

# NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

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50¢

## WORKSHOP TALKS

### Fatal trade secrets

by Htun Lin

A muckraking documentary, Bill Moyers' "Trade Secrets," exposes the chemical industry's "behind-closed-doors" modus operandi and the decades-long conspiracy to keep critical information about its products' toxicity hidden from workers and consumers. After their cover-up scheme was exposed, an industry executive arrogantly testified at a city council hearing that the industry has not only provided "better living through chemistry" but also economic and job benefits to workers. To this, a worker suffering from job-related illness replied, his voice shaking in anger, "I can get another job. I can't get another life!"

"Trade Secrets" ends with the "victory" of consumer advocacy for "disclosure" by winning Proposition 65 in California, where individuals gained the right to be notified of harmful chemicals in their surroundings, at work or other public places. Moyers explained, "it put the fear of God" in these companies that they would be liable for huge damages, if sued for lack of "disclosure." So public advisory posters went up around gas stations, hospitals, and other public facilities. That "fear of God," the right to sue, is what is absent in President Bush's proposal for a "patients' bill of rights."

Ironically, "Trade Secrets" ends with the statement that, despite this pressure, the industry continues to churn out new chemicals at many times its previous rate and the toxicity of most remain untested. We have only been awarded the "right to know" that more

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## BLACK/RED VIEW

### Congo and the market

by John Alan

A war has gone on in the Democratic Republic of Congo since August 1998. It is the biggest war in the world today. According to "the death census," conducted by private American relief organizations, it has claimed the lives of three million people. This war involves a mixture of many causes, some going back to the struggle for independence.

Yet in spite of a tremendous loss of life and the catastrophic social conditions created by this war, the American press has paid little attention. Neither the Clinton nor the Bush administrations denounced the genocidal character of the Congo war. Madeleine Albright, Clinton's secretary of state, in an off-handed way referred to it as "Africa's first world war." Colin Powell, Bush's secretary of state, has never made a significant policy statement regarding the Congo.

Powell's failure to do so appears strange. After all, Joseph Kabila, the new president of Congo and a major participant in the Congo war, has visited the U.S. to talk to the Bush administration and the UN secretary-general. He has also visited President Jacques Chirac in Paris and re-opened talks with the IMF and the World Bank. By all of these agencies of world capitalism, Joseph Kabila is considered to be more flexible than his late father, Laurent Kabila.

#### GRAB FOR RESOURCES

It is difficult to see through the miasma created by the U.S. State Department and what they make appear as just another ethnic war in the Congo. One need not be an expert on African affairs, however, to realize that Joseph Kabila's behind-the-scenes meetings with the Bush administration and the agencies of world capitalism, is nothing less than arriving at a price they will agree to pay a native autocrat for the right to use the labor power of the Congo masses to turn the vast natural resources of the Congo into com-

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## Spy plane tussle diverts view of mass unrest in China

by Bob McGuire

On June 1, President George W. Bush quietly extended China's most favored nation trade status just

ahead of the 12th anniversary of the June 4, 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre (on June 4 more than 50,000 people in Hong Kong remembered the murdered protesters). Bush's action was taken days after China agreed to return the U.S. spy plane that crash-landed on Hainan Island. China has insisted over U.S. objections that the plane be shipped back in pieces, echoing the Cold War-era way in which the U.S. returned a North Korean MiG.

The standoff over the spy plane came at a moment of growing friction between China and the U.S., exacerbated by Bush's announcement in May that he will do "whatever it takes" to militarily defend Taiwan. His push for a nuclear missile "defense" system, which China sees as directed against itself, and his decision to sever some contacts between the U.S. and Chinese military, indicate a not-so-subtle shift in U.S.-China relations. U.S. rulers have long desired some external "enemy" with which to detract attention from problems at home, and China may well fit the bill for George W. Bush.

Yet as the renewal of most favored nation trade status shows, the month-long confrontation over the spy plane on Hainan was secondary to trade relations. Bush has followed the senior Bush and Clinton in pretending that increased trade and investment with China will lead to increased freedom. They have ignored the urging of Chinese dissidents who see crackdowns continue unabated, especially against strikes and peasant uprisings.

One expert marveled at the hard line that Chairman Jiang Zemin took over the spy plane, on the grounds that withdrawal of U.S. investors could overnight reverse a decade of China's production gains, with



Unemployed workers in China where labor confrontations over unpaid wages and peasant rebellions are increasing.

annual growth in GNP staying in double digits during the mid-1990s and still holding around 8%. Even in the U.S. we have witnessed how mobile capital can be, as when Motorola shutters an Illinois plant constructed but five years earlier.

Renewal of most favored nation trade status merely confirmed what China's rulers already knew, that they need not fear foreign capitalists willingly pulling up stakes over foreign policy issues, even if writing off investments in the largely labor intensive export industry, though in excess of \$40 billion, would be relatively cheap. They might find countries where wages would be a little lower than the average Chinese worker's wage of less than \$60 a month, but not the workers to replace the 10,000 factories in the export zone

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## Movement to liberate Vieques unbowed

New York—In late May, New Yorkers protested the outrageous federal jail sentences imposed on four prominent local figures for having demonstrated at the Vieques naval base in Puerto Rico. Black and Brown New Yorkers came together to demand the release of the "Vieques 4" and an end to the continued use of the island of Vieques for bombing practice. Thousands of Puerto Ricans and their supporters have engaged in civil disobedience in Vieques over the past few years.

Rev. Al Sharpton, a Black civil rights activist who recently announced he is running for president in 2004, received the most jail time: 90 days. Three Bronx politicians—City Councilman Adolfo Carrion Jr., State Assemblyman Jose Rivera, and Roberto Ramirez, a former state legislator—each received 40 days. Sharpton got extra time because of a prior federal conviction for civil disobedience.

More than 200 demonstrators turned out May 26 to demand the release of the four. They gathered at the federal detention center in Brooklyn, where the four were sent to serve their sentences. It was the first of a series of demonstrations that will be held daily until they are released.

On May 31, the U.S. Court of Appeals denied a motion to free them on bail pending their appeal and indicating the sentences are not likely to be reversed. The four have begun a liquid-only hunger strike which all but Carrion are continuing as we go to press. They vow to continue until they are released.

Many protesters emphasized that the demonstrations represented a new stage of solidarity between Black and Brown New Yorkers. People were incensed that Sharpton's incarceration came immediately after he announced his run for president. One protester suggested the Bush administration encouraged the long sentences. Flora Edwards, the lead attorney for the four in their appeal, claimed they were denied the right to a fair trial because they were denied time to pre-

pare and the right to present all their evidence and witnesses.

Norman Siegel, former head of the New York City Civil Liberties Union, said the sentences, if allowed to stand, could have a chilling effect on other non-violent protests. Katherine Sharpton addressed the crowd with a message from her husband that the demonstrations should stay focused on ending the naval bombing of Vieques.

At a rally the day after the May 23 sentencing, at the Federal Building in Manhattan, local politicians, family members of the jailed men and radical activists joined voices to sing "We Shall Overcome" and to shout "Fuera de Vieques" and "Free the Vieques 4!"

The destruction of Vieques is so unpopular here that even our Republican governor had to oppose it. At the rally, one Puerto Rican woman said optimistically, "The situation is now so bad that Bush has to come out against bombing Vieques as well." Another woman said no, Bush and his attorney general are behind these sentences.

The latter appears to be the case. That very day in Georgia, another federal court imposed long sentences on demonstrators against the U.S. army's infamous School of the Americas at Fort Benning. The school trains Latin American military officers to assassinate and destabilize popular movements.

Twenty-six activists had been convicted two days earlier for demonstrating at the Army base last fall. Sentences ranged from probation to one year in jail. They were among 3,600 who took part in an annual protest demanding the closure of the school.

All 3,600 stepped onto the base, but the 26 committed their act in defiance of previous "ban-and-bar letters" that banned them from the base for five years due to prior arrests there. "We lock up peacemakers and give money and medals to warmakers," said Frida Berrigan of the War Resisters League about the sentences. "What's wrong with that picture?"

—Anne and Malik

## Workers (not) making it in America

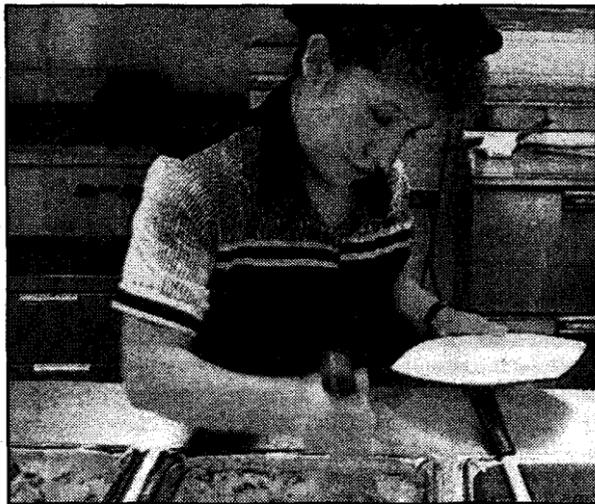
*Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America*, by Barbara Ehrenreich, Henry Holt and Company, 2001

This book corrects people who believe that if you have a job and work hard, you can "make it" in America. Ehrenreich tried in three different U.S. locations to live on low-wage jobs. But in spite of being white, a native English speaker, childless and in much better health than most of the working poor, "making it" in entry-level jobs proved almost impossible. In addition, Ehrenreich could be cheerful and upbeat because she knew she wasn't trapped in a bleak future with more of the same.

Ehrenreich worked as a waitress in Florida, a house cleaner and weekend nursing-home attendant in Maine and a Wal-Mart floor person in Minnesota. Her experiences are rendered with poignancy and humor in these pages. There was George the cook, a Czech immigrant who shared a flop-house bed with a person of different shift; he was accused in English (thus unable to defend himself) of stealing food (he was probably hungry). There was Maddy, who was constantly in a paroxysm of worry over her child's poor-quality daycare. And there was pregnant Holly, whose husband abused her and who was undernourished and without funds for food (as were most house cleaners Ehrenreich worked with).

Reading Ehrenreich's experiences looking for housing, jobs and food gives one a window to the exhaustion and fear of poverty. At the end of the day, the week, the months all the additions and subtractions of incomes and expenses resulted in negative sums. She couldn't scramble fast enough for one month to pay the second month's rent—even working two jobs, putting car expenses on her credit card and having a small stipend that she allowed herself to get started. After a monumental struggle to find affordable housing in Minneapolis-St. Paul, she read that prosperity had shrunk the number of low-cost units nationwide and commented, "I'm a victim not of poverty, but of prosperity."

Ehrenreich's weekend job in Maine was to help to feed an Alzheimer's ward in a nursing home. She was



alone on a day that was bedeviled by a series of administrative snafus. She managed well, including all feeding times. She was proud of this; yet the nagging question remained—why was an unknown, relatively untested person alone with all those patients for a whole shift and at such low pay?

Time after time, really terrific books like Ehrenreich's end weakly. The contradictions hang out at the end like a tree-top cradle in a strong wind. Ehrenreich calls for forming unions, which though important in the capitalistic system, can only be temporary, because unionizing, as we have seen, can become its opposite in the untrustworthy and mercenary union leader that collaborates with the bosses. How many times does that have to happen before we catch on?

In her last paragraph Ehrenreich expressed a kind of certainty that "someday, of course" the working poor will demand what they are worth. But paying workers less than their worth is the warp and woof of capitalism. Economic systems should serve us; however, the efforts of Ehrenreich's co-workers in *Nickel and Dimed* were commodified so that the owners of their time (their lives) could make a big profit.

But we want a new society that never requires a person to sacrifice her basic needs, work hard with treatable illnesses or raise children with blighted lives—one where the bottom line is expressed, not in money, but in the life-quality of each individual, what that person needs to become educated in her own personality.

—January B.

## Women Worldwide

by Mary Jo Grey

President Bush's right-wing flunkies replaced medical associations with anti-choice organizations as delegates to the World Health Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland in May. Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy Thompson sent representatives from the International Right to Life Federation, the conservative Family Research Council, and the National Law Center for Children and Families, and excluded, for the first time in several administrations, the American Public Health Association, the American Medical Association and the American Nurses Association.

\* \* \*

A coalition of more than 45 women's rights groups in India, under the banner of Maitree (Friendship), are demanding that police acknowledge and take action against police attacks on women throughout West Bengal. Women have gone to the streets in the city of Kolkata (Calcutta) to protest the rape of a 16-year-old deaf mute woman in a police van resulting in the birth of a girl. Police refuse to admit a crime took place, calling the young woman a "sexual pervert." Maitree is not only fighting to prosecute her attackers, but has provided her with free medical treatment and security.

## What constitutes a woman?

As the third wave of feminism moves forward, one issue that can be counted on to stir up lots of discussion is the subject of allowing transgendered people into gender-segregated spaces. Since the inception of modern feminism, women have fought to create our own "safe spaces" where our issues can be discussed and resolved safely. As the concept of "women's space" finally gained acceptance in radical circles, the question eventually had to be raised—what constitutes a woman?

The Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, an annual women-only music fest, decided years ago to deem their event a "womyn born womyn space" in order to keep trans women from entering the festival. This issue has brought out the strongest emotions in all women involved—from those women who fought the battle to have women's space in the first place, to those of us who weren't even born when Michigan began.

Let's consider the original question, "what constitutes a woman"? I'm not sure I understood what that meant two summers ago when I co-organized the first annual Southern Girls Convention in Memphis. The other organizers and I agreed to facilitate a caucus that housed segregated gender spaces for men and women, followed by a big meeting at the end where we talked about what we discussed.

The only problem was that we didn't take into consideration that some people didn't feel as though they belonged in either room. While we made it clear that trans people were welcome, we didn't think about people who identified as both genders, or didn't feel safe in the spaces that we designated for other people. When well known trans activist Leslie Feinberg spoke at the

## Women question realities of free trade

*Chicago*—The Free Trade Reality Tour, a caravan of four Latina workers, stopped at DePaul University in April to take part in a meeting titled, "Sweatshops, Cross-Border Trade and the Global Economy." The tour's final destination was Quebec, where it joined the protests against the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas. The tour was organized in part by Evia Arriola, a Latina feminist legal scholar, who is bringing a gendered perspective to the movement against globalized capital.

Two of the four women work in plants in Mexico's maquiladoras and are organizers of *Comite Fronterizo de Obreras (CFO)*, an independent labor association which organizes and educates workers. The other two women were from the Levi Strauss Company in San Antonio, Tex., where they had worked for years until their plant moved to Costa Rica in 1990. They formed *Fuerza Unida* to fight for compensation for the 1,115 laid off women workers.

Juanita Lopez Torres of CFO spoke about the move of maquiladoras to more remote areas in Mexico where companies pay half the already paltry wages they do at the border, impose harsher working conditions, and escape unions. They've also increased the normal workweek to include a full day of work on Saturday as well. In addition, both at the border and in the remote areas, workers are subjected to forced overtime when there are production deadlines to make—anywhere from two to six hours per day.

