

NEWS & LETTERS

Vol. 48 — No. 6

JULY 2003

50¢

WORKSHOP TALKS

Workers gouged to pay for tax cuts

by Htun Lin

Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz recently confessed that the claim that Iraq wielded weapons of mass destruction (WMD) was used as an excuse to invade Iraq, because "that was the one reason we could all bureaucratically agree on." In the same way, President Bush marketed his three huge tax cuts for the rich as a "job growth" program.

The result is that all across the nation, state budgets are facing the worst fiscal crisis in 50 years. One county supervisor in Oakland's Alameda County literally wept in his seat as he felt compelled to cast his vote for a budget. He said he had no choice but to cut yet more vital services to Oakland's desperately poor communities. One local man said, "They're not cutting to the bone. This is the bone!"

An unemployed woman said, "What good is a tax cut without a job?" Bush's tax cuts for the rich have meant massive cuts in local government jobs and services. Workers are paying punishing increases in local taxes, like sales taxes on everyday necessities.

CRUMBS FOR POOR WORKERS

The Bush gang reneged on his promise of a "tax cut for all," including "working families with children." He promised an increase in the "child tax credit" as a consolation for the poor working class, with crumbs that are left over from rewarding the richest capitalists of his class.

The biggest fanatic of the Bush religion is Rep. Tom
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BLACK/RED V I E W

'Antietam' still relevant

by John Alan

Nearly a century and a half after the U.S. Civil War a seemingly infinite number of books are still being published on it. It has been estimated that 100 new books on this topic appear every year. Clearly, publishers know that there exists an undying interest in the Civil War and that this nation is still waiting for new information and analysis about the most devastating and socially transforming war in American history.

James M. McPherson's new book *Crossroads of Freedom, Antietam, The Battle That Changed the Course of the War* (Oxford, 2002) is one of those new books. McPherson has chosen to see the Civil War from the "dimension of contingency" in the "sense of turning points" in a war, which "might have gone altogether differently." Antietam was such a turning point. It led to the Emancipation Proclamation and stopped England's and France's attempts to recognize the South as an independent state.

BLOODY DAY

McPherson opens *Crossroads of Freedom* with a chapter called "Death in September." According to McPherson the bloodiest at Antietam on Sept. 17, 1862 "remains the bloodiest single-day in American history." More than 12,000 Union and Confederate soldiers were killed or mortally wounded. Those casualties "were four times greater than the American casualties at the Normandy beaches on June 6, 1944."

And more died that day "than died in combat in all the other wars fought by this country in the 19th century combined: the War of 1812, the Mexican-American War, the Spanish-American War, all the Indian Wars" (p. 3). In other words, in becoming an imperial power the U.S. had fewer casualties than in a one-day battle at Antietam fought between Americans over the meaning of African-American freedom 140 years ago.

McPherson sees the battle of Antietam as a "historical tendency," meaning that although it was an immediate event, it would decide the fate of the Civil War. He seeks to prove the validity of his position by pointing out that once the Union general George B. McClellan had decisively defeated the Southern General Robert

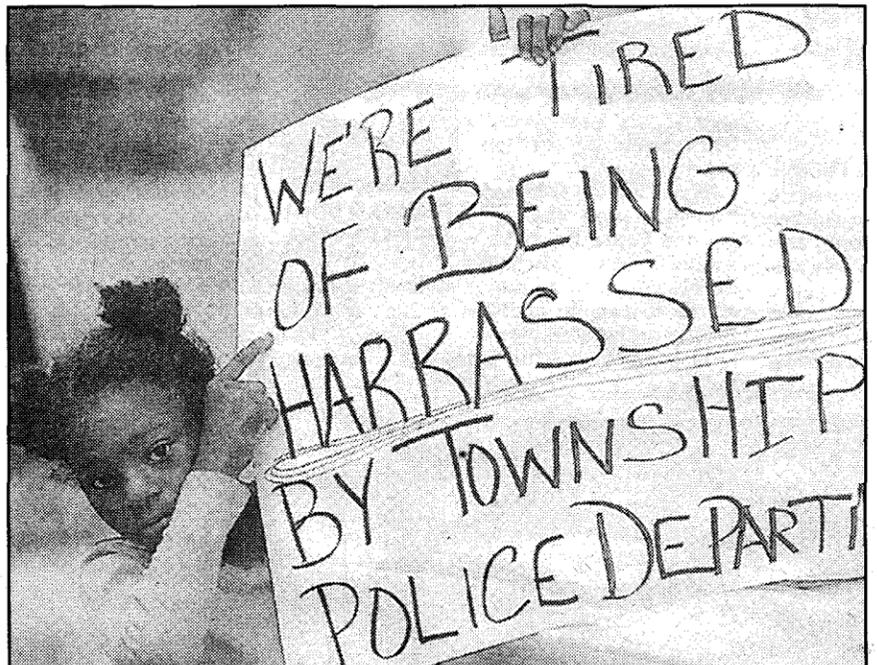
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Draft for Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, 2003-2004

War, resistance, and the need for a new alternative

The two-day-long rebellion of African Americans against police abuse that broke out in Benton Harbor, Michigan on June 16-17 says more about the state of this country than the recent global summits and photo-ops meant to showcase the U.S. military "victory" in Iraq. The rebellion in Benton Harbor, a city of 12,000 that is 92% Black, occurred after Terrence Shurn, a Black man, died from injuries sustained in a motorcycle accident after being chased through the town by white police officers.

Residents say that the outburst was a result of years of police harassment against the African-American community. The depth of anger in the community is reflected in the fact that even the arrival of hundreds of police from around the state failed to "restore order" after the first night of violence. Many residents were so angry at police misconduct that they threatened to set the police headquarters on fire.



Resident of Benton Harbor, Michigan protests police abuse

unseparated from being rooted in the body of ideas of Marxist-Humanism.

We publish here our "Draft for Marxist-Humanist Perspectives" to promote the widest discussion on the political, philosophical and organizational challenges facing Marxist-Humanists. We invite you to join in the process of developing our perspectives for the coming year, as part of the effort to work out a new unity between philosophy and organization.

of is neither merely theory nor that Karl Marx spoke in production. It is immanent in the entire nature of the present stage of capitalism.

The key question facing us is whether the forces of revolt will project a viable alternative to this stage of capitalism. The fact that political protests have fallen off elsewhere in the U.S. since the end of the Iraq war does not mean that the hundreds of thousands who participated in anti-war protests have become quiescent. Many are thinking of what to do next and do not buy George W. Bush's rhetoric that outside military intervention is the only way to "liberate" oppressed peoples. Yet the lopsided scale of the U.S. victory, which was able to blunt much of the anti-war opposition, combined with the failure to project an emancipatory alternative from the Left, is making it more difficult than ever to envision a transcendence of the present stage of capitalism.

If Marxist-Humanism is needed for anything at the present moment it is to help break through the ideological notion that mass of people cannot transcend capitalism, racism, and imperialist war through their own ideas and volition. To see how we can meet this challenge calls for a full confrontation with objectivity

The events in Benton Harbor reflect the simmering unrest that exists in African-American communities across the U.S. which could explode at any time. Yet the news media barely mentioned the rebellion until 48 hours after it began. It is one more reflection of the servility of the mass media towards the prevailing powers in this country.

That servility is bound to get worse in light of the June 3 decision of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to dramatically relax limits on the ability of media conglomerates to own TV and radio stations, newspapers and cable operations. The FCC's ruling shows that the concentration and centralization of capital in fewer hands that Karl Marx spoke

I. After the Iraq war: What next?

The U.S. "victory" in Iraq was made possible not only by massive military force. It also resulted from the fact that the Iraqis did not try to defend Saddam Hussein's regime. Instead, they welcomed the fall of his genocidal dictatorship. Yet as one recent report put it, "In the space of a few weeks, awe at American power in war has been transformed into anger at American impotence in peace." The joy felt by the masses of Iraqis over the collapse of Hussein's regime is giving way to growing resentment over the chaos and destruction wrought by the U.S. occupation.

This is reflected not just in the protests engineered by conservative Islamist tendencies that are trying to fill the political vacuum in post-Hussein Iraq, but also in complaints being voiced by Iraqis of virtually every political persuasion against the U.S. taking charge of everything from determining university appointments to deciding how the country's oil revenues shall be distributed. Even leaders of the Kurdish organizations which allied themselves with the U.S. during the war are complaining that its decision to run the country indefinitely and delay the formation of a national assembly and interim government may liquidate the de facto autonomy the Kurds have enjoyed in northern Iraq for the past 12 years.

Most significant are the concerns being voiced by Iraqi women, who are encountering efforts by secular and fundamentalist forces alike to restrict their rights. One Iraqi woman said, "The Americans say they brought us freedom. But freedom doesn't mean much to me without the chance to live my life." (1)

The Bush administration initially wanted to topple Hussein while keeping as much of the Ba'ath Party in power as possible. Yet resistance from the Iraqi masses upset these plans. It is seen in street protests against the U.S.'s effort to recruit Ba'ath Party officials to run the new police departments; in opposition by workers to efforts to "liberalize" the economy at the expense of their jobs and livelihoods; and in resistance by Iraqi women to moves to restrict their access to education, the revolutionary office, and freedom of movement.

The Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan stated on April 6: "Iraq might be overpowered by the military might of the U.S. Who isn't? But military might alone is not sustainable over time. It is easy for the military to invade, but much harder and even impossible to change the psychology of the ordinary people to submissively accept foreign freedom or to endure a foreign imposed regime."

Though the problems now being encountered by the U.S. in Iraq are significant, we should be under no illusions about the long-term impact that the war will

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WOMAN AS REASON *Contradictions at NWSA*

by Terry Moon

New Orleans—In contrast to 1990, when Black women and other women of color walked out of the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) Conference over an entrenched racism, women of color now dominate the NWSA staff and many are in important decision-making positions. Nevertheless, this year's conference, held June 19-22, remained overwhelmingly white and, as before, students were markedly missing from the workshops. This was especially serious given that the theme was "Southern Discomforts," and there were many sessions on the unique struggles of Southern women, taking up racism, poverty, and cultural and political marginalization.

What was new was that Marxism and class were words that, while certainly not on everyone's lips, were discussed at many panels throughout the conference, as well as mentioned by different plenary speakers.

One high point was the plenary talks by the one youth speaker, a founder of the Southern Girls Convention, Robin Jacks, who spoke of what it means to be young and working class in Mississippi; and Black woman community health worker and trainer Barbara Majors, who spoke of "Problems and Possibilities," emphasizing the often difficult relationships between Black and white Southern women. Here we only have space to discuss a few workshops and the keynote address by Minnie Bruce Pratt, Southern writer, poet and activist.

HUSSEIN'S BRUTALITIES IGNORED

Given Pratt's distinguished history in the women's movement, I was shocked when, in her condemnation of Bush's war on Iraq, she had not one word to say against Saddam Hussein. She described the condition of women under his brutal, murderous dictatorship as heaven: paid maternity leave, daycare at work, participation in professional jobs and in all aspects of Iraqi culture. She never mentioned Hussein's genocide against the Marsh Arabs—women, children, and men—or the murder of every revolutionary element in Iraqi society. This selective memory continued in her discussion of Afghanistan, where she had not one word to say about the USSR's invasion and occupation, implying that the puppet government continued the reforms begun in the 1970s.

When I discussed this with women later, each seemed unconcerned by Pratt's omissions, as if there

Tenn. nurses organize

Memphis, Tenn.—Several registered nurses (RNs) at the Regional Medical Center (the Med) got together and decided that we need a union to help represent us because we felt like we didn't have a voice in the care of the patients, buying equipment and other issues.

Administration pulled nurses from one unit to another, and those nurses were not trained to work in the second unit. If they cut back housekeeping, nurses have to pick up the slack. If they cut back lab, nurses have to draw blood. We're stretched so thin, it makes it difficult to give the best patient care.

Since Baptist Hospital closed in 2000, you have more patients in the same time period, and you come under the same standards. How can you deliver the quality of care or the standards of the Med if you're overloaded? In critical care the patient-to-nurse ratio is supposed to be two to one. On several occasions in units like trauma and ICU, there are three patients to one nurse, which makes it very difficult because there are a lot of things going on with critical patients.

On the floor, the average in the city is between six and eight to one, and the nurses in the Med are taking as many as 12 patients and sometimes more. Around the country in medical-surgical, the ratio is between four and six to one nurse. We want the nurses to be respected in the hospital.

We asked SEIU to help us get started. By the early part of this year, 52% of the number of nurses the Med said they had signed union cards. The Med said they had 500 nurses, but I'm not even sure that we do. We did not present the cards because the Med sent out a letter saying that the board had made a decision that they would not look at cards. They would not recognize us as a union. To this day the board still has not agreed to meet with us.

The chairman of the board, Lewis Donelson, is anti-union, which I feel is a conflict of interest because he does seminars to teach others how to keep a union out. In the 1960s he tried to stop the garbage collectors from unionizing. His law firm says it helps clients "maintain a union-free environment"—that's how he earns a living, so it wouldn't be good if where he's chairman of the board ended up having a union.

By having a union the hospital would have to hold to better standards of care. Right now, their standards are broken at any time, and we have no one to go to that could help us. With the union they would have to abide by these standards. We want to have a voice in patient care and to be able to give better patient care.

—Registered nurse

were no need to discuss any evil in the world except the U.S. How long women have suffered from the Left's "lesser evilism," being told we must work against U.S. imperialism rather than for a thoroughgoing revolution that would free everyone! And how right the early Women's Liberation Movement was to reject that idea, for everywhere women and men remain unfree.

Some of the same thinking was evident at the well-attended panel on "Third World' Women and Globalization: The Case Against Postmodern/Postcolonial Western Feminist Theory." Three presenters put forth a sharply critical view of postmodernism's reduction of "agency." But panelist Delia D. Aguilar kept countering women's genuine agency to class. While it was refreshing to hear a critique of postmodernism for ignoring class, Aguilar was pushing the same old tired leftist dogma that first we must have a "socialist revolution"—and she reduced socialism to nothing but class—and only after the revolution can we consider problems of sexism, racism, homophobia, and so on.

MARX VS. POSTMODERNISM

This truncated concept of socialism was accompanied by Aguilar's mangling of Marx. Agency, she claimed, exists within Marxism, but "it's not individual, it's collective." That it's Marx's humanism, not Aguilar's neo-Stalinism, that can successfully combat postmodernism was seen in how she was answered from the floor by a young gender activist Filipina scholar who passionately insisted that "Marx was definitely for individual progress, and for the full potentiality of human agency. We need to see how the Marxist-feminist label can expand."

We found at our two workshops, one on Raya Dunayevskaya's Marxist-Humanism and the other on the philosophic base of our work with prisoners, a keen interest in Dunayevskaya and how her ideas could help us today. Women wanted to know about the Hegelian concepts of first and second negativity. One asked how she could get *News & Letters* in her hometown in Florida. A young Black woman whose father taught prisoners, related how many of the students he had taught in high school were now in prison. There was interest in the way *N&L* sees prisoners' contribution to the idea of freedom.

We invite participants at the NWSA Conference to write us their thoughts on this column and on the conference as a whole.

