reversal of the policy will award a lesbian \$3,500 who two years ago quit her Rochester job to follow her partner who had landed a "prestigious" computer position in Virginia.

The new policy does require "proof" of a long-term committed relationship such as jointly purchases residences, shared living expenses, bonds and accounts, or life insurance policies.

The litigation director of the ACLU for lesbian and gay rights commended the "progressiveness" of New York State as it "has recognized a broader and more functional definition of family." —Shella G.



"Once again, protesters throughout America are being watched, often by police who are supposed to be investigating terrorism," writes Michelle Goldberg in *Salon.com*. "Civil disobedience...is being treated as terrorism's cousin and the government claims to be justified in infiltrating any meeting where it's even discussed." Joint Terrorism Task Forces have been deployed nationwide to involve local police in spying on citizens (2/11/04, "Outlawing Dissent").

Despite the intimidation, the movement to dump Bush may actually grow into a majority of votes going to Kerry on Nov. 2. But given the history of Republicans from Nixon to Bush, don't count on victory for the Democrats. Missed in the angst of the 2000 Florida election recount was the disenfranchisement of 90,000 registered voters well before election day, under the presumption they were ineligible former felons. In fact, few were, but most were African American or Democrat (6/20/03, Sandeep S. Stwal, *Infurnalpress.com*).

Less well known is a Caltech-MIT Voting Technology Project report that some 1.5 million presidential votes were not recorded in 2000 because of problems with voting machines. Worst of all, the computers and programs of the same high-tech firm with a right-wing management that selectively purged the rolls in Florida will manage lists of registered voters and count their votes in states across the country this November.

CRACKS

Hiding the truth is a kind of lie. Ever since the 1991 Gulf War, the arrival of soldiers killed in combat has been blocked to the media. Protecting grieving families is the excuse, but more and more their pain is turning against the administration.

One grieving mother, Sue Niederer, wrote an open letter to Bush after the death of her son, Seth Dvorin, in Iraq in February. She complained, "Seth died for President Bush's personal vendetta...Bush put us where we should never have been. We're not even in a declared war." She also condemned the Army for recklessly assigning Dvorin to disarm the bomb which killed him (2/12/04, *Hopewell Valley News*). Military Families Speak Out, with mothers' voices prominent, publishes criticism of Bush's invasion of Iraq, coordinates activities and trades information on its website (mfso.org), as does Veterans Against The Iraq War (vaiw.org).

Such sentiments of military family members are of deep concern to Bush, especially since they became public on the eve of the first anniversary of the start of the war. They also pose a challenge to activists involved in the upcoming day of protest on the anniversary of the beginning of the invasion of Iraq, March 20. What kind of a movement can be a unifying force between veterans and their families against the war, the unemployed and working poor, and gay and lesbians?

Scapegoating gays and lesbians by banning marriage means taking away more than 1,000 federal rights, benefits and responsibilities under law, along with hundreds of state-level rights and protections. The government uses the legal recognition of civil marriage to grant these rights, which include Social Security survivor benefits, hospital visitation rights and the ability to inherit a spouse's property without being taxed.

It isn't that gay and lesbian unions are only now becoming visible with the Massachusetts Supreme Court decision legalizing gay marriages and the surge of marriages in San Francisco, Chicago and elsewhere. There are gay and lesbian families in every county of the U.S. and a million children are being raised by gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered—and loving—adults. Indeed being "out" means that a newer concept of freedom was fought for and is in full view. Seeing everydayness in different sexual orientations removes a lever of power from the religious fundamentalists as well. "The more discussion there is and visibility there is for gay people, the better for all the legal injustices that we've experienced," explained a lesbian activist. "As people know us better, there's less discomfort."

The decrepit stage of capitalism is coming into better view by the day. September 11, 2001 undermined the momentum of the movement against anti-globalized capitalism, for decent jobs, and for new human relationships; they have not gone away because the conditions that summons them have only worsened. What's left for the bourgeois leaders is to artfully propagate a social ideology to disarm revolutionary impulses which otherwise are ready fight for new, human relations.

NEWS & LETTERS

Vol. 49, No. 2

MARCH 2004

News & Letters (ISSN 0028-8969) is published 10 times a year, monthly, except bi-monthly January-February and August-September for \$5.00 a year (bulk order or 5 or more, 25¢ each) by *News & Letters*, 36 S. Wabash, Room 1440, Chicago, IL 60603. Telephone (312) 236-0799. Fax (312) 236-0725. Periodical Class postage paid at Chicago, Illinois. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *News & Letters*, 36 S. Wabash, Room 1440, Chicago, IL 60603. Articles may be reprinted verbatim if credited to "News & Letters."

