

## WORKSHOP TALKS

### Overtime 'reform' to extend working day

Bush's Labor Department claims that their new rules on overtime pay will benefit many more workers on the lower pay scale than those it hurts on the higher pay scale. The real impact of the measure is to deny overtime pay for much of the non-unionized professional workforce—the most prominent examples belonging to categories such as nursing, clerical, and other administrative and technical service industries.

Less than ten percent of the American workforce today even belongs to an official labor union. Many workers don't realize that even though they are "professional," or might consider themselves proudly non-union, what they enjoy today in pay and prestige in fact came as collateral benefit from achievements of a movement which was once "union and proud" inside manufacturing, a sector which capital has undermined by moving jobs offshore.

Ironically, it was our own union bureaucracy which got comfortable with the business unionism of wages and benefits. But by ignoring working conditions, and accommodating to capital's revolutionizing processes, business unionism ultimately led to our own demise. Nevertheless, the historical labor movement, especially what Marx specifically singled out as the protracted battle over the "normal working day," was a crucial struggle for all workers, whether or not they belong to a union. Whether in manufacturing or the service industries, we workers are more connected to each other than ever before.

Clever company executives redefine whole categories of their workforce as independent contractors in order to deny them the overtime pay which decades of the union movement succeeded in institutionalizing. But it is not just a matter of pay, as bureaucrats pro or con in the debate have put an inordinate amount of focus on.

In fact, the overtime premium pay we union mem-

Continued on page 3

## BLACK/RED VIEW

### Bunche then and now

by John Alan

The July/August 2004 issue of NAACP's *Crisis* magazine ran an article by Charles P. Henry entitled "Ralph Bunche at 100: A Diplomat for the Ages." The motive for publishing this article was to remember and commemorate Ralph Bunche on the hundredth anniversary of his birth, Aug. 7, 1904, in Detroit.

Many African Americans are delighted that Ralph Bunche had a presence in the United Nations. They are rightly proud of his ability to negotiate an armistice agreement between Israel and Egypt for which he was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize in 1950. In 1954 Bunche was appointed the under secretary-general of the United Nations. In other words, Ralph Bunche had a blazingly successful career in the UN.

In March 1965 Bunche participated in the Civil Rights Movement's Selma to Montgomery March with 50,000 people and another Nobel Peace Prize winner, Martin Luther King Jr. Bunche appreciated the role and power of a mass movement. He had projected, with other young members of the NAACP, a need for such a movement.

Charles P. Henry writes:

In late August of 1933, Bunche and 32 other young Black intellectuals gathered at the estate of NAACP president Joel Spingarn in Amenia, N.Y., to discuss the organization's response to the Great Depression. Harris, Frazier and older NAACP leaders such as DuBois and James Weldon Johnson. They wanted the NAACP to forge alliances with white labor and address the economic needs of the Black masses. Their advice was ultimately rejected.

Bunche later wrote, when he was assisting Gunnar Myrdal in preparation of *An American Dilemma*:

The NAACP does not have a mass basis. It never assumed the proportion of a crusade, has it never,

Continued on page 8

## Beneath election rhetoric mass actions reveal divides

by Joshua Skolnik

**NEW YORK**—Through-out a week of protests against the Republican National Convention (RNC) in August and September, the streets were flooded with the voices, bodies and bicycles of the second America demanding an end to the Bush administration. Hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers and visitors from as far away as California and Puerto Rico called for ousting Bush through means ranging from the election of John Kerry, to impeachment, to social revolution.

While many signs and buttons simply proclaimed, "Anyone But Bush" or impugned his competence, many demonstrators are challenging U.S. society on a deeper level, demanding its radical reorganization. Moreover they do so with a clear idea that the situation will not be ameliorated simply by the election of a Democrat to office. For example, feminist groups like Code Pink linked women's rights to peace, and African-American neighborhood organizations linked racism, lack of housing, police brutality and the deficiency of AIDS treatment.

### CITY WORTHY OF MASS PROTEST

The popular sympathies of New Yorkers were clearly with the protesters, evident at the Sunday, Aug. 29 march of nearly half a million people. Bystanders went to their workplaces on a Sunday to cheer from their windows and hang signs and banners in support of the passing marchers. One sign proclaimed, "Iraq is Arabic for Vietnam," while another conveyed a philosophic dimension, stating, "The Light of Reason is Fading." According to some polls, the vast majority of city residents, 80% by one account, opposed the Republicans' presence, with around 10% planning to participate in events.

City officials were not about to let the unpopularity of the Republican Party get in the way of the smooth running of the convention, and attempted at every cor-



A week of protests and debates swept over New York City at the end of August in opposition to the Republican Party's nominating convention and Bush's policies. Women's liberationists marched Aug. 28, above. See more on pages 2 and 10.

ner to keep protests to a minimum. Organizers of the Sunday march had to fight for months over permits and ended up suing unsuccessfully over rallying points. The area around the convention was cordoned off and the police had announced expectations of a thousand arrests per day.

The endless scare tactics by the media, which tried to alarm viewers about anarchists and recently released Weather Underground people descending on the city to cause havoc, deliberately painted protesters in a shade just shy of terrorist. The siege atmosphere created by police, beginning days in advance, by deploying their helicopters with searchlights, barricading streets, and flying their menacing surveillance blimp, undoubtedly intimidated people from venturing into the city or out of their apartments.

Despite this campaign of fear, the weekend before the convention brought the two largest marches, beginning with a 25,000-strong March for Women's Lives across the Brooklyn Bridge with a rally near City Hall, which was organized by NARAL and Planned Parenthood. The title echoed the march on Washington this past April. Both called for women's rights to health care, including the right to abortion (See "Feminists bash Bush," page 2).

Continued on page 10

## The Left fiddles while Darfur burns

by Peter Hudis

On the surface, it may appear that the international community is, finally waking up to the genocide that the Sudanese government has been inflicting against the Black people of Darfur. After refusing for months to use the word "genocide" in reference to attacks by Sudan's government and its Janjaweed militias, Secretary of State Colin Powell stated in early September that genocide is occurring in Darfur.

And on Sept. 20 the UN Security Council passed a resolution calling on Sudan to "resolve" the crisis peacefully and threatened sanctions if it fails to do so. However, there is less substance to these responses than meets the eye.

First, the resolution passed by the UN Security Council limits itself to calling for an international commission to "investigate" charges of war crimes and only says it will "consider" imposing sanctions on Sudan if it does not cooperate. The UN has not taken any steps to actually stop the fighting, which is taking 10,000 lives a month.

Second, the UN and Bush administration are calling on the Sudanese government—the very force which instigated the atrocities in Darfur—to "disarm" the Janjaweed militias, which it has so far shown virtually no interest in doing.

Third, Powell has stated that no action will be taken against Sudan unless the UN Security Council agrees that genocide is occurring in Darfur—something that will almost certainly not happen, since that approach is staunchly opposed by China, which has large investments in Sudan's oil sector, as well as its own oppressed minorities.

As a result, while thousands of people in Darfur continue to die from military attacks and from malnutri-

tion in refugee camps near Sudan's border with Chad, the international community, including the Africa Union, continues to respond with either indifference or watered-down resolutions. Hundreds of thousands more may die within the next few months, unless the Sudanese government is forced to stop its scorched-earth policy in Darfur. Yet the Bush administration has made it clear that it is not interested in directly intervening in Darfur, given the trouble it is facing in trying to keep control of areas (like Iraq) which it deems "vital to U.S. national interests."

### RESPONSE FROM THE LEFT

It should come as no surprise that the U.S. has responded so meekly to the genocide in Darfur; after all, stopping genocide has never been a major factor in its deliberations over whether or not to intervene in crises overseas. The failure of the U.S. to take any action to stop the genocide in Bosnia in the early 1990s (200,000 dead) and in Rwanda in the mid-1990s (800,000 dead) are the most recent cases in point.

More shocking (though perhaps also not surprising) has been the response of many left-wing critics of U.S. foreign policy. Incredibly, many are now denying that genocide is occurring in Darfur at all. Some argue that

Continued on page 11

### ON THE INSIDE

WRITINGS OF RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA •

Karel Kosik's thought ..... Page 4

ESSAY • Marx and science ..... Page 5

EDITORIAL • Terrorism and statism in

Putin's Russia ..... Page 9

ONLINE: [www.newsandletters.org](http://www.newsandletters.org)

# Violence against women is a cause of AIDS

by Terry Moon

Women are getting AIDS and dying from it in far greater numbers than men. That isn't only because women's bodies make them more vulnerable to the disease. It has everything to do with how women are considered less than human, and how women's liberation is under direct attack from the Right.

A new study published in the prestigious medical journal, *Lancet*, confirmed what so many of us suspected: it is because women do not have control of their own lives and bodies that they end up sick and dying. The *Lancet* study showed "clear evidence that South African women whose male partners are violent or controlling face a 50% higher risk of becoming infected

## Feminists bash Bush

**NEW YORK**—You could not miss the strong feminist dimension to the anti-Republican National Convention demonstrations here in August-September. In addition to a March for Women's Lives on Aug. 28 and a rally by the National Organization for Women on Sept. 1, women were flamboyant and vociferous at many other rallies and marches, protesting both Bush's assaults on women's rights and his war-mongering.

But it remains to be seen whether all the woman-power we saw in the streets will go beyond trying to elect Kerry or marching against the war in Iraq—and the next war. What remains to be worked out is how actually to overcome existing social-economic thought relations, as part of the process of women's liberation.

### DIVERSE SPONSORS AND MARCHERS

The 25,000-strong March for Women's Lives was the largest reproductive rights demonstration here in many years. Like last April's million-woman march on Washington that put feminism back on the political map, New York's march, organized by NARAL and Planned Parenthood, had diverse sponsors and participants, including minority and community groups. In addition to trying to save the right to abortion, they demanded health care and lesbian and poor women's rights.

**What future direction may these groups have in common? We can't know from the speakers at the rally, who limited their talks to single issues.**

The National Organization for Women (NOW) participated in many actions—"to denounce the radical Right's attack on our nation" and "to show solidarity with peace, anti-poverty, lesbian rights and workers' rights." But at its rally and elsewhere, NOW focused on getting out the vote for Kerry. NOW actually used the word "revolution" to describe women's involvement in Kerry's campaign. NARAL actually has a poster in the subway contrasting Bush to good Republicans who support legal abortion: our reactionary governor, mayor and former mayor.

If the women's movement puts all its efforts into the election, it can hobble real change, which requires a social-economic revolution to break with capitalism and its anti-human processes. If our thinking doesn't venture beyond trying to win reforms, the idea of freedom can become lost.

### PROCESS OF WOMEN'S LIBERATION

I fear the women's movement will hit dead ends if it does not engender deeper reflection and discussion on the process of women's liberation. It is one thing to vote for Kerry in order to save legal abortion, but quite another to devote all our energy to defeating just one of capitalism's spokespersons, and that only temporarily. In 1992, after Clinton defeated the first President Bush and "saved" abortion, many feminist groups, such as Women's Action Coalition in New York, collapsed. If Kerry wins, will we make the same mistake of thinking we have secured women's rights, when we have merely "won" a little breathing space on one issue?

Throughout the week of anti-Bush events, the most conspicuous group was Code Pink, a feminist-pacifist organization that originated in California. Taking its name from Bush's terrorism alert code, the group's pink motif greatly enlivened our streets, and some members even managed to get inside and disrupt the convention. Code Pink concluded from the protests that "the peace and justice movement in the United States is not only alive and well, it is bursting with energy, boldness and creativity."

I liked Code Pink for its audacity and because its members immediately went from New York to Florida, where they are registering voters and trying to ensure that this year's election is not manipulated nor stolen, in light of recent attempts to suppress the African-American vote again.

**Although it may be more radical than the older national groups, Code Pink also fails to address barriers to women's liberation. Its statement implies that large and creative demonstrations in and of themselves mean the movement is "well."**

But there is no reason to believe that the recent protests have put us in a position to stop sexism, war and injustice from worsening, let alone to transform social and economic relations. We need to beware of turning protests into an end in themselves, of losing sight of the goal of transcending this society, so that women's liberation can be what Marx called the "absolute movement of becoming."

—Anne Jaclard

with HIV than other women."

This appears to be true worldwide. Human Rights Watch (HRW) studied Uganda, a country held by the Bush administration as an example of a successful

## WOMAN AS REASON

campaign against AIDS, and found "that Ugandan women are becoming infected with HIV, and will eventually die of AIDS, because the state is failing to protect them from domestic violence."

### THE FEMINIZATION OF AIDS

Rates of women's infection in Asia have increased sharply in just a few years and are expected to continue to rise. Even in the Middle East, where often women's traditional role is strongly enforced, 55% of those infected are women. Stephen Lewis, U.N. Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, put it most succinctly: "[G]ender inequality is what sustains and nurtures the virus causing women to be infected in ever greater, disproportionate numbers."

In sub-Saharan Africa, where almost 30 million of the 42 million people living with HIV/AIDS live, 58%, or about 17 million, are women. If you break it down further, women account for 75% of those between the ages of 15 and 24 living with HIV/AIDS. Lest anyone think this is only a problem overseas, women have risen from 7% to over 25% of those in the U.S. diagnosed with AIDS. African-American women are 23 times more likely to get AIDS than white and account for almost 72% of new HIV cases even though they are only 6% of the population.

The Bush administration's response to this tragedy is to politicize AIDS funding—as he has politicized all funding—using the deaths of hundreds of thousands as a way to push his extreme right-wing anti-human retrogressionist agenda. Rather than spend the \$15 million over five years that the U.S. promised to fight AIDS in scientifically proven ways—empowering women and promoting condoms and making them available—the needed funds are going to abstinence-only programs and reactionary religious organiza-

## 'Southern Girls' meet

**MEMPHIS, TENN.**—The Southern Girls Convention (SGC), held Aug. 12-14, is for radical feminist activists and was started in Memphis six years ago. In the words of the organizers: "The SGC is now an institution in the activist world and we plan on sticking around for a long time...to help activists in the South meet and network with each other, to provide people with an outlet like they might never have experienced before, and to be a



Convention protest of phony women's clinic.

contributing factor in a broader movement."

In an effort to steer the SGC to focus on politics, rather than DIY (do it yourself) skills sharing, dominant in past conferences, we started with a diverse panel of activists: Deborah Cunningham from the Center for Independent Living, a disabilities rights organization; Terry Moon of News and Letters Committees; Marquita Bradshaw of Defense Depot Memphis Tennessee—Concerned Citizens Committee; Cheryl Cornish, the pastor of First Congregational Church, and Casey Bryant of the anarchist DeCleyre Cooperative.

I led two workshops. The one on "Non-DIY Health" encouraged activists to form an organized resistance to doctors who drive patients away or injure their health. We shared stories of problems with doctors, such as one who performed unnecessary hysterectomies. My workshop on "Revelations About the Religious Right" presented information about their agenda to create a fascist theocratic government in the U.S., and discussed how much progress they've made under the Bush administration.

In the workshop on the "March for Women's Lives," Anna, who had helped the Feminist Majority coordinate rides for people going to the march, critiqued them because they would not put marchers from the same area in contact with each other, thus thwarting grassroots organizing.

At our activist action we protested a so-called "crisis pregnancy center." This phony clinic is run by a religious Right organization and gives out false information about abortion.

Each year a different area volunteers to host the conference. Next year it will be in New Orleans.

—Adele

tions. Women are paying with their lives because Bush has targeted for destruction the very notion that women should have "reproductive rights."

Uganda is the poster child of this effort as it has significantly reduced new HIV infections. Uganda's ABC program—standing for "Abstinence, Be faithful, use Condoms"—has been mischaracterized by the Bush administration as putting a greater stress on abstinence than on monogamy and condoms, when all three are stressed. The ABC program is endlessly touted by the U.S. administration as the reason for the decline in AIDS.

### CRIMES OF BUSH'S 'ABSTINENCE ONLY'

The truth is that Uganda aggressively got the word out about AIDS in a way that took away the disease's stigma and made AIDS a subject of discussion throughout society, including in grade schools. The education of the population is the basis of its success. But even here, as HRW warned: "Programs focusing on fidelity, abstinence, and condom use minimize the complex causes of violence, and incorrectly assume that women have equal decision-making power and status within the family."

Those who have worked for years fighting the disease and ground themselves in proven scientific studies, condemn Bush's policies as ineffective and deadly. Abstinence does not speak to women's reality where young brides in Africa get AIDS from husbands who are often years older; where one-fifth to one-half of women and girls worldwide are forced into their first sexual encounter; where over a third of young South African women fear refusing men's sexual advances; where poverty leads to prostitution; and where rape is a systematic weapon of war.

