

NEWS & LETTERS

"Human power is its own end"—Karl Marx

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WORKSHOP TALKS

Class-made disasters

by Htun Lin

Every aspect of our daily lives, not just in times of disaster, demonstrates the permanent crises of everyday life under capitalism. A co-worker recently said to me: "Bush will undo in just a few years what it took several presidencies over many decades to build up: civil society. By the time we retire, nothing will be left. Not our Social Security. Not our Medicare. Not even any of our freedoms."

How so? I asked. He said, "Look at it this way. There's all this talk about ownership. We don't even own ourselves. Any one of us can be picked up just walking down the street. They can call anyone a terrorist. We can be detained indefinitely without a trial, without anyone knowing our whereabouts."

"Our citizenship can be stripped. We can't even say anything. If they don't like what we say, they can declare our speech a threat to society. You or I can be disappeared at any time at will, just like they used to do in Chile or Argentina."

"It was all illegal then. But by the time the Supreme Court approves Bush's permanent detentions, in the name of his war on terror, they would become legal to use against us all."

"In his ownership society, Bush will make us all indebted to his permanent wars. We won't even own our own lives anymore."

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BLACK/REDAVIEW

Racism and politics

by John Alan

The practice of racism, both openly violent and covered over in politics, has existed in this nation since it was founded. Martin Luther King Jr. once said: "The Black revolution is much more than struggle for the rights of Negroes. It is forcing America to face all its inter-related flaws: racism, poverty, militarism and materialism."

Recently it was reported that after 40 years the suspect who was deeply involved in the 1965 murder of three voter-registration workers from the Congress of Racial Equality.

CIVIL RIGHTS MURDERS

The suspect is Edgar Ray Killen, a 79-year-old preacher who, investigators say, organized and led two carloads of Klansmen on the night of the killings, was arrested at his home in Philadelphia, Miss., and charged with the murder of Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman and James Chaney.

Forty years ago this act of Klan terrorism in a small Mississippi town did immediately attract the attention of many conservative politicians across this nation, who were against the so-called "racial liberalism" of President Lyndon Johnson's administration. "Racial liberalism" meant the Civil Rights Act of 1964—which ended racial segregation in public facilities and racial discrimination in the workplace—and the Voting Rights Act, which put the federal government behind the Afro-American right to vote. Of course, the "racial

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China as global factory is incubator of future revolt

by Peter Hudis

Few developments are changing the world more than China's unprecedented economic growth. In 2004 industrial production in China increased 16%. A growing number of firms in the U.S. and Europe—from textile manufacturers to furniture makers—are shifting operations to China where the cost of production is often less than that of the raw materials needed to create the same products back home.

China is running up huge increases in fixed capital investment—40% a year in some sectors. This has led to massive increases in demand for steel, aluminum, coal, cement, nickel, and other primary products that have kept commodity prices high and led to massive windfall profits for many multinational corporations.

This growth is no flash in the pan. Per capital gross domestic product (GDP) growth in China averaged 8% a year since 1979. The strongest per capita Gross Domestic Product growth in the U.S. for any 25-year period since 1830 was 4%.

Nevertheless this growth rests on shaky foundations. The hunger for raw materials and products to fuel China's expansion is exacerbating the exploitation of labor and destruction of the environment. Many workers labor 12 to 14 hours a day for \$50 a month in sweatshops where unions are forbidden and working conditions are unregulated. There is little or no access to health insurance in the factories along China's east coast and industrial accidents are endemic nationwide.

In 2004, 10,000 workers were killed in mining accidents—85% of the number of deaths due to mining disasters in the world. Half of the deaths occurred in the



Miners on vigil for some 150 coworkers trapped in the Daping coal mine in Henan Province in central China. The mine explosion in October, the result of extreme pressures to produce, added to the 10,000 killed in 2004 alone.

coal industry (three quarters of China's electricity output is generated from coal). Such accidents are endemic in government-owned mines and in the growing number of "independent," privately owned mines where workers are being relentlessly pushed to increase output with antiquated, outdated equipment.

CRISIS OF CAPITAL ACCUMULATION

China's economy is extremely unbalanced. Farms, where 900 million reside, are tiny. Few are mechanized. With farms unable to attain economies of scale due to

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Indonesia interferes with Aceh tsunami aid

by Aceh Center, USA

Acheh, Sumatra, lies 19 miles from the epicenter of the devastating earthquake of Dec. 26. Already ravaged by years of Indonesian military repression and exploitation, the province was hit by the largest tsunami waves, described as two coconut trees tall (50 feet). With a speed of 500 miles per hour, the tsunami destroyed 80% of the coastal area in the capital, Banda Aceh, and wiped countless coastal villages off the map. As of Jan. 20, there are an estimated 166,320 people dead, 750,000 homeless, and 50,000 orphaned children. The numbers increase daily, with thousands still missing and an unknown number of survivors dying from injuries and diseases such as cholera and malaria.

So many died because many of Aceh's four million people live on the coast, fishing or farming. Major cities—trading centers—are also on the coast. The force of the tsunami was made worse as a result of Indonesia's degradation of Aceh's ecosystem. And people had not been taught what to do; when they saw the sea first go out, they ran towards it to collect fish.

FAILED TO GIVE AID

Indonesia undoubtedly hopes to use this catastrophe to end Aceh's longstanding independence struggle. Aceh was under a "civil emergency" (martial law) for the past year and a half, and until several days after the disaster struck, almost no journalists or humanitarian workers had been allowed in. The province is occupied by 70,000 armed forces who not only fight the small guerrilla organization (GAM), but also violently repress the formerly massive civil society movements which seek a referendum on Aceh's status. Now traumatized people are being forced to rely on the same soldiers who traumatized them before the tsunami.

For the first three days following the earthquake and

tsunami, the Indonesian government failed to deliver or permit aid into Aceh. Since foreign military and humanitarian NGOs have been allowed in, the Indonesian military has interfered with aid importation and distribution. It is intercepting and storing much of the aid at unused military bases and airports. It interposes itself between the aid and the survivors, restricting aid workers' travel, requiring licenses, etc. Soldiers demand, from people who lost everything, both money for food and other aid, and their identity papers—the latter so that the military can continue to search for GAM members and peaceful activists, both of whom it shoots on sight.

NO GOVERNMENT CEASE-FIRE

Although GAM declared a cease-fire immediately after the disaster, Indonesia refuses to do so. The military recently killed several guerrillas, including some engaged in humanitarian work, and several civilians, including a six-year old child. It immediately built military posts alongside the refugee camps so soldiers can monitor who goes in and out. The refugees are forbidden to speak directly to journalists and foreign NGOs, making it difficult for journalists to get a real sense of what is going on and complicating the job of humanitarian workers, since the refugees are afraid to ask soldiers for the help they need.

Moreover, Indonesia has flown in members of Islamist militant organizations to stir up trouble and harass the international relief workers. Some wear Osama bin Laden T-shirts and falsely claim to be Achene. They tell the Achene that the relief workers are really there to convert them to Christianity. GAM and civil society organizations denounce these tactics, but are so accustomed to the military's propaganda that they expect it will blame GAM for its own inter-

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ONLINE: www.newsandletters.org

Helen Macfarlane and Marxism

by Anne Jaclard

Helen Macfarlane: A Feminist, Revolutionary Journalist, and Philosopher in Mid-Nineteenth Century England by David Black (Lexington Books, 2004, 179 pp, \$18).

Since contemporary feminism began nearly 40 years ago, the concept of recovering women's lost history has not only played a major role in feminist scholarship, it has also acted as an impetus to the movement itself. We are empowered by learning about women as agents of history and not just its objects. We are inspired in our own endeavors by learning about invisible women who held radical ideas concerning the organization of society on completely different, human grounds. Helen Macfarlane is such a woman.

Some feminists, however, write "herstory" as if it had no relation to so-called "male" history and ideas. It is questionable whether one can completely detach any women from earlier and co-existing ideas, but if there are places and times where one can, England in the mid-19th century is not one of them.

A DIALECTICAL RELATIONSHIP

On the contrary, this intellectual biography is exciting because it explicates the dialectical relationship—the two-way road—between Helen Macfarlane and the world-changing ideas of her time. The 1848 European revolutions, English workers' struggles, feminism, Hegelian philosophy, Marx's first publications—Macfarlane swims in them all. She pushes forward the development of radical ideas and combats reactionary ones. Her work is not only fascinating but extremely relevant 150 years later.

Macfarlane was the first person to translate Marx's *Communist Manifesto* into English. (The book does a real service by appending her little-known translation.) She was also the first Britisher to translate and comment on Hegel's works. Yet Macfarlane was in fact nearly lost to history. No one even published her name on her translation of the Manifesto, including the American edition published by the feminist Victoria Woodhull. Thanks to David Black for researching what little can be found about her—mainly, her prolific writings of 1849-50—and for illuminating her work by putting it into historical and intellectual context.

We learn that Macfarlane was an activist and journalist in the most radical branch of the Chartist workers' organizations, led by George Julian Harney. She was in Vienna during the 1848 revolutions that swept Europe. She translated and wrote about Hegel, who had revolutionized philosophy and laid the ground for Marx's philosophy of revolution. She repeatedly wrote that women were entitled to full equality. She wrote about the economic and political developments in England that informed Marx's analysis of class struggle in the *Communist Manifesto*, and she worked with him in England when he first lived there. In 1851, after Macfarlane and Marx had broken with Harney, Marx wrote that she had the only "original ideas" in Harney's publications, and deemed her "a rare bird."

Aside from such brief mentions, almost everything we know about Macfarlane comes from her 1849-50 work: 12 substantial essays she wrote under the name Howard Morton, and her translation of the *Communist Manifesto*. She was probably born in Scotland and educated to be a governess. Chartist archives mention her work on behalf of immigrant workers. Tragically, there is no record of her after 1851; perhaps she died young.

MACFARLANE AND RADICAL THOUGHT

But we know a lot about her from her essays and from the social movements she participated in. This short volume includes chapters on the radicalization and later demise of Chartism, on other political and religious tendencies of the time, on Marx and Macfarlane, on Macfarlane as a feminist Antigone, and on "The Legacy of Hegelian Marxism." Thus we see her work as part of the battles of ideas contending at the birth of Marxism, and also, although Black does not discuss this, at the birth of feminism as a movement.