Raya Dunayevskaya

Chairwoman, National Editorial Board (1955-1987)

Charles Denby

Editor (1955-1983)

Olga Domanski, Peter Wermuth, Co-National Organizers, News and Letters Committees. Jim Mills, Managing Editor. Felix Martin, Labor Editor (1983-1999).

759-C

YOUTH

Israel's 'refuseniks' break new ground

by Brown Douglas

When you even try to scratch the surface of the multi-faceted problems—theoretical and practical—of Israeli/Palestine, you are battered with the negativity and hopelessness that surrounds the topic. But in all negativity, there is a hope for forward movement, and that hope is imbedded within the human Subject to overcome the contradictions and prove that "freedom is the essence of man," like Karl Marx said.

1,248 is the magic number. That is the number of Israelis, most of them young, that so far have in one way or another refused to serve the murderous occupation that is wreaking havoc on the hundreds and millions, not to mention lives and homes, of all Israeli and Palestinian society, and the world.

These Israelis have spawned the refusenik movement, a movement that only shows signs of growing stronger despite the repression coming from within the Israeli ruling class, and the fact that most refuseniks find themselves sentenced to military prison for sometimes undetermined sentences.

SELECTIVE REFUSAL

This is a unique movement that can't be put in any specific pre-existing category of conscientious objection. The overwhelming majority of the refuseniks claim no ideology of pacifism or religious belief against military service. One of the most well organized refusenik-support organizations, *Yesh Gvul* (There is a limit!), describes this uniquely Israeli movement that "stresses the right and duty of every soldier to scrutinize the orders he receives, and reject duties he finds morally or politically repugnant."

"Unlike pacifism or conscientious objection, selective refusal recognizes circumstances when force is legitimate, as in defense against external aggression, or in pursuit of national liberation from foreign tyranny. But it rejects the abuse of military might for unworthy ends, such as wars of aggression, or violent subjugation of a civilian population."

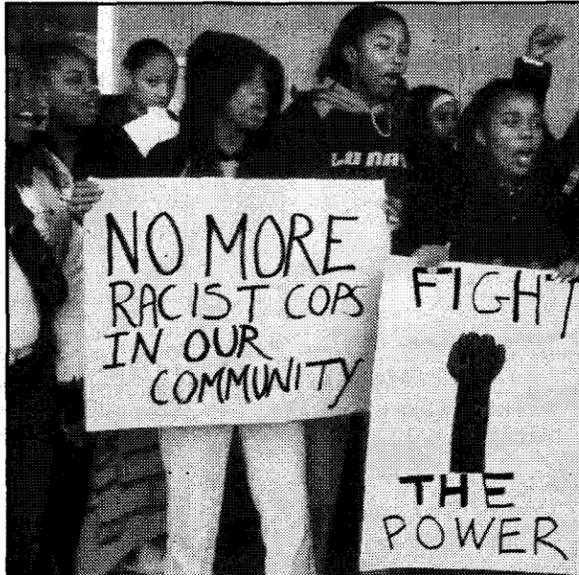
The range of groups is broad, from *Shministim* (high school) youth refuseniks, to self-described feminist women and men of New Profile, to desecrated to refuse which was founded by officers and soldiers (some of them highly decorated) of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). One would be hard pressed to find a sector of Israeli society that doesn't contain an element of resistance to occupation.

DISCUSSION IS BLOCKED

Finding hope in the human Subject isn't very popular these days, especially when you talk about Israel/Palestine. In a recent forum on the University of

Memphis campus two speakers gave their view of the underlying problems blocking the way to peace, and the crowd of about 200 erupted and basically left no room for anyone's opinion to be heard. Only one person tried to ask about forces that could point the way towards a solution. The attempted answer was quickly subsumed by screaming accusations from the audience, reinforcing everyone's fears and disillusionment towards the situation.

Oakland youth protest



News & Letters/Urszula Wislanka

OAKLAND, CAL.—Three students from the School of Social Justice and Community Development, an alternative high school in Oakland, addressed a rally on Feb. 26 calling for an investigation of the police officers who detained them on Feb. 20 during their off-campus lunch. They were illegally searched, threatened with physical violence, and subjected to racial slurs by white officers. When the teachers asked why their students were being detained, officer Glover stated sarcastically "under reasonable suspicion of being Black."

