

NEWS & LETTERS

"Human power is its own end"—Karl Marx

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50¢

WORKSHOP TALKS

Abu Ghraibs at home

by Htun Lin

Like the rest of the world my shop is full of dismay and discussion over the atrocities coming out of Iraq both in Abu Ghraib prison and Al Qaeda's beheading of Nicholas Berg.

The military hierarchy is trying to protect itself by fingering a few low level grunts for the Abu Ghraib atrocities. Many generals and Senators "investigating" this are ready to target a few individuals for court martial and not address the systemic abuse of prisoners coming from the imperatives of high command.

Healthcare workers can relate to this. Many of our coworkers have been singled out and fired for patient injuries when the real cause is actually systemic.

On the Abu Ghraib scandal no one is paying much attention to Army Spc. Joseph Darby, a 24-year-old MP who simply did the right thing when he broke the silence when he saw the soldiers around him following orders to do these unspeakable acts while his superiors assured him all was OK. The whole situation didn't sit right with him, and he took the extraordinary step of sending his misgivings up the chain of command.

We healthcare workers are also often told to ignore state regulations when we are given patient workloads deemed unsafe. When we object, often we're singled out as being "insubordinate." The more persistent worker will sometimes go beyond her immediate manager and report the abuse to the union or a state agency. But overseeing agencies always have ambiguous loyalties, to regulate but also to promote industry's bottom line financial health.

No matter how many investigative commissions are created from the top to determine facts, the truth is it is the grunt or worker on the front line who makes the ultimate determination about what is right. Workers are constantly torn on the job between doing the right thing versus fulfilling the demands of the hierarchy. For example, in healthcare we have several inspections a year by various governmental agencies and peer review. These inspections are purportedly for quality control, but in reality those inspected are given advanced notice so they can sweep even chronic prob-

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BLACK/REDVIEW

End police corruption

by John Alan

I am turning over my column this month to Mildred Henry who told her story of police torture to a meeting of News and Letters Committees in Chicago.—J.A.

I am on a crusade for my oldest son, Kilroy Watkins. He has now been incarcerated for 12 years due to a wrongful conviction.

On Jan. 12, 1992 my son was picked up and arrested at Area 2 headquarters. He was interrogated there for numerous hours before Area 3 officers came and took him. During the time of that interrogation they kept asking him about a murder that had happened on 53rd and Justine. My son kept repeating that he didn't know what they were talking about.

Sooner or later he learned that the detective who was interrogating him was Kenneth Boudreaux. He worked under Commander Jon Burge. From 1980 all the way up until 1990, Jon Burge and his detectives had a thing going where they were out in the poorest neighborhood, the South Side of Chicago, targeting Blacks and Latinos.

Jon Burge came from the army as a lieutenant. When the Wilson brothers back in the 1970s killed a police officer, Burge terrorized the South Side community until he arrested Andrew Wilson. But that was just the beginning. They needed more and more confes-

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ON THE INSIDE

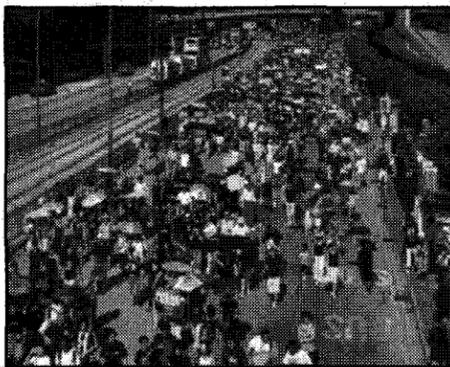
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Unrest girds China's growth

by Bob McGuire

A mine disaster which killed 35 on May 1, a persistent independent union movement, and a new women's movement of mothers of the martyrs of the crackdown on the Tiananmen Square revolt of 1989 reflect an undercurrent of revolt in China today.

Fifteen years ago, all eyes were on China as millions of Chinese—students, workers, intellectuals—demonstrated in cities across the country under the banner of freedom and democracy. By odd circumstance there was television coverage where Chinese rulers normally control information, so viewers around the globe caught glimpses of a developing movement that maintained itself, not even halted by declaration of martial law, until the bloody Tiananmen Square massacre of June 4, 1989.



In Hong Kong, 200,000 protest anti-subversion legislation last year, a hint of revolt below the surface.

The spectacular expansion of the Chinese economy since 1989 might now seem to overshadow the memory of Tiananmen Square, but the two against are connected. Popular revulsion in the U.S. against tanks crushing dissidents in Beijing and elsewhere after 1989 forced a debate in Congress on China's human rights record and economic sanctions.

CHEAP FORCED LABOR

Both Bush and Clinton in turn expressed their class allegiance by making a charade out of the annual certification of China's human rights status so that nothing interfered. U.S. capitalists have, with capitalists from Taiwan, Japan and the rest of the world, poured over \$450 billion in capital investment into China in the last dozen years, concentrated in the coastal export zones which have been at the heart of the boom years.

For that investment, capitalists have sought out not just cheap labor, but 150 million displaced workers only makes it seem to the capitalists that expansion could proceed without limit, but the numbers of jobless put even more downward pressure on wages. Displaced peasants, under conditions of forced labor that include 12-hour days and more, regimentation of off-duty hours and factory dormitories locked from the outside.

They incur debts that make them effectively indentured servants; they are brought back if they are able to run away from the factory. By comparison, Baldemar Velasquez of Farm Labor Organizing Committee in a

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EDITORIAL Rule of new torturers in Iraq

The exposé of the horrific abuses inflicted by the U.S. military against detainees at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, along with growing opposition by Iraqis of all political persuasions to the U.S. military occupation, has created a qualitatively new situation with global ramifications. For the first time since Ronald Reagan initiated a changed world of retrogression with a series of unbridled U.S. military interventions in the 1980s, the U.S. is encountering a serious setback in its effort to translate its global power into the imposition of total dominance on lands overseas.

The pictures from Abu Ghraib are the international equivalent of the videotape showing Rodney King being beaten by the Los Angeles police in the 1990s. The two have a similar origin: the repressive measures taken by bourgeois society to "maintain order" in the face of a rebellious population.

Despite the Bush administration's effort to blame

the abuses at Abu Ghraib on a few soldiers, it is increasingly clear that the dehumanization which



occurred there was widespread, systematic, and encouraged by those at the top. As Seymour Hersh, who broke the story in *The New Yorker* put it, the abuse of prisoners

in Iraq is "almost a routine fact of life that the soldiers felt no need to hide."

The problems facing the U.S. in Iraq come into focus

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WE NEED YOUR HELP TO KEEP NEWS & LETTERS ALIVE!

As George Bush's war on Iraq continues to pile brutality upon brutality, it becomes urgent to keep a revolutionary journal like *News & Letters* alive. The widespread disgust with the U.S. occupation of Iraq has made the Right in this country more determined than ever to silence any independent voice of opposition to their dehumanized rule. How far they are willing to go can be seen in the attempt of the Sinclair group to silence even Ted Koppel's ABC program on the U.S. war dead. At the same time, Kerry's electoral opposition to Bush is moving closer and closer to what it purports to be opposing. It makes the continuation of a paper like *News & Letters* more urgent than ever.

Nowhere else are the voices of those fighting for freedom heard inseparably from the articulation of a philosophy of revolution which is needed for those movements to succeed both in uprooting the dehumanized world in which we live today and in creating a new world built on human foundations.

In this issue, you will find the voice of the founder of Marxist-Humanism, Raya Dunayevskaya, along with the voices of rank-and-file workers fighting for union recognition in Memphis, women's liberationists fighting fundamentalist oppression in the Middle East, youth questioning racist inequality in the education system, and prisoners speaking for themselves in "Readers' Views" and thanking our supporters for keeping this paper alive.

It is that support from our readers that has kept us alive at every critical moment that has threatened our existence, ever since our birth in 1955. We receive no gov-

ernment funding, no grant money, no NGO support to keep us going. Our revolutionary work continues through the contributions of both ideas and funds from our readers and supporters alone.

It is they who have helped us bring out all the new works we are proud to have achieved in the past year — from two new works on the ongoing revolutionary Black dimension like John Alan's *Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles* as well as our 40th anniversary edition of Raya Dunayevskaya's *American Civilization on Trial*; to a collection of *Marxist-Humanist Writings on the Middle East*; to a mini-pamphlet on *Marx's Concept of Intrinsic Value*.

It is you, our readers, to whom we are appealing to help an independent voice like ours continue our revolutionary work. NEVER WAS YOUR HELP MORE NEEDED. PLEASE GIVE AS GENEROUSLY AS YOU CAN TO KEEP US ALIVE!

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Women torturers as the face of capital

by Terry Moon

It was a shock to see women's faces grinning at us from TV and newspapers as they participated in torturing Iraqi prisoners. It showed how wrong many were to think that, by nature, women are more humane than men. Those faces highlighted the mistake bourgeois feminists made when they insisted that equality means women should have equal access to the military in all its branches and all its tasks.

Those faces revealed how abstract the demand for equality can be. We don't want equal participation in a military in the service of a U.S. government bent on world domination. Rather, we call for the abolition of the military, and have no illusions that it can be anything other than a training ground for brutality. The sexual nature of the torture imposed on the Iraqis flowed from a history as long as the military itself of brutalizing, dehumanizing, raping, prostituting, torturing and murdering women.

RAPE, HARASSMENT ARE ENDEMIC

This is what one woman wrote about the military she was a part of: "...we must consider that, due to this failure to address and change these problems, there is an unwritten military policy of 'normalizing' or utilizing rape, brutalization and inhuman treatment towards our own and others, on both a national and global scale. If so, this would make our nation, and our military, no better than other nations...where abuse and rape have been utilized as methods of gaining submission and compliance from others."

Written before the torture of Iraqi prisoners was revealed, these are the words of nine-year career Air Force officer Dorothy Mackey, who was raped three times in one year by two senior officers from the Inspector General's office. In her struggle for justice she discovered that the responsibility for sexual assault and rape "plague our entire military system."

Brutality against women by military men existed from the moment armies were formed. But when women joined the service, male resentment was overwhelming and abuse skyrocketed. In the U.S. over 200,000 women veterans have been sexually assaulted by servicemen; 30% of women Vietnam veterans reported rape or harassment; in the last decade, two Department of Veterans Affairs surveys show 30% of women reporting not just harassment but attempted rape or rape. Most military women don't report rape or harassment, so the real numbers are probably double. Any move to change this reality has been stymied by military brass for decades.

CAPITALISM = DEHUMANIZATION

This brutality against women predates capitalism, but capitalism so fragments us that human beings no longer understand our relationship to the community, the rest of society, or to the world of things that human beings create. In his 1844 Manuscripts Marx spoke to this, writing: "The infinite degradation in which humanity exists for itself is expressed in this relation to the woman as the spoils and handmaid of communal lust...On the basis of this [man/woman] relation we can judge the whole stage of development of humanity. From the character of this relation it follows to what degree humanity has become human, and has recognized itself as such."

Marx saw how capitalism deepened the view of women as less than human: "Private property has made us so stupid and one-sided that any object is ours only when we have it, i.e., when it exists for us as cap-

ital, or when we possess it directly..."

What those grinning faces of Spec. Megan Ambuhl, Spec. Sabrina D. Harman, and Pfc. Lynndie England made so clear is how capitalism's capacity for reducing human relations to relations between things, affects women as well as men. That thingification is a fact of life flowing from every aspect of the production process.

It allows this perversion of human relations to become so universal that it affects women and others who have no stake in maintaining this system.

In capitalism such dehumanization is necessary for

social reproduction in all its phases. The true horror is that this descent into animality is an expression of what is "normal."

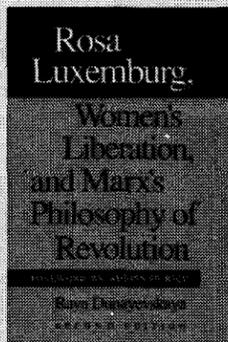
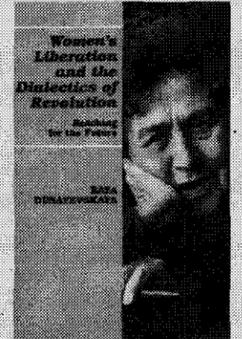
We have a different vision of the future from the degraded present captured in those pictures. A future where the form of human relations will be under our own control, and where people won't become objects to each other, but will be able to develop all their capacities and talents. Those pictures from Iraq and the degradation to which capitalism has subjected us, reveal how deep the uprooting must be, and how much is at stake in the struggle to make that vision of the future a reality.

WOMAN AS REASON

For Women's Studies: Philosophy, History, Sociology

"As will be evident throughout this book (which covers 35 years of writings on a single subject, Women's Liberation), the sharp differentiation between Marx's Marxism and post-Marx Marxism is not limited to that one question. A deep gulf existed between Marx's multilinear view of all human development and Engels' unilinear view. Which is why this single subject-Women's Liberation, whether viewed as it relates to philosophy or to forms of organization-is inseparable from the dialectics of revolution."

From *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future*



"Marx's Ethnological Notebooks are crucial in Raya Dunayevskaya's eyes because they show Marx at a point in his life where his idea of revolution was becoming even more comprehensive; the colonialism that evolved out of capitalism forced him to return to precolonial societies to study human relations and 'to see the possibility of new human relations,' Dunayevskaya wrote, as Marx sensed they would burst forth from a new type of revolution."

From Adrienne Rich's *Forward to Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*

To order, see literature ad on page 7.

WOMEN WORLDWIDE

by Mary Jo Grey

Women from the Old Women's Project, dressed as brides, marched through downtown San Diego, Cal., protesting President Bush's plan to give \$1.5 billion to counselors, churches and the advertising industry to "promote marriage." They don't oppose marriage—one was celebrating her 50th wedding anniversary—but they insisted the money would be better spent on child care, health care, job training and a living wage.

—Information from *Mother Warriors Voice*

The Colombian government labeled women and girl leaders, activists and human rights defenders as "guerrilla collaborators" and "legitimate targets" during warfare. Police ignore calls for help from women threatened by paramilitary groups. Nearly 150 women were killed or "disappeared" in Colombia in 2003.

—Information from *Women's Human Rights Online Bulletin*

Converging right wing reviewed

Author Ann Burlein compares the white supremacist movement's "hard sell" of their beliefs with the "soft sell" of the same beliefs within the religious right. She compares Pete Peters' white supremacy propaganda "ministry," Scriptures for America, with James Dobson's family counseling "ministry" and political influence machine, Focus on the Family.



