

NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

Vol. 46 — No. 2

MARCH 2001

50¢

Divide and conquer



by Htun Lin

All Kaiser hospital workers, including myself, just attended an all day orientation promoting the labor-management partnership to front-line health care workers. The precondition for this is that Kaiser remain a financially successful organization, which has meant drastic staff reductions and patient care cutbacks over the last five years.

All day long they emphasized the importance of all union workers joining forces with management in this partnership to help them compete against the for-profit sharks in the market place. In other words, nothing in the partnership challenges the logic of finance capital's restructuring of health care over the last decade—nothing addresses the daily stress over cutbacks in available beds, lack of adequately trained nurses, and lack of supplies and equipment.

It was ironic that they showed a labor history video about the fight against Taylorism. Workers fought Taylorism's job redesign, speed-up as well as de-skilling of jobs, job fragmentation and time study. That is the primary concern of rank-and-file workers under this partnership, which accelerated de-skilling, speed-up and fragmenting nursing. The new functions, however, create new union positions for a cooperative union.

'PARTNERSHIP' RESCUES BUREAUCRATS

Our orientation was full of the rhetoric that "quality care" is the main goal of the partnership. We workers remember that Kaiser CEO David Lawrence initially ignored AFL-CIO President John Sweeney's offer of

(Continued on page 3)

BLACK/RED VIEW

Hegel and Black history

by John Alan

After giving a talk recently on "Hegel, Black History and the Idea of Freedom" in the San Francisco Bay Area, a new article on this subject was brought to my attention: "Hegel and Haiti" (*Critical Inquiry*, Summer 2000) by Susan Buck-Morss. My talk took off from how Hegel's master/slave relationship, as the starting point for his dialectic of self-consciousness and freedom in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, has been central to Black liberation theorists from W.E.B. DuBois to Frantz Fanon.

Not only did Hegel impact Black liberation theorists but, as Buck-Morss shows, there is compelling evidence, ignored in the world of Hegel scholarship, that the Black masses in the Haitian Revolution of 1803 were the source for Hegel's famous narrative on the master/slave relation in the *Phenomenology*.

Buck-Morss shows that though the major figures of the European Enlightenment proclaimed a new concept of liberty as the opposite of slavery, they were nearly blind to the horrors of actually existing slavery which was the foundation for the accumulation of wealth in the new world trading system. She writes: "A glaring discrepancy between thought and practice marked the period of transformation of global capitalism from its mercantile to its protoindustrial form" (p. 821).

"The Haitian Revolution," she shows, "was the crucible, the trial by fire for the ideals of the French Enlightenment. And every European who was part of the bourgeois reading public knew it" (p. 837). Yet the prevailing intellectual histories silence that reality. In the early 19th century the German journal *Minerva*, edited by Johann Wilhelm von Archenholz, reported extensively on events in Haiti in the context of the unfolding of the ideals of the French Revolution. *Minerva* was very influential among German intellectuals, including Hegel, who referred to reading *Minerva* in his letters.

Buck-Morss points to the way Hegel changed his theory of mutual recognition, in the period before the *Phenomenology* (1806) took form, from one founded on customs and ethical life in the community to one based on a struggle to the death, culminating in a fight for

(Continued on page 8)

Sharon's election, Bush's bombs deepen crisis in Middle East

by Kevin A. Barry

Two events in February—the election of war criminal Ariel Sharon as Prime Minister of Israel and U.S. President George W. Bush's massive bombing of Iraq, his first big foreign policy action—together showed a type of imperial arrogance toward the Arab world not seen since the early 1980s, when Israel's then-General Sharon invaded Lebanon and the U.S. (under Reagan) mercilessly shelled its capital, Beirut, for months on end. It was in that period that Sharon allowed the massacre of nearly a thousand unarmed Palestinian refugees.

The *Jordan Times*, hardly a radical paper, wrote in response to Bush's recent air raids on Iraq: "We are rather incredulous at the timing of the strikes, which coincide with the collapse of Israeli-Arab peace-making, the election of a right-wing prime minister in Israel whose regard for Arab life is slight, and the emergence of an Arab population that is more disillusioned about the future of the region than at any time in the past two decades." Yet the U.S. and Israel, convinced that their superior weaponry can protect them forever, blithely ignore the rising anger of hundreds of millions of Arabs against them.

Bush's ignorance of the Arab world (or anywhere outside Texas) was surely a factor, but his air attacks also showed a reactionary type of political shrewdness. For the domestic effect of this new raid on Iraq, which was after all an intensification of the weekly raids Clinton had been carrying out for the past two years, was to get Democratic as well as Republican leaders to back him. This served further to demoralize those forces within the Democratic Party and to its Left that had been challenging Bush's vote-stealing in Florida, the very forces opposed to such imperialist actions.

In a parallel fashion, Ariel Sharon's successful courting of the Labor Party and Nobel Peace Prize winner Shimon Peres, to orchestrate the formation of a "unity" government, was designed to knock the wind out of the sails of the Israeli peace movement. It was also an attempt to suggest to the Arab world that Sharon's



Palestinian woman and house destroyed by Israelis.

racist and militaristic policies were the true face of Israel, and that they could take it or leave it.

SHARON'S REACTIONARY LEGACY

The utter unacceptability of Sharon to the Arab side, which views him as the worst possible Israeli leader, dates to those massacres at the Sabra and

Shatila Palestinian refugee camps outside Beirut. During 62 hours between Sept. 16 and Sept. 18, 1982, Israeli forces commanded by Sharon allowed their Lebanese Christian Phalangist allies, whom they had armed and funded since 1975, to rampage through the two camps. In the end, they slaughtered some 800 people, many of them accompanied by unspeakable torture and brutality. Soon after, a quasi-

governmental Israeli commission of inquiry found Sharon responsible and called for his resignation, a call that the conservative government of Menachem Begin ignored.

In the early 1970s, Sharon was in charge of policing the Gaza Strip, where one million Palestinian Arabs live today. He bulldozed farms, built roads dividing the various communities from each other, installed checkpoints allowing for a total lockdown, and cracked down brutally to eliminate resistance.

During the years 1977 to 1981, as part of Begin's government, Sharon was in charge of building large numbers of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories. As intended, these settlements, often inhabited by religious fanatics, and which would need to be dismantled as a precondition for any viable Palestinian state, remain one of the chief obstacles to peace.

The fact that a man like Sharon could be elected—and by a strong majority of 62% to 38% of those who voted—is a tremendous retrogression, not only for Israel, but globally. It will strengthen all types of reactionary fundamentalists, both Muslim and Jewish, for example. In a symbolic sense, it is far worse than Bush's victory in the U.S. While Bush tried to hide his

(Continued on page 10)

Demand freedom for Khalfani X. Khaldun!

Chicago—A turning point in the struggle to free revolutionary thinker and prisoner Khalfani X. Khaldun will occur on March 26, when his trial on trumped-up charges of murdering an Indiana prison guard will begin. Though the guard was killed in 1994, no trial had ever occurred due to delays by the state, in clear violation of Khalfani's right to a speedy trial. He is being targeted for a crime he did not commit because of his beliefs and activities as a New Afrikan prison activist who has spoken out for years in defense of prisoner and human rights.

The state's effort to silence Khalfani exposes all that is wrong in the criminal injustice system. He was released from prison after serving 15 years on July 17, 2000—only to have sheriffs serve him with a detainer warrant as he was leaving the prison with his family at his side, for the prison guard murder.

He was then taken back into custody and sent to St. Joseph County jail. He writes, "I was placed on the general population of the second floor, 2-G section, which is known as one of the worst sections in the place. After being in this section three separate times, these men extended a lot of admiration to me after learning of my long stretch in prison and the battles I've waged. In a matter of weeks, I was successful in curtailing a lot of the inherent Black-on-Black violence that occurs systematically throughout the jail and prominently in 2-G house."

Prison officials responded by charging him with "inciting a riot" and "disobeying a direct order." "My charge, according to them," he says, "was that I had too much influence throughout their jail. Since when did being a leader or being an influence become a crime?"

Since then, under the insistence of warden David Nickerson, he has been transferred to the supermax prison at Westville, Ind.

Khalfani is a well-known militant, teacher, and comrade to hundreds of prisoners and their supporters across the country, who know of him through his prolific writings and actions in defense of the oppressed. This motivates the state's effort to silence him. We urge our readers to support Khalfani, including by attending his trial, which will begin March 26 at 9:00 a.m. at **St. Joseph County Court House, Room 1, 101 S. Main St., in South Bend, Ind.**

As one of his supporters said, "The more people who come out in support of him, the better his chances because members of the jury are likely to be afraid of him based on what they've been told. When they see a slew of people from the outside in support, they will be forced to reconsider their position."

Anyone wishing to learn more about Khalfani's case and his ideas should visit his website at: www.prisonactivist.org/khalfani or write him at: Khalfani X. Khaldun, 874304 A-3 107 (McQuay), Westville, IN 46391-0557.

—Peter Hudis

ON THE INSIDE

FROM THE MARXIST-HUMANIST ARCHIVES—
THE WRITINGS OF RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

• *Women's Liberation and Revolution in Iran* ... Page 4
• *Review of Felix Martin's Life and Legacy* Page 3
• *ESSAY • Feminism and Philosophy* Page 5

International Women's Day as living history

by Terry Moon

Once you know about the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire of 1911, you never forget it. Two hundred girls, some as young as ten, Russian, Jewish and Italian immigrants, getting ready to pick up their pay and go home, instead are confronted with a fire, raging through the ten story building where they work among baskets of clothes, oily rags, tables and floors. They rush to the doors but they're locked to keep union organizers out. Soon young women are flying out the windows, many in flames, to crash to their deaths on the pavement nine floors below.

It's 90 years this March 25th since Triangle went up in flames. And on Feb. 15, 2001, Rose Freedman, the last survivor of that inferno, died at 107. These events are more than an occasion for remembrance because sweatshops have had a resurgence in the U.S. since the 1980s; because a Chinese toy factory fire killed 87 young women unable to escape because of locked doors in 1993; because 240 women died that same year in a toy factory fire in Thailand where the doors were locked.

Globalization and the destruction of environmental and safety rules by the World Trade Organization promise to make such tragedies more frequent. Nor is this confined to the Third World. It is not only the 50 Black workers who died in 1991, their bodies found by the locked fire doors smothered by smoke, in a poultry processing plant in Hamlet, N.C. In 20 years over 200,000 U.S. workers have been killed on the job. In New York City the sweatshop situation is so bad that one inspector said in despair, "This is another Triangle, just waiting to happen."

Knowing the doors were locked, Rose, 17 at the time, asked herself what would the bosses do, when the fire broke out on the eighth floor. She went to the tenth floor where the executives worked and discovered they had taken the freight elevator—barred to the workers—to the roof where firefighters pulled them to safety while they left 146 girls to burn alive or jump to their deaths from the ninth floor. Rose pulled her dress over her head and climbed smoke-filled stairs to the roof, where she leapt to the safety of the building next door.

The Triangle Shirtwaist fire is inextricably linked to the founding of International Women's Day. 1908-09 was a time of tremendous organizing and bitter strikes in which young Russian Jewish and Italian women garment workers displayed a militance that shocked their employers. This came out strongly in the 1909 "Uprising of the 20,000" in which 20,000 garment workers went out on general strike in support of the locked-out workers of the Triangle Shirtwaist Company. While the strike was a success and thousands of women won their demands, the Triangle workers lost their strike and because they lost, many died in the fire two years later.

It was not only their bravery but the socialist content of the American working women's demands that inspired Clara Zetkin, a leader of the German socialist women's movement, to propose in 1910 that an Inter-

Aramark's sexist past

Detroit—Readers may not know that *News & Letters* has supported women food service workers in Detroit for 31 years. Aramark was ARA (Automatic Retailers of America) in 1969, when women vending-machine service workers began a struggle to work at "men's" jobs and to eliminate the different job classifications that paid men more than women for doing the same work.

At that time Local RWSDU 1064 sided with ARA in opposing the women, several of whom filed discrimination suits in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (they also had to be pushed to accept their cases), which dragged on for years. A Local 1064 staff member recalled those battles over sex discrimination.

He felt that the women who had fought them "won the battle but lost the war" because their victory came so late and at great personal cost. He has a valid point, but when I look back, I see that though the company, in a new disguise, is pulling the same "divide and conquer" tactics, the union is much more responsive to the needs of the workers. Would today's battle be what it was without all that "labor, patience, and suffering of the negative?" I doubt it.

—Susan Van Gelder

Rethinking Our Future



International
Women's Day
Conference

CHICAGO • March 10 • 9-6

DePaul University downtown
1 East Jackson • Chicago (Loop)

Woman as Reason

national Working Women's Day be established. It was first celebrated in 1911, just before the fire, and in 1913 March 8 was set as the date in solidarity with the American working women's strike of 1908.

The Triangle fire is unforgettable not only because all those young lives were lost in such a horrible way for capitalist greed, but also because so little has changed.

The fire never left Rose Freedman's thoughts. Throughout her life she took every opportunity to speak out at rallies: "Nobody cares. Nobody. Hundred forty-six people in a half an hour...It should never have happened. The executives with a couple of steps could have opened

the door. But they thought they were better than the working people. It's not fair because material, money, is more important here than everything."

Listen to what another Rose, Rose Schneiderman, a working woman who had become an organizer for the Women's Trade Union League, said at the 1911 memorial meeting for the Triangle girls:

"Every week I must learn of the untimely death of one of my sister workers. Every year thousands of us are maimed. The life of men and women is so cheap and property is so sacred! There are so many of us for one job, it matters little if 140-odd are burned to death.

"We have tried you citizens! We are trying you now and you have a couple of dollars for the sorrowing mothers and brothers and sisters by way of a charity gift. But every time the workers come out in the only way they know to protest against conditions which are unbearable, the strong hand of the law is allowed to press down heavily upon us....

"I can't talk fellowship to you who are gathered here. Too much blood has been spilled. I know from experience it is up to the working people to save themselves. And the only way is through a strong working-class movement."

She was right then, and she's right now.

Women and the left in the auto union struggle

Not Automatic: Women and the Left in the Forging of the Auto Workers Union by Sol Dollinger and Genora Johnson Dollinger, Monthly Review Press, New York, 2000, 214 pp.

Just after Sol and Genora Dollinger's recent book on the early organizing days of the Auto Workers' Union came out, newly released Bureau of Labor Statistics figures showed that the percentage of American workers belonging to unions had fallen in 2000 to 13.5%, the lowest point in six decades. While some organizing successes were achieved recently by low-paid workers like janitors and home health aides, as well as some high-paid professionals like doctors, the steady declines have been in the core industries such as auto and steel, where globalization has resulted in increasing layoffs and plant closings.

Concern with these questions begs a look at a book like *Not Automatic*. The title was chosen to stress that the gains workers have made for everyone through union organization were not easy or inevitable, but came from the hard, often bloody, battles waged by tens of thousands of rank-and-file workers. Their focus is on the contributions made by "Women and the Left in the forging of the Auto Workers Union."

There is no mistaking as they tell their stories that both authors were proud of their lifelong identity as socialists. When Genora begins to tell her story of the 1937 Sitdown Strike in Flint, she begins with what she calls the "preparatory work done before the strike by radical parties," such as the Communist Party, Proletarian Party, Socialist Labor Party, Socialist Party (SP) and the Industrial Workers of the World.

The Socialist Workers Party appears on the scene shortly afterwards. Unfortunately, the importance of the radicals seems at times to be counterposed to what Genora calls the "spontaneous combustion of the workers," which "many so-called revolutionaries talk about" but she disputes.

Yet what she describes as the kind of "preparatory" work in which she was engaged for the SP (holding lectures "in socialism, plus labor history and current events" in a church basement), is not in a different world from the creativity of ordinary workers who actually invented the sit-down.

This book is divided into three parts. In Part I, on "Organizing the Auto Industry, 1934-1948," Sol Dollinger begins with a detailed history of three important strikes—the 1934 Electric Auto-Lite strike in Toledo, Ohio; the 1935 Chevrolet Transmission strike in that same city; and the 1936-37 sit-down strikes in Flint, Michigan.

