

WORKSHOP TALKS

Reagan's damage

by Htun Lin

The endless stream of choreographed state remembrances of Ronald Reagan somewhat resembled the month-long spectacle in North Korea after the passing of Kim Il Sung. Many propagandists are trying to enshrine Reagan on Mount Rushmore as they try to revise history through the prism of their distorted vision.

One such distortion, for example, is when Newt Gingrich said to Bob Schieffer on "Face The Nation," if there's one thing Reagan should be remembered for, it should be "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall." The Reagan idolators fantasize that he single-handedly "brought down the Soviet Union." They ignore the millions of workers behind the "iron curtain" who resisted that system over decades with their revolts.

REWRITING HISTORY

The trillion-dollar nuclear bombs and missiles which our own Big Brother amassed during the Cold War (by tripling our national debt) did not bring down the Soviet Union. Rather, the workers of Eastern Europe, starting with the East German workers in 1953, and on through the creation of Solidarity in Poland, brought down the Soviet Empire.

Ronald Reagan prided himself by reminiscing, "All I really did was get the government out of the way, and the people did the rest." Government today is bigger than ever, in the service of the war machine and capitalist expansion. The truth is closer to getting labor unions out of the way, and sustained corporate attacks on workers did the rest.

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BLACK/REDVIEW

Resegregated schools are U.S. reality

by John Alan

On May 17 Bill Cosby, due to his generous financial support of institutions that work on the behalf of African Americans, was invited by the NAACP's Legal Defense and Educational Fund to speak at a public meeting on the historic Brown vs. Board of Education decision of the U.S. Supreme Court that ended the legality of racially segregated public schools in this nation 50 years ago.

For some strange reason, according to Theodore M. Shaw, the president of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Cosby changed the focus of the celebration of the Brown vs. Board of Education decision by telling "the well-heeled, black-tie audience" that: "the lower economic people are not holding up their end in this deal."

Cosby said, unlike the story of Brown, this is no longer "the white person's problem." He chastised poor blacks for their failure to actively raise their children, to teach "knuckleheads" proper English and for spending \$500 on sneakers while refusing to spend \$200 for the educational package "Hooked on Phonics." Cosby has used the celebration of the historic Brown vs. Board of Education decision of the U.S. Supreme Court to harshly scold poor African Americans for their failure to get a good education and become economically prosperous.

The "lower economic people" of Cosby's scorn are not poor because they plan to be poor or want to be poor, but because capitalism either buys their labor power at cheap wages or doesn't use it at all. When Cosby referred to the masses of African Americans as "lower economic people," he expressed a class division among

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DRAFT FOR MARXIST-HUMANIST PERSPECTIVES 2004-2005

World crises and the search for alternatives to capitalism

When did the 21st century really begin? This is one of the most crucial questions facing us today. Did it begin with the mass protest in Seattle at the end of 1999 against global capitalism, or did it

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

begin with the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001? What will end up defining the 21st century—the emergence of new emancipatory mass movements such as emerged from Seattle, or the vicious circle of fundamentalist terrorist and imperialist war that was set into motion by September 11 and the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq?

Answering this question is not a matter of waiting to see how events unfold. It demands instead intervening in the events of the day with the goal of **transforming** reality. We cannot even begin tackling this question without seeing that it presents us with a fundamental **theoretical** problem that we are responsible for posing, thinking through, and helping to answer.

I. Openings for reversing the legacy of Reaganism

A. Ramifications of the U.S. quagmire in Iraq

The exposé of the tortures inflicted by the U.S. military against detainees at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, along with growing opposition around the world to the occupation, has created a new situation. For the first time since Ronald Reagan initiated a changed world of retrogression with a series of unbridled military interventions in the 1980s, the U.S. is encountering a major obstacle in its effort to translate its global power into the total domination of lands overseas.

The U.S.'s attacks against Iraqi civilians, coupled with opposition by Iraqis to the privatization of the economy at their expense, had turned much of the populace against the occupation even before the exposure of the torture of prisoners at Abu Ghraib. The scandal has deepened the quagmire facing the U.S. by revealing the barbaric nature of its behavior in Iraq, stirring up even deeper opposition to Bush and Blair's policies.

Likewise, Bush's total endorsement of Ariel Sharon's plan to annex West Bank Jewish settlements into Israel has plunged the U.S. into a deep crisis in the entire Middle East. While Bush embraces the terrorist Sharon as a "man of peace" for proposing a limited Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in exchange for incorporating large parts of the West Bank into Israel, what everyone else sees is repeated armed attacks by Sharon's forces against Gazan citizens.

The predicament facing Bush was seen at the G-8 summit of the major industrial nations, held in June at Sea Island, Georgia. The administration originally planned to use the summit to showcase U.S. efforts to push for "democracy" in the Middle East, but its initial refusal to even mention the Israel-Palestine issue in its declaration of principles angered European allies and led several Arab



Several hundred in Berkeley, Cal. marched June 25 against John Yoo, whose policy memo supporting torture of detainees has been implemented at Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison and elsewhere by the U.S.

nations to decline to send observers.

Though the state of Georgia declared a "state of emergency" in six counties to intimidate protesters from coming near the summit, several thousand still managed to demonstrate against it—reflecting growing opposition to Bush's effort to extend the retrogressive policies that were set into motion by Ronald Reagan in the 1980s.

For more than two decades the U.S. managed to get away with one military intervention after another—Grenada, Libya, Panama, the first Gulf War, Haiti, Kosova, Afghanistan and Iraq. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 gave fresh impetus to the U.S.'s drive for single world domination, as Bush sought to use the "war against terrorism" as a cover for imperialist intervention overseas. Yet in light of recent events in Iraq and the Middle East, the threat voiced often last year, that the U.S. may soon engage in further military interventions against states like Syria, Iran, or North Korea, seems much less imminent.

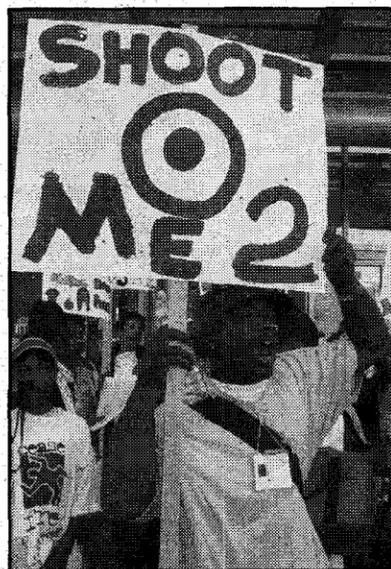
Clearly, the administration was ill-prepared for its Iraq occupation. The army is stretched so thin, with 10 of its 14 active divisions in Iraq or Afghanistan, that it has called up additional reserves and extended the active duty of army units bound for Iraq. This is in addition to the 20,000 troops whose deployment in Iraq was extended by at least 90 days this spring. Meanwhile, the Pentagon is transferring 3,600 troops to Iraq from South Korea.

These moves have drawn sharp criticism from many soldiers and their families, who are calling the extensions "forced conscription." Over 600 soldiers have voted with their feet by not reporting for duty after furloughs; thousands of soldiers in active reserve units have failed to notify the government of their whereabouts; and some GI's have been jailed for speaking out against the war.

Staff Sergeant Camilo Mejia refused to return to duty in Iraq, stating: "I have not committed a crime, and I will not run. I am saying no to war. I went to Iraq and I was an instrument of violence. Now I've decided to be an instrument of peace. If they say I am a criminal and if they give me many years in jail, I know I have made the right decision." (1)

Such voices reveal how widespread is the opposition to Bush's Iraq fiasco, not only overseas, but here at home. This growing opposition is helping to expose the contradictions in U.S. and Western capitalism that have caused things to go so badly in Iraq. Bush and Rumsfeld promoted the illusion that they could hold onto Iraq with a relatively small number of troops as part of their strategy to "streamline" and "modernize" the U.S. military. One reason that they have taken this approach is that a draft is politically unpopular and they know they can't count on an endless supply of recruits for an all-volunteer army. They also know that U.S. eco-

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Chicago youth march against police brutality on June 3.

NWSA shows revitalized women's movement

by Terry Moon

What came out loud and clear at the almost 1,000 women strong 25th Annual National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) Conference held in Milwaukee, Wis., last month, was an overwhelming disgust with President George W. Bush. It came through at the plenaries, at many of the 248 workshops, and in discussions in the halls and at our literature table. The conference as a whole reflected a revitalized women's movement, recommitted to bridging the gap between academia and women's freedom struggles worldwide.

The death of Gloria Anzaldúa, the first openly lesbian Chicana writer and activist in the contemporary Women's Liberation Movement, from complications of diabetes, gave a sense of urgency to the conference. Anzaldúa was known for *This Bridge Called My Back: Radical Writings by Women of Color* (1981), which she co-edited with Cherrie Moraga; and *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987). Her shocking death brought home that the needed transformation of reality cannot be put off.

FIRST PLENARY SETS THE TONE

The first plenary showed the necessity to engage with women outside the academy. Barbara Smith, lesbian Black feminist writer and activist, spoke of how women of color played a vanguard role throughout the history of the women's movement. Ellen Bravo, founder of "9to5," stressed the need for feminists to stand in solidarity with working women's struggles. Lisa Jervis, founder of *Bitch Magazine*, demolished the distinction between the so-called 2nd and 3rd waves of feminism.

Gerda Lerner, historian and author of the groundbreaking work *Black Women in White America* (1972), brought down the house as she weaved together a passion for women's history and contempt for Bush. Grounding her critique in how women's studies came to be, she showed how "women's studies as the radical part of humanities is under threat from budget cuts and the Right Wing."

She critiqued post-modernism—to great applause—

School ignores rapes

Thanks to a disgusting decision at the end of May by University of Colorado President Elizabeth Hoffman, no one will lose their jobs—including herself—nor be penalized or charged in a sordid scandal dating back to 1997, involving the sexual abuse of women.

Women's groups were outraged by her inaction, and the commission investigating the charges—also in question because of some members' close ties to the school—expressed dismay that their mildly-censuring report was disregarded. "If this is how they choose to clean up the program," said Peggy Lamm, commission co-chair, "I think they need a better broom."

The situation came to light in 1997 when a high school student reported that she was raped by an athletic recruit. By 1998, Boulder, Colo. prosecutor Mary Keenan put the school "on notice" to stop using women and alcohol in recruiting. Visits by recruits to the school regularly included "escorts" and strip clubs. But the only action the university took was to firm up what some called a cozy relationship between local police and the football program "benefiting" athletes that ran afoul of the law.

The lid started to blow off this can of worms in February 2004—four years after Hoffman was named university president—when three women filed federal lawsuits saying they had been raped at a recruiting party in 2001. This brought to nine the number of women who had made public that they were raped by football players or recruits.

Football coach Gary Barnett took the opportunity at a press conference to verbally attack one of the raped women, Katie Hnida, a former team place kicker, calling her a "girl" whose athletic ability was "awful." Barnett was suspended with pay for what were called "insensitive" remarks.

Some alumni criticized Hoffman for not firing Barnett immediately. Her true feelings came out when questioned about the nine rape accusations. She said: "Some go back seven years and no charges have ever been filed. So I don't know who to believe."

More bizarre was her reaction when, in a federal court case deposition, she was asked about the harassment of Hnida by football players who called her a vile word for female genitalia. Hoffman said, "I've actually heard it used as a term of endearment," supposedly by Chaucer in the 14th century's *The Canterbury Tales*!

Hoffman's attempts to correct problems in the athletic department are reminiscent of more foxes guarding the henhouse. She said: "The department will be placed under stricter oversight by the university"—the same university that had already done nothing even though put "on notice" by the prosecutor six years ago.

The Women's Liberation Movement fought a system that denied women our rights and persecuted us even when we were victims. Yet, we cannot assume that women will act more humanely. The revolutionary goal of the women's movement—to replace this system with a truly new human society where all are free—must be regained if we are to keep what is going on in Colorado from ever happening again.

—Mary Jo Grey

while highlighting "difficulties within our own Women's Studies programs." Her survey showed that studies of images of women, therefore women as objects, greatly outnumbered studies of women as agents. She characterized this as the "making of women into objects of inquiry rather than central actors."

Another subject of concern was women as torturers at Abu Ghraib. While Cynthia Enloe, author of *Bananas, Beaches and Bases*, raised this at the

plenary on "Women and Globalism," it was Ann Russo, from DePaul University, who seriously thought it through. In a workshop on "Representation and Resistance," she compared the Abu Ghraib images to lynching postcards showing grinning white women, which made her rethink feminism's relation to racism and colonialism.

The various feminist responses: "women in the military are being scapegoated"; the "few bad apples" concept; "women just trying to fit into male-dominated space"; and "women are just victims in the military"; all isolate women. When put in a total context, we can see that Abu Ghraib is "the American way." She concluded with the needed connections: the invisibility of Iraqi women who are tortured and raped to U.S. women raped in the military; how the torture of Iraqis is linked to prison abuse and police brutality in the U.S.

The diverse elements present at NWSA were illuminated by our own workshops. At "Women and the Anti-War Left," I discussed the war on the multi-religious people of Bosnia, women's militancy that fought the mass rapes, and the inaction of the Left which I contrasted to News and Letters Committees' activism and Raya Dunayevskaya's concern with the question of "What happens after revolution?" and Marx's concept of "revolution in permanence." Sonia Bergonzi followed with a discussion of the failures of today's Left to support freedom for women in Afghanistan and Iraq. In the discussion, women talked of what it would mean to project a liberatory vision of the future, how to keep that from being limiting, and asked what Marx meant by "revolution in permanence."

IDEAS OF MARXISM DISCUSSED

At our workshop on "Women as Revolutionary Reason," Olga Domanski contrasted Simone de Beauvoir's and Raya Dunayevskaya's views of Rosa Luxemburg. De Beauvoir saw Luxemburg, when she saw her at all, as simply an exception. Dunayevskaya saw her in the context of individualism and masses in motion: "the individuality of each woman liberationist is a microcosm of the whole, and yet...the movement is not a sum of so many individuals but masses in motion" (*Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, p. 83). This concept was illuminated further when Erica Rae took up women in the Paris Commune of 1871, and Susan Van Gelder discussed the

WOMEN WORLDWIDE

by Mary Jo Grey



Demonstration against stoning in Ankara, Turkey

July 11 has been declared as International Day Against Stoning to gain worldwide support to end "this act of sheer barbarism and hideous crime against humanity." Stoning is used by Islamic fundamentalist governments and groups enforcing Islamic Sharia law. Hundreds of women and men have been murdered in this way, or are awaiting death. Express your support for this day at www.stopstoningnow.com.

One room in Afghanistan, lighted by a gas lantern and powered by car batteries, allows a group of young Afghan women to transmit a revolutionary radio message daily to area women. Besides news and music, they air essays and features on topics such as women and the constitution, health care and the rights of abused women to divorce. It is the third radio station of its kind started in the country in the last year. "Many women in our culture cannot leave their homes at all, so this is the only way to reach them," said one reporter.

1929 Igbo Women's War.

Because at this conference Marxism was not a concept to be avoided but is what many women wanted to talk about, our literature table became a discussion area. Interest in Marxism coupled with a keen interest in women theoreticians, was shown in how we sold all we had brought of Raya Dunayevskaya's *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*.

