

# NEWS & LETTERS

"Human power is its own end"—Karl Marx

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## WORKSHOP TALKS

### Bush's disaster plan: how to create them

by Htun Lin

A recent cover of *Business Week* featured the iconic image of World War II's "Rosie the Riveter" donning a nurse's cap to signify that, while manufacturing has added zero jobs since 2001, health care has added 1.7 million. The untold part of the story is the struggle between workers and business in this growing sector.

As we have reported over the years, nurses in the California Nurses Association (CNA) have engaged in a protracted battle against health care restructuring (read commodification) and for quality care. Most recently, the nurses said they have learned from the experience of the government's total failure to respond to Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita.

Nurses who went to help in the Gulf region were appalled by the government agencies' inability to coordinate the delivery of urgent care (many were turned away, even as people were dying). But they were also appalled that much of the care needed was for chronic conditions neglected over the years such as diabetes and kidney failure.

Health care workers have started volunteer organizations such as Remote Area Medical, which conducts free health fairs in rural areas. They say they are overwhelmed by similar chronic problems all over the country, which they see as an indictment of the whole health care industry.

On Aug. 28, CNA launched a new initiative to orga-

Continued on page 3

## BLACK/RED VIEW

### Power of Black blood

by John Alan

Recently a hacker broke into California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's computer. The public found out that the governor attributed the passionate temperament of Cubans and Puerto Ricans to the fact that they have a combination of Black blood and Latino blood.

The governor's concept of this blood mixture is an indication of the racism that lies just below the surface in the political world. His comment was made because of a conflict with a Latina legislator, state Assemblywoman Bonnie Garcia. "I mean Cuban, Puerto-Rican, they are all very hot," were his words. "They have the, you know, part of the Black blood in them and part of the Latino blood in them that together makes it."

#### DEEPER THAN POLITICS

In no way does it describe the differences and conflicts the governor has with Latinos and African Americans. It is not their blood mixing that is his problem. Most Latinos and African Americans aren't giving Schwarzenegger political support in his effort to get reelected.

The concept of race used against Latinos and African Americans is not biological but is socially determined and has deep historical roots. Capitalism has always wanted Latinos and African Americans for their labor, and in the process diminished their status as full human beings.

The same is true today when capitalism greatly desires immigrant labor, especially from Latin America, but without affording it rights.

The governor's comments reflect a view that someone can put down Latinos by referring to their Black blood. This is an insult to African Americans. It wouldn't necessarily play the same way in Latin America.

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## LEAD-EDITORIAL

### THE MIDDLE EAST AND WORLD POLITICS

# In the aftermath of Israel's war in Lebanon

by Peter Hudis

The aftermath of Israel's war against Lebanon has transformed not only the Middle East but also world politics. The sharpest expression of this is that Iran—the backer of the war's victor, Lebanon's right-wing Hezbollah—has succeeded in reasserting its power in the Middle East at U.S. expense.

Whereas a few months ago the Bush administration insisted that it would get the UN to impose sanctions against Iran if it didn't suspend its uranium enrichment program, Iran has so far succeeded in avoiding sanctions by making use of the growing differences between the U.S. and other nations on the UN Security Council. Faced with growing reluctance on the part of Russia and China and even its European allies to agree to sanctions, the administration suddenly announced in mid-September that it is willing to defer its drive for sanctions if Iran suspends uranium enrichment for two months.

One report noted, "The apparent shift in the American stance reflects the hard realities that there are few good options on Iran" at a moment when Iran's stature has been raised in the region in the aftermath of Israel's debacle in Lebanon (Helene Cooper, "Rice Indicates Shift in Stance on Iran Sanctions," *New York Times*, 9/12/06).

#### RESULTS OF LEBANON WAR

Today's world certainly looks very different than before Israel's invasion of Lebanon in mid-July.

Israel dropped a greater tonnage of bombs on Lebanon in its four-week campaign than during its entire 1982 invasion of that country. Its effort to destroy Lebanon's infrastructure and terrorize its population included dropping 1,800 cluster bombs, containing over 1.2 million bomblets—40% of which failed to explode and will threaten the lives of Lebanese civilians for years to come. Its campaign led to the deaths of over a thousand civilians, while a quarter of the nation's populace became homeless.

Despite this massive onslaught, Israel failed to achieve a single tactical or strategic goal. It failed to destroy or dismember Hezbollah. It failed to get the international community to rein in Hezbollah. The UN resolution that ended the fighting provides no mechanism for disarming it, despite the fact that the U.S. had initially insisted on such disarmament as a precondition of any ceasefire.

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was forced

## Delphi UAW members fight buyout concessions

#### REMEMBER THEIR WORDS

**May 18, 2006.** The union's shop-chairman claimed that Delphi will not hire temporary employees to replace older workers taking the Special Attrition Program (SAP) [an attrition plan offering early retirement to Delphi's 24,000 UAW workers-Ed]. I argued how this can be true if the SAP language clearly states that Delphi can hire temporary employees to fill needs?

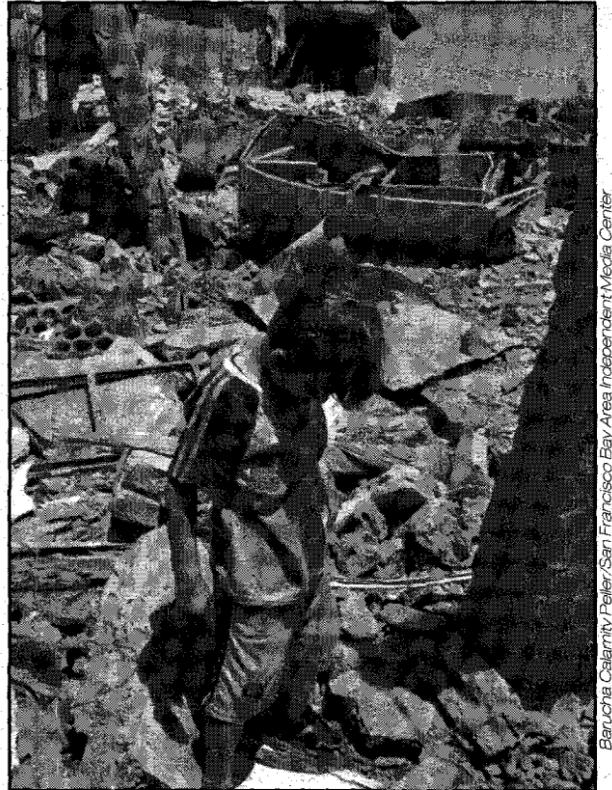
Now in September 2006 there are hundreds of temporary employees who should not only be protected and made full-time, but should be given 100% UAW representation like the rest of us, and above all they should all be immediately given equal top pay like the rest of the membership as according to our UAW constitution. Where is the Local 292 leadership now?

**March 25, 2006.** The shop-chairman responded to a handbill of ours by saying the membership should never be allowed to vote on the SAP, as Soldiers of Solidarity rallied for last summer. He stated, "The UAW has nothing to do with the SAP."

Yet as we argued, clearly the UAW international negotiated the agreement and it was supported by the Local 292 caucus on the shop floor.

**April 11, 2006.** The shop-chairman and the president of Local 292 signed a handbill with top Delphi brass in Kokomo saying that "The UAW and Delphi have approved the Special Attrition Program."

The next day they hosted a joint question and answer session with management at our own union hall, resulting in labor relation representatives and upper plant management standing behind a UAW podium conducting a union meeting.



Barucha Celsor/Pepper/San Francisco Bay Area Independent Media Center

#### After Israeli attack on Shaara in southern Lebanon

to acknowledge in late August, "I don't think there is an expectation that this UN force is going to physically disarm Hezbollah. You have to...hope that some people will lay down their arms voluntarily." Hezbollah, of course, has no such intention.

Israel's destruction of Lebanese cities and infrastructure has only succeeded in greatly strengthening Hezbollah, which is now distributing hundreds of millions of dollars in reconstruction aid to stricken communities, thanks to the largess of its main sponsor, Iran. As a result of its stiff resistance to Israel, Hezbollah has come out of the war as the most powerful political force in Lebanon.

This is a changed situation. Only a year ago Hezbol-

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#### CRIME FOR CRIME

The dominoes are falling now. It's crime for crime.

Without a militant rank and file, democracy is nothing but a closet to hang slogans in. The Concession Caucus scrapped the charade at Delphi. There won't be any more Local 262 Union elections—until further notice.

All vacated positions will be filled by appointment. It's not pretty but it's lean, and it sheds more light than shadow on bargaining behind the scenes. All a rep really represents is a transfer of power from the many to the few. We can vote for the best, the brightest, and the toughest, but if we aren't willing to fight the boss ourselves, we may as well give him the keys to our house. Delphi didn't bust the union. It self-destructed.

Thanks to the SAP, union members chose to vacate. Now temps dominate the workforce. By January the only "old union" members left will be rehired retirees, the remedial affect of whom will be less than a crust of bread over a wound. Like the son of a curse, Delphi Chairman and CEO Steve Miller got more than he bargained for. A pretty theory for an ugly fact.

The worst is yet to come. Consumers are driving cars worth less than their loans. Home owners hold more debt than equity. Wages are dropping like bombs. We can't afford to pretend the system works anymore.

The Concession Caucus responded to the crisis by whipsawing locals, promoting competition between workers, and pushing two-tier wage schemes that sacrifice the next generation for a pimp's promise. No one questions for whom the bell tolls. The dominoes are falling now. It's crime for crime.

—Todd M. Jordan, Delphi Workers Committee, Kokomo, Ind.

For more, see [www.futureoftheunion.com](http://www.futureoftheunion.com).

# Iran repression hits women, society

The continuing nuclear standoff between Iran and the U.S. has helped the Iranian government to further crack down on the democratic opposition within Iran. Several recent developments signal this ominous trend.

This crackdown comes after attacks have been waged upon women's protests and periodic workers' strikes. Just a few months ago, on June 12, the regime unleashed its women's police brigade on a peaceful women's demonstration which demanded basic civil rights. Prior to that it had crushed a transit workers' work stoppage in December and had arrested its leader Mansoor Osanloo. Osanloo was just recently released on Aug. 10. Currently faced with a strike of 3,000 automobile workers, the government has unveiled draconian anti-labor legislation.

Over the past few weeks, several developments signal a deepening of an ominous trend.

## SHARGH SHUTTERED

The closure of the most popular reformist daily, *Shargh*, on Sept. 11 for publishing a cartoon which ridiculed Ahmadinejad: *Shargh* had become an exciting forum for discussing ideas of West and East, ranging from its discussions of Habermas, Kant, Adorno, Marx to its yearlong series on lessons of the 1906-11 Iranian Constitutional Revolution, as well as its continuing effort to present the possibility of reinterpreting Islam to reconcile it with a secular society.

*Shargh* had also clearly opposed Ahmadinejad's anti-Semitism. Soon after Ahmadinejad's December 2005 speech in which he denied the Holocaust as a fact, *Shargh* had reprinted an interview with the leading prosecutor of the Nuremberg trials (from *der Spiegel*) and had devoted several articles to Hannah Arendt's critique of authoritarianism.

## ACADEMIC STIFLING

Ahmadinejad's call for the removal of liberal and secular university lecturers: This call threatens to destroy the limited openings for discussion and debate that had come to exist on some university campuses during the past few years.

## JAHANBEGLOO SILENCED

The "voluntary" confession of the prominent French-educated Iranian philosopher Ramin Jahanbegloo on August 31 after his conditional release from prison. Jahanbegloo, who is most interested in the ideas of Jurgen Habermas and Richard Rorty, had been arrested at Tehran airport in late April as he was about to embark on a trip to India where he was planning to study Gandhi's nonviolent philosophy.

Immediately after his release from prison, Jahanbegloo went to the office of the Iranian Student News Agency for an interview in which he "admitted" to having been "unknowingly used" by the "agents of U.S. Imperialism and Zionism" who arranged for him to receive a grant from the U.S. Marshall Fund to compare the Iranian democratic opposition to the one in Eastern Europe in the 1980s. He has now vowed to stop engaging in politics and wishes only to return to his research projects.

## SHIRIN EBADI BANNED

The government's declaration in early August that Shirin Ebadi's Center for Defense of Human Rights in

Tehran is illegal: The Islamic Republic has threatened to arrest Ebadi and her co-workers unless the Center is shut down.

Shirin Ebadi has vowed to fight this ruling "as long as I am alive." This center is a non-governmental organization and a member of the International Federation for Human Rights. It defends political prisoners pro bono and provides financial and emotional support for their families.

One prominent student political activist, Akbar Mohammadi, recently died in prison after a long hunger strike and years of torture. Another, Ahmad Batebi, is on a hunger strike now and on the verge of death from starvation and the effects of several years of torture. Both were arrested in 1999 after a wave of student demonstrations.

The democratic opposition movement within Iran desperately needs support from the grassroots international community at the moment. Continuing U.S. threats against Iran, the U.S. occupation of Iraq and Israel's devastating attacks on Lebanon and Gaza have strengthened religious fundamentalists in the region.

—Iranian women's liberationist

## NOW rallies for equal marriage



Hundreds of members of the National Organization for Women staged an Equal Marriage Rally in Albany, N.Y., July 23, at the state capital steps to protest a New York court's recent ruling prohibiting marriage for same-sex couples. They were part of the over 700 who attended the 40th anniversary Conference of NOW and the young feminist summit.

## Pakistani women fight abuse

Dr. Shazia Khalid, exiled from Pakistan for her attempts to prosecute her rapist, recently toured the U.S. for the Asian-American Network Against Abuse of Human Rights. Below are excerpts from her speech.

I was a doctor employed by Pakistan Petroleum Limited, a big energy company which is partly owned by the government, in Sui Field Hospital in a remote area of Baluchistan. The women of Sui are completely unaware of their rights. Education and healthcare facilities are almost nonexistent. Almost every woman has 10 to 15 children who are barefoot and inadequately dressed due to poverty.

I was a general practitioner working with women and children. I am distressed that today even those who are working to save the lives of the poor and helpless are subjected to this kind of indignity.

I was raped on the night of Jan. 2, 2005. Despite the presence of many security guards in the compound where I lived, I was not given protection. This incident ruined my whole life. My husband's and my careers have been destroyed. The most distressing part of this ordeal is that the government did not give me justice; rather they made me leave the country. Because of this I have been forced into a life of exile without my family and my son.