He recounts the way in which the "united front" of the main political groups came to an end after the historic victory over GM. The story then moves to the

Women Worldwide

by Mary Jo Grey

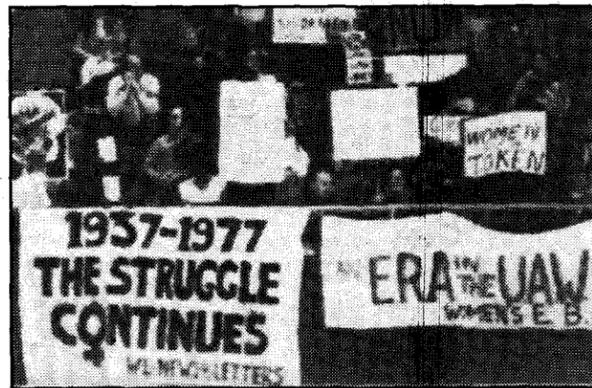
More than 800 Mexican workers, mainly rural women, sat in at a Nike factory in Atlixco, in January, protesting the firing of 20 workers who had complained about low wages, rotten cafeteria food, and the company's failure to pay a Christmas bonus mandated by Mexican labor law. The factory, Kukdong International-Mexico, makes apparel for major American universities.

—Information from *Labor Notes*

Lenient sentences for rape are the target of outraged women and human rights groups in Zambia. In December, a military officer was fined \$85 or nine months in prison for raping an 18-year-old student after lacing her drink with alcohol. Women's groups are also seeking murder charges against the rapist of a ten-year-old girl who subsequently died of a sexually transmitted disease.

The 23,000 member international women's human rights organization MADRE, in January, demanded the closing of the School of the Americas. They condemned the U.S.-run and funded combat training school which, since 1946, has taught Latin American and U.S. soldiers the "art" of execution and torture (including the rape and dismemberment of women). Closed in 1999 due to opposition, it quickly reopened as the Western Institute for Security Cooperation.

Young women workers in 12 Chinese factories producing Disney products for the holiday season were victims of sweatshop abuses. They were forced to work seven days a week, 16 hours a day. Workers told of unsafe working conditions, bad food and crowded dormitories—up to 24 workers to a dorm room.



News & Letters banner, unfurled from balcony during Flint protest at UAW 40th anniversary celebration, discussed in *Not Automatic*.

1940-41 drive to organize at Ford, but more was involved in those years than just factional warfare.

The bureaucratization of the union confronted by the rank and file by the mid-1940s was the result of U.S. capitalism's preparation for and entry into World War II. Thus, while the contract signed with Ford in June 1941 was the best one achieved in any of the big three auto companies, workers I knew when I worked at Ford Rouge in the early 1950s angrily described how the union they had helped win was unrecognizable

when they returned from the army four years later.

Part I ends with the post-World War II beginnings of the "Cold War" and the red-baiting that accompanied it as we see the consolidation of Walter Reuther's control and his capitulation to one draconian anti-union measure after another.

Part II consists of an oral history interview with Genora conducted by Susan Rosenthal in 1995. What is striking is how emphatically she rejects being called the "Joan of Arc" of the labor movement by those who recall the role she

played when no women were considered capable of being leaders, the severe beating she suffered from the corporation's hired thugs in October 1945, and the never-ending battle she waged against the union bureaucrats until the end of her life.

"It's not that I was born a heroine," she insists. "It was a question of growing up in a company town where people were going without food and children were going without health services. That wasn't the concern of GM. They just wanted to get their production out. If you were living in a company town, you would feel that, and you would do the same thing."

These pages testify to the hundreds of women who responded to the idea of an Emergency Brigade. "We didn't know that nothing like that had ever been organized before," Genora recalls. "We didn't know we were making history."

In a Part III called "Putting the Record Straight" we get a look of some of the many different ways history is rewritten, whether by Henry Krause inflating the role of the Communist Party in his *The Many and the Few*, or the union bureaucrats who were prevented by Genora from erasing the story of the Women's Emergency Brigade from the 40th anniversary celebration of the victory over GM.

There is much of importance in the labor history recounted in this little book for a new generation to think about. One of the most important is the quote from Karl Marx that serves as a frontispiece to one of the chapters: "History does nothing....history is rather nothing but the activity of humanity in pursuit of its ends." The masthead of *N&L* uses another quote that sums it up differently: "Human power is its own end."

—Olga Domanski

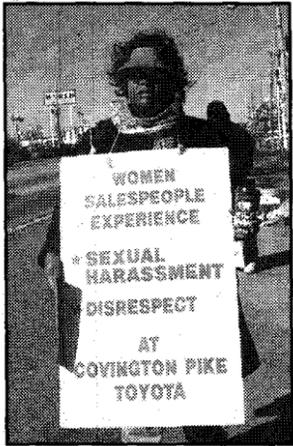
Memphis car dealer's harassment

Memphis, Tenn. — Twenty-six African-American workers are picketing the Covington Pike Toyota car dealership because of racism and sexual harassment. All the women have been sexually harassed by management. You can find out what color underwear a woman is wearing just by walking around a corner. It's that blatant.

One woman was groped by a member of upper management. She reported it and nothing was done. I was verbally sexually abused and I went to the right authorities and said, "Look, either this has to stop or I'm going to have to leave." They touched on it every once in a while in a meeting, but it was never taken seriously. It was basically a joke here.

We're trying to dress appropriately and professionally and follow the rules but you still have some who say, "Well, you're only a woman and we should be able to touch you, and talk to you, any way we want to." We're out here for all minorities and women who work hard and want the opportunity to move forward but can't because of the good old boy network.

I got hired in 1994 and the first thing that happened was blatant slurs and acts. There'd be a group of Blacks just standing out in the parking lot and banana peels were thrown in front of us. It was as if they were saying, why don't you pick up the banana peels



News & Letters

because that's all you are: monkeys.

You hear slurs from across the room. They are not directed towards you, but you know it's meant for you because you can hear it. It's things like: "Blacks don't because together, I've checked your history." Or "What's goin' on in the hood?" Or because that white girl is with that Black guy, "that's a wasted white woman."

There is not a Black person here who has a decision-making job even though about 80% of the sales force is Black, and the Black public is the one that supports this dealership.

In 1997 we addressed the general manager, Kent Richie, and told him there were some things going on we don't like. They didn't get corrected so in 1999, we brought it to the corporate guys and talked to them and it still didn't get resolved. Then we went to the third strike, giving it to our attorneys and having them file a class action lawsuit. Memphis is suffering from this kind of mentality and it holds us back. We think our actions have cut their business about 40%.

Our demands are just to have a non-hostile working environment, for people to have an equal opportunity so you can advance, not because of who you know, but because you have qualifications and skills to do the job. We want the good old boy network to be torn down.

We're out here every day to make a point. It's freezing cold, and on a Saturday I'm sure we would rather be home with our families. But we've got a point to make and our families understand. We're proud that we could get 26 people out here that have a oneness of mind and say enough is enough.

—Black, proud women and men Toyota workers

Titan Tire protest

Chicago—About 75 demonstrators, members of the Steelworkers (USWA), SEIU, Teamsters, Coalition of Labor Union Women, Jobs With Justice and others, gathered at Rush-Presbyterian Hospital on Feb. 14 to present a "Valentine" message to the hospital's CEO, Dr. Leo Henikoff.

Henikoff is on the board of directors of Harris Bank here, which has continued to provide a \$175 million line of credit to Titan Tire as the company has hired permanent replacements for over one thousand USWA members who have been on strike in Des Moines, Iowa and Natchez, Miss. since 1998.

This has allowed the company to hold out against the union despite losing millions of dollars. Titan workers in Des Moines were forced to begin an unfair labor practice strike May 1, 1998 when the company refused to negotiate with USWA Local 164 and sent scabs into the plant. They were joined by members of USWA Local 303L in Natchez in September 1998.

What makes Dr. Henikoff's participation in this all the more disgusting is that Titan has also cut off all benefits to pregnant women and people with disabilities. OSHA has issued Titan numerous citations for contempt.

At this very spirited demonstration, one speaker from Des Moines Local 164 said, "I've been a union member for almost 40 years and I've never seen this kind of solidarity among the unions."

Only turned up at this exposé, Harris Bank representatives days after a gay and lesbian-oriented job fair professing to represent a "progressive" organization. Word needs to be spread that in their actual practices Harris Bank and Titan Tire are anything but that.

—Participant

Strikes spread in Blair's Britain

London—There was chaos as 92% of train services on the London Underground were brought to a halt Feb. 5 by defiant mass strike. It may well be the Rubicon our movement has waited nearly two decades to cross.

The action of rail unions ASLEF and RMT was formally over layoffs and the risk to safety arising from the New Labour government's plans to privatize sections of the system. In reality it was a strike against privatization itself and as a result it holds massive public support. Since outsourcing on the national state-owned railways, there has been a string of disasters and many deaths.

The RMT made a 90% yes vote, yet a court ruling declared the strike illegal. The tactic of splitting the unions failed when for the first time in 15 years mass action, openly backed by union leaders, defied the capitalist courts. ASLEF stuck to their guns, and 4,000 RMT members obeyed working-class law and respected the picket lines.

The continuation of outsourcing by Blair has fueled further fights, notably in the Health Service, brought home by a string of scandalous deaths. At Dudley Hospitals in Birmingham 600 health workers have taken over 100 days of strike action against outsourcing. They have stood firm against attempts by the bosses, the government and local Labour MPs to bribe or scare them back to work.

Shortages to low pay have fueled ballots for industrial action amongst teaching unions in four cities and calls for national action. The Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS) scored a number of victories by strike action on the same issues coinciding with the

shock victory of independent socialist Mark Serwotka, a rank-and-file activist, for general secretary.

There has been a virtual "guerrilla war" of wildcats by postal workers. Underlying the disputes is a drive for productivity unleashed by an agreement made by the Communication Workers Union government and the Royal Mail, "The Way Forward." The government's lifting of the state monopoly to allow open competition whilst the Royal Mail expands globally has left the workforce caught between the pressures of state capitalism and global capital. Postal workers have responded with wildcats, scoring victories against Royal Mail in Bristol, Ipswich, and Stockport.

In Oxford 900 postal workers responded to bullying management with a wildcat, which spread even as union General Secretary Derek Hodgson issued a "special briefing" that "there should be no spread whatever of the unofficial action." A striker in Swindon responded, "Bugger what Hodgson says. We're not scabbing on Oxford and we're not going to let the management break our union." After a week it ended in victory.

The necessity of international solidarity to challenge capital has been brought home with redoubled force by the employers' offensive in the car industry. Just before Christmas GM announced the closure of its Luton plant with 2,000 job losses and the threat to many more. Spontaneously the morning and late shifts besieged the director's office until the police arrived. This was followed by a 24-hour protest, and GM workers at the Ellesmere Port on Merseyside walked out.

On Jan. 20 a demonstration in Luton of 10,000 was

(Continued on page 8)

Workshop Talks

(Continued from page 1)

"strategic partnership." Then right in the midst of the successful 1997-98 strikes by the California Nurses Association (CNA) over quality care, Lawrence found an escape hatch in Sweeney's offer and they jointly announced the new "strategic partnership" in December 1997.

Part of the partnership agreement is that the AFL-CIO can organize any new employees as Kaiser expands. The biggest AFL-CIO union here, SEIU Local 250, has been on an aggressive organizing campaign taking the mantle of "quality care." However this has not been on the basis of solidarity with nurses but rather as an adversary. Their special treatment in organizing is payoff for their partnership which was designed to undermine cross-union rank-and-file solidarity.

Sweeney seems to have discovered a new language of internationalism in an attempt to co-opt and at the same time undermine the independent rank-and-file anti-globalization movement. He spoke in Davos, Switzerland, saying "trade is an economic tool to meet the ends of development, democracy and a better deal for working people and their families around the globe."

When has trade ever been an "economic tool" to meet the needs of human development, democracy, and a better deal for working people? How can even capitalists with good intentions achieve these goals (much less labor bureaucrats) when the primary goal of global trade is to serve the self-expansion of capital? Marx answered this question indirectly when he exclaimed that in place of all the inalienable freedoms, the bourgeoisie substitutes a single freedom: free trade.

NURSES UNION UNINVITED

Many service workers asked about the glaring absence of registered nurses at the orientation. Many of us service workers had joined the nurses on their picket line because they led the way in raising quality care as a central contract issue. They won despite management's all out effort to fight them—a fight which included initiating a partnership with leaders of other unions. Today's partnership wants us to forget the real source of quality care as a worker's issue.

When the partnership was announced, SEIU refused to officially honor the nurses' picket lines. Now we see a glaring lack of CNA support at our service worker pickets against Sutter Health Care. CNA removed from their own contract a clause which allowed CNA members to honor picket lines of striking workers in other unions. CNA leadership put in writing what Local 250 did in practice when the partnership was announced, in other words, selling out other workers who happen to be in other unions.

A CNA nurse said this unilateral action passed after an abruptly called meeting where discussion was prematurely cut off. She said this was reminiscent of the dictatorial tactics used by the American Nurses Association which the present leadership ousted years ago when they created CNA as an autonomous and much more democratic union.

What is important to us workers is not petty disputes between union leaders. What is important is the shared experience we have in struggling against this restructuring in our everyday working lives and finding a solution from that perspective.

Felix Martin: making of a revolutionary

When we think of revolution, and revolutionaries, we often envision the likes of Biko, Guevara or Fanon. So when we look at a photo of Felix Martin, we may not immediately recognize a man who was cut from the same cloth.

When we speak of revolution, we don't think of a farmer from Hell for Certain, Kentucky or a World War II and Korean War veteran as the most likely candidate to stand on the front lines of a Marxist movement for freedom. Yet this man exemplified the universality of Marxist-Humanist thought.

The Revolutionary Journalism of Felix Martin, a new pamphlet published by News and Letters Committee, gives the reader a look into the mind, heart and soul of the making of a revolutionary. In the journalism of Felix Martin we see the true spirit of revolution and freedom in such a way that the words of a warrior for freedom, if well-made, will survive his passing.

MEETING MARX

Felix Martin was the pen name of Isaac Woods. He was a worker who believed in change, and who came of age in expressing his thoughts on paper in the 1970s. In 1983 he wrote, "It was back around the 1970 strike that I first met leftists. I had had a fight with my foreman and after the battle a worker came up to me and introduced himself" (p. 52). Felix stated that he attended some meetings and during this time first heard of Karl Marx.



The Revolutionary Journalism of Felix Martin (Isaac Woods). News & Letters, 2001. 107 pp. \$8.

This pamphlet allows the reader to share in Martin's education in Marxist-Humanist philosophy. Charles Denby, in his introduction of Felix to *News & Letters* in 1972, wrote of Felix's insights on freedom: "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" (p. 1).

When one reads Martin's first article for *News & Letters*, one can't help but appreciate the honesty and candidness of the man. "I don't feel I represent the workers in the shops where I come from," Felix wrote, "because I'm a white man, and I feel that most of the white people in this country now have become the anchor around the Black man's neck...In my plant—and I think it pretty well represents the other plants—the most militant people who are searching and trying to do something are the Black man and the Chicano or Mexican" (p. 3).

KENTUCKY ROOTS

Martin at the time was working for GM on the production line. He wrote his views from the trenches of capitalism, as a worker, and never apologized for who he was, or why he fought so vehemently for the rights of workers.

"My white ancestors went into the mountains of Kentucky because they believed in freedom. I'm a hill-billy, and I don't have too much education, but I know one thing. Until they put roads in there, we did have one little spot in this country where we did have freedom" (p. 3).

From those humble roots, a powerful writer was born. These selections trace the development of Mar-

(Continued on page 9)

From the Writings of Raya Dunayevskaya
MARXIST-HUMANIST ARCHIVES

Editor's Note

March is International Women's History Month. March 2001 also marks the 22nd anniversary of the historic march in Tehran, Iran on International Women's Day, March 8, 1979. On that day, women and male supporters braved Islamic Guards and thugs allied with the new government headed by Ayatollah Khomeini. The march demanded that the revolution, forged by the masses, continue and include freedom for women. As a philosophic contribution to furthering the revolution, Iranian Marxist-Humanists translated and published several writings by Raya Dunayevskaya, listed below. Two of her writings are excerpted here.