Another example was a Kenyan woman who had gone to Nicaragua as a witness for peace and wanted to hear "some words of hope." She joined us at the literature table to discuss how the world could be different after capitalism and what it would mean if what we need was produced for use, not for value. She told of a Nicaraguan textile company that shredded out-of-style jeans, rather than give them to the poor or sell them cheaply, and then would produce more, something that she thought was evil.

When you put together the March for Women's Lives in April (see "Women make history in massive rally," May 2004 *N&L*) and NWSA, it's clear that something new is happening in today's Women's Liberation Movement. Though NWSA is not without contradictions, it reveals the academic arm of the Women's Liberation Movement more determined than ever to be one with women outside the academy who want to transform existing reality.

Peruvian women win

We print below an important communication sent by a Peruvian feminist—Ed.

I have the enormous pleasure of informing you all that, finally, the Minister of Health, Dr. Pilar Mazzetti, has made the courageous decision to give the green light to give access to Oral Emergency Contraception (AOE) to the poorest of women in Peru, in spite of all pressures and threats.

This decision does away with almost three years of inequality and injustice. In fact, the AOE had been for sale in pharmacies, but was not available to poor women through the Family Planning program of the Ministry of Health.

We know that the Ministry's arrangement doesn't come to us by itself. What has already begun is the most integral struggle for sexual and reproductive health that will finally close the dark pages in the history of public health in Peru.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to be alert. The opponents of sexual and reproductive health haven't been passive. On the contrary, every one of them poses a threat to turn back the clock by using legal mechanisms such as Constitutional denunciations.

As the Board of Vigilance of Sexual and Reproductive Rights, it seems important to us to note that these individuals are not alone. They have the support of the majority of society, of the grassroots organizations, the professional and scientific organizations, and the organizations of civil society.

We ask all of you to be attentive to the information we are releasing. Also last month a letter was published by the ex-Ministers of Health and the scientific organizations supporting the politics of sexual and reproductive health, and those of the current Minister of Health. It is important to us that we, as civil society, also show our support.

—Susana Chavez,

Board of Citizen's Vigilance
of Sexual and Reproductive Rights

'Baby blues' studied

CHICAGO—In May a panel on postpartum depression was held here. The necessity of such a meeting is seen in the disregard by the medical community of women's health issues, especially this illness, which has resulted in women's suicides and children's deaths.

Panelists included Carol Blocker (mother of Melanie Blocker-Stewart who committed suicide after giving birth); Dr. Sarah Allen, chairperson of Postpartum Depression Alliance of Illinois; and Leslie Lowell Stoutenberg, Director, Pregnancy and Postpartum Mood and Anxiety Disorder Program.

The focus was on the illness, its symptoms, history of the recognition of postpartum depression, advocacy for research, and what can be done for the woman and her family.

Carol Blocker has become an activist in the struggle to gain support for women suffering from postpartum depression, and agitates for legislation requiring an expansion of research on the subject at the National Institute of Mental Health. Panelists also spoke on the down side of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act which protects a patient's privacy by prohibiting the disclosure of a person's illness. This has the potential of delaying treatment for women suffering from postpartum depression or psychosis.

During the question and answer session a lawyer representing Debra Gindorf, who had murdered her two children and then attempted suicide and is now on death row, presented Debra's story and the postcard campaign which is in support of a petition now before Gov. Blagojevich to grant Gindorf clemency. For more information go to: <http://freedebra.org>.

The symposium showed the need to look beyond what our society sees as "the happy mother and child" into the reality of this serious illness and the consequences it may bring if ignored.

—Sue

One year later, Congress Hotel strikers hold the line

CHICAGO—Over 1,000 people came to demonstrate in support of the Congress Hotel workers on June 15, which marked one year since the strike against wage cuts at the hotel began. The strikers themselves were joined by members of the National Interfaith Committee and workers in AFSCME, SAG-AFTRA, Communications Workers, Teamsters, Carpenters, Electrical Workers, Service Employees, Textile Workers and ACORN, among others. Twelve were arrested on Michigan Avenue in a peaceful disobedience.

According to Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (HERE) Local 1, the Congress Hotel has lost over \$1 million and is lowering rates to attract business. There is no sign of an agreement.

The previous week was spent time with the Congress picketers. The Booksellers Expo was taking place that week, and a number of publishers had booked rooms in the Congress Hotel. This is unfortunate, and a lot of the publishing company folks seemed quite embarrassed and sheepish when they found out that they were crossing a picket line.

It is too bad that what became a classic example of intellectuals ignoring the needs of workers couldn't have been changed, with a little more foresight, into a unity where resentment and embarrassment were replaced by solidarity and insight. This is one case where the practicality of "breaking down the division between mental and manual labor" should be more than apparent.

Henry Miller, who spent 26 years as a bartender at the hotel, kept the heat on them. "They don't care! When you get a cheap deal and you're cheap, you're gonna be cheap. You're gonna lay down with the fleas!" He said to one guy, "Don't blame me when those fleas start biting your wife and you've gotta explain it to her."

Veronica, a picket leader from HERE, said that they were receiving at least 500 complaints from the hotel guests about bugs coming out of their towels, bad odors, blood and other stains on sheets, elevators not

working. "One day," she said, "there was a huge cockroach sitting right in one of the front windows. We would take people over to show them it in the window."

One young worker, José, a houseman at the Congress, was very eloquent on the meaning of this year-long strike for him: "When I started working here, everything was okay, but after September 11 everything went down. They said that business was down, but this was just an excuse to make more money. The rich are like that, they have enough money but still want more. Last year they cut our salary 7%. Why?"

"Some people say to me, you have another job now—why do you still come here? But I have a mission here. I began this strike and I'm going to end this strike. It's

not easy to be working full time and picketing, but almost all of the workers who have found other jobs do this. Last winter it was difficult to be out here, but we are still here. We are strong and we're ready to fight, ready to scream, ready to say, 'Scabs, you're traitors!'"

—Strike supporters

Jacek Kuron (1934-2004)

Jacek Kuron, a lifelong Polish dissident who was once a revolutionary activist, died on June 17 at age 70. Considered by many to be the godfather of the Solidarity movement that exploded in Poland in 1980 following the Gdansk shipyard strike that catapulted Lech Walesa onto the Polish scene, Kuron had earlier attracted national attention in 1964, when he and Karol Modzelewski wrote "An Open Letter to the Members of the Polish United Workers Party," a Marxist analysis critiquing the Communist Party. The analysis exposed that Poland was a state-capitalist society and called the ruling class a "red bourgeoisie."

Following imprisonment for three years for this attack on the party, Kuron continued his opposition to the party and its policies. In 1968 he became a leading activist in student protests against the government, and was again imprisoned for three and a half years.

He was one of the founders of KOR (Committee to Defend Workers), an organization mostly of intellectuals that supported workers prosecuted after they had rebelled in Radom and Ursus in 1976. KOR was critical in establishing close cooperation between workers and intellectuals, and led to the establishment of the mass union movement, Solidarity, which swept the nation in 1980. KOR was dissolved, despite the objections of many, in light of Solidarity's success.

Solidarity had the national power. The question was, would it take it. The Polish Communist Party recognized this challenge to its power and moved to crush Solidarity, declaring martial law in 1981.

At this point, Kuron, who by this time had abandoned Marxism and feared by a Russian army advisor, advocated a "self-limiting revolution." Kuron was again imprisoned.

Solidarity, however, was not dead. With the collapse of the Soviet union in 1989, it swept into power. Kuron became labor minister, and now as part of the ruling bureaucracy opposed strikes by the workers and farmers who protested the privatization imposed by the government. The tremendous revolutionary promise for a new social human reconstruction that Solidarity had inspired in 1980, had been transformed into its opposite—an oppressive capitalist regime.

While no one can deny the many great contributions made by Kuron in his revolutionary years, the substitution of his own "self-limiting revolution" instead of following the aspirations of the Polish workers and farmers in Solidarity, and his own bureaucratization afterward, remain serious and critical failures.

—Urszula Wislanka/Andy Phillips

Abu Ghraib torture began at home

CHOWCHILLA, CAL.—It was not a surprise to me that the scandal in Iraq's prison involved people who were guards in a U.S. prison. Most of the Abu Ghraib abuses happen in every prison in California: harassment, belittling, degradation, the inhumanity in treating prisoners, etc. The staff here is the plain arbitrariness of the guards. The worst is the plain arbitrariness of the guards. The staff here is not helpful in almost any situation. There is no safety or protection from either an aggressive guard or another prisoner.

We see abuses of helpless people every day. If you try to stand up for yourself, you go to jail (segregation unit, or SHU). The only thing they don't do here is put naked prisoners in pyramids or put hoods on us. Otherwise, what I saw in Iraq is what happens here every day.

They say that this kind of treatment is against the rules. They have rules they are supposed to follow here, too. But they don't. The Geneva Convention should apply as a human standard in all situations.

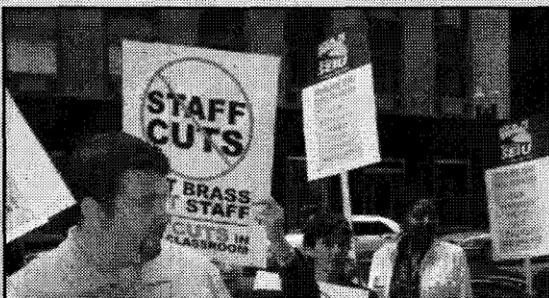
The belittling is constant and at all levels. Recently I was standing in line for sanitary pads; the white women in front of me got 10 pads each. I got three. When I asked if race had something to do with getting an inadequate number of pads, the guard made a scene and said I disrespected her.

We can get strip searched at any time for no reason at all, and many of us do. They feel this is normal, anything they do to us is "normal."

I had not heard that there were women held at Abu Ghraib, but I can just imagine the treatment they suffered. The incidents underscore the importance of people who stand up when something is not right. It was the soldier who blew the whistle who is the real hero. I had a situation when a staff member abused me. It was only because another staff member stood up for me that I can say I no longer suffer his abuse. I need to speak out about it, because the staff member who was harassing me was also harassing others. If I don't speak the truth about it, then I am allowing the things that got me here to continue to chain me.

—Woman prisoner
Central California Women's Prison

Chicago teacher crisis



As we go to press, the Chicago Teachers Union election committee has nullified the results of the June 11 election based on "evidence of fraud." Already Mayor Richard M. Daley had announced further "reforms" involving privatization of whole schools, including vacating job rights of existing teachers. Ed.

CHICAGO—Incumbent head of the Chicago Teachers Union Debra Lynch lost by a narrow margin to challenger Marilyn Stewart. Stewart, an associate of the old guard ousted by Lynch, now heads a union that faces choices not unlike the rest of the labor movement in recent years.

The school board is slashing 1,600 positions to make up a deficit of \$50-\$60 million. Since this will not wipe out the shortfall, some expect further cuts. The school board signed a union contract with Lynch that some members call a sellout, while knowing that property taxes collected to fund the schools would not pay for it. This situation is a quagmire, but for the union it is also an opportunity.

Rather than lining up to get the shaft, Stewart needs to launch an initiative in the style of the late union president Jackie Vaughn. The new leadership must flex its muscles and reach out to the community.

Parent-teacher associations, local school councils, religious groups and civil rights organizations should be organized in opposition to proposed cuts, designed to balance the budget on the backs of the kids in the classrooms. The community must read the riot act to school board president Arne Duncan through large-scale pickets and demonstrations.

The interests of the schools must be identified as the interests of society. Property taxes are inadequate to fund education. A good place to find funds is in the chunk of change being squandered on a wasteful war in Iraq.

—Teacher

WORKSHOP TALKS

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No working man or woman in America could ever forget Reagan's first act as president was to dishonor labor when he denied a fundamental American right to picket and to strike during a labor dispute by firing en masse air traffic controllers represented by PATCO.

The destruction of PATCO was a harbinger of all that was to come during the Reagan "Revolution." A decade-long corporate restructuring downsized working America with a long series of lay-offs and contract concessions. The era of plant closings, offshore production and cutbacks in healthcare and education began in deadly earnest.

Also forgotten seems to be his trampling of all voices for human respect and dignity: dismantling affirmative action, blaming poverty on the victims by inventing the concept of a "welfare queen," and more.

OPENLY CONNIVING

What big government can do against workers when acting in the service of corporate America has by now come into full bloom with the Bush White House's unapologetic collaboration with America's crooked corporate executives such as Ken Lay of Enron. We Americans can no longer see them in action. They hammer out secret deals behind closed doors with top corporate executives for energy regulation or loot the national treasury with massive tax cut giveaways for the super-rich, while working America suffers massive plant closures as well as schools and hospitals.

Meanwhile, the Pentagon has demanded from Congress another \$100 billion to add to the hundreds of billions already committed to a growing war machine dedicated to a permanent war against an "enemy" that is everywhere and nowhere.

Asa Hutchinson, Undersecretary of Border Security for the Homeland Security Department, has awarded a multi-billion dollar contract to Accenture (formerly Arthur Andersen Consulting) to create a "virtual border against terrorists" with the use of biometrics technology. This technology was first employed in America's workplace, such as my shop where we are tracked by biometrics surveillance systems.

BIG BROTHER

Our government using such high-tech methods tracking individuals through fingerprints, voiceprints, and eye and facial profiles, is probably more effective in fighting against internal dissidents, union activists, gay matrimonials and abortion providers than in fighting Al Qaeda. Big Brother is becoming more intrusive into every individual's personal life.

Whenever Reaganites speak of freedom, one should be reminded of what Marx said about bourgeois freedom: in the place of all the inalienable freedoms mankind has fought for, one freedom has emerged which has replaced all other freedoms: Free Trade.

Their concept of freedom is antithetical to that of the workers' concept of freedom. The "Reagan Revolution" has certainly gotten government out of the way. In the ensuing years under Bush senior, Clinton (who pretentiously declared "The era of big government is over"), and now, Bush Jr., government has become servant of corporate America's permanent war against working America, as well as workers of the world.

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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 parts of this essay in our May and June issues, and it concludes here. We publish this now as part of our ongoing discussions of Marx's critique of capital in our "Draft for Perspectives 2004-2005—World Crises and the search for alternatives to capitalism" (see page 1).

All footnotes here are by Dunayevskaya. 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). Other references to *Marx and Engels Collected Works (MECW)* have been provided as well.

Conclusion

...Because Marx's economic categories have so incontrovertible a class character, it is impossible to denude them of their class content. Although some of today's near-Marxists loudly proclaim the "neutralization" of these categories, they apply them to **capitalism and to capitalism only**.

Because the Marxian law of value is the supreme manifestation of capitalism, not even Stalin—at least not for very nearly two decades after he already had total power, the State Plan, and the monolithic party—dared admit its operation in Russia since he claimed the land was "socialist." It was only in the midst of a world war that the Russian theoreticians openly broke with the Marxian concept; in practice, of course, the ruling bureaucracy had long since followed an exploitative course.