The period was pivotal for women; in 1848, women's equality became an idea whose time had come. Although individuals had written earlier feminist tracts, suddenly the idea was expressed in revolutionary movements. Just five years before, when Flora Tristan agitated among French workers to form a Workers' Union with complete equality for women, most other socialists (Utopian socialists) treated her like a kook. But 1848 brought forth a feminist content within the European revolutions: in France, Germany, Austria, Hungary and Italy, women formed clubs to demand equal rights and joined in all aspects of the uprisings, including the fighting. In the U.S. the same year, the abolitionist movement gave birth to the women's rights movement. One of its first acts was to send a solidarity message to imprisoned French revolutionary women. Since 1848, it would be difficult to find a social movement in the Western Hemisphere or Europe that lacks a feminist dimension.

So much had women changed the world that, in 1849-50, Macfarlane almost casually insists on women's equality, as she advocates a society "where

freedom and equality will be the birth right of every human being...without poor, without classes....A society...not only of free men, but of free women."

What ties together all Macfarlane's ideas for the author—and presumably for her—is her grasp of the Hegelian dialectic. Black tells us, "Macfarlane was not only the first 'British Marxist': she was also the first British commentator on Hegel's philosophy and the first translator of any of his words into English." He cites Hegel's compelling "Idea of Freedom" and its "externalization" in the Age of Revolutions as having influenced Macfarlane to view history as a movement toward freedom.

Readers unfamiliar with English working class history may have trouble keeping straight all the contending groups and people described in this book. But they are worth reading about because they too left a legacy. Every anti-Marxist left tendency today, and many so-called Marxist ones, have parallels if not roots in the period. The idea that inequality arises in the market leads people today to advocate all kinds of schemes for the redistribution of wealth as the key to transforming society, just as the Utopian socialists did. Marx exposed the falsity of the premise by showing that capitalist relations are rooted in the mode of production. Yet we still hear well-meaning people every day making impossible demands of a system that is incapable of being substantially and permanently reformed.

MEANING FOR TODAY

Perhaps the most valuable lessons of Macfarlane's work emerge from her attempt to work out a revolutionary direction in a counter-revolutionary period. She held fast to Marx's new ideas at a time when others were going off in all directions. The 1848 revolutions had been defeated, leading the British as well as European movements to splinter. In opposition to Marx's attempt to unite exiled leaders into a World League of Revolutionary Socialists, moderates established the Central European Democratic Committee in 1850. Its program rejected "the cold and unfeeling travail of the intellect" in favor of the "instinct of the masses." Marx considered this an abandonment of revolutionary theory and a demand for the masses to act without thinking, a call for them to "have no thought for the morrow" and "strike all ideas from the mind." He strongly criticized the program for acting as if "the riddle of the future will be solved by a miracle." (*Marx and Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 10, p.529-31).

The parallels to debates today are unmistakable. We are living in a period of extreme retrogression, with capital and its handmaiden, imperialism, seemingly in command everywhere, with the world's dominant ideologies limited to religious fundamentalisms. We could not stop the war in Iraq, we could not stop Bush's reelection. In the left and social movements, some demand to work on "the riddle of the future," but others abandon all idea of a real alternative, and in despair and desperation retreat to "resistance" or beg for reforms. They render the possibility of social transformation an illusion by saying that the masses have to bring forth the future without developing ideas about it now, thus denying the power of ideas in the revolutionary process.

It is noteworthy that this book is the third published in Lexington Books' "Raya Dunayevskaya Series in Marxism and Humanism," the first two being works of the philosopher Raya Dunayevskaya herself. Helen Macfarlane fits right in with Dunayevskaya's dialectical approach to history and her concept that women are capable of being "thinkers as well as revolutionaries." Macfarlane was such a woman. Imagine what even greater contributions she might have made had she continued to work with Marx and the revolutionary movements of her day!

(For more on Helen Macfarlane, see page 5.)

WOMEN WORLDWIDE

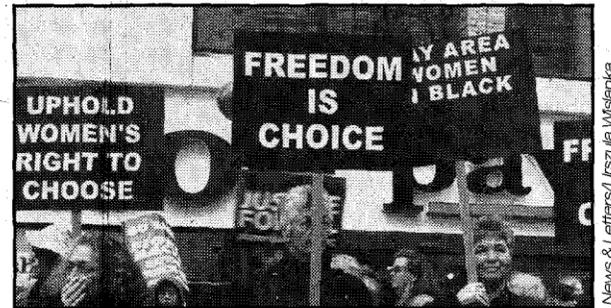
by Mary Jo Grey

A study by *The Washington Post* revealed that since 1990 at least 1,367 pregnant and post-partum women in 37 states had been violently murdered—nearly always by a husband or boyfriend. Their children often have lasting effects from the violence. In seeking to prevent such horror, the National Organization for Women is calling for laws with teeth, stay-away orders that are actually enforced, and the continuation of the Violence Against Women Act, up for reauthorization by Bush's Republican Congress. For more information contact: www.now.org/issues/violence/122904pregnancy.html

—Information from NOW

Afsaneh Nowrouzi, who has spent the last seven years on death row in Iran, will not be executed after an international campaign to spare her life. She was jailed after killing and castrating Police Chief Behzad Moghaddam who had attacked and attempted to rape her. In January, his family accepted \$62,500 instead of her execution.

Support Roe v. Wade



On the anniversary of the Roe v. Wade decision, abortion opponents wanted to make a statement in the heart of liberal San Francisco. But the few hundred opponents bused in from the central valley were met by thousands of pro-choice activists. Even the mayor and several other town officials joined the pro-choice rally.

Shari'a law in Canada

Despite fierce opposition by women's organizations across Canada, former Ontario Attorney General Marion Boyd recommended to the Ontario government that the 1991 Arbitration Act allow settlement of family legal matters based on religious laws.

Homa Arjomand, coordinator of the International Campaign Against Shari'a Court in Canada, states that this will encourage the spread of political Islam "pushing women's rights in Canada back 1,400 years." Shari'a courts put women in danger because they are victimized by male-dominated legal decisions based on sixth century religion and tradition. (See November 2004 *N&L*.) She said the Campaign will mobilize a strong force to oppose shari'a and called for the Ontario government to hold a public hearing giving people the opportunity to speak.

The Canadian Council of Muslim Women also expressed outrage, citing the "negative impact on vulnerable women and children..."

Heather McGregor, executive director of YWCA Toronto, said Boyd's decision "counts on the willingness of those required to give up power to be cheerfully educated to give up their advantage. Nowhere in the world did women wake up one day to find enlightened men in positions of power handing over equality. We have always had to fight for our own rights."

Tarek Fatah of the Muslim Canadian Congress called the recommendation "racist and unconstitutional." The Canadian Council of Women predicted that recent immigrants from Islamic countries will be pressured into arbitration where rulings might include spousal payments that last only three months beyond separation.

The fight for freedom for all women in Ontario and Canada has just begun.

—Mary Jo Grey

Afro-Colombian fight

Editors note: We print a News & Letters interview by Brown Douglas with Rosa Elena Ruiz Echeverry, of the Kambiri Afro-Colombian Women's Network, when she was in Memphis for the Southern Human Rights Organizers Conference in December.

We have been organized as Black women fighting discrimination for a long time. In Chocó, where I live, 95% of us are Black and 5% are mestizo. The mestizo dominates. We end up living in misery and we don't have the opportunity to work.

The municipality is the largest job provider, but the famous 550 Law has cut municipality jobs from 200 employees to 16! The 550 Law is a restructuring law that affects bankrupt departments and municipalities like ours and stops the little money that the government sent. In Mismina, my municipality, the unemployment is overwhelming. People are dying of hunger. Because we are miners, the foreign companies come and there is abundance for a short time, but when they leave everything returns to the way it was.

Health care is dead. The children are dying of hunger and sickness. The doctors and medicine are so costly we try to survive with herbal remedies passed down from our ancestors. Chocó has always been ignored by the government even though recently Uribe (Colombia's president) has given a little aid but not enough.

We women feel three discriminations: being poor, being Black, and being women. Now there is a fourth: the violence of being displaced. The plain truth in Chocó is that the liars that come to power are benefiting from the little money the government gives us. I ran for the municipality council but didn't win because of their political machine. Politics is beautiful, politics is global and social and we must participate. But the politics here is pure politiqueria (dirty politics) where the community leaders who can help our people are never given the opportunity.

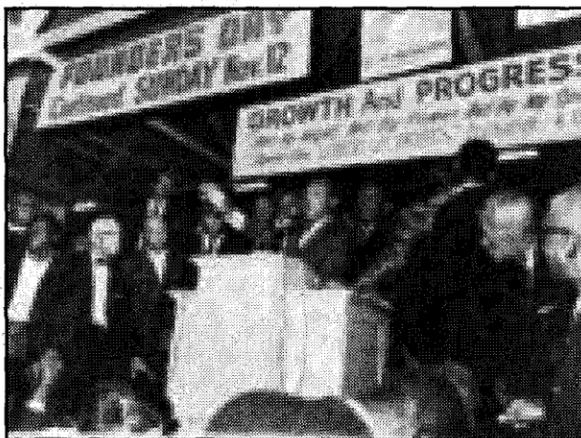
We need to analyze things and see the resources around us, to love them, and to use them in our favor. Not only those who come from outside have the right to use our resources, but we do too. We have even more right to them. The foreign companies come and stupefy us with their money. We're dependent on them and the government. What is more important is the state of our minds. We need to stop being slaves in our minds. That's what I tell the organizations and micro-enterprises I work with.

For Southern labor the dream is still 'We Shall Overcome'

MEMPHIS, TENN.— We shall overcome! How many of you believe that "We shall overcome"? When women and Blacks were given the right to vote, did they overcome? No. When Black children and white children could go to the same schools, did that get us over? We still have not overcome. The question I'm going to ask is, "How do we overcome?"

I don't believe we will ever overcome where we can sit down and relax and take it easy. We'll never get there until we get off of this earth. We must learn how to fight. Dr. Martin Luther King advocated nonviolence. I agree. Our scripture tells us, if he hits you on one cheek, show him the other. But that's real hard to do. But that is how we deal with oppression. We have to fight. But not necessarily with knives and guns. There are some laws to protect us but they are not complete.

My job is labor, organized labor. I'm the president of my local, Local 282 of the United Furniture Workers Union, and I have been in organized labor close to 30 years. I have been organizing, negotiating, and arbitrating, and am still at it. The employers were oppressing the workers back then. They passed a law that all workers have the right to organize. It's illegal for your



Martin Luther King Jr. in Memphis in support of striking sanitation workers, speaking on April 3, 1968, the night before he was murdered.

employer to even ask you if you support a union. But they put the fear of God in the workers. The labor law is just as weak as a drop of water.

