

NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

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50¢

WORKSHOP TALKS

Kaiser Tele-sweatshops

by Htun Lin

On May 17, the media exposed Kaiser HMO's now discontinued "pilot program" to reward employees with cash bonuses for keeping as few patients as possible from accessing services from Kaiser health professionals. Consumer advocates and nurses of the California Nurses Association (CNA) expressed outrage, calling this a "morbidity bonus."

Workers in SEIU Local 250 were rewarded with 2-5% of their pay for keeping at least half of incoming patient calls away from registered nurses or other health professionals. They were to keep medical appointments at between 15-35%. They were also told to average less than three minutes and 45 seconds on the phone per patient. This program lasted for two years from January 2000 to December 2001. In full Orwellian-speak, a Kaiser spokesman said, "The whole purpose was designed to help serve members better."

BY THE BOOK

Today the press is reporting a lot of shock and dismay from consumer advocates and CNA representatives. However, none of this current press attention has gotten the view of the workers who are put in these horrible positions. This was the focus of a report in *News & Letters* back in December 1999 just when the Call-Centers were set up and before the bonus program even went into effect. Or, as we reported then:

"The patient's first encounter with Kaiser health care is a canned answer from a training manual. One Call-Center employee said, 'If we don't follow the manual to the letter, we're punished. If we go by the book and something goes wrong we're still punished!'"

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BLACK/RED VIEW

Brokering reparations?

by John Alan

Recently the California Department of Insurance went back into its old files on insurance companies and released to the public the names of the African-American slaves who were insured by their white masters during the slave era. These old documents have given a tremendous boost to those who are now demanding reparations for slavery.

WEALTH BORN OF SLAVERY

Rev. Jesse Jackson declared that this business relationship between slave owners and insurance companies shows that reparations from private businesses is warranted. California's Governor Gray Davis said, "Clearly, we want to right any wrongs and do justice to people who were taken advantage of, if that's the case..." In California, Davis said, this also includes Chinese and Mexican Americans. Rev. Jackson agreed and said "the Chinese Americans came to America on the same slave ship with African Americans." Obviously he meant that only metaphorically.

Rev. Jackson's metaphor is inappropriate here, since it hides a crucial historic difference between the aim of the labor performed by African-American slaves and the harsh exploitation of the "free" Chinese labor in post Civil War California. African-American slave laborers in the South were primarily engaged in producing commodities for the world market, such as cotton, tobacco, rice and sugar. The slaveholders, the owners of those great plantations on which slaves labored knew, from the beginning, that the origin of their wealth and its accumulation were primarily due to slaves.

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ON THE INSIDE

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Struggles in the Philippines face U.S. troops, repression

by R. Russell

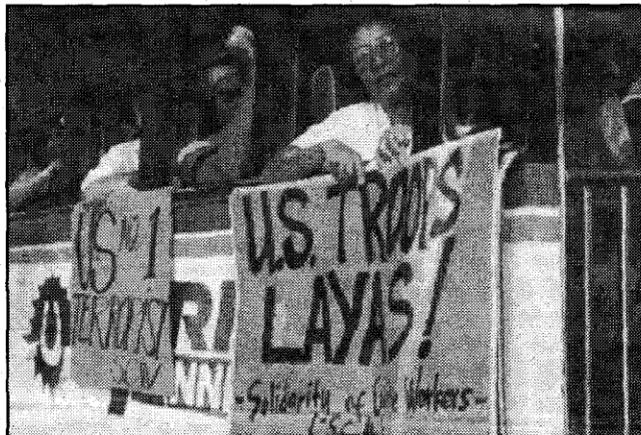
Manila, Philippines—In the early days of the Philippines summer, the year-old administration of Gloria Macapagal Arroyo was forced to reverse its edict that would have switched the May 1 workers holiday to April 29. Arroyo was convinced by a very credible threat of a *welgang bayan* (general strike) if she had not backed down. Her government's excuse for trying to water down the historic holiday was to create a three-day weekend in order to increase tourism from Manila to the provinces.

The revolutionary women's group Gabriela, along with Bayan which represents an important section of the above-ground Left, then organized the real May 1 rally at the presidential Malacanang Palace. This was achieved under difficult and dangerous circumstances. Massive security preparations were justified by Arroyo's government by citing terrorist threats and its response to last year's rally.

At that earlier rally, forces backing deposed president Joseph Estrada stormed Malacanang. He had been charged with plundering the Philippine people and was overthrown in People Power II, which brought Arroyo to power. The ensuing violence and deaths nearly succeeded in drowning out the voices of workers and supporters who had planned the May Day rally at Malacanang to mark the resurgence of labor militancy.

It was to begin a new stage after a several years of setbacks due to plant closings and movement of jobs to even lower-wage countries, union-busting, and the intensifying pressures on Filipino workers to move abroad. According to activist organizations who track it, there are currently 7.5 million Filipinos working overseas, including Japan, Hong Kong, the Middle East and the U.S. Their remittances back home constitute the Philippines's second largest source of foreign exchange.

In response to the Arroyo government's attempt to change the date of the international workers day, Gabriela's Manila secretary general Emmi de Jesus, quoted in the *Philippine Star*, pointed out that May 1 commemorates the general strike by thousands of workers in Chicago in 1886 to push for an eight-hour work day. She declared, "Clearly she [Arroyo] does not respect



Protester in Manila against *balikatan*, a collaboration in counter-revolution between the U.S. and the Philippines.

the historical value of the militancy of workers not only in the Philippines but also in the international arena. The fact is she is totally alienated from the working class."

These events unfolded during our discussions the Philippines with human rights, women and labor activists. During our visit the U.S.-led *balikatan* (shoulder-to-shoulder) military exercises were in their fifth month. During that time, the bloody fist of the armed forces came down hard in the provinces.

DEEPENING RELATIONSHIPS

In an atrocity reported in the back pages of the Manila dailies, Benjaline Hernandez, Vivian Andrade, Crisanto Amora and Labaon Sinunday were executed by the armed forces, shot in the face at point-blank range. Hernandez was the 22-year-old Davao, Mindanao leader of the well-known human rights alliance, Karapatan. When attacked, she was meeting with her three companions, community residents in the Arakan valley region of Mindanao, following up on a massacre of indigenous people in the same area a year earlier. Ms.

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WE NEED YOUR HELP TO CONTINUE!

The permanent militarism George W. Bush imposed within the first year of his stolen presidency was not only a permanent war against any he and John Ashcroft designated as the "enemy" but first and foremost against the forces for freedom right here at home. Since September 11, he has made quick use of that terrorist attack to push through his reactionary agenda at home, at the same time that he has sought to assure the counter-revolutionary dominance of U.S. imperialism over the entire world. This has helped to stoke the move to the Right which has become more and more evident in recent months, whether the shocking election in France that moved the anti-Semite and neo-fascist Le Pen to second place in the first round, or Ariel Sharon's attacks on the Palestinian people.

Everywhere the rulers have been using September 11 to try to divert attention from the economic stagnation that is truly global and the racist, sexist, exploitative conditions ordinary people are suffering everywhere. It is not that the forces for freedom have not been letting known their opposition to these horrors of capitalism everywhere. Their voices are heard in every issue of *News & Letters*.

You heard them in the May issue raised by the thousands of youth who marched in Washington, D.C. against Bush's wars at home and abroad, the World Bank and globalization, and against the attacks on the Palestinian people. You can hear them raised in this issue by welfare mothers fighting the new attacks on women in poverty, by the Immokalee laborers battling Taco Bell, by Black firefighters demanding the end of racist hiring. And in every issue you will hear the growing voices of prisoners demanding an end to the "criminal INjustice system."

Never was it more important not to separate these voices of protest from the articulation of a philosophy of revolution which you find in every issue of *N&L*. What makes that more crucial this year is the need for a total view that does not allow separating the question of what you are for from what you are against.

What has distinguished *N&L* and Marxist-Humanism this year has been our refusal to separate the fight against Christian fundamentalism and Bush's wars at home and abroad from the struggle against terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism—and aligning firmly, instead, with the forces fighting both. It is why we have made available to anyone who sends for it our statement on, "Confronting Permanent War and Terrorism: Why the Anti-War Movement Needs a Dialectical Perspective." In the July issue you will read our Draft for Perspectives for concretizing this further in the year ahead.

But we cannot do it without your help to keep *News & Letters* going! As we have done every year since we began in 1955, we must once again turn to you, our readers, to help us meet the ever-rising costs for our office rent and the printing of *N&L*. The new postage increases that begin at the end of June will be a special blow to us this year! We also plan to issue a new edition of *American Civilization on Trial*. This fundamental work that places the revolutionary Black dimension as vanguard for the creation of a new society based on human foundations is now almost out of print. That printing bill alone will come to well over \$5,000.

**NEVER WAS YOUR HELP MORE NEEDED!
PLEASE GIVE AS GENEROUSLY AS YOU CAN
TO HELP KEEP US ALIVE!**

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Bush's welfare bill disaster for women

by Terry Moon

Bush's retrogressive, punitive welfare legislation reveals what it means to have the Christian reactionary Right in the White House. Bush is attacking not only poor women, but the very idea that women and workers have a right to self-determination and freedom.

It is the revolt of women and workers that Bush is trying to crush with his ideologically driven welfare bill that has no basis in science or facts. It also has transformed the whole welfare debate. Work—and here we are talking of the most alienating, low-wage, no-status, drudge work available in the U.S.—is so much a given that even the Left calls only for a decent job, while the Democrats—thinking only of the next election—dicker over 30 hours per week vs. 40, and more, but not enough, money for childcare.

What you won't hear from the pusillanimous Democrats is that everything Bush, et al, say is a lie, especially the insistent Republican chant that the Democrats were wrong then in their predictions that the 1996 law would be a disaster to women and children. And they're wrong now.

REALITY OF WOMEN'S LIVES

There is plenty of science on the effects of Clinton's 1996 bill that gutted welfare that show that it was "a disaster":

- Those who first left welfare after the 1996 bill took effect were not, as is widely believed, only the most able, but also those with the most problems—health, mental illness, and so on. They are neither working nor on welfare; lost to the system, many may have died or become homeless.

- Most who left welfare for work cycled in and out of low-wage jobs, leaving families below the federal poverty level. Half the former recipients in some states said they were unable to buy food, pay rent or utility bills.

- One in ten former recipients had been evicted or become homeless.

- A three-state study, focusing on mothers with young children, found that parenting skills did not improve; that mothers were just as likely to be depressed as they were before being pushed into jobs; that they spent less time with their children.

Given this reality, Bush's assertion that his plan is "a pathway to independence," and that "too many Americans still have not found work and the purpose it brings," reeks of mendacity. Bush's plan—as are all his plans—is to attack the working class as a whole, and help his capitalist and right-wing religious fundamentalist friends. Women forced off welfare are required to take jobs that capitalists cannot farm out to super-exploited workers in Third World countries.

Typical is a county in Greenwood, Miss., where the unemployment rate is 10%. To fulfill requirements, some welfare moms take vans at 3 a.m. to jobs in chicken processing plants three or four hours away, where

Ex-prison moms rally

Chicago—Chicago Legal Advocacy for Incarcerated Mothers (CLAIM) held their annual Mothers' Day rally on May 10 to demand alternatives to incarceration for mothers. They are calling for community sentencing which would help moms and their children stay together. Currently over 80% of incarcerated women in Illinois are mothers, 50% with children under five years old.

Many women in the crowd had been incarcerated. They held signs that read: "Mothers missing their kids," and "When you lock me up, you lock up my children." One woman spoke about being "sentenced" to ten years in abusive foster care after her mother was sent to prison. She said that the effects of that trauma remain with her in her adult life.

The conditions of life, inside and outside (if there is such a thing for Black Americans) the criminal justice system are tied together in a hideous way. Fifty-four percent of women at Cook County Jail were homeless at the time of arrest.

When these moms are lucky enough to find someone to care for their children before they lose custody of them to the state, many can't afford to care for their children once they are released due to punitive laws which bar welfare payments to those who have been convicted of crimes.

Diana Delgado of CLAIM is a survivor of domestic violence, a former addict and was separated from her children while incarcerated. Her daughter was born in jail. Diana said to the rally that a good drug treatment program "saved my life and the lives of my children." She said her family is still in need of long-term therapy because they never developed the bond they could have had due to incarceration. The rally ended with chants of "Rehabilitation, not incarceration!"

"Mothers in Prison, Children in Crisis" was not just the theme of the rally, but is now a congressionally recognized day after the Illinois House passed HB 1961 in support of treatment alternatives to incarceration. (Apparently for every dollar spent in drug treatment another \$7 is saved in "societal and medical costs.") The bill is now currently in the Illinois Senate. The women's demands to save their lives and families in the face of a genocidal attack go beyond Congress's narrow vision of saving the almighty dollar.

WOMAN AS REASON

they earn about \$6 an hour. The pay is so low that they still get welfare. But the real welfare is going to the poultry plants. Bush's policy has supplied them with women to whom they pay starvation wages, while the state pays for the van, a \$5-a-day lunch, and a \$3,000 bonus for two years slave labor.

MONEY FOR THE FANATICS

Bush's religious fanatics get \$300 million to push marriage on welfare women, and a raise of federal spending on "abstinence only" education by \$33 million. Even U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher argued that "the only proven method for reducing pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease is to combine the abstinence message with one that teaches young people how to protect themselves."

Two-parent families look good for children because two incomes mean less poverty. Raising the minimum wage to a livable wage would do more than any of Bush's gifts to his capital-

ist friends to raise women and their children out of poverty. What Bush and his marriage-happy (except if that marriage is between those of the same sex) extremist friends ignore is the growing body of science that shows that poor women, and women on welfare, suffer much more abuse than wealthier women, with a rate of violence 3.5 times higher than those with incomes above \$40,000. For many women, leaving an abusive relationship was the true "pathway to independence." Bush, with his Promise Keepers mentality, would like to bar this escape route for the country's poorest women.

A measure of how far back Clinton's, and now Bush's, welfare bills have taken us is seen when we look at the highpoint of the movement for welfare rights as revealed in the demands of the National Welfare Rights Organization (NWRO) in the early 1970s. These Black and white women on welfare demanded a living wage for all Americans and they established that taking care of children was an honorable profession, one that should be respected and supported by the state.

Rather than take that as our beginning, today the movement is fighting on Bush's ground: trying to negotiate shorter work requirements or more daycare and training. But what NWRO revealed is that the struggle of women on welfare is about what it means to be human and the desire for self-development and a new human world. The stakes are that high. That is why the struggle must continue.