Lift High the Cross: Where White Supremacy and the Christian Right Converge, by Ann Burlein

She explains how both groups use "counter memories," their own reinterpretations of history, to form their philosophies. Both point to Old Testament stories of God abandoning a wayward nation of Israel and of kings winning back God's favor by purging Israel of the religious influence of other cultures. Peters and other white supremacists believe that Israelites were white and that they later went on to build a new "JerUSAlem" in the U.S. He believes that the influence of

"satanic" Jews and "bestial" people of color must be battled to win back God's favor. Dobson's beliefs are less garish: the U.S. was intended by the forefathers to be a Christian country but the revolutionary movements of the '60s led to social chaos that can only be remedied by "bringing back" a supposedly "Biblical," authoritarian family structure.

Both believe that gender roles and heterosexuality

are natural, but hold a contradictory belief that they need to be taught and enforced to keep order in society. Peters considers abusive marriages normal and uses them as a metaphor to explain why God punishes his bride, Israel, because he is "hurt" by her unfaithfulness. He also believes that men are naturally warriors who must submit to God by carrying out acts of violence. Dobson allows women to have a degree of personal empowerment in the hopes of luring them away from feminism, which he describes as extremist. He believes that fathers must lovingly control and physically punish their children so that they will identify their submission to their father with submission to God. In both cases, "submitting to God" means to submit to right-wing ideology.

Peters and Dobson use sentimental imagery of frontier homesteads and rugged individualism to promote the idea of private property ownership and a private sphere that they are trying to preserve from the corruption of big government and the inner city. Burlein demolishes this myth of self-reliance by describing the communal nature of frontier life and how frontier and home ownership in the 1950s (sentimentalized by Dobson) were subsidized by the government.

Burlein's occasional use of postmodernist jargon and rambling makes some of the book incoherent, especially in the conclusion, where she attempts to construct a progressive response to the right wing. However, the book is valuable in helping the reader to understand the thinking and the activities of white supremacy and the Christian right.

—Adele

Peace activists attacked

Editor's note: Below we print excerpts from a report given April 25 by Molly Malekar, the director of Bat Shalom, the women's peace organization that forms the Israeli side of The Jerusalem Link. The Palestinian side is the Jerusalem Center for Women. Thanks to Gila Svirsky for sending this report.

We were about 60 women: one-third Israeli, one-third Palestinian, and one-third internationals. We gathered at Bidu to protest the construction of the wall in this village. It was a quiet march, with women carrying signs and walking toward the area where soldiers were guarding the construction of the fence. At a distance of about 30 feet, we stopped because the soldiers turned to point their rifles directly at us. I called out in Hebrew, "Don't shoot, we're not armed, this is a nonviolent demonstration." Suddenly, there was an onslaught of tear gas and stun grenades falling all around us.

The grenades fell at our feet and we were choking, unable to breathe. Most ran back. Soldiers charged us and fell upon the women, grabbing some whom they arrested. Most of the women had run back, trying to recover from the tear gas, but I wanted to talk to the soldiers to prevent the arrest of four women. Suddenly, out of nowhere, four horses charged with border police mounted on them. I started to run, but one of them ridden by a young woman in uniform caught up with me and she struck my head with her billy club. I fell, and then a second horse charged toward me and I felt more blows on my head and back. There was no provocation whatsoever at any point while this was happening.

Gila also reports: The Israeli women's peace movement placed an ad in *Ha'aretz* on May 18, calling for an immediate halt to the violence in the Palestinian refugee town of Rafah, where scores of Palestinians have been killed—including many children—and for a renewal of negotiations for a peace agreement that will extract us from all the occupied territories.

"True and enduring solutions," we wrote, "are attained by negotiation, not destruction, revenge or humiliation." On May 18, 40 women drove to Gaza to see if they could intervene physically, but were prevented from entering Gaza by the army. The women set up an encampment at the Sufa checkpoint and say they will not leave until the army stops its actions there. Other peace and human rights organizations have placed newspaper ads, and many are organizing a larger delegation to join the women on May 21.

Resurrection Health workers fight for union

CHICAGO—Workers at nine Chicago-area hospitals managed by Resurrection Health are trying to organize a union to protect themselves and their patients from management practices that put profit before quality health care. At a large rally held May 2, three workers explained why they fight. The workers are seeking representation by AFSCME.—K.M.

RN, CARDIAC CT LAB:

I became a nurse to help people and to do more for my community. I want to ensure quality of care in an environment that is respectful. We have grown from three to nine hospitals in the past seven years. We are becoming just another corporation. The ideas have stopped flowing from the bedside up and flow from the office of counsel down. I have seen many nurses leave because of burnout. We want to give the full amount of attention the patients need. The housekeepers are flying from room to room in order to prepare for the next patient. One of my RN co-workers was fired recently. I feel that it was because he always spoke his mind about the conditions of work. I'm glad to see the turnout today. Every time we come together we get stronger.

RN, ST. MARY OF NAZARETH HOSPITAL:

I have been a nurse for 10 years. Management used to be sincerely concerned. Now it's much more corporate. I work in a gastrointestinal lab, but I used to be a nurse on the medical surgical ward. If I hadn't changed units, I would have burned out. I was overworked and often had to pass work to the next shift. There is no policy that says you have to punch out and continue working, but we have to do it to get our jobs done.

We are punished for taking sick days. Calling in sick is classified as an instance and we are allowed only seven instances per year. I have gone to work sick and worn a surgical mask to protect patients. I don't think this policy has solved staff shortages. I am convinced that as more Chicago hospitals become corporate, the quality of care will suffer.

Housekeeper, West Lake Hospital, Melrose Park:

I have worked at West Lake for eight years. I started out as a patient care assistant, but was moved to the housekeeping department and lost pay. West Lake no

longer seems like a family. We often do double or triple work with no extra pay. Many of the housekeepers make \$8 an hour and pay between one to two hundred dollars every two weeks for health insurance.

We have been threatened and harassed by management for our organizing drive. We have been forced to attend anti-union meetings. When we began using our staff mailboxes for distributing union flyers, management removed the boxes from our office. The environment management has created is so hostile that many people won't even look at open union supporters for fear that they will be fired.

Fred's warehouse workers continue struggle

MEMPHIS, TENN.—Fifteen or so activists from several different organizations met together to brainstorm about how to support warehouse workers at Fred's, who after a two-year struggle finally won union recognition but still have no contract.

Several Fred's workers were present and talked about their conditions and struggles. Many union members have recently been fired "in all kinds of ways," on trumped-up charges, and the union is negotiating to get their jobs back. They talked of how the company keeps coming to the table but each time changing the package that they had offered in the previous session. They are stalling, a usual tactic, but they do it in such a way that the company can't be charged with negotiating in bad faith, even though they are.

When asked why workers were so determined to have the union and a decent contract one worker said, "It's because of the inhumane way they treat us." He then related a story of a dangerous snowstorm in Memphis where the authorities were urging everyone to stay off the road. Fred's management took that opportunity to fire a lot of people. He said, "We had people who come to work from as far away as Batesville, Miss., and would never miss a day, but couldn't get in that day. They got points and some were fired."

Even people who had never said anything before were outraged about this and spoke out. Another worker said, "We had layoffs in August and after a month they called people back but at a lower paid job. Most were jobs these people couldn't work. They had women handling huge boxes. They terminated their unemployment. It was mostly union people."

Ideas the group came up with were to have different organizations each take a day in the month to protest at different Fred's stores, to picket, pray there, and pass out informational leaflets. One suggestion was to hook up with students involved in anti-sweatshop organizing; another was to hold regular fasts, and a third was to make a stand at the Fred's stockholders meeting. As long and as nasty as this struggle has been, Fred's workers are still going strong and have community support.

—Marxist-Humanist supporters

WORKSHOP TALKS

Continued from page 1

lems under the rug just long enough to pass.

Instead of all the pompous debates over legal minutiae by constitutional scholars, this one courageous act by one simple soldier has, in effect, challenged the whole Pentagon and indicted the Bush administration's blatant violation of Geneva Conventions.

In the late '90s when the California Nurses Association had a protracted campaign to get some control over quality of care, they publicized the abuses and neglect suffered by patients under managed care. It was a daily chronicling of a "hall of shame."

When inhuman abuse, whether in prison or in an HMO, sees the light of day, there is a collective indignation that can bring moral clarity. The Pentagon was forced to submit to Congressional hearings only when someone like Darby in the frontlines exposes abuses. When our HMO management found they couldn't stop the truth from coming out, they finally ended their stonewall and decided to give the nurses' union what they wanted by setting up new positions called "quality liaisons," filled by nurses who would have a say in setting standards and determining whether or not the hospital met those standards.

Nurses on the front line, who were really excited about the new liaison positions, are complaining that in practice they are not being heard. There are too few quality liaisons and it is hard for any given nurse to see a liaison on the floor when problems occur. Our union leaders need to understand that any contract is only as good as shop floor enforcement.

Imperatives that come from the management hierarchy are always concretely at odds with what is happening on the ground. Supposedly our mission is to "totally focus on the patient, providing the highest quality health delivery possible at the lowest cost," but what really happens in practice is cutting costs to the bare bones in order to maximize profits. The hierarchy is obsessed with "revenue enhancement." Their customers, corporations looking to reduce health care costs, are courted with new cost sharing plans which shift more costs to their workers as well as patients.

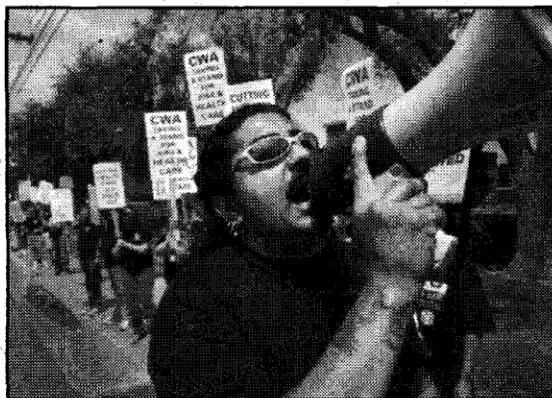
Recently, an administrator came to our staff meeting, complaining that our "numbers are miserable." She said, "your revenue collection rate directly impacts the budgeting process for the hospital. The anticipated revenue is already figured into next year's budget. If you don't collect it, departments will have to be closed, jobs will have to be eliminated, service cuts will be implemented. Your union will be monitored. Those who do not meet performance criteria will be counseled. If the problem persists, action will be taken up to and including termination. If you're not able or willing to bring up your collection rate, maybe you need to find another job."

We workers are fully aware that we are made to perform certain duties according to the inhumane dictates of a world we feel we did not create. Should I do this? I've been given an order and there are consequences if I don't follow it and do as directed.

We need to develop more confidence to speak out about what we know from experience everyday and do so collectively. We need to be able to freely determine our work lives together, to give direction to the whole organization, whether it's an army or an HMO.

It is not the higher-ups that we can rely on to address abuses, since they're part of the problem. Only when workers take full responsibility for our social existence, can we end the separation between the alienating imperatives of the organization and our individual sense of what is right and wrong.

SBC walk-out



Communication Workers staged a multi-state four-day walk-out May 21-24 against SBC. Protection of pensions, improvement of health care benefits, and stopping outsourcing of jobs were on the table when a tentative agreement was reaching May 25. Workers rallied in Sacramento, Cal. (above) and other locations.

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Quebecor unsafe

CHICAGO—On April 28, Workers Memorial Day, the day to memorialize workers injured and killed on the job, employees of Quebecor World Inc. in 13 countries demanded safer jobs. Their petition presented to the multi-national corporation says they are entitled to "respect, dignity and fairness...and...the right to know their rights will be respected."

Beginning in Montreal in 1954, Quebecor began acquiring publishing and printing operations while World Color had been in business in St. Louis from 1904 using technology and mergers to become a leading printing operation in the U.S. Quebecor World Inc. became the largest merger in the history of the industry. The multi-national spans North America, South America, Europe, and India.

The Graphic Communications International Union (GCIU) is helping workers organize in seven plants in the United States (some U.S. facilities have unions). But Quebecor World is using the lax enforcement of labor laws to illegally harass, fire, and intimidate those workers. Where Canadian workers can become unionized by signing cards, labor forces elections in which companies like Quebecor can call mandatory anti-union meetings, isolate union organizers, and even send mail to people's families threatening that the union will cost their jobs.

Safety and discrimination are major issues with the workers. Since 1998, Quebecor has been cited by the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) more than 140 times for unsafe working conditions. Black and Latino workers complain that their all-white supervisors only offer to train white workers for better jobs in the plants. At Olive Branch, Miss. Black women fill 96% of the lowest paid positions. Not one is in management, even though 36% of the workforce is African-American women. These workers are calling for a "seniority system" to provide for fairness in opportunity.

The international campaign against Quebecor is seeking respect for the conventions of the International Labor Organization (ILO). Justice@Quebecor, as the campaign is called, seeks to replicate global agreements that have been achieved with other multinationals by their workers (<http://www.Justice@Quebecor.org>).

While this type of movement is self-limiting within the confines of capitalism and even within one corporation, it does take a step into the future when globalization of workers' rights becomes a conscious element of peoples' lives.

—Dennis Dixon

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FROM THE WRITINGS OF RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

EDITOR'S NOTE

This essay by Raya Dunayevskaya was first published in 1965 in the anthology *Socialist Humanism*, edited by Erich Fromm, which contained a number of studies on Marx's Humanism by scholars and activists worldwide. We published the first part of this essay in our May issue; the last part will appear in our July issue. We publish this now as part of our ongoing discussions of Marx's critique of capital in our classes on "Alternatives to Capitalism."

Footnotes by Dunayevskaya are indicated by "RD"; all others are by the editors. The editors have provided references to quotes from Marx's *Capital* in the text. "MCIK" refers to Marx's *Capital*, Vol. I, translated by Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (Chicago: Charles Kerr & Co, 1906). "MCIF" refers to the edition of *Capital*, Vol. I, translated by Ben Fowkes (New York: Vintage Books, 1975).

PART II

Elsewhere(1) I have made a detailed analysis of all four volumes of *Capital* and their relationship to [Marx's] 1844 *Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts*. Here space considerations limit me to the two basic theories—the Marxian analysis of value and the fetishism of commodities—which are, in reality, the single, decisive, unified theory of alienation, or historical materialism, dialectically understood.