CFO is fighting this disparity. Margarita Ramirez Parada said: "It's been our experience that when workers know their rights, that's the only time you bring about changes in conditions." Margarita was suspended from a company with the agreement of her union for two years after trying to get safety regulations at a plant where use of a chemical banned in the U.S. caused pregnant women either to spontaneously abort or to give birth to babies born without brains. Margarita said she believes "workers at the border have been living under the impact of NAFTA for 30 years before NAFTA was created."

Petra Mata and Viola Casares from the *Fuerza Unida* said, "We in the U.S. already live in the Third World," and talked about extreme working conditions. Petra said, "They put pressure on our bodies to make more and more. They don't care about us as human beings." Viola said that once, when the floor flooded, the bosses told the workers to move the machinery despite the fact that they could have been electrocuted: "The machines are more important than us, than people. We need to unite with our brothers and sisters across the borders. We're comparing ideas. We're not machines, we're human beings and deserve better."

Levi Strauss had made three offers for compensation when the company closed. The workers said no. "We said, what about our dignity? It's not fair what they did to us."

However, Petra said that she does not want the women to be seen as mere victims. "We try to organize and educate workers. We don't want others to go through what we went through." After the discussion, she said that ten years ago she could have never imagined herself being a coordinator of an organization of women workers, going on speaking tours all over the country and world. She said that her experience in developing knowledge, self-confidence and strength is not unique. The experience transformed many of the women, much to the chagrin of their husbands.

—Sonia Bergonzi

## The anti-feminism of 'Feminists for Life'

"Feminists For Life" (FFL) is a group founded in 1972 by two women who were "kicked out of NOW due to their pro-life views." They are still going strong in their fight to end women's right to choose. FFL's website, until very recently, was listed on *Ms.* magazine website's list of links under "health and reproductive rights." On the *Ms.* discussion boards many posters found nothing wrong with the group. However, some posters discussing Naomi Wolfe's book, *Fire With Fire*, disagreed with Wolfe's acceptance of FFL and of anti-choicers in general as "feminists."

FFL claims that feminism and the "pro-life" agenda have in common the ideal of "non-violence towards and non-ownership of a human being." But the idea that a fetus (or a fertilized egg) has as much humanity as a woman is never questioned.

FFL co-opts feminist rhetoric in their discussion of how abortion doesn't change why "a woman aborts in the first place." (Not wanting children and concern for one's health are not considered among the reasons.) They discuss women's economic problems but have no solid discussion of how to change them. FFL also claims that to be anti-choice is following in the footsteps of first-wave feminists, who they say were all anti-abortion.

Reasons to consider FFL anti-feminist are more striking. FFL goes beyond promoting "pro-life" ideas to having an anti-choice agenda: recriminalize abortion. FFL spreads misinformation about abortion on their website and on college campuses, including: that few women died from illegal abortions; that legal abortion is dangerous; that there is a link between abortion and breast cancer; that "post-abortion syndrome" is real and widespread; and, worst of all, that impregnated rape victims feel better if they do not have an abortion.

How did groups like FFL get to be accepted in the feminist movement? That many feminists have failed to broaden their fight for abortion rights to include reproductive justice for all women caused other women to complain that their fight against sterilization abuse and to raise children in a safe world outside of poverty is not supported by feminists. This made it possible for the Right to co-opt feminist language on these issues without really caring about them.

A lack of knowledge about the tactics and goals of the Right can cause an uncritical attitude towards it. In order to challenge the right's attempts to co-opt and erode feminism, we need to solve those problems.

—Adele

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## Peoples Energy strike battle

Chicago—Service employees at Peoples Energy began a strike May 18 when management refused to meet the demands of Gas Workers Union 18007. The company revised its original intention of eliminating 36 positions and said the displaced workers would instead be placed in lower paid positions with a pay freeze until other workers catch up with their wages.

The union rejected this along with the mandatory Saturday work day. Although Saturday is a mandatory shift for many employees, before the strike service could not be scheduled on the weekend. Peoples Energy is putting on a front to its customers by saying that business will be handled as usual and that the service workers are doing a disservice to customers by going on strike. The truth is that the company is struggling to make appointments and meet new orders. There are

requests for employees in all areas to work as many as 12 hours a day.

As an attempt to sabotage the union, the company filed unfair labor practice charges against the Gas Workers Union. They claim falsely that the workers blocked entry to company facilities and engaged in picketing of the company's contractors, in addition to calling in phony emergencies.

June 19, 1865, two years after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed by President Lincoln, slaves in Texas were finally told that they were free. But in 2001, we still aren't really free. Now, regardless of race, we are all slaves to the corporate machine. As Sister Souljah said, "Slavery's back in effect."

Just as militant slaves were reprimanded by massa, service workers are being attacked for defying Peoples Energy. If anyone can't see that corporations are the new plantations, they are as lost as the clerical workers here who haven't demanded a union or who are willing to accept an embroidered polo shirt from the company for not going on strike.

—Akili

## Home Depot blues

Long Island, N.Y.—Home Depot is going downhill as a place to work. I only go in now to be with my friends on the job. Many of us have complaints about how the store manager has gone out of his way to mistreat us. Then there's the way the company makes promises to you about the future but doesn't live up to them. They said they would only give us a 4.5% raise this year. That's 45 cents an hour for me. It's closer to 15 cents an hour after inflation.

They say they need to keep reinvesting the profits back into the company. They build new stores instead of investing in the workers. One worker was promised a new job and \$2-3 an hour more if he gave extra time to train himself as an order picker. But now Home Depot is outsourcing truck delivery. So both he and the truck drivers end up being told if they want to keep working for the company it will be as ordinary associates.

—Angry Home Depot Worker, Store 1209

## Daewoo plant protest



Daewoo Motors workers, laid off from the Bupyong plant in South Korea, protested General Motors takeover of the company May 30. Management attempted to block workers from taking over the plant by placing shipping containers around the labor office which demonstrators tried moving (left).

## Pearl Harbor survivor looks back

by Felix Martin

December 1991—Fifty years ago I was a sailor in the U.S. Navy on the USS Vestal, at Pearl Harbor. The American capitalist news media has made such a big deal about the 50th anniversary of the Japanese attack that I want to state what it means to me—as a worker and as someone who almost lost his life that day.

Since Dec. 7, 1941 we've been told to "Remember Pearl Harbor," the same as our grandparents before us remembered the Maine, remembered the Alamo. It is a rallying cry for American workers and the poor to arm themselves to protect American capitalism and to help expand capitalism throughout the world.

When I try to remember my part in Pearl Harbor, it seems a really bad dream. On Saturday, the day before, we had the Admiral's inspection of the entire fleet, and that left all of us sailors pleased and tired....

After breakfast I went down to the deck below to the mess hall to read. I had been there just a few minutes when the boatswain's mate sounded General Quarters alarm: "This is not a drill. Man your battle stations." The first bomb hit our ship. It came through the mess hall, killing the chief master-at-arms.

I ran out, and as I crossed the well deck, a plane strafed us. The red tracers hit and jumped back into the air, spinning and dancing before my eyes. Then I entered a long passageway leading to the aft part of the ship and to my gun station. As I came out of the passage-way another bomb hit the ship and exploded in the carpenter's shop below.

The next thing I remember was when the fighting had ended. I remember seeing blood on the shells, and we were trying to find out where the blood was coming from. Our third shell man had lost his fingers. He was only 17 years old....

Forty-four months later the war ended, but the big change in my attitude didn't come until the Korean War. I was sent to a ship moored in Japan. I went there to bring it back into commission, and I was in charge of a crew of Japanese workers.

One young fellow was wearing a jacket which had some Japanese lettering on it. I asked him what the words were, and he told me it said "the Kamikaze." He had worn the jacket as a suicide pilot in World War II, though he never did have to fly. The war ended and that saved him. I told him how stupid I thought that was, to fly a plane into a ship and blow himself up along with it. He asked me, if it was the Japanese navy off the coast of California bombing the cities of the West Coast, what would I do?

I began to think for myself for the first time. I asked him, did he come from a poor family or was his family well off? He said his dad was a worker and poor. For the first time I began to see the war as a capitalist war, and working people and the poor on both sides killing each other and doing the dying while the capitalists and their children were protected and got rich.

Fifty years later we see the capitalists on the losing side, Japan, winning out economically over the capitalists on the American winning side. It's not just that the American capitalists don't like this, but also that the rulers are looking...to turn workers' attention away from blaming our own rulers and the capitalist system for the misery right now in our lives—no jobs, no health care, no toys for our kids for Christmas.

I see these big doings over remembering Pearl Harbor as a rallying call by the American capitalists to the American workers to save them from the capitalists of Japan—that is, work harder, don't complain, and when you do complain, make sure you blame the Japanese. And when this country decides to go to war, as it did against Iraq, and bomb cities and bury soldiers alive with bulldozers, shoveling them into the sand—don't even think that there might be something wrong or inhuman about that.

I am not saying that one capitalist is better than the other capitalist, because the capitalists in each country are the enemy of their own people. This whole system is inhuman. We're still living in what Marx called the "pre-history of humanity."

Taken from *The Revolutionary Journalism of Felix Martin* (Isaac Woods). To order, see page 7.

## Roots of a revolutionary run deep

I never met Isaac Woods, but some part of me knows him. I grew up in the rural Ottawa Valley near the Quebec border—in Ozarks North if you will. Like Isaac, I learned to shoot a gun at a young age, and like him as well I began to work before becoming a teenager. We both went to one-room schools.

I never thought that we were poor. Hauling drinking water from a dug well and wash water from the creek were chores, but like the outhouse, were never thought of as being signs of poverty. I imagine Isaac Woods felt much the same. My father never made any money, and the little money he did make went for taxes. However, like Isaac Woods, I had the bush to explore, a creek to swim in, fish to catch, and fields to dream in. Like Isaac, I have often wished that all the children of the world could experience the Huck Finn childhood I had.

There was little in my upbringing to suggest a future as a Marxist and labor historian. Something happened as I grew up, however. Like Isaac Woods I encountered the machine, the time clock, the owners and managers who didn't seem to have much regard for anything other than the bottom line. Like Isaac, I read, I listened, I experienced.

Unlike Isaac Woods, however, I have been fortunate enough to get a full university education, and to be teaching in university. But reading *The Revolutionary Journalism of Felix Martin* (Isaac Woods) made me stop and think about where I am now and how I got here. I have long been an advocate of the self-emancipation of the working class, and Isaac Woods reminded me of both its necessity and its possibility.

He reminded me that I do not have to be a thinker who used to be a worker, but a full human being capable of fighting for a society in which the two elements of my being can be integrated, thereby breaking down the capitalist division between mental and manual labor. He reminded me of just how much socialist intellectuals have lost faith—without reason—in the

## Workshop Talks

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harmful chemicals are on the way.

One worker said he was told by a factory production manager, "Go ahead and leave if you think this is dangerous to your health; I have three other guys already waiting to take your job." The worker chose to stay on because he had a wife and three kids to support.

The arena for worker replacement is now the entire globe. With the ongoing global capitalist restructuring and consolidation, as manifested by WTO, NAFTA, and FTAA, the anti-democratic nature of "free trade" has become an open dirty secret. Not only is this no news to us workers in production, but this attitude of secrecy also infects the labor movement. That's our dirty little secret.

Capitalists can still get around new restrictions when they are allowed to self-police and production essentially remains in their control. That's why HMO executives like David Lawrence are busily crafting an industry-sponsored plan to self-regulate HMO conduct while keeping at bay governmental or worker control of shop floor management.

But it was revealed in 1998 that Lawrence's own Kaiser HMO, in order to cut costs, had accounting executives order the director of cardiology services to downsize its heart disease screening protocol, even when it was proven to have saved lives, and despite several wrongful death suits Kaiser faced from its patients and the Texas Attorney General. In the end, Kaiser simply closed shop and abandoned the Texas market, thus effectively ending those challenges against its low quality and restructuring methods, and leaving its membership and workers holding the bag.

In the San Francisco Bay Area, the California Nurses Association won landmark contractual language giving nurses some control over "quality of care." They won this despite the sabotage from the AFL-CIO's president John Sweeney entering into a partnership (secretly negotiated), which enabled Kaiser management to continue its cost-cutting restructuring. Not only were services cut back, but many regular nursing positions have steadily disappeared since they have been re-engineered into cheaper less skilled service jobs, allowing management to erode the power gained in the nurses' contract over "quality of care."

No contractual language, no patients' "bill of rights," no consumer "right to know" proposition can rein in capital's inherent drive for an undemocratic domination over the workplace. Our struggle for democracy has to begin with our everyday work lives. Nothing fundamental will change so long as our own labor power itself remains a commodity, to be bought and sold. Beyond labor power as a commodity, Marx envisioned an open democratic free association of workers. The bourgeois version of democracy is obsessed with the absolute freedom of things—"free trade" and "open markets"—negotiated behind closed doors, surrounded by barbed wire fences.

capabilities of the working class.

Being descended from a long line of farmers, I was especially struck by his November 1982 article about the crisis on the farm. I had never really linked the impact of technological change on farmers with the impact of technological change on workers. Isaac does this brilliantly, and in relation to Marx's categories of dead and living labor. This wonderful linking of the rural and urban experiences with Marxist theory speaks to Isaac Woods' power as a worker philosopher.

I realize that what I am about to say may not be accepted by everyone who knew Isaac Woods, but I believe that it is important to link him to the republican tradition in America. I don't mean with what republicanism has become, or with the hypocrisy of Jefferson, who could speak with such brilliance about republican ideals on the one hand, and own slaves and call for the extirpation of native peoples on the other.

There was a time, however, when there was a genuine commitment in American thought to a freedom based on the ability of individuals and families to live by the fruits of their own labor, to have the necessary independence from bribery and corruption to be able to participate freely and intelligently in the public life of the society. A free association of independent producers, I think Marx called it.

This was a freedom that Isaac Woods wanted for all, not just white males. Listen to him describe the world of his childhood: "We produced what we wanted, and for how we wanted to live." Did Marx or Jefferson ever say it better? In a century blighted by the twin pillars of social democracy and state capitalism, have we ever been given a better idea of what to strive for in envisioning the socialist future?

As a rural boy I have spent much of my life in urban Canada listening to the stereotyping of rural people as racists and rednecks. I guess I was more ashamed of my background than I had realized. Reading *The Revolutionary Journalism of Felix Martin*, appreciating what Isaac Woods from the hills of Kentucky was able to do in his lifetime, was an inspiration, and has given me renewed energy to carry on in some small way the wonderful work that was his life.

—Peter Campbell



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

From the Writings of Raya Dunayevskaya  
**MARXIST-HUMANIST ARCHIVES**

**Editor's Note**

Young men and women set out to integrate interstate transportation in the South in spring 1961. The "Freedom Riders" confronted attacks by racist vigilantes with the collusion of local police and the FBI (See Editorial, page 8). Fortieth anniversary celebrations of the Freedom Rides took place in cities around the country last month, including a reenactment of the original rides.