WOMEN WORLDWIDE

by Mary Jo Grey

Finally the government of Nepal has passed two bills: 1) allowing women to inherit parental property, and 2) permitting abortions during the first 12 weeks with the consent of her husband, when a woman's health is in danger, and in cases of rape, incest, and fetal impairment. While welcoming these reforms, women's groups said the struggle for women's rights must continue. But, in the Bahamas voters rejected two referendums: 1) protecting women against job discrimination, and 2) denying citizenship to the children and foreign husbands of Bahamian women (while it is granted to the families of Bahamian men).

—Information from *We! Isis International*

Arsonists burned to the ground the home of a University of Montana professor days after she filed a lawsuit seeking health insurance for the same-sex partners of university employees. Carla Grayson, her partner, Adrienne Neff and their 22-month-old son awoke to flames and escaped through a window. Two days after she filed the lawsuit, she received an anonymous, powder-filled letter in the mail that read "die dyke."

The horrific practice of "honor killing" has taken the life of yet another courageous young woman—a Kurd who had moved with her family from Turkey to Sweden. After a lifetime of physical abuse by her father and brother, and four years of death threats when she fell in love with a Swedish man, 26-year-old Fadime Sahindal waged a public fight against conditions faced by young Kurdish women. She was shot in the head by her father and died in her mother's arms. Foreign groups in Sweden are now speaking out against patriarchal cultures that allow such barbarism.

A safe sex advice booth at a pre-prom fair at Alhambra High School in Martinez, Cal., drew protests from parents who called it "inappropriate." The county health services department that sponsored the booth said it was meant to "encourage thoughtful, careful decision-making." Tessa Rangel, junior class vice president, maintained "sex is nothing new to teens and if they make that choice, they might as well do it right."

A Melbourne, Australia Supreme Court jury, in April, convicted Peter Knight of murdering a security guard at an abortion clinic in Australia's first abortion-related killing. The guard and two other men struggled to disarm Knight when he entered the clinic with a rifle, ammunition and kerosene and pointed his gun at a pregnant woman.

RAWA demonstration



The Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan rallied in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, in April, to protest the Northern Alliance taking power in Afghanistan. RAWA condemned them for "a reign of terror, rape, looting and destruction" after elements of today's Northern Alliance took power in 1992.

Anti-war women abused by military families

North Carolina—As the U.S. continues to be plunged into a state of permanent war, a surprising group of women are daring to raise their voices in protest: the wives, girlfriends, daughters and sisters of military families in the Southeast. Many are paying a heavy price.

There has been an increase in the number of women being seen by a women's shelter here that have been beaten and threatened by their families for daring to speak out against the war in Afghanistan, and the idea of war itself.

"I was raised in a military family, and it never occurred to me to question the authority of it all," said a young woman whose boyfriend is in Afghanistan. "But on September 11 when the U.S. got bombed, I saw for the first time the suffering and horror that is inflicted. That changed me forever and I told my boyfriend I felt war is wrong." She continued to write to him about her growing feelings against the war.

One day she was surprised to find two of his friends at her door. They were there, they said, to talk to her about her lack of patriotism. What followed was an hour long beating during which she was insulted and sexually assaulted.

Another woman, married to a man in the upper ranks of the military, was physically assaulted for expressing her new views when other people were around. She also says September 11 changed her. "I have supported my husband in all his military endeavors.

Everything he has been involved in up to this point seemed to have a higher purpose. But now, after September 11, it should have been up to us, as Americans, to set an example for the rest of the world. I now understand fighting violence with more violence is not the way."

—Suzanne Rose

Pat's fascist friends

Memphis, Tenn.—*Church & State* magazine, published by Americans United for Separation of Church and State, is a wake-up call for those who think the religious Right is merely a highly opinionated celebration of Christianity. A recent issue reveals that Pat Robertson is in business with Charles Taylor, the dictator of Liberia, who is internationally criticized for his brutality. Taylor's military and police have been accused of torture, amputations and assassinations, but Robertson has joined him in a gold-mining business called Freedom Gold.

Robertson also helped organize and promote the "Liberia for Jesus" rally led by Taylor, in which Taylor told the crowd that Liberia was a nation under Jesus, even though it is only 35% Christian. Taylor has been known to kill people taking sanctuary in churches, and it is thought that the rally was an attempt to weaken support of a mostly Muslim armed opposition movement, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy.

In spite of this anti-Muslim stance, Taylor's Revolutionary United Front has sold diamonds from Sierra Leone to Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda network, which sold the diamonds in Europe and used the funds to operate in the Liberian capital of Monrovia since 1998.

Robertson recently dropped his supposedly religious stances against abortion and "moral relativism" when he stated that China had to have a forced abortion policy in order to curb overpopulation. The fact that he can hold this position when he doesn't mind women suffering and even dying when abortion is unavailable in the U.S. could be due to the fact that he aspires to be a major internet provider to China.

Robertson also attempted to reopen the Powerine oil refinery in Santa Fe Springs, Cal. This was blocked by a state judge who ordered the refinery not to reopen unless pollution-control equipment was installed. Residents of the area, who remembered the smoke that caused paint to peel off their cars when the refinery was previously operating, marched in protest of Robertson, dragging an effigy of him as a devil.

—Adele

—Sonia Bergonzi

Payback time for Black firefighters

Chicago—In April, Chicago Firefighters Union Local 2 elected James E. McNally as president with 62% of the vote. McNally was notorious for going around the station house and on fire calls in blackface to show his disgust with affirmative action programs in the Chicago Fire Department. He was also one of those white firefighters who were videotaped at an infamous racist fire-house party. Both the African-American Firefighters League of Chicago and the African-American Firefighter and Paramedic Support Group are asking the removal of McNally and elimination of automatic dues collecting by Local 2.

In 1980, firefighters had gone out on strike for 22 days, during which 22 lives were lost. Mayor Jane Byrne sought out the African-American Firefighters League of Chicago mem-

bers to cross the picket lines. They did not!

Firefighters Union Local 2, they did how much they appreciated the African-American Firefighters League



Black firefighters rally May 10 against decades of racist practices in hiring and advancement in the Chicago Fire Department.

of Chicago members for not crossing the picket lines, obtained Appendix G in the Contract. Appendix G contained the goal that the Fire Department force be approximately 30% Black and 15% Hispanic, and to that end, at least 45% of recruits should be Black and Hispanic.

Both African-American firefighter groups want African-American applicants to be allowed to go to the Fire Academy. Of 6,855 African Americans who passed the July 1995 Firefighter Entrance Exam, the first exam in ten years because of bias from beginning to end of the examination booklets, only 87 have been hired among 1,085 total hires as of February 2001. Of three women hired, all relatives of current or retired Fire Department personnel, none were African American.

The City of Chicago has admitted in federal court that it has continuously and historically discriminated against African Americans since the inception of the Chicago Fire Department. We African-American firefighters and applicants need serious help.

—George Wilfrid Smith Jr.

News & Letters

WORKSHOP TALKS

(Continued from Page 1)

The real shock is that this effort to make money by denying care came out of a "strategic partnership" initiated by AFL-CIO President John Sweeney. Again, as we reported in 1999: "This is part of Kaiser's restructuring plan that the AFL-CIO enthusiastically embraced in their 'strategic partnership.' Local 250 SEIU is really proud of having these new union positions boosting their regular dues income. They are touting a recent 'understanding' between Kaiser and the union that supposedly promises no layoffs."

"Many downsized employees end up in the new Call-Centers, and many are now desperately scrambling to get out. As one employee said, 'I've never been in a sweatshop before, but this sure feels like one. You have to get permission to go to the bathroom. Your bathroom breaks are timed. They're always monitoring your phone conversations to make sure you adhere to the manual. They treat you like a computer which is not supposed to think.'"

WORKERS OPPOSED

While state HMO investigators are now looking into this scandal, we workers were opposed to this Call-Center scheme from its inception, with or without the bonus, because we reject being treated like machines. We are fundamentally opposed to the whole concept of managed care's restructuring.

When our own union officials embraced that restructuring, they in essence adopted the same attitude that management has toward us service workers. Consumer advocates also fall into this trap by endorsing management's separation between the professionals as the designated mental workers and us service workers who are expendable.

Marx's vision was that a new human society would eliminate the whole separation between mental and manual labor. Overcoming that separation would mean that health care is an important end in itself, not a corollary expense to capital's expansion.

Capital is happy to pay its workers bonuses to keep patient-consumers away when the product is health-care, human well-being. When the product is a thing, the same army of telephone workers hired as automatons to animate a computer script (as in telemarketers) are given incentives to cajole consumers into purchasing that product whether they need it or not. Both methods accomplish the same goal—to enhance capital's bottom line and self-expansion.

FRAGMENTING CARE

Capital puts itself in the middle between the patient and the health care worker, fragmenting the natural human activity of caring for another. Even the U.S. government under Bush has aggressively expanded their role as HMO gatekeepers when it comes to Medicare. The government deliberately underpays providers who increasingly are refusing to care for Medicare patients. They are raiding this largest pool of health care resources in order to reward the richest one percent with a permanent tax cut.

Contrary to HMO consumer advocates, the government is not the solution to overcoming capitalist greed in the health care industry. Nothing will change until workers themselves have control. The problems faced by health care consumers will be solved only when we overcome labor's alienation as reflected in the fundamental separation between mental and manual labor.

Velsicol is poison to workers, community

Memphis, Tenn.—Velsicol, the huge chemical company built in the middle of one of Memphis' oldest Black communities, is in trouble. The community is already angry over Velsicol's decision to seek renewal of a permit to operate a hazardous waste incinerator (see April *N&L*). Now, it turns out that Velsicol's own study reveals that their decades of dumping have left the eight-mile-long Cypress Creek, which runs through some of the most densely populated parts of Memphis, dangerously polluted.

This came out at a Velsicol-called public hearing last month, attended by over 80 community people. While Velsicol's slick brochure stressed that studies "did not indicate any imminent risk," on the last page they admitted: "Chemical residue levels of organochlorine pesticides, such as dieldrin and endrin...exceeded EPA target levels for long term exposure."

It took leaders of the Volintine Evergreen Community Association (VECA) to fill out what "such as" really means: aldrin, chlordane, heptachlor, and heptachlor epoxide. VECA warns, "The EPA ranks all these chemicals in the top 10% of most toxic chemicals for human health." But it was from their own lives that community people spoke of the hazardous effects of living and working by Velsicol and Cypress Creek.

The first speaker was a Black worker who had inhaled chlorine gas at the plant and almost died. He explained, "Velsicol denied that it ever happened. I was denied worker's compensation and long-term disability, and my life was basically destroyed because of this company. What about the people who breathe all

this junk that these companies pollute?" Looking the Velsicol spokesman in the eye, he continued, "You people don't care about this community. I'm a living witness to that."

A hazardous waste incinerator demanded that Velsicol tell the audience what dioxin does to people. Not only did they stonewall that question, they said they wouldn't discuss the incinerator, as if people don't both breathe and walk, play and dig in the earth.

Soon people raised the demand that an independent health study, paid for by Velsicol but with community control, be done—not on the known effects of chemicals, but on the people! Women spoke of deaths in their families, of their neighbors, in the community.

The last speaker summed up feelings at the meeting: "I've heard some things that just don't add up. I heard the toxicologist talk about how you look at a residential area for 30 years of exposure, or a recreational area for 15 years, and then I hear you say that you don't have enough data to determine how much people were exposed to. I was stunned to hear the statement from the Vice President that 'We didn't know about [the hot spots of illnesses] before.' I've seen people from this community appeal, I heard it on TV, I saw it in *The Commercial Appeal*, I heard it on people talking about it at the open house Velsicol had in January."

The stonewalling by Velsicol was stunning, prompting a Black resident to say, "This is a room full of experts. When we ask these questions, somebody should get up and say something besides 'I don't know.'"

—Marxist-Humanist participant

Hidden history of the revolutionary Atlantic

The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic, Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, 2000, Beacon Press, Boston.

Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker portray uprisings, refusals, and revolts by workers opposing early capitalism in the 17th and 18th century Atlantic economy. The authors perform a great service to all radicals by supplying us accounts of our forebears in resistance in their own words.

The book takes its title from metaphors in 17th century ruling class discussions. Hercules embodied the ruling classes' struggle to stamp out revolt and mold proletarians into the class discipline demanded by capital. The Hydra embodied all that the ruling classes feared—and still fear—about the proletariat.

The Hydra was a mythical many-headed snake who would grow two new heads whenever one head was cut off. Similarly, working class struggles have arisen again and again at new points and with new methods of attack, despite capital's attacks on workers' power. The Hydra metaphor is particularly apt for contemporary class struggle and the multiple "heads" of the global working class.

Fear of workers' power haunts the ruling class today, knowing as they do that workers "do not forget, and... are ever ready from Africa to the Caribbean to Seattle to resist slavery and restore the Commons." Capitalists can't cut off all the heads of the proletarian Hydra, since capital requires the value produced by our labor. This dependence forces capital to find new methods to contain us in the capital relation and suppress proletarians who would "turn the world upside down."

Hydra details how the labor of sailors was crucial for maritime production, and that ships and ports were a

tool for both capital accumulation and proletarian resistance. Sailors faced harsh and deadly class discipline, vicious corporal and capital punishments, lethal working conditions and lack of provisions. Simultaneously, sailors mixed between cultures, learned new languages, and spread knowledge and practitioners of insurrection among the sailors, slaves, soldiers, servants, and workers of the Atlantic economy.

A widespread form of rebellion against the brutality of early capitalism was piracy. Pirates enjoyed a much more egalitarian and democratic life than slaves, servants, or sailors. Sailors aboard merchant ships frequently mutinied when pirates attacked, joining them. A number of women became pirates, escaping the narrow range of options within capitalist patriarchy in favor of the more self-determining piratical life.

Pirates preyed upon seafaring commerce, disrupting the trade in goods, slaves, and servants, thereby threatening the accumulation of Atlantic capital. The threat of the maritime made pirates' flotillas of resistance particularly dangerous to capitalism.

Every time capital broke up a slave rebellion or put down a mutiny, some of the rebels were killed to make an example, while the rest were dispersed, to new places in the transatlantic economy, where they often linked up with others conspiring to end capital's rule.

Our resistance forces capital to continually modify itself to survive. In a sense, the ruling class deludes itself, it is no Hercules but Proteus, shifting shape to dodge the blows of our resistance and retain its hold.

Hydra's most inspiring passages present cycles of struggle largely unknown today that resisted capitalism's foreclosure and foreshortening of human possibility. These cycles remind us that, despite capital's oppression, "the volatile, serpentine tradition" of proletarian resistance lives on.

—Nate Holdren

From the Writings of Raya Dunayevskaya MARXIST-HUMANIST ARCHIVES

Editor's Note

Raya Dunayevskaya travelled to West Europe in 1959, seeking new international relationships with groups that rejected both poles of state-capitalism, the U.S. and Russia. In preparation for the trip and an international conference in Milan, Italy, she penned a draft resolution in June 1958, titled "World Outlook." In it she discussed the philosophic grounding needed for working out an alternative to the concept of the vanguard party. Details of the trip can be found in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection* and in *25 Years of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S.* The resolution, excerpted here, is in the collection, beginning at page 2625. The headline, notes, and bracket material were added by the editors.