Marx's discovery that "it is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence that determines their consciousness" [*Marx-Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 263] was no departure from either his own theory of alienated labor or the theory of alienation as the central core of the Hegelian dialectic. But Marx's precise analysis of the actual labor process under capitalism is more concrete, alive, shattering—and, of course, revolutionary—than any stage of alienation in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind*.

In true Hegelian fashion Marx focuses on creativity, but, unlike Hegel, he bases it on the actual process of production. There, facing not just an idea but a **human being** who has ideas, Marx develops his earlier concept of the worker's "quest for universality."(2)

The "new passions and new forces" he now sees are born not only to overthrow the old order, but to construct a new one, "a society in which the full and free development of every individual is the ruling principle" [MCIK, p. 649, MCIF, p. 739].

So organically related are the economic, political, and philosophic concepts in *Capital* that when, in 1943,(3) the Russian theoreticians first openly broke with the Marxian analysis of value, they had to deny the dialectic structure of *Capital* and ask that, in "teaching" it, Chapter I be omitted.

It does not speak highly of "Western" philosophy that it never saw the philosophic implications in this economic debate, and therefore also failed to discern the reason why the theoretical magazine of Soviet Marxism (*Under the Banner of Marxism*), which had carried on the tradition of Marx's dialectic philosophy, ceased its publication. Thereafter, without further ado or any reference to any previous interpretation of Marxian economics, the revision of the Marxian analysis of value became the standard Communist analysis. The wholeness of Marxian theory has always been the *bête noire* of established Marxism. It took the collapse of the Second International and a break with his own philosophic past to make Lenin, at the end of 1914, fully grasp the organic connection of Marxian economics with Hegelian philosophy. And from then on he became uncompromising in his criticism of all Marxists, himself included.

In one of his "aphorisms" he wrote, "It is impossible fully to grasp Marx's *Capital*, and especially the first chapter, if you have not studied and understood the **whole** of Hegel's *Logic*. Consequently, none of the Marxists for the past half century has understood Marx!"(4)

THE FETISHISM OF COMMODITIES

There is no more remarkable piece of analysis in the annals of political economy—and no more Hegelian kind of writing in Marx's "early Hegelian period"—than the final section of Chapter I of *Capital*, entitled "The Fetishism of Commodities." There philosophy and economics are connected with history as integrally as content and form are welded together in a great work of literature.

By the time Marx introduced further changes into the French edition, after the Paris Commune, those 15 pages were as tightly drawn as the strings of a violin. We must remember that Marx considered the greatest achievement of the Commune to be "its own working existence."(5) The **totality** of the reorganization of society by the Communards gave Marx a new insight into the whole question of the **form** of value, not only as it was historically determined, but also as it conditioned bourgeois thought in turn.

Under capitalistic conditions of production, philosophy had been reduced to an ideology, i.e., false consciousness. The categories of thought proper to capitalistic production were uncritically accepted by all,

including even Adam Smith and David Ricardo, the authors of the epoch-making discovery that labor was the source of all value. This is why, despite their discovery, they could not dissolve the fetishism of commodities. Classical political economy, concludes Marx, met its historic barrier here.

The commodity form of the products of labor became a fetish because of the perverse relationship of subject to object—of living labor to dead capital. Relations between men appear as the relation between things because in our alienated society that is all "they really are" [MCIK, p. 84, MCIF, p. 166]. Dead capital is the master of living labor. The fetishism of commodities is the opiate that, to use a Hegelian expression, passes itself off as "the very **nature** of the mind"(6) to all **except** the proletariat who daily suffer from the domination of dead labor, the stranglehold of the machine.

Therefore, concludes Marx, no one can strip the fetishism from the commodities **except freely associated labor**. Obviously the Russian theoreticians, in 1943, were determined that no one should.

THE FETISHISM OF THE PLAN

The necessary ideology to cover up the exploitation of the laborer did not change its essence when it changed its form from the private to the state capitalism that calls itself Communism. Nor has the ideological rift between China and Russia undermined the exploitative relationship in either land. Were Marx to return to earth, he would have no difficulty whatever in recognizing in its new form—the State Plan and its fetishism—the state capitalist development he predicted as the ultimate effect of the inexorable laws of capitalist development.

Our generation should understand better than any previous generation that it is not a question of nationalized vs. private property. It is a question of freedom. Wherever and whenever freedom was limited, Marx struck out against the barrier, in practice and in theory. Thus, when classical political economists spoke of "free labor," by which they meant wage labor, Marx wrote caustically: "For them there was history, but history is no more."(7)

It should be obvious that Marx's primary theory of value, or "abstract," "value-producing" labor, is a theory of alienated labor.

In the humanist essays Marx explained why he analyzed economic facts "in conceptual terms as **alienated labor**....How does it happen, we may ask, that man **alienates his labor**? How is this alienation founded in the nature of human development? We have already done much to solve the problem insofar as we have **transformed** the question concerning the **origin of private property** into a question about the relation between **alienated labor** and the process of development of mankind. For in speaking of private property one believes oneself to be dealing with something external to mankind. But in speaking of labor one deals directly with mankind itself. This new formulation of the problem already contains its solution."(8)

By the time he completed *Capital*, however, Marx felt the need to create economic categories to analyze the alien character of labor under capitalism both as an activity in the factory and as a commodity in the market where "alone rule Freedom, Equality, Property and Bentham" [MCIK, p. 195, MCIF, p. 280].

Marx created special economic categories not only to expound his theory of value and surplus-value, but also to show how degraded human relations were at the point of production itself. By splitting the category of labor into labor as activity and labor power as a commodity—as if the laborer could indeed disjoint his hands from his body and have them retain their function—Marx was able to show that, since labor power cannot be so disembodied, it is the laborer himself who enters the factory. And in the factory, continues Marx, the laborer's ability becomes a mere appendage to a machine and his concrete labor is reduced to a mass of congealed, abstract labor.

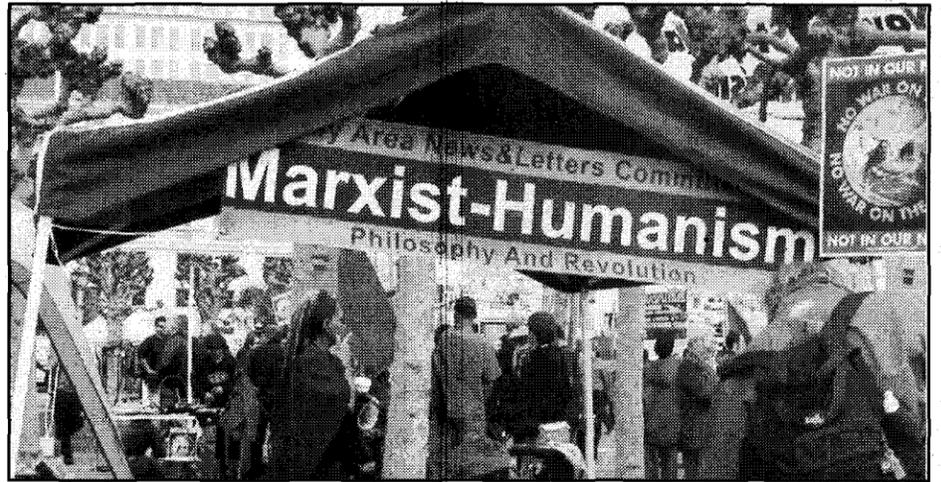
THE PIVOT OF THE MARXIAN CRITIQUE

Now there is, of course, no such creature as an "abstract laborer": one is a miner or a tailor or a steelworker or a baker. Nevertheless, the **perverse** nature of capitalist production is such that man is not master of the machine; the machine is master of the man. By the instrumentality of the machine, which "expresses" itself in the ticking of a factory clock, a man's skill becomes unimportant so long as he produces a given quantity of products in a given time. Labor time is the handmaiden of the machine which accomplishes the fantastic transformation of all concrete labors into one abstract mass.

Marx considered his analysis of concrete and abstract labor his original contribution to political

economy, "the pivot on which a clear comprehension of political economy turns" [MCIK, p. 48, MCIF, p. 132]. In the process of his analysis of the capitalist's "werewolf hunger for surplus labor" as "a live monster that is fruitful and multiplies," [MCIK, p. 217, MCIF, p. 302] Marx creates two other new categories: constant **capital** (machines) and variable **capital** (wage labor). All labor, paid or unpaid, he insists, is **forced** labor. And this labor is so alien an activity that it has itself become a **form of capital**.

The precision, as well as originality, of this description of alienated labor is not, of course, merely a category of the "deductive Hegelian dialectic." It is a category of the dialectic **empiricism** of Marx re-creating an altogether new level of truth. Only politically motivated, self-induced blindness can, when reading



Marx's pages upon pages on the labor process under capitalism, conclude either that the mature Marx departed from his theory of alienated labor, or that alienated labor is a "leftover" from Marx's "left Hegelian days" before he worked his way out of "Hegelian gibberish" into "scientific materialism."

(To be continued next month)

NOTES

1. *Marxism and Freedom*. See especially Chapters 5 through 8.—RD
2. *Poverty of Philosophy* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr), p. 157.—RD
3. *Pod Znamenem Marxisma (Under the Banner of Marxism)*, Nos. 7-8/1943. The crucial article on the law of value from this issue was translated by me under the title, "Teaching of Economics in the Soviet Union." Along with my commentary, "A New Revision of Marxian Economics," the article was published in *The American Economic Review* (September 1944). The controversy around it, in which Professors Oscar Lange, Leon Rogin, and Paul A. Baran participated in the pages of that journal, lasted for a year, at the end of which (September 1945) my rejoinder, "Revision or Reaffirmation of Marxism?" was published.—RD
4. See Lenin's "Abstract of Hegel's *Science of Logic*," *Collected Works*, Vol. 38 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1976), p. 180.
5. See Marx's *The Civil War in France*.
6. See Hegel on "The Third Attitude to Objectivity": "What I discover in my consciousness is thus exaggerated into a fact of the consciousness of all and even passed off for the very *nature* of the mind" (Hegel's *Logic*, first Wallace translation, Oxford University Press, 1892).—RD
7. The phrase comes from Marx's *Poverty of Philosophy*.
8. See "Alienated Labor" in *Marx's Concept of Man* by Erich Fromm, pp. 103, 108.—RD

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ESSAY

The concreteness of Marxist-Humanism

by Anne Jaclard

Raya Dunayevskaya's essay, "Marx's Humanism Today," published in Erich Fromm's collection, *Socialist Humanism: An International Symposium* (Doubleday, 1965; Anchor Books, 1966) and reprinted in ongoing installments in this paper, was a response to the battles over the humanism of Marx that she faced in 1965. It was not only a summary of her earlier work on this theme, but it intervened in the battle of ideas going on at the time in order to meet the demands of the moment in a concrete way. Taking this method as a challenge to us to be just as concrete when responding to today's objective situation, I will argue that we face a new situation in 2004, different from that of 1965, and that, if we are to respond concretely, revolutionaries need to begin theorizing an alternative to capitalist society.

SPECIFICITY OF THE 1965 ESSAY

Let us begin by looking at the history leading up to Dunayevskaya's essay. It came seven years after her groundbreaking book *Marxism and Freedom*. A key purpose of that book was to expose the "veritable conspiracy" to hide the humanism of Marx that had prevailed for decades. On the one hand, Marx had been suppressed by official Communism—not only by the Russians, who failed to publish his 1844 Humanist Essays, but also by deliberate mistranslations and misinterpretations of his works, including his greatest work, *Capital*. The suppression was perpetuated not only by the Russian and Chinese governments, but also by fellow-travelling intellectuals all over the world. The Marxist Left had so little interest in Marx's 1844 Essays, that the first to resurrect them were European Communists after World War II, who used them in their struggles with the Communist parties for the hearts and minds of the masses.

On the other hand, McCarthyism in the U.S. suppressed Marx by identifying him with existing Communist states. As Dunayevskaya wrote, in *Marxism and Freedom's* introduction, "Today, in the face of the constant struggle of man for full freedom on both sides of the Iron Curtain, there is a veritable conspiracy to identify Marxism, a theory of liberation, with its opposite, Communism, the theory and practice of enslavement." The book drew a sharp new division in the world. It both exposed "existing Communism" as state-capitalism, and challenged the anti-Stalinist Left to develop Marx's philosophy of liberation as an alternative pole of attraction.

But the world changed radically between 1958 and 1965. Starting in the 1940s, and up to *Marxism and Freedom's* publication, Dunayevskaya had been virtually the only English-language theorist (except for Herbert Marcuse) to write about Marx's humanism. His 1844 Essays had not even been published in English until she included two as an appendix to *Marxism and Freedom*. But the 1950s witnessed the start of new mass movements that pulled Marx's humanism out of the archives and onto the world stage. Third World revolutions against colonialism, Eastern European revolts against so-called Communism, and the Black "Freedom Now" movement in the U.S. compelled discussion of Marx's humanism.

Fromm's collection was a culmination of this resurgent interest in Marx's humanism. Widely read and translated into many languages, it contained essays by authors from many countries who had varied concepts of socialism and humanism, including Bertrand Russell and Norman Thomas, as well as Marxists and Marxologists. The breadth of the new discussion compelled Dunayevskaya to sharpen the differences between her thought and those of others.

By 1965, Marx's humanism had become such a hot topic that even some Communist parties and theorists began to claim they were for it. As Dunayevskaya writes in the 1965 essay, "the Russian Communist line changed....the claim now became that the Soviets were the rightful inheritors of 'militant humanism.'" A battle raged in and outside the French CP over its purported endorsement of humanism; fellow-traveling intellectuals such as Sartre supported it, while those such as Althusser vigorously attacked it. His *Reading Capital*, which contains a critique of Sartre for his defense of humanism, was also published in 1965.

Far from welcoming this new-found Communist "humanism," Dunayevskaya recognized it as an attempt to quiet the masses' interest in genuine Marxism. It was no longer sufficient to reveal the humanism of Marx; she now needed to distinguish it from its misrepresentations and distortions. Her essay sharply separates Marx's humanism from the Communist version, but she also distinguishes it from liberal interpretations of Marx. By stripping Marx's humanism of its specificity, she argues, the liberal academics "leave the door wide open" for the Russian and Chinese to cloak their exploitative, capitalist character and policies.

In response to this problem, the essay not only warns against leaving Marx's humanism abstract; it also demonstrates how *Capital* "signifies Marx's 'return' to his own philosophic humanism...on a more concrete level, which, rather than diminishing Marx's original humanist concepts, deepens them." If Marx's humanism is invoked without specifying its further, concrete development, its enemies can transform it "into an abstract[ion] that would cover up...the need to

abolish the conditions preventing 'realization' of Marx's philosophy, i.e., the reunification of mental and manual abilities in the individual."