In Mississippi, just across the state line, I represent the concrete workers at MMC—Mississippi Materials Concrete. The men pour concrete in the wind, rain, and cold. Would you believe those men voted in my union in 1997. Since 1997 I have met with MMC 86 times. We have not reached the first contract yet. We had the first election to vote the union in. We have had two decertification elections since then. But these men are saying: "We will die and go to hell before we vote the union out."

The law says the company must negotiate in good faith, but what the company puts on the table is that the union must waive all of its rights during the life of the contract, that the company can make rules and do whatever they want. They will not even agree to add the word "reasonable" to rules. They wanted to say: "We have the right to make rules." I said, "Well, if you are not willing to add the word 'reasonable,' then you could make a rule that said these men got to wear dresses." Those workers are better off without a contract than they would be if the company got that language.

Further down in Mississippi is Sears Logistics. They would only agree to a one-year contract. And do you know they refuse to agree to a dues check-off? The labor law says they don't have to.

Long ago Martin Luther King Jr., came to Memphis to support the sanitation workers. He was killed here trying to get the city of Memphis to recognize the workers' right to organize. Because under the labor law, those workers could not vote for a union like the private sector could.

After he was killed and the rioting went on all over the U.S., finally the city of Memphis said, "Okay, we'll recognize your union." Now there is a hospital here in Memphis called The Med. The nurses want to organize. One of the same men that refused the sanitation workers the right to organize is the Director of the Board of The Med. Do you know that he won't agree to let the nurses organize?

I can deal with that a little better than this: there is a college here named LeMoyné-Owen. It's a Black college. Do you know they refused to recognize the right

of the professors to organize? That sends me up the wall, because Martin Luther King came here and was killed fighting the people who refused to give the workers the right to organize. That case is up in Washington, D.C., because the Labor Board said they've got to recognize the professors' union.

LeMoyné-Owen hired the most anti-union law-busting firm in Memphis—and I've dealt with them down through the years—to represent them. In our churches we give donations to LeMoyné-Owen College. I told my pastor that as long as they refuse to recognize the union, they'll never get another penny of mine.

I keep talking about oppression. We have not overcome. So keep on fighting, not with guns and knives, but keep fighting with love, keep fighting with this pen and pencil, keep filing charges. Sometimes you will win in court; you lose more than you win, but sometimes you win. But I can tell you one thing, if you're not into fighting you'll never win.

—Ida Leachman, President of Local 282

The text above is from Ida Leachman's talk at the Southern Human Rights Organizing Conference in December.

Assassination exposes shallow solidarity

We condemn the murder of Hadi Salih, the International Secretary of the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU), tortured and killed in his Baghdad home on Jan. 4. Ex-Ba'athists loyal to Saddam Hussein are suspected. Salih, a former printer, had been persecuted by the Ba'ath regime for his labor activism. He had lived in exile since 1969, returning to Iraq just before Hussein's fall.

The IFTU, the largest trade union organization in Iraq, is aligned with the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP). The ICP was given a seat on the Iraqi Governing Council, and now participates in the interim government while actively campaigning in the Jan. 30 election.

In contrast, the unrelated Worker-Communist Party of Iraq (WPI) has boycotted the election. Like others, they wish not to give the appearance of legitimacy to a sham process that can only result in a legal veneer for the continuing occupation.

The WPI has denounced the ICP for working with the occupation government. Their current policy is simply the latest in the ICP's long history of opportunistic maneuvering, and later dealings with the Ba'ath regime in the 1970s.

LABOR AS TERROR TARGET

While the IFTU does not support the foreign occupation, it does express critical support for the Allawi government—widely regarded to be the puppet of the occupying forces—as better than an Islamist or Ba'athist government that would certainly brutally repress any independent labor organizations. This, along with its vocal opposition to Islamist and Ba'athist militias, has made members of the federation targets of the so-called resistance.

The murder has also been condemned by the rival Federation of Workers Councils and Unions in Iraq (FWCUI), which has links to the WPI. It also opposes both the occupation and political Islam, yet remains independent of the interim government. In this country, US Labor Against the War and the AFL-CIO have likewise condemned the assassination, pointing to the daily dangers that confront trade unionists in Iraq.

The murder of Salih cannot but have the effect of terrorizing the Iraqi labor movement. Indeed it is simply the most recent and visible of a spate of murders and kidnappings of IFTU members and rank-and-file workers, which further reveal the retrogressive, anti-working-class nature of the "resistance."

DEAFENING SILENCE

The majority in the American anti-war movement has been silent over this murder of a trade union leader and other attacks on workers in Iraq. That speaks volumes about the priorities of much of the Left, especially in light of the numerous explicit and implicit statements of support for the Iraqi armed "resistance."

The lack of solidarity with Iraqi workers' organizations and women's groups fighting for equality reveals an inability to conceive of international people-to-people solidarity as a way of building momentum for a worldwide movement against global capitalism in all its varieties.

The rest of the world seems to matter only in its relation to U.S. policy. This provincial attitude suppresses a vision of a comprehensive alternative to existing society by working to limit the perspectives of our movements.

The murder of this trade unionist should alert us to the vital need for international solidarity with workers, and their organizations such as the FWCUI and the Union of Unemployed, trying to build a third pole of opposition to the occupation and its puppet government, as well as the forces of Ba'athist reaction and Islamic neo-fascism. The future of Iraq and our own freedom movements depends on this solidarity.

—Joshua Skolnik

WORKSHOPTALKS

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What this worker was anxious about was a creeping fascism fueled by the trend towards fundamentalism—a fundamentalism which dovetails with capital's abstractions. When Bush says he believes in freedom and democracy, he means it only abstractly.

He supports the troops in Iraq, but only abstractly. He sends our soldiers on suicide missions without adequate armor or pay. He believes in charity, but only abstractly. He will gloat about his "generosity" before the check's even in the mail, while doing little to save lives.

He believes in an "ownership society," but only abstractly. He wants each of us to own stocks while dismantling Social Security. We can't even count on our health care or having a job anymore. He believes in the "sanctity of life," but only abstractly, and concretely does much to destroy it.

DRAINING OUR RESOURCES

In a way, Bush's invasion of Iraq is an apt analogy of what he is doing at home. The looting of Iraq's National Museum of Antiquity with its accumulation of thousands of years of human history followed the invasion. Bush is about to raid the historical accumulation of our collective wealth, and our rights and freedoms—our legacy of previous struggles. All in the name of "individual responsibility" and "personal ownership."

Marx once said, "The individual is the social entity." To me, that means society exists for the individual, not the other way around. Individual freedom cannot be sacrificed for the benefit of society. A free society cannot be comprised of unfree individuals, alienated from their own labor, and chained to big capital.

They say they want us to "rely on ourselves" for our own welfare, by "investing in the market." They don't tell us that the market is a gambling house built on what we produce.

Many workers who invest in the market believe their investment returns are coming out of the stock market. In reality, it is coming from the collective value of our own labor and the sweat and labor of other workers elsewhere. It is that same market which will turn on a worker's nest egg, when capital decides that profit margins are not high enough because the cost of labor is not low enough.

In Bush's ownership society, all we will really own is the liabilities associated with capital's expansion. The stock market's rise can only come about with the collective demise of workers' welfare.

The only way out of this morass is for average human beings, workers of the world, to unite in the same way we have united in the face of natural disasters. We have already proven to ourselves that we can take concrete actions on our own, without the direction of any government as in the way the whole world came together and solidarized in the wake of the tsunami or September 11.

Bush tries to put a human face on his machines of death by showboating occasional rescue operations in front of television cameras to show, as he put it, "American values in action." Imagine if all those military resources, trillions of wasted dollars, were used instead to save lives and promote life.

EXTENDING SOLIDARITY

If we are to take our lessons from the way we all came together to fulfill human needs in times of disaster, we must also extend that kind of solidarity into everyday life where even mundane needs, from social security to health care to our schools—have taken on crisis proportions. As eloquently stated by my co-worker: "Nothing will be left, if we allow them to carry out their plans to invest not in human needs but capital's needs."

Only the kind of free association of worker to worker, and the kind of solidarity already shown during disaster relief, once it is practiced in everyday life, can offer the kind of vision we sorely need to transcend this inhuman system and all the suffering from man-made disasters, as well as natural disasters made worse under capitalism.

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FROM THE WRITINGS OF RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

Editor's note

The life and legacy of the Polish and German revolutionary and feminist, Rosa Luxemburg, is achieving new attention 1. in light of capital becoming ever more globalized in the 21st century, 2. as evidenced by a recent international conference on Rosa Luxemburg in China, reported in "China as global factory is incubator of future revolt" in this issue, and 3. as reflected in the vigorous international interest in a new volume of writings, *The Rosa Luxemburg Reader*. Also because January is Luxemburg-Liebkecht month, a commemoration marking the murders of those two uncompromising Marxists in 1919, we publish a critical review by Raya Dunayevskaya of a collection of letters edited by Steven Bronner. The review originally appeared in *News & Letters* in August-September 1979, and can be found in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, 7041.

The multi-dimensionality and revolutionary internationalism of Rosa Luxemburg is well set forth in this collection of Rosa Luxemburg letters in the way in which the very first sentence of Bronner's Introduction leads to Rosa's statement: "I, too, am a land of boundless possibilities." That first section of "Reflections on Rosa Luxemburg" began with "There is always a tradition of liberation that stands in opposition to the heritage that a given society preserves and propagates."

It is this other tradition—revolutionary in the most total sense, that is to say, in its opposition both against capitalism and the reformist deviation within the revolutionary movement—that would have been easier to grasp if the readers had not to confront letters from 1894 to 1919 in one lump sum without a single distinction other than the year's date at the top of each page. It is true that Professor Bronner's substantive Introduction situates Luxemburg in the context of her era. But it is only natural that readers turning to *The Letters of Rosa Luxemburg* would want to hear her in her own words and sense the direction of her thoughts, actions, development before they have reached the 200th page of those letters.

'HEROISM OF MASSES' VS. OPPORTUNISM OF LEADERS

Because this book needs to be read by ever wider audiences, let me introduce two divisions into these letters to enable readers at once to meet Rosa Luxemburg—Polish, German, Russian, international revolutionary. The first half of the letters could be titled: "Heroism of Masses' vs. Opportunism of Leaders"; and the second half: "From Theory and Anti-War Agitation to Prison and Revolution."

