

NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

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50¢

Powerless before greed



by Htun Lin

In California we are experiencing a disaster, a disaster causing layoffs, production shutdowns, traffic chaos and accidents, people stuck for hours in elevators, patients' lives endangered by medical equipment shutting off. For the foreseeable future California is going to be under the threat of rolling blackouts.

All this was caused not by a natural disaster but by the effects of the ideology of deregulation of the energy market. A collusion of sellers artificially withheld energy to boost prices up to sixfold. Now the two major utilities, Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) and Southern California Edison, are saying they are bankrupt. They are demanding a bailout with higher rates and state help.

PG&E Corporation had restructured itself with the approval of Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Its profits from electrical production are now shielded from the mounting debts of its regulated subsidiary.

In the 1970s the government called this kind of artificial shortage an embargo. Later, in 1989, it even went to war over oil in the Persian Gulf. Now the cartel is domestic and includes Texas energy giants like Enron whose CEO contributed a half million dollars toward their share in the Bush oval office takeover. In return, Bush blamed California by declaring California's crisis "a result of a faulty law."

Another example of a man-made crisis generated to increase profits, is an equally serious crisis in health care where I work. It has not received much attention during this energy crisis. Last December the money

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BLACK/RED VIEW

Dixon Colley (1914-2001)

We mourn the passing of Dixon Colley. His relationship to Marxist-Humanism was unmistakable in the chapter on the African revolutions in Raya Dunayevskaya's *Philosophy and Revolution*. This month I turn over my column to Ba Karang's "In memoriam" to Colley.—John Alan

On Jan. 16 the West African country of The Gambia lost one of her greatest sons in its political history, at age 87. William Dixon Colley will forever be remembered not only as an anticolonial militant, but also as the head of a newspaper, *The Nation*, which from the start of our independence was the only paper to express without fear or intimidation the voices of the oppressed people of The Gambia.

Pa Dixon was renowned for his stands in defending the truth and his many efforts to encourage young journalists to take up the fight. As a young student I was interested in writing poems and getting them published in his paper, but he went further than that. He introduced me to the works of his friend, the Hegelian Marxist-Humanist philosopher Raya Dunayevskaya, who visited him in 1962. Together they traveled over the whole country to meet and discuss with ordinary Gambians, trade union leaders, youth, students, and political leaders during the struggle for independence.

Dixon and Raya first met each other in London in the late 1950s and developed a close political relationship. There is no doubt that Raya had great respect for him. I cannot remember talking to a member of News and Letters Committees who did not know of Pa Dixon.

He would often tell me about "this remarkable woman" and said he wondered during her trip to Africa if she slept at all; whenever he thought Raya was about to go to bed after a full day of work, "she would jump

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ON THE INSIDE

FROM THE MARXIST-HUMANIST ARCHIVES—
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Far Right enters White House with 'President select' Bush

by Terry Moon

No sooner was he sworn in than George W. Bush outlawed funds for family planning clinics abroad which may offer abortions or counselling, showing his contempt for freedom of speech and guaranteeing untold more women's deaths from clandestine and self-induced abortions. This first act of his presidency bore the mark of the Christian Coalition.

Bush's elevation to the presidency by a reactionary Supreme Court will not pass without contradiction. Massive, furious, and multi-dimensional demonstrations greeted his coronation, not only in Washington, D.C. but in cities and towns across the country, including San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Tallahassee in Florida where a pattern of theft of Black and Jewish votes threw the election into contention. (See page 11 for reports.)

Even before the inauguration, demonstrations erupted like the 300 who rallied in St. Louis at the stone courthouse where 144 years ago the slave, Dred Scott, sued his owner for his freedom. That demonstration, against the racist, sexist Missouri ex-Senator John Ashcroft as Bush's choice for attorney general, was sponsored by a growing coalition of Black and women's organizations.

The rage of protesters over the usurpation of democracy sharply contrasted then Vice President Gore's conciliatory gestures. In his last days as president of the Senate, he attempted to quiet the furious Rep. Maxine Waters and Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr. and the entire Congressional Black Caucus which stormed out of the Senate's certification of the electoral college vote.

Record voter turnout by Blacks and women had turned state after state away from Bush. And as much as Bush tried to play to Black America with his "compassionate conservatism," few were fooled, least of all the Black masses. Nor could pushing forward a handful of Black, Brown, Asian, and women's faces make

people believe that this diversity of color and sex represented any diversity of thought.

RIGHT-WING AGENDA IN APPOINTMENTS

Never before has a president with absolutely no mandate acted in such contempt of the obvious will of the people, apparent in his choices for his cabinet.

(This arrogance was further driven home by the obscene excesses of \$30 million squandered on inaugural celebrations.)

Of course, Bush's choice of Richard Cheney as vice president during the campaign represented a bid to return the country to the retrogressive reign of Reagan. The connection to Reaganism as it was continued in the senior George Bush's administration is palpable as well, including in some appointees who had served under George's W's father. (See "The Gulf War and Bush, ten years later," page 12.)

In his selections can be seen Bush's agenda to free capitalism from all restrictions and crush any and all opposition, most especially workers and Blacks, but also environmentalists, youth, and feminists—all those forces who have come together to challenge globalized capitalism.

Capitalism's naked, werewolf hunger for limitless production, however, must be cloaked in some kind of acceptable ideology. Thus Bush has overlaid capitalist ambition with a retrogressive fundamentalist, so-called morality which uses the language of religion and is racist and sexist to its core.

• Bush picked Ann Veneman as secretary of agriculture, a proponent of global free trade and bio-technology, and Elaine L. Chao as labor secretary. Chao opposes affirmative action, believes that "self-reliance is the essential engine of success," and her "labor" experience consists of serving on the corporate boards of Clorox, Dole Food, and Northwest Airlines.

• Roderick R. Paige, secretary of education, is for the delusive "freedom" of school vouchers. As for his pledge that "no child be left behind," poor and minority children fail the standardized achievement tests that Paige and Bush advocate in disproportionately

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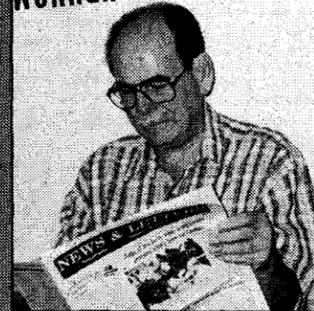
Kensington Welfare Rights Union leads the way in Washington D.C. anti-Bush inaugural march.

New!

THE REVOLUTIONARY JOURNALISM OF

Felix Martin

WORKER-PHILOSOPHER



THE REVOLUTIONARY JOURNALISM OF FELIX MARTIN (ISAAC WOODS)

"He reveals that it is much more than just a question of Black and white unity against the companies in the factory. What is involved is an understanding of the need for unity in order to make changes in our everyday lives."

— Charles Denby, Author of *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*

"I always read Felix Martin's columns with appreciation and trusted his voice."

— Adrienne Rich, Author of *What is Found There*

"A whole man, true to his class, true to his youth, true to his comrades and true to the next generation." — Rudy Sulenta, Local 216, UAW

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Women rally for just peace in Israel

Jerusalem—On Dec. 29, Israel saw the largest rally for a just peace that has been held since the outbreak of the intifadah three months ago...and it was a joint Israeli-Palestinian event. Women came in droves from all over Israel—Jewish, Muslim, Christian, and Druse. And despite the "closure" that Israel had imposed on the Occupied Territories, Palestinians also managed, by means only they know, to cross the Green Line and reach us.

The day began in the Notre Dame conference center located symbolically on the border of Jewish and Palestinian Jerusalem. The walls carried two huge banners in Hebrew and Arabic: Women Demand: No to Occupation - Yes to a Just Peace!

Women then took the podium one by one, Palestinian and Israeli alternately, to speak passionately of both the suffering and the determination to end the bloodshed between our peoples. This was a conference "of the people," but we were glad to see in the audience three Israeli Members of the kneset (Tamar Gozanski, Naomi Chazan, and Muhammad Barake) expressing their support for the grassroots work.

The translations into Hebrew, Arabic, and English allowed each woman to speak in her own language. I will just quote two: Michal Pundak-Sagie, activist in New Profile: Movement for the Civil-ization of Israeli Society, called upon soldiers to refuse orders that their conscience does not allow. And Zahira Kamal, leading grassroots spokeswoman in the Occupied Territories, declared that the principles of the Coalition of Women for a Just Peace provide a sound basis for peace between our peoples.

From the conference center, waiting buses moved the entire crowd to Hagar Plaza, the location of Jerusalem's Women in Black vigil, and an estimated 2,000 women filled the entire plaza and spilled over onto the side streets carrying the traditional black hand signs with "End the Occupation" painted in Hebrew, Arabic, and English.

Recalling Flo Kennedy

"If men could get pregnant, abortion would be a sacrament."—Flo Kennedy

The Women's Liberation Movement lost a founder on Dec. 21, when Florynce Rae Kennedy died at the age of 84. Flo was a Black women's liberationist when everyone said the women's movement was all white; she was an activist for gay liberation when lesbians were being vilified even by feminists; and she was a civil rights activist her whole life, from her experience growing up Black in Kansas City, Mo., and seeing her father, a Pullman porter, scare off the Ku Klux Klan with a shotgun when they threatened to chase his family from their home in a mostly white neighborhood.



I first encountered Flo at the very first national women's liberation action—the demonstration against the Miss America Pageant in Atlantic City, N.J. in 1968. You couldn't miss her and you couldn't forget her. No one knew how to wear pink better than Flo Kennedy and her flamboyant style and her witty put-downs became part of her trademark.

Kennedy became a lawyer as a way to fight oppression, but she had to fight oppression to do it: "Dean Willis Reese, a lanky man who talks with a lisp in a shrill voice and walks with a switch, hastened to assure me that I was being refused admission to Columbia Law School in 1948, not because I was black, but because I was a woman. I leaned on the ethnic angle, saying that some of my more cynical friends thought I was being discriminated against because I was a Negro (we weren't saying 'black' in those days), and in any case it felt the same. Law-school admission opened the door just wide enough for me..." By the early 1960s, however, she wrote that she began to have "serious questions...whether practicing law would ever be an effective means of changing society or even of simple resistance to oppression."

In 1966 she represented Black militant H. Rap Brown, and set up the Media Workshop to fight racism and sexism in print and TV, including advertising; in 1969 she, with other feminist lawyers, challenged the constitutionality of New York State's anti-abortion law, helping to overturn it the following year; in 1969 she helped represent 21 Black Panthers on trial for conspiracy to commit bombings. They were acquitted.

Throughout, she was active against the war in Vietnam. In 1971 she helped found the Feminist Party so as to nominate Shirley Chisholm for president; and in 1973, with Margaret Sloan, she founded the National Black Feminist Organization. In 1976 she coauthored one of the first books on abortion, *Abortion Rap*. She never stopped her thought and activism and lectured throughout the 1970s and '80s, despite a fused spine and other serious and painful health problems.

There is no question, as we face Bush in the White House, that Flo Kennedy will be terribly missed. Her incredible wit would have made mincemeat of George Dubya. She would demand that we do it without her. The struggle continues.

—Terry Moon

The extreme right did their best to provoke us and finally ended up exchanging blows with the police. They were overcome and moved behind barriers—out of sight, mind, and media.

At 2 p.m., the crowd poured out of the plaza every corner and sidestreet, we began our march toward East Jerusalem. Flying high were signs and banners saying "Palestine Side by Side With Israel—On the '67 Borders," "Jerusalem—two capitals for two states," "The Age of Generals is Over," "Fund the Poor, Not Settlers," and "We Refuse to be Enemies."

We finally all assembled in the park beside the ancient walls of the Old City of Jerusalem. Four brave young women took banners and climbed to the top of the wall from inside the Old City. From there, they unfurled four banners down the height of the wall saying "Shalom, Salaam, Peace" and "End the Occupation" in the three languages. The crowd roared its approval and the Old City was crowned the city of peace for one brief moment—until the soldiers assaulted two of the women and their banners. The women wisely threw the other two banners down to the crowd to save them, and probably themselves, too. But that was a great moment in modern history.

—Gila Svirsky

Deaths at Chowchilla

Oakland, Cal.—Since the unprecedented hearings at California's women's prisons last October (see November N&L), which brought a spotlight on inadequate medical care, one would expect the prisons to at least pretend to do better. It was with great alarm that we received reports of deaths at Central California Women's Facility in Chowchilla, some clearly from lack of medical care. In two months at least nine women have died, compared to 13 in all of 1998 and nine in all of 1999. Amnesty International has called for an independent investigation of the deaths.

In one case, Pamela Coffey's cell-mates called for help when she collapsed. Her tongue has swollen as a result of her condition. The guard, who was a Medically Trained Assistant (MTA), laughed as he walked out saying "I can't understand what she is saying. You can do more for her than I can." She received no help from him and died within a few hours. Several other deaths were also from unexplained causes.

The prison blamed the prisoners and conducted a disruptive search for "bad drugs," even though drugs weren't found in the autopsies.

A Madera County coroner's investigation concluded that Pamela Coffey, 46, "had a bad heart." She had been trying to get medical help since September. Yet her toxicology report showed that she received no medications of any kind. If she had a bad heart, shouldn't she been receiving medicine for it?

We still don't know what happened to others whose deaths are also unexplained. Even in terminal cases, the prison doctors are supposed to tell the prisoner when she has six months left to live, since prisoners are eligible for compassionate release.

Additionally, the prison's internal investigations found that medical staff in Chowchilla are guilty of rape and other "improper sexual conduct." They turned over cases of registered nurse Ossie Lee Shelton, MTA Brandon Lee Chang and Dr. Robert A. Bowman to Madera County prosecutors. Those cases represent a tip of the iceberg of sexual abuses in prison.

During the emergency hearings on Jan. 17 we called for legislators to recognize that the system of MTAs is not working and California Department of Corrections should not be trusted. Instead a community non-profit health organization should have independent access to prisoners to provide health care starting immediately.

—Urszula Wislanka

Women Worldwide

by Mary Jo Grey

The Committee in Defense of Iraqi Women's Rights is seeking worldwide support to end sadistic and barbaric actions against women. At least 60 women accused of prostitution were recently beheaded by the government and their heads publicly displayed at the entrance of their homes.

—Information from *We!*, Isis International

A new activist organization called Students Active For Ending Rape (SAFER) is working to combat sexual assault on U.S. college campuses through the reform of sexual assault policies. They maintain that current policies retraumatize rape survivors and do little to educate the campus community.