Pakistan Petroleum Limited Company...not only refused to assist me, they also concealed and mishandled the evidence in my case. After the rape and violence inflicted upon me, I was badly injured and could not walk, but no one was sympathetic towards me or assisted me through this ordeal. I was not given any medical treatment...they gave me sedatives and flew me to a psychiatric hospital in Karachi. After this I had to confront so many injustices that I lost faith in life and people. I attempted suicide but my husband and my family were on my side and gave me the strength to carry on. And as a result I am here to tell you my story. My case has been politicized and highly profiled, but

despite this I have not been given justice. Think of the thousands of women who are killed and burnt alive in Pakistan and whose cases are never even reported...silenced by death or by the feudal culture in many parts of Pakistan.

I want to work on women's rights and to encourage Pakistani women to come forward for their rights. I am working with Aurat Foundation in Pakistan to open a crisis centre in the Lyari area of Karachi, where women victims of violence will be given free legal aid, healthcare and counseling services so that women's poverty is not an impediment to justice and that women get the services they need to overcome their trauma and proceed with their lives.

I want Pakistan to be a model of justice and equality for the whole world. I want every Pakistani woman to be able to stand up tall and say, "Yes, in our country women are treated as equal and given justice." This is the dream I have and I am sure it is also the wish of every Pakistani woman. (See "Protest for human rights in Pakistan," page 8).



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## WOMEN WORLDWIDE

by Mary Jo Grey

Because of protests from thousands of women's rights and human rights organizations and activists around the world, the Iranian government stopped the stoning execution of Ashraf Kolhari—at least for now. The mother of four faced this brutal death after being convicted of adultery. Kolhari's lawyer, Shadi Sadr, urged activists to remain vigilant—both because Kolhari's future is not completely clear and because stoning is still legal in Iran. During the same week, the Iranian government declared the Defender of Human Rights Center illegal and threatened to shut it down and arrest its workers. Headed by Nobel Peace Prize winner Shirin Abadi, the center reports human rights violations in Iran, defends political prisoners at no charge, and supports their families.

A sit-in in September by members of Iraq Veterans Against the War, Veterans for Peace, and other anti-war activists resulted in a pledge from Oregon Democratic Congressman Peter DiFazio to initiate a Congressional investigation into the treatment of Army Specialist Suzanne Swift. She was arrested and faces court martial and imprisonment for refusing to report for a second tour of duty in Iraq, after the military ignored her reports of sexual harassment and rape there by three of her commanding officers (see August-September *N&L*).

An Amnesty International (AI) report charges Guatemalan authorities with a "wholly insufficient" response to the brutal murders of more than 2,200 women and girls since 2001. Up to 70% of the killings were not even investigated, and no arrests were made in 97% of the cases. The number of killings has risen for the fourth consecutive year. According to Larry Cox, AI-USA executive director, "The Guatemalan government bears the ultimate responsibility for the safety of Guatemalan women."

## Tewa women vs nukes

**Tewa Pueblos, N.M.**—Tewa Women United is an indigenous women's organization from the northern pueblos of New Mexico. Our mission is to promote wellness of mind, heart and spirit in our sovereign nation communities. Presently, we are concerned about the loss of community members from cancers that are rare or attributable to the nuclear industry, linked to radioactive materials and chemicals used when producing war weaponry.

We are near Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), an active war weapons research, development and production site. The laboratory created the first atomic bomb around 1943 in our sacred mountain areas. They were supposed to return the lands after the war. They did not admit they were still creating new nuclear weapons until five or six years ago. We have been getting reports that our surface water, groundwater, air and land are contaminated, and they still want to expand storage for nuclear waste. Our children and our children's children are getting leukemia, skin rashes, lung illness, reproductive ailments: ovarian, prostate, breast, thyroid cancers. We say no more harming us and our Mother Earth.

We were against 3nuclear weapons then and even more now. The for-profit business, Los Alamos National Laboratory Securities, plans, with less federal oversight, to upgrade their germ warfare testing, which means they will be using live organisms.

We appealed to the New Mexico Environmental Department and were able to stop open burning of depleted uranium. Another operation they merely changed to be done under another permitting system. But as Indigenous nation women we will not be silent. Our whole genetic pool is at stake again.

Tewa Women United, with five other organizations, has filed notice of intent to sue over violations of the Clean Water Act. There are more than 1,405 documented contaminated sites at LANL, and every time it rains or snows, these contaminants move through our canyons and springs to the Rio Grande. Our land borders the laboratory facility, which sits on a plateau. The surface water comes into our drinking and irrigation water. Los Alamos sits on the rim of an active volcano. The Rio Grande is about eight miles away, on an active fault line. All of the Southwest should be concerned. At our Annual Gathering for Mother EARTH on Sept. 23-24, we welcomed all to seek peace, speak the truth and find holistic ways to heal from the trauma of violence.

People need to hear the truth of how the U.S. came into existence. We indigenous peoples have borne the brunt of genocidal practices of the colonizers. Our San Ildefonso population of about 5,000 in the early 1500s dwindled down to 99 in the early 1900s. The cruel and racist practices to get the land and do away with land-based people, is the means used by a culture of violence. I am hoping the U.S. will be transformed to a culture of peace without nuclear industry, without perpetrator mentality, but with love for all relations in our native lands and in the world. We are a global family. Each and every one of us deserves to be happy, healthy and spiritually connected.

—Wan Povi, a Tewa women from New Mexico

## Unity in Detroit teachers' strike

**DETROIT**—Unity was strong among the nearly 10,000 members of the Detroit Federation of Teachers on strike. The 16-day strike ended Sept. 13, allowing the Detroit Public Schools to re-open the next day. A history of betrayal by the Board of Education and Superintendent William Coleman after last year's concessions contract galvanized teachers' determination.

In 2005, teachers had accepted a freeze in wages and step increases and loaned the Board five days of paid time. Then in March of 2006 the administrators and principals received 10-15% raises. But just days before school was to start the Board demanded a 5% pay cut, plus co-pays of up to 20% for health benefits, citing the need to save \$88 million dollars from teacher salaries.

Coleman ordered the schools to open as scheduled on Sept. 5, using support staff and volunteers. Teachers on the picket lines were asking if all those people had been fingerprinted, as teachers are required to do. But only about 20,000 students out of 130,000 attended, and we heard that not much was done. At my school even the parents going into the building told us they hoped we would win; we deserved it.

The next day, Coleman closed the schools and laid off custodians, lunch aides and secretaries. Meanwhile, the Board kept going to court to gain injunctive relief, citing "irreparable harm" to the District as parents enrolled their children in neighboring suburban schools and charter schools.

**Judge Susan Borman repeatedly ordered them back to the bargaining table, but on Sept. 8 she reluctantly issued a back-to-work order. The Detroit Federation of Teachers was ordered to call a membership meeting to read us the order.**

As soon as DFT President Janna Garrison began to read the order, the entire membership rose to our feet chanting "No contract! No work!" As we left the meeting it was clear that the overwhelming majority would defy the order. People were angry about the waste, cronyism and mismanagement of the Board—while

school buildings crumble and teachers buy toilet paper, the Detroit Board of Education spends 17% for administration while the average school district spends 10.5%.

On Sept. 11 it was clear that schools could not re-open. Motorists still honked in support of the pickets, and only 8% of the DFT members crossed. Finally Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick stepped in. After an all-night bargaining session, a tentative contract was reached. We were asked to vote on returning to work under the old contract while the formal ratification takes place. There was vigorous debate—a number of teachers close to retirement and some younger teachers wanted to hold out, but the majority voted to return.

**The new agreement freezes our wages with a modest increase in the second and third years, lowers our health care co-pay to 10% and adds liability representation, but it doesn't address working conditions.**

A group of teachers and supporters, the "Strike to Win" Committee, opposed the new agreement. But teachers I spoke with felt that to hold out longer would not have gained us anything more. Strike to Win argues that "we are the leaders of the new, integrated civil rights movement." Correctly asking "Why should the young people of Detroit receive anything less than those of the wealthy suburbs, they call for students and teachers to jointly fight for class size cuts.

Detroit Public Schools have been losing 10,000 students per year. There is still a widely held belief that charter schools are a better choice. And our strike takes place in the context of General Motors restructuring, Delphi's bankruptcy, and now Ford Motor Company's announcement of major plant closings and layoffs in the thousands. Northwest Airlines flight attendants were denied the right to strike by a judge, and have taken 21% pay cuts.

Rather than ignoring the issues of working conditions, which directly affect the quality of student education, now is the time to start building solidarity with the community and other unions in our region in support of meaningful changes for teachers and our students.

—Susan

## Protest at Delphi

**TROY, MICH.**—Approximately 55 people demonstrated in front of the headquarters of Delphi here on Aug. 11. A UAW dissident group, "Soldiers of Solidarity," organized the demonstration. Delphi, the auto parts maker spun off from General Motors, is in a campus-like setting in Troy, a Detroit suburb—it was not possible to get closer than the sidewalk, hundreds of yards from the building.

People came from as far away as Indiana, and there was a charter bus from Flint, which has a large Delphi plant. The demonstrators were Delphi workers and their supporters, including News and Letters Committees.

The workers were concerned about the proposals for restoring bankrupt Delphi to profitability: slashing wages, benefits and pensions, and plant closings. Signs with slogans attacked both Delphi management and the UAW bureaucracy, such as "Fund Pensions Not Fraud" and "No More Sellouts."

It goes without saying that a small number of Delphi workers and their supporters will not stop Delphi or its bankruptcy judge from what they are doing. What they did show was that the passion and reason of workers are very much alive.

This is all the more apparent when workers such as those in Soldiers of Solidarity are not fatalistically accepting a bad situation but are actively fighting against capitalism in its death throes. In fact, Delphi workers are seriously talking about a strike in spite of the claims of Delphi and General Motors that this will ruin both companies.

—Flint supporter

## Domestic work rights

**NEW YORK**—At a "Summit on Domestic Work in New York" held Sept. 8, domestic workers and their allies enlisted support for domestic workers to enact a state "domestic workers' bill of rights" for this largely unprotected workforce. Most federal labor laws exempt domestic workers.

There are about 200,000 housekeepers and nannies in New York State, nearly all of them women of color and most of them immigrants. Their isolation in individual homes adds to their exploitation and abuse.

A survey released by Domestic Workers United in July found that over a quarter of domestic workers have earnings below the poverty line, that most work 10 to 20 hours of overtime a week but only a third are paid for it, and that 90% have no health benefits.

### INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPANTS

The workers organizations involved in the "bill of rights" campaign are mostly ethnically based—South Asian, Caribbean, African, Latino and others. The bill in the state legislature would require a minimum wage of \$14 an hour, or \$16 if health insurance is not provided. It would require time and a half pay for overtime, one day off a week, and vacations, holidays, and other benefits. Although the bill has the support of some politicians and labor unions, there is little chance of it becoming law any time soon.

A domestic worker from Long Island described organizing a workers' co-op, enabling women to enforce the few legal rights they have. They recently won a county law, like New York City's, requiring employers to state in writing that they will comply with existing law.

One Latina worker described her live-in job caring for newborn babies day and night for months without a break. "I was so sleep-deprived, I forgot that I was a person," she said. When she got sick, she had no insurance, and was required to make up the days she took off. "Domestic work is an attack on the dignity of workers," she concluded.

### FIGHTING THE LIES

A domestic worker turned organizer described a woman who paid an agency in the Philippines \$5,000 on the promise of a white collar job. When she arrived in the U.S. she was told she would receive \$300 a week for domestic work instead. She was actually given \$100 a week and inadequate food for seven-day work weeks.

Amy Sugimori of the National Employment Law Project encouraged the campaign for a one-industry state law, likening it to California's agricultural laws, passed in response to union organizing in the 1970s and '80s, and to current campaigns by day laborers.

Joycelyn Campbell, a nanny and organizer for Domestic Workers United, concluded the conference: "For too long, the employers and government have underestimated the intelligence of domestic workers. They've called us stupid or ignorant. Now we are going to fight until we win."

—Anne Jaclard

## WORKSHOP TALKS

Continued from page 1

nize nurses nationwide to respond, on the model of Doctors Without Borders, any time a disaster strikes. Taking the initiative through their own voluntary association, nurses announced the creation of Registered Nurses Response Network.

In effect they were saying "Let's get real" about providing health care in emergencies. The nurses' effort is a moment in the crucial opposition singled out by Karl Marx in *Capital*, the irreconcilable contradiction between the "despotic plan of capital" and the plan of freely associated workers.

### PITTING WORKER AGAINST WORKER

Not only can't the government be counted on to respond in a disaster, but, especially under Bush, it is much more actively intervening to enforce that "despotic plan of capital." They are going after strong unions, like the one the nurses have created, trying to undercut workers' collective power. Under a ruling expected from the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), many workers could now be labeled supervisors and thus ineligible for union membership.

Until now, the definition of a supervisor, under the 1935 National Labor Relations Act, meant one who has the power to hire or fire. The new interpretation would classify as a supervisor anyone who delegates tasks.

The new ruling could affect an estimated 843,000 registered nurses and 123,000 licensed practical nurses, for whom advising, directing, training and delegating are routine. It could affect 180,700 cooks, 167,000 secretaries, and tens of thousands of cashiers, electricians, bank tellers, repairmen and pharmacists who are currently in unions.

It is we as workers who actually manage the workplace, get the job done, keep things moving, even as the capitalist controls the money and personifies capital's need for accumulation at our expense.

Every worker knows firsthand what Marx was talking about in *Capital*, in the section on "Cooperation": that workers guide and direct themselves in a cooperative fashion. In fact, that's what really happens when the capitalist brings many workers into one shop and into one cooperative social workforce.

### WORKERS' OWN COOPERATION

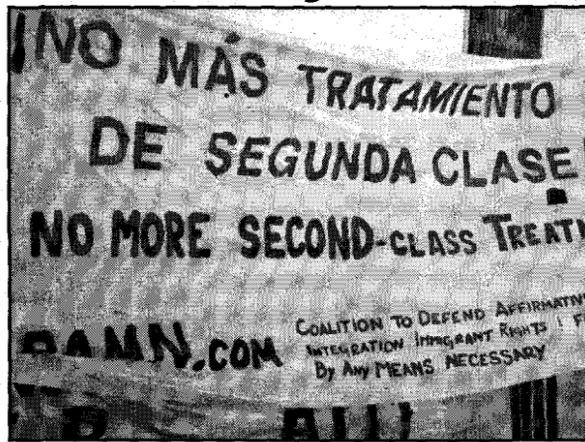
The point is that, while capital brings them together, the cooperation is inherent in labor. It is that natural cooperation which inherent usurps and expropriates towards its purpose of extracting more surplus value.