In 1947 Andrei Zhdanov dramatically (or at least loudly) demanded that "the philosophical workers" replace the Hegelian dialectic with "a new dialectical law": criticism and self-criticism. By 1955 the critique of Marxian concepts concerned his humanism. V. A. Karpushin wrote in "Marx's Working Out of the Materialist Dialectics in the Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts in the Year 1844":

"Marx was the first philosopher who went beyond the confines of philosophy and from the point of view of practical life and practical needs of the proletariat analyzed the basic question of philosophy as a truly scientific method of revolutionary change and knowledge of the actual world."⁽¹⁾

The Russian Communists were not, however, about to favor "revolutionary change" where revolutionary change meant their downfall. Therefore, when the Hungarian Revolution tried the following year to transform reality by **realizing** philosophy, that is to say, by making freedom from Russian Communism a reality, the debate ended in machine-gun fire. Thus the violation of the **logos** of Marxian theory was followed by the destruction of liberty itself.

Soon after, the Russian theoreticians unleashed an unbridled, vitriolic attack on all opponents of **established** Communism, whom they gratuitously labeled "revisionists."

Unfortunately, too many Western scholars accepted the term and referred to the ruling Communists as the "dogmatists," despite such wild gyrations and "flexibility" as, on the eve of World War II, the Hitler-Stalin Pact and the united front between Mao Zedong and Chiang Kai-shek; and, more recently, the rift between Russia and China.

At the same time, the single grain of truth in the duality of Lenin's philosophic legacy—between the vulgarly materialistic *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* and the creative dialectics of his *Philosophic Notebooks*—has provided a field day for the innate anti-Leninism of "the West."

Elsewhere⁽²⁾ I have analyzed "Mao's Thought," which is supposed to have made "original contributions to Marxism," especially his *On Practice*, and *On Contradiction*, as they relate to his rise in power. Here I must limit myself to the fact that the humanist debate was in danger both of becoming a purely academic question, and of being separated from the "political" debates on "revisionism."

Fortunately Marxism does not exist only in books, nor is it the possession only of state powers. It is in the daily lives of working people trying to reconstruct society on new beginnings.

The liberation from Western imperialism, not only in Africa but in Latin America (Fidel Castro too first called his revolution "humanist"), unfurled a humanist banner. Thereupon the Russian Communist line changed. Where, at first, it was claimed that Leninism needed no sort of humanization, nor any of the reforms proposed by the proponents of "humanist socialism," the claim now became that the Soviets were the rightful inheritors of "militant humanism."

Thus M. B. Mitin, who has the august title of the Chairman of the Board of the All-Union Society for the

'Marx's Humanism Today'

Dissemination of Political and Scientific Knowledge, stated that Khrushchev's Report to the Twenty-first Congress of the Russian Communist Party was "the magnificent and noble conception of Marxist-Leninist socialist humanism."⁽³⁾

And in 1963, at the thirteenth International Congress of Philosophy, held in Mexico, it was the Soviet delegation that entitled one of its reports "Humanism in the Contemporary World."⁽⁴⁾ Thus, curiously, Western intellectuals can thank the Russian Communists for throwing the ball back to them; once again, we are on the track of discussing humanism.

Let us not debase freedom of thought to the point where it is no more than the other side of the coin of thought control. One look at our institutionalized studies on "Marxist Leninism" as the "know your enemy" type of course will show that, in methodology, these are no different from what is being taught under established Communism, although they are supposed to teach "opposite principles."

The point is this: unless freedom of thought means an underlying philosophy for the realization of the forward movement of humanity, thought, at least in the Hegelian sense, cannot be called "an Idea."

Precisely because, to Hegel, "only that which is an object of freedom can be called an Idea," even his Absolutism breathed the earthy air of freedom. Our age can do no less.

It is true that the Marxian dialectic is not only political or historical, but also cognitive. However, to claim that Marx's concept of the class struggle is a "myth" and his "glorification" of the proletariat only "the end product of his philosophy of alienation"⁽⁵⁾ flies in the face of theory and of fact. In this respect, George Lichtheim's criticism that such an American analysis is "a sort of intellectual counterpart to the late Mr. Dulles's weekly sermon on the evils of communism"⁽⁶⁾ has validity.

Marx's humanism was neither a rejection of idealism nor an acceptance of materialism, but the truth of both, and therefore a new unity.

Marx's "collectivism" has, as its very soul, the individualistic element. That is why the young Marx felt compelled to separate himself from the "quite vulgar and unthinking communism which completely negates the personality of man." Because alienated labor was the essence of all that was perverse in capitalism, private or state, "organized" or "anarchic," Marx concluded his 1844 attack on capitalism with the statement that "communism, as such, is not the goal of human development, the form of human society."

Freedom meant more, a great deal more, than the abolition of private property. Marx considered the abolition of private property to be only "the first transcendence." Full freedom demanded a second transcendence.

Four years after these humanist essays were written Marx published the historic *Communist Manifesto*. His basic philosophy was not changed by the new terminology. On the contrary. On the eve of the 1848 revolutions, the *Manifesto* proclaimed: "The freedom of the individual is the basis of the freedom of all." [MECW6, p. 506]

At the end of his life the concept remained unchanged. His magnum opus, like his life's activity, never deviated from the concept that only "the development of human power, which is its own end" is the true "realm of freedom." [MCIF, pp. 954-5, MCIF, p. 959]

Again, our age should understand better than any other the reasons for the young Marx's insistence that the abolition of private property is only the first transcendence. "Not until the transcendence of this mediation, which is nevertheless a necessary presupposition, does there arise positive Humanism, beginning from itself."

"Positive Humanism" begins "from itself" when mental and manual labor are reunited in what Marx calls the "all-rounded" individual. Surely our nuclear age should be oppressively aware that the division between mental and manual labor, which has been the underlying principle of all class societies, has reached such monstrous proportions under capitalism that live antagonisms characterize not only production, but science itself.

Marx anticipated the impasse of modern science when he wrote in 1844: "To have one basis for life and

another for science is *a priori* a lie." We have been living this lie for 120 years. The result is that the very survival of civilization as we have known it is at stake.

The task that confronts our age, it appears to this writer, is, first, to recognize that there is a movement from practice—from the actual struggles of the day—to theory; and, second, to work out the method whereby the movement from theory can meet it. A new relationship of theory to practice, a new appreciation of "Subject," of live human beings struggling to reconstruct society, is essential.

The challenge of our times is not to science or machines, but to men. The totality of the world crisis demands a new unity of theory and practice, a new relationship of workers and intellectuals.

The search for a total philosophy has been disclosed dramatically by the new Third World of underdeveloped countries. But there are also evidences of this search in the struggles for freedom from totalitarian regimes, and in the West.

To discern this mass search for a total philosophy it is necessary only to shed the stubbornness of all philosophies—the concept of "the backwardness of the masses"—and **listen to their thoughts**, as they battle automation, fight for the end of discrimination, or demand freedom now. Far from being intellectual abdication, this is the beginning of a new stage of cognition. 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."

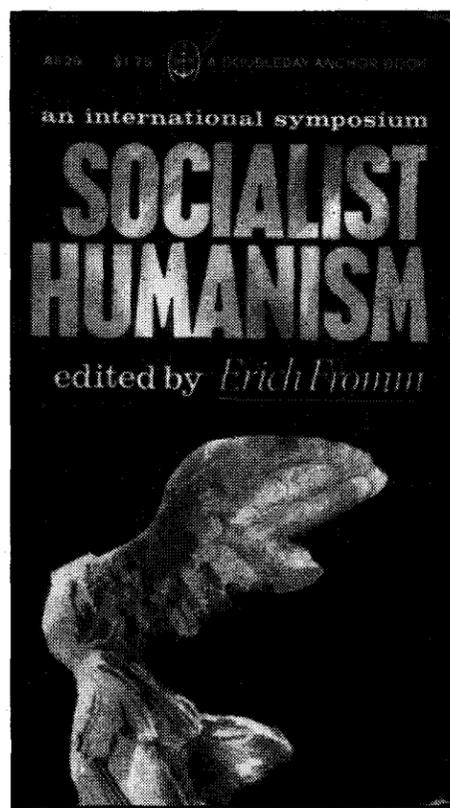
The espousal of **partynost** (party principle) as a philosophic principle is another manifestation of the dogma of "the backwardness of the masses," by which intellectuals in state-capitalist societies rationalize their contention that the masses must be ordered about, managed, "led." Like the ideologists in the West, they forget all too easily that revolutions do not arise in the fullness of time to establish a party machine, but to reconstruct society on a human foundation.

Just as **partynost**, or monolithism, in politics throttles revolution instead of releasing the creative energy of new millions, so **partynost** in philosophy stifles thought instead of giving it a new dimension.

This is not an academic question for either the East or the West. Marxism is either a theory of liberation or it is nothing. In thought, as in life, it lays the basis for achieving a new **human** dimension, without which no society is truly viable. As a Marxist humanist, this appears to me the whole truth of Marx's humanism, both as philosophy and as reality.

NOTES

1. *Voprosy Filosofii (Questions of Philosophy)*, No. 3/1955.
2. See the new chapter, "The Challenge of Mao Zedong" in the paperback edition of *Marxism and Freedom* (New York: Twayne, 1964). For an analysis of a similar perversion of Lenin's partisanship in philosophy into Stalin's monolithic "party-ness in philosophy," see the well-documented and perceptive analysis *Soviet Marxism and Natural Science, 1917-1932* by David Joravsky (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961).
3. *Pravda*, Feb. 6, 1959. The English translation used here appears in *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, June 3, 1959.
4. The report of this conference by M. B. Mitin appears in *Voprosy Filosofii*, No. 11/1963. For a different report of the same conference see *Studies in Soviet Thought*, No. 4/1963 (Fribourg, Switzerland).
5. *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx* by Robert Tucker (Cambridge University Press, 1961).
6. George Lichtheim's "Western Marxist Literature 1953-1963" appears in *Survey*, No. 50, January 1964.



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DRAFT FOR MARXIST-HUMANIST PERSPECTIVES, 2004-2005

World crises & the search for alternatives to capitalism

(Continued from page 1)

conomic resources are limited and they cannot easily afford to pay for hundreds of thousands of additional troops to occupy a country the size of Iraq.

In all this, Bush overlooked the importance of the masses. Raya Dunayevskaya pointed out the folly of such an approach in 1986, when she wrote in reference to Reagan's high-tech illusions about "Star Wars": "You can destroy a country, but to occupy it, you have to be there, with infantry. The infantry is the key, not the high-tech weaponry. That is what the rulers always forget—the masses."(2)

The U.S. has faced more opposition in Iraq than in Afghanistan, partly because in Afghanistan the guns and resources were and are controlled by warlords who have deals in place with the U.S. to "keep the peace." The U.S. has not sought to occupy Afghanistan directly; most U.S. troops are based in Kabul or in isolated bases, while fundamentalist warlords control much of the country on behalf of U.S. interests.

Iraq lacked the equivalent of the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan that could take control of large parts of the country on the U.S.'s behalf. At first, at the start of the Iraq war, the administration planned on decapitating the top leaders of Hussein's regime while keeping much of his Ba'ath Party apparatus in place. Yet by the end of the war, which led to the total destruction of Hussein's regime and much of his army, the U.S. abandoned this approach. It then toyed with alternatives, like using its proxies in the Iraqi National Congress, but it never had the forces on the ground to control much of anything. It is true that several Shiite Islamist militias emerged soon after the war, but the U.S. could hardly embrace them. That would have alienated the Kurds to the point of threatening the breakup of the country, which would undermine a centerpiece of U.S. policy in the region—opposition to an independent Kurdistan. The U.S. and Britain, therefore, found that they had to occupy Iraq directly.

The rebellions in Iraq this spring made it clear to U.S. commanders that they lacked the forces to control the situation. In response, they brought back former leaders of Hussein's army to lead militias in Falluja and dropped their demand that fundamentalists under the control of Moktada al-Sadr surrender to U.S. forces. Bush is now trying to give the new interim Iraqi government more control of the country, even as he insists on maintaining total U.S. control over all military operations.

B. Building solidarity between forces of liberation

Not all Iraqis who oppose the U.S. occupation support fundamentalist clerics like al-Sadr or the insurgents in Falluja. Most Shiite political tendencies have denounced al-Sadr and many Iraqis have condemned the Falluja militants. As Iraqi citizen 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."

This does not mean religious fundamentalism isn't a major threat. The overthrow of Hussein by the U.S. and the discrediting of nationalist and communist tendencies over the past several decades have left a void that militant Islam is eager to fill. This void is not just political, but philosophic. The Left's failure to develop a viable alternative has created space for a host of reactionary tendencies to aspire for mass support.

The rise of fundamentalist Islam in Iraq—once one of the most secular nations in the middle East—gives new meaning to Karl Marx's insight that bourgeois society, including its secular culture, does not negate the pull of religious mystification.

Marx showed that the alienated, mystified social relations of capitalism—in which human relations take on the form of relations between things—provides religious mystification with a new lease on life. For this reason, he did not make criticism of religion the centerpiece of his thought. Marx argued,

The immediate task of philosophy, which is at the service of history, once the holy form of human self-estrangement has been unmasked, is to unmask self-estrangement in its unmasked forms. Thus the criticism of heaven turns into the criticism of the earth, the criticism of religion into the criticism of law and the criticism of theology into the criticism of politics.(3)

Marx's approach retains its validity. So long as the transcendence of the alienated nature of capitalism is not envisioned and realized, an array of regressive tendencies, including religious fundamentalist ones, will step in to try to fill the void.

For this reason we disagree vehemently with the kind of ideological pollution being promoted by leftist commentators like Walden Bello, who argues that "one of the key obstacles to the emergence of a sustained peace movement in the U.S. and internationally" is that "progressives have been incapacitated by their own qualms about the Iraqi resistance"—which he identifies with the Falluja militants and fundamentalists like al-Sadr! No better is James Petras, who argues: "Since the resistance began a year ago,

not a single U.S. intellectual...has dared to declare their solidarity with the [Iraqi] anti-colonial struggle. They have 'problems,' I hear, 'about supporting Arab fundamentalists, terrorists, anti-Semites, etc.'...There are two sides: An entire nation fighting a colonial and consequential political U.S. imperialism. Serious and consequential political intellectuals must make a choice."(4)

With a methodology inherited from post-Marx Marxism, this reifies "the Iraqi people" into an undifferentiated totality—as if it is void of class, gender, and ethnic divisions once the opponent is the U.S. In truth, the battle being waged in Iraq today is not just against the U.S. military, but is also pitting reactionary fundamentalists and "secular" Ba'athist loyalists against Iraqi workers, women, and national minorities trying to create a free society. Failure to solidify with these liberatory forces amounts to telling humanity that it has no choice but to side with either U.S. imperialism or native reactionary tendencies.

In opposition to such short-mindedness, this year we helped generate solidarity with Iraqi feminists in groups like the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq, which has come under attack from both fundamentalists and the U.S. occupiers. Over 1,000 Iraqis marched in Baghdad on International Women's Day against a planned constitutional measure to impose Shari'a law, showing once more that the quest for new man/woman relations is as indigenous to Iraq as to any society on earth.

Those who call on the anti-war movement to support any force battling the U.S., no matter how reactionary it may be, not only ignore the importance of these women's struggles; they also stand in direct opposition to the self-activity of the Iraqi working class. Some Iraqi workers greeted the collapse of Hussein's dictatorship by forming small but growing independent trade unions and unions of the unemployed. In doing so, they have come up against the U.S. military occupation, which has maintained Hussein's 1987 labor law which forbids strikes or unions in public industries, including in the all-important oil industry. These unions have also come under attack from the same reactionary forces that Bello and Petras call on us to support.