Hundreds of women, girls, men and boys marched in Blantyre, Malawi, Dec. 8, to condemn violence against women. The march was part of a two-week marathon protest which included Patricia Shanil Mulzi, the wife of the country's president.

—Information from *off our backs*

New Book IN FRENCH!

La Femme et L'Industriel: Travailleuses et Ménagères en Colère dans la Révolution Industrielle

A collection of writings by such feminists as Susan B. Anthony, Louise Michel, Rosa Luxemburg, and including a translation of Raya Dunayevskaya's 1970 essay "The Women's Liberation Movement as Reason and as Revolutionary Force"

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Queer Notes

by Suzanne Rose

Wanda Jean Allen, a 41-year-old Black lesbian, was executed on Thursday, Jan. 11, by the state of Oklahoma. She became the first Black woman executed in the U.S. since 1954. She was convicted of killing a childhood friend and later murdering her lover, whom she had met in prison. A last minute stay of execution, argued on the basis of her low IQ, was denied Thursday morning by Governor Frank Keating, an ardent death penalty supporter. A Federal Appeals Court and the U.S. Supreme Court also refused to stop the execution.

About two dozen people, including Jesse Jackson, were arrested for trespassing during a protest outside the prison where Wanda was being held. One supporter in Illinois spoke of the difficulty in getting attention for Wanda's case. "She's a Black, female lesbian and even among activists who claim to know better, she's not considered important enough. It's sad that so many people have never heard her name. We want Wanda Jean Allen to know she did not die alone."

'Comfort' women speak out

Over 50 years ago, when she was 14 years old, Chinese woman Iwa Na was violently taken from her home while washing clothes. She was brought to a cave where five Japanese soldiers took turns raping her. When she escaped, she was found and hung in a tree and beaten until unconscious. As she awoke, she found herself in the same cave and endured the same fate as before, as a "comfort woman" for the Japanese military.

Iwa Na stood up before the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery in Tokyo, Japan, and demanded that justice be brought to the thousands of comfort women who suffered as she did.

Iwa Na said that when the war ended, "We were left roaming. We were miserable. I am angry!" Most comfort women could not bear children or tell their loved ones of their forced prostitution due to fears of becoming a damned woman.

From Dec. 8-12, the Tribunal heard testimonies from two ex-Japanese soldiers, experts on Japanese history and international law and comfort women from China, the Philippines, Taiwan, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Indonesia, and East Timor. While experts have gathered mounting evidence since 1991 to prove military involvement in comfort stations, the Japanese government denies responsibility.

Ex-soldiers testified that they were encouraged to go to comfort stations to deter rape in the battlefields. But, one of them exclaimed, there was still "rape in the battlefield. In enemy zone we were told we could do what we want to do, so we raped." The other ex-soldier stated that the Japanese military "told us to kill children and women, because children grow up and will kill." He told of raping a woman who had smeared feces on herself to deter him. He raped her nonetheless.

According to Ms. Gay McDougall, UN Special Rapporteur on systematic rape, there were over 200,000 comfort women enslaved by the Japanese imperial army and government. Only in 1992 did the Japanese government decide to deal with this issue. This was only due to the courageous women who spoke out about their abuse, forcing the world to open its ears. The government set up an Asian Women's Fund, but the money comes from private donors. However, most of the former comfort women see this as a way for the government to evade responsibility, so they refuse to accept the money.

Instead, the women have organized internationally to expose the reality of violence against women worldwide.

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More batteries, less workers at Exide

by David Sheldon

Exide Technologies, a major producer of automotive and industrial lead-acid batteries with \$3.2 billion in annual revenues and operations in 19 countries, is a leader in developing increased profits at workers' expense. Over 300 were recently laid off at its North American facilities as part of an effort to save \$24 million and eliminate a number of unionized workers on its payroll.

I recently completed a two-month tour of an Exide plant in Burlington Iowa, which manufactures batteries for DaimlerChrysler. If Exide has its way, the local union there will be nothing but history.

A few months ago the company held a 45-minute "conference" at the end of each shift in which it said that if production numbers did not go up, waste by-product go down and quality of batteries improve, then they would lose the contract with DaimlerChrysler and everyone would be laid off. Not surprisingly, everyone said they heard similar threats in the past. But many workers felt this time they may close the plant as a way to eliminate unionized workers at the facility. Shortly afterwards, I was laid off—just days before completing my probation.

This has been a scary time for new hires, since they fear being dismissed if they refuse to outperform sea-

soned workers. At the same time, unionized workers attempt to make sure new-hires fail at any attempt to outperform them. Plant managers love this "Termination Game" since they can use the new worker to get out more production from unionized workers.

I was hired to place plastic caps on batteries or "pods" and place date stickers on the side, if the type of battery required it. I started the job with only one full day of training and found my position required a cluster of job duties on equipment I had no idea how to operate. Both co-workers and shift foremen had no problem yelling at me for every little mistake, whether the cause was related to my job performance or not.

This was in addition to outdated equipment we had to work with; most of the machinery is nearing 20 years of constant usage and a crew of maintenance personnel is constantly repairing broken machines just to keep the lines running at full speed.

They work you pretty much to death until you are close to the end of your 60-day probationary period. Then at the end of your shift they tell you "it did not work out" and "we do not need your services anymore." This happens a lot, usually on a weekly basis. Plant managers do this just before the health insurance and other benefits kick in. I have heard this happened to at least 30 new-hires in the last four months.

In addition, Exide has just laid off other unionized workers—supposedly because the number of product orders is down. Whatever happened to the backlog of orders they used to always talk about?

As it stands Exide is still operating in Burlington, and I am sure it is up to something new in the field of increasing profits. It's capitalism at its best!

Too few workers still too many for Canteen

Chicago—Every day you hear of more shutdowns and plant closings around Chicago, with tens of thousands of workers losing their jobs. Here at Canteen they laid off just one worker in the warehouse, and we are outraged about that, because we were already short-handed.

In the past year or two Canteen has failed to replace warehouse workers who left or transferred out, so overtime has become a near-daily part of the job with a full crew. Whenever anyone called in sick or went on vacation, the hours became downright hellish. Laying off one more worker makes every day and every week a crisis of fatigue and long hours. If they don't mind paying us time-and-a-half, we must be way underpaid at straight time.

There was enough criticism of the permanent two-tier wage for hourly workers that it was eliminated in the current contract signed two years ago, raising the pay of the most recent hires by about \$3 an hour. The company officials who ordered this senseless layoff, whether they were local or at the North Carolina headquarters apparently justified it as trying to shuck off pension contributions and other benefits rather than the wage itself, even though this young worker had very little chance of retiring from Canteen.

Route drivers have long complained of similar treatment. They deliver to food services at factories and other companies, both vending machines and cafeterias. If drivers have routes they can do in 45 hours, then route supervisors break routes up until they can't. Shoddy service is bound to lead to lost customers, but the company doesn't think that far ahead. They forget they make money off us and act instead like labor is an expense.

—Warehouse worker

Workshop Talks

(Continued from page 1)

managers at Blue Cross could not come to an agreement on a reimbursement rate for health care provided by the Sutter chain. Sutter has so consolidated health care in the Bay Area by incorporating financially troubled hospitals like Alta Bates and Summit into their chain that they have become the "PG&E" of health care in northern California. (See "Mass California hospital strike," August-September 2000 N&L)

This dispute between two levels of health care finance management caused the disruption of health care for hundreds of thousands of northern Californians. Many patients now have to trek 50 miles to the nearest contracted provider. It has been clear to us health care workers, fighting managed care's restructuring for the last decade, that all these crises and shortages have been manufactured. They come out of an ideology based on relations between things, commodities and capital, and not people.

In health care they eliminated hospital beds, closed emergency rooms, and denied care as much as possible. Their shortages were manufactured to increase profits. To workers, both health care and energy are basic life necessities for survival and not mere commodities for investor speculation.

STATE OWNS DEBT ONLY

Many leftists are now excited because the virtual bankruptcy of California's two main utilities means the massive involvement of the state, which they hope will take over ownership. Even capitalists are for "socialism" when they are bankrupt and want a state bailout. That will mean the bankrupt companies and all their liabilities, as well as the new extorted energy prices, will be the responsibility of California workers and consumers through taxes and higher utility rates.

Restructuring has allowed PG&E's parent company to stash away its profits while the state bails them out. Separation of the utilities from the financial centers extracted huge surplus value from workers by controlling production and supply while pressuring for even higher consumer rates. Similarly, restructuring in health care allowed the HMOs to make huge profits while hospitals and providers are financially strapped, causing staffing shortages and service cuts.

No doubt the "flaw" which energy CEOs and Bush see in the deregulation law is the rate cap which hinders further price increases charged to consumers. There are consumer advocates like Harvey Rosenfeld from Nader's group who similarly see a "flawed deregulation plan." They merely blame the utilities for having written it. We are already paying in real life consequences when the lights go out or when hospitals have to close, and we will keep paying.

WILL WORKERS CONTROL?

Beyond state ownership or consumer advocacy is the question: will workers have control of their work to provide for human beings as the first and last priority? Only workers can get beyond the attitude that what is objective is "bond ratings" and intercapitalist "credit ratings" instead of human needs and our own ability to fill those needs.

The recent collapse of the energy system as well as the health care crisis here gives us a glimpse of just how capitalism, carried to its logical conclusion, will self-destruct, taking a huge human toll along with it. Workers built these utilities. Workers run these utilities. We know they are absolutely necessary to life.

No law that either regulates or deregulates will abolish the abuses we are facing. No law will abolish capital and the logic of the social abstraction, value, that drives this behavior. The so-called free market is regulated according to the dictates of capital and its need to expand, and to increase profits even to the point of its own demise. Only workers together, taking control of their own labor, will allow us to get beyond these recurring crises of capital.

Nike plant reprisals



News & Letters

Chicago—Fifty anti-sweatshop activists gathered in front of the Michigan Avenue Niketown store on Jan. 27 to protest an anti-worker campaign at an apparel plant in Mexico. Workers at the Kukdong factory in Atlixco, Mexico, are experiencing severe reprisals for a walkout they undertook in early January. 85% of Kukdong's production is Nike brand apparel.

Organizers of the protest said that the striking workers, who walked out over low wages and management's failure to deliver a Christmas bonus, were attacked by riot police on Jan. 12. Fifteen strikers, including a pregnant woman, were sent to the hospital. Two days later, management fired the strikers.

The demonstrators passed out flyers highlighting the workers demands: that the company union currently in place be disbanded, that all fired workers be rehired, and that management recognize the independent organization the workers have formed. An organizer said that seven activists were arrested for distributing inside the store.

—Kevin Michaels

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Facing Aramark at SBC

Detroit—I am sending you a letter that outlines the current struggle with Aramark at the phone company in Detroit. Many of you know that we at RWDSU Local 1064 have many contracts with Aramark which include decent pay, good pensions, health care benefits and sick and vacation days.

The difference between this location and the others is that the entire crews at the phone company are African-American women. We are negotiating a first contract here and Aramark has thus far refused to budge on important issues such as pension benefits, sick days, vacation days and wages.

The union seeks the same working conditions and benefits as their European-American counterparts get in other locations such as GM, Ford, Chrysler, etc. The phone company, which is Aramark's customer, is the most profitable in the country and this caterer is among the largest in the world. We seek your support in these negotiations. Your ideas are welcome!

Elena Herrada, representative, RWDSU Local 1064 and Keith Phelps, President, Local 1064

We work in the cafeterias of the phone company, SBC (formerly Ameritech and before that Michigan Bell). Many of us have worked in these cafeterias since the mid-1970s. The average wage is \$7.00 per hour. Our current employer, Aramark Corporation, came in to run the cafeterias at Ameritech in 1998.

Under the previous employer we had a union contract and benefits. Aramark wouldn't settle with us and took away important parts of our seniority rights, all of our sick days, our life insurance and health care policy. High seniority employees had enjoyed four weeks of vacation. Aramark cut everyone to one week. Time away from our work with family we had earned through our many years of service was snatched away by this new company.

In over two years of being our employer Aramark only gave a 30-cent-an-hour increase, and that came only recently as an attempt to bribe us against voting for union representation. We really earn less than a living wage. We have no sick days and people come to work sick because they can't afford to miss a day's pay or to pay for a doctor, because we have no health insurance coverage for ourselves and our family members.

This unfair situation we experience exists while we work for one of the largest food service companies in the world contracting with the most profitable and biggest telephone company in the United States! We are now fighting to reach a fair new deal with Aramark through our union.

We seek full medical benefits for ourselves and our family members, decent wage increases, paid vacation reflecting our years of work at the phone company facilities and restoration of our paid sick day benefits. Please support us and join our campaign to gain justice and a fair contract in return for our hard work.

—Vernette Chester-Harp, Chief Steward, Downtown Detroit and Sherry Williams, Southfield SBC Cafeteria

We won a contract that gave modest wage increases, health care benefits, sick days and most importantly, a pension. The workers will be able to receive their past years of service after two years in the pension fund, which is the centerpiece of this important victory. Without the coalition that supported the crew, this contract would never have been won.

—Elena Herrada, Jan. 26, 2000

From the Writings of Raya Dunayevskaya
MARXIST-HUMANIST ARCHIVES

Editor's note

Black History Month 2001 is an important moment in which to view the historic-philosophic contributions of Marxist-Humanism for the ongoing efforts to uproot this racist, sexist, class ridden society. For this reason we here publish excerpts of a Perspectives Thesis presented by Raya Dunayevskaya to a national convention of News and Letters Committees in 1963, just after the pamphlet *American Civilization on Trial* had come off the press. The speech was entitled "The Need to Transform Reality." We here publish excerpts of Parts 1 and 4 of the talk. The original can be found in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, 3279. All boldfacing and titles of subheads are in the original.

August 1963

The totality of the opposition between the world of the ruled and that of the rulers is bound to explode.

The question is: what will allow the collision of the two worlds to result in a reconstruction of society on other, on human beginnings? Can the future inherent in the present evolve without a theory? And, if not, where is the theory that will converge with the practice of the millions?

Naturally, we think it is Marxist-Humanism. But we must put its analysis of what is, as well as the organizational form of what is to be done, to the test.

The task is to see that, when the collision occurs, the action truly transforms reality, instead of merely "chalking it up to experience," aborted attempts, stillbirths, unsuccessful revolutions and even successful ones that still did not continue into a new viable social order on a world scale.