It is true she used the expression "heroism of the masses" to describe the magnificent actions of the Warsaw workers in the first Russian Revolution, 1905, whereas this collection of letters begins in 1894, with a letter of Luxemburg to her colleague and lover, Leo Jogiches, in which she complains that his letters are wholly devoted to the "Cause" and tell her nothing of him personally or of the organizational and factional differences with the Russians. But it is even more true that, from the very start of her break with bourgeois society—when she was only a teenager, yet was already under police surveillance and had to leave Poland for Switzerland, where she met her life-long collaborator Leo Jogiches—"the heroism of the masses" was precisely what won her commitment to the revolutionary movement. She never veered from that for a single moment.

However, whereas that 1894 letter from Paris spoke so personally and very nearly "obediently,"

all one has to do is read the very next set of letters, as she reached Germany in 1898 to see a quite different Luxemburg. Not only does she take issue with Jogiches' advice, but she reaches such immediate heights theoretically on the most burning question raging in the German Social Democracy—the very first appearance of reformism—that it is her analysis, *Reform or Revolution*, that is the most comprehensive and profound answer to Bernstein. It becomes a standard for all revolutionaries, and has remained so to this day.

Not only that, Luxemburg's letters disclose something still more extensive: the vision of a genius anticipating capitalism's development into modern imperialism before the word had been "invented." Listen to Luxemburg telling Jogiches about "Shifts in World Politics" ever since Japan's attack on China, 1895, and Russia's

Even in criticism...her praise of the Russian Revolution and the Bolsheviks under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky "who dared" was unequivocal.

and Africa is the final limit beyond which European politics no longer has room to unfold...the European powers will have no choice other than throwing themselves on one another, until the period of the final crisis sets in within politics..." The letter was dated January 9, 1899! (p. 72).

THEORY, PRISON, REVOLUTION

Naturally, no book review, much less subheadings, can do justice to the multiplicity of topics and years (1894–1919) covered in *The Letters of Rosa Luxemburg*; the first subheading made no such claim. It did, I hope, help point a direction, both as to the objective situation and the subjective developments in Luxemburg's life. She no sooner set foot in Germany than she began the fight against reformism. Her "German period" ended long before World War I broke out and revealed the betrayal of the German Social Democracy. Ever since the first Russian Revolution, 1905–06, when Luxemburg was still close to Karl Kautsky, she began to "speak Russian" as she described the "heroism of the masses": "in all factories, committees, elected by the workers, have arisen 'on their own,' which decide on all matters relating to working conditions... the organization advances indefatigably. In spite of martial law... the work is being carried out just as if political freedom were already a reality" (pp. 114–115). By 1910 she broke completely with Kautsky.

As she generalized her experience into the analysis of *The Mass Strike, the Party, and the Trade Unions* and worked to apply it in Germany, Karl Kautsky's abstract revolutionism and his "theory of attrition" horrified her. She sensed his opportunism which would lead to betrayals. She called it "the servility of the theoretician" back in 1910. Just as her total break with Kautsky, four full years before the outbreak of war, long before anyone else, Lenin included, sensed any defect in the then most outstanding revolutionary, so her anti-war agitation in 1913 led the Kaiser to cite her "for

treason" before there was actual war.

Prof. Bronner has caught the character of Rosa Luxemburg as prisoner beautifully: "It is easy to forget how drab and debilitating prison life can actually be. Rosa Luxemburg's letters serve as a reminder...Rosa Luxemburg reacts against the drudgery of prison life...She searches for beauty in the cracks of existence, and in response to the boredom of isolation, she watches insects, feeds her titmice, and observes the manifold diversity of nature."

That was very far from all she did in that hellhole. Not only did she continue her leadership, theoretical and political, of the anti-imperialist war, and also produce a minor masterpiece of literary criticism of Korolenko (not to mention the constant flow of magnificent "personal" letters, especially to Mathilde Wurm, when she suddenly calls upon Penthesilea, the queen of the Amazons). No, she is also involved in strict theory, the phenomenal *Anti-Critique*, directed against the critics of her greatest* theoretical work, *Accumulation of Capital*. They are, in fact, a single work.

Unfortunately, as her letter to Hans Diefenbach discloses, her rage was directed not alone against those she called "Marx's epigones," who took issue with her critique of Volume II of *Capital*, but even against "the famous first volume of Marx's *Kapital*, with its profuse rococo ornamentation in the Hegelian style" (p. 185).

None of this, however, diverted in any way from what dominated her whole life, in theory or practice, in or out of prison: REVOLUTION. Even in criticism, for example, her praise of the Russian Revolution and the Bolsheviks under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky "who dared" was unequivocal. Above all, there was the unending preparation for, and finally actual participation in, the German Revolution which finally freed her from prison. Because revolution was her life—or as she expressed it: "The Revolution is magnificent; all else is bilge"—the then-ruling Social Democracy wanted her dead. Where the Kaiser hadn't succeeded, the Freikorps was incited to brutally murder her and throw her body into the Landwehr Canal.

The Letters of Rosa Luxemburg ends with a letter in which she enclosed the first issue of *Rote Fahne*, organ of Spartacus League, transformed into the Communist Party, and calling for all power to the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils. It was dated January 4, 1919. Within 11 days she was dead. But they could not kill her ideas. Her revolutionary legacy lives on; for no other generation does her life's work bear as much relevance as for ours.

* The designation "greatest" means it is Luxemburg's most important theoretical work, not that I agree with it. Elsewhere I have taken issue with it. See my "Analysis of Rosa Luxemburg's *Accumulation of Capital*," included as Appendix to *State-Capitalism and Marx's Humanism*.... [Much of that analysis was brought into and developed as chapter 3, "Marx's and Luxemburg's Theories of Accumulation of Capital, its Crises and its Inevitable Downfall," in *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*.—Editor.]



Neraphko/ito

Rosa Luxemburg's Enduring Legacy

The Rosa Luxemburg Reader

Edited by Peter Hudis & Kevin B. Anderson - Monthly Review Press, 2004. 432 pp.

Among the major Marxist thinkers of the period of the Russian Revolution, Rosa Luxemburg stands out as one who speaks to our own time. Her legacy grows in relevance as the global character of the capitalist market becomes more apparent and the critique of bureaucratic power more widely accepted within the movement for human liberation.

The Rosa Luxemburg Reader will be the definitive one-volume collection of Luxemburg's writings in English translation. Unlike previous publications of her work from the early 1970s, this volume includes substantial extracts from her major economic writings—above all, *The Accumulation of Capital* (1913)—and from her political writings, including *Reform or Revolution* (1898), the *Junius Pamphlet* (1916), and *The Russian Revolution* (1918).

The Reader also includes a number of important texts that

have never before been published in English translation, including substantial extracts from her *Introduction to Political Economy* (1916), and a recently discovered piece on slavery. With a substantial introduction assessing Luxemburg's work in the light of recent research, *The Rosa Luxemburg Reader* will be an indispensable resource for scholarship and an inspiration for a new generation of activists. "Rosa Luxemburg travels into the twenty-first century like a great messenger bird, spanning continents, scanning history, to remind us that our present is not new but a continuation of a long human conflict changing only in intensity and scope. Her fiery critical intellect and ardent spirit are as vital for this time as in her own. With meticulous care, including valuable endnotes, editors Hudis and Anderson project her in the fullness of her being and thought."—Adrienne Rich



The Rosa Luxemburg Reader

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Helen Macfarlane and the Idea of Freedom

We print here an excerpt from Dave Black's newly published and groundbreaking study *Helen Macfarlane: A Feminist, Revolutionary Journalist, and Philosopher in Mid-Nineteenth Century England*. Macfarlane was the first person to translate the *Communist Manifesto* into English and the book includes the long-unavailable text of her version. The following selection from the book's introduction situates Macfarlane in the context of the revolutionary events and ideas of her time.

In 1848, as the February Revolution in France unleashed a chain of insurrection across Continental Europe, the Chartist movement in England once more took to the streets. For the third time since 1838, a petition was presented to Parliament for electoral reform and universal male suffrage; and when the House of Commons rejected it, the middle class allies of the Chartists backed off once again from a confrontation with the government. Isolated uprisings broke out in parts of the country, but were easily suppressed by troops and special constables. Chartist leader and member of Parliament for Nottingham, Feargus O'Connor, drew the lesson from the defeat that the six-point "People's Charter" needed to be watered down in order to maintain the movement's alliance with the Manchester Liberals. Chartist radicals, such as George Julian Harney, on the other hand, saw in the defeat one betrayal too many. The radicals argued for a new independent working class movement with a "social" and internationalist perspective. To this end Harney, in June 1849, launched a new monthly, the *Democratic Review of British Politics, History and Literature*; in spring 1850, he resigned from O'Connor's paper, the *Northern Star* to set up a new rival weekly, the *Red Republican*. In November 1850, Harney published a translation of *The Communist Manifesto* in his paper, presenting it to his readers as "the most revolutionary document ever given to the world."

In a biography of Harney published in 1958, A. R. Schoyen noted that one of the most prolific contributors to his presses, who wrote under the name of Howard Morton, showed a remarkable understanding of what would later become known as Marxism. Schoyen's probing into the identity of this mysterious person led him to ask:

Who could this be, but Helen Macfarlane, the admired acquaintance of Marx and Engels and translator of the first printed English version of the *Communist Manifesto*, which appeared in the four November 1850 issues of the *Red Republican*?

Schoyen's statement has never been seriously challenged and, until now, has never been followed up as the important discovery it was. Macfarlane was of that generation of post-Napoleonic War "baby boomers," which included other original and radical women writers such as George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans) and the Bronte sisters. Like these literary contemporaries, Helen Macfarlane had to use a male nom de plume to get her work into print; but for her, an avowed feminist and revolutionary, the obscurity inflicted on her by bourgeois male society—and its historians—was to be near total.

Historians of Chartism have always bemoaned the fact that most Chartist activists, living in modest circumstances, did not have the luxury of keeping archives. Schoyen, on writing about Harney, says:

This book is necessarily and unashamedly a *Biography of an Idea*.

The impersonal nature of most of the available materials on Julian Harney, mainly newspapers and periodicals in which he wrote, leave one with no more than conjecture about some aspects of his life.