In April a group of armed gangs controlled by al-Sadr ordered workers in aluminum and sanitary supply plants in Nasiriyah to hand the factories over to them for use as bastions for fighting the U.S. military. The workers refused and remained inside their factories. The Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions in Iraq (FWCUI) stated, "We completely reject the turning of workers and civilians' work and living places into reactionist war-fighters between the two poles of terrorism in Iraq: the U.S. and their allies from one side, and the terrorists in the armed militias, well known for their enmity to Iraqi people's interests, on the other."

The emergence of this new Iraqi labor movement deserves our full support—not least because it can help transcend the ethnic and religious divisions that threaten to tear Iraq apart. Falah Alwah, a representative of FWCUI, stated, "The interim government has structures set up on ethnic and religious bases, and it is therefore logical that it attempts to develop the union movement along these lines. It is a divisive concept for workers. We want to establish genuine unions in Iraq. The Workers and Trade Union Councils in Iraq act on the basis of recognition of the right of all workers, regardless of their ethnic, linguistic or religious origin, to be present in the union. Only the workers' movement can avoid ethnic confrontation and can unite the country to avoid what happened in Bosnia or in the ex-Yugoslavia."(5)

Ironically, many of those arguing against people-to-people solidarity with the liberatory forces in Iraq on the grounds that "we in the West should not be telling Iraqis how to proceed" are the very ones advising the anti-war movement to support reactionaries there who attack women and workers!

A genuinely revolutionary and humanist anti-war movement capable of fundamentally transforming our alienated society cannot be built on the basis of what it is against; it has to be built on the basis of what it is for. The starting point for achieving this is solidarizing with those in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere who are reaching for human liberation. This is not alone a practical question; it is also a theoretical question, for it entails developing the ideas that can lead to new dialogue between different forces of liberation.

In the absence of developing the ideas that are at stake in liberation struggles, the historic initiative gets conceded to the Right—a lesson that should have been learned from the way Reagan's presidency managed to change the course of world politics. We surely need to debunk the myths about Reagan that were manufactured by both Republicans and Democrats at his recent funeral. But we need to do so with full recognition that what allowed him to introduce a retrogressive, changed world was the failure of the radical movement to develop and project a viable alternative to existing society.

Congress Hotel workers in Chicago were joined by other unionists for the one-year anniversary of the start of their strike. See page 3.



Chris Geovaris/Chicago Independent Media Center

We surely cannot depend on presidential aspirant John Kerry and the Democrats to develop such an alternative for us. Kerry has gone out of his way not to harshly attack Bush over Abu Ghraib, and in his overall campaign against one of the most reactionary presidents in U.S. history he has managed to make the difference between himself and Bush appear paper-thin.

A far deeper basis of opposition can arise in the aftermath of the Abu Ghraib scandal by developing new connections between the anti-war movement and the struggles against the criminal injustice system. John Alan addressed this in his new book *Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles*:

Even many who oppose the U.S. drive for single world domination overseas through incessant military intervention overseas fail to recognize the vanguard role of African Americans. It isn't alone a matter of the difficulties the anti-war movement has faced in bringing large numbers of African Americans out to its rallies...It's a question of making a category out of what has emerged from crucial turning points in U.S. history...The challenge is to meet this movement by articulating how its independence is a manifestation of the irrepressible idea of freedom.(6)

The April 25 March for Women's Lives, which was attended by over a million and included many Latinas, Asian, and Black women, likewise shows the potential for building new solidarity between those fighting Bush's policies at home and abroad.(7)

Developing such connections among the forces of liberation will not arise automatically; it takes labor, including theoretical labor. In solidarizing with those fighting oppression, we must not overlook the ideas that they are struggling to defend.

II. The matrix of global politics and economics

A. The economic basis of U.S. dominance

The fact that new voices are being raised against the U.S.'s fiasco in Iraq doesn't mean that the forces controlling U.S. domestic and foreign policy will retreat without a fight. Far too much is at stake for them to walk away from its quagmire in Iraq. At issue is not even Bush's presidency, but the U.S. drive for single world mastery. That drive is not simply driven by personalities, but by the present stage of restructured state-capitalism.

The U.S. quest for global military domination is inseparable from its effort to maintain dominance over the world economy. More than ever, the global economy is being kept afloat by the debt-financed U.S. economy; the U.S. accounted for most of the world's economic growth since 1996 and much of that continues to be financed by massive inflows of capital from overseas.

While foreign capital continues to flood into the U.S., decent-paying jobs continue to flood out of it. 1998 has lost 12% of its manufacturing jobs since 1998—a period in which global industrial production rose by more than 20%. White collar and service jobs are experiencing similar job losses; in 2002 alone, for example, Sprint's productivity jumped 15% while its payroll fell by 11,500. Such figures are being repeated in industry after industry, which helps explain much of the persistently high levels of unemployment in the U.S. economy.

In response to this, labor is fighting back. The four-day multi-state walkout by SBC workers in May was motivated by demands for improved health care and an end to outsourcing of jobs. Though the Communication Workers of America has worked out a tentative agreement with management, many of the issues which motivated the walkout remain unre-

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solved—not just at SBC but in the communications industry as a whole. Meanwhile, new labor protests and strikes occurred in June in New York City by day care workers, home health aides and teachers who are fully aware that the modest "recovery" in the U.S. economy has yet to "trickle down" to them.

What enables the U.S. to dominate the world economy is that it remains the investment haven of choice for foreign capital. Foreign investors hold 50% of outstanding U.S. Treasury debt, 35% of corporate debt, and 12% of U.S. equities. The U.S. economy is doing as well as it is because of foreign loans and consumption propped up by borrowing. One analyst wrote, "Never before has the world put more stock in America—both as an engine of growth and as a store of financial value."(8)

Maintaining this situation is inseparable from asserting U.S. global military hegemony. Military force is important in showing the rest of the world that the U.S. can keep control of key natural resources, such as oil, and dominate the process of political decision-making between different capitalist states. This explains much of the reason for the Iraq war: the Bush administration decided to take down Hussein because it knew he was weak militarily and they figured that his rapid defeat would intimidate other centers of world capital, like West Europe and Asia, to abandon any illusions that they could ever challenge the U.S. economically or politically.

The U.S.'s fiasco in Iraq has undermined this scenario. This doesn't mean the U.S. will simply beat a quick retreat—not least because the Republicans, and many Democrats, not without reason, view the maintenance of a massive U.S. military empire as a key part of managing its structural economic problems.

Meanwhile, the threat of terrorism—which has tended to strengthen reactionary tendencies within the U.S.—is more alive than ever. The invasion of Iraq has only increased this threat, as recent terrorist attacks by Al Qaeda in Saudi Arabia and the Madrid train bombing show. This makes all the more relevant the point we made from the moment the September 11 attacks happened, namely, that it is just as important to oppose reactionary tendencies trying to challenge U.S. global hegemony as it is to oppose the U.S. drive for single world domination.(9) Any other standpoint closes off the space needed to work out an emancipatory alternative.

B. The Brazil-China connection: a new pole of global capital?

The election of Lula as Brazil's president last year was the culmination of a long history of workers and peasants' struggles and his election was a cause for celebration. Since taking office, things have been less sanguine; though Lula has initiated some projects to ameliorate poverty and homelessness, he has adopted the economic program of his predecessors by pursuing a straight neoliberal agenda.

In the field of world politics, however, Lula has tried to assert some independence. He opposed the Iraq war, he traveled to Cuba, and he extended some support to Chavez's regime in Venezuela. Of far greater importance is his effort to work out a new kind of economic-political alignment with China and Russia.

Lula concluded a trip to China in late May accompanied by 400 business executives. Fifteen business and trade deals were signed between these two economic powerhouses of the developing world—ranging from Brazilian aircraft manufacturer Embraer's agreement to build planes for China to a \$1 billion contract for China to build an aluminum factory in poverty-stricken northeastern Brazil. Most revealing was an agreement for China to buy large amounts of uranium from Brazil (the world's sixth largest uranium producer), in exchange for Brazil helping to build 11 new nuclear power plants in China. This raised eyebrows in Washington, since China is undertaking a significant buildup of its

arsenal of nuclear weapons.

During his trip Lula sidestepped questions about China's rampant human rights abuses and said nothing to support Chinese labor struggles—this from a man heading a party that did not hesitate to go against the dominant trend in the Latin American Left in the 1980s by strongly supporting the Solidarnosc movement in Poland.

Lula's China trip is part of a broader effort to create an alternative pole in the developing world to U.S. power. Last year Brazil formed, along with India and South Africa, a "G-3" to counter U.S. hegemony in international relations. Lula has stated, "We dream in the near future it will be a G-5, which will be with Russia and China" a counterweight to U.S. power. One analyst wrote, "Lula's pursuit of closer ties to China is part of the Brazilian president's sweeping international agenda for improving Brazil's trading relations with other developing countries and regions...so that the developing world does not have to depend so much on the U.S."(10)

It is true that China, which is heavily dependent on exports to the U.S. and investments from U.S.-based multinationals, is not anxious to openly upset relations with the U.S.; nor is Russia in the position to break free from U.S. dictates, though its growing importance as an oil exporter gives it more wiggle-room than in recent years. Though it is not clear that Lula's dream of a "G-5" will ever come to fruition, the fact that such an effort is underway reflects the extent to which the U.S.

does not have smooth sailing in its drive for single world mastery. Intra-capitalist rivalries persist and can be expected to grow in the aftermath of the U.S.'s problems in Iraq.

The fact that

Lula comes out of the Left and continues to use left-ist language, even as he pursues a neoliberal agenda—as also seen in his support for Brazilian agribusiness which is decimating the Amazonian region through soybean production, much of which is exported to China—makes it crucial not to be taken in by any half-way house "challenge" to the U.S.

What is true for large nations trying mildly to distance themselves from the U.S., like Brazil, is even truer of smaller ones who openly oppose it, like Cuba. Castro's decision in June to close down 40 categories of self-employed businesses—as if state-controlled capital is an advantage over such enterprises that have enabled many Cubans to supplement their meager state wages of \$8 a month—only serves to show what little new he has to offer.

Opposition to U.S. imperialism that is not based on a concept that transcends both state-capitalism and neoliberalism remains abstract and is unable to pose a real alternative; it just tailends any anti-American force and reduces the struggle against capitalism to something purely political.

C. Genocide in Darfur

One of the most difficult challenges facing us today is that in the absence of an emancipatory alternative all sorts of nefarious tendencies enter to fill the void. We witnessed this in the 1990s, when the collapse of both Communism and the internal socialist humanist opposition in Yugoslavia created a void that Serbia's Slobodan Milosevic took advantage of by fomenting ethnic hatred against Kosova and genocide against Bosnia.

Tragically, the failure of much of the Left to speak out against the "ethnic cleansing" of Bosnia and Kosova is being repeated today in the near-silence over the genocide being waged against Black Africans in Darfur, in western Sudan.

Conflicts in Darfur have been going on for decades between Black Africans and the Arab-dominated Sudanese government, which has long opposed the interests of the Fur, Masaalit, and Zaghawa communities of Darfur (an area the size of France with a population of four million). Sporadic uprisings have occurred there over the past three decades. Conflict intensified in the 1980s, when Colonel Ghadafi of Libya encouraged the creation of an "Arab corridor" into Central Africa; he supplied weapons to Arab militias in Sudan, which launched attacks against the citizenry of Darfur.(11)

By the 1990s, the element of racism against the Black Africans in western Sudan became pronounced

when 27 Arab pastoral groups declared war against the "Zurug" (or Black) non-Arab groups of Darfur. Last year Sudan moved to repress any dissent in the region by letting loose the janjaweed militias—death squads 20,000 strong, not unlike the units employed by Milosevic against Bosnia and Kosova and the interahamwe used in Rwanda against the Tutsi. The janjaweed openly talk of "exterminating" the Blacks of Darfur.

Groups have arisen to defend the inhabitants of Darfur, such as the Sudanese Liberation Army and the Justice and Equality Movement. Sudan has responded with a scorched-earth campaign of aerial bombardment, systematic rape, and unleashing the deadly janjaweed on the civilian populace. Tens of thousands have been killed and raped, over a million have been forced from their homes, and much of the populace is slowly being starved to death.

Though this genocide resembles Sudan's 20-year war against secessionists in the south, there is one major difference—whereas the southern rebels are Christian and animist, the people of Darfur are Muslims. This is not an inter-religious war, but a racial-ethnic war, as an Arab-dominated government seeks to wipe out indigenous Black Africans.

The Bush administration still refuses to say that genocide is occurring in Darfur; it brokered the talks between Sudan and the southern rebels and does not want to upset its new-found alliance with the Sudanese government, which it sees as an ally in its

"war against terrorism." U.S. Black and civil rights organizations have also so far said little about the issue. Nor has anything been done by the African Union, created as a result of the political impotence of the Organization for African Unity.

Why is the genocide in Darfur not a larger issue in the anti-war and other movements? Is it because the U.S.

is not behind the conflict? Does this mean another Rwanda will be allowed to happen? Have we learned nothing from the genocide in Bosnia—or the ongoing war of the Indonesian government against the people of Aceh? Just because the U.S. is not militarily involved in a conflict doesn't free us from solidarizing with the victims of ethnic cleansing, religious fundamentalism, and statist terrorism. The radical movement cannot afford to focus only on opposing U.S. actions; it has to proceed on the basis of the kind of new society it is for. Anything less eliminates the ground for extending the most basic kind of human solidarity.

(Continued on page 7)

A June 8 die-in at the gates of a wood products maker, the Hercules company, in Brunswick, Ga. targeted the ruinous environmental policies of the capitalist economies represented in the G-8 meeting in nearby Sea Island.



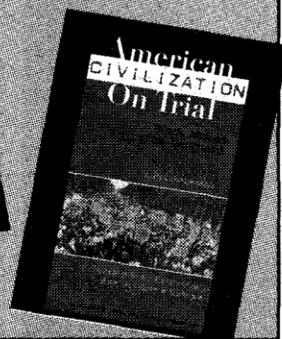
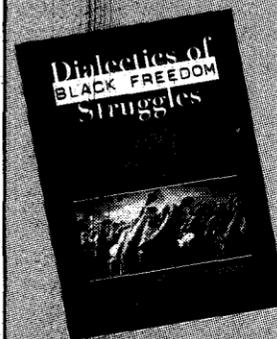
Marx's Concept of Intrinsic Value

On the unity of value, fetishism, and the analysis of capitalist production in *Capital*. by Andrew Kliman



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World crises & the search for alternatives to capitalism

(Continued from page 6)

III. Envisioning an alternative to capitalism

Why has it proven so difficult to develop a viable alternative to capitalism? Much of the reason is that throughout the 20th century most radical movements and intellectuals assumed that an alternative to capitalism would arise from nationalization of industry and state control of the economy. "Marxism" became largely identified with its opposite, nationalized property under the control of a single party state. By the 1980s this proved totally bankrupt. In every instance the reduction of "socialism" to the state control of industry led to totalitarianism or to an embrace of "free market" capitalism.