The first selection is taken from her 1980 pamphlet, *25 Years of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S.: A History of Worldwide Revolutionary Developments*.

The second is a letter to her colleagues in News and Letters Committees in 1979, reprinted in 1984 in her book, *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution*. Both are available from *News & Letters*.

Sept. 5, 1980

Nothing short of a shift in global powers climaxed the period 1977-79, from the reverberations of post-Mao China, through the Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa and the Latin American revolts, to the struggles of the Iranian masses against the Shah, which assumed such mass proportion as to develop into outright revolution.

At its very beginning I had been working on a new book, the topic of which has three subjects. One is Rosa Luxemburg; the second is the relationship of Women's Liberation in her time and ours; and the third is Marx's philosophy of revolution, which had gained a new dimension with the first transcription of Marx's *Ethnological Notebooks*.¹ I no sooner had reached the first chapter on Rosa Luxemburg, which deals with the turning point in her life—the 1905-07 Russian-Polish Revolution—than all sorts of new facts about its extension into Persia illuminated the Iranian struggles of 1978. At the same time, Marx's *Ethnological Notebooks* cast new illumination on the philosophy of Woman's Liberation as it extended Marx's own 1844 analysis of the Man/Woman relationship to his 1881-82 analyses of the possibility of revolutions occurring in backward countries.

The overthrow of the Shah, and with it the undermining of U.S. imperialism's dominance of the Gulf region, not only opened a dramatic shift in global power, but for the first time moved the question of the Middle East from oil, to one of social revolution. What was most outstanding was that the greatest, most powerful and sustained mobilizations for months on end, including a general strike of oil workers, preceded the three-day insurrection of Feb. 9-12, 1979, which did indeed initiate a whole new epoch in world relations.

Every segment of the population had been totally involved in ridding Iran of its twin nemeses—the Shah and U.S. imperialism—and it seemed to be the eve of the greatest revolution since 1917. The workers who had been out on general strike refused to turn over their guns even when the Ayatollah commanded it. All sorts of spontaneous organizations arose, by no means limited to former guerrilla groups. Quite the contrary. There were *shoras* [women's organizations], there were workers' councils, there were *anjomanis* [soviets]. And in all of them youth was dominant.

There was no end to the freedom of the press and the great attraction for the student youth of new Marxist translations. The most eagerly sought-after of the Marxist groups were those who were independent of any state power. The most persistent fighters for self-determination were also the most organized, and were

not only the Kurds but also the Arabs. Because they were all part of the mass revolutionary outburst which overthrew the Shah, they felt confident in continuing the fight for genuine self-determination.

Finally, and no means least, the Women's Liberation Movement aimed at opening up a new chapter for the revolution. They were involved for five days, beginning on International Women's Day, March 8, 1979, in continuous marches under the slogan, "We made the revolution for freedom and got unfreedom."

Ayatollah Khomeini no sooner found himself in total power than contradictions began tearing the newly liberated nation apart. The emergent retrogression was analyzed in the March 1979 *Political-Philosophic Letter*, "Iran: Unfoldment of, and Contradictions in, Revolution." This critique was translated and published in Farsi, as were my writings on Women's Liberation in a pamphlet entitled *Woman as Reason and Force of Revolution*, which also included an article on women by Rosa Luxemburg and Ding Ling's *Thoughts on the Eighth of March*. The introduction to the series of essays was written by an Iranian Marxist-Humanist woman, Neda.

All through 1979 and indeed a good part of 1980 there was hardly an issue of *N&L* which did not have either eyewitness reports on the Iranian Revolution, letters from Iran, special articles on both the women's revolution and the fundamentalist Islamic betrayal of it, as well as serious articles on what type of organization, what type of *shoras*, what kind of relationships of religion to revolution...

Rosa Luxemburg, *Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* greatly illuminated the events of 1979 and 1980. History had paid little attention to the 1905 Russian Revolution's extension to Persia referred to earlier, though especially the women's *anjoman* was a true historic first. Suddenly, however, another element of that revolution in Persia—its first constitution—became a focal point for the 1979 Iranian Revolution. But what the Islamic fundamentalists meant by it and what the young revolutionaries related to, were absolute opposites.

The Left revolutionaries were studying and trying to practice the dialectics of the 1905-07 Russian Revolution, Luxemburg's analysis of the General Strike as both political and economic and thus bringing on the revolution, the call for women's liberation included in Luxemburg's manifestos, and above all, the focus on the spontaneity of the masses who were actually more revolutionary than the leaders. What the study also showed was the possibility of a revolution bursting out in a technologically backward country ahead of one that was not only technologically advanced, but one that had a great mass Social Democratic party.² ...

NOTES

1. Lawrence Krader transcribed Marx's Notebooks, which were published in 1972 under the title, *The Ethnological Notebooks of Karl Marx*, by Van Gorcum, Assen.
2. Interestingly enough, there was also a new interest in and new translations of Luxemburg's writings. We published the first translation ever by David Wolf of her *Theory and Practice* [Available from *News & Letters*].

* * *

March 10, 1979

Dear Friends:

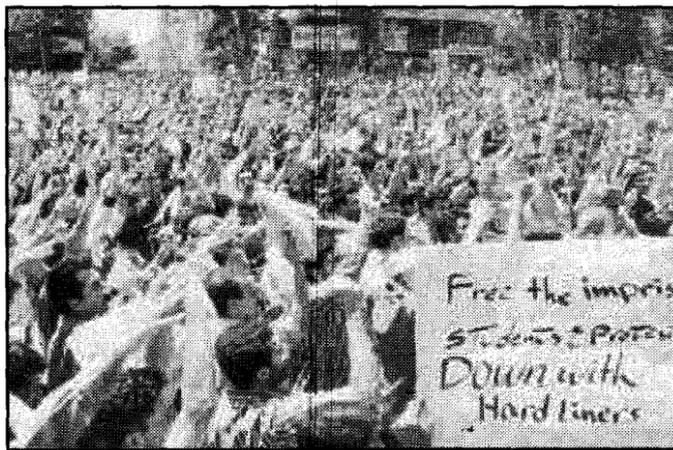
On my way to the talk in celebration of International Women's Day [March 8], that I was to give at Wayne State University on "Rosa Luxemburg and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution," came the news of the most magnificent international event: tens of thousands of Iranian women were demonstrating against

Women and revolution in Iran

Khomeini, shouting "We fought for freedom and got unfreedom!" Naturally, I began the talk with an homage to those Iranian women's liberationists who had, with this act, initiated the second chapter of the Iranian Revolution. Thus, my very first sentence stressed the *todayness* that this mass outpouring had placed on our topic, though it was to begin with rolling back the clock to 62 years ago, when the Russian working women transformed International Women's Day into the first of the five days that toppled the centuries-old Tsarist Empire.

The point was not only to single out great revolutionary acts, but to demonstrate that even in the first Russian Revolution of 1905, a great theoretician, Rosa Luxemburg, was as "shortchanged" about her thoughts as were the Russian working women, en masse, who were later to be played down as allegedly "unconscious" about their historic act which began the second Russian Revolution. Toward that end, I read from the still-unpublished speech of Rosa at the famous 1907 Congress of all Russian Marxist tendencies, which pointed to the fact that 1905 was but the first of a series of 20th century revolutions...*

I spent the following day, March 9, talking with an Iranian male revolutionary, developing ideas not only



1999 student protests challenging the Islamic constitution in Iran.

of the revolution but how we must be prepared for the counterrevolution that is sure to arise in Iran as Khomeini holds on to power and gathers not

only men but some women to consent to turning back the clock to Islam's reactionary viewpoint on women—and by no means only on the question of dress; and I singled out the historic points in the development of the Russian Revolution, which moved from the February events through Lenin's April Thesis to Kornilov's July counterrevolution, and only after many laborious and bloody months arrived finally at October. In a word, we were discussing my next *Political-Philosophic Letter on the Iranian Revolution*.**

March 10 was still a newer day when, but half an hour before the Iranian's plane left, I came up with the idea of translating into Farsi Ding Ling's *Thoughts on Eighth of March*, which would carry also the following message of solidarity with the Iranian women of today, stretching back to 1908 on native grounds:

"In Spring 1908—when the 1906 Constitutional Revolution everyone is talking about today was still alive, and a women's *anjoman* was still most active, especially in Tehran—New York garment workers declared March 8 to be Women's Day. The following year, in support of the locked-out Triangle Shirtwaist makers, the mass outpouring became known as the "Uprising of the 20,000" that so inspired the German working women's movement that its leader, Clara Zetkin, proposed to the Marxist International that March 8 become an International Women's Day. Today, you—the daring women of Iran—have opened a new chapter in the Iranian Revolution of 1979. In homage to you, and to express our solidarity with your ongoing revolution, we are here translating the thoughts of still another opponent of the status quo, this time in China—Ding Ling, who opposed both Stalin and Mao (who purged the great writer), as she expressed herself creatively in *Thoughts on the Eighth of March*."

The friend who volunteered to do the translation felt that, indeed, the simple act of translation would thus express a totally new Man/Woman relationship...

Yours, Raya

Persian translations of Raya Dunayevskaya's works published by Anjoman Azadi, Iranian Marxist-Humanist organization from 1979 to Today.

"Iran: Unfoldment of, and Contradictions in, Revolution." (1979)

"Worker and Intellectual at a Turning Point in History." From Chapter 4 of *Marxism and Freedom. On the 1848 Revolutions and Marx's critique of Ferdinand Lassalle*. (1979, 1989)

"The Two Russian Revolutions and Once Again, The Theory of Permanent Revolution." (1979)

Woman as Reason and as Force of Revolution. From *Philosophy and Revolution* and other works. Published on the first anniversary of the 1979 International Women's Day protests in Iran. (1980)

Special Introduction to the First Persian Translation of Marx's 1844 *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*. (1980)

Revolution and Counter-revolution in Iran: Political-Philosophic Letters. (1982)

"Intellectuals in the Age of State-Capitalism: A Critique of Herbert Marcuse." (1982)

Nationalism, Communism, Marxist-Humanism and the Afro-Asian Revolutions. Translated by Nahal. Preface to the Farsi edition by the author. (1983)

"The Paris Commune Illuminates and Deepens the Content of Capital." From chapter 5 of *Marxism and Freedom*. Includes an unpublished essay by Karl Marx on the Paris Commune. (1984)

"The Last Writings of Marx Point a Trail to the 1980s." From *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*. (1989)

"The Shock of Recognition and the Philosophic Ambivalence of Lenin." Translation of essay in *Telos*, Spring 1970. (1992)

Enqelab va Azadi (Revolution and Freedom). Newspaper includes Dunayevskaya's lecture on the Marx Centenary in 1983 to Center for Iranian Research and Analysis. (1981-1984)

Sokhan Azadi (Freedom Forum). Journal includes Dunayevskaya on Hegel's Absolutes and on Marx's Capital. (1992-1994)

For more information, contact AnjomanAzadi@aol.com or *News & Letters*, 36 South Wabash, Room 1440, Chicago, IL 60603.

NEWS & LETTERS

Vol. 46, No. 2

MARCH 2001

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

Raya Dunayevskaya
Chairwoman, National Editorial Board (1955-1987)
Charles Denby
Editor (1955-1983)

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

News & Letters is printed in a union shop. © ECU 759-C

ESSAY

Feminism and speculative philosophy

by Maya Jhansi

The past couple of years have brought with them significant blows to the triumphal hegemony of global capital by a new international anti-globalization movement. In the pages of *News & Letters* we've tried to cover the various dimensions of this exciting movement, particularly the new openings that seem inherent in it for a renewed international women's movement. Yet today with the election of George W. Bush, we are faced with the signs of a fierce retrogression, whether we look at Bush's attempt to "Christianize" Washington or his determination to take back all rights won during the 1960s. A vibrant and vocal movement has never seemed more urgent.

In the face of such obstacles, it becomes more urgent for us to rethink the goal of our movement, and raise questions about vision and perspectives and history. While there are those who will argue that this is no time for "abstract" questions, philosophy has never seemed to me so practical, particularly if we are to

address the disorientation within the Women's Liberation Movement that has limited it for the last three decades.

There has been some attempt to address the need for philosophy, as seen especially in the modest but significant renaissance of interest in Marx that runs parallel to the development of the anti-globalization movement. Yet, even with all this renewed interest in Marx, there haven't been very many attempts to rethink the question of Marx's relationship to Hegel. The question of the relationship between Marx and Hegel is assumed to have been settled long ago, and the reductionist vulgar Marxist counterposition of Hegelian idealism to Marxist materialism, to a large extent, defines current thought. For too long, it has been wrongly assumed that the "speculative dimension" is unnecessary for revolutionary theory and practice.

FEMINIST THOUGHT AND MARX

This is especially true in feminist thought where the failure to grapple with the speculative dimension of Marx's own thought has left Engels' reductionist view of Marx's dialectics virtually unchallenged. The only feminist to have called for a total reassessment of Marx's relationship to Hegelian dialectics was Raya Dunayevskaya. In doing so she uncovered a more complex picture of the gender dimension in Marx's work than is usually attributed to him.

For the most part, there has not been the sort of renewal of interest in Marx within feminist thought as there has been on a more general level. Today, even many of the formerly self-defined socialist-feminists have moved on. Allison Jagger, for instance, has an essay in a new book called *Decentering the Center: Philosophy for a Multicultural, Postcolonial, and Feminist World*, edited by Uma Narayan and Sandra Harding. The essay, titled "Globalizing Feminist Ethics," focuses on morality in the global arena and draws on, among others, the work of John Rawls. Indeed, in none of the essays in the book as a whole discuss in any sustained way Marx or dialectical philosophy in general. Given this paucity of feminist interest in Marx, it has become increasingly difficult to talk about the relationship of feminism to dialectical philosophy.

To complicate matters further, where feminists have shown a renewed interest in "Marxism" or what some like Rosemary Hennessy call "materialist feminism," a corresponding interest in dialectical philosophy, particularly in Hegelian philosophy, remains elusive. Nancy Hartsock is perhaps the best example in that she has persevered in her insistence that Marxism, especially Marxist dialectics, is necessary for contemporary feminist theory and politics. She writes, "The dialectical mode of understanding provides a means for us to investigate the manifold ways social forces are related, a way to examine a world in which 'objects' are defined by the relations coming to focus in them, and in which these objects are constantly changing."

Yet, in Hartsock's assertion of the importance of dialectical philosophy, what remains absent is any serious re-examination of Marx's indebtedness to Hegelian dialectics. Although, for example, Hartsock appropriates the work of Lukács, a notable Hegelian-Marxist, for her concept of the feminist standpoint, she does not herself take up the question of Hegel, even in order to more fully examine the meaning of Marxian dialectics for feminism.

It seems that in the world of feminist philosophy, theorists interested in Hegelian philosophy and those sequestered in Marxism remain, for the most part, sequestered in separate and mostly unrelated camps. What this has led to is a reiteration of old vulgar Marxist concepts—the assumption, for example, that Marx only dealt with class, narrowly defined as the urban, male industrial proletariat. Such post-Marxist vulgarisms as the "base/superstructure" concept, economic determinism and so on are not being questioned.

The most interesting work on Hegel comes from postmodernist and non-Marxist theorists who continue to engage with the enduring presence of Hegel in the modern and "postmodern" world. Judith Butler, quoting Althusser, emphasizes the ambivalence that greets this fact in her preface to the new edition of *Subjects of Desire: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth Century France*: "This dead god, covered with insults and buried a hundred times over, is rising from the grave" (quoted in Butler, p. xiii). *Subjects of Desire*, which was Butler's doctoral thesis, traces Hegel's concept of desire from the *Phenomenology* through French thinkers like Kojève, Sartre, Deleuze and Foucault.

Though well-known as a poststructuralist feminist, Butler writes that "all of my work remains within the orbit of a certain set of Hegelian questions." She even

relationships.

Yet their premise is one that spirits away Marx. That is, their call for a return to speculative philosophy is based on the idea that since we are totally alienated beings, speculative philosophy best articulates our reality because it is itself "meaning derived from our totally alienated relationship to the world." Our failure to transform reality "turns our reflective self-relation into pure awareness." Thus, they begin with the *Science of Logic* because it develops the Idea's awareness of its lack of determinate being. From that they derive social and political realities.