Many unions play management's game and promote an active co-operation. In my shop they initiated a Labor-Management-Partnership, whose obsession is "teamwork," cooperation that promotes corporate bottom-line goals. With the expected NLRB ruling, any team leader may no longer be part of the union.

We workers already knew what Marx wrote in *Capital*, that it is the workers who can manage themselves in direct social cooperation. This direct social cooperation inevitably comes into an irreconcilable conflict with capital's "despotic plan."

Overcoming this opposition depends on the reality of value production being totally replaced by the reality of concrete labor that shapes workers' own freely associated initiatives. Registered Nurses Response Network provides a glimpse of an aspect what that reality may look like.

## Labor Day march



**Oakland, Cal.**—Young people predominated as several thousand demonstrators at peak during the 8.5 mile march to downtown here for immigrant rights on Labor Day.

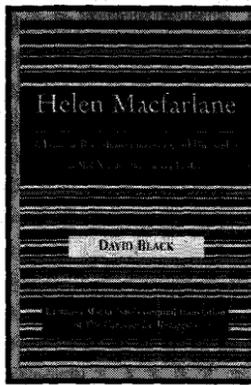
## Activist nurse wins

Nurse and union activist Debra Moore has been reinstated to her job at Eastern State Hospital in Williamsburg, Va. with full back pay and sick leave after being unjustly fired last spring. Hospital administrators were punishing her for using her rights under the Family and Medical Leave Act and for speaking out against a shortage of nurses that made it dangerous for both patients and employees (See June-July N&L).

The hearing officer said Moore was treated differently when she was prevented from voluntarily switching hours with other nurses due to child care considerations, even though she was working 40-48 hours a week. The union thanked hospital employees and supporters from across the state who rallied to win in a right-to-work state like Virginia.

You can get more information by going to: <http://www.vaue160.org/union/modules/wfsection/article.php?articleid=170>,

—Information from Chris Townsend, UE



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FROM THE WRITINGS OF  
**RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA**

**EDITOR'S NOTE**

This November marks the 50th anniversary of one of the most important revolutions in history—the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. In revolting against the Russian forces that had occupied the country since 1945, the Hungarian revolutionaries organized themselves in decentralized workers' councils, taking control of factories throughout the country. In opposing state-capitalism that called itself "Communism" as well as Western capitalism, the revolutionaries of 1956 opened a new epoch in indicating a pathway to transcend value production.

Because the memory of this historic accomplishment has been buried and distorted by today's rulers—who try to propagate the lie that it was a mere effort to replace state-capitalism with "free market" capitalism—we reprint here Dunayevskaya's Political Letter of Sept. 17, 1961, in which she commemorated the event. Footnotes by Dunayevskaya are indicated by "RD"; all other footnotes are the editors.

"Don't talk to me about space ships, a trip to the moon or Marx, about life in the atomic age...."

"We live like this. In darkness, in mud, far away...."

"Don't tell me it is worse in Africa. I live in Europe, my skin is white. Who will embrace me to make me feel that I am human?"

—Karoly Jobbagy  
Budapest, April 1956

On Oct. 23, 1956 the Russian puppet regime in Hungary fired on a student youth demonstration in Budapest. Far from dispersing the young students, these were soon joined by the workers from the factories in the outlying suburbs. The Revolution had begun in earnest.

During the following 13 days, ever broader layers of the population revolted. From the very young to the very old, workers and intellectuals, women and children, even the police and the armed forces—truly the population to a man—turned against the top Communist bureaucracy and the hated, sadistic AVO (secret police).

The Communist Party, with more than 800,000 members and the trade unions allegedly representing the working population, just evaporated. In its place arose Workers' Councils, Revolutionary Committees of every sort—intellectuals, youth, the army—all moving away from the Single Party State.

Overnight there sprang up 45 newspapers and 40 different parties, but the decisive force of the revolution remained the Workers' Councils.

When 13 days of armed resistance was bloodily crushed by the might of Russian totalitarianism, the new form of workers' organization—factory councils—called a general strike. It was the first time in history a general strike followed the collapse of the revolution. It held the foreign imperialist as well as the "new" government at bay for five long weeks.

Even a Janos Kadar(1) had to pretend he was listening to the demands of the Workers' Councils for control over production and even the possible abrogation of the single party rule.

As late as November 21, 1956, the Appeal of the Central Workers Council of Great Budapest stated: "We protest against the attitude of the newly formed 'Free Trade Unions' which are ready to accept the workers' councils merely as economic organs. We declare that in Hungary today the Workers' Councils represent the real interests of the working class, that there is no stronger political power in the country today than the

## On the 50th anniversary of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution Spontaneity of Action and Organization of Thought

powers of the Workers' Councils."(2)

And on Nov. 30 the Bulletin of the Central Workers Council reported a meeting with Kadar at which they demanded a daily press organ: "Our position is that the Workers' Councils are in absolute need of a press organ so that the workers may receive uniform and true information...We also raised the question of the multi-party system." (3)

It was the attempt to publish the *Workers' Journal* without state permission that made Kadar realize that "the government was simply ignored. Everyone who had a problem to settle came to us (Central Workers' Council)," (4) that made the Kadar Government, with the help of the Russian Army, move in and dissolve the Councils, on Dec. 9, long after armed resistance had been crushed and the exodus of refugees had reached 200,000, or a full 2% of the total population.

Although the Revolution had been sparked by the intellectuals, not only had the workers borne the main brunt of the fighting, but it was they who had shown the greatest creativity and given the Revolution its historic direction.

Even their support of [Premier] Imre Nagy(5) was dependent on his acceptance of the workers' control over production, a multi-party system of government, and a new type of socialism. Central to it was, an independent Hungary, but this demand for self-determination had nothing in common with narrow bourgeois nationalism. As Imre Nagy himself recognized—it was this fact that brought him to the leadership of a revolution he did not desire—"They want a People's Democracy where the working people are masters of the country and of their own fate, where human beings are respected, and where social and political life is conducted in the spirit of humanism...An atmosphere of suspicion and revenge is banishing the fundamental feature of socialist morality, humanism." (6)

This Marxist humanism was in the air since 1955. Because the Communist intellectual caught this in the air, he was assured of leadership of a revolution against Communism.

When the fight against the Stalinist, Rakosi(7), had first begun and he called these intellectuals "outsiders," Tador had replied that the ruling circle "is not the party. The party is ourselves, those who belong to the other current, who fight for the ideas and principles of humanism, and whose aims reflect in ever-increasing measure those of the people and of the country." (8)

But though the intellectuals had caught the humanism in the air and set off the revolution, they did not reveal themselves as leaders and organizers at the moment of crisis. The best, the young however, did recognize that the spontaneity which produced the revolution will see that it does not die.

"As a true Marxist I believe in the inevitability of the historic processes. We know perfectly well that a wave of terror and Stalinist repression will be let loose on us...You know how the revolution broke out—spontaneously, without any kind of preparation. When the police fired on our students, leadership and organiza-

tion sprang up overnight. Well, we'll scatter now just as spontaneously as we came together...The revolution can't die; it will play dead and await its moment to rise again." (9)

Today, when the world stands on the brink of nuclear holocaust, sparked by Russian state-capitalism calling itself "Communism" and American private capitalism calling itself "Democracy," the page of freedom opened by the Hungarian Revolution shows the only way out of the crisis-wracked capitalist order.

When the 1917 Russian Revolution put an end to the first betrayal of established Marxism, Lenin never wearied of reminding us that without "the dress rehearsal" of 1905, there could have been no successful

1917. Because of the maturity of our age, marked, on the one hand, by the African Revolutions which broke from Western capitalism, and, on the other hand, by the East European Revolutions against Russian totalitarianism, the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 is more than a dress rehearsal for a new European Revolution. It is the dress rehearsal for a world revolution that is out to reconstruct society on new, truly human beginnings and in that way finally bring to an end that which Marx called the pre-history of mankind.

**NOTES**

1) János Kádár (1912-1989) was selected by the Russians to lead the communist regime in Hungary from 1956 to 1988.

2) *The Review* (published by the Imre Nagy Institute, Brussels), No. 4, 1960.—RD

3) *The Review, East Europe* (New York) of April 1959 also carries an "Eyewitness Report of How the Workers Councils Fought Kadar."—RD

4) "My Experiences in the Central Workers' Council of Greater Budapest" by Miklos Sebestyen,

*The Review*, Vol. III, #2, 1961.—RD

5) Imre Nagy (1896-1958) was a reformist leader of Hungary who served as Prime Minister during the revolution in 1956. He was executed by the Russians following the crushing of the revolution.

6) *Imre Nagy on Communism: In Defense of "The New Course,"* pp. 49, 56.

7) *Mastyas Rakosi* (1892-1971) was a Stalinist leader of Hungary in the late 1940s and 1950s. He was in the USSR at the time of the revolution.

8) *Behind the Rape of Hungary*, by F. Fejto. See also my *Marxism and Freedom*, pp. 62, 255-56 on the Russian debates on Marx's Humanist Essays, and my *Nationalism, Communism, Marxist Humanism and the Afro-Asian Revolutions* on the Polish debates.—RD

9) From a report by Peter Schmid quoted in *The Hungarian Revolution*, edited by Melvin J. Lasky.—RD



## The Hungarian Revolution, 1956 ...

... as it happened and as comprehended philosophically. Two works by Raya Dunayevskaya  
**Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today (1958)**

In Hungary, the form of revolt was concretized not only as an opposition to Stalinism, but as a form of workers' rule, workers' councils sprang up in Hungary in place of the established trade unions. This decentralized form of controlling their conditions of labor at the point of production became a new universal. Councils of intellectuals, councils of revolutionary youth, all sorts of nonstatist forms of social relations emerged in every field, from newspapers and parties—a proliferation of both appeared overnight to underlying philosophies of freedom and totally new human relationships.

From Chapter 15, "The Beginning of the End of Russian Totalitarianism"

### Philosophy and Revolution: From Hegel to Sartre, and from Marx to Mao (1973)

The two features which characterize great periods of upheaval are, one, that a new subject is born to respond to the objective pull of history by making freedom and reason the reality of the day. And, two, a new relationship between theory and practice is forged. This is true for the past-Levellers in 17th century England; the sans culottes in the French Revolution of 1789-1793; the runaway slaves impelling the United States to the Civil War of 1861-1865; the St. Petersburg proletariat in the 1905 and 1917 Russian Revolutions. This is true for the present—in the Hungarian Revolution against Russian totalitarianism, no less than in the African Revolutions against Western imperialism. This does not mean that each of these historic periods has given birth to a totally new philosophy. An original philosophy is a rare creation, born after much travail only when called forth by a new stage in world consciousness of freedom.

From Chapter 8, "State Capitalism and the East European Revolts"

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## ESSAY

## Demonstrating an alternative to capitalism

by Andrew Kliman

Developing a philosophically grounded alternative to capitalism is vitally important in order to free our minds from the clutches of Margaret Thatcher's slogan, "there is no alternative" (TINA)—and from its practical effects. Struggles for freedom continue but, given the widespread acceptance of TINA, they understandably stop short of trying to remake society totally. Just as it is rational to try to change what can be changed, it is rational to refrain from trying to change what cannot be changed. People who don't want to hear about socialism because of the failures of what they believe to have been socialism are making perfect sense.

On the other side is a new global justice movement declaring that "Another World is Possible." This slogan, too, is quite rational if one interprets it as a call to think through the possibility of another world and to prefigure another one. But ultimately, whether struggles for a completely different, non-capitalist, human society are rational depends upon whether another world is actually possible. This needs to be shown, and that requires showing how it is possible to break with capitalism and make that break sustainable.

At the present moment, I believe, no one can answer with confidence that another world is possible. But I do not think this is a reason to despair. The effort to work out how it might be possible is really just beginning. The whole problem was avoided for many, many decades, mostly because it was believed that state-capitalism was the "actually-existing" alternative, or that the state-capitalist mode of production could and would become socialist simply by virtue of one or another sort of political change—"democracy," workers councils in control, etc.

Although it is commonly said that Marx was a theorist of capitalism, not of socialism, a lot of his work pertains, directly or indirectly, to the concept of a new society. We ignore it at our peril. Throughout his life, Marx battled Proudhonism and similar tendencies, showing that their proposed alternatives would not be viable and would lead back to capitalism. And he worked out to some extent what would actually be needed. That work needs to continue—Marx does not provide "the answer"—but it needs to continue on the foundation he laid, and that Raya Dunayevskaya built upon.

## THE CRITIQUE OF THE GOTHA PROGRAM

Above all, it is crucial to take seriously her identification of his *Critique of the Gotha Program* (CGP) as "New Ground for Organization."<sup>(1)</sup> I don't think she meant that the CGP was a treatise "on organization," but that Marxist organizations need to make the actual content of the CGP their ground. In other words, they need to make their *differentia specifica* the projection and further development of the CGP's vision of the new society, especially its analysis of what is required in order to make that vision a reality, the "whole theory of human development" that Dunayevskaya said was worked out in the CGP.<sup>(2)</sup>

In this *Critique*, Marx theorized the future course of human development, from the dawn of revolution, through the revolutionary transformation of capitalism into communism, as well as the further development of the latter, on the new foundations established during its initial phase, into a "higher phase of communist society." Dunayevskaya criticized Marxists for continually quoting the slogan "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs"—which concludes the CGP's discussion of the higher phase—but "never bother[ing] to study just how concretely that arose from the Critique of the supposedly socialist program, and what would be required to make that real."<sup>(3)</sup>

I believe that this statement puts in a nutshell the whole methodology of Marx's critique. One key theoretical principle runs throughout his commentary on Paragraph 3 of the Gotha Program: relations of distribution correspond to and depend upon relations of production. Thus the "fair distribution" that the Program called for cannot be made real without a revolution, in permanence, in the mode of production—a revolution that, in its initial phase, makes labor directly social and thereby does away with the law of value and the commodification of labor-power, and then continues until the "higher phase" is reached.<sup>(4)</sup>

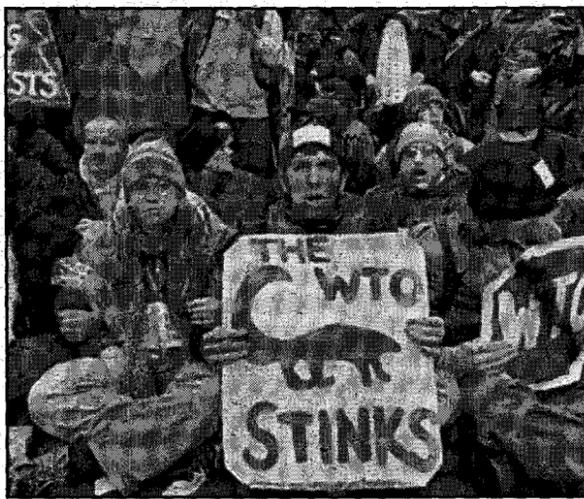
Simply being for "from each according to her ability, to each according to her needs" is a retrogression from what the CGP achieved. So is being "for" an end to value production without specifying what is required to make that real. It is precisely this sort of thing that got Marx so enraged about the Gotha Program. The Program ignored the theoretical achievements that had resulted from three decades of hard intellectual labor on his part, and that were finally available in *Capital* for all to study—if only they would do so. Instead, the Program spouted what he called "obsolete verbal rubbish" and "pervert[ed]...the realistic outlook, which it cost so much effort to instill into the Party but which has now taken root in it."