At the rally Arsenio Johnson said he can't walk down the street without being harassed by the police. Derrick Taylor said he felt terrorized by officer McGuinn, who repeatedly searched the genital area of at least one student. John Barclay said he does not feel safe anymore. He said, "We are intelligent, we're trying to do something with our lives. We do not deserve this."
—Urszula Wislanka

NY left institution purges *Capital* teacher

NEW YORK—On Feb. 9, the *Brecht Forum* informed the teacher of its course on "Capital, Marx's *Capital* and Alternatives to Capital," Andrew Kliman, that it does not want him to teach there in the future, and that it "would not object" to his leaving before the current course was over. The expulsion letter came in response to Kliman's and the class' complaint that the *Brecht* substantively rewrote the course announcement without his knowledge or consent. The *Brecht's* version of the announcement hid the fact that the course is a seminar on *Capital* and, without permission, identified him as having written for *News & Letters*.

"Such numerous and important changes are by no means 'purely stylistic,' as the *Brecht* claims," Kliman said. "I have never before had text substantially altered like this without consultation. I've never even heard of such a case before. The *Brecht* itself in intellectual integrity."

Kliman had been teaching for a sixth term at the *Brecht* to an unusually large class of 23. The course has resumed at another location.

Teachers at the *Brecht Forum*, a 28-year-old New York City left educational institution, are not paid. The purged seminar leader is a widely published Marxist-Humanist theorist whose writings have clashed with established "Marxist" economics. He and others have refuted "Marxist" economists' alleged proofs of Marx's internal inconsistency.

What was Kliman's crime that merited expulsion? Only that he and the class objected to the *Brecht* rewriting the course description and Kliman's biography without his knowledge and consent for its catalogue, website, e-mail and flyers. The *Brecht* did this not once, but twice. The rewriting, which disguised the fact that the course was a course on *Capital*, undoubtedly served to reduce enrollment.

Although the *Brecht* claimed the changes were "stylistic," it is known that the administration dislikes Kliman's work and politics. One student reported from personal conversations that leaders of the *Brecht* were "out to get" him. During another discussion of the rewriting problem, an influential person at the *Brecht* complained about Kliman's "idealism" and expressed disagreement with his recently published "Marx's Concept of Intrinsic Value."

The three-term seminar emerged out of Kliman's *Brecht* course on *Capital* Vols. 2 and 3. He and several students co-wrote the new course's description. Acting on its own, the *Brecht* changed the course title to "Four Questions" and removed several points in the descrip-

tion, actions that disguised the fact that the course consists primarily of a close reading of Vol. 1. In addition, Kliman's biography was changed by removing references to his prior *Brecht* teaching, dropping some of his publications, and adding that he had published in *News & Letters*.

When the *Brecht* happened last fall, Kliman objected privately, and the *Brecht* sent out the correct version of the course description to its email list. Yet when the winter publicity appeared, the description had again been modified, and the *Brecht's* rewrite of Kliman's bio again replaced his own. This occurred even though he had asked the *Brecht* not to alter the text without his permission.

Kliman and the class then requested a correction, an apology, and assurance that such re-writing would not occur again. The *Brecht's* executive director, Liz Mestres, not only refused, but announced she has a right to make changes to course announcements without the knowledge and consent of their authors, even when the changes are additions that disclose teachers, supposed political associations. As one student said, "There is little doubt that Mestres made this identification to scare off prospective students."

Brecht administrators faulted Kliman for discussing the matter with the class; they interrupted two class meetings by shouting at him when the matter was being discussed. Several students sent letters to the *Brecht* objecting to its rewriting without permission. Another objected to the idea that such matters should be kept from the class. Kliman's several attempts to discuss the matter with Mestres were rebuffed.

Many class members think the issues at stake are fairly simple: no school has a right to rewrite course descriptions and bios without consultation; the class has a right to present its project as it sees fit; no institution has the right to publish teachers' supposed affiliations without permission. Yet some class members held that a left institution should not be challenged, even if it suppresses other leftists, in order to maintain "unity"—even when changing its practices would not harm the institution in any way.