There can be no genuine unification of theory and practice in the tradition of Marxism unless we face boldly 1) the utter bankruptcy of thought of the existing vanguard parties, 2) the spontaneity and maturity of the revolutionary movement from practice toward not only theory, but a new society, and realize 3) that neither the constant repetition of the need of a vanguard party nor the *in toto* rejection of that concept will answer the need of our epoch, which is nothing short of a new unity of theory and practice based on the movement from practice. An indispensable prerequisite of that is the theoreticians' acceptance of their responsibilities.

A constantly changing concept of vanguard, based on the relationship of the masses to the party, and the party to where the masses stood, is the essence of Leninism. The 1905 Revolution changed Lenin's 1902-3 concept of vanguard. Again on the eve of October 1917, he threatened to go to the sailors and resign from the [Bolshevik] Political Committee because the masses were more revolutionary than the party. Once again in the last years of his life he pointed to the need of "the non-party masses checking the party."

The repetition of the "need of a vanguard" did not turn the Fourth International into a mass movement that led the revolutions following World War II. On the contrary, they have ended as a tail-end to Stalinism. But neither did the rejection of "the party to lead" become a theoretical focal point for revolutionary regroupment or even do away with the total isolation of these groupings from the mass movement. It is time to draw a balance sheet on the basis of the actual world situation....

Responsibilities of Theoretical Groupings

Any analysis of the objective situation, even one as cursory as ours, cannot fail to meet the challenge to re-examine its own foundations, principles and perspectives in the light of the objective situation. There is nothing new in the betrayal of the Communists and the Socialists, nor in the inadequacies and tailendism of the Trotskyists. We must finally come to a confrontation between the demands of the objective situation and the realities of the small groupings like ourselves who have broken with all those who go under the banner of Marxism — not alone Communism but also Trotskyism — but have nevertheless failed to become a focal point for revolutionary regroupment.

This may be our first attempt for international contact and may be limited to information and distribution of each other's views. Yet we cannot begin any sort of new collaboration, no matter how limited, without facing the reality of the past ten years, or at least the seven years since the final break with Trotskyism¹. The impelling motive for such a re-examination is precisely the objective situation: 1) the coming of De Gaulle to power [in France in 1958] shows the barbarous offensive which the bourgeoisie feels free to embark [upon] when it sees the impotence of the established workers' parties; 2) the Marxist opposition to these established parties cannot constantly limit itself to criticizing others; it must answer why the state capitalist tendency the world over² has itself not become a greater force either theoretically or in the class struggle.

As with all Marxist analysis, we must begin with production and the specific stage of workers' revolt. The new stage, technologically, began with Automation and the 1949-50 [U.S. coal] miners' strike. Since the work-



Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today

"Dunayevskaya... has the capacity, rare in people as learned as she is in Western philosophy and theory-including Marxists-to respect and learn from other kinds of thinking and other modes of expression..."

— Adrienne Rich, The Women's Review of Books

To order 2001 Humanity Books edition, see page 7.

Toward a new concept of organization

ers themselves had moved the question of labor productivity from the question of fruits of labor — wages — to the kind of labor, this demanded a re-examination of our philosophic foundation.

Three years later the tocsin sounded for the beginning of the end of Russian totalitarianism. The East German Revolution [of 1953] which was followed by a revolt in the slave labor camps of Vorkuta within Russia itself shook the whole theory of the alleged invincibility of state capitalism to its foundations. Yet *Correspondence*³, which began on the basis of state capitalism and workers' revolt and considered its very manner of writing, editing and publishing this workers' organ a blow to bureaucracy "as such," fell apart when the war clouds over Formosa [Taiwan] led the American bourgeoisie in its McCarthy-induced hysteria to make its listing.⁴

Even before then, the truth is that with the break of Yugoslavia from Moscow [1948] and the emergence of Mao's China [1949], the state capitalist theory had come to a standstill, limiting itself merely to summarizing and repeating what had been said. The only thing new that we added was that philosophy should become integral. How could it achieve this transformation if the grand result of all the "oughts" was that philosophy cannot any longer answer these philosophical problems — only the proletariat can? This is one of those truths that has always been used by theoreticians to avoid and evade their specific responsibilities. Of course only the class struggle will give the final answer; the point is what is your responsibility as a grouping that functions and supposedly has a *raison d'être* whether the class struggle is out in the open or is quiescent.

Lenin has left the indispensable measuring rod for the Marxist theoretician in the method by which he met the challenge of the collapse of the Second International. The re-examination of the philosophic foundations meant that from then on dialectics was not "philosophy" but the essence of politics. Still 1915 allowed him to keep his *Philosophic Notebooks* to himself. We can no longer do so. Where, in 1915, the core of the dialectics was the unity of opposites, to us, in 1958, the core of the dialectic is nothing short of a materialist reading of the Absolute Idea, or the unity of theory and practice based on the movement from practice. The responsibility of the theoreticians must begin precisely here, and must be stated openly.

The idealist features of the Absolute Idea are quite secondary to the logic which historically impelled Hegel to return from nature, or practice, to mind, or theory. Whether or not this is also evident in Hegel's own works which, though restricted to thought, have as their constant points of reference the development of humanity itself as a development of stages of freedom from Greek society to the French Revolution, is not the issue. The crucial point is that it is our contemporary world, our own age of absolutes, where revolution and counter-revolution are so interlocked, that has compelled the Absolute Idea to emerge out of its abstract context and come into head-on collision with the concept of the vanguard party.

The concept of "the party to lead" has become a pillow for intellectual sloth, the actual stumbling block to a unification of theory and practice on new foundations. At the same time the opposite side of the same coin is the concept of those who reject the concept of the vanguard party *in toto* for it [that rejection] then has become an evasion of their tasks, their role, their responsibilities, their relationship to the mass movement. Where the impotence of Trotskyism is not alone in the lack of a mass following but in their concept "to lead," to plan "for" the workers, to substitute themselves for the capitalist class and rule in a state capitalist manner, the isolation of the opponents of vanguardism from the mass movement has contributed to the apparent apathy of the French masses. The appeal for Workers Councils can be as "sloganned" as any minimum program when it appears suddenly out of thin air, with no theoretical preparation.

It is an evasion of responsibility and perspective to think that the mass movement alone must give all the answers. A new epoch opened with World War II and the failure of fascism's attempt to centralize the European economy in preparation for world conquest. The new

protagonists — U.S. and Russia — for world power have now "advanced" to the point where civilization itself is within the orbit of an ICBM. Our age must therefore answer with as challenging a theoretical unfolding of perspectives as was the case with Marx in 1843, 1864 and 1871 and with Lenin in 1914 and 1917.⁵ But it must be for our age. The maturity of our age demands the totality of the Marxist Humanist approach and forbids leaving the philosophy as the province of the theoretician.

A materialist reading of Hegel's Absolute Knowledge took one form in Marx's time — the general absolute law of capitalist development in the unemployed army, and its opposite, the new passions and forces for a new society. That is to say, the dialectic of bourgeois society was concrete, while the elements of the new society present in the old were, of necessity, general.

The dialectic took another form in Lenin's time where the objective world connections and transformation into opposite were the predominant features of the world of World War I. The new transformation into opposite of the workers' state itself had barely begun, much less been consummated by January 1924 when Lenin died. Hence, the outstanding feature seemed to be "merely"

the emergence of a new rude personality called Stalin who had a passion for bossing and who should be removed from power.

Because Trotskyism went no further than that when state capitalism had already developed, it has inevitably degenerated where it is nothing but a left cover for Communism (Stalinism first and Khrushchevism now).⁵

A new point of departure is in the ever deeper strata of the proletariat from America that has raised the alienation of labor in a more concrete form than ever could have been in Marx's time. A new point of departure is the Hungarian Revolution [in 1956] where the freedom fighters did not separate politics from economics. A new point of departure in theory cannot fall short of this challenge from actuality.

We in America think that *Marxism and Freedom* is such an attempt, the first comprehensive attempt since the death of Lenin to restate Marxism neither as dogma nor as ready-made answers to the problems neither Marx nor Lenin faced. This study, from the vantage point of the new problems of state capitalism, is done on the basis of the movement from practice, not only to theory, but to a new society. It is not, and does not pretend or wish to be, a programmatic document.

Marxism and Freedom is, and claims to present, a theoretical basis for the clarification of minds which is the first prerequisite for Marxist groups, for both serious analysis and actual activity in the class struggle. The masses will do what they will do. We cannot substitute for them. But we must know where we are bound in more comprehensive terms than has been the case for the past seven years.

We feel that there can be no vision for a new society without the total reorganization of thought, and the complementary experience of a workers' newspaper such as *News & Letters* as both weapon in the class struggle and the ground for continuous deepening of theory...

NOTES

1. "Ten years" refers to the period ever since the departure of the Johnson-Forest Tendency from the Trotskyist Workers Party in 1947. "Seven years" refers the period since the departure of Dunayevskaya (Forest) and C.L.R. James (Johnson) from the Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party in 1951, including the split between Dunayevskaya and James in 1955 and her founding of *News and Letters* Committees, and the publication of her *Marxism and Freedom* in 1958.
2. Those who adhere to the theory that the epoch is characterized as "state-capitalist."
3. *Correspondence* was the publication of Correspondence Committees.
4. The U.S. Attorney General "listed" many groups, including the Johnson-Forest Tendency, as subversive, a charge which Dunayevskaya totally rejected.
5. Khrushchev was Stalin's successor.

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759-C

PHILOSOPHIC DIALOGUE Dialectics and Israel-Palestine conflict

by Eli Messinger

Can dialectical philosophy help us comprehend the mutually destructive, intractable conflict between the State of Israel and the Palestinian movement for self-determination? Can dialectical philosophy provide a beacon light for those seeking a way forward toward a humane society in the Middle East and globally? This discussion takes off from the editorial, "Israel-Palestine crisis at boiling point," and Raya Dunayevskaya's "Stop the slaughter of the Palestinians," written in 1982 in response to the massacres in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps, both of which appeared in the April, 2002 *News & Letters*.

TRANSFORMATION INTO OPPOSITE

There is abundant evidence that the barbarism of Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, and the current military operations in the West Bank, indicate a transformation of what Israel meant at its birth into its opposite. As many as 20 years ago, Dunayevskaya was compelled to ask "Does Israel wish to imitate the Nazis and translate 'Deutschland über alles' as 'Eretz Israel über alles'?"

There are even specific behaviors on the part of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) which are reminiscent of what was done to Jews in the concentration camps. It was reported all men from 15-45 were rounded up, blindfolded, stripped to their undershirts, and had identification numbers written on their arms.

From a psychodynamic viewpoint, this behavior represents an identification with the aggressor. This is a defense mechanism, originally pointed out by the child psychoanalyst Anna Freud, in which the frightened child takes on the character, or mimics the actions, of the child's tormentor. By the child taking on the role of tormentor, the child expiates the aggression it once endured and seemingly fortifies itself against another attack (*The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense*, Anna Freud, The Hogarth Press, 1937).

While not a "final solution" in the sense that the Nazis attempted to physically exterminate the Jews, the recent IDF military incursions are attempts to eradicate the cultural infrastructure of the Palestinians. The Palestinian Ministries of Education, of Health, of Civil Affairs and the Central Bureau of Statistics were deliberately ransacked. As the *N&L* editorial stated: "The plain fact is that Sharon is trying to rid the minds of Israelis and Palestinians of the very idea that they can ever live in peace with one another."

Lenin in his "Abstract of Hegel's *Science of Logic*," delineated the concept of transformation into its opposite. Lenin wrote, "Briefly, the dialectic can be defined as the doctrine of the unity of opposites." Dunayevskaya used this concept to account for the transformation of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution into its opposite—not a worldwide proletarian revolution but the ideology of socialism confined to one country; not the emancipation of the worker but continued dominance by state capital; not a realm of freedom but of totalitarianism. The broad idea of Zionism has similarly seen a sharp about-face.

There have been competing ideological currents within Zionism throughout its history. Liberal-socialist Zionism, originally the most popular current, has its roots in

Enlightenment ideas of universalism and humanism. In its view, morality consists in transcending personal and group egoism to secure universal and equal suffrage.

In contrast, fundamentalist Zionism sees the purpose of the nation as securing maximum strength and unity against external foes. It sees a powerful, mystical link between peoplehood, statehood, and territory. The paradox is that fundamentalist Zionism has triumphed although its rival current consistently had the upper hand in numbers, resources, votes and, at a later stage, control of the state machinery of Israel.

The key to understanding why the liberal-socialist tendency largely transformed itself into the strident, exclusionary nationalism which now holds the upper hand lies in the acceptance by the liberal-socialists of the strategic primacy of exclusively Jewish interests and aims. The subsequent inconsistencies in its positions were conceptually bridged by a theory of stages; universalist aims and ethics were held in principle but temporarily suspended until after the creation of an independent, secure Jewish state. But once the liberal-socialist tendency compromised, it was easy for the fundamentalists to utilize very real threats and wars to gain adherents for its more exclusionary policies.

BARE OPPOSITION VS. TOTAL UPROOTING

Dunayevskaya's article condemning the Sharon-Begin invasion of Lebanon was subtitled "The Need for a Total Uprooting" because she also criticized the narrow nationalism of the PLO. The PLO circumvented the class struggle of the indigenous Lebanese Left against its opponents, the neo-fascist Phalangists, and instead focused solely on Israel.

Dunayevskaya refused to equate a nationalism void of working class character with legitimate national liberation. She added, "This does not mean that we give up the struggle for self-determination, Palestinian especially. It is that we do not narrow our vision of the revolutionary struggle for a totally different world..." Bare opposition to one or another destructive force typically leads to a "half-way house" position.

Two principles of dialectical philosophy are involved. The first is that of totality. Georg Lukács in 1923 wrote, "Dialectics insists on the concrete unity of the whole...Only in this context which sees the isolated facts of social life as aspects of the historical process and integrates them in a totality, can knowledge of the facts hope to become knowledge of reality" (*History and Class Consciousness*, MIT Press, 1968).

ic fundamentalism. Which is why we need to do everything we can to stop the slaughter of Palestinians and support the Palestinian national liberation movement.

It is sad to see that the national liberation movement of the Jewish people was transformed into its opposite, an imperialist state-capitalist country. During the rise of Nazism and anti-Semitism even Leon Trotsky, a Marxist revolutionary who was opposed to nationalism, had to recognize that "decaying capitalist society is striving to squeeze the Jewish people from all its pores; 17 million individuals out of the two billion populating the globe, that is less than one percent, can no longer find a place on our planet" ("Manifesto of the Emergency Conference of the Fourth International," *Socialist Appeal*, June 29, 1940).