But what is needed in order to make real the vision of a society without value production? Some people imagine that we simply need to "produce for need, not for profit." This betrays an extremely superficial and inadequate conception of value production. The really crucial issue is the one that Dunayevskaya singled out in her critique of the Stalinist revision of the law of value: value production is characterized by "minimum costs and maximum production."<sup>(5)</sup> It doesn't matter what products you produce. Nor is workers' control of the planning process sufficient in order to abrogate the

law of value:

"[E]ither you have the plan of freely associated labor, or you have the...despotic Plan. There is no in-between. The only possibility of avoiding capitalist crises is the abrogation of the law of value. That is to say, planning must be done according to the needs of the productive system as a human system. A system where human needs are not governed by the necessity to pay the laborer at minimum and to extract the maximum abstract labor..."<sup>(6)</sup>

Nothing short of this is the plan of freely associated labor. It remains the despotic Plan of capital—even if workers' faces rather than corporate managers' faces serve as the new personifications of capital. "There is



no in-between."

As long as the law of value exists, producers will need to compete effectively, and therefore to produce as much as possible as cheaply as possible. There cannot be socialism in one country, much less in a single cooperative or network of cooperatives. Even if the members of a cooperative or network of cooperatives are nominally their own bosses, it follows from the continued existence of the value relation that "the process of production has mastery over [human beings], instead of the opposite."<sup>(7)</sup>

Thus as long as "[t]he co-operative factories run by workers themselves [exist within capitalism]...they naturally reproduce in all cases, in their present organization, all the defects of the existing system, and must reproduce them...the opposition between capital and labour is abolished here...only in the form that the workers in association become their own capitalist, i.e., they use the means of production to valorize their own labour."<sup>(8)</sup> What was crucial to Marx wasn't which human beings were nominally in control, but whether the process of production had mastery over human beings, or the opposite.

## WHAT CAN END VALUE PRODUCTION?

Some people suppose that qualitative matters are profound, while quantitative matters are beneath them. But without careful attention to the quantitative issues, we would give our Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval to a system of worker-run cooperatives that produce for human needs like health care, in which "the workers in association [are] their own capitalist." That is, in order to compete effectively, they pay themselves the minimum and extract from themselves the maximum output.

Of course, a system like this wouldn't really produce a lot of health care, because the great mass of humanity, paid at or near value, wouldn't be able to afford much health care. And it wouldn't really be run by workers, both because the law of value would really be in control, and because class divisions are the inevitable result of a system that seeks to minimize cost and maximize production. In such a system, you have to have some people whose job it is to guarantee maximum production from other people, and these other people are a "cost." Marx was well aware that capitalist class rule follows from the capitalist mode of production, rather than the reverse. As he wrote in *The Civil War in France*, "The political rule of the producer cannot co-exist with the perpetuation of his social slavery. The [Paris] Commune was therefore to serve as a lever for uprooting the economical foundation upon which rests the existence of classes, and therefore of class rule."

Now then, what is needed in order to end value production? Marx's view, as expressed in the CGP, was that "Within the co-operative society based on common ownership of the means of production, the producers do not exchange their products; just as little does the labor employed on the products appear here as the value of these products, as a material quality possessed by them, since now, in contrast to capitalist society, individual labor no longer exists in an indirect fashion but directly as a component part of total labor."

Question: Why doesn't the labor employed on the products appear here as the value of these products? Marx's answer: "since now, in contrast to capitalist society," the individual's labor is directly social—"directly...a component part of total labor." Thus, in order to end the law of value, labor must become directly social.

This was not an isolated remark. In Chapter 1 of *Capital*, he showed that neither the commodity fetish nor the value-relation exist in non-capitalist societies because, in these societies, the individual's labor is directly social. In the future free communist society, for

instance, workers will act as "one single social labour force" and, once there are "direct social relations between persons in their work," their social relations no longer need to be mediated by things that serve as "objective" representatives of the work they've done. And thus there are no longer "social relations between things"—social relations between commodities insofar as they are values, congealed quantities of labor in "objective" form.<sup>(9)</sup>

## MAKING LABOR DIRECTLY SOCIAL

But what must be done in order to make labor directly social? It is tempting to answer "abolish exchange of the products." This is, in essence, the answer given by the Stalinists in 1943, when they claimed that the contradiction between private and social labor had been overcome in Russia, thereby making it a non-capitalist society. The individual's labor was supposedly recognized, without mediation, as social labor in the State Plan; it did not have to become social labor by its product first being sold, nor did it fail to count as social labor if its product could not be sold.<sup>(10)</sup>

But this answer puts the cart before the horse. The reason why there must be exchange of products is that labor is only indirectly social—not vice-versa. If labor were directly social, there would be no need to exchange products. For instance, Marx projects in the CGP that, in the lower phase of communism, "The same amount of labor which [an individual] has given to society in one form, he receives back in another." If you work for an hour, you're entitled to the product of an hour of other people's work. There's an exchange, to be sure, but it is directly an exchange of labor. The products don't exchange, as Marx noted, quoted earlier.

Another way of putting the same point is that the Stalinists did not do away with exchange of products. Nominally, there was no exchange of products, only exchange of labors. But the amount of "labor" one did depended not only on how long and hard one worked, but on how much one produced, and the value of what one produced. As Dunayevskaya noted, the Stalinists wrongly equated "distribution according to labor" with distribution according to value.<sup>(11)</sup>

So, what does need to be done in order to make labor directly social? I don't know. I don't think anyone knows at this point. But I am confident that remunerating expenditures of labor equally is not the solution. It is the consequence, not the cause, of the direct sociality of labor. Marx spent decades fighting the utopian-socialist / Proudhonist view that equal remuneration is the solution, arguing correctly that it is not even possible without a thorough revolution in the relations of production. It does no good to say, "let's remunerate all labor equally," or "let's count all labor as equal." If the economic relations are such that different labors aren't actually equal, counting them as equal will be a principle at loggerheads with practice. For instance, if we "declare" that the labor of a surgeon and a nurse's aide are equal, it is almost inevitable that a black market for surgical services will quickly emerge. Either that, or "we'll" have to enforce the equality through military-state power that has no prospect of withering away.

So the issue is not whether we count different labors equally—politics is not in command—but whether the social relations are such that different labors actually count equally. The task is to work out what such social relations are, and what is required to make them real.

## NOTES

1) Raya Dunayevskaya, *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, Urbana and Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1991, p. 153.

2) Raya Dunayevskaya, *The Power of Negativity*, Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2002, p. 261.

3) *Rosa Luxemburg*, pp. 156-57, emphasis added.

4) If we want a free, human society in the here and now, we have to think seriously about the whole trajectory of the revolutionary process, not just the higher phase, because we remain extremely far from the point at which the principle "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs" can prevail. A society in which we contribute according to our ability, and which satisfies our (basic) needs, may well be possible in the near term. But the principle in question is far more visionary, projecting a future in which society in effect imposes no obligations on its individual members. There's no longer any connection between what one contributes to society ("from each") and what one is entitled to receive ("to each"). You give according to your ability without regard to what you get in return, and others receive according to their needs without regard to whether they have contributed anything to society. This principle is practiced in some cases even now, but society cannot viably operate on this basis—it cannot become the governing principle of social life as a whole—until (a) we achieve levels of material, cultural, and individual development far in excess of those that currently exist, and (b) the nature of work is transformed so profoundly that it becomes "life's prime want" rather than something to avoid when possible.

5) Raya Dunayevskaya, *The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism*, Chicago: News and Letters, 1992, p. 87.

6) Raya Dunayevskaya, *Marxism and Freedom*, Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2000, p. 136, emphases in original.

7) Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, London: Penguin, 1990, p. 175.

8) Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III, London: Penguin, 1991, p. 571.

9) Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 171, p. 166.

10) "Teaching of Economics in the Soviet Union," unsigned, *American Economic Review* 34:3, Sept. 1944, p. 525.

11) *Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism*, p. 84.

## POLITICAL, PHILOSOPHIC, AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVES FOR UPROOTING CAPITALISM

*N&L* provided an excellent overview of the struggle for freedom from within the working class in the Marxist-Humanist Perspectives thesis published in the August-September issue. One thing that needs pointing out, however, is that the Left has been where it is today before, in the period of the imperialist war for domination during the time of President Woodrow Wilson, known as World War I. The Espionage Act of 1917 and the Sedition Act of 1918 followed by the period known as the Red Scare sought to repress anti-imperialist activity at that time, much in the same fashion that Bush's "war on terrorism" is trying to do today.

The great difference is that these activities that came out of a previous time were aimed at the Left for a duration roughly the period of that war. The war ended. So did the U.S. attempts to turn back the Bolsheviks in terms of the presence of U.S. troops on Soviet soil. Not so with the "war on terror," a shadow war of indefinite duration. With no logical end, it heralds the beginnings of a more permanently corporate fascism without any end in sight. The Left must resist this tendency with all its strength and resolve. *N&L* has an important role to play in the struggle and I have no doubt will continue to be a voice of revolutionary resistance.

**D.T.  
Louisiana**

The best part of "Theoretic Preparation for Uprooting Capitalism" (*N&L* August/September 2006) is the section discussing "the Transcendence of Value Production." It shows that the content of Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Program* has to become the basis for any effort to think out an alternative to capitalism. That's because it pinpoints the pivot for uprooting capitalism—getting rid of the law of value. We can try to change society however we want, but if we don't rid ourselves of the law of value, nothing will change.

**Student  
Indiana**

Your discussion of Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Program* inspired me to re-read the work. I was struck by Marx's precision. He says that in a socialist society "producers do not exchange their products." At first I was puzzled. How could any society not have the exchange of products? Then I realized he was saying that the exchange of products is replaced by the exchange of equal quantities of labor time. As he wrote in his *Critique*, "the same amount of labor which (the worker) has given to society in one form, he receives back in another." Marx is showing us with this what a society that has gotten rid of value production looks like.

**Old Radical  
California**



*N&L* tells the true story of how the immigrants and the working class have to stand up so the government and big business won't run over them in this so-called "Free Country." When the people stand up for their rights is when the government hides behind their laws and if there is no law that benefits them, they just make one up. Thanks too for giving us news about Latin America because I'm Mexican-American, more Mexican than American. I was saddened by the way the elections recently went in Mexico. The oligarchy are trying to steal the elections from the people. Right now Hugo Chavez of Venezuela is the only one willing to stand up in front of the world and tell about the true ways of the U.S.

**Prisoner  
Delano, California**

Thanks for providing those of us in prison with vital information that can't otherwise be found inside these walls. I make sure the paper makes its way to

I can understand that some Marxists don't like Marx's discussion of a new society in his *Critique of the Gotha Program* but what I don't understand is why they don't just come out and say they disagree with Marx. It's not like it's against the law to disagree with Marx. It's better to say you disagree than claim you agree but then just ignore the content of what he has to say.

**Teacher  
Chicago**

I thought it was great that you included in your Perspectives Thesis the statement by Raya Dunayevskaya that says if labor were directly social we wouldn't have capitalism. I wasn't aware that she had discussed a non-capitalist society in such specific terms. Could you point me to other writings by her in which she discusses this issue?

**Anti-war activist  
Illinois**

There have been calls for economic empowerment by the various symbols of New Afrikan leadership here in Amerika, positing this economic empowerment as the panacea to our racial oppression. For anyone to call for economic empowerment under capitalist production shows not only a fundamental lack of understanding of capitalism itself, but also serves to strengthen capitalist relations. Economic empowerment of the New Afrikan domestic colonies at best would amount to only a temporary amelioration in the basic day-to-day necessities of life for a relative few.

**Faruq  
California**

We see that in Latin America there is a reawakening of the growth of worker cooperatives and women's organizations spreading the vision of non-hierarchical organization. Now is the time to talk of how these could be steps to moving to where we want to go. Now would be the time to champion these little experiments of breaking free, rather than emphasizing their futility.

**Sociologist  
Memphis**

Is the danger now state disintegration? Or is it, in core countries, fascism and the merging of the state with corporate interests—and, in the periphery, the merging of states with religious fundamentalism?

**Concerned  
Tennessee**

The refusal of workers to pick up the old solutions, like statist reformism and Bolshevisms, is not a sign of backwardness, but of thinking rationally. If we are going to talk about getting rid of capitalism, we have to take on what that would involve. That's what your Per-

# READERS' VIEWS

spectives Thesis focuses on, and that is what makes it so important.

**Dave Black  
England**

## KATRINA ONE YEAR AFTER

One year ago, Katrina thrust the realities of U.S. society's racial and class divisions into the world spotlight. The almost universal acknowledgement that the response of the Bush/Cheney administration was callously negligent seemed to raise hopes that it might even give birth to a poor peoples' movement that would have national political implications. By today we realize that George Bush has succeeded in defining the social impact of Hurricane Katrina as a regional phenomenon, caused solely by the particularities of the politics and economy of south Louisiana. The Black population of New Orleans remains dispersed across Texas and the southern states. Economically disadvantaged and politically marginalized to begin with, the evacuated residents of New Orleans are now diluted into the population of their host cities and towns. They are considered to be one more urban problem for police, politicians and social workers to deal with. Meanwhile, back in New Orleans, the businessmen and real estate developers are free to move ahead with plans to rebuild a smaller city, one more tourist-friendly and welcoming to investment than ever.

**Kevin Michaels  
Illinois**



## STRUGGLE FOR WOMEN'S LIBERATION

This year is the 30th anniversary of the passage of the anti-woman Hyde Amendment prohibiting the use of federal funds for abortion for poor women. The effect was and still is devastating. 12.8 million women of reproductive age have to depend on Medicaid for health care. When it was legal Medicaid funded about a third of all U.S. abortions. Today poor women have to choose between food, rent, or an abortion. There is no way to celebrate such an anniversary except to vow to work harder for women's freedom in the struggle to create a totally new world.

