

NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

Vol. 48 — No. 5

JUNE 2003

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WORKSHOP TALKS

Union label layoffs

by Htun Lin

We have heard a barrage of reports in local newspapers on Kaiser Permanente (HMO) exporting members' personal, medical and financial information to India where it now subcontracts information technology functions and data processing. The outrage was that this endangers patient privacy, which was supposedly guaranteed by a recent act of Congress.

Among us workers the real issue is that this is the latest phase of a ten-year restructuring program, which has resulted in the elimination of thousands of jobs as well as replacement of permanent employees with ones from subcontracting temporary agencies.

'TECHNO-CASTE' CHEAP LABOR

The Indian computer workers are part of the new "techno-caste" in a global economy. Many American information services companies are exploiting them as cheap scab labor. Our unions need to put a stop to it, if they're worth the dues we pay them each month. The road to Kaiser's action today was paved many years ago in contract language sold as "job protection" by our own union to those of us who questioned it. The constant erosion of our job security was enhanced by a labor-management partnership in the midst of this restructuring.

When our union leader agreed to allow Kaiser to insert provisions on "automation" and "reduction in force" in our contract, many of us felt uneasy. When we asked why this was even being broached in bargaining, the response was: "This is a protection, should it become necessary for Kaiser to automate some func-

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BLACK/RED VIEW

'The Souls of Black Folk' 100 years on

by John Alan

W. E. B. Du Bois' *The Souls Of Black Folk* was published on April 18, 1903, a hundred years ago. It was republished throughout the 20th century, probably because, as Du Bois predicted, the color line was the problem of the 20th century. According to David Levering Lewis' biography of Du Bois, the first edition was an "electrifying manifesto mobilizing a people for bitter, prolonged struggle to win a place in history. Ironically, even its author was among the tens of thousands whose conceptions of themselves were to be forever altered by the book."

DUAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND FREEDOM

Du Bois' thesis is that African Americans live in "a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this dual consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of the other, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels this twoness—an American and a Negro, two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings, two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder."

Du Bois says African Americans want to end their twoness and "attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face."

When Du Bois wrote that African Americans want "to end their 'twoness'" and be free, he grasped the

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Movements for freedom in Latin America challenge U.S.

by Mitch Weerth

Since the Iraq war ended the Bush Administration has turned its attention to Latin America again, this time with a renewed confidence that its logic of tagging all social movements as "terrorist" that need to be taught to kowtow to America's military might will garner no significant opposition.

Bush's jewel at this moment is Colombia, a country that provides him with a special opportunity to carry out his militaristic vision for the region.

Colombia's right-wing president, Alvaro Uribe, was in Washington on April 30 to pick up his check for \$100 million—a payoff for joining the "coalition of the willing," even though no material aid for the Iraq war came from Uribe's regime.

More than \$2 billion in military aid has flowed into Colombia over the past few years from the U.S., ostensibly to fight drug trafficking. As one would expect, this aid has only increased the horrors flowing from Colombia's 40 year old civil war: already this year 50 leaders of different indigenous communities have been assassinated, either by government forces, paramilitary groups organized by landowners, or the so-called Marxist revolutionaries, the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia).



Mass labor rally in La Paz, Bolivia during the February crisis.

In 2002 the country suffered 3,366 political assassinations, 735 "disappeared," 184 union organizers murdered, and 353,000 displaced due to the violence, all in a country of 42 million people.

Colombia is starting to look a lot like the Israel-Palestine conflict, insofar as neither Uribe, Bush, the FARC nor paramilitaries appear the slightest bit interested in anything but endless war.

Colombia also represents more to the U.S. than a solid military outpost in South America, replete with oil. It also carries a crucial ideological role, for so long as the war drags on, it is easy for the U.S. to claim that

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U.S. refuses to answer for Dunn Field toxics

Memphis, Tenn.—The continuing fight of the residents who live by the Defense Depot here, a Superfund pollution site, is coming to an end and the 99% Black community is losing. The latest battle was a meeting for public comments last month that the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) called to disseminate information about how one of the Depot's most polluted sites, Dunn Field, supposedly would be cleaned.

Conducted in a way that is guaranteed to disempower the community, these meetings are alienating in the extreme. The information is disseminated in a way that is difficult for a poor and poorly educated community to use. In this case highly technical information was sent out in CD-ROM format a week before the meeting. At the meeting, the material is presented by an engineer, using an overhead projector, following a script to the letter. None of the technical terms are broken down.

STEAMROLLER MEETINGS

After the expert's presentation, only clarifying questions about it will be entertained. If you're lucky, the expert may answer a question, but only if it addresses exactly what he presented and does not venture into any other aspects of the Depot Superfund site cleanup.

After the allotted time, the community is finally allowed to make comments, but are limited to five minutes at a time. But none of the comments, or questions, will be addressed at the public comment meeting. There will be no real discussion or dialogue.

Rather, the comments will be recorded and then, several weeks later, there will be a "Responsiveness Summary," a report that supposedly addresses these questions and comments. That report might say that the comments or questions don't make sense, or answer them in a way that is impossible for anyone but a scientist to understand. The whole process is designed to stop real dialogue, and to protect DLA and EPA officials from coming face to face with the people whose lives and health are impacted by the decisions they make behind closed doors.

At the meeting, Marquita Bradshaw, founder of Youth Terminating Pollution, tried to address the process itself: "Not everyone in my community even has a computer, and it took the DLA and EPA years to gather this information, to do the science, but they only give us a week to go over it," she said. Ms. Bradshaw and others pressed for a longer comment period in order for the community to be able to study the mater-

ial.

One of the criteria set by law for a cleanup plan is "community acceptance," which is to be "evaluated" after the plan is decided—meaning that it will be forced down the community's throat. How can there be "community acceptance" when the community will not be able to understand this mountain of technical documentation by June 6, the end of the comment period?

How can there be "community acceptance" when the community has not been involved in the process? There were only a handful of community residents there, outnumbered by the bureaucrats and government contractors making money off the cleanup. The government's lies, ridicule and stonewalling long ago managed to drive the community away from public meetings, and since the community has learned through harsh experience not to trust them, any claim of "acceptance" is a total fraud.

NEIGHBORHOODS POLLUTED

The Depot is a classic case of environmental racism, with the white power structure and its Black shells covering up their half-century-long poisoning of the overwhelmingly Black community and former workers there, who suffer tremendous health problems and deaths.

Astonishingly, 50 acres of Dunn Field—three quarters—are to be "cleaned" simply by declaring that nothing needs to be done to them, because they are supposedly below regulatory "levels of concern." Yet, as Depot neighbor Stanley Tyler pointed out at the hearing, the plans are based on the false assumption that they know what chemicals are in the ground and water, and where: "It was a dump. And with a dump you never know what was put, how much, and when. We just can't say with certainty what's there and how much is there and when it was put there."

Peggy Brooks, who lives directly across from Dunn Field, tried to humanize the proceedings: "I'm concerned, now that all the studies have been finished,

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ON THE INSIDE

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WOMAN AS REASON

By Maya Jhansi

What is choice? How do class and race complicate the politics of choice? These are the kinds of questions addressed in a new book, *Policing the National Body: Race, Gender and Criminalization*, edited by Jael Silliman and Annanya Bhattacharjee.

In this anthology, activists and writers associated with the Committee on Women, Population and the Environment (CWPE), a multiracial feminist organization, expose the realities of criminalization, violence and poverty faced by women of color, and raise a number of provocative questions about the future of the women's movement. In the 1990s, the CWPE focused on exposing the misogynist assumptions of environmental activists and population control advocates.

In this anthology, the writers continue this CWPE tradition of challenging false assumptions, not only of mainstream society, but of activist and feminist communities. Several writers bring out the ways that poor women and girls come under the control of abusive state and global policies, often in the guise of feminist-friendly rhetoric.

JUST CHOICES

Several essays—"Private Fists and Public Force: Race, Gender, and Surveillance" by Anannya Bhattacharjee, "Better Dead than Pregnant: The Colonization of Native Women's Reproductive Rights" by Andrea Smith, and "Killing the Black Community: A Commentary on the United States War on Drugs"—take up the ways that the criminalization of poor women of color results in a brutal, violent attack on reproductive choice. The racist crackdown on "crime" has been accompanied by an ideological assault on Black, Latina, Native American and poor women. This has led to a direct policing of women's bodies by the State, either through appeals for the "welfare of the fetus" or through endangerment or neglect of the health of poor women.

In addition to addressing the specific realities of women of color, the authors in this anthology are engaged in a dialogue about the women's movement in general. Several argue that the movement has been depoliticized by the current focus on public policy rather than grassroots organizing. For example, the Black Women's Health Project, which had 120 local chapters and thousands of members in the 1980s, dwindled down to less than 10 chapters in the 1990s, after it opened a public policy office in D.C. and closed its community organizing office in Atlanta (p. 150).

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WOMEN WORLDWIDE

by Mary Jo Grey

The Massachusetts House Ways and Means Committee voted April 29 to eliminate funding for all rape crisis programs in Massachusetts. Women's groups are rallying international support to stop this travesty before it takes effect in July.

Women from ethnic minority groups in northeastern Burma are reporting sadistic rapes by the military, which human rights groups are calling authorized and systematic. Initial allegations were made last year by the Shan Women's Action Network, documenting incidents of rape or sexual violence against 625 women and girls, committed by soldiers from 52 military battalions—25% of these resulted in deaths. A study by Refugees International, released in April, charged: "Women are raped during forced labor assignments, while farming, or in their own homes, and also when they are trying to flee to Thailand."

More than 200 students, faculty and supporters rallied at Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio, in March, protesting the university president's cancellation of a production of the play, *The Vagina Monologues*. Father Michael Graham, the university's president, objected to the play's "language and themes" about women's sexuality. The show did go on, however, when Economics Professor Nancy Bertaux sponsored it as part of one of her courses. Students spearheaded the production to raise money for a local women's shelter, and to promote awareness of violence against women. The play was condemned by the Cardinal Newman Society as "vulgar" and "spiritually destructive" with "no academic or social value to students at a Catholic college."

A university to serve women of poor Asian nations, including Afghanistan, Cambodia and Vietnam, is scheduled to open in September, 2005. The government of Bangladesh has donated land and organizers from around the world are raising money to build and operate the school, providing a four-year college education for women who could not normally afford it. To learn more or offer your support, visit www.asianuniversity.org.

—Information from off our backs

Race, class and the politics of choice

Instead of mobilizing a critical mass, many feminist organizations are engaged in placing a few women in power through electoral politics. As the authors of "Just Choices: Women of Color, Reproductive Health and Women's Rights" point out, more than a decade has passed since the last national conference on reproductive health. What this means is that we are represented "by a few women speaking on behalf of the many rather than the many speaking for themselves" (p. 150).

In addition to this critique of activism, there is an important but largely underdeveloped theoretical critique in many of the essays. For example, several authors critique the "market model" of choice offered by the liberal feminist movement, i.e. the assumption

that choice is simply the ability to choose (buy) contraception from a range of options. This leads some pro-choice advocates into supporting the use of untested and dangerous forms of birth control and chemical sterilization, such as depo-provera, quinocrine and norplant, simply because they are cheap and easily available—of course, for use on poor women's bodies.

COMPROMISING FEMINISM

Betsy Hartmann's essay "The Many Faces of Population Control" is one of the most thought-provoking. She sharply criticizes the The UN Cairo+5 population conference in 1999, which was much touted by feminists for replacing population control strategies with a focus on women's empowerment and family planning. However, Hartmann writes, the Cairo conference was at best a double-edged sword. It allowed women to challenge their governments on a range of reproductive issues, but at the expense of compromising with their neo-liberalist agendas.

Because mainstream groups saw the Vatican and fundamentalism as the main problem, economic issues about development were seen as less important. Fear of fundamentalism led many women's groups into alliances with government delegations committed to neoliberal market policies, because they supported "choice."

The result of this "strategizing," Hartmann argues, is that "the Cairo consensus reinforces the belief that economic and environmental 'scarcities' are caused by population growth, not by a highly unequal, unstable and unjust global capitalism" (p. 274). This supports the assumptions of racist population control advocates. Though the rhetoric may have changed from "population control" to "women's empowerment," the "fertility of poor women" is still seen as the cause of "the ecological destruction of the whole planet" (p. 259).

Hartmann roundly criticizes the global women's movement, as well as the U.S. movement for allowing the onslaught of fundamentalism and the Right to restrict their critiques of the government. For example, feminists remained largely uncritical of Clinton because he supported international women's rights, though at home, he yielded to the Right's demonization of women of color by abolishing welfare.

All in all, this anthology suggests the need for a deeper, more uncompromising and inclusive women's movement. There is, however, no serious discussion of the threat of fundamentalism, which does indeed police the bodies of women of color in many parts of the world. In the interview at the end with Angela Davis on post-September 11 realities, fundamentalism is not even mentioned. Nevertheless, the anthology is an important book to discuss for people who are interested, not only in the ability of a few to choose, but in the emancipation of all women from violence, poverty, brutality and patriarchal control.

NY pro-choice picket



News & Letters / Anne Jaclard

New York—A picket line of feminists greeted a gala affair by the anti-choice organization, National Right-to-Life (NRL), at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel on April 29. Supporters of abortion rights from NOW, NARAL, and Planned Parenthood managed to shout and wave signs at fancy-dressed women and men attending an awards ceremony at the Waldorf, where NRL honored a number of famous actors and other people who work to deny women the right to control their own bodies.

The picketers' creative signs included a mock photo of a couple in bed with a legislator in between them. We were reminded by the virulent reactions of some people going into the hotel that abortion remains one of the most divisive and emotional issues in the country, all these years after we thought we had won this fundamental right. But many more people applauded than cursed us as they went by on the busy street, especially women.

—Anne Jaclard

Open Letter from women of Kosova

Below we print excerpts of a letter to the women of Iraq from the Kosovar Women's Network, a network of local women's groups and NGOs in Kosova. The full text is at www.womensnetwork.org. —Ed.

The dictatorship of Saddam Hussein vanished under the heavy bombing of the American and British forces. Many rejoiced the day when a government that persecuted...its own people disappeared. The big question is what comes next...As women's groups that work in a post-conflict area, run mainly by a United Nations (UN) administration, we have a very complex story to tell to the women of Iraq.

Kosovar women started organizing in the early 1990's and...resisted the persecution of the Kosovar Albanian population by...Slobodan Milosevic. When war started in ex-Yugoslavia, we became part of the regional women's networks that raised their voices against the war and provided help to women and refugees...When the war came to Kosova, women's rights activists became refugees themselves, but never stopped working with women and for women....