Another student countered that "Only through reasoned debate can leftists work out differences and problems and figure out how best to fight. That is, the tactic of suppressing dissenting views is not only wrong 'in principle,' but produces backward movement, not forward. By debating and developing ideas now about what non-capitalist means, we are helping the movement go forward toward that goal. The process we are engaged in is the very opposite of suppressing dissent."
—Seminar participants

Why is the reaching out for a new reality and new answers to old questions so many times just a mere footnote? It seems to me that something lacking in the discussion is the idea that humanity can break from an endless cycle of violence, repression, and terror. Because we sometimes blind ourselves to the new, it's common to get caught up in easy solutions, like "it's Zionism's fault" (most of the time not even knowing what exactly Zionism is), or even a non-solution like "it's always been like this and will continue because it's all about religion, or opposing civilizations, or East vs. West." Said another way, we're pretty good at finding things to criticize but not the other side of that coin, pointing towards a solution by using our solidarity and creativity.

The refuseniks are, on the other hand, through their highly spontaneous and idealistic actions, saying that there is a way forward. But saying that all "valid" resistance is embedded in them would be missing the point because, of course, you have a whole generation of Palestinian youth showing broad resistance to occupation. Also not to be ignored are the young resisters from the U.S. and other countries, like Rachel Corrie, who put their lives on the line to put an international face on self-determination.

We can't separate any of these forces from the ideas that are imbedded in the resisters' activity. The second negation, the forward movement that begins by saying no to an oppressive situation is the only way to advance the struggle against all forms of oppression. If we can start using those ideas as the jumping-off point of our solidarity with the refuseniks, maybe we can forge a movement that challenges all of the half-way houses and the "roadmaps" to end up with full, real freedom.

Support the refuseniks at yeshgvul.org.

Chicago Social Forum

CHICAGO—Activists from a variety of movements gathered at a high school here on Jan. 31 to participate in a conference modeled on the series of anti-globalization events known as the World Social Forum. The Chicago event was timed to coincide with the most recent World Social Forum, held in Mumbai, India, the first to be held in a location other than the forum's birthplace of Porto Alegre, Brazil.

The daylong schedule of well-attended discussions on the anti-war movement, the global economy and other topics was primarily organized by the American Friends Service Committee. Plenary sessions featured talks by healthcare activist Dr. Quentin Young, Njoki Njehu of the IMF reform organization 50 Years is Enough Network, and other local speakers.

While several attendees and speakers had just returned from the World Social Forum, it was not clear exactly what relationship the Chicago event had to the Mumbai gathering. This ambiguity may reflect that of the social forum movement as a whole, which, while still possessing some momentum, seems to be struggling to find direction between big NGO politics, electoral participation, and the maneuvering of the radical Left.

The organizers of the Chicago Social Forum hope to continue the discussions begun in January with an ongoing series of smaller meetings, the first of which will discuss public housing in a human rights framework.
—Kevin Michaels

How to contact
NEWS & LETTERS COMMITTEES

CHICAGO 36 S. Wabash, Room 1440 Chicago, IL 60603 Phone 312 236 0799 Fax 312 236 0725 MEETINGS Call for information	FLINT, MI P.O. Box 3384, Flint, MI 48502
DETROIT P.O. Box 27205 Detroit MI 48227 MEETINGS Sundays, 2 p.m. Write for information	NEW YORK P.O. Box 250657 Columbia University Station New York, NY 10025 212 663 3631 MEETINGS Sundays, 7:00 p.m. 39 West 14th St., Room 205 (Identity House, Manhattan)
LOS ANGELES 4475 Sunset Drive-Box 181 Los Angeles, CA 90027 MEETINGS Sundays, 6:00 p.m. Echo Park United Methodist Church 1226 N. Alvarado (North of Sunset, side door)	OAKLAND P.O. Box 3345 Oakland, CA 94609 510 658 1448 banandl@yahoo.com MEETINGS Contact for information
MEMPHIS & MISSISSIPPI 1910 Memphis Ave, PMB 59 Memphis, TN 38104	
INTERNET	
Email nandl@igc.org banandl@yahoo.com (Oakland)	WORLD WIDE WEB www.newsandletters.org
INTERNATIONAL MARXIST-HUMANISTS	
BRITISH BCM Box 3514, London, England WC1N 3XX http://members.aol.com/THEHOBGOBL/masthead	
IRANIAN Anjoman Azadi, 36 S. Wabash #1440, Chicago IL 60603 anjomanazadi@aol.com , www.anjomanazadi.org	

OUR LIFE AND TIMES

by Kevin A. Barry

A year after the U.S. launched its invasion, Iraq's economy is still moribund, the social infrastructure is in even worse shape, and the political situation is uncertain at best. Thirteen years of harsh Western economic sanctions and over three decades of genocidal Ba'athist rule have left the country in ruins. At Baghdad's Central Teaching Hospital for Children, raw sewage still runs through the hallways, a year and tens of billions of dollars later.

