

NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

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50¢

WORKSHOP TALKS

China's Liaoyang 5 and U.S. workers

by Htun Lin

I attended a demonstration on July 10 outside the Chinese Consulate in San Francisco to support the five unionists arrested in Liaoyang, China—Yao Fuxin, Pan Qingxiang, Xiao Yunliang, Wang Zhaoming and Gu Baoshu. They were elected by their fellow workers who were demonstrating by the tens of thousands protesting massive layoffs, unpaid wages and unfulfilled promises of unemployment benefits.

Instead of negotiating with them, the authorities charged them with organizing "illegal demonstrations." Other workers who tried to prevent their arrests were beaten.

This human toll is due to Chinese rulers' massive privatization as a requirement of China's government joining global capital. The small demonstration in San Francisco should have been much larger, considering what is at stake for American workers.

President Bush dreamed up a new "axis of evil" between Iran, Iraq and North Korea to pump up his plans for permanent war. There's plenty of evil in those countries but no "axis." One true organic "evil axis" is between U.S.-led global capital and China's despotic state-capitalist rulers who, according to *Business Week*, have made China into a "manufacturing superpower." Global capital is now even fleeing from its other favorite low-wage locations like Mexico and the Philippines to go to China, where workers are paid a third as much.

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BLACK/RED VIEW

New King Cotton

by John Alan

The United States of America is now the only economic superpower in the world. It has unprecedented power to manipulate the market-value of any commodity produced anywhere in the world. Recently, President Bush, a passionate apostle of free trade, and Congress agreed on legislation to give U.S. farmers a \$180 billion subsidy. This amount of money will lower the price of agricultural commodities on the world market. According to James Wolfensohn, the World Bank president: "These subsidies are crippling Africa's chance to export its way out of poverty."

'FREE MARKETS' VS. HUMAN BEINGS

According to the United Nations Development Program that gift of subsidies to U.S. farmers will result in poor countries losing \$50 billion a year in agricultural exports, which is about equal to the aid they are now receiving from all the rich nations combined. This drop in income means that farmers in poor African nations, who are cultivating cotton for sale on the world market and are now living in poverty, will soon be plunged into a condition of absolute pauperism. The poor cotton farmer in West Africa and his family will literally starve as a direct result of this bill.

In Mississippi 1,700 million white cotton farmers sell half their crop on the world market in competition with Chinese, African and Pakistani growers. Now these already wealthy farmers will receive hundreds of millions of dollars in subsidies from the federal government.

One cotton farmer alone, Kenneth B. Hood, got \$750,000 in subsidies. Hood, who shook Bush's hand at

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ON THE INSIDE

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Africans struggle to overcome slavery, AIDS, neocolonialism

by Bakary Tandia and Pauline Muchina

According to reports from the Special Session of the UN General Assembly, three quarters of the more than 36 million people currently living with AIDS/HIV are living in sub-Saharan Africa. The general secretary, Kofi Annan, has asked for \$7 to 10 billion a year to fight AIDS and other killer diseases, but little has been raised for Africa. Don't human rights and democracy promotion start with disease prevention and human life protection?

POLITICS OF AIDS

In the history of human disease, HIV/AIDS is unique because it raises many emotional issues about families, law, and access to health care. In Africa women and children are more vulnerable than men for many reasons, biological, social and economic. Their social status puts women at risk more than men. In some countries polygamy is practiced; one man is infected, but two women are at risk.

If a woman thinks that her husband or boyfriend is infected, she cannot force him to use a condom because of the power relationship within the family. Because of the economic situation, if she wants to challenge him, she will find herself outside without any resources. There is also the infection from mother to infant and the stress tied to this.

It has become urgent for Africa to find the means to appropriately deal with the HIV/AIDS crisis. Yet there are several stumbling blocks. African countries are dealing with financial crises with international financial institutions, specifically debts. Last year, the sub-Saharan African region paid \$13.3 billion in debt repayments. How will those countries be able to deal with the HIV/AIDS crisis when they must pay such an amount?

Another stumbling block is landmines. It is a big issue and the U.S. has not signed the landmine treaty. In Africa we have 30 million landmines. In Mozambique alone there are 12 million. They cost maybe \$3 per landmine, but in order to remove them, it costs about \$300 each. If you multiply \$300 by 30 million, think of how much it will cost for countries also trying to deal with the HIV health crisis.

The third stumbling block is the force of globalization. African countries are being forced into globalization without being ready. The G-8 leaders met in Cana-

Bakary Tandia is president of the Committee for the Defense of Human Rights in Mauritania. Pauline Muchina is from Kenya and an HIV/AIDS counselor in Newark, N.J.

Black Belt farmers occupy U.S. offices

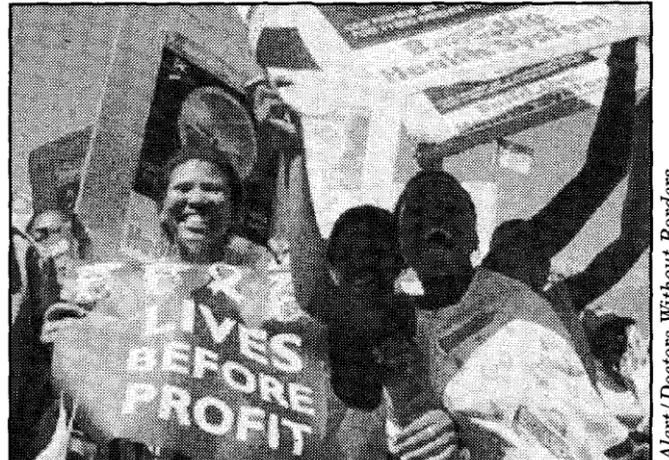
On July 1, over 300 Black farmers from 16 states occupied the Tennessee Department of Agriculture offices to protest farm foreclosures and loan discrimination. Several discussed the issues with N&L. — Editorial

Brownsville, Tenn.—Gary Grant: The Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association was organized in 1997. The Pigford v. Glickman class action, for past actions of discrimination by the Department of Agriculture (USDA), was supposed to make it possible for farmers to continue to farm. The government used this document to continue to do the very process it was doing before, which leads to the farmer losing his livelihood and then his land.

The consent decree has two tracks. Track A will get you \$50,000 and possible debt relief if you can prove discrimination. We laughed, because the discrimination has already been proven. Track B is that if you've got documentation, you can go after larger sums of money. Most farmers had to go into Track A.

We had people who were denied loans because they misspelled the county in which they lived, or the name of the agent. This is the only agency in the government that has what's called a committee of "your peers" that determines whether you get a loan or not. Why would a group of farmers give me a loan? Aren't I the competition? What is this madness? A group of white men talking about who's going to be able to buy a piece of land and a Black man comes in and says he wants to buy it? Or a woman, or a white man that's poor?

We began this sit-in with 10 demands. Some folk in Washington need to be fired—those that discriminated against us, which has been proven in the Pigford suit. They have an "administrative process" to settle civil rights complaints. We have four families who have partial settlements where the language has been approved,



Activists protest the high cost of drugs for AIDS treatment in Pretoria, South Africa, last year.

da in June to give aid to Africa, with strings attached. All the players must equally participate in setting the rules, but that is not the case with African countries.

The fourth stumbling block is neo-colonial leaders. Neo-colonialism is worse than colonialism because you don't know that you are colonized, but things are getting worse day by day.

It is clear that Africa is expendable to the West. The focus away from Africa started shifting when, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the post-Communist Eastern European nations were created and a lot of strife and economic crises took place. It was also on the non-governmental organization (NGO) level where funds were tied up in Eastern Europe. What can we do as Africans when we feel so left out in the global economy?

MAURITANIAN SLAVERY

We are in the 21st century and slavery still exists in this world and in Mauritania and Sudan specifically. In Mauritania slavery is not what people describe as modern forced labor. It is a classic slavery in modern times. It took place prior to the Atlantic slave trade, around the 13th century when the Arabs came from the Middle East to sub-Saharan Africa. Since then, it has been prevalent in Mauritania from generation to generation by birth. If you are a slave, your children will become slaves.

Slaves are used for agricultural and domestic in Mauritania. They take care of the cattle and also produce dates. More importantly slavery is part of the cul-

(Continued on page 10)

the money agreed on. And they won't deliver. That's one demand. We want a commitment from Secretary of Agriculture Veneman to settle these in 30 days. We have five Tennessee farmers, in this office, whose applications have not been processed.

I come from a community in North Carolina that's called a resettlement community. Out of the New Deal of the 1930s the government bought 18,000 acres of plantation land, and made it possible for Black people to buy it. Three hundred Black families became independent farmers—poor, poor, poor, poor, and poor.

Today, all the land is being farmed, but not one of those original 300 families is farming there. We own 93% of the original 18,000 acres, and 98% of it is rented out to white farmers. Something is wrong, that white folk can make a living off of the same land that Black farmers couldn't. "Make a living" means white people can pay loans off of the same land that Black people couldn't, raising the same crops. Of course, they can plant on the day that it's supposed to be put in the ground.

Tom Burrell: The lawsuit exposed the USDA's attempts to eradicate Black farmers. USDA employees are committed to removing Black farmers from agriculture.

The lawsuit is a win for the USDA. They got rid of 99% of African-American farmers and they used \$615 million of the taxpayers' money to pay for the lawsuit settlement. The USDA is good at eradicating things. In California it was the medfly, and here in Tennessee it is the boll weevil. One species that has also been put on that list is Black farmers. They have an eradication program that's 99% effective. Why wouldn't they continue to discriminate? They're going to set up a mop-up

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Alert/Doctors Without Borders

Hegel, Antigone and feminist defiance

by Maya Jhansi

Historically, at least since Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, women have questioned and many have rejected the importance of Hegelian philosophy for feminism. While de Beauvoir took up the master/slave dialectic in *The Phenomenology of Mind*, many recent feminists are focusing on Hegel's reading of Sophocles' play *Antigone* to bring out Hegel's attitude to women and to assess whether Hegel has any relevance for feminism. In fact, the most recent issue of *Owl of Minerva: Journal of the Hegel Society of America* is devoted to the subject of Hegel on Antigone, with some contributors like Patricia J. Mills rejecting Hegelian philosophy as necessarily sexist, and others like Philip Kain using Hegel's view of Antigone to argue for the possibility of a feminist appropriation of Hegel.

Antigone is a beautiful play that has always garnered interest from philosophers and revolutionaries. Hegel himself called it "one of the most sublime and in every respect most excellent works of art" (*Aesthetics*). There is much in it and in Hegel's reading of it that speaks to the contemporary moment. The play foregrounds the contentious relations between women and the state and between religion and the state, both of which are important at a time when we face the redoubling of U.S. military hegemony, as well as the unprecedented rise in violent religious fundamentalisms around the world.

In the play a brazen and brave woman, Antigone, defies an ordinance issued by the King of Thebes, Creon, to let the slain body of Antigone's brother rot above ground without a proper burial because of his betrayal of the city of Thebes. Antigone, citing her duties to her family and to divine law, buries her brother (we assume, though we don't see her doing so in the play). When confronted by Creon, she refuses to feel guilty and to repent for her actions, thereby inflaming the king, who rails:

Anarchy-

Show me a greater crime in all earth!

She, she destroys cities, rips up houses,

WOMAN AS REASON

*Breaks the ranks of spearmen into headlong rout.
But the ones who last it out, the great mass of them
Owe their lives to discipline. Therefore
We must defend the men who live by law,
Never let some woman triumph over us.
Better to fall from power, if fall we must,
At the hands of a man—never be rated
Inferior to a woman, never.*

Antigone's spirit of defiance has been heralded by feminists as exemplary of a revolutionary feminist ethos. Judith Butler, in her book, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and and Death* (Columbia University Press, 2000), writes that she returned to Antigone because "the legacy of Antigone's defiance appeared to be lost in the contemporary efforts to recast political opposition as legal claim and to seek the legitimacy of the state in the espousal of feminist claims." What Butler finds in her reading is that Antigone destabilizes not just the state but the family she supposedly represents, and through her public speech act disrupts the precarious balance of gender identity.

Butler, like other feminists, criticizes Hegel for not recognizing Antigone's transgressive radicality. Mills goes a step further in arguing that Antigone represents Hegel's neutralization of women's desire. "Hegel's Antigone," Mills writes, "is a response to the 'problem' of female desire, and as such is an attempt to nullify the persistence of woman as other as she challenges any simple notion of the rule of reason over passion" (*Owl of Minerva* 33:2, p. 217).

To Mills, women remain forever the other of Hegel's speculative system, cast out by the dominating drive of the abstract and the universal over the erotic and the sensual. Ironically, Mills recapitulates the problem many have pointed out in Hegel, namely that in the (few) places where he takes up women, he relegates them to the family, to emotion outside of reason, to unreflecting subjectivity. Mills, in associating women solely with their sensual drives, does the same.

While it's true that Hegel often had a reactionary attitude to women, Mills fails to satisfactorily answer whether the journey of consciousness, through self-consciousness, reason, spirit, religion to Absolute Knowledge in *The Phenomenology* is necessarily a male journey. Hegel may have thought so as a person, but is his philosophy limited by his gender politics?

This is a real question. It would be wrong to dismiss out of hand Hegel's sexism, but it would be equally wrong to assume a complete identity between Hegel's politics and his philosophy. Marx himself addressed this when he delved into Hegel to determine whether Hegel's accommodation to the Prussian state flowed necessarily from his philosophy. It's true, as Dunayevska showed in *Marxism and Freedom*, that Hegel dehumanized the Idea instead of treating it as the dialectic of live men and women. He ended up resorting to an external determinant—the State—to resolve the contradictions of society. However, Marx still saw Hegel's dialectic of negativity as the movement of history, the algebra of revolutionary transformation, though in alienated form. This concept, Dunayevskaya argued, transcends the limits of Hegel's political outlook.

Patricia Mills scoffs at attempts to "read Hegel through the lens of Karl Marx," but to those of us in search of emancipatory alternatives, it seems rather silly to just erase Marx's appropriation of the Hegelian dialectic. It isn't, after all, just about interpreting Hegel's attitude to women in his reading of Antigone, but about our own search for an emancipatory meaning and direction for feminist defiance today.

Prisoners talk change

New York—At the end of June the Women's Prison Association and Home Inc. hosted the tenth National Roundtable for Women in Prison. It was a unique gathering of former women prisoners, prisoner advocates, criminal justice professionals and social services providers.

The opportunity for the women prisoners to participate was the highlight. It was the purpose of the roundtable to have an exchange of ideas about what change would look like, how can we work together.

For the former prisoners willing to talk, just the fact of their sharing their story was an act of courage and a contribution. Helping other women, still in prison or just getting out, was their first priority. The social service providers pointed to those success stories and made their case that better programs would make a difference. The academics presented their research. The activists pointed out that for every prisoner who makes it on the outside, there are a thousand who don't. Thus, they argued, putting band-aids on the problem is not a solution, we have to work to abolish prisons altogether.

The former prisoners pointed to how they re-created themselves from abused, neglected victims into strong women fighting for others. But there is a danger in focusing so much on individual needs. What gets lost is the fact that this social system creates the poverty and "crime." The call for a systemic change, a revolution, has to start and come back to the individual. Becoming new people in the process of fighting what's wrong highlights the point of revolution, which is not a change as an event, but the continual re-creation of our common humanity in each individual.