We greeted joyfully the decision that put Kosova under a UN administration. The UN was to us the revered international organization that developed and passed key documents that stipulated women's rights and promoted their integration in all levels of decision-making. But, when we returned home we were, unfortunately, disappointed by the UN Mission in Kosova (UNMIK)...Some of the international staff came to Kosova thinking that this is an extremely patriarchal society where no women's movement can flourish. And there were those who wanted us to do all the ground-work for them...but were not interested in listening to us and acknowledging our expertise....

Instead of dedicating all our energy to helping women and their families put together lives shattered by war, we expended effort in fighting to be heard and in proving to UNMIK that we knew what was best for us....

But we did not give up. We raised our voice.... We encourage women in Iraq to organize, raise their voice and be part of the rebuilding of their country.

We, Kosovar women don't support a US military administration in post war Iraq. But if the UN takes on civic administration in Iraq, its time they change the principle of their work.

HELP IRAQI WOMEN FIGHT FOR THEIR RIGHTS!

SUPPORT THE PUBLICATION OF AN INDEPENDENT WOMEN'S NEWSPAPER IN BAGHDAD!

"Our vision is that women should not bend down under the burden of religion, nationalism, tribalism, and Political Islam. Women should stand upright. We should be strong. We are beginning to organize, starting from the north where we can function better, and we will spread to the center and the south."

—Yanar Mohammed, Coordinator of Defense of Iraqi Women's Rights

Iraqi women have a long and valiant tradition of fighting for their rights. In 1958, 45,000 women demonstrated in the streets for their civil rights—a good decade before the modern American feminist movement was born.

Due to Saddam Hussein's brutal Ba'ath party regime, repeated U.S. imperialist war and genocidal UN sanctions on Iraq, most of the gains of women have been overturned. However, Iraqi women continue their fight.

Two independent women's organizations, Defense of Iraqi Women's Rights (DIWR), and the Independent Women's Organization (IWO) with the support of the Worker's Communist Party of Iraq, have been working in Northern Iraq to run a women's shelter and fight against Iraqi civil laws based on Shar'i'a that sanction "honor killings" and other misogynist laws and practices.

IWO has 2000 members, and since the opening of their shelter in the '90s, have saved 250 women from "honor killings."

In the wake of the latest U.S. assault on and occupation of Iraq, IWO and DIWR are launching an independent newspaper EQUALITY in Baghdad to fight for the rights of women to be included in the political debate over Iraq's future. But they need your help! Show your solidarity with the women of Iraq by making a donation to:

Yanar Mohammed and DIWR
5 Sunny Glenway, Unit #115
Toronto, ON M3C2Z5
Fax: 416-724-7104
Yanar2002@hotmail.com

'Terrorist' peace march to docks

Oakland, Cal.—The peace movement took to Oakland's docks again on May 12. This demonstration, also organized by Direct Action to Stop the War, was especially important in the wake of last month's police riot against a demonstration at those same docks (See May N&L).

Several hundred people marched from the BART station to the docks, setting up picket lines at five gates through which truckers pick up cargo from the ships. Some people were prepared for another police assault, some were just armed with the knowledge that we can't let police intimidate us. In fact, no visible business was taking place. The gates were locked and no trucks were going in or out.

Unlike last time, the police presence was minimal. They even posted signs on the roads warning drivers to expect delays during the protest. American President Lines, one of the two companies shipping weapons for the U.S. military, had postponed an incoming ship.



News & Letters

So the atmosphere was mostly festive, with a brass band and many songs condemning Bush's policies both abroad and at home, and a feeling that "we won" this time. The real question, as expressed by one of the demonstrators, was not taking over a street corner for a time. "It is a war of ideas."

This peaceful reassertion of our right to dissent came after much fallout from the previous demonstration. The Oakland City Council called for an outside investigation of the incident. There have been hearings and numerous testimonials incriminating the police conduct from the protesters who were shot.

It turns out that just before April 7, the California Anti-Terrorism Education Center (CATIE), staffed by the FBI and drawing \$6.7 million in state funds, issued a memo stating that intent to shut down the port is "a terrorist act."

The Oakland Tribune reported that, when confronted with a complete lack of evidence of any planned terrorism, CATIE spokesman Mike Van Winkle said such evidence wasn't needed to issue warnings about war protesters.

"You can make an easy kind of a link that, if you have a protest group protesting a war where the cause that's being fought against is international terrorism, you might have terrorism at that (protest)," said Van Winkle. "You can almost argue that a protest against that is a terrorist act."

The official logic that a protest against Bush's war is a terrorist act is very chilling. That is equal to the biggest lies from Stalinist Russia. It is a war of ideas, but words are used to mean their opposite.

—Participants

A fitting tribute to a worker's life

Please accept this contribution to your appeal in memory of my father, Paul Kelch (1917-2003), who died last month. As I said at his memorial, Dad was something of a hero to me, although "heroic" is the last way he would have characterized himself. In fact, he was one of the most self-effacing human beings I've known.

There were three aspects of his life that especially speak to me in these troubled times. At the start of WWII, Dad was eager to sign up, but seeing the horrors of war he became a soldier who threw his gun in the river and never wanted anyone close to him to have anything to do with war.

After the war, he was a strong union supporter for 30 years in UAW Local 212 at Chrysler in Michigan, especially in enforcing health and safety rules. This was the period when the union movement was a force in tremendously expanding access to education and health care that my generation grew to take for granted and is in mortal danger now.

Finally, Dad's unionism was as a rank-and-filer who didn't hesitate to go against the union. He was one of the leaders of a wildcat strike against the introduction of time-study. This was the beginning of the now pervasive use of computer technology that lords it over truckers. (See "Chrysler truckers wildcat against time-study tyranny" June-July 1970 News & Letters.)

Those three moments—opposition to war, worker solidarity, and a struggle for genuine democracy in our everyday working lives—reveal a direction that is the opposite of our world of permanent war and terror.

—Ron Kelch

A prayer for fools

Pray for money
 Pray for the good life
 Pray for enemies
 Pray for friends and families
 For the crops in the field
 The ships at sea,
 Bombers in the night sky,
 So that bombs that fall upon
 Those beneath may taste their death,
 Bring them waters flowing ill disease
 Weeping children cut down as weeds
 God bless those in power over us
 God like in their dance.
 May we submit to their hypnotic trance
 Bend our knees at their suggestion.
 Slaves for ever and ever with out remission

—Patrick Duffy

Los Angeles May Day

Los Angeles—Over 10,000 demonstrators, mostly from south of the border, marched on May Day through downtown Los Angeles to the Federal Building. They held a rally with a performance by a lively Mexican musical group, climaxed by speakers addressing the crowd. Signs included "Stop the Scapegoating," "Legalization Now," "Drivers License Now," "Health Care, Not War" and "No To U.S. War."

The event was sponsored by MIWON (Multi-ethnic Immigrant Workers Organizing Networks) which includes Immigrant Workers Union, Garment Workers, Korean Immigrant Workers Advocate and other organizations.

Activists from progressive organizations such as Assi workers, United Teachers Los Angeles, Bus Riders Union and others, as well as independent individuals, supported the immigrants.

Today's intensifying immigrant bashing and deep cuts in all levels of government social and civil programs, like health care and education, and increasing unemployment, are tied to Bush's wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Bush justifies his wars at home and abroad by the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 but they also stem from today's world economic crisis, the worst since the Great Depression.

—Basho

Stop Coke killings!

Chicago—Over 100 trade unionists and supporters marched through the Pilsen neighborhood on May 3 to rally in front of the Coca-Cola bottling plant on Cermak Road. The crowd had gathered to protest Coke's complicity in the murder of trade unionists in Coca-Cola's bottling plants in Colombia. Coca-Cola's Atlanta headquarters has frequently distanced itself from responsibility for atrocities committed at any of its Latin American plants on the grounds that the bottlers are locally owned. Coke has in particular disclaimed responsibility for the murder of at least eight trade union leaders at Coca-Cola in Colombia as at the hands of the semi-official death squads.

The key speaker was Luis Cardona, a union leader from Colombia, who survived to tell the tale because he and his family fled to the U.S. from Colombian death squads. He has fought the efforts of the Bush administration to deny him asylum, and is currently staying in Chicago. (See March N&L) This Saturday rally was timed to the plant's normal 2:00 pm closing. For some reason the plant closed at noon this one day, so, as organizer Jerry Mead said, one concrete result of the rally was giving Chicago workers an extra two hours off.

—Participant

Liaoyang jail terms

The Liaoyang City Court in China's Liaoning Province handed down draconian sentences on May 8 to labor activists Yao Fuxin and Xiao Yunliang, seven years for Yao and four years for Xiao. The authorities had held death sentences over their heads since their January trial on concocted added charges of "endangering state security."

Given the apparent deterioration of the workers' health over the last 14 months of incarceration, Xiao's eyesight and Yao's heart and mobility, even their prison terms sound like death sentences. But even the state mouthpiece People's Daily acknowledged their continued defiance within the courtroom.

The original charges of "illegal" assembly, marching and demonstrating were outrageous enough. Yao and Xiao had been arrested in March 2002 along with other activists called the "Liaoyang 4" or "Liaoyang 5" for their involvement in a massive protest of up to 30,000 laid-off workers at the Liaoning Ferroalloy Factory.

That demonstration was just one of a wave of protests by workers at state-run and privatized factories throughout the Northeast of China. They were demanding that the state and factory authorities make good on empty promises of back wages, pensions and severance pay.

Police used force to prevent 300 workers from entering the courtroom to support the workers on trial. Even their relatives were barred from attending the sentencing, except for one daughter of each defendant. Yao did not even have his lawyer present. Authorities "quarantined" him on the pretext of the SARS epidemic.

It is utter arrogance on the part of China's rulers to make use of SARS to further limit workers' rights. After all, it was state policies of denial and suppression of information that allowed SARS to get out of hand. State and Communist Party authorities have used the same methods with SARS as they perfected with AIDS in China, attacking not the disease but anyone who speaks out with the facts, as if the truth about either disease would "endanger state security."

Labor groups around the world will be protesting the harsh sentences for Yao Fuxin and Xiao Yunliang. But the greatest fear of China's state-capitalist rulers continues to be workers' opposition within the country. The seeming overreaction to mass protests of Liaoyang workers in 2002, like jailing and execution of workers forming autonomous trade unions in 1989, indicates that China's workers and the growing army of the unemployed may yet determine China's future.

—Bob McGuire

WORKSHOP TALKS

(Continued from page 1)

tions. It will require them to give us 90-days notice and will allow us to transfer to other jobs. Failing that, it gives us a severance package."

The union leader passed this off as positive, as some kind of insurance policy. But a severance package means at most one month's salary, and even that only after ten years of service. In any case, what he never discussed was the phrase "should it become necessary" to automate. Why should it be necessary? Why should outsourcing and subcontracting be "necessary"?

The union talked us into language for our own elimination. Now the information technology workers who are in the union at Kaiser and who have been used to eliminate other union workers are themselves being eliminated through outsourcing and the technology of global information flow.

For workers there is nothing "necessary" about this. Technology is used to control our working lives. This is even more apparent in other jobs. What the West Coast dockworkers agreed to means technology will replace several thousand clerks in the ILWU.

That is a continuation of what ILWU workers have suffered historically with containerization. ILWU head Harry Bridges negotiated that part of early post-World War II automation into the dockworkers' contract, declaring, "You can't fight progress." Workers know that technology is introduced into the workplace to eliminate us and to more thoroughly dominate us. This is no "progress."

BOTTOM LINE TECHNOLOGY

We reject capital's "necessity" to automate as an article of faith under the present regime. That article of faith to which labor leaders unfortunately genuflect is capital's ultimate hegemony over workers' lives. That necessity is the drive to discipline labor. This is facilitated by the labor bureaucracy, preaching to the rank and file about capital's "necessity."

There has been at Kaiser a top down fantasy about a rosy future for us with the introduction of more technology. I still remember Dr. David Lawrence, our former CEO, declaring a huge billion dollar IT project, ten years ago. "A laptop for every MD" he declared. All medical information would be online, "at your fingertips."

Not only has this paperless dream not been realized, the real result of that vision is the use of computers to enhance the bottom line. A priority is keeping track of patient's co-payments and making sure they are collected up front.

Computers are also transforming the whole health process. Much of a nurse's working life has been transformed into recording data. Getting the paperwork done now is a top priority. Most of the hands-on real care is now given by low paid nurses aides. Mechanization means much healthcare is working according to a recipe where the trend is to erode independent judgment. Staffing levels are managed so by design there is never much time to give to individual patients.

UNDER WORKERS' CONTROL

It is time for us workers to put some real flesh on the demand for quality care that was begun by the nurses in the midst of this maelstrom called restructuring. Technology, under workers' control, could enhance human capacities for the well being of patients and workers in general.

While our labor leaders have resorted to legislation and lobbying, they sidelined our initiative in our every day activity, allowing management's bottom-line prerogatives to dominate health care, the most recent example being outsourcing IT work to India. We workers need to regain the initiative for quality care on the shop floor where it only began, by making the struggle for workers' well-being the prime-necessity of our daily activity. This is the only way to overcome capital's "necessity".

From the Writings of Raya Dunayevskaya
MARXIST-HUMANIST ARCHIVES

Editor's note

This month marks the 50th anniversary of the first mass revolt against Stalinist totalitarianism—the June 17, 1953 uprising of the workers of East Berlin. It was followed soon afterward by a revolt inside Russia by prisoners at the Vorkuta slave labor camp. In light of the claim by today's ruling ideologues, that it is impossible to oppose totalitarianisms from within, Raya Dunayevskaya's discussion of these two mass uprisings takes on a special importance.

The following document, originally entitled "Two Pages of History That Have Shown the Way to Freedom," was written on April 23, 1955, at the time of the founding conference of News and Letters Committees held that same month. For a fuller discussion of how the 1953 East German revolt and Vorkuta uprising signalled the beginning of the end of Russian totalitarianism, see Dunayevskaya's *Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today*, chapter 15. All footnotes here are added by the editors.

The letter, which can be found in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, 12042–12046, has been edited for publication; footnotes are the editors'.

On June 17, 1953 the East Berlin workers came out in a strike against the Communist rulers. This unprecedented action began as a strike against "higher norms," that is, speed-up, and developed into calling for the release of political prisoners and the formation of a new government through free elections. It was the first strike to have occurred in a country under Russian occupation and it thereby changed the political face of Europe.

A few weeks later another "first" occurred that shook the Kremlin to its foundations. This time it was a strike at its own slave labor camp at Vorkuta.(1) This strike, inspired by the East German revolt, was even more remarkable than the first in that it was organized underground by prisoners who had no rights whatever and right under the noses of the NKVD (the Russian Secret Police).