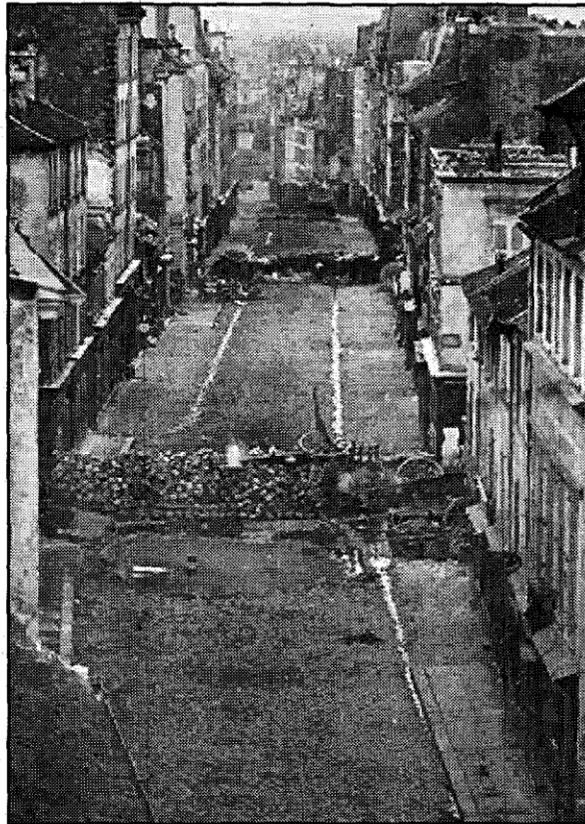
Schoyen's words resound a lot more starkly in the case of Helen Macfarlane. Her life story, through no fault of her own, is more resistant to the "picklocks of biographers" than almost any other nineteenth century writer of outstanding talent, even the notoriously obscure Isadore Ducasse (Comte de Lautreamont) author of *Les Chants de Maldoror*, who died during the Siege of Paris in 1870. One obvious reason for Macfarlane "keeping her head down" behind a male pseudonym must have been the daunting prejudice that would face any woman who openly expressed radical political opinions. When two generations earlier, in 1792, Mary Wollstonecraft published *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* and went off to Paris to support the French Revolution, she had been attacked by Horace Walpole as a "hyena in petticoats." But even in 1850, British society, in Helen Macfarlane's judgment, condemned itself in "the position of women, who are regarded by law not as persons but as things, and placed in the same category as children and the insane." Just as the storming of the Bastille in 1789 had introduced the sansculotte into the demology of English opinion, so the June Days of 1848 in Paris provided the equally terrifying figure of the "Red Cap" Republican, this time armed not only with the rifle and the pike but also with the "damnable

doctrines" of socialism and communism. In early Victorian England, a female "Red Republican" who openly proved that she could wield the pen as a revolutionary weapon better than most men, would have been scourged as a danger to public order and decency.

Although I have been able to unearth some previously unknown biographical material on Macfarlane, most of her life story remains elusive; the problem is compounded by her sudden "disappearance" in 1851. Most of what has been discoverable about her comes from her published writings—twelve substantial essays in all—and some of the writings and correspondence of her associates, especially Harney, Engels and Marx. This book then, is necessarily and unashamedly, a *Biography of an Idea*.

Macfarlane was living in Vienna in 1848 when the Revolution against the Hapsburg monarchy radicalized her. Her fluency in the German language gave her access to the great philosophic works of German Idealism and its radical "Young Hegelian" inheritors, such as Heinrich Heine and Karl Marx. She was described by the latter as the most original of Harney's stable of writers; as a

rara avis among the empiricist English. For Macfarlane, as for Hegel—and arguably Marx as well—the Idea of Freedom was identified with the Idea of History. Macfarlane was not only the first "British Marxist": she was also the first British commentator on Hegel's philosophy and the first translator of any of his words into English.



A daguerreotype by a French photographer named Thibault shows aftermath of street fighting in Paris during the 1848 revolution.

BEYOND CAPITALISM: MARX'S CONCEPT OF AN ALTERNATIVE A SERIES OF FIVE OPEN DISCUSSIONS

Is it possible to today develop an alternative to all forms of capitalism, whether in its free market or statist variety? Can a concept of a new society that transcends value production animate today's forces of revolt to go beyond reformism and one-sided critiques of U.S. imperialism that fail to articulate what we are for? What concepts can help break through the prevailing notion that there is no alternative to existing society?

These meetings will address these questions by exploring a work by Karl Marx that contains his most extensive discussion of a new society—his Critique of the Gotha Program. We will explore Marx's Critique in light of ongoing theoretic and practical debates in the radical movement. As Raya Dunayevskaya, the founder of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S., wrote in 1987: "The burning question of the day remains: What happens the day after [the revolution]? How can we continue Marx's unchaining of the dialectic with the principles he outlined in his Critique of the Gotha Program?" We invite you to join in these discussions.

MEETING 1

From Marx to Lenin, Lukács and Korsch:
The Problem of Envisioning a New Society

MEETING 2

'Transitional Society' or Absolute Liberation?
On What Happens the Day After the Revolution

MEETING 3

Directly and Indirectly Social Labor: What Kind of
Human Relations Can Transcend Capitalism?

MEETING 4

Critique of Politics, Economics, and the State

MEETING 5

Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy:
The Untrodden Path

For the locations and dates as well as readings for the discussions, contact the News and Letters Committee nearest you • See the "How to Contact News and Letters Committees" on page 3 or visit www.newsandletters.org on the web.

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SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY OFFER

STATE OF THE WORLD AS WE START 2005

The earthquake that has displaced millions and killed still uncounted thousands is an indicator of the powerful ecological and environmental issues that need to be faced. In many parts of the world, access to clean air or even water creates great misery for humanity. Against the challenges faced by humanity, the priorities of "anti-terrorism" seem more a means of avoiding issues and justifying increasing authoritarian rule. An alternative or alternatives need to be presented. Unfortunately there has been no adequate projection of one by the anti-war movement, the environmentalists, or the anti-capitalists. Rather, belief-based systems of fate or religion have been re-enforced.

A casual observation of the world's political and economic systems shows them to be both buckling and straining. There is an over-concentration on the passive act of voting rather than on demanding freedom of expression or labor rights or even the right of assembly. It has resulted in the continual encroachment into the life of the citizen under the guise of safety or security.

**P. Duffy
London**

The dictionary defines fanatic as inspired by a deity, marked by excessive enthusiasm and intense uncritical devotion.

Today we live in an age of fanaticism. In Iraq, the fanatic Bush meets the fanatical terrorists, a perfect fit. In between these two monsters, tens and perhaps hundreds of thousands of Iraqis and thousands of Americans and other nationalities have had their lives extinguished or permanently mangled.

The capitalist system under which we live resembles nothing less than a ferocious wild animal, such as a lion or tiger or bear, ready to pounce on and tear to shreds anything it sees as prey. But the comparison is not fair to the animals, which act only out of an instinct for survival, whereas the rapacious ruling class acts on conscious, greedy, calculating decision. Ensuring the survival of the people on this earth requires doing to the capitalists what they have dealt to the noble creatures of the wild places. That is, we must bring the corrupt capitalist system itself to extinction.

**Ex-postal worker
Battle Creek, Michigan**

I thought of Malcolm X's infamous "chickens will come home to roost" statement and the Vietnam War "pacification" strategy when I read about a judge's order, at the request of city officials, to evict ALL residents of a Los Angeles apartment complex because of gang activity. It seems as though Falluja has come to the U.S. and that our government and leaders know of no other way to save a neighborhood other than to destroy it. What insanity. The so-called gang members (insurgents?) will simply move to another neighborhood and dozens of innocent families will incur hardships all because of the failures of our racist, capitalist society.

**Angry citizen
California**

EXCHANGE ON ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

From an exchange in the Chicago IndyMedia web site about an announcement for a meeting on Arafat's death sponsored by the Chicago News and Letters Committee:

How ironic that a project that supports "soft" Zionism—an oxymoron if there ever was one—is hosting a forum on the way forward for Palestine. *News & Letters* has consistently supported the right of Israel to impose a settler-colonial state upon the Palestinians, and has been a vigorous voice from the so-called left in opposition to truly progressive solutions like a democratic secular state within the region.

**"Yikes" (an anonymous web poster)
Chicago IndyMedia**

How suspicious that anonymous poster "Yikes" makes an accusation about the position of *News & Letters*

I think we need a new kind of pledge of allegiance, moving past nationalism to worldism, or better put, humanism. It would show which side you are on and shine some light into the shadows to expose the enemies and fence-sitters on the question of proletarian liberation. It should be something people can hold onto and not be over-intellectualized. Simple principles of worldism to gain wide-spread support. (Look what 10 rules did for Christianity.)

**Sid Rasmussen
Nebraska**

I recommend renting the DVD of "The Quiet American" and checking out some of the discussions and reviews written around 1956 of Graham Greene's novel of that name, and the commentaries anticipating the about-to-be-launched disastrous American intervention in Vietnam. I could have sworn I thought they were discussing G.W. Bush and his overly self-confident folly in Iraq some 50 years later. How some things never change. A case of bad history repeating itself.

**Video viewer
California**

I've heard that a number of voting rights activists in Ohio were wearing orange ribbons which commentators said were chosen to remember Florida, where the wishes of the voters were ignored in order to put the Governor's brother in the White House. But orange-ribboned Ohio activists told a different story. They said they picked up the color from TV coverage of the Ukrainian election where a new election was ordered. They were saying that was what was needed here.

**Angry voter
Illinois**

Is anyone aware that AIDS is the leading cause of death for African-American females between the ages of 25 and 34—and the second leading cause of death for African-American males of that same age group? Does anyone care that African-Americans and Latinos account for over 70% of newly diagnosed AIDS cases? When it was first diagnosed 25 years ago, it was seen as a "gay" disease and many thought they could ignore it. Today we are seeing the second generation of AIDS, which disproportionately affects the young, the poor and the disenfranchised. For a while AIDS cases dropped in Chicago, but now they are on the rise again. Those who would like to know how to help improve the lives of those affected by this epidemic can contact the AIDS Foundation of Chicago at 411 South Wells, Suite 300, Chicago, IL 60607-3924 or at www.aidschicago.org.