Raya Dunayevskaya wrote the July 4, 1961 editorial in *News & Letters*, reprinted here, in response to the new page of freedom written by the Freedom Riders and the counterrevolutionary history of laws used against movements in the U.S.

Mary Hamilton and other Freedom Riders wrote in *News & Letters* of their experiences on the Freedom Rides and in the jails where they found new allies, including Woman Power Unlimited. Dunayevskaya's editorial and the Freedom Riders' stories were published in *Freedom Riders Speak for Themselves*, available in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, 3414. Footnotes are the editor's.

July 4, 1961

Two events, one in the Deep South, and the other in the capitol, disclose the shocking state of civil liberties in the United States, marking us as a nation on the road to totalitarianism.

**IN THE SOUTH**

The jailing of 227 Freedom Riders in Jackson, Miss. has focused the world spotlight on the jungle law that rules the South. It reveals equally clearly the willful impotence of the federal government to enforce the law of the land on desegregated interstate travel. The federal officials claimed that they were "helpless" in the present situation. At the same time the attorney general had the effrontery to ask for a "cooling off period" by the Freedom Riders who were brave enough to challenge the Southern bigots. We suggest that the attorney general [Robert Kennedy] test for himself the coolness of a Mississippi jail during the long, hot summer.

**IN THE CAPITOL**

Allegedly at the opposite pole from the white supremacists stands the U. S. Supreme Court. Nearly 200 years after the Declaration of Independence, 100 years after the Emancipation Proclamation and the 14th Amendment to the Constitution, the Supreme Court at long last ruled for desegregation in education.\* As was clear, however, from its "due dispatch" loophole, the South was granted enormous leeway to disregard the ruling. Far from charting a course for human rights, the present Supreme Court differs in no fundamental respect from the nine old men who sat on that bench in order to waylay much of the New Deal legislation.

The shaky majority (5-4), by which some liberal rulings are handed down is quickly dissipated the moment the atmosphere emanating from the White House changes, at which time the majority shifts to the opposite end.

This has been the case ever since the president of the United States, at the time of the invasion of Cuba,\*\* had declared that "the deeper struggle" is not with arms, but with "subversion." He promptly tried to subvert the freedom of the press. The majority of these nine old men on the Supreme Court caught the spirit at once, and they tried to subvert our constitutional freedom of thought with the new rulings on the Smith and McCarran Acts\*\*\*

Thus, from both the side of the bigoted states righters, and the United States Supreme Court a course of action is established; by failure to enforce federal law in the face of local prejudice, and by legal decision in face of presidential ire, the machinery of totalitarianism is set in motion, and the democratic processes of the United States and precious liberties under the Constitution are made a dead letter. The United States is rushing headlong to be the "equal" of Russia in thought control.

Justice Douglas said in his dissent:

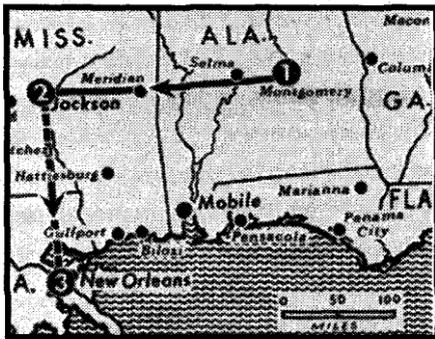
"Nothing but beliefs are on trial in this case. They are unpopular and to most of us revolting. But they are nonetheless ideas or dogmas of faith within the broad framework of the First Amendment.

"What we lose by majority vote today may be reclaimed at a future time when the fear of advocacy, dissent and non-conformity no longer cast a shadow over us."

\* *Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954 declared segregated schools unconstitutional.

\*\* The Bay of Pigs invasion by the U.S. in 1961.

\*\*\* The Smith Act, 1940, made it illegal to advocate the overthrow of the U.S. government. The McCarran Internal Security Act (1950) allowed for exclusion of radicals from the country.



Route of the Freedom Rides

The learned justice didn't specify when, in the future, "the fear of advocacy, dissent and non-conformity" will no longer "cast a shadow over us." Unfortunately Supreme Court decisions are not easily reversed unless the people show in no uncertain terms that they do not mean to have their freedom tampered with.

**IN THE PRESS**

The majority of the bourgeois press noisily approved the reactionary Supreme Court rulings. The few papers that dissented—and the powerful *New York Times* did mildly dissent—still misled the American public as to the facts about the Smith Act. The impression was given that the issue at stake is "Communism." The Smith Act does not single out Communists and defines "forcible overthrow" so loosely that no act is required to set it into motion. It can be and in fact is, applied to any opponent of the ideas of the powers that be. Thus both in Arkansas and Louisiana it was used to try to compel the NAACP to turn over its membership list to KKK-inspired rulers, if not to lynch mobs.

The paper that lays claim to covering "all the news that's fit to print" didn't see fit to print the facts about the first application of the Smith Act. It cited 1948 as the year, whereas in fact it was 1941. It talked of its use against the Communist Party, whereas in fact the Smith Act was first used not against the Communists. On the contrary, with the connivance of the Communists, it was used against the Trotskyists and militant trade unionists clearing out corruption and do-nothingness on the part of their bureaucratic overlords in the Minneapolis Teamsters Local 544.

Clearly, the seven years that *The New York Times* is willing to bury in its morgue are not for purposes of "letting the dead bury the dead," but for purposes of letting the dead bury the living. The living were not informed either of the facts of the first application of the Smith Act, or of the fact that it was under the "inspiration" of Dan Tobin's gangster leadership of the Teamsters Union who resented and feared democratization, that the Roosevelt administration railroaded the Trotskyists and Teamster militant trade unionists to jail. So much for the first application of the Smith Act.

The Trotskyists were not powerful enough to compel the Supreme Court to review their case. The Communists, when it was applied to them, were powerful enough to win a Supreme Court ruling. At that time (1957) the Court tried to limit its approval of the act, by interpreting "advocacy of violent overthrow" to mean not "the mere abstract doctrine of forcible overthrow," but actual "incitement to action." *The New York Times* of June 7, 1961, accepts the claim at face value, adding however:

"The sustaining of the Smith Act's membership clause, and the setting in motion of the ponderous Internal Security Act, can only serve again to divert public attention

to the virtually non-existent internal Communist threat. The real Communist challenge is from abroad; and the sooner Americans get over the idea that we can solve the problem by persecuting the tattered remnants of American communism at home, the better able we will all be to face the really hard decisions, and hard problems posed by the genuine menace of communism pushing outward from China and the Soviet Union."

This linking of the Smith Act, which has nothing to say of "the Communist challenge from abroad," with the McCarran Internal Security Act, which does, in its preamble, mention Russian Communism, is once again to mislead the public. We do not mean to say that the McCarran Act is any less a perversion of Amendment I to the Constitution [freedom of speech] than is the Smith Act.

We are disentangling the two in order to prove why, with what malice aforethought, the American Communists were not tried under the McCarran Act, but under the Smith Act. This was done in order to set a precedent against genuine working class opponents of capitalist ideas, or even against those who stand for equal rights for American Negroes, as was the case with the Southern states' use of the Smith Act against the NAACP.

The Supreme Court was compelled to throw that case out. In the present instance, however, the FBI, the administration, the Supreme Court (and, not so incidentally, the press) did all in their power to force an

# Freedom Riders challenge homegrown totalitarianism

identity between the Marxist theory of liberation, and its opposite, the Communist practice of enslavement.

Thereby they achieved a veritable conspiracy with Russian Communism, which for its own purposes has usurped the name of Marxism.

**THE PRESIDENT**

President [John] Kennedy likes words, moving words that speak of freedom. He likes them for ceremonial occasions, like July 4th perorations; he likes them at summit meetings to compete with the Communist use of them; and he likes them for luring the newly emergent African nations into the "Western" camp. On such occasions he speaks of our nation as one "born of revolution." He becomes so passionate an advocate of the freedom of speech, the press, assembly, that he becomes audacious enough to quote from the great American Abolitionist, William Lloyd Garrison,

who, in fighting the government and the paid press for tolerating slavery, had declared in his *Liberator*: "I am in earnest. I will not equivocate. I will not excuse. I will not retreat a single inch, and I will be heard."

The one thing that President Kennedy failed to say was the truth about himself—that he was tolerating the jailing of the Freedom Riders; that he had created the atmosphere for the



Freedom riders sit at a lunch counter in bus station in Montgomery, Ala., the first time station was integrated, May 24, 1961.

new reactionary Supreme Court rulings subverting the First Amendment to the Constitution; that his brother, far from asking for a "cooling off period" when these decisions were handed down, hastened to announce their immediate application. He was stayed from this course only by the restraint, hypocritical though that was, of Justice Felix Frankfurter, who granted the Communist Party petition for a rehearing in the fall.

Obviously, all too obviously, President Kennedy liked only the "sound" of the words of freedom, not their practice.

The deprivation of our civil rights, North and South, and the shackling of free minds have nothing whatever to do with the fight against "Communism." On the contrary, it is the true breeding ground of all totalitarianisms—Communist, Hitlerite, or KKK-inspired private enterprisers. When private capitalism begins to compete with Communist state-capitalism in devising ever-new ways of thought control, it can be only because the foundation of both is the same and so is their purpose: to repress the working people.

Capitalism, private or state, has been moving from crises to wars and back again ever since its birth. In our age of oneworldedness, it has the added purpose of single world domination even at the insane expense of a nuclear holocaust that may spell out the end of civilization altogether. Beware then of those who would fight against totalitarianism abroad by embarking on totalitarian ways at home.

The fight against totalitarianism can be won only by Freedom Fighters, who "do not equivocate" in their struggles against discrimination and exploitation, and therefore can exorcise "the shadow cast" over our land. The Freedom Fighters of our epoch, as of the epoch of William Lloyd Garrison, will be heard.

"Don't forget your history. Know your destiny." —Bob Marley

## American Civilization On Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard

"In a word, to separate a philosophy of liberation from the struggle for freedom is to doom us to yet one more unfinished revolution such as has characterized the U.S. from its birth, when the Declaration of Independence was meant for white only and left the Black enslaved."

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### NEWS & LETTERS

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## ESSAY

by Peter Hudis

The startling discovery, made several years ago in an archive in Moscow, of a heretofore unknown manuscript defending *History and Class Consciousness* by its author, Georg Lukács, seemed destined to impel a reconsideration of one of the most important chapters in the history of Marxism.

From the moment of its publication in 1923, *History and Class Consciousness* was renowned for its creative attempt to restore the revolutionary character of Marx's thought through an extension and renovation of Hegel's dialectic. Neither the Communist International's denunciation of the book in 1924, nor Lukács' later "self-criticism" of it when he capitulated to Stalinism, lessened its appeal for several generations of radicals drawn to its innovative discussion of class consciousness and reification and its daring critique of Engels for failing to fully grasp dialectics. Nevertheless, Lukács' failure to speak out in defense of his book following the attacks on it in 1924 led many to conclude that he had immediately abandoned its perspective.

Now that the manuscript of Lukács' defense of *History and Class Consciousness*—entitled *Tailism and the Dialectic*, written in 1925 or 1926—has been published and translated into English (Verso, 2000), it becomes possible to see to what extent, if any, the history of Marxism needs to be rewritten after all.

## FROM PHILOSOPHY TO 'THE PARTY'

Though *Tailism and the Dialectic* puts to rest the notion that Lukács renounced *History and Class Consciousness* as soon as it was attacked by the Communists in 1924, anyone looking for a serious defense or development of its philosophic concepts will be disappointed. Lukács does not discuss the major theoretic concepts in *History and Class Consciousness*. He is mainly concerned with responding to the charge leveled by Abram Deborin, a Russian theorist, and László Rudas, of the Hungarian Communist Party, that his stress on "subjective" factors like class consciousness meant that he downplayed the centrality of Lenin's notion of a "vanguard party."

Lukács' effort to answer Deborin and Rudas shows the limits of taking the ground of one's opponent. It is not he, Lukács says, who downplays "the role of the party," but his critics. He refers to "the open Menshevism of Deborin and the tail-ending of Rudas."

Lukács' defensiveness on "the party" has to be seen in the context of the times. Though few party hacks were likely to wade through Lukács' dense discourses on dialectics, any sign of lack of enthusiasm for the "vanguard role" of the Bolshevik Party would have earned him instant expulsion from the Communist movement. Yet Lukács' focus on "the party," which takes up over half of *Tailism*, is not disingenuous. It represents a genuine effort on his part to defend his overall theoretic position—even though "the party" is directly discussed only in the final (and perhaps least read) essays in *History and Class Consciousness*.

In *Tailism*, Lukács contends that Deborin and Rudas suffer from a "vulgar view" of history in that they downplay subjective agency. For them, society is just an extension of nature. The subjective element is minimized as is the role of class consciousness itself.

In contrast, Lukács writes, "Everything depends on class consciousness, on the conscious will of the proletariat. This is where the moment of decision lies....The fate of the proletarian revolution depends on the subjective element."

But this doesn't mean that Lukács stresses mass self-activity. He writes, "There is a distance between the consciousness of the situation that the proletariat actually possesses and the consciousness that it could have." What "bridges" that distance is "the party." "The task of the proletarian party is to overcome the distance between being and consciousness."

Lukács therefore says, "Lenin's organizational forms are essential....In no way are they, as Rosa Luxemburg thought, useless 'paper' guarantees....The organizational forms of the proletariat, in first rank the party, are real forms of mediation, in which and through which develops and is developed the consciousness that corresponds to the social being of the proletariat."

Lukács even goes so far as to quote approvingly Lenin's 1903 statement that "class political consciousness can be brought to the workers only from without, that is, only from outside the sphere of relations between workers and employers." Lukács adds: "The consciousness of the masses at any one time does not develop independently of the party."

Decades later, in his Preface to the 1967 edition of *History and Class Consciousness*, Lukács said his book had tried to "out-Hegel Hegel." It appears that his 1925-26 "defense" of it tried to out-Lenin Lenin. Of course, at the time no one, Lukács included, had any inkling that Lenin had written a detailed study of Hegel's *Science of Logic* in 1914-15 which went further philosophically than even Lukács in embracing such Hegelian concepts as "subjectivity," "self-movement," and "transcendence." But since Lenin kept his Hegel notebooks to himself and never connected his philosophic reorganization to the question of "the party," it made no impact on the "Leninists."

In any case, it is clear from *Tailism* that despite all of his emphasis on "class consciousness," for Lukács it isn't the proletariat which is the *subject* of history, but rather the *party*.

This should come as no surprise. In the period in which he wrote *Tailism* (1925-26), Lukács published essays on Moses Hess and Lassalle, in which he reconciled himself to established "Marxism." Moreover, the tendency to fetishize the party is evident even in *History and Class Consciousness*.

It is true that organization is only fully discussed at the end of the book. And it is also true that, whether in the 1920s, when it first appeared, or the 1960s, when it was the rave of the New Left, what excited everyone was not the book's discussion of organization, but its probing of alienation, reification, and dialectics, especially in the essays "What is Orthodox Marxism?" and "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat."