WOMEN WORLDWIDE

by Mary Jo Grey



Afghan girls studying at school

Right-wing Islamic fundamentalists burned down a girls' school southwest of Kabul in June in the latest in a series of such attacks in Afghanistan. The school had been rebuilt and equipped by the UN. This was the sixth girls' school burned in Maidan and one of more than a dozen burned or blown up across the country since late 2001, when the Taliban lost power. Hundreds of thousands of girls have returned to school since that time.

The unrelenting support of women's reproductive health and rights activists was instrumental in New York City expanding access to emergency contraception to safely prevent accidental pregnancy. The New York City Council overrode Mayor Michael Bloomberg's veto of two key bills. One requires city hospitals that provide emergency treatment to rape survivors to also counsel and offer emergency contraception; the second requires city pharmacies that do not stock emergency contraception to prominently display signs informing customers about their failure to do so. These bills, and an existing law requiring emergency contraception be available at all city Department of Health clinics, make New York City the first city in the country to have such comprehensive legislation.

A public plea for justice is being made on behalf of Sakina, a 22-year-old Pakistani woman, and her 15-year-old sister, who were burned and scarred when Sakina's husband threw acid in her face during an argument. Police never even attempted to arrest him, leaving the women vulnerable to further attack. Since 1994, the Progressive Women's Association has documented 1,500 cases of acid attacks. The Pakistani Human Rights Commission estimates that 70-90% of women there suffer from domestic violence.

—Information from Women's Human Rights Bulletin

'Bush must go!'

New York—Thousands turned out to denounce Bush when he came here for a high-priced fundraiser June 23. Spearheaded by feminist groups demanding that women's right to abortion be saved, the demonstration defied the police and tied up rush-hour traffic around the Sheraton Hotel in Midtown.

This opportunity to demand Bush's defeat was initiated by Planned Parenthood and joined by NARAL and NOW. Their members and several other feminist groups turned out in force, including Code Pink, WAC and others.

"We won't go back" to illegal abortion was the dominant message, and none too soon. Congress just capitulated to right-wing demand and outlawed late term abortions; plus, we face the prospect of Bush appointing two Supreme Court nominees.

Many others also turned out, including anti-war activists, gays and lesbians, environmentalists, students, and backers of affirmative action. They denounced Bush for lying about the reason to make war on Iraq and demanded his impeachment. We shared the momentary feeling of potential power until we were shoved into pens and at least seven resisters were arrested.

We are already planning to turn the Republican National Convention here next year into a huge opportunity to express our outrage. Bush must go!

—Demonstrators

Iraqi woman speaks

Below we print excerpts from an International Women's Day talk by Yanar Mohammed, a founder of Defense of Iraqi Women's Rights (DIWR), whose mission is to better the lives of Iraqi women and involve them in the debate over the future of Iraq.

In the Middle East, the situation in Iraq is thought of as one of modernity. During the 1950s and '60s, progressive movements were very active in the streets. When I say "progressive," these are communist movements that believe in equality of men and women. They set up a social profile for women that changed their lives.... At the end of the 1950s 45,000 women in Iraq were organized within the Women's League....

In 1958, 45,000 women demonstrated in the streets and asked for their civil rights. They were able to pressure the government to make some amendments to the civil laws, for example, inheritance, where under Islamic Shari'a women get half what it gives a man. There are many rules in Shari'a that women demonstrated against, and were able to change....

Unfortunately, in 1963 the Ba'ath regime came to power, which led the way to Saddam's Ba'ath regime—the Arab Nationalist Party—and to dictatorship. It was brought to power by U.S. support, so as to crush progressive movements, mainly communism.... All the achievements I told you about were cancelled....

In spite of all the blows the Iraqi people received, still Iraqi women are considered to be a symbol of modernity. They are educated: 40% of the labor force in the public sector were women. I bring this up to answer the number one myth that is spread in the Western world: that Iraq is a Muslim society where women's rights are unachievable because they contradict the Muslim tradition. All mentioned above and the history of our protests give the full answer to that....

There was a campaign for Islamization of Iraq, which Saddam decided to go into in the '90s. We think religion is personal, and there should be freedom of religion, including atheism. But when religion is used to chop off women's heads, when it turns into political parties that try to reach power and keep half the population oppressed—that is what we are against....

In 2000 there was mass organized killing of women that targeted 200 women in Baghdad and Mosul. The General Union for Women of Iraq—a government organization controlled by the Ba'ath Party—was asked to present a list of "honorless" women to the government. In other words, prostitutes who had no choice but to sell their bodies in order to feed their children. The Ba'ath party went to the houses of these women and beheaded them. They made them naked, and hung them upside down in front of their houses as an example that these honorless women are against Islam.

In the 1990s in northern Iraq, 5,000 women died because of honor killings organized by the ruling Kurdish parties. My friend tells me that in her city authorities knock on the doors; they ask this family and that family and tell them they have to kill their daughters, because they are honorless, because they are having affairs, relationships. Even falling in love is enough reason for a woman to be killed.

Our vision is that women should not bend down under the burden of religion, nationalism, tribalism, and political Islam. We are beginning to organize, starting from the north where we can function better, and we will spread to the south and the center. No one can decide a future for Iraq that women will not have. For us, it is full equality, a secular government, it is a socialist government. That's what we are working for.

All your support is very much needed for our shelter in Iraq. Every dollar that you provide will be going for a woman who is in desperate need.

Yanar Mohammed and DIWR can be reached at:
5 Sunny Glenway, Unit 115, Toronto, ON, Canada
M3C 2Z5. Telefax: (416) 724-7104. Email:
yanar2002@hotmail.com

Support for union drive at Fred's

Memphis, Tenn. — Over 300 people rallied outside the Civil Rights Museum on June 14, demanding justice for workers at Fred's Warehouse who voted to unionize a year ago. Hundreds of UNITE members came from all over the South, from Kentucky and Florida to Missouri and Texas, to support the struggle. Several other unions were there for support too.

The rally showed internationalism by denouncing Fred's for its exploitation here and abroad. It has been carrying items made in Burma, where a repressive, murderous regime enforces harsh conditions in sweatshops for the benefit of multinational corporations.

"Slave labor anywhere is a threat to organized labor everywhere!" was the theme.

Jesse Jackson, who has long supported union campaigns, came to town to deliver a message that struck a chord: "The South is built on cheap labor. We need a new South where Blacks and whites don't just play football together, they make a living wage together, have health care together. The South must change, and it falls to the workers to bring about that change."

Most important was the testimony of two fired Fred's workers. First, Gigi told her story:

"I got fired last year just because I asked the man how you'd like my job and give it to somebody else? He told me I was being insubordinate. Everybody here knows how it goes: you wear your union shirt, you pass out leaflets, you're just bait waiting to be caught by the fish. It was me today, it could be you tomorrow.



News & Letters

"When you went there to fill out an application, you were looking. When you leave, you're still going to be looking. You miss a couple days sick, you ain't got your job, not working at Fred's. I've seen a lot of things in my day, but to see a man have a heart attack and get written up — that's the kind of place Fred's is."

Then Fred's gave his action: "Fred's still does not want to recognize me and my co-workers as a union. Fred's is not going to give up easily. People are still working at Fred's, making his profits. We rally; we protest; Fred's sees that and they understand that. But my point of view is that the people who work on the inside are going to have to stand up too. Has anyone ever heard of a work stoppage? If you just give Fred's five or ten minutes a day work stoppage, they are going to

lose profits.

"I worked at Fred's a year and a half. The reason I was fired was, a guy who was 6' 5" and 340 pounds threatened to kill me just for wearing a union shirt. If I had ever crossed him, he would have had me killed, or killed me himself.

"The next day I brought a printed letter in saying that if this guy harmed me, I would hold Fred's responsible. But my supervisor took me to the office with four people in management, the lawyer, and Randy Jacobs. Jacobs asked, 'Did you tell your supervisor you felt like killing people?' They changed my whole story around on me. I looked over and saw 'termination' already on my referral.

"I was terminated for union activity. But I'm not giving up. My co-workers aren't giving up."

—Participant

Labor agency thieves

Chicago — On June 17, San Lucas Workers' Center took over the waiting room of Elite Labor Services, demanding that they immediately begin giving work tickets to workers whether requested or not. This is because workers need to be able to show the hours they work if their checks come up short.

The demonstrators presented the day laborers waiting there and the agency with a survey showing that 40% of workers polled had had hours or even whole days of work missing from their pay; or had experienced delayed payment of wages at least once. All the workers said that they wanted work tickets for their records.

Harvey Cole, the owner of Elite, looked foolish in front of TV and print journalists by refusing this simple request. A Spanish language station in Chicago carried this as the lead story in their newscast.

Harvey Cole was targeted as the head of the association of temporary staffing agencies which negotiated last year with the Chicago City Council on the ordinance to regulate the day labor "industry." The ordinance passed on May Day with strong input from day labor organizers and workers from San Lucas Workers' Center, but the association worked to soften the cost of having to treat day laborers like human beings.

Since then, while the city has made no attempt to enforce the law, the day labor agencies have devised ways so that the commodity (labor) still has to pay for its own delivery. They still favor immigrants for jobs over Blacks, Puerto Ricans, and other native born workers in order to send them into sweatshop conditions. The worst capitalist practices are kept in place so as not to inconvenience those making profits off of human misery.

—D. D.

Stopping FTAA, in the interest of labor

Nashville, Tenn. — Activists from eastern, central and western Tennessee gathered in Nashville at the IBEW Union Hall on June 14 for the Tennessee Industrial Renewal Network's (TIRN) "Statewide FTAA Strategy Session." The Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) is a free trade agreement that is often described as extending NAFTA to all of the Western Hemisphere—except for Cuba.

FTAA is scheduled for completion in 2005, but civil society has yet to see the written text or to be involved in the draft negotiations. TIRN's Fair Trade Campaign is dedicated to stopping the FTAA. TIRN's mission is to change economic policy so that it is fair to workers and uplifts communities.

In a session on "Language and Culture of the Campaign," an organizer asked four questions of the participants, a quarter of whom were people of color, to demonstrate who the people are that are most affected by the FTAA.

When she asked how many people had been laid off and who had received or are receiving low wages and no benefits, most raised their hands, some turning to their neighbors and sharing their experiences. Then she asked how many people had been laid off because of race or were victimized by racism on the job, and the people of color raised their hands.

After a year and a half of strategy sessions, it seems to me that we had a real epiphany because we have

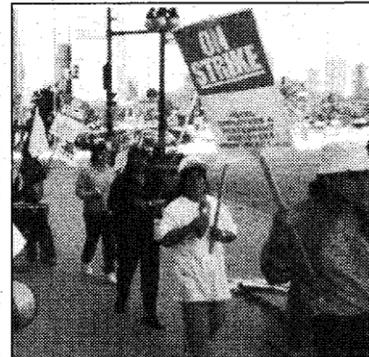
Chicago hotel strike

Chicago — We went on strike June 15. The contract with the Congress Hotel ended at the end of last year, and we were trying to negotiate a new one, but the owner of the Congress Hotel, Albert Nasser, cut our wages by 7% in May. He also cut off our health insurance. We were earning \$8 an hour before walking out.

Over three quarters of the people have been here more than 10 years, but others have moved around, and know what it's like elsewhere. And lots of the

women, and men, have another job, besides working at Congress Hotel. They need both jobs. One woman worked eight years at another hotel and has been here for two years.

Nasser is cheap. He was using scab labor to rehab rooms here, but the city found out the scabs weren't qualified to do the



Jim Mills / News & Letters

Pickets at Congress Hotel.

plumbing and electrical work, so they had to stop. Nasser has spent lots of money, just not on a fair contract. He had the scabs put in marble bathrooms, tear up the carpeting, and install soundproofing for the apartments of Nasser's assistant, Sholomo and his son.

And scabs are staying at the hotel. Sholomo brought them in to do our jobs, but it takes two of them to do the work of each one of us. And the Congress Hotel is paying them \$11 an hour. The hotel should be putting that money behind a new contract instead.

The hotel has been making us work harder so they can spend less. The elevators we are supposed to use are always breaking down. That means the employees have to carry luggage up and down the stairs. This north tower has 12 floors and the south tower has 14. Guests are mad about taking the stairs too.

Housekeeping is usually supposed to take care of 16 rooms in an eight hour shift, but when it gets busy, which is most of the time, we can't refuse to clean more, sometimes over 30 rooms. We only get \$4 for every extra room.

There are only three supervisors in the whole hotel. The housekeepers have to run all over the hotel looking for the supervisors when they need help because Nasser is too cheap to hire more supervisors.

So far we have turned away some guests at the front door. One man told management to give us a contract.

The rest of the members of Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 1 around the city won a new contract last year. They make \$10 an hour, going up to \$12 later. That's all we're asking for, along with our insurance back. Workers from other hotels support our strike, too. We had hundreds with us in front of the hotel one Sunday.

If we stayed quiet, maybe they would take away our vacation, then something else, then maybe kick out the union. We are on strike for the rights of workers at the other hotels too.

—Strikers

WORKSHOP TALKS

(Continued from page 1)

DeLay. He said the reason why he and Bush, behind closed doors, decided at the last minute to break a promise and omit the child tax credit for the poorest working Americans was: "They don't pay any taxes."

Forget for a moment that the taxes they do pay—Social Security and Medicare—are the very funds Bush is stealing from the now forgotten "Social Security lock box," in order to finance his wars and tax cuts. The Bush tax policy really represents a massive redistribution of wealth to those who make money not through their labor but through capital investment.

Tax policy as a means of redistribution of wealth had a different dynamic when capitalism was fighting to save itself. That was the intent behind Lyndon Johnson's "Great Society" programs, 30 years after Franklin Roosevelt's "New Deal" earned him the label "class traitor" by some in his own class.

But without the New Deal, Roosevelt realized, the popular uprisings by workers' movements, armies of the unemployed, could have sounded the death knell of capitalism. The global system of robber barons collapsed in a global depression. With Bush, the robber barons are back in charge. Towards a future of permanent war, they're restructuring the tax system for that end.

TAXING OUR BODIES

Every day that a worker enters the factory, he is already being taxed. In the first hour or so, the worker creates enough value to cover all his living expenses. The rest of the eight hours are all surplus labor, extracted by the capitalist as surplus value. The capitalists are prone to calling the workers' wages "labor cost," a constant irritant that has to be cut.

The capitalist behaves as if this cost comes out of something he earned, when in reality, everything the capitalist "earned" is value created by workers and expropriated as unpaid labor. From this perspective there is a tax on workers of over 80% that Bush and DeLay don't want to talk about.

Outside the factory the worker is taxed once again, this time by government. In fact, the capitalists pay their own corporate taxes, if any, from the added value stolen from workers. However, it is through alienated labor, which produces value, that the biggest "tax" occurs every minute of our work lives. The cost is tremendous in damage on our bodies, our minds and our environment.

DIFFERENT VISION

Our basic conditions of life and labor will not necessarily improve by changing our tax laws. We need to change the very nature of our thinking about why we have taxes at all, whether for essential social needs like schools and hospitals or to launch senseless military campaigns. We don't share the same nightmares as the capitalists since we don't share the same vision.

Since they're the ones who created and spread weapons of mass destruction, the capitalists' worst nightmare is not those weapons, but it is us. We are their worst nightmare, everyday working people, especially if we regain our ability to act in concert not only against the total catastrophe towards which global capitalism is leading us all but also towards a positive vision of a society where the needs and creativities of every human being is its own end.