Today, however, we have to recognize that the transformation into opposite of the national liberation struggle of the Jewish people happened because it is not enough to be against fascism. Without a concept of genuine human liberation, the mere opposition to fascism will only lead to another half-way house.

Today the Palestinian movement finds itself in a world in which there is only one superpower. World capitalism faces a global economic slump and demands permanent war. The absence of a liberatory alternative to capitalism has given religious fundamentalism a free hand to fill this void under the banner of "anti-imperialism."

Any international campaign for peace between Israel and Palestine must oppose the war crimes of Sharon and the Israeli government at the same time that it condemns terrorist attacks by religious fundamentalist groups.

A peace settlement based on the creation of an independent free Palestine in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza, alongside the state of Israel, and not an agreement providing for loopholes and Israeli settlements such as the Oslo Accords, is the solution. Without such an agreement, there will be no solution to the Israeli Palestinian conflict.

In more explicitly political terms, the total character of a movement for national liberation, especially its working class character, needs to be assessed. This comprehensive vision of a new world in the making is at the heart of Marxist-Humanist philosophy.

THE NEGATION OF THE NEGATION

The second, related principle is that of the negation of the negation. This principle insists that mere opposition to a retrogressive force such as the Sharon regime does not by itself lead to a total uprooting which is necessary for a new beginning on new grounds. We are now in the philosophical realm of Hegel's Notion in his *Logic*, what he considered the realm of freedom. In this realm, the active subject plays a determinative role.

Who might be the subjects seeking for a new beginning on new grounds? First and foremost we have the Palestinian masses. By initiating the intifada a decade ago, they declared themselves to be full and active participants in the drama concerning their fate; before then, they had been considered merely the passively suffering casualties of the 1948 War temporarily tucked away in refugee camps. The intifada involved virtually every man, woman and teenager in battles against the Israelis.

While the recent host of suicide bombers does continue that trend of active participation, it signals desperation and a failure of the masses, Palestinian or Israeli, to transform the situation through rational means. Until recently suicide bombing was a tactic reserved for the most reactionary and religiously-fundamentalist tendencies in

the Palestinian movement. Many Palestinians agree with Nuha Khouri, a woman from Bethlehem who has said, "We lose some of our humanity with each bombing" (*The New York Times*, May 4, 2002).

This kind of negation, while understandable, is retrogressive. In these bleak times, some hold any form of "resistance" to be a negation of tyranny even when its very substance blocks forward movement towards freedom. It is important to recognize that some forms of first negation, rather than leading to a second negation, instead block the path to it.

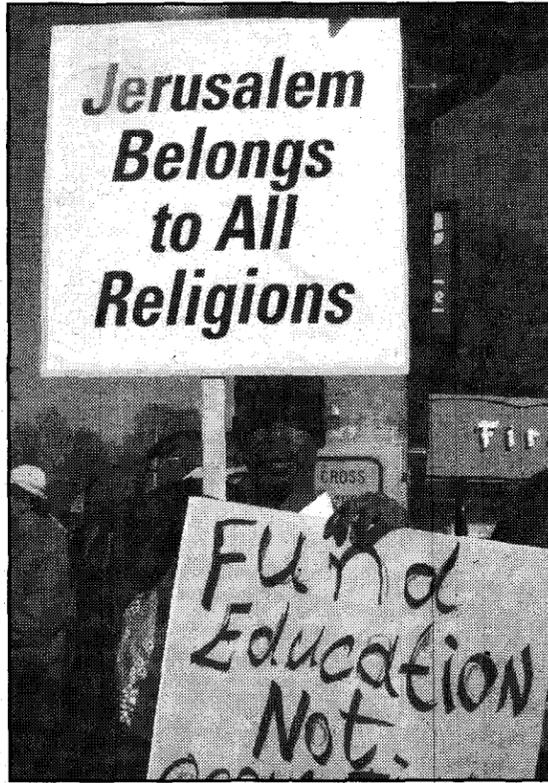
Hegel had confidence that the spirit of liberty was powerful because it springs from our very essence as human beings. In his *Philosophy of Mind*, he said: "When individuals and nations have once got in their heads the abstract concept of full-blown liberty, there is nothing like it in its uncontrollable strength, just because it is the very essence of mind, and that as its very actuality."

The tenacity of the Palestinian people in their more than half-century struggle for independence and statehood bears out Hegel's words. Indeed the spirit of Palestinian resistance has become a rallying point for all opposed to the U.S. juggernaut which insists that Apache helicopters are the ultimate determinant of history; that U.S. imperialism rules the world; and that permanent warfare is the natural condition of humankind. It is fitting that the Palestinian cause figured prominently in the April 20 demonstrations in Washington, D.C., against globalized capital and the U.S. war machine.

Within Israeli society, too, the forces of freedom are small but tenacious. These include the Refuseniks, reserve officers and men whose numbers have increased almost tenfold in the three months since the movement was launched, and Women in Black who stand for mutual respect between the two societies.

Of special interest is the new role played by internationalist peacekeepers who have taken upon themselves the task of mediating the crisis without relying on any state structure including the UN. *The New York Times* carried an extensive, favorable article entitled, "Only Label for American in Ramallah is 'Human Being.'" It described the humanitarian aid carried out by a Jew from Brooklyn and his Palestinian-American fiancée for the besieged West Bank Palestinians.

When Jewish critics vilified him for betraying his people, he answered, "I don't think I'm crossing any line. The cause is justice and freedom—these are human causes." They and others in the International Solidarity Movement use tactics drawn from the militant pacifist tradition to resist the Israelis. This is a moment when we need to transcend the binary logic which defines so much of the response to this crisis—as if recognizing the rights of Israelis to live in peace trumps Palestinian self-determination, or as if supporting Palestinian self-determination means denying Israel's right to exist. It is crucial that we project a total view. This necessitates a dialectical philosophy.



News & Letters

Iranian revolutionary view of Israeli war

by Alireza Ardebili

The massacres that the Israeli occupation army has been committing against Palestinian civilians is a repeat of Sharon's 1982 genocidal war against the Palestinian people. Sharon is determined to kill the very idea of peace between Palestinians and Israelis. It is no accident that the targets of his attacks have been in the West Bank where many individuals and organizations who have been active in the peace process reside.

Sharon could not launch this assault by himself, without a green light from the Bush administration. It is true that the Israeli-Palestinian war is slowing Bush's war against the so called "Axis of Evil." But in my view, Sharon's version of the "war against terrorism" is copied from the U.S. government's drive for permanent war.

Sharon was also helped by the actions of Islamist terrorist groups, Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Hezbollah whose suicide bombings provide daily insecurity for the people of Israel. At the same time, I find it most shocking that nearly 46% of Israelis support evicting the Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza. More than 31% of Israelis are in favor of the racist expulsion of all Arabs from Israel!

Many who support Israel blatantly compare Arafat to bin Laden to justify Sharon's "war against terrorism." On the other hand, many who support Palestinians justify suicide bombings against Israeli civilians. They say: "Palestinian people have no guns, no F-16's or Kalashnikovs. The only thing they have is their bodies. It's the last weapon left."

There is a half-truth in this statement, but this view forgets that suicide bombings kill innocent civilians. Being against suicide bombings does not mean that one has to support Bush's "war against terrorism," which means attacking anyone who speaks against the U.S. government's drive for permanent war. The Palestinian movement is facing both Israeli imperialism and Islam-

STATE OF THE UNION'S GRAVE CONTRADICTIONS

With his "war on terrorism," Bush has so shifted attention to the international arena that what gets passed over is the "state of the nation" right here at home, especially in terms of class and race. Thus, we are supposed to have recovered from a recession, but unemployment is again going up and the standard of living for working people is going downhill. More than 40 million are without health care insurance while those still working have to pay a greater and greater percent of their coverage. There really has been no increase in union membership despite the labor drives talked about in the last few years. As for race, 10 years after the Los Angeles rebellion the conditions of Blacks and Latinos show a continuing wide gap compared to whites in terms of income, education and health care. The "state of the union" is full of grave contradictions, but little of it is seriously discussed.

**Concerned
Oregon**

In the Chicago media we are hearing about a so-called "ground swell of support" for the Cook County Jail guard who beat one of the suspects in the Palatine Brown's Chicken massacre. Some don't think he should be disciplined because of the horrendous nature of the suspect's crime. Do they think brutality is a one-shot thing? I remember when my brother was in Cook County. He had a headache and asked for an aspirin. A guard clubbed him across the head and said, "Now you really have a headache." My brother could have snapped this fool like a twig but the coward hid behind his "authority" to brutalize. I think this "ground swell" is the creation of minor right-wing media figures.

**Fred
Chicago**

Could it be that the "permanent war" may be an attempt by the U.S. capitalist class to resolve today's global economic crises by expanding production of commodities of death? World War II got the U.S. out of the 1930s' depression and also marked the development of the nuclear bomb. Millions of human beings paid the price of death while capitalists profited. Consider how much of the U.S. federal expenditure is military today. There are, however, a lot of differences between the events of WWII and Bush's permanent war. Today the threat of nuclear annihilation is a reality. Today, I believe, the consciousness of the world's people is more anti-war and pro-peaceful existence than ever before.

**Basho
California**

President Bush was made aware of information the CIA and FBI had obtained regarding the suspicious nature of several of the plotters in the September 11 terrorist act. The public was not made aware of any of this. Should the 3,000 dead civilians qualify as "collateral damage" sacrificed in the name of maintaining wartime secret intelligence? It is known that Churchill did not warn British citizens of an impending Nazi bombing in order not to reveal to them his ability to crack their code. And some Americans suspect President Roosevelt chose not to reveal information that forewarned of the Pearl Harbor attack in order to catalyze America's entry into WWII. During the Afghan bombing campaign Rumsfeld admitted that civilians "will be killed...that's the nature of war." Have we Americans now joined the rest of the world as legitimate "collateral damage" deliberately sacrificed to protect the interest of some military/strategic goals and secrets?

**Worried
Oakland, Cal.**

What the pundits are forgetting in the flap about why the FBI and CIA didn't prevent September 11 is that the entire government downplayed Al Qaeda because they were so busy presenting the anti-globalization movement as the main threat, and painting the mainly non-violent activists as terrorists. The pundits also ignore the book *Osama bin Laden: The Forbidden Truth* which quoted the former director of anti-terrorism

for the FBI saying that the State Department, acting on behalf of U.S. and Saudi oil interests, interfered with FBI efforts to track down Osama bin Laden. Maybe that's why Bush is so defensive about the whole question.

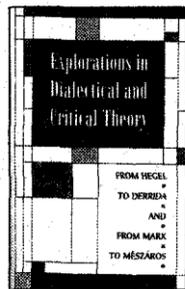
**Suspicious
Memphis**

The economy of the '90s was a bubble economy. But the Federal and especially state governments made their plans based on expected revenues from it. Now that the bubble has burst, the budgets are in horrible trouble. California faces a \$25 billion deficit this year. Gov. Davis is talking about a 60% cut in their already miserable health care budget. In my state, Oregon, the public schools have already been hit hard, with lots of lay offs. I am sure lots of the states will face this. And, of course, the Federal budget is back to its deficits. The states generally can't run deficit budgets and have to cut services. You can bet it won't be the police and prisons, but the social services.

**Teacher
Oregon**

Bush's "new world order" is looking more and more like new world disorder, both at home and abroad. He is so totally obsessed with his own totalitarian objectives that he seems oblivious to the opposition growing against him. By now even writers and analysts who were lauding his "leadership" a few months ago are not only questioning his policies but warning that they will lead to disaster for America and its people.

**Concerned
Detroit**



THE QUESTION OF DIALECTICS

For those of us who felt we could simply turn our backs on dialectics for a while, September 11 and the events since then have been a kick in the head. There cannot be a middle ground in thought. When I sent for the statement you offered for free in the May issue, on "Confronting Permanent War and Terrorism: Why the Anti-War Movement needs a Dialectical Perspective," I worried that it would be something written only for intellectuals. I could not have been more wrong. What a wonderful statement to give others! I am excited by the concrete way it lays out the objective situation in the world within the dialectical process. It put the philosophic and political together in a way that leaves no doubt as to what is at stake if we fail to do so.

**Single mother
North Carolina**

The reviewer of *Explorations in Dialectical and Critical Theory* did a fine job in delineating the major points of the collection — not an easy thing to do. But I felt that one of the most perceptive points he made was to point out that the essays are concerned with abstract philosophical conceptions which lack an important concreteness, and then to observe that the pamphlet should be read in conjunction with *News & Letters*, which abundantly provides the concreteness reflecting the philosophy. I certainly agree.

**Retired editor
Detroit**

I have just read an exciting new work published by Lexington Books, called *The Concept of the Other in Latin American Liberation: Fusing Emancipatory Philosophic Thought and Social Revolt* by Eugene Gogol. He writes that he aimed to work out "a view of Hegel with Latin American eyes" and "a view of Latin America with the eyes of the Hegelian dialectic." If Hegel himself invites the postmodern criticism of his philosophy as Eurocentric, Gogol follows H.S. Harris in drawing a rigorous distinction between Hegel's "science of experience" on the one

READERS' VIEWS

hand, and his lapses into a Eurocentric "myth of a 'March of the Spirit'" on the other hand.

This emancipated Hegel, who works out a revolution in philosophy, is the Hegel who works out the method for the Marxist-Humanist philosophy of revolution. In this way, Hegel's bourgeois, European "subject" is transposed to a new continent of thought and revolution, where the dialectics of freedom begin anew on Latin American soil. With Carter's visit to Cuba, the failed coup in Venezuela, the crisis in Argentina, and the Chiapas rebellion, the appearance of this book could not be better timed.

**Professor
Spokane**

GLOBAL WARMING

Almost every week the headlines mention some new proof of global warming like the recent study that concluded this year had the hottest January-March in a thousand years, or the new giant iceberg that broke off of Antarctica. An extreme weather event has us wondering whether global warming was a factor in the heat wave that killed hundreds in India or the floods in the Midwest. Even though it's seldom possible to prove a single event is caused by global warming, we do know that the climate system as a whole has been partly shaped by human actions so no weather can be thought of as strictly natural any longer.

**Environmentalist
Tennessee**

PALESTINE AND ISRAEL

Your May editorial on how "Sharon's brutal invasion defers peace for a generation" says that 88% of Israeli Jews support an invasion of the West Bank. It called to mind the way some supporters of Israel's aggressions insist that the country, surrounded and vastly outnumbered by hostile Arab states, is only defending itself. History is loaded with examples of vicious attacks justified in the name of self-defense. Hitler was "defending" Germany against a Jewish conspiracy. Pinochet murdered Allende's democracy because it was about to impose a Communist dictatorship. And, as John Alan pointed out in his column on "Racism and Terror" (May 2002), police in the U.S. justify their oppression of African Americans because they are supposedly "ready and able to spring from their impoverished urban communities to commit crimes against whites." It will take sharp, uncompromising dialectical thinking to shatter the walls of such monumental ignorance and prejudice. *News & Letters* is more vital than ever in that respect.