—Urszula Wislanka

Southern Convention

Memphis, Tenn.—The fourth annual Southern Girls Convention was held July 19-21 in Athens, Ga. Activists from across the South were invited to lead workshops, give lectures and educate others on organizing in their region. The convention began right here in Memphis when the Women's Action Coalition took on the task of starting what would now be an annual radical gathering of activists based out of the South.



july 19-21, 02
athens, ga

This year saw incredible speeches by Mississippi-based civil rights activist Constance Curry and former Black Panther chairperson Elaine Brown. Both women spoke about their history in the movement and answered questions

from the packed auditorium.

Though fraught with several organizational flaws, this year's conference saw many informative workshops, skill shares and roundtable discussions.

One example was the "How to start an abortion fund in your town" workshop led by Wyndi Anderson of the National Network of Abortion Funds. The NNAF helps women pay for abortion procedures, and even provides housing, transportation and emotional support. Several women, including myself, left this workshop with immediate plans to start an abortion fund in their town.

Other topics covered were "TransFeminism," a discussion on transwomen as part of the feminist movement; "Lame is good: How to be an ally to disabled folks," in which ableism within radical communities was discussed; "Intersex—what it is & how it affects you" offered a detailed account of life as someone who is intersexed.

The weekend ended with a meeting of organizers past, present and future, and it was decided that next year the conference will take place in Asheville, N.C.

All of us decided to keep in touch via a list serve to create an organizers' manual to be passed along from year to year. There was also talk of keeping the focus away from the primarily white punk community, as it detracts from a major part of what makes the South so wonderful and that is the fact that it is a melting pot of all types of different people and communities.

—Michaela Parra

Working unpaid hours

Los Angeles—I'm a licensed visiting nurse (LVN). I take care of a three-year old baby girl who has had a tracheotomy since she was born because of digestion problems. I work eight hour shifts at night, six days a week. Another LVN works the early morning shift after me, and the mother of the baby takes care of her till I come to work.

The parents are very poor and have to depend on the state for all their medical assistance. I am paid by the state at a very low rate.

Two weeks ago the mother gave birth to a new baby. There was no one to care for the three year old. The other LVN couldn't help me as she works a second job on the weekend when this all happened. The husband works afternoons for 12 hours, at less than minimum wage.

He is undocumented so they can get away with it. All the relatives were afraid to take care of the three year old because of the tracheotomy. I ended up working three 24-hour days in a row, but for only three days of eight hours pay per day. If I had not done this I would have lost three days pay as the state would have hospitalized the baby since there was no one else to watch her. All this to keep from losing three days pay. Now does this make sense? Something is wrong here.

—Georgianna Williams

WOMEN WORLDWIDE

by Mary Jo Grey

Waves of anti-government protests across Saudi Arabia followed the horrific deaths of 14 girls in March in a fire at a girls' school in Mecca. The deaths, and severe injuries to dozens of other students, were caused when religious police forced those without robes and head scarves back into the burning building. Details of the uprising, only now leaking out, revealed that thousands of demonstrators—mainly women—protested in the streets across the country. Some even removed their veils. Police made mass arrests, hunting down leaders, beating women and children with sticks and firing rubber bullets.

Hundreds of unarmed Nigerian women—from 30 to 90 years old—occupied a multi-million dollar Chevron-Texaco oil facility in Escravos, Nigeria in July. Holding 700 workers inside, they demanded jobs and aid for their poverty-stricken village. Their week-long negotiations ended with the threat of a traditional and powerful shaming gesture—removing their clothes. The company agreed to hire at least 25 villagers, as well as build schools, water and electrical systems. The women, some with babies tied to their backs, greeted the agreement with singing and dancing on the company docks.

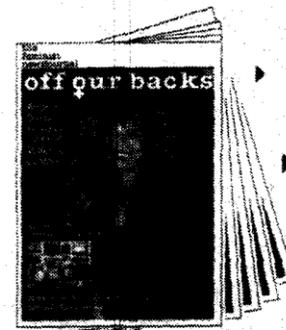
A unity during the past year between U.S. Christian fundamentalist groups and Islamic fundamentalist nations has worked to restrict the expansion of reproductive rights in United Nations documents and activities. At the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children in May, that unholy alliance succeeded in denying all reproductive health services to children and teens because they might include abortion. The Bush administration gave its support to the alliance, saying it shows that it "shares many social values with Islam."

Northern Kentucky Right to Life organization is urging a local health board to reject the use of federal funds to finance family planning services, charging that "contraceptives cause abortion." Some board members called the statement "scientifically flawed" and "extremist." Rejection of funding would seriously jeopardize access to reproductive health services to women throughout northern Kentucky.

The Women's Caucus for Gender Justice is demanding fair representation for women in the election of judges to the International Criminal Court. Only one woman has ever served as judge on the International Court of Justice in its more than 80-year history. The 34-member International Law Commission had no women in its 55 years of existence until two women were elected late last year. The ad hoc tribunals looking at war crimes, including mass rapes and rape camps, in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia had, at most, three women serving at any one time among the 14 permanent judges.

—Information from We!, Isis International

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Zoo protest against BBJ Linens

Chicago—Well-dressed attendees of the Lincoln Park Zoo Ball were greeted by workers from BBJ Linens, a laundry in suburban Skokie that supplies tablecloths and napkins to upscale caterers, as they entered the fundraising event on the evening of July 12.

The workers had gathered with union staff and other supporters at the zoo entrance to protest the use of BBJ products by the event's caterer. Before the rally began, a woman worker said of BBJ: "They treat us like crooks. At the end of our shift they check our bags."

The workers at BBJ—predominantly immigrant women—have been organizing among themselves since the spring of 2001. While not officially represented by a union, UNITE has been supporting the BBJ workers in their efforts.

After the group of workers and supporters left the event chanting "We'll be back!" *News & Letters* was able to interview three BBJ workers, two of them women. One woman had been fired for speaking out against intolerable conditions, but got her job back through the Labor Board.

—KM

We want the union because without one they don't recognize our rights and won't improve conditions. For example, we tell the owners the stairwell to the napkin department is not safe to climb, but they don't do anything about it.

WORKSHOP TALKS

(Continued from Page 1)

The watershed event that sealed this axis was Congress passing Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) with China during the Clinton administration. PNTR lifted all restrictions and high tariffs imposed in response to China's continued human rights violations. This paved the way for China's entrance into the WTO under the present administration.

RACE TO THE BOTTOM

This decoupling of human rights from trade was an affirmation of capital's right to move where it can practice the most unfettered despotism and exploitation over workers. This is what put downward pressure on conditions of life and labor for U.S. workers. Capital here has been emboldened to force workers off welfare and into low wage sweated labor. This is what they mean by "free" markets.

The success of Wal-Mart comes not only from importing Chinese goods made by slave wage-labor. It is an equal opportunity exploiter. Wal-Mart has paid most workers less than \$8.50 an hour, but extracted even more unpaid labor by forcing those workers to work off the clock. Class action suits against Wal-Mart on behalf of workers charge that Wal-Mart managers literally lock workers in after they have signed out on their time-card, making them perform unpaid overtime work.

Wal-Mart is a favorite on Wall Street where investors are learning the hard way that cooked books by CEOs can't create value. Only workers can do that. Wall Street's profit squeeze means workers are being pushed to the extreme.

Capitalist "reformers" now want to institute "honesty" in the corporate boardrooms. Bush and Congress are now "outraged" at CEOs who commit fraud to rob from shareholders the surplus (unpaid) labor they robbed from workers.

While capitalist reformers are now worried that the financial sky might fall on them, it would take deep digging under the trading floor to see the foundation of all this exchange-value—production floors all over the world, where millions of workers toil to create value.

BUSINESS 'RIGHTS'

Ten years ago, Chinese human rights advocate Harry Wu came to a Wal-Mart convention to urge shareholders to divest themselves from Chinese-made goods and products sold at Wal-Mart and made by prison labor. Clinton, flanked by former presidents in May of 2000, told Congress with a straight face that if they didn't pass PNTR it would be a "serious impediment to further democracy, freedom and human rights in China."

Harry Wu, who spent 19 years in a Chinese labor camp, was outraged. He said "Don't lie to me...They're concerned about business rights, not human rights. That's fine...but don't lie to the American people." For Wu the truth is in a report calling Chinese workers making American goods indentured servants who are paid less than subsistence wages, packed into dormitories with one day off a month.

Bush's praise for China as a partner in the "war on terror" gives China carte blanche to brutally suppress opposition such as the Uighurs who have been fighting for genuine autonomy in Xinjiang for half a century. However, the crux of this "evil axis" between China's rulers and U.S.-led global capital is the continuing plunder of the veritable gold mine of Chinese labor. All the human rights violations threaten our conditions of life and labor, with more takebacks and attacks on our civil rights. Bush and Ashcroft have already made significant headway towards that kind of future for us.

The fight of the Liaoyang workers is our fight. We need to solidarize with them, whether with boycotts or our own actions in production, but also with an open international discussion of what kind of labor humans should perform.

In the puller department it is so hot, but there are no fans or ventilation. We're not allowed to drink water or Gatorade while we're working. If we do, the supervisor takes the water and throws it away. It's like slavery. The people who work in ironing have no protection. The tablecloths are very hot and they burn their hands. The owners don't allow them to cool.

About 10 of us have been representing the workers who are starting to organize. We now feel that we have a voice. We were scared of talking before because they would fire us. Now we feel a little stronger in expressing ourselves, telling the owners about the bad conditions and about the low wages.

Before we started organizing, I was the kind of person who, when they told me not to do something, I wouldn't. I was very insecure. Now I fight for my rights. And now we feel strong enough to support the other workers who are still afraid.

Last year, before the union started its pressure campaigns, only 5% of BBJ workers were permanent. The rest were day laborers, even people who had been there for seven years. Now almost everyone is a permanent employee. But we still don't have affordable health insurance and we lost our seniority. We only got a 50-cent raise, and the conditions are the same! For us, nothing changed. But for BBJ, it was a big concession.

As a worker I know how other workers feel even if I don't do the same kind of work as they do. I know what it's like to work in horrible conditions and to get bad pay. We want workers everywhere to know that we will support them in their struggles whenever they need us. We thank the Carousel laundry workers for coming out to support us.

They can count on us to support them.

No justice, no tuxedos!



Chicago—Workers and supporters protest Gingiss, a formalwear company, for firing 30 long-term employees and replacing them with low-wage day laborers. Organizers are spearheading a boycott of the company.

Gas bill muggings

Chicago—Don't rejoice when you hear corporations like Enron and Arthur Anderson going down for corruption. You may be paying for it.

Peoples Energy, the virtual monopoly in the natural gas industry in Chicago, is showing its gratitude to those who went on strike and protested price increases by firing employees and cutting off those delinquent with their gas bills at a speedier rate.

To get service restored, the consumer has to pay the full bill plus a deposit—no exceptions. In addition, the company has enforced a "two strike, you're out" payment plan within a year. During off winter season, the consumer must front 25% of the bill. During the winter season, consumers must pay 10% within seven days, so a \$1000 bill must have \$100 as a down payment.

If you miss this payment you have only one other time during the year to have an opportunity to not have your gas shut off. Consumers used to go months or years without getting their gas shut off on delinquent bills, but amidst corporate scandal, corporations are fighting back in more blatant ways. It's as if the consumer is at fault for high prices and downsizing.

Now, when payment arrangements are not fulfilled and bills are overdue, you will receive a "friendly" phone call reminder. The nature of customer service is now based on "the corporation is always right."

One employee who handled billing complaints was fired for signing over customer's checks to her personal bank account. Instead of informing the customers, they were cut off faster. Employees are intimidated from future strike activities by increased firings.

Corporate abuse has long been ignored by the mainstream, and now that some examples of it have come to light, it is also time to expose how everyday social relations are poisoned within the corporate structure. Now, amidst retribution, it will be harder for consumers and workers to organize around this societal abuse.

—Akili

Quecreek rescue

Detroit—Like most people in the U.S., I closely followed the dramatic events leading to the successful rescue of the nine coal miners trapped in the Quecreek Mine in southwestern Pennsylvania. I was impressed by the level of technology and knowledge available and used to save them.

When I heard the news, I recalled an explosion I was in because one boss did not give accurate information to another boss. Many other times while I worked in the coal mines in the area during the 1950s, adjacent mines were cut into and miners lost their lives as a result. It is speculation to think some of those lost lives could have been saved if such technology had been available then, but it is certainly possible.

However, the major issue at Quecreek is how this could have happened. Investigations will be made and reported, but I do know from my experience that most of the so-called accidents that resulted in deaths and/or injury were due to mine management's lack of concern for the safety of the miners. The bottom line for coal operators has been, and I am certain still is, to get that coal—often at the expense of the health, safety and welfare of the miners and their families.

State and federal laws stipulate the procedures that are supposed to be followed to avoid Quecreek incidents, and there are underground mine maps that indicate locations of adjoining mines. One of two things probably happened: the maps were not accurate (which is inexcusable), or they were ignored—which is even worse. And one thing is certain—the miners obviously did not know of the danger, for they would never have cut into the other mine.

Miners have always demanded to have control of safety in the mines. They have always been denied that responsibility, which they would joyously assume. The result is that mine management continues to control and too often endanger the lives of miners for the sake of production.

—Andy Phillips,

Co-author of *The Coal Miners' General Strike of 1949-50 and the Birth of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S.*

Docker solidarity

Oakland, Cal.—International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10 held a unity rally on June 27, where they were joined by thousands of other workers demanding an end to management's effort to outsource ILWU work and break the power of the union in the present contract negotiations.

The employers in the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) are feeling like they can go after the ILWU in this post-September 11 climate. For years they have campaigned hard for more federal government intervention in the maritime industry to undermine the ILWU. Now government security czar Tom Ridge has called the ILWU directly, telling them to settle their contract negotiations without a strike. Hanging over the ILWU is the threat that Bush will issue a Taft-Hartley injunction, to force workers to stay on the job.

WORLD TRADE NEEDS DOCKERS

During a brief, symbolic work stoppage trucks lined up for miles awaiting loads to feed the new economy's lean, just-in-time inventory. What capitalists and their men in the White House fear most is not a security breach on the docks but the power of dockworkers to shut down the world economy and their willingness to use that power to support other workers.

Jack Heyman of the ILWU said the agenda of the PMA is to "restrict trade union power on the docks by banning the right to strike." He added, "Under the rubric of 'national security,' the impending Maritime Security Act, and passage of the USA Patriot Act not only basic liberties will be affected but background checks will be required to screen port workers, the bulk of whom are minority or immigrant workers."

ILWU has been in the forefront of international workers' solidarity, supporting the mostly African-American Charleston, S.C. dockworkers and the Liverpool dockworkers in England. An International Dockworkers Council, affiliated with a five-million-member International Transport Workers Federation, came out of these solidarity struggles.

At the December AFL-CIO convention, the Teamsters, ILA (the east coast longshore union) and ILWU formed a transportation union pact. All pledged at the unity rally to support the dockworkers in any showdown with management.

The solidarity campaign continues to attract more support as at a July 24 rally outside of PMA headquarters in San Francisco's financial district. Since the ILWU contract expired on July 1, they have been renewing the old contract on a day-to-day basis.

PROMOTING LAYOFFS

The ILWU says they are willing to have their clerical positions computerized, eliminating many of the 2,300 jobs, as long as the remaining work is still done by ILWU. The ILWU gained their relatively good pay and benefits because they accepted dramatic cuts in their ranks from new technologies like containerization.

A deeper question for dockworkers and their friends expressing solidarity with them is how to deal with the continued use of technology as a weapon that erodes the ranks of militant unions, leaving other workers in the two-tier economy behind. We have to confront this slow drip of technological innovation used as a weapon against us and transform its very existence as capital.