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—Julie Travis Rogers

From the Writings of Raya Dunayevskaya MARXIST-HUMANIST ARCHIVES

We must now tie up the intelligentsia and the labor bureaucracy with the Plan. Thus far we have not done so concretely enough. We spoke of the Plan as the enemy, but we did not split the category of planners into a strict relation to the specific epoch for which they planned. We spoke of the labor bureaucracy as the same nature as Stalinism, both resulting from the stage of state-capitalism, but no internal connection flowed from all of this. Not in any truly concrete sense. So I will now split up that category [of] planners and see whether we can get closer to the internal logic.

With the end of classical political economy we have the first planner appearing in Jean Charles Leonard Sismondi. He tried to stop the march of industry, of constant capital outdistancing variable capital. Thus the doubts of bourgeois classicism got embodied in a bourgeois representative.(1)

The doubts grow with the "unconscious" development of capitalist production, and petty-bourgeois socialism appears—first in Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, with his bank aid program, and then with Ferdinand Lassalle, with his demand for state aid to "cooperative production societies."

The opposite of their intentions is thus clearly seen in their program, for in truth each tries to be a better bourgeois than the bourgeoisie itself—one by "abolishing" money but all wrapped up in the fetishism of commodities [Proudhon], the other by "extending" cooperation and all wrapped up with the fetishism of the state as some sort of classless arbiter [Lassalle].(2)

Proudhon is the last of the representatives of the epoch of competitive capitalism. Lassalle is the anticipator of monopoly capitalism (that's really what his cooperative form of labor is), or more precisely yet, the statification of industry and of life. Both are rejected by the further development of capitalism. With the transformation of competitive into monopoly capitalism, the bourgeoisie itself becomes the planners and the results of their planning are: trusts, international cartels, imperialism.

The new petty-bourgeoisie strata—which has also been transformed into its opposite, from the laissez-faire small grocery man into the administrative clerk of the trusts—begins to ask for a saner "policy." But these are much [less] dangerous than the Proudhons and Lassalles, for the very development of capitalism so engulfs them, they do not even know the "vocabulary" of the proletariat, and the latter does not listen to them at all.

The real danger comes from within scientific socialism—Rudolf Hilferding(3), the orthodox [Marxist], not Eduard Bernstein(4), the revisionist. Hilferding sees the new stage of capitalism in its financial razzle-dazzle appearance and becomes enamored of its capacity to "unify" commercial, industrial, and financial interests [instead of being] concretely aware of the greater contradictions and antagonisms of the new monopoly stage of capitalism.

I wish to stress the seeming orthodoxy of Hilferding. No one, absolutely no one—not the firebrand Rosa Luxemburg, nor the strict realist V.I. Lenin, and I dare say not Hilferding himself—knew that what he was doing with his theory of finance capitalism was bringing in the first theory of retrogressionism [into Marxism]....Even with over four decades of hindsight, and much, hard thinking on the subject, I have first now

EDITOR'S NOTE

After the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq this year, revolutionaries are discussing imperialism in the age of state-capitalism and ways to challenge it. It is a central topic in the Draft for Marxist-Humanist Perspectives (see "II. State-capitalism and imperialism," page 5). For that reason, we reprint part of a letter from Raya Dunayevskaya to C.L.R. James, of March 2, 1951. In it Dunayevskaya discusses, critically, the Marxist theories of imperialism in the first generation after Marx. The letter has been edited for publication and the title and notes are the editors'. The original is in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, 9291-98.

On the economic roots of Imperialism Rudolf Hilferding and 'the stability of capitalism'

realized that what Hilferding was seeing and analyzing (and it took Nikolai Bukharin's theory of the transition period to bring it home to me)(5) was the **stability of capitalism**.

Watch the orthodoxy though: Hilferding is proposing no revisionism. The automatic fall of capitalism is still expected and the inevitability of socialism in a mechanistic sort of way is also held to tightly. But rather than seeing monopoly as a transition into opposite of a previous stage, monopoly is treated more like simple large-scale production. **That is the key.** For if it is not a transition into opposite of a fundamental attribute of capitalism, then **capitalism's organization and centralization, monopolization's appearance as the "emergence of social control"...** is in fact superseded socialism. Or more precisely, [Hilferding] retrogresses back to home base: the equilibrium of capitalist production.

By viewing the whole development of trusts and cartels not from within the factory, but from "society," that is, the market, Marx's general law of capitalist accumulation—the **degradation** of the proletariat along with capitalist accumulation—has no meaning for Hilferding. Neither does Marx's postulate "private production without the control of private property" make any imprint on Hilferding.(6) And of course labor remains a unity; there is not any inkling of an aristocracy of labor arising out of the monopolization and degradation and imperialism.

You must remember that even with the outbreak of World War I, but before Lenin did his own analysis [of imperialism in 1915], he introduced Bukharin's *World Economy and Imperialism* which said pretty much the same thing as Hilferding. All this I want to repeat again and again in order to emphasize the orthodoxy, in order to show that [even when] all the formulae are adhered to the loss of revolutionary perspective not yet in a positive way but in the negative of awe before the **existent**, continued capitalism can be very, very deceiving. If it was [deceiving] to Lenin we better watch it all the time.

What in truth emerges from a close study of Hilferding...is that the new generation of Marxists following Engels' death [in 1895], placed within growing, centralized production, saw **monopoly not as a fetter but rather as an organizing force of production.** So that the Second International, which had openly rejected Bernsteinism and gradualness, accepted Hilferdingism. That meant tacit acceptance of the capacity of capital to gain a certain "stability," to modify its anarchism as a "constant" feature. They saw in [this] new stage not a **transition** to a higher form, but something in itself already higher, although "bad."

Now the person who made this all clear to me was Bukharin, that logical extension of Hilferding, blown into the **theory** of counter-revolution right within the first workers' state. It is to him that we must turn. Here too for our generation it is correct to view him with hindsight, precisely because his is "only" theory that will become full-blown actual counter-revolution with Stalin supplying it an objective base.

Keep in mind therefore the three actual stages of capitalist production for the three decades since the publication of Bukharin's *Economics of the Transitional Period*:

1) 1920-30: Taylorism plus Fordism, that is, the discovery of the [assembly] belt line and with it the necessity for a fascist order in the factory. It may be "vul-

gar" to call gangsters part of the intelligentsia, but that is the genuine face of "social control" when the masses themselves do not control [production]. Marx's view of the planned despotism plus the industrial army of managers, foreman, etc. has moved from theory to such **everyday** practice that every worker knows it in his bones; he needs no ghost come from the grave to tell him that....

2) 1930-40: General crisis; New Dealism where "everybody" allegedly administers, and fascism where openly only the elite do, both in mortal combat with the CIO and the general sit-down strikes (which made a true joke of private property) for "social control." Plan, plan, plans: National Five-Year Plans in Russia, Germany, Japan; John Maynard Keynes, the New Deal, technocracy, the Tennessee Valley Authority, public works.

3) 1940-50: Monopolization has been transformed into its opposite, statification. (What greater scope for a modern Moliere, to take those weighty volumes of the Temporary National Economic Committee (TNEC)(7) proving monopolization and how strangling it is, and then on the eve of World

War II they are finally published in full, prefaced by a call for full mobilization which shows that monopolization plus Hitlerism is child's play as compared to American statification.)

End of World War II, "end" of fascism and state-private-monopoly rule. Complete state-capitalism reaching its tentacles from Russia into Eastern Europe, engulfing Britain, seeping into Western Europe and peering out of the U.S. **Total, global plans:** Marshall, Molotov, Monnet, Schumann, Truman's Point 4.(8) Keynes is dead; long live the state plan. The intelligentsia in Russia, the Social Democratic labor bureaucracy elsewhere, all in mortal combat with the Resistance, with the Warsaw [uprising](9), with general strikes and colonial revolutions. One strangles the revolution "for" the masses' own good, and the other for "democracy's" shadow.

NOTES

1. Jean Charles Leonard Sismondi (1773-1842) was an early critic of industrialism. His *New Principles of Political Economy* (1819) proposed state regulation of the economy in order to create a balance between production and consumption. Karl Marx made critical notes on Sismondi in 1844.
2. For more on Proudhon (1809-65), a founder of anarchism, and on Lassalle (1825-69), whom Marx called a future worker's dictator, and several others noted here, see Dunayevskaya's *Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today*.
3. Rudolf Hilferding (1877-1941) was a leading theoretician of the "orthodox Marxist" Second International. He is best known for *Finance Capital*, which argued that the influence of banks over industry led to monopolies and consequently to imperialism. He opposed the German Social-Democrats' vote for war credits in 1914, though he took a centrist position as a leader of the Independent Social-Democratic Party. In 1923 and 1928 he served as Finance Minister in two German Social-Democratic governments. He was murdered by the Nazis in Paris in 1941.
4. Eduard Bernstein (1850-1932) was the founder of revisionist Marxism who rejected the notion of the inevitable collapse of capitalism and the seizure of power by the proletariat.
5. Nikolai Bukharin (1888-1938) was a leading theoretician of the Russian Bolsheviks. He wrote *Economics of the Transitional Period* in 1920. Though Stalin utilized some of ideas in his rise to power, Bukharin was executed on Stalin's orders in 1938.
6. This is probably a paraphrase of Marx's comment that the concentration and centralization of capital leads to "the abolition of the capitalist mode of production within the mode of capitalism itself....It is private production unchecked by private ownership" See *Capital, Vol. III*, trans. by David Fernbach (New York: Vintage, 1981), p. 569.
7. The Temporary National Economic Committee (TNEC) reports were a series of studies commissioned by Congress which studied the concentration of economic power in the U.S. economy.
8. General George Marshall was the U.S. Secretary of State under Truman who devised the Marshall Plan for the recovery of Europe after World War II. V. M. Molotov (1890-1986) was Soviet Foreign Minister from 1939-49 and 1953-56. Jean Monnet (1888-1979) headed French economic planning after World War II and was a guiding force in the creation of the European Common Market, the precursor of the European Union. Robert Schumann (1886-1963), French Foreign Minister during the late 1940s and early 1950s, devised the Schumann Plan in 1950 to place French and German coal and steel production under a single joint authority. This later became the foundation of the Common Market. Truman's Point 4, unveiled in 1949, was an effort to "combat Communism" by promising aid to underdeveloped nations.
9. This refers to the Polish uprising against the Nazis in Warsaw in 1944. Though the Russian army was outside Warsaw at the time, Stalin refused to extend any aid to the uprising and allowed the Nazis to crush it.



The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism

Selected writings by Raya Dunayevskaya

"Our theory of state-capitalism differs from Bukharin's not only because the concrete problems differ in each epoch, but because the vision, if you will, must differ from Bukharin's abstract revolutionism and, instead, be rooted in the actions and thoughts of working people who would themselves decide their own destiny before, in, and after the revolution."

To order, see page 12.

The
Marxist-Humanist
Theory of
State-Capitalism



selected writings
by Raya Dunayevskaya

Draft for Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, 2003-2004

War, resistance, and the need for a new alternative

(Continued from page 1)

have on the region and on the world as a whole.

The U.S. military victory in Iraq clearly gives the Bush administration an opening to intimidate and invade other regimes. It has threatened to attack Syria if it does not follow its dictates. It is issuing new threats against Iran over its nuclear program and its support of Shi'ite groups opposed to the U.S. in southern Iraq. The Pentagon is now providing aid to the Mujahedeen Khalq group (even though the U.S. attacked it during the Iraq war because of its support for Hussein's régime) in order to make use of the group for possible future military actions against Iran.

The administration is also moving closer towards a possible preemptive strike against North Korea. On June 3 the Pentagon announced that it will reposition most of its 37,000 troops out of the range of North Korean artillery. This move, which was opposed by the South Korean government, will make it easier to launch a preemptive strike against the North if the U.S. chooses to.

Not to be forgotten is Latin America, where the U.S. is pouring military aid into Colombia and keeping an eye on growing mass movements in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru. Even Brazil, where Lula has gone out of his way not to antagonize the U.S. since being elected president this year, is being viewed with concern by members of the Bush administration.

The U.S. is also using its victory in Iraq to press ahead with the development of a new generation of nuclear weapons. Last month the House and Senate repealed the Spratt-Furse Amendment, which prohibits the development of nuclear weapons with an explosive force of less than five kilotons of TNT. The administration wants to be able to develop such weapons for use as "bunker busters" against a number of potential adversaries. This is occurring even as a host of states—from China to Pakistan and India and from Iran to North Korea and beyond—seek to augment or develop nuclear arsenals of their own.

No less important than such material factors is the war's ideological impact.

Massive anti-war sentiment arose this year, not only overseas, but within the U.S. A new generation of youth in high schools and colleges joined in anti-war protests, as did feminists, environmentalists, and gays and lesbians. African Americans were the dimension most opposed to the war, as indicated in poll after poll.

Dissatisfaction with the overall state of living and working conditions is also evident. Bush's latest tax cuts for the rich come in the midst of an economy that has lost three million jobs since 2000. State governments are experiencing the worst fiscal crisis in half a century. State governments have cut \$50 billion in health, welfare, and education benefits in 2002, and expect to cut another \$26 billion this year. The \$75 billion in cuts roughly corresponds with the cost of the war against Iraq. The rate of unemployment is higher today than at any time in the last 10 years.

Growing dissatisfaction with these conditions on the part of labor is seen from recent strikes by communications, hospital and hotel workers against declining wages and mushrooming health care costs. Though prior economic downturns mainly hammered workers in manufacturing, the present "job-loss recovery" is affecting workers across the board, especially service and government workers.

At the same time, an array of domestic spying and harassment activities, from INS attacks against immigrants to the USA PATRIOT Act and the "Terrorism Information Awareness Program" (a renamed version of the Total Information Awareness program headed by John Poindexter) is undermining democratic rights. On June 5 Attorney General John Ashcroft asked for even broader powers to detain suspects and deny them access to an attorney. This will effectively jettison the First and Fourth Amendments. All of our liberties are in severe danger, whether we see anything dramatic happening right now or not.

Bush is also nominating the most reactionary judicial nominees of any president in decades. And Congress' recent vote to ban late-term abortions is the beachhead the anti-choice movement had mapped out, and can easily lead, with coming changes in the Supreme Court, to the outlawing of abortion.

Bush's drive for permanent war is in part intended to stifle opposition to these conditions. The massive use of military might against Iraq was intended not only to bring down Hussein but also to provoke speechless wonder at the inability of any power to put up any effective resistance to such a devastating onslaught. The sense of powerlessness and dependence generated by the war on Iraq is intended not only for foreign consumption; it is also aimed at convincing the American public that there is no alternative to the present form of society and course of political affairs in the U.S.

A successful war does not necessarily silence discontent, as Bush Sr. learned after the first Iraq war when a declining economy made him a one-term president. However the present administration is trying to pre-

vent a repeat of history by making the "war against terrorism" and the strengthening of the national security state a permanent feature of the political landscape.

That this is no idle threat is born out by the fact that the war against Iraq has increased the threat of terrorist attacks by fundamentalist forces. The war has provided new opportunities for Al Qaeda and others to reinvigorate their terrorist networks, as seen from the recent bombings in Saudi Arabia and Morocco. Even Senator Richard Lugar recently stated that U.S. policy in Iraq is in danger of "creating an incubator for terrorist cells and activity."