**Supporter
Ecuador**

While I know that Sharon's unbridled attacks against the Palestinians demand worldwide condemnation, I felt the May editorial was somewhat unbalanced. You do correctly condemn the suicidal Palestinian bombers and I don't mean to imply that the devastation they create is comparable to the wholesale destruction inflicted by Israel's military forces. But there should have been more critical denunciation of Arafat, Hamas and the fanatical fundamentalists as well.

**Subscriber
Detroit**

As I write this on May 12, the week has had its measure of horrors — with Palestinian bombs in Rishon Letsiyon and Beersheba, and the Israeli army re-invading Tulkarm and enforcing cruel curfews elsewhere. But the potentially worst scenario seems to have been averted — an Israeli invasion of Gaza. The results of an attack on the Gaza Strip, one of the most densely populated regions in the world, with abysmal poverty and already unbearable living conditions, would dwarf the tragedy of Jenin.

But the most encouraging event of the week was Peace Now's rally last night in

Tel-Aviv, as some 100,000 Israelis turned out to demand, "Get Out of the Territories Now!" It was the largest rally since the al-Aqsa Intifada began 20 months ago. Already the media have begun to minimize it, but it was critical in terms of affecting a broad swath of public opinion. The occupation can and will be stopped.

**Gila Svirsky
Jerusalem, Israel**



"When one falls, another steps forward."

TIANANMEN REMEMBERED

China achieved a smooth transition from one form of an overwhelming state-capitalism to a new form of state-capitalism. Capital is beginning to integrate itself with a group of people related to the political powers of the state. In this process, the workers have been losing everything they had. They had been told they "owned" the results of their labor, collectively and under the name of the state, but the gunfire in Tiananmen Square in 1989 told them that the state is not really theirs and that the things they were told they owned were never really owned by them.

Raya Dunayevskaya's analysis of state-capitalism and her philosophic works deserve attention in Chinese intellectual circles today more than ever before. But few of them are interested in Marxist analyses of today's China. These intellectuals are overexerted by the economic achievements of China in the last ten years and tend to forget what happened in Tiananmen Square. Nationalism is the main stream of today's intellectual circles just as it has been for more than a hundred years.

**Chinese Scholar
Canada**

ENDING DEATH ROW

Last year, when Illinois Gov. Ryan placed a moratorium on the death penalty, he appointed a special commission to review the sorry state of the process here. The commission just released its report of almost 100 reforms needed to ensure "fairness" — from videotaping all confessions obtained by police to providing qualified defense attorneys. Coincidentally, several anti-death penalty organizations had called for a demonstration the day after the report was released and barely 100 people participated. Some people I spoke to about it said, "The death penalty is dead in Illinois because they'll never be able to implement all those reforms." I feel it's important to remember that Ryan isn't seeking re-election and a new governor will be elected in November. If George Bush can "unsign" an international tribunal agreement to prosecute genocide by war criminals, a new governor can certainly overturn the current moratorium.

**Erica Rae
Chicago**

I hope the low turnout at the May 14 March Against the Death Penalty here doesn't mean people think the movement has already succeeded. The death penalty was reinstated here in 1977 as part of the same right-wing offensive that eventually brought Reagan to power. That offensive brought about the growth of the prison-industrial complex along with attacks on welfare, affirmative action, women's and gay rights, and the labor movement. State violence has deep historic roots. Think of David Walker, Nat Turner, John Brown, the Haymarket Martyrs, Sacco and Vanzetti—or Mumia Abu-Jamal today—and you can see how it is woven into the deepest conflicts over race and class in American society.

**Abolition sympathizer
Chicago**



**REMEMBERING
A RICH LIFE**

We were all shocked and saddened to learn of the passing of Mary Holmes whose association with us went back to 1977 when she visited Britain to discuss building Marxist-Humanism here. We held a lot of meetings, including one with Harry McShane in Newcastle and I have powerful memories of that. The pamphlet she co-authored, called *Working Women for Freedom*, was taken up by a radical distributor here and sold several hundred copies.

**Dave Black for the London Corresponding Committee
England**

Mary was a great teacher and helped me understand quite a few things. She will be missed not only for her works but for her smile and her life.

**Auto worker
Louisiana**

What a terrible loss, and she was so young! I didn't know her personally but very much appreciated her "Our Life and Times" columns, co-authored with Kevin A. Barry. I didn't realize what a rich life she had, a life interrupted but not incomplete.

**Lesley
Oklahoma**

At a time when human life has the possibility of being extended, it is ironic that she should die so relatively young. Cancer is big business and we should spend some time reflecting on how little the system cares for the people it exploits. Perhaps in the tradition of an Irish wake we will spend time celebrating her inspirational life. We are invited not to mourn but to organize.

**Pat Duffy
Britain**

When you come from another country and are trying to understand what peo-

ple are saying at a meeting, it means a great deal to have someone help you to understand what is going on. That is what Mary did for me time after time. That is what a real friend does, and it is a rare thing to experience.

**Ali Reza
Chicago**

Although I met Mary only twice when she visited Toronto many years ago, I was deeply impressed with her warmth, intelligence, sense of humor and — above all — her commitment to achieving a world based on human values. I still remember her stories about participating in the student revolt at Columbia. I will miss her global reporting and remain inspired by her dedication.

**Roger
Toronto**

While everyone knew Mary as the co-author of "Our Life and Times" not all were aware of all the other work she accomplished for Marxist-Humanism over the years. Most recently, it included the painstaking and Herculean work to which she had devoted the one day each week she was off her regular job, in order to catalog the thousands of books from Raya Dunayevskaya's personal library that were donated to the Wayne State University Archives Library. Her creative organizational work and many contributions to the pages of *N&L* are what we are honoring at the same time that we are mourning our great loss.

**Olga Domanski
Chicago**

Editor's Note: Along with our thanks for the many other expressions of sorrow we received on Mary's passing, we wish to thank all those who honored Mary by sending contributions to *N&L* to continue her legacy with us.

**DAUGHTER OF PERSIA:
REVIEW OF AUTHOR'S LIFE**

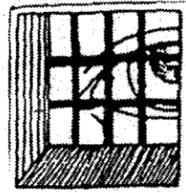
I attended a discussion and book-signing by Sattareh Farman Farmaian of her internationally acclaimed book, *Daughter of Persia: A Woman's Journey from her Father's Harem through the Islamic Revolution*. The Video Theater auditorium

was filled to capacity as she described how her father was once a wealthy and powerful prince in Persia/Iran who had married eight times (but not as in Western culture one at a time). Ms. Farmaian's mother was the third wife and she was the third of her nine children. Her father had 30 sons and 20 daughters and made sure all were educated. On Fridays he had all the children present to check on their health and test them on their studies.

Farmaian recited for us in Farsi one of the poems her father had her learn. It spoke of human beings all being connected to each other in one way or another. He died in his 80s under house arrest when World War II was going full tilt. This was when Farmaian decided to leave Iran. She laughed at herself for expecting to see the Statue of Liberty when she got by ship to the port of Los Angeles. She attended Southern California University, later worked at Hull House in Chicago, returned to Iran to open the School for Social Work in Teheran, running it for 20 years until the 1979 revolution when she was imprisoned. Allowed to leave Iran in 1980, she worked for 22 years at UCLA before retiring. She has only a daughter.

**George Wilfrid Smith Jr.
Chicago**

**VOICES
FROM
WITHIN**



The way prisoners' rights are handled is all about control. The hopes and dreams of women in prison are all about seeing and being with our families once again. Family visits mean strengthening the bonds that were broken or weakened by our substance abuse. Once in prison drug offenders are mandated to attend substance abuse programs. They help us regain our value system and our understanding of who we are. They give us the tools we need to repair the broken promises and relationships we left behind. I feel visiting privileges with our families and children give us the opportunity to use these tools given us in those

programs. That bonding is a vital part of our returning to society and feeling part of it.

**Prisoner
California**

As I continue to read each issue of *N&L*, I'm becoming more pessimistic about the state of the world. Everything seems to end in violence. What's the point of being right if those in the wrong have the superior might to impose their will on those in the right? Please keep producing the thought-provoking articles that have given me so much insight over the years and thank my donor for me.

**Native American prisoner
Texas**

Editor's note: Can you donate the price of a sub to our special Donors' Fund which pays for subs requested by prisoners who have no funds of their own?

GLOBAL LABOR FERMENT

You don't have to search for news of labor struggles around the whole world today. Besides the largest general strike in decades reported in the May issue in "Our Life and Times" and the massive labor events shortly after in Germany, the end of May may also see nationwide strikes in key sectors in South Korea. The unions there threaten to strike just days ahead of the start of the World Cup finals, which kicks off in Seoul on May 31. Those strikes would involve thousands of taxi drivers and hospital workers as well as industrial unionists.

And not to be overlooked is what is going on at the University of California medical centers where 8,000 nurses of the UC system plan a one day strike on May 29 if their union can't get a satisfactory contract to replace the one that expired on April 30. What is getting headlines in this situation is the way replacement nurses (read: scabs) are being sought by the San Francisco firm, Healthcare Consulting and Staffing Services, via a web site named www.scab.org, which is offering them \$1,000 for a 12-hour shift, plus up to \$600 in travel expenses and "deluxe accommodations."

**Labor activist
Los Angeles**

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VOICES FROM THE INSIDE OUT

by Robert Taliaferro

Reparations for slavery is a concept that is gaining more and more attention by the month. A recent lawsuit by Deadria Farmer-Paellmann against Aetna Inc., CSX Railroad, and Fleet Boston Financial Group has sparked the ire of at least one journalist in the country. A recent commentary writer for the *Baltimore Sun* felt that Paellmann's suit was ludicrous and that the CEOs of Aetna—and other companies who might bow to such suits—were nothing more than (in his words) "deluded wusses."

Notwithstanding the writer's limited vocabulary, if

BLACK/RED VIEW

(continued from page 1)

Karl Marx saw in this white master and Black slave social relationship an economic category that was "the pivot of industrialism." He wrote: "Without slavery you have no cotton, without cotton you have no modern industry. It is slavery that has given value to the colonies; it is the colonies that created world trade; it is world trade that is necessary condition for large-scale machine industry."

It should be noted here that in the above quote Marx was not justifying African-American slavery. Instead, he was relating slavery to the totality of the economy, through which the labor power of the slave created both the world market and industrial capitalism.

WHO WILL 'RIGHT THE WRONG'?

Chinese labor brought to California built the railroads that integrated the U.S. and brought the Pacific Rim into a new world market created in the 19th century. By the time Chinese laborers came in large numbers African Americans had been here for three centuries and legal slavery was abolished. In 1882 California passed a Chinese Exclusion Act, and when they needed more labor they brought in the Japanese. In the 1920s a similar act limited Japanese immigration and that is when they started the *bracero* program to import Mexican labor.

A pertinent problem confronting those who are demanding reparations is: who can they put on trial and who can possibly pay reparations for three centuries of accumulated capital? Or, to put it the way Gov. Davis did, who is going to "right the wrong"? It would be extremely difficult to tabulate the tremendous amount of capital that was accumulated by three centuries of extorted labor. Furthermore, the capital produced by slave labor has merged, long ago, with the total social capital of this nation.

FREEDOM MOVES HISTORY

Those who today demand reparations for past slavery should put the whole of American civilization on trial by demanding the end of racism and permanent poverty. The only way to "right the wrong" if you want to do it in terms of "payments" is to turn over the whole social capital to the workers who create it all. This would call for a great deal of activity, thought, and social reorganization, which is much deeper than searching though centuries' old insurance archives to find a paper trail of the master insuring the slave. Such a search may be interesting to the historian but politicians seem to want to abstract all this history because the only determinant they understand is money. Concrete history is important because it proves that what moved it is the African American quest for freedom.

That quest has always been the opposite of the accumulation of capital in this country. That was also Marx's view as he saw the victory over slavery open up a whole new labor movement in the U.S. Only the completion of that revolution will solve social problems and not Rev. Jackson's willingness to broker with Gov. Davis over a long history of the exploitation of African Americans.

José Solís transferred

Professor José Solís Jordán was transferred to Puerto Rico on May 21. Framed for the 1992 bombing of a military recruiting station in Chicago (see April 1999 *News & Letters*) Solís has been serving his 52 month sentence at the Federal Penitentiary in Coleman, Florida. His transfer to the Puerto Rican Federal Detention Center in Guaynabo will keep him there until July 23, when he is scheduled to be sent to a halfway house in Trujillo Alto to complete his sentence this November.

Solís has borne years of injustice, falsely convicted on the word of a government informant who admitted to the bombing and who was paid over \$100,000 for his testimony. The conviction came amidst a spew of propaganda from the *Chicago Sun-Times* and local government sources over alleged Puerto Rican "terrorist" influence here. Further indictments and convictions were loudly promised but nothing, in the years since, has materialized—not even in the post-September 11 climate. This fact speaks for itself.

Professor Solís has spent much of his time in Coleman teaching G.E.D. classes to other prisoners. He is a good man, as well as an innocent one.

—Supporter

Continuing price of slavery

one were to view his article without knowledge of this country's slave-oriented past, they might come away with a feeling of disdain for the likes of Paellmann and her suit.

The commentary writer does, to his credit, note that Aetna wrote insurance policies for slaveholders that insured their slaves. He also quotes the reasons for Paellmann's suit. She said, "These are corporations that benefited from stealing people, from stealing labor, from forced breeding, from torture, from committing numerous horrendous acts."

The commentary writer then states that Aetna profited from slavery for 12 years, as it was founded in 1853 and chattel slavery ended—supposedly—in 1865. "Aetna," states the writer, only "insured the lives of slaves 'for a few years.'" That writer, and many other opponents of the reparations debate, seem to feel that African Americans in this country should simply let bygones be bygones and assimilate—quietly—into the mainstream of society as if that aspect of American culture never existed.

He, and many like him, live in a revisionist society that defines historical accuracy by virtue of who wins and who loses. We celebrate the founding of this country every July 4th, defining its greatness in pomp and ceremony, yet cannot seem to bring ourselves to accept the fact that a large part of its early greatness relied heavily upon the backs of slaves; fueled by their blood and sweat; built upon the foundation of their broken

bodies.

It is true that Aetna and other companies have given a bit back to the Black community. Aetna distributed about \$36.5 million over the past 20 years to Black-oriented programs. That comes to a little over 5 cents per African American alive today per year during that 20 year period. When said like that, it doesn't seem like very much.