Living in a time of retrogression such as ours, such an approach seems to have validity. That is, philosophy seems not to inhere in reality, to be rather in a separate compartment altogether.

Yet this is precisely Marx's critique of Hegel: that he remained sequestered within an alienated mode of thought. Thus, though he credits Hegel with articulating the "moving and creative principle of history," the dialectic of negativity and transcendence, yet still for Hegel, Marx argued in his now famous 1844 "Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic," transcendence meant the alienation with objectivity itself. Thus, transcendence meant the transcendence, not only of alienation, but of objectivity itself.

This is also what the authors of *Hegel and the Logical Structure of Love* seem to argue as the basis of "speculative philosophy." "Marxists" have taken Marx's critique of Hegel to mean that Marx was opposed to Hegelian "idealism." What Dunayevskaya has shown, however, is that far from turning Hegel on his head, as Engels and vulgar post-Marx Marxists after him argue, Marx appropriated the Hegelian dialectic with a "real corporeal" human subject at its center.

MARX ENGAGES HEGELIAN PHILOSOPHY

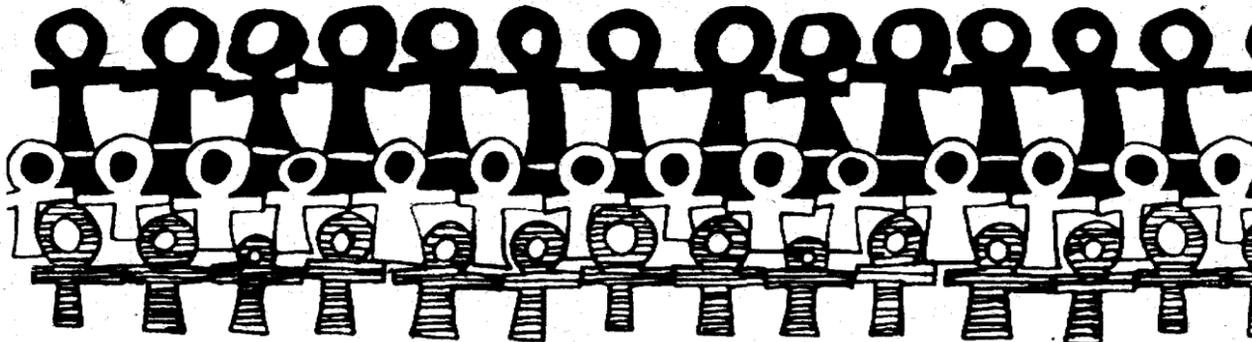
It is a difficult and complex question. On the one hand, Marx did argue that the Hegelian dialectic was mystified and dehumanized. On the other hand, the Hegelian dialectic "in and for itself" served Marx, and later those like Dunayevskaya, as "the source of all dialectic." That is, Marx's philosophy does not begin with the abolition of Hegelian philosophy, but is rather always in engagement with it.

It is ironic that feminists are doing and have done such interesting work on Hegel. Butler, for example, follows the work of Jean-Luc Nancy and other French Hegelians in arguing that Hegel himself confounds those who would attempt to locate dogmatism and teleology in his philosophy. Yet when it comes to the very separate world of "Marxism," the dogmatism, teleology, economic determinism, and gender reductionism that is attributed to Marx go virtually unchallenged!

But these are very related phenomena—the refusal to delve into the Marxian-Hegelian dialectic helps to perpetuate the vulgarisms of "post-Marx Marxism." It is only by addressing the question of Hegel that looms so large in Marx that we can prevent the reification of Marx's ideas into an heirloom, a set of political conclusions, slogans, programs, dogma.

An interrogation of the Marx/Hegel relation can open up vistas for feminism. That was Dunayevskaya's argument. Instead of accepting the reductionism instigated by Engels as Marx's, we need to try to delve into Marx's own comprehension of his body of ideas as a philosophy of revolution.

Doing so will enable us to reconceptualize a truly revolutionary feminism and even re-energize the Women's Liberation Movement.



goes so far as to argue that Michel Foucault likewise remains within the orbit of Hegelian questions: "Foucault remains a tenuous dialectician, but his is a dialectic without a subject and without teleology, a dialectic unanchored in which the constant inversion of opposites leads not to a reconciliation in unity, but to a proliferation of oppositions which come to undermine the hegemony of binary opposition itself" (p. 225). Butler, like other postmodernists, stresses the contingency and lack of closure inherent to the dialectic of the *Phenomenology of Mind*.

There are, of course, a variety of feminist approaches to Hegel. Many seem to focus on Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind*, the most influential being Simone de Beauvoir's adaptation of the master/slave dialectic in her book *The Second Sex*. However, far from seeing the dialectic in the *Phenomenology* as having anything to do with women's struggles for self-determination, de Beauvoir saw it as the expression of women's necessary Otherness and objectification.

Another feminist writer, Mary O'Brien put it this way: "There is one important sense in which Hegel's system is a 'whole,' a sense in which it does mark a break in history's hitherto unflinching stride. The system is the most ambitious attempt ever made to define humanity as masculine, to celebrate the transformation of real people to the abstract concept of Universal Man." De Beauvoir's appropriation of Hegel did not challenge or critique this view of Hegel because she was primarily interested in arguing Otherness as the existential condition of women.

A NEED FOR SPECULATIVE PHILOSOPHY?

Given the suspicions with which feminists have greeted Hegel, I was surprised to find a book that argued for the importance of speculative philosophy for such profane realities as sex, love and family. *Hegel and the Logical Structure of Love: An Essay on Sexualities, Family and the Law* by Toula Nicolacopoulos and George Vassilacopoulos argues that: "When our awareness becomes speculative, it is an absolute negativity in the sense that its being is wholly indeterminate. If speculative awareness is the kind of awareness from which to resolve the problem of the meaning of the world's (potential) mode of being, it must construct this meaning immanently. This means that speculative awareness begins with its awareness of its lack of determinate being and of its need to determine itself as, or to become, the notion of the world's mode of being. This is the sense in which speculative awareness becomes speculative."

The authors argue that it is precisely the failed attempts at revolution that have revealed to the world the need for speculative philosophy, since speculative awareness is meaning or conceptuality derived from our total alienation. They critique the "theme-centeredness" of modern philosophy, its anti-systematic nature.

Much of the book attempts to argue the dialectical relationship between Hegel's three major "mature" works, the *Science of Logic*, the *Philosophy of Nature* and the *Philosophy of Mind*. In the *Science of Logic*, the Idea develops itself in and for itself, "in the element of its pure self-recognition, that is, in pure thought and as pure thought," and at its completion (as the Absolute Idea) recognizes "itself as a being that lacks determinateness" and turns to Nature and then returns to itself in the *Philosophy of Mind*.

Yet although the authors seem to capture the self-movement of the Idea, and talk about its self-determination, they don't really address Hegel's dialectic of negativity itself. The latter half of the book consists of their attempt to show how the categories of Mind are developed into a system of social and ethical life, particularly family, love and law. They make some interesting points, arguing that there is nothing in Hegel to prohibit same sex relationships and that there is much in Hegel to support a feminist conception of human

Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future

"What is important now, in relation to Women's Liberation and particularly so in America...is to begin to see that women must have the philosophy of liberation in general, in particular, in essence, and in mind. It is critical not ever to separate theory from practice or philosophy from revolution, because unless you have that unity you will just end up once more feeling good because you have told off the men, but not having established anything new for woman as Reason."

by Raya Dunayevskaya

Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution
Reaching for the Future

RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA



\$15.95 (plus \$2 postage)

THE MIDDLE EAST—IRAQ, ISRAEL-PALESTINE, AND WOMEN FOR PEACE

BOMBING IRAQ

Western reporters covering reaction to the latest U.S./British missile attack on Iraq never fail to call protests in Iraq "official," meaning they are staged. Yet what could be more staged than "breaking news" on what the Pentagon itself considered routine air strikes. Htun Lin's "Workshop Talks" column in the January-February *N&L* really gets at the consequences of passing off staged, or man-made, crises as natural disasters. Not only is attention drawn away from real human suffering on the ground, whether in health care, vital utilities, or in Iraq, but away from real solutions that must take place in ideology.

Oakland reader
California

President Bush's attack on Iraq is just an opening salvo for what we have in store for the future. He is determined to do what his father couldn't, and that is to create a "New World Order" with the U.S. as undisputed ruler. It means ruling with an iron hand, not only in international relationships but also here at home. The future is sure to see an unending series of crises and confrontations.

Retiree
Detroit

While there was considerable overseas condemnation of the U.S.-directed bombing raid against Iraq, Britain not only took part in the raid, but the Blair government, including its most "left-wing" member, Clare Short, justified it on the grounds that it was necessary to defend the Shiites and Marsh Arabs from further murderous attacks by Saddam Hussein. Our own response should make it clear that the Iraqi regime is a real menace, but that U.S.-British bombing is no solution. I'm a bit concerned that some recent articles on Iraq in *N&L* by non-Marxist-Humanists have condemned the West only and said nothing about the butcher of Baghdad.

Richard Bunting
Oxford

We're told President Bush has a nickname for all his close associates which is creating confusion because he hasn't issued a handbook that identifies all of them. I have one for Bush: "Trigger Happy." Or is "Loose Cannon" better?

Activist
Detroit

ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

We urgently need the help of you in America to prevent the sale of nine Apache attack helicopters to Israel. However you feel about the situation in the Middle East, one thing is clear: We do not need more weapons. I am not opposed to foreign aid; I think the U.S. should share its wealth with peoples throughout the world. What it should not be doing, however, is exporting more instruments of war.

Apache attack helicopters were used by the Israeli government to assassinate Palestinians, to shell Gaza City, Ramallah, Bir Zeit, and other locations. Please, please, please: the last thing we in Israel and Palestine need is more ways to kill each other. Send an e-mail to President Bush (president@whitehouse.gov). One sentence will do. All they do is count how many in favor, how many opposed. Thanks!

Peace activist
Jerusalem

Many American Jews have responded to Ariel Sharon's election in Israel with horror. We had hoped Ehud Barak would make a difference. He had a mandate to move toward peace but all his offers fell far short. There are no half-way measures when a country maintains occupation over another people by force. Israel had to end the occupation, dismantle the settlements, and get out of the West Bank, or it was bound to wind up with a horror like Sharon.

American Jew
California

Sharon's career over the past four

decades leaves little doubt that his natural tendency will lead him to increase the brutal oppression of the Palestinians. That is certainly what the settlers and other Sharon allies on the extreme Right expect of him, but it is a road that could lead to an all-out regional war, to Israel's international isolation and a deep rift in Israeli society. Alternately Sharon may strive to create a moderate image and make some superficial conciliatory gestures at the outset of his term, but there is no way he can reopen serious negotiations with the Palestinians without unraveling his own constituency.

While his election is a grave setback which could cost the lives of many, it did not alter the basic ingredients of the situation—neither the Palestinians' determination to obtain sovereign statehood on their own soil, nor the disinclination of most Israelis to sacrifice their soldiers in the cause of denying the Palestinians that statehood.

Adam Keller
Tel Aviv

WOMEN FOR PEACE

I am forwarding this letter from Gila Svirsky in Jerusalem:

For the past 13 years (since the formation of Women in Black) women have been the most vibrant, daring, and progressive part of the Israeli peace movement. Before anyone else, we advocated a two-state solution and creative solutions to the refugee issue. And we have had partners on the other side—Palestinian women committed to peace. We now have a full slate of activities for the weeks ahead: During the upcoming swearing-in ceremony of Ariel Sharon, we will demonstrate outside the Knesset with some advice for him and the new ministers: We want peace! On March 8 we'll mark International Women's Day with a mass march of Israeli Jewish and Arab women, with delegations from Italy, Spain, England and possibly other countries. The issue is the plight of women—inequality, violence, the exploitation of factory workers, and the connection with security issues. We do checkpoint monitoring with groups of 4-5 women seeking by our presence to reduce the violence and abuse that often takes place there.

Those who want to support the Coalition of Women for a Just Peace can get information on how to do so by writing to gsvirsky@netvision.net.il or by writing to:

Donna Spiegelman
Boston, Mass.

When I read Gila Svirsky's report in the January-February issue on the joint Israeli-Palestinian "women's rally for a just peace" tears blocked my eyes. I wish I could have joined them. I come from a country with long-term oppression and have been fighting for Taiwanese independence for a long time. We know very well how authoritarian regimes control their people. Our fight is not only for Taiwanese but for all those who are in a similar situation. We are fighting for what human beings should be, just as *N&L* is. That is why I feel we are comrades.

Taiwanese woman
Illinois

THE PARIS COMMUNE

This year marks the 130th anniversary of the Paris Commune of 1871—the historic movement of the working class in Paris to build democracy from the ground up and defend their economic, social and political interests. It had support throughout the world, and its lessons are still relevant today. The commemoration will kick off on Sunday, March 18, at the La Peña Cultural Center in Berkeley where the film "Dare to Struggle, Dare to Win" about the 1968 French General Strike will be premiered. On May 5 a new film on "The Communes" will be screened for the first time in the U.S., and on May 6 there will be a conference in San Francisco to discuss the Commune's relevance for today. Your readers can get more information

READERS' VIEWS

by calling LaborFest at 415-845-9803. I thought you would want to know about what is being planned since Raya Dunayevskaya's discussion of the Paris Commune in her *Marxism and Freedom* is the finest discussion anywhere on the impact of the Commune to Marx's writing in *Capital* and thereby its relevance for today.

Supporter
Los Angeles



EMERGENCY CONFERENCE FOR MUMIA

The year 2001 will prove to be decisive in the 19-year-struggle for justice for Death Row inmate Mumia Abu-Jamal. The movement demanding a new trial has circled the globe with prominent organizations and government officials in 73 nations expressing their outrage at the violation of his fundamental democratic and constitutional rights and the threat of his execution. He is still alive because we won a temporary stay of Pennsylvania Governor Ridge's second warrant for Mumia's execution. Now Federal District Court Judge William Yohn has to decide whether critical evidence that was barred by the Pennsylvania court will ever be heard.

We are at "five minutes to midnight." We are inviting everyone interested in justice—abolitionists, trade unionists, faith-based activists, human rights organizers, people of every color, faith and sexual preference, youth and political organizations to attend a national gathering in Washington, D.C. on Friday/Saturday, March 30/31 to help make Mumia's execution a price too high for the rulers to pay. Contact 215-476-8812 for more information.

Mumia supporter
New York

THE SCENE IN ECUADOR

The latest confrontation between the increasingly repressive Ecuadorian government and the indigenous-led protest movement has ended with an uneasy truce, represented in an accord signed by both sides. Under the guise of its "state of emergency" declaration, the military and police were vicious in their attacks on protests stemming from the IMF-style "belt-tightening" economic measures which increased drastically the price of everything, including basic food products. Three were killed, including a 14-year-old boy, dozens injured and hundreds incarcerated. Fearing the anger provoked by this state violence President Noboa finally agreed to negotiate personally with the movement's leaders but the agreement does not begin to address the fundamental issues that continue to impoverish an already suffering nation.

The price for cooking gas had been raised by 50% and that increase was reduced to "only" 23% and called a decrease. Orwell would be proud! The most important achievement was the government's promise to release and pardon all those arrested during the uprising. But the fundamental capitalist structure that is choking the country to death, the rampant corruption at the highest levels of government and industry and the crushing external debt all continue.

As it did last year when a massive popular uprising was in motion, the indigenous leadership negotiated away its moral and practical force in exchange for a temporary peace without justice. A year ago it was with the military, this year with the president. The struggle has a long way to go. The people are sick, hungry and angry, and they will be heard from again, sooner rather than later, in my opinion.

Correspondent
Ecuador

SAVE PHILIP WORKMAN!

Despite evidence proving that the bullet that killed a policeman could not have come from Philip Workman's gun, despite the the non-police "eyewitness" now admitting he was not at the scene; despite several jurors saying if they knew then what they know now they would never have convicted him; despite all the evidence pointing to Workman's innocence and the need for a new trial, the U.S. Supreme Court dismissed his appeal for a new hearing "without comment."

His lawyers see this as his last chance as Republican pro-death penalty Gov. Don Sundquist is expected to turn down Workman's clemency application. The state supreme court will now set a new execution date. Anti-death penalty activists in Memphis and Tennessee have been taking to the streets for months in an effort to stop the "legal" murdering of Workman. Now we need a national outcry.