The possibility of a continuous war between U.S. imperialism and Islamic fundamentalist terrorism pre-

sents the liberation movements in this country with a serious challenge—one that will become even graver if another terrorist attack occurs inside the U.S. As we saw from September 11, 2001, few things strengthen U.S. rulers more than such attacks—just as Bush's arrogance in invading other countries with overwhelming military force provides a recruiting ground for terrorists.

This vicious circle of war and terrorism is providing regimes around the world with an opening to crack down on the forces of opposition. Ongoing mass struggles continue to show themselves, from national liberation movements in Acheh

and Palestine to anti-slavery struggles in Mauritania and Sudan to movements against dictatorial regimes in

Kenya and Burma. These struggles have added new dimensions to the concept of freedom, as masses of people seek to work out questions about the role of nationhood, the possibility of providing for economic development for all, and creating genuine democracy. Yet the rulers of Israel and Indonesia especially are seizing this moment to try to silence their opponents by draping their repression under the cover of a "war against terrorism," knowing full well that in doing so they will have continued U.S. support.

The suicide bombings by groups like Hamas and the Al Aqsa Brigade have undermined Bush's "road map" plan for "peace" between Israel and the Palestinians. At the same time, Bush's insistence that all acts of violence against Israel must cease before a peace plan can begin to be implemented makes it harder to resolve the crisis, since not even the leaders of Hamas, let alone Palestinian Authority, have total control over the actions of every potential suicide bomber. The parameters of Bush's "road map" in effect gives Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon as well as the suicide bombers a veto over the peace process since Bush uses each suicide bombing as an excuse to initiate even more violence against the Palestinians.

Whether it be in the Middle East or here at home, we face the threat of a vicious circle of war and terrorism in which both sides, for all their mutual animosity, end up reinforcing each other's reactionary power.

II. State-capitalism and imperialism

A. The logic of capital

What can be done to break out of this vicious circle of imperialist war and terrorism? What can Marxist-humanists do to help the movements against war, racism, sexism, and capitalist globalization project an alternative to this situation?

First, we must emphasize what not to do. We must not focus all our energy and opposition exclusively on attacking the U.S., even though it remains the sole superpower and the force responsible for so much global destruction. A one-sided opposition to U.S. imperialism that fails to seriously oppose Islamic fundamentalism or dictatorial regimes like that of Saddam Hussein or North Korea's will not move us forward. It only plays into Bush's hands by enabling him to present U.S. militarism as the agency for promoting "liberty" and "democracy" throughout the world.

The tendency to focus everything on a critique of the U.S. while having little or nothing to say about its reactionary critics has become especially predominant today—precisely because the U.S. has such unmatched

power. The problem with focusing everything on a critique of U.S. actions is not only that it leaves the anti-war and other movements open to tail-ending state powers who may for now oppose (for whatever reason) U.S. war moves, as France and others in the UN did this year. The problem is deeper. Such an approach diverts attention from the way U.S. imperialist actions are rooted in the nature of globalized capitalism.

Imperialism is not the product of a cabal of right-wing ideologists who have managed to take control of the Bush administration. Imperialism is the expression of a determinant stage of capitalist production. It can be stopped and uprooted only by abolishing the capitalist system as a whole.

What Rosa Luxemburg wrote in her *Junius Pamphlet* in the midst of World War I remains true today: "Imperialism is not the creation of any one or of any group of states. It is a product of a particular stage of ripeness in the world development of capital, an innately international condition, an indivisible whole, that is recognizable only in all its relations, and from which no nation can hold aloof at will."⁽²⁾

The imperialism that Luxemburg, Lenin and others analyzed at the start of the 20th century is of course very different from what we now confront. However, like today, the "classical" imperialism of the late 19th and early 20th century resulted from a new stage in the concentration and centralization of capital.

As Marx showed in *Capital*, the inner drive of the capitalist mode of production is to concentrate and centralize capital in ever fewer hands. The rise of cartels, trusts, and monopolies in the late 19th and early 20th century put traditional laissez-faire capitalism to rest. Competitive capitalism transformed into its opposite, monopoly capitalism. This provided the economic basis of imperialism.

As Lenin showed, the rise of monopoly capitalism did not annul competition; the two instead co-existed on a new level, as seen in heightened international competition for markets in the technologically underdeveloped countries. World capitalism became divided into five contending imperialist blocs, which unleashed the holocaust of World War I in 1914.

An even deeper transformation into opposite took place later when the Russian Revolution became a totalitarian state-capitalist society under Stalin. Marx's prediction in *Capital* that the laws of capitalism would not be changed even if all capital was "united in the hands of either a single capitalist or a single capitalist company" came to life.⁽³⁾ State-capitalism was not restricted to Russia, however; it defined a new world stage of production in the 1930s, as seen in the rise of fascism in Germany and Italy, the Co-Prosperity Sphere in Japan, and the New Deal in the U.S.

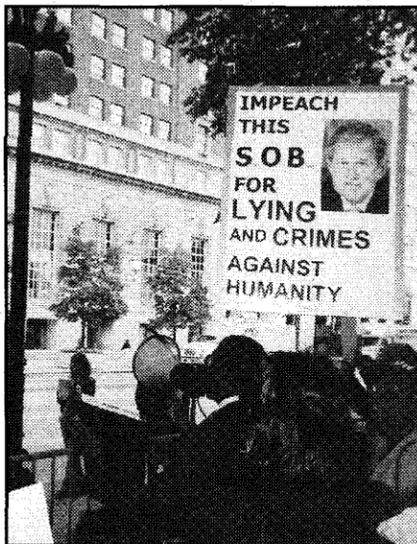
The rise of state-capitalism the world over meant also a new imperialism, not alone for division of the world, but for single national control of the world's economy. This defined the bipolar conflict between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. in the Cold War.

As Raya Dunayevskaya, the founder of Marxist-Humanism, wrote in 1951: "Monopolization...Complete state capitalism reaching its tentacles from Russia, into Eastern Europe, engulfing Britain, seeping into Western Europe and peering out of the U.S....One strangles the revolution 'for' the masses' own good, and other for 'democracy's' shadow."⁽⁴⁾

By 1989-1991 the bipolar world came to an end, as the East European nations freed themselves from Russian tutelage and the U.S.S.R. broke apart. Though the U.S.S.R. collapsed and dropped out of the race for world domination, the U.S. continued its drive for single world dominance, only now unencumbered by competition from another superpower.

The U.S. drive for total military and political domi-

(Continued on page 6)



Chicago protest against Bush in June

News & Letters / Jim Mills



Protest in Geneva against G-8 summit, June 3

Independent Media Center

NEWS & LETTERS
 Vol. 48, No. 6 JULY 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 or 5 or more, 25¢ each) by News & Letters, 36 S. Wabash, Room 1440, Chicago, IL 60603. Telephone (312) 236-0799. Fax (312) 236-0725. 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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News & Letters is printed in a union shop. 759-C

Draft for Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, 2003-2004

(Continued from page 5)

nance of the past decade flows from the same logic of capital that drove earlier stages of imperialism. As Dunayevskaya wrote in 1960: "From the capitalist point of view, private or state, there is an imperative urgency for a single power to dominate the whole world which will, of necessity, include totalitarian control over 'their own workers.'"(5) She added: "The reason that the capitalistic world, from its division into five power blocs in World War I, came out of World War II with two, and only two, power blocs, nuclearly armed, is that there is just no room for more if this madhouse of 'production for production's sake,' where the dead labor of machines and not the living labor of human beings has the decisive voice, is to continue. In fact, there is no room for two."(6)

The fact that the concentration and centralization of capital has advanced so far that by now "there is no room" for even two superpowers underlines the present effort by the U.S. to achieve global domination through its drive for permanent war.

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 surely enabled the Bush administration to openly proclaim its goal of achieving world hegemony by means of absolute military superiority over any imagined or real adversary. Yet much of what Bush is now promoting was earlier put forth, albeit more tentatively, during the Clinton administration. Clinton refused to sign the ban on land mines; he and the Congressional Republicans opposed allowing the World Court to indict U.S. citizens for war crimes; and he launched his own version of "preventive war" with missile attacks on Afghanistan and Sudan in 1999. Though few said so then, in response to those attacks we said in 1999 that this constituted "a drive for permanent war."(7)

What fuels U.S. rulers' fantasies about their ability to dominate the world is the size of the U.S. economy. The U.S. today accounts for 31% of global economic output—about the same amount as during the 1950s. The U.S. economy is larger than that of the next four largest economies combined—Japan, Germany, France and Britain. This in part explains how the U.S. can spend more on the military than the next 10 largest nations combined. Even China—second to the U.S. in the size of its military budget—spends only one-seventh of the U.S. each year on its military and is decades away from catching up with the U.S.'s edge in high-tech weapons.

Yet even with the tens of billions that Bush has added to the military budget (which is now over \$400 billion) U.S. military spending as a percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is only half what it was during the height of the Cold War. As Paul Kennedy recently put it, "Being no. 1 at great cost is one thing. Being the world's single superpower on the cheap is astonishing."

The U.S.'s economic, political and military power does not mean, however, that it has actually achieved total global dominance. Nor is it the only state power with global ambitions. That became clear in the run-up to the war on Iraq, when serious tensions erupted between the U.S. and some of its closest European allies, like France and Germany. The G-8 summit of the major industrial powers in Evian, France on June 1-3 did little to paper over these differences.

France is trying to revitalize the European Union's (EU) Foreign and Security Pact as a way to enable EU countries to develop a military force independent of NATO and the U.S. It has the support of Russian President Putin in this, who like French President Chirac has talked of the need for a multipolar world.

Russia is also trying to strengthen its relations with former client states in Central Asia. One report noted: "In the aftermath of the ousting of Hussein's regime in Iraq many authoritarian leaders in Central Asia feel threatened by the rise of U.S. unilateralism and are turning back to Russia in search of security guarantees."(8) The rulers of Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan recently agreed to establish a "Warsaw Pact-style rapid reaction force."

China also is moving closer to Russia (its largest arms supplier), since it is nervous about the U.S. military presence in Central Asia and its threats against North Korea. One report noted: "Spurred by their shared opposition to the U.S.-led war in Iraq, China and Russia have moved to beef up the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which includes Russia, China and four ex-Soviet Central Asian nations, in hopes of turning it into a full-fledged security alliance in the future."(9)

The importance of such efforts to be independent of the U.S. should not be overstated. Yet despite the EU's effort to write a constitution and have a single foreign minister by 2006, Europe is not a unified entity, nor is it in the position to seriously challenge the U.S. As the EU expands it is becoming more diffuse and less able to develop a unified stand on international issues. And as the controversy over the Iraq war showed, the leaders of the Central and East European nations that are

about to join the EU are more than willing to follow U.S. dictates, virtually at any price.

Russia and China are also in no position to seriously challenge the U.S. on either the political or military front, despite their efforts to forge closer relations. In many respects the interests of Russian, Chinese, and U.S. rulers converge, as seen in Russia's use of the "war against terrorism" to continue its attacks on Chechnya and China's use of the same to oppose Muslim separatists in Western China.

That world politics is no longer defined by a series of superpowers contending for world domination, but by a single power—the U.S.—does not negate the need to oppose all forms of unfreedom, wherever they are found. It only makes such a perspective all the more necessary. There are two worlds in every country.

B. Economics and ideology

Humanity is the actual principle of the state—but unfree humanity. It is thus the democracy of unfreedom—alienation carried to completion. The abstract reflected antithesis belongs only to the modern world.

—Karl Marx(10)

What is new about the present stage of state-capitalist imperialism compared with earlier periods?



Cincinnati rebellion, 2001—has anything changed since?

One thing that is different today is that the U.S. does not seem interested in direct territorial control of the rest of the world, in contrast to the classic stage of imperialist colonialism in the late 19th and early 20th century. Ever since the rise of neo-colonialism in the post-World War II era, the U.S. has preferred more indirect methods of domination, by relying on local surrogates and economic compulsion.

In Afghanistan the U.S. relies on warlords and tribal chiefs to do its bidding. In Iraq it wanted to make use of the Ba'ath Party apparatus. Though the outcome of the war thwarted that, and the U.S. still has 150,000 troops in Iraq, it will eventually try to draw down their numbers as it tries to find surrogates to enforce its dictates.

In other countries—like Saudi Arabia—the U.S. has found that its interests are undermined by maintaining a permanent armed force for an indefinite length of time. It is therefore withdrawing most of its troops from that country, even as it builds new military bases in the Persian Gulf, Central Asia and elsewhere.

Yet the fact that U.S. policies are not the same as direct colonial occupation doesn't mean world capitalism lacks a territorial center of power. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri are mistaken to argue, "The U.S. does not, and indeed no nation-state can today, form the center of an imperialist project"(11) The U.S. is very much the center of such a project, precisely because the state-capitalist matrix of our globalized world has not been superseded.

This is especially reflected in the way U.S. capitalists absorb massive amounts of surplus value and capital from the rest of the world. Capitalists in Europe and Asia continue to buy up U.S. Treasury bonds and ship capital here through speculative and direct capital investment. They see the U.S., with its low wages and benefits and bloated military, as a safe haven for their investments. The U.S. is now more dependent on foreign capital than at any time in the past 50 years.

Surplus value and capital also flow into the coffers of U.S. capitalists from technologically underdeveloped nations in Asia, Africa and Latin America through payments obtained by financial capital from interest on Third World debt; sweatshop conditions of labor which generate profits that end up in the hands of U.S.-based multinationals; and the benefits that come from the dollar's hegemony as the global currency.

The human impact of this imperialist tutelage is nowhere more devastating than in Africa. Africa's share of global trade fell from 3.3% in 1980 to 1.6% in 2000. Its share of world investment has fallen from 4% in 1980 to 1.8% today. The annual capital growth rate of GDP in most African countries has been falling for over a decade. Even oil producing nations like Nigeria have seen their GDP growth decline in recent years. Non oil-producing nations in Africa are experiencing a serious decline in world market prices for their agricultural exports.

This has not stopped global capital from continuing to strip the continent of raw materials and natural resources—often through the mediation of local capitalists, regional states, and domestic elites—as most tragically seen in Congo, where over three million have perished since 1998.

Added to this is Africa's massive debt burden. The debt which African countries owe Western banks accounts for 75% of the continent's total GDP. The service on this debt represents a massive transfer of surplus value and capital from Africa to Europe and the U.S. New tax systems and so-called new trade liberalization policies promoted by the IMF and World Bank are also accelerating the rate of capital export from Africa to Europe and the U.S. None of the industrially developed economies can

claim that they are committed to the development of the African continent.

Looked at in human terms, the present stage of state-capitalist imperialism is no less rapacious than earlier stages of imperialist expansion. If anything, the genocidal nature of imperialism is only being accentuated. Global capital is returning to the conditions that characterized the primitive accumulation of capital at "the rosy dawn of capitalist accumulation," as seen in increasing poverty, rising unemployment, and a devastating health crisis, especially of HIV/AIDS, that is claiming millions of lives a year.

Forces in the industrially developed West are not the only ones responsible for this carnage. Capital is a world system; it is as much a part of the internal structure of Third World societies as it is of multinational corporations. The disintegration of economies and societies that have fallen into the web of local warlords and mafias ranges from Congo to Afghanistan and Sierra Leone to Iraq.