We now have the story of this other strike in a most remarkable book by a Dr. Joseph Scholmer, an inmate there who experienced imprisonment by the Gestapo for his anti-Nazi activities only to be re-arrested by the Russians after his liberation for his anti-Russian sentiments.(2)

This eyewitness account of the Vorkuta revolt is distinguished from all other stories of forced labor camps by its passionate and relentless struggle for freedom. Even the horrible conditions in these camps stand out not for their terror but by virtue of the prisoners' sense of humor; from their reference to the guards' tommy-guns as "balalaikas" to their tales of how Jews meet the new anti-Semitism by writing, next to the word, nationality, "Indian." It is this humanity, this comradeship, which made living tolerable and united them not alone in the aspiration to revolt but the actual planning and execution of it.

'NOT IN THE WILDEST DREAMS'

The strike in July 1953 could not have occurred without the previous underground formation of resistance groups within the camps, which were led by the various nationalities of Russia, mainly Ukrainians. Yet the strike as it occurred was entirely different from the action planned previously.

Prior to June 17 all the preparations for resistance to the totalitarian rulers were based on the eventuality of war and therefore looked to the Western rulers. When Stalin died [in March 1953] hope spread through the camp but all that came from the Eisenhowers and Churchills were condolences to the leaders who continued the Stalin regime. Once June 17th took place, on the other hand, the Vorkuta prisoners saw that the workers and only the workers, of whatever country, must achieve their own liberation and by their own methods. East Germany had shown the way and they decided to follow up that strike.

"For a time," writes Dr. Scholmer, "the prisoners had not really been thinking in terms of outward success at all. They were just intoxicated by the strike....For all those taking part in it, the strike was simply the first positive defiant action of this sort ever to take place within the Soviet Union. And that was enough. It was something unheard of, something which no one had ever thought possible even in his wildest dreams."

THE STRIKE ITSELF

Indeed, the most remarkable part of the strike is that it ever took place at all. For most participants it

On the 50th anniversary of the June 17, 1953 East German revolt

The myth of the invincibility of totalitarianism

was the first strike they had ever been in. It was the ordinary man in the camps that had to bear the day-to-day burden of the strike. At first they just refused to work. But then they actually organized a public meeting right in the camp. They elected a strike committee of their own in which all nations were represented, and informed the camp police that they better withdraw because the prisoners themselves were taking control of the camp.

The police did so, not of course without informing Moscow immediately. But so did the strikers—they refused to meet with their direct jailers but insisted that a representative from the Kremlin be sent down to meet with them. The Russian government sent a commission headed by General Derevianko.(3) His attempt to harangue a public meeting of the inmates proved a failure. The prisoners stood solid, refused to be moved by the better food once their sentences remained the same, and demanded a review of all political trials and removal of barbed wire.

The commission returned to Moscow. Nothing shows so the uncertainty and insecurity of these totalitarian rulers than the caution with which the government at first dealt with this revolt. The sympathy of the soldiers too was with the prisoners. In the end they did what the Tsar did back in 1912 in the Lena gold field strike; they opened fire and shot down the strikers. But where in East Berlin they resorted to violence quickly, here they bargained and moved cautiously for weeks before the mass shooting.

MYTH OF INVINCIBILITY DESTROYED

But it had the effect of shaking the Kremlin to its very foundations. A few months later students from the Leningrad Mining Institute working in the pit in Vorkuta told [the prisoners] of their strike, which everyone talked about in Leningrad:

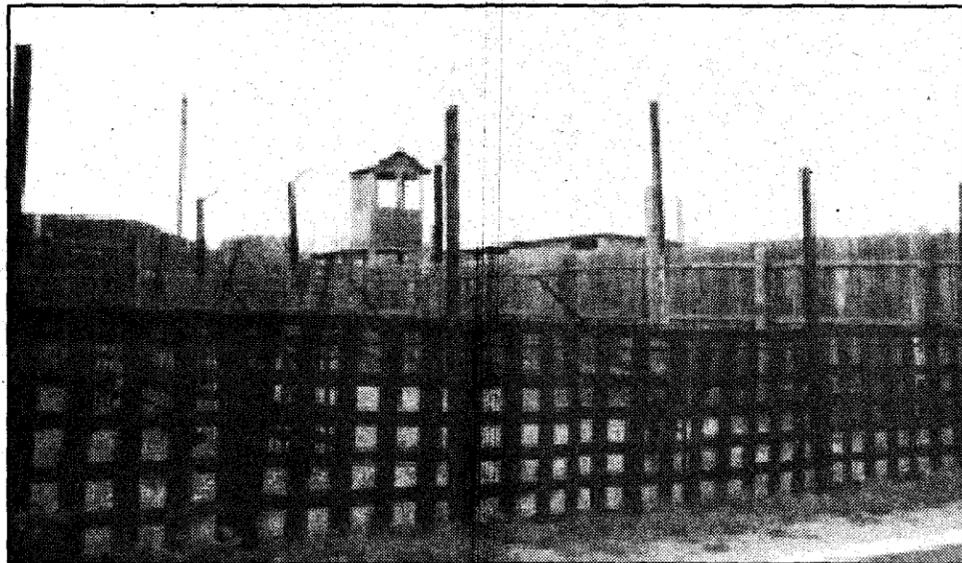
"We soon got to know you were on strike," they told us. "The drop in coal was noticeable at once. We don't have any reserves. There's just the plan, that's all. And everyone knows how vulnerable plans are. It destroyed the myth that the system was unassailable."

Five months after June 17 one of the leaders of the Russian resistance group met an East German student in Vorkuta and naturally the talk was all about the East German revolt. The Russian leaders first then grasped the treachery of "the West." Not alone had the Eisenhowers and the Churchills sided with the Stalin regime in Russia as the prisoners here knew, but they now found out that even from their safe Allied radios no encouragement to the workers in revolt was sounded. To the prisoners' "why," the East German students replied: "Because they were afraid that any aggravation of the situation might lead to war."

But it's clear from the reports from the prisoners [Scholmer explains] that the Russians were also afraid it might lead to war! Each side was afraid of the non-existent courage of the other!

The East German students resumed their tale that the labor bureaucrats, as well as the West German government, found nothing better to tell the West Berlin workers than to be sure "not to compromise themselves." Finally the Russian resistance leader saw how

wrong it, was at all to depend on "the West." He said: "These radio stations are controlled by the various governments, aren't they? Well, on June 17 they had to ask the government officials what they were to do.



The Vorkuta slave labor camp in northern Russia, site of a massive revolt 50 years ago.

And the government officials have a professional dislike of popular uprising, wherever they take place."

'MAN IN THE STREET HAS THE BEST IDEA'

The epilogue Dr. Scholmer writes is much more depressing than the conditions at Vorkuta. For here he was free at last, he thought. He had been one of some thousands of slave laborers released during the Big Four ministers' conference.(4) He had a story of revolt to tell and the press to listen to him. They listened but they didn't hear. First, these Russian experts could not understand that a revolt had occurred; they were ready to discuss abstractions, such as could such a revolt occur, but not the concrete fact that it has occurred. Then he was given the line that "the time was inopportune" to tell his story.

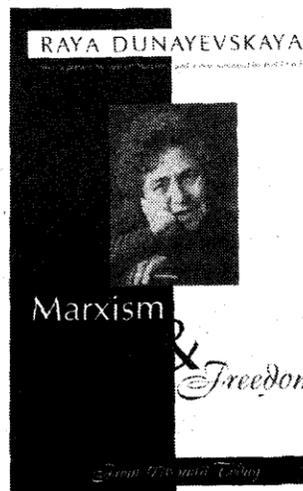
"When I first mentioned the word, 'civil war' to these people," Dr. Scholmer concludes, "they were appalled. The possibility of a rising lay outside their realm of comprehension. They had no idea that there were resistance groups in the camps..."

"I talked to all sorts of people in the first few weeks after my return from the Soviet Union. It seemed to me that the man in the street had the best idea of what was going on. The 'experts' seemed to understand nothing."

The man in the street does indeed know more than these experts because the American worker, as the American public in general, in its own struggles with the bureaucrats, inside and outside factories; in its own aspirations for a new society and struggle for it feels at one with the Russian and East German workers. It is not a question of language. It is a question of experiences and expectations.

NOTES

1. The Vorkuta camp, 1,500 miles north of Moscow, was a coal mine that employed tens of thousands of slave laborers at a time. In total, more people perished in Vorkuta than at Auschwitz.
2. See Joseph Scholmer, *Vorkuta* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1955)
3. General Kozma N. Derevianko was a major figure in Stalin's regime, who along with Gen. Douglas MacArthur accepted the surrender of the Japanese in 1945.
4. The "Big Four" refers to the U.S., Russia, England and France, the occupying powers which controlled Berlin after World War II.



**A classic of American Marxism...
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"The impulse for writing this book came from two sources: 1) the American workers, and 2) the East German workers....It was the period when the East German workers challenged the Communist regime in their revolt of June 17, 1953. A revolt in the slave labor camps of Vorkuta, inside Russia itself, followed within a few weeks....From the philosopher in the ivory tower to the man on the street, the world is preoccupied with this question: Can man be free in this age of totalitarianism?" —Raya Dunayevskaya

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PHILOSOPHIC DIALOGUE

by Russell Rockwell

Contemporary Marxist theory is still trying to grapple with the place of nature, practice and reason within Hegel's dialectic. The issue resonates because giving revolutionary action a direction remains a perspective as long as freedom from capital's domination eludes us. The variety of approaches can be seen in the theorists' treatment of Hegel's dual concepts, the Idea of the True and the Idea of the Good.

These concepts emerge, in tension, in the chapter on "The Idea of Cognition," almost at the apex of the dialectical progression through Hegel's *Science of Logic*, immediately before the final chapter, "The Absolute Idea." The Idea of the True and the Idea of the Good anticipate the clash of opposites in the Absolute Idea, building throughout the "history" of conflicts coursing throughout the entire *Logic*.

Three figures who stand out as contemporary commentators on Hegel's dialectic, including on the Idea of the True and the Idea of the Good, are worth discussing: Herbert Marcuse, V.I. Lenin, and Raya Dunayevskaya.

THREE VIEWS

1941 saw the publication of Marcuse's *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory*(1). This was the first work by a Marxist to analyze the full range of Hegel's works. *Reason and Revolution* was also the first work in English to analyze Marx's early 1844 Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts (the "humanist essays") after decades of burial in the archives. The manuscripts included "Critique of Hegel's Dialectic and Philosophy as a Whole," a discussion of all of Hegel's principal philosophic texts. (Hegel's *Science of Logic* followed the *Phenomenology of Mind*, Hegel's first major work, widely recognized for its originality and genius. The *Logic*, in turn, was followed by Hegel's elaboration of his whole system in the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, where the *Logic* was incorporated as the first of three books, the remaining two being the *Philosophy of Nature* and the *Philosophy of Mind*).

While many have analyzed *Reason and Revolution's* interpretations of the social relevance of Hegel's categories, this has not been the case with Marcuse's "other Hegel book," *Hegel's Ontology and the Theory of Historicity*(2). It was written in 1932, a decade earlier than *Reason and Revolution*. For example, Douglas Kellner maintained that the work was, "probably of primary interest today to Hegel scholars" suggesting its limited relevance for Marxist or critical social theory generally(3).

Lenin is the next pertinent figure here. Even to this day he is not generally recognized for his philosophic achievements. Yet in 1914, almost two decades prior to Marcuse's *Hegel's Ontology*, he recorded a detailed study of the entirety of Hegel's *Science of Logic*, including a primary focus on the dialectic of the Idea of the True and the Idea of the Good.

Finally Dunayevskaya argued that Hegel's categories—including the Idea of the True and the Idea of the Good in the *Logic* (as well as in the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*)—retain the social relevance with which Hegel originally intended them. To her, revolutionary social theory will develop only under the impact of a continuous return to Hegel's texts in the context of new social developments, a view strengthened in her last writings in the 1980s.

Each of these three took a long, hard look at that section of the *Science of Logic* where the Idea of the True and the Idea of the Good are found, and drew different conclusions.

WHAT HEGEL RE-CREATED—AND CREATED

What were the Idea of the True and the Idea of the Good in Hegel's hands? In the subsection of the *Science of Logic*(4) on the Idea of the True (pp. 783-818), Hegel explicates something he calls "the theoretical Idea." The subsection is essentially an outline of scientific, abstract reasoning. It includes subdivisions on analytic and synthetic cognition, on theorems, and on their proofs. Hegel remarked that "In the theoretical Idea the subjective Notion, as the universal that lacks any determination of its own, stands opposed to the objective world from which it takes to itself a determinate content and filling" (p. 818).

In contrast, the Idea of the Good (pp. 818-823) corresponds to the practical Idea, "the urge [of the practical Idea] to realize itself, the end that wills by means of itself to give itself objectivity and to realize itself in the objective world" (p. 818).

To Marcuse, the Idea of the True and the Idea of the Good are historical concepts, which Hegel himself rooted in the history of philosophy. He wrote in *Hegel's Ontology*:

With the concept of the "good," Socrates is said to aim at a determination of "essence" or "substance," "qua that which is in-and-for-itself, qua what preserves itself, substance has been defined as purpose (telos) and more precisely as the true, the good..." Thus the "good" is understood as the "universal, which has determined itself in itself..." ...the philosophers of nature had sought to define it as one or more self-sufficient substance. Hegel views it as Socratic "one-sidedness" that he applied this concept of the good to the moral sphere alone, whereby "subsequently all followers of moral idle talk and popular philosophy declared him their

Hegel's Dialectic of the True and Good

patron saint..." But "the good that is purpose in-and-for-itself...is also a principle of the philosophy of nature..." (p. 170, emphasis added).

In other words, a prior unity of the ideas of the true and the good existed in Socratic philosophy. This is the implied historical, philosophical reference point for the *Logic* where Hegel analyzed the modern separation of the two.

But there is an intention at the core of Hegelian philosophy to re-conceptualize their dialectical unity, or "identity," at a higher level and more concretely than was ever possible in the time of Socrates. The aim is to unite theory (of the possibility of a society free of social domination) with practice (those active social impulses for this freedom already present in the existing social order). Hegel's criticism of Socrates' "supporters" showed the depth to which Hegel intended to take his own investigations.

While Marcuse drew attention to that criticism, he omitted an equally important theme Hegel developed. In his *History of Philosophy*(5) Hegel made a lengthy and detailed analysis of the "personality" of Socrates (pp. 389-448), particularly the relationship of this personality to the philosophic universality that unfolds with, and indeed within, this personality.