The ensuing collapse of statist Marxism and reformist Social-Democracy led to the gravest problem of all—a decline of "Marxist" movements and even interest in Marxist theory. This impacted the entire Left, including the anti-Stalinist Left which had distinguished between Stalinism and liberatory, humanist Marxism. This decline of interest in Marx proved deadly, for it removed the ground needed to envision and work out a path to a noncapitalist future.

At the same time, the attacks on dialectical reason that have dominated intellectual discourse since the 1980s—not just from pragmatists and Althusserians of the old Left, but from the "new" generation of theorists influenced by poststructuralism and autonomism—has also impeded the effort to envision a noncapitalist future. The wholesale rejection of Hegel, which characterizes such different figures as Foucault, Deleuze, and Negri, blocks access to "the vision of the future which Hegel called 'real humanism' and later 'communism'." (12)

This didn't mean that history ground to a halt. New forces and new passions spring up from the bosom of society, no matter how deep the crisis in radical thought may be. We saw many instances of that in the past two decades, especially in 1999 when the Seattle protests against the neo-liberal restructuring of state-capitalism brought to prominence the emergence of a worldwide movement against global capital.

Though the September 11 attacks disoriented some within this movement, the movement has not yet run its course—as reflected in the recent elections in India. Almost no one foresaw the defeat of the BJP, given the "boom" in India's economy. Yet in retrospect, the fact that tens of millions of working people turned out to toss the BJP from power should not come as such a surprise in light of the way large numbers of workers and peasants attended the World Social Forum in Mumbai in January.

One dimension that has made the Seattle protest, and other actions of the movement against global capital since then, so exciting was that the centralism and "party-building" fetishism of the traditional Left was rightly rejected in favor of decentralized organizational structures. The old Left's efforts at "party building" have done nothing to fill the void in the development of an emancipatory alternative, and no amount of efforts to recapture the "vanguard party to lead" concept in some "new" expression will have any greater success.

At the same time, the rejection of the "party to lead" and the embrace of decentralized forms of organization, correct as that is, has not resulted in the emergence of a new organizational expression of the idea of freedom that persists after the end of particular protests or campaigns. Why has it proven so hard for anti-vanguardists to create an organized expression of the idea of freedom that survives the ebb and flow of particular protests and campaigns?

Nobody tries to forge a movement or organization if they think that spontaneous action by itself will bring forth a new society; they do so out of an implicit awareness that some kind of organized articulation of an ultimate goal is needed. So why has it proven so hard to create an organizational alternative to the "vanguard party" that could become a pole of attraction for masses of people?

Isn't it because ideas are often separated from organization, as if basing activity on distinct theories and ideas inevitably risks falling into a fixed and frozen ideology? Many assume that the old Left failed because it insisted on an attachment to ideas. But the truth is, the old Left failed because it relied on adherence to leaders and power politics instead of ideas.

In fact, being serious about ideas is the very opposite of dogmatically holding to some fixed and frozen ideology. It involves a continuous working out of the inner dialectic of philosophy.

To leave ideas to the realm of "theory" and organization to that of "practice" robs us of the ability to comprehensively respond to the question of whether there is an alternative to capitalism and what has called itself "socialism." The question is too awesome to be worked out by individuals in isolation from forces of liberation. It can only be worked out in an organizational collectivity that is based on a philosophy of liberation.

The development of Marxist-Humanism speaks directly to this problem. Its roots go back to the the-

ory of state-capitalism, developed by Dunayevskaya as a response to the new stage of capitalism that emerged out of the Great Depression. By analyzing state-capitalism that called itself "Communism" through the categories of Marx's *Capital*, she proved its nonviability long before Marx's collapse in the 1980s.

By the 1950s it became clear to Dunayevskaya that state-capitalist theory, though necessary to meet the challenge of the times, was insufficient. The emergence of counter-revolution from within revolution, as in Stalin's Russia, called for a philosophy that recaptures the humanism of Marx for our day. Even the best economic analysis is still negative; it represents a critique of what exists. To meet the challenge of "new passions and new forces" asking "can humanity be free in the age of totalitarianism?" required something more—filling the philosophical void that has persisted in the radical movement since Marx's death.

For this reason, in such works as *Marxism and Freedom* (1958), *Philosophy and Revolution* (1973), and *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* (1982), Dunayevskaya focused on filling the missing link in the radical movement—

dialectical philosophy. Dialectics, she insisted, cannot be reduced to an ideology or some fixed and frozen set of conclusions. As she wrote in 1974,

Whatever Hegel said, and meant, about the Owl of Minerva spreading its wings only at dusk simply does not follow from the objectivity of the drive, the summation in which the advance is immanent in the present...When subjected to the dialectic method from which, according to Hegel, no truth can escape, the conclusion turns out to be a new beginning. There is no trap in thought. Though it is finite, it breaks through the barriers of the given, reaches out, if not to infinity, surely beyond the historic moment. (13)

The unresolved task facing Marxist-Humanists is to see to it that dialectical philosophy becomes ground for organization. Though Dunayevskaya explicitly projected this challenge in the 1980s, after creating the category "post-Marx Marxism, beginning with Engels," she was reaching for a new kind of organization that would take responsibility for developing a non-totalizing form of dialectics from as early as 1953, in a series of letters that led to the birth of Marxist-Humanism.

The 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes" was written as part of a dialogue among Dunayevskaya, C.L.R. James, and Grace Lee (Boggs) Dunayevskaya on what kind of revolutionary organization could replace the vanguard party. As she wrote in a 1987 reexamination,

I wasn't interested in either the mass party, which the masses will build, or in the elitist party, which we definitively oppose, but in what happens to a small group 'like us' who know that nothing can be done without the masses, and are with them, but [such small groups of] theoreticians always seem to be around too. So, what is the objectivity which explains their presence, as the objectivity explains the spontaneous outburst of the masses? In a word, I was looking for the objectivity of subjectivity. (14)

By the time Dunayevskaya completed the 1953 letters, she had departed from what C.L.R. James called "the dialectics of the party." By "dialectics of the party" James meant defining the specific form of organization that could replace the vanguard party. While Dunayevskaya was also interested in new forms of organization, she did not stop there: she focused most of all on the relation between dialectical philosophy and organization.

This led to the formation of News and Letters Committees in 1955. Dunayevskaya stated at its

founding convention, "It is the organization of thought which determines organizational life." (15)

This concept flowed from *Marxism and Freedom*. It showed that the Second International had plenty of "organization" and many publications, but they were unsuccessful since there was no organization of Marxist thought. In part, it was seen in their failure to publish much of Marx's work. But even when they did publish Marx it meant little, since they took his conclusions as a pillow for intellectual sloth instead of experiencing the Marxist dialectic in light of the realities of their times.

The Marxist-Humanist concept of philosophy as ground for organization broke new ground—including from those who had accepted the theory of state-capitalism. As Dunayevskaya wrote in 1973, "Even in 1950-51, when for the first time we did add a section on philosophy right within our political document (*State-Capitalism and World Revolution*) and were on the threshold of totally breaking with Trotskyism organizationally as well, we still had not, in throwing out the concept of the 'party to

lead,' created anything to take its place. That is the whole point. We still haven't fully, not yet. We have practiced an alternative. We have created committees...we must now expand

that by making it a totality so that *Philosophy and Revolution* is its organizational and not only philosophical manifestation..." (16)

From then to the end of her life in 1987 Dunayevskaya focused on how to close the gap between philosophic breakthrough and its organizational concretization. The task is neither to develop organization apart from philosophy, nor to treat philosophy as a set of conclusions that one simply "propagates." No new kind of organization can emerge from either approach. She defined the challenge in her unfinished work on "Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy" in 1986-87: "The question of organization not only as organizational growth we're so in need of, but the concept of organization...where it is inseparable from and dialectically integral with, the dialectics of philosophy." (17)

Embarking upon this "untrodden path" of dialectics of organization and philosophy is central to concretizing the challenge that Marxist-Humanism has posed since its birth—answering the question of what happens after the revolution.

This question is posed by ongoing revolts and it is the task of revolutionary theorists to respond to it. It is seen in such expressions as "Another World is Possible" or "Life After Capitalism"—the latter being the name of a forum that will be held at the protests against the Republican Convention in New York in August.

However, it is difficult to even get started on developing an alternative without the hard theoretical labor of internalizing Marx's Marxism and working out what it means for today. In the absence of such necessary work it becomes easy to fall prey to the illusion that a new form of organization will by itself meet the challenge of the times. The way in which many in the movement against global capital were unsure of how to respond to the September 11 attacks points to the need to go beyond the issue of forms of organization by developing philosophy inseparable from organization.

As Dunayevskaya wrote in one of her final essays, "The two-fold problematic of our age is 1) What happens after the conquest of power? 2) Are there ways for new beginnings when there is so much reaction, so many aborted revolutions, such turning of the clock backward in the most technologically advanced lands?" (18)

Responding to this problem entails taking Marxist-Humanism to its next stage of dialectical development. It cannot be done by repeating conclusions

(Continued on page 8)



The historic, million-strong March for Women's Lives on April 25.

Marxist-Humanist Writings on the Middle East
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World crises & the search for alternatives to capitalism

(Continued from page 7)

or by assuming that Marxist-Humanism has answered all theoretical problems. We instead need an open-ended process of working out philosophy in an organizational collectivity.

IV. Political-philosophic-organizational tasks

In the past several years we have sought to respond to this challenge by issuing a series of new publications, such as *The Power of Negativity*, which includes some of Dunayevskaya's major writings on the dialectics of organization. It has sparked a number of serious and wide-ranging discussions. We have also helped issue new editions of *Marxism and Freedom* and *Philosophy and Revolution*, as well as a Chinese translation of both books and a Persian edition of *Philosophy and Revolution*, the latter translated by a Marxist-Humanist. In the past year we have also issued a new edition of *American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard*, John Alan's *Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles*, and the pamphlets *Marxist-Humanist Writings on the Middle East* and *Marx's Concept of Intrinsic Value*. These were issued as part of a living battle of ideas that we invite our readers to join with us in discussing, concretizing, and further developing.

This year we also reexamined Marx's critique of capital in a series of nationwide classes on "Alternatives to Capitalism." These classes, which had excellent attendance and discussion in our local committees, sought to explore how Marx's critique of capital illuminates the path to overcoming today's dominance of capitalism.

Marx's critique of capital has two inseparable dimensions—his critique of capital as a social relation and his critique of leftist alternatives that fail to envision a total uprooting of capital. Marx's critique of the radical alternatives of his day is not some distant historic issue without relevance to today. This is especially seen in his critique of such 19th century radicals as Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, who opposed the state, and Ferdinand Lassalle, who was a statist-socialist.

Proudhon's utopianism and Lassalle's statism represented partial, superficial negations of existing society insofar as both failed to envision the transcendence of commodity production. Proudhon wished to eliminate some of the inequities of capitalism by "realizing" the principle of equality, presumably involved in commodity production, on the basis of the classical political economists' discovery that labor is the source of all economic value. While Proudhonism long ago passed into history, the assumptions contained in its approach live on. These assumptions are seen when those who argue that the inequities of globalized capitalism can be overcome by replacing institutions like the World Trade Organization and IMF with organizations based on mass participation—as if humanity can be freed without abolishing value production and alienated labor.

The question we have to ask ourselves today is how to actualize a new society defined by a concrete equality based on new human relations, as opposed to the abstract "equality" of the capitalist market and process of production. Such a society can neither be realized in a statist framework nor in a "free association" that skips over the need to abolish the capital relation itself.

Marx's analyses of the need to abolish not just the manifestations of capital but capital itself provides the ground for overcoming such limited approaches. But it isn't as if the answer is lying there in Marx and we can just pick it up and popularize it. The way in which Marx's two-fold critique of capital intimates a future, noncapitalist world has to be thought through to its fullest logical development in light of the specific realities of our time.

To achieve this it is first of all necessary to grapple with Marx's work inseparable from Hegel's. Dunayevskaya spoke to this in 1985: "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 by 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 **consequently**, related to other Ideas that emerge out of **historic** ground, and do not care where all this might lead to, including transformation into opposite." (19)

Thinking through the logic of an idea to its fullest development is at the core of Hegel's dialectic; it reaches its fullest expression in the Absolute Idea—which is not an end but the jumping off point for new beginnings. Thinking through the logic of an idea is central to the creativity of cognition; it is how cognition not only reflects the objective world, but creates it.

In other words, since the present moment does not, by itself, immediately suggest an alternative, one has to be thought through by bringing the creativity of cognition to bear on the content of Marx's new continent of thought. As Marxist-Humanists see it, "Marx's legacy is no mere heirloom, but a live body of ideas and perspectives that is in need of concretization. Every moment of Marx's development, as well as the totality of his works, spells out the need for 'revolution in permanence.' This is the absolute challenge to our age." (20)

As Marx wrote in the *Grundrisse*, "If we did not find latent in society as it is, the material conditions of production and the corresponding relationships of exchange for a classless society, all attempts to explode it would be quixotic." (21) Envisioning a noncapitalist future doesn't involve drawing up a "blueprint" for a new society; it instead involves discerning the reaching for a new society that is contained in ongoing mass movements, while never adopting an uncritical attitude toward them.

At the same time, as the Marxist-Humanist Perspectives Thesis of 2003-2004 put it, "Standing for a new society does not simply mean being for practical struggles for a new society once they arise. Standing for a new society also means theoretically discerning the elements for creating a new society **before** such struggles arise." (22) Envisioning a noncapitalist future cannot simply wait for the emergence of new revolts; that may leave the masses without the direction needed to reach their goal.

There is no way to anticipate the future without doing the "thought diving" involved in experiencing theory. Experiencing theory isn't a matter of either using the conclusions of Marxist-Humanism to attack others or to justify a series of prearranged conclusions. That just treats the body of ideas as a **thing**. But the body of ideas is not a thing. It is a **process**. Treating the ideas as a process entails taking up a problem that hasn't been answered yet by going into the body of ideas, into objectivity, into the ideas of others by thinking out the logic of an idea to its ultimate conclusion—not in an enclave removed from the world, but in an organization that engages movements, involves itself in ongoing events and organizations, works to fuse theory and practice.

As our Perspectives for 2003-04 put it, "Why should the theoretic power of philosophy be only theoretical? Why shouldn't we exercise that power in class struggles, in Black struggles, in the anti-war movement, in youth and Women's Liberation struggles? Why not project Marxist-Humanist philosophy **organizationally** as the power that is both the form for eliciting from the masses their thoughts and projecting Marxist-Humanist perspectives to them?"

This remains our unfinished task. To achieve it we need a reorganization of priorities. We will only grow as an organization if we demonstrate that we are involved in a process of creating something **new** which has never been fully actualized in the history of the anti-Stalinist Left—an alternative to both the vanguard party and total reliance on spontaneous forms of organization. It can only be achieved by drawing on the full body of ideas of Marxist-Humanism and engaging in the painstaking, rigorous thinking that can meet new objective and subjective revolutionary challenges.

lutionary challenges.

Our primary responsibility is to create space and time for concretizing the Marxist-Humanist organization of thought. The acceptance of such responsibility necessitates having an organization to ensure that ideas are worked out in dialogue with the movements of our time. First and foremost we need to ensure that the works of the founder of Marxist-Humanism are available, but that alone is insufficient; our philosophic responsibility **above all** demands concretizing the Marxist-Humanist organization of thought in relation to today's realities and theoretic debates.