—Marxist-Humanist supporters

From the Writings of Raya Dunayevskaya MARXIST-HUMANIST ARCHIVES

Editor's Note

We publish here, for the first time anywhere, a historic document in American Marxism—Raya Dunayevskaya's June 5, 1951 "The Revolt of the Workers and the Plan of the Intellectuals." It was a defense of *State Capitalism and World Revolution (SC&WR)* a major statement of the Johnson-Forest Tendency, and marked its complete break with the Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP). *SC&WR* was jointly written by C. L. R. James (a.k.a. J. R. Johnson), Dunayevskaya (a.k.a. Freddie Forest), and Grace Lee Boggs. "The Revolt" was a response to a critique of *SC&WR* published in April 1951 by George Novack (a.k.a. William F. Warde) and John G. Wright, both representing the SWP majority. The original document can be found in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, 1424.

We here publish the first section of Part II. Additional excerpts will appear in our October issue. "MCK" refers to the Kerr edition of Marx's *Capital*; "MCF" to the more recent translation by Ben Fowkes. Notes by the author are signed "RD"; others are by the editors. We wish to thank Jesse and Jason for their help in editing the piece.

Part I

THE MARXIAN ECONOMIC CATEGORIES, AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE

Comrades Novack and Wright accuse "Johnson-Forest" of the heinous crime of identifying the capitalist economy with the "Soviet economy." They mean the economy of Stalinist Russia, which since 1943-44, the Stalinist theoreticians themselves have admitted operates according to the law of value. The admission was forced upon them by the Russian reality.

Long before the admission was made, "Johnson-Forest" had demonstrated that the existence in Russia of the economic categories analyzed in Marx's *Capital* was not a matter of coincidence. Rather it was due to a fundamental kinship between the Russian economy and capitalism. (1) In summarizing the facts and conclusions of the extensive study, "Johnson-Forest" used the concise original formula Marx created for analyzing specifically capitalistic production relations: *C/V*, that is to say, the domination of constant capital (or dead labor) over variable capital (or living labor).

For this, "Johnson-Forest" is taken to task. "In dealing with the *C/V* relation," write Comrades Novack and Wright, "one remains in the general sphere of productivity, equally applicable in this abstract form to any and all economic systems."

I beg to differ. Far from being "an abstract form" equally applicable "to any and all economic systems," *C/V* are two of the only three original categories Marx contributed to the field of economics to define the specifically capitalistic law or movement of contemporary society. (2)

Reflect on this a moment. Marx transformed the entire science of political economy. From a study of things, it became an analysis of production relations. He wrote some 4,000 pages, or 2,000,000 words, in his analysis of the economic system of capitalism. And for all that, except in three instances, he could use the categories of classical political economy. For those three, however, he had to create new categories altogether.

Now Comrades Novack and Wright take two of these three new categories and assert that they are applicable "to any and all societies."

How is it possible for Marxists to go so completely off the class rails theoretically? The error is no accident. It never fails to appear among Marxist theoreticians who have failed to grasp the essence of Marxism for their specific epoch in strict relationship to the revolutionary activity of the masses. Each stage of capitalist production has posed only two alternatives: either the self-activity of the workers or the plan over the workers. A terrible trap awaits those who do not hold tight to this.

MARX'S CAPITAL AND 'THE PLANNERS'

The theoretical axis of Marx's *Capital* is the question of plan—the plan of the capitalist against the plan of free, associated workers. Chapter XIII(3) in particular is unmistakable in its dialectical opposition between the despotic plan inherent in capital and the plan of the proletariat in the cooperative labor process. The cooperative form of the labor process unleashed a new productive power. The attempt to control this power within capitalistic confines is the basis of the despotic plan of capital. Marx affirms that there can no longer be any doubt about this: The workers' resistance has disclosed that what appeared ideally as plan was in practice the undisputed authority of the capitalist.

We say that today only the actual revolution of the proletariat in the process of production itself can save society. We have written and repeat: future generations will stand in amazement at the equivocal but relentless resistance that the Fourth International carries on against this.

Yet it is one of the unique contributions to the analysis of human society that this very revolt, this and no other, saved society in the middle of the last century. *Capital*, in its inherent tendency to appropriate the 24 hours of the laborer's day for itself, had broken all

bounds of morals and nature, age and sex, day and night. Marx tells us that society itself was threatened. The revolt of the workers established the shortening of the working day. This revolt and its consequences led to the intensive development of machinery.

Bourgeois scientists, as usual, claimed the legally limited working day as a result of their science, their intellect, their plan. The bourgeoisie claimed the invention of machinery as their contribution to human welfare and progress.

Marx poured scorn on these Pharisees. The determination of what is a working day "presents itself as the

result of a struggle, a struggle between collective capital, i.e., the class of capitalists, and collective labor, i.e., the working class" [MCIK, p. 259, MCIF, p. 344]. It was "the product of a protracted civil war, more or less dissolved, between the capitalist class and the working class" [MCIK p. 327; MCIF, p. 412]. The influence of the workers' revolt on the development of machinery should be studied in Volume I [MCIK, pp. 447-457; MCIF pp. 533-543]. But even that revolt, because it did not overthrow capitalism, meant increased despotism.

Marx categorically asserts that since all labor under capitalism is forced labor, plan can be nothing but the organization of production under the domination of the machine. To try to bring order, therefore, into the anarchy of the market of a society based on the factory plan, could only mean subjecting society to "one single master."

On the other hand, the cooperative form of the labor process discloses the socialism imbedded in capitalism. The discipline, unity, cooperative action of the proletariat proves once and for all 1) that its existence as a class presupposed that the fundamental types of all the productive forces of the future have been developed. What is now required is a new method of uniting them. And 2) that the self-development of the proletariat is the new method of uniting them. Without this no higher form of production is possible. Do Comrades Novack and Wright agree with this or not? In *The Invading Socialist Society* we asked Ernest Mandel (4) that question. He did not answer.

Marx's point is that under capitalist production, on the other hand, the only way a rise in productivity can be achieved is the ever-greater domination of machines over living labor. "Johnson-Forest" did not discover this. That is what *Capital* is about.

The consequence of the complete inversion in the relationship of machines to men, with its misery for labor and anarchy of the market, could not help but impress the intellectuals. They were ready with plans for everything except the reorganization of the productive process by labor itself.

Consistently Marx posed the cooperative form of the labor process in opposition to these intellectual planners who could not comprehend this new power. Marx warned: not to see the plan inherent in the activity of the revolutionary proletariat must force one to pose an external factor to do the planning.

He dismissed with utter contempt Proudhon's plan to do away with exchange. For the practical and violent actions of the proletariat, Marx wrote, Proudhon substitutes the "evacuating motion of his head" [Letter to Annenkov of Dec. 28, 1846].

Proudhon was neither the first nor the last of the planners. Planning is not limited to idealists. The abstract materialist who views technological development outside of the class relationship also slips back into considering the capitalistic factors of production as mere factors of any social form of production. That is why Marx created new categories—constant and variable capital—to describe the manner in which machines and labor united under a capitalist economy. In opposition to all the planners—abstract materialist as well as idealist—Marx elaborated his analysis of capitalist production.

In Volume I of *Capital*, the socialistic nature of the cooperative form of the labor process is held out in sharp contrast to the hierarchic structure of capitalist control. In Volume II Marx isolates the capitalist nation and analyzes it as unit:

The revolt of the workers and the plan of the intellectuals

...we must not follow the manner copied by Proudhon from bourgeois economics, which looks upon this matter as though a society with a capitalist mode of production would lose its specific historical and economic characteristics by being taken as a unit. Not at all. We have in that case to deal with the aggregate capitalist. [MCIK, p. 503, MCIF, p. 509].

It is not "Johnson-Forest" who preach that piece of Proudhonism. It is the Fourth International.

The whole of Volume II is built not on individual, private capital, but on aggregate, national capital. (5)

In Volume III, Marx returns to the creative plan of

the workers as the plan most adequate to their human nature and most worthy of it. So that the creative plan of the workers in opposition to the authoritarian plan of the capitalist runs like a red thread through all three volumes of *Capital*.

Now Lenin in 1915 realized that there were aspects to *Capital* that no Marxist, including himself, had understood for 50 years. We, in 1951, can see still further, for the problem posed theoretically by Marx in *Capital* is the very one posed so forcefully in a concrete manner

by our epoch. The Marxist theoretician who has failed to grasp this has invariably fallen into the same trap as the abstract materialist, and singled out some basic element of capitalist production as a mere technical problem. The inescapable next step is to spirit away the class content of the economic categories Marx created. This happened to the great revolutionary martyr, Rosa Luxemburg.

Where Proudhon poured forth all his wrath against the machine but had nothing to say about the modern workshop, that is, the factory, Comrade Luxemburg poured forth her wrath against the modern workshop but let the machine stand as if that could be divorced from its factory environment.

Having divided what Marx had united, she followed the pattern as if she had been stage directed. She said that there is nothing specifically capitalistic in the categories *C/V*. These, she contended, were merely expressions of machine production in "any and all" societies. That is how she began. She ended by revising the Marxist theory of accumulation. (6)

The same, in different circumstances, was true of Bukharin, and precisely, I might add, on the questions of state capitalism and of the economy of the transition period. Both errors were inevitable. The crisis at each new stage of capitalist production needs some solution. There is always a radical bourgeois solution which, of course, only intensifies the crisis.

Let the Marxist theoretician beware. He must find in the specific circumstances the basis for the specific revolutionary action of the masses. If he does not, he is drawn fatally toward the solution posed by the radical bourgeois.

By her theory of accumulation, Rosa Luxemburg anticipated the underconsumptionist theory of Keynes. By his theory of state capitalism and the economics of the transition period, Bukharin anticipated Stalin....

NOTES

1. Fundamental kinship does not mean identical twins. As *State Capitalism and World Revolution* puts it: "We have never said that the economy of the United States is the same as the economy of Russia. What we say is that, however great the differences, the fundamental laws of capitalism operate."—RD

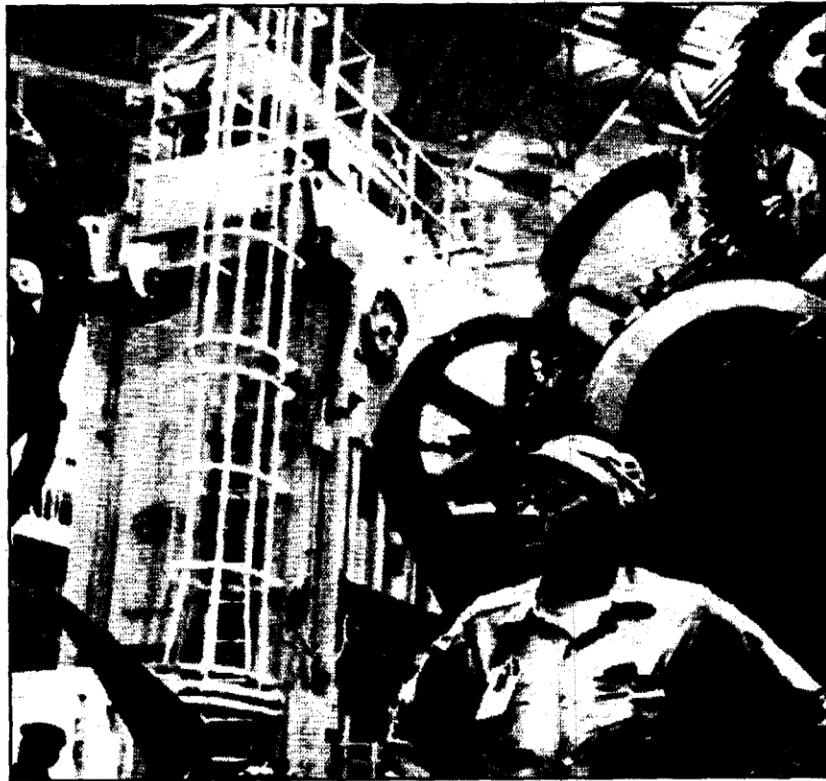
2. Labor power—and with it the split of the category of labor into abstract labor and concrete labor—is the third original Marxian category. (We'll deal with this later.) Commodity, value—and with it surplus value—Marx refined, but the categories themselves he took over from classical political economy. Characteristic of Marx was this insistence of his upon crediting classical political economy with a theory of surplus value it had never elaborated just because it was implicit in their labor theory of value.—RD

3. A reference to the chapter on Cooperation in *Capital*, Vol. I.

4. Ernest Mandel was a leading Trotskyist economic theorist, here referred to under the pseudonym "Germain." *The Invading Socialist Society* was a 1947 pamphlet written by James, Dunayevskaya, and Lee.

5. Anyone aware of the voluminous debates around Vol. II will count 1,000 and 1 before he abandons himself to the assertion that the society Marx dealt with was only an "abstraction."—RD

6. See "Luxemburg's Theory of Accumulation," by F. Forest [Dunayevskaya], *New International*, April and May 1946.—RD



Earl Dotter

PHILOSOPHIC DIALOGUE

Editor's note: We received the following response from a Chinese student to the new collection The Power of Negativity: Selected Writings on the Dialectic in Hegel and Marx, by Raya Dunayevskaya. We welcome your participation in this ongoing dialogue.

In Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind*, the stage of Spirit can help us understand the historical periods of the French Revolution, industrial capitalism, and state capitalism. This stage is featured by "spirit in self-estrangement," or as Hegel defined it, "the discipline of culture" (cited in *The Power of Negativity*, hereafter *PON*, p. 39). Raya Dunayevskaya notes that it is full of "contradiction between the individual and society or between what we would call petty bourgeois individualism and the truly social individual" (*PON*, p. 39).

We might trace Marx's critique of "alienation," or "fetishism of commodities" in capitalist society from the description of spirit in self-estrangement by Hegel: "Spirit in this case, therefore, constructs not merely one world, but a twofold world, divided and self-opposed."

The dual character of labor, that is, concrete labor and abstract labor, results in the twofold character of commodities, in other words, use value and value. Because of this, human beings are separated from the products they produce. They are alienated from the objective world. What's more, they are alienated from other human beings because of the division of labor and large-scale machinery manufacture. Human beings become attachments of machines, and human relations are thingified. In contrast, commodities are endowed with life and alienated by humans. As a result, human beings are idolized from their essential being. Life is dehumanized and creativity suppressed. People cannot freely choose what they like to do. The world appears a prison full of uncontrollable necessity.

This is reflected in the Enlightenment of the 18th century. As Hegel commented, the attempt to oppose faith and superstition, but the sphere of spirit was divided into a lower region—the actual world, and a higher region—"the ether of pure consciousness, raising itself above the first." He added: "This second world, being constructed in opposition and contrast to that estrangement, is just on that account not free from it" (cited in *PON*, p. 40). Superstructure is separated from and opposite to objective reality. Theory is separated from practice.

Later on, in the 20th century, because of this self-estrangement, Marxism could not be developed alongside the changes in the economic conditions of the proletariat and the capitalists. Labor bureaucrats positioned themselves high above the mass and the Communist Party was no longer the mediated result of socialist theory and the practical struggle of the proletariat.

TWO KINDS OF SUBJECTIVITY

An extreme example of the self-estranged spirit is what Hegel calls the noble type of consciousness. Dunayevskaya connects this to the Chinese leader Mao Zedong, who rests his consciousness high above ordinary people and identifies his personal will with the will of the state. Hegel writes that this type of mind binds "the essential reality and self indissolubly together" and produces "a twofold actuality—a self that is truly actualized, and a state power whose authority is accepted as true" (cited in *PON*, pp. 40-41).