WHAT'S NEW TODAY

Following Dunayevskaya's method of being concrete when responding to the objective situation, let us identify what is new and what is not in 2004, so that we can think through the needed response. I argue that we face a different situation in 2004 from that of 1965, and that, to respond to it concretely, we need to theorize an alternative to capitalism. Today, although there are still "vulgar communists" around who defend property as socialism, few argue any longer that Marx rejected his youthful humanism when

h e



Mass protest against global capital, Genoa, Italy, 2001

became "scientific." And despite an anti-humanist reaction in parts of the academic Left, the concept of humanism has had a great influence in the world.

Many social movements of the past 40 years have based themselves on humanist ideas that share some aspects of Marx's, such as the goals of individual freedom and self-development, including the Black liberation movement and the women's and GLBT movements. So established is "humanism" in the U.S. that liberal intellectuals like the editors of *The New Yorker*, present the political struggle in the U.S. today as one between Christian fundamentalists and humanists. A hair-raising cartoon by Lee Lorentz in the May 10 issue shows a full-scale military assault on a suburban home with a mild-looking man in the doorway. The caption reads, "2:12 p.m. Aug. 16, 2007. The last secular humanist is flushed from his spider hole."

But the concept of humanism most often expressed is undeveloped and fuzzy. It is surely a step backward that, in today's reactionary climate, we are called on to defend secular humanism. Marx's humanism does not even figure in the battle of ideas, because Marx barely appears. So we are facing a different, perhaps harder job than in the 1960s, when there was widespread discussion about Marxism.

The changed terrain hits you when you read Dunayevskaya's 1965 essay. It remains a great summary of Marx's humanism, but the Russian and Chinese Communist humanist whom she argued are no longer the main enemy. Nor is there much of a Marxist Left to contest the implications of Marx's humanism. As Dunayevskaya argued, what is crucial for a successful revolution is the re-creation of Marx's philosophy for our age. But few are working to re-create it today.

Instead, public discussion of Marxism has dwindled to almost none, and most people view thoroughgoing social transformation as so impossible that it is hardly worth discussing. So the 1965 essay certainly does not solve the problems we face. Our job, it seems to me, is not simply to re-publish it. We need also to accompany it with a discussion of what it means to be continuators of Marx's and Dunayevskaya's ideas at a historic moment when revolution seems to be off the agenda. I suggest that the first order of business is to show that an alternative to capitalism is indeed possible.

This problem is addressed in *News and Letters Committees' Perspectives for 2003-04*, which calls upon revolutionaries to concretize a vision of post-capitalist society. To begin this work, it is necessary to study Marx, for a fuller understanding of his achievements on this. It is crucial to explicate the inner workings of capital, rather than discussing his work at a level so general that people fail to catch the historic specificity of capitalism's mechanisms. And it is crucial not to read Marx in light of one's own particular concerns; but rather to draw out of his work the principles that can aid our search for capitalism's absolute opposite.

If we have correctly identified the challenge facing us today, our task may be harder than ever. That is because Marx gave only brief hints about what a post-capitalist society would be like. To break through his and our own abstractions about it, we need to understand his method of analysis with sufficient precision to get inside the dialectic of *Capital* and concretize it.

Dunayevskaya's warning in 1965 against turning Marx's humanism into an abstraction, and her discus-

sion of the need for "thought to proceed to...concrete truths," seem to me to be crucial to the perspective of concretizing an alternative to capitalism. Some of us have long repeated the goal of abolishing the separation between mental and manual labor and of becoming whole human beings. It is high time to say what we mean by that. If we fail to "proceed to concrete truths," why should any one believe that a new society is possible?

'PROCEEDING TO CONCRETE TRUTHS'

Dunayevskaya writes, "The totality of the world crisis demands a new unity of theory and practice...This new relationship of workers and intellectuals...This new stage in the self-liberation of the intellectual from dogmatism can begin only when, as Hegel put it, the intellectual feels the 'compulsion of thought to proceed to...concrete truths.'"

The dogmatism she had in mind here was the intellectuals' belief in the backwardness of the masses, which resulted in their tailending "actually-existing socialism." What I am concerned with here is a different dogmatism, the belief that "there is no alternative" to capitalism. What Hegel's key, however, is Hegel's methodology, which we need in order to work out a new direction for revolutionary thought, and thereby break through this new dogmatism.

Hegel's reference to "proceeding to concrete truths" is no call to leave theory behind and rush into practice, since his dialectic remained in the realm of thought. Rather, Hegel is describing the method of development of ideas—how thought, when allowed to continue its own development, can end up at concrete truths. Dogmatism cuts off the dialectic in thought before it can develop to its logical end.

Throughout her writings, Dunayevskaya developed the importance of the dialectical impulse to follow out the logic of ideas. In a 1985 talk called "The Power of Abstraction" (contained in *The Power of Negativity*, Lexington Books, 2002), she said,

Remember how rarely you think something through to the end. Indeed, if you do follow an abstract thought to the end, and if your Idea is the wrong one, you will wind up sounding like an idiot. That is, thinking "in and for itself" will end up proving that the Idea is no universal. But if your Idea was correct, the concretization will prove you a genius. Ideas 'think,' not sequentially, but consequentially, related to other Ideas that emerge out of historic ground, and do not care where all this might lead to....

Why do we so rarely think through ideas to the end? Why are we so reluctant to do hard mental labor? It seems that many in today's anti-war, anti-globalization, and other movements think of ideas as bare, undeveloped abstractions. They think that ideas can only be concretized by political practice—usually in the form of the same old street demonstrations around single issues, sometimes even by making unprincipled alliances. Such people must be assuming that a new, human society will just flow out of more and more protest activity, or from their good intentions, without the need ever to face any theoretical problems.

Why do some assume this, when history has so clearly proven otherwise? Perhaps many don't consider ideas as a force for revolution because they have never considered it possible to make ideas concrete, and have never experienced the process. Therefore as a necessary grasp Hegel's notion of concretizing ideas by conceptual mediation between the objective world and the ideal one we seek to realize.

Perhaps some hold back from thinking through alternatives to capitalism because the present moment looks so bleak that the project seems futile. But the objective situation only underscores the need to engage in this process. We need to do so not only because we live in retrogressive times, but because, as the U.S.'s morass in Iraq shows, the empire is unstable. There are opportunities for fundamental change.

Hegel's method alone is not sufficient, however, for thinking through alternatives to capitalism. As noted above, we simultaneously need a firm grasp of Marx's Marxism, which alone contains an understanding of the specific "nature" of capitalism that allows it to be transcended.

Hegel cannot tell us what the new society will be like; his idea of freedom remained abstract. Marx alone laid the basis for envisioning non-capitalist society. But Marx can "tell" us this only if we practice what Dunayevskaya singled out from Hegel—following an idea to its conclusion. Indeed, she understood Marx to have followed the drive to freedom inherent in the Hegelian dialectic to its conclusion; she said that he transformed Hegel's revolution in philosophy into a philosophy of revolution.

Thus, Hegel and Marx together spell out the material, conceptual ground for developing an alternative to capitalism. Only hard mental labor can give direction to the tasks we face to the extent that Marx needed giving a "blueprint" of postcapitalist society, the need to work out an alternative to capitalism has been the perspective inherent in revolutionary Marxism since its birth 160 years ago, in Marx's 1844 Essays. It is time for those who dream of a different future to proceed to concrete truths.

ABU GHRAIB AND THE SYTEMATIC ATROCITIES OF BUSH'S WAR

The Bush administration is trying to downplay any possibility that the despicable acts against the Iraqi prisoners were systemic. But if those photos had not been leaked, things would have been business as usual. We have been fed the lie that our troops were welcomed as liberators by the media as well as our government. It's being said in Washington that the world shouldn't judge the entire U.S. and its military based on the actions of "a few bad apples." But didn't we do exactly the same kind of ruthless actions when the almighty U.S. blanketed Iraq with missiles and bombs in March '03, killing thousands of innocent Iraqi citizens and putting hundreds into prisons. My question is how many more Iraqi prisoners will have to be abused, humiliated and sodomized before the rest of the world can officially pass judgment on the entire U.S. military and its citizens for allowing it. After all, we compared Saddam Hussein to Adolf Hitler for the torture of his own people. So isn't it fitting to compare George W. Bush to Saddam Hussein? The evidence is out and it shows that our own Ba'ath party just marches under a different flag.

**Angry Citizen
Arizona**

What really hit home for me was hearing some commentator, identified as a Republican on a news program, ask why anyone should be surprised that prisoners were stripped naked, deprived of sleep and made to stand for hours. It was expressed as though that was the proper way to treat prisoners, as though it was the proper way to treat any human being. When will we in the U.S. take action to stop all abuse—beginning with the prisons in the U.S.?

**Tristan
Los Angeles**

My son, who is in prison, had his whole unit stripped naked for two weeks, with all blankets and bedding taken away and the air conditioning turned up. During this whole time no phone calls could be made or mail received. I know this as abuse. It has to be stopped.

**Georgianna
Los Angeles**

Of all the articles I've read about the torture of the Iraqi prisoners, the most powerful to me was one that commented

on the way the grinning faces of the American military men and women in those photos reminded him of the photo exhibit that recently toured the U.S. as "Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America," which showed whole families enjoying a lynching as if it were a picnic. No matter how much Bush insists the photos we're seeing is not "the American way," it is clear that racism and brutality still define a lot about our history and have a long way to go to be stamped out. At the same time it is important not to forget those who refused to accept that as the "American way"—from the Abolitionists of yesterday to the whistle blower who stood up today.

**Revolutionary
Chicago**

The measure of this society's degeneracy is not only the torture of prisoners at Abu Ghraib, but the chorus of voices now being heard here in Memphis making the most outrageous excuses for that behavior. Many letters to the editor here reveal the racist attitude that any atrocity perpetrated by an Iraqi justifies the most vicious torment of any Iraqi, notwithstanding the fact that the Red Cross had said up to 90% of those in Abu Ghraib may have been detained by mistake. It isn't hard to see that the racist attitude right here is as vicious locally as it is toward people in the Middle East.

**Environmental justice activist
Memphis**

That women participated in the torture of Iraqi prisoners definitely gives the lie to the slogan that "all women are my sisters." And Condoleezza Rice shows more than ever how false it is to think "women in the military will be too soft." While we hear that Colin Powell at least opposed some of the moves of Rumsfeld/Cheney/Bush on strategic grounds, Rice just followed along as one of the key architects. What we're seeing in the photos is not new. It always happens in war, and it's happening all over the world. What the U.S. has done is prove the lie of being the great liberator by picking up where Hussein left off, even down to using the same prison! They are all cut out of the same cloth, which is why they could reach into their own prisons to recruit those guards to be the "interrogators."

**Educator and women's liberationist
Illinois**

SAMANTHA MATTOX / AKILI

We mourn the passing and celebrate the life of Samantha Renee Mattox (1976-2004), who wrote articles and poems for *News & Letters* under the name Akili.

Born in Chicago's Altgeld Gardens projects, Samantha was a remarkable young woman with an intense commitment to the freedom and dignity of Black people. She saw this as inseparable from the freedom of all human beings, a vision that encompassed many struggles that were equally aspects of her being: as worker, as woman, as part of the lgbt community.



Samantha was also representative of the generations of Black youth who have been hit hard by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In 2001, when Chicago's *Windy City Times* named her as one of the "30 Under 30" up-and-coming activists, she said: "Although I have AIDS, it is not the sum total of who I am. AIDS is not anything to be proud of or ashamed of. It just is. It's a medical condition. I was an activist long before I knew I had the disease."

Samantha was active in the Black Student Union and organized a Black feminist discussion group at Roosevelt University, where she graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Journalism. She was a local organizer for the National Young Women's Day of Action. She also published articles in a variety of publications which targeted aspects of racism from Chicago's history of segregation to the persecution of the MOVE organization and Mumia Abu-Jamal.

She was well-read in classic works of workers' writing, from *The Autobiography of Mother Jones* to Charles Denby's *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*.

Samantha was also gifted with a fantastic sense of humor and a deep love for literature from George Eliot to Lorraine Hansberry. Her sharp, original mind could see the connection between two of her favorite authors, Dorothy Parker and Donald Goines. She had a knowledge of popular culture from old Hollywood films to the cinema of French Africa.

A gifted high school basketball player, she won a "Cuthroat Award" for her competitive play. She was also a skillful dancer.

When her illness began to attack these natural gifts that she so enjoyed, Samantha fought it with a sense of pride and dignity that was inspiring. She spoke at Affinity and at *News & Letters* on the question of AIDS and Black women, and made an effort to attend demonstrations on other issues that she cared passionately about. She also kept writing as long as she could, on issues such as mass transit accessibility and nursing home abuse.

In the nursing home industry Samantha saw a form of warehousing of human beings that was in many ways parallel to the prison system. She would bombard administrators with letters of complaint both for herself and others.

For those of us who have to live without her spirit, her humor, her laughter, there will be an inevitable feeling of loss and tragedy. But in her courageous fight to the last, Samantha won a victory for those values of pride and dignity that she cherished for all people.

READERS' VIEWS



MARCHING FOR WOMEN'S LIVES

Given the historic nature of the March for Women's Lives, it's a crime how it has been hidden by the media and slandered by the Right. Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting says they found only six stories from the broadcast networks on this largest march ever in the U.S. Other news outlets focused on the tiny contingent of anti-abortionists. Dick Cheney's head advisor, Mary Matalin, called the March "out of touch and irrelevant"—incredibly, since one out of every 300 Americans was there! Bush's advisor Karen Hughes equated those who marched with terrorists! When asked whether abortion would be an election issue, she said "the fundamental difference between us and the terror network we fight is that we value every life." Sure, like all those lives in Iraq and all the U.S. troops who have died or been wounded!

**Outraged Women's Liberationist
Memphis**

I couldn't go to the March but watched the rally on C-Span and it wasn't made up of only "stars" although they were quite good. So many different groups were represented, including 100 young women and men from Medical Students for Choice, who came in lab coats with stethoscopes and talked of the dangers of losing abortion providers. There were many Latinas marching with their young children, some of whom said they might never have an abortion but firmly believed that choice has to remain only with each woman.