The perspectives for *News & Letters* paper—its production, content, distribution and frequency—has to be conceived in relation to our Perspectives as a whole. *N&L* aims to bring together political analyses, voices from below, and the process of experiencing theory, and we need to constantly check ourselves to see we are living up to that.

The Constitution of News and Letters Committees states, "We hold it to be the duty of each generation to interpret Marxism for itself." This cannot be achieved by individuals working in isolation without a unified direction. It can only be achieved by eliciting and developing the talents of different individuals on the basis of a unified organizational perspective. This is the key to determining all our tasks, from forging new international relations to initiating explorations of our newest publications, from engaging in movement activities to meeting our financial responsibilities.

What we need most of all is a common discussion, a common dialogue, in which we speak to each other about what is needed to ensure the future existence of Marxist-Humanism. We invite you to participate in this process with us.

—The Resident Editorial Board

Notes

1. Quoted in "Iraq War Objector Surrenders with Fanfare," by Kirsten Schamberg, *Chicago Tribune*, March 16, 2004.
2. See "Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, 1986-87."
3. "Introduction to Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*," *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 176. See also Marx's "On the Jewish Question": "We no longer regard religion as the cause, but only as the manifestation of secular narrowness. Therefore, we explain the religious limitations of the free citizen by their secular limitations. We do not assert that they must overcome their religious narrowness in order to get rid of their secular restrictions, we assert that they will overcome their religious narrowness once they get rid of their secular restrictions."
4. See Bello's "Falluja and the Forging of the New Iraq" [<http://host84.ipowerweb.com>] and James Petras' "So Where are the Western Intellectuals?" [<http://iraqtunnel.com/php>].
5. *International Liaison Committee Newsletter*, 72, April 14, 2004.
6. *Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles* (Chicago: News and Letters, 2004), pp. 11, 14.
7. See "Women make history in massive rally," *News & Letters*, May 2004.
8. Stephen Roach, "The Heavy Lifting of Global Restructuring," *Morgan Stanley Global Economic Forum*, May 27, 2003.
9. See "Terrorism, Bush's retaliation show inhumanity of class society," by Peter Hudis, *News & Letters*, October 2001.
10. "Brazil and China draw closer," by Carmen Gentile, *United Press International*, May 28, 2004. See also "China's success inspires envy and awe," by Richard McGregor, *Financial Times*, May 28, 2004.
11. See Dunayevskaya's "Draft for Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, 1985-86": "Ghadafi is by no means the scatter-brain that the U.S. government and the media are making him appear. You cannot, for example, dismiss the other critical alliance he has now negotiated with the new ruler of Sudan, General El-Dahab." *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, 10345.
12. See *Marxism and Freedom*, by Raya Dunayevskaya, p. 66.
13. "Hegel's Absolutes as New Beginning," *The Power of Negativity* (Lexington Books, 2002), p. 184.
14. "Presentation on the Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy," *The Power of Negativity*, p. 7.
15. "Theoretical and Practical Perspectives: Where to Begin?" (1956), *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, 2566.
16. "Philosophy and Revolution as Organization Builder" (1973), *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, 4982.
17. "Talking to Myself" [May 13, 1987], *Supplement to Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, 10923-24.
18. "A post-World War II View of Marx's Humanism, 1843-83; Marxist Humanism in the 1950s and 1980s," *Bosnia-Herzegovina: Achilles Heel of Western 'Civilization'* (News and Letters, 1996), p. 93.
19. *The Power of Negativity*, p. 310.
20. *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, by Raya Dunayevskaya (Champaign-Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), p. 195.
21. Marx's *Grundrisse*, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28 (New York: International Publishers, 1986), p. 97.
22. See "War, Resistance, and the Need for a New Alternative," *News & Letters*, July 2003.

Critical acclaim for

The Power of Negativity:

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by Raya Dunayevskaya

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This volume presents [Dunayevskaya's] life-long thinking, showing how influential her reading of Hegel was for her interpretation of how humanity works to make itself free. She used Marx and Hegel to think through how the movement of negation promotes human freedom. She explored "the positive within the negative, to express philosophically the yearning of women, children, and men to be whole human beings" (p. xxix)...

For those who have never read Dunayevskaya, this volume provides an excellent introduction. For those who have read her work, this is a volume that presents her total thought as a process. In an era where Marx's thought is being minimized, Dunayevskaya's thought is an important reminder of how both Marx and Hegel have influenced and continue to influence contemporary political understanding and movements.

—Patricia A. Johnson, *Review of Metaphysics*

EPITAPH FOR REAGAN

After his death, they sang Reagan's praises as if he were a saint. He was another guy going to heaven non-stop. I couldn't help wondering, with all these so-called angels with reputations like his heading to heaven, who is in hell? Maybe the people who asked for a transfer when they saw who was coming there?

**Robert Talliaferro
Wisconsin**

When the federal government closed down all their offices for Reagan's funeral on Friday, June 11, one post office in Marin posted signs everywhere telling patrons they were closing in memory of Ray Charles. In Oakland, a memorial was held "for the victims of Reaganism."

**Correspondent
Bay Area, California**



ABU GHRAIB AT HOME

What is clear about the recent "revelations" regarding the torture of prisoners in Iraq is that nothing is new. The government has always tortured, murdered and abused its enemies. The media has also always whitewashed or excused it. Not only have foreign peoples been abused, but inmates of domestic prisons, jails and mental institutions as well. In the U.S. a small privileged number of owning-class individuals live well off of the labor of the majority. Their agents carry out the abuse of those who disturb or threaten their continued accumulation of increasing wealth. The world belongs to them—and that is the problem. But it does not have to be—and that is the solution.

**Subscriber
Louisiana**

All the abuses now being spotlighted in Iraqi prisons are endemic and rampant in U.S. prisons on a daily basis. The mainstream media has consistently downplayed it or refused to report it at all. The Iraqi abuses were widely reported by freelance internet reporters as well as the Red Cross, Justice Watch, and Amnesty International months before it was reported by the U.S. corporate media. Our government openly scorns the U.S. Constitution and ignores the rule of law. We see the police shooting and/or beating civilians on a daily basis and the courts do nothing. *N&L* has been one of the few voices in the wilderness that speaks out against injustice and spotlights the truth.

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Brooklyn, Connecticut**

CAPITALISM AT WORK

For the past two years here, and I would guess in every city in the U.S., construction has been booming, partly due to the present low interest rates. From government buildings to retail outlets to huge shopping malls and homes and apartments, construction is taking place in many empty lots (often preceded by demolition of still usable old buildings), as well as encroaching on or destroying wilderness areas outside the city. At the same time there is a tremendous shortage of low cost housing which is not being met. This adds to the skyrocketing rents and costs of private homes, out of reach for most people. Under our capitalist society the primary interest of capital, which finances these projects, is to self-expand at its greatest possible rate of profit. Meeting people's human needs is a secondary issue, at best.

**Reader
Los Angeles**

THANKS TO ALL OUR FRIENDS AND READERS FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO HELP KEEP NEWS & LETTERS ALIVE

Have you sent in your contribution yet?

READERS' VIEWS

THE CONCRETENESS OF MARXIST-HUMANISM

The common theme of beleaguered "progressives" is deep hostility towards the Bush administration but beyond this negative unity not much else binds us together. Most stunning is that many recognize that capitalism is the root of our problem, but have virtually nothing to say about the laws of motion of capital per se, and absolutely nothing to say about alternatives.

The serialization of Dunayevskaya's "Marx's Humanism today" in the May and June issues of *N&L* can help us understand the pathological inability of the Left to conceive a third alternative to Bush's dangerous doctrine and the reactionary forces of fundamentalist Islam. But pointing this out does not relieve us of the difficult obligation to project what the third could be. In "The Concreteness of Marxist-Humanism" (*N&L* June 2004) Anne Jaclard quotes Dunayevskaya about thinking an idea through to the end. There is a widespread view that even if we don't like capitalism, complaining about it is like complaining about the winter in Duluth. If our task is to show that another world is possible, our first thought should be that this is not going to be an easy struggle.

**Tom More
Washington**

I hope you print more pieces like "The Concreteness of Marxist-Humanism." We need more discussion of an alternative to the system instead of just criticizing it. People aren't going to keep working to change the system unless there's an idea of what can replace it. That's clearly the case in this part of the country.

**Subscriber
Arizona**

The essay on Rosa Luxemburg by Peter Hudis in the May issue of *N&L* was especially interesting regarding the administration of post-seizure of power in a revolutionary society. At times I have contemplated the positions, in view of a number of situations and crises (e.g., the Bolshevik occupation of lands in the Transcaucasus, Stalin's iron rule, Mao's "democratic dictatorship," North Korea, Cuba), and the discussion you presented is fresh to me and inspires further consideration of the forces at play. It seems



MUSIC AND POLITICS

The story of what happened after Daniel Barenboim won the Wolf Prize in Jerusalem is of more than only musical interest. The award was established to honor outstanding artists and scientists who have worked "in the interest of mankind and friendly relations among people" and he had certainly demonstrated that, including the way he founded with Edward Said a workshop for young musicians from all the countries of the Middle East, Jews and Arabs alike. In his acceptance speech, where he sharply criticized Israel's policies toward Palestinians, he said: "Music is an art that touches the depth of human existence, an art of sounds that crosses all borders. As such, music can take the feelings and imagination of Israelis and Palestinians to new, unimaginable spheres." He then donated the moneys of the prize to music education projects in Israel and in Ramallah. Israeli politicians, of course, denounced his criticism of their policies, but nobody could deny the power of his words and his acts.

**Music lovers
Los Angeles and Chicago**

JACEK KURON

I had the opportunity to interview Jacek Kuron when I visited Poland at the end of 1980, just when Solidarity was at

that so many dynamics are involved and each case can so sharply contrast that a single blueprint seems improbable. I would like to hear more on all this.

**New subscriber
Corcoran, California**

Having Dunayevskaya's archives available in *N&L* is important because her ideas are relevant to today's world. Her column on "Marx's Humanism Today" showed how different theoreticians related to chapter one of Marx's *Capital* on fetishism, especially the contrast between Althusser and Marxist-Humanism. In our classes here on "Alternatives to Capitalism" we ran into "Marxists" who want to get rid of chapter one of *Capital*. I always criticized Althusser but I didn't know how much of his ideas came from Stalin.

**Iranian friend
Bay Area**

I am encouraged to know about *N&L* after finding the article in the December issue on the life of Charles Denby, who was an African American. My indoctrination up to now has been one of relating Marxism to the horrors of Stalin or Russian history. Alas, I can now say that U.S. history is no less atrocious.

**New reader
Indiana**

The death of both Ronald Reagan and the Polish activist Jacek Kuron in the same week made me think of the importance of Jaclard's essay on the "Concreteness of Marxist-Humanism." Reagan said "there is no alternative" to existing capitalism. Kuron started out as a left-wing activist who wanted to replace Stalinism with a self-managed society run by workers, but by the late 1980s he ended up agreeing with the basic ideas of Reagan. The "self-limiting revolution" turned into "instead of revolution." That's pretty much set the tone of everything we've confronted since then. As I see it, Jaclard's essay is telling us that the role of News and Letters Committees is to try to take the discussion in the opposite direction.

**Supporter
Los Angeles**

the height of its power and was inspiring the whole population. The energy and vision of the ordinary people seemed to transform everything. I was especially interested in his position on Marxism, since I knew about the letter he had co-authored with Karol Modzelewski analyzing Poland as state-capitalist, and Raya Dunayevskaya had asked me to find out if he had read her *Marxism and Freedom*. It turned out that he had never heard of it—a book like that would never get past the state censors. But what was shocking was when he completely disavowed Marxism, saying that trying to use Marxism to understand present-day economics is the same as looking at a Neanderthal man to try to understand today's man.

**Andy Phillips
Detroit**

THE OKLAHOMA SCENE

The recent WTO finding against the U.S. cotton subsidies was criticized by the congressman from eastern Oklahoma, which is an agricultural state that produces cotton. I believe that, in this case, the WTO is basically correct because the subsidies unfairly hurt farmers in Africa. As regards exporting manufacturing jobs, in my local community a Wrangler (VF Jeanswear) plant was closed in order to move production to Mexico, even though the labor force is non-unionized and Oklahoma became a "Right-to-Work" state in 2002. A large number of the former workers are women who have sewed for much of their working life. This has elicited anti-Mexico sentiment while being disastrous for a small community, which had upgraded its water and sewer system to accommodate the jeans and western clothing factory. It seems unlike-

ly that the former Wrangler employees will find employment locally, so they will either have to move or remain unemployed/early retired. Some have accused Wrangler of being "unpatriotic" and demanded that they remove the American flag in front of their distribution center located in town, which still remains in operation.

**Allen Mui
Seminole, OK**

WOMEN'S LIBERATION

Professional basketball player Kobe Bryant was charged with raping a 19-year-old hotel employee in Vail, Colo. a full year ago, but the tone of favoritism for the defendant was clear when he was allowed to play the entire basketball season. Only now has the court set a trial date. His fans, including young women, cheered him at every game, while his defense team, including a woman lawyer, Pamela Mackey, used the time to mount a vicious attack against the victim, forcing a court ruling banning reference to her as a victim and trying to get every aspect of her sexual, medical and mental history opened up to court scrutiny. The fact that a woman is leading this charge reminds us of a lesson learned early by the Women's Liberation Movement—all women are not my sisters.

**Women's liberationist
Chicago**

STRUGGLE FOR GAY AND LESBIAN RIGHTS



The general credibility of the Lead article "Fight the Christian Right's attacks on women's lives" (April 2004 *N&L*) is undermined by the hyperbole of some of the claims made. The point-blank dismissal of the possibility of reform—"sexist, racist, homophobic capitalism cannot be reformed"—struck me as ultra-left. Reforms can be won, and are won, when people struggle for them, and gay rights is a good example.

In my lifetime, Britain has changed from a society where sex between men was a criminal offense, to one where it is unlawful for an employer to discriminate on grounds of sexual orientation. Gay marriage is an idea whose time has only just arrived, an idea of the 21st century. Rosa Luxemburg was surely correct when she wrote of "an indissoluble tie between social reforms and revolution," although her description of the struggle for reforms as means and the social revolution as goal is not yet the full story, as social revolution is also a means—to a world where oppression will be something people learn about in history books.

**Richard Bunting
England**

I am in total agreement with T.D. Coleman on the question of gay marriage assimilation and glad to see someone write about the issue this way (May 2004 *N&L*). Many people here in the GLBT community have a false sense of security now thinking that things will get better if they can marry. Some say it is a blow against Bush. I am not against gay marriage but feel we should be concentrating on the increase in violence in the community, as well as against women in the U.S. and in other countries. I'd like to see us working on anti-war efforts and against capitalism along with the issues that directly relate to sexuality.

**Suzanne Rose
Washington**

THE COURT OF HISTORY

Now that even the Serb "Republic" has admitted that the 1995 Srebrenica massacre of 7,000 Muslims took place, those on the Left who denied it ever happened—not just Stalinists but also anarchists like Peter Staudenmejer—need to apologize for their gross errors.

**Bosnian support activist
Chicago**

Did the Chicago police murder May Molina Ortiz?