**Mark Ishaug, Executive Director
Chicago**

Right after the announcement that "Preacher" Killen is to be retried for the murder of the civil rights workers, Andrew Goodman, James Chaney and Michael Schwerner in Mississippi in 1964, I saw an interview with Mrs. Goodman who said she believed justice would now be done. Ben Chaney, James' younger brother, felt that it should be handled differently and that justice



without presenting any supporting evidence whatsoever? The truth is that "Yikes" blatantly misrepresents the position of *News & Letters* on the topic of Israel and Palestine. *News & Letters* has advocated the right of self-determination for both the Jewish and the Palestinian peoples for decades. Since the Six Day War, this has concretely meant support for a two-state solution based on the 1967 borders of Israel, the West Bank and Gaza. "Yike's" comment about "truly progressive solutions" pegs him or her as a neo-rejectionist, but I challenge "Yikes" to find any textual support for the charges leveled. He or she can start by looking in the recently published pamphlet "Marxist-Humanist Writings on the Middle East" available from *News & Letters*.

**Kevin Michaels
Chicago**

READERS' VIEWS

would not be done. Without faulting her, I felt she was thinking in a strictly one-to-one relationship about the murder of her son, while Ben Chaney was thinking about the whole context of life for Black people in Mississippi to this day, and the power and economic relationships underlying the events of 1964, 40 years later.

**Susan VanGelder
Detroit**

For anyone who doesn't think that race matters, I'd like to share what doctors at the National Institute of Health wrote on this in the *Journal of Health Psychology*: "Our analyses document that race matters a lot in terms of health. Moreover, the sources of racial disparities are not unknown, individual or obscure. They can be traced to inequalities that have been created and maintained by the economic, legal and political structures of society. These systems, and not individual beliefs and behavior, are the fundamental causes of racial and socioeconomic inequalities in health. Eliminating these disparities will thus require changes in the fundamental social systems in society."

I couldn't say it better myself.

**Ready for Changes
Chicago**

SCIENCE AND CAPITALISM

Raha's essay in the October *N&L* on "Sham neutrality of science born of capitalism" took me by surprise. How could he not separate science from capitalism,



or see capitalist science as molded by the needs of capitalism? I believe that the most irresponsible act ever committed by any individual or

group was the creation and detonation of the first atomic bomb, not only because of its destructive power, but because these scientists weren't sure what would happen when the first atomic bomb was detonated. One of the scientists, Fermi, was taking bets that the detonation would ignite the atmosphere. Of course, we now know that wouldn't have happened, but at the time there was enough doubt that it should have prevented them from performing the detonation. I think the fact that the first atomic bomb was exploded, given the fact that there was a possibility of destroying civilization as we have known it, no matter how slight that possibility was, defines capitalist science.

**Worker-thinker
Colorado**

IN TSUNAMI'S AFTERMATH

I participated in the demonstration held on Jan. 3 by Achenese political refugees living on the East Coast, together with Indonesian students and a few U.S. supporters, to denounce Indonesia's resistance to aiding Aceh and its interference with international aid. It was heartbreaking to talk with those who have lost so many loved ones and to know that even the survivors will never have normal lives again. The Achenese are sure the Indonesian government is deliberately fumbling the aid in hopes that more people will die and Aceh will be too decimated ever to resist it again. They are calling this ethnic cleansing.

**Free Aceh supporter
New York**

The director of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in Seattle, Dr. Eddie Bernard said that just a few buoys, like those scattered across the Northwest to detect earthquakes that might spawn a tsunami, could have done the job in the Indian Ocean. Scientists wanted to put two more there, including one near Indonesia, but the plan had not been funded. A

mere half million dollars could have saved thousands of lives. When that is compared to the \$1,500,000,000 the U.S. spends each day to fund the war machine, the only thing you can call the lack of funding for an inexpensive, low-tech early warning system is criminal negligence.

**Anti-war activist
Seattle**

There are social as well as geologic reasons that the early warning system is in place in the Pacific Rim but not in Southeast Asia, or that geologists in Australia and Hawaii did not know how to contact the populations soon to be hit as "they were not part of any warning system." But it is not only on the response side that social processes play a role. One of *The New York Times*'s articles on delays in the Indonesian government's relief effort mentions that the only buildings that survived in Meulaboh on Aceh were the mosques, some well-constructed buildings, and the military station. The poor often are forced to huddle near the shore of the Indian Ocean and are thus more vulnerable to typhoons.

**Psychologist
New York**

Right after we got news of the tidal wave Colin Powell was on TV talking of what a horrible disaster it was. Our ancestors would no doubt have wondered what they had done to anger the gods and cause this punishment. Most of us know better now. We also know that much of the tragedy could have been avoided with early warning devices. But so little is spent to help the impoverished and so much on weapons to protect the rulers that Powell's concern could only seem jaded and discredited when compared to his own part in the current slaughter in Iraq.

**Longtime socialist
Wisconsin**

DIEGO GARCIA

The year 2004 was rich in events for the campaign to close down the U.S. military base on Diego Garcia, to re-unite Diego with Mauritius, and to get compensation for the people forcibly



removed in the 1960s and 1970s. No sooner did the idea of the Peace Flotilla to Diego Garcia get off the ground and receive support from the No U.S. Bases network than the effects of the movement began to be felt.

Our campaign contributed to the vast number of British citizens getting to know about the issue, despite their government's attempts to keep it all a secret. It was accomplished through the beautiful John Pilger film "Stealing a Nation." Now the British government has agreed to the Chagossians visiting Diego Garcia and the other islands in April 2005. At the same time, in Mauritius all the social, union and left political organizations have signed up to the Peace Flotilla declaration, and the No U.S. Bases network is preparing for an international conference against all military bases in the second half of 2005.

It is true that none of our goals has yet been achieved—the closing down of the base on Diego, full reparations and the right of return, as well as the re-unification of Mauritius, are all still to be won. But the precondition of making sure that many people know about the problem makes victory more possible. Thank you for all you have done to help us do that. Please tell your readers to visit our website www.lalitmauritius.com.

**Lindsey Collen, for LALIT
Mauritius**

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IRAQ: 'BATTLE OF IDEAS' OR 'BEAUTIFUL SOUL'?

In its analysis of Bosnia, Kosova, Aceh, and now Darfur, *N&L* has courageously tackled the risky subject of nationalism while other sections of the Left have either ignored it or—worse—ended up endorsing genocide. Peter Hudis' essay, "Resistance or Retrogression? The battle of ideas over Iraq" (*N&L*, November 2004) is in this worthy lineage. Hudis points out that the underlying reason for luminaries like Chomsky's and Zinn's disastrously false calls in Bosnia and Kosova is the lack of a proper philosophical grounding behind their politics. Without it, he says, one runs the risk of "empty negation" and he characterizes Naomi Klein and Arundhati Roy's support of the Iraqi insurgency as instances of such empty negation. He rightly says that their justifying this by invoking the futility of waiting for "pristine movements" is wholly untenable.



Hegel

As alert as he is to this pitfall, he chooses to ignore another danger that Hegel calls to our attention in the *Phenomenology*: that of becoming the "Beautiful Soul" and maintaining the purity of our convictions independent of the actual consequences. Hudis' gesture of picking out well-intentioned but irrelevant players like Federation of Workers Councils and Unions (FWCUI) and Organization for Women's Freedom in Iraq (OWFI), and suggesting this offers a way out of the "quagmire" comes dangerously close to the "Beautiful Soul" posture.

Hudis is correct to ask of Klein and Roy, "Where was the argument that liberation movements are never pristine when it was time to defend the Bosnians and Kosovars (or the Rwandans for that matter) from genocide?" But one could ask just as plausibly, "Where was the Western Left when the U.S. armed Osama bin Laden's mujahideen or when the U.S. supplied chemical weapons to Saddam?" Is it adequate to reply that one did take the correct oppositional stance when such questions were posed?

Is it simply a matter of looking back 20 years from now at the ruins of Iraq and having one's stance vindicated by events?

The proper Hegelian demand is a far more unsettling one; it impels us to ask: how does the consistency of our own Beautiful Soul hang on throwing our weight behind the obscure and irrelevant entities we have nominated as worthy of our support? Is this an escape route to avoid coming to grips with the underlying forces that have led up to the present where the conflict is between two equally reactionary forces? Might this expose our own impotence in the face of electorates in the U.S. and throughout the Western world turning increasingly reactionary, anti-immigrant, and racist even as they claim to be upholding "moral values"? Might it be our own problems (crime, racism, unemployment etc.) that are being exported overseas in the form of wars and economic imperialism? If so, do we not need a better analysis of the dangerous rightward drift among working people throughout the West before we start picking which horse to back in Iraq?

Roby Rajan
Racine, Wisconsin



Peter Hudis responds:

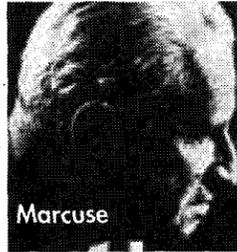
Roby Rajan is right to call attention to Hegel's critique of the "beautiful soul" that "lacks force to externalize itself...It lives in dread of staining the radiance of its inner being." Self-satisfied critiques that stand outside of the realities they aim to expose certainly cannot resolve the dilemma facing the radical movement.

Yet for this very reason, why presume that FWCUI or OWFI are "obscure and irrelevant"? OWFI publishes 10,000 copies of each issue of *Equality*—no small number in a land the size of Iraq. FWCUI has organized unemployed unions and workers' councils numbering in the thousands. While such groups may not be massive, their calls for a secular, democratic society are shared by many Iraqis. Is it not incumbent on us to actively solidarize with such forces, no matter how marginalized they may

appear? Otherwise, we will be left "looking back 20 years from now on the ruins of Iraq."

The same holds true when it comes to the U.S. Let's not forget that the presidential election was decided by a few hundred thousand votes. (Kerry's ineptitude hardly helped!). The Left will never be able to connect to currents in the U.S. opposed to the Right so long as it apologizes for reactionaries overseas that are (rightly) hated by the U.S. public. That doesn't make it any less important to search out liberatory currents—any more than the support for slavery in the 19th century invalidated the handful of "obscure and irrelevant" abolitionists.

To resolve the dilemma facing us the critique of false alternatives can't be separated from going "lower and deeper" into the subjects of liberation. The Left has failed at home; but one reason is its lack of confidence in "the second America."