Consider the new epoch which began with the great Russian Revolution of 1917, and resumed, but only to die an early death, with the Spanish Revolution of 1937. Or the age that began with the CIO [Congress of Industrial Organizations] in the United States and ended with the Resistance movements in Europe during World War II. Or the era that began with the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, dying in Russia's Europe, but coming to life on the African continent in the very same year of DeGaulle's rise to power. Far from being thrown backwards, this continued into the Africa Year, 1960, which is also the year of the great youth demonstrations in Japan. Everywhere today we see undercurrents of revolt. In the United States this assumes open forward movement in the Freedom NOW struggles of Negroes.

This, too, however, has now reached the crossroads. Isn't it imperative that, whether we begin with the Freedom NOW movement that is presently being pressured by the Kennedy administration whose hands have been freed a bit by his nuclear co-aspirant for world power—Nikita S. Khrushchev—or whether we take the youth movement in distant Japan, the dialectical relationship of object and subject be not restricted to the objective world and the mass force but is inclusive also of small groupings like News and Letters Committees? Philosophically, politically, organizationally, this indeed is the nub of the matter.

All history teaches us that, for want of a unity of theory and practice, there have been altogether too many unfinished revolutions, and none more unfinished than the Civil War in the United States—plus the hot-house kind of bureaucratization of the CIO.

Whether we use the word, organization, in the sense of Wendell Phillips who considered the gathering of a half-dozen men in one room discussing how to change reality as thereby signifying the first act of revolution; or we use the word, party, in the Marxian sense of an organization disciplined by a theory of liberation, and therefore distinguishing itself from the masses as a whole in two respects: 1) in place of only the immediate interests of the proletariat, it holds aloft their historic interests, and 2) in place of the national viewpoint, it puts forth the international one; the point is that a grouping that is the "knowing" of the mass, its historical, international and theoretical receptacle so-to-speak, must come to grips with the need to be more than "a reflection" of the world.

It is this which Lenin grasped when he viewed the outbreak of World War I and the collapse of the Second International. It led him to an entirely new concept of praxis, practice in the theory of knowledge ("in the theory of knowledge" was underlined by Lenin as he read Hegel [in 1914] and made this crucial generalization: "Cognition not only reflects the objective world, but creates it"). The truth that we are trying to express for this period, for our era, is this: Freedom can be achieved only if men understand their experience and will to transform reality....

'LOWER AND DEEPER'

All of philosophy consists in making explicit what is only implicit in the objective movement of history. An objective view of historical development of necessity reveals the subjective, the human force which will be the one to realize the forward movement of humanity. In the case of the United States it was the Negro.

Such a methodology guided Marx's actions. Instead of despairing when the British trade unionists left the First International at the time of the Paris Commune, Marx further concretized his concept of the revolution-

ary role of the proletariat with the new view of going "lower and deeper" into the class—the unskilled rather than the skilled; the newly-arrived in the city rather than the bourgeoisified ones; the oppressed minorities—the Jews, the Irish, the East Indians—rather than upper rungs who gain from capitalist-imperialist exploitation.

It is not an easy concept to grasp. It wasn't when Marx first said it. It wasn't for nearly a half-century thereafter. It took World War I and the collapse of established Marxism in the Second International before Lenin "found" and fully understood that expression, "lower and deeper," and then only with the help of the Hegelian dialectic and its concept of development through contradiction, via the route of the unity of opposites, of self-development.

Once Lenin understood it, then and only then did he fully understand the empiric facts. Then and only then could Lenin build on that foundation the theory of the aristocracy of labor as being integral to monopoly capitalism. This on the one hand. On the other hand, came the driving necessity to destroy the state structure, root and branch, and with the new form of organization, of the self-mobilized masses—the Soviets—have the party aim to end division between mental and manual labor.

NO VANGUARD ROLE IS 'FIXED'

It is this, just this, that led Lenin to write: "Cognition not only reflects the world but creates it." The party, as the "knowing" of the proletariat, would prove itself by aligning with these masses. It wasn't that the party "guided them"; it was they who pushed the party forward, and it is they who found a need for "this knowing." When the separation of party and mass, and knowing and action re-entered the scene with the conquest of state power, the party and the revolution were both doomed.

Let's go back to the vanguard role of the Negro. Vanguard is not yet the whole. The Negroes do need the collaboration of the white workers, and not only because the latter are the majority while the American Negroes are a minority, but mainly because the proletariat, too, is a vanguard and at the very point around which all else in society revolves—at the point of production. No vanguard role is ever "fixed for all time." Only with the vanguard party's transformation into opposite—the monolithic party of Stalin, Khrushchev, Mao—did such a concept arise. It became "fixed" along with totalitarian power.

This, precisely, is why with our very first unique theoretic contribution—analysis of Russia as state-capitalist totalitarianism—we insisted, at one and the same time, on the concept of new forms of workers' revolts. And we pointed to the class nature of Stalinism rather than only its bureaucratization as the root cause of monolithism in "the party."

This, precisely, is why, once we made explicit all that was implicit in the theory of state-capitalism and workers' revolt and returned to philosophy, we achieved the full circle—Marx's original Humanism rather than yet one other form of vanguardism.

RELATIONSHIP OF PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE

"Cognition not only reflects the world, but creates it." To work this out fully, from every vantage point, including those we cannot even see, is the task of this generation.

That the youth not only here, but throughout the world, and especially so in Japan, precisely in the country where you cannot possibly accuse the youth of inactivity, keep probing for the philosophic foundations discloses yet another distinction between our organization and the party in the old vanguardist sense.

It is this: when a fundamental fact of man's existence eludes him, when he cannot penetrate through the objective and yet does not wish to turn to external forces to explain it away—be they gods, fetishisms, or vanguard party—he digs deep down to find the meaning of his actions.

This is the pivotal significance of philosophy. It is neither a mythology, nor metaphysics, nor an illusion. As Herzen saw it over 100 years ago, "Dialectic is the algebra of revolution." And Merleau-Ponty added 100 years later, "Philosophy is the algebra of history."

In a word, the search for philosophy, the attempts to work out this "algebra of history and of revolution" is

The uniqueness of Marxist-Humanism

the act of realizing it. The young Marx may have sounded idealistic when he said that it was not enough for theory to tend to reality; reality must also tend to theory. But he meant something very practical: the proletariat taking hold of philosophy.

This is why I entitled this report "Transformation of Reality." This is not only the lifeblood of theory, of methodology, of the dialectic, it is life itself.

It is the life of the proletarian rebelling against his conditions of labor and life and overthrowing these conditions which degrade him.

It is the life of the youth rebelling against a world they did not make but are willing to reconstruct on new beginnings.

It is the life of the minorities, and in America this minority is the Negro, but it is every oppressed minority anywhere from the Jews to the American Indians, from the Germans or the Poles or Hungarians in the Russian Empire to the non-Han minorities in China.

And transformation of reality requires that we recognize our special role in all actions we undertake—be they in the Freedom NOW movement, or in the trade unions (both against the labor bureaucrats and those like the Trade Union Leadership Council who would compromise with them) or in youth organizations, or functioning on our own, be that the theoretical and/or practical fields. Let's see how these relate this very moment to the March on Washington as the culmination of all the Negro struggles since the Birmingham events in May. What has transformed it from a March on Washington for "Jobs and Freedom," to one for "redress of grievances"?

First came a pause in the USSR-USA Cold War (whether you wish to consider it from the point of view of realigning their different orbits, or, more important, the intensifying of the class struggle at home). Our resolution centered around it, warned of the dangers of the Negro leadership stopping far short of the full aspirations of the Negro masses, criticized white labor for its passivity in this, and we at once went to press with a second edition of *American Civilization*

where this is also spelled out by asking people to join News and Letters Committees to continue in the full tradition of Abolitionism and Marxist-Humanism....

Just as a foundation, even a solid one, is not yet the whole house, so a comprehensive theory which we alone have in Marxist-Humanism is not yet the organization, the people who alone can put it into effect, while the process of so doing will act toward their own self-development.

The uniqueness of Marxist-Humanism lies also in this: that despite all theoretic contributions and singleness of purpose in achieving total freedom, it asks to be "taken over" by the masses, to be subjected to the daily and long-range tests, so long only as the unity of theory and practice, worker and intellectual, technologically backward and technologically advanced economies, all merge in order never to stop short of "the ultimate": the new society, the new human dimension, the incorporation within the individual of all of his mental and manual talents....

It is now up to us AS AN ORGANIZATION, which neither lays claim to "vanguardism," nor has illusions of substituting itself for the mass, to see that our uniqueness is made known, our isolation ended, our coalescence with the mass movement a fact which will help in the creation of a truly new society on truly new beginnings. That is why I wish to end on the note sounded in our Resolution:

Organizational consciousness begins with the realization that none of these analyses, whether in book or pamphlet forms, in newspaper, or Political Letter forms, are "for themselves." It is conceit to think so. No one can build an organization when they underestimate the reason of the masses to grasp our philosophy organizationally.

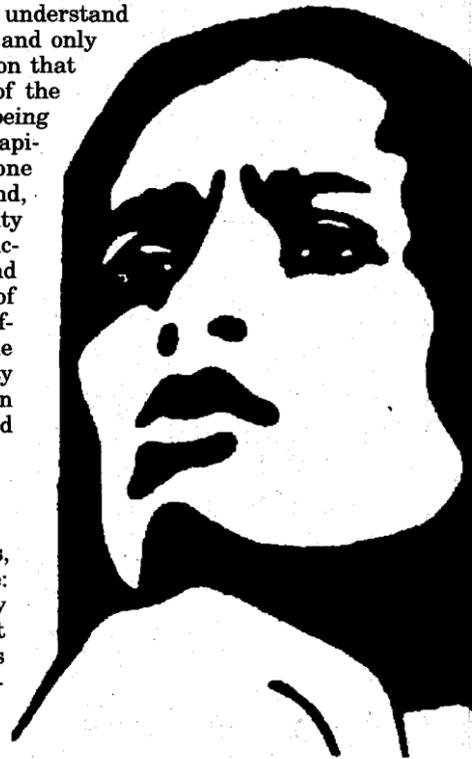
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ESSAY

The idea of freedom in Black history

by John Alan

A unique character of the body of ideas of Marxist-Humanism is that it has developed a considerable amount of material showing that the thoughts and activities of African-American masses in their long struggle for freedom in the U.S. are unseparated from the idea of freedom for our age.

This body of ideas, which is found in the Archives of Marxist-Humanism, *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection - Marxist-Humanism: A Half-Century of its World Development*, does not separate African-American movements from other struggles for freedom, whether it be for the rights of labor and women or against U.S. imperialism. In other words, Marxist-Humanism has uncovered how the African-American dimension has placed the whole of American civilization on trial and found it guilty.

Today's globalized capitalism also means we cannot ignore the international dimension of the Black freedom struggle. In the 1983 *Introduction to American Civilization on Trial (ACOT)*, Dunayevskaya recounted the points of affinity between her philosophy of Marxist-Humanism and Frantz Fanon, especially his focus on "the absolute" and what "philosophic thought teaches us..." (p. iv) Marxist-Humanism has done a great deal to show what philosophic thought teaches us about the African revolutions.

TWO WAY ROAD BETWEEN U.S. & AFRICA

Dunayevskaya's *Philosophy and Revolution* revealed that "revolution in permanence" and "absolute negativity as new beginning" are the crucial philosophical concepts which brought the African revolutions to a crossroads. On the one hand the leaders, burdened with the consciousness of backwardness, chose the pathway of technological development and the world market, while the masses on the other hand wanted to create a totally new non-exploitative society.

When one reads about Dunayevskaya's trip to Africa in her political letters of the 1960s, which later became the foundation for chapter 7 of *Philosophy and Revolution* on "The African Revolutions and the World Economy," it becomes clear she was deeply involved in this conflict between the reasoning of masses and the thinking of the leaders. She discovered this division by going to meetings in the villages to hear the voices of the masses and by interviewing the leaders. She wrote in *Philosophy and Revolution*:

Despite the instant mass mobilizations and the search for new humanist beginnings that would unite philosophy and revolution, theory and practice, which was by no means limited to intellectuals but was a need most urgently felt by the masses themselves, we must soberly face the present bleak reality. For just as these revolutions reshaped the map of Africa in less than a decade, they just as rapidly reached the crossroads. Thus, though the revolutions emerged from deep indigenous roots, without capital of any sort, and by their own force and passion and reason achieved their political emancipation, independent of the 'East' as well as the 'West,' after gaining power they did not remain quite so externally 'nonaligned.' (p. 217)

The African masses began to suffer a new phase of exploitation and domination by world capitalism. Today, many see the bleakness of the reality Dunayevskaya spoke of in the 1960s. Our job is to make sure that what doesn't disappear is her sharp focus on the need for a philosophy of revolution which would objectify the idea of freedom in the reasoning of the African masses.

A NEW UNITY OF THEORY AND PRACTICE

Dunayevskaya's philosophical and practical engagement in global freedom struggles cannot be separated from her 1953 philosophic breakthrough on Hegel's Absolute Idea as containing both a movement from practice and a movement from theory. It resulted in the breakup of the Johnson-Forest Tendency in 1955 and the birth of News and Letters Committees, a Marxist-Humanist organization.

Central to the 1953 breakthrough was "the philosophic capacity to recognize the genius of the masses from below in a way that records the movement from practice as itself a form of theory" (*25 Years of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S.*, p. 5). To practice this principle, at our founding Charles Denby, a Black production worker, became the editor of *News & Letters* and Dunayevskaya became chairperson of the Editorial Board.

This personification of a unity of practice and theory created an unusual kind of radical newspaper with the added dimension of race. It happened during a momentous time. Workers in the U.S. and behind the so-called iron curtain were spontaneously organizing and demanding new human relations both in production and in society as a whole.

The Marxist-Humanist Archives contain the history of these revolts from the workers' point of view, revealing that battles against automation were organized by rank-and-file workers outside of the bureaucratic structure of the union leadership. Black workers

played a prominent role in those strikes both as activists and thinkers. Among them was Denby.

Dunayevskaya first met Denby in 1948 when he was well-known in Detroit as a leader of wildcat strikes. As she wrote in her moving In Memoriam to Denby in 1983, "The speech I heard him give on tenant farming in the South and factory work in the North was far from being a political speech. Listening to him, you felt you were witnessing an individual life that was somehow universal, and touched you personally."

Dunayevskaya recalled exciting moments when ideas were exchanged back and forth between her and Denby. What she described was nothing less than a concretization of the absolute idea, the unity of the movement from theory with the movement from practice which is itself a form of theory. The unity created new directions in the thinking of both Dunayev-

ed spontaneously with the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955-56 had a historical connection with the 19th century Abolitionist Movement that ended chattel slavery. The Civil Rights Movement terminated President Hayes' infamous 1877 decision to stop Reconstruction and return absolute political and economic power to the former slave owners.