CHICAGO—May Molina, 55, was a founder of the organization Families of the Wrongfully Convicted. She worked hard to free her own son, Salvador Ortiz, and others who have suffered wrongful convictions at the hands of corrupt and brutal police officers. May has been a fixture at all kinds of activities for social justice from opposition to police brutality and the death penalty to anti-war marches.

May's life ended in a holding cell at the Belmont and Western police station here on Wednesday, May 26. She had been detained by police Monday night, along with her son Michael Ortiz, on the suspicion of possession of a controlled substance.

While May was in custody police denied requests by her lawyer and family members to deliver her medicine or provide her with medical attention. May was wheelchair-bound, diabetic, asthmatic and had a thyroid condition. She was thrown into a naked cell with a steel bench, for over a day, before being found dead.

The police leaked word to the press that bags of "heroin" had been found in May's apartment and that she had a number of packets of heroin in her esophagus and stomach when she died.



May Molina

From the first this strained credibility, in simple physiological terms—how could something still be in one's esophagus after more than 24 hours?

Furthermore, the substance that police had claimed was heroin tested negative, and turned out to be just candle-making supplies. Michael Ortiz was released without charges on June 16—he had been cruelly and pointlessly held during his mother's funeral, which he was forced to miss.

May's death certificate says "Pending toxicology report" and her family was told that it may take up to six months to complete that report.

There are a lot of unanswered questions and a call has gone out for an independent investigation.

May's family and supporters attempted to deliver a letter requesting this to United States Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald, but it was refused delivery by his office. A series of vigils and demonstrations have been held here since May's death.

This is a truly defining moment in the movement against police brutality and corruption in Chicago—something that the City surely realizes, as well. Long-time activist Mary L. Johnson, who supported the call for an independent investigator, report-

Iraq abuse no surprise to U.S. prisoners!

SUMNER, ILL.—To struggle may not be our individual choice, but struggle is very much a part of us. Fallen prey for over 400 years to cruel, racist evil and inhuman suffering, where was the outcry for Afrikans? Where were the UN, international laws, World Courts, Senate committee hearings?

If the soldiers who perpetrated the acts of torture and abuse on the Iraqi prisoners were prison guards here in the U.S., then obviously that will tell anyone where there's smoke, there's fire. We, as prisoners in the U.S. penal system, are more than familiar with the techniques that were used by soldiers in Iraq.

For years now our criminal in-justice system has consistently upheld such extreme treatment of its prisoners. Under the guise of "security" the high courts have allowed for retired farmers, Klansmen, recover-

ing alcoholics, etc, to work as prison guards with full authority to strip prisoners completely naked in mass groups, ordering them to bend over at the waist and pull our buttocks apart while the white demons laugh and giggle, all in an effort to humiliate the prisoners.

Those who refuse to dehumanize themselves are viciously attacked while their arms are handcuffed behind their backs. This attack is carried out, by guards weighing over 300 pounds, with mace, huge stacks, shields and steel-toed boots, beating prisoners unconscious and forcefully probing their buttocks. The guards often use racial slurs and spit on the prisoners, who are usually Afrikan or Hispanic.

In the maximum institutions this occurs daily and in medium facilities periodically. At no time has there been a public outcry or investigation by any senator or congressman, state or federal.

So tell me again, what's all the fuss about? Iraqis who? The only reasonable statement I can make about those who have tasted a small portion of what we as Afrikans live with on a daily basis is, welcome to the struggle!

—Mahdi, Lawrence Correctional Center

Beating covered up

PARCHMAN, MISS.—In the early hours of Nov. 24, 2003, inmate Christopher Smiley, a psychiatric patient who suffered from many illnesses, threw urine on a female officer named Bertha Rimpson. Afterwards, he was removed from his cell and taken to a suicide management cell where he was beaten for ten minutes by officers Rimpson, Morgan, Forrest, Deer, Williams and Little. He was badly bruised all over his back, shoulders, and one of his arms.

Two days later, while he was stripped and in the management cell, he hanged himself. The day before he had mailed a letter to his aunt telling her, as best he could, what happened. He told her he was in fear for his life. She contacted the NAACP. When they confronted Mississippi Department of Corrections Commissioner Christopher Epps, he denied that Smiley was beaten and said that he sustained the injuries because he fell down while he was in restraint gear. He also told this lie to the biggest newspaper in Mississippi, *The Clarion-Ledger*.

One morning about two months ago, officer Rimpson threatened my whole tier by saying, "I'm going to start pissing in ya'll's food." Also, since the incident, she has been walking around telling other inmates in this building, "Hang yourself," "Kill yourself," and "You'll be next." She seems proud of the incident. When officer Little saw Smiley's body after he hanged himself, he laughed out loud.

I complained to officials in the prison about officer Rimpson's threats. (I couldn't complain to officials about the beating and hanging because I was not on the same tier he was when it happened. Everything that I just said about the beating was told to me by officers and inmates.)

I also wrote the Mississippi Ethics Commission. They referred my letter to the Internal Affairs department here. The head of I.A. and the woman who investigated Smiley's beating and death talked to me. They would not discuss officer Rimpson's threats; all they did was try to convince me that Smiley was never beaten. When I told her that everyone knows what happened (which is true; all the guards readily admit what happened and have had conversations with me and with other inmates about it), she told me that it didn't happen. I asked her to tell me what really happened and she gave me no response.

The prison staff is supposed to be here to make sure that inmates don't escape or cause themselves or others any harm; they aren't here to beat and threaten them. Prison officials are aware of everything that happened, but there is still no justice for Mr. Smiley, his family, and inmates who have to live with threats and the fear that they, as Rimpson said, will "be next."

—Parchman inmate



by Robert Taliaferro

Growing up in a certain period in U.S. history, we had—as a country—often been forced to take sides when it came to principles of faith. One cannot escape the current debate about the phrase "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance and the reasons why that phrase exists at all. It was indicative of the times and of how even concepts of faith could be politicized.

The "under God" phrase was added in order to distinguish the difference between a capitalist society like the U.S. from a Communist society like the (then) Soviet Union. Fifty years later, debates over faith and philosophy have once again attained the status that they did during the Cold War era, and now these debates are being extended to historically secular activities.

BUSH POLITICIZES FAITH

Bush's call for more faith-based programs is an example of how one's faith can be politicized and how such references can be discriminatory in nature even when they are meant to be otherwise. Additionally, the faith-based initiatives currently being proposed at all levels of government stand contrary to the doctrine that is behind the principle that church and state should be separate.

One of the distinct problems of any faith-based initiative or program is whose faith should be the foundation for the concept. In the U.S. Christianity is the overwhelming doctrine of faith, and if programs are defined based on that specific faith—and in turn openly supported by government—then we have governmental infringement of the right to believe in some other philosophy that is not consistent with the government-sponsored program.

In a post-9/11 world we have found that despotic faith-initiatives can influence action and political idealism regardless of the name one gives to a god, and as such, can result in notions that are not consistent with equality or justice.

Non-secular programs, despite what supporters might think, have never been positive or truly successful simply because they often force people to choose—first a religious concept and then the program this con-

cept supports.

Though supporters of such programs would choose to debate that opinion, we see this in many areas and are just now recognizing the impact of these new faith-based initiatives.

Such organizations as Planned Parenthood are under attack by faith-based coalitions, thus threatening to weaken or eventually overturn *Roe v. Wade*. Drug and alcohol centers have become more "faith"-oriented and even state-run programs in prisons are rarely without their "religious/faith" elements, which often result in prisoners refusing programs based on that premise even though they may be required if that person wishes to attain their freedom.

These initiatives are not new. Historically, faith-based initiatives funded despotic governments, supported colonialism, attempted to justify slavery and racism, and continue to be discriminatory in nature because of religious arrogance that exists with all faiths.

FREEDOM AS THE ESSENCE OF HUMANITY

Religious faith is a concept that is not a bad thing and can exist in many forms—even in Marxist-Humanism—but it should not overshadow the inherent purpose of an idea or reason for a program's existence, and it should not conduct itself in a manner that could be considered as discriminatory, especially if it is a program that is conducted in a government facility or under government supervision. When we move towards a purely faith-based premise for every aspect of our lives, the only destination that we can arrive at will be war—either one of class, one of distinction, or one of culture—and as such one of enslavement, for faith is fickle and arbitrary. Faith, or religious doctrine, is not synonymous with right or freedom. As Karl Marx noted, freedom is so much the essence of man that even its opponents realize it: "No man fights freedom; he fights at most the freedom of others. Every kind of freedom has therefore always existed, only at one time as a special privilege, at another time as a universal right." There are certain things that should always be inherent rights and should never be governed by faith-based imperatives...freedom, equality and justice.

ed that her daughter-in-law's home was broken into by police who said that they were looking for drugs, which they didn't find. But they did hold guns on the small children in the house.

Michael Ortiz and many others have made the point that the struggle for justice for Salvador Ortiz will continue.

—Gerard Emmett

Torture in Chicago

CHICAGO—This country's people try to act outraged about torture and abuse in Iraq. But just about every Black man who has been arrested has been subjected to this type of abuse.

The only difference is the taking of pictures in Iraq. If those hadn't come out, there would not have been any proof. We have always said it was white racist Americans in the armed forces who are training in torture techniques. When they come home, they sign up as police officers or prison guards where they can get away with this type of injustice to their fellow Americans.

For the past 25 years, we have been trying to educate people about the torture and abuse in this very city. Police Commander Jon Burge led a systematic torture ring that practiced suffocation, electroshock, burning, beating, and even murder, in order to get suspects to make false confessions. He came back from the army as a lieutenant and targeted the poorest streets on the South Side of Chicago.

Then-States Attorney Richard M. Daley used the confessions of 100 Black men on his resume to become mayor. Sometimes I wish, "If only we had some of our Black politicians standing beside us." But they won't because they have all been endorsed by Mayor Daley. But it is their Black sisters and brothers who elected them to office. For what? So they can forget all about those who put them there in the first place?

There should not be one-sided justice. There should not be racism. Nor should there be any torture or police brutality. And yet all this exists in our great land of opportunity and democracy. My son, and so many others, weren't considered innocent until proven guilty. They were all marked just by being Black, poor and uneducated. Yet you say the system works? For whom? I say, for the white and rich.

We hear men like Daley and States Attorney Dick Devine manipulate the press, the police, the legislature, and the rest of our government; they are men who think they are above the law. As the mother of a wrongfully convicted person, I say that no man should stand that tall! Let's bring them down—Mayor Daley, Burge and his detectives, and Devine—and hold them accountable.

—Mildred Henry

For more information contact *Enough Is Enough!* Campaign, P.O. Box 377535, Chicago, IL 60637; enoughisenoughcampaign@yahoo.com.

Faith, politics and freedom

Reagan's influence survives his passing

Former President Reagan's demise on June 6 after a long illness was a godsend to a week-long media spectacle of this country's state religion, carefully planned by his followers over a decade ago to milk it politically to assure the continuance of Reaganism.

An army of Reaganites filled TV screens in a wholesale revision of history with memories of this supposedly "beloved" leader. Across the political spectrum everyone hailed his "optimism." And grounds for "optimism" today, even among the most ardent supporters of Bush's war and occupation in Iraq, is just what is missing of Reagan's heirs.

Reagan was the godfather of Bush's foreign policy team that totally inverts reality and fantasy and equates "freedom and democracy" with U.S. militarized capitalism's struggle for global dominance. Reagan laid the ground for today's militarism in 1986 when he unilaterally staged a foray in the Gulf of Sidra and bombed Tripoli, killing many innocent civilians. He established the right of the commander-in-chief to commit state terror anywhere anytime in the name of fighting "terrorists." The "Great Communicator" was thoroughly adept at substituting fantasy for reality.

He dubbed contra terrorists "freedom fighters" as they staged attacks from Honduras on Nicaragua's revolutionary government, which came to power through a popular overthrow of the U.S. backed Somoza dictatorship. So intent was Reagan on backing back that history that he gave the contras covert logistical support, illegally funneling them money and arms gained from equally illegal arms sales to Iran in exchange for hostages.

REAGAN AND SADDAM

While Iran's Khomeini and Reagan secretly helped each other, that didn't stop Reagan from sending the current Secretary of Defense, Rumsfeld, as his special envoy to Saddam Hussein during the eight-year slaughter of the Iran-Iraq war. Saddam started that war but soon encountered serious setbacks. Rumsfeld went to promote the U.S. and Iraq's "common interests" with financial aid to help rebuild Iraq's oil pipeline and buy some military equipment. Rumsfeld's embrace of Saddam Hussein came just when Saddam was using chemical weapons on the battlefield against Iran.

Reagan also dubbed "freedom fighters" the most reactionary religious fanatics fighting the Russians in Afghanistan, sending them half a billion dollars a year in military support while pushing the Saudis into doing the same through their man in Afghanistan, Osama bin Laden. This helped lay the ground for more reactionary consequences we see today.

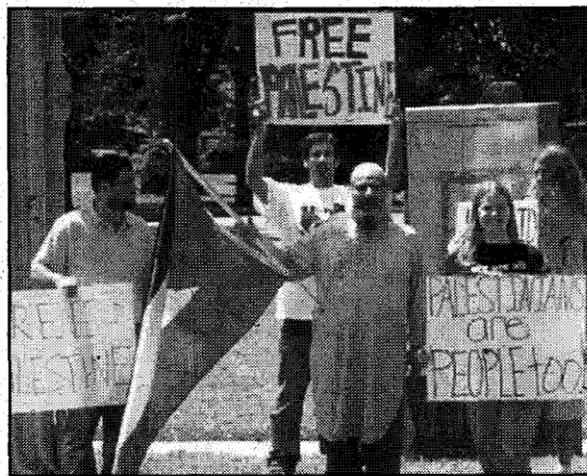
Reagan's militarism tremendously expanded the state at the cost of human services. The biggest budget deficits in history were piled up deliberately to choke resources for social spending and roll back gains made by workers going back to the New Deal. Today, more than ever, militarization and budget deficits con-

tinued as capital's weapon against the poor. Reagan's war against the poor was coupled with an attack against hard won affirmative action gains by African Americans in the Civil Rights Movement as well as an attack on labor rights initiated with the firing of striking air traffic controllers of PATCO.

A CHANGED WORLD

One of the grossest rewrites of history is to credit Reagan's military buildup with the collapse of the Russian empire. Such an assertion besmirches the memory of the real heroes, the masses in Russia and especially East Europe who, with much sacrifice in decades of long struggle, brought down Russian state-

Activists support Palestinian people



MEMPHIS, TENN.—Two dozen activists gathered here on June 5 at the street corner of Poplar and East Parkway, demanding an end to U.S. aid to Israel until Israel ends its occupation of Palestinian territories (West Bank and Gaza). That day marked the 37th anniversary of Israel's brutal and illegal military occupation, which causes immense suffering for the Palestinian people, creating a backlash of terror against Israelis as well. Since September 2000, well over 3,000 Palestinians have been killed, along with almost 1,000 Israelis. The overwhelming majority of casualties on both sides are civilians. While the killing of civilians on both sides should be utterly condemned, it is obvious that the occupation is the cause of it all. The U.S. supports Israel with \$3 billion in direct aid, over two thirds of which is military aid. That is excluding about \$2 billion in indirect aid. The demonstrators were part of a national campaign to end this aid so that U.S. tax dollars do not support human rights abuses.