Given this actuality, those closest to the epidemic turn to science or the law for answers. Stephen Lewis hopes for a breakthrough on microbicides "in five to 10 years" so "that women will have a way to reassert control over their sexuality and defend their health." HRW insists the Uganda government "enact and enforce laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination against women to bring Ugandan practices into accord with international human rights standards and constitutional provisions."

Although science and legal reforms must be pursued as a means to stop the mounting deaths, they leave intact the reality that must be confronted, challenged and transformed: that women are considered less than human; that we do not have control over our lives and bodies. The needed solution is a human one, a new human society built on totally new foundations.

## WOMEN WORLDWIDE

by Mary Jo Grey

As the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence marks October as Domestic Violence Awareness month, U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft is issuing new regulations restricting the range of gender-based persecution that would allow women to seek asylum in the U.S. This would keep women fleeing "honor killings," sexual slavery, rape, domestic violence, and other human rights violations that they suffer because of their gender, from getting protection in the U.S.

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

Over 600 Turkish women marched on parliament in Ankara, Sept. 14, carrying signs reading: "State keep your hands off my body!" and "No to the male-dominated penal code." They protested a proposed government ban on adultery, saying it would be used primarily against women, including imprisonment and loss of custody of their children.

## 'Women of Juarez'

**LOS ANGELES**—I recently attended "The Women of Juarez," a play written and directed by Ruben Amaviza based on the situation in the Maquilador City of Juarez, Mexico. Over 400 young Mexican women have been murdered since 1993 and over 600 others reported missing.

Through the family of one of the victims, the play reveals the brutal nature of life in Juarez, the daily struggle to make a poverty-level living in the midst of mass murder. Neither the victim's father or boyfriend did anything to investigate the murder; it was her mother and sister who sought justice.

Neither the police, the Mexican government, the foreign Maquilador owners, nor the press have seriously investigated the murders or protected the women. Most cases have not been investigated. The general attitude is that the victims are to blame.

As stated in the program: "The majority of the victims are dark-skinned young women, factory workers. [They] are kidnapped and raped repeatedly by more than one person, tortured, mutilated and murdered." Two-thirds of the murdered women are between the ages of 11 and 20.

The movement to solve these murders is international. From Oct. 20 to Nov. 1, a caravan of activists will cross the U.S. and Mexico demanding justice and an end to the femicide. More information is available on [www.amnestyusa.org/juarez/salma.html](http://www.amnestyusa.org/juarez/salma.html)

—Basho

# New hotel labor struggles

**CHICAGO**—We have been on strike at the Congress Hotel since August of 2003, and are still maintaining a picket line into the second year. The owners still will not match wages and conditions of the contract that workers in UNITE HERE at other Chicago hotels work under.

The owners are keeping the hotel open but understaffed with scabs who are themselves underpaid. This once was a great hotel where presidents would stay, but not anymore. Most owners, no matter how much they are pushing for profits, pour a regular portion of revenues back into the building to maintain it. With this ownership, whatever money comes in goes straight into their pockets, and the hotel goes downhill.

There was a rumor that the Congress Hotel was on the market. It must have been a bargaining ploy, because we have seen no change. Obviously, any new owners couldn't be worse.

We are paying attention to the situation in Atlantic City, where UNITE HERE workers at most of the hotel-casinos went on strike last week. On the West Coast, UNITE HERE workers in San Francisco who have been working without a contract began a limited two-week strike at four hotels. They had been holding out not only on wages and benefits, but for a two-year contract that would expire at the same time as contracts in Chicago, New York and Boston.

We had heard they expected that the limited strike might turn into something more if the owners reacted, and they did: the owners expanded the battle by locking out workers at ten other hotels.

Other workers and supporters have extended solidarity to us and our picket line. Now that we have company on the streets, with picket lines on both coasts, we support them.

—Congress Hotel strikers

**NEW YORK**—Five Latina maids—the youngest a teenager—are suing New York's Broadway Plaza Hotel charging sexual harassment, discrimination, wage abuses and forced labor. They are among the first to bring a forced labor charge since the Trafficking Victims and Protection Act was amended in December 2003 to allow individuals to bring such charges in civil court.

## WORKSHOP TALKS

Continued from page 1

bers enjoy today is part and parcel of the "protracted battle over the normal working day." That battle is not over.

### 24-HOUR WORKING DAY

It is not hard for us workers to see that the employer, if left to his whim alone, would extend the working day to the full 24 hours. Many of us have sustained life-long injuries through numbing repetition for extended hours. This is the kind of toll which no amount of overtime premium pay will ever repair.

Those of us not directly in manufacturing, but other related service industries, will often do large amounts of overtime, not for overtime pay, but for the satisfaction of realizing a job well done. A nurse presiding over a sick patient, a teacher staying after school, or a clerk over an office deadline would know exactly what I'm talking about.

Often we are pushed to the brink of our performance simply because of the working conditions set in the workplace, not so unintentionally by the employer. Working conditions are the issue not addressed by "over-time" pay, and which bureaucrats, counting their beans, inside government or inside unions, miss. But working conditions don't merely exist on the outside. It exists inside as well, inside the worker's subjectivity.

### ALIENATED LABOR

This is precisely the intangible criterion which no amount of dispassionate economic consideration, based on the phantom-like objectivity of capital, will address. It comes from the very heart and soul of the worker. It is not reflected by any numerical manipulation or any mathematical computation which treat the worker as object.

The overtime pay rule, in essence, is not only a battle line drawn over the normal working day, but is also a line which divides mental from manual labor. The length of the working day became our means of declaring, "When does my time become my own?" rather than let the employer rob all of it. The key question is not pay but alienation.

The normal working day cannot be instituted from above. What is normal recompense for one's labor cannot come from anyone but the workers themselves. It is a debate which ultimately needs to occur between workers. What is fair and normal will inevitably have to come from the workers themselves—not just related to his pay alone regarding the working day, but reaching for the larger philosophic question: What kind of labor should a worker, any worker, perform?

It is this market of unfreedom which the workforce would inevitably have to abolish, if we are ever to redefine what a normal working day means. But that abolition of the market concept will have to begin at the point of production itself. I believe that is what Marx meant by a vision of a new society based on the "free association" of laborers, and "the development of human power which is its own end."



**Argent Hotel workers in San Francisco on strike for a decent contract length, health care benefits, wages and pension. Three other hotels walked out in August. Ten other hotel owners responded by locking out their union employees, bringing to 4,000 the total number of workers involved.**

Immigrant women in low-wage jobs are most vulnerable to such labor abuse, said Lenora M. Lapida, director of the women's rights project at the American Civil Liberties Union. Women make up close to 60% of the 1.4 million hotel workers, with nearly 25% Hispanic. Yet Latinas earn the least and are least likely to be in a union.

## Chicago day laborers fight for centers

Temporary labor is growing at a phenomenal rate in this so-called "global" environment. While not new, there is a growing trend for producers to work in a permanent temporary status. This maintains them at minimum wage levels without benefits. These people are technically employed by the agency. But the National Labor Relations Board has said in the past that people in this situation have a "double employer" status that allows them to form bargaining units based at the point of production—giving them the ability to organize into unions. UNITE-HERE has succeeded in helping people organize in this situation with the help of the San Lucas Workers Center, Jobs with Justice and the Interfaith Committee on Workers' Issues.

### USED AS STRIKERS

Permanent jobs are being filled by "temporaries" every day. It will take internal organizing by the day labor workers, the labor unions and people in the community to put people into those jobs at the same status as regular employees. Labor, grassroots, faith-based, political, and social pressure must be brought to bear on the greater business community demanding that contingent labor as an employment strategy will not be tolerated. This needs to be part of a world-wide social revolution that demands alternatives to corporate neo-liberal exploitation.

The Five-Star Laundry strike of 2000 (a UNITE victory!) and the Congress Hotel strike are instances in which day labor agencies have been scabbing on permanent employees. In strike situations, state law requires agencies to tell its employees that they are entering a labor dispute. In the Five-Star situation, many people refused to cross the picket lines. The Congress Hotel situation has not been as successful in this respect.

Refusing work from agencies is never a good idea if one is desperate for work. Exposing oneself as sympathetic to unions will also threaten any further work

## Quebecor presses don't stop for fire

**COVINGTON, TENN.**—Recently there was a fire at the Quebecor printing plant here, where I work. It happened on third shift. The fire started in the paper warehouse about 5:30 a.m.

There are 100 or so people working on each shift, all in the same building as the paper warehouse.

Workers wanted to leave, but were told to keep working. The fire alarm went off for 45 or 50 minutes before management shut the presses down and evacuated the press room. When I came to work at 7:00 that morning, everybody was standing outside the plant anyway.

They bring out packets every other month showing what to do in case of a fire or other emergency, but they didn't go by that. They stress it all the time: you do this when a fire is going on, or a tornado. Then when it happens, they don't go by it.

People said it's wrong. The union's supposed to be filing a complaint, and we're signing a petition, and some people are going to testify about this. Quebecor already has 22 charges against them.

—Quebecor worker

with that agency. The onus must be taken off the individual by making the law concerning day labor scabbing stronger and part of the federal labor law. We still need the labor law to outlaw hiring "replacement workers" in economic strikes as it is outlawed in other industrialized nations. The laws need to be strengthened at all governmental levels while scabbing and crossing picket lines has to become socially unacceptable again as it was in South Chicago when I was growing up.

In the world of day labor, people's checks are held up. People are cheated out of hours and days of pay. People are not picked up from jobs after working in remote suburbs. People are placed in sweatshop conditions, lacking safety equipment, and without recourse to any defense from the arbitrariness of the employers or their "clients." The "owners" buy Lexuses, Jaguars, fine houses in "exclusive" suburbs and vacation homes with the wealth extracted from day labor. Exploiting day labor keeps the client companies from having to take any responsibility for the people who produce their products. They have purchased abstract labor power and will mine that resource to its fullest with no regard for the actual laborer doing actual labor."

### 'GOOD CORPORATE CITIZENS'

Many of the clients of the day labor agencies are well known corporations like Sara Lee and the *Chicago Tribune*—who consider themselves, and are indulged as "good corporate citizens." The contractors exploiting jornaleros are avoiding hiring at union pay scales—pocketing the difference so they can live and vacation with the day labor agency owners. It is going to take social, political and economic pressure on the clients of the day labor agencies, the agencies themselves and the *la parada* contractors to make them abide by a code of conduct that reasonably reflects human sensibilities. While the Workers' Centers can provide space and certain resources for the workers to organize and help themselves, the wider community is needed to make it impossible for those who use day labor to treat the workers with less than the dignity that any human being deserves.

How long people will submit to the systematic destruction of long fought for labor standards and a return to the Wild West standards practiced by the day labor exploiters depends on organization. This organization has to take place both at the grassroots level as well as at the advocacy level—much like one fights a "ground war" that is supported by an "air war" and the infrastructure for support services. Clausewitz might call it "politics by extraordinary means"—at least in the way that most people have learned politics in this less-than-democratic republic. It has to engage society at every level. People need to fully comprehend the inhuman effects of contingent labor in order to combat it. If people broadly work together, we can overcome the plague of neo-liberal accumulation that drives the contingent labor "industry."

—Dennis Dixon

**How to contact**

**NEWS & LETTERS COMMITTEES**

<p><b>CHICAGO</b></p> <p>36 South Wabash, Rm. 1440 Chicago, IL 60603 Phone 312 236 0799 Fax 312 236 0725</p> <p><b>MEETINGS</b> Call for information</p> <p><b>DETROIT</b></p> <p>P.O. Box 27205 Detroit MI 48227</p> <p><b>MEETINGS</b> Sundays, 2 p.m. Write for information</p> <p><b>LOS ANGELES</b></p> <p>4475 Sunset Drive-Box 181 Los Angeles, CA 90027</p> <p><b>MEETINGS</b> Sundays, 6:00 p.m. Echo Park United Methodist Church 1226 N. Alvarado (North of Sunset, side door)</p>	<p><b>FLINT, MI</b></p> <p>P.O. Box 3384, Flint, MI 48502</p> <p><b>NEW YORK</b></p> <p>P.O. Box 250657 Columbia University Station New York, NY 10025 212 663 3631</p> <p><b>MEETINGS</b> Sundays, 7:00 p.m. 39 West 14th St., Room 205 (Identity House, Manhattan)</p> <p><b>OAKLAND</b></p> <p>P.O. Box 3345 Oakland, CA 94609 510 658 1448 banandl@yahoo.com</p> <p><b>MEETINGS</b> Contact for information</p> <p><b>MEMPHIS &amp; MISSISSIPPI</b></p> <p>1910 Madison Ave, PMB 59 Memphis, TN 38104</p>
---	---

**INTERNET**

<p><b>Email</b></p> <p>nandl@igc.org banandl@yahoo.com (Oakland)</p>	<p><b>WORLD WIDE WEB</b></p> <p>www.newsandletters.org</p>
--	--

**INTERNATIONAL MARXIST-HUMANISTS**

**BRITISH**

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

**IRANIAN**

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

**NEWS & LETTERS**

Vol. 49, No. 8      OCTOBER 2004

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

Raya Dunayevskaya  
Chairwoman, National Editorial Board (1955-1987)

Charles Denby  
Editor (1955-1983)

Olga Domanski, Peter Wermuth, Co-National Organizers, News and Letters Committees. Jim Mills, Managing Editor. Felix Martin, Labor Editor (1983-1999).

© EQUINE 759-C

News & Letters is printed in a union shop.

FROM THE WRITINGS OF  
**RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA**

**Editor's note**

Karel Kosik (1926-2003) was one of the most innovative philosophers in recent history. His emphasis on philosophy as "an indispensable human activity," which he actively promoted before and during the movement to create "socialism with a human face" in Czechoslovakia in 1968, was integral to his humanist Marxism. That his death in 2003 was ignored in the English-speaking world speaks volumes about today's disregard for critical Marxist theory. As part of breaking through this conspiracy of silence, we reproduce here a 1978 essay by Raya Dunayevskaya which discussed Kosik's work. Originally entitled "Adorno, Kosik and the movement from practice," we reprint here the part dealing with Kosik. For the full essay, see *News & Letters*, March 1978 and *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, 7004-7005.

[Theodor Adorno's *Negative Dialectics* and Karel Kosik's *Dialectics of the Concrete*] are not only the most serious contributions to the study of dialectics in the past half-century, but path-breaking originals...

*Dialectics of the Concrete*, though written in as abstract a philosophic form as Adorno's and thus as difficult for the "common reader," sees what historic concrete the dialectic concrete "has in mind." Kosik's work, instead of being shunted aside, is intensely discussed, and not only in Czechoslovakia but internationally. It is the type of philosophic work, it is felt, which has something very important to say. In a very significant way, Kosik's work both anticipated the Prague Spring, 1968, and, at the same time, was a theoretical departure which said, if defeated, this can become a new jumping off point for the next revolution.

Thus, though abstractly and indirectly articulated, no one doubted that it was an attack on the ruling bureaucracy, even if that were expressed, not in political terms, but as a philosophic critique of fetishized existence. In his sharp first chapter's critique on the pseudo-concrete—an important new contribution of Kosik's—he reminds the readers that "man's fetishized praxis ... is not identical with the revolutionary-critical praxis of mankind" (p. 2).

To try to draw from his use of the generic Man (with a capital "M"), instead of specific worker, the conclusion that Kosik was shunting aside the revolutionary proletariat, in the manner of the so-called "New Left," (1) is to fly in the face not only of Kosik's view of the role of the proletariat, but also his praise of philosophy as the "indispensable activity of mankind" (p. 4). Rather than playing up generic Man as opposed to the "classic" revolutionary proletariat, Kosik is rejecting the reductionist Communist concept of subjectivity, as if it meant nothing but petty-bourgeois egoism, and re-establishing subjectivity as, at one and the same time, the ground of Hegelian dialectics and distinctively Marxist dialectics of Subject who shapes his own history.

Kosik is most explicit in his description of exploitation as resulting from "dead labor ruling over live labor, object ruling over man, product over its producers, the mystified subject over the real subject, the object ruling over the subject. Capitalism is a dynamic system of total reification and alienation, cyclically expanding and reproducing itself through catastrophes in which 'people' act behind masks of officers and agents of this mechanism, that is, as its own components and elements" (p. 110).