The truth, however, is that Lukács' organizational "orthodoxy" on "the party" flowed from his original philosophic contribution—his essay on reification.

To Marx, reification refers to the process whereby living labor is transformed into a thing through the

regimen of the factory clock—by the worker being subjected to the discipline of socially necessary labor time. Lukács, in contrast, treated reification as a universal, as what affects everyone. Not only is labor reified, turned into a thing, he argued; in capitalist society, our thought is reified as well.

This theory of reification has proved immensely popular since it seems to explain everything—from the commodification of culture to the increasingly one-dimensional character of capitalist ideology. Yet it places advocates of revolutionary transformation in a thorny contradiction.

To Marx, the reification of labor is met by the resistance of the laborer who resists from within the effort to transform her laboring activity into a component part of capital. But if even our thought is reified, wherein resides the internal point of resistance? It is impossible, from the vantage point of Lukács' theory of reification, to answer the question. Either one gives up the effort to postulate a subject of resistance altogether (as did the Frankfurt School and the postmodernists), or one reaches for an outside force to resolve the contradiction—the vanguard party. The latter became Lukács' approach:

Lukács' defense of *History and Class Consciousness* makes explicit what should have been clear all along—that his original philosophic categories are unable to account for proletarian self-activity and so he ends up deifying "the party."

## DIALECTICS VS. ENGELS

This is not to say that organization is the only issue taken up in *Tailism*. The latter part of it contains some interesting material related to dialectics of thought.

In response to Deborin's attack on him for critiquing Engels' effort to connect dialectics to nature, Lukács shows he wasn't saying that dialectics applies only to society and not to nature. Instead, *History and Class Consciousness* argued that there is no immediate link between dialectics and nature since our "metabolic interchange with nature" is mediated socially.

*Tailism* also returns to Lukács' critique of Engels for claiming that "practice," especially the progress of experiment and industry, will prove the incorrectness of Kant's notion of the "thing-in-itself." *History and Class Consciousness* brilliantly demolished this claim, showing that "in fact, scientific experiment is contemplation at its purest."

*Tailism* lacks the audaciousness of his earlier critique of Engels, but neither does it take it back. Lukács says that Engels failed to understand that for Kant "practice" actually confirms the validity of the "thing-in-itself." He writes: "It is thoroughly possible to be an agnostic in a philosophic sense in relation to reality, without bringing this agnosticism to bear on one's practical attitude to the external world."

In the few places where Lukács discusses Hegel, we get some brilliant insights, as when he writes: "Categories that in Hegel himself, in the most abstract and idealist part of his *Logic* ('The Logic of the Concept') form the peak of his system, become real, practical moments of the proletarian class struggle." Unfortunately, he does not develop this. By the end he retreats to saying, "If Marx, in overturning Hegel's philosophy, has at the same time rescued its real core, then he precisely rescued most from the *Logic of Essence*."

Even when he is most philosophic, however, the question of organization takes precedence. Again and

again Lukács insists that class consciousness can only be attained through the agency of "the party."

## VANGUARD FETISHISM TODAY

Lukács' vanguardism is being touted as the "newness" of *Tailism*, as seen from the Introduction to it by John Rees and the Postface by Slavoj Žižek.

Rees, a Trotskyist, is ecstatic at finding that Lukács fetishized "the party" since he is a vanguardist too. His discussion of the theoretic issues borders on the banal: "Lukács rediscovered the idea that a social construct, the market, appears to the actors trapped within it as a natural necessity, which imposes a pattern on their lives in a manner that they themselves are powerless to resist....This is precisely the idea of Marx's writings on alienation and commodity fetishism."

Nothing is further from the truth. To Marx it is not "the market" that defines alienation and commodity fetishism, it is the perversity of capitalist production, wherein the machine assumes mastery over the living laborer. Marx never tired of showing that what happens in "the market" is simply a consequence of the alienation of labor at the point of production. Rees' vulgarization not only turns Marx on his head, it hardly does justice to Lukács.

A much more serious analysis is provided by Slavoj Žižek's Postface. Žižek is drawn to Lukács' embrace of Lenin's theory of organization because for him it represents a break from the notion that revolution depends on "objective conditions." To Žižek, revolution depends on The Event, the willful act of intervening at a crucial juncture to seize the initiative. Lukács' emphasis on "the party," he argues, restores the subjective, willful component of Marxism against objectivistic tendencies.

On these grounds Žižek, like Lukács, rejects Luxemburg's emphasis on spontaneity and revolutionary democracy in her debates with Lenin. Lenin's contribution, Žižek says, was "to take a leap, throwing oneself into the paradox of the situation, seizing the opportunity and intervening, even if the situation was 'premature,' with a wager that the very 'premature' intervention would radically change the 'objective' relationship of forces."

What Žižek fails to notice is that Luxemburg's debates with Lenin were never about whether or not to "seize the moment." As Luxemburg wrote in *Reform or Revolution*, "Since the proletariat is not in the position to seize political power in any other way than 'prematurely,' the objection to the 'premature' conquest of power is at bottom nothing more than a general opposition to the aspiration of the proletariat to possess itself of state power."

Moreover, Luxemburg hailed the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 on the grounds that "they alone dared." And she took the initiative in leading the 1919 German Revolution, even though she realized that the masses were ill-prepared and could suffer a defeat. At no point did Luxemburg display any reticence about "seizing the moment" "prematurely."

What was at issue in Luxemburg's critique of Lenin was the need not to contain the revolution within narrow party dictates which vitiate revolutionary democracy. She argued that the suppression of revolutionary democracy after the seizure of power would compromise the liberatory character of the revolution itself.

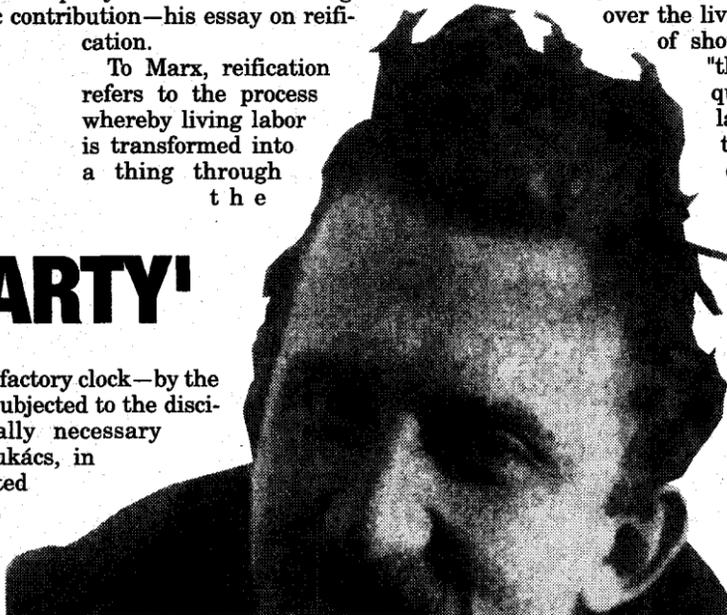
Žižek, to the contrary, writes: "Here, we should reject this blackmail (as Lukács does *à propos* of Rosa Luxemburg): there are no 'democratic' procedural rules one is *a priori* prohibited to violate....The political legacy of Lukács is thus the assertion of the unconditional, ruthless, revolutionary will, ready to 'go to the end,' effectively to seize power and undermine the existing totality....Lenin was right: after the revolution, the anarchic disruptions of the disciplinary constraints of production should be replaced by an even stronger discipline."

Clearly, what matters for Žižek is the seizure of power, and not what happens after. The question facing this generation, however, is not "how to seize power," but how to ensure that the revolutionary process continues after the seizure of power—that is, for the revolution to continue "in permanence" until all forms of alienation are totally uprooted.

Luxemburg's emphasis on spontaneity and revolutionary democracy remains a key component of the effort to work this out for our times. Even here, of course, we must be critical, since she too held to the elitist concept of the "party to lead" and never related dialectics to revolutionary organization.

As *Tailism and the Dialectic* makes clear, Lukács didn't either. His legacy leads, as does post-Marx Marxism as a whole, to a cul-de-sac on the question of organization. A totally new beginning must be made, which cannot be found within the parameters of either a purely political critique of "Leninism" or a philosophic one which shies away from jamming together dialectics and organization.

## THE DIALECTIC AND 'THE PARTY'



## Lukács' History and Class Consciousness reconsidered

### TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS DON'T BE CONFUSED!

A number of subscribers have recently asked what is our connection to a publication called *Freedom Voices*. We wish to make it clear that *News & Letters* and News and Letters Committees have no connection with this publication whatsoever.

It is published by individuals who left News and Letters Committees after our 2000 Convention. At that Convention, those now associated with this journal handed in a lengthy document which they demanded the membership immediately vote to approve for publication, even though they did not provide members with any copies to read ahead of time. When the Convention overwhelmingly voted to table the motion so that members could read and discuss the document, as provided for in the Constitution of News and Letters, they left the organization rather than engage in any discussion.

We will be publishing a "Draft for Marxist-Humanist Perspectives" in the August-September issue of *News & Letters*, which will further develop our theoretical and practical work for the coming year. We remain committed to carrying on the Marxist-Humanist perspectives which we have practiced since our founding, and we invite you to deepen your dialogue with us.

### WHERE DO WE GO FROM CINCINNATI?

Your Lead article in the May *N&L* on how "Cincinnati's Black rebellion exposes U.S. racial injustice" was great. But where do we go from here? The white powers feel that this thing will die out and that will be the end of it. What is the NAACP doing? Where is the Black United Front located? Are they calling mass meetings in other states? We just had a march in Norfolk against discontinuance of busing in our middle schools. It is felt that this is the beginning of a return to separate but unequal schools. The march was just as effective as spitting into the wind. Urinating in public would have gotten more attention. We talk a good fight. When do we start doing something?

Ready  
Virginia

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I was impressed with the amount of discussion before and during the rebellion in Cincinnati as you reported it. They didn't just go in and chase out the mayor. They had a discussion about the guy who dismissed them after saying the city was sorry. Radicals keep saying "there's enough talking, we have to do something." When you do act, you have to go back and review what happened. Taking an assessment of the situation is in order to figure it out for yourselves.

David  
California

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I liked both the article on Cincinnati and the Archives column on the 1965 Watts revolt (May *N&L*). They show that the point is not so much what is next in activity but what is next in thought. That is a difficult step. What you quote about Marx saying consciousness is something the world must acquire even if it doesn't want to seems a simple statement but it is really powerful. It's important to think about what you're doing before you do it. Putting those two articles together gave a lot to think about.

Black woman  
Oakland, Cal.

\*\*\*

When I heard about the revolt of Asian youth in England last week, I was immediately reminded of what was clear from the revolt of Black youth in Cincinnati last month. One reporter said Asians in England had long suffered discrimination but that "this generation simply isn't going to take this any longer." Sound familiar?

Revolutionary  
Chicago

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Cincinnati was an expression of mass reason. The youth there separated themselves from all other movements who stopped reaching for totality. This was an echo of what happened in Seattle, which reached beyond the parameters that labor leaders set for it, when rank-and-file workers joined the youth. These kinds of moments keep appearing, as can be seen from the Archives column on Watts, which spoke so profoundly to Cincinnati over 35 years later. But where is the recollection of it except in Marxist-Humanism?

Ron Brokmeyer  
Bay Area, Cal.

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Commemorating the Freedom Rides on their 40th anniversary through a partial re-enactment by some of the original riders got national media coverage. But they presented it outside of the context of

the state of Black America today. Just days earlier, the Cincinnati cop who murdered a young Black man and set off days of street revolt was let off with only a misdemeanor charge. It's the same in one city after another. As we found with the case of Amadou Diallo, prosecution doesn't ensure justice; his killers were found guilty of nothing! The growing movement against the criminal justice system is one measure of the state of Black America today, but it was ignored in all the media reports of the Freedom Rider commemoration. One reporter even concluded that, unlike 40 years ago, the Freedom Rider bus this year arrived to "no sign of racial divide."

Incredulous  
Chicago



### FELIX MARTIN'S REVOLUTIONARY JOURNALISM

I was always concerned about the possible divide between philosophers and workers in *N&L* but even a cursory examination of Felix Martin's book confirms its title—*The Revolutionary Journalism of Felix Martin: Worker-Philosopher*. Almost equal weight can be given to both sides of the hyphen.

Editor  
New York

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*The Revolutionary Journalism of Felix Martin* was a very good read. What I liked best was his earthy, down-to-earth style of writing. He conveys sophisticated ideas in a simple way that makes it easy for anyone to understand them. The world is definitely in need of many more people like him. His passing was a great loss to us all.

Concentration Camp inmate  
Texas

### MOVING ON FROM SEATTLE

A friend who went to the recent solidarity conference in Philadelphia made an observation I felt relevant because at conferences like this one serious thought is needed if we are to succeed in building a strong freedom movement. She said the prevailing sentiment was, "OK Seattle was great, but let's move on!" It's good to see a lot of us searching for a way to really change this system. What I like most about Marxist-Humanism is that it encourages a full outlook with both action and philosophy, not just one or the other.

Doug  
Memphis

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I was in Seattle and I think there was a hundredfold more teargas used in Quebec. There were also rubber coated bullets not used in Seattle, and helicopters hovering low to keep the gas concentrated. While this was going on, Mr. Jean Chrétien (my translation is Cretin) introduced a "democracy" clause in the FTAA, whereby any country that stops being "democratic" will be kicked out of the FTAA. Based on Quebec, Canada should be the first to go. I think Quebec will be considered a turning point in the fight for and against global-

# READERS' VIEWS

ization. Next time the rubber coating will come off the bullets and gloves will come off the fists.

Giorgio  
British Columbia

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Quebec seems to prove that even when the authorities field an army, the people refuse to be muzzled. The spirit of Seattle lives on. I've been hoping that as time passes, a more comprehensive, revolutionary movement would develop. Things are heading in that direction, but we still seem to be locked into street demonstrations as the primary expression of resistance. I'm sorry to say that is not going to bring the walls of capitalism tumbling down.

Ron  
Texas

### MAY DAY 2001 IN BRITAIN

I attended my local May Day event, a rally and march called by the Oxford & District Trade Union Council. With only 60 taking part, it was small by Oxford standards. There was a good speech by a woman representing Oxford University Students Union, opposing tuition fees, and a poor one by John Lister, the Oxford Socialist Alliance parliamentary candidate, who said we should renationalise everything that has been denationalised, tax the rich, and vote for him. Slogans chanted on the march included such gems as "They say privatise, we say nationalise." Such is the total failure of the traditional Left to project the idea of a new human society. As we marched through the rain and the traffic, struggling to hold an umbrella, one bus driver called out: "I bet your umbrella was made in Taiwan by slave labor."

Richard Bunting  
Oxford

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At the May 1 march in the West End, there was a repeat of what happened last year, when a crowd of 5,000 protesters were herded into a pen and "held in custody" for four hours. Except this year they were held for eight hours. Not surprisingly, a few people later vented their anger on shop windows and there were 90 arrests. One thing is certain, the Left's turbulent love affair with Mayor Livingstone, who urged the police to treat all anti-capitalist protesters as "violent" is well and truly over.