**March supporter
Chicago**

The feminist movement is not prepared to say that women can be cruel too. There is a branch like Code Pink that says women are better and kinder than men, and I haven't seen any mention of the torture scandal on their website so far. It leaves us open to attacks from right-wing talk show hosts like Michael Reagan who blamed the scandal on women trying to be like men. Another one, Michael Savafe, blamed it on the new visibility of lesbians in the media, and called one of the women in the torture pictures "dykey looking." We need to be clear that feminism is about the radical notion that women are human. It liberates us to bring out the best in ourselves, but we have to be alert to its shortcomings and what causes them.

**Adelle
Tennessee**

CRACKS IN THE EMPIRE?

Whenever I read the basic writings of Marx and Marxist-Humanism I realize how superficial is the approach of so much of the so-called Left. Calling for us to go beyond our circumscribed lives is dangerous stuff for the rulers. They fear the potential power of the masses. Yet we are beginning to see cracks in the stability of the U.S. drive for worldwide control. Its empire is beginning to deteriorate internally as all social services erode under the rulers' assault, and more and more jobs disappear. I am submerged with anguish over the millions of children who will never have any kind of fulfilled life, or even ever reach adulthood. Yet there seems little public dissent. Is there a way out or is there "no exit"?

**Frank
Wisconsin**

The hearings by the 9/11 commission are telling people what they already knew about Bush and his ulterior motives. I saw the press conference he gave after 9/11. His eyes were sparkling. He finally had a mission: to rule the world, beginning with overthrowing Saddam Hussein and occupying Iraq.

**Reader
California**

If the growing anti-Bush sentiments due to his lies, cynicism, lack of any concern for his canon fodder, much less the thousands of innocent civilian victims, as well as his cronyism with the rich against the poor, finally fosters the development of a powerful anti-fascist movement, it could lead to a revolutionary situation.

**Ana Lucia
Texas**

CALL FOR ACTION ON HEALTHCARE

Quality, affordable health care has been priced out of reach for millions of hardworking, tax paying Americans. Healthcare increases are outpacing wages and have made it difficult for small businesses to provide coverage to their workers, while corporations are shifting the burden directly to their employees.

On Saturday, June 19, tens of thousands will join together across the country from the Golden Gate Bridge to Brooklyn Bridge to demand a solution. To find an event near you, or to start your own event, go to <http://www.unionvoice.org/ct/D7a3qD41K1Jy/bridgethegap>.

The crisis touches everyone. At this moment there are 8.5 million children in our country without health care and as you read this message, five more people lost their coverage. June 19 is the day to send our message to Washington.

**Andy Stern
Cyberspace**

CONTRACTING OUT CANADA TO THE U.S.

The heavy use of "contracting out" is completely decimating the union membership here. It is occurring on all fronts, but especially Health & Welfare and Government Services. Jobs paying in the \$16 range are gone; services are contracted out, mainly to U.S. companies who hire at the \$8 to \$10 level. Many of the jobs are also part time, so there is no provision for benefits. There is no question it is a deliberate break-the-union ploy on the part of the right-wing government whose first act, when elected, was to reduce taxes for the top income faction. We have high unemployment and Vancouver City Council is currently debating the establishment of a tent city to "get the homeless off the streets." Councillors are looking at the U.S., especially Portland, where such a thing exists. And this in a world where the CEOs pull in millions!

**M.M.
Vancouver**

LEGALIZING GAY MARRIAGE

The ACLU filed a lawsuit against the New York State Department of Health on behalf of 13 same sex couples whose plans to be married by the mayor of New Paltz, N.Y., were thwarted after criminal charges for marrying gay and lesbian couples were brought against him. Charges have also been filed against several Unitarian ministers who stepped in to solemnize marriages in Mayor Jason West's place.

Different lawsuits were filed against the clerk of New York City about his refusal to issue marriage licenses to gays and lesbians. The refusal has taken place in a number of other areas, where suits are also being filed.

The argument common to these different suits is that any law barring same sex marriages denies the persons the guarantees of equal protection and due process under the state's constitution. As one of the plaintiffs put it, "We are New Yorkers, we are U.S. citizens, and we want our rights protected."

**Sheila
New York**

TWO EDUCATIONS

As an unfortunate consequence of growing up in the mean and pernicious ghetto streets on the South Side of Chicago, I witnessed vile things on a daily basis and perpetrated heinous things against the innocents of my poor and wretched community.



The moment that I learned to read and write well, I picked up Malcolm X's Autobiography and Carter G. Woodson's Mis-Education of the Negro.

From each I learned much. From Malcolm's I learned about the devastating effects of self-hatred and the universal principle that "If you change your self-perception, you can change the behavior."

Modibo Colorado

HAITI AFTER THE COUP

Jamaica and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) member countries resisted intense U.S. pressure by calling for an investigation by the UN into the circumstances that led to President Aristide's departure from Haiti after the Feb. 28-29 coup.

votes in 2000; that he was forced out of office as a result of an illegal insurgency; that Aristide and his wife were then flown to the Central African Republic by the U.S. military; and that a so-called "resignation letter" it was claimed he signed was then determined by the U.S. State Department's own Creole interpreter to have contained nothing about resignation.

Concerned lawyer New York

MARXISM AND ANTI-MARXISM

Marxism to me is a set of principles that makes the case against capitalism and builds the case for socialism and moves always in that direction.

S. R. Iowa

I was reading in the recently published Rosa Luxemburg Reader that she said what Marx had said on the basis of the experience of the Paris Commune, which had at that time been thought outdated for at least 30 years, was actually still very current.

Luxemburg reader Berkeley

In Capital, Marx talks about the phantom-like objectivity of socially necessary labor time. When your job goes to Asia, it is because they can produce the widgets cheaper.

how much nursing a patient gets. This seems phantom-like. Who is making up all these numbers? Where does the objectivity come from?

Health worker Oakland, California

VOICES FROM WITHIN

In reading John Alan's column "Bush's Black Rightists" (May N&L), I couldn't restrain my delight at reading an accurate assessment of Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice.



John Overmyer

Witness Powell's presentation at the UN on Iraq's so-called WMD and Rice's public statements absolving Euro-America of guilt in the Atlantic slave trade as well as her keynote speech at the National Association of Black Journalists, where she spoke of Bush's grand plan for democracy in the Middle East.

Flashed Bush's racist policies. The NAACP tout Powell and Rice as examples of so-called African-American achievement. The Black conservative judges they turn on are in reality less harmful to the oppressed masses of the world than Powell and Rice.

Prisoner California

After seven years of incarceration in this dungeon, whatever sanity I have been able to hold on to is owed largely to the window into the world which papers such as yours, sent down the line by one comrade or another, have provided me.

Incarcerated Pennsylvania

Editor's Note: Readers, can you contribute the cost of a sub to our donors' fund, to allow us to send N&L to those who cannot pay for it on their own?

I've been receiving N&L for some time and think it's by far the best use of a printing press I've ever seen! May you continue to be blessed with the will and the resources to do the noble work of helping to change this world for the better.

Supporter from within Arizona

Thank you for keeping your paper alive!

Prisoner Crescent City, California

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BLACK/REDAVIEW

Continued from page 1

sions.

At that time I don't have to tell you who was the States Attorney. It was our now-Mayor Daley, who claimed from then up until now he wasn't aware of this torturing. In 1993 Jon Burge was fired by the City of Chicago. Now he resides in Florida, but he's living on taxpayer money on a pension. Boudreaux tortured my son for 36 hours, choking and hitting him upside the head until he signed a confession to a murder that he did not commit, but they didn't fire him. I hear now he's doing paperwork for the FBI.

I have to do something. I can't sit down any longer while they have an innocent man, my son, doing 30 years for a murder he did not commit. The only evidence they had in court was that signed confession. Every time he said he didn't know what he was talking about, Boudreaux walked over, punched him upside the head or choked him, repeatedly. The Assistant States Attorney was in the room, also his partner Halloran.

When it went to trial, the only witness was a 14-year-old girl, Christy Cameron, who they had kept long hours at a police station trying to get her to sign that Kilroy did the murder. At the trial, she said, I signed something, but I didn't sign that I said he killed someone. I don't know what I was signing because I wanted to go home.

The other witness was Boudreaux. They asked Boudreaux if he had any physical contact with my son. He perjured himself and said the only time he touched my son was to unhandcuff him from a ring on the wall; while his partner, Halloran, and the assistant DA said, no, no, he remained handcuffed to the ring on the wall the whole 36 hours—no phone call; no lawyer present.

My son asked for a witness that could prove his innocence; but the state and the judges and the cops didn't allow him enough time to bring in this witness. They said they couldn't find the witness. Me and my husband got in the car and went right to the man. The man signed and gave us a sworn affidavit which my son now has in his possession.

I feel this system has failed both me and my son, because those 12 years have been too long. He cannot be a doctor or a lawyer. They put him away back in slavery. It's nothing different. It's going on everywhere.

But I'm in this alone—just me and his son; a son he didn't know he had until I went to the county jail at his trial and said, you got a son. So since then, 12 years, he has been out of this young man's life; regretting that he's not out here to play baseball with him or soccer.

Mayor Daley used these young men's confessions on his resume to become mayor of Chicago. But now a sister of a cop came forward after 20 years. She told them of Madison Hobley, one of the Death Row Ten, saying that her brother, Robert Dryer, who was his detective, beat Madison Hobley, forced him to sign that confession, put that man on Death Row for killing his wife and unborn child. She is telling it all. She is telling what we have been trying to get out for 25 years.

End cop corruption

In May, we of the Enough is Enough! campaign attempted to visit Mayor Daley. But he knew we were coming. So he had a roster. If Enough is Enough's name wasn't on it, we weren't going to see him.

In April we went to the special prosecutor who was holding the evidence that could prove these tortures, torture victims and confessions. He refused to see us.

Then we learned that Burge is supposed to come back and testify. Mayor Daley is paying for Burge and his detectives' defense. We don't have any money. Our sons are rotting in there. They think by incarcerating all these young Black and Latino men, they're going to distort their minds, break them down, where they'll be

useless. But I got news for you. My son has become a better person. He is educated, more than he was when he was out here on the street. He gets me involved in every activity that he has done. He has become so strong, until I said, if he can be strong in a place like that with all that pres-

sure, and he can hold steadfast, then so can I.

I know the struggle will continue and I'm not going to take this lying down. I got a son who I cannot reach out to; I cannot see growing up, raising his child or having a productive life out here.

Now you look at Iraq. My heart goes out to those people but, if you ask me, I feel like this is Iraq right here. I feel like Bush ain't nothin' but a Saddam Hussein. You know all that torturing and beating is happening right here in prisons. For 12 years, what help did I have? They know if you've got a public defender; they know if you're Black, if you're uneducated. Half the Black men they pick up can't read or write.

That's why I keep saying, justice delayed is justice denied. We're not going to stop until we get victory on our side. We've got to do something about this. It cannot continue on; this not only breaks down the prisoner, it breaks down the family. I'm worrying constantly, wondering whether my son will ever beat this thing. Will he ever get out and come home again to the family who loves him? It's worry, it's anger, it's frustration and I just can't see living in a country that's supposed to be free, helps everybody else, but help your own. Its destroying our citizens just for money and power. We have to do something, we have to do something now.



News & Letters

West Memphis Three

In this day and age, "Salem Witch Trial evidence" should not be admissible in a court of law. Such is the evidence by which Jason Baldwin, Damien Echols and Jessie Misskelley were convicted of the murder of three eight-year-old boys.

These murders were committed in Robin Hood Hills in West Memphis, Ark. The local "good old boys" methods of obtaining crime scene evidence left much to the imagination and speculation of the local police investigator, Gary Gitchell. In his efforts to solve these heinous crimes under his watch, he grasped at straws as to who might be a likely suspect by enlisting the speculation provided by a juvenile probation officer who happened to be present at the crime scene.

On this flimsy evidence Damien Echols, a loner who liked heavy metal music and the occult, was blamed for it. His friend Jessie Misskelley, 17, was coerced into a confession even though a lie detector test proved that he was innocent. Through a tearful confession of more than five hours the police concluded that this young man, whose IQ was 72, was guilty as well.

Jason Baldwin was found guilty for no other reason than merely being associated with them. The evidence, what little of it was available, was so contaminated the conclusions were ineffectual.

Powerful media hype added to the paranoia surrounding the three young teens. No other suspects were even considered nor investigated and DNA evidence was not pursued. The victims did not appear to have died where they were found in the wooded area. Lack of blood evidence at the crime scene confirmed the murder probably did not occur there. The supposed "crime scene" had no notable footprints even though the ground had been saturated with rain.

Further evidence revealed the bite marks on the children did not match those of the defendant's teeth. Furthermore, 24 hours had passed before a report was investigated about a bleeding and muddy man who was spotted at a short distance from the crime scene.

The bible-belt satanic paranoia in Arkansas influences the fanatics who wish to blame people that do not fall into their strict ideals of Christian traditions. This idea of satanic blame comforts the local population into the belief that all will be right as soon as the devil worshippers are brought to trail. Paranoia and media hype combine to distort and invent clues as well as obscure the truth from being revealed.

Since these murders occurred in the early 1990s in a small town, the science of gathering evidence and information were somewhat limited. Important evidence and clues were not followed through because the police in charge of this case saw three easy suspects.

Henry Rollins, Lemmy Kilmister and other musicians are in the process of raising money to get the DNA evidence necessary to clear them.

—Mike M.



by Robert Tallaferra

During the administration of Republican (Republican-Democrat) Bill Clinton, a number of sweeping reforms were passed by Congress and signed into law which did much to pave the way for the "Patriot Act."

The first was the Anti-terrorist Effective Death Penalty Act (AEDPA) which, in effect, limited appeals in certain cases and expanded the death penalty to cover new offenses. One of the most damning indictments of that law was the way that it de-clawed the ancient writ of Habeas Corpus. AEDPA allowed for the fundamental precepts that made the Patriot Act, and its provisions, an easy sale to Congress.

Following AEDPA, and in the wake of tons of critical arguments against prisoner litigation, Congress and every state passed the Prisoners Litigation Reform Act (PLRA). PLRA is perhaps the most damaging law passed by Congress in the history of the country as it limits prison litigation in such a way that has allowed more abusive conditions to exist than ever before, almost with impunity.

PLRA, especially, is about capital. It is a binding example that you get the justice that you can afford to buy in the U.S. The Federal version of the law is bad enough. It requires prisoners to exhaust administrative remedies in the prison system that are often system-nepotistic in scope, and which can subject complaining prisoners to excessive discipline or other retaliatory actions by authorities. In essence, prisoners are required to complain to the state or federal prison authorities, and expect them to investigate themselves.