In short, with this discussion of the history of philosophy, Hegel seemed to suggest that the "identity" of individuality (personality) and universality was implicitly realized in the life of Socrates, that is, for one individual in respect to a particular, that is, historically conditioned society. Our age holds within it the potential for this unity of personality and universality to be explicitly posed as a goal and realized throughout society as a whole.

LOSING HEGEL'S SOCIAL DIALECTIC

Marcuse omitted this social outlook emanating from Hegel, in his treatment of the Idea of the True and the Idea of the Good. That omission in *Hegel's Ontology* is clearly reflected later in Marcuse's dismissive conclusions, in *Reason and Revolution*, of the social relevance of Hegel's analysis of the constellation of the theoretical, practical and absolute ideas.

Perhaps it should be no surprise also in *Reason and Revolution* that Marcuse concludes that Hegel's dialectic of the Absolute Idea ultimately implies the subsumption of individuals by the universal. The Absolute Idea in that case reflects a "knowing subject" that must comprehend all objects so that "their independent objectivity is overcome" (p. 163).

In *Reason and Revolution* Marcuse clearly seemed to have the right words to describe the Absolute Idea, as in itself dialectical (and as such containing opposition within itself), but he characterized this opposition as merely a "dynamic," leaving aside the specific opposites in conflict, the dialectic of the Idea of the True and the Idea of the Good. Hence for Marcuse the question was how the Absolute Idea as a unity turned into, or made the transition to, its opposite (into nature) in Hegel's system (p. 166).

To the contrary, here is how Hegel described the dialectic of the Idea of the True and the Idea of the Good in the chapter on the Absolute Idea in the *Science of Logic*:

[The Absolute Idea] contains within itself the highest degree of opposition...possesses personality...but which, none the less is not exclusive individuality, but explicitly universality and cognition...(p. 824).

Thus not only is opposition retained in the Absolute Idea; the Absolute Idea, which is opposite to a synthesis or the subsumption of practice by theory, contains the highest opposition. And what is this opposition now? It is a unity of the opposites, personality and universality.

"Personality" certainly suggests the widest possible diversity of expression. At the same time, Hegel's concept of the "conclusion" of logical thinking—Absolute Idea—contains within it both this diversity and universality. The Absolute Idea is a unity of identity and difference. In social terms, capitalism itself is a unity of difference and identity, what Marx, in the *Grundrisse*(6), called a situation of personal freedom in a context of objective dependence (p. 158). Overcoming capitalism entails abolition of the blind conditioning of the individual by the universal.

Marcuse emphasized how hard it is to explicate, in Hegel's dialectic, the actual transition from the *Logic* to nature. Dunayevskaya noted as much, however adding that Marcuse did not pursue an analysis of Hegel's actual categories as he further developed them, even though Hegel explicitly stressed the necessity to do so in the last paragraph of the *Logic*.

Dunayevskaya leveled a similar critique with her analysis of Lenin's *Philosophic Notebooks*(7). In these she demonstrated that Lenin, in his analysis of the Idea of the Good, concluded that within Hegel's dialectic,

"cognition not only reflects the objective world but creates it." Yet even after such a profound summary, Lenin argued that Marxists may best interpret Hegel's thought in terms of its direct relationship to practice. Hence Lenin explicitly advised that it was not necessary to follow Hegel categorically beyond the (first) dialectical transition from the *Logic* to the *Philosophy of Nature*, that is, on to the (second) transition from nature to mind as well.

POLITICS DEEPENED

The lengthiest chapter in Marcuse's *Reason and Revolution*, except one, is on the *Science of Logic*. The single longer chapter is on Hegel's "political writings," especially the *Philosophy of Right*, which Hegel published after completion of the *Philosophy of Mind*. Marcuse's rationale for closely analyzing the *Philosophy of Right* in lieu of a discussion of the *Philosophy of Mind* (other than the later publication date of the former work) is his conclusion that the *Philosophy of Right* represents the development of the socially relevant categories that were originally laid out in Objective Mind, the section of the *Philosophy of Mind* immediately preceding the concluding Absolute Mind section(8).

Remarkably, however, not far into *Reason and Revolution's* chapter on Hegel's political writings, especially the *Philosophy of Right*, Marcuse seemed to say there is a need to delve into the purely rational aspects of the dialectic in the absolute, where the "ultimate truth" resides:

Some of the gravest misunderstandings that obscure the *Philosophy of Right* can be removed simply by considering the place of the work in Hegel's system. It does not treat with the whole cultural world, for the realm of right is just part of the realm of mind, namely, that part which Hegel denotes as objective mind. It does not, in short, expound or deal with the cultural realities of art, religion and philosophy, which embody the ultimate truth for Hegel...Even Hegel's most emphatic deification of the state cannot cancel his definite subordination of the objective to the absolute mind, of the political to the philosophical truth (p. 178).

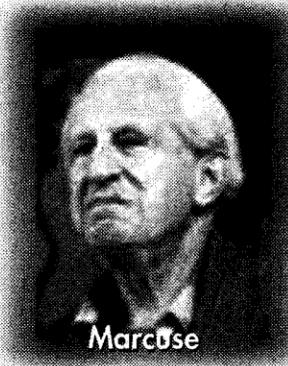
Even after showing that work needs to be done in unfolding the dialectic of freedom beyond the realm of politics, Marcuse left it at that. As shown in the recently published *The Power of Negativity*, almost as if picking up the challenge, as early as 1953 Dunayevskaya quoted from the final syllogism of *Philosophy of Mind* where Hegel wrote that the "nature of the fact...causes the movement and development. Yet this same movement is equally the action of cognition." Where Hegel concluded that, "The eternal Idea in full fruition of its essence, eternally sets itself to work, engenders and enjoys itself as Absolute Mind," Dunayevskaya concluded, "We have entered the new society" (p. 30).

Lenin concluded from Hegel's section on the Idea of the Good that "cognition not only reflects the objective world but creates it," and Marcuse indicated that for Hegel, right up to the end of the *Encyclopedia*, the dialectical negation (in thought as well as in practice) of the "objective world" was both possible and necessary for actual freedom. However, because she alone tied together the principal strands of Hegel's dialectic relevant for overcoming today's oppressive social reality, Dunayevskaya is the most important among the three interpreters of Hegel's dialectic considered here.

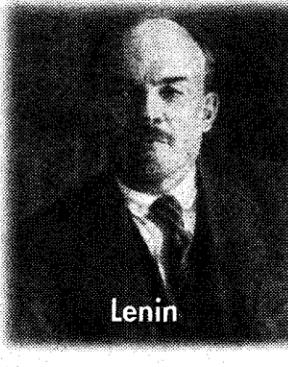
From the *Science of Logic* she traced the dialectic of the Idea of the True and the Idea of the Good to the "highest opposition," as universality and personality in the Absolute Idea and, from that text, to the final syllogisms of *Philosophy of Mind* where she believed a crucial conceptualization of the society that overcomes capitalism can be found.

NOTES

1. Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory*. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Books, 1989.
2. Herbert Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology and the Theory of Historicity*, trans. Seyla Benhabib. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987.
3. Douglas Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
4. G.W.F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. A.V. Miller. London and New York: George Allen & Unwin, 1969.
5. G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Volume I. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995.
6. Karl Marx. *Grundrisse*. New York: Vintage, 1973.
7. Raya Dunayevskaya, *The Power of Negativity: Selected Writings on the Dialectic in Hegel and Marx*, eds. P. Hudis and K. Anderson. New York, NY: Lexington Books, 2002.
8. G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, trans. William Wallace. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971, pp. 241-291.



Marcuse



Lenin



Dunayevskaya

THE WAR AND ITS AFTERMATH

It's getting so that war is becoming permanently entrenched in our daily living, as if it was part of the "normal" rhythm of life. George Orwell predicted the need for permanent war to keep capitalism alive. But you are saying we can answer with "revolution in permanence." In the meantime we are experiencing permanent anxiety.

Frank
Wisconsin

+++

The anti-war movement has to rethink, redecide and act anew about its role in getting the U.S. out of Iraq now and stopping Bush's other planned conquests.

Lawyer
New York

+++

In retaliation for the French refusal to go along with the invasion-rape of Iraq, President Bush needs to order the immediate removal of the Statue of Liberty off U.S. property and deported back to France from whence it came.

She's just a fake symbol now, taking up space. At the same time, it should be noted that the reason the sun does not set on the American empire is that God no longer trusts America's rulers in the dark.

Incarcerated citizen
Texas

+++

It seems ingenious that you can make an economy out of dropping bombs and having to build more.

David
California

+++

A grim but important source of information on the Iraq war is found at www.iraqbodycount.org which keeps a count of reported civilian deaths resulting from the Iraq war. Stated methodology is basically monitoring a range of on-line news sources and including fatalities reported by more than one source. They give maximum and minimum figures, reflecting differences between the reports. As of April 24 the toll stood at minimum: 1,933; maximum: 2,380. This does not include members of armed forces on either side, or deaths caused indirectly by the war, like from disease caused by polluted water, lack of hospital treatment and so on. Naturally it can't include any unreported deaths.

Richard Bunting
Oxford, England

+++

U.S. forces are now occupying Iraq, the second largest oil producer, by overthrowing the dictator they helped to install 25 years ago. What would happen if the Iraqi workers went on strike and refused to produce any oil? That would cause U.S. capitalism to have problems with the flow of capital around the world. The ideologues dream about controlling the world, but it could be strangled by Iraqi oil workers.

Iranian exile
California

+++

I read that workers at the Basra refinery, Iraq's second largest — and the only one that produces the cooking fuel

needed to make meals and boil water — staged a protest on May 9 to demand elections to choose their managers. They don't accept the British army officer who replaced the former Ba'ath party manager. It is an important action, especially if it proves to be the beginning of other actions by workers fighting to rebuild Iraq their own way.

Observer
Chicago

+++

N&L is one of the few sane voices in an otherwise dismal landscape. There is something incredibly eerie about the way preparations for war were going on together with drawing up an administrative blueprint for post-war Iraq. We were also witnessing preparations for the "humanitarian disaster" to follow — all as part of an integrated logistical exercise. And millions of people in the streets all over the world seemed utterly powerless to stop or even slow down this military-cum-humanitarian juggernaut — the "new military-humanism" indeed.

Subscriber
Wisconsin

+++

I was introduced to *N&L* at a peace rally here and found the letters and articles thought-provoking and informative. I have been trying to find ways to stop Bush's never-ending so-called "campaign against terrorism" and have come across two possible ways. The fastest might be to boycott products of corporations that have donated money to Bush or profited from the "war." The second would be to form a coalition of not-so-powerful but idealistic political parties that could take over the Democratic Party by the next presidential election. We have to find ways to stop the Bush administration.

E.C.
Eugene, Oregon

+++

The times we live in are not just retrogressive anymore, but desperate, when activists are deemed "radical" for simply expressing their defense of documents of the greatest colonial powers in history, whose beautiful expressions of humanitarianism always exceeded their content. I made a sign to greet the Commander-in-Chief the morning he had greeted his soldiers' homecoming dressed in his bomber jacket, fighter pilot's helmet and John Wayne smirk. My sign read "U.S. Constitution, the UN Charter, and Geneva Conventions are NOT irrelevant." Over 500 people, with many signs, came to protest Bush's triumphant return. We were kept at least a mile away from Bush, in an empty, closed-off street.

Health worker
California

+++

The press has had a field day blasting Jayson Blair for making up or plagiarizing his stories. But are they so far above it? Does giving credit to their source make their story true, when the primary if not the only source for them is the State Department? Where is the outrage that what they have been reporting as objective truth are administration statements of the "immanent danger" that Iraq posed which have proved to be a fantasy? Now that the supposed weapons of mass destruction were given as the reason for the war have not been found, we are told that isn't important. The "embedded

atrocities against humanity that I had ever read or heard about.

"Maybe it's because a part of me is Native American that I feel so strongly about total annihilation. That race was nearly run off into extinction by settlers of the new world. Then came the smear on humanity that was slavery. Some advocates of change say that Affirmative Action is little more than a guilt trip. I say that's the way it should be. We make choices and have to live with the consequences. That's how we learn and grow. Anything else translates into being so stupidly afraid of change that we eventually drive ourselves into extinction."

Reader
Oklahoma

READERS' VIEWS

reporters" were providing a ringside seat of a gladiator fight rather than any real truth about the war.

Disgusted with the press
Oakland, Cal.

REVOLUTIONARY ANTIGONE

After reading David Black's article on "Helen McFarlane: Antigone in Victorian England" in the April issue, I kept thinking that Antigone possessed a unique revolutionary quality in her ability to subjectively analyze and dissect the cause and effect of the oppressed people. She understood not only the power of ideas but their depth. It was apparent in the way she embarked on two crucial aspects of life: 1) that no man knows when he would be required to uphold the higher law embedded in his existence above all state law, and 2) that there is a greater death than physical death. Antigone was fully aware of her coming demise as are all true revolutionaries who follow the dictates of their own mind. Nonetheless they know that autonomy means freedom and no material kind of acceptability could bring that about.

Prisoner
California

THE VALUE OF LIFE

The EPA got in trouble by using cost-benefit analyses of clean-air regulations that put a lower dollar value on the lives of people over 70. That's bad but how can we accept putting dollar values on people's lives to begin with? The whole thing is a scam to justify destroying the lives and health of the working class and people of color in the name of profit.

Environmental activist
Tennessee

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While the world watched the fiasco here of high school seniors beating up and dousing junior girls with excrement and animal entrails, the truth of the story became even more bizarre. Despite the fact that a number of girls were injured seriously enough to be hospitalized, many in the affluent white suburb where it occurred banded together to protect the guilty parties — including parents who fueled the fury with three kegs of beer. After all, they said, what's the big deal? — "it's only an annual hazing ritual, a rite of passage to 'adulthood' that's been going on here for more than 20 years." How sadly prophetic that a so-called rite of passage to an adulthood under capitalism should include the attempted destruction, humiliation and degradation of human beings — especially women.

Mary Jo Grey
Chicago

ISRAELIS & PALESTINIANS

The Israeli occupation began in June 1967 and has persisted for the past 36 years, with unremitting harm to Palestinians and Israelis alike. For the sake of both peoples, the time has come to end it. Three events are upcoming toward that end:

1) The Coalition of Women for Peace will be launching 10 days of events from May 30 through June 8, beginning with a mass Women (and Men) in Black Vigil in Tel Aviv. 2) An international conference of Women in Black will be held in Italy Aug. 28-31. 3) A women's International Human Rights March will be held in Israel and Palestine Sept. 4-25. We invite people of good will throughout the world to hold solidarity actions with us during this period calling for an end to the Israeli occupation.