Dave Black  
London

### MAY DAY 2001 IN UKRAINE

The Ukrainian Workers Group took part in the May Day demonstrations this year. The main slogans were "Smash the bourgeois system," "Long live the proletarian revolution," and "Workers of all lands, unite." Our banner was "For Marxist Humanism!" About 5,000 took part in the demonstration and meeting. We distributed a leaflet explaining who we are and what is *News & Letters* and *Hobgoblin*, which created great interest.

UWG  
Kiev

### WHO'S CRYING AND SCREAMING AMERICA?

I'm sending you something I wrote in 1996, which is still true today:  
An innocent black man in jail.  
America; who's crying and screaming?  
A poor family in the project.  
America; who's crying and screaming?  
Areas in cities called ghettos.  
America; who's crying and screaming?  
City zones redlined by the powers that be.  
America; who's crying and screaming?  
If you would look in the mirror, you will see  
that it is you, America (and may God have mercy on thee).

George Wilfrid Smith Jr.  
Chicago

The article from Kiev on the "Power struggle in a polarized Ukraine" in the April *N&L* was amazing. It was a picture of a concrete group of people who believe their theoretical position makes a difference in the world in which they're intervening. They get into a contradictory movement and bring in their philosophy to try to change the direction of the debate. It was a wonderful example of people trying to have their ideas make a difference.

Urszula Wislanka  
California

### PLAN COLOMBIA

Indiscriminate spraying that is taking place in conjunction with Plan Colombia is threatening more than 150,000 hectares of rain forest along the Amazon and Orinoco Rivers, involving Brazil, Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru, along with Colombia. At the current rate, the spraying has the potential to destroy more than two million hectares of rain forest by 2015. It already has had adverse effects on the health of campesinos and the indigenous population along with that of domestic animals and agricultural production. This is in spite of the fact that fumigation has proved to be totally ineffective in Colombia, where nearly 250,000 hectares have been sprayed in the past five years and instead of stemming the cultivation of coca has seen the areas of cultivation tripled.

Correspondent  
Ecuador



### YOUTH ON THE ROAD

On May Day in Gainesville protesters dressed like genetically engineered tomatoes in solidarity with the underpaid labor who supply Taco Bell with their tomatoes. They left a tomato almost as tall as the building in the drive-through which had a latch on the bottom releasing rotten tomatoes on the premises. I also got to escort at an abortion clinic called Bread and Roses. There were lots of escorts (most of them traveling kids like myself). They used a giant tarp to shield the abortion clients from the yells of the pro-lifers. It was very effective.

Andrea  
On the Road

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We want to tell you about an amazing event that just occurred here in Bellingham. There is a vacant lot downtown that locals turned into a garden and recreational center in less than 24 hours. People of all socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds participated when they saw what was happening. People began to bring sledge hammers to bust up the concrete and then brought turntables, games, hula hoops and it was suddenly a party. A huge mural was hung depicting what the vacant lot could look like if used as a community space. For two days it made the front page of the *Bellingham Herald*. It's an example of what can happen when a few people put their energy together.

Lee  
Bellingham, Washington

### ENERGY CRISIS OR BIG PROFITS?

I spoke to someone who supplies economic information to the energy industry in the U.S. who told me that from his perspective what is going on in the industry and its political power now is scary. He said most people don't realize how much more they are paying for energy with hidden taxes and higher prices right now. In the next ten years he expects energy costs to be 50% higher for ordinary customers.

Last year was a bad one for many stocks, but energy stocks rose 40%

because Wall Street sees the potential for big profits. The main problem is not getting more oil supply as Bush contends, since there wouldn't be enough refinery capacity to process the oil—and the industry isn't interested in building more expensive refineries. Tax and interest rate cuts won't have as much effect as Bush contends, either, because his friends in the energy industry are busy siphoning off income for their sector of capital.

**Economist  
New York**

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The Democratic National Committee has chosen an apt new name for the GOP and a new website they are launching to highlight the faces of Big Oil within the Bush/Cheney administration. It is being called GrandOldPetroleum.com.

**No joke  
Chicago**



**THE MANY  
STRUGGLES  
FOR  
WOMEN'S  
LIBERATION**

I appreciated the article from Tokyo on women and labor in Japan in the May issue. There is very little in the media about Japan's feminism, feminism, feminism, and environmentalism. But the struggle for a better and freer world definitely exists. Here are a few recent examples. On May Day over a million came out all over Japan to celebrate, organize or protest unfair working conditions. Since April 6 Japan now has a law against domestic violence. And currently, Japanese feminists are protesting the censorship of a TV program about the International War Crimes Tribunal in Tokyo.

**Jennifer  
Tokyo**

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Sonia Bergonzi's article "Emergency action for women's lives" (May) coalesced for me with the New York demonstration "Who decides, you or them?" Tightly "pigpened" in front of the Waldorf Astoria, 200 people decried the way the so-

called "Right to Life" committees honored Father Frank Pavonne who has been justifying violence and criminal activity against abortion providers and their patients. We need to make the facts of clinic violence known to all: seven murders between 1993 and 1998; 17 attempted murders from 1991 to today; 100 Butyric Acid attacks since 1992; 213 bombings and arson incidents since 1977; 338 death threats and 540 bomb threats since 1977. Integral to disseminating these facts, and to the immediacy of the actions of the Pro-Choice movement, looms our task to continue the struggle on to "absolute negativity" in order to assure freedom's forward movement.

**Sheila Garden  
New York**

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Whether our faxes and calls had an impact on Susan Sontag, or whether she planned to say what she did anyway—and although I would have liked more—I feel she did well when she accepted the Jerusalem Prize at the Annual International Book Fair and then called on Israel to stop building settlements and to demolish them instead as part of a peace agreement with the Palestinians. I'd like to thank all who leaned on her.

**Gila Svirsky  
Jerusalem**

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The Women's Action Coalition co-sponsored a protest with the University of Memphis on the students of the sociology of gender class against the proposed NBA stadium. About 30 of us, mostly young women, Black and white, passed out literature to explain why we were angry that money which could benefit poor Memphis women and children will instead be used to build a \$250 million sports stadium. There are a disproportionate number of low-income, woman-headed households in Memphis, and in some areas nine out of ten children are suffering from hunger. The wide news coverage of our protest shows how contentious the proposed new stadium is. Many here are vehemently opposed to it.

**WACers April and Terry  
Memphis**

**COOPTING DOROTHY DAY?!**

I never thought I would see the day when George W. Bush would try to coopt the heritage of Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic Worker movement, but it happened on May 20 when in a speech at Notre Dame he said, "Any effective war on poverty must deploy what Dorothy Day called 'the weapons of spirit.'" Day may have believed in "spirit" but for her it was a motivator for effective political action—something that is the total opposite of Bush's effort to hand over the federal budget surplus to the super-rich.

**P.W.  
Illinois**

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In the *Financial Times* it was stated that "the amount of wealth owned by the world's richest people rose 6% to \$27 trillion last year." As a middle class person, struggling to survive, I find this appalling. The article didn't mention the percentage of those who are poverty-stricken or those of us who are near-poverty, desperately trying to preserve our jobs, because we have no financial safety net and no money to invest since we live from paycheck to paycheck.

**Akili  
Chicago**

**CRITICAL THEORY & MARX**

I very much liked the exchange between Peter McLaren and Glenn Rikowski in the May issue. I'm going to close my course in Critical Theory by returning to the Marxist origin of the project and arguing that Critical Theory's dalliance with liberalism has been a mistake. The exchange gives a good overview of Marx's basic ideas.

**Teacher  
Seattle**

**LEFT 'ANTI-IMPERIALISM'**

I was surprised to read about Castro's recent visit to Iran and wondered what those two countries could have in common to bring them together at this moment. It became clear when Castro was given an honorary doctorate for his struggle against U.S. imperialism. Evidently their common battle, especially against the U.S. embargo of both countries, buried any concern for human

rights conditions within their own countries. It is unsettling to see how many in today's Left, especially visible on the internet, hang onto Castro as a model of the new society, mainly because of his opposition to the U.S. This uncritical support for anyone that is against U.S. imperialism has resulted in some pretty shocking allies, as we saw most recently in the massive left support for Slobodan Milosevic whose policy of ethnic cleansing killed hundreds of thousands in Bosnia and Kosova.

**Mary Jo Grey  
Chicago**

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I have just renewed my subscription to *N&L*, the journal of the Marxist-Humanists, which is about the only one of the myriad left factions to take a principled, single-standard line on the horrific events in the Balkans. For the past several years I felt increasingly isolated in my revulsion for the apologies (and outright cheerleading) for war criminals—of either the Serb or NATO variety—by the so-called "Left." *N&L* makes me feel less lonely and is attempting to move the debate in what I consider the right direction.

**Bill Weinberg  
New York**

**A VOICE FROM WITHIN**

Please print this for me in your section, "Readers Views" as soon as possible: *N&L* is a superb publication that is second to none. It is educational, informative, deals with reality, and exposes the dark side of the greedy and heartless. The struggle for justice, peace and equality must continue. I share what I read with others here and beyond this prison's walls. Please continue your worthy endeavors and let it be known that I am extremely grateful to the donor who made my subscription to *N&L* feasible.

**State Prison Prisoner  
California**

**THANKS TO ALL OUR READERS  
WHO HAVE RESPONDED TO OUR  
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CONTRIBUTION TO HELP KEEP  
N&L ALIVE?**

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## EDITORIAL

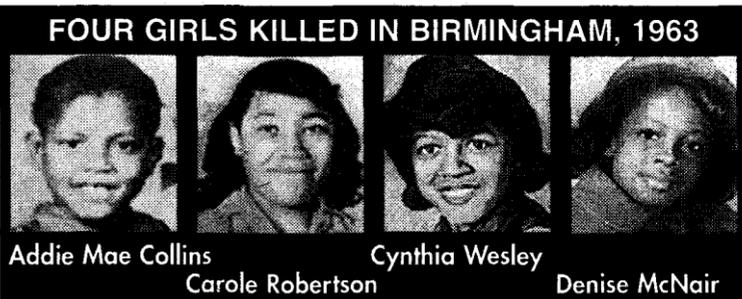
Hallelujah. An Alabama jury convicted Thomas E. Blanton who, as a member of the Ku Klux Klan in 1963, helped blow up the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Ala. The blast killed four little girls, ages 11 to 14, and maimed a fifth child. Another 21 people were injured. Blanton and another Klaner, Robert "Dynamite Bob" Chambliss, were suspects ever since the blast, but not until 1977 was Chambliss convicted and it took almost four decades to try Blanton. Evidence belatedly turned over by the FBI

led to Chambliss's conviction, and only now did a crucial piece of FBI evidence surface to convict Blanton, 1964 of audio tape of the killers' account of the deed.

### BIRMINGHAM AND FOUR LITTLE GIRLS

A look at Birmingham and the world which was watching it in the 1960s discloses revolution and counter-revolution. Ever since a successful bus boycott to end segregation in 1956, white Birmingham city officials passed a series of ordinances to bolster it. 1962 saw a mobilization of Black Birmingham determined to wipe away segregation once and for all.

Rather than give in, the city closed public facilities and stopped relief programs, even at the expense of white working families. Infamous police commissioner



Addie Mae Collins

Carole Robertson

Cynthia Wesley

Denise McNair

### FOUR GIRLS KILLED IN BIRMINGHAM, 1963

"Bull" Conner stepped up a reign of terror. In late Spring 1963, some 750 Black youth were jailed in the largest protest against segregation ever. After six days, 3,000 crammed into the filthy Birmingham prisons,

arrested in non-violent protests. Fully half were children. When white businessmen, whose stores had been boycotted for months, showed signs of bending to the demands of the protests, racist reaction was swift.

Bombs ripped through the headquarters of the integrationists and the home of Martin Luther King's brother. High pressure hoses and police dogs unleashed on demonstrators were captured in unforgettable images flashed around the world. Rather than defending the Black populace of Birmingham, U.S. Attorney General Bobby Kennedy questioned the timing of the protests, as if they could wait. When Alabama Governor George Wallace chose to close public schools rather than integrate them in the fall, not all white Alabamans went along with him, including angry parents.

In that atmosphere of treason fomented by Wallace and other segregationists, the ilk of Blanton and Chambliss felt emboldened to further terrorize Black Birmingham. On Sept. 15, 1963, the 16th Street Baptist Church was bombed. Less well known are the police murder of Johnny Robinson and white mob slaying of Vigil Ware at that time.

### FBI—DOGS OF COUNTER-REVOLUTION

With its eyes and ears inside the KKK, why didn't the FBI intervene to stop the bombing in 1963? This was not the only time it considered the Freedom Now! movement more of a threat than murderous racists. The FBI allowed a white mob to set upon a bus carrying Freedom Riders in 1961. The passengers were beaten, leaving an activist paralyzed, and the bus torched. The same FBI, at the behest of the attorney general, spied on civil rights figures, even tapping the

phone lines of Martin Luther King Jr. Failing to bring forth the audio tape incriminating Blanton until now continues such a tradition of racism and repression.

Louis Freeh's FBI participated in the bogus and racist spy hunt against Wen Ho Lee, a Taiwan-born U.S. citizen and defense department employee. Lee was virtually exonerated last year. Also last year, a chillingly unprecedented public rally by FBI agents in the nation's capital denounced the possible clemency for Native American political prisoner Leonard Peltier.

After the bombing of the Olympic festival in predominantly Black Atlanta in 1996, white supremacist Eric Rudolph made his getaway. Meanwhile the FBI, in self-imposed impotence, tried coercing a confession out of a security guard. Rudolph was later linked to the bombing of a Birmingham women's clinic which killed a guard and maimed a nurse.

And despite Congress's showy denunciations of the FBI assaults on white supremacists at Ruby Ridge, Idaho, and religious fanatics and their children in Waco, Texas, it throws more money at the bureau which has doubled in size in the 1990s and opened shop abroad to throttle movements there.

### FREEDOM, THEN AND NOW

If U.S. rulers are finding more counterrevolutionary jobs for the FBI, it is because aspirations for freedom are multiplying, including at home. Take George W. Bush's dubious path to the White House which outflanked the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The names of eligible voters were purged from voter registration rolls. Not surprisingly, Black and poor citizens found themselves disenfranchised the most.

Nevertheless, the recent Cincinnati rebellion and protests against the World Trade Organization, along with persistent and growing community movements against police repression, have exposed dot.com fairy tales and bourgeois lies about social and economic progress abroad and at home.

As the 1963 events unfolded, we published *American Civilization on Trial*, the first true history of Black struggles for freedom and their moments of coalescence with all freedom struggles. It showed the underlying humanism of the new freedom movements, and posed the need to preserve and advance these movements as a philosophy of revolution. Because that need for "the power of negativity" persists still, we plan to issue a new edition of *American Civilization on Trial* for today's movements.