But then prisoners are further hobbled by state versions of the law. Most state legislatures have rewritten their laws so that the exhaustion doctrine is so expansive, convoluted, and lengthy, that it acts as a deterrent to prisoners seeking remedies to unlawful state or Federal actions about treatment while incarcerated.

With the passage of PLRA, prison administrations have been given carte blanche to systematically ignore most civil rights provisions that were once at least minimal staples of due process and equal protection in prisons, as well as protection against cruel and unusual punishment.

Ironically, shortly following the passage of PLRA

In search of justice

statutes, supermax prisons sprung up around the country like bad weeds, and private prison use by states exploded. In essence, for prisoners, PLRA was the 21st century version of the Fugitive Slave Act of 19th century America.

Equally ironic is that PLRA succeeded so well in achieving one of its goals that now the courts themselves are the causes of inordinate delays, finding that prisoners have adapted where the system hasn't. Prisoners are often more professional in their filings, more succinct in their arguments, and more consistent in their following a court's rules or statutes than the courts. This growing expertise has taken the courts by storm. The delays are now, more often than not, of the courts' own doing, or the results of the complex, convoluted, poorly written statutes pertaining to PLRA, which actually costs more money to manage than the few frivolous suits that made it to court pre-PLRA.

Additionally, such laws as PLRA and AEDPA are test platforms for such laws as the Patriot Act, both per wording of its provisions, and the human and technological resources used to prosecute the law.

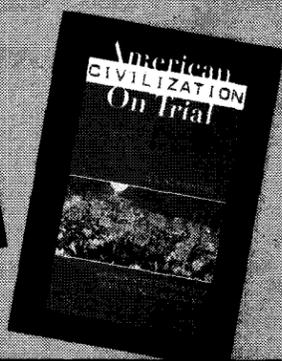
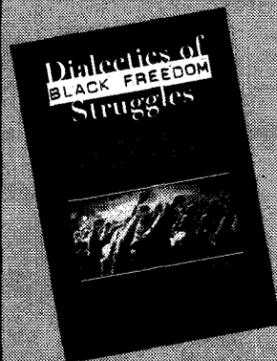
The technology, the resources (as in DNA identifications) are direct results of prison technology and standards finding their way to the civilian world. Patriot Act provisions have been used for years in prisons per profiles of alleged threats and preemptive, unrepresented, confinement of individuals.

It's another example of how prisons have become a proving ground for actions taken against the community by government entities who feel they can act above the law when it suits them, because they make the laws and create the technology that can enslave as well as enlighten.

Karl Marx noted, "At the same pace that mankind masters nature, man seems to become enslaved to other men or to his own infamy. Even the pure light of science seems unable to shine but on the dark background of ignorance" (*People's Paper*, April 19, 1856).

This ignorance is complacency in hoping that legislatures will do their best to protect the common person, and turning a blind eye to the machinations of those who place political aspirations over justice.

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EDITORIAL

Continued from page 1

with Abu Ghraib, but they by no means end there. Even before the prison scandal broke, Iraqis of virtually every political persuasion expressed their disgust at the U.S. military's brutality in containing uprisings in Falluja, Najaf, and Karbala. Faced with the threat of losing control of these areas, the U.S. has rehired former Ba'athist officers who served under Saddam Hussein—thereby giving the lie to the claim that its occupation has anything to do with bringing "democracy" to the Iraqi people.

These developments are causing deep divisions within ruling circles, including in the military. Some officials admit that while the U.S. is prevailing militarily it has lost the trust of Iraqis. A recent Gallup poll showed that the vast majority of Iraqis want the U.S. to withdraw immediately. Some in the U.S. military have even concluded that the war is effectively lost, even as Bush insists the U.S. will need to keep troops in Iraq for another five years.

EXPORT OF PRISON ABUSE

There is no question that the abuses at Abu Ghraib represent an export of U.S. prison-control techniques to nations overseas. Charles A. Graner Jr., the officer charged with many of the abuses at Abu Ghraib, was a prison guard from 1996 to 2002 at SCI Greene Prison in Pennsylvania, which houses such death-row inmates as Mumia Abu-Jamal. He worked at the prison in 1998 when a hunger strike was initiated there against the abusive treatment by guards.

Elsewhere in the U.S., as at Maricopa County Jail in Arizona, inmates have been made to wear women's underwear as a form of humiliation, and at Virginia's Wallens Ridge Maximum Security Prison inmates have repeatedly been forced to wear black hoods for days at a time—just as at Abu Ghraib.

Also the man who directed the reopening of Saddam's Abu Ghraib prison for the U.S., Lane McCotter, was forced to resign as director of the Utah Department of Corrections in 1997 when an inmate died after being shackled to a restraining chair for 16 hours. As Robert L. Bastian wrote in *The Los Angeles Times* of May 6, "The hard fact is that the U.S. installed in Iraq an American-style approach to prison management."

Numerous reports were made over the past year by Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the Red Cross about prisoner abuse in Iraq and Afghanistan, but nothing was done to correct the situation. This is much like the situation here at home where cases of systematic torture and humiliation of prisoners goes unreported and unpunished.

Mildred Henry, an African American whose son Kilroy Watkins was falsely imprisoned for murder after being tortured into a confession by Chicago detective Jon Burge, recently stated, "I feel that what has happened to the prisoners in Iraq is the same as what has been going on here for years. I feel that George W. Bush is no different from Saddam Hussein" (see Black-Red View column, page 1).

The Bush administration has long opposed endorsing the International Convention Against Torture and it has refused to give the International Criminal Court jurisdiction over U.S. military personnel who commit human rights abuses. Defense Secretary Rumsfeld has often expressed disdain for the Geneva Conventions and in early 2002 he dismissed complaints about the

Rule of new torturers in Iraq

abuse of prisoners overseas by calling them "isolated pockets of international hyperventilation." Given all this, is it any surprise that the soldiers at Abu Ghraib felt that they had license to act as they did?

A FAILED WAR

The rage now being felt by Iraqis against the U.S. does not stop with the abuses at Abu Ghraib. Even members of the U.S.-picked Iraqi Governing Council have complained bitterly that they were never consult-

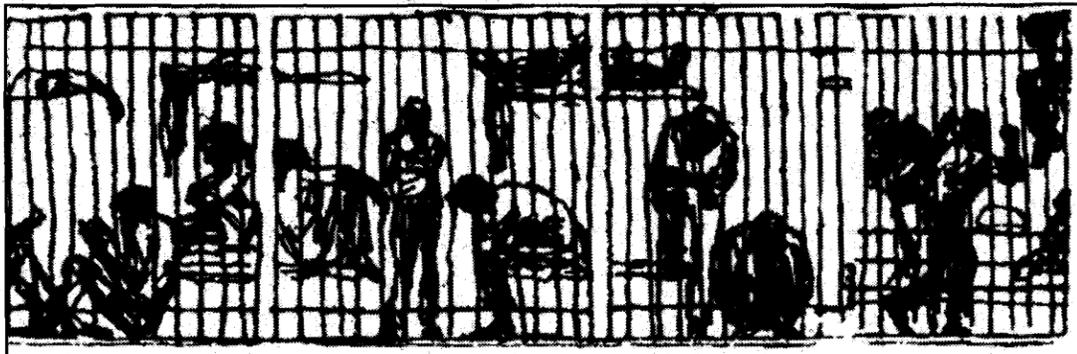
intervene there whenever it wants and it will control Gaza's airspace, coastline and border with Egypt.

THE ISRAEL-PALESTINE IMBROGLIO

Bush's endorsement of Sharon's plan—which amounts to handing over control of Gaza to Hamas—is no as far apart from the Abu Ghraib scandal as it may appear. Gaza is a vast outdoor prison camp under Israeli control. Assassinations, beatings, and false imprisonment are daily occurrences.

Presidential hopeful John Kerry is hardly hoping himself to be much of an alternative to Bush, as seen in his support of Bush's endorsement of Sharon's plan and his scandal—except to criticize Senator Edward Kennedy for saying "Shamefully we now learn that Saddam's torture chambers reopened under U.S. management."

The events of the past two months in Iraq are of key importance, for they mark the first time in two decades that the U.S.'s



drive to translate its global power into total dominance has run into a serious roadblock. Despite the refusal of Kerry and most of the Democrats to exploit this, a crucial opening has emerged for reversing the entire course of U.S. politics since the 1980s.

Yet we can be under no illusion that Bush & Co. will give up without a fight. Far too much is at stake for the U.S. political and military establishment to just walk away from its present predicament. The issue is not even Bush's presidency, but the entire U.S. drive for single world mastery. As Rumsfeld's trip to Iraq in mid-May to "rally the troops" and the administration's efforts to whitewash the Abu Ghraib scandal by blaming it on a handful of wayward soldiers shows, the administration will do whatever it can to recoup the ground it has lost over the past two months.

This makes it all the more imperative that the anti-war movement develop its independent power of action and mind by opposing not just the U.S. but also all reactionary forces opposing it by solidarizing with the indigenous revolutionary elements, in Iraq and in the U.S., that are reaching for a liberatory future.

ed about the U.S.'s use of massive military force in Falluja, Najaf, Karbala and elsewhere, which according to the Associated Press have resulted in the deaths of over 1,300 Iraqi civilians.

The anger felt by Iraqis at the U.S. occupation does not mean they support fundamentalist clerics like Muktada al-Sadr who have taken up arms against the U.S. in Najaf; nor have they shown much sympathy for the insurgents in Falluja, many of whom are Saddam Hussein loyalists. On the contrary, in recent weeks the vast majority of political tendencies in the Shiite community have denounced al-Sadr and many Iraqis have condemned the desecration of the bodies of U.S. contractors by the Falluja militants and the beheading of U.S. civilian Nicholas Berg by Al Qaeda militants as barbaric and contrary to Islam.

Yet while most Iraqis oppose the reactionary fundamentalists who are attacking the U.S., they are firmly opposed to the U.S. occupation, which has killed many civilians, arrested thousands of innocent people without charges, sold off large portions of Iraq's economy to U.S. multinationals, and accelerated Iraq's massive destitution and unemployment.

As Iraqi Ahmad Abbas told *The New York Times* on May 8, "We don't support either side. We don't want the Americans to kill the members of [al-Sadr's] Mahdi Army, but we also don't want the Mahdi Army to win."

What has further inflamed anger at the U.S. in the region is Bush's endorsement of Israeli Prime Minister Sharon's plan to annex Jewish settlements on the West Bank in exchange for an Israeli "withdrawal" from the Gaza Strip. Sharon has made it clear that he plans to invest tens of millions of dollars in new West Bank settlements once Israel withdraws from Gaza, thereby fortifying Israel's hold on the West Bank and making it harder for a viable Palestinian state to ever emerge.

Even the "withdrawal" party from Gaza for now rejected is not authentic, since Israel will still have the "right" to

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U.S.'s nuclear threat

MEMPHIS, TENN.—Several dozen people, many of them college students, gathered here for a meeting on "Nuclear weapons: Global crisis, local challenge" May 6. Sponsored by Pax Christi and the Mid-South Peace and Justice Center, the event featured speaker Ralph Hutchison of Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance (OREPA) from Oak Ridge, Tenn.

He said that the nuclear threat is escalating because the U.S. is leading a nuclear arms race. He pointed to the overturn of a U.S. law banning design of new nuclear weapons and vastly increased funding for nuclear weapons projects. Having long opposed links between nuclear weapons and commercial nuclear energy programs, the U.S. has done just that by using the Watts Bar, Tenn., commercial reactor to make tritium to be used in bomb production. The U.S. is also moving ahead on designing "mini-nukes," which it chillingly calls "useable" battlefield weapons.

Hutchison cited several former high-ranking officials saying that nuclear weapons make us less, not more secure. For one thing, their presence spurs proliferation. Hans Blix, former chief UN weapons inspector in Iraq, projects that 20 years from now 40 nations or other organizations will possess nuclear weapons.

Hutchison contrasted the \$6.6 billion nuclear bomb budget with the cuts being made in many programs from environmental protection to childcare to rural health aid. He spoke of the South as the new "nuclear heartland," with major nuclear weapons production facilities being located in Tennessee and South Carolina. The opposite, he said, is us, advocating a "Stop the Bomb" campaign, which he wanted to link to "another history" of the South, the civil rights movement.

Other speakers were Mary Dennis Lentsch, a nun who went to prison for anti-nuke actions, and Jerry Bowen, who spoke on what to do, such as the annual April and August protest actions in Oak Ridge, including blockades or other civil disobedience.

In the discussion, I pointed out the environmental racism involved. When Oak Ridge was built in the 1940s, there was total segregation and African Americans were forced to live next to a plant using radioactive and toxic materials. When we talk about this issue, the effects on people who work in or live near these plants should be a major part of the message. This is important, as we see from the fact that, when nuclear weapons production almost ground to a halt in the 1990s, it wasn't just because of the end of the Cold War. It began with the widespread outrage stemming from the scandals in the late 1980s about how the workers and neighbors of these plants had been poisoned. That history reveals how nuclear weapons are part of an inhuman system that exploits and poisons workers and people of color, and a movement against it needs to build on their force and Reason.

—Franklin Dmitryev

QUEERNOTES

by Suzanne Rose

CALIFORNIA—The long awaited trial of three men charged with killing Gwen Araujo began April 14. Gwen was a 17-year-old transgender who was brutally beaten and strangled at a party after it was discovered she was biologically male. The three men were furious because they previously had sex with her. The trial is one of the first times that an act of hate violence against a transgender person has been prosecuted.

UTAH—Utah high school students held a protest to support a group of students who were punished for wearing "Queers Kick Ass" T-shirts to school as part of an anti-smoking campaign aimed at GLBT youth. At one high school the students were told they had to turn the shirts inside out or take them off or they would be suspended. The assistant principals wore the T-shirts the next day. The assistant principal threatened to bring the school's Gay-Straight Alliance group, which had nothing to do with distributing them, to a "screaming halt." The ACLU is defending the students.

POLAND—About 800 gay rights activists in Krakow endured verbal abuse and had eggs, stones and firecrackers thrown at them during a march through the city. The 200 counterdemonstrators called for gays to be kicked out of the city and the country. The protests and violence come as the country joined the European Union despite being unable to prove that its human rights standards concerning gays were sufficient.