**Women's Liberationist  
Illinois**

While the women's movement seems strengthened around the world, as seen in what transpired on International Women's Day, it seems to be waning here the more the Christian Right gets entrenched in the debate. The Christian

Right tends to demonize a woman's right to be independent and to have control over her body and mind without having to fear governmental interference.

**Concerned male  
Wisconsin**

I staffed the Women's Action Coalition table the other day at the Cooper Young street art fair here where part of our display was on getting the word out about emergency contraception, also called "the morning after pill." Everyone I spoke to was really angry that it will not be available over the counter to women younger than 18. They are supposedly too young to get this pill, but evidently not too young to get pregnant. Keeping young women from having this resource is a way to try to punish them for having sex, a punishment that can last a lifetime.

**Feminist activist  
Memphis**

The news about pharmacists being allowed to decide whether or not to prescribe the morning after pill infuriated me. There is no excuse for any group of service workers in entrusted positions to pick and choose their obligations based on so-called "moral" grounds. Should penicillin not be dispensed for patients with venereal disease due to sinful fornication? Should firemen not douse out fires of people who don't watch their kids who then set their houses ablaze? There must be some means of revoking the licenses of those who refuse to fulfill a lawful request. Could I deny taxi service to someone because I don't want him to go to a Christian Revival meeting since I'm an atheist? Couldn't I be hauled into court? Aren't injunctions possible to squash these kinds of actions that withhold service because it runs counter to one's tenets?

**Male taxi driver  
Los Angeles**

Some of the ruling class are scared we can't compete with other nations' rapidly developing science and engineering programs. *The New York Times* reported on a panel of academics who decided women are still discriminated against in the sciences and rejected the claim that there are "innate" differences in learning potential between men and women. Unfortunately, the panel feared the "loss of human capital" that occurs when women are discriminated against, rather than the loss of freedom that happens when gender inequality is institutionalized. We need a humanist science!

**Physics student  
Tennessee**

## VOICES OF REASON FROM WITHIN PRISON WALLS

anyone in here who wants to keep up with what's going on in the rest of the world.

**Prisoner  
Menard, Illinois**

Please accept the two pre-stamped envelopes I'm enclosing as a very small donation. They are paid for and can be mailed from and to anyplace in this nation. The Department of Correction in North Carolina used to allow inmates small "stick-on stamps" but somehow they found out we were mailing them out as donations and to buy books and magazines and stopped it. This is childish. Just one more way to cut us off from free society. I understand I broke the law, but the propaganda the DOC's of this country put out about the mentality of people in prison is a disservice to reality. I know some things have to be done. But other things are downright evil.

**Prisoner  
North Carolina**

I've enjoyed all the issues of the paper

I've received this year, but especially enjoyed two articles on "The law of value in capitalist society" and "A new look at the Russian revision of Marx's concept of directly social labor."

Marx and Engels had the right concept for an idealistic and utopian society. Capitalistic rule as in the Western mindset is contradictory and an oxymoron. For me, the writings of Raya Dunayevskaya fall in line with the perceived ideals of society.

**Prisoner  
Florida**

What is truly revolutionary about your publication is that you not only seek to practice theory, but also to derive theory from practice. It is as universal in its scope as it is elegant in its simplicity. The integration of subject/object both defines and transcends my nascent concept of Marxist-Humanism. If for no other reason than your ongoing development of this holistic approach, *N&L* would still be a valuable contribution.

**Prisoner  
Vacaville, CA**

I find *N&L* to be informative and a guide as to the direction we, as a people of African descent, should strive for in search of our true freedom in a capitalist society whose bloodline runs off the hard sweat of the poor and working class as well as the incarcerated. *N&L* lets me know the importance of having the right philosophy when a people are participating in a world struggle for equality.

**Prisoner  
Pontiac, Illinois**

If we aren't careful, just being Black will soon be against the law. As you read these words, another law is being introduced. The answer to how they decide what is right or wrong is easy. If they can convince you that what they're telling you is right and everything you do is no good, it is the key to their power. Our actions in history show we take nothing and turn it into something. Today's youth have the ability to mold themselves into tomorrow's leaders. We can help by instilling in them pride and resistance to B.S.

**Prisoner  
Susanville, California**

**BUSH'S LETHAL AGENDA**

The people in Lebanon didn't need a war. It's enough just to survive and the same is true for the people in Iraq. That's how it is for us in South Memphis, too. Bush's policies kill people, and the day-to-day struggle is a war in itself.

**African-American disabled worker  
South Memphis**

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The Bush/Cheney/Rumsfeld/Rice conspiracy landed this country in another Vietnam. What bugs me is that no one is really addressing that. The U.S. has embarked on an untenable path, with young soldiers now committing atrocities of war, a war that should not have been started in the first place. And we still allow that draft-dodging weasel to talk about "staying the course."

**Prisoner  
American Gulag**

\*\*\*

It is crazy to have the president of the U.S. trying to get legal justification for torturing prisoners. As someone who was incarcerated by the army and experienced cruel and unusual punishment, I can testify that what Bush is doing to justify torture is just insane.

**African-American activist  
South USA**

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Someone who worked a minimum wage job may not know the word alienation but would know the feeling of exploitation and would know in their hearts what it means not to have control over their own life. Someone from Korea can understand Blacks whose community has been poisoned by the Defense Depot of Memphis, despite language difference, because it is a common human experience. We're talking of humanity and people with the ability to feel and to be hurt. Bush's main qualification was that he had no feelings for people.

**Environmental justice activist  
Memphis**

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Bush is killing more and more men, women and children, and has destabilized a whole region of the world based on lies. How is it that he has not been impeached? Have we become so used to such transgressions that we would rather talk about a case of illicit sex in

the Oval Office as an impeachable offense instead of the murder of civilians based on lies and hidden political agendas? This is a philosophical Kosova and Rwanda all over again, where everyone knows that things are wrong and yet everyone seems to be waiting to see who is going to say something first.

**Robert Taliaferro  
Wisconsin**

**CHINA'S CULTURAL  
REVOLUTION**

The Editor's note that accompanied the article on "Tragedy of China's Cultural Revolution" (August-September 2006) pointed out that it was excerpted from an article by Dunayevskaya that had appeared in *N&L* in 1966, "World Significance of China's Self-Created Turmoil." Reprinting it now, to mark the 40th anniversary of the launching of the Cultural Revolution, not only underlines how right on target was that analysis at the very beginning, but how much it contributes to the ongoing discussions today. I remember reading it when it first appeared and feeling how it prepared me to understand not only what would soon follow those world-shaking events, but what developed in the full four decades after. It has great importance for the ongoing discussions today.

**Octogenarian  
Illinois**

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One of the things I have never understood about China's Cultural Revolution is how any artist could have been or can be a supporter of a movement which so stifled freedom of expression. Is not the ability, the freedom, to express oneself artistically, and genuinely, part of what we seek in the new and human society to which we are still looking forward?

**Perplexed  
Chicago**

**FOR FREEDOM OF SPEECH**

Josh White is an independent journalist working in San Francisco who refused to turn over unpublished video take-outs to a federal grand jury investigating a July, 2005 anti-G8 demonstration. He has been charged with civil con-

tempt for refusing to testify at his hearing and jailed until further notice. He could be held for up to a year although he was never convicted of any crime. He is being held on civil contempt in order to coerce him to testify and turn over his unpublished work product to a federal grand jury. We encourage everyone to support Josh while he is being held at FCI Dublin. If we keep on fighting there is a chance we can win his release. For information: <http://freejosh.pbwiki.com>

**Support Committee  
California**

**THE BRITISH SCENE**

The affection with which Blair is held in neo-conservative America is not shared in the hearts or the poll forecasts of the UK. The animosity between Blair and Brown has ignited. The resignation of several government ministers drove Blair to apologize to the country for the naughty Labor Party and make a vague departure promise. The media frenzy may spark other issues such as Iraq, pensions, and union disputes such as in rail. What should the left be attempting to do? As Rosa Luxemburg articulated it, the future is either socialism or barbarism. As Labour gives up or sells cheaply the collective assets of the past, it also attempts to enslave the future. We would be stupid to hope that a Labor Party regeneration will aid the masses.

**Pat Duffy  
Britain**

**TROUBLES FOR YOUTH**

Youth in Michigan, caught up in the whirlwind of poverty, violence, despair and perversion that characterizes the cesspools we call cities, are given a Machiavellian choice. It is either jail, and the ruination of their young lives, or the Michigan Youth Challenge Academy, a grueling course in military indoctrination. Upon graduation, many "opt" for enlistment in the military.

The effect of disproportionate unemployment on the youth, especially minority youth, used to be called the "economic draft," but this is an entirely new phenomenon. It is a conscious strategy of the ruling capitalist class to head off an outright military draft, with the threat to the present hierarchical soci-

ety posed by massive anti-war protest that would follow, as during the Vietnam War. Where once the cities and towns of this area were known as the "arsenal of democracy," now they are being turned into giant cannon fodder factories. As can be seen by this new development, that journey will be greatly shortened for these young people.

**Ex-Postal Worker  
Michigan**



**WORKERS  
OF THE  
WORLD**

The IWW Starbucks Workers Union has announced that employees at the Logan Square

Starbucks store in Chicago have joined the union, becoming the first outside New York City to do so. They issued a set of demands that included a living wage, guaranteed hours and the reinstatement of IWW baristas fired for organizing activity. Starbucks is often praised for offering generous benefits but the union contends the workers face low wages and barriers to health care and other benefits. Starbucks insists none of its U.S. stores is unionized because the IWW is not formally certified by the NLRB, but last March the company settled an unfair labor practice charge that they had violated federal law by prohibiting workers from sharing written union information or wearing union buttons. They were forced to post notices explaining workers' rights to organize.

**Union supporter  
Chicago**

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The "Workshop Talks" column in the August-September *N&L* spoke about U.S. health care being managed by an I.T. worker in India. It has its echo here with a \$70 billion project for the UK health service. This excludes the 10% for private health care in the NHS budget. Big bucks for the bosses and their friends, suffering and death for patients. Unemployment for doctors and nurses. Workers of the world need a voice.

**Nurse  
Britain**

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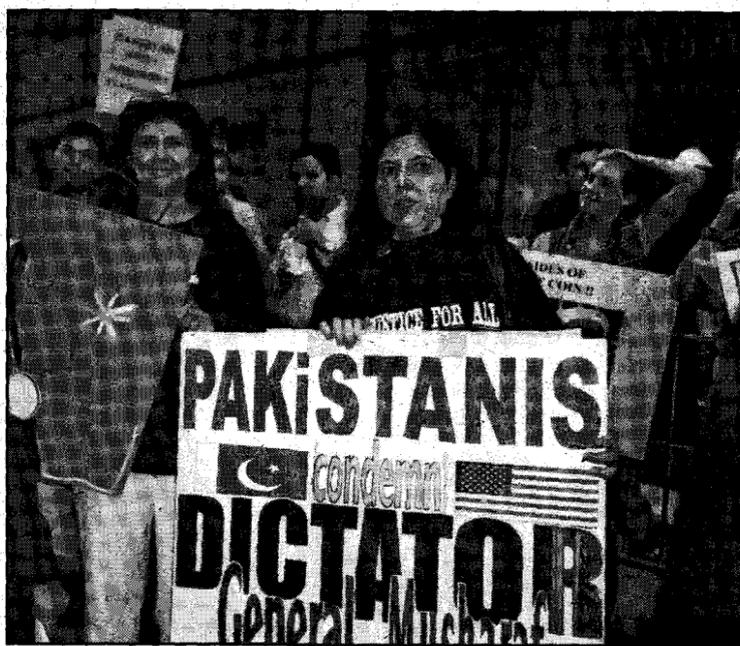
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## Protest for human rights in Pakistan

**NEW YORK**—A demonstration by Pakistani-Americans challenged Gen. Musharraf, the unelected president of Pakistan, when he came to town for UN summit meetings on Sept. 18. Vigorous chants of "women's rights are human rights" and "what do we want? democracy!" filled the midtown block across from Musharraf's hotel. Spearheaded by the Asian-American Network Against Abuse of Human Rights (ANAA), the rally demanded an immediate end to violence against women, repeal of religious laws that promote injustice, the restoration of democracy, and protection for religious and ethnic minorities and for defenders of human rights.

Speakers pointed out that Pakistan is one of the leading violators of human rights, especially women's rights. A main focus of the rally was to demand the repeal of the Hudood and Zina Ordinances and other laws which are highly discriminatory against women. Many rape victims land in jail if they try to seek justice due to these religious-based laws. Musharraf recently announced that the Ordinances would be repealed, but then backed down and agreed to modify them instead.

Pakistan has no laws against domestic violence, and



Demonstrators in New York denounce Pakistan's president, General Musharraf, for attacks on women and human rights.

beatings, rapes and killings are committed with impunity, as in the recently publicized rape cases of Dr. Shazia Khalid and Mukhtaran Mai. So-called "honor" crimes, usually the murder of disobedient women by family members, average two a day. A corrupt police force and multiple court systems compound the legal injustices.

The government is also responsible for harassment, beatings and murders of human rights activists and journalists. "We are asking for a global coalition to demand the restoration of human rights and democracy in Pakistan," said ANAA president Dr. Amna Buttar. Apparently Musharraf has been hurt by ANAA, since his government recently alleged that Buttar is really an Indian!

Co-sponsors of the rally included Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Equality Now, several Sindh and other Pakistani groups, and student groups, but few people besides Pakistani-Americans attended. For information, see [www.4anaa.org](http://www.4anaa.org).

—Anne Jaclard

## Tennessee campaign: nursing home industry steals peoples' lives

**MEMPHIS, TENN.**—A key issue for most people with a significant disability is to be able to choose home-based services rather than being institutionalized. There is this huge void in Tennessee for those who need physical assistance performing what is called "the daily activities of life": bathing, dressing, toileting, and eating. People with visual impairments may need a driver or reader. People with cognitive disabilities would have assistance with shopping, making appointments and decisions in their lives. A huge disconnect exists in having the services available because the State believes that if you have significant needs that you or your family can't afford to take care of, then the State sees its obligation as being met by warehousing you in institutional settings.

That's the rub. Moving into an institution means giving up all we hold dear. You lose control of the tiniest decisions: what do I eat or wear, what time do I get up in the morning, where would I like to go—your individual schedule is gone and the institution decides these questions. You give up having your own home, having people over when you choose, having a sex life, a romantic life, and being part of your community.