## Black/Red View

(Continued from page 1)

modities for the world market.

To cover-up their relentless exploitation of labor and consumption of natural resources, Powell is now in Africa preaching about democracy to African leaders. This is the height of hypocrisy. In the 1960s the western powers, along with the UN, helped initiate an epoch of the most brutal dictatorship in Congo with their support for war in the copper-rich Katanga province as well as the murder of independence leader Patrice Lumumba. Now when they speak of "democracy" what they want in Africa is "stability"—social peace. The motive then as now is the unfettered ability of global capital to exploit Africa's natural and human resources.

### IMPOSSIBLE DEBTS

Thus, life in Africa today, according to UNICEF, means "that 1.2 billion people live on less than a dollar a day, including 500 million children. In many developing nations, funds needed for public health, education, and improvements in the infrastructure are instead absorbed in debt repayment. Despite the mythology that Africa drains Western resources, the fact of the matter is just the opposite. When one combines the debt payment and trade imbalances, for every one Western dollar that flows into Africa three move from Africa to the West. In real dollars between 1980 and 1996 Africa paid off more than double its external debt, and yet found itself three times more impoverished." (*National Catholic Reporter*, Dec. 22, 2000)

Africa now is going through a tremendous upheaval of war and all the social horrors and human suffering that war creates. Yet the truth of the African revolutions of the 1960s has not died in the memory of many Africans. Today that revolutionary truth is being used by African leaders as a camouflage to conceal the plundering of Congo's abundant timber, diamonds, gold, coffee, and other resource. For example, Uganda has organized and trained a military force in the Congo which is there to engage in this plunder. Uganda calls this force MLC, Movement for the Liberation of Congo. Yet the only liberation in which MLC is involved is the "liberation" of Congo's resources.

### DEVELOPMENT: HUMAN OR CAPITALIST?

Africa, after several centuries of revolts against western imperialism, finally won its political freedom in the 1950s and '60s. Yet its labor power and its natural resources are still being exploited by world capitalism. The everyday conditions of life and labor for ordinary Africans are more oppressive than ever.

Raya Dunayevskaya noted the pull of the world market on the thought and action of African leaders when she wrote "the tragedy of the African revolutions began so soon after revolution had succeeded because leaders were so weighed down with consciousness of technological backwardness that they turned to one of the two poles of world capital. The isolation from the masses deepened so that the new rulers began to look at them as mere labor power."

That happened in spite of the fact that the African masses created the new era of independence from colonialism and reached for a new road to development based on their own collective talents. Now that global capital is a unitary system the pull of the world market is even more immediate and unquestioned in the minds of all leaders. This makes it all the more important to return to the liberatory idea that transformed the African continent and meet it with a philosophy of freedom beyond capitalism.

## The wrongful conviction of Maurice Carter

*Chicago*—Maurice Carter has been in prison for 25 years, his conviction based on untenable witness testimony. Carter was targeted by the Berrien County, Michigan, prosecutor two years after an off-duty Benton Harbor policeman received a gunshot wound that hospitalized him for two days. Two years later witnesses, who had claimed not to be able to identify the perpetrator immediately after the crime, were "sure" Carter was guilty. Their certainty was based upon the prosecutor's coaching aimed at convicting his suspect.

Three composite drawings came from the shooting. Two were done by the victim's wife who admitted that she hadn't gotten a good look at the suspect. The other was by the store clerk who had waited on the perpetrator for several minutes immediately preceding the crime. The clerk was certain she could identify the perpetrator but her drawing could not have been of the same person as those from the victim's wife.

One of the main witnesses at the trial heard shooting and, after hesitation, looked through her second floor window across an intersection over the top of another building where the shooter was running away from her vision. She said at first that she couldn't identify the criminal. Twenty-four months later, after

she became an employee in the prosecutor's office and had seen a photo spread in the local paper showing Carter's picture next to the clerk's composite drawing, she was "positive" it was Carter.

The clerk, on the other hand, was sure she could identify the shooter from the very start of the investigation. Two years later she and a customer who was in the store were positive that Carter wasn't the guilty party but they were going against the prosecutor's theory of the crime and the jury did not believe them.

A third witness was facing drug charges which can carry a life sentence. In exchange for the charges being dropped he agreed to testify that Carter was the gunman. However, on the witness stand he recanted his affidavit. He did this because he had been with Carter in their hotel room when the shooting occurred and knew he was innocent. Later, when he pleaded guilty to having fabricated Carter's guilt—not the recantation—he was convicted of perjury.

There is more to tell about the accusation and trial of Maurice Carter. Contact Citizens Committee for the Release of Maurice Carter, 132 Water Street, Benton Harbor, MI 49022, or [www.freemauricecarter.com](http://www.freemauricecarter.com).

—January B.

## Community fight against Carolina landfill

*South Carolina*—Our organization, South Carolina Environmental Watch (SCEW), has been fighting a proposed landfill in Allendale County that was supposed to be inert, a demolition landfill, to be located at the site of a closed municipal landfill. SCEW did investigative work, and helped the community get organized and their confidence up.

The community is very mixed—farmers and African Americans. Environmental justice issues cover communities of color, rural, and economically depressed communities. African Americans fit into all three of those categories. The major industry in Allendale—even though they're trying to move it to waste—would probably be farming.

Our investigation found that the municipal landfill was an Environmental Protection Agency Superfund site. Beit Trucking was applying to the county for a permit to run the inert landfill. We went to the hearing of the county council and the Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) was there. The community people were prepared with information and the questions they would ask.

I listened to DHEC trying to give the community people the runaround, and started asking pointed questions about the site. I also brought up other problem facilities in South Carolina to show that there is a history of this sort of thing. After the meeting I told

DHEC the findings when the landfill water had been sampled—the toxins present in the water and their potential damage to human health, especially lead and arsenic. New studies show that even at very low levels arsenic is a carcinogen.

The landfill has not been monitored since 1996 because the county does not have the money. Beit Trucking was saying they would monitor the landfill if they were allowed to use it as an inert landfill.

What they failed to say is that because it is a Superfund site, the community could go after the previous owner/operator of the site, and their much larger mother company, and make them clean it up. The EPA and South Carolina would've helped with the cleanup too. Then it wouldn't have been the whole burden falling on poor Allendale County. The people in Allendale didn't know that.

And they didn't know that Allendale could apply for a brownfield grant which would give them the opportunity to have a landfill reclamation process and perhaps turn it into something a lot less toxic.

They were withholding all that information from the community so that Beit Trucking was seen as the savior who would monitor the landfill and the wells. DHEC looked very silly, and had to admit that Allendale County need not be totally responsible for the cleanup of this facility.

—Mildred Meyers

# Cincinnati march for justice

**Cincinnati, Ohio**—A rally and march for justice in solidarity with the Black community was held here on June 2. Up to 1,000 people, including locals and those from around the country, turned out to let the Cincinnati police know that they are being watched in the aftermath of last month's rebellion against police murder.

The march called for an end to police abuse and killings; an end to patterns of police racism and racial profiling; and social and economic justice. Some speakers focused on reforming the police, for instance by involving the U.S. Justice Department. But as one Black man in the crowd said, "With Bush and Ashcroft that is just a fantasy. The system hasn't worked for Black people at all and we have to start from that."

For the most part, the youth who led the rebellion last month weren't present at the march. In discussions it became pretty clear that the left activists hadn't developed a very deep connection to them, and aside from Derrick Blassingame being a speaker their voices weren't well represented at the rally.

The most intense moment of the march was probably the minute of silence that was observed at 13th and Vine, where Timothy Thomas was murdered. It showed a deep respect, coming as it did at the request of Thomas' mother. All sections of the marchers were united by this feeling.

What I missed was an articulation that could match this, a sense that greater connections could have been drawn. The same tensions were present here that have appeared in anti-globalization protests regarding direct action, critique of capitalism, and so forth. Many

of the same activists were present. But there is still a lot to be done in developing the language and thought which can make this coalescence of movements a reality.

—Gerard Emmett

# Chicago rally against injustice, police abuse



**Chicago**—Some 300 people rallied June 2 in Touhy Park to protest police misconduct, racism, homophobia, and wrongful convictions. Participants marched to State's Attorney Dick Devine's house to protest his cover-up of police abuse. Mounted police intercepted the protesters (above).

# Conference on Israeli-Palestinian crisis

**Los Angeles**—The "Open Tent Middle East Coalition" held a conference on "The Israeli Palestinian Crisis: New Conversations for a Pluralist Future" on the campus of UCLA, on May 20. While Ariel Sharon's government was bombing innocent Palestinians with F-16 warplanes in retaliation for a suicide bombing in Netanya, about 200 participants were involved in meaningful discussion about the crisis. The panels featured Jewish and Palestinian scholars and activists and ranged from "Why Oslo and Camp David II Failed" to "Solving the Crisis: the Future of Coexistence."

**Dr. Mahmood Ibrahim, a Palestinian historian who teaches at Cal Poly Pomona, argued that a fundamental defect of Ehud Barak's offer to the Palestinians was that it did not offer them the entirety of the West Bank and Gaza. Barak's offer would have still allowed Israel to hold onto its settlements, West Bank communities surrounding Jerusalem, roads, army bases and nature preserves. This violated the very idea of a viable Palestinian state free of Israel's army presence.**

Dr. Rashid Khalidi, director of the Center for International Studies at the University of Chicago and author of the book, *Palestinian Identity*, reaffirmed these problems. He argued that the Oslo agreement as well as Camp David II failed because they did not address three "pre-requisites": 1) The acceptance of U.N. Resolutions 242, 181, and 194 which signify the principles of land for peace, as well as compensation for refugees; 2) The recognition that both peoples have the right to self-determination and independence; 3) The acceptance of the pre-June 4, 1967 border as the only mutually acceptable basis for partition.

Khalidi emphasized that no fruitful peace negotiation could take place unless the following issues are understood: 1) The return of land taken for Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. 2) The acceptance of Jerusalem as the capital for both peoples, with Palestinian sovereignty in East Jerusalem, Israeli sovereignty in West Jerusalem, as well as complete access to the entire city by all people. 3) The acceptance by Israel of the return or monetary compensation or restitution for Palestinian refugees. Furthermore, Israel would have to acknowledge its share of the responsibility in creating the Palestinian refugee crisis while others, including the United Nations and the Arab governments, had a role too. Without the recognition of these fundamental issues, Khalidi thought, there is a possibility of endless conflict which might turn the region into a wasteland.

Rabbi Michael Lerner, the editor of *Tikkun* maga-

zine, reported that he is now the target of a death threat issued by right-wing extremist Jewish organizations, because of his activities in defense of Palestinian self-determination. While he agreed with Ibrahim and Khalidi on the need to dismantle the Israeli settlements and return Israel's borders to the 1967 Green Line, he distinguished his point of view on the following issue: "Israel would have to admit its part for what happened to Palestinians in 1948. But I say part because Palestinians made a moral mistake. They kept the Jews out of Palestine when we were being put in the crematoriums. But that was also no excuse for us to hurt the Palestinian people. When we jumped from the crematoriums on their backs, our pain was so much greater than theirs, that we could not see they had a justified anger too. We only saw their anger as a manifestation of the world being against Jews. It was a complex reality."

On the question of the right of return, he believed that it would be fair to allow 25,000-30,000 Palestinian refugees to return to Israel every year for the next 25-30 years or, as an alternative, to offer compensation for those refugees who do not return.

Lerner argued that for the Israeli public to be convinced of this position, the Israeli Left would have to reassess its shortcomings: "The Israeli Left has not been able to understand the needs of Mizrahi and Sephardic Jews and has lost them to the right-wing Likud. That is because the Israeli Left does not understand the hunger for meaning in a society in which the solution being offered is free market capitalism. Israel has become the Taiwan of the Middle East." Lerner concluded by calling for massive teach-ins in the U.S. and an international peace force composed of civilians who understand the complexity of the situation.

The conference concluded with a report by Gila Svirsky, an Israeli feminist peace activist whose writings have often appeared in *News & Letters*. Svirsky reported that a week before the conference, she and a group of Israeli peace activists who had organized a caravan of food and medicine to Palestinian villages, were warmly greeted by villagers who shook their hands. She also emphasized that between 1,000 and 2,000 Israeli Army reservists are currently sitting in Israeli jails because they have refused to fight in the occupied territories. She asked the conference participants to start a letter writing campaign to their local newspapers to oppose Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories by calling for returning Israel to its 1967 borders, advocating a just solution on Palestinian refugees, and a shared Jerusalem.

The Open Tent Middle East Coalition in Los Angeles can be reached at [www.opentent.org](http://www.opentent.org)

—Frieda



## VIEWS FROM THE INSIDE OUT

# War on drugs

by Robert Taliaferro

The war on drugs in this country expands well beyond its borders, and Americans are not the only people paying the price of community militarization.

In Colombia, government-backed "illegal" paramilitary forces often lead the strikes against rebel forces who are said to expedite the drug trade. The operation is funded—in part—by over a billion dollars of mainly military aid from the U.S.

Some of that aid is in the form of Vietnam-era Huey helicopters, and defoliant that brings to mind the Agent Orange used in Vietnam. The defoliant is dumped on the fields of coca leaf in Colombia, but is indiscriminate in its destruction, killing "legal" crops as well.

Prior to spraying, however, the paramilitary forces are charged with the task of "relocating" the population of the area, and this relocation has resulted in reports of massacres of suspected sympathizers of guerrilla units in the target areas.

According to human rights groups, at least 100 people are massacred each year in one province in Colombia that is said to be the stronghold of FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) guerrillas. This province is also, reportedly, responsible for over half of Colombia's annual cocaine production.

The military has a quaint phrase called "collateral damage" that is often used when describing the destruction of property—or people—that is not part of the main objective.

The war on drugs in Colombia also has its collateral damage, not only with legal crops being destroyed by defoliant, but in people being illegally arrested, and often killed, simply for being at the wrong place, at the wrong time.

### AID OF PARAMILITARIES

Though it is said that the U.S. has been placing pressure on Colombia to distance itself from paramilitary groups, it was only after repeated UN complaints about human rights abuses that Colombia—at least on the surface—made efforts to curb its affiliation with such groups, yet military leaders on the ground often use such groups as the spearhead of other military actions. In fact, many members of the paramilitary groups are former soldiers of such units as Colombia's 24th Brigade.

The brigade is under investigation in Colombia for human rights abuses, and though it is restricted from receiving U.S. aid because of those abuses, its former commander is currently up for promotion.

In the United States, the war on drugs has led to the incarceration or judicial sanctions of millions of people, affecting the lives—with its collateral damage—of millions more. It has spawned an industry that has become self-perpetuating, a feeding frenzy of fear that has strangled this country in razor wire, steel doors, and concrete walls.

In the United States, the war on drugs has become synonymous with cultural genocide, especially as it relates to African Americans. Though we do not see the massacres of whole villages such as one might see in Colombia, the loss of a person killed in a hail of bullets because they were driving while Black or Brown, can seem like a massacre to a family that depended on that person for financial or emotional support.