To Hegel, spirit in self-estrangement is due to the presence of a first negation without a second negation, resulting in the "dead form of the spirit's previous state" (cited in *PON*, p. 42). Enlightenment stuck to the opposite of faith and superstition, but failed to go on negating itself—the pure consciousness, the culture (superstructure) separated from objective practice. Dunayevskaya writes that it is the same with vulgar materialism and with "Trotsky's forced identification of nationalized property and 'workers' state'" (*PON*, p. 42).

In countries such as Russia and China, nationalized property did dig out the roots of capitalist exploitation by negating capitalist private property. However, controlled by the party and government, it was exposed to free appropriation by bureaucrats in power. In the abstract, the masses owned the property of the whole nation, but actually they were penniless. "Nationalized property" became an abstract idea and an empty slogan. Individual will was suppressed by the authorities in the name of the people. Communism turned into state capitalism and the enemy of humanism.

To Hegel, the second negation, which contains positive elements for renewal, is extremely important. If we stop at first negation, writes Hegel, revolution would become "merely the rage and fury of destruction" (cited in *PON*, p. 42). As Dunayevskaya pointed out, "if you have not faced the question of reconstruction on new beginnings but only destruction of the old, you have, therefore, reached only 'death—that achieves nothing, embraces nothing within its grasp; for what is negated is the unachieved, unfulfilled punctual entity of the absolutely free self'" (*PON*, p. 42).

Because revolutionists failed to address the question "What should we do after revolution," the "socialist" regimes collapsed in one country after another, including Russia and Eastern Europe. Others like China and Vietnam have actually converted to state capitalism, with rampant bureaucratic corruption, while North Korea is ruled by authoritarian government.

This recent history makes us aware that the struggle

Reflections on Hegel, Marx and Mao

for human freedom is never-ending. After we negate the external opposites, we need to negate the internal opposites inside ourselves. We need to negate our previous revolutions with a new revolution, to rediscover the "absolutely free self" from a higher starting point. Then the second negation will provide a positive basis for future negations.

WHAT IS NEGATIVITY?

In his *Science of Logic*, Hegel wrote: "The negativity which has just been considered is the turning point of the movement of the Notion. It is the simple point of negative self-relation, the innermost source of all activity, of living and spiritual self-movement, the dialectic soul which all truth has in it and through which it alone is truth; for the transcendence of the opposition between the Notion and Reality, and that unity which is the truth, rest upon this subjectivity alone. The second negative, the negative of the negative, which we have reached, is this transcendence of the contradiction, but is no more the activity of an external reflection than the contradiction is: it is the innermost and most objective movement of Life and Spirit, by virtue of which a subject is personal and free" (cited in *PON*, p. 20).

The dialectic of negativity is the absolute method. It enables us to keep pace, not only with the development of external objective reality, but also with internal subjective reality—the ever-changing concept of freedom, the ever-progressing human consciousness.

The goal of absolute negativity is to realize true freedom, which is reached in the final stage—Absolute Knowledge. At this stage, human beings will obtain the Absolute Idea, which is the unity of objectivity and subjectivity, the unity of thought and practice, and the mediated result. It is the stage when human consciousness achieves total freedom by grasping the absolute method—the dialectic of negativity. This stage is never the end of human history. Instead, it is the new beginning in the everlasting process of human development.

The Absolute Idea is a process of development, which

goes from individuality to universality and from universality to individuality. All these stages can happen simultaneously. According to Hegel, the object is not just a "thing-in-itself," but the unity of the particular object and its universal notion. He wrote: "The object as a whole is the mediated result (the syllogism) or the passing of universality into individuality through specification, as also the reverse process from individual to universal through canceled individuality or specific determination" (cited in *PON*, p. 17).

Dunayevskaya wrote that Hegel concluded that "nothing in life or in thought has a beginning so simple as is imagined but that 'every beginning must be made from the Absolute, while every progress is merely the exhibition of the Absolute. It is the Absolute only in its completion'" (*PON*, p. 19).

To Dunayevskaya, no matter whether it is "notion," "Spirit," or "absolute," it applied to the development of socialism: "So although we began with the universal of socialism and although we have seen socialism in the various phases of the [Paris] Commune, the Soviets, the CIO, it is not yet IT for it can be it 'only in its completion.' The new society will not be until it is; now we see only intimation, approximations, but it is nevertheless all around us, in the lives of the workers and in the theory of the party, so until the abolition of the division (between mental and manual labor), we are back to stages of development" (*PON*, p. 19).

Based on nationalized property, the so-called socialism in Soviet Union and China was actually state capitalism. Normally, only Communist Party members could hold high positions in the government. Although congress representatives were supposedly elected from the masses, they were actually appointed by party officials of higher positions. In contrast to the bottom-to-top system of democratic election, this top-to-bottom system of official appointment made any supervision by another power or party impossible.

The party was no longer "the Other," or "the mediated result of the three layers," which incorporated and served as a medium between the notion of socialism and the practical struggle of the proletariat (*PON*, p. 17). The party was no longer "what it is by its relationship to the proletariat outside" (*PON*, p. 17).

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World capitalism's unstable economic base

by Andrew Kliman

During the past couple of years, and especially during the last few months, stock prices throughout the world have taken their deepest plunge since the economic crisis of the mid-1970s. Only a few months since the latest recession (apparently) ended, the collapse of stock prices is a signal that yet another downturn may be on the horizon.

Other economic news suggests that a renewed downturn or "double-dip" recession is not unlikely. The latest government statistics indicate that there has been essentially no job creation in the country since February. (In the 11 months prior to February, the number of jobs fell by nearly 160,000 per month.)

Advance figures for the second quarter of the year indicate that the growth of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) slowed to a meager 1.1%, that business investment declined for the seventh straight quarter, and that the growth of consumer spending fell markedly. Several newly released indicators of future economic activity, such as factory orders and surveys of consumer confidence, are also signaling that the economy may weaken in the months ahead.

ANOTHER RECESSION?

The collapse of stock prices might prove to be a cause, and not only a signal, of a double-dip recession. Investors in U.S. stocks have lost about \$7 trillion—an amount equal to 70% of annual GDP the last 28 months. Many of them are working people who, as they redouble their efforts to provide for their retirement, will now have to save more and spend less. In response to a big drop in spending, economic growth would slow down markedly or even turn negative.

Even though stock prices rebounded from their recent lows in late July, they remained very depressed. As of August 2, the Dow Jones Industrial Index stood 29% below the peak it reached in early 2000. More representative stock price indexes have fallen even more sharply. During the past 28 months, the Standard and Poor's 500 index has fallen by 43%, and the NASDAQ index has fallen by a whopping 75%.

Dramatic revelations that Enron, WorldCom, and other giant U.S. companies falsified profit reports, and the consequent bankruptcy, are among the factors contributing to the accelerating plunge in stock prices.

But this is far from the whole story.

Not only did the stockmarket collapse begin well before such revelations, but it is an international, not national, phenomenon. Stock prices have plummeted in every major European nation, as well as throughout Latin America. In most cases, moreover, the decline is roughly equal in magnitude to the decline in the U.S. On average, stock prices throughout the world have fallen by 45% from their peak in 2000, and by 22% from their highs earlier this year.

CRISIS IN PROFITABILITY

We are witnessing the gradual return of worldwide stock prices to where they stood just before a speculative mania, fueled by a fantastic overestimation of the profits to be gotten from computer technology, sent them skyrocketing. The NASDAQ index, which shot up fourfold, has in the past couple of weeks descended to where it stood at the end of 1996, when Federal Reserve Chairman Greenspan warned about "irrational exuberance" overtaking the stockmarkets.

The S&P 500 index, and especially the Dow Jones, still remain significantly above their pre-mania levels. This doesn't mean that stocks will descend to those levels and then stabilize. It is quite possible that stock prices will rise sharply in the near future. It's also possible they will continue to plummet.

The recent financial scandals have helped to depress stock prices because they have made investors worry that companies in which they are investing might be less profitable in the future than they had expected. But investors have many other reasons besides cooked books to worry about the future trajectory of profits.

Company after company has been reporting that its profits are lower than had been expected. Some analysts forecasted that this would be a "profitless recovery"—as well as a "jobless one"—and they are being proven correct thus far. The latest figures show that corporate profits have not rebounded from the depths to which they sunk during the recession. They remain 20% below the peak levels they reached in late 1999 and early 2000.

The U.S. has displayed its military dominance in recent months. But economic and financial events continue to suggest that its military might rests on an unstable economic base.

RESPONSES TO THE DRAFT FOR MARXIST-HUMANIST PERSPECTIVES, 2002-2003: PERMANENT WAR OR REVOLUTION IN PERMANENCE?

I'm new to the radical Left and appreciate how the Draft Perspectives shows that News and Letters Committees is not about providing pat answers to social questions. That's important because addressing manifestations of capital is not a permanent solution. It can be helpful, but it's not a revolution. I didn't understand that before. It boils down to how a small group can't implement a plan on people. When people do come together, that will be a source of power. They aren't willing to settle for pat answers. I also liked that the Perspectives showed that Bush is driven by capital. It's more than that he's a terrible person, he really is a slave to capital.

**New to the movement
Tennessee**

+++

A recent article I read in *Political Affairs* called "The Forever War: Globalization and the New World Order" documented the entrenched, reactionary ownership by the few of our central government and their drive to barbaric oblivion for all. It is a challenge to confront all the deadend roads being again proposed for resolving this capitalist crisis of over-production and declining rate of profits. The Draft Perspectives clearly describes the objective reality and the road to a radical, revolutionary alternative. But, despite all my attempts to understand, I still stumble on "double negation," "the Absolute," and how Marx went beyond Hegel. I feel if I can ever incorporate those concepts into my being, it would be a new awakening for me. Can anyone write an article really clarifying these basic intellectual concepts?

**Frank
Wisconsin**

+++

I have a problem with the discussion of "the negation of the negation." It's a type of double negation that could appear to the uninitiated as containing serious negative connotations. Am I correct to understand that the first negation is destruction of capitalism and the second negation is a reversal of the destruction, i.e., building a new paradigm? It sounds convoluted. Is it just me? Could this concept be more clearly articulated for the masses?

**M.S.
Texas**

+++

In Argentina, which is taken up in some detail in the Perspectives, it really is the women who are pushing the movement forward, even when the reports don't say so. Neighborhood associations in Latin America mean women doing the work. That existed in the poor communities before the bank closures. Women may be one reason why these organizations refuse to be taken over by the vanguardist Left. I wish we could hear more directly from the women themselves.

**Women's Liberationist
Memphis**

+++

None of the things Bush did as an oilman, which voters passed over in the '90s, can be ignored now. Just think

what trouble he'd be in without September 11. The most important thing about the collapse in equity prices is not the lies and corruption, but the fact that the falling rate of profit has become unveiled. The so-called "investor class," a category pointing to the large percentage of Americans who own stock, was supposed to make everyone identify with capitalism and make "class warfare" a thing of the past. Now most realize they are just workers after all, and the economic policies are for the super-rich. Further, we're seeing a dramatic downturn in the last pillar of this economy, consumer confidence, as this deflation in assets hits the majority consuming class.

**R.B.
California**

+++

I'm enclosing for you an article that appeared in a Canadian magazine called *Money Sense*, which is titled "Give war a chance." The writer sees war as still the best business and recommends investments in the stocks of defense companies like Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, General Dynamics and Northrop Grumman, which are expected to jump 26% against a 7% decline for the Standard and Poors 500. Here in plain English we read about the role of war in keeping up and making profit in the oldest most profitable "business." The longer and more intense the war is, the more replacements are needed for the expended cruise missiles, bombs, ammunition, and the newest and latest systems to deliver them. Just imagine what the military budget could do in the fight against worldwide poverty, hunger, and AIDS. When will we finally reach a state of sanity where war will not be the "best business" and instead of giving war a chance we give peace a chance?

**Giorgio
Canada**

+++

The global corporations have made it clear that the future they have in mind for a majority of the human race is a total lack of material security. It has come to the point where they will destroy us or we them. Asking corporate CEOs to be ethical is like asking a tiger to be a vegetarian. The WTO protest in Seattle was good because it was a genuine confrontation. But we didn't see any follow-through. Great revolutions come about spontaneously but an organized strategy is needed to give a direction.

**New reader
Berkeley**

+++

The invitation you printed to ask readers to participate in the discussion of your Perspectives is really great because what you're presenting relates to all of us on the planet. The Left says the U.S. is enemy number one and any others are smaller enemies. But men and women who are suffering in Iran know it is not only Bush but all sorts of fundamentalists who need to be seen as "false alternatives." After World War II we saw revolutions happening in the Third World, but now all these countries are struggling for their daily lives. We are having problems right here. Germany, Japan and the U.S. are going down simultaneously. Could there be a revolution in a developed country like the U.S.?

**Iranian exile
Fremont, California**

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I generally agree with your viewpoints. But I disagree with what you said in the July issue about Hindu and Jewish fun-

damentalism. When has any Hindu or Jewish fundamentalist bombed a church or a mosque in Italy, Morocco, Germany or the U.S.? When did a Jewish fundamentalist anywhere in the world turn a mosque into a synagogue? Yet Islamic fundamentalists have been guilty of such things. While I praise *N&L* for not falling into the anti-Semitic claptrap of the rest of the leftist and "progressive" media, by saying all fundamentalisms have a moral equivalence you are self-defeating.

**J.F.
Marion, Ohio**

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In early July the Senate approved the opening of Yucca Mountain in Nevada (western Shoshone land) as the central storage site for the nation's high level nuclear waste, primarily from weapons production facilities and the 103 nuclear power plants. Catastrophic truck and rail accidents carrying nuclear wastes across the U.S. now become a real possibility. The approval of the facility, projected to open in ten years, now gives the nuclear industry an excuse to build a whole new generation of nuclear power plants and weapons. There is no safe way to dispose of nuclear waste, yet the industry is pushing for more growth. The best solution is to store and monitor for leakage on site, with no transporting—and to stop all future production.

**Basho
Los Angeles**

+++

First came Sharon's march to Temple Mount. Then, his deliberate incursion into Jenin and Ramallah right on the heels of the Arab League's peace proposal. Now we've seen a missile attack in a crowded neighborhood right in the midst of ongoing cease-fire talks sponsored by European diplomats. Let's think. In view of all this evidence can we believe that Sheik Shehada was the "real" target? Or is the real target what Sharon's government deems most dangerous to his regime? The possibility that peace might actually break out?

**Asian American
Oakland, California**

+++

I have no suggestions to add to your forthcoming Convention and discussion. But I would like to say that the publication of *N&L* is invaluable in that it provides a perspective on the dissent within, and sometimes outside, the great U.S. I am sure that many of its readers and contributors, including myself, will never be really grounded in Raya Dunayevskaya's works. Bless those of you who are. Just don't forget where the ground is.

**Longtime supporter
North Vancouver, B.C.**

+++

Many youth today get stuck in a half-way house—that is, only half way to revolution—by embodying their activism through forming more and more co-operatives of some type. As the Draft Perspectives highlights, the revolt in Argentina has come up with some very new and exciting forms of organization born out of the masses' spontaneity. I believe that youth should take the challenge given by the Draft Perspectives in terms of what we as revolutionaries have to offer, "in terms of ideas, concepts, perspectives that can help answer that most difficult question of all—what happens after?"