Terry Moon
Memphis

FELIX MARTIN

WORKER-PHILOSOPHER

I am 25 years old, a student and a worker at the same time. All young people should read Felix Martin's writings to become conscious of what is happening around us and at the point of production. We have been brainwashed by the school system, the news media, and the government leaders to believe that this is a perfect society, but it is all lies. It is a lie too that the state-capitalist countries who call themselves "socialist" are practitioners of Marxism. As youth we can build a new society and throw this old corrupted system in the trash.

I met Felix Martin as a child and always liked the way he expressed things, and his optimism. Although he was white I never felt a bit of racism from him. Now that I am reading his book I understand why he was like that. It was because he was a Marxist-Humanist. His book has made me want to read the works of Raya Dunayevskaya and Charles Denby now.

Student-worker
California



FIGHTING FOR WOMEN'S LIBERATION

It was great to see the grassroots movement that took off on the Internet after the *L.A. Times* columnist, Patt Morrison, suggested an appropriate way to celebrate Presidents' Day would be to make a donation to Planned Parenthood in George W. Bush's name. Planned Parenthood reported that 15,000 people made contributions and close to \$500,000 was raised. As I understand it, they hand-delivered mailbags stuffed with personal messages to Dubya, that came with the contributions, making sure he knew this was our response to his reinstating the "global gag rule" and appointing John Ashcroft as U.S. attorney general.

Women's liberationist
Chicago

They have always been trying to convince us that it's our diet that gives women breast cancer—too much fat, not enough vegetables. Now they have come out with the results of a new comprehensive study that concluded it doesn't matter. Women who eat the most or the least vegetables, the most or the least fat—they all get breast cancer at the same rate. The article said everyone was upset because there's "nothing you can do." I thought that is wrong. Of course, there is something we can do. We can now stop blaming ourselves if we get cancer and start demanding a clean environment and a world that puts human health before profit.

Women's liberationist
Memphis

THE MANY FACES OF AMERICA'S RACISM

The announcement by Bush's Chief of Staff Andrew Card that the White House offices on race relations and AIDS would close came on the heels of a report that one out of three gay Black men here are HIV positive. The announcement was quickly restated to assure reporters that that work would be handled "elsewhere." But there was little doubt that Card had been stating the truth and was simply left to take the fall. As Black Leadership Forum Executive Director Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich put it: "I'm assuming that Andy Card fell on the sword."

**M.J. Grey
Chicago**

Would you believe that a vote passed in the Virginia Senate on Jan. 26 to let Fairfax County prohibit its residents from sleeping anywhere but their bedrooms? It was clear to everyone that it was targeted against the growing immigrant communities who not only have large families but often take in friends who cannot afford the high rents in the area. As the Virginia director for the League of United Latin American Citizens put it: "Allowing someone to go homeless is simply not acceptable. It's not part of the culture."

The bill passed by a vote of 20 to 19 and the opponents demanded a reconsideration of the measure immediately.

**Outraged
Illinois**

When I was in the post office and asked for the African-American stamp, I was told the post office is considering discontinuing Black Heritage stamps because they aren't selling. I want to ask everyone to request African-American stamps every time you mail something, instead of accepting the love, flag, rose or teddy bear stamps they offer you automatically. Let's keep Black stamps in circulation! Some may think it's not a major issue, but I consider it part of the ongoing effort to assert ourselves as a major economic force in this society.

**Proud Black woman
Chicago**

When I read about President Bush's choice of Black judge Larry Thompson to be deputy attorney general under Ashcroft, I thought it might balance Ashcroft's rabid conservatism. Then I learned Thompson is a long-time friend of Clarence Thomas and prepared his defense against Anita Hill's charges of sexual harassment by Thomas. He also represented the Lockheed Corporation facing contract bribery charges; a Coca-Cola company executive against union bribery charges; and former Interior Secretary James Watt when he was charged with influence peddling. Most important of all, Thompson has consistently blamed Blacks and their institutions for being "irresponsible" and at fault for the terrible conditions Black Americans face. If the far Right was smiling at Ashcroft's appointment, they must be dancing in the aisles with the addition of Thompson.

**Fearful
Detroit**

Your readers need to know about the way the state of South Carolina unleashed a violent military-style assault with 600 riot-equipped police against dockworkers who were picketing on Jan. 20 to protest the use of scab labor in Charleston. It wasn't enough that it resulted in charging five workers with inciting to riot and keeping them under an unheard of house arrest order. Now the State of South Carolina is going even further to rein in Black political power, with pending legislation that would inhibit the right of unions to collect dues—and separate legislation to prohibit any union member from being appointed to any board, agency or commission in South Carolina. It is clearly designed against ILA Local 1422 which has been known for developing Black working-class power in the port city of Charleston.

The Black Radical Congress has joined with a number of AFL-CIO unions to organize a solidarity movement and push back this reactionary offensive.

**BRC member
San Francisco**



**HEALTHCARE
U.S. AND
BRITAIN**

What is going on in Britain? Two years ago, the health service launched an advertising campaign for extra nurses and before Christmas the prime minister announced that it had failed. We now have a new advertising campaign and at the same time two major reports (one from Scotland, another from the chief nursing officer) both admitting the basics are not being attended to—that is, patients not fed or bottoms wiped. What has been the press and media response? One of the major stories is that nurses are too tired for sex. Interesting that should take priority over the number of nurses killing themselves. The opposition party is concerned over the number of deaths in the service, some 18 a year. The *Echo* reported at least two deaths in the Southampton District alone. The factors that led to the deaths were stress and bullying. Self injury for the average nurse is worse than for working in the armed services.

**Patrick Duffy
England**

I'm astounded nothing has been written in the bourgeois press about the draconian medicare cutbacks in the home health care field that took effect on Oct. 1 last year. Previously when patients were discharged from the hospital under medicare they were eligible for at least eight weeks of different disciplines (therapists, nurses, and aides) coming to the home. Certain supplies were included. Currently under PPS (Perspective Payment System), each illness is called an episode with a certain amount of money assigned to cover home health care and supplies. The length of care is shortened along with the number of visits per week for each discipline. It compromises the patient's health and opens the door for "Hannibal the Cannibal."

**Home health care worker
Chicago**

**ZAPATISTAS AND
MAQUILADORAS**

Vincente Fox thinks he can silence the indigenous struggle by "stealing Subcomandante Marcos' voice" and giving in to some demands made by the Zapatistas. Can he really think the Zapatistas can be bought off with their own self-interest? President Fox is opportunist to the core. He has taken the space and voice the indigenous struggle has created and is using it to try to show he is sympathetic to their demands. But this ex-Coca Cola executive cannot hide from a people with freedom on their minds. I do not believe he will be able to gain indigenous support by building more maquiladora plants and giving Mexico away to foreign industrialists. I believe the Zapatistas will support the Mexican workers' fight for freedom and show the world they will not give up revolutionary struggle to be wooed by a corporate liar.

**Youth in solidarity
Memphis**

**REPORTING THE ANTI-KLAN
RALLY —A CRITIQUE**

I was very disappointed in the reporting of the anti-Klan rally in Skokie, in the January-February issue. Most disturbing was that it was buried at the bottom on the next to last page. Generally your reporting is accurate and balanced but this article said Skokie is a predominately Jewish city which sounds either prejudiced or ignorant since Skokie has a large Jewish minority. The article didn't mention the peaceful demonstrators, including myself and 14 other Unitarian-Universalists and others. I agree the rally should be discussed and coordinated action between anti-racists should be planned. But where you placed the article implies *N&L* didn't think the anti-Klan rally was very important!

**Mark Lickerman
Chicago**

**GIVE A FRIEND A GIFT
SUBSCRIPTION TO NEWS & LETTERS
ONLY \$5 PER YEAR**

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS FROM NEWS & LETTERS

BOOKS

By RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

- NEW!** *Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today* 2000 edition. Foreword by Joel Kovel.....\$24.95
- Philosophy and Revolution: from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao* 1989 edition. New author's introduction\$14.95
- Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* 1991 edition. New author's introduction. Foreword by Adrienne Rich\$12.95
- Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future* (1996 edition)\$15.95
- The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism: Selected Writings by Raya Dunayevskaya*\$8.50
- The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism: Two Historic-Philosophic Writings by Raya Dunayevskaya* Contains "Presentation on Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy of June 1, 1987," and 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes".....\$3 paperback, \$10 hardcover

By CHARLES DENBY

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

By KEVIN ANDERSON

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

PAMPHLETS

- American Civilization on Trial, Black Masses as Vanguard* Statement of the National Editorial Board. Includes "A 1980s View of the Two-Way Road Between the U.S. and Africa" by Raya Dunayevskaya, and "Black Caucuses in the Unions" by Charles Denby.....\$2

- Voices from within the Prison Walls* by D. A. Sheldon. Prisoners' views of (in)justice system and organizing from within.....\$8 For pamphlet plus donor copy for a prisoner\$16
- Harry McShane and the Scottish Roots of Marxist-Humanism* by Peter Hudis\$3
- Bosnia-Herzegovina: Achilles Heel of Western 'Civilization'* (Expanded edition)\$5
- NEW!** *Kosova: Writings from News & Letters* 1998-1999\$3.50
- Marx's Capital and Today's Global Crisis* Includes critiques of Ernest Mandel and Tony Cliff\$2
- The Coal Miners' General Strike of 1949-50 and the Birth of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S.* by Andy Phillips and Raya Dunayevskaya\$2
- 25 Years of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S.: A History of Worldwide Revolutionary Developments* by Raya Dunayevskaya.....\$1.50
- Myriad Global Crises of the 1980s and the Nuclear World since World War II* by Raya Dunayevskaya\$2
- Theory and Practice, by Rosa Luxemburg* First English translation.....\$2
- Nationalism, Communism, Marxist-Humanism and the Afro-Asian Revolutions* by Raya Dunayevskaya.....\$1.25
- Frantz Fanon, Soweto, and American Black Thought* by Lou Turner and John Alan.....\$3
- Working Women for Freedom* by Angela Terrano, Marie Dignan, and Mary Holmes.....\$2
- Dos ensayos por Raya Dunayevskaya*\$2
- News and Letters Committees Constitution*\$3c postage

- NEW!** *Marxist-Humanist Literature Catalog for 2000* A full list of publications (includes many not listed here) available from News and Letters Committees.....\$5c postage

ARCHIVES

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

NEWSPAPER

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

Mail orders to:

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

Enclosed find \$_____ for the literature checked. Please add \$1 for each item for postage. Illinois residents add 7% sales tax.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____



Views
from the
Inside
Out

COINTELPRO's legacy

by
Robert
Taliaferro

Awareness is the key to defeating a problem before it gains life and becomes a self-perpetuating entity. Such is the case with COINTELPRO-like tactics being used against modern-day activists in areas such as issues that center around women's rights, the environment, the death penalty, or prison reform.

There is a generation of Americans who look at the acronym COINTELPRO and are too young to remember the dark days of the '60s and '70s when the FBI—and other law enforcement agencies—targeted student radicals, civil rights leaders and organizations, and other Americans who did not conform to J. Edgar Hoover's concept of patriotism.

The acronym COINTELPRO stands for "Counterintelligence Program." As with any governmental function that has "intelligence" in its name, it was a highly secret—and illegal—program to not only garner intelligence on American citizens, but also to use whatever means necessary to disrupt their lives if they were opposed to established American policies.

These disruptions came in many forms: from agents within an organization or movement placed there to inform on—or disrupt—the activities of the group, to using intimidation and disinformation to discredit the leadership of a group.

Though one cannot condone the actions of Jesse Jackson Sr. with regard to the reports that challenged his credibility on inaugural eve, 2001, the timing of the revelation had shades of the COINTELPRO-doctrine.

Counterintelligence programs aimed at leftist political organizations and movements that espoused independence (such as Puerto Rican nationalists), Civil Rights proponents (such as Martin Luther King Jr. and the Black Panthers), and students protesting the war in Vietnam were "profiled" individuals who came under the scrutiny of the government.

In fact, one of the ironies of arguments against racial profiling is that it is—in effect—a case of the barn doors being closed after the cows have left, for law enforcement has been practicing profiling techniques for years—in secret—and has approached a level of sophistication in its techniques that far outweighs the arguments raised by detractors.

It all comes back to the concept of awareness, and the lulling effect that the protections afforded by the written words of the Constitution have on Americans when confronted with the actual practice.

During the administrations of Reagan, Bush, Clin-

ton, and with the dawn of another Bush, Americans—as a whole—are being profiled on a daily basis...put to sleep by the "great communicator," directed elsewhere as we looked everywhere but home for our "points of light" among the millions, misled by Clinton as he militarized our communities, and robbed blind by another Bush who now tries to pacify the masses.

Through it all, the apparatus of COINTELPRO was alive and well, rearing its ugly head again and again in Seattle, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, and Florida.

Counterintelligence programs have many dimensions and are not always so easily identified as such. The dangers of driving, walking, sitting, or standing while Black, Brown, Asian or Indian; and peaceful demonstrations that, for no logical reason, turn violent so that police can wade through the ranks with clubs and gas, effectively silencing the masses and decimating their ranks of those who might not be so stout of heart.

These are the tools of Hoover's vision of counterintelligence. Today, however, with widespread use of the Internet, cell phones, and the "big brother" presence of electronic surveillance in our lives that we don't even notice, such programs take on new dimensions that are frightening in their scope, and would make Hoover envious, for we now live in a society that Hoover could not imagine, where we give away basic freedoms under the auspices of gaining a sense of security.

A violation of the basic rights of one segment of society is a violation of those rights in the society as a whole, for the concept of freedom and the ability to voice one's opinions against the actions of government are as fundamental as one's right to sing its praises. When a government fears its people—and their opinions—so much so that they promulgate governmental abuse, then the tenets of a Cold War exist again, not abroad, but at home. And just a single step will take each of us that much closer to cultural slavery.

"The oppressed
have a voice
and you
hear it!"
—Prisoner,
Texas

"I think it's shoulders
above other Marxist papers
and many anarchist ones,
as well."
—Anarchist, Illinois

"I take many
left-wing papers.
Yours is the best."
—Doctor, California

Subscribe to News & Letters
Only \$5 per year

Black/Red View

(Continued from page 1)

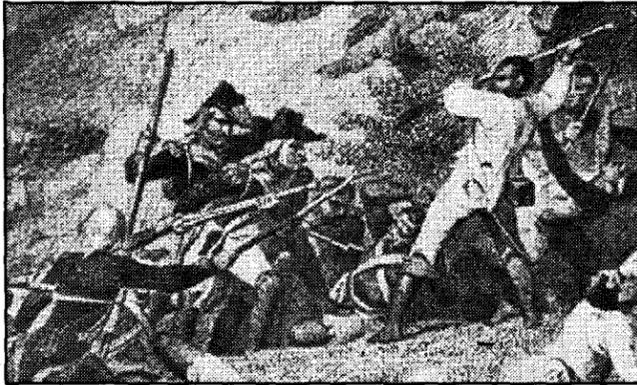
full social selfhood and freedom in the master/slave dialectic. Buck-Morss takes to task the whole world of Hegel scholarship who are at a loss to adequately account for this dramatic development.

Some, like Otto Pöggeler, say it emerged in Hegel as a "totally 'abstract' example" (p. 843). This in spite of the fact that Hegel was an avid, indeed "religious," imbibor of current events. As Hegel wrote in this period, "Reading the newspaper in early morning is a kind of realistic morning prayer."

Why can't intellectuals fathom the impact on Hegel of the Haitian Revolution—a then unprecedented extension of the idea of freedom to an historical struggle of actual slaves? Buck-Morss' answer is that "the intellectual historians of German philosophy know only one place to look for the answer: the writings of other intellectuals" (p. 843).