It's not humane to segregate people in nursing homes, that's obvious. Furthermore, it is much cheaper to live in the community with support services. Most nursing homes in Tennessee receive \$30,000 to \$40,000 a year per person. Community-based services may cost half of that or less.

My organization, Memphis Center for Independent Living's, main focus is to change the way Tennessee does business, and it's going to be a struggle. This year we introduced a bill, the "Community Choices Act," to our legislature. It didn't get very far, but will be re-introduced in January, and we will be

stronger and wiser.

In the meantime, we're working hard to educate legislators. We also educate those with disabilities about what they can demand and help them understand that this can be a reality if we all work together.

Our campaign, "Money Follows the Person," was developed to show that the dollars set aside for people with disabilities and older people who need personal assistance are now only for institutional care. We believe that same money should be available for the person to use in a community-based setting—their own home or with family members.

The nursing home lobbyists are very strong. They contribute heavily to our legislators' and governor's campaigns. When we say the money should be spent to help people stay in their homes, they say, "No! That's our money." The nursing home industry is a huge business that generates mega-profits.

A few months ago we did a collaborative action with ADAPT (a grassroots civil rights organization for peo-

ple with disabilities). Five hundred of us assembled in Nashville from all over the country to make clear what it means to live in nursing homes rather than our homes. We blocked streets with our wheelchairs, which made headlines. Our local ADAPT chapter and MCIL have done several actions around Memphis and in Nashville. We're seeing things slowly change, even how people are discussing the issue and how some community-based services are being provided.

One action was a picket of a political fundraiser to embarrass Gov. Bredesen, for his atrocious gutting of TennCare (see September-October 2005 *N&L*) and his total lack of accountability to our repeated requests to introduce "money follows the person" legislation. We picketed outside the hotel so that everyone driving their limousines into the parking lot saw our signs, and then we crashed the party to give Bredesen our press release and let him know just how serious we are.

—Deborah Cunningham, MCIL

## On Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, 2006-2007

One of the most interesting parts of the Draft for Marxist-Humanist Perspectives (*N&L*, August-September 2006) for me is Part III "The philosophic-organizational challenge: what happens after?" Let me start with Section A, "New stage of revolt or birth of a new epoch?" I think it is a good thing in the Draft to stress the notion of Dunayevskaya's of what is at issue for revolutionaries in our time: Can we continue Marx's unchaining of the dialectic organizationally, with the principles he outlined in his *Critique of the Gotha Program*. The emphasis has to be on "organization," because that aspect relates to the possible ability of Marxism-Humanism to intervene in the revolts and uprootings of today.

### WHICH SUBJECT?

"The main difficulty," Dunayevskaya said in *Marxism and Freedom*, "in seeing the elements of the new society in the present is that workers repeat many of the ideas of the ruling class until the very day that an explosive break actually occurs." And so, I add, there are a lot of left theoreticians, who are "impatient" and are beginning to think without the impulse(s) of the living subject in capitalism and reach a vanguardist position, from which they want to prescribe what the living subject has to do, or they reach a position of a so-called automatic subject, in which there is no place for a living subject.

The citation with which Section C begins is of great importance, because Dunayevskaya touches there the relation between the Universal and Particular, especially when she is saying, "to catch the 'moment' when the Universal particularizes itself and when it does not is the key to everything." One such a moment was the coal miners' general strike of 1949-50, which was a fundamental element in the birth of Marxism-Humanism.

If capitalism is characterized by dead labor which is dominating living labor, and automation is the summit of that dead labor, how true are the words, "Automation has cut across the thinking of the people more sharply than anything else since the Industrial Revolution nearly 200 years ago" (Raya Dunayevskaya, *Marxism and Freedom*, p. 264).

### IMPULSE TO HUMANSIM

The strike of the miners was a breakthrough in this thinking in the sense that they "began to question not only the fruits of their labor wages but the kind of labor." This is a crucial point, for the miners were looking for another kind of labor, the opposite of wage labor, an end to value production, which gave the impulse to Humanism in Marx's conception as directed against capitalism.

I do agree with the notion of the Draft to help fill the void on the question of what happens after. What for me is an open question at the moment is the relation or connection between "what happens after" and "the day before."

—Karel Ludenhoff

## BLACK/RED VIEW

Continued from page 1

Africans and Latinos have been mixing for centuries there. It has arisen in the context of capital accumulation. The trend arose as early as when Africans staffed the ships that brought Columbus to America.

### RACISM INGRAINED IN CAPITALISM

As Marx said of the birth of capitalism: "The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines, of the indigenous population of that continent, the beginnings of the conquest and plunder of India, and conversion of Africa into a preserve for the commercial hunting of blackskins, are all things which characterize the dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are chief moments of primitive accumulation" (*Capital*, p. 915).

Even today's events show that it is not just a period of "primitive accumulation" that hangs on a racist ideology, but that racist ideology continues to be personified by capitalist political leaders in the ongoing accumulation of capital.

## QUEER NOTES

by Elise

In a huge move for human rights, the cabinet of South Africa's President Thabo Mbeki approved a civil unions bill for same-sex couples which will now go to Parliament, where its specific benefits and rights will be determined. In 2005, South Africa's Constitutional Court ruled the country's common-law understanding of marriage was unconstitutional because it discriminated against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people (see *Women Worldwide*, May-June 2006 *N&L*). The South Africa Constitution bans discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. South Africa would be the first African nation to recognize same-sex relationships.

Two different state courts have ruled in favor of transgender people. Eric Buffong, a transgender man who was fired from his job as a cook at Equus restaurant in Westchester, N.Y., is protected by the state's human rights law, State Supreme Court Justice Joan Lefkowitz ruled. He can now proceed with his lawsuit against the restaurant. The ruling applies to the entire state of New York. And in Colorado, Civil Rights Division Director Wendell Pryor ruled that the firing of Danielle Cornwell, a transgender woman, violated the state's anti-discrimination law. Director Pryor found that the firing of Ms. Cornwell by Intermountain Testing Company was because she is a woman.

Latvian gay men and lesbians, and EU and U.S. supporters, held Pride events in their country, despite being verbally abused and having eggs thrown at them. The Pride events coincided with the Latvian parliament's rejection of a bill—presented by Latvia First, an anti-gay party—that would have banned the mass media from publishing articles about, or interviews with, gays or lesbians about their lives or gay rights in the mass media. The bill was rejected because it goes against national and international legislation.

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# Remembering the double tragedy of September 11, 2001: Say no to terrorism and Bush's drive to war!

Five years after September 11, 2001 we recall the Marxist-Humanist statement on that double tragedy written shortly after it occurred. The full text follows.

September 16, 2001

A double tragedy descended upon the world with the barbaric, cruel and inhuman terrorist attack on New York and Washington, D.C. on September 11. The first tragedy was the terrorist attack itself, which created a level of destruction and mayhem never before seen in a U.S. city. The second tragedy, now unfolding, is the response to the attacks by the Bush administration, which has used them to declare a "state of war" and is pushing for total militarization, at home and abroad.

As Marxist-Humanists, we oppose both sides of this double tragedy. Our ground is the absolute opposite of mindless terrorism and statist militarism—the idea of freedom.

## HUMANISM VS. TERROR

The September 11 attacks have nothing to do with any struggle against capitalism, injustice, or U.S. imperialism. They were a brutal act of violence against U.S. workers that has no rational cause, legitimacy, or justification.

No group took responsibility for the attacks, and not a single political demand or proclamation was issued by anyone. It is hard to discern any political content to these acts, presumably carried out by Islamic fundamentalists under the leadership of Osama bin Laden. They were simply geared to kill as many people as possible. Such cruelty could only have been carried out by the most reactionary, backward elements imaginable.

And yet even in the midst of this anti-human destruction the light of humanism did shine, in the hundreds of workers and citizens who flocked to "ground zero" in New York to help clear rubble, save victims, and provide medical aid to the injured. The unexpected—construction workers rushing to save office workers, Black youth helping elderly Jewish people to get out of the area—became commonplace. New forms of solidarity emerged—as seen in the prisoners at Folsom Prison, most of them Black, who collected \$1,000 to aid victims of the disaster.

These humanist expressions of solidarity, however, are being quickly buried by Bush's effort to use the attacks as an excuse to militarize America, restrict civil liberties, and prepare for what the rulers have long aspired for—permanent military intervention overseas. Bush is being given a free hand to rebuild the military, gut domestic social programs, and bury the memory of his stolen election. On a single day the terrorists succeeded in totally shifting the ideological ground and handed the far Right one of its greatest victories.

Bush is preparing to bomb anywhere he deems fit to "eradicate terrorism"—even though this may mean killing thousands of innocent people in Afghanistan and elsewhere who have suffered for years from the repressive, anti-woman policies of such reactionary regimes.

Bush claims that revulsion over the September 11 attacks has unified the nation, for now. Yet let's not forget that a similar kind of "unity" after Pearl Harbor was attacked in 1941 was used by U.S. rulers to commit such atrocities as the bombings of Dresden and Hiroshima. We are being thrust into a new, voracious, and deadly militarism.

## INTERNAL CONTRADICTIONS

This does not mean Bush has all the cards in his hands. Forces have been unleashed by the events of September 11 that may be beyond anyone's ability to control.

First, the economic impact of the attack on the World Trade Center—tens of billions of dollars of damage were done and many airlines now teeter on the brink of bankruptcy as a result of the disruption of air travel—will almost certainly send the U.S. into a full recession.

Second, world politics—especially Middle Eastern politics—is far too volatile for the U.S. to simply ride roughshod over each and every country. Bush's effort to enlist Arab countries like Syria as well as Arafat's PLO in the "battle against terrorism" has evoked complaints from Israel's Sharon, who is making use of the crisis to extend a total military crackdown against the Palestinians. The U.S. is also insisting that Pakistan break ranks with Afghanistan and allow U.S. forces to use it as a launching pad for attacks on its ruling Taliban.

Though it has so far said that it will cooperate with the U.S., Pakistan's regime is very unstable and is itself closely linked with Islamic fundamentalists.

The impact of Bush's effort to promote military adventurism on an unprecedented scale is already seen in the jingoistic attacks against Muslims, Arab-Americans, Palestinians, South Asians and other peoples of color that have occurred from Chicago to Texas. Talk shows are filled with calls to send Arabs and Muslims

to internment camps, just as the U.S. did with Japanese-Americans during World War II. This atmosphere also extends to restrictions on various forms of protest and political expression. On Sept. 14 two activists in Philadelphia who were holding a sign over a bridge in defense of Mumia Abu-Jamal were approached by federal

ATF agents and ordered to disperse. That government terrorist specialists are already being used against legitimate, non-violent activists is an ominous signal of what is ahead.

## WHAT TO DO?

It is imperative that we completely and totally oppose Bush's effort to respond to senseless terrorism with an equally senseless policy of indiscriminate military intervention, just as we must oppose all efforts to restrict civil liberties at home or scapegoat immigrants and people of color. But an effective opposition to this new militarism will not emerge unless we project a total view rooted not just in what we oppose, but what we are for.

It is therefore all the more disturbing that some on the Left have only mildly condemned the September 11 attacks and have spent most of their time arguing that the real culprit is—U.S. imperialism. U.S. military intervention against Iraq, Sudan, Afghanistan and its support of Israel, some say, has created a climate which drives opponents of the U.S. to pursue such "desperate measures" as suicide attacks. As John Keller put it in "The Chickens Come Home to Roost," "When a big country uses its military or money to push around a smaller country, the small country can only fight back via terrorism."

This amounts to a bizarre spectacle. While the perpetrators of the terrorist attacks remain silent as to their motives and intentions, "leftist" commentators, from Alexander Cockburn to Naomi Klein, are trying to provide the rationale for them! All we need to know, presumably, are the crimes of U.S. imperialism, and then the reasons for the September 11 attack supposedly become "understandable."

These "explanations" misconstrue the nature of the forces which conducted the attacks. Reactionary Islamic fundamentalism is not simply driven by hatred of U.S. imperialism acts against Iraq, Palestine, or any other country. Islamic fundamentalism is just as much driven by hatred of feminism, homosexuality, workers' rights, etc. Such groups as Afghanistan's Taliban, Algeria's FIA, and the terrorist cells in Egypt which have murdered Marxist professors as well as indigenous writers and singers represent a violent rejection of everything "Western"—especially those aspects of Western society created through decades of struggles by workers, women, gays and lesbians and minorities for a more open and free society.

To try to rationalize the September 11 attacks as an "understandable" reaction to U.S. foreign policy skips over the fact that some forces opposed to the U.S. are just as regressive, if not even more so, than U.S. imperialism itself.

## TWO WORLDS IN EACH COUNTRY

Yes, U.S. imperialism is a terrible force which wreaks enormous destruction throughout the world. And yes, the U.S. is implicated in the crimes against humanity of the Taliban and bin Laden—the CIA supported bin Laden when he fought the Russians and as recently as a few months ago the U.S. gave Afghanistan's ruling Taliban \$100 million in aid.

But by the same token, these forces are implicated in the crimes of the U.S. government. Islamic fundamentalism has again and again strengthened U.S. imperialism by taking actions which have undermined revo-

lutionary forces and solidified counter-revolutionary policies.

This was true in 1979, when the taking of hostages at the U.S. embassy in Iran by Islamic fundamentalists helped Reagan achieve political ascendancy. That is true today, when an anti-feminist, homophobic fundamentalism of an even more reactionary bent is enabling the inheritors of Reaganism to impose their regressive agenda upon this country.

Those fighting for human liberation need to make it very clear that the attack of September 11 was not a viable protest or response to the U.S. or any of the atrocities it perpetrates around the world. To even hint otherwise is an attack on the freedom movements within the U.S. and internationally and can result only in further isolating leftists from the masses.

For its part, the Taliban no more speaks for the Afghan masses than its ideological twin—Jerry Falwell—speak for the American masses. There are two worlds in every country, including in Afghanistan.

As the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan recently said, "There is a vast difference between the poor and devastated people of Afghanistan and the terrorist Taliban criminals. While we once again announce our solidarity and deep sorrow with the people of the U.S., we also believe that attacking Afghanistan and killing its most ruined and destitute people will not in any way decrease the grief of the American people. We sincerely hope that the great American people could differentiate between the people of Afghanistan and a handful of fundamentalist terrorists."

It is no less imperative to single out the two worlds within this country. We need to decisively reject the argument, recently made by an anarchist, that "The American populace to a large extent shares responsibility for the deaths of their compatriots, as they share responsibility for all the deaths carried out by or in the interests of the U.S. military."