Kosik's greatest contribution is the reintroduction of the dialectic as the revolutionary pivot of Marxism. We see this especially clearly in the crucial third chapter of the work which deals with Marx's *Capital*. Here, too, though he sticks strictly to *Capital* as the concrete greatest work of Marx, with rigorous analysis of both its construction and its development of categories, he manages, though indirectly, to make it an attack on mechanical materialism, that is, the ruling bureaucratized teaching of *Capital*, as if, once you counterpose social to individual, you have come to Marx's concept of the class struggle, not to mention the philosophy. As he puts it, "Man is walled into his socialness. Praxis, which in Marx's philosophy had made possible both objectivation and objective cognition, and man's openness toward being, turns into social subjectivity and closedness: man is a prisoner of socialness" (p. 106).

And a few pages later he contrasts to this "socialness" Marx's revolutionary way out: "*Capital* turns out

## The philosophic legacy of Karel Kosik

to be the 'odyssey' of concrete historical praxis which proceeds from the elementary labor product, through a series of real formations in which the practical-spiritual activity of people in production is objectified and fixed, to conclude its journey not in the cognition of what it is in itself, but rather in a **revolutionary** practical action based on this cognition" (p. 111).

No one need think that, because "Philosophy and Economy" is the most important chapter, Kosik limits himself to either economics or philosophy. Rather, his work is a far-ranging and far-reaching critique of the glorification of science and culture, which he calls the metaphysics of science and culture. The East Europeans will feel a great affinity for Kosik's profound critique of Plekhanov and they will easily guess that it's not only a critique of Plekhanov but of "socialist realism," **Lukács included**. He considers that Plekhanov's work on art "lacks the 'human sensory activity' which cannot be reduced to 'psyche' to the 'spirit of the times'" (p. 77) and holds that Plekhanov's method is a "one-sided approach smacking of Enlightenment" (p. 61). In the land of Kafka, the readers will know that reality is as irradiated by a great work of philosophy as by great works of literature and film.

The movement from practice over the past two decades that produced new theoretical departures was by no means limited to East Europe but covered the

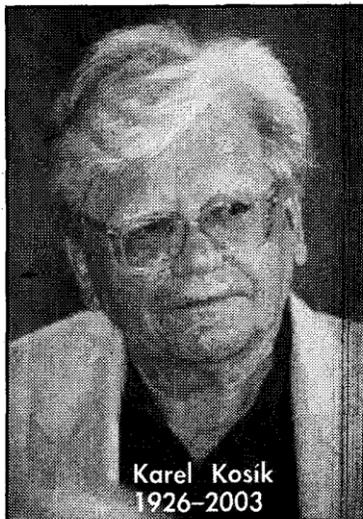
world. This was most brilliantly articulated by Frantz Fanon, when he wrote that the Africans' struggles for freedom were "not a treatise on the universal, but the untidy affirmation of an original idea propounded as an absolute." (2) There is no doubt, of course, that once action supersedes the subjectivity of purpose, the unity of theory and practice is the form of life out of which emerge totally new dimensions; in the 1960s, these heralded women's liberation as well as Black, youth as well as labor.

It is these live forces that made the near-revolutions of the late 1960s. What is needed now is the singling out of the dialectic of Reason in so inseparable a manner from the movement from practice that freedom can be made a reality. It's this type of role for new, revolutionary subjectivity that Marx disclosed: "Not only do the objective conditions change in the act of reproduction, for example, the village becomes a town, the wilderness a cleared field, and so on, but the producers change, too, in that they bring out

new qualities in themselves, develop themselves in production, transform themselves, develop new powers and ideas, new modes of intercourse, new needs and new language" (*Grundrisse*).

1. See "Czech Marxism: Karel Kosik" by Paul Piccone, in *Critique*, No. 8 1977.

2. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press; 1966), p. 33.



Karel Kosik  
1926-2003

## Praxis, cognition, and revolution

by Peter Hudis

Karel Kosik was a trail-blazing philosopher, whose *Dialectics of the Concrete*, first published in 1963, still represents a remarkable and refreshing work of dialectical philosophy. In breaking from the mechanical materialism of 20th century "Marxism," which reduced ideas to a mere mirror-reflection of social reality, Kosik showed that Marx's work is above all concerned with the **transformation** of reality through critical, revolutionary, **philosophic praxis**.

As against the claim that "philosophy 'as such' has come to an end," he wrote: "It is not true that philosophy is merely an alienated expression of alienated conditions and that this description exhausts its character and mission. Only particular historical instances of philosophy might amount to false consciousness in the absolute sense, but from the perspective of philosophy in the real sense of the word, these would not amount to philosophy. They would be mere systematizations and doctrinaire interpretations of biases and opinions of the time, that is, ideologies" (*Dialectics of the Concrete*, p. 102).

Philosophy springs from the passion to know the meaning of things in a world where appearance and reality fail to coincide. Dialectical philosophy, Kosik held, is the highest expression of the effort to know the "thing itself," the fundamental truths of human reality. So long as we live in an alienated, bifurcated world, he insisted, philosophy will remain the "indispensable and irreplaceable" activity of humanity.

Though Kosik was an academic philosopher, he never viewed philosophy as the privileged activity of a few people. He became a leading activist in the Prague Spring of 1968—the effort to create "socialism with a human face" in Czechoslovakia. In the brief period of "thaw" preceding the Russian invasion, he joined the Central Committee of the Communist Party and became the philosophic spokesperson for the struggle for new kind of socialism freed from bureaucracy and authoritarianism. His speeches during the Prague Spring—often given before thousands of workers and students—explicitly discussed philosophic issues, such as: What is being? What is time? What kind of society can liberate the individual?

The Russian intervention put this free-thinking to an end. Kosik was expelled from the party and prevented from teaching or publishing. For more than 20 years he became a non-person, forced to support him-

self by translating works that were issued under other people's names.

In 1992, several years after the Berlin Wall came down, I visited Kosik in Prague. By then he had obtained his old job back at Charles University. Though he had opposed Stalinism at great cost to his personal well-being, he was virtually ignored in 1989, viewed as a product of a bygone era. But it was his critics, not himself, who were living in darkness.

Kosik told me, "In 1968 I raised as a philosophic question 'what is socialism.' It had become imperative to rethink socialism from the bottom up in light of the Stalinist experience. Today I am asking as a philosophic question 'what is democracy.' The leaders of the 'new' Czechoslovakia have as narrow a concept of democracy as the old rulers had of 'socialism.'"

Kosik's independence of mind had its price. Not long afterwards he was fired from Charles University by the "new" administrators (some of whom were former Communist hacks who had transformed themselves into champions of "free market" capitalism). The excuse given was a lack of university funding, but he, like his critics, knew that that was mere pretense.

Kosik spoke much as his wrote—with biting clarity and succinctness. *Dialectics of the Concrete* could easily have been a 1,000 page book; in fact, it is barely 150 pages long. Not a wasted word, not an indirect expression. Philosophy, like truth, aims to know "the thing itself." And though knowledge of the "thing itself" involves a "detour," a philosophic journey, it is has to be carried out with great precision and rigor.

The most memorable moment of our visit was when he asked to see a photograph of Raya Dunayevskaya. He then told me that he had first heard of her work in the 1940s, when he read an essay of hers in a French Marxist journal. Though they failed to establish direct contact, he was very interested in her work and peppered me with questions about her development of Marxist-Humanism. He later helped get a publisher for the Slovakian edition of her *Philosophy and Revolution*—no small matter, since by then "Marxism" had become so discredited in East Europe that it was hard to get any hearing of an independent Marxian voice.

The collapse of Marxism in 1989—not so much the regimes that called themselves "Marxist," which was a welcome development, but the collapse of any discussion of Marx's work which accompanied it—pulled on Kosik as well. Though in private he continued to champion Marx for "delineating the domination of the human by the inhuman," he did not return to further develop the explicitly Marxian philosophic themes that characterized his *Dialectics of the Concrete*.

This may have impacted his view of the political situation. By the late-1990s, horrified at the NATO intervention in Kosovo, he reverted to a one-sided condemnation of U.S. actions by attacking the U.S. without taking a stand against Milosevic's genocidal policies. Though Kosik had asked penetrating questions about the meaning of socialism and democracy, he no longer seemed to do so when it came to "anti-imperialism."

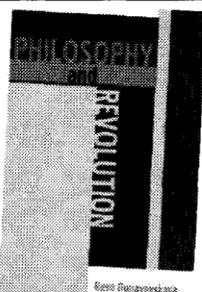
In this sense, the life of Karel Kosik reflects the tragedy of our times as much as its heroism. Nothing, however, can take away from that "magical moment" in Prague 1968 when he made a serious effort to bring together dialectical philosophy with political activism.

By Raya Dunayevskaya, two works on The Algebra of Revolution...



**The Power of Negativity:**  
Selected Writings  
on the Dialectic in  
Hegel and Marx

**Philosophy & Revolution**  
...from Hegel to  
Sartre and from  
Marx to Mao



Each \$24.95 ... To order, see page 7

## ESSAY

## Sham neutrality of science born of capitalism

by Raha

## 'CASTLES IN THE AIR'

How do you suppose to name our city?

I've got it! Listen - **Cloucdukooland!**

That's it! A perfect name.

Imagination's happy home,

Where Theogenes builds castles in the air

—Aristophanes, *The Birds*

"To have one basis for life and another for science is a priori a lie."

—Marx, *The 1844 Humanist Manuscripts*

What has happened to the dream of the abolition of intellectual elites and of participatory democracy as the offspring of technological progress envisioned by John Dewey? Isn't it time to finally dethrone the prophets of the techno-scientific society and the presuppositions of an automatic age? We have learned where the "technically sweet pursuit of nuclear science" *a la* Oppenheimer has led to and not just with regard to his fate under McCarthyism but the whole genre of scientists in the first half of the 20th century.

Once the first Big Bomb exploded, it became obvious that the scientists were last to be consulted about its use. The myth of neutrality, therefore, turned out to have served only a **political concept**. But when are we going to reach a universal consensus that it isn't just Hitler's science or North Korean or Pakistani Quadeer Khan's science, but science **as such** that has gone to the devil?

It is one of the most peculiar characteristics of our time in which no deformity ever vanishes. At a climactic stage in the technological conquest of nature, old forms belonging to the previous epochs of human development live side by side with the moderns. Thus we find the civilized horrors of overwork grafted onto barbaric horrors of slavery and serfdom. Hunger and obesity, Malaria and AIDS, absolute poverty and abstract wealth continue to coexist however unevenly distributed among different individuals. We therefore suffer not only from the present but also from the past.

What seems so astonishing is that even affluence and the absence of hard physical labor among certain segments of the population has not generated health, happiness or freedom. The life of "leisure," conceived as the opposite of "toil," has led to depression, inactivity and alienation. We are, therefore, oppressed by underdevelopment as well as by full technological development. As Marx would say in Postface to *Capital*: "**The dead clutches onto the living.**" There is a **primitive** character to the **modern** age—perpetuating the most ancient through the instrumentality of the machine—the domination of man by man.

Developed as such instrumentality, the earlier era's project of realizing technology's concrete purpose has now amounted to a sheer abstraction. What began as an abstract concept, the machine at the service of human progress, has been transformed into its progress. The "slaves of men," as Oscar Wilde had dreamed, turned out to enslave men. But the tendency to regard "men" as semi-idiots or dummies relative to the mind of the machine, while latent from its very beginning, appears now to have achieved total dominance. It is now apparent that the "republic of science" (Marx, "The Latest Prussian Censorship," 1842) has crowned the "smart machine."

No longer content with a subsidiary role as the application of science, technology is now behaving as if it is self-caused and possesses a mind of its own. It has ceased to be bound by any external aim. Its end has become the pure self-development of technology itself. The illusion of "technicity" as an independent deity has even been likened by some to the myth of the "Prometheus Unbound." But one must be fully true to the legend and ask: If that ancient Titan stole fire from heaven and introduced it to "man," if he sacrificed for humanity by getting chained to the Caucasus with vultures constantly gnawing at his liver, what has this so-called "Modern Prometheus" offered mankind?

Humanity—always subjugated as a **talking instrument**—is now on the threshold of ultimate self-instrumentation in the creation of bio-technological life forms that may very well have the potential to threaten the survival of the human species. Given the fact that under capitalism, life itself is but a mere means of living, and in light of the experience of the atomic bomb, should we not pause a moment to ponder the ramifications of this new venture? Is this then the next frontier in Scientific Utopia?

## MARX'S 'REQUIEM' FOR SCIENCE

"The fear that there will one day be established a despotism based on science is a ridiculous and absurd fantasy. Such a thing could only arise in minds wholly alien to the positivist idea."

—Claude Henri Saint Simon, *L'Organisateur*

"All our inventions and progress seem to result in endowing material forces with intellectual life, and in stultifying human life into a material force."

—Marx, Anniversary speech for the *People's Paper*

In his own time, Positivist circles of Comtist orientation had accused Marx of having advanced metaphysical ideas that are anti-science. In fact, Marx himself seems to have intimated the "end of science." In the

face of the growing conflicts within capitalism, Marx critiqued Ricardo—the best of classical political economists—for "naively taking this antagonism for a social law of nature. But with this contribution the bourgeois science of economics reached the limits beyond which it could not pass," as Marx put it in his Postface to *Capital*. Social antagonisms in practice and in theory revealed that the scientific claim to objectivity was a sham. "It was thenceforth no longer a question whether this or that theorem was true, but whether it was useful to capital," Marx argued in the Postface. This then "sounded the knell of scientific bourgeois economics."

Furthermore, declared Marx, "the whole of modern science of technology" is brought into existence as a result of a process whose "principle" is "production in and of itself" without regard for the human element, or "without looking at the ability of the human hand to perform the new process" (*Capital*, Vol. 1, p. 616, Vintage edition). It is animated by "the drive to reduce to a minimum the resistance offered by man, that obstinate yet elastic natural barrier" (*Capital*, p. 527). Thus in the face of this science, the special skill of each individual "who has now been deprived of all significance, vanishes as an infinitesimal quantity" (*Capital*, p. 549).

It was not just the young Marx who hailed the Silesian weavers' destruction of the machines in 1844. In his greatest theoretical work *Capital*, he devotes an entire section of the chapter on machinery to "The struggle between the worker and the machine." Here, in a dramatic way, he makes a reference also to "the Luddite movement" and states that with the introduction of machinery, for the first time "the worker fought against the instrument of labor itself" (*Capital*, p. 554).

Theoretically Marx struck back at the bourgeois economists who defended the capitalist employment of machines. Apologists such as MacCulloch who stated that "the contemplation of machinery in itself" demonstrates that machinery "as such" is free of internal contradictions, reproached their opponents for being the "enemy of social progress." Machines, contended Marx, are no longer "the tools of man," but are "the implements of a mechanism, mechanical implements" (*Capital*, p. 494). Machinery, wrote Marx, "does not just act as a superior competitor to the worker, always on the point of making him superfluous. It is a power inimical to him" (*Capital*, p. 562). "Stop the machines," Marx cited the cry of the workers, "at least during meal-times" (*Capital*, p. 357).

In the collective working of the system of automatic machines which Marx called a "mechanical monster" with "demonic power," the subjective principle is transformed. It is "an organized system of machines to which motion is communicated by the transmitting mechanism from an automatic center" (*Capital*, p. 503).

In handicraft and manufacture, the worker makes use of the machine; in the factory, the machine makes use of him. There the movements of the instruments of labor proceed from him, here it is the movements of the machine that he must follow...In the factory we have a lifeless mechanism which is independent of the workers, who are incorporated into it as its living appendages (*Capital*, p. 548).

Like the torture of Sisyphus, it "exhausts the nervous system," "does away with the many-sided play of the muscles, and confiscates every atom of freedom, both in bodily and intellectual activity." In "The House of Terror," which is Marx's designation for the factory, the "constant labor of one uniform kind disturbs the intensity and flow of man's vital forces, which find recreation and delight in the change of activity itself" (*Capital*, p. 460). The individual herself becomes "annexed for life by a limited function" (*Capital*, p. 469) and "divided up and transformed into the automatic motor of a detailed operation" (*Capital*, p. 481). This then constitutes "the spirit of the factory" where "the mind is least consulted."

But to make sure that this does not just include physical toil, Marx added that "even the lightening of the labor becomes an instrument of torture since the machine does not free the worker from work, but rather deprives the work itself of all content" (*Capital*, p. 469). He then quoted from G. de Molinari's *Etudes economiques* on the "labor of surveillance": "A man

becomes exhausted more quickly when he watches over the uniform motion of a mechanism." Therefore under the most developed form of machinery—"a vast automaton"—the inversion of the subject/object relationship grows into a "total antagonism."