Far from ameliorating these conditions through some "compassionate conservatism," Bush's policies are accentuating them. This was seen at the end of the G-8 Summit when the U.S. stripped from its final declaration a statement of support for providing affordable drugs to developing countries. Large drug companies in Germany and the U.S. opposed the measure as a violation of their "intellectual property rights." How many millions more will now die as a result?

(Continued on page 7)

Critical acclaim for The Power of Negativity: Selected Writings on the Dialectic in Hegel and Marx

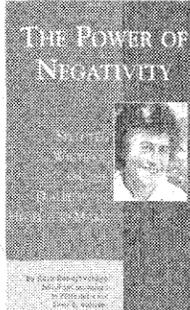
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need for a new alternative

(Continued from page 6)

What drives this rapacious drive for the accumulation of capital in ever fewer hands is global capitalism that has to overcome the decline in the rate of profit that has seriously plagued it ever since the 1974-75 world recession.

The rulers may think they can stem this decline through such technological innovations like labor-saving devices and high-tech production. But as Marx showed over a century ago, in Vol. III of *Capital*, "The rate of profit does not fall because labor becomes less productive, but because it becomes more productive."⁽¹²⁾ Despite all the mechanisms utilized by capitalism over the last 30 years to increase the accumulation of capital at the expense of living labor, it still has not been able to extricate itself from the tendency of its rate of profit to decline which openly showed itself in the mid-1970s.

Herein lies a difference between today's stage of capitalism-imperialism and that of the early 20th century. A century ago imperialism hid the tendency in the decline of the rate of profit through the extraction of super-profits from exploited lands overseas. So much was this so that Marxists did not focus on the tendency of the rate of profit to decline until the Great Depression in the 1930s. As Rosa Luxemburg put it in 1913, we might as well wait for the moon to fall to earth as to expect capitalism to collapse because of the decline in the rate of profit.⁽¹³⁾ Today, in contrast, the tendency of the rate of profit to decline openly drives capital's werewolf hunger for lower wages, technological innovation, and imperialism.

Economics is not all there is to the present stage of state-capitalist imperialism. Each new stage of capitalism has been accompanied by an ideological component. This is no less true today. The central ideological component of the U.S. drive for single world mastery is the claim that its military interventions are geared to promote "democracy." The war in Iraq was aimed in part to promote this.

Important as it is not to fall into one-sided critiques of the U.S., it is just as important to oppose the notion that the U.S. has now become the catalyst for promoting "democracy" in the rest of the world. To do otherwise only feeds into the ideological pollution that masses of people cannot free themselves from dictatorial regimes but need the intervention of an outside force, the U.S. military, to do it for them. Such a standpoint closes off the projection of what is sorely needed—the notion that a new society can be created by working people, women, oppressed nationalities and youth through their self-activity.

Opposing the illusion that the U.S.'s military interventions are aimed at "democratizing" the world requires more than just exposing the hypocrisy and brutality of U.S. policies. That is because the ability of the rulers to appropriate the language of "democracy" is largely a result of the Left's failure to realize socialist democracy in its efforts at social transformation.

We cannot underestimate the impact of the aborted and unfinished revolutions of the past century. The Left's failure to create a truly liberatory alternative to capitalism, one which realizes the principles of genuine proletarian democracy and socialist humanism, has created a void which the rulers are taking advantage of by using the language of "liberation" for their own nefarious ends. To fully combat this it is not enough to express what we are against; we must unfurl a new banner of what we are for.

C. Questions facing the Left over Cuba, Argentina

The ongoing controversy over the arrests of dissidents in Cuba underlines the importance of projecting a liberatory perspective. In April, the Cuban government handed down severe jail sentences—ranging from six to 28 years—to 75 dissidents and executed three Black Cubans who tried to commandeer a boat to Florida. Some long-time supporters of the Cuban revolution have sharply condemned these actions.

Eduardo Galeano recently wrote: "The Cuban government is now committing acts that, as Uruguayan writer Carlos Quijano would say, 'sin against hope.' Rosa Luxemburg, who gave her life for the socialist revolution, disagreed with Lenin over the project of a new society. Her words of warning proved prophetic, and 85 years after she was assassinated in Germany she is still right: 'Freedom for only the supporters of the government, however many there may be, is not real freedom. Real freedom is freedom for those who think differently.'" He also quoted Luxemburg: "Without general elections, without freedom of the press and unlimited freedom of assembly, without a contest of free opinions, life stagnates and withers in all public institutions, and the bureaucracy becomes the only active element."⁽¹⁴⁾

The vitriolic response of many on the Left to such

criticism has hardly been reassuring. Responding to Galeano, Heinz Dieterich Steffan wrote: "Whether Rosa Luxemburg or Lenin was right is a lengthy debate. What does not require debate is the logical status of her famous affirmation of the freedom of others. Just like Voltaire's aphorism on liberty 150 years previously, and Immanuel Kant's categorical imperative, these are abstract and general pronouncements that do not serve to resolve concrete difficulties....if one affirms that 'freedom is always the freedom of others,' it has to be said that this axiom is valid when the others are called Adolf Hitler or Ariel Sharon or George Bush and his subalterns."⁽¹⁵⁾

It is not at all out of the question that Bush will add



Protest in Argentina in support of factory occupation at Brukman

Cuba to his list of the "axis of evil" and even try to invade the island. We of course must oppose that we would oppose a U.S. invasion of any land. But the defensive reaction of some leftists to any criticism of Cuba, on the grounds that it "plays into the hand of U.S. imperialism," only helps reinforce the central problem of the Left—the disconnect of the idea of freedom from the struggle against capitalism.

Leftists who fail to stand up for freedom in Cuba (or Iran or North Korea for that matter) do grave harm to the struggle for a new society, since they come out sounding like apologists for the very policies overseas that they routinely criticize at home. As a result, many drawn to radical ideas end up concluding that the Left can't be entrusted to stand up for human liberation.

The fact that we oppose U.S. imperialism in no way justifies muting our criticism of regimes that may oppose it. To do so only concedes the idea of freedom to the Right.

The need to fill the void in the Left's projection of an emancipatory alternative is especially critical in light of events in Argentina, where Néstor Kirchner, a right-of-center Peronist with a mildly reformist agenda, was recently elected President.

After the collapse of Argentina's neo-liberal experiment in late 2001 a massive popular movement arose there, centered on spontaneously-formed neighborhood assemblies and committees of the unemployed. Hundreds of factory occupations also occurred, which threatened to create a situation of dual power. The central demand of this new movement was "everyone must go!"—a reference to the corrupt politicians who had helped lead the country into bankruptcy.⁽¹⁶⁾

So how can it be that this year the national elections ended up as a battle between different wings of Peronism, which had earlier become discredited by their association with bankrupt neo-liberal policies? As one recent report put it, "One year later, the movements continue, but barely a trace is left of the wildly hopeful idea that they could someday run the country."⁽¹⁷⁾

Part of the problem is that various vanguardist groupings of the old Left tried to infiltrate and take over the popular assemblies, alienating many with their abstract programs and their insistence on providing "leadership." The political infighting and leadership battles demoralized many who were active in the assemblies, which have shrunk from over 200 in Buenos Aires a year ago to about 50 today.

The project hatching of left-wing vanguardists was not, however, the only problem. In response to the dogmatism of the vanguardist Left, many independent radicals emphasized the need for the movements to stick to autonomous actions and not engage in "abstract" discussions of theory or politics. Though many of the factory occupations showed that workers could manage their own affairs without the mediation of corporations or the bourgeois state, few on the Left made a serious effort to spell out how such developments can provide a systematic alternative to capitalism. For many, projecting the need for "autonomous institutions" became a substitute for offering a vision of a social alternative to the system as a whole. This failure "to offer the country a competing vision of the future" left the door open for the political old guard under the leadership of Kirchner to assume power.

This doesn't mean the mass movement in Argentina is over. Many factories are still occupied by workers and the neighborhood assemblies and unions of the unemployed, though weakened, persist as well. It is highly doubtful that Kirchner will be able to stem the

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crisis that led the emergence of this mass movement.

Yet the critical question remains to be answered: will the anti-vanguardist Left finally shed its disdain for a philosophy of liberation and project a comprehensive vision of an emancipatory alternative to existing society? That question is not only critical for those in Argentina. It is critical for us all.

III. To the barbarism of war, we pose the new society

What distinguishes a Marxist-Humanist response to imperialist war and terrorism is not just that we oppose both sides of the conflict but that we take responsibility for projecting a vision of a new society that transcends capitalism. What the founder of Marxist-Humanism, Raya Dunayevskaya, projected at the height of the Cold War remains the fundamental task and perspective for us to concretize today—namely, "To the barbarism of war we pose the new society."

By a new society we mean the total uprooting of the very fabric of this racist, sexist, class ridden society—the abolition of capitalist value production through the creation of new human relations based on the unity of mental and manual labor. Marx's humanism remains for us the measure of any effort to create a new society.

Standing for a new society does not simply mean being for practical struggles for a new society once they arise. Standing for a new society also means theoretically discerning the elements for creating a new society before such struggles arise.

As the Constitution of News and Letters Committees says: "The necessity for a new society is clear from the working people's opposition to war. That opposition is based on a vision of a new society in which they, to a man, woman, and child, control their own lives. Any opposition to war, which is based on less than this, must end in capitulation to the warmongers."

Opposing the U.S. drive for permanent war does not only entail (as Arundhati Roy put it in a recent essay) "isolating the Empire's working parts and disabling them one by one."⁽¹⁸⁾ That leaves untouched what masses of people are hungering for but which radical theoreticians and parties are doing little to address—the projection of a comprehensive alternative to existing society. Instead of saddling the movements from practice with all the responsibility for meeting that task, we need to confront our philosophic and organizational responsibility for doing so.

The fact that this year corresponds with the 50th anniversary of the philosophic moment that led to the birth of Marxist-Humanism—the 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes"—provides us with an opportunity to become much more concrete about how we can meet this challenge. In viewing this breakthrough with eyes of today, we can be greatly aided by the new edition of Dunayevskaya's *Philosophy and Revolution: from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao* (Lexington Books, 2003) and the collection *The Power of Negativity: Selected Writings on the Dialectic in Hegel and Marx* (Lexington Books, 2002), which contains an array of writings by Raya Dunayevskaya on the significance of the philosophic moment of Marxist-Humanism.

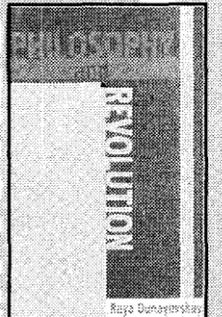
As our work this year in completing a new study on the Black dimension has shown, the perspective of "To the barbarism of war we pose the new society" is integral to the philosophic moment of Marxist-Humanism. This can especially be seen from the difference between

(Continued on page 8)

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War, resistance and the need for a new alternative

(Continued from page 7)

what C.L.R. James called "the dialectics of the party" and what Raya Dunayevskaya developed as "the dialectics of organization and philosophy."

In his *Notes on Dialectics* (1948) and other works of the late 1940s and early 1950s, James sought to explore dialectics as part of developing a new relation between spontaneous struggles and revolutionary organization. As he wrote in commenting on Hegel's *Science of Logic* in his *Notes on Dialectics*, "We have to get hold of the Notion, of the Absolute Idea, before we can see this relation between organization and spontaneity in its concrete truth."

Yet James' *Notes* said little about the Doctrine of the Notion (which Hegel called "the realm of subjectivity or freedom") and even less about the Absolute Idea. But he did have a lot to say about organization. A mass party fighting bureaucracy became his universal: "You know nothing about organization unless at every step you relate it to its opposite, spontaneity. It is meaningless without that co-relative, its Other, tied to it." (19)

On the basis of this standpoint James later posed spontaneous mass struggles embodied in a mass party as the **absolute** opposite of the vanguard party. Though he tried to rethink the relation between spontaneity and organization through a study of Hegel, he leaped to an organizational conclusion without working out the fullness of the dialectic. Everything got reduced to the **form** of organization, while the need for a relation between mass struggles and a philosophy of liberation was left aside, which left out the question of what those mass struggles were for.

A very different approach began to be explicitly developed by Raya Dunayevskaya with her 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes." She there concentrated on the last chapters of Hegel's *Science of Logic* and on the final three syllogisms of Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind* (which no Marxist had previously explored) with the question of organization very much in mind.

Yet by the end of the 1953 letters Dunayevskaya was no longer concerned with what James called "the dialectics of the party"—that is, defining the right **form** of organization irrespective of its philosophic content. A historic breakthrough occurred as she dove deeply into Hegel's concept of "absolute liberation" at the very end of the *Science of Logic* and into the section on "Absolute Mind" in the *Philosophy of Mind*.

She singled out Hegel's statement in para. 575 of the *Philosophy of Mind* that Nature (or practice) is "implicitly the Idea," as well para. 576, where Hegel says that "philosophy appears as a subjective cognition." But she did not stop her commentary there. She went on to the final para. 577, where Hegel points to a **unification** of practice and philosophy, of subjective and objective. She viewed Hegel's statement in para. 577 that "it is the nature of the fact, the notion, which causes the movement and development, yet this same movement is equally the action of cognition" as a philosophic anticipation of the end to the division between mental and manual labor.

As she later wrote in the 1980s, in looking back on the breakthrough achieved with the culmination of her 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes," "It becomes necessary to stress here, over and over again, that I had not a word to say about the Party or the Soviets or any form of organization. On the contrary, here is what I then concluded: 'We have entered the new society.'" (20)

The 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes" gave birth to the new concept that the task of a revolutionary organization is neither "to lead" the masses through "the party" nor simply to foster the development of spontaneous forms of mass organization but to philosophically project a vision of a new society which the movements from practice are implicitly reaching for.

As Dunayevskaya wrote on June 6, 1987—the last words written by her—"Dialectics of the Party"...was turned in my hands to be Dialectics of Organization and that meant not only both Party and Spontaneity but the New Society." (21)

This year we need to concretize this perspective for all of our philosophic and organizational work. We made a beginning on this with our class series this spring on "Negativity and Freedom: Philosophic Alternatives to Capitalism, War and Terror." These classes, held in each local of News and Letters Committees, explored how the dialectic in Hegel and Marx was recreated in the development of Marxist-Humanism. We explored this in light of contemporary philosophic alternatives, like that of Theodor Adorno, Michel Foucault, Richard Rorty, Julia Kristeva and others.

What stands out from the left-wing philosophic alternatives which are predominant today is that many of them have abandoned the effort to conceptualize the transcendence of capitalist alienation. Whether it be Foucault's concept of the reproduction of power relations, Adorno's effort to free the dialectic of negativity of its "affirmative" dimension, or Rorty's pragmatic critique of grand narratives, radical theory has pulled back from the effort to spell out a comprehensive alternative to existing society. The ability of capitalism to reproduce racism, sexism, classism, and social alienation is emphasized, but not the ability of humanity to transcend them.

In a word, the central function of radical theory—to break the chains of the present by showing that there

is an alternative to capitalism—has been largely left aside. The question which is on the minds of workers and intellectuals alike—"can humanity be free" in an era defined by both globalized capitalism and aborted and unfinished revolutions—remains to be seriously addressed.

The responsibility of a revolutionary theoretician is not just to critique various aspects of oppression and alienation. The responsibility of a revolutionary theoretician is to show that a different world is possible, not abstractly, but through the comprehensive projection of a philosophy of liberation that is rooted both in spontaneous struggles of the oppressed and in an ongoing dialogue on dialectical thought.