## BEYOND 'ANTI-IMPERIALISM'

Such narrow opposition to U.S. imperialism has for far too long disoriented would-be revolutionaries. It has led them into opportunism and realpolitik, distancing them from the aspirations of the masses of human beings for genuine liberation. In recent years, such attitudes have caused a section of the Left to betray the Bosnian and Kosovar people, and tacitly to give support to Milosevic's genocide.

The lesser-evilism which underlay much of the Left's silence on Bosnia, and its refusal to support the movement for national self-determination in Kosova, has only succeeded in strengthening the power of U.S. imperialism. The reason so many despair of the struggle for freedom and turn to patriotism, xenophobia and statism is that they see no liberatory alternative to capitalism. Instead of responding to each political crisis by repeating the same old slogans against "U.S. imperialism," revolutionaries have a responsibility to oppose all societies and tendencies based on alienated human relations while projecting a positive vision of a new society, what Karl Marx called "positive humanism, beginning from itself." Only in that way can humanity see that there is an alternative to capitalism-imperialism.

In a word, those opposing Bush's drive for war need to take this moment to stop and think.

Nowhere is that more important than for the movement against global capital, which reached a turning point in the protests in Genoa this summer. The atmosphere now descending upon this country may well hurt the movement by discouraging activity. Many are even asking whether the opening reached in the anti-globalization movement will be shut down. But the answer to this is not to just beat the drum for more activity, as if repeating familiar criticisms of U.S. policy will by itself suffice.

We live at a moment when political opposition must have a total view in order to be truly effective. We must take a firm stand against all forms of injustice, whether as propagated by terrorists, U.S. imperialism, or by anyone else, while developing a comprehensive perspective of the kind of new human relations we are for. Never has dialogue and debate on the need for a philosophy of revolution been more important—not alone for the forward movement of the struggles against global capital, but for their very existence. We urge you to join in the theoretical and practical work of developing these perspectives with News and Letters Committees, America's only Marxist-Humanist organization.

—A Statement from the National Editorial Board of News and Letters Committees



Protesters join in an anti-war demonstration in San Francisco in 2001.

San Francisco In/Out Center

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# In the aftermath of Israel's war in Lebanon

Continued from page 1

lah's popularity was in decline since it was the only party in Lebanon to oppose the mass movement calling for Syria to withdraw its troops, which had occupied parts of Lebanon since the 1970s. Hezbollah did poorly in the elections that followed Syria's humiliating withdrawal in 2004. Yet all that has now changed.

## THE ROAD TO WAR

How could Israel's rulers be so foolish as to repeat the U.S.'s mistake in Iraq by presuming that a massive bombing campaign combined with a limited ground invasion could reshape a country? Part of the answer is that the U.S. coaxed Israel into the war to begin with.

The capture of two Israeli soldiers by Hezbollah in mid-July was hardly a cause for war. Such actions have occurred on the part of both sides for years. But the Bush administration was worried about growing Iranian influence and wanted to cut it down to size at a moment when its allies are not rushing to confront Iran. As a Bush official put it, "The Israelis told us [that invading Lebanon] would be a cheap war with many benefits...It would be a demo for Iran" (Seymour Hersh, "Watching Lebanon," *The New Yorker*, 8/21/06).

Israeli Prime Minister Olmert also wanted to attack Lebanon as a way to detract attention from his violent crackdown against the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, where over 250 Palestinians have been killed since July. While the world's attention was on Lebanon, Israel placed Gaza under a siege that brought the Palestinian economy to its knees. Gaza's Gross Domestic Product, already one of the lowest in the region, has declined by another 25% because of Israel's actions.

"Disproportionately" is hardly a strong enough word to describe Israel's murderous assaults in Gaza and Lebanon in response to border strikes by Hamas and Hezbollah. For every Israeli civilian killed by Hezbollah's Iranian-, Russian- and Chinese-built rockets during the Lebanon war, 30 Lebanese civilians were killed by Israel's attacks. Israel also made widespread use of phosphorus shells which cause severe burns and a slow, painful death. Their use is prohibited by international law.

Israel's barbaric actions by no means excuse the actions of Hezbollah which engaged in plenty of atrocities of its own—such as firing thousands of rockets into Israeli civilian areas packed with ball bearings intended to cause as much destruction of innocent human life as possible.

Despite Israel's inhumane actions, Israel's "Peace Now" movement supported the war, as did most of the country's left-leaning activists and intellectuals—leaving the small number of Israelis who came out against the war largely isolated. However in the aftermath of Israel's military and political setbacks, growing numbers of Israelis are now questioning the entire rationale for the war.

## THE REGIONAL IMPACT

Israel's Lebanon debacle further amplifies the U.S.'s quagmire in Iraq, where civil war is killing 100 people a day. The Shi'a militia of Muqtada al-Sadr and other reactionary groups have gained in strength. The U.S. is between a rock and a hard place. If it withdraws from Iraq, its power and prestige will plummet, but if it remains in Iraq, it faces the awesome task of controlling a disintegrating country.

In the face of this, no one is any longer talking about bringing "liberal democracy" to the Middle East. Israel's defeat in Lebanon has put the final nail in the coffin of Bush's illusion that he could remake the Middle East simply by taking down Saddam Hussein's hated regime in Iraq. And as a result, the U.S. will now face more opposition from other state powers—as seen in Russia's refusal to support sanctions against Iran's nuclear programs.

Yet the horrible crisis facing us today is told in the fact that even when U.S. and Israeli imperialism suffers a major defeat, it still is no cause for celebration since thoroughly reactionary forces are being empowered by it.

This refers not just to Hezbollah but also to Iran, the real winner in the recent events. Iran's growing influence was seen when Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki (a U.S. ally) traveled to Iran in September for "friendly" discussions with Iranian President Mah-

moud Ahmadinejat. The latter stated after their meeting, "Even on security issues, there is no barrier [between us] in the way of cooperation."

For the first time since the collapse of the USSR in 1991, a state opposed to the U.S.—Iran—has succeeded in supplanting some of the U.S.'s power in the Middle East.

The outcome of the Lebanon war has also given Islamic fundamentalists throughout the Middle East a huge boost in mass support, increasing the possibility they may gain power one day in Egypt, Jordan, and/or Pakistan.

## VOID IN IDEA OF FREEDOM

The clash between Israel and Hezbollah is part of a broader world conflict. The U.S. uses Israel to advance its drive for world dominance while Iran is using Hezbollah to create a "Shi'a Crescent" against the U.S. Yet we must not overlook a key fact—that Hezbollah



Iranian women protest for freedom in January—where's the solidarity?

takes as its model not Al Qaeda but rather the 1979 Iranian Revolution.

Al Qaeda arose from a defeat suffered by the fundamentalists in places like Algeria and Egypt. Lacking a mass base and suppressed by various regimes, Al Qaeda was taken in by the Taliban in Afghanistan. But the Taliban itself was hated by most Afghans, which helps explain why the U.S. was able to overthrow it in 2002 with only 18,000 troops. Al Qaeda has kept itself alive since then and can still do considerable damage. But it is very different than Hezbollah.

Hezbollah didn't arise from a defeat but from a victory by Islamic fundamentalism—the 1979 Iranian Revolution. It has modeled itself on that revolution by trying to obtain a mass base. Its ability to do so explains its success against Israel. And its mass base is now getting stronger.

Yet the fact that a group has a mass base does not mean that it is deserving of support, even if engaged in "everyday resistance" against an occupying power. The content of the movement has to be measured against the idea of freedom—and if found wanting, it must be rejected. That is as true of Hezbollah as of parts of the Iraqi resistance, like Muqtada Al Sadr's militia in Iraq—even though it is largely composed of urban poor in areas that were once the strongholds of Iraqi communism.

That is why we insist that for Marxist-Humanists the point of departure is not everyday resistance or even mass struggles, but the self-determination of the idea, the philosophy of revolution, which provides the measure as to whether a movement or struggle is or is not part of the creation of a new society. It is because we take our point of departure from the idea of freedom that we firmly condemn those on the Left who now support Hezbollah.

During and after the Lebanon war large sections of the U.S. and European Left opposed Israel's attacks on Lebanon by uncritically praising Hezbollah—whose missiles deliberately targeted Israeli civilians—even though it is a pro-capitalist, right-wing organization that opposes women's rights, gay rights, and workers' self-emancipation. In England, Iranian dissidents opposed to their government who joined in anti-war protests were physically assaulted by supporters of Hezbollah and were told to leave the rallies by some English "leftists." In the name of opposing Israel, some have sunk so low as to insist on uncritical praise for Hezbollah and even Iran.

One left apologist of the fundamentalists is Tariq Ali, who writes: "A radical wind is blowing from the alleys and shacks of the latter day wretched of the earth" that is expressed in the "anti-imperialism" of Hamas and Hezbollah who "are responding to everyday needs." He acknowledges that this "Islamic voluntarism is not a stable alternative to creeping neo-liberalism...the limits of this radicalism, so long as it remains captured by the Koran, are clear enough" ("Mid-Point in the Middle East?" *New Left Review*, April 2006).

Ali fails to recognize that the problem isn't that the fundamentalists are "captured by the Koran." It's that they are captured by a highly regressive, reactionary, misinterpretation of the Koran that is a product of capitalist modernity. Ali thinks that the problem with Hamas or Hezbollah is that they lack "leaders comparable to [Hugo] Chavez or [Evo] Morales"—as if it's the lack of such leaders, instead of their reactionary ideology, that opposes women's rights, workers' rights, social-

ism and democracy, that is the real problem!

As we have seen again and again, the battle between capitalism-imperialism and capitalism-fundamentalism leaves little room for independent thought, as leftists line up to support the latter in opposing the former.

Lebanese writer Hazem Saghih argued, "It would be better if the Left...grasped the specificity of the situation it is dealing with, rather than contenting itself with generalizations motivated only by hatred of American foreign policy and sometimes of America itself...If Karl Marx would have known that his followers had donned Iranian clerics' robes, he would be turning in his grave" ("How the European Left Supports Lebanon," *Open Democracy*, 8/4/06).

## THE WAY FORWARD

The absolute opposite of the position of leftists who tail-end reactionary fundamentalism is not to say "a plague on both your houses," however. Simply declaring opposition to both Israel and Hezbollah is not a valid position because it only states what one is against without ever specifying what one is for and thereby does nothing to point the way to the uprooting of capitalism.

Simply condemning Israel and Hezbollah doesn't even distinguish one from the position of bourgeois groupings. In Lebanon among the main opponents of Hezbollah have been capitalist moguls who, until 2004, were led by former Premier Rafik Hariri, a billionaire who rebuilt much of Lebanon through cheap labor and Saudi oil money. Hariri's well-heeled followers detest Hezbollah since its patron, Syria, murdered Hariri in 2004. Yet they also now detest Israel since it has destroyed Lebanon's infrastructure. Simply saying down with Israel and Hezbollah doesn't even distinguish one from the position of Lebanese capitalists.

Even more crucial, a position of "a plague on both your houses" ignores the need to have all perspectives begin from a concept of a totally new society. Here is how we expressed this after the September 11, 2001 attacks:

"The reason so many despair of the struggle for freedom and turn to patriotism, xenophobia and statism is that they see no liberatory alternative to capitalism. Instead of responding to each political crisis by repeating the same old slogans against 'U.S. imperialism,' revolutionaries have a responsibility to oppose all societies and tendencies based on alienated human relations while projecting a positive vision of a new society, what Karl Marx called 'positive humanism, beginning from itself'....We live at a moment when political opposition must have a total view in order to be effective."

The work we have been engaged in to make Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Program* our ground for organization is integral to this. Our effort to grasp, internalize, and develop Marx's concept of a new society—both his final goal of "from each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs" and his notion of what steps are needed to make that a reality—is a direct follow-through and concretization of our effort to respond to the void in the idea of freedom that has been especially evident since September 11, 2001. (See "Demonstrating an alternative to capitalism," page 5.)

## MARXIST-HUMANIST PERSPECTIVES

In sum, Israel's murderous invasion of Lebanon and its ongoing attacks against the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank must be totally opposed, and totally opposed not by supporting Hezbollah, Hamas, or Iran, but by working to make the content of Marx and Marxist-Humanism's notion of a new society real for today's forces of liberation. Anything short of that, including "a plague on both your houses," is retrogressive.

An alternative to capitalism cannot be developed on the basis of empty-minded slogans or inchoate feelings and intuition. It requires making full use of dialectical reason in working through the logic of the concept. Never has it been more urgent to concretize the creativity of cognition, whether in regard to crises in the Middle East or anywhere.

As the Marxist-Humanist Perspectives for 2006-2007 puts it, "No one has a crystal ball as to how to create the social relations that Marx outlined as needed in the aftermath of a social revolution. Neither a program nor a blueprint can bring it into reality. But the radical movement has greatly suffered from failing to take off from and further develop the principles outlined in Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Program*. This has left a void that is being filled by false alternatives like market socialism, statism or anarchism. None can answer the pressing question of whether humanity can be free from capitalist value production, racism, sexism, and dehumanized, thingified relations of everyday life.

"We aim to help fill the void on the question of 'what happens after' by creatively rethinking and restating his concept of 'revolution in permanence' for today, and by making Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Program* our ground for organization. In taking this as our core organizational perspective, we seek to get others thinking about these concepts by going to their meetings, writing to their publications, and engaging in dialogue with all whom we can reach." (For the full thesis, see *News & Letters*, August-September 2006, also at <http://www.newsandletters.org>.)

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## Rally in solidarity with Darfur

**NEW YORK**—"Save Darfur now," "It's about time," "Never again—again," and "Not on our watch" were some of the chants raised by 30,000 people at a rally in Central Park Sept. 17. New York was among some 40 cities around the world holding demonstrations the same day in an attempt to cause world leaders and the UN to take action to stop the killing in Darfur, western Sudan.

The Sudanese government has for the past three years sanctioned and aided in the slaughter, rape, maiming and destruction of towns in Darfur by ethnic based militia. It recently refused to allow in more UN peacekeepers and it resumed aerial bombing.

The slogans about time refer to the fact that two years ago, Pres. Bush and UN Secretary General Annan promised to act—by then about 50,000 people had been slaughtered. Now, more than 200,000 have been killed and 2.5 million left homeless. The slogans about "never again" refer to the recurrence of genocide, which was supposed to have ended after World War II.