For the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1963, Marxist-Humanists decided not to let that history of revolution and counterrevolution remain outside of the new social consciousness. Yet there was no immediate connection between the 19th century Abolitionists and the movements of the 1960s. A mediating connection was developed through a specifically Marxist-Humanist recollection of the development of the idea of freedom in the U.S.

For Dunayevskaya the objective power and presence of the idea of freedom is a Universal which emerged in both the mind of a leader of a 19th century slave revolt, Nat Turner, as well as in the greatest dialectical philosopher, Hegel.

As important as the idea of freedom is, and has been in the development of this country, why is it that today you hardly hear it in the opposition to today's global capitalism? We hear a lot about inequality, unemployment, sweatshop jobs, the criminal (in)justice system, etc., but what happened to the vision of the full and free self-development of the human being?

How did that recollection in the tremendously condensed summary we call *ACOT* lead to our concept of the objectivity of the freedom idea?

Dunayevskaya saw the Black struggle as central to the whole American Revolution, i.e., as integral to every important historical breakthrough. As she wrote in *25 Years of Marxist-Humanism*:

Black masses [are]...vanguard precisely because it's impossible to separate them from any part of American history. Black masses in motion were revealed as the touchstone of the whole of American development, whether one took 1776 as the point of departure and showed the Declaration of Independence in its true limited light, i.e., that it meant independence for whites only; or the 1830 Abolitionist movement when the white intellectuals did gain a new dimension by joining with the Blacks to carry on a 30-year struggle that culminated in a Civil War; whether one took America's plunge into imperialism with the 1898 Spanish-American War, when the Blacks were the first to establish an Anti-Imperialist League and demonstrate their affinity with Latin America; or whether one brought it all the way to 1963. (p. 11)

Our problem today is not that a new objective development of capitalism has made the vanguard character of the Black struggle to the whole American development an outmoded idea. As our Marxist-Humanist Perspectives Thesis for 2000-2001 puts it: "What can help bridge the gap between today's anti-globalization protests and the legacy of revolt born from the Los Angeles rebellion is the Marxist-Humanist concept of Black Masses as Vanguard of the American Revolution."

Our task is bringing to the fore the underlying philosophy that made possible such a profound recollection of the role of Black masses in the development of the idea of freedom.

Dunayevskaya didn't consider the parallelism between Black and labor struggles as an insurmountable barrier. She wrote, "Only when these two great movements coalesce do we reach decisive turning points in U.S. development." This speaks to the need to bridge the gap between anti-globalists and those fighting the criminal (in)justice system today. What is needed to bridge that gap is the "unifying philosophy" of a "new Humanism" specifically "Marxist-Humanism."

We can't find this unifying philosophy only in points of affinity with the mass movements. Even with someone as great as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the Freedom Now movement, Dunayevskaya was not uncritical. She criticized Dr. King for making his great statement on the need for an "I-thou" relationship which doesn't "relegate persons to the status of things" into an "impersonal ethic rather than the living mass movement, the point of creative origin and forward march of humanity." She criticized the Freedom Now movement to the extent that it limited itself to "the immediate demands of segregation and not to the ultimate of total freedom from class society."

Yes, she praised the Garvey movement for proving that Black masses could organize themselves, but she critiqued that movement "because they didn't have a total philosophy and because they were so frustrated, where did it all end? 'Back to Africa.' It was fantastic. They were all Americans. This is where they had labored all their lives." This critique from her speech to the 1969 "Black/Red Conference" was part of an effort to get us to see dialectics as a dimension of the coalescence of different forces.

Only by moving away from dialectics as a crucial dimension of coalescence could it be suggested, as it

expand your reading list for

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

by exploring these three crucial Marxist-Humanist works!



American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard
Statement by the National Editorial Board of News and Letters Committees
\$2

Nationalism, Communism, Marxist Humanism, and the Afro-Asian Revolutions
by Raya Dunayevskaya
\$1.25

Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal
by Charles Denby
Wayne State University Press,
\$14.95

To order, see lit ad, page 7

skaya and Denby.

Denby told the story of the inhumanity of automation in pamphlets like *Workers Battle Automation* and in his Worker's Journal column in *News & Letters*. He wrote many articles on race and class struggles inside and outside the auto plants. The range of his columns included stories about wildcat strikes, how the union bureaucracy participated in the writing of sell-out contracts, the relation between automation and unemployment in the Black communities and his own activity in the Civil Rights Movement. He wrote on the crucial dimension of race in America's freedom struggles and on the importance of philosophy to articulate the meaning of his own and the movements' activities. Today's activists would do well to reconnect with Denby's way of recollecting the meaning of the freedom struggles during his lifetime.

BLACK MASSES AS VANGUARD

American Civilization on Trial is not a large document. The 1983 edition, which includes Denby's appendix "Black Caucuses in the Unions," is only 39 pages. In spite of its small size, *ACOT* is an original development of the philosophy of Marxist-Humanism.

When *ACOT* first appeared in 1963, Martin Luther King, Jr., stood at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D. C. and addressed 250,000 people. He told them that 100 years after Lincoln had signed the Emancipation Proclamation, African Americans were still not free. He said: "The Negro is still badly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination, [still living] on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity." But he still had a dream "that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal.'"

Now, if Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream has not materialized after 37 years, then racism needs to be recognized for what it is—a social manifestation of American capitalist society. Yes, racism has been modified by a century of mass movements, the enactment of civil rights laws and Supreme Court decisions, but, like classism, it cannot be uprooted apart from its social origin and development in American capitalist society.

This brings us back to *ACOT* and Marx's concept of "revolution in permanence"—that is, the need to not stop at political emancipation.

FROM POLITICAL TO HUMAN LIBERATION

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s that start-

(Continued on page 10)

THE ELECTIONS AND AFTERMATH

I read that a Zimbabwean politician was quoted as saying that children should study the U.S. election event closely because it shows that election fraud is not only a Third World phenomenon. To illustrate the point he is said to have continued: "Imagine that we read of an election occurring anywhere in the Third World in which the self-declared winner was the son of the former prime minister and that this former prime minister was himself the former head of that nation's secret police/intelligence agency. Then imagine that the self-declared winner lost the popular vote but won based on some old colonial holdover from the nation's past known as an 'electoral college.' Then imagine that the self-declared winner's 'victory' turned on disputed votes cast in a province governed by his brother; that the nation's most despised caste had turned out in record numbers to oppose his candidacy; that his party opposed a recount of the ballots in the most hotly disputed district..."

Greetings from one banana republic to another!

**Observer
Ecuador**

The reactionary majority of the Supreme Court is already acting more boldly since their decision on Gore and Bush. They just struck down some wetlands regulation as an infringement on states' rights. Just as in the Gore-Bush decision, it was with no basis in law. Where Gingrich's Contract on America failed legislatively, get ready for judicial deregulation.

**Franklin
Memphis**

When I saw George W. Bush described as a "dauphin" in referring to the fact that he was the son of a former president, I looked it up and found two definitions. One said it was a name assumed about the middle of the 9th century by a lord of the French province of Dauphiny. A second definition was more relevant for us today—it traced the term to the eldest son of the King of France prior to the Revolution of 1830. I wonder if the selection of executioner Dubya may prove to be the spark that ignites that piece of coal which represents the inert mass of the working class today. (By "inert" I mean in the sense that Marx said the working class is revolutionary or it is nothing.)

Scientists can tell us the combustion point of coal, but no one can predict when the working class will arise and fulfill its historic mission. The process of combustion will be greatly aided by the bellows of newspapers like *News & Letters*.

**Retired postal worker
Battle Creek**

Florida was not the only trouble-spot. There were problems all over the country. Some were due to deliberate disenfranchisement, others to simple incompetence. In Detroit we had excessively long waits and mass confusion because the voter rolls had been prepared not by the city but by the Republican Secretary of State—who then turned down the city's request to extend polling hours, claiming that a three-hour wait was not an impediment to voting. No? Just ask the senior citizens who had summoned all their strength and resources to come out and vote that day!

**Angry voter
Detroit**

Robert Taliaferro's column, "If prisoners had vote" (December 2000 N&L), showed how important the disenfranchisement of prisoners is. I shudder to think what Bush will do about prisoners' other rights now that he's in power and knows that they would have defeated him in election 2000.

**Doug
Memphis**

I am a Christian, but it sizzled my ears to hear the closing prayer at the inauguration refer to Christian beliefs as if those are the only ones that are held in this country. It shows the kind of Administration we will be facing in the next four years.

**Concerned activist
Detroit**

It was obvious that the Christian Coalition was directing the hand of the brand new President George W. Bush when he signed his first edict, just a couple of hours after taking the oath of office, declaring Sunday as the day of worshipping God. It shows the direction he intends to steer the nation. I thought there was something in the U.S. Constitution about the separation of state and religion. Although he declares he wants to be the president of "all Americans" it must have skipped his attention that besides the Christian Coalition there are a number of other religions in the U.S. who don't worship their God necessarily on Sunday. Some worship on Saturdays, some on Fridays, some don't worship God at all. The State has no business in the bedrooms of its citizens and should have even less role in their spiritual life. Officially he may be the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, but seems to want to be the Führer of the whole nation.

**Giorgio
Vancouver**

Who said, "I'll put an end to the idea that a woman's body belongs to her... The practice of abortion shall be exterminated with a strong hand"? John Ashcroft in 2001? No, that was Adolph Hitler, 1925.

**Women's liberationist
Memphis**

The Supreme Court selection of George Bush was a coup by gavel. As you pointed out, it was the second coup attempt in the past two years. The Right is not deluded by bourgeois propaganda about democracy and went all out for the kill. What is the point of holding more elections if votes count only when a court says they should? Freedom of speech, of assembly, of religion, to petition for redress are all gone unless it suits the powers. What we're dealing with are Banana Republicrats in office everywhere!

**Ana Lucia Gelabert
Texas**

As Dick Gregory stated in the D.C. protest, this is not the first time in American history that fraud has been perpetrated in the election process, but it's the first time that it's been revealed to a large segment of the public.

**Protector
Los Angeles**

The recent corrupt happenings in Florida and the elevation of the masses' awareness has made the time ripe for something new. A good case could be made that we are ready for a pure democracy, without representatives. The reason the framers set up a representative form of government is because of the great distances to be traversed by horse-power and the logistics of having everyone attend meetings at the same time. We are now in an age where the barriers of time, distance and space can be overcome with the internet, interactive television, cell phones and faxes. I can visualize running a government by the people by live simulcast and the Web. Instead of "Who Wants to be a Millionaire" how about "Who Wants to Run the Country?" Problems could be put into question format with multiple courses of action and have people select what they think is the correct solution. It's a scary concept, isn't it? Think this will ever happen? My guess is no. Those in power would fight to hold onto their power and put the whole concept into suspended animation in the courts for years and years—using our tax money to do it.

**Michael Caddy
Nebraska**

How did they dare, at the anti-abortion rally in Washington, to call that king of executions a "life-affirming President"?

**Outraged
Tennessee**

Bush and the Far Right Republicans who now control all three branches of the federal government are not thieves in the ordinary use of the word. A com-

READERS' VIEWS

mon thief steals to take some of the benefits of society's production, including food, and if caught is sent to prison. Bush and his big time backers stole with impunity, not only the vote of the people but world power.

**Basho
Los Angeles**

People who are hailing Tommy Thompson, tapped by Bush to be Secretary of Health and Human Services, as some sort of non-partisan messiah, need to be reminded that he is the one who worked out the deal with Bush to send several hundred Wisconsin prisoners to Bush's prisons in Texas. It was the first private prison for profit contract and led to Wisconsin becoming the leading exporter of prisoners to private prisons throughout the U.S. I know a lot about it because I was imprisoned in Wisconsin, and am making money for Tennessee.

**Prisoner
Tennessee**

The repeated message of the inauguration was that this was a "peaceful" transfer of political power from the Democrats to the Republicans. It was all to hide the serious mass discontent over the election and conditions of life in this country. The reality of the "peaceful" transfer is that it means no fundamental change in the policies and practices of the two old capitalist parties.

**Black journalist
California**



Felix Martin, 1974

**FELIX
MARTIN
WORKER
THINKER**

It was a sad moment when I learned about the death of Felix Martin. I learned many ideas from him. I learned that Marx was a philosopher, not the vulgar economist I was told he was when I was active in one of the vanguard parties. I learned that Marx's economic concepts were also philosophical.

Felix had a spontaneous and frank way of expressing his ideas. He was the proletariat of the future society. It's why, although he died as a person, his ideas live on. Many intellectuals and the so-called Marxist-Leninists should learn from him and discover how a simple factory worker was able to comprehend the most profound philosophic and economic thoughts.

**Revolutionary Worker
Anaheim, California**

I have just read Felix Martin's book. What a tremendous development as he went on living and learning. In November 1992 he wrote: "I would give anything to have known about the counter-revolution within the revolution as a young worker..." I too look back on my life and fervently wish someone way back there would have presented an alternative dissenting view. It has been a gradual struggle for me to grasp these ideas and only relatively successful in the last few years since I have had time to read. I can now understand why so much has been kept from us and still is. There is so much in Felix Martin's book that is helpful in that search.

**Freedom seeker
Wisconsin**

THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE IN THE PHILIPPINES

The Chicago Coalition to Oust Estrada voiced their support of the people of the Philippines who sounded off the call

to the international community, proving once again that the power of the people is a mighty force for social change. In the Philippines over a million people gathered at the Edsa Shrine where back in 1986 another anti-people regime was toppled. Joseph Erap Estrada was given an ultimatum and resigned as President, while V.P. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo was sworn in. At the support meeting in Chicago, speakers not only addressed the current Estrada scandals, but the deeper issues concerning the plight of the Filipino people, including the Visiting Forces Agreement, debt cancellations, freeing political prisoners, and the question of national industrialization and land reform.

**Revolutionary
Chicago**

**FOR
ROSA
LUXEMBURG
AND
KARL
LIEBKNECHT**



It was moving to read that over 100,000 people walked to the memorial in Friedrichsfelde Cemetery in Berlin on Jan. 15 to honor Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht who were murdered by the German Freikorps on that day in 1919. The Freikorps turned out to be the precursors of the Nazis. The demonstration takes place each year bringing together pro-revolutionaries from all over Germany to honor Luxemburg's and Liebknecht's courageous opposition to World War I.