Unfortunately, Buck-Morss lumps Marx together with "(white) Marxists" who helped to bury the concreteness of the master/slave narrative because they focused on class struggle. She writes, "Since the 1840s, with the early writings of Karl Marx, the struggle between the master and slave has been abstracted from literal reference and read once again as a metaphor—this time for the class struggle" (p. 850). She fails to see that for Marx, not only was slavery integral to capitalism's globalization and explosion of wealth, but the struggle against slavery became the pivot around which modern freedom could unfold. As I put it in my talk:

"We talk a lot about the need to oppose the globalization of capitalism today, but it was Marx who made clear that capitalism's first moment of globalization was built on slavery. He saw as well the centrality of the slave revolts and Black regiments in the American Civil War to get to a new freedom. On Dec. 26, 1846 Marx wrote to Pavel Annenkov that 'Direct slavery is the pivot of our industrialism today as much as machinery, credit, etc. Without slavery, you have no cotton, without cotton you have no modern industry. It



Hegel and Black history

is slavery that has given value to the colonies; it was the colonies that created world trade; it is world trade that is the necessary condition for large-scale machine industry. Also, before the slave-trade in Negroes, the colonies supplied the Old World with but very few products and did not visibly change the face of the earth. Slavery is thus an economic category of the highest importance."

It was Raya Dunayevskaya who saw, in the actual opposition to slavery, the indigenous roots of Marxism in America (see *Marxism and Freedom*) Her *American Civilization on Trial* (1963) traces the self-development of the idea of freedom in U.S. history in which the Black masses have been vanguard. Black masses have continuously exposed the hollowness of the pompous, abstract proclamations of democratic ideals as they fought for genuine democracy and freedom in the face of actual oppression in the form of slavery and racism.

Buck-Morss rightly takes to task the academic world's lack of a genuine objective scholarship which appreciates the objectivity of "subjective" mass struggles, that is, that the "spirit of liberty...could be catching, crossing the line not only between races but between slaves and freemen." (p. 845) For her, grasping this has "potential for rescuing the idea of universal human history from the uses to which white domination has put it...the project of universal freedom does not need to be discarded but rather, redeemed and reconstituted on a different basis" (p. 863).

Hegel intended that his articulation of the "catchiness" of the idea of freedom, which he called the self-determination of the Idea, would aid in the realization of "universal freedom." Today's liberation theorists and activists would do well to take another look at Dunayevskaya's body of work, built on the development of the idea of freedom in masses in motion. For Dunayevskaya this was a way to "unchain" Hegel's dialectic of the Idea of "universal freedom," which could itself become a force for coalescence and the realization of new forms of social solidarity among different subjects struggling for freedom and a new society.

Racist hit-and-run

Holly Springs, Miss.—On Jan. 24, five-year-old Taylor Jones was hit and killed while attempting to get on a school bus. Taylor was killed instantly according to officials. Police say the driver did not stop for the bus even though the bus had its stop sign out and lights flashing. The death occurred on Caycey Road in Marshall County, Miss.

The Marshall County Branch of the NAACP got involved with the case only after the Marshall County Sheriff's Department refused to file charges against the driver of the truck that killed Taylor Jones. Several witnessed this tragedy, including family members of the little victim. NAACP President Kelvin O. Buck said that the fact that no charges were filed and the victim was a Black child and the driver a white man, represents the kind of pattern typical of Sheriff Kenny Dickerson and the Marshall County Sheriff's Department.

On Jan. 29 the Marshall County NAACP held a press conference at the site of the killing. Approximately 400 showed up for the press conference in support of the family of the victim. They demanded that manslaughter charges be filed against the driver. On Jan. 30 officials decided to file multiple charges and made the public announcement on Jan. 31.

Officials claimed that they were waiting on the completion of an investigation to file charges. They had indicated prior to the NAACP press conference that the investigation could take anywhere from two weeks to two months. Buck says that he attributes the arrest to the outrage displayed by the demonstration. He expressed his gratitude to those who supported the press conference and said he was cautiously optimistic about the arrest. "This is an important first step but past experiences with the judicial branch of our criminal justice system have too often led to even greater disappointment and frustration," Buck said.

The trial has been set for sometime in early March.

—Black Marshall County protester

Prison activists meet

Fresno, Cal.—Over 200 people participated in the "Joining Forces: Environmental Justice and the Fight Against Prison Expansion" conference on Feb. 10. Activists described the patience and suffering it takes to successfully combat the construction of new prisons and toxic waste incinerators in their neighborhoods.

There was a clear desire to overcome the isolation of single-issue activism, since marginalized communities are the target of both prisons and toxic waste dumps. Poor towns and neighborhoods are offered dubious get-rich-quick promises of economic development by those projects. Because of the spreading epidemic of HIV, TB and Hepatitis C, especially in prisons, where people get no care, prison issues are of vital importance to environmental justice activists.

One environmentalist expressed her view of the need this way: "We need to redefine our movement. Environment has to include social environment and justice has to mean more than equitable distribution of trash." Reflecting on past conferences and protests another environmentalist said: "I invite you to not just listen and take information to misplace somewhere in your home, but make it a part of your daily life."

The afternoon sessions talked about the suit against building of a new maximum security prison in Delano. It was proposed by then-Governor Wilson in 1994, but dropped. It reappeared suddenly in Governor Davis' budget in 1999, a clear payback to prison guards. But California Department of Corrections' own projections show the first decline in prison population in 20 years. In the discussions it was emphasized how important it is to include the subjectivity of prisoners who, in their struggle to keep their sanity and their humanity against a sadistically absurd environment, have come to important insights which could help people create a human society.

The conference ended with planning a huge march in Delano, to be led by the United Farm Workers, against building the new prison there.

—John, Urszula and Zoe

British strikes

(Continued from page 3)

joined by delegations in solidarity from GM plants from across Europe, the USA and Canada. On Jan. 25, 40,000 GM workers took action across Europe in solidarity with their British brothers and sisters. At four Opel plants in Germany and in Portugal rallies were held at factory gates. Zaragossa Opel plant in Spain struck and marched on GM offices, 6,000 workers at Antwerp walked out. Peter Jaszczuk from the Opel works in Bochum spoke well that it is "a signal that the era of the European-wide strike has come."

New Labour has announced it will make "full employment in the U.K." the heart of its looming election manifesto. This rings hollow in a society where unemployment is indispensable. The fight to save jobs poses the fundamental conflict of interests between capital and labor.

The active rejection of the agenda of the bosses and partnership with capital opens the possibility of a more far-reaching solidarity for freedom from the entire system of global capital. No matter who wins the election, this system will remain and this winter of discontent points to this as the goal we must set.

—Christopher Ford, Secretary, PCWU

EDITORIAL

Bush's dangerous new retrogression

With all the sound and fury over former President Clinton's pardon of wealthy fugitive union-buster Marc Rich, which continues the Right's attempt to criminalize and destroy what they perceive as his "liberalism," the real crime of Clinton's last days in office is being swept under the carpet. This crime is the failure to grant clemency to long-time Native American political prisoner Leonard Peltier, after holding out hope that he might be reunited with his family and comrades after 25 years of unjust imprisonment.

Peltier said, "It is a terrible feeling and disappointment knowing that this nightmare has not ended and will continue for many months to come....The White House gave my attorneys indications that there was a good chance for my clemency to be granted. I had to prepare myself for being released because there was no sign that my petition would be denied....Then Jan. 20 came and went! The White House never even told us what the decision was. We had to find out through the press that my name was not on the list of clemencies."

This was indeed a cruel and heartless act. It is clear that the fault here isn't only Clinton's, though, but a result of his caving in to the demonstration that was held in Washington, D.C. by hundreds of armed FBI agents in protest of his decision even to consider granting Leonard Peltier clemency. And this shows with absolute clarity that we have entered a most dangerous time for all the forces of opposition in this country.

RELIGIOUS HAND-OUTS

George W. Bush represents a major retrogression but not a transformation into opposite. Bush's state terrorist bombing of Iraq, for example, is consistent with Clinton's policy throughout his administration. Clinton's co-optation of right-wing ideological positions, while at the same time presenting himself as a bulwark against the far Right, now reveals its com-

plete failure as what many viewed as a weak rampart becomes a wide open door for the most reactionary racist, anti-woman, homophobic and exploitative forces to walk through.

Where the Right had faced some defeats, as in the failed bid to impeach Clinton, it now looks forward to a period of state-sponsored hothouse growth at the expense of the public, as with Bush's newly created Office of Religious Affairs. This would turn over "charitable" government functions to private religious organizations, breaking down the historic separation of church and state. Sen. Jesse Helms has proposed extending this to foreign policy as well.

The appointment of John Ashcroft as Attorney General is especially revealing. Whatever posturing Bush may do, he has placed at the head of the country's vast legal bureaucracy an open sympathizer of the racist Confederacy. This will do nothing to reverse the racist and classist incarceration of two million souls in the American gulag, the epidemic of police brutality, the practice of racial profiling that makes targets of young Blacks and Latinos in particular. And the confluence of right-wing religion and state power creates the most dangerous situation in decades for women's rights to control of



Leonard Peltier

their own lives and bodies.

The influence of a right-wing paranoid at the top will do a lot to foster the return (which has already begun in Chicago) and growth of the once-discredited Red Squads and other forms of political harassment. These have already been intensifying in the wake of the Seattle demonstrations as well as others against global capitalism.

THE MILITARIZATION OF REPRESSION

This could already be seen in the unprecedented security presence at Bush's inauguration, with military-style checkpoints that made Washington, D.C. resemble old East Berlin. That this trend is international could be seen in the militarized assault upon demonstrators at the recent World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. The upcoming Quebec City meetings on the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas promise similar measures, while the World Trade Organization has announced that its next meeting will be held in the repressive Persian Gulf state of Qatar.

It would be an illusion to think that the rulers will reserve their forces for these large-scale occasions. They want to prevent another Seattle 1999 or Los Angeles 1992 and will do whatever they think it takes. The gravity of this situation can't be minimized, or we will be whistling past the graveyard of our hopes. The movement for freedom, here and worldwide, will have to confront the necessity for serious rethinking in order to meet this new situation in which the most retrogressive forces in American life have taken control of the world's most powerful machinery of repression.

Worker-thinker

(Continued from page 3)

tin's philosophical growth from that first article in 1972 to a conversation in 1983 with his early mentor, Charles Denby, on Marx:

"When I first 'met Marx' I saw that he was recognizing workers as being something in their moving and doing. Here was Marx talking about the workers having their own movement, their own self-development, and it was done so that you could see your own thinking and doing. It was not Marx telling me what to do, but recognizing what I was doing" (p. 50-51).

One gets the impression that no one could "tell" him to do anything, but in recognizing him as a worker and his value, Karl Marx's writings played a vital role in Felix's development from a worker/farmer/Marxist-initiate to a full-fledged Marxist-Humanist philosopher.

"The first book I ever read which dealt with Marx was *Marxism and Freedom*. When I could understand the words, I could begin to understand this question of mental and manual..." Where I had always been looking to the foreman or the union bureaucrats as the thinkers—that they were the head and I was the body—I now saw it very differently" (p. 53).

One of the most appealing qualities of Felix Martin's writings was his ability to explain complex concepts in simple (but not simplistic) terms. In 1986 he wrote, "For Marx, freedom meant a society where all people are equally thinkers and doers, full human beings. That is what I have been fighting for as long as I can remember, and what people all over the world are still fighting for today" (p. 61).

Felix Martin was a worker, a farmer, an environmentalist, and a man who knew, firsthand, the atrocities that corporate bureaucrats visited upon those who were enslaved by their policies, and he wrote from the experience that was ingrained in his heart. Martin's writings and involvement with News and Letters Committees defined the organization's universality, and the overall message of Marx's philosophy for workers.

BECOMING WHOLE HUMAN BEING

In his memorial to Raya Dunayevskaya in 1987 he wrote, "To me, as a worker, this Marxist-Humanist organization founded by Raya Dunayevskaya and Charles Denby is what all of history has been struggling toward, an organization where workers and intellectuals can come together and work out these new ideas, where each can become a whole human being, to free ourselves from this butchering inhuman system" (p. 65).

The writings of the man from Hell for Certain—as plain as they may seem at first blush—are well-represented in this work, for in their "brown-bagged" plainly wrapped sincerity, the selections remind us of what Marxist-Humanism is all about.

In 1987, upon the death of Dunayevskaya, Felix Martin wrote, "Now, for the first time we are without Raya. It's like we lost our navigator at sea. But all through the 1980s Raya was trying to help our self-development so we could all become navigators, Marxist-Humanist thinkers and activists" (p. 65).

As the navigator charts the course, the helmsman must steer the ship to safe harbors. For future generations, *The Revolutionary Journalism of Felix Martin* should act as a guide for those helmsmen who are entrusted to steer the course and maintain all due speed towards freedom.

—Robert Taliaferro

Passion for change runs deep in Iran

On the 22nd anniversary of the fall of the monarchy in Iran hundreds of opposition rallies were held Feb. 22 throughout the country protesting the lack of freedoms. The recent conservative backlash against the reformist movement, its newspapers, and its spokespeople, seems to have only helped intensify the protest movements.

In January hardline judges handed down a series of harsh jail sentences to ten writers, feminists, journalists, and student leaders who had participated in a conference in Berlin last year. The conference organizers, the German Green Party and a liberal research institute, had invited independent human rights activists as well as government-connected reformists to discuss recent developments in the country.

But protests by Iranian exiles and vehement denunciations of the regime for its inhuman policies and practices turned the conference into an international public relations disaster for the government. Ten conference participants were arrested upon return and were charged with "threatening national security." A major media campaign to incriminate them was also

Capital punishment and other nonsense

Gatesville, Texas—If you should encounter some half-wit who still believes the nonsense about capital punishment being a deterrent to heinous crimes, you might want to have the following facts handy.

A recent study by *The New York Times* showed the 12 states with no death penalty (Alaska, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia, Wisconsin) do not experience higher murder rates than those states with it. In fact, in 10 of those 12 states, the murder rate is appreciably lower.

After the U.S. Supreme Court reinstated the death penalty in 1976, the states which resumed executions experienced increased murder rates. While these may be surprising statistics to a few, they are nothing new to students of the criminal justice system.

Capital punishment simply does not deter crime. The truth is that the vast majority of murderers are either chemical substance weirdos or they simply believe they can kill and get away with it. Murderers of either group are not likely to be deterred by anything. If, however, anything could deter, the threat of life in prison without parole would come closer than the threat of death by civil execution.

The *Times*' report tells us that Massachusetts, which does not subscribe to the death penalty, has a notably lower murder rate than its less populous and ethnically diverse neighbor, Connecticut, which does. Texas, as the world has learned, is the leader in executions with 231 since 1976, 144 of those carried out while George "Dubya" was in office. From 1973 to 1995, Texas, with an average annual murder rate of 13-34 per 100,000 residents, ran second only to Louisiana, proving that the death penalty deters no one.

It is highly unlikely that life without parole as an alternative to the death penalty would bring about a higher murder rate. What it would bring, however, is the avoidance of our occasional execution of an innocent person.

How much longer will we tolerate this primitive process? The answer will come from state and federal legislative action. The answer must, however, be prompted—even demanded—by the public.

—Roger Hummel

unleashed. These developments have coincided with an all-out war atmosphere created by the regime in its supposed "defense" of the Palestinian Intifada.

One of those arrested was Mehrangiz Kar, an articulate feminist jurist and legal scholar who has written several major popular works critical of the inhumanity of Islamic legal codes and norms practiced in Iran, used by women in daily legal battles.

Other defendants include Shahla Lahiji, the editor of a feminist women's magazine, and Akbar Ganji, a former insider turned investigative journalist who has exposed government assassination squads. The sentences seemed to have only backfired because the accused have now become major opposition figures with widespread support at home and abroad.

In one of her moving speeches in Berlin, Kar remarked that the reformist majority in the parliament elected last year can not do otherwise but to decisively move to dismantle the oppressive political and legal system set in place by the Islamic constitution. Anything short of that, she warned, will quickly bring the movement to a dead-end and lead to a strengthening of the conservatives.

She was not optimistic that such a decisive move by the reformists would actually take place. The present constitution was first shoved down the throat of Iranians by Ayatollah Khomeini in 1980 during the hostage crisis, and was specifically designed to frustrate any future attempts to democratize.

The Islamic reformists have thus far had to submit to the powers of the Faqih—the supreme leader—and the judiciary, but tensions are beginning to split this movement. On the one hand, in February a reformist-Islamic student group staged a sit-in in front of the Majlis (parliament) and issued an open letter to Ayatollah Khamenei, obliquely accusing him of ordering the killing of opposition figures, attacking the university dorms, and covering up the affair. On the other hand, Khatami and other executive branch officials are condemning anyone who questions the constitution.