**Former anarchist
Memphis**

LIGHT IN BOLIVIA?

In the July elections in Bolivia, for the very first time a socialist political party got the second place with almost 22% of the vote. The Movement to Socialism (MAS) was born in the tropical jungle of Cochabamba in a region called Chapare, well-known because there are the biggest coca crops of Bolivia. The leader is a cocalero union chief who has been accused by the U.S. ambassador and DEA of being a drug and crime supporter, and now he has a chance to reach the presidential chair. For the very first

time, the senate and house of representatives are going to have coca growers, Indian representatives and a wide range of people from the most depressed sectors. For the first time in many years I can see some light in the future of my country.

**Carlos
Bolivia**

WOMEN VS. WAR



The reports of four Fort Bragg military men murdering their wives made me go back to reread the June *N&L* article by Suzanne Rose who wrote from North Carolina about anti-war women in military families being beaten by their husbands or his friends.

Women's Liberationists have long documented how war abroad comes home in the form of extreme violence against women. Serbian feminists, in particular, saw their country transformed into one where soldiers, returning from murdering civilians in Bosnia, brutalized their own wives and children. Guns were everywhere. To me, it's no accident that three of the four U.S. soldiers in the recent murders had just returned from Afghanistan. The bravery and reason of the women Suzanne Rose wrote about who had come out against the war is starkly underscored by these murders.

**Terry Moon
Memphis**

IS TIME RUNNING OUT?

The UN has released a report predicting that time is running out for the planet and if society continues on a "market first" direction, the planet's condition in 30 years will be stark: 3% of the earth's surface absorbed into urban sprawl, much of it slums, devastating biodiversity; 55% of humanity facing water shortages; most coastal regions clogged with pollution; almost one third of the world's fish stocks depleted or over exploited; substantial degradation of farmland and destruction of forests. Rather than take the slightest action to prevent this from happening, Bush, lord of the world, shows that he is at the same time the slave of capital by lifting all environmental restrictions on its activity, as much as he can get away with. Although he imagines he is capital's master, commanding it to go forth and multiply, even at the expense of earth itself, he is only articulating its own inner drive.

**Environmentalist
Tennessee**

EMERGENCY APPEAL: STOP INDONESIA MILITARY AID!

President Bush has already convinced Congress to restore some aid to Indonesia and proposes to give millions more. An outpouring of calls and letters to Congress is needed to try to defeat this proposal. Congress cut off aid to Indonesia in 1999 because of its horrendous human rights abuses in East Timor. Now the pattern of military militias that murder, rape and torture unarmed civilians and burn their villages is being repeated in Aceh, Maluku, West Papua and other regions that have dared to demand self-determination in the past few years. Restoring U.S. aid will give the green light to Indonesia to intensify its repression. One woman describes the Acehnese condition as hopeless: "They are fighting the military not because they think they can win, but because there is no way out of their dilemma: devastated if they fight back, annihilated if they don't."

Readers can help by contacting Congress and getting in touch with *News & Letters* about people-to-people solidarity work.

**Anne Jaclard
New York**

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CORRECTION

Two lines from the "Draft for Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, 2002-2003" in the July *N&L* were omitted. On page 8, the line "Convention will focus on perspectives for projecting this" should have appeared at the very bottom of the first column, and the line "other publications will be discussed at the Convention" should have appeared at the bottom of the second column. We regret any confusion this may have caused.

—Editor

LABOR STRUGGLES IN 2002

Demonstrating outside a Taco Bell with ten Immokalee workers, we almost shut the place down—until police came when there was almost a physical confrontation with an angry Taco Bell patron, who tried to run us over. But we got a lot of honks for support from other motorists. It is an amazing movement by workers to have some control over what they do. One of them would yell, "Don't eat at Taco Bell, it makes people poor." It made it concise. He would go up to the cars and talk to everyone and show the relationship of what people were buying to what workers do in the fields. He talked about "solidarity" in doing away with inhuman conditions. One worker told me that despite the bad things he's encountered in the U.S. he likes being a migrant worker because he meets new people, sees new things, and is looking forward to taking back what he's learned to Guatemala.

**Young activist
Tennessee**

+++

I have worked for a used appliance sales and repair shop for 12 years. I repair and deliver any and all their appliances. The store has been sold three times since I came to work here. I have worked for my current boss for three and a half years. When I told him I needed two weeks off for a vacation with my family he told me I couldn't take the time because the place was too busy, and if I took off I was fired and should find another job. I couldn't believe what he told me. Everyone needs some vacation time; my boss takes his, but I can't. I receive no vacation pay and get no medical coverage, but he is going to fire me if I take two weeks without pay. It is difficult to find a different job because my English is not good, but I am a good worker and very knowledgeable in my trade. It makes me very angry to be treated so badly.

**Latino worker
Los Angeles**

+++

Everybody could surely relate to what reporters described as the "bitterness" the rescued coal miner, Brian Mayhugh, expressed when he mentioned that days after the rescue, the miners had yet to hear

from the owners of the company, Black Wolf Coal Co., for which they had been working. It makes you feel they were lucky it wasn't the coal company but state and national agencies that were directing the rescue, or they might still be down there.

What I related to as well was the way his wife added sharply to his revealing comment with an immediate, "Every minute they were down there better be paid as overtime!" The reporter—who was a woman—added "she wasn't joking in the least." No kidding!

**Ex-miner's wife
Illinois**



**THE
BRITISH
LABOR
SCENE**

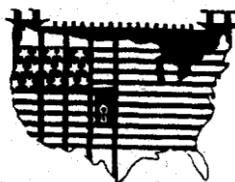
Where to now is the question after a massive strike by local government workers here in Britain. I attended a rally where some 200 to 300 union workers turned up to lobby the local councillors over low pay and their national pay campaign. Nationally the one-day strike where over a million people walked out was the largest strike in 20 years. The mood of the strikers was united but ironically, though a trade union official who spoke paid tribute to the large number of women strikers (650,000 out of one million), not a single woman had been given the mike or the platform. There were the usual handful of socialist paper-sellers but the dead hand of official unionism made it feel that the members were just a stage army. At one point one of the leaders asked the strikers to come together. Like a flash, there were exchanges between the strikers, management and the councillors.

As I left, a small detachment of police marched past me on the road. It seemed to me that the government had been preparing for this strike, since the police had been given their pay rises and promised more of everything. The councillors receive allowances of 20,000 pounds plus expenses and pensions. The average wage of local authority workers is between 5,000 to 10,000 pounds, with women as usual in the lowest pay bracket. The future will depend on the extent

that activists and union members actually run the dispute. Will we see only a cozy deal between New Labour and the trade union leaders or a little more respect and dignity at work?

**Patrick Duffy
England**

**CRIMINAL
INJUSTICE
SYSTEM**



Today (July 31) the Inglewood police issued a warrant for Neilson Williams. On June 23 he was beaten so badly he was unconscious for three days and there is a witness to his beating by J. Morse—the same cop who was seen on tape slamming Donovan Jackson's head on the hood of a police car. Williams was not charged with any crime until today, after he filed charges against the Inglewood police. Now consider that today another Black man was released from prison in St. Louis, Missouri after 18 years for a rape he did not commit. He had been trying to get the DNA tests done for the last eight years, but had been blocked at every turn. Someone has to answer where is the justice for Blacks and Browns and the poor in this country? Something has to change now.

**Angry
Los Angeles**

+++

I enjoy reading *N&L* very much. I have learned a lot about some of the problems in other countries as well as this one. It seems the whole world is against the poor, no matter what color we are. I was poor and white from Maine, which is not as bad as being poor and Black in the South. But it's close. I was picked out because we were poor, just so the cops would have someone to beat.

**Prisoner
Maine**

+++

I am incarcerated at the Supermax prison at Tamms. We are in our cells 23 hours a day, alone in a 7-by-12-foot cell.

To see what we're going through you'd have to lock yourself in a bathroom for 12 years and see how it affects the mind. Yet when I was reading your newspaper it made me feel like I have some hope in getting others to see I am innocent of the crimes I was charged with.

**C.F.
Tamms, Illinois**

**LIBERATION FOR
AFGHAN WOMEN?**

An article in the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that since the "liberation" of Afghanistan from the Taliban, dozens of young women have chosen death by self-immolation in order not to be sold by their families to the highest bidder. One 14-year-old burned herself to death last month after her family sold her to a 60-year-old man. The "dowries" offered reach \$10,000 to \$15,000. According to "observers" women are not self-sufficient and "agree to be married off at an early age." I don't understand how much more strongly you can express your disagreement than by taking your own life!

All the recent news is testimony to how little the "liberated" interim government, created by the U.S. and UN, actually is liberated. The work of RAWA, which recognizes women as human beings, and whose stories you have covered, stands in sharp contrast against any military solution to the problems of liberation.

**Urszula Wislanka
California**

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AND A
REMINDER!**

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Black Belt farmers occupy U.S. government offices

(Continued from page 1)

operation and get rid of the remaining 1%. This agency is corrupt. The employees at the USDA are completely out of control. The president can't do anything with them.

The USDA stalls, so the farmer would not get money to plant until after planting season. That guarantees disaster. If you get the loan after the planting fails, the

BLACK/RED VIEW

(Continued from page 1)

the ceremony signing the farm bill, had little sympathy for African cotton farmers. With the arrogance of a true plutocrat he said, "Maybe the farmers in Africa should be the ones not raising cotton." The concentration of power in the hands of a few cotton growers in the South has long shaped race relations which meant the persecution of African Americans for several hundred years. Now the cotton farmers in the Mississippi delta are playing the same card in the world market.

COTTON AS A DETERMINANT

American cotton farmers can produce much more cotton than African or Asian farmers. They have both the science and the technology to accomplish this and hence it will cost them next to nothing. Thus, the subsidies given to wealthy American cotton farmers in Mississippi by the Bush administration, are really the self expansion of U.S. capital through the pauperization of the African and Asian cotton farmers.

Cotton, as a world commodity, has a long history in shaping economic, political and cultural life in America. Marx, in *Capital Vol. I*, pointed out that the development of cotton spinning machinery in England undoubtedly caused "the growth of cotton in the United States and with it the African slave trade, [and] also made the breeding of slaves the chief business of the border slave states. When, in 1790, the first census of slaves was taken in the United States, their number was 697,000; in 1861 it had nearly reached four million." (p. 485) The plantation system produced tremendous wealth and concentrated political power in the hands of a small oligarchy in the southern U.S. on the basis of a permanent terror against the slave population. Marx said the foundation for the growth of industrial capitalism in the 19th century was the extraction of surplus value from slaves.

TOWARDS ABOLITIONISM, AGAIN

Capital accumulated on the backs of slaves and today that accumulated wealth is lording it over poor cotton farmers in Africa and Asia. In this new reconstitution of the world market, capitalism is as brutal and life threatening as ever. In this country so-called welfare reform has pushed poor Black and white workers into poverty jobs while billions of dollars are going to a handful of rich farmers.

The opposition to "king cotton" by the slave revolts and the Abolitionist movement in the 19th century deepened the idea of freedom. Today's new concentration of power will hopefully bring new forms of solidarity and new manifestations of the idea of freedom as the poor in this country and those fighting U.S. imperial dominance the world over discover ways to work together to overcome global capitalism.

money, instead of being an asset, becomes a liability. Whatever I borrow after a certain date is going to drain the equity out of my business. The USDA is guilty of discriminating against African-American farmers, and they are conspiring to discriminate against us to render us landless. African Americans acquired 16 million acres of land after slavery. Today we own less than three million.

Whether the USDA's decisions are favorable or not, the farmer needs a decision. It's tormenting to deal with local market prices, boll weevil infestation, varmint infestation, and all the other problems. At least he shouldn't have to guess when he's going to get the money. If they could give him the loan in July, why couldn't they have given it to him in time to plant?

The loan applications have to go to D.C. to get processed. The government's got people working for them here but can't make them process our applications. They wouldn't even process these applications for the Secretary of Agriculture while the world was watching! How much bolder, indifferent, and contemptuous can a group of individuals be when the world is watching to see if you're going

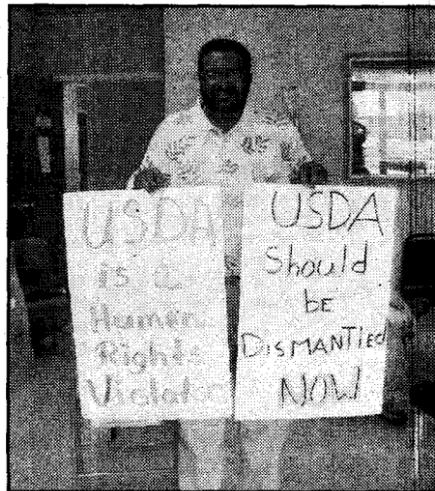
to do the right thing and you don't do it.

I was whacked by the USDA in 1982. I appealed to Washington, because I was five years farming and I only got a loan at the local level one year. I had to go to Washington every other time to get my money. In this one particular year, Washington approved the check for \$106,000. The check comes to the local office and the county supervisor wouldn't give it to me.

I called the state directly and said, "Make the man give me my money!" He said, "They haven't given you your money?" I said, "No!" He said, "You meet me at Congressman Jones' office at 2:00." The county supervisor was there with the check. I was in the Congressman's office and the State Director asked him in front of the District Director, "Why will you not give this man his check?" He responded: "If I give Tom this check, I will not be able to work in Haywood County."

In other words, local whites have threatened him. They don't care what folks in Washington said. Don't you give that man the \$106,000 because the 3,500 acres of land he's working, guess what? We want it back.

So they arranged to give me the money so it wouldn't look like the county supervisor gave it to me. The locals control who gets the check, and they control who gets into office so that certain people don't get the checks.



Protest at Brownsville, Tenn. USDA building.

Reverse unjust conviction of Richard Flood!

Chicago—Richard Flood is a former political prisoner who served time in the Tamms Supermax prison, to which he had been sent in reprisal for his legal and organizing work on behalf of other prisoners. Upon his release in March 2000 he secured employment in Chicago in construction (as a member of Ironworkers Local #1) and continued his political work.

He told us in a recent interview, "When I was in prison I decided to further the work of Fred Hampton and George Jackson by raising the political consciousness of gang members. If we could get them to focus on social change, I decided, it would be a real plus for our movement. The system doesn't want gang members to become political. That's where all the trouble began. I ended up in Tamms because of my political work."

After his release, he worked with the highly regarded Mr. Malo Youth Center in Chicago. "I went to this organization to do volunteer work. I was doing paralegal pro bono work, on landlord tenant disputes, at the time. The Mr. Malo organization is on the Southeast side of Chicago, a very depressed area. I saw it as an opportunity to continue my work with gang members, to try to instill in them a need for social change."

Only a year after being released from prison, however, Richard again found himself in jail on trumped-up charges. On March 24, 2001 Richard and his wife Rebecca stopped at a gas station in Joliet, Ill. He returned from inside the station to find his wife being attacked by three armed persons. Richard, himself unarmed, disarmed one of the attackers; during the course of the struggle, two of the attackers were injured. His wife was seriously hurt, but she was denied medical treatment by the authorities, who also not only refused to arrest the three attackers, but arrested

Richard instead on charges of attempted murder.

The verdict (in October 2001) was as bizarre as the pretext for arresting him. Richard's use of force was found to be justified against one of the attackers but not justified against another attacker! During the trial, the three attackers admitted they were high on crack cocaine at the time. It is undisputed that Richard was unarmed, was not high on drugs, and did not initiate the incident.