—Omar Baddar

Resegregated schools are U.S. reality

(Continued from page 1)

African Americans. However, Cosby refuses to admit this division as he railed against "senseless crimes and violence." Yes, senseless crimes are awful. But they can't be stopped just by offering a moral world to the "lower economic people" with the pretext that it would transcend the world of racism and poverty that Cosby's "lower economic people" live in.

Cosby is so successful and wealthy that neither poverty nor racism can do him harm. But the overwhelming majority of African Americans do not have Cosby's shields of racism.

SEPARATE AND UNEQUAL

Recently, Charles Ogletree, an African American chosen to attend Stanford University under an affirmative action program inspired by the Supreme Court's *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision, published a new book, *All Deliberate Speed: Reflection on the First Half Century of Brown v. Board of Education*.

In the book Ogletree argues that while the *Brown v. Board of Education* case was historic, it was opposed and diluted by the government, political officials, and anti-civil rights activist organizations. Black America finds itself segregated and under more threats than it has been since the Civil Rights era.

Racism still haunts America's public school system. Topeka's integrated schools are moving in a troubling direction. The minority students in its public schools are increasing at two percent a year, from 30% in 1991 to more than 51% today. In some Topeka Schools, nearly four-fifths of the students are nonwhite.

One reason for this diminishing number of white students in Topeka's schools could be that middle class white families are sending their children to private schools or have moved out of Topeka. Today there is little enthusiasm for a further court-ordered desegregation even among Topeka's Black establishment.

Indeed, there is no alarm among any of Topeka's political leaders about the re-segregation of its public schools. This indicates that after a half century the decision by the Supreme Court has left no influence on the thinking or the activity of many present day Black and white Americans. To many, it's an old political decision that has little or nothing to do with their immedi-

ate economic and social conditions and problems.

This reported indifference to the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision in no way diminishes the historic importance of that decision, but it does reject the political nature of that decision which sees human beings only as abstract citizens with constitutional rights and separated from all other human beings.

CONTRADICTIONS IN CIVIL SOCIETY

Karl Marx said: "Human emancipation will only be complete when real, individual man has absorbed into himself the abstract citizen; when as an individual man in his everyday life, in his work, and in his relationships, he becomes a species-being and when he recognizes and organizes his own powers as social power so that he no longer separates this social power from himself as political power."

Those lines from Marx can be objectively seen in the history of the African-American struggles for freedom. From the Reconstruction Period down to the Civil Rights Movement, the social power of the African-American masses has often been transformed into a struggle to gain political power to compel the government, i.e. the state, to stamp out racism, end poverty, build housing for the poor and stop segregating African Americans. In other words, political reform.

However, reform did not put an end to poverty or racism in the U.S. Nevertheless, this failure did not prompt many to take a critical look at the inability of political power to change the social relations and conditions created by capitalism.

The Civil Rights Movement shook up this nation and revealed to the world that it was not the "cradle of liberty" but a racist nation that segregated African Americans in schools, in restaurants, on buses and in urban slums. The African-American middle class thought there was a political remedy for this racism. They thought if enough African Americans got elected to Congress, laws would be enacted to end the practices of racism in all of its various social forms.

This so-called entrance into the power structure by the African-American middle class leaders clearly indicated that they were leaving the mass movement for positions in the political structure of capitalism. Their departure only ended a phase of the ongoing struggle against racism in the U.S.

capitalist totalitarianism.

Today's glossing of history is based on counterrevolution that emerges so soon and often from within revolution as it pushes aside the aspirations of the masses. It is not enough to be merely against, whether that was Russian state-capitalism or U.S. imperialism's reach for global capitalism, when counterrevolution is itself so much a part of the mix of opposition.

From the beginning of his presidency Reagan wanted to overturn the revolution in tiny Grenada—to try to erase from history the idea that a new freedom can come out of revolution. The opportunity was handed to him in 1983 as a counterrevolution came from within the Grenada Revolution when a faction jailed and eventually murdered Maurice Bishop, the leader of the New Jewel Movement. The new government turned down the new government who came to demand Bishop's release. "What happens after the revolution?" is a question we have to address now if we are to overcome Reaganism's hold on the prevailing political discourse.

—Ron Brokmeyer

Joys of gay marriage

OAKLAND, CAL.—We had a great time on our wedding day in San Francisco, when the city issued marriage licenses to gay and lesbian couples. We experienced tremendous solidarity. It was a torrential downpour that day and we had to wait for over six hours straight in the rain. All kinds of people came by, gay, straight, kids, etc. A woman was handing out newly-purchased dry socks from a huge garbage bag full of them. Another woman gave out frames (for the wedding pictures).

Once we got inside, there was still another three hours of waiting. But everybody was in the best mood. Many people working there were volunteers; all were kind and helpful. They helped to make sure your forms were filled out properly, so that the applications could not be rejected on technicalities.

The Right is making a technical argument that those licenses are invalid because the forms were changed to say "spouse one" and "spouse two," rather than "groom" and "bride."

A lot of couples really wanted to get married. Some were together 27 years. Some came with their families, their children. It had a very personal face, very moving.

We saw every type of marriage: civil ceremonies, but also ministers, or rabbis. It was great to get the actual marriage license. As much as you don't want to have the state mess in your life, to get this official document that everyone else can have but it has been denied to you is so very powerful. It is an official piece of paper, which made us feel less on "the outside." You can't make rational political decisions (not to have the state mess in your private life) when you can't have something that everyone else can have.

It's hard not to take something you never had, never thought you could get. Once you have it, it's easier to give up.

It's almost like what happened to Blacks. It is in some ways comparable, but in some ways not. A better analogy would be that the state is offering benefits to some people, but not to others. The social and cultural ramifications are not as great for gay couples as for Blacks. The inter-racial marriage situation is more comparable. Comparison to slavery is not right, it trivializes both.

—Margo and Katy

QUEERNOTES

by Suzanne Rose

JAMAICA—Brian Williamson, a leading gay rights activist in Jamaica, was stabbed and killed in his home. He was found with multiple stab wounds in his neck. Police are denying the murder was a homophobic attack, claiming that a missing safe suggests it was a robbery. A gay rights group, J-FLAG, is saying that because Williamson was one of the country's most visible gay men, they consider the stabbing a hate crime. The murder comes just a few days after Amnesty International published a report strongly criticizing Jamaica over its stance on sexual diversity. Many in Jamaica are forced to leave their communities after being threatened or attacked on suspicion of being gay.

BRAZIL—Sao Paulo now holds the record for the largest Pride parade in the world. An estimated 1.1 million people marched through the city's main downtown thoroughfare.

KANSAS—The Kansas Supreme Court agreed to hear an appeal on behalf of Mathew Limon, who has been sentenced to 17 years in prison for an act of consensual oral sex with another teenager. Under Kansas law, no one under age 19 has the legal right to have sex, but authorities turn a blind eye if the couple is heterosexual. Limon's lawsuit has already run its course through the state courts and was sent back to the Kansas Court of Appeals from the U.S. Supreme Court. Limon has already served four years for his "crime."

BOSTON—Some graduating seniors protested the presence of Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney during commencement ceremonies because of his opposition to same-sex marriage. As he approached the podium many in the class of 1,100 stood and turned their backs. Others booed and raised armbands in support of gay and lesbian rights.

OUR LIFE AND TIMES

European elections and French strikes

by Kevin A. Barry

In a period when some have viewed the European Union as a counterweight to the U.S., recent events have called this into question. While the European public remains decisively opposed to Bush's war and occupation of Iraq, support for European unity is not nearly as widespread, as shown by the June 12 elections for the European Parliament and the extremely difficult negotiations over a European constitution.

Not only was turnout on June 12 lower than in past years, but in several countries, nationalist parties opposed to European unity also gained headway. This was especially true in Britain, where the small UK Independence Party received a stunning 17% of the vote, just behind Labor (22%), and the Conservatives (27%). For Britain's Tony Blair, it was a stinging defeat,

Saudi Arabia murder

The gruesome beheading of Paul Johnson, a U.S. engineer and employee of Lockheed Martin, in Saudi Arabia on June 18, has been one of the latest in a series of terrorist attacks by "Al Qaeda on the Arabian Peninsula." A few hours after the announcement of Johnson's murder, the Saudi police reported that it had killed Al Muqrin, an Al Qaeda leader. According to an Islamic fundamentalist website, however, Johnson had been kidnapped by Al Qaeda members who were aided by Saudi security forces.

The latest wave of terrorist attacks has targeted foreign workers as well as Saudi citizens. In April, a massive suicide car bomb tore through the Saudi Arabian police headquarters in Riyadh. It killed four and wounded 148. On May 1, gunmen shot Saudi and foreign employees at the office of ABB Lummus, an oil contractor in Yanbu. They killed five and tied the naked body of one victim to the back of their car and dragged him around, boasting of a "Jihad" against the "infidels" before they were killed by security forces.

On May 31, gunmen stormed into an office and then a housing compound in Khobar. They rampaged through the homes in search of Westerners and took many hostages. During a 25-hour standoff, they killed 22 foreign civilians including Asians and Africans. Most of the gunmen then fled.

Saudi Arabia is home to six million foreign workers and professionals who are from neighboring Arab countries as well as India, Pakistan, the Phillipines, South Korea, England and the U.S. They constitute a quarter of the country's 23 million inhabitants. The Saudi kingdom from its inception has been the product of an alliance with the Islamic fundamentalist Wahabi sect. The fact that some fundamentalists have turned against some sectors of the Saudi leadership, does not make the Saudi regime less reactionary.

The U.S. administration is not only concerned about a drop in Saudi oil exports but depends on several trillion dollars of Saudi deposits in U.S. banks and stock market investments that buttress the U.S. economy.

—Shella Sahar

as was the local election a few days earlier when his Labor Party did not even manage to place third. While it was a defeat for Blair, these elections were hardly a victory for anti-war forces, with right-of-center parties gaining the most. One exception was the London mayoralty election, where leftist Laborite Ken Livingstone coasted to victory.

If anti-war sentiment sunk Blair, it did not seem to help Germany's Gerhard Schroeder, a vocal opponent of Bush's war, in the Europarlament elections. With unemployment standing at over 10% and rising, Christian Democrats played on fears over the economy and immigration to score a two-to-one victory over Schroeder's Social Democrats, who experienced their worst showing since World War II.

France's President Jacques Chirac is the European head of state who is the most prominent critic of Bush's war. Again, however, an anti-war stance did not shield his government from voter anger. The Socialist Party scored an almost two-to-one victory over Chirac's conservative alliance in the Europarlament elections.

It was in France that jockeying among bourgeois parties gave way to something more fundamental, a determined effort by the working class to place its own stamp upon national politics. For months, Chirac's government has been pressing forward with plans to privatize the electrical power industry. Fearing layoffs and cutbacks in wages, benefits, and working conditions, electrical power workers have held strikes and mass demonstrations.

Despite only hesitant support or even opposition from union leaders, strikers cut off electric power to

parts of the national transportation system on June 7, disrupting trains and subways for over 500,000 commuters. With a touch of Gallic humor, masked workers wearing union badges also disconnected the power supply to the homes of Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin and several other politicians who favor privatization. So far, much of the public seems to support the workers, rather than the increasingly unpopular Chirac-Raffarin government.

Serbs admit massacre

Nearly nine years after the event, Bosnian Serb officials have made a public, written admission that their forces murdered thousands of Bosnian Muslims in Srebrenica in July 1995. The leadership of the separatist Serbian entity within multiethnic Bosnia confessed under heavy economic pressure from United Nations officials. However, they were careful not to specify the actual number killed—7,000. Nor did they use the correct word to describe their actions—genocide.

While the report gave the locations of 32 previously undiscovered mass graves, it did not reveal the whereabouts of war criminals Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, both still at large. It did, however, mention coordination with police from Serbia proper at Srebrenica in 1995. That could spell trouble for Slobodan Milosevic who, in his defense against genocide charges at the Hague Tribunal, has denied such links.

This admission by the Bosnian Serb leadership seriously undermines the pattern of obfuscation, conspiracy theories, and outright lies that has characterized Serbia's defenders over the past decade. Unfortunately, such defenders have included a few prominent leftist intellectuals like Noam Chomsky, Ramsey Clark, and Michael Parenti. For years, they and the Serb nationalists have argued that reports of Serbian genocide were distorted if not doctored by powerful Western political and economic interests out to crush Serbia for its supposedly independent stance. Will they now issue a self-critique?

Nigeria unrest

In June, the Nigeria Labor Congress (NLC) called a general strike against high oil prices. These have doubled since the government eliminated price controls a year ago, but the strike helped to restore those controls. However, the NLC's opportunistic leadership has not offered much of a challenge to the underlying social and economic disaster in today's Nigeria, an oil-rich land where nearly three-quarters of the population are forced to live on less than \$1 per day.

In recent years, mass anger has been diverted from local and international capital and into ethno-religious conflict. So far, 2004 has been a particularly bloody year. The hot spot is Plateau State, located in the middle of the country, where the predominantly Muslim North meets the largely Christian and animist South. The most serious outbreak occurred on May 2, when well-armed members of the predominantly Christian Tarok ethnic group descended upon the town of Yelwe. When they were finished with their murderous work, 630 Muslim civilians from the Hausa and Fulani groups lay dead. These racist attackers dare to call the Hausa and Fulani "settlers" rather than residents of the area, despite the fact that they have lived there for over a century!

The entire region has been marked by conflicts over land between Tarok farmers and their pastoral Muslim neighbors. Predictably, retaliatory violence soon broke out in the North, in Kano, where Muslim rioters drove out 30,000 Christians and killed hundreds. There seems to be no end to this cycle. If it continues to deepen, Nigeria faces the prospect of a return to military rule in the name of stability.

Protest in Mexico

At least 111 protesters were arrested May 28 in Guadalajara, Mexico during the march against the third summit of heads of state of European Union (EU), Latin American and Caribbean nations. There are reports that many of those arrested were forced to strip naked and were left in a room where a jailer would look in on them periodically and shout insults. In addition to the march on the day of the summit, there were weeklong activities leading up to it by many organizations who came to Guadalajara from throughout Mexico, including students from UNAM (in Mexico City), and a delegation from Chiapas.

A few days before the march, in one of the official meetings leading up to the summit, the EU leaders voted down a proposal to include a paragraph in the summit's final declaration condemning the U.S.'s torture of prisoners in Abu Ghraib. Bush's biggest EU allies, Tony Blair and Silvio Berlusconi, did not attend.

This was the third such summit between the EU and Latin American and Caribbean leaders, the first being in Brazil in 1999 and the second in Spain in 2002. Since the last meeting, the growth in the EU to 25 member states has given some hope to leaders in Latin America that their relationship to the EU can help them counteract the failures of commercial agreements with the U.S., especially NAFTA, as the EU has funds to help its poorest members.

—Mitch Weerth

Occupation in Spain



More than 2,000 *sin papeles* (immigrants without papers) occupied Barcelona Cathedral and Santa Maria del Pie church, June 5, calling for unconditional recognition. Police violently evacuated the Cathedral and at least 25 immigrants face deportation. Many are forced to live in abandoned buildings in deplorable conditions.

Independence Media Center/Barcelona

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