Both outside the country, where millions of Iranians live in exile, and inside, a growing number yearn for the overthrow of both the rule of the clergy and an end to the involvement of religion in state affairs. The reformists do not speak for this large segment.

The major political shift, up to this moment, has been that some "true believers," once supporters of the Islamic Republic, have been moving away from demagoguery and towards becoming serious freedom fighters.

Reform ideologists, however, have also sown many illusions about the possibilities of achieving freedom within the present framework. They have exerted their influence on more radical elements such as during the summer 1999 student protests.

Unfortunately many Iranian Marxists consider the reformists to be a greater threat than the hardline conservatives, blinding them to the important developments of the present moment.

The closure of 30 or more newspapers last year has not stemmed the tidal wave of ideas and struggles coming. Serious debates are taking place in smaller papers, in more radical circles, and in underground groups on the relationship of revolutionary theory, Marx's ideas, and the process of struggle for freedom.

Iran is awash in talk and protests by students, by workers, by national and ethnic minorities, and by women's liberationists. How can we ensure that these voices of revolt can be heard unseparated from the articulation of a philosophy of revolution?

—Cyrus Noveen

For more on Marxist-Humanism in the Iranian revolution, see page 4.—Editor

Sharon's election, Bush's bombs deepen Middle East crisis

(Continued from page 1)

most reactionary policies during the campaign, Sharon trumpeted his.

Such retrogression is the price Israelis and Palestinians will now be forced to pay for seven years of missed opportunities since Oslo in 1993. Most of the missed opportunities have been from the Israeli side: stonewalling and delays on withdrawals from the occupied territories, cantonization of even those areas ceded the Palestinian Authority, continuing to allow the settlements to expand even when talking peace, and refusing until six months ago even to discuss shared sovereignty over Jerusalem.

This was compounded by the zigzags of defeated Prime Minister Ehud Barak since July 2000, when the Palestinian leadership rejected a U.S.-brokered plan that would have evacuated most (but not all) settlements and given Palestinians limited control over parts of Jerusalem. Two months later, when Barak responded to rioting after a provocative claim-staking visit by Sharon to Muslim religious sites in Jerusalem by digging in, the peace process was effectively derailed. This was especially true after Barak's soldiers and police proceeded over the next months to kill no less than 300 Palestinians, many of them children and teenagers. His forces also engaged in other atrocities, including the publicly avowed assassination of Palestinian leaders.

THE PALESTINIAN RESPONSE TO BARAK

During these same crucial months, from July through February, the Palestinian leadership—not only Yasir Arafat's corrupt Palestinian Authority, but also more independent voices—grew increasingly rejectionist. In January, even after Barak, under U.S. prodding, seemed to accept a substantial compromise on Jerusalem and a near-total withdrawal from the occupied territories, the Palestinian leadership refused to go along.

Nearly unanimously, it insisted that, in addition, all the Palestinian refugees from 1948 and 1967 and their descendants, now nearly four million people outside Israel or the territories, be granted an unlimited right of return, not to a new Palestinian state, but to Israel proper. Given current demographic trends, such a return would have made Israeli Jews a minority in a largely Arab country in a decade or so.

As *Le Monde*, France's left of center newspaper, one that has long supported critically the Palestinian movement, editorialized on Jan. 4: "In recognizing the existence of the Jewish state ten years ago, the Palestine Liberation Organization had implicitly renounced the objective, avowed openly or secretly nourished, over several generations: the 'return to Jaffa' of the refugees from 1948 and their descendants. Today, the hour has come for Arafat to officially dissipate this sad mirage, maintained for the exiles, that of a reconquest of the old Palestine."

Unfortunately, the murderous Israeli actions that accompanied Barak's peace offers made just such a renunciation by the Palestinian leadership impossible. This was even more the case as it became known, from September onwards, that Barak had lost his majority because of these very peace offers.

Those who might have wanted to compromise with Barak were forestalled by all sorts of demagoguery. This included secular intellectuals who wrote of the absolute right of return, but knowingly ignored the one million or more Israeli Jews expelled from Arab lands since 1948.

But the most destructive voices were religion-tinged. Listen for example to Sheik Ekrima Sabri, Jerusalem's

top Muslim cleric, who stated: "There is no proof the Jews ever were in Jerusalem" during Biblical times. During the battle over the Florida election, he stated that "Jews" were trying to steal the election for Gore: "They will steal it, and then they will remove him and then the Jew Lieberman will take over. That is why we support Bush" (quoted in *The New Yorker*, 1/29/01).

On the Israeli side, such voices found their counterpart, not only in Sharon's bombastic threats to bomb Egypt's Aswan Dam if necessary, but also among the 100,000, many of them Jewish religious fanatics, who demonstrated on Jan. 8 in Jerusalem. They came out to denounce any effort to share control of the city and to support a ruling by two chief rabbis forbidding any relinquishing of Jewish control over the Temple Mount, which contains the city's two most important Muslim religious sites, as well as the Western Wall, the most revered one for Judaism.

ARE THERE ANY OPENINGS?

Not for a generation has the overall situation in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict looked so bleak. However, while this needs to be faced squarely and not minimized in any way, we need also to note a few signs of hope, small as they are.

One of these lies in the fact that voter turnout was the lowest in Israel's history. While Sharon's relative majority was very large (62% to 38%), in absolute numbers he drew no more votes than had Netanyahu in 1996, the last time a reactionary anti-peace candidate won. The difference today is not in the size of the pro-reactionary vote but in the sharp decline of the Labor vote.

That decline was due to massive abstentions, constituting fully 40% of the eligible voters, almost entirely from the Labor camp. To be sure, some of these abstentions were from the Right, labor supporters who thought Barak had not cracked down enough or had offered too many concessions. However many abstentions came from the Left, from those who could not bring themselves to vote for Barak because of his mur-

derous crackdown that destroyed the prospects for peace.

On the Israeli Arab and Jewish sides, the abstention was a well-organized movement. It included not only the well-publicized near-total abstention by voters from Israel's Arab minority, some 13% of the potential electorate. There were also hundreds of thousands of pro-peace Israeli Jews who refused to vote for Barak.

Israeli sociologist Lev Greenberg organized an appeal signed by some 50 pro-peace intellectuals, calling for the casting of blank ballots. According to a report on Feb. 7 in *Ha'aretz*, Israel's left-of-center paper, some "believe that the blank ballot movement will have a continuation after the elections, that it will be led by the Jewish and Arab Left and that it will be an extra-parliamentary movement."

Can the Israeli Left really break with Labor, soon to be part of Sharon's government, and draw a substantial part of the 40% who abstained into a mass-based peace movement? One test is the various demonstrations that were called, including the Peace and Justice marches held simultaneously in both Israel and the West Bank on Feb. 24. Another will come on March 8, when Jewish and Arab women plan to demonstrate for peace. Yet another will come inside the military, where increasing numbers of youth may refuse to fight for Sharon's reactionary government, especially in the face of what is sure to be escalating Palestinian resistance.

Nonetheless, Sharon's victory and its consequences cannot be underestimated. He will care little about the fact that he was far from obtaining an absolute majority. His uninterrupted history of aggressive wars and massacres, of violence and racism, make him a truly dangerous man. Most ominous of all, he will now be the commander-in-chief of one of the world's best-equipped and sophisticated militaries, complete with nuclear weapons—one backed up by an equally short-sighted and dangerous U.S. administration led by George W. Bush.

—Feb. 26, 2001

Bush's bombs hide humanism of Iraqi masses

Memphis, Tenn.—The Iraq Sanctions Challenge returned to the U.S. from Iraq and Jordan the evening of Jan. 21. The previous week we spent touring hospitals in Iraq, water treatment facilities, food rationing/distribution centers, the Al-Ameriyah bomb shelter, primary schools and a university, seeing and hearing for ourselves the effects of economic sanctions on a nation under siege. We delivered antibiotics to the Red Crescent and school supplies to the primary schools.

I saw for myself what pictures only hinted at—overcrowded hospitals short on medicine and medical supplies; neighborhoods where barefoot, malnourished children play near the open sewer trenches running through their streets.

In Basra, I met Ali-Saadi Chanchyn Hussein and his father Saadi. On Jan. 25, 1999, his family was eating breakfast. At 9:30 a.m. the sky turned dark, then their house was blown apart by U.S. bombs. The same bombs blew shrapnel across little Ali's face.

We stand in the doorway to their building, rebuilt two months after the air strike; as Ali points to his scars, his father offers me a place to stay. My government offers this family bombs and sanctions, and they offer me shelter.

As my country wages war on the households and families of Iraq, bombing the southern "no-fly" zone the day after we left, these people want me to know that they love Americans, that they want peace, and that they want our government to lift sanctions and stop bombing them. They want our government to let them live. They wanted my address and they wanted their pictures taken with me.

I had to tell a lot of people that the new administration wanted to intensify sanctions, to be more aggressive towards Iraq. How do you apologize for that? How do you say, "I'm sorry, but our new president, the son of the man who put you in this state, wants it to continue, wants the suffering to worsen"? That's essentially the approach this administration will take/has taken, and much of the Senate, especially Fred Thompson of Tennessee, is right behind the son of a Bush.

There is a lot of information to sort through, a lot of experiences to unravel, and a lot of stories to tell. I'm ready to tell everyone.

—Ceylon

Memphis—On Feb. 13, 1991, U.S. forces dropped two "smart-bombs" on the Al-Ameriyah bomb shelter in Baghdad. Over 400 Iraqi citizens were killed. Ten years later, in Memphis, members of the Humanitari-

an Action Collective met in front of the armed forces recruiting office to let people know what happens on the other end of bombs dropped by the U.S.

We held signs that called for an end to the bombing and the sanctions. Ceylon Mooney taped two signs onto the windows causing someone to emerge from the building to tell us, "No, no, take that down." He peeled the signs off and set them on the ground.

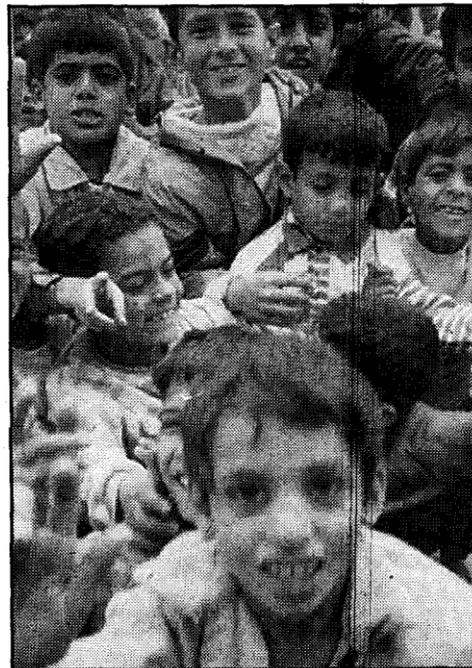
When the police arrived they told us that unless we had a permit we had to go. "What?" we asked, trying to explain that, with seven people, we didn't need a permit to assemble on a street-corner. A cop yelled, "If you don't have a permit, I'm gonna arrest you." Ceylon told the officer he was staying, and we had a right to be there. The officer handcuffed him and put him in the back of the police car.

We emphatically warned the officers that they better check the law before they took him in or they'd be in trouble, and we called Ceylon's lawyer and 911 to report a false arrest and asked them to send a sergeant—someone who actually knew the law.

Meanwhile, we took photographs of the scene. After an hour the police finally let him go with a citation and the message that "if a cop tells you to move and you don't move, it's disorderly conduct."

This action was planned to educate people about what's been happening in Iraq for the past ten years, but we ended up getting a lesson on the disregard for free speech and a free press by the authorities. We saw it on Feb. 13 in cops who didn't know of our right to assemble, and we see it in the media coverage as the new President Bush bombs Baghdad once again.

—Young woman peace activist



Children in Iraq: objects or subjects?

Ceylon/News & Letters

San Francisco—Within hours of the Feb. 16 U.S.-led air strikes on Baghdad, protesters gathered at Powell and Market streets. At least 50, many of Middle East descent, marched in a picket line as a similar number looked on and joined in the chanting. Almost everyone had come to this busy commuter/shopper/tourist intersection straight from work.

One speaker pointed out the silliness of George W. Bush's self-defense rationale when he reminded the crowd that not one U.S. aircraft had been shot down during ten years of patrolling the no-fly zones. Another activist made her case that the offensive was prompted by the need to revitalize hatred for the Iraqi people in view of worldwide opposition to sanctions against Iraq. Indeed, later that evening a Bay Area television station reported the reaction of 10,000 polled on the Internet: 24% approved of the attack, 74% were opposed to it.

—David M.

How to contact

NEWS & LETTERS COMMITTEES

CHICAGO

36 S. Wabash, Room 1440
Chicago, IL 60603
Phone 312 236-0799
Fax 312 236-0725

MEETINGS

Call for Information

DETROIT

P.O. Box 27205
Detroit MI 48227

MEETINGS

Mondays, 6 p.m.
Central Methodist Church
Woodward and Adams

LOS ANGELES

4475 Sunset Drive-Box 181
Los Angeles, CA 90027

MEETINGS

Sundays, 5:30 p.m.
Echo Park United
Methodist Church
1226 N. Alvarado
(North of Sunset, side door)

FLINT, MI

P.O. Box 3384, Flint, MI 48502

NEW YORK

P.O. Box 250657
Columbia University Station
New York, NY 10025
212 663 3631

MEETINGS

Sundays, 6:30 p.m.
Washington Square Church
133 W. 4th St.
Manhattan

OAKLAND

P.O. Box 3345
Oakland, CA 94609
510 658 1448

MEETINGS

Sundays, 6:30 p.m.
2015 Center St. (at Milvia)
Berkeley

MEMPHIS & MISSISSIPPI

1910 Madison Ave, PMB 59
Memphis, TN 38104

INTERNET

Email

nandl@igc.org
banandl@yahoo.com (Oakland)

WORLD WIDE WEB

www.newsandletters.org

INTERNATIONAL MARXIST-HUMANISTS

ENGLAND

BCM Box 3514, London, England WC1N 3XX
http://members.aol.com/THEHOBGOBL/index.html

Retrieving Lenin in the 21st century?

Essen, Germany—A conference, organized primarily by the radical philosopher Slavoj Zizek on the theme "Towards a Politics of Truth: The Retrieval of Lenin," was held Feb. 2-4 in this small German industrial city. Some 150 people from Germany, France, Britain, Belgium, The Netherlands, Korea, Kurdistan, Austria, and elsewhere, many of them youth, heard 16 speakers. They discussed Lenin and dialectics, Lenin and colonialism, Lenin's concept of organization, and whether Lenin is relevant to today's anti-globalization movements.

Given today's political and intellectual climate, it would be an understatement to call such a conference controversial. Controversy, if not scandal, seemed to be the intent of conference organizer Zizek, whose article "Learning from Lenin" appeared in the prominent weekly *Die Zeit* on Feb. 1, the day before the conference opened. He wrote: "Liberal society knows no radical choice. Fundamental change should not be considered. Here Lenin is actual. The alternative lies outside the system." Where Marx has been to a great extent integrated into academia, he added, speaking Lenin's name shows that one is after truly fundamental change.

In his opening and closing remarks to the conference, Zizek evoked neither Lenin's concept of the vanguard party nor the single party state, but "Lenin in becoming—after 1914," someone who was "stranded without coordinates" after the outbreak of World War I and the collapse of the socialist movement, and who had to reinvent revolutionary theory and practice, not least in a return to Hegel.

Lenin's 1914 return to Hegel became a topic of heated debate on the first night of the conference, after the philosopher Eustache Kouvelakis and I spoke on Lenin's Hegel studies and his break with the crude materialism of earlier Marxists. I also developed the impact of Hegel on his view of world politics, especially the anti-colonial liberation movements, where Lenin contrasted the nationalism of imperialist powers to that of oppressed nations engaged in liberation struggles. (I used this to contrast Serbian nationalism under Milosevic to that of the Bosnians and the Kosovars.)