As against the combined collective worker as "the dominant subject" with machines as the mere objects, now "the automaton itself is the subject, and the workers are merely the conscious organs, coordinated with the unconscious organs of the automaton, and together with the latter subordinated to the central moving force" (*Capital*, p. 544-45). Even "virtuosity" as a totality of capacities, powers and abilities of the individual is now the sole property of the Machine: "There appears nothing higher in itself, nothing legitimate for itself." And "it is the machine which possesses skill and strength in place of the worker, is itself the virtuoso,

with a soul of its own in the mechanical laws acting through it" (*Grundrisse*, p. 693).

Labor as a purposive, conscious activity, during which the producer enjoys the free play of his/her physical and mental powers, also makes instruments into "the body of its soul and thereby resurrects them from the dead" (*Grundrisse*, p. 364). The worker interposes the instrument of labor "between himself and the object of his labor, and which serves as a conductor, directing his activity to the object" (*Capital*, p. 285). "Earth itself," explained Marx, as the "original tool house," is an instrument of labor. Thus the instrument,

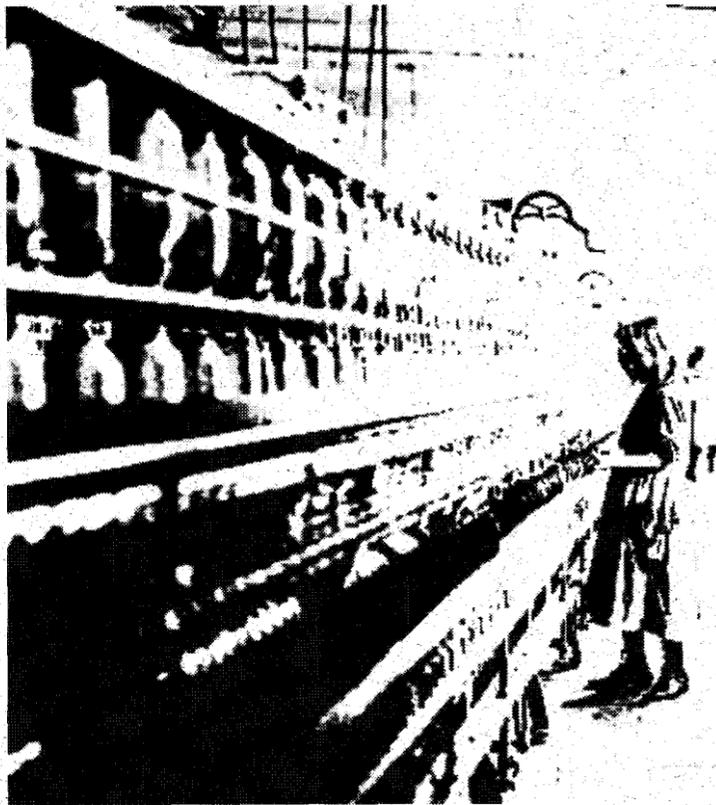
or nature, is posed as the **middle link**. He then singles out paragraph 209 of Hegel's *Logic* in the *Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences*, where Hegel stated that "Reason is as cunning as it is powerful. Cunning may be said to lie in the intermediation action."

However the **metamorphoses** of the instrument of labor from a tool to a machine marks a turning point in human history. Now the impulse departs entirely from labor. Labor, as living, form-giving soul of this "syllogism," is subsumed under the self-propelling life of an instrument. It is no longer the worker's activity that determines and regulates the movement of the instrument, but the other way around. Here the self-activating teleology of inert matter takes the place of purposiveness. Therefore "the technical subordination of the worker to the uniform motion of the instruments of labor" gives rise to a "barracks-like discipline." It alienates from him "the **intellectual potentialities** of the labor process in the **same proportion as science** is incorporated in it as an independent power" (*Capital*, p. 799, my emphases). In this sense, then, science as a potentiality distinct from labor and as the manifest will of an other becomes a power over against the producer.

Now "the science which compels the inanimate limbs of the machinery, by their construction, to act purposefully, as an automaton, does not exist in the worker's consciousness, but rather acts upon him through the machine as an alien power, as the power of the machine itself" (*Grundrisse*, p. 693). Science, natural forces and the system of machinery unite as the three forces which constitute the power of the master. Specifically, then, the "spirit" appearing in "the form of thing-hood" is "another man" (*German Ideology*, in *Collected Works*, vol. 5, p. 157). Scientific detachment from and the opposition to the productive process of the laborer are also the foundation for the instrumentalization of knowledge itself. "The **knowledge, judgment and will**...are faculties now required only from the workshop as a whole. The possibility of an **intelligent direction** of production expands in one direction because it vanishes in many others" (*Capital* p. 482, my emphases). Hence the purely "despotic form" of the capitalist direction of production.

Here "the workshop as a whole" is the microcosm of society as a whole. Just as in the workshop, where knowledge incorporated in the machinery appears as an external power to the producer, the accumulation of knowledge, and of skill in society, incorporated into capital, gives rise to an abstract "social brain" above and beyond the individuals. Thus, wrote Marx, "The **social spirit** of labor obtains an objective existence separate from the individual workers" (*Grundrisse*, p. 529, my emphasis). Consequently, "the thing, which **stands opposite** him, has now become the true community" (*Grundrisse*, p. 496, Marx's emphasis).

This essay is adapted for *News & Letters*. Contact us for the full article.



## SLAVERY AND THE INJUSTICE SYSTEM TODAY

A number of the articles in the August-September *N&L* seemed to me to speak to each other in a powerful way. Robert Taliaferro's "Slavery undergirds global economy" writes not only of the U.S. but of countries all over the world and shows that the question of the prison-industrial system is a complex one where acts of slavery exist in sometimes subtle ways. It was important that he mentioned Walmart and Taco Bell where the lack of unionization plays an important part in the slave-like working conditions. Then you read the "Prison Voices" published in the Readers' Views section of the paper and you see actual letters from those undergoing the kind of degradation the prison-industrial complex is responsible for today. But it is the powerful, straightforward way Mary L. Johnson tells her life story in the Lead article in the issue on "ending police corruption" that proves to be the most powerful indictment of the society which we are confronting today and which is truly based on the kind of slavery all these articles are describing.

**Women's Liberationist  
Chicago**

The Lead article in the August-September issue ("We can come together to end police corruption") is on a subject people in Louisiana know well. There have been beatings and even an occasional killing conducted by area police here for years. I was beaten in 1998 over a speeding incident. When I went to court about it I found out about three other people who had been beaten over minor traffic incidents. They were all Black. I'm white and was heard last. I was threatened not to come back to traffic court again because the judge was tired of hearing the same thing over and over. Most of the victims are Black and almost all are poor and can't fight back. I salute the effort of those brave people who stand up and challenge this system. That is what is needed all across this nation.

**Supporter  
Louisiana**

I teach history and had one of my students do some reading on the origins of the police department. He found that the origins of formal, paid, so-called professional police were in the first depression of modern capitalism when people were thrown off their farms and had to go to the city to find work. There was no unemployment insurance or food stamps. People just went hungry. When

## MICHAEL MOORE'S MOVIES

As someone who has been following Michael Moore's work for some time, I appreciated the movie review of his "Fahrenheit 9/11" in the August-September issue. The reviewer caught very well the way in which Moore "portrayed in vivid colors how America's imperialist wars are fought abroad by first winning its class and race wars back home." Yet I felt that to do full justice to "Fahrenheit 9/11" even more should be said on the important way Moore depicted African Americans in his film. It was not one or two incidents but the way they were depicted through the whole movie that told a powerful story, beginning with the opening scenes where actual footage shows the long line of Black members of Congress begging the Senate to vote against approving the Supreme Court's decision to "elect" Bush president in 2000. I would like to write something for *N&L* on the way reviewers all missed the importance of what Moore did on the question of the Black welfare mother who had been forced back to work in his film "Bowling for Columbine." To my mind, it is a serious failure for reviewers not to single out Moore's important appreciation of the Black experience in all his films.

**Philosophy teacher  
Illinois**

I went to a vigil at Overton Park here for all those who died on 9/11/01 and after — both U.S. and Iraqi. I brought my sign: "No to War! No to Terrorism! Yes to the New Human Society" and a Black man who told us he was 37 years old, saw the sign, stopped dead in his

they were hungry enough they went into stores and took food off the shelves. The well-to-do called them mobs and hired thugs to protect themselves. The police departments we know today came about when they swore them in as a full-time force to keep down the people considered dangerous to the authorities on top. I want to tell the people whose voices were heard in the Lead story of the August-September *N&L* that many of us are with them in their struggle to end the injustice being done to them. At the same time, we know that the injustice will not be ended until the power of these wealthy classes is broken and we set up something new. It is only when we destroy their power that the prison doors will be opened up, just as has been done in every revolt against injustice since the French Revolution

**History teacher  
Illinois**

Robert Taliaferro's article on slavery is timely. However, as good as the article was I thought its conclusion was deficient. It isn't good industrial practice that we need but the abolition of industry as it exists. That means getting rid of labor-power as the ultimate commodity of commodities. That, too, is a form of slavery.

**Hospital worker  
California**

The article on the Chicago police brutality was really good. Every time I read about this stuff I get angry that the mainstream press doesn't carry these stories. This IS the essential news, isn't it?

**Peace activist  
Memphis**

## THE BRITISH SCENE

In the UK we have been defeated by capital which is using the Labour Party and the unions in a way that the conservatives could not. Individuals are being stretched on the rack. Stress and divorce is rising along with both suicide and violence. It is happening throughout much of the world, where the main political parties are opposed to any change unless it is for their benefit or the benefit of their backers. It is why there are so many cross-Atlantic links between the Republicans and Democrats there, and Labour and Conservatives here.

**Pat Duffy  
Britain**

tracks, and said: "Yes! Yes! That's it, exactly!" He joined the vigil for the next two hours and talked about the ideas. He saw Michael Moore's "Fahrenheit 9/11" three times in one week and has been talking to everyone about it ever since.

**Feminist anti-war activist  
Memphis**

A lot of folks are looking forward with great interest to Michael Moore's next documentary which reportedly will be on the so-called health-care industry. But evidently nobody is more interested than the big-business health insurance corporations and drug manufacturers who are so worried that they have already warned their employees and sales representatives to be on the lookout for a fat man wearing a baseball cap and carrying a camera and not to talk to any such person they might spot.

The reported tentative title for the film is "Sicko" and Moore says he got the idea for it when he was making his TV show "The Awful Truth." He is quoted as saying, "We had this guy who was going to die because his HMO wouldn't pay for his transplant so we went with him and conducted a funeral rehearsal. The HMO was so ashamed that they paid for the transplant and he lives to this day."

However he got the idea, there are lots of people who would like to see a Moore film take on the murderous oxymoron-named "health-care" business. There are certainly thousands hoping his "Fahrenheit 9/11" will bear some fruit on Nov. 2.

**Moviegoer  
Illinois**

# READERS' VIEWS



## FROM MARX TO TO MARXIST- HUMANISM

In the article "From Marx to Marxist-Humanism" (August-September *N&L*), Raya Dunayevskaya asks "can man win freedom from under totalitarianism?" It's a question that certainly speaks to this moment, as can be seen when you look at how many totalitarian regimes exist today. She gives us hope that freedom is possible. Thinking about how many discussions about state capitalism are going on today from Iran to China I am very glad this article was reprinted. Revolutionaries need to get their ideas out there so we can all learn from discussing them.

**Iranian exile  
San Francisco, CA**

The article by Raya Dunayevskaya was important for thinking about what it means to be a continuator of Marxist-Humanism, in the way she posed it at the end of her life when she developed further the distinction between "followers" and "continutors." That's what becomes of prime importance when a founder is gone. How to sum up the new for your own time as a concrete totality, not limited to the economic-political plane but in a way that doesn't lose continuity with the philosophic moment is a question of the highest importance.

Once I figured out the meaning of the graphic that accompanied the article, I thought it was a good way to show "one not two" — Marx, not Engels; Lenin, not Trotsky; Raya Dunayevskaya, not CLR James. The Johnson-Forest Tendency agreed on the economics and politics of their age as state-capitalism, the new stage of labor revolt and Black liberation as independent struggle. James wanted to have the new revolutionary subject, spontaneity as against vanguard party and to break free from the bureaucracy. Yet without the total philosophy of Marxist-Humanism it ended in merely negative opposition and vulgar materialism.

**Marxist-Humanist  
Memphis**

## 'CHALLENGE OF ANTI-HUMANISM'

The essay by J. Skolnik on "The challenge of anti-humanism today" (August-September *N&L*) was very learned. I liked his point criticizing leftists who claim they can agree with a philosopher like Heidegger but differ with his politics. Don't some Marxist-Humanists say that about Hegel, that his philosophy is tops but some of his political views need to be rejected? What needs to be proven is whether Hegel's political views follow from his philosophy. The essay says if you follow out those philosophers it will lead to their political conclusions, but that needs to be proven also.

Skolnik's conclusion on the need to be grounded in Marx's critique of political economy needs to be explained more. Dunayevskaya says when you catch the new economic stage of development, that is only a beginning. The essay has a bold claim that "only the transformation of economic relations of production will ... guarantee that alterations in the modes of exchange and distribution ... can be maintained." But guarantees don't reflect the dialectic. Dunayevskaya said Engels was superior to Marx in economics. You can be very brilliant in economics and miss the philosophic moment.

**David Mizuno/Oto  
Oakland, CA**

Skolnik's essay attributes the desperation of the Left to a deficiency in theorizing alternatives to capitalism, and seems to imply a connection between

that and the postmodern-Left claims of the death of the revolutionary subject. It's an interesting claim but it's never made clear what the connection is.

**Franklin Dmitryev  
Memphis**

I liked the essay by J. Skolnik. I am now looking up the references to get further informed. Meanwhile, please renew my subscription to *N&L*.

**Reader  
Belmont, CA**

"The challenge of anti-humanism" is an articulate engagement with many ideas in current discussion. How do the anti-humanists pose as an opposition to capitalism? By denying subjectivity. They de-construct capitalism this way, which includes the de-construction of subject as any universal. It is a pull to the lie of immediacy, as though there can be something like an unmediated human existence.

**Ron Brokmeyer  
Oakland, CA**

## PARTNERS FOR PEACE ON TOUR

I will be traveling to the U.S. in October together with two Palestinian women (Marianne Albina from Jerusalem and Hidaya Said Najmi from Jenin) as part of the Partners for Peace tour called "Jerusalem Women Speak: Three Women, Three Faiths, One Shared Vision."

Our schedule calls for us to begin in Washington DC Oct. 7-8. We then go to Irvine, CA Oct. 9; to San Diego, CA Oct. 9-11; to Los Angeles/Orange County, CA Oct. 12-13; to San Francisco, CA Oct. 14-16; to Seattle, WA Oct. 16-18; to Chicago, IL Oct. 19-21; and back to Washington, DC Oct. 21-24.

Those interested in getting information about the tour to any of these cities can call 202-863-2951 or partnersforpeace@yahoo.com or check it out at [www.partnersforpeace.org](http://www.partnersforpeace.org).

**Gila Svirsky  
Jerusalem**

## LABOR STRUGGLES TODAY

In a recent issue of the *Los Angeles Times*, an important article by Mike Davis commemorated the Great Textile Strike that shut down the mills across the entire South on Sept. 1, 1934, and told the story of what has happened since. The image of Southern labor until that day had been that it was servile and unorganizable. But when the "lint heads" of the South went out they were quickly joined by the mill workers of New England to become the first industry-wide general strike of the 1930s. The point of the story was not the way a powerful union was forged despite all the beatings and shootings to suppress it, but how today, 70 years later, "the cotton spindles in Dixie have again stopped spinning." It is the result, of course, of the global jobs catastrophe that followed in the wake of what is called "trade liberalization." In this article Davis called it an "invisible tragedy" pointing out that it's certainly not going to be discussed on Fox News or CNBC. I would certainly like to see it taken up fully in the pages of *N&L*.

**Supporter  
Los Angeles**

Declaring bankruptcy and opening up the next day under another name used to be a trick small store owners used. Now it's an anti-labor tactic used by huge corporations. They declare bankruptcy, get before an anti-labor judge (and there are plenty appointed by Nixon, Reagan and the Bushes) who permits them to cut wages, pensions and other benefits as part of their financial

"recovery." It's a maneuver corporate lawyers have been using increasingly, all with the support of the corporate-friendly Bush administration.