It is unclear if the U.S. occupiers will even be able to stabilize the political situation in the near future, let alone start to modernize and develop the country under Western capitalist lines, as neoconservative propagandists had predicted before the war.

Even after the capture of Saddam Hussein, Ba'athists and Sunni Islamists continue to stage armed attacks with impunity throughout much of central Iraq. The horrific slaughter of 140 Shi'ite men, women and children on March 3, the Shi'a holy day of Ashoura, is the most recent example. In mid-February, gunmen chanting "God is great" raided the police station in Falluja, a center of pro-Ba'athist sentiment. They killed 24 U.S.-trained police and freed some 50 prisoners. Two weeks before, terrorists killed over 100 people, many of them key political leaders, in suicide attacks during an Islamic feast day in Erbil, the capital of the Kurdish autonomous zone.

After six months of similar attacks, it is indeed curious that the armed resistance has yet to reveal either its leadership or any political program. In interviews with the Western press, those claiming to be part of it have indicated strong sympathies for the former regime, combined with elements of extremist Sunni Islamism. Neither of these ideologies would have much chance of garnering support, except perhaps in corners of the Sunni triangle.

At the same time, the Shi'ite religious parties and leaders, which tacitly support the U.S. occupation, have put forward conservative Islamist politics. At a minimum, they want to place gender and family law under the control of reactionary religious courts, in some type of Islamic republic, although perhaps a more moderate version than that of neighboring Iran. Behind the

Sudan massacres

In recent weeks, fighting has heated up in the western Darfur region. Self-defined "Arab" militias armed by the central government are attacking villagers defined as "African." Even as it negotiates a peace agreement with the movement for autonomy by the peoples of the predominantly Christian and animist South, the Islamist government is continuing the same genocidal policies in Darfur that it used for decades against the South, at a cost of two million lives.

In Darfur, the heavily armed militias have descended on villages, massacring men, raping women, and seizing livestock. In the past year, some 3,000 Darfur residents have been killed, 670,000 internally displaced, and 100,000 driven across the border into Chad. In contrast to the war in the South, that in Darfur has been directed by Muslims against their co-religionists from a different ethno-linguistic group, who have dared to demand a measure of self-rule. "You Blacks, we're going to exterminate you," has been the racist battle cry of the "Arab" militias.

While the people of Darfur have received some support from neighboring Chad and from international human rights groups, their plight has been ignored in the U.S.-sponsored peace negotiations between North and South. The U.S. is extremely anxious to wind up these negotiations, not the least because the multinationals are interested in exploiting Sudan's oil.

utterly justifiable demand for early elections lies the specter of an Islamist victory, at least in the vast Shi'ite areas of the South.

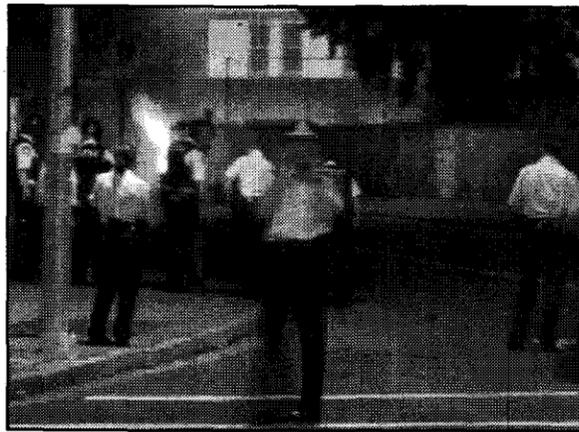
Because the regime was toppled by outside intervention rather than an internally generated revolution, because Ba'athist repression crushed all political parties leaving only the mosque standing, and because Shi'ite Islamists could organize across the border in Iran, these Islamist parties have gained much power over the past year. In Basra, in addition to pressuring women to veil, they have begun to forbid women from even going onto the streets unaccompanied by a male relative. The sale of alcohol has been eliminated by forms of intimidation including assassination.