There were really two demonstrations. The one in which about 10,000 working class and anarchist revolutionaries took part attracted a large participation from Turkish and Kurdish marchers this year. In the other, there were 90,000 marchers, most of them from the former German Democratic Republic, called out by the Party for Democratic Socialism, the only pro-socialist party in the German Bundestag.

**Correspondent
California**

PALESTINIANS AND ISRAELIS

The Israeli media blame Palestinians hysterically for wanton terrorist acts against innocent Israeli citizens. They forget basic facts of life in the Gaza Strip: More than a million Palestinians live there in horrible, overcrowded conditions, lacking even water. Israel has taken away 20% of the land and of the water of the Gaza Strip, and gave it to 6,000 settlers who live in comfortable houses, surrounded by gardens and swimming pools while Palestinians' drinking water is over-salted and those who can afford it drink only mineral water. Many illnesses of their children are due to the salty water. After the fiasco of the peace talks, there is no more hope of the settlers getting out with peaceful means. Sadly, it seems as if the Israeli government will withdraw those settlements only after it has become too costly in Israeli lives. It is why I feel that the worst time is still in front of us.

**Naomi Eden
Israel**

When I read the article "We Refuse to be Enemies" in the December issue, I remembered watching on TV Ted Koppel's town meeting in Jerusalem where men from both sides contested each other while women from opposite sides listened to each other and urged peace. But the war has never stopped. The Israeli and Palestinian women who wrote that appeal have my full support for the nine acclamations they made. I want to ask the world to listen to women who are true to real life.

**Student
DeKalb**

**THE
CRIME
OF
PRISON**



The authorities are coming up with all types of new laws, rules and programs to play mind games with us. I don't know if prominently stamping on the envelopes of all our outgoing mail "This correspondence is from an inmate of the Illinois Department of Corrections" is an attempt to cut us off from the people outside of these walls, but I do believe it is an attempt to get some people not to write to inmates. Cutting us off from outside communication is an attempt to take total control of our lives. Most people believe that if the prison officials are not beating us with sticks or gas or guns, we are doing good and have no right to cry about the mental attacks that aim to kill our minds. We have more than a few walking around behind these walls in a state of open madness.

**Prisoner
Illinois**

As of September 2000 all Illinois prisoners are forced to pay \$2 before receiving non-emergency medical or dental services. Only chronic illnesses or emergencies are exempt. Now, anytime a prisoner gets a cold or sprains an ankle, \$2 is snatched from his "trust fund" account. Historically, prison hospitals have never been good providers of health care for prisoners who have frequently been used as "guinea pigs" for experimental medicines. Prison doctors think Tylenol/Motrin cures everything. To add insult to injury, prison hospitals, are not even adhering to the entire House Bill 4331 for Corrections which states that prisoners who are indigent are exempt from paying the \$2. Since when has forcing prisoners to pay for medical care been an objective for rehabilitation? This is just another example of the very poor getting even poorer.

**Tiberius Mays
Illinois**

The hard work that went into the December issue was very much appreciated, especially the article by D.A. Sheldon, "Few jobs on outside," on what it is like getting out of prison, and the new "Behind Prison Walls" feature. I think it is difficult from a European perspective to understand the reactionary and complex factors you are dealing with.

For some time I have been urging N&L to devote more space to the arts and poetry. A number of substantial artistic contributions have been made by a wide range of ex-prisoners here in Britain. One play that came out of the prison experience led to the abolition of the death penalty in the UK. It would be good if N&L helped lead a similar revolt.

**Pat Duffy
England**

WHY IS N&L NEEDED?

N&L is the only paper covering what is going on in Aceh. It is shameful that the genocide taking place there can go on without a worldwide outcry. N&L is the conscience of the Left.

**Terry Moon
Memphis**

**HUMAN RIGHTS
AMERICAN STYLE**

January marked the 10th year since the Gulf War, which the U.S. is still carrying on against the people of Iraq through its inhuman economic sanctions. What many Americans may not know about is the contaminated water many Iraqis have to drink because the county has not been allowed the means to restore its water purification systems, destroyed during the 42 days of allied bombings. There has been increasing international pressure to lift the sanctions, but the U.S. voice on the Sanctions Committee has continued to veto requests for spare parts to rebuild the water treatment infrastructure in Iraq. In Chicago, over 100 gathered for a procession from the Federal Building to the Sun-Times and the Chicago Tribune, carrying black coffins and white lanterns. What was most important was talking to people watching as the procession wove

through the streets to tell them what the demonstration was about.

**Anti-war activist
Chicago**

Despite all his words about racial unity and healing historical injustices, President Clinton turned his back on a chance to give Leonard Peltier executive clemency. On International Human Rights Day, thousands of people demonstrated for Peltier's release, and during Clinton's last days in office White House phone and fax lines were flooded with calls from ordinary people and human rights leaders alike. Appeals came from Coretta Scott King, the SCLC, Amnesty International, Rigoberta Menchu, Desmond Tutu and from Native nations and organizations throughout the country.

It is not only that Leonard Peltier has been imprisoned for 25 years without ever getting a fair trial but that he has been denied a new trial on a technicality despite the fact that the judge admitted a strong doubt has been cast on the prosecution's case. Even that judge supports clemency.

Peltier's conviction came out of what has been called the Pine Ridge Reign of Terror in which the FBI was deeply involved 25 years ago. The demonstration by hundreds of FBI agents we recently witnessed, demanding that Clinton not pardon Peltier, made me wonder what new kind of reign of terror may be ahead of us now.

**Human rights activist
Illinois**

**MORE DUMPING
BY JEB BUSH**

Remember that barge full of Philadelphia's incinerator ash that has been sailing the oceans for the past 15 years because no country would accept its waste? It will finally come ashore. Having dumped African-American and other votes, and having dumped his brother on the U.S., Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida has said he is more than happy to let the ash be dumped on Broward County.

**Environmentalist
Memphis**

**A
WORKING
WOMAN'S
LIFE**



The lurching economy is already hitting working women hard. Women in low-wage non-union jobs who have managed to balance work, transportation and child care on the head of a pin are finding their hours cut and the whole structure tumbling down. The cutbacks in auto have affected my neighbor, a single mother who works for a company that cleans industrial plants. Her company lost some major contracts with auto companies and subsidiaries and she got a lot fewer hours between Thanksgiving and the end of the year. She works midnights in a Coney Island restaurant to cover her bills, because she has school-age children who need her during the day. Needless to say, she is always short on sleep.

**Women's liberationist
Detroit**

**HOW DO WE GET
TO SOCIALISM?**

I recently discovered your website and have been avidly reading some of your articles. I know you consider the "socialist" countries as state-capitalist and I agree with that position. But what do you propose as a transition to socialism? What is your program for socialist revolution and construction? Please send me a sample copy of N&L. I'd like to subscribe so I can find out.

**New Reader
Islip, New York**

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Views from the Inside Out

Effects of DNA profiling

by
**Robert
Taliaferro**

Later this year it will be possible for African Americans to have a sense of where their ancestors came from on the continent of Africa. This will be made possible through the use of DNA profiles.

Over the past few years, since DNA testing began, innocent prisoners have been proved innocent through the use of DNA, and the guilty have found that the evidence against them can be overwhelming.

In June 1998, all 50 states codified laws that authorized law enforcement in the state to operate criminal DNA databases, and to place their DNA profiles into the FBI's national database.

As with any new technology, abuses of the system should be considered. After genetic samples are taken, what happens to them, or the profiles garnered from them? In Pennsylvania the profiles are maintained for 50 years and in Massachusetts they are maintained in perpetuity. In Illinois even a finding of innocence will not allow the expungement of DNA profiles.

In DNA sampling of felons—regardless of the degree—not only the felons themselves are sampled, but so are their family members. In giving African Americans an opportunity to find their genetic roots in Africa, genetic scientists note genetic markers that are indicative of peoples in a specific area of the continent.

It only stands to reason that the same genetic markers that can track the roots of an ancestor hundreds of years back, can certainly track a brother, father, sister, son, daughter, or aunt in the next city, county, or state.

With over two million people currently confined, and several million more on parole or probation, it does not take an actuary to figure out the numbers involved who—through the DNA profiling of felons—will also be profiled as well.

In Britain, the country that first used DNA profiling to solve crimes, it is estimated that 30% of the male population may be eventually profiled. Additionally, law enforcement in Great Britain often requests voluntary DNA sampling to help them solve crimes if a genetic sample is not profiled in their DNA database. Other European nations have similar policies.

Such actions on a national level violate the basic principles of privacy. They tend to criminalize the guilty and innocent alike, and offer still another aspect of control over the proletariat...for who will suffer from such profiles? The union members arrested for disorderly conduct; the students who march against social injustice; the person of color arrested because they drove in the wrong neighborhood and got lost...and how long will it be before a company, like with mandatory drug and alcohol testing, requires each employee to submit to DNA profiling before they are hired?

Experiments within the prison industrial complex always find a way to trickle down into mainstream society. Electronic monitoring, now used in some companies to track their employees—and their productivity—first was used to track the movements of prisoners under intensive sanctions in the community.

A widespread use of DNA profiling, despite some of its obvious advantages, if not monitored closely, becomes another controlling factor that others can use to further define the commodity value of not only prisoners but workers in the community as well.

In time, especially with advances being made in

Rally for Mumia

New York—In one of the largest actions in solidarity with Mumia Abu-Jamal to date, about 1,000 New Yorkers filled the Mother AME Zion Church in Harlem in December. They called for a new trial and freedom for Mumia, a Black political prisoner who has been condemned to death for allegedly killing a white cop in Philadelphia. The solidarity meeting was preceded by a march from the Upper West Side to Harlem.

The diversity of the audience was noteworthy. Blacks and whites gathered together in equal numbers, joined by many Latinos and Asians. The audience was young, middle-aged, and old; female and male.

Organizers of the meeting stressed that protest alone will not lead to Mumia's release; those who are committed to the struggle must know the facts, so that we can convince the not-yet-committed that he was framed and deserves a new trial. An educational video was played, in which Veronica Jones, whose testimony was instrumental in securing Mumia's conviction, confessed that she had perjured herself.

Another notable moment came when Leonard Weinglass, Mumia's attorney, announced that the U.S. Supreme Court had issued a stay, less than an hour before, halting the recount of the vote in Florida. This was the first of two crucial decisions in which the court, by a 5-4 majority, made George W. Bush the president-elect. The Supreme Court's action revealed to the public at large "what you and I have known for a long time": the judicial system is not independent nor above politics. In Mumia's case, the political connections of judges and political pressures have been operative all along, said Weinglass. Judge Sabo, who sentenced Mumia to death, is a former law enforcement official and remains a member of the Fraternal Order of Police.

—A. Anielewicz

genetics, the commodity value of workers may well be defined by such genetic profiling, whether it is known, or unknown. That profile might determine whether or not one is genetically capable of doing a job; whether one is a good insurance risk; or whether one might be prone to a criminal act, simply because they match the genetic markers of a person who was once arrested.

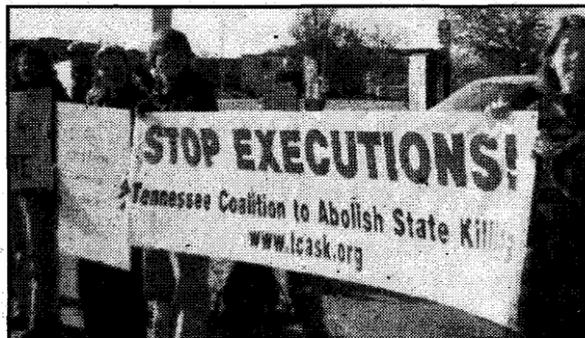
Some might feel that a necessary consequence of more viable means to protect the public might dictate some compromises of basic freedoms; in so doing, they lull the public into a false sense of security that such compromises will not be abused. But if history teaches us nothing else, it should teach us that the voluntary forfeiture of any right at all, will soon lead to the mandated forfeiture of all rights without distinction. Commodities in a capitalist society have no rights.

Wrongful conviction

On Jan. 30, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear Philip Workman's appeals on Feb. 16, giving him a stay of execution. —Editor

"When they execute me [it will not be] because of what the evidence shows, but because I'm not innocent enough." Philip Workman, Oct. 3, 1999.

Memphis, Tenn.—An important type of wrongful conviction occurs when a person guilty of one crime is convicted of a more serious offense. This is the situation of Philip Ray Workman, scheduled to be executed in Tennessee. Despite the fact that the evidence indicates he did not kill Memphis Police Lt. Ronald Oliver,



News & Letters

no court has granted him relief.

Everyone agrees that on Aug. 5, 1981, Workman robbed a Wendy's restaurant in Memphis. When the police responded, there was a struggle between Oliver, Workman, and Officer Aubrey Stoddard, at the end of which Oliver was dead, Stoddard was wounded, and Workman had fled the scene.

Workman had .45 caliber silver-tipped hollow-point ammunition. The police had .38 caliber ammunition. The state maintained that Workman deliberately shot Oliver, killing him with a gunshot to the chest. Workman's attorneys argued that Oliver was killed by friendly fire from an officer at the scene.

Workman's attorneys made no effort to investigate whether Workman had killed Oliver. Workman's appellate attorneys have demolished the state's case against him. What the jury never knew is that when the .45 caliber hollow-point bullets in Workman's gun exit the body, they leave large exit wounds. The exit wound in Oliver's body was smaller than the entrance wound. Two noted pathologists concluded that Oliver's wound was far more consistent with the ammunition used in the police officers' guns.

Harold Davis is the only witness who testified to seeing Workman shoot Oliver. In the fall of 1999, Davis admitted that his trial testimony was perjured.

Last spring Workman's lawyers learned that the Shelby County Medical Examiner had an X-ray of Oliver's body, which they previously denied existed. The X-ray showed the bullet had not fragmented in Oliver's body, which explained the small exit wound. This finding supports the argument that the bullet had not come from Workman's gun. His lawyers asked for a hearing on this, but the appellate courts have refused.

The daughter of Lt. Oliver requested clemency for Workman, stating that she believes her father was killed by friendly fire. Several of the jurors asked the governor to grant clemency. A prominent Tennessee victims' rights advocate supports clemency, and Workman's clemency defense team is headed by a former D.A. from Shelby County.

—Margaret V.

Racial injustice

Holly Springs, Miss.—We in the Black community have been trying to deal with the case of the dragging and beating of Willie Roy Foster by a white man, George Hunsucker, for some time. We think that the trial has pretty much come to an end. We were hoping for more, but we got about as much as we expected.