This is what makes the projection of Marxist-



Original portrait of Rosa Luxemburg (1871-1919), by Luxemburg scholar Narihiko Ito

Humanism so imperative. As the writings contained in *The Power of Negativity* show, Marxist-Humanism's entire development represents a concretization of the breakthrough achieved in the 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes," which discerned a **dual** movement in Hegel's Absolutes—a movement from practice implicitly reaching for a new society and a movement from theory that makes the vision of a new society explicit. Only in their unification is a new society possible.

The dialectical essence of Marxist-Humanism is absolute negativity as new beginning, that is, the total uprooting of the old and the creation of new human relations. It takes the entire body of ideas of Marxist-Humanism to discern the necessity for such a total uprooting. That is why the publication of works like *The Power of Negativity* must inform the very reason for being of our organization.

For this reason we need to ask: Why should the theoretic power of philosophy be only theoretical? Why shouldn't we exercise that power in class struggles, in Black struggles, in the anti-war movement, in youth and Women's Liberation struggles? In a word, why not project Marxist-Humanist philosophy **organizationally** as the power that is both the form for eliciting from the masses their thoughts and projecting Marxist-Humanist perspectives to them?

The fact that we make no pretense to being a "party" hardly means that the organizational expression of Marxist-Humanism, or indeed even the existence of News and Letters Committees, can be taken for granted, as if it is not as critical to have a vital and growing Marxist-Humanist organization as it is to engage theoretically in the battle of ideas. If philosophy is to serve as the organization of thought that determines the reason for being of a group like News and Letters Committees, philosophy must become inseparable from organizational consciousness.

This defines our tasks and perspectives for the coming year. We will soon have in hand a new edition of *American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard*, as well as a pamphlet entitled *The Dialectics of Black Freedom: A Marxist-Humanist Perspective on the Needed American Revolution*. These will greatly enhance our work in the battle of ideas as well as in the practical struggles of the Black dimension, which remains the vanguard of the American revolution.

We also face a critical moment now that all of the major philosophic works of Marxist-Humanism—*Marxism and Freedom*, *Philosophy and Revolution*, and *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*—are in print, some of them in new editions. The projection of these works in the battle of ideas as well as in practical developments in the freedom movements becomes critical.

We also have a new pamphlet of Marxist-Humanist writings on the Middle East, which can aid the rethinking underway in the anti-war movements, as a new generation seeks new alternatives to imperialist war and fundamentalist terrorism.

The development of all our tasks—from the monthly publication of *News & Letters* to building our local

committees and developing new international outreach—will be discussed in detail at our upcoming national gathering. Critical for all of our perspectives is the need to ensure the financial responsibilities for the concretization of our perspectives. We invite you to participate in the process of discussion that is vital to the continuance of Marxist-Humanism.

—The Resident Editorial Board

NOTES

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21. See "1953: The Philosophic Moment re: Organization, and therefore also re: Paper," in *Supplement to the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, Vol. 13, 11001.

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INTERNATIONAL MARXIST-HUMANISTS

BRITISH

BCM Box 3514, London, England WC1N 3XX
<http://members.aol.com/THEHOBGOBL/masthead>

IRANIAN

Anjoman Azadi, 36 S. Wabash #1440, Chicago IL 60603
anjomanazadi@aol.com, www.anjomanazadi.org

'SOULS OF BLACK FOLK'



Souls of Black Folk was a groundbreaking book 100 years ago and is still a moving work today. John Alan's "Black-Red View" (June *N&L*) was magnificent in illuminating its dialectical character and in showing how that dialectic was stopped short because of Du Bois' "talented tenth" notion, which put a barrier between his theory of struggle for oneness out of a divided self, and the actual mass movement from practice toward freedom that shaped history.

**Activist/thinker
Memphis**

I concur with everything brother John Alan wrote in the article on "Today's talented Tenth" ("Black-Red View," March *N&L*) on Black culture being formed by freedom struggles. Writers like Gates don't break down the fundamentals of their story. In oblique ways they denounce brothers like Malcolm X, Huey Newton, George Jackson, and John Africa—the true pioneers who defined Black culture so profoundly that it inspired brothers like myself. The Black talented tenth struggled with the people at first, but then advanced to a comfortable station in life and turned their backs on the continuing struggle for liberation as if it was no longer needed.

**A brother within
Wisconsin**

ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Maya Jhansi raised some important questions in her article about women's rights ("Race, class and the politics of choice," *N&L*, June 2003). What particularly stood out for me is how she discussed cheap remedies such as Depo-Provera for use on poor women. When people talk about population control, they usually mean control of poor women. The Right tries to justify its position by insisting people shouldn't have kids if they can't afford them since the state will have to take care of them. It's all against poor women.

**Akili
Chicago**

I don't believe you can characterize most women's groups as going into alliances with neoliberalist governments. The UN Cairo+5 population conference in 1999 was opposed to blaming women's fertility for problems of overpopulation and attempted to transform the debate about overpopulation to center on how capitalism allocates resources. You can't control population unless women have free say. When women don't have control of their bodies, they also end up having too many babies. Their health is seriously compromised as is the health of their families. Let's not be afraid to take on these problems head-on.

**Women's Liberationist
Memphis**

DANNY GLOVER VICTORY

Here is a positive story for a change. The "Dial-in for Democracy Campaign" that was launched in response to the right-wing attack on Danny Glover for opposing the policies of the Bush administration has just won a resounding victory. The campaign, which was spearheaded by TransAfrica Forum, had asked friends and supporters to contact MCI to insist that it not back down on its relationship with Danny by canceling his appearance in television spots for MCI. After an outstanding commentary by Tavis Smiley on the Tom Joyner Morning Show on May 15, MCI was deluged with phone calls, e-mails and

READERS' VIEWS

faxes. Their response was short and to the point: "Our contract with Danny Glover runs through January 2004 and we intend to honor our contract." While we are celebrating we have to recognize that the attempt to silence Danny Glover was a warning about what the extremists have in mind to silence all of us.

**Civil rights activist
Chicago**

THE MYTH OF INVINCIBILITY

The June Archives column about destroying the myth of the invincibility of totalitarianism was quite timely. Unfortunately, that myth is back as is seen in the ideology that there is no alternative to capitalism. Consider how even those who opposed Bush's war against Iraq for the most part failed to find or even seek any connection to forces of revolt within Iraq, even though the 1991 uprising there should have been at the front of everyone's mind. When families of the imprisoned came out on the streets in Iraq last year to demand that Hussein's regime account for their loved ones, why didn't the Left address the significance of those voices? Instead, *Voices in the Wilderness* held an anti-war rally in Baghdad at about the same time that omitted any criticism of Hussein. That would not have happened if the driving force of the movement were a vision of self-emancipation by all the world's peoples and the transcendence of racist, sexist, heterosexist capitalism.

**Anti-war activist
Tennessee**

As a 23-year-old who considers himself a Marxist-Humanist, it made me very proud to read about the anti-war demonstrations all over the country earlier this year. Because I was incarcerated I could not be there physically, but I was there spiritually holding an anti-war banner with a mind determined for peace. There were many prisoners from all religious persuasions who were against military action. There was even talk of how we could have a peaceful demonstration on our yard to oppose the war. Unfortunately not all the gangs and religious organizations could agree on how to carry it out. I am especially proud of the peace activists who made their views known even after Bush claimed the war was over. I feel he got what the government wanted, and that he is now trying to find another situation to take our eyes off of Iraq.

**Still incarcerated
Michigan**

PROFITS AND 'THE PEOPLE'

George Bush says, "The Iraqi oil belongs to the Iraqi people." The logical follow-up of this statement should be that "The American oil belongs to the American people." Unfortunately, it is common knowledge that the U.S. oil "belongs" or at least is exploited by the Big Oil companies and only a very small number of CEOs and shareholders benefit from the enormous profits.

The U.S. attack on Iraq created tremendous destruction of the infrastructure, water, electricity production and transmission, telephone communications and so on. Before the war even started, Mr. Rumsfeld and company handed out recon contracts to chosen companies (including to Haliburton, the company of its former chairman Dick Cheney). These contracts, worth hundreds of millions of dollars to the U.S. companies to rebuild and restore the damage caused by the massive U.S. "shock and awe" bombing campaign, will be paid for by the Iraqi oil revenues. So much for the Iraqi oil belonging to the Iraqi people. The correct name for the attack on Iraq should have been "Bombing for Profits."

**Georgio
Canada**

Research is being done to develop more specific chemicals to control malignancies like cancer, when studies should be done to determine why there are so many malignancies today, and increasingly in younger people. Of course, that would no doubt expose to censure many of the chemical and nuclear companies. That cannot be allowed. Instead new expensive chemicals to combat cancer are found which bring further profits for the pharmaceutical companies. It is disgusting to see our universities joining with the ruling elite in their rush to obliterate any kind of truly human society.

**Senior citizen
Wisconsin**

A SCARLET LETTER IN LIFE

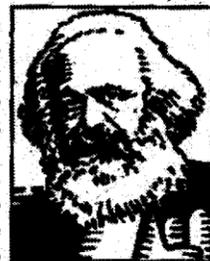
In Florida a law was passed in 2001 that required women who wished to have their newborns adopted to publish a list of all the men who might be the father of the child in the local papers where the sexual intercourse had taken place. The rationale for this anti-woman requirement was that the father had parental (property) rights on the child and had to be part of the adoption process or might want to keep the child himself. Women were effective in standing up to the Florida law and now the possible father must file with the confidential "father registry" before the mother begins adoption proceedings. This is supposed to be an improvement. At least it is not public.

Now *The New York Times* has reported a case where a woman, married for five years, had a 10-year-old whom her husband wished to adopt. She was required to place an ad in her college newspaper giving her name, description and names of any men who might have been the father. *The Scarlet Letter* is not just a book by Nathaniel Hawthorn. It lives on today.

**Jan
Chicago**

REVOLUTION & RELIGION

I asked for your pamphlet on "Marx's *Capital* and Today's Global Crisis" because most revolutionists I have read about, from Mao and Stalin to Bolivar, Zapata, Sandino, Gandhi and Che Guevara, seem to talk about Marx and I wanted to find out more about him for myself. This prison's library has no books on struggle so you have to reach out to learn



what you can. I am an ordained minister with a degree and for much of my life was a religious man but through studying history, politics, economics and absorbing the world situation as well as studying in prison and on the street, I have come to believe it will take more than religion to change the world. It will take struggle.

In your pamphlet on Marx it amazed me how much he wrote about applies to today and how a capitalist world is "one nation" where the workers continue to produce and become more and more impoverished. I would like to read more to better understand the difference between abstract labor and concrete labor, which I see as what has to be grasped to truly understand what Marx was talking about.

**Revolutionist
Soledad, California**

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

After the recent Supreme Court decision allowing the public media to be even more under the control of the wealthy few, thus wiping out the ability of any independent or minority voices to be heard, and as someone who works in the field of education, I was very fearful about what the Supreme Court ruling on affirmative action would be. Like many others, I was pleasantly surprised but a little confused at what was upheld. Considering the complexity of the differ-

ences in "scoring" between the University of Michigan basic admission policy and that of the law school, which was the one favored by the Court, I wonder whether the "scores" won't wind up reconfigured and the tables against minorities and the poor, no matter what model is adopted. In practice, I believe the jury is still out on this one.

**Erica Rae
Chicago**

BUS RIDERS UNION

The local transit agency in Los Angeles (MTA) is planning to unfairly raise bus fares. This will especially affect the working class and the elderly of our community. The MTA is a hated agency here and has lousy bus/subway services. The Bus Riders Union is trying to protect the rights of commuters/passengers. We have organized over 200 Black, Korean, Latino and working class white workers and students for the May 22 MTA board vote. We won four "No" votes from them for defeating the fare increase but five were needed and the board is adamant about imposing the fare hike.

Your Los Angeles readers are invited to attend a meeting to discuss our demands at 10 a.m., Saturday, July 19, at 3300 Wilshire Blvd. or to call 213-387-2800 for more details.

**Amanda Potter
Los Angeles**

POEMS

The inclusion of my poem, "A prayer for fools" in the June issue was very welcome. Poems are birds and as they start their flight you never know where they may go. Thank you for helping it on its way.

**Patrick Duffy
Britain**

DEMANDING ANSWERS

I have to ask again. What does it mean that several years ago Superintendant Hillard wanted two young African-American boys under the age of nine charged with rape and murder before they were found to be innocent—but three white male Chicago cops beat Timia Williams in broad daylight and they are still Chicago police officers?

**George Wilfrid Smith Jr.
Chicago**

How can our police murder unarmed citizens, some even children, and the court system refuses to demand accountability? The only murderers who are routinely acquitted or have convictions overturned are police officers. Any found guilty face sentences of far less severity than you or I would have. I find it a blessing and at the same time a shame that I can rely only on *N&L* to provide news from an honest perspective. The only complaint I have is that I wish its reader base was much larger. People deserve the truth. Every subscriber should get a friend to subscribe!

**Supporter
Brooklyn**

REACHING OVER WALLS

I am Palestinian and although I appreciate the full content of *N&L* the articles on the Middle East are the most important to me and the most informative because they present the raw truth. I usually refrain from presenting my opinions because my reality is the walls that confine me. They have convinced me that Dostoyevsky said it best when he wrote that the degree of civilization in a society can be judged by entering its prisons.

**Prisoner
Newark, N.J.**

I want you to know how much I appreciate reading *N&L*. It is the most serious publication I have ever received. I read them and pass them on to other brothers in the struggle.

**Prisoner
Indiana**

**THANKS TO ALL OUR FRIENDS
AND READERS FOR THEIR
CONTRIBUTIONS TO HELP US
KEEP N&L ALIVE.**

**HAVE YOU SENT IN YOUR
CONTRIBUTION YET?**

PHILOSOPHIC DIALOGUE

by Eric King

Editor's note: This Philosophic Dialogue was delivered as part of News and Letters Committees' recent series of classes on "Negativity and Freedom: Philosophic Alternatives to Capitalism, War and Terror."

Today pragmatism arguably represents the greatest challenge to Marxist-Humanist thought in the U. S. Fredric Jameson once pointed out the Anglo-American tradition's profound hostility to dialectic. And what falls under the term postmodernism owes more to James and Dewey than to Heidegger's question of being. Richard Rorty is an important figure in this respect, because he has done the most to refurbish the pragmatist tradition and because he nevertheless shares a certain affinity to Marxist-Humanism.

Rorty vigorously attacks the idea of an intellectual vanguard. He writes that pragmatism is humanism applied to epistemology—truth is not *sub specie aeternitatis* but is what is useful to human beings. Furthermore, he comes from the same radical milieu as Raya Dunayevskaya, which shows itself obliquely in statements such as "still, the image of Lenin, that captured the hearts of our grandparents..." Like Lenin, Rorty insists that theory subordinate itself to practice, that it concern itself first and foremost with the concrete. And it is with his understanding of concreteness that we can begin to flesh out the differences between his pragmatism and dialectical thought.

RORTY'S PSEUDO-CONCRETENESS

For Rorty, concreteness is a matter of local issues as opposed to abstract theory. "I hope that we have reached a time where we can finally get rid of the conviction that...there just must be large theoretical ways of finding out how to end injustice, as opposed to small, experimental ways." (1) He thinks we should talk about greed rather than bourgeois ideology; starvation wages and lay-offs rather than the commodification of labor; per-pupil expenditures and differential access to education rather than the division of labor into classes.