**Labor Observer  
Detroit**

I was glad to see the article on the Million Workers' March in the August-September issue. But we can't just cheerlead the movement. When you call a march you have to ask what is the meaning behind it. Some of the most important work here on labor was done by ILWU Local 10 during their strike last year. Now they are calling for the march in Washington, DC. Why not protest on the docks against off-shoring and computer replacement of workers? Mass marches are a success when they are the result of a prolonged movement and I don't see that now with labor.

**Unionized worker  
California**

The Draft for Marxist-Humanist Perspectives 2004-2005 printed in the July issue was very well written, but the issue of immigration was not adequately addressed. Latino immigrant workers are among the more radical of U.S. workers and immigration is a major issue here. There have been many raids by the INS in cooperation with local police and sheriffs at immigrant workers' sweatshops and other places where they congregate. At the same time, efforts to stop such raids and deportation are being organized here by the ACLU, the Mexican-American Legal Defense Fund, and other such groups. The need for cheap immigrant labor is one of the contradictions of capital. At the same time, it threatens and lowers the standard of living of the American workers. Whether corporations move abroad for lower wages or import low-wage workers, the effect is the same to the U.S. workers. The pitting of immigrant workers against the U.S. workers (sometimes as scabs) has not been adequately addressed in *N&L*.

**Asian American  
Los Angeles**

**VOICES OF REASON FROM WITHIN THE WALLS**

I'd like to tell you something about the conditions here. The diet here is a disaster! The taxpayers should be outraged because if our diet improved, the healthcare costs would decrease. Many women are anemic since our diet lacks iron. You get an iron supplement for a little while. Just before the prescription runs out, they test you and say you're OK. Of course it's better, but then they stop the supplements. It creates a vicious cycle. There are no healthy options. We don't get enough protein, fruits or vegetables. It's all carbs, fat, starch and processed meats. The diet is very bad for diabetics since 90% of the food served converts to sugar. Improper diet results in numerous health care problems, not just diabetes but high blood pressure, high cholesterol, iron deficiency, osteoporosis, hair loss and many other illnesses.



The doctor on our yard is quick to shame us. He frequently states that we're lucky to be getting any treatment at all, that it costs too much. We are humans and this is a form of cruel and unusual treatment.

**Woman prisoner  
Chowchilla, CA**

Thank you for my subscription. I have read enough material to understand that my situation is just a small piece of what this corrupt system does and that freedom from here is not freedom from the capitalist system. I was very interested in the article in the August-September issue about police abuse which was part of a Forum on "What is next for the movement against police torture and wrongful convictions" held in Chicago. Do you have any information on forums held on the West Coast?

I am familiar with police abuse, as my uncle was charged with shooting at officers out of a moving vehicle. As usual, no gun was found or any gun residue or drugs and he didn't have any violent or

criminal history. What happened to him nevertheless is a tragedy for many people who have been labeled lower class, minority, and poor, all of which are class distinctions in capitalist society. When any of us goes to a jury, it is always made up of another class's peers. To be properly represented legally in this society you have to be financially well off. I am looking forward to reading *N&L* to better understand the capitalist system and find out more about your philosophy of revolution. I would also like to know if there is any way I might be able to get a copy of the *Rosa Luxemburg Reader* since I saw a short documentary on her a long time ago and am very interested in her work.

**Prisoner  
Susanville, CA**

I read your paper cover to cover and feel as if my mind is blossoming like a beautiful flower as I learn what is really going on in the world. Why don't we see any of this type of writing in the national papers? It's so clear that our government doesn't care about any of us as a people. It's all about money and power. Some of us see ourselves as a think-tank and would like to start a small version of *N&L* to print the truth as we know it about prison life and about crime. We're also trying to start a book program so we can learn and share ideas. Please keep on fighting for freedom.

**Prisoner  
Ontario, Oregon**

**DEMOCRATIC CAPITALISM?**

I recently came across an obvious oxymoron: democratic capitalism. Capitalism can no more be democratic than democracy can be capitalist. It's another destruction of the true meaning of words. The rulers are good at this.

Something else I was recently reading referred to the politicians in Washington as the "criminally insane" in describing the ruthlessness of capitalism and its exploitative destruction of everything it touches. I think it's true they are all mentally ill in the sense of any concepts of basic morals and ethics and what is truly human, or should be.

**Longtime socialist  
Wisconsin**

Dubya (or Junior, as we affectionately refer to the commander-in-chief here in Michigan) has got it wrong again. He isn't the "war" president. He's the "war-bucks" president.

**Ex-Postal Worker  
Michigan**

A mandatory draft for young men and women (ages 18 to 26) has been in the works for some time. Information about it is circulating through the internet. Whether or not one is for or against a military draft I strongly believe the bill should be debated openly, not pushed through as a stealth bill, which is what seems to be happening. The pending legislation in the House and Senate (companion bills: S89 and HR 163) would time the program's initiation so the draft could begin as early as Spring 2005, just after the 2004 presidential election. It appears to many that the administration is quietly trying to get the bills passed now, while the public's attention is on the elections. Among other things the plan eliminates higher education as a shelter and includes women. Also crossing into Canada has already been made very difficult. This is something I feel we have to be concerned about no matter who we think is going to win the White House.

**Worried peace activist  
Philadelphia**

Why be angry, when you should be mad!  
A bag of money is nothing compared to a barrel of oil.  
Blend, mix, stir your drink, just make sure it's paid for!  
Cry, weep, sob, grab a cocktail.  
Difficult as it is, it's going to be harder.  
Cannot doze or take a nap, forget about sleep.  
So you thought an election was dull or even boring?  
Final vote, last count!  
The finish line has been crossed, to what end?  
Or whose end?

**George Wilfrid Smith Jr.  
Chicago**

**SELECTED PUBLICATIONS FROM NEWS & LETTERS**

**BOOKS**

By RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

- The Power of Negativity: Selected Writings on the Dialectic in Hegel and Marx**  
by Raya Dunayevskaya.....\$24.95
- Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today**  
2000 edition. Foreword by Joel Kovel.....\$24.95
- NEW! Philosophy and Revolution: from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao**  
30th Anniversary issue, 2003.....\$24.95
- Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution** 1991 edition. New author's introduction. Foreword by Adrienne Rich.....\$12.95
- Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future** (1996 edition).....\$15.95
- The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism: Selected Writings by Raya Dunayevskaya**.....\$8.50
- The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism: Two Historic-Philosophic Writings by Raya Dunayevskaya**  
Contains "Presentation on Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy of June 1, 1987," and 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes".....\$3 paperback, \$10 hardcover

By CHARLES DENBY

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

By KEVIN ANDERSON

- Lenin, Hegel, and Western Marxism: A Critical Study**  
First full-length treatment of Lenin's studies of Hegel.....\$15.95

**PAMPHLETS**

- NEW! 40th anniversary edition of American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard, and**
- Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles: Race, Philosophy & the Needed American Revolution**  
Each \$8, Special: Both for \$15, including postage.

- NEW! Marxist-Humanist Writings on The Middle East**  
Selected writings by Raya Dunayevskaya 1961-1982 and *News & Letters* 1988-2002.....\$5
- Bosnia-Herzegovina: Achilles Heel of Western 'Civilization'** (Expanded edition).....\$5
- Kosova: Writings from News & Letters, 1998-1999**.....\$3.50
- Explorations in Dialectical and Critical Theory**  
From Hegel to Derrida and from Marx to Mészáros.....\$5
- NEW! Marx's Concept of Intrinsic Value**  
by Andrew Kliman.....\$2
- Marx's Capital and Today's Global Crisis**  
Includes critiques of Ernest Mandel and Tony Cliff.....\$2
- The Coal Miners' General Strike of 1949-50 and the Birth of Marxist-Humanism In the U.S.**  
by Andy Phillips and Raya Dunayevskaya.....\$2
- 25 Years of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S.: A History of Worldwide Revolutionary Developments**  
by Raya Dunayevskaya.....\$1.50
- Myriad Global Crises of the 1980s and the Nuclear World since World War II**  
by Raya Dunayevskaya.....\$2
- Theory and Practice, by Rosa Luxemburg**  
First English translation.....\$2
- Nationalism, Communism, Marxist-Humanism and the Afro-Asian Revolutions**  
by Raya Dunayevskaya.....\$1.25
- Voices from within the Prison Walls**  
by D. A. Sheldon. Prisoners' views of (in)justice system and organizing from within.....\$8  
For pamphlet plus donor copy for a prisoner.....\$16
- The Revolutionary Journalism of Felix Martin (Isaac Woods)**.....\$8
- Working Women for Freedom**  
by Angela Terrano, Marie Dignan, and Mary Holmes.....\$2
- Dos ensayos por Raya Dunayevskaya**.....\$2
- News and Letters Committees Constitution**  
.....37¢ postage

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

**ARCHIVES**

- Guides to Collection and Supplement to the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection: Marxist-Humanism: A Half Century of Its World Development**  
Full description of 15,000-page microfilm collection.....\$4.50
- The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection-Marxist-Humanism: A Half Century of Its World Development**  
A 15,000-page microfilm collection on 8 reels available from Wayne State University, Detroit, MI 48202.....\$165

**NEWSPAPER**

- News & Letters subscription**  
Unique combination of worker and intellectual published 10 times a year. (Request information about gift subscriptions.).....\$5/year
- Bound Volumes of News & Letters**  
1970-77, 1977-84, 1984-87, 1987-94, 1994-99.....\$30 each  
*N&L* is also available on microfilm from Pro Quest, 300 Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106. *N&L* as well as other Marxist-Humanist literature is available on audio tape.

**Mail orders to:**

News & Letters, 36 S. Wabash, Room 1440, Chicago, IL 60603, Phone (312) 236-0799

Enclosed find \$\_\_\_\_\_ for the literature checked. Please add \$2 postage for each pamphlet, \$4 postage for books. Illinois residents add 7% sales tax.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address \_\_\_\_\_



by Robert Taliaferro

Let's talk about the price of justice. Some of us are of a generation when the only criminal justice-oriented television programs were Perry Mason and a few lackluster police dramas. At that particular time we all had faith in Perry's prowess to get to the truth of an issue, knowing that no innocent man or woman would go to prison on his watch.

Fortunately that naivete no longer exists, for today we are permeated with the fallibilities and unnecessary excesses of American jurisprudence that is deathly sick on all levels, and no longer do we have undying faith in the nobility of American justice. Gone are the Perry Mason-like days when a sense of integrity drove the case, a time when a person was perceived to be innocent until proven guilty, unless, of course, you were a person of color.

In today's world, the largest untruths in the criminal justice system are often fueled by corporate-driven reporting by the media that is subjective in nature. In the 1990s this subjective reporting led to many so-called prison reforms that curtailed prisoner litigation but did not reform the system which instigated the litigation in the first place.

One of the biggest changes came in the form of a piece of knee-jerk political legislation called the Prisoner Litigation Reform Act (PLRA) on the federal level, and state-legislated progenies of the federal act. The act effectively stifled prisoner litigation in this country at a time when big business had decided that prisoners were a growth industry.

## BLACK/REDVIEW

Continued from page 1

in any single instance, attracted the masses of people to its banner. It has shown a pitiful lack of knowledge of mass technique and of how to pitch an appeal so as to reach the ears of the masses.

It is obvious that Bunche was extremely aware of the necessary role that the masses must play in making any decisive racial social changes in the existing American society. This is not just a theoretical issue. A search of American history shows that African-American masses were in action, whether its leadership were Black and white abolitionists, a Marcus Garvey or a Martin Luther King Jr. during the Civil Rights Movement. Legally the civil rights battle was won, but racism is still a characteristic of American society.

Ralph Bunche's career began in 1928 and ended when he retired from the United Nations in 1971. During those 43 years, Bunche also worked in President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Office of Strategic Services and then in the State Department.

### ROOSEVELT'S REFORMS

Bunche, and all the other prominent African Americans holding top jobs in Roosevelt's administration, were called the President's "Black Cabinet." What did this "Black Cabinet" do? It did precisely what Roosevelt wanted it to do. It encouraged African Americans to desert the Republican party by assuring them that a Democratic victory would not lead to the ascendancy of Southern politicians in Washington.

John Hope Franklin, the African-American historian, has noted that

Members of Roosevelt's 'Black Cabinet' were not politicians for the most part. To be sure, there were Negro political advisers to the President; but few of them were in high positions of trust in the government. It was later said that they were mere salesmen for the New Deal, but of many of them it could not be said that they were brought in because of faithful political service during campaigns; and finally, they were highly intelligent and highly trained persons who were called in to perform a specific function.

The above description might fit Ralph Bunche or it may not. We know that Ralph Bunche severely criticized the New Deal. In January, 1936 he wrote, "The explanations of the New Deal and of its apparent failure are not far to seek. The New Deal merely represents our domestic phase of the almost universal attempt in capitalistic countries to establish a new equilibrium in the social structure; an attempt made necessary by the fact that the collapse of the economic structures under the world-wide depression brought out, in bold relief, the sharp class antagonisms which the developing capitalistic economies had nurtured."

Today Bush's ideologues undermine even the mild attempts at equilibrium proposed by the New Deal. One of Karl Rove's close collaborators in Bush's re-election campaign, Grover Norquist, recently took glee in the fact that, "[t]wo million people who fought in the Second World War and lived through the Great Depression die every year. This generation...defended anti-American policies. They voted for the creation of the Welfare State.... And they are dying."

The exacerbation of the class contradictions in U.S. society has hit African Americans the hardest. It's time to return to Ralph Bunche's advice to settle for no more half-way solutions which only aim to save capitalism.

# All the justice that money can buy

Additionally the restrictions of such legislation allowed for Abu Ghraib-style abuses to become so prominent in U.S. prisons that Amnesty International placed the U.S. on its list of human rights abusers.

One of the most devastating aspects of PLRA is that it did not completely take away a prisoner's right to redress of grievances, for that is a constitutional imperative, but it did require prisoners to comply with a principle called the "exhaustion doctrine." In essence, that doctrine states that the prison staff, or respective Department of Corrections (DOC), must first have the opportunity to review itself to see if it feels it did anything wrong. After months of this review process, and if the state decides that it has not done wrong, then the prisoner can appeal to the courts.

### NEW LEGAL SHACKLES

In the 1990s there was a prison building boom that pretty much destroyed the funds that could have been geared towards developing the infrastructure that could help to alleviate the need for such insanely aggressive prison construction. This boom was sparked by politicians who fed upon the fears of the community in some well-publicized cases.

Prisoners, and prisoner-related programming, started to be scrutinized with a microscope and with the Republican Clinton in office, federal legislation was finally passed and signed by him that Republicans had been attempting to pass for nearly 30 years.

One of the main features of PLRA was that it eliminated the indigent status for prisoners—though keeping it in place for others as long as they were not prisoners. This meant that if a prisoner wished to file a lawsuit against abuses promulgated by prison staff, he would have to pay the filing fees for a court action after he concluded the exhaustion phase of his review.

Though prisoners still can file as indigents, they are required to pay the cost of their filing fees, which can range from \$50 to \$500 depending on the court and type of case. Since, on the average, prisoners earn from zero to \$500 a year in their prison accounts from jobs, often the thought of having to go without things like soap or toothpaste tends to dissuade the filing of suits.

Most prison abuses lie within the processes that state prisons, and federal prisons to a lesser extent, use

to compel order. When a person is alleged to have committed an offense in a prison, he is taken in front of a hearing committee that is made up of staff members of the prison. He can ask for an advocate—also a prison staff member—and he is alleged to have some due process rights that were defined, one might add, because of prison litigation.

Though prisoners are not compelled to exist in a vacuum and do not forfeit all of their rights when they are incarcerated, most prisoner litigation revolves around what happens at these hearings, which prisoners often refer to as "kangaroo courts."

Additionally prisoner litigation addresses aspects of the prison environment that require change, ranging from restrictions of cruel and unusual punishment such as torture, to holding prison employees accountable for their actions.