Richard's legal counsel did not mount an effective defense. When Richard moved for a retrial, they were unwilling to develop arguments regarding prejudicial conduct on the judge's part. The issue of the judge's conduct was placed before another judge, who denied Richard the opportunity to develop his argument and simply returned the retrial motion to Judge Rozak, who summarily rejected it.

Richard has been subjected to an extraordinary level of harassment in jail. He has been given bogus write-ups for alleged disciplinary infractions and has been hampered in his efforts to file a complaint. The apparent intent is to develop a record of alleged misconduct in order to justify giving him a harsh sentence. On July 12, he was transferred from Joliet to the Kankakee county jail, where he is now being held in isolation. His sentencing is scheduled for August 26.

Richard urgently needs effective legal representation for his appeal. Michael Deutsch of the People's Law Office in Chicago, who has worked with the Center for Constitutional Rights, is willing to take the case. Richard must now raise the necessary funds. Please give whatever you can to his defense. Checks can be made out to the People's Law Office Clients' Fund and sent to Victor Wallis, 411A Highland Ave, Somerville MA 02144. —P.H.

Chicago police home invasion nightmare

Chicago—My granddaughter and I were in an argument in my home on Feb. 16. She was really agitated. She was on punishment because she had missed school, and I wouldn't allow her to leave the house. I am 54 years old, I have asthma and other health problems. I just wanted some help in getting my granddaughter to calm down, so I called the police. My daughter was also at the house with her four little boys.

My granddaughter had gone up to her room and closed the door when the police arrived. When they opened her door they claimed that she had something in her hand. When I entered her room Officer Mendoza was sitting on her legs on the bed, and another officer was sitting on her chest. She wasn't trying to kick or anything.

I told the officers, "Let her sit up. She can't breathe." Mendoza said, "She can breathe, she's talking." Officer Conroy busted into the house and grabbed me and pushed me out of the room. We were facing each other so I was being pushed backwards. The way he was pushing, with my asthma, I couldn't catch my breath. It was terrifying. He pushed me into the living room where my daughter and babies were.

Mendoza and the others were carrying my granddaughter downstairs. She only had a short dress on, you could see underneath. It was winter but she had no shoes. They didn't give her a chance to put her shoes on. Mendoza struck her on the side of her head. There were six or seven police officers there, men and women, but they didn't do anything to stop him. When I was shoved in another room by myself, one Black woman officer came in and said, "Be quiet, be quiet. I see what is hap-

pening here." This same officer told the others to let my daughter get my granddaughter her shoes. But she wouldn't stand up for us in front of the others.

An officer told me, "Get your coat! You're going to jail!" My neighbor had heard all the noise and came over. She called the police and said, "Send a sergeant down here. These police are out of control." Sergeant Mulray arrived and asked, "What do you want me to do?" He didn't do anything but tell me that I was obstructing justice.

At the police station, the officers tried to claim that my granddaughter had struck one of them in the face. I could hear Mendoza trying to agitate my granddaughter. Conroy and his buddies were just walking around laughing. They said, "If you make a complaint we're going to put your granddaughter in jail for hitting a police officer." Mendoza was trying to get one officer to say that he was hurt by my granddaughter.

They let me upstairs at the station when the youth officer came. She said the charges against us would be dropped if we'd drop the charges against Officer Conroy. They tore up the complaint against us. My granddaughter was told that she would have to go to a CAPS program. The youth officer told her that she could have been shot for striking an officer. She tried to scare her.

We have complained to the Office of Professional Standards, but they haven't gotten in touch with us. How could the police just be allowed to come into my home and terrorize us like that? We were all women and children. What about my grandchildren seeing something like that? How do you tell them to call the police when they need help? —Gloria Lewis

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Bolivian campesinos scare rulers

In the June presidential elections in Bolivia Evo Morales, leader of MAS (Movement to Socialism) got 21% of the vote, came in second, and forced a runoff between himself and Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada (of MNR, former president from 1993-1997) who couldn't quite muster 23%. "Evo's" campaign was aided in part by U.S. ambassador Manuel Rocha, who warned Bolivians not to vote for someone who "wants Bolivia to be a major cocaine exporter again." This was a slander against the heroic Aymara leader of campesino coca growers unions who supports the cultivation of coca for traditional consumption and opposes cocaine production. Consumption of the coca leaf predates the arrival of the Spanish conquistadores.

It is estimated that there are some 35,000 families that produce coca in the tropical Chapare region of Bolivia. These people have suffered horribly from a U.S. policy, begun under the previous Bush administration that provided millions of dollars in military aid to eradicate coca fields and next to nothing to help develop alternative crops to cultivate. As opposed to Peru and Colombia, however, where "defense" of coca growers takes the form of guerrillas who terrorize growers as much as the military

does, Bolivia's campesinos have responded by strengthening their unions (a result of the enduring spirit of the 1952 revolution).

This is where Evo Morales's power comes from. It comes from the fact that the ruling class hates him. On Jan. 24 of this year he was removed from parliament, voted out by 104 of the 119 members (he was elected in 1998). He was accused of being the "intellectual author" of violent confrontations between coca producers and the military the prior week.

The government of Jorge "Tuto" Quiroga, pushed along by the U.S., has not been content that some 90% of the coca fields have been eradicated. The policy has now become "zero coca," a poorly veiled slogan that simply means "zero unions," "zero power to indigenous people," and yet more poverty. The revolt in January was set off by a government decree criminalizing the sale of coca leaf.

But Evo, 43 years old, is not just a popular union man, nor just a symbol of Aymara strength. He got 21% of the vote because he says things like this: "We are in an explicit struggle against globalization, Capitalism is the worst enemy of

humanity. It is the worst enemy of the environment. People everywhere are starting to rise against this system" (BBC, June 27).

—Mitch Weerth



War on 'terror' hits innocent in Philippines

An American soldier, accompanied by Philippine troops, shot Buyong Buyong Isnijal, a 27-year-old Muslim from the Lakan tribe on the southern Philippine island of Basilan during a midnight operation on July 25. U.S. troops have been on the island for more than seven months hunting for members of the Abu Sayaf, a militant Islamic fundamentalist group that has largely turned to kidnapping for ransom and banditry.

The American soldier, identified as Reggie Harris, accompanied by two Filipino troops, broke down the door to the Isnijal house and shot Mr. Isnijal in the left leg. Family members, including Jurida Isnijal, his wife, witnessed the unprovoked shooting. After the group of soldiers took Mr. Isnijal away, Ms. Isnijal interrupted an International Solidarity Mission meeting on Basilan in order to report the emergency. The mission is investigating human rights violations stemming from Philippine and U.S. military operations in the region.

The Filipino troops explained that they had found a rifle in a neighbor's house. Mr. Isnijal, bleeding, denied that he owned a gun or that he knew of any rifle that belonged to any of his neighbors. The soldiers then began cleaning his wound. As the rest of the family

watched, the soldiers then took him out of the house and said that they were taking him to a nearby hospital. Ms. Isnijal tried to follow, but the soldiers said that she must wait until the following morning to visit her husband. When she went to the hospital a few hours later, she was informed that the soldiers had already taken Mr. Isnijal to a military barracks.

Liza Maza, Secretary General of Gabriela, the revolutionary women's group, and a congressional representative of the left electoral party Bayan Muna, said that the military has been getting away with shocking human rights abuses just by citing the campaign to subdue and defeat Abu Sayaf. "The Philippines armed forces have become even more abusive and arrogant because of the training exercises they have been conducting with the U.S. troops. This is one other compelling reason why the U.S. troops should leave the country immediately and why the Balikatan [shoulder-to-shoulder] exercises should be permanently terminated. Civilians are being victimized while the Abu Sayaf continues to thumb their noses at the military."

—R. Russell

Workers and students struggle in Iran

Grassroots resistance to Iran's fundamentalist and totalitarian regime has continued to intensify in spite of a renewed effort by the ruling clergy to crush any expression of dissent. On July 9, a demonstration in Tehran on the anniversary of the 1999 government raid on students was attacked. Several student leaders were arrested. A larger student demonstration had been cancelled for fear of a massive police assault. The following week police attacked a demonstration of 15,000 workers who had gathered in front of Tehran's social security department to protest against poor working conditions, low pay and a revised labor law that makes firings easier. They chanted: "Capitalists—leave the labor law alone," and "We are former soldiers, now we are hungry."

CASUALTIES OF REPRESSION

Several political prisoners are in severe danger: Manuchehr Mohammadi, a leader of the United Student Front, an organization that demands a secular government, is near death and has just been transferred to a psychiatric hospital where he has been severely beaten. Mohammadi has developed severe osteoporosis from malnutrition and a hunger strike and is unable to walk as a result. Mohammadi's brother, also a student activist is also in prison.

Siamak Purzand, a 73-year-old dissident journalist and husband of feminist and legal scholar Mehranguiz Kar, has been sentenced to 11 years in prison. On July 25, he was forced to appear on television to "confess to being a Western spy." He was convicted of promoting Western culture and advocating a secular state.

The Islamic Republic has now strengthened its police force through a "Special Unit" which is openly armed and in charge of attacking and viciously beating youth and women who display any expression of resistance. Women are beaten for not wearing a full chador, wearing white or colorful overcoats, showing their hair or exchanging glances with men. Youth are arrested at parties. A visiting Iranian dance teacher from the U.S., Mohamad Khordadian, was arrested and given a 10-year suspended jail sentence for "corrupting" the youth.

DISPUTES WITHIN CLERGY

In this environment, one faction of the clergy has expressed dissatisfaction with corruption within the government. Ayatollah Taheri of Isfahan, resigned on July 10 and sided with another Ayatollah, Montazeri who has been under house arrest since 1998. Both had been staunch allies of Khomeini. Following Taheri's resignation, the supreme religious leader Ayatollah Khamenei banned newspapers from discussing this case. One newspaper, *Noruz*, was subsequently banned for six months for publishing articles about the resignation. This policy of censorship was approved by President Khatami.

The "Freedom Party" of former prime minister Bazargan who helped bring Khomeini to power in 1979, has now been banned and 35 of its members have been sentenced to prison terms. The reformist wing of the Parliament associated with the Participation Front, led by Mohamad Reza Khatami (the President's brother) and Saeed Hajjarani (former head of the secret police who was shot two years ago) is now threatening to resign from the parliament. This wing constitutes 70% of the Iranian parliament. The Participation Front has also advocated mending relations with the United States government.

—Sheila Sahar
July 28, 2002

Mansoor Hekmat— Iranian Marxist

Mansoor Hekmat (Zhoobin Razani) passed away at the age of 51 in London on July 4. His was a strong and confident voice for working class liberation in Iran and throughout the Middle East. The constellation of radical activist organizations he helped fashion spans from Pakistan, Turkey, and Iraq to most of western Europe and North America.

Hekmat first became well-known in the early 1980s for his critiques of "populism" in the Iranian Left, for having tail-ended the Islamists. Implicit in this was a theory of state capitalism. His theory of state capitalism developed later in the mid-1980s that was different than that of Marxist-Humanism, in that he argued the origins of Russian state capitalism was rooted in the 1921 NEP programs and sided more with Bukharin in those debates.

After going underground in Iran Hekmat joined forces with Kurdish revolutionaries to form a non-Stalinist Communist Party, distancing from guerrilla focus theories of the New Left. Hekmat demanded that his colleagues engage workers, immigrants, and civil rights struggles in whatever country they lived. This was a breath of fresh air in the 1980s compared to most of the rest of the Iranian Left who were isolated and self-absorbed.

The numerous publications Hekmat helped found and wrote for, gave a boost to a lively debate on Marxism and socialism, while engaging in support activities internationally for refugees and for dissidents in Iran.

In the late 1980s I wrote an article in *News & Letters* about one of his colleagues, Gholam Keshavarz, who was assassinated in Cyprus by Khomeini's death squads. During that time I worked with several of his colleagues in Los Angeles in numerous labor and immigrant activities.

In the early 1990s with the collapse of Communism in Russia and East Europe, a new split emerged among Hekmat's colleagues. He wrote a new series of articles calling for the establishment of "Workers' Communism" as opposed to "bourgeois communism." The split also involved tensions with the Kurdish revolutionaries who did not want to be fully subsumed under an Iranian organization.

Unfortunately as a theoretician Hekmat never engaged Marxist-Humanism, or Marx's humanism, which could have illuminated many of the dilemmas. Nevertheless he was a serious and worthy figure. His independent standing on the need for revolution, the need for an independent working class movement, and the need to break from the fetishism of unity, were correct. He was the most prolific Iranian Marxist revolutionary theoretician. After September 11 Hekmat was among a handful to quickly single out the need to confront both fundamentalist terrorism and Bush's imperial moves.

Hekmat was a strong voice for liberation that emerged out of the contradictions of the 1979 Iranian Revolution. It is sad that he will not be there when the new generation of Iranians confront the present oppressive regime and overthrow it. But the legacy of his vision of a genuine socialism will keep his memory alive.

—Cyrus Noveen

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Africans struggle against slavery, AIDS, neocolonialism

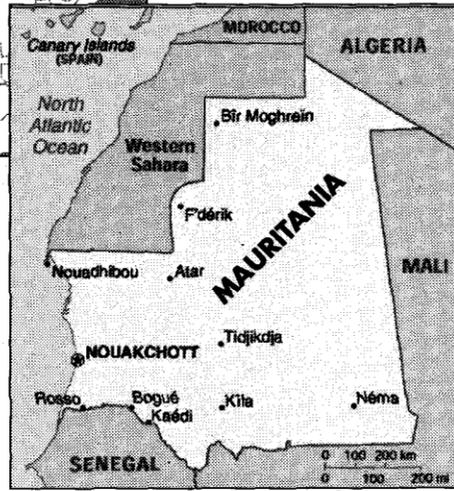
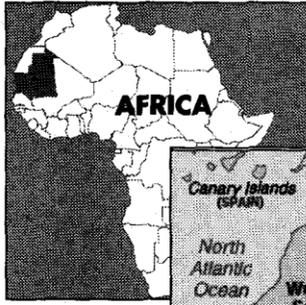
(Continued from page 1)

ture. The more slaves a man has, the more powerful he is. What is amazing is that slaves vote. For the person who has 200 or 300 slaves, their voting power goes to somebody in a town who, for instance, wants to be mayor. Because slaves will follow the instructions from their master, this kind of democracy has created additional interests in having or keeping slaves. Of course, if slaves are free and have the freedom to vote, the Arab minority will lose the guarantee to keep power for themselves.

The Mauritanian population of 2.5 million is divided and subdivided. Among the two main groups, Arabs, who rule the country, represent 30% of the population. Black Mauritians comprise the other 70%. They are divided into two groups. One subgroup, 40% of the population, are slaves or live in the same conditions as slavery. They are Black, but they speak Arabic, much the same way African Americans speak English. They live in their country, but they have no memory of their ethnic origin.

The rest, 30%, live in the South and are divided into four ethnic groups: Pulaar, Soninke, Wolof, and Bambara. They have their own cultures and their own languages. The government has designed policies to destroy the Black African culture in the South. As part of the implementation of that policy, in 1989 it deported more than 80,000 Black Mauritians from their own country and sent them to Senegal and Mali. There they live in refugee camps. The international community, in particular the UN, is not doing anything to help them. The reason for the deportations was to destroy the Black African community in order to make the land vacant for the Arabs along the Senegal River valley.