MARCUSE AND THE ABSOLUTE IDEA

Russell Rockwell's important essay, "A fresh look at Marcuse's 'Ontology'" (*N&L*, December 2004), points out the limitations of any Hegelian-dialectical approach to Marx's thought that falls short of the Absolute Idea, the integration of the theoretical idea—the idea of the true—with the practical idea—the idea of the good. Our present situation, this dark night of retrogression, finds many of us reminiscing about another time, when Marcuse was a doyen of the New Left. Consider the role of Vietnam in the elections just past. But perhaps Marcuse's eventual disillusionment, which traced the decline and fall of the New Left too, has something to do with his failure to think the Idea all the way through to the end.

Rockwell shows how Marcuse was closer to Hegel in *Hegel's Ontology and the Theory of Historicity* (1932) than in *Reason and Revolution* (1941). Having

come up to the lip of the Absolute Idea in 1932, the rest of Marcuse's career traces a retreat from it, even though *Reason and Revolution* was a path-breaking book in the development of Hegelian Marxism. In the end, Marcuse's "Great Refusal" proved itself as powerless to call forth a new society as was the new left that once took it up as a battle cry. By rectifying Marcuse's philosophical mistake, Marxist-Humanism may be in a position to project something affirmative beyond Marcuse's initial step of first negation, an alternative to capitalist society, without which it seems likely that the Left today will founder just as surely on the rocks of the vicious present as that bright shining ship set sail of yesterday.

Tom More
Spokane



What Russell Rockwell's essay reveals that is new is that Marcuse in 1941 was actually willing to follow Hegel through his criticism of the Practical Idea, which because it gets locked into the posture that the external world is "intrinsically worthless" can never fully recognize the positive in negative as the idea's own self-movement. The reef that allures so many, who then run aground, is Hegel's praise of the Practical Idea standing above the Idea of Cognition considered up to that point. In 1941, Marcuse drops the qualifier when Hegel's preference for the Practical Idea is only over cognition "already considered." Rockwell poses the centrality of the individual in Hegel and the Logic as showing "how the individual grasps the social and molds it such that it is the basis of the very possibility of each individual's freedom." My question is: why does he use feudalism to illuminate Hegel's concept of the "immediate actuality" of individual freedom in the Absolute Idea. After all, when Hegel reaches the Practical Idea as the Idea of the Good, he refers the readers back to a section of the *Phenomenology* on self-certain moral spirit, which comes after the revolutionary overthrowing of feudalism in 1789. In other words, Hegel is addressing the problem of uniting organization and philosophy after the revolution.

Ron Brokmeyer
Oakland, Cal.

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**PHILOSOPHIC
DIALOG**

Dialectics of development in transition

by Khalfani Malik Khaldun

Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles by John Alan (News and Letters, 2004) is a masterpiece that covers race, philosophy, and the needed American Revolution. I am always encouraged when I detect material that reveals the dialectical course that the Black struggles have taken in this country.

The history of Black (New Afrikan) people in this empire is one of domination and colonial oppression. These experiences have conditioned people to struggle and resist. This is an undeniable concrete dialectical reality that has propelled the New Afrikan nation to the forefront of many levels of struggle in the U.S.

What I appreciate about *Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles* is how Alan understands the importance of our success in impacting people's struggles nationally and abroad. His book invokes a spirit of self-determination and sense of purpose, enabling one to believe in one's natural right to forge real struggles. Dialectically, the book shows the distinction between progress that has been made and moments of stagnation, thereby showing the fortitude embodied in the New Afrikan nation's character.

While it is no secret that we still face a mountain of contradictions and mental setbacks due to the post-traumatic slave syndrome, Alan would not negate the role of the vanguard being reserved for New Afrikans. That means a lot to me, knowing that we still battle for internal redemption due to being overwhelmed with nihilism. A nihilistic threat hangs over us like a cloud.

Like all people colonized in Amerika, New Afrikans are greatly influenced by images of comfort, convenience, machismo, violence against women, and a host of other seductions that bombard consumers. These seductive images contribute to the predominance of market-inspired ways of life at the expense of all others, thereby edging out non-market values such as self-love and caring for others which our ancestors passed down to us. The predominance of such images among many living under the threat of poverty with a limited capacity to ward off self-contempt and self-hatred poses a nihilistic threat to our nation.

Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles is a profound contribution to fallen humanity. It challenges us to mature politically and embrace a holistic view in dealing with national and international approaches to self-determination. The book reveals new energy and the potential emergence of a new movement.

AMERICAN CIVILIZATION ON TRIAL

American Civilization on Trial by Raya Dunayevskaya (News and Letters, 2004) is another masterpiece. Its subtitle is "Black Masses as Vanguard." After reading these books two times I engaged some of my comrades in prison in lengthy discussions on them. We disagreed at times but we concluded they brought to life a host of creative ideas.

American Civilization on Trial represents a wealth of facts that will help newcomers to politics and emerging struggles. It exposes the many atrocities and tragedies visited upon New Afrikans. This is a system that places more value on capitalist gains and imperialist pursuits than the empowerment of people. *American Civilization on Trial* places in the forefront a bloody past filled with the ugliness of white supremacy and racism.

Today we remain targets of institutions wherein multi-million dollar corporations operate off of the profits obtained from slavery. This book arms the new activist with the tools of empowerment, especially for anyone who seems to be feeling that the struggle is dead.

The history of New Afrikan national struggles in the U.S. dramatically exposes the Amerikan political system. Amerika's much praised institutions of representative government, voting and constitutional laws have never proved adequate for providing universal human rights. The Declaration of Independence, a document of ambiguous practicality, was followed by the Constitution, a document filled with illusions of equality. This combination of falsehoods appeared in the 5th amendment, which reads: "No person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without the due process of the law." White Amerika was, and still is, protected by this rule while New Afrikans then and now are still viewed as chattel property of the state.

American Civilization On Trial is equal to the call of conscience to anyone who favors ending the continued oppression/degradation of (New Afrikans and people of color). Since Dunayevskaya singled out Black masses as vanguard, she was clearly confident that we carry the rights as champions on our shoulders. We are our own liberators; this is a fundamental dialectical reality.

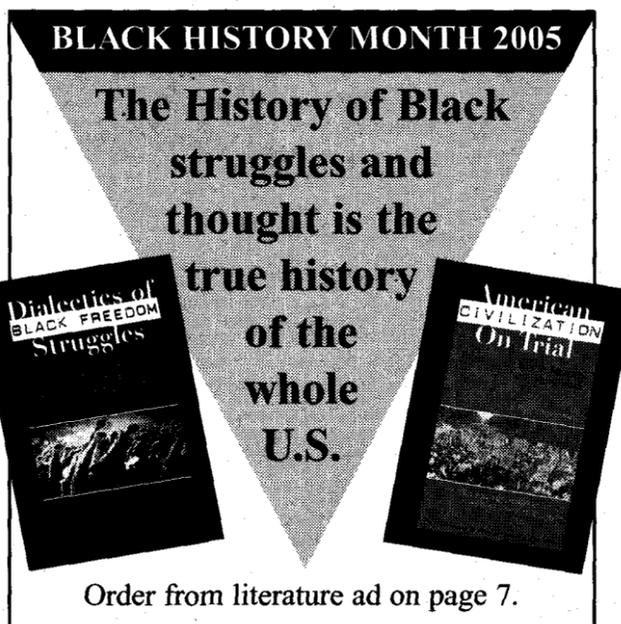
There is a point of contention for me in this book concerning Du Bois' theory of the "talented tenth." In the 1920s several Black intellectuals who were accepted as Black leaders by white Amerika signed a petition to the Department of Justice to have Marcus Garvey deported. They saw his "Back to Africa" proposition as "fak-

Khalfani Malik Khaldun is a political prisoner who is facing repeated harassment by prison authorities for his radical views. This essay is excerpted from a longer piece. For the full text, contact *News & Letters*. Contact Khalfani Malik Khaldun, 874304 (Leonard McQuay) at: A-207 SHU, PO Box 1111, Carlisle, IN 47838.

ery." Garvey posed a threat to the established order of intellectuals like Du Bois, who acknowledged that Garvey was influential and effective among the masses whereas those around Du Bois seemed to have failed. Du Bois said: "It was a grandiose and bombastic scheme, utterly impractical as a whole. But it was sincere and had some practical features; and Garvey proved not only an astonishingly popular leader, but a master of propaganda. Within a few years, news of his movement spread, his promises and plans reached Europe and Asia and penetrated every corner of Africa."

While I believe Du Bois made some notable contributions to the dialectical development of our struggle, his petition against Garvey constituted an act of betrayal. The conscious use of a racist government institution to deport Garvey was inherently wrong. They recognized the legitimacy of the state enough to make use of it. This tells me that at that moment the people should have placed the "talented tenth" on trial. Such actions are reflected today, when New Afrikans and other people of color allow themselves to be used as neo-colonialists against their own people.

I admire the contributions of Garvey and his genuine love for his people. "Back to Africa" was an effec-



tive organizational strategy that awakened in New Afrikans a strong sense of pride, worth, and national identity. While it may have been impractical to many, I believe it was a vision needed to unite oppressed New Afrikans. The "talented tenth" should have let the people deal with Marcus Garvey and not have used the government to do so. There is a clear distinction between the intellectualism of the talented tenth and the nationalism of Garvey.

THE NEGATION OF BLACK LEADERSHIP

Today the New Afrikan masses are again faced with a choice concerning the leadership of our communities. By no means do I intend to castigate anyone. However, if we as a people are to move toward real self-empowerment we must dialectically set into motion the laws of negation.

New Afrikan communities and organizations are permeated by outdated leadership. Many who currently hold leadership positions do not want to give them up, even when they openly admit that they can't take the people to the next level of struggle. The people who have chosen these men and women as their "leaders" have to implement the dialectics of negation.

Sometimes those who are politically unconscious don't know how to make such a choice. Therefore the politically active and mature members of our communities must do it for them. We must confront all elitist tendencies and call for the recruitment of new blood in our movements. We must develop a philosophy of action and internalize it. A philosophy of action is needed to take charge of our lives and choose leaders who genuinely have the best interests of the New Afrikan masses at heart.

The reason the masses do not relate to their political leaders is because they have fallen out of touch with them. Much of the leadership in the Black community has become apologetic, liberal and accommodationist. This is a result of their class-oriented commitment to infuse the New Afrikan working class into the present economic order and to perpetrate the politics of bourgeois reform. They are not prepared to repudiate the system that rewards their political accommodation.

The conservatives among our leaders do not desire real power; they have no independent program worthy of the name. The interest that Black conservatives defend have little or nothing to do with the realities of New Afrikan material or social life. No public position is too extreme, no statement is too ingratiating, no act too outrageous for the Black conservative. We owe it to our nation to expose and oppose these classic patterns of petty bourgeois opportunism and accommodationism.