### PRISONIZATION OF LEGAL SYSTEM

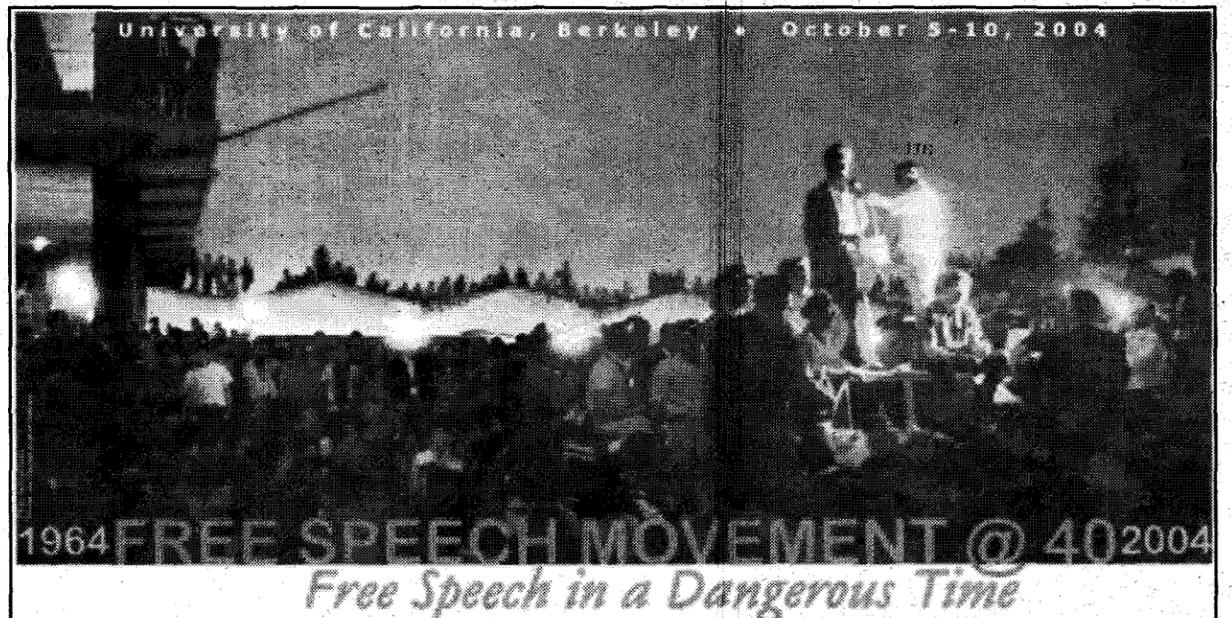
One of the main ironies of the PLRA was that it allegedly would unplug state and federal court systems by creating a stringent set of guidelines that a prisoner had to follow before gaining access to the courts. Prior to PLRA, a prisoner-initiated action could be decided in about a year or less; now, with all the processes, such actions gain lives of their own lasting upwards of two years, often exacerbating the conditions which caused the suit to be filed in the first place.

As with all things prison-oriented, laws have a tendency to trickle down into the community. Litigation reform is now a big topic in the Bush campaign. Like PLRA, it is designed to protect the interests of the company, not the common person who might be abused.

Today prisoners die within prisons through abuse and neglect; today sickness and disease is spreading through prisons around the country, largely going unreported often because prisoner lawsuits have not been filed—as they once would have been—to alert the media and community that such problems exist. Then the prison epidemic becomes a community epidemic.

Litigation reform is said to be necessary to stop abuses of the court system in this country. In reality it is a political subterfuge that allows the erosion of equality, fundamental fairness and justice in order to protect large corporate interests.

## Free Speech Movement anniversary



BERKELEY, CAL.—Veterans of the free speech struggles on the University of California Berkeley campus organized a series of events to celebrate the movement's 40th anniversary. Visit [www.fsm-a.org](http://www.fsm-a.org) to find out the full details. Also see the *News & Letters* pamphlet, *The Free Speech Movement and the Negro Revolution (1965)*.

## Science and state-capitalism in California

California, the country's most populous and technologically developed state, by all accounts is going to vote against George W. Bush in a big way in this Presidential election. Here capitalism is a bit more progressive than the political alliance of militarized science and religious reaction that seems to nearly have a lock on the federal government. For example, Proposition 71, which has huge backing from many super rich contributors, will authorize \$3 billion in bonds for stem cell research. The biotech industry, which will be the beneficiary of this corporate welfare, is also adding money that blankets the media with ads with testimonials from experts on the tremendous potential of stem cell research. However, this corporate giveaway to make California competitive with countries like the United Kingdom in stem cell research comes just when health and social services are severely stressed under an unprecedented state financial crisis.

In the national election campaign, Kerry certainly found a "wedge issue" by saying he would be a president who believes in science and he brought in science in a human way pointing to the potential of stem cell research to help cure a whole host of diseases. Against a metaphysical soul attached to cell cultures there is in the here and now millions of conscious individual souls developing in the womb of society whose lives are threatened with many possibly curable diseases. People can relate to that, but let's not be fooled that in this capitalist framework this science won't be one more way of making health care, especially pharmaceuticals,

more of a profit center for capital accumulation.

On the ground, in California clinics and hospitals, workers are fighting health care restructuring that focuses on the bottom line and limits their efforts to save lives. For example, it was recently announced that the Martin Luther King, Jr./Drew Medical Center, the only public hospital serving a huge part of South Central Los Angeles, will close its trauma unit. At the same time workers continue to get stuck with the increasing costs of medicines and coverage, if they are lucky enough not to lose coverage altogether. That makes another proposition a crucial test. Prop 72 is an initiative submitted by the legislature and signed by then Governor Davis which will require companies with more than 20 employees to provide health care coverage by 2006. Pro-business Governor Schwarzenegger and business interests, mostly fast food franchises calling themselves "Californians Against Government Run Healthcare," are also flooding the media with disinformation to defeat Prop 72 and support for it is going down.

Businesses will do everything to undermine the effort to bring the benefits of medical science to the growing lower tier workforce even as they expect workers to pay for their research and development. Elections in capitalist big-money democracy will not overcome this contradiction, but we are hoping for a small victory in the effort to make the well-being of the human being the focus of our activity.

—Ron Brokmeyer

**EDITORIAL****Terrorism and statism engulf Putin's Russia**

The world became witness to another double tragedy last month, when Chechen terrorists took hundreds of children hostage on Sept. 1 at a school in Beslan, a town in the North Ossetian region of the Caucasus. The terrorist attack resulted in the deaths of 500 people, at least half of them children. This horrific episode was followed by a series of declarations by Russian President Vladimir Putin that effectively puts an end to what is left of "democracy" in Russia. Just as George W. Bush used the terrorist attack on September 11 as an excuse to plunge the U.S. into permanent war, so Putin is using the terrorist attack at Beslan to centralize all political power in Russia into his hands.

**HORROR IN BESLAN**

The attack in Beslan, which took place in Middle School No. 6 in the southern Russian region of North Ossetia, was carried out by forces associated with Shamil Basayev, a former Prime Minister of Chechnya who has turned to increasingly desperate and inhumane terrorist attacks against civilians. His group—the "Riyadus-Salakin Reconnaissance and Sabotage Battalion of Central Chechen Martyrs"—held 1,200 people for three days without food or water. They denied all requests to release women and children, and even refused offers of the children's parents to be used as hostages instead of their children. Hundreds died after Russian troops invaded the school after explosions were set off by the terrorists.

Basayev's group has also claimed responsibility for a terrorist attack on Aug. 31 in which a woman detonated a suicide bomb on a Moscow subway station, killing ten, as well as for the destruction of two Russian jetliners, in which over 100 perished.

Putin responded to the siege at Beslan by claiming that it was the work of "Islamic radicals" from Central Asia and Afghanistan, but so far not one of Basayev's fighters has been identified, but so far not one of Basayev's Russian-controlled territory. Putin has tried to avoid discussing Chechnya altogether, as if the terrorist attacks have no relation to Russia's brutal invasion and occupation of that land. Taking a cue from George W. Bush's playbook, he now says he reserves the "right" to strike at "terrorists" anywhere in the world in order to "protect" Russia from further attacks.

The Beslan attack has been condemned by virtually every political tendency in Chechnya. The small number of extremists grouped around Basayev (perhaps 200) have received support from fundamentalist Islamic groups, such as Al Qaeda. But much of the Chechen political opposition is now denouncing Basayev as an impediment to Chechen self-determination. Yet the attack in Beslan is now being used as an excuse for launching racist attacks against Chechens throughout Russia.

The Beslan attack was so horrific that it is hard to see what even a deranged militant like Basayev thought could be achieved by taking hundreds of children hostage. However, it is possible that he hoped that it would stir up inter-ethnic hatred in the Caucasus, thereby making the entire area ungovernable for Rus-

sia. At least four terrorists from neighboring Ingushetia were involved in occupation of Middle School No. 6. The largely Christian North Ossetians and Muslim Ingushes fought a brief war with each another in 1992, and tensions between the two ethnic groups have been mounting ever since.

**THE END OF RUSSIAN DEMOCRACY**

Putin has responded to all this by putting an effective end to what is left of democracy in Russia. On Sept. 13 he stripped the electorate of the right to elect governors and district representatives in Parliament, on the grounds that "terrorism can only be combated through centralized political control." He will now appoint governors, presidents, and other leaders from the country's 89 regions. He will also eliminate district elections that up to now chose half of the seats in Parliament.

This represents a further move to roll back the limited openings toward democracy that Russia experienced after 1991. However, it represents a qualitative change, since Putin had never before reversed the right of democratically choosing state representatives through the ballot box. Putin defends these measures on the grounds that, without greater central control, Russia risks being torn apart by ethnic conflict, not just in the Caucasus, but in conflicts with Russia's

2,000 other ethnic groups. His measures are certain to be approved, since Parliament long ago became Putin's rubber stamp, and public outrage over the Beslan terrorist attack runs deep. Indeed, not a single leader of Russia's 89 regions voiced any protest against the proposed changes, even though it means they will now be totally at the beck and call of Putin's commands.

Putin clearly formulated these plans for greater centralization long before the Beslan attack. Beslan gave him the opportunity to implement plans he has had on the shelf for years, since in its aftermath much of the Russian public and political establishment is willing to accept anything that smacks of an "iron fist" against terrorism.

In effect, the Russian political establishment is blaming democratization as the problem, instead of focusing on the real issue, its genocidal war against Chechnya that has reduced the number of Chechens living there from 1.25 million to 500,000. At least 125,000 Chechens, including 30,000 children, have been killed by Russian forces since 1999. The land is largely in ruins, and Putin refuses all pleas to negotiate a political resolution of the conflict.

Needless to say, Putin's move to put to rest what is left of democracy in Russia will do nothing to combat terrorism, since elections on the regional level have little, if anything, to do with preventing the kinds of attacks that occurred in Beslan. A much greater factor is corruption among the police and political establishment, which eats up 4% of Russia's GDP each year. Basayev and others have made use of such corruption by bribing border guards, policemen, and soldiers to look the other way.

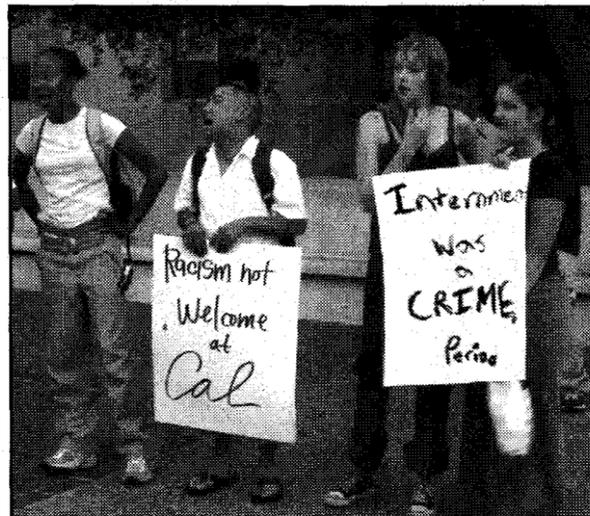
The Bush administration appears to be in no mood to seriously question Putin's effort to arm the Russian state against "terrorism." As one commentator put it, "This war is giving Mr. Putin the victory he seeks in the struggle that matters to him: the one for absolute power in Russia. It is an outcome we should detest, achieved by means we must abhor" (see "We make common cause with Putin at our peril," by Martin Wolf, *Financial Times*, Sept. 22).

**VOICE OF THE SECOND RUSSIA**

The situation facing the Russian masses is truly desperate, since they are trapped between terrorist attacks on the one side and heightened statist authoritarianism on the other. Putin has used "great Russian chauvinism" in the past to cement his political control, and there is little doubt that he will confront little resistance from the Russian political establishment in continuing to do so today.

This makes it all the more important to solidarize with those forces in Russia who are trying to steer a course opposed to both terrorism and statism. In September the Campaign of Solidarity Against War in Chechnya in Moscow issued a statement which declared: "Terrorism—the murder of peaceful civilians—children even—is insane barbarism. But it has been born in the atmosphere of terror that has been brought to Chechnya by Russia's rulers, who will stop at nothing in their efforts to sustain their empire's might....Only a broad social protest movement—not state-directed rallies with servile national slogans—can put a stop to the wave of terror. To end the terror, what is needed above all is to stop the state terror in Chechnya, which is spreading to Ingushetia and threatens to engulf the whole of North Caucasus. An end to the state terror would destroy the basis of Islamic extremism, which grows like a parasite on the suffering of the victims of war."

The events of the past month show that ending the vicious circle of fundamentalist terrorism and statist-capitalist repression is not just a task for those in the U.S., but for everyone striving to create an alternative society around the world.

**Protest racist author**

Hundreds of protesters denounced University of California-Berkeley's appearance of Michelle Malkin, author of *In Defense of Internment: the Case for "Racial Profiling" in World War II and the War on Terror*. While she claims that the U.S. government suspected a network of spies controlled by Japan were on the West Coast during WWII, the only spies ever found were white. Malkin, a Filipina, said she would not object to Filipino Americans being profiled if the government felt it necessary.

News & Letters / Urszula Wislanska

**Peace activist looks at the 'Other Israel'**

**NEW YORK**—Adam Keller, a leading Israeli peace activist, discussed "The Other Israel—A Different View of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict" at several locations in the New York during September. In a talk at Columbia University, he explained the history of the conflict since 1967, when Israel annexed Palestinian-occupied lands, especially the last 10 years of scuttled peace plans. He also highlighted the refuseniks—Israeli soldiers who refuse to participate in the military occupation—and the youthful anarchists who are putting their bodies on the line to protest Israel's current construction of a wall through the West Bank. The wall, he emphasized, is part of Prime Minister Sharon's plan to retain the West Bank even if Israel gives up the Gaza Strip.

Keller was an early refusenik during the Israeli occupation of Lebanon; he was jailed three times since 1984 for refusing to serve in occupied territory, and for counseling other conscientious objectors. (All Israeli males are required to serve in the army for three years and then in the reserves until age 45.) He is spokesperson for Gush Shalom (Peace Bloc) and editor of the newsletter *The Other Israel* (available in English). Gush Shalom supports a two-state solution to the seemingly intractable conflict, in which an independent Palestinian state would be created in the West Bank and Gaza, using the 1967 borders and sharing Jerusalem.

When he spoke here, Keller was actually optimistic about a two-state peace plan being implemented, because the military option has not worked for Israel. The current cycle of bombings and retaliatory bombings is untenable for both peoples, he said.

Keller decried the killings, jailings, and destruction of homes and villages that Israel has inflicted on the occupied territories in a futile attempt to end the Palestinian struggle for self-determination. He also decried Sharon's ongoing construction of a wall through Palestinian villages on the West Bank, which is cutting off farmers from their land, students from their schools, workers from their workplaces, etc. Many Israeli peace groups have staged demonstrations against the wall, including the Women's Coalition for Peace and the Feminist Collective. They have been shot at and tear-

gassed along with the Palestinians. Keller reported that a peaceful demonstration on Sept. 13 included 400 Israelis and 2,000 Palestinians.

Keller also mentioned that some youth have recently refused to go into the army at all, rather than entering but refusing to serve in the occupied territories. Although his position differs, he expressed pride in his son, Uri Ya'acobi, who has endured seven jail sentences for refusing to serve in the army. Five other youth who spent almost two years in prison were released on the day after Keller's talk, but they immediately received new call-up orders, and he feared they would be

**Palestine/Iraq anti-war solidarity fast**

**MEMPHIS, TENN**—I began a ten-day liquid-only fast on Sept. 1, in solidarity with Iraqis and Palestinians using nonviolent means to resist war, terror and occupation in the Middle East. This was one of more than a dozen such fasts occurring around the U.S. in Chicago, New York, and other locations.

I kept a daily vigil and set up a display at Christian Brothers University, where I'm a student. Passers-by in this area of heavy foot traffic engaged me on the nature of the fast and read leaflets about nonviolent resistance highlighting efforts by Iraqis and Palestinians.