Gila Svirsky
Jerusalem

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I was especially moved by Brown Douglas' article on "Remembering Rachel Corrie" in the May issue of *N&L*. It moved me because of her strength in her beliefs. She had the

courage and determination that we all need to stand firm and not allow governments to walk over us as if we are just something lying in their way. They must be forced to realize that we will not stand for their atrocities.

New reader
Ohio

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The May *N&L* had it exactly right in the picture it ran with the article on "Hegel's Absolutes and the crisis of Marxism" which showed "the ugly wall" in Berlin, built by the ruthless, vicious, police state totalitarian rulers of East Germany. Just so, exactly what is to be said about the ugly wall being built by the current rulers in Israel? Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

Within the Gulag
Texas

HUNTING FOR NEW BEGINNINGS

It was good to see the special section on the philosophic moment of Marxist-Humanism (*N&L* May 2003) at a time when the world so desperately needs new beginnings in thought and reality. Dunayevskaya insists that organization be worked out together with the dialectics of philosophy. It gets to the heart of what is missing when the Left stops at first negation and therefore cannot get beyond the ground of existing society, or even paralyzes itself by rejecting the dialectics of the subject and all absolutes, as that was developed in the two essays of that special section.

Franklin Dmitryev
Memphis

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I have been reminded anew of what the wonderful poet, radical lesbian feminist and social activist, Audre Lorde, said about the contradictions we have to overcome today. It was in her acceptance speech when she was named the state poet of New York in 1991 but speaks even more loudly to us today.



Here is what she said:

"What does it mean to be a poet in a country where more money per minute, every minute, is spent on armaments than is spent to feed the starving children? Where the price of one stealth bomber, already outmoded, is more than the entire federal appropriation for all the arts? What does it mean that a black, lesbian, feminist, warrior, poet, mother is named as the state poet of New York? It means that we live in a world full of the most intense contradictions, and we must find ways to use the best we have — our selves, our work — to bridge those contradictions."

Lorde fan
New York

HOT HOUSE ASSAILED

The Hot House is a nonprofit organization that has functioned in Chicago for 16 years as the center for international performance and exhibition. On May 9, between performances of the legendary Cuban band Orquesta Aragon, it was closed down by the City of Chicago which claimed that the licenses under which they had operated for years were inappropriate for this kind of performance. While the Hot House management and staff are confident that they can show the city will be found in error, the first week of the shutdown cost them thousands of dollars in lost revenue, threatens to bankrupt the organization and has put the entire staff out of work. They are asking for contributions as well as letters of support they can compile and present to the City. Letters can be faxed to 312-362-9708. Cash contributions will be tax-exempt and can be mailed to:

Hot House
31 East Balbo
Chicago, IL 60605

NATIVE AMERICAN VIEW ON 'ANNIHILATION'

I thought you'd be interested in some excerpts of an article that appeared in a small paper here in Oklahoma: "Some friends and I were talking about the war with Iraq and I was totally on board with the fact that Saddam needed to be taken out and his people freed from their oppression. But when someone said 'They should just nuke the whole country' and another agreed and then another, I never felt so nauseous in all my life. I kept thinking of Hitler, Mussolini, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and every



atrocity against humanity that I had ever read or heard about.

LABOR QUESTIONS FOR TODAY

Here in the South-Central area, support and even enthusiasm for the war in Iraq is combined with anxiety over government deficits and unemployment. Newly graduating teachers have poor prospects of finding jobs. The alleged benefits of being a "Right to Work" state (since September 2001) are contradicted by layoffs at major private employers in Tulsa and Oklahoma City.



I am always interested in the reports from N&L supporters in Memphis and the southern U.S. area. The tendency for manufacturing to migrate to non-union, low-wage areas such as Alabama or Kentucky is often justified by the argument that otherwise the same production would be exported to China, Mexico or Central America. Maybe Karl Marx failed to anticipate the growth and influence of mass retail chains such as Wal-Mart on the production of goods.

**Allan Mui
Oklahoma**

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The purpose of having "Worker Centers" is multifaceted. Job training and education is one function but the initial function is to organize workers to only accept "just" wage levels. At today's rents and cost of living, the minimum wage needs to exceed \$10 an hour. A second need is to regulate the employers by making them register. A big problem with day labor in the agencies and street corners is cheating people out of ramps that they work. This problem is rampant with immigrant and other desperate workers. They are targeted for this type of exploitation because there is no enforcement mechanism to protect them.

Along with this self-organization unions need to think outside the traditional box to create different categories of workers with short-term contracts appropriate to these "hiring halls" and specific services. We need to get enforcement of Wage and Hour laws and legislation like the Day Labor Ordinance passed by the Chicago City Council on May 1, 2002. It is presently completely

unenforced to the delight of the day labor operators and their clients.

**D. D.
San Lucas Workers' Center
Chicago**

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An important social justice victory was achieved in Santa Fe when the city council approved a "Living Wage" ordinance in the private sector. It is being legally contested by the business community. For information on the details of this successful campaign contact Santa Fe Living Wage Network, PO Box 9034, Santa Fe, NM 87502 or www.santafelivingwage.org.

**Living Wage Supporter
Santa Fe**

ON THE BRITISH SCENE

The recent success of the British National Party in the local UK elections reveals a danger of underestimating what the racist and fascist parties represent. There is also a danger in over-focusing on their success and becoming demoralized to the extent that they walk to victory without a fight. The gains for the BNP are the massive publicity generated in spite of their small size. They want legitimacy and by emerging as the opposition to Labour in Bunting they are beginning to get it. They may push the Labour Party and society even further Right. It is not a new phenomenon; the National Front was able to expand rapidly in the 1970s. The Anti-Nazi league claims they smashed the fascists but the reality is that Thatcher came to power and it was union organization that was damaged and the miners who got smashed. The problems are now severe in the aftermath of the Iraq War with Islamic phobia, the deterioration of public services and worsening work conditions.

**Pat Duffy
England**

BLACK AMERICA

The May issue's lead by Emmett and Toussaint was really right when it comes to Black America's challenge to Bush's war and repression. Those of us

who protested the war here in Memphis were all struck by the fact that so much of our support from those driving by was from African Americans. The same is true when we stand on the corner protesting the death penalty. The fact that both movements still remain overwhelmingly white shows how much work the peace movement has to do.

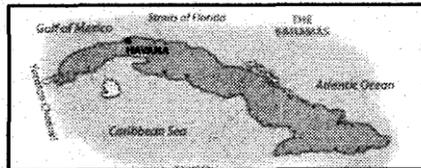
**Peace Activist
Memphis**

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The article on Black America on the first page of the May issue was powerful. It was a wonderful complement to the material about the anti-war work reported on the last page of the same issue in "Our Life and Times." I wish there had been a way to make sure every reader made this connection.

**Philosophy professor
Chicago**

THE CUBAN CRISIS



The article about "Cuba's Clampdown" in the May issue should have explained the situation more deeply, since the Yanqui imperialist has been trying for years, along with the Cuban *gusanos*, to come back to the old system. I know the Cuban autocracy is using the mask of being socialist but the situation is not black and white. There are many confusing issues inside the island and not all the opposing organizations are progressive. Many who oppose the government are controlled by the Catholic Church and many are financed by the Bastitianos in Miami. If the Cuban regime is overthrown in the same manner the Soviet regime was overthrown in Eastern Europe, what kind of government and economy will be established? Private capitalism or will the revolution continue on and establish a real workers' state? We have to identify our stand or we could sound like the ultra-rightists or the romantic intellectuals.

**Marcos
Los Angeles**

MESSAGE TO HILLARD

Once more on the case of Timia Williams for whom April 2, 2001 was the worst day of her 11-year-old life when she was beaten by three racist Chicago cops for nothing. No justice has come her way ever since. Now we learn that Police Superintendent Terry G. Hillard is going to retire. He says he needs to spend time with his eight-month-old grand-daughter. I'd like to tell him he needs to spend 10 years and four months with her so when she turns 11 he can look her in the face and wonder whether she will get the same justice Timia got. Not a damn thing so far.

**George Wilfrid Smith Jr.
Chicago**

ANSWERING OUR APPEAL

Enclosed is my check in response to your appeal. Your hard work and the valued contribution N&L makes is very much appreciated. If our "leaders" must stand "shoulder to shoulder" then we must stand even closer.

**Longtime supporter
Britain**

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We have to start talking to the working class at the national level. We have to stop merely talking to each other and get out into the streets to put our energies where our newsletters are. Please keep up the work in getting out the socialist philosophy.

**A socialist for a new society
Arkansas**

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Your work is of the highest importance to us. I want to thank the donor who has made it possible for me to get N&L. I will soon be out on parole and you can be assured that I will be in touch with you again. I would like to contribute or assist this cause in some way but I have no funds until I am out. You will hear from me as soon as I am.

**Prisoner
Texas**

Editor's Note: Have you sent your contribution to help keep N&L alive?

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

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- Marxist-Humanist Literature Catalog for 2000-01 A full list of publications (includes many not listed here) available from News and Letters Committees...60¢ postage

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VOICES FROM THE INSIDE OUT

by Robert Taliaferro

There are times when you get a better perspective on something if you set it down for a while and come back to it later. Recently that occurred with regard to an October 2000 report titled "Legislative Hearings on the Conditions of Confinement for California Women Prisoners," that was published by the California Legislature, and prepared by prisoner support groups.

When reports like that are written, particularly in an election year, they gain a lot of attention.

Then, with the politicians in place for two, four, or six more years, mainstream attention seems to fade away like a California sunset, and these "stars for the moment" (the women interviewed) are relegated to their regular routines and existence, often suffering worse abuse because they talked.

PRISONS' HORROR AND HYPOCRISY

In reading the report a little over two years later, one is struck with the stark realities of the plight of California's women prisoners: during med-line at one of the prisons, the mothers, daughters, sisters, wives, and grandmothers stand in 100 degree heat, or pouring rain (conditions that would never be tolerated in men's prisons) to receive medication that may save or prolong their lives.

Women with HIV and/or Hepatitis C, who are being stripped of their health and their lives, are further stripped of their dignity as they are "put out there" by the discriminatory and degrading policies of the state.

Nearly 80% of the women are non-violent offenders, the majority are imprisoned for drug charges, a disproportionate number of the prisoners are women of color, and an astounding number of the women were already victims of abuse prior to coming to prison. You have to ask yourself where the "correctional" aspects of incarceration are actually conducted. Certainly not in

A prison letter from Richard Flood

On behalf of myself, my family, and our legal defense team, I would like to express our sincere and deeply held gratitude and appreciation for your continued support (See Aug.-Sept. and Nov. 2002 *N&Ls*).

On April 25, 2003, in a 3-0 ruling, the Appellate Court (Third District) of Illinois issued an order reversing my conviction and sentence based upon a legal technicality, namely, that there is a likelihood that the jury was swayed by inadmissible evidence, and remanding the case for a new trial. Now we must wait 21 days to see if the State files a petition for rehearing or an intent to seek review by the Supreme Court. If the State does neither, then seven days after the 21-day period I will return to the county jail.

We have made the first successful step towards my release from custody. This is nonetheless a bittersweet victory, inasmuch as, had getting out of jail been my main point, I would have accepted the State's original "deal" and been home in December 2001.

We still have a ways to go, as evidenced by the Appellate Court's ruling, in particular their refusal to vindicate and release me outright based upon our insufficiency of evidence claim. Their finding is illogical and exposes an inherent contradiction. It credits the State's theory of the case on the one hand as it pertains to my use of force in defending my wife and myself from attack against multiple armed assailants under the influence of illicit drugs, as to one assailant, and rejects the same theory as to the other assailant.

The State's version of the incident directly conflicts with ours, and therefore, if I were acquitted of the charges related to one assailant, it stands to reason that our version was deemed more credible. How then does the Appellate Court, and the jury for that matter, turn around and credit the State's version of the same incident with regards to the other assailant?

Further, in reversing and remanding the entire case

Tennessee stays Paul Reid execution

Memphis—Tennessee's rush to execute another prisoner last month was stopped three hours before Paul Reid was scheduled to die by lethal injection for murdering seven young employees of three fast food restaurants in 1999. Reid, who is mentally ill, halted his appeals early in the process. His sister appealed to the federal Sixth Circuit Court, contending Reid should have a full evidentiary hearing to prove his competence in making such decisions. The court agreed.

Three doctors diagnosed Reid. All established that he was schizophrenic, one writing Reid is the "schizophrenic, paranoid type"; the second diagnosed "schizoaffective disorder, bipolar type, most recent episode manic. His manic symptoms currently include grandiose behavior and delusions, such as being selected to breed with a millionaire's wife"; the third said Reid doesn't believe himself to be mentally ill, as do half of those suffering from schizophrenia.

Despite such evidence, the Tennessee State Attorney General's Office rushed an appeal of the stay to the U.S. Supreme Court in an attempt to execute Reid as planned. But Reid, taking the stay as "a sign from god," decided to resume the appeals process.

None of the 30 or 40 of us at the vigil on the night

California's prisons.

We, as a nation, love to express our horror at abuses in Third World countries because it gives us a feeling of confidence about the sanity of our way of life and system of government. If television cameras could enter a prison, they would see the abuses promulgated within women's prisons—where women are relegated to the same class and status as if they were in Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, or some of the countries of Africa.

We admonish other countries around the world to follow the "high road" of freedom and justice, to be humanitarians while behind the walls and razor-topped wire fences of a women's (or men's) prison, another human being is being tortured to death because of the lack of fundamental primary medical care, or within the mind-numbing confines of a "supermax" prison cell.

We admonish other countries for human rights abuses and to adhere to recognized standards of treatment. Yet behind the walls of American prisons, another woman will cry herself to sleep, because of the abuse that she has to endure on nearly a daily basis.

TO BE TRUE TO THEIR COURAGE

The report is a sad indictment of a country that prides itself on equity, dignity, and respect. But, as damning as the report is, one can only be impressed with the dignity and absolute courage of the women who gave their testimonies, knowing that they may be subjects of future retaliation.

on said legal technicality, the Appellate Court stated that it "need not reach Richard's remaining arguments on appeal," namely, the trial judge's and State's blatant misconduct, vindictiveness, and political bias openly displayed throughout this ordeal. All of that has been conveniently wiped off the slate, as if it had never happened. In effect, the State gets another bite at the apple, and the opportunity to better conceal their animus towards me during this exercise in futility.

It stands to reason that if and when I am remanded for a new trial, the State will attempt to negotiate another "deal" in exchange for a guilty plea, such as "time served," which is the same type of unscrupulous deal the State offered to Aaron Patterson, while knowing beforehand that George Ryan was set to pardon him for a double murder he did not commit.