This writer's attack on Althusser's misreading of the relation of Marx and Lenin to Hegel prompted strong agreement from Fredric Jameson, who deplored recent attempts to portray Hegel as a static philosopher of totality. Others vehemently defended Althusser's legacy and attacked the Hegelian tradition in Marxism as extremely damaging. Zizek criticized those on the Left who had supported Milosevic and pointed out that Lenin's support of small oppressed nations was not mere benevolence, but something very concrete, as was his daring to confront Hegel's Absolute.

On the second day of the conference, much of the debate was on Lenin's concept of the party, including presentations by Trotskyist theoreticians such as Daniel Bensaid and Alex Callinicos. More thoughtful interventions that questioned received views of Lenin came from Lars Lih and Sebastian Budgen. The highlight of day two, however, was the intervention via telephone by imprisoned Italian philosopher Antonio Negri, who discussed the new global resistance to capitalism as outlined in his recent book, *Empire*. In another talk that day, Jameson deplored the attempt to reduce Lenin to the political, suggesting that he had returned to Marx's concept of capital through a reading of Hegel's *Science of Logic*. Revolution is the key, Jame-

son concluded, if we can keep it alive as process, not event.

Throughout, the conference exhibited tensions between cultural studies types, orthodox Leninists, and anti-globalization activists. These tensions came to the fore on the last day, when anti-globalization activist Doug Henwood argued that Lenin was not very relevant to today's struggles. This was followed immediately by Alain Badiou's structuralist-Maoist presentation, one that bizarrely tried to resurrect not only the mindless destructiveness of Mao's Cultural Revolution, but also Mao's maxim that "one divides into two," which was presented as a high point of revolutionary philosophy. It was quickly pointed out that such Maoisms lead only to what Hegel called the rage and fury of destruction, a type of negativity that contains nothing of the creativity of a forward movement, which is why Hegel contrasted bare or abstract negativity to absolute negativity, the negation of the negation.

Was this conference the harbinger of a critical recovery and rethinking of the legacy of that great revolutionary thinker and leader, Lenin, who is so slandered today that few on the Left even dare to pronounce his name? Germany's liberal establishment press (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Frankfurter Rundschau*, etc.), which covered the conference in great and scornful detail did not seem to think so. Even the left-of-center *Tagezeitung* likened the conference to resurrecting a corpse, pouring particular vitriol on "antiquated writers of history, who disputed to what extent Hegel corresponded to Marxist-Leninist doctrine and who sought to liberate the true Lenin from the Leninologists." One wonders, however, if these critics protest too much, if they do not feel the earth moving underfoot, at least to a slight degree.

—Kevin Anderson

Plant explosion threatens community

Memphis, Tenn.—On Feb. 8 a 45,000-gallon chemical tank, filled with dicyclopentadiene, exploded and burned at Velsicol Chemical Corp. in my North Memphis neighborhood—an area where several chemical plants sit in the midst of crowded Black neighborhoods. A large plume of thick dark smoke poured out of the burning tank for hours. It smelled oily, like gasoline.

I started getting phone calls. A lady with a three-day-old grandchild said, "I don't know what to do. The odor is too strong. I live right here by it." Somebody else was out with her eight-month-old grandbaby. Her sister called her and told her to stay out of the area.

My car is not running. How could I get out of the neighborhood? A couple of friends came and others called to see if I was all right, and if people needed evacuating. No sirens were heard.

After the explosion I was looking for some kind of horn to go off. I called the non-emergency police number. They didn't know what to tell me to do. I called Velsicol, and finally got somebody's voicemail. I said, "We're in the neighborhood, we don't know what to do. Should we evacuate? Please inform me about this." I never got a response and it's more than a week later.

For the last three years, Velsicol and other chemical companies have been talking about a community alert system. On Jan. 30 there was supposed to be a drill where the alarms would go off and your phone would be called automatically to let you know what the emergency was. Nobody got a phone call.

On the news, Velsicol plant manager Glenda Akins said there was no threat to the community. Then why didn't they inform the community? She said, it's not her job to call, that it was the Fire Department's responsibility to alert the community.

I called the television station because they said the smoke blew into "a sparsely populated area." I told them my neighborhood alone has 3,000 people, just blocks from Velsicol. On the same street with chemical plants, there are houses. They said the wind was high, but the pollution settles somewhere. The community was just written off. Right by Velsicol is a day-care center.

We don't have a clinic in this area. You can't get a flu shot here, or aspirin for your headaches from smelling this mess. You can't get a prescription, dry goods, groceries, a hamburger. This area is redlined as far as development. We don't even have a Dollar Store.

A lot of the citizens say, there's nothing we can do. There is something we can do. We can unite our voices and the ants can come together and go up against the giants. Let them know you're not willing to continue this low quality of life. The benefits the community receives from chemical companies' used computers and their appearances at the school don't outweigh the environmental harm done to us. There's a lot of talk about community development. But if you develop homes on polluted land, you have not improved the quality of life. Until we develop a people-friendly policy on the environment, what good does redevelopment do?

—Balinda Moore

Youths protest city job cuts



Chicago—200 young people organized a protest in front of Mayor Daley's office in City Hall on Feb. 22 to protest cuts in funding for summer jobs. Many of the youth skipped school to express their indignation over the city's plan to offer at least 4,000 less summer jobs than last year.

Sweatshop conference targets prison labor

Evanston, Ill.—About 200 students gathered at Northwestern University here Feb. 9-11 for the first United Students Against Sweatshops Midwest Regional Conference. The conference was exciting to me because of the possibility it represented of bringing together two movements that are too often held separate, the opposition to global capitalism embodied by the anti-sweatshop activists, and the opposition to the racist criminal justice system. The conference began with a demonstration on Friday afternoon, Feb. 9, against Sodexo Marriott, the company that provides food service at Northwestern and which is also the world's largest investor in private prisons.

The most interesting aspects of the weekend were the many ways young people are clearly reaching out to try to make the connections that need to be made—especially at this moment of reactionary ascendancy—between these movements. It was also made clear that this won't happen without some hard work. Although the young people present were mostly white and middle-class, in the most serious of them the idealism and hunger to engage in a search for a new kind of society was absolutely there.

Concretely, the conference was really powered by the growing, nationwide movement against Sodexo Marriott. In 1998, the French multinational corporation Sodexo Alliance took over Marriott Management Services and now holds \$4.5 billion in annual catering contracts with universities, hospitals and corporations. Sodexo Marriott makes about \$1.2 billion per year from students on its campus contracts.

Kevin Pranis of the Prison Moratorium Project gave a fascinating workshop on the history of private prisons, beginning in the post-slavery "convict lease sys-

tem" that perpetuated racist and brutal social relations, to today's state-capitalist reality in which the CEO of the largest private prison firm, Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), is a former head of the Federal Bureau of Prisons. CCA was recently found guilty in a South Carolina lawsuit of "criminal conspiracy to use violence and terror" to control juvenile offenders that the state places in its power.

Currently Sodexo Marriott provides food services for about 500 campuses around the country and this abysmal connection between school and prison could well be the tinder for a new movement along the lines of the movement to divest from South Africa in the 1980s. There has been significant activism around this issue at a number of campuses, and Sodexo Marriott has been forced off four campuses so far. Organizers look forward to escalating activities this spring, including a demonstration April 4 (the anniversary of Martin Luther King's assassination) at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

While this was exciting, it was even more interesting and moving to hear the young people in the workshops trying to draw the connections between these specific abuses and the larger issues of this country's racist social relations. Some of the conference organizers had a cynical view of "Marxism" based on their view of the 1960s movements, but the potential for transcendence of that was clear in the discussions.

The future activities that flow out of this conference and others like it will be very important, but it will also be necessary to see that the ideas and the consciousness that are embodied in these continue to develop and become themselves a force to transcend the oppressive social relations we live under.

—Gerard Emmett

Queer Notes

by Suzanne Rose

The Bush administration has lodged a complaint with the World Trade Organization alleging that Brazil's generic production of seven common HIV drugs violates WTO rules and U.S. drug company patents. More than 100,000 Brazilians are being kept alive by the locally produced copies of the exorbitantly priced brand-name drugs. During a public health emergency, Brazilian law allows for generic production of drugs that would otherwise require authorization of the patent holder.

—from *Windy City Times*

Allegations of fraud concerning an anti-gay petition in Dade County are being investigated by Miami law enforcement. The local GLBT organization called in a handwriting expert who said that 480 signatures gathered by the Christian Coalition-endorsed Take Back Miami-Dade are fake. The petition has 50,912 signatures, enough to get an anti-gay referendum on the Miami-Dade ballot. The referendum would repeal a 1998 law that bans discrimination against gays in employment, housing and public accommodations.

The first meeting of the Chicago Midwest Lesbian Health Research Consortium was held Feb. 21 at the University of Illinois at Chicago's College of Nursing. Still in the beginning stages, the Consortium is a broad-based effort to bring together current and future researchers, service providers and public health professionals to promote lesbian and bisexual women's health research.

Our Life and Times

China's rulers exposed by Tiananmen Papers

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

The Tiananmen Papers, published earlier this year in the West, document the decisions made by China's ruling Communist Party (CP) elite between April and June, 1989, leading up to the imposition of martial law, the bloody suppression of mass, nationwide demonstrations, and the aftermath of the June 4 massacre. The papers were delivered by Zhang Liang, pseudonym of an anonymous CP member, to western scholars, most of whom agree on their basic authenticity.

The transcripts of meetings detail the split within the CP on how to respond to the students and workers and youth who took over Tiananmen Square. The rulers saw the students as a clear threat to their hold on power. Deng Xiaoping, the ultimate authority at the time, declared on April 25 that the protests were "no ordinary student movement...This is a well-planned plot...to reject the Chinese Communist Party and the socialist system at the most fundamental level." According to the transcripts, Deng's declaration, nearly verbatim, became the editorial in the next day's *People's Daily*.

The Tiananmen Papers expose a great number of replies to the editorial from the public who supported the students, whose original aims were to root out official corruption. The papers also give a detailed view of the scope of the protests throughout China. According to Zhang, the compiler, the demonstrations involved millions of people, workers and peasants as well as students. The CP was especially fearful of independent activity among workers, and emerging student-worker alliances.

Li Peng was in the faction which called for the army to crush the occupation of Tiananmen Square. The eight "party elders", with Deng in control, sided with military force. Zhao Ziyang, opposed to martial law, was deposed as CP general secretary and replaced by Jiang Zemin, who now is also president. Li, now chairman of the national assembly, holds the second office in the CP. Zhao remains under house arrest.

In the week after the June 4 crackdown, CP leaders

World Social Forum

An estimated 10,000 people from 100 countries—environmentalists, farmers, feminists, left activists, and members of the Landless Workers Movement (MST)—met at the World Social Forum (WSF) in Porto Alegre, Brazil, at the end of January. The WSF was organized as an anti-globalization alternative to the World Economic Forum which met the same time in Davos, Switzerland.

The conference agenda took up questions ranging from debt relief, taxing international capital transfers and other reformist perspectives, to child labor, racism, feminism and other issues. The activist bent of the forum was demonstrated when WSF participants joined with the MST to invade a research farm run by the biotech corporation Monsanto, and pulled up genetically modified soya and corn plants. Environmentalists and farmers have objected to practices in agriculture which make farmers dependent on corporations for growing crops.

The question of full participation at the forum was raised by representatives of the United Black Movement in Brazil, which protested at a WSF press conference that they were scheduled for only a one-hour session during the five-day conference. There were no Black participants and only one woman on the WSF organizing committee, a question the organizers have promised to address.

were alerted to clashes in every provincial capital and in every major city. Far from a "well-planned plot," Zhang Liang described what happened as "autonomous, spontaneous, and disorderly." Yet Zhang is himself described as a reformer from within the CP who distances himself from any substantial involvement for mass movements.

China's current rulers have branded the Tiananmen Papers as fake, but they are circulating now on the internet and will be published in Chinese sometime this spring. China's current rulers have refused any open discussion of events surrounding April-June 1989. Hundreds of political prisoners from the revolt remain in jail under harsh sentences.

The CP knows that in 1989 it was close to losing its grip on power. This helps to explain the vicious state attacks on the seemingly benign and apolitical Falun Gong movement. The CP leadership must have been shocked to see 10,000 Falun Gong practitioners appearing to come out of nowhere to surround their compound in Beijing on April 25, 1999. This occurred despite tight security on the eve of the tenth anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre.

More importantly, international support is rallying around Cao Maobing, an electrician who tried to form

Anti-immigrant Spain

The shocking picture of an overloaded boat with 700 Iraqi Kurdish men, women and children being deliberately and dangerously beached off the French Riviera has raised the whole question of how west Europe is responding to immigrants. In Spain, protests were held after new anti-immigrant legislation went into



Thousands rallied in Madrid protesting new anti-immigrant laws. Sign reads "I'm human. And you?"

effect in January. Around 40,000 people, including trade unionists and leftists, marched in Barcelona on Feb. 4. A week later, up to 10,000 immigrants from Africa, East Europe and Asia marched in Madrid, demanding work permits and residency documents.

The anti-immigrant laws were introduced by the conservative government of Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar after racist anti-immigrant riots broke out a year ago in the southeast agricultural region. There are one million legal and 130,000 illegal immigrants now in Spain—only 2% of the population. Most are from Morocco and sub-Saharan Africa.

It is now easier for authorities to expel illegal immigrants who have also lost their previous rights to education and medical care. Some 30,000 people whose requests for residency papers or work permits were denied last year could now be deported. The law also denies them the right to protest or strike.

an independent labor union at a state-owned silk mill in Jiangsu Province, eastern China, after the official CP-controlled union did nothing to help the workers on issues concerning pensions, unemployment benefits and corruption of factory management. Cao was forcibly put into a psychiatric hospital, and was given drugs and shock treatment after going on a hunger strike in January to protest his detention.

It is an old Stalinist practice to forcibly commit people with dissident ideas into mental hospitals. Nonetheless, a new generation in China is seeking new ideas and some are turning to a re-examination of Marx's Marxism through conferences, translations, and new commentaries.

Escape from Aceh

Since June of last year, 500 people have been killed and 300 more are missing in the Indonesian province of Aceh, in spite of a series of cease-fires between the government and the armed separatist movement (GAM). *News & Letters* interviewed 22-year-old Nazaruddin Abdul Gani, who fled Aceh in December after he reported this brush with death.

I was a volunteer for RATA, Rehabilitation Action for Torture Victims in Aceh, an organization based in the capital, Banda Aceh, and funded by the International Red Cross in Denmark. I went to work for RATA in Lhokseumawe. Many villagers came to the office asking if we could help bring peace. I couldn't tell them when peace would come, because every day the situation became worse and worse.

After ten months, three friends and I were kidnapped by the military. My friends were two men, Idris and Bahtiar, and a woman, Ernita, who was a nurse. We had been providing medical help in one village and were traveling to another village, when three cars stopped our car. They did not wear uniforms, but I recognized some of them as military men and informers. They took our identification papers and then they tortured us. After we were bloody, they took off our clothes and put us in their car. They took the RATA symbols off our car, and used them to kidnap other people.

We were taken to a military station, where other soldiers asked the commander if they could beat us too. They discussed the best way to kill us. They drove us around, waiting until it got dark, so the public would not see. Then they took us out of the car one by one. Bahtiar and I were left in the car while Ernita and Idris were taken to an area with some growth, to hide the killings. We heard our friends shot and killed.

In the car, Bahtiar helped me untie my hands. Then I tried to untie his, but the soldiers came back. I pretended my hands were still tied. The soldiers told us to get out of the car and to walk to where our friends had just been killed. I broke away and ran in another direction. At that moment I had no expectation of getting away; I just preferred to be shot in the back than to watch them kill me. I ran, fell, got up, and ran some more. All the time, the soldiers were shooting at me. Because it was dark, they couldn't see me for long.

I followed a light to a village and went up to a house, where a villager gave me clothes and food. I couldn't eat because my mouth was badly cut during the torture. The whole village hid me there for two days. They called the RATA office in Banda Aceh, and the "humanitarian pause" office and the Henry Dunat Center. These humanitarian groups came and took me to Banda Aceh. They found the bodies of my three friends. Then Sidney Jones of Human Rights Watch came and took me to Jakarta, and then to New York. It was not safe to stay in Aceh after I told my story.

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*.