The judge sentenced Hunsucker to five years, with two years suspended, for leaving the scene. Due to a hung jury, he was not convicted of aggravated assault. We expect his lawyer or the district attorney to appeal.

Right now people are discouraged. We feel this is an example of a system that's supposed to be a justice system, not bringing justice to a case where this man had clearly brutalized Mr. Foster and left him in the ditch to die. Had someone not found Mr. Foster, we wouldn't be talking about aggravated assault. We'd be talking about murder. A person who does something like that should receive more than three years in jail.

I can only think of listening to Bush's inaugural speech and how hypocritical it is. He talks about justice, and he realizes that there are still places where people have perceptions that justice does not exist.

Well, here's a clear example of where justice does not exist, where a man has been brutalized by another person, and the person who did it walked around free and now he's received perhaps one of the lightest sentences that could be given for something of this nature.

We of the Marshall County NAACP will be exploring our options to see how we can influence a more appropriate sentence for the crime that was committed by Mr. Hunsucker. We're not satisfied at all with what has been handed down by Judge Henry Lackey. Willie Roy Foster will never be the same. He has a lifetime sentence in his condition.

—Kelvin Buck

Black/Red View

(Continued from page 1)

on her typewriter."

Dixon's life as an activist dates back to his role as an African student opposed to British colonial rule and ideology. When he tried to return home after a visit to London, his passport was confiscated by the British Home Office. His case was fought out in the British Parliament before he was able to get his passport back and return home.

Dixon always said he never had any political ambitions—he was never going to become a prime minister or whatever, he was going to be a journalist. But he was not only a journalist. One of his most exciting experiences was his visit to the liberated zones in Algeria during the liberation struggle of the 1950s.

Among his close acquaintances were those who didn't read his newspaper. They were workers, market women, ordinary people who were not able to read or write, but one would always read the minds of these people in his paper. Dixon said that to be a good journalist one has to be good at listening to the ordinary people.

Dixon helped the market women organize themselves, he gave advice and help to women gardeners, worker activists, students and youth. He offered them an exchange of ideas. When the Organization of Revolutionary Students, a clandestine group, ran into printing difficulties, he put the office of *The Nation* at its disposal.

If it were not for his stubbornness to stick to principles, much of the history of the Gambia Press Union (GPU) would never have been written. Dixon sacrificed a lot of time and energy to make the GPU not only a recognized union but also an instrument to further the interests of journalists. The GPU will come to miss him.

Dixon deposited his archives at the National Library, and there is no better place to learn and write about the political history of the country. The political history of The Gambia will be incomplete without Dixon and *The Nation*.

It was not accidental that two great people like Raya and Dixon knew each other. Pa Dixon will be missed by many, but he has contributed a great deal in creating the grounds for continuity—a very important factor in his political life. Join us in mourning the death of this great man.

—Ba Karang, The Gambia

Support Damian Williams!

Los Angeles—Damian (Football) Williams is the young man who was convicted in the Reginald Denny beating case during the 1992 Los Angeles Rebellion. Damian served five years in prison and ever since his release on parole, the 77th Street police station, an even more notorious part of the LAPD than the infamous Rampart Division, has been after him to try and put him back in prison. They have stopped and harassed him on many different occasions.

On July 19, 2000 Damian went to the 77th Street station to clear his name because he heard he was accused of a crime. When he got there he was arrested and accused of "shooting Grover Tenner in the back during a drug deal gone bad."

Later in August, a Tyron Killingsworth was arrested and accused of being the shooter and Damian was then accused of conspiring with him to rob Tenner. Now

Damian is charged with first degree murder as an accomplice to Killingsworth while in the process of a robbery. If convicted, he would face the death penalty.

We are in need of your assistance in defending Damian. He is not guilty of this crime, and was only visiting the sister of the deceased, a childhood friend. He did not rob or kill anyone. It is part of the continuing harassment of the LAPD 77th Street police station.

The costs are high, so please help us to fight for justice for Damian Williams. We need to be able to make the strongest possible case for Damian's freedom. Please send your donations to Faith Christian Fellowship, 400 E. Palmer Ave., Compton, CA 90220. Make your tax-deductible check payable to "Faith Christian Fellowship." Our heartfelt thanks.

—Pastor Payne Le Vias, Judy Tanzawa,
Georgiana Williams
Committee to Defend Damian Williams

Editorial Mexico's 'opening'—to what?

The new Mexican administration of Vicente Fox has used its first two months in power to claim that Mexico is experiencing a "nueva apertura," a new opening, after 71 years of single party rule. Jorge Castaneda, the new foreign minister culled from the ranks of leftist academicians, wants his country to open up to the UN and take a more active international role. Felipe de Jesus Preciado, commissioner of immigration, wants to open the doors to foreign observers, especially those who engage in, as he calls it, "guerrilla tourism" in Chiapas. Carlos Maria Abascal, secretary of labor, speaks of a "new labor culture" in which "class struggle has ended," to be replaced by dialogue when "conflicts of interest" arise.

But in a recent talk given to a group of industrialists Fox tried to encourage their interest in peace by saying once it's achieved they will have won themselves a new land, full of natural resources and cheap labor, where they can place new maquiladora plants. On Jan. 13, on his weekly radio show, he went so far as to claim with regard to the Zapatistas (EZLN), whose 1994 rebellion in Chiapas shook



Members of autonomous community, Chiapas

Mexico to its foundations, that he will "steal subcommandante Marcos' voice" when he fulfills the EZLN's three conditions for resuming a dialogue. These include release of EZLN prisoners, troop pullback from seven specific camps, and a constitutional amendment on indigenous rights and culture. Four days later he travelled to Chiapas, providing his country with an amazing spectacle.

The night before his arrival 400 soldiers destroyed and abandoned the "Roberto Barrios" army encampment. That brought to four the number of bases evacuated in the past three weeks, leaving three more to meet the EZLN demand. By the end of his stay, Fox pledged the others will soon be vacated also.

No less incredible was the nationally televised interview Fox initiated on his first day in Chiapas with Maria Nuñez Ruiz, an indigenous Tzeltal woman who berated the army and demanded they exit their communities "because they've only come here to make us suffer all the more. Before we didn't know what a soldier was, what prostitution was. Now, thanks to them, we have that experience." Fox answered by saying his government has a debt to pay the marginalized and

needs to "replace the soldiers with jobs." So far he has also released some of the Zapatista political prisoners and sent the 1996 San Andrés accords to Congress for debate and, supposedly, passage.

It's easy to expose what the Mexican press has called the "zig-zagging" in this former Coca-Cola executive's sincerity. One day in January, for example, he insisted the EZLN must lay down its arms in order for a dialogue to resume, a favorite line of the former Zedillo administration. The following day his spokeswoman struggled to explain that he merely meant this as an "invitation" to do so. He has also refused to recognize the existence of the fascistic paramilitary groups that work in tandem with the army.

Fox's "vision" for Chiapas's future is the total opposite of the autonomous control spelled out in the San Andrés accords. Not by coincidence, President George W. Bush's first foreign trip will be a Feb. 16 meeting with Fox in San Cristobal. But it should not obscure the fact that we are indeed witnessing an opening, an opportunity for new mobilization on the part of campesinos,

workers, and solidarity activists.

The Zapatistas plan to take advantage of this by marching to Mexico City Feb. 25 to present their case to Congress. This is an event we must support in all ways possible, for it will reveal much about where this movement is at in one very crucial respect: its relationship to the urban working class.

Whether Fox will be able to use the Zapatistas to further his own image as a populist reformer, or whether the Zapatistas will be able to use Fox, revolves around whether workers see the need for a coalescence with the indigenous/campesino struggle.

The seven years since the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has been in effect have produced levels of poverty, both rural and urban, not seen since before the 1910 Revolution. Capital has thus done its part to foster the needed coalescence.

Whether revolutionaries can now deepen their critique of capital to the point Marx did where he revealed the "new passions and new forces" that alone can reconstruct society on a new human foundation is what must be worked out. This is what our solidarity with the "other Mexico" must reach for.

Chicago toxic racism

Editor's note: Below we conclude an interview which began in the December 2000 N&L.

Chicago—On Oct. 31 an 11-acre site in our neighborhood was rezoned for industry. They want to put a plastics factory next to our homes. We proposed MRC/Prima Plastics build their factory either at Pulaski and 35th which is an industrial site, or at the Pilsen Industrial Park where there are no houses nearby. Alderman Muñoz said, "no," flat out without looking into it.

Alderman Muñoz would still have the 75 jobs in his ward that he wants if the factory is built at these other locations, but he looks at it as a done deal. It's easy; he has a buyer and the support from the city. Now he can say, "re-elect me, I got you jobs." But the people see this as racism because we need libraries, parks, and recreational facilities for our children and they're trying to build a factory.

MRC/Prima's 75 jobs, at just above minimum wage, aren't going to help the underemployment problem in our community. A library or park or recreation center would serve a lot more people. We actually have a plan for the 11-acre site to be turned into a park.

What they're doing is a clear violation of our civil rights. We rank as the third most contaminated area in the Chicago metropolitan area's 90 communities. We received a grant three years in a row from the EPA to get rid of the contamination. We have a city waste management transfer area here a few feet away from houses. It receives 1,500 tons of garbage a day. We have the Crawford coal burning electric station here which releases 18 million pounds of sulfur dioxide into our community every year.

Ninety-five percent of the people here are of Mexican-American descent. They are robbing us of developing our minds and our children's. They're going to benefit from our hard labor and our talent. We are enraged! There are explosions and fires time after time in plastics factories. A couple of months ago in Richmond, Cal., at the most advanced plastics factory, an explosion and fire killed one person, injured 200 and 12 schools were shut down. We don't want the same for our community.

—Alma-Iris Montes, Little Village Environmental Justice Organization

Depleted uranium

Western Europe is in an uproar over the mounting death toll from "Balkan syndrome." Fifteen soldiers who served as peacekeepers in Kosova and Bosnia—where more than 40,000 rounds of U.S. munitions containing depleted uranium were fired—have died of leukemia, and thousands more suffer from a variety of disorders similar to the Gulf War syndrome.

The U.S. and Britain shot down their NATO allies' demands for a moratorium on use of the radioactive ammunition. They proclaimed that depleted uranium never hurt anyone—aside from those who were blown to bits or burned alive inside tanks and buildings whose walls were vaporized by uranium-tipped shells.

Experts were trotted out to "prove" that it was "biologically impossible" for depleted uranium to cause leukemia. This claim went up in smoke when a UN study found eight of 11 sites tested in Kosova to be "considerably contaminated," and emitting beta radiation. Unlike the alpha radiation given off by uranium 238—the only radioactive substance the experts assumed was in the munitions—beta particles can penetrate bones, causing leukemia.

The UN study—which was delayed 18 months by NATO non-cooperation and whose full results will not be known until March—also found traces of uranium 236, which is far more hazardous than U-238. Soon the Pentagon was forced to admit that plutonium, which can kill even in minute amounts, and other highly dangerous elements were found in the supposedly depleted uranium. The Pentagon knew this a year ago and never warned its allies, or the public, until now!

So great is the public outrage that after the NATO cover-up several European countries embarked on their own studies of the sweeping health problems of their former peacekeepers, and the European Parliament called for a halt in the use of depleted uranium munitions. Britain even had to reverse its refusal to screen its soldiers for medical problems.

Still, what about the effects on people who live in the bombed areas of Bosnia and other countries? A UN study last May concluded that Kosova groundwater may be so contaminated as to be unfit for drinking. Children and adults have unwittingly collected bits of radioactive shells, and dairy cows graze in contaminated areas.

And what about Iraq, where radioactive debris from the 1991 Gulf War still contaminates the land and water? Doctors there report a massive increase in leukemia, which they attribute to depleted uranium. The U.S.-led embargo denies Iraq the medicine to treat the illness. Also, U-236 has been found in the urine and bone tissue of some Gulf War veterans. And just as the military tried to deny there even is a Gulf War syndrome, there is not one word, much less a study, of what is happening to workers who produce, pack and load these shells.

Capitalism's anti-human nature is revealed even in its technological advances, creating weapons that keep killing a decade after the shooting stops.

—Franklin Dmitryev

The current political situation in Ukraine

Kiev, Ukraine—The current political situation in Ukraine is characterized by sharp fighting between two bourgeois clans: that of President Leonid Kuchma and oligarchical Ukrainian monopolists (Alexander Volkov, Grigoriy Surkis, Viktor Pinchuk and so on) vs. Prime Minister Viktor Yushchenko, who represents the interests of American monopolies and their satellites—the IMF/WTO and NATO. It is very important to present for workers and youth a Marxist analysis of these events.

The victory of bourgeois President Leonid Kuchma in the elections of November 1999 clearly demonstrated the weakness of the so-called left camp in Ukraine. Post-Stalinist presidential candidate Petro Simonenko (of the Communist Party of Ukraine, CPU) was unable to unite wide masses of workers and youth in the struggle against the capitalist system. Ukrainian workers correctly don't believe Simonenko's slogan that the Soviet Union was a socialist society. Memories of the gulag, the KGB, Stalinist repressions and the non-effective bureaucratic pseudo-planned economy under the old regime is too fresh in their minds.

Various kinds of Social-Democrats—such as Alexander Moroz (Socialist Party of Ukraine, SPU) and Vasyl Onopenko (Ukrainian Social-Democratic Party, USDP) as well as leaders of the radical populists like Natallya Vitrenko (Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine, PSPU)—also weren't supported by the Ukrainian people. As a result of this defeat we encountered the full disintegration and stagnation of the traditional "left" parties.

DIVISIONS IN RULING CLASS

The privatization policy pushed by President Kuchma has been profitable first of all for Russian monopolies. The largest Ukrainian industrial enterprises were owned by Russian monopolies. Western investors weren't permitted to participate in privatization auctions. This has also proved profitable for Ukrainian oligarchic bourgeois groups.

These groups made billions in the oil, gas and transportation sectors. In this way Russian and Ukrainian monopolies became business allies.

Naturally, Western transnational corporations weren't satisfied with this situation. So they succeeded in getting their man—Viktor Yushchenko—to become

prime minister. It was the IMF's condition for paying off the latest debt for Ukraine. However, President Kuchma still governs such key ministries as defense, police, and the secret service (formerly run by the KGB).

Yushchenko, now the prime minister, is seen by many as the main candidate for the next president. Local oligarchs and the administration of President Kuchma have their own candidate—Viktor Medvedchuk, vice-speaker of Verkhovna Rada, the Ukrainian parliament.