My family and friends want me home and couldn't care less whether or not the State vindicates me. I am left contemplating whether or not standing upon principle alone equates to all that we have to endure for even a semblance of true justice.

Still, none of those cops, judges or lawyers were present at that gas station on the time and date in question. I was, and I know in my mind and heart that my only intentions were to protect my wife and get her out of harm's way. I believe that I was well within my natural rights as a human being. Further, regardless of my previous record, I also believe that I was within my legal rights as a citizen.

However, it appears that a former political prisoner and revolutionary activist doesn't enjoy these rights in the U.S. Perhaps I should humble myself, take the deal, and then try to get a pardon from some scandal-plagued governor.

In solidarity, Richard Flood

before Reid was to be murdered by the state thought that he would live to see the sun rise.

Pete Gathje from the Tennessee Coalition Against State Killing led off the vigil by observing: "The State of Tennessee, in its usual wisdom, selected a date that has some significance. Tomorrow is national Holocaust Remembrance Day. One of the first group of people targeted by the Nazis were the mentally ill. They are people on the margins of society, and typically don't have a lot of defenders. Paul Reid, who is to be executed tonight, has a long history of mental illness dating back to his days in Texas, where he was found mentally incompetent by the court. But for the state of Tennessee, it doesn't matter that Reid himself has dropped his appeals and that the state will really be participating in a kind of state-assisted suicide tonight."

Tennessee seems determined to execute the mentally ill. The only person executed in Tennessee in the last 40 years, Robert Glen Coe was mentally ill; and the next person scheduled to die on Tennessee's death row, Abu-Ali Abdur-Rahman, also has a long history of serious mental illness and abuse (See March 2002 *News & Letters*). All of us involved in the struggle to end the death penalty know that we will have to fight again for Reid sometime in the future. The struggle continues.

—T.M.

Inhuman conditions in women's prisons

There is a stunning eloquence in the stories the women told. The one theme that was so very compelling was the consistent repetition that, "we are someone's mother, someone's daughter, someone's sister, someone's wife, and some little one's grandmother."

A woman in the California system wrote of "we" rather than "me," a call out to her incarcerated sisters that speaks of unity and empowerment. But the concept of "we" should extend much further. The "we" of the community should be flooding state and national legislators with angry letters as to the plight of women prisoners in this country.

"We" should extend to the floor of the UN and to the halls of international law in The Hague, indicting a country for war crimes in the class war of poverty, racism, and sexism. In this country, death comes slowly—the bullet—the lack of a simple checkmark on a form that would save a person's life. Death comes slowly, day by day, hour by hour, second by second,

with such mind-numbing clarity that it is a wonder more people in that situation don't simply lay down and quit.

The system has a long memory. We must have equally long memories so that we do not allow the courage of these brave women to be forgotten or ignored. These reports are not simply documents for the moment, but a haunting tribute to the courage that it took for the women to come forward and let their voices be heard. To be revisited as a legacy for those whose voices will never be heard again.



Design for the California Coalition for Women Prisoners, 1540 Market St., Rm. 490, San Francisco, CA 94102. www.womenprisoners.org

BLACK/RED VIEW

(Continued from page 1)

dialectical method of African-American freedom struggle. It was the greatest point of his life. The desire to overcome their "twoness" characterized every struggle since that time and makes Du Bois a contemporary. The contradiction in consciousness demands action and leads to developments in the world and self-development. This is the essence of what has energized the Civil Rights Movement and every movement for freedom in this country.

RACIST 'REALITY' VS. HUMAN UNITY

Du Bois wrote *The Souls Of Black Folk* when most African Americans were living in the un-reconstructed South and being terrorized by lynch mobs. During this time, Booker T. Washington was presenting a well-financed campaign to convince African Americans to accept segregated conditions and only engage in economic self-help activities. Du Bois' position was a challenge to that. It opposed Washington's accommodation to reality and sought to create a new reality of a whole re-united human being. There were others opposed to Washington, but it was the absoluteness of Du Bois' position, the desire to create a whole person, that crystallized that opposition.

Du Bois was a brilliant, well-educated man. He is widely known for having a concept that only such exceptional men could lead and think for African-American masses. He called these men "the Talented Tenth." When he turned to socialism, this concept went from being centered in the Talented Tenth of African Americans to the elitist party of Stalin.

This elitism prohibited him from working out an active relation of his theory of a struggle for oneness to the concrete events that shape history. This would have required a dialectical theory not just of consciousness, but of freedom. Such a dialectical perspective was not forthcoming from Du Bois even when it was most needed. For example, he did not relate his theory of the struggle for self-conscious oneness to the Civil Rights Movement as it emerged.

DU BOIS' GREATNESS...AND LIMITATIONS

He wrote in 1957 "...the black workers, the scrubbers and cleaners, the porters and seamstresses. They turned to a struggle not for great principles and noble truths, but just asked to be let alone after a tiring day's work; to be free of petty insult after hard and humble toil. These folk, led by a man who had read Hegel, knew of Karl Marx, and had followed Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, preached: 'Not by Might, nor by Power, but by My Spirit,' saith the Lord. Did this doctrine and practice of non-violence bring solution of the race problem in Alabama? It did not."

It is a tragedy that Du Bois could not see philosophy in the concrete struggle of the African-American masses, just when they inspired a whole generation to oppose this alienating society. Nonetheless, Du Bois' original concept in *The Souls of Black Folk* is still important today. Du Bois, the son of a Civil War veteran, was one of the founders of the NAACP along with the children and grandchildren of the abolitionists. He died on the very day Martin Luther King Jr. gave his "I have a dream" speech in Washington D.C. The cause of African-American liberation shaped his entire life.

Indonesia—stop bombing Aceh, pull out the troops!

Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri began bombing her countrymen May 19, as the military launched an all-out war in the far northwestern province of Aceh against separatist rebels known as GAM. After violating and then abrogating the peace accord signed last December, Megawati (as she is known) imposed martial law and raised the number of troops in Aceh, whose population is four million, from 30,000 to 45,000.

In the first three days of the war on Aceh, 135 civilians were reported killed or missing and 23,000 civilians were displaced from their homes. Food shortages were reported.

The influx of military personnel and warships, along with the bombing, constitute the biggest use of force since Indonesia's 1975 invasion of East Timor. Indonesia has failed to wipe out GAM despite 27 years of fighting and periods of repression of the entire population, killing some 10,000 civilians and galvanizing a broad-based movement in support of independence.

The military is employing new tactics, including using civilians as human shields, assaulting women and burning down schools—about 300 in the first three days. Taking a page from the U.S. war on Iraq, the government banned independent journalists and "embedded" 60 journalists trained by the military. One journalist was expelled after he photographed a GAM member attempting to put out a fire at a school; the government line is that GAM is burning the schools.

Megawati advised the independence movements in both Aceh and West Papua to leave the country, although it is unlikely she will allow those whose lives are in danger to exit. Moreover the surrounding coun-

tries of Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore and the Philippines announced they would not allow any refugees in, and began crackdowns on Acehese already there.

Indonesia announced it will arrest all members of SIRA and SMUR, the leading student groups working for a referendum on Aceh's status, and KONTRAS, a human rights organization. A woman was arrested who works for the Henri Dunant Centre, the Swiss conflict-resolution organization that was monitoring the peace accord. The martial law declaration permits the arrest of Acehese outside of Aceh as well.

The breakdown in the peace process may have been inevitable, because the accord, signed under international pressure to stop the killing, was broadly written and interpreted differently by the two sides. When talks were scheduled to try to save the peace, the government insisted that GAM renounce its long-term goal of independence, which had not been mentioned in the accord, and then it arrested the GAM representatives on their way to the talks.

Protests against the war were held within a few days in Australia, East Timor, Malaysia, Holland and the U.S. Small numbers of Acehese refugees and supporters demonstrated in Washington May 21 and New York May 23.

In New York, we picketed the UN to demand it intervene (no chance), and the Indonesian Mission to the UN where we shouted, among other slogans, "Free my mom" along with two men whose mother, a hotel owner and activist, had just been arrested on charges of being a GAM leader.

In Jakarta, where there have been pro-Aceh demonstrations, four foreigners were deported for protesting

the war, and a student protest was held in spite of the repression against any demonstrations. Most Indonesians are not sympathetic to the Acehese, however, because the government-controlled media paints them as "terrorists" and claims Aceh's independence would destroy Indonesia.

Part of a statement by Australian supporters declared:

"Today, the people of Aceh are calling for peace, and for their own democratic right to a peaceful process of self-determination, through a UN-facilitated referendum. Calls for self-determination come from a broad-based, non-violent civil society movement that includes farmers, fishermen, women's organizations, student groups, religious leaders and businessmen.

"The people of Aceh are not harking back to a traditional past, but to a future of peace and prosperity through democracy and social justice. This future will not come as long as the Indonesian military continues to act with impunity against the people of Aceh, Papua, Maluku and its own citizens throughout the archipelago. It will not come as long as governments around the world (including the U.S., Britain and Australia) continue to give military aid to Indonesia."

U.S. activists are asked to protest the war to the Indonesian embassy and the U.S. State Department in Washington, and to join support work aimed at educating Americans and Indonesians about Aceh and establishing people-to-people solidarity. For more information, contact Aceh Center in the U.S. at acehcenter@yahoo.com or *News & Letters* (See page 10 for directory).
—Anne Jaclard

EDITORIAL

Occupation of Iraq: What happens now?

The Bush administration is learning the age-old truth that it is easier to defeat the population than to occupy it and control the population. It is not surprising that the U.S. government, a representative of advanced capitalism, was able to employ advanced capitalist technology to bomb Iraq into submission. We opposed the war and we opposed Saddam Hussein's oppressive regime; we "take sides" only to support movements for genuine liberation. Now everyone wants to know, what comes next?

It's hard to believe that Bush's experts were as unaware as it seems of the human problems that would follow the war—from the immediate looting of hospitals and historical treasures, to the continuing lack of electricity, water, food and medicine, six weeks after the bombing ended. According to a UN warning issued May 14, more than 300,000 Iraqi children currently face death from acute malnutrition, twice as many as before the invasion. The Bush administration undoubtedly knew what could happen to the people of Iraq; they just did not care.

NO DEMOCRACY IN SIGHT

The U.S. is now faced with the long-term problems of restoring the economy and governing a diverse country that does not want to be occupied, all the while arguing that its heinous war was justified in order to bring democracy and a better life to the Iraqi people. No prospect of either democracy or a better life is in sight. Rather, Iraq is sinking into chaos and the rule of fiefdoms and mafias. People, especially women, are afraid even to leave their houses due to the violence and destruction.

The best organized mass movements at this time are led by Islamic fundamentalist clerics, who stand ready to take the reins of government while the U.S. government flounders about. The retired general who had been sent to govern Iraq was replaced, as the State Department and Pentagon argue over what to do.

Current U.S. policy seems to be to let everything in the country collapse. Whether or not the worsening conditions are intentional, they seem designed to cause people to give up the hope for self-determination that the fall of Saddam engendered, to decelerate any nationwide political movements by "divide and conquer," and to make an exhausted population grateful to receive handouts to keep them alive.

At the beginning of the war, the U.S. seemed determined to leave the Ba'ath party bureaucracy and police in place so as to prevent any opportunities for social revolution. That was the reason the U.S. did not remove Saddam during the first Gulf War. This time the plan was quickly rejected by the Iraqi masses, who took matters into their own hands as soon as Saddam was killed (or, as is now reported, fled the country at the start of the war with a billion dollars in cash).

Doctors and hospital workers demonstrated in Baghdad in May against the U.S. attempt to re-install the Ba'ath commissioner of health, forcing the U.S. rulers to reverse themselves and announce that no such officials would be allowed back in power. Women have been completely ignored by the U.S. overseers,

but now are speaking out against the possibility of losing the rights they had. Feminist groups are demanding a say in the new government and denouncing U.S. attempts to court religious leaders by holding out the possibility of an "Islamic democracy."

Without women's rights and secular law, there can be no democracy. But of course, the U.S. has no intention of allowing the Iraqis to participate in deciding their future. Bush's experts had to give up immediately their plan to install a puppet government of Iraqi exiles, so now they state publicly that there will be no self-government for a long time.

Iraq's likely future can be seen in Afghanistan, which underwent devastating U.S. bombing a year-and-a-half earlier than Iraq did. Although Afghanistan was a much poorer country and had an Islamic fundamentalist

government, we can expect the U.S. will act—and not act—in a similar manner in Iraq as it has in Afghanistan. There the U.S. installed a puppet government and some troops in Kabul, leaving the rest of the country in the hands of fundamentalist warlords, whose tacit support it pays for with money and per-

'Road Map' takes shape in Middle East

The text of the "Road Map" for Middle East peace was released by the U.S. State Department on April 30. This statement of the "quartet" of the U.S., the European Union, Russia and the UN consists of three phases: Phase I calls for ending terror and violence, freezing Israeli settlements in Palestinian land and preparing for a Palestinian election and constitution; Phase II calls for elections for a Palestinian state with provisional borders; Phase III calls for a final permanent resolution on borders, Israeli settlements, the status of Palestinian refugees, and the status of Jerusalem based on UN resolutions 242, 338 and the 2002 Saudi Peace Initiative. The progress from stage to stage however is based on "performance benchmarks."

Even though this Road Map again postpones addressing the major issues involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to the final phase, it was immediately accepted by the Palestinian cabinet of the new Prime Minister Mahmud Abbas or Abu Mazen. Abu Mazen and his head of security Mohammad Dahlan do not have a good reputation in Palestine because of their participation in the corrupt and undemocratic practices of Arafat's Palestine Authority. However despite this, the latest polls conducted by Birzeit University in the West Bank show that 70% of Palestinians believe Abbas should be given a "fair chance" in his effort to make peace.

The Israeli army, however, continues an almost permanent raids into Gaza. It continues its practice of killing civilians, targeted assassinations, house demolitions, and destruction of Palestinian farmland. Since the deliberate crushing to death of Rachel Corrie, an International Solidarity Movement (ISM) activist, by an Israeli tank, the IDF has shot two other ISM activists and has killed a British journalist. International visitors to the

mission to control their fiefdoms. Little U.S. aid has gone to re-building or improving conditions.

The U.S.'s claim that its war on Iraq will bring democracy is as big a lie as its claim to have "freed the women of Afghanistan." One Afghan group that has consistently opposed all wars, occupations and fundamentalist regimes over the past 26 years is RAWA, the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan.