But does it really make sense to talk about education disparities without also raising the issue of class? From a dialectical perspective, Rorty indulges in his own form of abstraction. The world is an interrelated whole, and the attempt to grasp particular issues outside of this context will only mystify their inter-relational character. Rorty's pragmatism would be seen as a philosophy of the pseudoconcrete by the Czech philosopher Karel Kosik. In his work *Dialectics of the Concrete*, Kosik describes the pseudoconcrete as a world of fixed objects existing in apparent autonomy or indifference from one another. This autonomy conceals relationships that effect the particulars not just at their margins, so to speak, but in their very essence.

If reality were only the sum of facts, of further irreducible elements, then it would follow that concrete-

Rorty, dialectics, pragmatism's limits

ness is the sum of all facts; yet the accumulation of all facts would not yet amount to the cognition of reality, and neither would all accumulated facts amount to a totality. Facts are the cognition of reality only provided they are comprehended as parts of a dialectical whole, not as immutable further irreducible atoms which, agglomerated, compose reality. The concrete totality is not equal to all the facts.

Dialectical thought's embrace of totality would scandalize Rorty—even though the liberal capitalism he espouses is as totalizing a doctrine as the socialism he rejects. But dialectical totality simply recognizes that the things of this world do not exist in isolation from one another. It is emphatically not the summation of all facts, or a formal unity external to the content.

THREE FORMS OF TOTALITY

Kosik distinguishes between three forms of totality: 1) the atomist-rationalist view; 2) an organic notion for which the whole is greater than the parts; and 3) a dialectical understanding of the term. (2) Totality in the first two perspectives is a transcendent and otherworldly concept. In important ways, it returns to the problem of the "in-itself." The impossibility of knowing a thing in its essence becomes the impossibility of knowing the world apart from scattered particulars.

But we should resist the dualism of particular vs. totality. Andrew Seth Pringle Pattison, the 19th-century Scottish idealist, writes that the "thing" is a complete synthesis of qualities; and that the noumenon is thus a fuller knowledge as yet unreached by us. But it is not an unattainable reality, and to exalt this useful distinction of thought into a barrier which thought is unable to surmount is simply to fall down and worship our abstractions. (3)

Likewise, totality cannot be seen as what is beyond the scope of finite reason. I would argue that another name for totality is the process of history. History is infinite, but not because it goes on forever. Hegel describes this as "the perpetual repetition of one and the same content, one and the same tedious alteration." Rather, it is the moment of self-creation that produces this infinity. Far from being constrained to what it has been, humanity has the possibility of transforming its conditions and creating what Dunayevskaya calls a "revolution in permanence." Pragmatism verges on a dogmatism of the present as a result of its rejection of dialectics.

Rorty sees the world as broken up into discrete, local issues. His politics reflect this perspective: "The best we can hope for is more of the same experimental, hit-or-miss, two-steps-forward-and-one-step-back reforms that have been taking place in the industrialized democracies since the French Revolution." (4) If

only the Right were as humble as Rorty insists the Left become. It was said of President Eisenhower that his philosophy was his smile; but conservatives soon abandoned his genial conformism and remade the world to suit their convictions. Seattle 1999 and the anti-war movement attracted mass audiences to left-wing politics. But without delving deeper into philosophical questions, this movement will be stillborn.

As an organization, News and Letters Committees is crucial to addressing this challenge. But it is not always careful to project the philosophy of Marxist-Humanism as a revolutionary force; and thus falls into the same mistakes facing pragmatism. Recent issues of *News & Letters* have seen a discussion in the "Readers' Views" section between a reader frustrated with the lack of a program and respondents who see this as another form of vanguardism.

PRACTICE AND THE IDEA

In her May 20, 1953 letter on Hegel's Absolutes, Dunayevskaya writes that "practice itself is implicitly the idea." She isn't referring to just any kind of practice, but revolutionary *praxis*, which isn't supplied by the masses and then reflected in the pages of *News & Letters*. This would set up a new system of external mediations, placing the organization outside of revolutionary activity and in the role of passive bystander.

If the idea of freedom has content, the philosophy of Marxist-Humanism cannot leave programs or organizational work to the masses. For this reason, Dunayevskaya's 1987 "Presentation on the Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy" states that though the committee-form and the party-to-lead are opposites, they are not absolute opposites: "At the point when the theoretic form reaches philosophy, the challenge demands that we synthesize not only the new relations of theory to practice, and all the forces of revolution, but philosophy's suffering, patience, and labor of the negative," i.e. experiencing absolute negativity. (5)

Rorty is most persuasive when he points out the difficulty of envisioning a non-capitalist society. Given the failure of previous attempts, he writes, "this would have to be a society based neither on the investment of private capital nor on public ownership of the means of production." (6) Rorty's third alternative is precisely what Dunayevskaya means when she raises the question of what happens after a revolution. It cannot be vanguardist, then, to raise the issue. What is necessary is that it be seen as revolutionary praxis, and develop concretely from the struggles and subjectivities of the present.

1. "Intellectuals at the End of Socialism," by Richard Rorty, *Yale Review*, Vol. 80, Nos. 1-2, April 1992, p. 4.
2. Karel Kosik, *Dialectics of the Concrete*, pp. 18-19.
3. Andrew Seth Pringle Pattison, *The Development from Kant to Hegel*, pp. 46-47.
4. "Intellectuals at the End of Socialism," p. 16.
5. *The Power of Negativity: Selected Writings on the Dialectic in Hegel and Marx*, by Raya Dunayevskaya, pp. 18-19.
6. "Intellectuals at the End of Socialism," p. 4.

Peru social pressures

After 22 months of the Toledo government, it can be confirmed that the central tenet of neoliberal policies has not changed. In this context, the rural sector, the farmers and campesinos, have seen a systematic fall in prices, for the most part below the cost of production. Poverty amongst the rural population has risen to 78%. So on May 26 hundreds of thousands of farmers and campesinos initiated a general strike with mass demonstrations and highway blockages that produced shortages in the country's major urban centers.

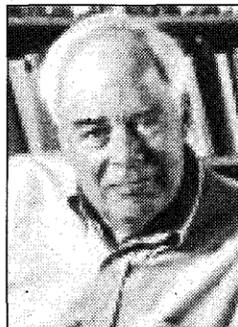
The main demands are for: progressive tax reform; renegotiation of the external debt (which consumes approximately 25% of the government's budget) in order to allow greater public investment in agriculture; price support guarantees; expanded credit; and greater protective tariffs. The movement also demands judicial security in defense of the communal lands and beneficiaries of agrarian reform who have come under attack by the huge mining and landowning corporations, and it has rejected the privatization of the water supply through concessions to private companies.

The May 26 general strike followed a national strike by the teachers that began on May 12 that has received the support of nearly 80% of the population and has reached into every corner of the country.

The government responded by declaring a state of emergency, which has provoked active resistance. The height of resistance took place in Puno where 40,000 marched to protest the death of one student and 40 others injured by police gunfire. On June 3 a nationwide mobilization against the state of emergency took place with 20,000 marching in Lima alone.

The Toledo government is on the precipice. However it is probable that Toledo will continue in power ever more isolated and unable to maneuver. But it cannot be discounted that Peru may very well go the way of Argentina where the De la Rúa government collapsed.

From an interview with Victor Torres Lozado of the *Confederacion Campesina del Peru* that appeared in the June issue of *Tintaji*, an independent left newspaper in Quito, Ecuador, translated by Roger H.



Richard Rorty

VOICES FROM THE INSIDE OUT

by Robert Taliaferro

Early morning screams, lasting an hour, chilled the cavern-like hallways that acted as echo chambers, startled everyone out of their hard-found sleep. The 20-year-old Black male screamed that someone was looking at him, which was impossible under the circumstances. He finally stopped, and spent the rest of the morning attempting to find someone to talk to him through the air vent. Another 20-year-old Black male, began shaking and twitching like those subjected to sensory deprivation in immersion tanks. The guards were keeping him like an addict in a strip cell. His eyes darted to the vent as this offers the only contact with one's peers. Two other "cellies" in the strangely designed segregation cells, are finally split up after they were caught displaying "body parts" to each other.

THE SYSTEM OF AMERICA'S HELL

Welcome to the world of a \$90 million supermax prison. In this particular Midwestern state's monument to abuse, considered to be the worst such facility in the country due to its windowless vacuum-like environment and psychologically challenging conditions. Mostly young, under-educated and marginally emotionally- or psychologically-impaired non-white prisoners are subjected to a degree of sensory deprivation that was previously only found in the cells of Lefortovo prison in the former Soviet Union.

Such deprivation is normally used in modern interrogation techniques to break the will of the prisoners, effectively disassociating them from both the free world and prison communities from which they have come. Such techniques are only employed for several weeks in such an interrogation. At this facility, these techniques are employed for up to a year or more.

The 6-by-12 foot "segregation" cells are dominated by a 3-by-7 foot slab of concrete and steel, which acts as a bed; toilet, sink, and shower is also incorporated into this room where the walls are painted an off-white, and a light stays on 24 hours a day—also a feature in interrogation cells.

For only five or six hours per week prisoners are allowed recreation in a concrete room whose only feature is a 12-by-8 inch vent mounted high in the room so they can receive their only fresh air in the otherwise enclosed facility. Few take the option to leave the cell;

Cruel and unusual punishment as usual

perhaps because the recreation pens are more depressing than the cells themselves, or perhaps a small view of the sky is not enough to placate the hours of state-imposed solitude. Prisoners may not see the sun or sky for the entire time they "serve." Add the lack of newspapers, magazines, even family photographs and you have a vacuum that allows no social growth, even within the prison environment.

From the very first day, the same psychological problems seen at California's infamous Pelican Bay have been present at this facility. These young prisoners will, after their short sentences, go from a supermax facility that experts consider worse than Pelican Bay directly back to the street community.

TORTURE RETURNS TO ITS ROOTS

In the late 1800s, prisoners were led into Pennsylvania's "eastern Penitentiary" with black sacks over their heads to disorient them. Now the prison system has come full circle to the stark, windowless environment of the newest—and most expensive—supermaxes in the U.S. Once abandoned as cruel and unusual, the high-tech version of the black hood has returned.

And with nothing to do and very little experience in such total isolation, prisoners begin to degrade emotionally and psychologically. Often this process is exacerbated in the younger prisoners who are used to high volumes of external stimulation, who now, lacking that, begin to turn on themselves and others.

Prisoners are not allowed to retain cups and utensils. Even bags must be returned to guards to avoid their use in such "entertainment" (as some supermax prisoners call it) of throwing feces or urine at guards.

The isolation affects guards as well since their traditional role has been reduced to that of servants. Recently that lackluster performance resulted in a prisoner in an observation cell being dead for several hours before he was finally checked.

The existence of these high-tech cathedrals of cruelty defines, exactly, the degree of a society's civilization, verifying the wisdom of Dostoyevsky—particularly in this country which attempts to define the "moral high road." What's so very compelling is that only a few scant years ago we—as a nation—were showing our disdain for such places and practices in other countries, all the while secretly creating our own.

Repression of Aceh freedom movement continues

Indonesia continues its war against the northwest province of Aceh, a guerrilla movement designed to wipe out the separatist movement known as GAM and, apparently, to turn Aceh into a concentration camp. It seems the war is really being waged against the civilians who organized themselves into a broad referendum movement, in order to force them to give up any idea of independence.

The war began May 19 and has intensified since independent journalists were banned. After the army killed a German tourist and injured his wife, the area was closed to visitors and the government curbed communications to prevent the world from knowing the details of its atrocities.

But two visits by the government's human rights commission, KomnasHAM, confirmed reports of summary executions, including of children; abuse of women; and massive removal of villagers to camps, where conditions are terrible. Especially since most of the humanitarian aid organizations have been forced out of Aceh and no aid is allowed in, a huge human disaster is in the making.

'SHOCK THERAPY'

In mid-June, the air force used its U.S.-built F-16 fighters for the first time to bomb an area of North Aceh in order to "force the rebels to come out of their hiding place, as this will make it easier for us to attack them," the army said; it will "give them some shock therapy." Light Bronco counter-insurgency aircraft were also used to rocket and strafe the area. These attacks, which are more likely to kill and maim innocent civilians than GAM rebels, are part of a strategy to drive the local populations out of the war zone. The government has announced the relocation of thousands of villagers, and estimates are that 40,000 may have been relocated so far into camps designed to hold

up to 200,000 people.

Health officials have treated thousands of refugees for illnesses since they were moved into camps around the province, an official said, including respiratory ailments, skin disease, bronchitis and diarrhea. Some refugees are suffering health problems due to overcrowding and lack of clean water, and food shortages have begun.

ATTACK ON THE MASSES AND LEADERS

The extent of the relocation gives the lie to the government's claim that its only aim is to wipe out an estimated 5,000 GAM guerrillas. The guerrillas have widespread support in the villages, and the government apparently knows it cannot force its kind of "peace" on Aceh without destroying that country. Often villagers flee when the army approaches to avoid killings, rapes, and torture, so that many displaced persons are hiding in the forests, without food or shelter. When the army moves people to camps, it then loots and burns their homes.

Not only are all pro-referendum and human rights activists being detained and interrogated by the police if they are not killed on the spot, but so are any remaining humanitarian workers. Several, including four members of the Centre for Human Rights and two volunteers with the Indonesian Red Cross, were accused of having relations with GAM and charged with subversion, which carries a penalty of life imprisonment.

On June 7, Saiful Bachri, an activist with KONTRAS (the Commission for Victims of Violence and Missing Persons), was shot dead. Since all activists are both subject to arrest and in danger of abduction by military-backed militias, many have fled or gone underground.

The face of fascism is evident in Indonesia's conduct of the war. At least three pro-government militias are

active in Aceh. The army created militias to attack pro-independence groups in East Timor in 1999, and regularly uses such thugs in West Papua and other areas.

GOVERNMENT MILITIAS

In May, a militia attacked the KONTRAS and Legal Aid offices in Jakarta for speaking out against the war, and the government instructed the population of Jakarta to spy on the Acehnese neighborhoods to root out any activists. Two large protests of the war were held in Jakarta in May, but the demonstrators were quickly repressed.

The U.S. press has hardly mentioned the atrocities going on in Aceh. A campaign by Aceh supporters in the U.S. and by international journalists' organizations was necessary to save the life of William Nessen, an American freelance journalist who with a GAM unit in the mountains when martial law was declared. He reported that he tried to surrender to army troops but was fired upon and forced to flee. In late June, he was finally allowed to surrender in the presence of a U.S. official, but he is still being detained and could be jailed for years.

U.S. government officials have made a few comments criticizing the war, but Indonesia is too important an ally in its "war on terrorism" for it to use its muscle to stop the war in Aceh. Supporters of human rights are concentrating on trying to get Congress to prevent the full restoration of military aid to Indonesia.

You can protest the war to the Indonesian embassy, the U.S. State Department and the Congress (202-224-3121), join support work aimed at educating Americans and Indonesians about Aceh and establishing people-to-people solidarity, and make financial contributions. For information, contact Aceh Center c/o Zainal, PO Box 6356, Harrisburg, PA 17112 or at acehcenter@yahoo.com, or this newspaper.