Secular, feminist, and leftist groups have continued to take advantage of the somewhat greater freedoms

made available by the old regime's collapse. The Kurds have developed a largely secular political culture in northern Iraq. However, their efforts to retain autonomy and to return to oil-rich Kirkuk, ethnically "cleansed" of Kurds by Hussein, have raised the specter of ethnic conflict. The U.S. has responded by pressuring the Kurds to give up their hard-won gains.

Some of the moderate leftist and liberal parties like the Communist Party have sought to form a common electoral front with the two main Kurdish parties, as a democratic secular alternative to the Shi'ite Islamists. As reported in previous issues, revolutionary leftist groups like the Worker Communist Party have also come onto the scene, as have feminist and labor groups. Some 120 new newspapers and magazines have begun to appear, whether in Arabic, Kurdish, or English. It is here, not in the nihilistic destructiveness of the armed resistance, not in the authoritarian politics of Shi'ite Islamism, and not in the plans of the U.S. occupiers, that the possibility of a humanist future lies.

Sydney cop brutality



Police swarmed over the Redfern area of Sydney, Australia after aboriginal youth protested the death of 17-year-old Thomas Hickey, Feb. 14. He was impaled on a fence while being harassed by police as he rode his bicycle.

Dominican strike

A 48-hour general strike paralyzed the Dominican Republic on Jan. 28-29. Organized by groups linked to the Marxist Left, but supported by the more established Dominican Liberation Party (PLD) and even sections of the business community, the strikers called for a moratorium on payment of the national debt and the rescinding of new taxes on gasoline and other basic commodities.

More generally, the strike targeted President Hipolito Mejia, who has presided over a deep economic crisis. The price of rice has doubled, as has the national debt, while inflation has cut the buying power of the masses by 50%.

All of this was exacerbated by the collapse of Banco Intercontinental in April. The government, which had corrupt ties to this bank, decided to guarantee all deposits. Most of this \$2.2 billion payout, two-thirds of the annual state budget, benefited some 80 very wealthy individuals. In addition, Mejia, although he calls himself a social democrat, supported the U.S. war in Iraq. Mejia has also allowed elements of the former Haitian military and death squads to establish bases from which to attack the former Aristide government.

In January, as with an earlier general strike last November, the government responded with violence, killing at least eight people. Among the dead was Clemente Reynoso, the 24-year-old leader of New Alternative, a leftist party. Another leftist, Joselito Vasquez Castro, also 24, was also shot to death. A number of other leftist leaders were arrested.

Morocco law reforms

In January, the Moroccan parliament approved far-reaching changes in the *mudawana* (family law), granting major new rights to women: 1) At age 18, women will attain legal autonomy, as against the old law putting them under the "guardianship" of their fathers or husbands. 2) Easy male divorce by repudiation and polygamy will become extremely difficult. 3) The legal marriage age for women will be raised from 15 to 18. 4) Wives will now have joint legal responsibility in family matters, rather than being compelled to "obey" their husbands. 5) In cases of separation or divorce, the wife (not as formerly, the husband) will become the presumptive legal guardian of the children.

Despite their limited character, these changes are truly historic. Not since 1956, when Tunisia adopted a secular family code, has an Arab country enacted such an egalitarian family law. The new Moroccan law is the product of two sets of pressures. At the grassroots level, feminist groups such as Springtime of Equality have been campaigning for such a law since 1993, when they gathered a million signatures. In 2000, thousands demonstrated in favor of women's equality, but this was answered by an even larger anti-feminist demonstration by Islamists.

However the May 2003 terrorist attacks on Moroccan civilians by Islamist extremists put Islamist groups on the defensive. At the level of ruling class politics, King Muhammad VI, frightened by these attacks and under pressure from the U.S. and France, overcame his hesitations. He decided to back the new law, both to undermine Islamist extremism and to gain favor among the Western powers.

British job protest

In the largest public sector job action in over a decade, 100,000 British government workers struck for 48 hours on Feb. 16-17, shutting down many government offices, especially in the social services sector. At least 10,000 government workers receive only \$19,000 per year. To survive, many have to apply for the very social benefits they administer.

Tony Blair's neo-liberal government offered almost nothing on wages, but wants to establish a new "evaluation" system for workers. In a move reminiscent of Margaret Thatcher, the government attempted to intimidate workers by a strategic leak to the *Financial Times* on the day the strike began. According to the newspaper story, the government was considering a "reform" of the civil service that would eliminate 80,000 jobs.

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.