I told them of how in Iraq over 14,000 civilians have been killed in the U.S. invasion and occupation. In Israel, 943 Israeli civilians have been killed and in Palestine more than 3,000 Palestinians since 2000. A number of international solidarity activists have been assassinated, and a few have survived assassination attempts by "legitimate" authorities.

As I began my fast, the Iraqi city of Najaf entered its second week of a cease-fire following three weeks of intense siege and bombardment by U.S. forces. In late August, more than 10,000 unarmed Iraqi pilgrims, following a call by Grand Ayatollah Sistani to "march to Najaf in order to rescue the city," placed themselves between the warring parties of the U.S. military and the Mehdi militia. They called for Najaf to be a weapons-free zone, for the Iraqi rebels to disarm and vacate the holy shrine, and for the U.S. occupation to

immediately withdraw. The effect was immediate: an end to the fighting, for the time being.

Palestinian prisoners and detainees all throughout Israeli-occupied Palestine began a hunger strike on Aug. 15 in protest of inhumane treatment of them and their families by Israeli authorities. In this non-cooperation, the prisoners use their imprisonment as an organizing tool and as an act of resistance to the collective punishment and arbitrary abuse of the Palestinian people by the Israeli occupation. The initial reaction of some Israeli authorities was a mixture of contempt and a celebratory opportunism, as with Israeli Public Security Minister Tzachi Hanegbi's famous "let them strike till death" statement.

The strike, which generated massive support and solidarity actions throughout Israel, occupied Palestine, and much of the world, has brought some Israeli authorities to the negotiating table. In late August, 350 Palestinian prisoners in Ashkelon jail stopped their hunger strike because the Israelis decided to discuss their demands and agreed on most of them. A few days later, these 350 prisoners rejoined the other 7,500 prisoners on hunger strike.

As I was ending my solidarity fast on Sept. 11, the Israeli Defense Forces were celebrating the Palestinian prisoners hunger strike with a barbecue.

—Ceylon Mooney

# Beneath election rhetoric, mass actions show divides

Continued from page 1

The following day's large march, on Sunday, Aug. 29, past Madison Square Garden (MSG) on the eve of the convention, went off with only a few incidents. Heavily covered by the major media outlets, this event came close in numbers to the half a million people who came out to oppose the then-pending war in Iraq on Feb. 15, 2003. It's difficult to describe the character of an event so big and diverse, but it evoked the feel of the recent large anti-war and anti-occupation demonstrations, as most signs and banners condemned the war in Iraq. Afterward many protesters made their way to Central Park, which the mayor had declared off-limits ostensibly to protect the grass from being trampled. What was, in fact, trampled upon that week were protesters' civil rights.

## POOR, PEOPLE OF COLOR MARCH

While authorities tolerated the weekend events, other events organized by the poor and people of color, as well as by those intending acts of civil disobedience, evoked a harsher response. When the media turned its attention from mass protests to the convention proper on Monday, that tolerance seemed to vanish as police made sure, once the convention was actually in session, to forbid access to the area around MSG.

In an obvious attempt to send an early message to potential protesters, police, usually tolerant of Critical Mass, the monthly direct action bike ride meant to reclaim the streets from cars, cracked down on the event which occurred the Friday before the convention, and notably drew 5,000 bikers. Police arbitrarily arrested over 260, including passersby. Most people's bikes were returned only after nearly a month.

Monday brought two important events led by poor people and people of color. The Still We Rise coalition, consisting of more than 50 local neighborhood, housing, immigrant, homeless and AIDS grassroots organizations, conducted a march which drew about 10,000 people, starting in Union Square and going to MSG. They highlighted the huge and growing inequality in American society, especially in the areas of housing, healthcare and HIV services, as well as those caught in the machinery of the courts and prison system.

This highlights the conditions that could worsen as Bush threatens to slash nearly all the funding for Section 8 federal housing subsidies. "In Bushwick, Brooklyn," one young participant complained, "half the population lives below the poverty level," adding, "We don't have college recruiters in our school, but we have military recruiters."

Also Monday, the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign, which had set up a tent city in Brooklyn, held a rally at the UN, organized by the Kensington Welfare Rights Union, and then proceeded on an unplanned march to MSG. Towards the end of this event, police, who had negotiated with demonstrators over the route, created mass confusion while trying illegally to pen marchers in. They met with some resistance, whereupon they drove motor scooters directly into the crowd and began to disperse people, making several arrests.

The major crackdown occurred the next day. Tuesday's day of non-violent civil disobedience and direct action ended with further indiscriminate arrests—nearly 1,200 people, many of whom were held more than two days before being processed by the court system. Police rounded up entire demonstrations with orange netting and seized whole blocks of people, miles away from the convention site, before they were able to even begin marching.

Protesters often received contradictory instructions from the officers with whom they negotiated, and were not given a chance to disperse before being arrested. Such sweeps, which also caught a number of random bystanders, occurred at several locations throughout the city. The processing of these detainees was illegally dragged out to insure that as few as possible would be back out on the streets when Bush made his acceptance speech Thursday night. One detainee held by police for 49 hours reported that they were constantly harassed and repeatedly told they had no rights. Authorities even inexplicably asked her what she knew about terrorism. Some tried to make the protesters feel guilty for dissenting by evoking the 9/11 terrorist attacks that traumatized the city.

The detainees suffered not only from being kept in limbo and incommunicado, but also from the deplorable conditions in which they were held. The repressive measures provoked by the outpouring of "unsanctioned" dissent came to be symbolized by Pier 57, the makeshift detention camp housed on a pier on the Hudson River that was leased by the NYPD to handle the expected influx of arrestees.

Most of the nearly 2,000 people apprehended over the course of the week were taken to Pier 57 initially after arrest and usually spent the night in its toxic conditions. The ground of the pier, formerly used as a bus depot, was saturated with oil, antifreeze, and other hazardous chemicals on which people were forced to sit

and lie down due to insufficient seating. The facility was quickly dubbed "Guantanamo on the Hudson" because detainees were held without being charged in chain-link cages topped with razor wire. As people were later released, they emerged from the courthouse with visible cuts, rashes and chemical burns. A number of class action lawsuits are currently being planned over the myriad wrongs committed by the city.

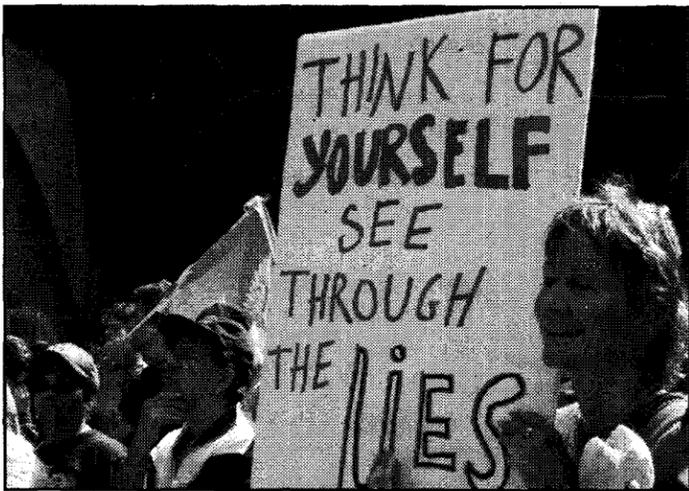
## DISSENT GROWS, SO DOES REACTION

While big events were obvious targets, also taking place throughout the city were hundreds of smaller spontaneous demos. Many made it clear to delegates that New York did not welcome them. There was a demonstration in solidarity with immigrant workers. On Wednesday, 8,000 people stood in a symbolic unemployment line that stretched the three miles between Wall Street and MSG, holding pink slips to highlight the joblessness of this "recovery." And despite the overwhelming security detail, a few courageous people did make it into the stadium to disrupt speeches.

Members of the AIDS activist group ACT-UP were able to gain entrance to the convention to disrupt one talk. Code Pink ("Code Pink Women for Peace") activists also managed to sneak in on more than one occasion to heckle speakers, while two of their activists managed to stop Bush's acceptance speech for a few minutes before being hauled off the convention floor. Importantly Code Pink has also announced that they

will now travel to Florida to warn out that state's looming election fraud and disenfranchisement of Black voters.

As dissent grows, police tactics have escalated



Chicagoans turn out for "Unity Rally" against Bush on Aug. 29, coinciding with the mass march in New York City that day.

against protesters from 1999 to the present. And the national coordination of surveillance results in not so subtle ways our freedom to dissent is being choked by the state, recalling the infiltration practices of the FBI in the 1960s. Police called their "rapid-response" tactics, such as arresting people on the mere pretense of disorderly conduct, the "Kelly Doctrine," after Police Commissioner Ray Kelly. His policy of overwhelming and preemptive force mirrors the Bush Doctrine. The parallels between the tactics employed to stifle protest in New York and those employed in the war on terror are chilling.

Indeed stifling voices of protest makes sense in the context of the ruling class's overall campaign against the forces of revolution nationwide, indeed, worldwide. Relentless attacks on workers' power, rampant police brutality, the deeply racist criminal justice system, and attacks on women's freedoms are all aspects of the class impulse to grind down the passions and forces that can overthrow this society and to limit the horizon of our thought and the idea that we can build a new, human society.

## A WINDOW ON THE FUTURE

The continuing economic crises, which serve as the basis for the Iraqi war and occupation and the U.S. drive for single world domination, as well as the attendant crises in American political, military and ideological power, have made it necessary to take such measures in an attempt to impose consensus at home. They are also testing how much they can get away with.

No matter who wins the election, conditions of life will not substantially change. The tendency for the rich to get richer and the poor to approach Third World conditions inevitably results from the way capital works. The drive for world domination, inherent in the logic of the capitalist system that both major parties serve, is a decidedly bipartisan endeavor.

Although there is currently a split in the ruling class over the war and occupation and its threat to stability at home and elsewhere in the world, the Democrats continue to take the ground of the Right. While perhaps capable of giving back some rights to women and minorities, they have been unable or unwilling to tap into the dissatisfaction with the current administration or even to pose much of an alternative. Only belatedly and reluctantly has Kerry distinguished himself from Bush.

While there were enormous amounts of creativity on display at the anti-RNC events, it's important to note that organizing around the RNC, which took up most of the movement's time for the last year, still amounts to being defined by the very limited scope of electoral politics.

In the end, it also must be acknowledged that police choreographed the week's events. In their show, what was permitted, happened, and what was not, did not.

Although there has been some ebb and flow, protests have tended to get bigger over the last several years. The unprecedented ease of international coordination and a near instantaneous communication of struggles across the globe promise even more international dialogue and solidarity. This spread of ideas that can contribute to the overthrow of this society, the ruling class wants to suppress.

There is also a growing sense from certain quarters of the movement that, rather than simply resting on the conclusion that another world is possible, we must begin seriously talking about and concretizing an alternative vision for a new society free from the capitalist order. Only this kind of reasoned self-activity can break through the false absolute of capital that declares no possible alternative and halt capital's totalizing impulse.

## 'Life After Capitalism'?

NEW YORK—A much anticipated conference on "Life After Capitalism," held here Aug. 20-22, proved to be both disappointing and disturbing. Only a few hundred people seemed to be in attendance at any time, and very little of the conference dealt with its ostensible theme. The weak attendance seems to have been caused, in part, by the organizers' exclusionary practices.

The conference's name recalled the subtitle of Michael Albert's recent book, *Parecon*—short for "participatory economics." One plenary session included an explanation of *parecon* by Albert, followed by commentaries from Andrew Kliman, a Marxist-Humanist, and Peter Staudenmaier of the Institute for Social Ecology. Unfortunately all other panels dealing with "visions" had to compete against this one in the same time slot. The remainder of the conference was devoted to life under capitalism and to organizing efforts against it. Most panels featured either community-based activist groups, or discussions of "prefigurative" politics, in other words, the practice of new social relations here and now, within capitalism.

Some of these discussions were important. For instance, Michael Hardt, co-author of *Empire*, grappled with how to ensure that "horizontal," anti-vanguardist organizations are able to sustain themselves. Yet one must wonder why the organizers promised a conference on "Life After Capitalism," and attracted an audience on that basis, but then served up something quite different.

Most disturbing were the authoritarian, exclusionary practices of the organizers. A student working group on "Alternatives to Capitalism" had asked to put on a panel, but was not allowed to do so because its members are interested in the thought of Karl Marx. Moreover the organizers rejected the requests of News and Letters Committees, the International Socialist Organization, the Spartacist League and other groups to set up literature tables. A notice on the conference website stated that the "space" would not be "receptive" to "sectarian left groupings," and asked them to stay away. However Judith Le Blanc of the Communist Party was welcomed as United For Peace and Justice's representative on the opening plenary.

No definition of "sectarian left groupings" was given; the website notice stated only that "you know who you are." The vagueness of the category indicated that the organizers "felt entitled to exclude whoever they happened to call 'sectarian,'" as one dissenter put it. Organizers' subsequent defenses confirmed this charge: the conference was their "space," and they were entitled to do with it what they wanted. A critic pointed out that this notion, which was lauded as a "principle" of "anarchism," was no different from defenses of segregated housing on the ground that "your home is your castle."

The organizers had originally portrayed themselves and their aims quite differently. The conference program "envisioned a space in which all voices are heard, a space in which the concept of 'horizontalism' can be both a goal and a tool. ... [I]t is necessary for us to put great amounts of energy and thought into structuring egalitarian and provocative conversations, ones in which all of our voices and ideas can thrive." Such pluralistic practice is not merely ethically sound. As the organizers correctly stressed, "seeing and hearing one another in our full humanity and confronting the power hierarchies that we observe amongst ourselves" are crucial aspects of breaking down and challenging capitalistic ideology and behavior. Unfortunately they failed to practice what they preached.

The Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth Club and the Internationalist Group set up literature tables at an empty end of the main hall. The organizers then called on uniformed security guards to expel them. At this point, people with News and Letters Committees began to chant "Freedom of Speech, Let them Stay." As the chanting spread through the hall, an organizer picked up a microphone and tried to drown it out, but did not succeed. The organizers were forced to abandon their effort to exclude the "sectarians," but spitefully continued to harass and bait unwanted groups throughout the conference.

"That this kind of thing occurred within our movement at the very moment when we are embroiled in the fight against the police-state tactics surrounding the Republican National Convention protests should give us cause for concern," complained the dissenter. "Despite the conference title, 'Life After Capitalism,' they [the organizers] displayed the pitiful state of life under capitalism."

—New York News and Letters Committee attendees

# The Left fiddles while Darfur burns

Continued from page 1

the belated efforts of the U.S. and European Union to get Sudan to stop its attacks on Darfur is part of an effort to gain control of Sudan's oil and to undermine the position of China, which is the largest foreign investor in Sudan's oil industry. Such denials of genocide fly in the face of both accounts by independent journalists and reports issued by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

One leftist, John Laughland, wrote in *The Guardian* on Aug. 2: "We ought to treat with skepticism the U.S. Congress declaration of genocide in the region.... Our media has taken this complex picture [in Sudan] and projected on it a simple morality tale of ethnic cleansing and genocide. They gloss over the fact that the Janjaweed militia come from the same ethnic group and religion as they are allegedly persecuting." (1)

In fact, no one has questioned that the Janjaweed as well as the residents of Darfur are Muslims. The conflict is not an intra-religious conflict (as has been the case with Sudan's three-decade war against secessionists in the southern part of the country) but, one in which the central government is trying to crush aspirations for self-determination and an equitable distribution of the nation's wealth by Darfur's non-Arab, Black populace.

## LEFTIST EXCUSES

Laughland and others are recycling the same kinds of arguments in regard to Sudan that we used to hear on Bosnia and Kosovo, namely that Germany (which helped broker the recent negotiations between Sudan and the rebels in the south) is trying to "break up" Sudan just as it supposedly helped break up Yugoslavia, and the U.S. is "inventing" tales of ethnic cleansing in Darfur in order to bring down an "anti-imperialist" government. (In fact, as late as June 1991, when Croatia declared independence from Yugoslavia, Germany reaffirmed its support for a unified Yugoslavia, as did the

U.S.; and Milosevic's Serbia was an authoritarian state-capitalist regime which never represented any kind of alternative to the capitalist West.)

Until the crisis in Darfur became too noticeable to ignore in the past few months, the Bush administration was trying to forge closer relations with Sudan. Sudan denounced the September 11 attacks and said it was willing to work with the U.S. to "combat terrorism," and Bush followed this up by repairing some of the damage caused by Clinton's destruction of Sudan's main pharmaceutical plant by a U.S. preemptive attack in 1999.