—Anne Jaclard

BLACK/RED VIEW

(Continued from page 1)

E. Lee at Antietam, Lincoln announced that he would emancipate the slaves.

MARX'S VIEW

Marx was a sharp observer of what was happening during the Civil War. He thought that the Confederate invasion of Maryland in 1862 was a sign of the ongoing dissolution in the Confederacy. Marx wrote that the invasion of this border state by the South

...showed that even in this section [of the country] the support for the Confederacy is weak. But the whole struggle turns on the border states. Whoever possesses them dominates the Union....The emigration of the slaveowners from Missouri, Kentucky and Tennessee to the South, with their black chattels, is already enormous, and if the war is prolonged for a while, as it is certain to be, the Southerners will have lost all hold there. The South began the war for these territories. The war itself was the means of destroying its power in the border states, where, apart from this, the ties with the South are weakening daily because the market can no longer be found for slave breeding and internal slave trade. (Letter to Engels, Oct. 29, 1862.)

Marx clearly saw a number of interlocking contingencies which were opposing the Southern Confederacy. He saw Antietam in the context of the economic crises caused by the struggle over the border states limiting slavery. No one was more careful to follow events empirically than Marx. Yet in spite of all the contingencies that emerged, the overriding determinant for Marx was the necessity of the idea of freedom in the slaves themselves. In the same letter Marx criticized Lincoln for not measuring up to this real "historic content" of the war.

McPherson doesn't war Lincoln off the hook. He reveals that the great emancipator was a politician, without any philosophy of freedom, under pressure to appease both slave-holding border states and abolitionists.

For Lincoln, the only goal of the war was to preserve the Union. But the slaves didn't agree with his limited view of the war. McPherson writes:

They voted with their feet for freedom by escaping from their masters to Union military camps in the South. By creating a situation in which the Union officers would either have to return them to slavery or acknowledge their freedom, escaping slaves took the first step toward achieving freedom for themselves and making the war a war for freedom as well as for the Union (p. 62).

This quote contains nothing less than a method used by slaves, 140 years ago, to transform political war into a war for a new concept of a relationship of person to person and to labor.

The real story of why the Civil War continues to need re-examination is not alone unearthing new contingencies, but the persistence of the drive to be free by African Americans. That persistence never stopped and showed itself in the whole 20th century. While McPherson wrote an important book on the Civil War, it still lacks the focus on the massive self-organization of African Americans which was the underlying determinant for the Civil War's contingencies.

Hearings: war at home



Chicago IMC. Photo by Garth Liebhaber

Chicago—On June 17 the Chicago City Council, under the urging of Rogers Park Alderman Joe Moore, held hearings on the police misconduct that ensued at the end of the massive anti-war march held in Chicago on March 20. Moore participated in the protest, but left after the rally.

The march and rally was not only in response to the war, but in response to an anti-war resolution sponsored by Moore and approved by the City Council with only one dissenting vote, just before the February city-wide election. However, out of 50 members Moore, Helen Shiller and Richard Muñoz were the only aldermen present at the hearings.

This well planned and coordinated March protest began with 5,000 people at Federal Plaza. After a rally, the marchers headed towards Michigan Avenue, an upscale shopping district in the East Loop. However, about 10,000 more people had joined and Chicago police directed the marchers to Lake Shore Drive, a major artery connecting the north and south sides of Chicago with its center and with each other.

The people who stayed with the march until Chicago Avenue were trapped. A lucky few took the Oak Street underpass before police blocked that escape. For about an hour the police made arbitrary selections of those who might leave; hapless clients released from Northwestern hospital stumbled into the mess; various tourists, shoppers and others struggled with the hyperbolic story of their entrapment.

"I heard the commands, 'Officers, take one step forward! Officers, step forward!' When helicopters came over, it was clear they had a plan," said Makalani Abisa in the hearing.

The ordeal of the people who got arrested was extraordinary. All were crowded into both wagons and lockups. "The police at the station were mean and nasty. We had to hold up coats to go to bathroom and no water. There were 36 women in a cell who took care of each other. It was a good experience," said Beth Lynch Giddings.

About 550 people were arrested on March 20 and about 250 more were detained in the police encirclement. Almost all were accused of reckless conduct. By June 19 the number of people subject to charges had gone from over 200 to only 20, the rest of the charges having been thrown out and many of the arrestees being freed without charges. Two more were arrested at the follow-up demonstration on March 21. As of this writing, the status of the 20 people facing charges is not known.

—January

Detroit corruption reaches the top

Detroit—The corruption, criminal activity and coverups of wrongdoing were so widespread in the Detroit Police Department that the people, including City Council members, called for a federal investigation into the department about a year ago. This month the federal investigators submitted a report that, among other things, called for the indictment of 17 police officers assigned to southwest Detroit on charges of shaking down precinct prostitutes and drug dealers, theft of huge sums of money and drugs from drug dealers, systematic coverup of officer abuses and criminal activity, including the planting of evidence, making false arrests and giving false testimony in court.

The disclosure of this police reign of terror in southwest Detroit gives rise to questions about the entire police department, and confirms what many Detroiters know about police abuse in their own areas. A comment heard everywhere on the streets was that southwest Detroit was no different from any other precinct—except the southwest precinct wasn't as good as other precincts in covering up their abuses.

These exposes came on the heels of another scandal involving Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick, his personal security guard and a high-ranking deputy police officer. The mayor fired the deputy, who was investigating rumors of a wild party at the mayor's mansion, and the coverup of an accident by one of his security guards. The mayor had replaced the old security guard with cronies from his high school and football playing days, despite the fact that major security officers in the affair had police records. He held a widely-publicized press interview in front of his mansion to deny everything, declaring that nothing in the charges had happened.

The deputy who was summarily discharged said he was fired because he was conducting the investigation involving the mayor, which the mayor and police chief both denied, although many veteran police officers said that they could never remember such a high-ranking officer being fired like that. The mayor and police chief claimed the deputy had simply been reassigned to another duty, claims that were patently false.

Subsequent investigations have resulted in the resignations of the security officers charged with wrongdoing. The latest news is that police officers had taken Queen Latifah to an after-hours joint to "show her a good time," providing a police escort and companionship. The only problem with this is that it is all illegal—officers are supposed to shut down such joints, not frequent them with celebrities.

The Michigan state attorney general, who had been called in to conduct an investigation into the allegations made against Kilpatrick and his security guards, cleared them of any wrongdoing, but nobody believed him. All politics, everybody said.

One thing is especially clear: this is not over, and it is going to be expensive for Detroit. Paying for the monitor and the reforms will require money the city can ill afford. And this says nothing about the lawsuits that will follow on the heels of the indictments of the 17 officers in southwest Detroit of involving previous purged testimony and false imprisonment.

—Andy Phillips

OUR LIFE AND TIMES **World powers try to stabilize Middle East**

by Kevin A. Barry

Under strong pressure from the leaders of the U.S., the European Union, Russia, and several Arab countries, a serious attempt is underway to stabilize the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of the so-called "Road Map." This outside pressure comes at a time when both Israelis and Palestinians have exhausted themselves in a bloody struggle that has claimed nearly 2,000 lives since September 2000, most of them Palestinian. While none of these powers, great or small, cares about the fate of the Palestinian people who have endured a cruel occupation since 1967, they are all concerned with regional and global stability and especially with undercutting the appeal of terrorist networks like Al Qaeda.

Since it is the Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon who has been the greatest obstacle to any viable peace negotiations, the first sign that something new was afoot came on May 25, when Sharon suddenly and for the first time pronounced the word "occupation" to describe Israeli control of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Then, on June 3, George W. Bush met with the leaders of four Arab states—Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Bahrain—and Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Abu Mazen (Mahmoud Abbas). Bush for the first time came out clearly in favor of a Palestinian state with contiguous borders.

The next day, June 4, Sharon, Mazen, and Bush met. Beforehand, Sharon made a token gesture, the release of 100 of Israel's 5,000 Palestinian prisoners. Mazen was the one who really offered an olive branch, addressing the people of Israel directly when he stated, "We do not ignore the sufferings of the Jews through-

Burma crackdown

The military rulers of Burma (Myanmar) have cracked down hard again. A year ago, they promised greater openness and negotiations with the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD). They released NLD leader and Nobel Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi after over a decade of house arrest, allowing her some freedom of movement.

On May 30, however, a pro-regime mob attacked a convoy that included San Suu Kyi, killing a number of her colleagues and injuring many more. Police moved in and arrested many NLD supporters. They are holding San Suu Kyi incommunicado in the notorious Insein jail. They have also closed down the universities to forestall student protests.

Since the government limited San Suu Kyi's travels after her release last year, thousands instead traveled long distances to hear her address NLD rallies. The determination of the masses to do away with a military regime that has been in power in various guises since 1962 has caused the regime to end a period of political opening that it rightly feared was getting out of control.

out history." Sensing a change in the wind, tens of thousands of Jewish fundamentalists demonstrated in Jerusalem that very day, with slogans denying any rights to the Palestinians such as "To divide our land is to defy God."

In the next few days, the Islamic fundamentalist Hamas movement denounced the Sharon-Mazen-Bush meeting, especially Mazen's statement about Jewish suffering. Then, on June 8, in another response to the peace negotiations, commandos from Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the more secular Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade staged a joint attack that killed four Israeli soldiers. Two days later, Israel attempted to assassinate a top Hamas leader with a missile, as it has done so many times before, missing him but killing innocent civilians. This led to an unusual public rebuke from Bush.

On June 11-12, the same cycle of violence that has

doomed so many peace initiatives seemed to have emerged: A Hamas suicide bomber killed 16 on a bus in Jerusalem and then Israel killed a Hamas leader and several civilians in a missile attack. By now, 60 people had died since the Sharon-Mazen-Bush meeting.

As we went to press, however, the Road Map had not broken down. By June 17, Hamas was suddenly indicating that it might agree to a halt to its suicide attacks. Then, on June 19, the Israeli army dismantled a small outpost settlement of 25 people during a day-long confrontation with Jewish fundamentalists.

For the first time since July 2000, some serious negotiations are taking place. Whether Sharon is willing to move beyond small gestures merely to placate the U.S. remains to be seen. Only real actions can lead to the achievement of a real two-state solution.

—June 21, 2003

Massive student protests in Iran

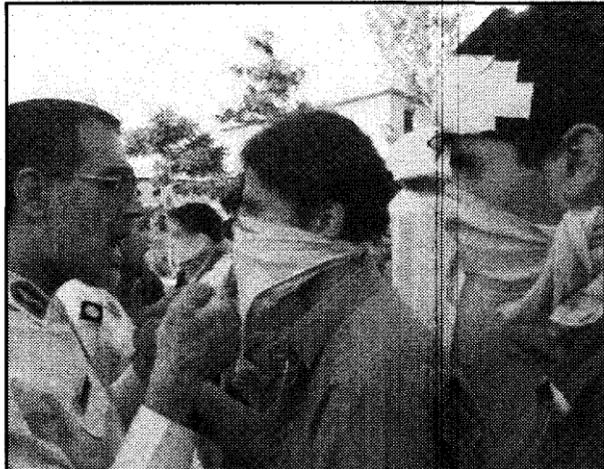
A Tehran university student protest against the privatization of universities, on June 10, set off a wave of protests that came to embody not only students but ordinary citizens and whole families, not only in Tehran but in other Iranian cities. By the second night, thousands of residents of Tehran were expressing their support by driving on the streets and honking their horns. Slogans included the call for the resignation of President Khatami and an end to "Supreme Leader" Khamenei and the entire Islamic Republic. All wanted freedom for political prisoners.

By the third night, Islamist vigilantes called Ansar al Hizbullah and Basijis started attacking students and ordinary citizens. Students sleeping in their dormitories at Allameh Tabatabai University were attacked in the middle of the night. They were beaten with chains, their belongings were destroyed and residences were severely damaged.

By June 14, the protests had spread to Isfahan, Shiraz, Ahvaz, Hamedan, Mashhad, Kirmanshah, and Tabriz. An open letter to Khamenei from 250 intellectuals challenged the very idea of "supreme leadership" and supported the right of Iranians to criticize their government. Signers included Hashem Aghajari, the former Islamist professor who has been in jail for challenging the Shi'ite principle of imitation from a leader.

As of June 23, thousands of people in Tehran and other cities have been arrested. The plainclothes police are raiding the homes of protesters and arresting more. Some arrestees have been forced to "confess" to

their mistakes. Families of political prisoners are now holding daily vigils in front of the infamous Evin prison. Students are also holding sit-ins in front of



Tehran University and the parliament. A letter from 166 members of parliament has condemned the savage attacks on the protesters.

Khamenei has been attacking these protests as "instigated" by the U.S. and the Iranian monarchist media in Los Angeles. The Bush administration promises to bring democracy to Iran even as the U.S. occupation of Iraq is proving to be a complete disaster. At the same time, the Iranian regime is doing its best to come to an agreement with the European Union and

the UN on the development of its nuclear power plants.

The French government has chosen this moment to arrest members of the Iranian Mujahedeen Khalq (MK) and to raid their offices in France. The MK, who are mostly based in Iraq, have recently made an alliance with the U.S. army. So far, nine members of the MK in Europe have immolated themselves to protest the arrests in France.

The protests in Iran, which are explicitly anti-fundamentalist, continue to be a ray of hope in a crisis-ridden Middle East.

—Sheila Sahar

Europe's labor unrest

Mass protest strikes to defend hard-won gains have hit France and Austria. The French strikes have gone on almost weekly for over six weeks. They reached their peak when millions walked off their jobs and one million came out onto the streets, in the greatest mass outpouring since 1995.

The strikers have opposed proposals by the rightist government for both cutbacks in the national pension plan and education "reforms." To receive a full pension, one would have to work not 37.5 years, as today, but 40 years by 2008 and 42 by 2020. This would discriminate harshly against working women, who on the average work fewer years in full-time paid employment. The government also wants to "decentralize" education, which would lead to pay cuts for non-teaching staff and greater social inequality among schools.

The strikes continued through May and June. Large strikes on June 3 disrupted much of the economy, with postal, transport, and schools deeply affected and one million taking to the streets in demonstrations.

Workers from the ranks attacked the labor bureaucracy, which had shied away from an unlimited general strike that would have continued until the proposals were shelved. During a debate on June 4 at a big Paris rail station, one shop floor delegate from the General Confederation of Labor (CGT) stated: "Afterwards, an accounting will be demanded of the unions that betrayed us." As we went to press, parliament was poised to vote through the pension changes, but the education proposals had been withdrawn for now.

During these weeks, Austrian workers battled a new pension policy that is to cut benefits by 20%, affecting working women the most. The retirement age will also be raised from 59 to 65. On May 6, the biggest strikes since World War II shut down urban transport and schools, with many workers holding mass indoor meetings at work to air their grievances. On June 3, an even bigger general strike occurred, with private and government workers participating. Nonetheless, the conservative-dominated parliament rammed through the pension cuts a few days later.

In Germany, the Social Democratic Party (SPD) Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder has proposed a "Plan 2010" that would cut unemployment and health benefits and make layoffs easier. After he was booed at a May Day rally outside Frankfurt, a furious debate took place within the SPD. By June 1, however, SPD leaders had caved in to Schroeder, who now uses the Margaret Thatcher slogan, "There is no alternative."

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