Honk for gay marriage

MEMPHIS, TENN.—The Memphis Lesbian and Gay Justice Coalition and supporters gathered at a major intersection here on May 17 to commemorate the first gay and lesbian marriages performed in Massachusetts. Approximately ten people held signs, rainbow banners, balloons, and flags and urged motorists to honk for gay marriage rights. The demonstration was planned from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. but we remained for an additional hour because of the strong community support! Almost half of the passing motorists responded to the demonstration positively by honking horns or waving. Several passengers were spotted honking reluctant drivers' horns! We met little resistance, a surprise for Memphis.

While the demonstration was to celebrate and advocate gay marriage rights, we also held signs pertaining to ending discrimination of all forms, and securing comprehensive equal rights for gays and lesbians. One mainstream journalist stopped to interview us and several activists appeared on a local call-in radio talk show to discuss the victory in Massachusetts and the aims of gay rights activists.

—Amy

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Mass unrest undergirds China's hothouse growth

Continued from page 1

recent speech estimated that there are 400,000 Mexican and Guatemalan workers in North Carolina doing construction, farm work, landscaping, and poultry work who have paid \$1,200 to \$3,000 to be smuggled into the U. S., making the movement of immigrants in just one state a billion-dollar industry. The difference is that in China, workers can be drawn into debt to get their jobs without crossing borders.

The status of workers in foreign-owned export industries, as forced labor without a voice, is underlined by the fact that they are not eligible to join the sole official union, the All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU), and so can not unionize at all.

Workers in foreign-owned sweatshops now do have the right on the books to form a union connected to the ACFTU, but only on paper. Most shops have not been able to form unions, or factory managers have turned up as union officers. After all, the ACFTU as a Communist Party-controlled union in a party-controlled state-owned industry has always been the ultimate company union.

China's rulers since 1989 targeted those who have sought independent unions like the Beijing Autonomous Workers Union formed on Tiananmen Square, or similar unions in Shanghai and elsewhere. Despite repression wherever authorities have found signs of independent organizing, the banner of an autonomous union remains one of the worst fears at the top.

Hand in hand with the rise of China's industrial development has been shuttering of the bulk of state-owned industry and privatizing much of the rest of state property into the hands of cronies close to power. The plant closings have written off a whole generation of veteran workers, much more thoroughly than U. S. plant closings in auto, steel, meatpacking and the like.

China's boom economy has no need for displaced workers when, like developing capitalism around the world, they can find uprooted peasants, youth and girls, to work at the so-called minimum wage of \$54 to \$72 a month—or less.

So fearful of the future are Chinese workers that the savings rate, even including subsistence workers, is an astounding 45%.

The case of Yao Fuxin and Xiao Yunliang, the "Liaoyang Two," shows how much the authorities—state, local and union—fear workers at these dismantled and privatized plants. Yao and Xiao, held responsible for demonstrations demanding fraudulently withheld severance pay and pensions, were sentenced last year to be jailed until 2010 and 2007, respectively.

TRUE COST OF GROWTH

On May Day came word that 35 miners were killed at a coal mine in Shanxi province. The greatest horror amidst this news was that the deaths represented a normal day in the mines. The official death toll of coal miners in 2003 may have been in actuality above 12,000—more than 350 times the death rate in U. S. mines.

Shortages of electricity, which is 70% coal-fired, have led to scheduled blackouts and lost production as often as three days a week. Coal production pushed up by 20% in 2003, even though China's mines include previously mined seams and pick-and-shovel operations. This pressure for production as some grades of coal doubled in price put workers' safety last, especially in privatized mines.

Coal is not the only commodity putting an upper limit on growth. Availability of high grade concrete for the Olympic Stadium in 2008 that plans for this show-place structure were redrawn to use half as much concrete. And China has bought so much oil, becoming the world's second leading oil importer behind the U.S., that the ultimate export economy ran trade deficits in all three months of the first quarter of 2004.

The pace of economic expansion has quickened despite shortages of raw materials and energy and looming environmental disasters as uncontrolled expansion fouls water and land. China's gross national product expanded by 9.1% in 2003 and rose again to 9.7% in the first quarter of 2004, back to levels not seen since the mid-1990s.

The vigor of a renewed wave of U. S. plant shutdowns and production running off shore has proven that China remains the irresistible center of attraction for capitalists seeking to pay labor at the minimum and injected China into political discussion in this election year. The AFL-CIO has taken the approach of demanding sanctions against China for unfair labor practices,

even by pro-free market World Trade Organization standards involving 750,000 of the three million U.S. factory jobs lost to runaway shops in China.

DEALING WITH ENEMIES

With economic crisis looming, authorities have treated any criticism of government or even local officials as a frontal assault on the regime, and have redoubled efforts to eliminate safe havens for opposition. In Hong Kong, China announced years ahead of scheduled elections that there would be no direct election of the Hong Kong chief executive in 2007 or expansion of voting for the Legislative Council in 2008.

This represents de facto gutting of the autonomy guaranteed to Hong Kong for 50 years after the former British colony reunited with China in 1997. Beijing is throwing down the gauntlet to those who have already marched 20,000-strong to protest on April 11 the effective end of Hong Kong autonomy. Will authorities tolerate the much more massive demonstrations scheduled for June 4, the anniversary of the Tiananmen Massacre, and July 1, the date Hong Kong reverted to Chinese sovereignty?

Voices of opposition are being silenced by extra-legal means. Death threats and vandalizing of their offices caused two radio talk show hosts to flee Hong Kong. A third talk show host, Allen Lee, not only resigned his job but, as a deputy to the National People's Congress, resigned his political position as well. Similar intimidation in Guangdong has removed editors and reporters who dared to criticize the government handling of last year's outbreak of SARS.

Beijing used even more heavy-handed intimidation against its opposition by sending a war fleet into Hong Kong. Naval maneuvers in waters near Taiwan could have been a dangerous intervention while the narrow reelection of Chen Shui-bien's independence-minded party remained in dispute. Yet China did not heat up its rhetoric until after Chen's election was confirmed. It was as if creating turmoil might disturb relations with capitalists on Taiwan which dominate sections of the mainland economy.

Neither an independent interest in Marxism nor the truth has protected opponents. Last fall a Henan province court sentenced provincial official Ma Shiwen to eight years imprisonment for circulating an official report which placed blame for the AIDS epidemic in Henan on officials who had orchestrated selling blood for profit. In April Hu Jia, an AIDS activist, was arrested in Beijing for supporting the public call by a retired military surgeon for verdicts to be reversed on participants of Tiananmen Square.

Even leaders of "Mothers of Tiananmen Square," mothers of those martyrs, were arrested at the end of March, then released. Just as quickly, one leader, Ding Zilin, was arrested again at the beginning of May. There were opposition leaders after 1989 who said that change would only be possible after Deng Xiaoping died.

Not only is Deng dead, but his appointed successor Jiang Zemin has been succeeded by Hu Jintao, yet these arrests, and removing the future of democracy from Hong Kong, send the message across China that nothing short of regime change will give them full voice—and sends the message to capitalists in and out of China that forced labor will remain on sale.

Twenty-five years ago, General Motors production worker and Marxist-Humanist Felix Martin wrote a "Letter to a Chinese Worker" at the time of Deng Xiaoping's visit to the U. S. He expressed solidarity across borders long before China became the world's favored sweatshop: "The only thing that these leaders and rulers see is how much more surplus or unpaid labor value they can get out of each worker. Private capitalism as in the U. S., or state capitalism as in China or Russia, is really the same no matter what one calls it." This is more true than ever.

While time may have eroded the ideological veil preventing many in the West from solidarizing with Chinese workers and dissidents, it is the exchange of ideas about liberation that can fuel an internationalist movement to finally uproot capitalism in all its masks.

Indonesia's fake 'peace' gesture in Aceh

After a year of martial law in Aceh, Indonesia announced that it would end on May 19, and "civil emergency" status will begin instead. This sham change will take place without the withdrawal of some 55,000 troops and police that are operating in the province to quell the Aceh National Armed Forces (TNA/GAM) and the many civil society movements for independence.

Although civil emergency status will allow puppet civilian authorities to function, the military will continue to impose curfews, set up blockades and detain suspects indefinitely. Military operations will continue in large areas where the government has been unable to defeat TNA/GAM. The new status will only mean continued abuses by the Indonesian

military (TNI), which has murdered, tortured and further impoverished the population of the north Sumatra province under martial law and earlier military campaigns.

TNI just recently orchestrated such events as forming militias to attack and kidnap GAM members' families. In Nisam, a village in northern Aceh, a local militia has been holding civilian hostages since May 10, when the victims' house was burnt down. According to a report released May 3 by SIRA, an organization that worked for a referendum on Aceh's status before it was forced underground, the TNI has been increasing the intensity of its repressive actions against civilians. The number of those arrested and killed for allegedly helping or giving money to TNA/GAM is on the increase. SIRA received reports that in the previous week, hundreds of civilians had been arrested and many of them had already been executed without any due process of law.

In East Aceh TNI troops continue to gather information through "cuak" (paid informants) to establish data on any civilian who ever helped or contributed money to TNA/GAM, or any civilian who had ever asked for a contribution from the public or from shopkeepers. There are hundreds of civilians in detention at present, traumatizing their families with the possibility that they too would be executed. There is no law or authority that can protect them from this possibility.

May 16, another 170 GAM prisoners from the Pidie, Jantho, and Meulaboh areas learned they would be sent to Java prisons the next day. Sending prisoners far away deprives them of any contact with their families or supporters, and allows further abuse to take place. One civilian prisoner, Muhammad Nazar, a leader of SIRA, was convicted of serious crimes for giving a speech in which he called Indonesia "colonialist." Another, Abu Thaha, will be sent to Java without hav-

ing been convicted at all.

A recent report from Amnesty International states, "Nearly all aspects of the lives of ordinary citizens are adversely affected by the military emergency, people are terrorized by the numerous killings and the ever present threat of arrest, torture and ill-treatment. At the same time, economic and social life has been severely disrupted by the intense military operations."

Amnesty has new testimonies from individuals who have been tortured by both the military and the police in recent months. Methods include beatings, burning with cigarettes, having plastic bags placed over their heads, and electric shocks. It also received credible accounts of rape and other forms of sexual violence against women. In

one case, Amnesty reports, a 12-year-old girl from North Aceh is alleged to have been raped by members of the Indonesian military in August 2003. In another case, three women from East Aceh, one of whom was pregnant, are reported to have been forced to strip and been molested by soldiers. To Amnesty International's knowledge, neither of these cases has been investigated.

Months before the change in status, TNI began a campaign to continue martial law. It created fake evidence of popular support from the Acehnese. During a recent visit by members of Indonesia's parliament, TNI mobilized thousands of villagers to rally all over Aceh, forcing them to show support for extending martial law. In a few areas the participants were even given money to participate in the rallies. The threats and modus operandi of the mass mobilization were the same on every occasion. The texts of the "popular" declarations condemning independence groups and praising improved economic and security conditions under martial law, were identical. The number of people required from every village is always the same: 20 to 40 persons. Also, hundreds of militia have been sleeping on the streets and telling passing military trucks that they will not allow the Indonesian military to withdraw from Aceh.

To stop the atrocities perpetrated by Indonesia's military, we urge the international community to stop providing any military assistance to Indonesia, and we urge countries to put pressure on Indonesia to allow international humanitarian agencies to operate in Aceh, and to allow UN special rapporteurs to visit Aceh. We also urge countries to bring the Aceh issue for discussion in the UN General Assembly and European Parliament.

—Reyza Zain, Aceh Center

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Muhammad Nazar, political prisoner in Aceh

Representation by Sam Friedman

A Rutgers crew rests in the Raritan on the morning after the President's speech on Abu Ghraib. As the President said, prison torture or prison murder "does not represent the America I know," nor that of the happy crew now rowing upstream.

But ask the inmates of Texas prisons, or those in Pennsylvania where Army Specialist Charles A. Graner learned his trade as prison guard, or the prisoners who were guarded by Staff Sergeant Frederick in Virginia, or the INS detainees of Elizabeth, New Jersey, or the inmates in Mississippi in Parchman in the '60s— or in Parchman or Coahoma County even now.

Ask not those upstream about torture, about prisons, but forgive them not for they choose not to know.

YOUTH

Recollecting Che Guevara

by Brown Douglass

Ernesto "Che" Guevara was born 76 years ago this month on June 14, 1928 in Rosario, Argentina. Any celebration of his life should be inseparable from a celebration and discussion of his ideas, actions, and legacy as an internationalist revolutionary. While many of us—especially young people—are bombarded with deified images of his face on posters, T-shirts, and album covers, what the mainstream does not readily show us is Che's unbending revolutionism and his complicated and sometimes contradictory body of thought.

Che is probably the best known revolutionary in the Western Hemisphere, and possibly in the whole world. His start as an idealistic young doctor from a liberal middle-class family in Argentina, to a guerrilla leader and later Minister of Industry in post-revolutionary Cuba almost sounds like a fairy tale. It's that exact idealism, sometimes bordering on adventurism, that I think appeals so much to young people from all backgrounds and countries wanting to change the world.

The idealism of Che, although present after his becoming a self-made Marxist in the Cuban revolution, was channeled in different ways after the taking of power from the dictator Batista. He quickly became an exemplary "socialist man," a term he used to express the new type of human being that was to emerge from the defeat of imperialism and building of socialist society. Voluntary labor, sacrifice to the state, and unending work and self-education were almost religious sacraments to him. Though his outlook on the world was many times very scientific, his "socialist" moralism made him an endearing figure to many poor Cubans who saw a man that not only talked about a new society but got his hands dirty as well.

THEORETICAL LIMITATIONS

The problem comes when your focus jumps from the people to the State and the Party. When the state plan becomes an abstract program of rapid industrialization and nationalization of property as it did in Cuba, the workers and peasants who made the revolution become an abstract mass as well. When before it was a private capitalist or landowner implementing their will on the workers and peasants, now it was the state implementing a Plan that didn't end up meaning worker and farmer control of production, but state control.

Che's vanguardism stemmed from his belief in the guerrilla "foco" unit, to him the be-all and end-all center of revolutionary activity. Instead of a social revolution made by all the oppressed sectors, a vanguard can "guide this [revolutionary] struggle to success, including by shortcuts." The shortcuts to revolution in this case meant, under the "correct leadership," mobilizing the peasants until the workers in the city saw the need for revolutionary violence and only then uniting everyone against the oligarchy. In this way his immense belief in humanity to free itself was stunted by his fetishism of the vanguard to "correctly interpret" social conditions and implement a Plan from the outside.