The signs and speakers made many references to genocide in Rwanda and some to Bosnia. The sponsoring coalition includes Amnesty International, unions, the NAACP and many religious-based organizations of



Demonstration participants demand an end to genocide in Darfur.

various religions; see its website at [www.savedarfur.org](http://www.savedarfur.org).

The rally was made up principally of young people; I talked with college and high school students from New York city, Long Island, New Jersey, upstate New York and Maine. Many Jewish organizations were present, including youth organizations. Some students came because a teacher had gotten them concerned about Darfur, while others had learned about it from religious organizations. Many Africans from the area were also present, workers as well as students.

The rally included music and talks by famous people. Some blamed the U.S. failure to act on Sudan's being an ally in Bush's "war on terror." Speakers urged continuing calls and text messaging to Bush, Congress and the U.N. But people I talked with asked how we can expect such pressure to work, when it has done nothing so far. This led to discussions of the need for profoundly revolutionary change.

—Anne Jaclard

## Israeli dissident: 'Defeat or suicide'?

At the moment of undeniable defeat, Israel's loss was explained by its unsuccessful military actions against Hezbollah and the civil population in Lebanon. The majority of people only analyze the military factors involved and do not take into account previous economic and political conditions under which Israeli soldiers were sent to the battle field that also play a primary role in this defeat.

First off, from the second day of the truce (which was later violated by Israel), reservists denounced the lack of provisions such as food. This claim was further confirmed by Israeli television channels which reported that lack of sufficient food supplies forced most soldiers to plunder from surrounding homes. They were even given food by some Lebanese civilians living in the enclosed areas.

Many of these reservists were sent to the front illegally—with the assent of the population—because they lacked one of the basic requirements to fight: training.

These reservists were not called upon during preceding years to attend their month of annual training to which every citizen who has completed the military service must come. They were not adequately trained and many of them had not laid hands on weapons in years.

Another very important factor to take into consideration is the situation in Palestine. In this war the credit shouldn't solely be given to Hezbollah. The Palestinian civil population that has been deprived the right to life and to self-determination has been battling the Israeli army for more than 50 years. This effort must not be so easily discredited. Their incessant fighting and suffering is key in the conclusion of the war between Hezbollah and Israel.

The Israeli army has been completely spoiled by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, becoming not only an occupying force but a repressive army as well. This is demonstrated in their fire clashes with "insurgent groups" and their repeated retaliation against a civil population's unsophisticated combat tactics, which are totally different from the employment of organized guerrillas and national armies.

The Israeli army has clearly lost their motivation to fight wars because of the oppression they inflict on

Palestinians, whereas Hezbollah guerrillas showed great determination and motivation.

The Israeli aviator is accustomed to taking off, flying by civilian buildings and targeting the ones that suit his fancy. Israeli soldiers are mostly prepared to shoot at children standing near checkpoints or entering protected tanks while destroying mass picturesque facades outlining the city for no apparent reason. Attacks of this form which give them a sense of patriotism or heroism have lately lost their touch.

—Ivan Vanney

## YOUTH A space for self-development

by Brown Douglas

Let's begin with something concrete: we have a Marxist-Humanist Youth Committee, an autonomous group of youth that has no membership requirements to News and Letters Committees for those who want to be involved. The potential for a group like this is expansive; we are very much in control of its direction and goals.

We also have the opportunity to create a whole page in the Marxist-Humanist paper *News & Letters* and have full say over its design, organization, and content. Any friends of ours or contacts in the movement are free to contribute their ideas and time to make the page a reflection of what we want it to be.

We haven't yet made this page the space that can be used for our self-development and have not had the discussion with ourselves about what it even means to undergo self-development. It's crucial to keep in mind that for Marxist-Humanists, self-development of the individual is never seen as separate from an engagement with larger movements, philosophies, and organizations. The self-development we are interested in is one that is individual and subjective and at the same time seeks to universalize itself and bring itself to bear on objective reality.

The reason that youth have a page to ourselves in the first place is based in the recognition, seen in the News and Letters Committees Constitution, that "even though the youth are not directly involved in production, they are the ones whose idealism in the finest sense of the word combines with opposition to existing adult society in so unique a way that it literally brings them alongside the workers as builders of the new society" (*Constitution and By-Laws of News and Letters Committees*, page 4). It is this very idealism that can make us "thought-divers" who are unafraid to dig deeply into ideas as we try to work out ways to create that new human society we are for.

The many debates, tendencies, and groups that youth take part in show not only a thirst for expression, but a thirst for philosophy. Not necessarily philosophy as it's taught in a classroom, but philosophy as a

## Muslim prisoners fight discrimination

The month of Ramadan is upon us. Many of you reading this may not be Muslims, but you do stand in defiance against all forms of discrimination. As Muslims, we are obligated to observe our fast. For some time now, Muslim prisoners housed in the Secured Housing Unit (SHU) of Wabash Valley Correctional Facility have experienced discrimination, disrespect, and harassment trying to communicate with Chaplain Bob Nemerget who is responsible for processing the Ramadan list every year.

For the past three years, the chaplain has prevented Muslim prisoners from being approved to receive the Eid-ul-fitr (end of Ramadan feast meal). We were recently informed, once again, as a result of interference from Bob Nemerget, that Muslim prisoners in disciplinary segregation would not be receiving our feast meal. Bob Nemerget's reasoning was that due to security precautions we could not receive our feast meal. This man has been given free authority to expose his views that Muslim prisoners on the SHU are not serious nor sincere.

The fast begins on Sept. 24 and ends on Oct. 24. We appeal to everyone to stand in solidarity with us and expose Chaplain Nemerget for his unprofessional, unethical, racist, discriminatory attitude toward Muslims. Call or write and demand that all Muslims housed on the SHU be afforded their rights to receive the feast meal and all rights in Indiana prisons. These are our demands:

- That Muslims housed on the SHU receive the feast meal of Eid-ul-fitr.
- Demand an explanation if the meals are denied.
- That meals be delivered on time by staff.
- That Muslims not be subjected to harassment by staff during the fast.
- That all Islamic meals be treated with utmost care
- That WVCF hires a Muslim cleric or imam to govern over Islamic affairs.
- That all Ramadan meals are hot, nutritious and adequately proportioned (and not diminished by Aroma).
- That meals are provided at appropriate times (before dawn and after sundown).
- That all Muslims on the SHU are allowed to travel their journey through the month of Ramadan in an on-going state of peace (to complete obligations to Allah without hindrance).

Anyone wanting to monitor the progress of events may contact us with solidarity communications or questions about the conditions. Peace and blessings to you all.

—Brother Malik Khalidun and Shavaughn Carlos Wilson-El

Call or write: Assistant Superintendent of Operations, James Hendrix, P.O. Box 500, Carlisle, IN 47838.

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## OUR LIFE AND TIMES

## Plan for 'parallel' government in Mexico

by Kevin A. Barry and Mitch Weerth

The Sept. 16 mass gathering of supporters of Andres Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) in Mexico City's Zocalo, dubbed a National Democratic Convention (CND), elected him the "legitimate president of the republic" and asked him to assume the post on Nov. 20, prior to when Felipe Calderón is sworn into office as president on Dec 1. AMLO is also to form a cabinet, and establish his headquarters somewhere downtown.

The CND gathering was one culmination of the protests that have been ongoing since the fraudulent July 2 elections. A tent city, where 3,000-10,000 people were camped out at any one time in the Zocalo (it's estimated that some 60,000 spent at least some of their nights there) was dismantled to allow room for the traditional military parade in the morning of the 16th, and the CND in the afternoon.

Some cynical observers in the U.S. such as James McKinley, writing in *The New York Times* (9/15/06) viewed the demise of the tent city as evidence of a lack of initiative on the part of AMLO and the ongoing movement. The truth is actually much more complex.

Once Calderón's victory was certified on Sept. 1, a decision that cannot be appealed, AMLO's quest for the presidency was, legally speaking, out of options. He

## Pope's bigotry

Pope Benedict XVI has generally hewed to the line of his equally reactionary predecessor, Pope John Paul II, but not on Islam. Where John Paul II sought dialogue, Benedict has looked for confrontation. In 2004, while still a cardinal, he said that Turkey should be denied admission to the European Union because Islamic culture is "in permanent contrast to Europe." Last year, he gave a papal audience to the late Oriana Fallaci, a former leftist whose anti-Islamic diatribes—"the sons of Allah breed like rats," and others—have earned almost universal condemnation.

Then in September, Benedict attacked Islam in a major speech on secularism, faith, and reason. He quoted a 1391 statement by a Byzantine emperor to the effect that what Muhammad added to biblical teaching were "things only evil and inhuman," among them spreading the faith by violence (jihad). Benedict went on to state that while Christianity is "shaped by Greek philosophy," for Islam "God is absolutely transcendent" and "not bound up with any of our categories, even rationality," here referring to writings of the Catholic theologian Adil Theodore Khoury. Thus, he claimed not fundamentalist Islam, but Islam as a whole, is both violent and irrational, while Christianity is not. So much for the crusades, or the rationalist philosophers and scientists of medieval Islam, like Averroes, Avicenna, and Alfarabi!

As an erudite intellectual, Benedict surely knows better, and he also knows the type of violent reaction such words would provoke from a religious community that has its own share of fanatics. He got that reaction in good measure, and then duly "clarified" his statement, saying that he had been quoting others, not agreeing with them, "regretting" any offense. Why, then, in his original speech did he not express his disagreement with those he quoted?

We suspect that Benedict wishes to play to anti-Muslim sentiment in Western Europe, where the Roman Church has suffered a dramatic loss of membership. He may also be looking for support in Eastern Europe, in places like Russia and the Balkans, where Orthodox Christian communities have their share of Islam haters. The overall effect, though, is to throw another match into the powder keg that today constitutes relations between the Arab/Muslim world and the West.

could have done as Cuauhtemoc Cardenas did in 1988: put his tail between his legs and go home. Instead he has continued to call on his supporters to build a sustained mass movement of non-violent resistance to a Calderón-led government. And masses of working class Mexicans—urban and rural—are heeding his call.

The character of the protests in the Zocalo since early July led to the success of the Sept. 16 event. To highlight the fact that the movement is not limited to the capital, each of the 31 Mexican states had their own tent, and everyone circulated freely among them.



Protesters camped in a tent city in the heart of Mexico City bringing all traffic to a standstill.

## Afghanistan crumbling

Five years after the U.S. toppled the ultra-fundamentalist Taliban, Afghanistan is rapidly sliding downward. Taliban forces have regrouped and begun to vie for power in the Pashtun southeast. These forces, supported from bases in Pakistan, have assassinated hundreds of officials, aid workers, teachers, women's activists, and Muslim clerics not in accord with the Taliban's retrogressionist ideology.

The Taliban has also destroyed some 300 schools. School enrollment, especially of girls, has declined from a high of five million (1.5 million of them girls) a couple years ago. Pakistan's madrasas, the original spawning ground of the Taliban in the 1990s, seem to offer an inexhaustible supply of young recruits willing to engage in suicide attacks.

However, neither the nefarious tactics of the Taliban, nor the support they have received from elements of Pakistan's military-intelligence services, can alone explain their re-emergence. The Taliban is feeding on the failures of the Western-supported government of Hamid Karzai, in power since 2001. Under Karzai, corruption has reached unprecedented proportions, creating a much-resented stratum of wealthy officials. Despite \$15 billion in aid from developed countries since 2001, only 6% of the population has electricity, while half suffers malnutrition.

The ostensibly secular Karzai government has allowed fundamentalists to take control of the judiciary, and warlords to rule over much of the country. In many rural areas, opium cultivation has become an alternative to grinding poverty. As a result, Afghanistan now accounts for 90% of the world's opium crop. Perhaps most important, the U.S. has lost support because of the way it has conducted the so-called war on terror.

AMLO gave daily updates, in mass meetings called "informative assemblies" (*asambleas informativas*), on the progress of the effort to fight the election results. The entrance to the encampment had a banner over it proclaiming it the "Zocalo Commune" in reference to the 1871 Paris Commune. AMLO would come and go via the metro, as is his fashion. Overall it was characterized by a festive spirit, not one of defeat.

Despite having experienced another fraudulent election, Mexico may now be in a better position than other Latin American countries who have been successful in their attempts to elect leftist presidents. Rather than see the initiative for change in living conditions pass to the state, which has been leading to few concrete improvements elsewhere, there is no illusion in Mexico: the movement must either grow or succumb to Calderón's rule over the next six years.

It is not clear to anyone what AMLO's "parallel government" will mean. Some evoke the years 1858 to 1861 when Benito Juárez and his fellow liberals established their capital in Veracruz. Others see in AMLO a 21st century Francisco Madero, who defied Porfirio Díaz in the 1910 presidential election, was jailed for his efforts, and then called on his fellow citizens to rise up in arms against the state. AMLO appears to prefer the Juárez analogy. He alludes to him often, and he has scheduled the next reunion of the CND for March 21, Juárez's birthday. AMLO isn't calling on anyone to rise up in arms, but he is calling for mass civil disobedience. He readily acknowledges that this movement is currently his only recourse against a new PAN administration backed by the U.S.

## Palestine and Israel

Israel's disastrous invasion of Lebanon has overshadowed its ongoing attacks on the Palestinians of the Gaza Strip. Ever since June, when Hamas militants humiliated the Israeli army at a Gaza checkpoint, killing two soldiers and capturing another (who has still not been found), Israel has hit Gaza with bombs, missiles, and ground incursions. These attacks, which amount to the collective punishment of the Palestinian people and thus a clear war crime, have resulted in dozens of deaths, many of them of children.

As we wrote in the August-September *N&L*, the disproportionality of Israel's actions cannot be explained by the single attack they suffered in June. Their larger goal is to derail the compromise being worked out between the more secular Fateh and the Islamist Hamas, which won the last Palestinian election. In June, and now more recently, the two factions have come close to an agreement that would involve Hamas tacitly recognizing Israel's right to exist and agreeing to a Palestinian state comprised of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, in other words only the lands seized by Israel in 1967.

This is unacceptable to the present Israeli government, which wants illegally to hold onto East Jerusalem and major parts of the West Bank. Moreover, Israel fears that such an agreement among the Palestinians would make it impossible to continue to deny that the Palestinians are ready to negotiate. This is why, just as Fateh and Hamas again seemed to reach an agreement in September, Israel announced that it would build 700 more homes for Jewish settlers in the West Bank.

Will it go on, as in the past, to provoke the Palestinians with a new series of armed attacks? Perhaps. But Israel has been chastened by the Lebanon fiasco, and may now be in a position where it too is forced to negotiate seriously, not only over its captured soldier, but also over Jerusalem and the West Bank.

## 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.