Then there is that magnificent constitutional amendment that reportedly freed the slaves. It states: "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to its jurisdiction."

We find that, even after chattel slavery was abolished, the country still could not relinquish its slave-driven heritage. And even if one were to applaud the intentions of Congress in 1865, it still took two more amendments to put teeth in the 13th Amendment, and even so, it was effectively countermanded when laws were created that criminalized being Black, and plantations

easily converted over to become prisons.

It would be virtually impossible to determine what is owed to the descendants of slaves, and if there were a viable argument against reparations, it would be in determining this "dollar" amount and how it could be distributed equitably. Perhaps this argument could be stemmed by looking at the replacement for the plantation, and using those numbers as a model, especially since slavery is still allowed in this country if one has committed a crime.

So what does it cost to maintain and insure a slave? In 1854, Aetna wrote a policy that insured three slaves for a cumulative total of \$2,900; in 2002, one private prison contractor charges a little over \$16,000 a year (per person) to maintain a Midwestern state's version of slaves. That state also incarcerates Blacks over whites at rates of almost 30 to 1, a rate much higher than its Southern counterparts.

If one adds those figures in with close to 400 years of other factors that are direct results of the slave trade, whatever is finally gained by the proponents of reparations, the companies and the collective consciousness of the country will have gotten off cheaply.

Chicago cop abuse

Chicago—After the last Chicago Police Board meeting, I received a letter from the Office of Professional Standards saying that they feel the police officers who came to my home and beat and abused me were in the right. I am not letting this go.

I almost had a nervous breakdown behind the reports of the 911 system's failure when Ronyale White called the police three times because her husband was threatening her. They never showed up to help her until she was already dead. This shows how serious they take emergency calls.

On Feb. 12, 2000, I gave my tenant a five day notice. She called for an officer to come out concerning the notice. The officer who came was Ephgrave. I told him it wasn't his concern. I asked him to leave but he refused. He began to be rude and seemed prejudiced. When he did leave his attitude was cruel.

The next time I saw Ephgrave was March 22, 2000. The tenant called him. Before Officer Ephgrave arrived, one other officer came to the scene. My family and I explained the situation to the officer. We had not seen the tenant that day.

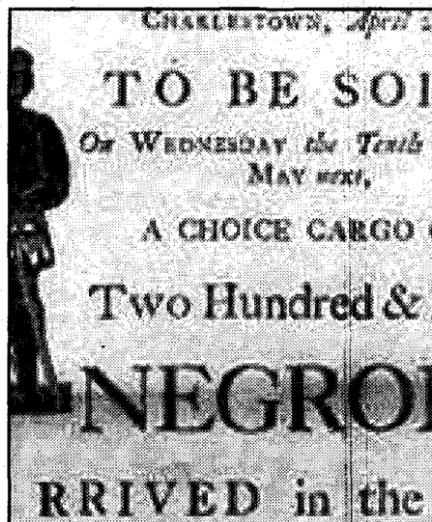
Ephgrave finally showed up and asked the other officer to leave, but he didn't leave. Ephgrave grabbed my arm and demanded that we go outside. I told him I had nothing to say to him. He grabbed me in an aggressive way, I repeated "I have nothing to say to you." I felt more comfortable talking to the other officer. The last time Officer Ephgrave and Officer Garcia grabbed me it was too aggressive.

I was thrown down, kned in my back, handcuffed very tight, dragged out and roughly put in the car. Ephgrave used vile racial words. After they put me in the car they called for backup. Police began to come from every direction. It seemed like now there were 15 squad cars. Ephgrave began taunting and laughing, discussing me to my tenant and other officers. They spent about 20 minutes doing that. I was 55 years old and not in any kind of good shape.

I have tried to get Jesse Jackson, Channel 7 News, and Johnnie Cochran to help. For two years I have been fighting the Chicago Police 11th District on Harrison and Kedzie. My grandsons have been beaten. The other day I was bringing groceries home and the police pulled up next to our car. We were right in front of our house and my grandson was harassed by the police. They had him step away from the car and demanded to know his name, and what was he doing there. He was just helping me with the groceries.

The Chicago Police 11th District gives us no life. I live in fear everyday.

—Charlene Coleman



Afro-Cuban 'Heart'

Raices de mi Corazon ("Roots of My Heart"), a film directed by Gloria Rolando, Imagines del Caribe.

This independently produced Afro-Cuban film is both artful and deeply rooted in history. Gloria Rolando based some of the story upon her family. It begins with a Black Cuban journalist, Mercedes, hearing from her white boss that "now isn't the time" to research a particular historic episode which she is interested in because of her family's forgotten history.

Her search for this past leads her to the Cuban uprising of 1912, in which up to 6,000 Blacks were killed, most of them members of the Partido Independiente de Color (PIC). The PIC, the first Black political party outside of Haiti, was founded by Evaristo Estenoz in 1908 to fight for the rights Blacks had been denied in Cuba despite the fact that they made up the vast majority of fighters in the Army of Liberation against Spain.

The U.S. military occupation reinforced the intense racism that had been inherited from slavery and Spanish colonial rule. The repression in Cuba had always been especially intense for fear of a Haitian-style slave uprising. Interestingly, the film shows how the memory of 1912 was kept alive by songs in Haitian Creole that the ruling class didn't understand well enough to ban.

By 1910 the PIC had more than 10,000 members and the white ruling class was worried enough to begin demonizing them with false stories of rape and pillage. They roused fears of a "race war" which became a self-fulfilling prophecy when the U.S.-backed military moved to massacre the Black population.

At the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Rolando was asked how the history of the PIC was treated in Cuba today. She stated that it was still not spoken of in schools, and probably wouldn't be in the near future, although the time would come. At the end of "Raices de mi Corazon," Mercedes is telling her children the story, but much remains unspoken. This is no longer the silence of an unspoken past, but the more profound silence of an unwritten future. It makes this celebration of Black identity an education for anyone.

—Gerard Emmett

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—Illinois reader

"It shows the 'other view' that stays hidden from the common USA Today newspaper."

—Florida reader

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—Maine reader

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Death penalty opponents at crossroads

The wall of political will that has served to support the death penalty since its reappearance in the United States in 1977 seems to be crumbling. The state of Maryland became, on May 9, the second state to issue a blanket moratorium on the carrying out of executions, pending the release of an academic study of the institution. A federal judge has issued a decision contending that the federal death penalty may be unconstitutional.

A poll carried out by ABC News in May confirms that public support for capital punishment has measurably declined. It found that 65% of the American public supported the death penalty, a number that, while high, is significantly less than the numbers resulting from similar polls carried out in the mid-1990s.

These developments are to be welcomed wholeheartedly. The death penalty is a racist weapon used by the state as the ultimate form of social control. It is in large measure a state-sanctioned continuation of the practice of the lynching of Black people and has been used, as well, as a weapon to discipline labor activists like the Haymarket martyrs of the 19th century and political dissidents like the Rosenbergs and Mumia Abu-Jamal in the 20th. It deserves to be thrown down.

RACIAL DISPARITY

Particularly noteworthy among these new developments is the degree to which the issue of race is involved in the Maryland moratorium. Unlike the decision of Illinois Governor George Ryan, which hinged solely on the innocence of many of those on death row, the Maryland moratorium is linked to a study being undertaken by the University of Maryland on racial disparities in the death sentence. This is a crucial opening for opponents of capital punishment to attack the institution at its weakest point as well as confront the larger issue of anti-Black racism in the United States.

What explains this partial disintegration of support for the death penalty? The Illinois decision seemed to be a defensive move by a politician faced with a thoroughgoing erosion of the legitimacy of his state's criminal justice system. The governor, a supporter of capital

punishment, acted after a total of 13 death row inmates—a number exceeding by one those executed by the state since 1977—had been freed due to evidence exonerating them.

The sheer volume of this evidence, much, but not all of it, provided by developments in technology, may have contributed to a rethinking by many. Revulsion on the part of those who hear of the factory-like regularity of executions in states like Texas surely plays a part as well.

Some may have even been moved by the vigor of anti-death penalty sentiment in European countries, particularly Italy, and their reluctance to cooperate fully with President Bush's anti-terrorism efforts because of the persistence of capital punishment here.

Others may have been swayed by the cumulative effect of case after case of prosecutorial misconduct, fabricated testimony offered by jailhouse informants, instances of racial profiling, and inadequate performances by overtaxed public defenders.

The sum of these things means that the diverse movement against the death penalty, one made up of activists, religious people, family members and more, is having an impact on U.S. society. Yet as positive as these developments are, those committed to the anti-death penalty cause are confronted with some sober realities.

The Illinois moratorium is not likely to end in the abolition of capital punishment in the state. The panel appointed by Governor Ryan to study the issue recently turned in its report and recommended no less than 85 separate changes to the way the death penalty is handled in the state.

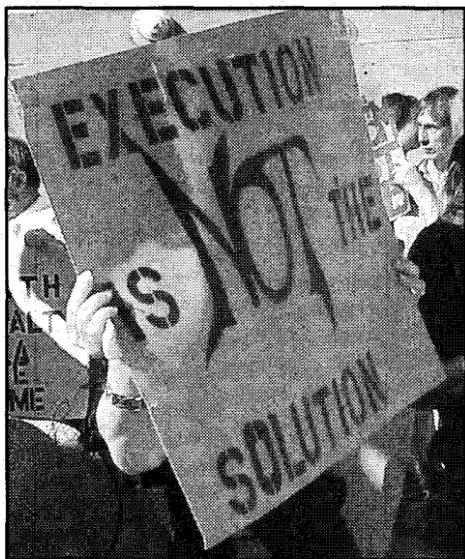
Disappointingly, however, it did not urge that capital punishment be abandoned. Legislation based on the recommendations is now being opposed by the pro-death penalty forces in the Illinois state legislature. The federal case, which applies only to courts in New York, Connecticut and Vermont, is being appealed by prosecutors. The outcome of the Maryland moratorium will not be determined for some time.

OPPORTUNITIES RAISE QUESTIONS

Despite the contradictions in the present moment, the movement against the death penalty now has the opportunity to rally itself around the position that the institution is too flawed to fix and that moratoriums must lead to abolition. Equally profoundly, the movement has the chance to seize the issue of racial disparities in the death sentence to strengthen its character as a solidly anti-racist one. Additionally, the movement has the opportunity to attack the life-without-parole substitution for the death penalty by asking what kind of society would routinely relegate people to a state with no future whatsoever.

This new moment for the anti-death penalty movement is an important one. It holds great potential for widening the movement to end it and to profoundly transform the racist and class-ridden society that has employed capital punishment as a weapon throughout its history.

Independent Media Center



Indiana prison brutality

Westville, Ind.—Systematic torture and brutal conditions exist in every maximum control facility across this country. The maximum control facility here in Indiana has been the site of many violations of prisoners' human and civil rights in its 12 year existence.

In the last two months, prisoners all over the facility have become the victims of physical attacks by extremely violent Gestapo troops. This must be exposed and immediate help is required. Last month during a unit search of our cells, a prisoner named Arelius Bucannon was attacked by some control unit pigs. He was slammed to the floor and had his head and face smashed into the concrete by the boot of one of these pigs. He was also shocked four times by a stun gun, which caused burn marks on his neck.

Two prisoners, David Taylor and Jerald Jessup, have started a hunger strike due to the horrible medical conditions of this facility. This action is very serious. It is a last desperate attempt by these two men to receive adequate and effective medical attention. Food here is already scarce and inadequately portioned, so to go on a hunger strike, you know this must be the final call.

These men aren't eating anything, nor are they drinking water. They plan to strike until someone addresses the conditions here. All of our challenges are being undermined by staff members or informants. These men may die, so I ask that this be addressed as a matter of importance.

Taylor suffers from kidney stones and the department of corrections has failed to approve surgery to have them removed. Jessup is an elderly man who suffers from congestive lung problems and chronic pain. He has hearing in only one ear.

This is a help for support. They need your help.

—Khalfani M. Khaldun

END THE INHUMAN CONDITIONS

Send messages of protest to:
**Commissioner of Indiana Department of
 Corrections Evelyn Ridley-Turner**
 (317) 232-5715
**Superintendent of Westville Maximum
 Control Facility Daniel McBride**
 (219) 785-2554 fax (219) 785-6136

Abdur'Rahman reprieve

Memphis—Anti-death penalty activists in Tennessee were greatly cheered and relieved by the U.S. Supreme Court decision to grant a full hearing in the case of Abu-Ali Abdur'Rahman. Mr. Abdur'Rahman had been scheduled for execution April 10, and was 36 hours away from being killed when the court granted a stay. The Court will consider procedural issues relating to Mr. Abdur'Rahman's attempts to get the federal courts to hear his claims of prosecutorial misconduct in his case.

Despite a rule issued by the Tennessee Supreme Court making it clear that Mr. Abdur'Rahman has preserved the issue for appeal, the federal courts have refused to hear it. The Supreme Court's ruling will influence other cases as well as Mr. Abdur'Rahman's.

In this case, as in that of Philip Workman last year, activists in Tennessee played an important role in resisting the executions. There is an active moratorium movement in Tennessee with support from the Nashville Metro Council and the Legislative Black Caucus. Although the fight is far from finished, we are hopeful that there will be few—if any—more legal vandivers in Tennessee.

—Margaret Vandiver

Wang Ruoshui remembered

Cambridge, Mass.—On May 16, students from China joined prominent scholars of modern China at Harvard to honor the memory of Wang Ruoshui. The gathering was unusual in that noted scholars, mostly from the U. S. and Europe, were eulogizing a man who was close to the top of power under Mao Zedong and in post-Mao China—and out of power remained a Marxist and Marxist humanist until his death last December.

Liu Binyan had been expelled from the Communist Party in 1987 along with Wang Ruoshui following the mass demonstrations of students and workers beginning in December 1986. He was a colleague at *People's Daily*, the official newspaper, while Wang was deputy editor. He recalled that instead of joining the inner circle of leadership under Mao, Wang had written a letter to him in 1972 criticizing the "leftists" behind Mao—and was sent to the countryside as a result.

Liu Binyan said that when Wang Ruoshui returned to the *People's Daily* under Deng Xiaoping, he was often blamed for any opposition. Yet during some campaigns orchestrated by the Party, like the 1981 attack on Bai Hua, Wang had the courage to keep the attacks out of *People's Daily*. As Liu said, even in China one man of integrity could make a difference.

Roderick MacFarquhar examined Wang's writings, including his 1980 definition of alienation, where public servants become masters. Wang had said that after his dismissal he felt free, but still considered himself a Marxist, and that "Man is the departure point of Marxism."

Merle Goldman examined the moment that led Wang Ruoshui to become a Marxist humanist. He was assigned to lead the attack on Soviet revisionism in 1964, and studied Marx including his 1843-44 writings on alienation under capitalism.