The internationalism that Che expressed during the building of post-revolutionary Cuba was second to none. He took many trips after the revolution as an ambassador, and also to observe the oppression and freedom struggles in other parts of the world, especially Africa. He led a group of Cubans in the Congo in the anticolonial Kinshasa rebellion. After returning home to Cuba, he gave up his government post and citizenship to fight with guerrillas in Bolivia, where he even-

Racist inequalities in the education system

OAKLAND, CAL.—Blacks United for Quality Education (BUQE) with the support of many other organizations, including Black Radical Congress, Education Not Incarceration, and Books Not Bars, held a community forum on May 6 to publicize the threat to end the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP).

BUQE was started recently by students from California State University in Hayward, Vista Community College and others to save EOP. EOP is a 30-year-old program aimed at making it possible for students with very low income to attend college. It is threatened by the current round of educational budget cuts, at a time when tuition is increasing dramatically. In the past it enabled many Black students to be the first in their families to obtain a college degree.

The meeting was opened by a poem "Rebellious Spirit," by a young woman who related the current problems to the thinking of many people who struggled. David J., who just finished Alameda College, talked about how budget cuts in community colleges make it hard to even think of attending. For students who have no money it is not unusual to take four years to complete a two-year program, because they have to work full time in addition to going to school. Financial aid is not easy to get, and if you are granted any money, it comes in only at the end of the semester, which means many Black students are discouraged from even trying. David stressed that education is a right, and it should not be made into a privilege.

We also heard a budget analysis from Rema B., a campaign manager for Books Not Bars. The current California budget is proposing a \$700 million cut from the University of California and California State University systems. It also includes \$700 million to finish construction of a new prison, Delano II. Once the prison opens, it will take \$100 million per year to operate. The

current prison population is 32,000 prisoners below capacity, so why are we building new prisons? We should be closing existing ones! The problem boils down to the lack of representation of our interests in the state capital.

The high school students described the conditions in their school: "Many teachers are not able to handle their class. State Administrator Randolph Ward just cut the positions of 60 janitors (among the 200 employees laid off on April 30). Even before those cuts, the school was in bad shape: floors not being mopped and the bathrooms very nasty. The lunch rooms are filthy even before lunch. It is hard to concentrate on learning in such an environment."

Another young woman, who transferred to Oakland Tech from a predominantly white school, "noticed the more pronounced presence of ROTC and military recruiters. The bad, and no-hope-of-improvement conditions contribute to incarceration, to homicide rates, to seeing the military as the only way out—we need to give students a chance!"

During the discussion the question was raised what is priority? There were several answers. I spoke about the history of public education: how the idea of educating all children was introduced by the newly emancipated slaves after the Civil War, who did not want to just put a few of the Black children into existing schools, but demanded an education for all; how it was the experience of Mississippi Freedom Summer that taught white students to ask "what is education for" which helped to give birth to the Free Speech Movement at U.C. Berkeley; and how David J.'s questioning the purpose of education now harkens to those earlier very radical traditions. Education for all is the basis for any real democracy.



OAKLAND, CAL.—Borrowing a page from Cesar Chavez's activism, nearly 1,000 students, parents and their supporters from the community marched 70 miles in eight days in April from San Pablo to Sacramento to plead with the government for funding for their schools. Unfortunately neither the legislators nor the governor showed up to listen to them after their march.

Following Chavez's steps further, nine students, teachers and activists started a hunger strike in downtown Oakland on May 10 to bring attention to the plight of the schools. This is their commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education and the 40th anniversary of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Their demands are: restore the \$2 billion cut to all California schools, equity in education funding and elimination of the West County debt.

—Concerned

Anti-war activists debate direction

MEMPHIS, TENN.—Recently, a debate arose in the Mid-South Peace and Justice Center over what our demands should be in regard to the war and occupation of Iraq. It started because an offhand comment revealed an assumption that our message was simply "U.S. out now." Since the U.S. has created a dangerous situation with some very reactionary forces vying for power in Iraq, some felt that it was necessary to address the question of what happens to the people of Iraq. We decided to have a forum on the topic, with three panelists, Gerry Vanderhaar, Allan Lummus, and Terry Moon, all long-time activists who do not shy away from theory.

As to what happens after U.S. troops are withdrawn, Vanderhaar proposed we call for "the UN to take over peacekeeping and rebuilding Iraq." Moon pointed to the bad history of the UN in Iraq, such as the fact that Lakhdar Brahimi, leader of the UN's role in Iraq, argued in 1991 against providing assistance to the Shi'ites and Kurds when they rose in revolt against Hussein's dictatorship.

Instead, Moon said our explicit goal should be "a new world based, not on militarism and capitalism as it is now, but on human rights and liberation." She proposed we focus on people-to-people solidarity: support liberation movements rather than allowing all relations to be channeled through governments. Groups like the Union of the Unemployed, the Organization for Women's Freedom in Iraq and other democratic indigenous organizations must be allowed to develop without harassment by U.S. forces.

One objection was that "choosing sides" would make us "the same" as the occupiers. This was answered with the point that the solidarity always involves choosing those who deserve solidarity because they are about liberation. Otherwise what kind of vision of the future would solidarity mean? The second objection was that we could not "sell" this demand to everyone. That is an issue on which we will not be able to agree, since some are more interested in appealing to local politicians with a limited goal of anti-intervention, while others of us want the anti-war movement to be unseparated from the effort to transform society at home and think our natural allies are those who feel such a need—workers, women, Blacks, Latinos, youth, gays.

—Anti-war activist

Inhumanity of California youth jail

OAKLAND, CAL.—The group Education Not Incarceration celebrated this year's May Day by holding a teach-in. Several hundred people, including many youth, attended the various workshops.

Venus, a young Black woman representing Let's Get Free and Books Not Bars, led a workshop on the California Youth Authority system. In the wake of scandals following a video tape of youth being abused in the facility and two people dying there, there is a call to shut down CYA altogether. All 10 facilities are a total failure. Over 90% of youth who graduate from CYA end up in adult prison. Within three years 5% are dead and only 4% are in school or working.

But the real crime of CYA is not its dismal statistics or even the individual scandals. It is its inhumanity. The facilities are called "gladiator schools." They train for no jobs, provide no education or drug treatment. It is not run by teachers or counselors but by prison guards with guns. Children in the facilities, some as young as 11, are kept in cages—literally. Classrooms, mandated by the state, consist of desks placed in individual cages. The teacher is only able to pass materials to the students through a slit in the otherwise completely locked cage. On non-school days, the children are locked 23 hours a day in their cells. The large muscle exercise area is just a bigger cage.

The ostensible reason for such treatment is gang affiliation and the threat of corresponding violence. And if you did not belong to a gang when you went into the facility, CYA will "assign" you to one.

One graduate said that if you do make something of yourself, it is because you worked on it yourself, not because CYA helped you in any way. When you are in there, you have to work to recollect who you are, who you were to your family, remind yourself who you are to those people.

Darlene, a young woman in the facility, was not helped by the drug treatment program they assigned her to. The gang prevention program she was assigned to did not even meet. Most children are on strong psychotropic medications such as thiorazine.

She described sexual harassment happening every day: guards asking you to flash them, watching you closely when you take a shower, commenting on your body. Yet she was very scared to leave CYA. She was sure she would mess up and end up in adult prison.

Missouri Department of Youth Services has replaced its equivalent of CYA with rehabilitation centers. Those have just a 10% recidivism rate.

We talked about the need to humanize people, not de-humanize them. The people most in need of humanization are the politicians, who set up this system. It cannot be allowed to go on!

—Urszula Wislanka

OUR LIFE AND TIMES

India: Voters repudiate religious Right

by Kevin A. Barry

In an upset that confounded pollsters and pundits the world over, India's voters dealt a decisive defeat in April-May elections to the Hindu chauvinist Bharata Janata Party (BJP), in power since 1999. The BJP had campaigned on the slogan "India shining." This alluded to the country's strong economic growth, with the Gross Domestic Product having increased at a rate of 8% in 2003, nearly as fast as in China. The BJP also stressed the recent peace negotiations with Pakistan.

This new emphasis on peace and prosperity was supposed to soften the BJP's traditional image as a party based on religious hatred, especially toward Muslims. Only 14% of the population, India's Muslims are regularly accused by the BJP of oppressing the Hindu majority. The BJP was heavily involved in the 2002 riots that killed over 700 Muslims in Gujarat. The new, softened BJP image was supposed to foster a more decisive victory than in 1999.

Instead, the left-of-center Congress Party slate won the most parliamentary seats (40%), as against the BJP's 33%. With the two (reformist) communist parties recording their best showings ever, a coalition government based in the Congress, the communists, and a few other parties is the likely outcome. How could this have happened?

The BJP's most solid base of support lies within the

Fiat strike in Italy

In May, workers at the Fiat plant in Melfi concluded a three-week strike that had shut down half of the company's worldwide production. By the end of the strike, those production losses totaled some 40,000 vehicles. The ultra-modern Melfi plant, built a decade ago in an impoverished area of southern Italy, was known for its barracks-like discipline. Its 5,000 workers had received 9,000 disciplinary citations in the last several years. They had to work 12 days straight before getting a day off and their pay scales were 13% less than at other Fiat plants in Italy.

Because the Melfi plant produced parts as well as vehicles, the strike soon impacted the rest of Fiat. At this point, police tried to break the picket line, but the Melfi workers held strong, supported by workers from other plants in the surrounding area. These local workers engaged in sympathy strikes, as did Fiat workers in northern Italy.

The settlement established a new work schedule, whereby a six-day workweek would be followed by two days off, followed in turn by a four-day week. Several thousand disciplinary citations will be reviewed. Wages will gradually be raised to the same levels of other Fiat workers in Italy. In short, a victory.

Upheaval in Peru

Cirilo Robles, the mayor of Ilave, a rural Peruvian town 200 miles southeast of Lima, was attacked by a mob of about 3,000 Aymara Indians, on April 27, and left under a bridge to die. The event capped a month of road blockages, including the main artery between Bolivia and Peru, by tens of thousands of highland Aymara protesting Robles inability to account for over \$2 million in public funds that were supposed to have been spent on public works projects in impoverished areas.

Peru's president, Alejandro Toledo, was also faced with a miners' strike at the end of April, a march of coca growers on the capital, and a doctors' strike in the north of the country.

—Mitch Weerth

middle classes, around 200 million people, less than 20% of the total population, which is now over a billion. Along with the upper classes, this group has benefited the most from the recent embrace of globalized capitalism. It is from within this narrow group that most of the oft-cited two million mobile phones are sold each month, or that two million people work in the vaunted computer sector. It is here that the slogan "India shining" had some resonance.

This same slogan had little impact on the urban and rural poor, when it did not annoy or even outrage them.

The poor are far more numerous than the middle class, as seen in the fact that 300 million Indians are forced to live on less than a dollar a day. It is within this group that one finds most of the 50% of Indian women who are still illiterate. It is within this group that one finds most of the 200 million people who lack access to clean water. It is in this group that one finds most of the Dalits (untouchables), the 20% of the population that lives under an apartheid-like system in rural areas.

In retrospect, two events of the last several months seemed to foreshadow the BJP's resounding defeat. One, noticed by the world, was the vast turnout of



Protest in Mumbai, India at World Social Forum in January 2004

Independent Media Center/India

urban and rural activists, including many from Dalit and women's groups, at the World Social Forum in Mumbai (Bombay) in January. WSF organizers were overwhelmed when 60,000 local people attended their workshops, more than at any previous WSF. They added a focus on class, caste, and gender oppression within Indian society to the WSF's sometimes rather abstract anti-globalization politics. At the same time, these indigenous revolutionary forces acquired a new sense of confidence from the fact that activists from the world over heard them out and recognized their grievances.

A second event, virtually unnoticed by the world, was the February strike, in which 50 million government workers walked off their jobs in the face of government repression.

This type of yearning for a new world will hardly be fulfilled by the Congress Party, which has already promised not to change the BJP's overall economic policies. Nor will the legacy of the BJP disappear. In its years in power, it has deeply impacted the educational system with its propaganda. It continues to organize and train the paramilitary Association of Nationalist Volunteers (RSS), its openly neo-fascist youth wing.

Nonetheless, the politics of hatred, of religious chauvinism, and of the narrowest cultural nationalism has been weakened, creating space in which liberatory forces that oppose the rule of capital can more easily assert themselves.

'Ethnic cleansing' in Darfur

In May, the UN Security Council sidestepped calls to take action against the massive "ethnic cleansing" in Darfur, Sudan. In the worst such case since Kosovo in 1999, government-armed "Arab" militias known as the Janjaweed have driven a million people considered to be "Africans" from their homes, burned their villages, poisoned their wells, and stolen their livestock. Human rights groups estimate that 1,000 people are being murdered every week, with thousands of women subjected to rape.

Some 110,000 African refugees have fled to neighboring Chad, while 900,000 are trapped in camps inside Darfur, often surrounded by hostile Janjaweed. Literally thousands face starvation in the coming weeks. The courageous African women of Darfur are not only refusing to give up their rightful claims to their land, but are coming forth publicly and giving their names as they charge the Janjaweed with rape.

As is well known, the Islamist Sudanese regime is already guilty of a genocide involving two million deaths from starvation, massacre, and slavery during its 20-year war on the Christian and animist South. Given this record and the evidence of present atrocities in Darfur, the silence is deafening, whether from the Western powers, the Arab-Muslim world, or the Left.

South Africa's anniversary

This spring, South Africa marked the tenth anniversary of the end of apartheid, one of the most brutal of the 20th century's totalitarian systems. A decade ago the liberationist African National Congress (ANC) won national elections and assumed power. Under Nelson Mandela and then under his designated successor Thabo Mbeki, the ANC has overseen the formation of Africa's most democratic society. A new constitution has established freedom of the press and of association, trade union rights, women's rights, and gay and lesbian rights. There is an atmosphere of tolerance toward ethnic minorities, whether Indian, white, or mixed race. The economy retains much strength, with the per capita Gross Domestic Product similar to that of Poland.

At the same time, however, this transition from a racist and authoritarian regime to a bourgeois democracy has shown the limits of a merely political emancipation that leaves the rule of capital in place. While political power and some degree of wealth have flowed to a small Black elite, 45% of the population still has to live on less than \$2 per day. This social chasm is widening, at a time when unemployment stands at 42%. Fully 80% of the land is still owned by the formerly ruling white minority, while some 11% of the population is HIV-positive. Sooner or later, these deep class divisions will find a way of expressing themselves, to the detriment of the new Black elite.

NEWS AND LETTERS COMMITTEES

Who We Are And What We Stand For

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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