WOMEN'S STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM

Tahmeena Faryal, a RAWA representative on tour in the U.S., declared, "Little has changed in Afghanistan, especially for women. We don't have democracy; student demonstrators were recently attacked and killed for asking for water and electricity. The fundamentalists are gaining support. Conditions for the 85% of women in rural areas are just as bad as they were under the Taliban."

Women's position everywhere is a measure of society's unfreedom, and their struggles are beacons toward a new way of life for women and men alike. As those kinds of beacons, two feminist organizations have been operating in northern Iraq—Defense of Women's Rights and Independent Women's Organization (See page 2).

Only social revolution by the masses themselves can bring freedom. RAWA and the Iraqi women's organizations arose from within two of the most oppressive countries in the world. Their ideals and practice can inspire our own movements, and help to put the issue of social revolution back on the world's agenda.



Woman in Iraq confronts U.S. soldier.

Defense of Iraqi Women's Rights / DWR

West Bank and Gaza have been told that they must sign a waiver which absolves Israeli troops of all responsibility for their safety.

Hamas, Al Aqsa and other groups have also conducted six suicide bombings within Israel during the past two months. On April 29 a suicide bombing at a restaurant in Tel Aviv killed five and injured 36, hours after the Palestinian parliament approved a new cabinet. The suicide bombers were found to have been British citizens associated with fundamentalist groups. On May 18, another suicide bombing on a bus in Jerusalem killed seven, just after the first meeting between Abu Mazen and Ariel Sharon.

Sharon has made it clear, not only in actions but also in words, that he does not see the withdrawal of Israel from any settlements "on the horizon." The U.S. administration however seems determined to create a semblance of peace in the region that would allow it to concentrate on its occupation of Iraq.

As of May 26 Hamas, which has been negotiating with Abu Mazen, has agreed to a truce inside Israel, if the IDF ends its targeted assassinations of Palestinian leaders. The U.S. has offered to recognize the Lebanese Hizbullah and its political role in Lebanon in return for a suspension of violent acts against Israel and "intelligence" cooperation between it and the U.S. Sharon and his cabinet have voted to "accept" the Road Map, but only based on U.S. consideration of 14 reservations which reject much of its content.

Also, on April 30, 700,000 Israeli workers went on strike against spending cuts and mass firings proposed by Benjamin Netanyahu, who is now minister of finance. The strike did not succeed but deep economic and social problems continue to haunt Israeli society.

—Sheila Sahar
May 26, 2003

Movements for freedom in Latin America challenge U.S.

(Continued from page 1)

radicals opposed to neoliberalism—in this case ones who claim to be Marxist, the FARC—are terrorists that need to be contained.

The FARC, after all, does engage in terrorism—not in the sense of being a threat to the U.S., as Bush would have us believe, but certainly against any union or campesino leader that does not recognize them as being the “foco” of a future government.

Therefore, so long as the U.S. is able to identify any opposition to its draconian economic plans for the region with a purely destructive, endless war, it has achieved its central purpose: to squelch any confidence in an alternative to capitalism.

OPPOSITION TO NEOLIBERALISM

What worries Bush and Uribe the most, however, is the growing opposition to war and neoliberalism from within Colombia. For the past year, for example, a women's movement has been developing that is opposed to all sides in the armed conflict.

In March and April of this year, there have been several large protests that have led to conferences of indigenous groups that have met to issue manifestos against the war, for respect for rights to land and the right to organize without being shot at from all sides.

What also must be frightening for the warmongers is that the movement against privatization of city services, which began in the mid-1990s in the city of Cali, achieved a presence last year in the House of Representatives in the person of Alexander Lopez Maya. He was elected as part of the Polo Democratico, an attempt to counter the two-party monopoly on politics.

Despite being one of only a few within the government to be challenging Uribe, his presence there is significant because his opposition to privatization comes from a rich experience.

As head of Cali's public services union, SINTRAEM-CALI, he led several occupations of municipal buildings in the late 1990s that saved city services from being sold off, an ongoing movement that continues to inspire much international solidarity.

CRISIS IN ECUADOR

In Ecuador and Bolivia, where the U.S. has taken a renewed interest militarily, though not on the level of its “Plan Colombia,” there is also growing opposition from below. In both places the U.S. has gone out of its way to justify greater military activity by making repeated allegations—never backed up by facts—that “drug running terrorists,” once pushed out of Colombia, must be pursued into the rest of the Andean region.

In reality, it is the persistence of the revolts, both within Ecuador and Bolivia, coupled with the instability of the regimes that attempt to coopt them, that drives U.S. militarism in the region.

In Ecuador, where the U.S. has recently increased

its military presence at existing bases and is attempting to establish a new base in the Galapagos islands, President Lucio Gutierrez's four-month-old government is unravelling. This is due in part to the fact that since coming to power he has sought to divide the movement of indigenous groups that once supported him.

The main grouping of indigenous peoples in Ecuador, CONAIE, which was responsible for getting Gutierrez elected on an anti-International Monetary Fund platform, has been sidelined since in favor of a previously unknown entity, FEDEPICNE (Frente de Defensa de los Pueblos Indigenas, Campesinos, y Negros del Ecuador).

March of dislocated peasants arrives in La Paz, Bolivia in mid-April

From the latter group Gutierrez is recruiting into his administration leaders who are less antagonistic to his post-election love affair with IMF policy.

In response, Quechua leaders are already calling on his economic team to resign, and within CONAIE discussions are currently taking place to consider a full break with Gutierrez and the beginning of street protests

against his rule.

If this happens, it will be very important to watch where this movement goes in the coming months, now that there no longer seem to be any illusions on the part of the indigenous movement regarding Gutierrez's once vitriolic attacks on neoliberalism.

NEW MOVEMENTS IN BOLIVIA

It is in Bolivia, however, where one of the largest proletarian revolts in many years has occurred. On Feb. 12-13 a spontaneous revolt broke out against a new IMF-imposed 12.5% income tax hike. It was set off when the military fired on a peaceful march organized to oppose the tax.

High school students from Ayacucho joined with university students, workers, and members of the police—and their wives—in La Paz, El Alto, and several other cities to ransack every government, bank, or office-building that represented the imposition of IMF policy and privatization over the past 15 years.

The military resorted to putting snipers on rooftops to quell the revolt, which resulted in 33 dead and hundreds injured.

Though the rebellion was short lived, it underlines just how intense the opposition to neoliberal restructuring has become. It is not surprising that this would happen in Bolivia, considering the length of time the movements have been developing there, and their diversity.

There is the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS), which originated among the lowland Chapare region coca growers' unions, headed by Evo Morales who won 23% of the vote in the June 2002 presidential election. Felipe Quispe is also a prominent movement leader, head of the highland Aymara party, the MIP. Oscar Olivera, who led the battle in Cochabamba in 2000 against the privatization of water, also continues to play a prominent role today.

Thus all of the battles that have been waged since 1985, when the imposition of neoliberal policies began to be implemented with devastating effects on living standards, are being carried over to today.

This is a situation that is obviously not lost on the Bush administration. In an interview on March 29 Evo Morales referred to his country as one that is “...militarily occupied by the U.S. The [Drug Enforcement Agency], for example, commands the [Bolivian] repressive forces in the Chapare region.

“The Bolivian Armed Forces receive instruction and

depend strategically and logistically on the [U.S.] Southern Command. Then the U.S. military comes in repeatedly for exercises it calls ‘civic actions.’ We repeatedly condemn this behavior, but the majority in our Congress have treated it as normal practice.”

It is a sad commentary on American diplomacy to witness the extent to which every political relationship the U.S. government has with Bolivia is at the same time a military one. The ambassador David Greenlee, for example, is a former CIA chief and acted as a “political adviser” to the U.S. Southern Command in the 1990s.

The Bush administration knows full well that its economic policies are having a devastating effect on life in Latin America and are breeding revolt.

It would be a mistake, however, to conclude from this, as some solidarity activists in the U.S. do, that the neoliberal model is in its “final death throes.”

The experience of Ecuador, where the supposedly radical, anti-IMF Gutierrez declared he wanted to be Bush's “best friend” the minute he took office, shows once again how eager “leaders” are to use leftist rhetoric to attempt to coopt a movement.

As long as activists, both here and in Latin America, fail to develop a deeper theoretical dimension as the only way to see through such tricks, capitalism has a long future in store for us.

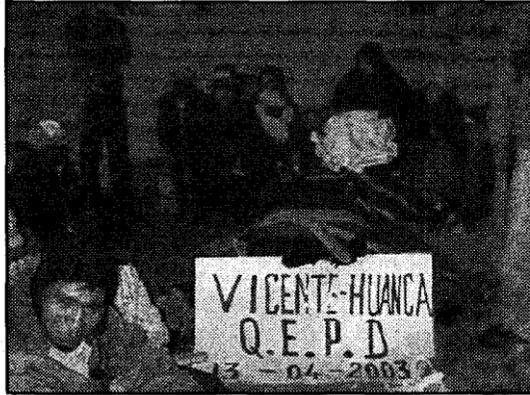
Dunn Field toxics

(Continued from page 1)

will there be any danger of chemicals coming out into the air and harming the health of the people who live in the community? Maybe ordinary citizens don't understand all that you are talking about. For those of us who reside across the street from Dunn Field, is there a possibility that our homes could be bought and we could be relocated? My house has lost value. I couldn't get a fraction of what I paid for it. Is there some kind of financial consideration for those who live by Dunn Field who, unknowingly, bought homes?

“Had we known, we would not have done that. Many of the residents are elderly, retired, homes paid for, living on Social Security and Medicare. They're not able to relocate themselves. I'm trying to put a human face on this and a heart and soul too. I really believe that we should be considered.”

—Environmental Justice activists



Prison hell in Indiana

The prison hell in southern Indiana, called “death valley,” is the Carlisle Correctional Facility. In the past five years four prisoners have been murdered there by racist prison guards. Almost all of the prison staff there is white; most of the prisoners are African American.

Khalfani Khaldun is the latest target of abuse. One guard has gone out of his way to provoke Khalfani, a longtime prison activist and thinker whose writings have appeared in *News & Letters* (Khalfani was transferred to Carlisle in January). On March 4 the guard and four other officers tried to force Khalfani to surrender a religious necklace, on the grounds that it was unauthorized. They then told Khalfani that he must stop his prison activism or they would kill him by placing arsenic in his food.

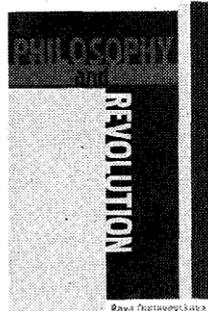
Khalfani's false conviction of having murdered an Indiana prison guard is fueling these racist attacks upon him. There is no question that many guards want to see him dead and their efforts may prove successful if nothing is done about it.

Khalfani has filed a request for an investigation into the latest acts of harassment. He is asking his friends and supporters to write to the prison authorities asking that the guards who have been threatening his life be removed from their jobs or moved out of the SHU unit in which Khalfani is housed. Letters should be sent to: Head of Internal Affairs, 334 IGC South, 302 West Washington St., Indianapolis, IN 46204.

To directly contact Khalfani, write to him at: Khalfani M. Khaldun, No. 874304, PO Box 111 (SHU Unit), Carlisle, IN 47838.

—Peter Wermuth

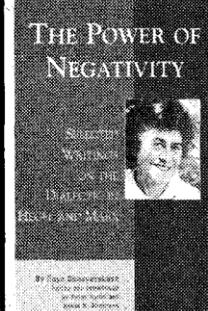
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—Patricia Altenbernd Johnson, University of Dayton



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Memphis Latinos stand up for dignity

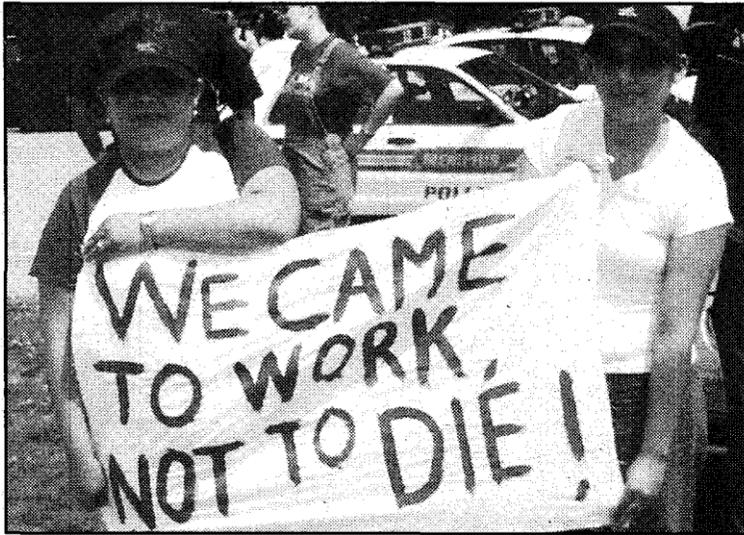
Memphis, Tenn.—The first Latino-oriented protest march here took place on May 10. Called by Fuerza Latina Unida (FLU or "United Latin Movement") and attended by about 200 people, mainly Latino—especially youth, workers, and homemakers—but with many Black and Anglo participants, the two-mile Peaceful March For A Shredded Memphis Shrugged off the Southern heat, ending in an enthusiastic rally.

A catalyst for the action was Alex, a Guatemalan who told his story (in Spanish) to the rally:

"My wife was killed last November. I'm left to take care of our two children. People broke into my apartment and shot her. I called 911 but they couldn't answer

because they only spoke English. We need police and 911 operators who speak Spanish."

This story struck a chord because so many Latino workers have been robbed and got no help from the police, even at times being robbed by cops with impuni-



Young marchers carry home-made banner.

ty. While organizers were careful to avoid antagonizing the police, an upcoming protest against police brutality was announced, which elicited some cheers.

One Latina marcher told *News & Letters*, "We want a safer Memphis, more help for Hispanics, the emergency services who will help us more. We don't have protection. They ignore us a lot. We want to be able to live and to work. We want them to listen to us."

Many marchers made their own signs, such as: "We came to work, not to die," and "Orgullosos ser trabajadores" ("Proud to be workers").

One white FLU organizer said, "It's exciting to see all the different types of people here, united around a

common theme. The Latino community in Memphis is new. There's never been a Latino public display of anything. It's also exciting because you've got such a diverse mix: African-Americans, other immigrants."

—Memphis News & Letters

'Warriors' criticizes budget priorities

Oakland, Cal.—The students of Sequoia Elementary School celebrated May Day by putting on a play called "Warriors of the Spirit: A Protest Play About Children as Prisoners of War and Budget Cuts."