One of the ironies of the war on drugs is that 100 years ago cocaine was a popular drug in this country, used in everything from everyday remedies to a popular soft drink that is now sold in a bright red can.

White Southerners, in particular, were at the forefront of outlawing cocaine—not because of its addictive properties but because of stories of how the drug made Blacks almost impervious to bullets, and how they became aggressive and unruly when confronted with traditional law enforcement techniques of white police at the time.

Equally ironic is that the largest population of abusers at the time were white middle class men and women.

### WAR ALONG RACIAL LINES

One hundred years later, the war on drugs is still fought on racial lines, even though the largest percentage of drug abusers in the country are still white, while the largest population of incarcerated and abused people are those of color.

And in Colombia, the coca plants are resilient, while "legal" crops may never recover from the defoliants that were sprayed to destroy their horticultural relatives. Even if the war on drugs could be won on the ground through militarization of communities both here and abroad, one wonders what the effect will be on such places like remote provinces in Colombia that were battlefields for that war.

What future is there for a country's growth potential if their land is spoiled by airborne poisons sprayed over fertile land, lending the cultivation of "legal" crops as a relatively impossible task in an impoverished area. And most of all, what good are legal crops, if all the farmers that can grow them are dead?

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# Racial clash in Britain



Fighting between Asian youth and racist white gangs in Oldham broke out at the end of May. Watch for the July *News & Letters* which will carry a report from Britain.

# Spy plane tussle diverts view of mass unrest in China

(Continued from page 1)

city of Shenzhen alone.

Nevertheless, China's rulers have their own reasons for railing against the U.S. A recent report by Communist Party's inner sanctum warned of a spreading pattern of "collective protests and group incidents" against the regime by workers, peasants, and the unemployed. Entitled "China Investigation Report 2000-2001: Studies of Contradictions Among the People Under New Conditions" it warned that growing protests against inequality, poverty and corruption is jeopardizing "stability." In light of this, the regime is more than willing to use the "nationalist card" to attempt to deflect attention from mounting crises at home.

During the stand-off over the spy plane Jiang permitted demonstrations that backed the government and even egged on the authorities to take an aggressive stand against the U.S. One slogan, "blood debt must be paid in blood," backed stern action in the name of the downed Chinese fighter pilot. Such demonstrations were forbidden 12 years ago when aimed at state and party rulers, including Li Peng and the late Deng Xiaoping, for slaughter of demonstrators around Tiananmen Square and in Chengdu, as well as armed repression of demonstrators in over 200 other cities.

## CHINA'S DEEPENING CRISES

The contribution to favorable growth in GNP from China's coastal export zones masks a crisis in the industrial heartland. This is giving foreign enterprises even more leverage.

A growing army of unemployed from shuttered state enterprises now exceeds 25 million. It is backed by more than 100 million fleeing rural areas and interior provinces in search of work in the cities and on the coast, where they can claim no legal status. The state has asserted the right to discipline the workforce—by the official union backed by police, army, labor camps and prisons—for foreign-owned factories as well as for heavy industrial plants that have been the heart of the state-monopoly enterprises.

The most jealously guarded monopoly of all is the top-down, official All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU). Workers suffered even a greater share of the death meted out by martial law troops on June 4, 1989 than the university students who initiated the occupation of Tiananmen Square. Those who founded the Beijing Workers Autonomous Federation on Tiananmen Square in 1989 and autonomous unions throughout the country were pursued and jailed.

The wave of executions of workers that followed centered on Shanghai, where current Party chairman

Jiang Zemin was Shanghai party chief and where current Premier Zhu Rongji was mayor. A number of workers from independent unions in Hunan rotted in jail until last year; several thousand remain jailed. The regime chose to expel others such as Han Dongfang of the Beijing Workers Autonomous Federation from the country on the pretext of the need for medical attention and then denied him re-entry to China proper. In the face of certain punishment for publicly forming labor organizations since 1989, workers from Hunan to Gansu to Inner Mongolia have been jailed up to ten years for "threatening state security" for organizing over lay-offs, pay or job conditions.

Workers in the coastal export industry did not have union membership or coverage under the trade union law for most of the 1990s. Foreign enterprises had a free hand on wages, hours and conditions. Now the ACFTU is rapidly adding members in a branch for foreign invested enterprises under a separate law. Is that for the benefit of workers in those plants? Not likely, considering that a poll showed near-unanimous praise, by factory owners, for their working relationship with the ACFTU.

One factory in Shenzhen that had been shorting its workers over \$25 a month—nearly half the minimum wage—and ignoring overtime pay, first claimed that it was subject to no labor laws, then tried charging the wage shortfall for food and dormitory lodging. As for safety conditions, 10,000 workers were permanently disabled in Shenzhen alone, for which in practice the reward was to be fired.

Conditions of life and labor run at a catastrophic level as well in state industry, where union and industry both answer to the same state-capitalist boss, the party-controlled state. In the coal mines, an astounding 10,000 miners died each year on average during the 1990s. Pressure to double production to fuel expansion in a coal-based economy puts at risk even more lives in the immediate future.

Safety has taken a back seat to cost-cutting in plants



Northeast China, center of unrest

## Struggle continues against bloodshed in Aceh

Bloodshed has increased in Aceh, a province in northwest Indonesia where the entire population has been demanding a referendum on independence for the past two years. The government's response is repression. Since ExxonMobil closed down natural gas production in March due to violence in the area, Indonesia has sent more troops and increased its killing, kidnapping, torture, rape and burning of homes, schools and community centers.

The largest organization leading the fight for a referendum—larger than GAM, the guerrilla movement—is the student organization SIRA, which has more than 100 member organizations and is growing. SIRA is the biggest challenge to the government, not only because we have such widespread support, but also because of the reasonableness of our demands.

The government cannot logically deny our demands, especially when we say that Aceh's problem is the Indonesian security forces in Aceh. We have talked many times with the government, we have an open door to continued talk; but the government still pretends it is not responsible for the violence, blaming it all on GAM and "persons unknown."

More than 600 people have been killed so far this year alone. Everyone knows the main perpetrators are the security forces, yet the government pressures journalists to say the killings are by "persons unknown."

Indonesia is trying to kill off our educators and even moderate political leaders, everyone who has a good mind and can challenge government policy. Many professors have been killed, like Safwan Idris, director of State Institute of Islamic Studies, who was killed in his home. They think that when they kill professors, then the students will have no one to guide us, no one to lead us besides the government. This is crude and stupid.

Recently they killed T. H. Djohan, a former vice-governor of Aceh who had criticized the government's policies of burning homes and sending more troops. It was a shock that he got killed because he had been high up in the military.

The government says they have a plausible proposal for peace and to bring the perpetrators of violence to justice, but no one can expect honest investigations to be done by it while it is killing people daily. They are even starting to kill and kidnap foreign journalists.

In Jakarta, an Acehnese students' hostel blew up May 10, killing three people and injuring others. The government said the residents were SIRA students making bombs. They detained and tortured other residents trying to get evidence. The students weren't even SIRA members; they just had some of our public docu-

ments in the house.

The government uses any excuse to blame SIRA. On May 13 in the capital of Aceh, army troops dismantled the giant permanent referendum billboard in front of Baiturrahman grand mosque, which had been approved by President Wahid. The billboard was a memorial sign of the Acehnese aspiration for a referendum, constructed after the huge referendum rally on Nov. 8, 1999.

There have been suppressive actions against SIRA activists by arrest, detention, intimidation, kidnapping and murder since SIRA organized a huge rally demanding a referendum in November 1999. About two million people gathered in Banda Aceh. It was peaceful; no casualties took place because no security forces were deployed.

On May 14 the SIRA office in Jakarta was attacked, and May 15 in Banda Aceh, police raided and destroyed SIRA headquarters. They ripped out our signs and wrote on the wall, "SIRA is a communist group," "SIRA is a traitor of the people," and "SIRA enjoys the people's money." I think the military only hurts itself by making wild accusations against SIRA.

The second rally, known as the "Mass Rally for Peace" took place on Nov. 12, 2000. At least 60 people, were killed by security forces that blocked convoys going to Banda Aceh to exercise their political views. Many people were brutally tortured.

I believe Indonesia will have to negotiate; they can't kill everyone in the whole country. If they keep killing so many, they will lose their credibility and good name in the world. As Isaac Asimov said, "Violence is the last resort of incompetents."

—SIRA member in the U.S.

On May 22, the U.S. Congress, under intense pressure from human rights groups, passed a "finding" of human rights abuses in Aceh and West Papua, and a finding of escalating violence in Maluku and Central Kalimantan as well.

The Congressional resolution also calls for Indonesia to release Jafar Siddiq Hamzah's autopsy report so an investigation of his murder can be made. Hamzah was the founder and director of the International Forum on Aceh, which works for peace and human rights in Aceh. A New York resident, he was kidnapped, tortured and killed while visiting Indonesia last summer.

The resolution was brought about by the work of the Indonesia Human Rights Network, 1101 Pennsylvania Ave. SE Washington, DC 2000, TEL 202-544-1211, which urges everyone to pressure Congress not to restore military aid to Indonesia.—Editor.

as well as mines as the government has withdrawn the subsidies from heavy state industry. As many as 40,000 state-run enterprises have been allowed to go bankrupt. Others have hung on with massive lay-offs which frequently target older women by cannibalizing pension funds, or even extorting loans from workers.

## SWEATSHOPS AND LABOR REVOLT

The tragic explosion that killed more than 40 people in an elementary school in Jiangsi this year exposed sweatshop conditions in that one school as young children were forced to produce firecrackers to cover tacked-on school fees. Spotlighting these illegal fees that in part replace funds withdrawn to Beijing explain the increasingly early dropout rates and the number of underage children in the workforce.

More than 90% of secondary schools also have sideline enterprises. Collectively their revenue, over \$15 billion (not including the part that ended up in the pockets of school officials) nearly equaled the national education budget for all levels of schools combined.

Anti-corruption show trials of party cadres, even high-level officials sometimes ending in execution, cannot remove responsibility for pervasive corruption from single-party domination. Peasants who are guaranteed by law that local fees will be no more than 5% of the value of their crop have been presented with fee on top of illegal fee, totaling more than 100% in some townships after a poor harvest.

Even though acts of defiance are criminalized as "endangering state security," peasant uprisings have increased in the 1990s. So far troops and armed police have followed orders, as when they killed two peasants in a Jiangsi village in April.

But labor disputes have multiplied even more. Strikes and job actions numbering 8,150 in official statistics in 1992 had exploded to 120,000 by 1999, all illegal. Privatization of state-run enterprises, transferring assets but not obligations to the well-connected, has created an added reason for job action. So will privatization to foreign capitalists.

Although some job actions have made gains, many of them have ended in arrests. But the scale of job actions testifies not only to the desperation of workers, it also indicates how discredited the ruling Communist Party has become since 1989. Merely the bayonet and the certainty of jail cannot keep workers from striking or blocking trains.

It is easy to see the fallacy of some student activists in the aftermath of 1989 who looked for help from the U.S. government whose support goes annually to Chinese rulers. U.S. workers, on the other hand, have a basis for solidarity by facing in milder forms some of the problems of Chinese workers, from privatization and buyouts to housing shortages and overtime. With the agenda that Bush has laid out, the situation of the Chinese might even be an ominous vision of our own future if we cannot block Bush's plans.

The publication of *The Tiananmen Papers* this year testifies to the continuing battle to "reverse verdict" on the Tiananmen Square Massacre. Some figured that it was necessary to wait until Deng Xiaoping died before reform could take place. Now Deng has been gone for four years and Jiang, whose only claim to power is that one man, Deng, picked him in 1989 because he was effective in defusing worker protests, still sits in office. But as worker and peasant opposition becomes bolder, never has his rule been so precarious.

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## Hawaiians protest bankers' meeting

**Honolulu**—Over 500 angry protesters, many in native Hawaiian dress, greeted 3,500 delegates from 49 countries who gathered here last month for the annual meeting of the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The ADB is an entity, like the World Trade Organization, that undemocratically makes economic and development decisions that negatively affect working people, the poor, and the environment.

Native Hawaiians and others—including many youth, and union members from the Teamsters and the International Longshore and Warehouse Union—came together under the umbrella group ADB Watch for a "March for Global Justice and Hawaiian Rights."

Hawaiian sovereignty activists led the march, carrying the Hawaiian Kingdom flags upside down—the international sign of distress. They raised issues of land rights, federal recognition of Hawaiian self-rule, and independence. Another issue local law enforcement forced activists to raise, as sovereignty rights activist Haunani-Kay Trask said, is "the militarization of the Honolulu Police Department (HPD)."

In the land of Aloha, 500 protesters faced a police force with \$500,000 worth of new riot gear; sidewalk barricades separating protesters from those who needed to hear their message; over 200 police; plus private guards; plus National Guardsmen; and police helicopters. While National Guard Maj. Chuck Anthony claimed, "I haven't seen any intimidation at all," police filmed a press conference with protesters, and HPD Chief Lee Donohue unbelievably claimed he knew nothing of the filming but that it was warranted to protect the rights of officers accused of wrongdoing! In fact, some marchers turned out because they were angry that the city had tried to stop the march by refusing to issue a permit. ADB Watch had to go to court to force Honolulu to let the march proceed. Security for this 100% peaceful protest will cost Hawaiian taxpayers over \$4 million.

But it was not only a hostile police force that protesters encountered. The local press, especially the *Honolulu Advertiser*, vilified the protesters while touting the ADB to the skies, referring to it as "a Manila-based bank [that] distributes \$5 billion a year in loans to address poverty in developing nations." Protesters



Hawaii sovereignty activist marches against bank.

in Seattle, Quebec and elsewhere were called "bused-in thugs." When the paper was swamped with letters and calls from citizens angry that local people were being intimidated from marching, the *Advertiser's* editorial slandered the letter writers, saying: "Our mail has brimmed with organized write-ins complaining..."

Despite this orchestrated attempt to present only the capitalist side, activists made their voices heard. Phoy Bun Nyor (or Poy Bun Nyok—the *Advertiser* failed to spell it consistently!) came from Cambodia to

tell of how the 59 villages and 20,000 people along the Se San River are experiencing severe flooding since an A D B - financed dam has been built. She is fighting an ADB project that would create a series of dams which would dis-

place thousands, flood rain forests, and destroy fisheries. Another Cambodian, Mon Mon, a farmer, was forced off his land by ADB-funded logging projects.

Beverly Longid from the Cordillera Peoples' Alliance is opposing an ADB project in the Philippines that is building roads—the infrastructure that international capital needs to expand—when the real need is irrigation and help in stopping the introduction of crops that are crowding out native plants. She says, "The biggest problem is that native people are not consulted first." Haunani-Kay Trask said it most succinctly: "The ADB is uprooting indigenous people all over Asia."

While Honolulu Governor Ben Cayetano was greeting the ADB as the first of what he hopes will be many similar meetings held in Hawaii, what was beneath his notice, but will make the difference in the long run, is that the ADB meeting was the opportunity for activists from several Asian countries to meet together with native Hawaiian and U.S. youth and labor activists who are forming part of the movement from below that is directly challenging capitalism.