Wang also had access to discussions of East European Marxists' discussions of socialist humanism (and in those discussions discovered Raya Dunayevskaya, for whose *Marxism and Freedom* he later wrote the introduction for the Chinese edition). Goldman saw Wang not only as the man who would again echo Marx by writing "The specter of humanism is looming large over the land," but as the epitome of the upright Confucian official.

Wang Ruoshui's wife Feng Yuan showed a video on this man of modest appearance and great accomplishment. His writings, in that same modest way, still raise the banner of Marxist humanism not only for China but for the world.

—Bob McGuire

Eyewitness accounts from West Bank

Chicago—Kathy Kelly and Jeff Guntzel, members of Chicago's Voices in the Wilderness, a campaign to end the United States and United Nations economic sanctions against the people of Iraq, were among the first activists to enter the West Bank during the Israeli operations. The two activists gave an eyewitness account of their experiences to an audience of 250 at a forum at DePaul University on Sunday, April 28.

"In the past month, Israel has engaged in a massive assault on the occupied territories in the West Bank," said Kelly. "Human rights organizations have not been allowed into Ramallah and Jenin to survey the situation or count the number of dead, a number believed to be in the hundreds."

"In addition to looting and demolishing hundreds of homes, cars and businesses in the Ramallah and Jenin areas," said Guntzel, "the Israeli army has attempted to systematically obliterate Palestinian society by destroying the educational records of Palestinian children and by seizing Palestinian land deeds."

Kelly and Guntzel arrived in Ramallah on April 9. The people in Ramallah had been under a 24-hour curfew for two weeks prior to their arrival.

"Israeli soldiers and snipers had 'shoot to kill' orders for anybody who dared to venture out of their home," said Guntzel. "Israel had declared the city a 'closed military zone', which means no foreigners or journalists were allowed to enter."

"We were able to enter the camp because brave Palestinian children showed us how to take back ways through the countryside, avoiding Israeli checkpoints," said Kelly. "We are also grateful to several young Israeli soldiers who showed us how to sneak past the checkpoints."

On April 14, after several failed attempts, Kelly and Guntzel were able to enter the Jenin camp. Although

Israeli soldiers would not allow them to walk through the checkpoint, several soldiers did tell them how to cut through fields in order to bypass checkpoints, said Kelly.

"What people should know about Jenin," said Kelly, "is that it's a regular city neighborhood, with three-story buildings, homes and shops. It resembles an American city more closely than it resembles what many of us picture when we think of a refugee camp."

"The IDF soldiers used bulldozers to widen the road into Jenin," said Kelly. "To make this new road, over 800 homes were demolished. This means that the homes of 4,000 people were destroyed in order to find less than 200 Palestinian resistance fighters."

Kelly and Guntzel say they were shocked and dismayed by the war-torn appearance of Jenin. They walked to the center of the city, where they say a huge circular space had been cleared by Israeli bulldozers. The homes and businesses that used to be in this area, about 100 in all, had been demolished.

"We heard snipers shooting at a small group of men who had come to pull bodies from the rubble in the center of the camp," said Kelly. "The men began to dig a mass grave. While we watched, they pulled four bodies out of the rubble, including that of a small child."

At the DePaul forum, Kelly was asked why she chose to go to a war zone. She replied, "I was prepared to lose a limb, to lose an arm, or to lose my life."

"President Bush has said there will be an endless war against terrorism," said Kelly. "We can be confident of an endless peace movement. We wanted to be a part of whatever protection could be afforded to Palestinians living in the occupied territories. It is up to activists and aid workers to create the tunnel for light to shine through."

—Rachael Perrotta

Struggles in Philippines face U.S., repression

(Continued from page 1)

Andrade, 18, and Mr. Amora, 23, were farmers. Mr. Sunday was a Lumad (member of a non-Muslim indigenous community).

Karapatan, in a flier distributed at a press conference we attended in Manila, quoted Arakan valley community members who witnessed the killings of Hernandez and her companions. One of the soldiers told the residents, "They are all extinguished. They have all gone to another world. It is all peaceful now. Go and get them."

Another soldier boasted, "You should have seen how the women cried!" These comments suggested a concerted terror campaign on the part of government forces, including its local vigilante auxiliary forces. An armed forces spokesman accused the group of "associating" with the New People's Army (NPA). Barely a week later Expidito and Manuela Albarrio were slain execution-style by military forces as well. The two were leaders of Bayan Muna, the electoral party of Bayan in Mindoro Oriental, an island near Luzon. They were the parents of eight children.

At the Manila press conference called by Karapatan, we learned that at least 28 members of activist organizations have been killed during the Arroyo administration alone. The military campaigns reflect a political response to many new relationships being formed between growing youth and other activist groups and indigenous communities throughout the country, most crucially in the southern Philippines where the U.S. is set to establish a permanent military presence.

A recent article included in a pamphlet honoring the activists recently killed in the Philippines discusses AnakBayan, a nationwide militant organization of both in-school and out-of-school youth. According to Jeppie Ramada, AnakBayan chair for the Southern Mindanao region, the group was founded in 1998 with only about 6,000 members. Today, less than four years later, the group has grown to some 20,000 members with chapters being formed in practically every city in the country, including some remote ones in Southern Mindanao.

Two fact-finding missions in March and April, the first composed mostly of international observers, the second involving Philippine organizations like Karapatan with many youth activists involved, investigated human rights conditions. The first visited the island of Basilan, while the second focused on Sulu province, both just to the south of the main island of Mindanao.

The heightened militarization of both areas, ostensibly in pursuit of the Abu Sayyaf (a once highly ideological Islamic fundamentalist group now committed to little more than kidnapping and banditry) was well under way two years before the U.S. sent its troops. In addition, virtually the entire southern Philippines has been deeply affected by three decades of fighting the central government over the issues of separation or autonomy.

The new American military presence has only exacerbated the crises. The mayor of Isabella, the capital city of Basilan, told the fact-finding mission, "We welcome the American troops with open arms, open legs, with open everything."

In addition to recording revealing statements from local leaders, the mission documented a "climate of fear" among Basilan's majority Muslim population, exacerbated by the joining of American military technology and equipment with the bloody tactics of the Philippine military and Abu Sayyaf. It discovered as well that the armed forces had carved its 50-hectare Jungle Training

Base for the *balikatan* in Zamboanga (in the part of Mindanao closest to Basilan) from the 90-hectare ancestral lands of the Lumad Subanen tribe.

Elsewhere in Mindanao, the still unresolved late April series of bombings in General Santos City, on the southern-most tip of the island, resulted in the arrest and continued detention of three ethnic minority men, all active in Bayan and other left groups. Jehohn Macalinsal, a 19-year old Muslim detainee from the Sangil ethnic group, was active in the Progressive Organization of Gays in the Philippines, PROGAY.

Armed forces personnel broke into the Moro Women Day Care Center where he was working, and forced him to make a telephone call warning of a bombing in General Santos City. Caller ID was then used to frame him and the others for conspiring to bomb department stores and other sites in the city.

While increasing the desperation of many indigenous communities in Mindanao and other areas, the government's use of the *balikatan* to wipe out revolutionary forces is evolving into a principal strategy.

Some reports maintain that the Arroyo administration really views confrontation with the Abu Sayyaf terrorist and kidnapping group as an internal national priority and that the Philippine people are unable to handle the threat on their own. Others hold that the U.S. is simply and unilaterally using the Philippine situation to further its global supremacist aims.

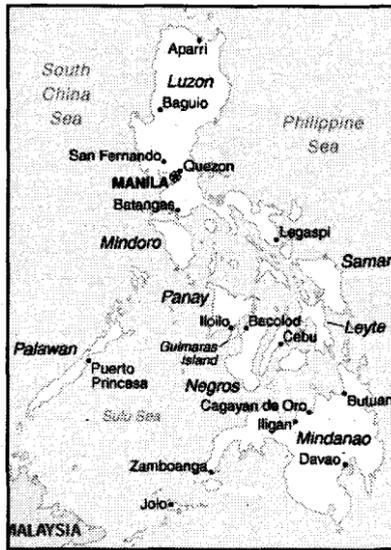
In fact, the counter-revolutionary intentions at the core of the *balikatan* are quickly expanding. It now appears that repression is aimed at all dissident forces whether urban or rural. Targets range from youth activists joining above-ground dissident groups in large numbers to indigenous peoples defending their communities.

ARROYO'S DECLINING SUPPORT

Arroyo has tried to create a welcoming environment for the 60th anniversary in April of the World War II Bataan death march. Thousands of Filipinos and U.S. captive forces died at the hands of the hated Japanese invaders in 1942 during the march. The *hukbalahap*, a civilian anti-fascist guerrilla force, continued to inflict heavy losses on the Japanese after U.S. military leaders pulled out their troops. When the U.S. returned to the Philippines near the end of the war, it focused on disarming the *hukbalahap*, which threatened to turn the imperialist war into social revolution in the Philippines. Filipinos' fondness for their own guerrilla history may be why, rather than widening support for a return of U.S. forces, the Arroyo government has been losing backing.

A poll conducted by Social Weather Stations indicated that in the last six months, support for the Arroyo administration declined from 28% to 16% among workers, and from 26% to 10% among the urban poor.

Following widespread publication of these results, a possible explanation emerged. The department of labor announced that merely 43% of Metro Manila businesses comply with the \$5-per-day minimum wage law. With an unemployment rate of at least 30%, the "triple whammy" of price increases in power, fuel and water charges is sure to drive the already massive numbers of urban poor even deeper into desperation.



University of Utah

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This hasn't gone without resistance. Gabriela took the lead in organizing protests against the triple whammy. At the same time, they celebrated unprecedented court rulings favoring working women in fights against pervasive discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace, as well as rape and murder.

FUNDAMENTALISM OR REVOLUTION?

State repression, combined with ruthless local vigilante forces, has been unremitting in the 15 years since the People Power triumph over the Marcos dictatorship. This has, in part, led to the recent rapid growth of the NPA in certain rural regions. That growth, however, is certainly less significant than the rapid advance of religious fundamentalism, especially in the southern Philippines. For example, throughout the 1990s the secular Moro National Liberation Front was eclipsed in political importance by a break-away faction, the fundamentalist Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

It is true that the U.S. includes the NPA on its list of terrorist groups along with Abu Sayyaf. Communist Party of the Philippines leader Jose Maria Sison recently called on the NPA to attack the U.S. military presence in the Philippines. But the basically unmodified Maoist ideology of the CP is not taken seriously by masses of people striving for liberation. Most significantly, it finds little resonance among the new generation of student and youth activists.

A philosophic void which has plagued the world's Left for decades has become even more apparent with the emergence of the U.S. as the sole superpower and the politicization of fundamentalist religion as its new nemesis. Such a total crisis has brought new attention to the power of ideas. While the presence of such a void is recognized in everyday life, a significant new focus may be occurring among students and intellectuals.

For example, a recent book by the philosopher Florentino Timbreza details the work of Erich Fromm on the relationship of religion, philosophy and practical life from the perspective of Philippine history, indigenous values, and religious beliefs. Timbreza writes that many students have become "allergic to the once sacred word 'God,'" and declares, "man is already dying and nothing happens." Timbreza writes, "Hegel wrote that the spirit (or the human mind) is at war with itself. As a result, it has to overcome itself as its most dreadful object."

Timbreza critically examines Fromm's approach to the Hegelian-Marxian dialectic, including the meaning of absolute in the German idealist tradition. He assesses the significance of Fromm's concepts of alienation and humanism for current trends in Philippine life.

We saw the passion for new beginnings in thought in the enthusiasm of students and faculty for the presentation we gave at one university on Hegel in Critical Theory and in Marxist-Humanism. Afterwards philosophy and political science faculty and students concisely discussed Hegel's categories and the new society, and posed questions about the conceptual differences between Hegel and Marx in terms of social classes.

The discussions, along with the new relationships being forged among revolutionary forces, show that the Philippines is alive and vital with desperate struggles and widespread desire for radical social transformations. However, it is abundantly clear that there is no strictly political entry into the heart of this ongoing process. The search for genuine social revolution in the Philippines, in thought as much as in practice, is rich in historical lessons, and it has become increasingly so with each passing decade.

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Like Hegel and Marx, I Stand for Negation

The little churches on their hillsides resound
With song, with prayer, with affirmation
of a God of righteous indignation
and with confirmation of the rectitude
of suit-and-tongue-tied congregations;

and builders of bridges radiate positivist joy
for conceiving erections
like the Verrazano Narrows,
and for supervising their construction, girder by girder,
bolt by bolt,
paycheck by paycheck,
mortgage payment by re-done kitchen.

These typify American dreams
along with the ultimate kisses, shootouts
and stereotyped fade-outs
of Tube and of screen.

Yet all fade like cliches
when face to face with Negation,
with the out-of-work seamen and blistered farmers
who caged the British within the noose-like Charles,

with outraged peasants
blazing the French countryside with their masters' homes,
with sans-culottes opening minds and prisons,
destroying the edifices of human serfdom
while the slaves of Haiti destroyed slavery itself,

with the men and women of Minneapolis, Toledo,

San Francisco, and Flint
whose strikes said "No more profits pumped
from starving bodies, gear-mangled limbs.
Nothing moves,
nothing is built,
no bridges erected, no workers dying in the trying,
but by our soy-so."

With the beloved communities of blacks positive in their negation
whose aggressive suffering plucked Jim Crow
naked
and destroyed Southern traditions of rapine enshrined,

with the women who seized their bodies and their thoughts
from old propriety
and double standards,
demanded that dads and communities
deal with dirty diapers' joys
and that they themselves help guide
the changing of the world,
negating old traditions
and letting freedom in.

With Hegel and Marx, I stand for Negation.
With the peasants, artisans, slaves, strikers,
beloved communities, and women revolting,
I seek the positive through destruction,
destroying the destroyers,
building new community,
building freedom with rage.

—Sam Friedman

YOUTH A clouded future after cuts

Chicago—Students from Columbia College, Harold Washington College and the University of Illinois at Chicago joined together, March 2, to protest education funding cuts in the State of Illinois.

At Columbia College, over 150 students, teachers and administrators gathered to listen to students speak out against cuts in the Monetary Award Program (MAP) Grant budget. MAP Grants are need-based financial aid, and nearly one-third of Columbia students receive the grant.

There are proposals in the Illinois State Legislature to cut MAP Grants at private institutions in Illinois. One proposal calls for cutting the entire \$200 million grant budget. Another plan by Senate Republicans calls for cutting only \$50 million.

The students made signs with such slogans as, "Save our Education," and "Illinois Legislators: Vote No To Education Funding Cuts," and began to march. As the march went down Michigan Avenue and State Street, students chanted and the bucket-drum corps provided a beat.