Besides that, in 1990 the government of Mauritania arrested 500 Black military officers, made them political prisoners, and killed them while in detention. This was documented by Human Rights Watch and by Amnesty International. Before that, in 1989, they



destroyed over 300 villages, which is also documented. The worst is the game the government is playing with slavery. Legislation has supposedly abolished slavery three times. However the intent of the current Mauritanian government has not been to effect freedom, but rather to assuage and lull the international community—and aid donors—into a false belief that action has been taken.

The most recent abolition occurred Nov. 9, 1981 through Ordinance No. 81.234. The second article of that ordinance granted compensation to slave masters for the loss of their "property," whereas no compensation was made to those slaves who were "freed." There is no mention of slave owners being punished for disobeying the law.

For over 10 years, movement organizations have been struggling to put an end to the practice of slavery, but the government has refused to recognize them, and so they cannot operate legally, receive donations or obtain any resources. A member of an illegal organization can be arrested at any time, which often happens. And in January

the main opposition political party struggling against slavery, the Action for Change Party, was banned by the government of Lt. Col. Taya.

The problem is not just the action of the government, but also the international support that regime is enjoying. In 1990 during the Gulf War, Mauritania sided with

Iraq. The reports from the U.S. State Department were very critical. Since then Mauritania has cut off diplomatic relations with Iraq and signed a full diplomatic agreement with Israel as a member of the Arab League. The whole language from the State Department changed. Yet nothing has changed people's lives.

AT THE MERCY OF FOREIGN POLICY

More recently the U.S. is forging alliances that will help it continue its war against terrorism. With the growth of Islam and Arabization of the continent, the U.S. is very afraid. The Arab nations are also paying a lot of attention to Africa right now, with aid for education and health. After September 11, one of Osama bin Laden's close advisors was known to be in Mauritania, and many people were arrested in connection with Al Qaeda. President Bush was in touch with President Taya seeking secret cooperation. So the U.S. government is ready to develop some kind of close cooperation with any country where they can get help. It has even resumed discussions with Sudan.

Within Africa, when refugees from Mauritania started coming to Senegal in 1989 due to the deportations, Abdou Diouf, president of Senegal, stated, "If I didn't allow apartheid in South Africa, there is no way to allow it next to my door," but not long after, he shut his mouth because French interests were in jeopardy. For Mauritania and Senegal are former colonies of France, and if there were a conflict between them, it would put him in a very uncomfortable situation. That's why the two countries were forced to resume diplomatic relations though nothing was done to change the situation with the deportations.

Even where victims of slavery find solidarity, religion and politics interfere. This can be seen in the differences between Sudan and Mauritania. In Sudan there is civil war. In Mauritania there is none. In Sudan women and children are taken into slavery. In Mauritania there is no such thing; slavery is passed from generation to generation. In the case of Sudan, because Christians are the victims, they have the strong support and attention of those in the U.S. and in Europe. In Mauritania since the population is all Muslim, the Americans and Europeans are silent. In terms of human suffering people should not be supported selectively based on religion.

PEOPLE AS ROOT OF CHANGE

Many looked with hope toward the World Conference Against Racism in Durban last year. The U.S. came with conditions, though, not to talk about reparations for the slave trade or about the crisis between Palestinians and the Israelis, nor about economic underdevelopment as a form of racism. Once the U.S. delegates realized that these conditions were missing, they walked out.

They went back to poor African, Caribbean and Latin American governments and told them, "If you work for reparations or Palestinian statehood, we'll cut you off." So the African governments went back to their own NGOs and said, "Look, our hands are tied" and they were absent for votes on those issues. Clearly aid does not come from a human rights approach.

In South Africa itself, liberation is not complete. Although it had a very persistent movement that brought the fall of apartheid, it didn't go far enough in terms of the poor people. And after apartheid, the truth and reconciliation movement didn't transform the system.

Very few national movements today are viable. One movement that has shown itself to have a supposedly socialist perspective in Kenya is Mungiki. They follow the Mau Mau tradition that fought against colonialism. They've been arrested and there have been killings. But they are patriarchal, even requiring female circumcision for membership in their organization.

And then there is the South-South initiative which is a movement within the African continent, but also reaching out to other Southern hemisphere nations, trying to trade with one another. Unfortunately it is not entirely free of capitalism.

The movement, though, is real strong on the local level. You see it by the way people are appealing to their traditional way of relating to one another. Kenyans have a system, especially amongst women, where they farm together and share the resources amongst their communities.

In Mauritania there are two abolitionist organizations fighting for freedom and equal opportunity, El-Hor, which means "the free," and SOS-Slaves. Both organizations educate slaves with the knowledge that they become aware of their rights. These organizations also fight for the criminalization of slavery and the adoption of socio-economic measures to translate the legal fictions of freedom into a lived reality.

In Africa in general, people have learned that they must take destiny into their own hands. Ending gender discrimination and ending poverty in Africa is one way of stopping the spread of HIV/AIDS. Also whenever a chance is given to African countries to organize themselves through the democratic process, they seek to truly do it in their best interests.

There are a lot of movements organized locally by grass roots organizations to fight corruption, to help people rejuvenate their economies, to make sure education is getting to people, and to make sure HIV/AIDS education is getting to people. The resources to do that are not available, but we have the human resources. That's a very strong force.

When the people are trying to make their contribution, we know that diversity is positive and every person, every community has something different to bring. Africa did not have a revolution; it's in the making.

EDITORIAL

Bush's apparatus of repression

Bush's recent efforts to create a massive new Department of Homeland Security (even the name sounds like a creature of Nazi Germany) is the largest government reorganization in 50 years. The proposal includes all kinds of new domestic surveillance measures, permission for the military to engage in law enforcement, "national standards" for state driver's licenses (in other words, national identity cards), and much more.

As Alison Mitchell described it *The New York Times*, the new department "is nothing less than a project to transform American society" (July 28). Moreover, Tom Ridge, White House director of homeland security, said that creating the new department is not "the end of our reform efforts, it is the beginning."

TOTALITARIANISM IN THE WINGS

Civil libertarians have been up in arms about the FBI lifting its rules against spying on non-criminal domestic groups. They have also condemned Bush's call for neighbors to report on neighbors. This scheme to create a nation of informants would have been called Terrorism Information and Prevention System, or TIPS. Even Republicans compared TIPS to Orwell's nightmarish "1984" and to Stasi, the former East German Communist police spy system.

Most serious is the elimination of constitutionally protected rights that has been proceeding systematically all year, with much more planned for the future. Right after September 11, the government passed the USA-PATRIOT Act. It defines domestic terrorism as actions that appear intended to intimidate or coerce the government; classifies immigrants as terrorists for any crime not committed for money that involves a weapon and expands prohibitions against Americans giving aid to any groups designated "terrorist."

Bush and Attorney General Ashcroft also began attacking non-citizen immigrants by taking away the right not to be imprisoned without charge or deported without cause. After September 11, 900 people were swept off the streets, and many remain in prison nearly a year later. We don't know how many because their names were never released and many have not been permitted contact with lawyers. On Aug. 1 a federal court decided these measures were unlawful. The Justice Department is sure to appeal.

Thousands of young immigrant men were ordered to report for interviews with the local police although some police departments refused to call them in. Recently all immigration "green card" holders were ordered to file notice of their current addresses with the INS upon penalty of deportation.

Furthermore a few days after September 11, Bush established, by executive decree, a new kind of war crimes tribunal for foreigners, lacking even the standards of established "military justice." Some criticism was heard, and the government has yet to conduct such a trial.

The USA-PATRIOT Act allows the prosecution of anyone aiding an organization that the Attorney General lists as "terrorist," and there is no judicial review of the list. You can contribute to what appears to be a worthy

cause today, and find yourself arrested tomorrow because Ashcroft just put that group on the list.

If anyone thinks the mild resistance by some in Congress, experts, and the media against these measures will stay the government's hand in stripping away our civil liberties, they are naïve. For one thing, some of these measures show that the president can accomplish by executive decree just about anything he may be unable to get Congress or the courts to approve.

Every time Bush discusses his war-without-end and the need for "homeland security," he is preparing new assaults on our freedom. Perhaps he was hoping to blunt public outcry by eliminating civil rights incrementally. The next stage after the initial attacks on immigrants was attacks on their lawyers. In April the government indicted Lynne Stewart, a noted criminal attorney, and her assistant for allegedly passing information from a jailed client to his Islamic fundamentalist followers.

The "evidence" was obtained by wire-tapping their jailhouse conversations. All Stewart's client files were seized as well. Inasmuch as the right to communicate confidentially with one's lawyer used to be a linchpin of U.S. criminal law, this is an assault not only on immigrants and lawyers, but on everyone's attorney-client privileges.

GOODBYE TO HABEAS CORPUS

In May the government jailed José Padilla, a U.S. citizen accused of planning to build a "dirty bomb" and of meeting with Al Qaeda operatives. The government solved the problem of what to do with him by declaring him an "enemy combatant" and throwing away the jailhouse key, eliminating his Constitutional right of habeas corpus (to be brought before a judge) and right to counsel. A federal judge is now considering whether this is legal.

About two dozen people have reportedly been jailed since September 11 under the material witness law. After 10 months, a federal judge upheld the government's power to continue to hold one such man who is allegedly a witness to someone else's political views. There is no claim that the witness committed a crime.

September 11 has become an excuse for all levels of government to resurrect racial profiling and racism of all kinds—and to take our eyes off police brutality—and for government to collect personal information about people from their employers, schools, libraries and websites. The debate over procedures such as searching selected people at the airport, tends to assume that there is a need for invasive security measures, and that the problem is only "how much" or "balancing" civil liberties and security.

This kind of discussion gives the impression that the whole issue is no more than a matter of how many hours you are willing to spend in the airport, and invites the public down a slippery slope of compromising its own rights. In fact, the dangers ahead are serious threats to all. Preserving one or another civil liberty now is no guarantee that it will be awarded in the future, but we would be wise to fight now in the hopes that we will be able to fight later.

VOICES FROM THE INSIDE OUT

by Robert Taliaferro

"Why did you drop out of school?" the pre-test application asked. "Was it due to family problems (drunk father, drug use), or were there other reasons?" Test takers were even surprised that there were questions that they felt alluded to other issues such as homosexuality.

When the students would query the tester about the intrusiveness of the pre-test process, they are given the boilerplate answer of "statistical references" as the reason behind the questions. If people choose to stand on their right to privacy, they are denied access to the test until they decide that their education is more beneficial than their individual rights.

Even nature calls are treated with disdain, and if people have to use the restroom in the middle of the exam, they are either forced to deal with it...or fail. Upon failure, students must wait six months before they are allowed to test again.

Students note that they do not have problems with the harder academic standards that are required. They are upset with the one to two-hour-long session that they had to endure to even get to the test—which many felt intrusive enough to qualify for a national security clearance rather than necessary items which would act as previews of their educational skills.

One of the saddest things about democracy is what people have to be willing to give up in order to live in the culture. Since the war on terror has begun we are informed that there is a price to freedom, and that cost translates to one's loss of privacy.

The loss of privacy can mean different things to different people, however, and as such, is more acceptable to some than to others.

To many whites it is a vision of security, a defined view that their elected officials are taking their safety

Blockade hits transit discrimination

Memphis, Tenn.—We're proud members of ADAPT (American Disabled for Attendant Programs Today). We were waiting at the bus stop and saw a bus with a wheelchair lift coming around 3:15 p.m. The bus driver saw us sitting there in our wheelchairs, he braked slightly, then pulled off. He refused to stop. The bus wasn't crowded, he just didn't want to pick us up.

We started calling MATA (Memphis Area Transit Authority) mainline and MATApplus trying to get a ride back to work. MATApplus is the transit system for people functionally unable to use the fixed route system. According to the Americans with Disabilities Act, if the mainline bus fails in any way, MATApplus is supposed to pick up the slack.

We couldn't get hold of any of the powers that be. We called James Anglin, the MATApplus manager, and William Hudson, the

MATA president. Nobody was in their office and the staff at MATApplus kept transferring us or wouldn't answer our call or wouldn't return our calls. We just got tired. We knew the next bus would come at 4:08 p.m. Just as it was coming around the corner we saw a MATApplus bus pull up across the street. I thought, aha! They're here to pick us up. Wrong! They picked up



Michael Heinrich / Memphis Center for Independent Living

another guy. We saw a mainline bus coming and decided to block it. We figured, nobody is calling us, nobody is giving us anything, so let's stop this bus and maybe we can negotiate.

We had been out all afternoon trying to get some way back to the office. Then a MATApplus bus did pull up, and someone told us that was the bus we were to get on.

When we started towards it, the driver of the bus we were blocking took off, and so did the MATApplus bus. So we decided to block the van of a MATA supervisor who came out here. The police are here, but MATA is not going to prosecute us for blocking their bus.

They aren't going to prosecute us because they know that they're in the wrong and totally incompetent. It's 5:35 p.m. now. Transportation in Memphis for disabled people is totally undependable. But a lot of people with disabilities have no choice. You have to get to your job; get home from your job; pick your children up from day care; go to the grocery store; go to the doctor. You're at their mercy. The drivers who passed us by will probably not even be reprimanded, it happens so frequently.

—Renee and Deborah

Protesters challenge World Food Summit

The streets of Rome were filled with 40,000 protesters in June, marching against the World Food Summit held under UN auspices. Participants included farmers from the Third World and Europe, environmentalists and activists from the movements against capitalist globalization, who contrasted the politicians dining on lobster and foie gras with the 12.8 million southern Africans now at risk of starvation.

The U.S. led the fight to turn the World Food Summit into a vehicle for biotech and agribusiness multinational, using the fight against hunger as a pretext for selling biotechnology and demanding opening of markets.

Many delegates from poor countries objected. Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni insisted that technology is not the solution: "The most fundamental problems are not the weather; are not lack of improved seeds. The main causes of food shortages in the world are really three: wars, protectionism in agricultural products in Europe, the USA, China, India, and Japan, and protectionism in value-added products on the part of the same countries."

The U.S. did not even let the summit recognize the right to safe and nutritious food, which is implied by the 1948 UN Declaration on Human Rights.

Many protesters echoed the message of French farmer and anti-globalization activist Jose Bove: "GMOs (genetically modified organisms) are no answer to hunger. It is just that big multinationals want to control all the rights to seeds."

Activists also held a counter-summit in Rome, the

World Forum for Food Sovereignty. The counter-summit's closing declaration attacked "globalization and liberalization, intensifying the structural causes of hunger and malnutrition [resulting in] displacements of peoples and massive migration, the loss of jobs that pay living wages, the destruction of the land and other resources that peoples depend on, an increase in polarization between rich and poor and within and between North and South, a deepening of poverty around the world, and an increase of hunger in the vast majority of nations."

The declaration called for "strengthening of production by the poor themselves for local markets or the radical redistribution of access to productive resources that is fundamental to real change for the better." To the plans of the rulers, it "counterpose[s] the underlying concept of Food Sovereignty as the umbrella under which we outline the actions and strategies that are needed to truly end hunger."

As important as it was, what the declaration disregarded was that the phenomenon it attacked, "the unbridled monopolization and concentration of resources and productive processes in the hands of a few giant corporations," is the law of development of capitalism. Or to be precise, one pole of that law, the other pole being the growth of poverty, unemployment, revolt of the exploited working class, and new passions and new forces to uproot this outmoded capitalist system, which has shown a far greater ability to generate famine and war than human development.

—Franklin Dmitryev

Beware new GED

seriously. Piece by piece they have been slowly conditioned to this intrusiveness in the guise of protecting their homes, businesses, money, streets, or peace of mind from the hoards of drug dealers, gangsters, and sociopaths that are supposed to be roaming the streets.