A number of teachers discussed with their classes articles from the daily papers about budgets. The students talked about war and prison budgets and the realities of prisons and war as against spending money on schools and the impending school budget cuts. The teachers shared the substance of those discussions with a Sequoia parent, Cherrie L. Moraga the playwright and editor of the feminist anthology *This Bridge Called My Back*, who created a play based on the students' comments.

The first scene, featuring "Sequoia State Pen for the Young and the Restless," presented some of those discussions: comparing the \$7,000 it takes to educate a youth to the \$1,620,000 to incarcerate one for life (they figured 60 years at \$27,000 per year). A student observed that "teachers should become prison guards, they will get paid better and even get paid overtime." Another explained, "Sometimes it feels like we're already in jail."

After the performance, there was an opportunity for the cast to answer questions from the audience. When asked how they would choose to spend the money in the national and state budget the third, fourth, and fifth graders answered: on shelters for the homeless, on a drama program for the school, on Oakland, on all of California, or to split the money between the Iraqi children and their own classroom so all could at least have pencils.

—Urszula Wislanka

Guatemalans bring fire to Southern labor fights

By Brown Douglas

We are constantly reminded these days of the overwhelmingly global nature of capital. Not only can we see multi-national corporations all over the world trying to quench their werewolf hunger for profit by exploiting human communities, human labor, and the environment. We can also look around us and see many different types of people that probably wouldn't find themselves here in the U.S. if it weren't for the ever-new boundaries and needs produced by the expansion of capital.

The Maya of Morganton by Leon Fink describes one unlikely community and its struggle against the unfair labor practices of Case Farms poultry processing plant in Morganton, N.C. This community is almost completely composed of indigenous highland Guatemalan Mayans, (mainly of the Q'anjol'al, Aguacateco (split between the two main ethnic groups, the Awakateko and Chalchiteko), K'iche', and Mam ethnicities. There were also a handful of Mexican workers that took an active part in the strikes and unionizing campaigns.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Throughout the whole book, Fink allows 100-odd workers, strike leaders, and community members to "speak for themselves" through extensive interviews. It gives the feel of a fluid dialogue between the author and participants, and allows for complexities in the telling of the story straight from the mouths of those involved.

The first sign of wildcat worker resistance to conditions at the plant was in May 1993, "when approximately 100 workers stood up in the plant cafeteria and refused to work unless the company addressed a list of alleged abuses—including unpaid hours, the lack of bathroom breaks, poor working materials, and unauthorized company deductions for safety equipment like smocks and gloves, as well as inadequate pay."

But it wasn't until two years later, in 1995, that organized labor got involved. After a dramatic unionization drive and vote, the Laborers International Union of North America (LIUNA) won the right to represent the workers. Throughout the approximately six

years of labor struggle that the book covers, management never respected the workers' decision and took all of the typical steps, from stalling recognition of the union to stymying and breaking off contract talks with the workers.

One aspect of the workers' experience was not unique to them and is a recurring theme in American labor history—the speed-up. In citing a study done by the National Interfaith Committee

for Worker Justice, Fink shows that the most frequent complaint of workers, "concerned the 'dangerously high speed' of the production line. Combined with the rigidity of work assignments (there was no rotation of jobs at the plant), the line speed only exacerbated repetitive motion injuries frequently reported in most poultry-processing plants."

It brings to my mind something very important to Marxist-Humanist theory and history, the automation of the "continuous miner" that miners in West Virginia fought so hard against in the 1950s, when the question of "what kind of labor should man do?" was raised by the miners. The fact that today this same type of automation permeates capitalist production everywhere would seem completely overwhelming if it weren't for the repeated struggles of rank-and-file workers at the point of production.

But interestingly, the unique thing about this book is that its subject matter—or better put, Subject, with a capital "S"—is not the typical rank-and-file worker one might envision. To be sure, many of the miners who initiated the wildcat strikes against automation in the '50s were European immigrants.

'DEAD HELPED THE LIVING'

But in capital's latest stages of globalization in which its hand reaches out blindly across borders to find cheaper and cheaper labor, it has encountered and in many ways uprooted, indigenous peoples from Central America. Many of these people still have a very strong tie to traditional culture, language, and communal ways.

This is, I believe, Fink's focus throughout the book: the interplay between the traditional cultures, and the way in which globalization has eroded or strengthened certain aspects of them. "How the dead helped to organize the living" is a phrase Fink uses to reconcile the phenomenon of a rich and sometimes tragic diaspora history of struggle and repression with a small Mayan in North Carolina fighting a Southern boss at a poultry plant.

To do this, he gives some interesting historical and sociological analysis of Morganton, and the workers' home communities in Guatemala, in order to properly situate the events of the book. This meant delving considerably into the social turmoil and civil war that plagued Guatemala throughout the 1980s and '90s.

The Maya of Morganton helped remind me that while capitalist globalization is busy redrawing borders and repressing human communities on a global scale, it also calls into existence new Subjects of revolt. The complex, multi-dimensional character of an indigenous Mayan community fighting the boss in North Carolina, USA, is something that a whole new generation of radical internationalist activists can look to as we try to build a movement against capital and for true human development.

Students protest education cuts



Sacramento, Cal.—Hundreds of public school students and teachers rallied here on May 8 to protest state budget cuts in education. Inside the capital they attended scheduled meetings with individual legislators. Several students read out statements they had composed for the occasion. Outside, speakers fleshed out the theme, "Education not incarceration," with alarming contrasts such as that between some 10,000 California teachers who face the prospect of pink slips, and state prison guards, who look forward to a recently authorized pay raise.

—David M.

Clean air struggle

Chicago—The largest sources of air pollution and mercury in Chicago are the Crawford & Fisk coal burning electrical power plants in Little Village and Pilsen owned by Edison International's Midwest Generation. These neighborhoods are the heart of Chicago's Mexican immigrant community.

A 2001 Harvard School of Public Health study estimates that there are 2,800 asthma attacks, 500 emergency room visits and 41 premature deaths every year due to poor air quality from these two plants.

Those most affected live in Little Village and Pilsen, but people who live throughout Chicago also breathe dirty air from the two plants. The mercury from these plants gets into the fish we all eat from our rivers and Lake Michigan, poisoning our nervous system. The tons of carbon dioxide produced by these plants are Chicago's biggest addition to global warming.

The Pilsen/Southwest Side Local of the Green Party, the Little Village Environmental Justice Organization and students from Farragut, Benito Juarez, Frances Parker and Evanston Township High Schools are organizing to fight these polluters.

Last Spring Chicago Alderman Ed Burke proposed a new law to the Chicago City Council that would clean up most of the air pollution coming from the Crawford and Fisk Power Plants. But Mayor Daley and the city's Department of the Environment have stopped this from moving forward. We need to let them know that we want this law passed now!

—Activists

NEWS & LETTERS
Vol. 43, No. 5 June 2003

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

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OUR LIFE AND TIMES **Iraq: U.S. occupation and Ba'athist legacy**

by Kevin A. Barry

As the U.S.-British occupation entered its second month, the indifference of the new rulers to the Iraqi people was seen in how they continued to stand by as looters attacked hospitals, universities, museums, and most ominously of all, nuclear sites.

During the same period, the occupiers maintained complete military control of Iraq's oil facilities, where not a single instance of looting was reported. The U.S. government and media have refused to estimate the total deaths from the war, but given the many Iraqi units that met sudden death from the skies without being able to get off a single shot, that toll is surely in the tens of thousands.

In mid-May, after weeks of claims that they would install an interim government made up of Iraqi citizens, the U.S. and the British announced that they would rule directly. This outraged even groups that had supported the new occupiers, like the Kurdish parties and the Iraqi National Congress.

Neither the demoralizing chaos on the streets nor

Mass French strikes

On May 25, some 500,000 workers and their supporters demonstrated in Paris. The week before, on May 19, hundreds of thousands of teachers, as well as health care, postal, and telephone workers went on strike across the country in an attempt to block a rollback of retirement and pension benefits. Around 500,000 also took to the streets in various cities on May 19.

On May 13, an even larger strike halted the above sectors, as well as air and ground transport, electric power plants, and newspaper delivery. A million people also demonstrated in the streets. This was clearly the biggest outpouring by labor since the 1995-96 mass strikes, which defeated a similar austerity plan by an earlier conservative government. This year, as is typical of large strikes in France, sectors of labor not directly affected by the austerity plan nonetheless joined in again, most notably the railroad workers. In a separate action, postal workers in Paris have been carrying out strikes for weeks against automation.

If President Jacques Chirac and Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin thought they could take advantage of the fact that French public opinion had strongly supported their opposition to the Iraq war, they were proved wrong by a large wave of public support for the strikers.

Al Qaeda attacks

Giving the lie to Bush administration claims that the reckless invasion of Iraq would undermine them, the fundamentalist Al Qaeda network staged two major terrorist attacks in mid-May. In Saudi Arabia, 15 suicide bombers simultaneously attacked two residential complexes and a U.S. corporation. Besides the attackers themselves, 20 people were killed, seven of them Saudi citizens. Other victims included seven U.S. citizens, as well as citizens of the Philippines, Britain, and other countries.

Less than a week later, 14 suicide bombers attacked a major hotel, a Spanish restaurant, the Belgian Consulate, a Jewish community center, and a Jewish cemetery in Casablanca, Morocco. Besides killing 13 of themselves, the attackers also murdered 28 other people, all but five of whom were Moroccan citizens.

While Al Qaeda thus proved its continuing existence, if these attacks were an attempt to capitalize on Arab rage against the Iraq war, the response on the ground by Saudi and Moroccan citizens suggested otherwise. This does not mean, however, that other forms of fundamentalism might not grow in the coming months, as the occupation of Iraq continues.

the maneuvers of the occupiers has succeeded in snuffing out efforts toward liberation among the Iraqi people, however. In Amara, a city of 300,000 in the southern Marsh Region, a local council has taken power, led by anti-Ba'athist guerrilla fighters who took power without outside help. In Baghdad, hospital workers as well as university students and professors have demonstrated against the continued presence of Ba'athist administrators.

The once-massive Communist Party (CP) has also reappeared in public, alongside a host of other parties

RAWA demonstration



Hundreds of women and young girls in Islamabad, Pakistan, April 28, remembered the seizure of Kabul, Afghanistan by fundamentalists in 1992. Organized by the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan, the demonstrators also condemned the reinstatement of Northern Alliance criminal warlords in Kabul.

Russia's Chechen war

In Russian-occupied Chechnya, two suicide bombings killed some 75 people in May. In one case, a truck bomb struck a Russian military and government headquarters, but also killed civilians in a nearby neighborhood. In the second case, suicide bombers killed 15 Chechens attending a celebration of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday. This second bombing, carried out by two women, was aimed at the Russian-installed Chechen leader Akhmad Kadyrov, who escaped unharmed.

While these terrorist attacks grabbed international headlines, especially after Russian President Vladimir Putin made a spurious attempt to link them to Al Qaeda, what is seldom reported, especially in the U.S. media, is the savage and unrelenting violence with which Russian forces have attempted to subdue Chechnya since 1999. Russia's repression has led the Holocaust Museum in Washington to place Chechnya at the top of its "genocide watchlist." With about a million inhabitants, the death toll in Chechnya is estimated at somewhere between 100,000 and 300,000.

A confidential Russian government document leaked to the international press this spring admitted to 1,314 assassinations of civilians by Russian forces during the year 2002, surely a gross underestimate. Many more have been kidnapped, beaten, tortured, and raped, men as well as women. One gruesome tactic is to kill with explosives, leaving only scattered body parts, which also makes a traditional Muslim funeral impossible. In April, Sergei Yushenkov, a prominent Russian politician who had spoken out against the repression, was assassinated in the heart of Moscow.

and movements. All of these parties survived years of underground existence or exile. "Iraq has always had political parties, even during Saddam's time, but they had to meet in secret," a worker who was visiting the CP's office told the international press.

Many of these opposition parties survived the 1990s in the Kurdish-ruled northern enclave. While Kurds have been prominent in Iraq's new political ferment, women have been relegated to the sidelines, not only by the emergent Islamist parties, but also by the secular ones. As one woman said: "We do not want to become like the Iranian women. In this country, the man always wants to oppress the woman" (*Le Monde*, April 30, 2003).

Several Islamist factions have tried to fill the vacuum left by the collapse of the Ba'athist regime. They surely represent a danger, but it should not be exaggerated. While the Western press made much of the one million Shi'ite Muslims who turned out for the Muharram celebrations in April, fewer noted that only 3,000 joined the Islamist-led political demonstrations during those same days.

Many are desperately seeking answers concerning relatives arrested by the old regime. Crowds have dug up unmarked graves at Al Ghraib prison outside Baghdad, where Ba'athists continued to execute political prisoners up through the last hours of their rule. The U.S. and the British have given such groups virtually no assistance, and much evidence is therefore being lost.

The International League for Human Rights estimates that the Ba'athist regime massacred hundreds of thousands of Iraqis over three decades. In the 1980s, it killed over 100,000 Kurds, during a period when Saddam Hussein was a U.S. ally. Then in the 1990s, after the first Gulf War, it crushed a resistance movement among the 500,000 largely Shi'ite Marsh Arabs. In an ecological as well as genocidal crime, it drained the marshes, killed 100,000 people, and deported another 200,000. Out of a total population of 23 million, three to four million Iraqis were also driven into exile during Ba'athist rule. Many of them are now returning, with the hope of rebuilding their country politically, economically and morally.

Nigeria elections

Voters recently elected Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo to a second term, giving him a two-to-one margin over his nearest rival, Muhammadu Buhari. Both Obasanjo and Buhari are former military dictators, but Obasanjo was later elected in a multi-party vote in 1999.

Buhari faced two obstacles as a national candidate. First, he has backed attempts by many of the states in the predominantly-Muslim North to impose Islamic Shari'a law, which has included public whippings or even sentences to death by stoning for "adultery." Second, older voters remembered Buhari's actions as military ruler from 1983 to 1985, when he ordered soldiers to carry out corporal punishments of civilians on the streets.

During this year's election, international observers reported instances of violence and vote-rigging, especially in the oil-rich Southeast. While this may have boosted Obasanjo's margin of victory, few claimed that Buhari could have won, even in a more honest vote.

Corruption and authoritarianism, as well as ethnic and religious violence, which marked Obasanjo's first term, are likely to continue. In addition, while Obasanjo has promised to stop any executions for "adultery," his commitment to secular law is of a limited nature. He has allowed women like Amina Lawal, sentenced to death by stoning, to go through lengthy trials and appeals before northern judges and has not intervened as brutal public whippings have been carried out under Shari'a law.

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 nuclear 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*.