Then as now, all too many on the Left seem willing to close their eyes to the brutal fact of ethnic cleansing and genocide, so long as the government committing such crimes issues enough "anti-imperialist" rhetoric to be viewed as a "victim" of U.S. policy.

Another leftist, Stephen Gowans, has recently written that while genocide "may" be occurring in Darfur, we should still oppose efforts by outside powers to stop the fighting since "the only effective protection against these attacks is to put an end to the imperialism that prompts them in the first place. And since what lies behind the exploiting, subjugating, and plunder is the incessant drive to accumulate that lies at the heart of capitalism, the task of achieving [an end to the violence] is inseparable from the task of replacing capitalism." (2)

This abstract revolutionism that ignores how to

immediately stop the genocide in Darfur isn't worth the paper it's written on. It tries to use the suffering in Darfur to generate "a movement against capitalism" instead of actively solidarizing with the people of Darfur. Such abstract calls for "revolution" only undermine the very idea of revolution. For why should anyone listen to leftists who call for a revolution against capitalism if they display such insensitivity towards actual people facing genocide?

The reason why many leftists failed to solidarize with Bosnia and Kosovo and are repeating that with Darfur today is that despite their "anti-capitalist" rhetoric, they aren't rooted in a vision of a new society centered on the self-activity of the human subject. What Marko Hoare wrote of the non-response to the "ethnic cleansing" of Bosnia and Kosovo remains unfortunately all too true: "More striking even than the defense of denial of crimes against humanity by the left revisionists is their sheer lack of any positive vision for the future."

The **immediate**—solidarizing with the people of Darfur—is inseparable from the **ultimate**—working out a comprehensive, liberating vision of a noncapitalist future.

## NOTES

1. See "The mask of altruism disguising a colonial war," by John Laughland, *The Guardian*, Aug. 2, 2004.
2. "Sudan: Round Gazillion," by Stephen Gowans [http://bellaciao.org/en/article.php?id\_article=3327]
3. "Genocide in the former Yugoslavia: a critique of left revisionism's denial," by Marko Attila Hoare, *Journal of Genocide Research* (2003), 5(4), p. 548.

## 'No shortcuts'

*Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles* is a clear and vigorous statement of a Marxist-humanist understanding of the Black struggle for freedom throughout the history of the USA. It consists of five chapters: the first on the notion of the continuing challenge of the U.S. Black masses as vanguard in the American revolution which is needed; the second on the struggle of civil rights and the limits of political emancipation; the third on the new challenges posed by globalized capital; the fourth in which prisoners of color speak out for themselves; and the concluding chapter which is concerned with finding a new unity of theory and practice in the African-American struggle for freedom.

There is a preface by the National Editorial Board of News and Letters Committees, which states that this book has been published to mark the 40th anniversary of *American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard*, "published at the height of the Civil Rights Movement in 1963" (p. 1). It stresses the need for a philosophic understanding, but one that is integral to the concrete reality of the society: "African Americans are revealing that the Idea of freedom cannot be relegated simply to overcoming terrorism and religious fundamentalism, of which we have a version here... with the Christian Right... the idea of freedom has to be worked out and deepened from within this racist, alienating society" (p. 2).

Also included is an appendix by Raya Dunayevsaya on the horror of "Grenada: Revolution and Counter-Revolution." It too stresses the organic link between theory and practice and theory: "What we see when the philosophy of revolution is separated from actual, social revolution is the attempt to force the concept of revolution through the barrel of a gun" (p. 96).

The opening chapter eloquently states the issue: "The increasingly alienated nature" of U.S. society, "which promises permanent war overseas and decaying conditions of life and labor... and mounting racism at home"—and the leading role of the revolt of the disenfranchised African-American masses in the struggle to create "a liberating alternative" (pp. 5-6).

The most recent history is engraved with the "two-fold disaster" dating from September 11, 2001: first, "the terrorist attack itself" and second, "the Bush administration's response to it by declaring a 'state of war' and engaging in total militarization, at home and abroad" (p. 8), while actually "the fundamental issue is... everyday human relationships" (pp. 10-11). Hence the importance of Marxist-Humanism: Marxism needs to be understood as "a philosophy of liberation rooted in the ongoing struggles of the oppressed" (p. 14)—in other words in the process of the self-development of the Black masses, this idea being developed in chapter two. A political solution is not sufficient. There is a "need to go beyond civil rights, to create a 'new humanism,'... a new society" (p. 29). Thus, the final chapter develops the distinction drawn by Marx between political emancipation and human emancipation: as important as the former is, it is not sufficient.

These are the key ideas that this book develops in reference to facts and figures relating to the disenfranchised African-American masses and their other brothers and sisters of color and their struggles for freedom—ideas that deserve constant critical development. As ever, however, there is a danger that the inherent fallibility of reason, even in the practice of the dispossessed masses struggling for liberation, is forgotten. There are no shortcuts, no substitute for constant critical questioning.

—Prof. Peter Figueroa

The genocide in western Sudan challenges revolutionaries as did ethnic cleansing in the Balkans in the 1990s. Read two publications from *News & Letters* that met the challenge of that period and continue to have relevance for today's world.

<p><b>BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA</b> Achilles Heel of Western Civilization</p>	<p>Bosnia-Herzegovina: Achilles Heel of Western 'Civilization' \$5</p>	<p><b>KOSOVO</b> Writings from News &amp; Letters, 1998-1999</p>
<p>Kosovo: Writings from News &amp; Letters, 1998-1999 \$3.50 ...To order, see page 7.</p>		

## San Francisco rally



San Francisco, Cal.—The sixth annual "Power to the Peaceful" concert, which originated as an event held to bring attention to the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, took place on Sept. 11 this year. More than 50,000 attended the event.

## Police violence targets family

**CHICAGO**—A South Side neighborhood meeting in support of the Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS) on Sept. 14 was followed by a violent incident at 72nd and Woodlawn, according to Craig T. Carrington, of Loop Legal Services. "Hands Across the Community" was the theme of neighborhood meetings all over Chicago. This was an effort to bring religious leaders, CAPS police and residents together to help the police secure and protect Chicago neighborhoods. Carrington, who supported "Hands Across the Community," said a rock-throwing incident caused the police to victimize his sister Karine and her children, Chrell, 12, Anthony, 15, and Randy, 13.

Without making sure they had the actual offenders, police went after neighborhood teens with their billy clubs and handcuffs. Chrell, a 40-pound, 12-year-old girl, was leaving a store when she was arrested. They slammed her against the squad-roll, knocked her down and pulled her along the curb, badly bruising her back and leaving finger bruises on her neck where police were holding her, said Carrington. When her brothers got wind of these doings, they rushed to the scene yelling, "That's my sister!"

The police turned on the brothers. Anthony was knocked unconscious with one blow, cuffed and thrown into the car. He woke up at the police station. In the meantime, they sprayed Randy, an asthmatic, with pepper-spray in his face. Enter Karine, the three children's mother. She resisted how the police were treating her children, so they slammed her against their car,

yanked her arm all the way back and arrested her.

A bystander, Yvette Franklin, had words with the police and in return received racial epithets and was called the "B" word several times.

Upon arriving at the station, the police were surprised by a crowd of between 200 and 300 local residents demanding information. At this point, police apologized to Chrell for mistaking her for a boy, but still issued charges against her as a juvenile. But, Carrington said, some of Chrell's charges were transferred to her mother where they carried more weight, she being an adult.

Residents got together on Sept. 17 at Park Manor Christian Church to exchange information and try to understand exactly what happened. According to Carrington, many neighbors stood up and expounded on the incident, saying that the police were out of line and were using excessive force on children. How much force do adults carrying side arms need against unarmed children? How could the whole family be disrupted, the mother incarcerated with an injured arm and shoulder, the children brutalized, in such an incident?

The case was discussed at a Sept. 30 meeting of Enough is Enough!, a community anti-police brutality organization. At the time of the meeting, all were facing charges. Karine was still in custody. Her children were released after being held overnight. Karine needs \$2,500 in bond money. The public defender has tried to get the bond reduced, but no dice. So far, \$1,100 has been raised.

—January

## OUR LIFE AND TIMES

by Kevin A. Barry

Not since Vietnam has the U.S. imperial behemoth suffered such humiliating setbacks as those unfolding in Iraq today. Over a year into the occupation, armed attacks on the U.S., its Iraqi allies, and civilians working for them are increasing in number, scope, and brutality. Efforts to form a pro-U.S. government under the authoritarian Iyad Allawi, or even an army, are also faltering. The CIA-backed Allawi cannot appear publicly for fear of assassination, while the U.S.-trained army and police are suffering massive desertions and are surely infiltrated from top to bottom by anti-U.S. forces.

As *Le Monde's* respected military analyst Rémy Ourdan wrote on Sept. 19, "The American failure in Iraq is a story of territories abandoned to the enemy. Since the Sunni and Shi'ite insurrections in April, the American army and its Iraqi allies have seen entire regions of the country escape from their control, and into that of the mujahedeen. Today it is clear that it is the rebels who have the wind in their sails."

## Indonesia elections

Former general Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono won by a landslide over incumbent Megawati in September's presidential elections. Within the context of the Indonesian political-military establishment, Yudhoyono is a relative liberal. He has promised greater autonomy to minority regions, as well as moves against corruption. He has also vowed to reform the military, which ruled the country under U.S.-backed dictator Suharto from 1965 to 1998.

While Yudhoyono did support the overthrow of Suharto, his own past includes two stints as an officer in East Timor, where Suharto's military committed genocide. East Timor is finally independent, but the Indonesian government has refused to extradite or seriously prosecute its war criminals. In August, courts voided almost all of the few convictions obtained over the 1999 carnage in East Timor. In that year, 15,000 were killed and 250 driven from their homes, in a last fling of bloodletting as East Timorese voted for independence in a United Nations-sponsored referendum.

In 2003, as Megawati's security minister, Yudhoyono faced the question of how to deal with the independence movement in Aceh, another long-suffering province, where thousands have been killed by the military. At first Yudhoyono seemed to favor compromise with the resistance, but he soon caved in to military pressure by declaring martial law. In his campaign, Yudhoyono promised greater autonomy for West Papua, another region whose people have faced military repression.

Indonesia also faces the challenge of radical Islamism, as the world saw in the horrific bombings that killed nearly 200 people in Bali in 2002. Eleven days before this year's election, another attack by fundamentalist suicide bombers on the Australian Embassy killed nine people, all of them Indonesians, and injured 150. These movements have targeted Indonesia, whose 228 million people make it the world's largest predominantly Muslim country, but so far with only limited success.

The country's biggest challenge concerns capital and labor. Strong labor organizing since 1998 has succeeded in raising the average wage in Jakarta by over 50%. It is now higher than that in Shanghai or Hanoi, but still a shockingly low \$75 per month. In response, corporations have threatened layoffs and relocation abroad, while the International Monetary Fund has demanded economic "reforms" that would benefit international capital at the expense of workers.

## George W. Bush's quagmire in Iraq

Sunni Muslim jihadists now control Falluja and several other cities, where they have created fundamentalist mini-states in which groups working with Al Qaeda can organize freely. They are working closely with highly trained military and intelligence operatives from the former Ba'athist regime. In late September, these jihadists kidnapped and videotaped the beheading of two American civilian contractors, after having done the same to three Kurdish truck drivers. A week earlier, one of their suicide bombers killed 47 outside a Baghdad police station. Their most inhuman act was the gruesome murder, duly recorded on video, of a dozen impoverished contract laborers from Nepal.

Sunni Muslims, the support base of the old Ba'athist regime, are concentrated in northern Iraq and form only about 20% of the population. Initially, the Shi'ite majority greeted the U.S. occupation at least neutrally, but this has changed with the rise of the anti-U.S. fundamentalist cleric Moqtada al-Sadr. His Mahdi Army, drawn from the poorest parts of the population but

funded from mysterious sources, controls Sadr City, a vast Shi'ite slum in Baghdad. Twice, Sadr's forces have engaged the Americans in sustained battles for control of Najaf, the Shi'ite religious center. Each time, the Americans won Pyrrhic victories, while Sadr emerged as a nationalist hero who had been able to defy the U.S. colossus.

The more moderate Ayatollah Ali Sistani, the country's most revered Shi'ite leader, has continually attacked the occupation and especially the way in which former exiles have come to dominate the government and the official political process.

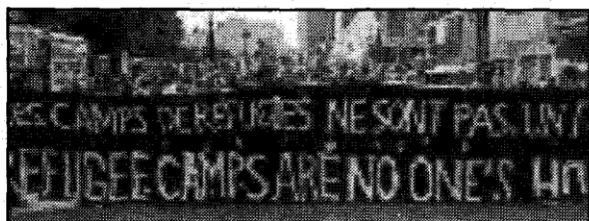
None of this has gone unnoticed within the dominant classes inside the U.S. Week after week, damning reports about the war and occupation have emerged from official circles. On Aug. 24, a panel headed by former Nixon administration Defense Secretary James Schlesinger held current Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld directly responsible for setting the ground for the abuses at Abu Ghraib prison.

On Sept. 16, *The New York Times* reported that a classified National Intelligence Council Estimate warned of the possibility of civil war inside Iraq and concluded that the most favorable outcome would be "an Iraq whose stability would remain tenuous in political, economic, and military terms" through 2005 and beyond. This led even the cautious John Kerry to issue some strong attacks on the war and occupation.

The U.S. intervention's brutality, ineptitude, and sheer imperial arrogance have managed to push the mass murders of the Saddam Hussein regime into the background. Today, Abu Ghraib stands for a place where the U.S. military tortured and humiliated hundreds of Iraqi prisoners, rather than one where the old regime tortured and murdered thousands upon thousands. Even the effort to put the genocidal Saddam Hussein on trial has become mired in disputes between Allawi and the former U.S. favorites, Ahmad and Salem Chalabi.

But the real tragedy of Iraq is that while the U.S. managed to depose the Ba'athist regime, its invasion and occupation have done more than anything since September 11, 2001 to swell the ranks of the jihadists and to give them a new base of operation. It is the specter of Lebanon in the 1980s that now haunts Iraq and the region.

## Quebec march



More than 1,000 people marched through the streets of downtown Montreal, Sept. 18, in support of 100 Palestinians being threatened with deportation back to refugee camps in Lebanon and Israel. The demonstration also commemorated the 1982 massacre of refugees in the Sabra and Shatila camps in Lebanon by military forces.

## German protests fizzle

The demonstrations began in the dead of summer in eastern Germany. With unemployment in the region a catastrophic 18.5%, people were outraged when the social democratic government of Gerhard Schroeder enacted a law sharply curtailing Germany's comparatively generous unemployment benefits.

They adopted the tactic of Monday demonstrations, a deliberate echo of those that had brought down the Stalinist regime 15 years earlier, in 1989. In a region better known recently for its political apathy, the idea caught on. By mid-August the demonstrations had swelled to 70,000, with the largest crowds in Leipzig, Berlin, and Magdeburg. The old 1989 chant "We Are the People!" now began to be heard.

While the demonstrations exhibited a grassroots character, political tendencies like the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS, formerly ruling Communist Party) were also present in force. So were the small neo-Nazi parties, which have made eastern Germany a target of their organizing.

Then came the Sept. 19 elections in two eastern states, Brandenburg and Saxony. The PDS did exceptionally well in Brandenburg, with 28%, just behind the social democrats, and scored 24% in Saxony. However, world headlines focused on something else. Two neo-fascist parties had also gained ground, with the most fanatical one scoring 9% in Saxony, the highest vote for such a party in Germany since 1968. Humiliated by this sorry outcome, the masses turned away. The demonstration on Monday, Sept. 20 drew only a few hundred. Never was it clearer that the Left will fail if it limits itself to what it is **against**, without spelling out what it is **for**.

## Bringing Marxist-Humanism to you

Participate in a revolutionary dialogue ... check out News and Letters Committees "Events" at [www.newsandletters.org](http://www.newsandletters.org). Or contact us ... see "How to contact News and Letters Committees" on page 3. Watch for meetings on "What Happens After Revolution?" in 2005.

Readers of the print edition of News & Letters have seen some changes. Your newspaper now arrives in an envelope. Want to keep N&L coming? Why not renew your subscription now? And your donations will help with the additional cost of bringing News & Letters to you.

## NEWS AND LETTERS COMMITTEES

### Who We Are And What We Stand For

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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