For Blacks and other people of color, it is a vision of more incidents of profiling and abuse. Police are defined as these heroic knights of old who are conquering the dragons of terrorism, and if the collateral damage includes a few Black, yellow, brown, or red faces, that is simply the risk that one must take in the culling out process.

To the rest of the world it is the chessboard of American imperialism stretching forth its hand with billions of dollars to play with toys developed—but never used—during the Cold War, in a new war that will define Bush's presidency, but like Vietnam, will never be truly won. It allows for him to deflect public opinion away from any real problems in his administration.

And all the while when we fill out our taxes, take out a library book or use the internet, use a credit card, get a driver's license, or take a test, the defining issue of democracy—freedom—is seeping through the bureaucratic fissure of intrusiveness that defines our culture.

To the students who had to sit through this process, it was felt that this was simply another form of profiling people; as one young brother called it, "academic profiling," that when mixed with other factors may very well establish a criteria for test-taking workers who might get passed over for a job, or promotion, based on the information of that pre-test query.

"Only people who have taken the GED and come from a family that did not abuse drugs or alcohol need apply to the service jobs that we have available." For the others... Well, there's always war!

Inglewood mass rallies

Los Angeles—The Black and Brown communities are up in arms over the beating of 16-year-old Donovan Jackson, July 6, by Inglewood police and Los Angeles County sheriffs. The beating was seen around the world when a video camera caught his head being slammed on the hood of a police car, and then showed him slugged in the face by an Inglewood police officer—all while Donovan was in handcuffs. Donovan's only "crime" was wanting to know why the sheriffs deputies were questioning his father who was simply filling his car with gas.

Donovan is now charged with resisting arrest and assaulting an officer. The man who videotaped the police beating of Donovan, Mitchell Crooks, is now under arrest for hit-and-run and burglary warrants which are over five years old. Since this incident there have been many community rallies, marches and town hall meetings in Inglewood.

There was a meeting of 700-800 at the Inglewood high school with many young women and men very angry about the behavior of the Inglewood police officer who beat Donovan. This officer has a history of abuse complaints against him. Now the proof is on videotape. He has been placed on administrative leave with pay. The young people at the meeting wanted him in jail where they would be if they were involved in a beating caught on video.

Several days later there was a rally and march of up to 1,500 at the Inglewood police station with many political and church leaders in attendance. Some of the comments we heard from the community people were: "There should be a two strikes law for police" and then "No, it should be a one-strike law." This "racial profiling has to stop. They are now doing it to all immigrants as well."

A few days later there was a meeting of 1,200 held at Faith United Methodist Church in Inglewood headed by Rev. Andrew Gaither. He is the only minister who openly supported the LA 4+, the young men who were tried after the L.A. rebellion of April 1992. He has always been in the forefront of struggles in the African-American community for freedom and dignity, especially that of Damian Williams who is now having to stand trial on the trumped up charge of murder by the 77th Street police station—part of the Los Angeles Police Department's racist profiling.

Some 2,000 attended a Town Hall meeting, a few days later, with many in the Black and Brown communities joining the struggle.

There is a prayer vigil at the Inglewood police station every night with 300-400 people, new faces all the time. This struggle will continue until the profiling and abuse is stopped

—Judy Tristan and Georgianna Williams

Forum on AIDS

Chicago—Gregg Bordowitz and Darrell Gordon, longtime AIDS activists, spoke at a Video Machete forum, July 26. Bordowitz compared the recent AIDS conference in Barcelona, Spain, to that in Durban, South Africa two years ago. Barcelona had a heavy presence of pharmaceutical companies, as well as political figures including ex-president Bill Clinton. Neither had been present in Durban.

There, the grassroots Treatment Action Campaign brought 5,000 people out into the streets wearing T-shirts emblazoned with "HIV+." Around four million people in South Africa are HIV-positive and around 29 million people in sub-Saharan Africa as a whole. This compares to about one million in the U.S.

The spread of AIDS is perhaps the most serious threat to humanity today. China has 70% of intravenous drug users testing positive. HIV has been discovered in every province. In India there have been three to four million reported cases, with eight or nine million estimated. The fastest growth right now is in Eastern Europe, with the epidemic of intravenous drug use there spreading HIV through needle sharing.

There has been a huge shift in AIDS activism's focus as the epidemic has spread in the Third World. Bordowitz, who is a filmmaker-activist, showed some footage from his film "Habit" on the Treatment Action Campaign in South Africa. TAC's focus is on the delivery of HIV treatment to the poor. In response to pressures, pharmaceutical companies lowered prices of anti-retroviral drugs by 40-50% but many in poor countries still can't afford them.

Brazil has been producing its own generic version of the drugs since 1992, in violation of patents, and as a result it has cut mortality rates by 50%. This is in line with the results in developed countries. Brazil provides the drugs free to HIV-positive people. India also produces its own drugs, but it doesn't have a system of delivery to the poor, only the wealthy.

When South Africa threatened to break the patent agreements, 40 pharmaceutical companies threatened a lawsuit, but it was dropped under pressure. That is one of the recent victories in AIDS activism. For now the World Trade Organization won't bring action against countries that violate trade laws in production of AIDS drugs.

Another victory in recent years has been the role of ACT UP Philadelphia. Bordowitz and Gordon described how the largely African-American led group successfully pressured the Clinton administration to reverse its support for the WTO's moves against Brazil, as well as how it brought the issue of AIDS to the attention of the anti-globalization movement.

—Gerard Emmett

OUR LIFE AND TIMES

War continues in Afghanistan, Pakistan

by Kevin A. Barry

U.S. planes bombed a wedding in southern Afghanistan in July, killing 40 people and wounding 100. This and other attacks on innocent civilians have begun to create hostility to U.S. forces, where there had been a measure of gratitude for driving out the widely hated Taliban.

June's long-awaited *loya jirga* or national assembly also left a bitter taste. Under U.S. orchestration, the resulting government continued to be dominated by ethnic Tajik Northern Alliance warlords, some of them almost as fundamentalist as the Taliban or Al Qaeda.

One example was the treatment of Sima Samar, the most prominent woman delegate, who was elected deputy chair of the *loya jirga* in a secret ballot. In response, a newspaper run by elements of the Northern Alliance accused Samar of having "insulted Islam," under a headline calling her "the Salman Rushdie of Afghanistan." After death threats followed, Samar announced that she would step down as Minister for Women's Affairs to head a less visible human rights commission.

In neighboring Pakistan, reports of horrific violence against women have surfaced in recent weeks. The most outrageous case was that of Muktarin Bibi, who was raped by four men on June 22 after a bizarre village "trial." Upper-caste men—elements of the Hindu-based

caste system still survive in Pakistan—were seeking to cover up their own rape of Bibi's 11-year-old brother. To this end, they accused the boy of sexual advances toward one of their female relatives. As "punishment" for his family, a village court dominated by the upper castes ordered Bibi to be raped by the four men.

The fact that these reports from Pakistan's villages are reaching the international press is a sign of the determination of rural women to speak out and resist. Since Bibi's case became public, dozens of other women have gained the courage to come forward to file rape complaints.

At the same time, Islamic fundamentalist groups continue to organize in Pakistan, capitalizing on mass resentment over increasing U.S. domination of the region. Like Bush, they wish to see world politics polarized between, on the one hand, the U.S.'s imperialistic

"permanent war on terrorism" and, on the other, their own reactionary form of anti-imperialism. This polarization serves to close out labor, leftist, and feminist forces.

The new stirrings among women and other progressive forces in the region, however, suggest the possibility of a liberatory alternative to both the Islamists and the U.S.-backed "authorities."

Walkout in Canada

Toronto city workers staged a two-week general strike in July. At its height, some 22,000 workers walked picket lines. The strike left garbage uncollected and closed down swimming pools, ferry service, and needle exchanges for IV drug users. Finally, the Ontario provincial legislature voted for binding arbitration, after "pro-labor" New Democratic Party members betrayed the strikers by giving up plans to delay the vote. This forced an end to the strike.

This strike was not undertaken lightly. It concerned not wages, but the very existence of unionized labor in Toronto. The city government has announced plans to privatize municipal services, which could subject workers to mass layoffs. It offered to guarantee the jobs of only those with 10 years of seniority. The city even spurned a counter-offer from the labor bureaucracy that would have cut this to six years, still leaving thousands of workers in jeopardy. Now the arbitrator will no doubt propose a rotten compromise.

Holland moves Right

Amsterdam, Netherlands—A new administration took power in the Netherlands, in July, an outcome of the elections of May 14. The new administration represents a right-wing answer to the problems facing world capitalist society.

Two items already speak volumes—the interests of working class people and human rights. If I read the proposals of this new government properly, there will be a deterioration in the labor conditions for the working class. Unemployed and medically-rejected people have to fear large financial cutbacks and limits on their rights to get social benefits. In the case of human rights, several limitations will be introduced regarding immigrants and political exiles. There is talk of these restrictions being the most severe in Europe.

A number of things in the process of a strong move to the Right deserve notice.

The former government, and the traditional political parties, have no real answer to the problems facing world capitalism. They adjust themselves to the status quo, and the so-called "new" party, the LPF (the party of the late Pim Fortuyn, who was assassinated on the eve of the elections in May) is no exception.

A lot of traditional social-democratic voters either did not vote, or voted for the LPF. This is a process one can see everywhere in Europe where social-democratic parties were part of the government. These parties, which in name are leftist but which in practice follow neo-liberal policies, are receiving strong blows. The bourgeois ideology is everyday poured out to the people, resulting in the impression that the LPF would do something new. Actually, this party is a right-wing populist party and the ideas of Fortuyn are in line with those of Berlusconi in Italy and Haider in Austria.

The move to the Right, which was already going on for a long time, was strengthened by September 11. It has become clear that individual terrorism—the successful attempt on the life of Fortuyn—does not stop the move to the Right. On the contrary, it forms a climate for more repression.

—K.L.

New war crimes of Sharon and Hamas

Israel's Prime Minister Ariel Sharon carried out another war crime, on July 23. Under his orders, a U.S.-supplied F-16 fighter jet fired a missile into an apartment building in the crowded Gaza Strip. They did so in order to assassinate a Hamas leader, Sheik Salah Shehade, who had been linked to numerous attacks on Israeli civilians. When the dust cleared, besides Shehade, 15 civilians were killed, among them eight children and a two-month-old baby. Most did not even live in the same building as Shehade. Sharon called the attack "one of our major successes."

In a response that showed an equally ghoulish disregard for human life, the fundamentalist Hamas set off a bomb in the cafeteria of Hebrew University, killing seven young students. Another Hamas bomb killed nine people on a commuter bus, most of them also civilians.

As Hamas and Sharon continued their grisly competition in terror, a new study revealed that malnutrition has become rampant among Palestinian children suffering under Sharon's lockdown of nearly one million people on the West Bank.

Left surges in Brazil

Polls in July continued to give Workers' Party (WP) candidate Luis Ignacio "Lula" da Silva a commanding lead in presidential elections scheduled for October in Brazil. The prospect of a victory by Lula, a former Marxist, has caused tremors in the financial markets, despite moves to the Right by the WP, which now calls itself "post-socialist."

Brazil is the world's ninth-largest economy, but also a land of grinding poverty. Wealth and power have long lay in the hands of a tiny landowner-military elite. In the impoverished Northeast, where Lula grew up, the law turns a blind eye toward the slave labor that is still widespread in the lumber and cattle industries. Brazil's national debt stands at \$250 billion, much of it state funds that were siphoned off by corrupt politicians and generals with the complicity of international capital. These cozy arrangements would surely be challenged were Lula to win in October.

Mass strike in Britain



Britain saw the largest strike in more than 20 years, July 17, as over a million local government workers walked off their jobs across the country demanding a 6% pay increase. Two-thirds of the strikers were women who remain in the lowest paid jobs.

Mexican airport protest

More than 1,000 Mexican peasants seized government hostages, in July, as part of a protest against airport construction on their land. After several days, as support demonstrations mounted across the country, the Vicente Fox government agreed to free jailed peasant leaders, to increase compensation for confiscated land, and to provide new jobs and land to the peasants. During these events, peasants recalled before TV cameras how their grandparents, then part of a movement led by Emiliano Zapata, had seized the land from the wealthy few during the Mexican Revolution.

In recent weeks, the government finally began to honor promises to open some files of the Federal Security Directorate, the dreaded secret police. Working together with the military and the CIA, the secret police repressed student, labor, and peasant activists, often sending them to their deaths after horrible torture. The most notorious case was the massacre of hundreds of student protesters in Mexico City in 1968. Human rights activists have deplored the fact that swift prosecutions of those responsible, many of them still alive, are not on the agenda. However, pressure for action may build as citizens begin to examine the police files.

NEWS AND LETTERS COMMITTEES

Who We Are And What We Stand For

News and Letters Committees is an organization of Marxist-Humanists that since its birth has stood for the abolition of capitalism, both in its private property form as in the U.S., and its state property form, as it has historically appeared in state-capitalist regimes calling themselves Communist as in Russia and China. We stand for the development of new human relations, what Marx first called a new Humanism.

News & Letters was founded in 1955, the year of the Detroit wildcat strikes against Automation and the Montgomery Bus Boycott against segregation—activities which signaled a new movement from practice that was itself a form of theory. News & Letters was created so that the voices of revolt from below could be heard unseparated from the articulation of a philosophy of liberation.

Raya Dunayevskaya (1910-1987), founder of the body of ideas of Marxist-Humanism, became Chairwoman of the

National Editorial Board and National Chairwoman of the Committees from its founding to 1987. Charles Denby (1907-83), a Black production worker, author of *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*, became editor of the paper from 1955 to 1983. Dunayevskaya's works, *Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today* (1958), *Philosophy and Revolution: From Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao* (1973), and *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* (1982) spell out the philosophic ground of Marx's Humanism internationally, as *American Civilization on Trial* concretizes it on the American scene and shows the two-way road between the U.S. and Africa.

This body of ideas challenges all those desiring freedom to transcend the limitations of post-Marx Marxism, beginning with Engels. In light of the crises of our nuclearly armed world, it becomes imperative not only to reject

what is, but to reveal and further develop the revolutionary Humanist future inherent in the present. The new visions of the future which Dunayevskaya left us in her work from the 1940s to the 1980s are rooted in her discovery of Marx's Marxism in its original form as a new Humanism and in her re-creation of that philosophy for our age as Marxist-Humanism. This is recorded in the documents on microfilm and open to all under the title *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection—Marxist-Humanism: A Half-Century of Its World Development*.

Dunayevskaya's philosophic comprehension of her creation and development of Marxist-Humanism, especially as expressed in her 1980s writings, presents the vantage point for re-creating her ideas anew. Seeking to grasp that vantage point for ourselves and make it available to all who struggle for freedom, we have published Dunayevskaya's original 1953 philosophic breakthrough and her final 1987

Presentation on the Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy in *The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism* (1989), and donated new supplementary volumes to *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*. News and Letters Committees aims at developing and concretizing this body of ideas for our time.

In opposing this capitalistic, racist, sexist, heterosexist, class-ridden society, we have organized ourselves into a committee form of organization rather than any elitist party "to lead." We participate in all class and freedom struggles, nationally and internationally. As our Constitution states: "It is our aim... to promote the firmest unity among workers, Blacks and other minorities, women, youth and those intellectuals who have broken with the ruling bureaucracy of both capital and labor." We do not separate mass activities from the activity of thinking. Send for a copy of the Constitution of News and Letters Committees.