At the State of Illinois building, Columbia Students were joined by students from Harold Washington and UIC. Through a megaphone, various students addressed the crowd. Several told personal stories, including students who will not be able to attend school next semester if the grant budget is cut.

The students from Harold Washington were marching in protest of education funding cuts at the City level. In solidarity, the students from Columbia joined the Harold Washington students in a march around City Hall. There, students delivered a petition to a representative of Mayor Daley, asking the mayor to halt cuts in education funding.

The march then returned to the State of Illinois building, where several students brought a petition to Governor Ryan's office. From the Governor's office at the top of the building, the protesters could be heard.

A representative of Governor Ryan told students that the Governor has always been an advocate of education, and that his budget for 2003 actually proposes a \$10

million increase in the MAP Grant budget.

The march was covered on the local NBC, ABC, CBS and Telemundo news programs. Students expressed hope that the people of Illinois heard their message—that education budget funding cuts are not an option.

—Rachael Perrotta



French May Day

Montpellier, France—The spontaneous demonstrations against Le Pen started here with the high school students on the very night of the first round election, April 21, and continued with a thousand or more at 6 p.m. all week.

The April 27 march was called by the Students' Union and various leftists and civil liberties folk. We went all around the city, a couple of miles, about 15,000 strong (according to police and press), a very young crowd in a basically good mood, but with bitter feelings expressed in signs and chants. These ran the gamut from a mild "Jean-Marie: pas gentil" to a ferocious "Le Pen, Fascho, le peuple aura ta peau" ("Le Pen, you Fascist, the People will have your hide").

As a foreigner, I liked the slogans like "First, Second, Third Generation, we are all the children of immigrants" and best of all, "Keep the undocumented aliens, Expel Le Pen."

—R. G.

Queer Notes

by Suzanne Rose

In Russia, several members of the State Duma, the lower house of parliament, introduced a bill that would make lesbian relations a criminal offense in the country. Lexei Mitrofanov, a nationalist member, said that lesbians were responsible for the decline in the population.

"If a woman doesn't observe moral, ethical norms, then there will be no growth in the birth rate," he said. In April, Gennady Raikov, the leader of a pro-Kremlin parliamentary faction, stated that he and other lawmakers had drafted a bill that would reinstate criminal punishment for homosexuality.

In Wales and England, prison rules have been reformed to allow gay partners to be classified as close relatives. It is hoped this will make it easier for gays to visit their partners in jail. Gay prisoners who are in a relationship with other prisoners at a different prison will now be allowed to apply for "inter-prison visits."

According to Martin Narey, the Prison Service director general, it is hoped the move will encourage stability in the lives of gay prisoners. "Maybe this is formalizing gay partner visiting rights, but it will not change much," said Steve Taylor, spokesman for the Association of Prisoners.

"Prison staff are being given diversity training, but it doesn't extend to inmates who can be racist and homophobic. A gay couple cannot kiss and cuddle in prison visits like a heterosexual couple - they'd probably be assaulted on the way back to their cell and we know that for a fact."

Challenges to sham Pakistan referendum

Pakistan—Eleven men and three women, leaders and workers of the Labor Party of Pakistan, were arrested April 26. Their crime? They were holding a peaceful demonstration in front of the Lahore Press Club when they were stopped and told to disperse. They refused to give up their right to assemble and protest.

I heard those who were not arrested speaking about the incident. They were trying to secure bail for their 14 comrades who were eventually released the next day after their bail were secured. The police also grabbed an innocent pedestrian who was released the night before.

They said that the procession had been peaceful, but impassioned. They were carrying banners denouncing General Musharraf, the man they believed to be a pernicious dictator, and chanting slogans against him and his pseudo-referendum.

These are not isolated cases. The state machinery did all it can to suppress voices of opposition wherever they arose. They banned public assemblies and made it impossible for people to express their opinions, either through the media or by public demonstrations.

All the state's resources are at the general's command and what was he using them for? To herd and harass the people to attend his rallies and tell them how committed he is to their welfare while they were being beaten by the police as they tried to leave; to churn out ceaseless propaganda from all state media; to suppress dissent by threatening and strong-arming journalists, the same tactics his predecessors used except he can use them with greater impunity since he is not a mere civilian.

Amongst the clamor against the referendum, women's organizations were a strong, vocal and active presence. The Joint Action Committee (JAC), which is a group of 35 non-governmental organizations, held a press conference at the Lahore Press Club on April 12. They unanimously condemned the military usurpation of the democratic institutions of the country and protested against the absolutely unconstitutional referendum: "We clearly and categorically declare our protest against the referendum. This press conference is the first step in our plan of opposition."

JAC also pointed out that holding political rallies places all involved armed forces personnel in violation of their oath to abstain from political involvement. JAC members declared that as mature citizens of the State of Pakistan, they were capable of making their own decisions without military guidance.

Amongst the representatives of JAC was the Secretary of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and advocate of the Supreme Court, Hina Jilani. She said that it is unconstitutional to seek election as president through a referendum.

"This referendum order is an insult to the intelligence of the people of Pakistan," Hina declared. She went on to point out the contradictions between Mr. Musharraf's claim to constitutionality and the actual executive order about the referendum, stipulating that this order overrules all other laws, and that it cannot be challenged in any court of law.

The Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy, an alliance of political parties, mobilized their large following to thwart the general's plans. They declared that they would hold rallies against the referendum wherever Musharraf held his rallies.

The wide-scale protest against Mr. Musharraf's campaign for permanently militarizing Pakistan was supported by all the major and most minor political parties, all bar associations, and most non-governmental organizations. Most major political leaders issued statements of their boycott of the referendum and the Supreme Court Bar also filed a constitutional petition against the referendum.

—Observer

Contradictions in anarchist book fair

Chicago—The Matches & Mayhem Anarchist Book Fair is a conference organized by and for anarchist youth, and it was especially exciting for me to see that the emergent youth movement of the past few years (the movement that I come out of) is thriving.

When I first became involved in the youth movement, the central issue was the sweatshop problem. The youth that I knew limited their social and political critiques to the IMF, WTO, and World Bank.

Though the critique of sweatshop labor is still very important to the anarchist youth movement, it was wonderful to see just how much the movement has grown and developed in the past year.

Unfortunately, the youth movement still struggles with the deep problems that caused me to leave it, especially in regard to how some in the movement view and treat women. At the book fair, which I attended on May 11, I bought a zine, a book of monsters, that was amusing—if grotesque—until I reached the image of a dead, naked woman hung from a meat hook while a young guy stuck a straw up her genitals and sucked on it.

This image, titled "hooked on the flava," was provided free of critique or context. It could be argued that the young guy was the "monster," hence the inclusion of this image in the zine, but it would be just as easy to argue that the dead woman was the "monster."

This mutilation of women's bodies and the fetishizing of death is imagery taken directly from pornography and advertising. In the pornography industry, a movie where a woman is killed and mutilated during the sex act is called a snuff film. Dead or comatose women are now used to sell vodka, cars, and are sold as images to be used in masturbation.

This type of imagery is a response to the Women's Movement and the resulting entrance of women into public life. The idea, if you can call it that, behind snuff imagery is simple: it tells the viewer that women are things to be used and controlled, and if a woman can not be controlled, men will rape her till she dies.

Turning people into things is what capitalism does best. By endorsing and using snuff images, by turning women into things, into dead meat, and by using these images in a "humorous" context, some (not all, or even most) of the anarchist youth are buying into the system that they abhor.

They are hurting, oppressing, objectifying, and exploiting women—and they are also limiting the possibilities of their own existence. How meaningful is your life when your satisfaction and amusement depends on the destruction of the lives of others?

An honest critique of capitalism must include a critique of the images and products used and produced under capitalism. This, by necessity, includes a critique and rejection of the sex trade and of images that commodify women.

—Jen Ainbinder

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OUR LIFE AND TIMES Far Right tests European freedom struggles

by Kevin A. Barry

The re-emergence of a racist, anti-immigrant, and sometimes neo-fascist far Right has put Western European labor and youth movements to the test, in a way not seen for decades. How they meet the challenge of a far Right, reinvigorated by anti-immigrant hostility after September 11, will also affect the worldwide anti-globalization movement.

In France, there were almost daily mobilizations of youth, workers and immigrants between April 21, when neo-fascist Jean-Marie Le Pen placed second in the first round of the presidential elections, and May 5, when French voters repudiated Le Pen, 82% to 18%. Nonetheless, 18% was a most sobering score for an open racist and Holocaust denier, whose whole career has been one of attacks on Arabs and Muslims, from his youthful work as a torturer for the French army during the Algerian War, to his more recent calls for the expulsion

New opening in Burma?

The release of Aung San Suu Kyi marks a new development in the fight for freedom in Burma. First confined in 1989 in the wake of the millions-strong pro-democracy uprising of the previous year, she has spent most of that period under house arrest.

Aung San Suu Kyi has refused to compromise with the military dictatorship. She has pointed to the fact that her National League for Democracy won 82% of the vote in a free election, later annulled by the military. She has continued to call for economic and political sanctions against the regime.

At least 1,500 other political prisoners still languish in the government's jails, while the Burmese people live in poverty and oppression. Only a third attend primary school. AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis are rampant. Freedom movements of national minorities, who constitute a third of the population, have been crushed, with forced labor imposed on prisoners. The most persistent force of opposition, the youth, have seen their universities closed again and again.

While the military has deliberately left the limits of the current opening unclear, the Burmese people are sure to test it. Since the military takeover in 1962, which imposed the infamous "Burmese road to socialism," a bizarre amalgam of narrow nationalism, Stalinism, and Buddhism, the revolt has been ceaseless. After the mass mobilization and repression of 1988, the worldwide human rights movement began to take up the cause of the Burmese people, pressuring many of the leading powers to enact sanctions.

'Scientific' racism

In May, in a solemn ceremony attended by government officials and members of the Khoisan people, Saartje Baartman's remains were returned to her native South Africa. Lured to Europe in 1810 by a British surgeon who promised to make her rich, this young woman instead found herself confined and exhibited like a circus animal.

Dubbed the "Hottentot Venus," Baartman was also "studied" by the noted French scientist Georges Cuvier, who pronounced her body movements similar to "those of an ape." After Baartman died in 1816, Cuvier dissected her body, parts of which were preserved in formaldehyde jars at the Musee de l'Homme in Paris.

This early 19th century atrocity was a marker in the birth of a new form of racism, one that justified white domination on "scientific" grounds. Long refuted by 20th century science under the impact of the anti-fascist and Black liberation movements, this type of racism still lives on in more subtle forms, including the debates over race and test scores.

of immigrants and the restoration of the death penalty.

In holding their noses to vote overwhelmingly for the relatively moderate conservative Jacques Chirac, the only other candidate on May 5, the French public showed a moving self-discipline. Not only did they ignore Le Pen's demagogic attacks on the political establishment, voters on the Left also rejected calls by the Trotskyist Workers Struggle party, which had received 6% in the first round, to cast blank ballots, something anti-globalization activist José Bové termed "sectarian and unrevolutionary." This stance also caused Workers Struggle contingents to be booed at some anti-Le Pen demonstrations.

During these demonstrations, the youth were at their most creative, whether in the chant "We Are All the Children of Immigrants" or in the humorous slogan, "Better the Crook than the Fascist." The latter indicat-

Anti-Bush protests



More than 70,000 demonstrated in Berlin, May 21, against President Bush's visit to Europe, citing the U.S.'s appalling human rights record and its so-called "war on terror."

East Timor celebrates

Tens of thousands came out to celebrate the official birth of this century's first new nation, East Timor, on May 20. Former resistance leader Xanana Gusmao made the main speech in which he called for democracy, tolerance, and reconciliation. Several international leaders also attended.

The presence of President Megawati Sukarnoputri of Indonesia constituted a grudging recognition of the independence of a land her country had brutally occupied. However, in a hostile gesture, the Indonesian navy dispatched six ships into East Timorese waters on the eve of independence.

No nation has won its liberation at a steeper price. After 400 years of extremely harsh Portuguese colonial rule, East Timor won independence in 1974, helping in the process to liberate Portugal from its own fascist regime. The country's new Marxist leadership worried the U.S., whose Secretary of State Henry Kissinger encouraged neighboring Indonesia to invade. Under Indonesian genocidal occupation a quarter of the country's 800,000 people died, but eventually the pressure of the East Timorese resistance helped to topple the Indonesian military regime.

In August 1999, Indonesia allowed a referendum on independence, which was approved overwhelmingly. After another series of massacres in full view of the world media, United Nations forces finally intervened in December 1999. Today's East Timor is a devastated land, but one whose people finally control their own destiny.

ed both a firm support for bourgeois democracy over fascism and an unalterable opposition to the corrupt Chirac, who has himself made racist comments.

This came to full fruition on May Day, when over a million came out to march behind trade union and leftist banners, including 400,000 in Paris alone. "Such a turnout is reassuring" stated one African immigrant. All eyes are now on the June legislative elections, which will determine whether the Right can now dominate France.

Even as France moved out of the headlines, the Netherlands was thrown into turmoil by its May 15 elections, when the far rightist List Pim Fortuyn placed second, ahead of the Social Democrats. Buoyed by public sympathy after the assassination of its founder just before the election, this anti-immigrant party is now slated to join a coalition government with the conservative Christian Democrats.

In Germany, the 2.7 million strong metalworkers union won a big victory in a series of strike actions, gaining a 4% raise for the first year, and then 3.1% for the six months until the end of 2003. At the same time, however, there is fear that the anti-labor Christian Democrats may return to power next fall on the basis of an anti-immigrant campaign.

What a right-wing victory in France or Germany could mean can already be seen in Italy, where a coalition of conservatives and far rightists holds power. Despite strong resistance from labor that has brought millions onto the streets, the government is seeking to pass laws undermining some of labor's most basic rights.

Rape victim faces death

A 26-year-old Pakistani peasant woman, Zafran Bibi, has been sentenced to death by stoning for admitting being raped by her brother-in-law. Bibi, who was raped many times by her brother-in-law after her husband was imprisoned for murder, had previously complained to her in-laws, who had remained silent. She was forced to make the accusation public when she became pregnant. According to the Sharia (Islamic Law) court in Pakistan, Bibi's admission that her brother-in-law raped her, and her refusal to disown her new child, are proof of Zina (adultery).

Her rapist, however, has been set free without charge, since under the laws of Zina four male witnesses must testify to having seen a rape take place. The testimony of women is not admissible. The case of Zafran Bibi has become the subject of many editorials in Pakistani newspapers and will now be reviewed by a higher court.

But according to Pakistani women's rights activists, even if the death sentence is reversed, Bibi will still be sentenced to 10 to 15 years in prison. Eighty percent of women in Pakistani prisons have been convicted under laws that ban extramarital sex. Half the women who report a rape are charged with adultery under Zina laws.

—Sheila Sahar

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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*.