Yushchenko's clan began their attacks on Kuchma by accusing him of being involved in the disappearance of Georgiy Gongadze, a famous Internet journalist. They then entered into unexpected agreements with the SPU (led by Moroz), CPU (led by Simonenko), and Ukrainian ultra-fascists from UNA-UNSO (whose leader is Andriy Schkil) and Schit Batkivschiny (Shield of Motherland Party, led by D. Korchinskiy).

The reformists behind Yushchenko have refused to conduct a class analysis of this political camp. They think their main task is to overthrow Kuchma. In this way the reformists have refused to organize a workers' alternative.

DUALITIES IN THE LEFT

The leaders of the SPU and CPU do not permit members of their parties to use red flags and banners in protest actions. The SPU participates in such actions under the official Ukrainian bourgeois blue-yellow flags. Another reformist party—the PSPU, led by Vitrenko and Volodymyr Marchenko—oppose the CPU and SPU and refuse to join in any actions which they are part of, including work with the masses.

Our organization, Ukrainian Workers Group, is the only revolutionary communist group which offers the masses a proletarian alternative. We take part in mass meetings and demonstrations with our own materials and banners. We offer to sharply oppose both bourgeois clans and develop our own proletarian program. Our leaflets also include material about Raya Dunayevskaya's heritage, her theory of the nature of the former Soviet Union and the theory of Marxist humanism. We also include information about News and Letters Committees, which stands on clear Marxist positions.

—Vadym Yevtushok

Far Right enters White House with 'President select' Bush

(Continued from page 1)

higher rates than others, shutting them out of higher education.

• Under Tommy Thompson, the "Health and Human Services" Department will be anything but. As governor, Thompson cut welfare rolls in Wisconsin from 100,000 families to 7,700. The average annual income of those thrown off is 40% below the poverty level for a family of three. Forty-seven percent can't pay their utilities, 37% can't pay for housing, and 32% can't pay for all the food their families need. It is not only women with the most problems who are the last on the rolls; the ones with the most difficulties—poor health, abuse, language problems, mental illness—were also the first to be thrown off for violating stricter rules. These women are homeless, living in poverty with relatives or friends, depending on handouts, in jail, or dead. Thompson, anti-abortion to the extreme, promises to review RU-486, one of the most tested drugs in history, supposedly for safety, but in actuality to ban it.

• On the environmental front, Bush's secretary of interior, Gale Norton, is a registered lobbyist for a company being sued for numerous toxic waste violations. Her free-market approach as Colorado's attorney general resulted in the 1992 Summitville mine disaster, killing the Alamosa River. Bush's pick for the Environmental Protection Agency, New Jersey Gov. Christine Todd Whitman, was targeted by that state's Legislative Black and Latino Caucus for environmental racism. The new secretary of energy, Spencer Abraham, one of the strongest supporters of the dumping of high-level nuclear waste in Nevada's Yucca Mountain, fronts for an energy policy based entirely on promoting production of nuclear power, coal, natural gas and, above all, oil, including the opening of Alaska's fragile Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling.

• Most ominous of all is Bush's choice of John Ashcroft for attorney general. The facts of Ashcroft's

Palestinian diaspora

"The Longing: A Play Based on Palestinian Oral Histories." Written and directed by Robert Hostetter. Music by Majed Abu-Ajamieh.

Chicago—"The Longing," a dramatic adaptation of Palestinian oral histories, debuted here last Fall. The play arose out of two years of work by its writer and director Robert Hostetter and an ensemble of American youth. Hostetter originated the project with two weeks of interviewing 25 Palestinians who lived through the "Nakbah" (catastrophe) of 1948.

After a year of working on these transcripts he took a group of students to Israel and to Palestinian areas as part of a class on "conflict transformation in the Middle East." Some actors had developed close friendships with the people they played. Others said that the work had given them a better grasp of the complexities of rebuilding community after years of distrust.

The prologue reminds the audience that Palestinians too experienced a holocaust, and to admit this is not to deny the importance of the Jewish holocaust.

In the first part, The Catastrophe, scenes from 1948 are reenacted, focusing also on the role of right-wing Jewish terrorist groups who sought to destroy the possibility of Arab-Jewish coexistence. The massacre of Deir Yassin is retold in the words of several who saw it. This part served as a reminder of why so many Palestinians fled in the wake of the 1948 war.

Part Two shifts to the occupation of West Bank and Gaza after the 1967 war. The stories include accounts by Israelis who refused to become occupiers. Other stories are told in harrowing detail of many young Palestinians becoming activists and facing police brutality. We are also told the stories of many Palestinians holding on to a key to their old homes, visiting their old quarters in Jerusalem or Haifa now occupied by occupants oblivious to history.

Part Three moves to the 1990s and the hopes rekindled for a real peace between Israelis and Palestinians. Here again some of the stories focused on the way Israelis and Palestinians fought alongside each other against those bent on destroying any chance of coexistence.

At this tragic moment when solidarity to reach genuine peace between Israelis and Palestinians is being overshadowed by preparations for war in the Middle East, "The Longing" is a beacon of hope with vivid and palpable representations of the human side of the conflict. Anyone interested in arranging a performance of "The Longing" in their city should contact Robert Hostetter at the Communication Arts Department, where he is chairman, at North Park College in Chicago.

—Cyrus Noveen

racist acts are now widely known: He used the race card to slander Black justice Ronnie White who had been nominated to a federal judgeship in 1999, tagging him "pro-criminal"; he spoke at and praised racist and sexist Bob Jones University; he honored the clearly racist *Southern Partisan* magazine, stating that those who fought to maintain slavery were "Southern patriots"; he twice vetoed measures passed overwhelmingly by the Missouri legislature that would have made it possible for volunteer deputy registrars from nonpartisan organizations to engage in voter registration in the 50% Black city of St. Louis—a policy already allowed in

the rest of the mainly white and Republican St. Louis County.

Further, Ashcroft helped scuttle the nomination of James Hormel as ambassador to Luxembourg strictly because Hormel is openly gay.

He expressed his hostility to women's right to control our own bodies when he sponsored legislation so draconian that it criminalized abortion

even if a woman was made pregnant by rape or incest, and signed legislation stating life begins at conception.

MILITARISM'S LINK TO REPRESSION

The triumvirate of Donald Rumsfeld as secretary of defense, Condoleezza Rice as national security advisor, and Colin Powell as secretary of state reveals Bush's plans to drastically increase funds to the military, develop the astronomically expensive and completely unrealistic "Star Wars" missile defense system, and extend the U.S.'s imperial reach at the expense of social programs in the U.S.

Bush's \$1.6 trillion tax cut for the rich and his pricey plans for the military come at the very moment when unemployment is rising and plants and businesses are failing. Even his treasury secretary, Paul O'Neill, has said that the tax cut would do nothing to reverse the slowing U.S. economy.

Signs of a slowdown—or worse—are omnipresent. From semiconductors to sales of new single-family homes to retail sales, December showed the worst growth since 1987. One of the most serious indicators of a slowdown and coming recession is that of job creation. The growth of private jobs in the fourth quarter was the slowest since 1992.

The loss of jobs cuts across all businesses from dot-com companies to service and heavy industries. Even computers aren't selling and Gateway is eliminating 2,400 jobs. In sales Montgomery Ward eliminated more than 37,800 jobs, Sears laid off an additional 2,400 and smaller retailers are following suit across the country.

The hardest hit segment of the economy is manufacturing, with 62,000 jobs lost in December alone, with announced plans for another 134,000 layoffs to come. Both DaimlerChrysler and General Motors plan to cut car production by about 25% the first quarter of the year and layoffs and shut-downs in auto have already

The idea of freedom in Black history

(Continued from page 5)

was by some at one time, that the Million Man March of 1995, with its spirit of self-reliance and rehabilitation through moral virtue, could be a continuation of the negativity and reach for a different future signified by the 1992 Los Angeles rebellion.

TOWARDS A RESTATEMENT OF ACOT

From the start, Dunayevskaya saw that it was imperative that each of us "(1)...internalize *American Civilization on Trial* so that we can, at a moment's notice, make a comprehensive presentation of these views to outside groups and individuals; (2) it is equally important that we do not consider this pamphlet as a 'finished work,' but that we constantly expand it, reinterpret it, and bring it up to date."

This meant, as she put it in her 1983 Introduction to *ACOT*, that we cannot leave the present retrogression to the "factual stage alone" (p. i) including the new youth revolts that erupted then in Florida. Rather she pointed to the need for theory meeting those new voices to be "developed to the point of philosophy—a philosophy of world revolution." (p. iii) "The absolute challenge to our age," she wrote, "is the concretization of Marx's concept of 'revolution in permanence.'" (p. v)

In other words, the way Dunayevskaya felt *ACOT* needed to be re-created was not merely by bringing in new objective facts about the Black condition and the new revolts it engendered. Rather, the reality of our times demanded going into Marxist-Humanism itself as a re-creation of Marx's concept of revolution in permanence. What this means to me is that not only should we hold fast to great strides in the idea of free-

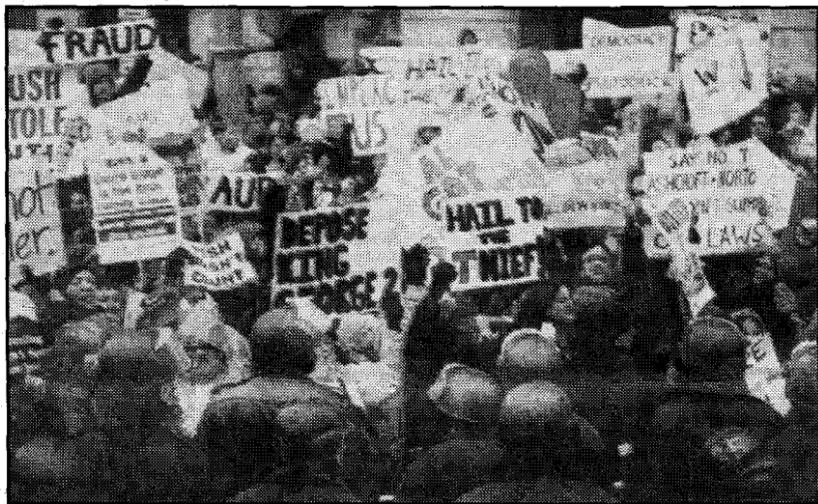
dom through moments of coalescence. Rather, we need to go further and realize that Dunayevskaya considered a projection of Marx's dialectic of self-development as itself a dimension that can facilitate the needed coalescence of revolutionary forces.

To make the underlying philosophy the active unifying agent is not an easy task, but it is a task we cannot shrink from because its soul is the revolution itself.

This came up recently when a group of us in the Bay Area went through Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind*. A restatement of para. 575 (the syllogism Logic—Nature—Mind) might say: once Marxist-Humanism recognized all these movements from practice—like the Civil Rights Movement, the ghetto rebellions from the '60s to the '90s, the struggle for a new kind of labor, etc.; once it recognized these movements as **moments** of the power of the idea to shape reality, **Mind has to assert itself out of this implicit Idea which is what Hegel calls Nature.**

In para. 576 (the syllogism Nature—Mind—Logic) Mind itself presupposes Nature and "philosophy appears as a subjective cognition of which liberty is the aim and is itself the way to produce it." Here, through the movement from theory, each Particular movement articulates its Universal, which is the Universal of all movements, freedom.

In the final syllogism, para. 577, the act of creation of ourselves as human beings is no longer separated from our comprehension of ourselves through the recollection of our history and the recognition of the power of dialectics practiced every day and in every aspect of our lives. This Dunayevskaya called the new society and Marx "revolution in permanence." It is the task for our organization and for the revolution.

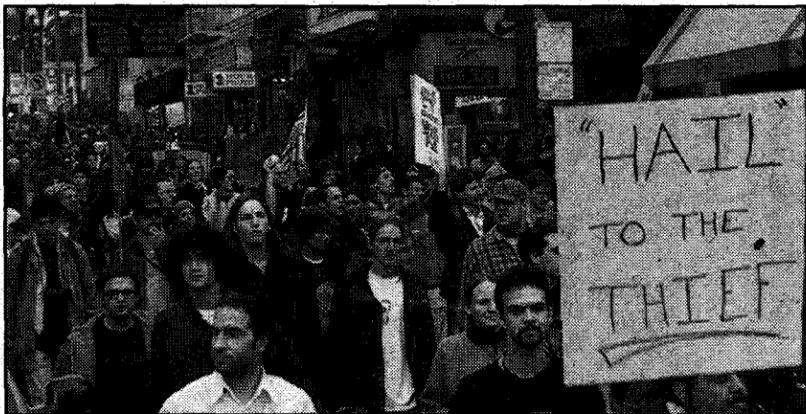


This is what Bush saw on the way to his swearing-in, Jan. 20.

Nationwide protests against Bush's inauguration

Washington, D.C.—Forty thousand or more protesters came here on Jan. 20 to rain on George W. Bush's inauguration. About two hundred of us came on four buses from Chicago, and at a rest stop we ran into an equal number of NAACP-organized women from Detroit.

There were a number of separate demos in D.C., called on short notice by various groups, and with a great element of spontaneity in the turnout by people from all walks of life: working people, women and youth, gays and lesbians. Ten thousand Black marchers turned out at the Supreme Court. Security was heavy and at times harassing. When many of the demonstrators began to



Marchers in the San Francisco counter-inaugural protest.

converge on Pennsylvania Avenue along the parade route, it clearly worried the Bush camp enough to delay the start for hours.

A lone military band was drowned out by cries of "Shame!" Then came hours of empty street. The parade spectacle was essentially buried beneath our utter contempt. Bush was vilified when he sped by as "the president-select," "a coup leader," "the Thief," "the Executioner" and "the second president of the Confederate States of America," among other choice descriptions. One man pointed across the street to the National Archives and said, "That's where they keep the original copy of the Constitution that they're tearing up today."

The ascension of Bush to the White House raises very fundamental questions about American society, not all of them finding voice at the anti-inaugural demos. As the struggles against capitalist globalization and the criminal injustice system struggle to coalesce they will be facing an even more reactionary landscape.

—Gerard Emmett

San Francisco, Cal.—The ubiquitous "Hail to the Thief" signs among the 15,000 gathered here on Jan. 20 to protest Bush's inauguration had hand-written variants. Many wanted to compose their own signs since they felt their voice was silenced in the electoral spectacle. "Jail to the Thief," "Heil to the Thief" and "Hail the High Executioner" reflected people's creativity during the spontaneous massive outpouring

Disability activists fight for access

Memphis, Tenn.—On Jan. 15, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, members of the Memphis activist group ADAPT, voiced their protests against the inaccessibility of the Blockbuster Video store on 1556 Union Ave. Powerful chants of "Access is a civil right" rang out in unity. ADAPT stands for American Disabled for Attendant Programs Today. The diverse group consists of people who passionately fight for the rights and equality of persons with disabilities.