—Terry Moon

## Protest against militarization of space

**Los Angeles**—On May 19, Armed Forces Day, over 200 people demonstrated at the main gate to Vandenberg Air Force Base (the largest space command facility in the world, bordered by the Pacific Ocean and located 150 miles north of Los Angeles) to protest against the escalation of Star Wars/Missile Defense program. Star Wars includes defoliation planes and helicopter gunships as well as in Colombia; it also includes satellite surveillance and directing ground-based missiles with nuclear warheads.

Despite opposition, both within the U.S. and worldwide, the current Bush administration backed away from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty to pursue development of missile defense shield. The term missile defense shield is misleading: the madness in their logic is that its own first strike capability is protected from retaliatory missiles if the U.S. has an unending defense shield. Many scientists view it as unworkable. In the past, there have been experiments of launching missiles from Kwajalein, a coral atoll in the Marshall Islands 5,000 miles away and missiles launched from Vandenberg AFB attempting to intercept them. Many such tests have failed.

Demonstrators are protesting Star Wars/Missile

Defense Shield as leading to a new arms race, a new Cold War which escalates world tension. Most countries, including Russia and China, that are viewed as potential enemies, have voiced opposition. Escalating development of U.S. space command technology is to protect the interest of globalized capital investment, although other reasons are given, for example, the need for strong defense. Rumsfeld is pushing for the U.S. to develop high-tech military superiority over its capitalist competitors as well as over global forces of revolt in today's economic crises.

The protesters were facing Air Force security police in full Darth Vader riot gear, state and county police, helicopters, and a high pressure water hose truck. Over 20 protesters crossed over onto the base and proceeded to sit down in acts of civil disobedience. Each was approached by three police and a dog, handcuffed and arrested.

The demonstration resulted in local television coverage which showed protesters voicing their reason for opposition. Television also showed a few counter-demonstrators (family members of military personnel). Later in back country action, other protesters hung banners aimed at military personnel, some near high security zones. Some were caught and arrested.

—Basho

## Students say no to standardized testing

**Oakland, Cal.**—On May 7 dozens of students at Oakland High School, most of them Black and Latino, held a lunch hour rally protesting the annual statewide SAT9 examination, given in first through twelfth grade. If a school averages below a certain score, it receives no SAT9 money. Predictably, schools attended by low income students score lower than well-funded schools attended by students from high income families. In other words, the \$677 million in state funds will tend to go to already affluent schools. One Black student held up a giant mock check made out to "Wealthy Students" in the sum of \$677,000,000 and signed by "Low Income Students."

A teacher from an elementary school said many of his first and second grade Spanish-speaking students have come crying to him out of frustration during the three week ordeal. To him the tests, given in English only, are designed to measure not scholastic ability, but inequality within the system. A Latina Oakland

High student said that for 40% of kids in Oakland schools, English is a second language.

The rationale of SAT9 is that norm-referenced testing will show which schools are providing a proper education and therefore deserve more funding. The "carrot" is supposed to provide teachers with the incentive to do what they are paid to do. Protesters pointed out that SAT9 looks for superficial skills, not for evidence of quality education. Because of the test's overall impact on both the student body and faculty, and because of funding implications, educators spend a lot of time teaching the test instead of a regular curriculum.

I wondered what the letters SAT stood for. Some said it meant "student assessment test." Others said "standard achievement test" or "scholastic aptitude test." I think one student had it right. Her sign read: "Stupid Ass Test 9."

—David M.

## Michael Parenti, apologist for Stalinism

The following is excerpted from a flyer distributed to protest a recent appearance by writer Michael Parenti on San Francisco radio station KPFA's show *Flashpoints*. Parenti is author of *To Kill a Nation: The Attack on Yugoslavia*. The complete document is available from *Wild in the Streets*, 2140 Shattuck Ave. #2200, Berkeley, CA 94704.

Divorcing Marxism from freedom all too easily leads to lending support to tyrants who claim the label "socialist." In a letter to the *San Francisco Bay Guardian* (3/21/01), Michael Parenti claims a nostalgia for "the guaranteed income, free education, medical care and affordable housing" of the Milosevic era, and dismisses allegations of ethnic cleansing, rape camps and mass atrocities. He contends that only 70 bodies have been recovered from the supposed massacre of Srebrenica. This last contention openly conflicts with the report by the UN Commission on Human Rights on Srebrenica, issued 11/15/99, which provided pages and pages of evidence on the massacre, including an account by one Croat member of the Bosnian Serb Army, Drazen Erdemovic, whose unit by itself executed over 1,000 Muslim men and boys on the Pilica state farm. It is available on the Internet from the Commission's website, [www.unhchr.ch/](http://www.unhchr.ch/).

Milosevic started out as a major bank official. As Serbia's leader, he was the architect of savage austerity measures imposed upon working people, a policy which implemented the demands of the IMF and international capital. This led to violent protests by workers, including an attack on the Yugoslav parliament building in July 1988, and mass rioting in the streets of Belgrade in March 1991, as well as widespread strikes in which people from all ethnic backgrounds cooperated on the basis of class interests. The response of Milosevic, and other bureaucrats such as the leaders of Croatia and Bosnia, was to fan the flames of ethnic strife. The U.S. government initially supported Milosevic, on the basis of his willingness to enforce IMF policies, and only turned on him when his regime was deemed unstable.

Milosevic's rule led to mass protests within Yugoslavia in late '96-early '97, after he tried to overturn by force the results of opposition victories in local elections. He retreated, briefly, then resorted to escalating repression in Kosovo. In May 2000, his government suppressed what was left of independent media, including radio station B-92, the first station outside the U.S. to send a message of support to the KPFA staff during the July 1999 Pacifica occupation. Meanwhile, Parenti was on "Flashpoints," describing the Yugoslav opposition as a creature of the CIA. He likewise ignored the murder of several publishers of opposition newspapers.

Parenti consistently downplays the extent of Joseph Stalin's crimes. He recently claimed on KPFA that the number in the Gulags may have been as low as in the thousands. And he dismisses counts of victims in the millions, presented by the likes of Russian Marxist Roy Medvedev, as exaggerations and propaganda.

The politics and program of state capitalism and social democracy espoused by Parenti have already been tried, and proven disastrous, for both working people and the socialist movement. To succeed in getting rid of capitalism, a move necessary for both humanity and the planet, we must disavow this program and the wreckage left behind in its wake.

Get background on events in the Balkans by reading "Bosnia-Herzegovina: Achilles Heel of Western 'Civilization'" and "Kosovo: Writings from *News & Letters*, 1998-1999." See page 7 to order.

## 'The Quare Fellow'

**Chicago**—The play "The Quare Fellow" was shown to a full house, including *News & Letters* supporters and members, at Chicago's Chopin Theater on May 19. Written by Brendan Francis Behan (1923-1964), an Irish Republican Army member who went on to become a well-known playwright, "The Quare Fellow" is based on the 24 hours preceding an execution at the Mountjoy prison in Dublin, Ireland, where Behan was incarcerated in the middle of the last century.

The play was shown in the Chopin Theater's basement, a perfect location because of its dungeon-like look, imperfect echo and large steel door. The play starts with guards yelling out "bang out your doors!" at five minute intervals, preceded by the slamming of this large black sliding door. As a former prisoner, this noise put a chill down my spine.

The two dozen-strong troupe of actors who played the roles of prisoners, guards, and other prison officials were hard to hear and understand by the majority of the audience based on the acoustics and Irish accents. I and a few others were able to make out the dialog.

"The Quare Fellow," written a half century ago, communicated similarities with the prison of today with its dehumanizing system of punishment and control. It demonstrated through its perspectives both the prisoners' suffering and the abusive prison staff.

—D.A. Sheldon

## Our Life and Times

# Sharon brings conflict to boiling point

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

On June 1, as we were going to press, a suicide bomber from the Islamic fundamentalist Hamas movement killed 20 Israeli youths outside a disco in Tel Aviv. This terrorist attack stunned and horrified almost all Israelis and many on the Palestinian side as well. Even before this particular outrage, leading Islamic clerics in Egypt and Saudi Arabia had strongly condemned such attacks on innocent civilians as un-Islamic.

Hamas said that its attack was in response to how, on May 18, in a type of escalation unthinkable only weeks ago, General Ariel Sharon, the Israeli Prime Minister, used U.S.-supplied F-16 jet fighters to attack Nablus and Ramallah on the West Bank. These air attacks killed eleven and wounded many more.

Sharon, the butcher of Beirut, ordered the May 18 attacks on Palestinian police stations in retaliation for a terrorist attack the same day in which a lone Islamic fundamentalist had blown himself up at an Israeli shopping center, killing himself and five Israelis. It did not seem to matter to Sharon that there were no connections between the Nablus and Ramallah police and the suicide bombing.

On May 19, Arab League foreign ministers voted to sever all political contacts with Israel. This included

## Strikes in Greece

Two general strikes—April 26 and May 17—shut down Greece as thousands of workers protested the proposals of Socialist Prime Minister Costas Simitis to "reform" the state's pension system by reducing pension payouts and raising the retirement age for all people to 65.

The new plan requires an increase in workers' contributions and a cut in pension benefits by 15-20%. Since Greece joined the Euro-zone in January, Simitis has been under increased pressure to reduce public debt. Currently, the pension system expends 3.3% of Gross Domestic Product. Unions are demanding that state funds be used to bail out the pension funds, which are calculated to run out of money by 2005.

The unexpectedly broad support for the general strike against the proposed cutbacks has forced Simitis to table the initial pension plan. Instead, the socialist government has employed the tactic of asking for a "social dialogue" with unions and business representatives to reach a "consensus."

## Argentina protests

As Argentina's economy continues to founder from a three-year-long recession, protests against the policies of President Fernando de la Rúa have become a near-daily event. Unemployment has reached 15%, and an estimated one-quarter of Argentines—nine million people—live below the official poverty line.

Recent protesters have ranged from striking airline workers to beekeepers. In May, hundreds of children of unemployed parents rallied in Buenos Aires after a two-week-long march from northern Jujuy province.

In March, De la Rúa appointed Domingo Cavallo as new economy minister. Cavallo orchestrated Argentina's economic course in the early 1990s under the previous Menem government, which left millions jobless. The current government's policies are tied to maintaining a \$40 billion IMF support package to prop up the economy which now carries \$120 billion in debt. De la Rúa and Cavallo have introduced more public spending cuts.

Egypt and Jordan, the only two Arab countries that have signed peace treaties with Israel. The Israeli press was unanimously scathing in its coverage of Sharon's use of jet planes and even the U.S. government issued a mild rebuke.

These horrific actions have helped to raise the number of deaths since September to over 500, most of them Palestinian. Less remarked upon are the daily privations of the Israeli occupation, which severely limit Palestinian self-rule even in the territories they supposedly control. The frequent lockdowns and curfews routinely bar students from attending classes, workers from going to their jobs, and those in need from obtaining medical care.



Nawal Issa Ahmad and son, Abdullah, survived a harrowing birth at an Israeli checkpoint after being denied access to a hospital.

## Berbers march

Over 500,000 Berbers marched on May 20 against the military-backed government of Algeria and the killing of over 80 demonstrators during battles with state security forces which erupted at the end of April. The demonstrations began after April 18, when three students were jailed and beaten for allegedly "insulting" police during an official commemoration of the state's repression of the 1980 Berber uprising. One of the students subsequently died in police custody.

The Berbers are boycotting the official government investigation, ordered by President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, into the killing of protesters. They are demanding the release of protesters who were arrested, and the removal of state police from the region. Demonstrations continued through the end of May, organized by the recently-formed Coordination of Berber Committees which functions outside the established political parties. The Committees also launched a general strike in the region.

Berbers are the original inhabitants of north Africa. In Algeria, they fought prominently in the war to end French colonial rule. But since independence in 1962, Berbers have confronted a series of governments promoting the "Arab character" of the state and denying official recognition of the Berber minority's language and culture. While Algerian Berbers are Muslim, they also oppose the Islamic fundamentalists who have been warring with the military and murdering civilians since the 1992 military pre-election coup.

As the Israeli women's peace group Bat Shalom reported on May 16: "Nawal Issa Ahmad gave birth at an Israeli checkpoint southeast of Bethlehem near Um Al-Salumeh village after Israeli soldiers repeatedly refused to let her cross the checkpoint in order to go to the hospital. Ignoring her tears and pain the Israeli soldiers did not let her pass the checkpoint imposed at the village's entrance."

Inside Israel, some on the right call openly for a type of "ethnic cleansing" that would drive Palestinians across the border into Jordan. Others, like Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, spiritual leader of Shas, a rapidly growing Jewish fundamentalist party, state openly that the "Arabs" should be "annihilated."

On the Arab side, the low point was reached by Bashar Assad, Syria's new leader, who in the presence of a silent Pope John Paul II called for joint action by Christians and Muslims against the Jews, who, he claimed "assassinate all of the principles of all of the religions, in the same way that they betrayed Jesus and tried to kill the Prophet Mohammad" (*Le Monde* 5/9/01).

On the Palestinian side, few voices have condemned Assad, none of them officials of the Palestinian Authority. One exception is the writer Edward Said, better known for his denial of any difference between politicians like Sharon and those favoring compromise with the Palestinians, like the martyred Yitzhak Rabin. Recently, however, Said has begun to speak out against the rise of fundamentalism and anti-Semitism on the Arab side. In a May 23 statement circulated by the Open Tent Discussion Group <OpenTent@listbot.com>, Said wrote:

"I would have thought that better than denouncing Israel from top to bottom it would have been a smarter thing to cooperate with sectors inside the country who stand for civil and human rights, who oppose the settlement policy, who are ready to take a stand on military occupation, who believe in coexistence and equality, who are disgusted with official repression of the Palestinians.... I would also have thought that it is the better part of honesty to have dissociated oneself from the crude anti-Semitic attacks such as those emanating from Damascus recently: what do these do except display to the world a mind-set that is both sectarian and viciously stupid?"

## Rightist wins in Italy

In a tightly fought race in May, ultra-conservative Silvio Berlusconi became Italy's new prime minister. Berlusconi, whose fortune is estimated at \$12 billion, already owns Italy's three largest private TV networks, with a total audience share of 45%. Their news coverage was totally biased in favor of Berlusconi.

Despite this advantage and polls suggesting a landslide, a record turnout by working people made the race much closer than the pundits had predicted. Voters in large cities such as Rome, Turin, and Naples repudiated Berlusconi's coalition. One party allied with Berlusconi, the racist Northern League, saw its totals drop to under 5%, below that of the far Left.

Still, the election represents a sharp turn to the right that is sure to result in attempts to slash the wages and social benefits of working people. Recognizing this danger, some 65,000 metalworkers rallied for higher wages a few days after the election, also lambasting Berlusconi. In addition, intellectuals are discussing how to resist the new government, with the renowned writer Umberto Eco calling for a "moral crusade" against it.

## 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.