After local patrons complained about the inadequacy of an existing ramp, the owners responded apathetically. Unsatisfied members of ADAPT took the matter into their own hands and proved direct action works. They successfully closed down the store for several exciting hours.

Deborah Cunningham the director of the Memphis Center for Independent Living was part of the group that blocked the entry with wheelchairs. She held a poster featuring the artwork of fellow protester, Sher

Stewart. The drawing was of Martin Luther King Jr. saying "My dream is blocked by Blockbuster." The Civil Rights Movement and the Disability Rights Movement are parallel in their struggle for equality. Martin Luther King III said, "Our destinies are tied together" at ADAPT's "March for Justice" last October.

ADAPT blocked the entrance of Blockbuster from noon until around 3 p.m. when the district manager drove in from the suburbs. He unenthusiastically passed out a paper to the protesters promising to have the problem fixed in a week.

"The Americans with Disabilities Act has been passed but the problem is there is no implementation," said Sher Stewart. Many Memphis businesses have not yet complied with the Americans with Disabilities Act which was enacted over a decade ago. The Memphis Chapter of ADAPT meets 6 p.m. the first Monday of every month at the Memphis Center for Independent Living located at 163 N. Angeles (901-726-6406).

—Ida B. Risin

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—Urszula Wislanka and David Mizuno'Oto

Aftermath of Klan rally in Skokie

Chicago—Approximately 25 members of two Ku Klux Klan groups from Wisconsin and Indiana rallied on the steps of the Cook County Courthouse in the suburb of Skokie on Dec. 16. Skokie, a predominantly Jewish city, was the site of a legal battle over the attempt of a neo-Nazi group to hold a provocative march there in 1978.

More recently, the city was the site of the murder of Black resident Ricky Byrdson by Benjamin Smith, a violent racist and follower of the fascist World Church of the Creator, who carried out a series of fatal shootings of minority members in July of 1999.

The Klan members were confronted by 450 counter-demonstrators, 100 of whom were close enough to pelt the racists with snow and ice and drown out the sound of their message with chants.

The large number of heavily armed police present directed most of their efforts towards making it extremely difficult to reach the court house. They then harassed the counter-demonstrators who made it through their check points.

While the protest was successful in physically confronting the Klan, it was unable to prevent an act of violence directly inspired by their racist message. As counter-demonstrators were leaving the area, a group of racist skinheads attacked a Black woman participant, who had to be hospitalized for her injuries. Her attackers managed to escape.

Even greater violence may have been planned for the day. Police arrested a Tennessee Klan leader in the area on weapons charges.

Local discussion about the event on the part of anti-racists seemed to be limited to the internet. Not a single meeting was called to discuss the protest and conceptualize a more thorough response for any future rally of racists in the area.

As if sensing a lack of focus on the part of anti-racists, one of the two Klan groups involved applied for a permit to rally in Gary, Ind. on Jan. 20, but was denied on a technicality. The group expressed its intent to reapply.

—Kevin Michaels

Los Angeles—Five to seven thousand people gathered at Pershing Square in downtown Los Angeles to protest George W. Bush's presidency on Inauguration Day. Many that addressed the crowd were liberal reformists: a spokesperson for the NAACP, one for the National Organization for Women, a rabbi, a Santa Monica city councilman, and U.S. Congresswoman Maxine Waters. Actor Ed Asner was the event's M.C.

Others whom I heard included a speaker from the Campaign to End the Death Penalty. One speaker talked about monopoly capitalism and another about Mexican and indigenous issues.

The protesters, in high spirits, marched through downtown to the Federal Building. The sidewalks were filled with smiling onlookers, mostly Mexicans and poor people of other ethnicities. The marchers were mostly white but included significant numbers of Blacks, Browns and Asians. They included longtime leftists of various tendencies and many new activists, including Greens, environmentalists and Screen Actors Guild Members. Their ages ranged from youths to spunky elderly.

Signs made by individuals read "Free Mumia," "No more Gary Grahams," "Not my president," and "Hail to the Thief."

—Basho

D.C. activists debate 'what are we FOR?'

Over 120 activists participated in a unique meeting entitled: "A Forum for Anti-Capitalists, From Seattle to D.C., What Are We Fighting FOR? Where is Our Movement Going?" The meeting was held in Washington D.C. on Jan. 21, the day after the counter-inaugural protests. Many of the participants were young activists in the anti-globalization movement who had traveled to D.C. to protest Bush's inauguration.

The forum was organized by a Marxist-Humanist and hosted by George Washington University Action Coalition and moderated by a GWU student. The speakers included anarchists, Marxist-Humanists, and other independent activists sharing an anti-capitalist, anti-vanguard party, and anti-statist perspective on organizing. The speakers were Chris Strohm of the Independent Media Center, Chuck O., a D.C. anarchist, Laurie Apple, who works with Justice Action Movement and the Kensington Welfare Rights Union, Cad, a D.C. anarchist, and Peter Hudis and Tom Rainey of News and Letters Committees.

The meeting had been promoted and organized as an opportunity for activists to "go beyond strategy and tactics to examine the ideas, theories and philosophies at play and war in the new movement." The need for such a discussion was noted by several of the D.C. activists on the panel, who said the anti-globalization movement seems to be losing some of the impetus and momentum that came out of the Seattle protest of over a year ago. This was also addressed by the two Marxist-Humanist speakers, who emphasized the need for the movement to become a "thinking body" that grapples not just with immediate tactics and strategies but also with such long-range questions as how can we project a liberating alternative to the very existence of capital.

After each panelist spoke for 10 minutes, members of the audience spoke out for over an hour in a very lively discussion. Several wanted to know whether it is possible to raise theoretical issues openly in a movement without "alienating" people.

However, it was clear after an hour of discussion that a vocal and aggressive minority had had enough. Several spoke out against the very concept of discussing ideas that can guide our activity. Though most had come for this purpose, the anti-ideas people—most of whom called themselves anarchists—succeeded in disrupting the meeting. Rather than regroup for an action or to have their own meeting somewhere else, they merely stood around chatting and prevented the rest of the participants from continuing. Eventually they left, and the discussion resumed.

The fact that 120 people came out for such a meeting shows that today's young anti-capitalist activists are not satisfied with merely going from one big protest to another. Already many are asking "We've had all these huge demonstrations, what's next?" In one-on-one and in small group discussions there is much self-critique within the new movement. At the same time, there is a strong anti-intellectualism which dominates in public meetings. I see a lack of self confidence in exploring new ideas on revolutionary philosophy and organization, which allows a minority of anti-intellectuals to dominate in large group discussions.

This forum was an experiment which needs to be continued as an activity within the movement. The anti-globalism activists of today must be confronted with the failure of past movements to go beyond "movement culture" and coalesce with Black Americans, workers, immigrants, and others who are fighting for their freedom on a daily basis. Without developing the concept of what we're fighting FOR, activists will continue to make the same mistakes as in the past and this new movement will burn out.

—Tom R.

Our Life and Times

The Gulf War and Bush, ten years later

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

The tenth anniversary of the start of the Gulf War was remembered with anti-sanctions demonstrations in several U.S. and world cities. Coinciding by only days with the presidential inauguration of George W. Bush, the occasion raises a number of issues.

The unified NATO alliance, along with UN backing and support from key Arab countries, put together by the first George Bush to wage war against Saddam Hussein after Iraq invaded Kuwait, has long since fallen apart. Russia, France and China have, in practice, disassociated from the UN Security Council-sponsored sanctions against Iraq, and Britain, the remaining military ally of the U.S., wants to cease the constant bombing patrols.

Saddam observed the anniversary by denouncing the Gulf War allies (except the Arab countries involved) as "the enemies of God, the followers of Satan"; earlier, he reviewed a four-hour military parade which reportedly featured hundreds of tanks and other weapons.

The embargo against Iraq has been broken by everyone—western capitalists, especially oil companies, looking to do business with Iraq again; Arab countries (except Saudi Arabia and Kuwait) showing solidarity with Saddam's anti-Israel stance and his pledge of political and financial support for the Palestinian uprising; and international humanitarian organizations ferrying in medicine and other supplies.

This hardly means improvement in conditions for the Iraqi people. They have endured the full impact of sanctions and Saddam's repressive regime, which has used a good portion of the UN-controlled "oil for food" revenues to repair the military and construct megalomaniacal monuments like the Saddam Grand Mosque. The most disgraceful result of the sanctions is measured by the catastrophic infant mortality rate which

Death of Kabila

The hostility of the most oppressed sectors of the Congolese masses toward the assassinated strongman Laurent Kabila, killed by one of his bodyguards, was evident at his funeral procession. For Kabila had done more than any other individual to destroy the hopes for a new beginning for Congo and the region after the 1997 mass-based overthrow of the Mobutu dictatorship.

In 1960, a rapacious Belgian colonialism was forced to grant independence to the Congolese masses under the African Socialist, Patrice Lumumba. But within a short time, Western imperialism was back in the saddle as the CIA installed Mobutu Sese Seko, Lumumba's assassin. The major difference between Kabila and Mobutu was that the latter was a creature of global imperialism, cutting out his neighbors. Kabila, operating in a period of Western withdrawal from Africa, relied on alliances with neighboring dictators, especially Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe. He allowed them to exploit the country's lucrative deposits of diamonds, uranium, and cobalt. In this sense, Congo's current crisis is that of the class nature of the post-independence African states themselves.

The Rwandan and Ugandan regimes are not free of responsibility either. One could sympathize with their helping to launch the 1998 uprising against Kabila, especially after the latter allied himself with remnants of the *interahamwe*, who had carried out the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. However, Rwanda and Uganda's narrowly militaristic outlook, already a factor in 1996-97, served only to alienate the masses from the rebels in the period since 1998. The result has been a futile war that has killed or starved two million people since 1998.

has risen to 108 of every 1,000 babies dying before his or her first year from lack of adequate medicine, nutrition and sanitary conditions.

Two engineers of the Gulf War, Vice President Dick Cheney (then secretary of defense) and Secretary of State Colin Powell (then head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) are now prominent in Bush's administration. In the immediate period Bush will likely continue Clinton's policy, which had mutated into binding the end of sanctions to the end of Saddam. Powell has supported a U.S. stance to "re-energize the sanctions regime," which may mean targeting sanctions to military commodities, while ending the blanket trade embargo.

A hard-right, militarist group, including Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and others, lines up with Cheney, who stated during the campaign the U.S. "might have to take military action to forcibly remove Saddam." This side has lent vociferous support to reviving the Iraqi National Congress, a so-called opposition alliance led by exiles with no support within Iraq, which was totally fabricated by CIA funding under the first Bush administration, and later openly funded by Congress under the Clinton presidency for \$97 million.

More crucial, the Iraqi people have not forgotten

Ouster in Philippines



Thousands demonstrated near Manila, Philippines, Jan. 20, to topple the two-year-old presidency of Joseph Estrada. Weeks of countrywide protests against his graft and corruption finally forced his resignation.

Czech demonstrations

In the biggest mass outpouring since the fall of the single-party Communist regime in 1989, over 60,000 Czechs, many of them youth, gathered in historic Wenceslas Square in Prague on Jan. 3. They came out to support striking journalists, who have been occupying the national public television station since Dec. 20 in a protest against blatant efforts by the two dominant political parties to control the news.

The immediate issue was the appointment of a station director with close ties to the right-wing Civic Union Party of Vaclav Klaus. This party rules the country in a power-sharing arrangement with the Social Democrats, led by Milos Zeman. The contempt of Klaus and Zeman for even the most basic democratic norms rivals that of Bush's Republican Party in Florida.

The international anti-globalization protests in Prague last September may also have played a role in generating a new type of grassroots opposition.

that the first Bush administration and its armed forces stood aside at the end of the Gulf War, when the genuine opposition to Saddam—the Kurds in the north and Shiite Muslims in the south—rose up in near-revolution and were viciously slaughtered. These indigenous mass revolts are anathema to the U.S. and to regional Arab rulers.

The other volatile factor driving U.S. policy, as it has in the past, revolves around maintaining stable oil supplies, especially with a U.S. recession on the horizon. Iraq did not participate in the recent OPEC agreement (and has not since the Gulf War) to cut oil production in order to raise prices. Currently, Iraq is keeping most of its oil off the world market.

Looming over whatever posture the Bush administration takes towards Iraq—especially with the likely February election of a right-wing Sharon government in Israel—is the question: what lessons have we learned from the ill-fated protests against the Gulf War ten years ago? The military build-up and war took place in the period of the collapse of state-capitalist regimes calling themselves "Communist" in East Europe and Russia. Yet the anti-war protests did not rise up to full stature when the need was to state what we stand for—a new, human society. This allowed some tendencies to fall back so far as to lend support to Saddam in the name of an unexamined anti-U.S. imperialism.

Nice, Davos protests

Protests spread to Zurich, Berne, and other cities Jan. 27 after riot police using tear gas and water cannons attacked demonstrators at the World Economic Forum in the ski resort of Davos, Switzerland.

This comes one month after over 60,000 workers and anti-globalization activists marched in Nice on the French Riviera, to protest against capital at the European Union summit being held there. With large labor union contingents from France, Spain, and Italy, this demonstration deepened the internationalism already seen in Prague last September, and continued that of Seattle in 1999. Small but significant workers' delegations also arrived from Eastern European lands such as Macedonia, Poland, and Slovenia.

'Comfort' women

(Continued from page 2)

A very clear message was made at the Tribunal: the 500 international participants desire to go beyond what happened 50 years ago to demand an end to violence today. The Public Hearing on Crimes Against Women in Recent Wars and Conflicts was held during the Tribunal to hear testimonies about women and girls raped systematically in Kosovo, Sierre Leone, Burundi, Peru, Sri Lanka and more.

On the final day of the Tribunal, the People's Court found the Japanese government guilty of crimes against humanity. While the Japanese government had little to say of this judgment, the Japanese people and international community are more aware of violence against women.

For more information you can reach those who hosted the conference at: Violence Against Women in War Network, www.jca.apc.org/~vawwjs; Asian Centre for Women's Human Rights, www.ascent.org.philosophy. If you have any comments, please feel free to email me through N&L.

—Kind Lady

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.