Many Black self-empowerment organizations have promoted food shelters, public health care, child care, job training, free education, etc. Yet these programs have been abandoned by major sections of the Black elite. So it is up to us as progressives and Marxist Humanists to move the interrupted national and international struggle for human rights and social equality

forward within the framework of actual revolution. The social crisis confronting New Afrikans cannot be transcended unless our politics, in theory and practice, exposes and opposes sexual exploitation, imperialism, and monopoly capitalism in an uncompromising manner. There must come a time when negation of the negation occurs by saying out with the old leadership in embracing the new.

DIALECTICS OF DEVELOPING NATIONAL IDENTITY

We as an oppressed poor people colonized in Amerika must remind ourselves that history is an organic process that affects and in turn is influenced by civil and political institutions, ideologies and culture. Nothing in New Afrikan or world history has ever been predetermined by any single factor or force. Marx wrote in the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*: "Men make their own history. But they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given, and transmitted from the past."

I have devoted space in these pages to Black history to show that struggles for socialism and to end Black underdevelopment did not begin in the 1980s, but in the racial and class struggles of past generations. Ever since our ancestors came to this country New Afrikan people have sought out a national identity. Having been associated with extremely derogatory statements, it has been important for my people to embrace nationalism. Every nation in the world and inside this country is properly recognized except the (Black) New Afrikan. We are not Black, we are not Americans, we are not African Americans. We constitute a disenfranchised New Afrikan nation colonized in North America. This Amerikan government doesn't recognize us as a legitimate nation because we do not have a national territory. However, we still exist and we have struggled. No one else can define us but ourselves.

There are people who say the philosophy behind the national question and concepts of New Afrikan identity are impractical. The "talented tenth" said the same things about Garvey's "Back to Africa" movement. All concepts go through stages of development as we embrace other philosophies and study new materials. Through that process our consciousness broadens.

By no means am I a racist; nor do I support a racist politic. But I am in full support of self-empowerment, educational empowerment, economic empowerment of New Afrikans by way of nationalism. There are some New Afrikans who may choose not to struggle alongside white activists because they feel their communities and struggles must be cleaned up by us. I agree with this. But once we have organized and empowered ourselves we can forge ties beyond our respective communities with whites and other people of color. We are first and foremost our own liberators.

While this is my commitment, I reserve the right to support other revolutionary groups who share the same principles as I do. In order to balance our energies we need to go beyond our box and embrace new philosophies and concepts. I once thought that Marx was a racist who was only concerned with the progress of non-Black people or nations of color. I was wrong. For about four and a half years I've attempted to internalize Marxist-Humanism. Marxist-Humanism intellectually stimulates me. It helps me see that educational growth is possible and it helps us to envision new possibilities.

Inside these prison walls men and women cling to an assortment of philosophies that in some way empowers them. However of late the lack of support for their struggles has caused a slow regression in their open affiliation and membership. Many prisoners are feeling abandoned by the organizations they've praised, followed, or advocated. This is a real problem.

All New Afrikan, anti-imperialist and anti-authoritarian and anarchist organizations must be more hands-on in their work with prisoners. Nobody can claim to be a prison abolitionist who hasn't established a physical presence with someone inside these walls. I am a prison activist and for this I am housed in a Special Housing Unit for 23 hours a day. I work constantly to forge ties with progressive, revolutionary minded people. I'll work with and respect whoever works with and respects me.

I support and respect the comrades in News and Letters Committees. They've been actively engaged in the struggle since the days of the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Marxist-Humanism takes the struggle against capitalism and imperialism to the next level, where the process of dialectical stages of development takes place.

We are all different, but we constitute one human family. This commonness is the foundation and vision of Marxist-Humanist perspectives in bringing a new and effective revolutionary vision to this world. Many groups and movements have used *News & Letters* materials to advocate their message. We have followed in this tradition by becoming publishers ourselves.

We cannot expect the masses to know what we have to offer unless we make it available to them. Comrade George Jackson wrote in *Blood in My Eye*, "Action establishes the front." We are politically conscious and this means that we must take action. Everyone has a role to play. I salute *News & Letters* for being relentless in its adherence to Marxist-Humanism and in being real friends of the struggle. Let us move in the direction of a united front. The struggle continues.

EDITORIAL

Capitalism adds to tsunami horror

The tsunami of Dec. 26 was one of the worst natural calamities to strike humanity. The immediate death toll was well over 220,000 and as many or more may die in an aftermath of hunger, disease from bad water, and lack of medical treatment for survivors with festering wounds. The destruction even reached Africa but was most devastating in the South Asian nations that line the Indian Ocean, especially Indonesia, Thailand, India and Sri Lanka. The tidal wave had a crushing impact on at least five million people's lives. The Aceh province of Indonesia on Sumatra was the closest to the epicenter of the quake and received the severest blow.

SAVAGERY OF THE MILITARY

Acheh also revealed most sharply how the tsunami's death and destruction was not only born of natural causes but was also the result of the savagery of capitalism, especially as personified by the corrupt Indonesian military, which has kept Aceh under its brutal rule for decades. The people of Aceh have been fighting for centuries against foreign rule—first from the Dutch and Japanese and now the Indonesian military. Since 1976 the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) has been fighting for national self-determination while the Indonesian military has conducted a repressive rule of

systematic torture, murder and rape against civilians.

As aid for tsunami victims poured in, the military hoarded it in their compounds, selling it to civilians and using the human catastrophe to go after any dissidents who came out of hiding to do humanitarian work. It is a scandal that the Aceh liberation struggle has received little or no support from the Left. As Peter Hudis put it in an immediate appeal for Aceh on our web site: "The irony is that at the very moment when a good number of 'progressives' find a million and one excuses for 'solidarizing' with some of the neo-fascist Islamic fundamentalist militias that are terrorizing Iraqi workers and feminists, all because some of them for now 'oppose the U.S. occupation,' there's dead silence on extending solidarity with common folk who want nothing more than to live in peace."

Reports of the tsunami's devastation engendered massive spontaneous expressions of human solidarity from ordinary people all over the world. In Aceh, medical and aid volunteers rushed to the scene but were hamstrung at each step by the 70,000 Indonesian troops running Aceh as their private fiefdom. They are now using the disaster to further solidify their bloody rule. At least in Sri Lanka, where there is also an ongoing fight for national independence among the Tamils, the government there agreed to a truce in order to coordinate aid.

As help and money rushed in from around the globe, President Bush made no public statement on the disaster for a full 72 hours. Last year Bush administration operatives openly declared the U.S. government is the maker of global "reality" to which all the world, as extensions of its capitalist empire, must accommodate. The reality, not only of nature, but also of millions of ordinary human beings acting on their concern, expunged that grand illusion. Ordinary people asked why this empire, which sucks vast resources into a militarized science, has no priority for installing a tsunami warning system for poor nations like the one that already exists on the Pacific Rim. Why was it that the U.S. Pacific Warning Center in Hawaii, which measured the strength of the undersea earthquake and gave the U.S. Indian Ocean naval base on Diego Garcia adequate notice of an impending catastrophe, did not even have a mechanism in place to warn the poor nations in the region?

The Bush administration's puny initial offering of \$35 million in aid shocked Senator Leahy, who made an apt contrast when he said, "We spend \$35 million before breakfast in Iraq."

To patch up his public relations disaster, Bush sent his emissaries, Secretary of State Colin Powell and his brother Jeb Bush, to the area to place the U.S. at the head of the relief effort and declare that \$35 million was just a start. Then, to further save face, "W" Bush asked former Presidents Clinton and George H. W. Bush to head a fundraising drive for tsunami relief. Governments have now pledged substantial amounts for assistance and rebuilding. However the record from past disasters, like the Hurricane Mitch in Honduras, shows that when the headlines are gone only a small fraction of the aid is actually realized. The result is that the poor in the impacted regions are left in the severest destitution for the foreseeable future.

New Bolivian revolts

Bolivia experienced a new series of revolts at the end of 2004 and the beginning of 2005. In October the one year anniversary of the 2003 revolt that brought down the Sanchez de Lozada presidency was remembered with massive marches, especially in the city of El Alto, that demanded Sanchez de Lozada be extradited from the U.S. and forced to stand trial. Then in November El Alto kept the heat on Carlos Mesa's government with further strikes that demanded the French-controlled firm Aguas de Illimani, which provides water services to La Paz and El Alto, have its contract rescinded for failure to provide the services it's supposed to. Five years ago another "water war" forced a different multinational corporation from the city of Cochabamba.

La Mesa inadvertently gave this movement a huge boost when, on Jan. 31, he followed IMF dictates and cut a state subsidy for gasoline and diesel, which not only drove up the prices of those products but also affected prices for other basic consumption goods. In the first two weeks of January there were huge marches and work stoppages in La Paz, Cochabamba, El Alto and Santa Cruz (the latter city produces a third of Bolivia's GDP). After the first week the government backed down and agreed to get Aguas de Illimani out of El Alto, but it did little to stem the anger Bolivians feel for Mesa, who has done next to nil to change Bolivia's course since the 2003 rebellion. The Federation of Neighborhood Organizations (Fejuve, which played a central role in the 2003 revolt) has been keeping the pressure on the government to insure that access to water now be controlled by the residents of El Alto, and not the state.



Demonstrators at UN headquarters in New York City, Jan. 3, protested the Indonesian government's hijacking aid sent for tsunami relief in Aceh.

After crucial days were lost, President Bush then used the U.S. military to rush aid to Aceh while carefully not stepping on the authority of the Indonesian military. Heart-wrenching scenes of desperate people swarming around helicopters revealed also the effect of having been ignored and isolated for so long.

Just as the extent and depth of inhuman conditions were coming to light, the Indonesian military chose to set a March deadline for foreign presence to leave

Acheh. What scares them most is the spotlight being shined on their Aceh rule by the thousands of foreign witnesses, journalists and relief organizations, who have been kept out for so long. The mass of unarmed aid workers say they could get help to those who need it throughout Aceh if they weren't hampered by the Indonesian military in the name of protecting them from GAM. They are not afraid of GAM, which has declared a unilateral ceasefire. For GAM, the humanitarian effort is the first priority.

BUSH'S WAR CRIMES

While U.S. soldiers participating in humanitarian aid declared how much they preferred this assignment, under directives from the Bush administration this same military has just been exposed for systematic and widespread use of torture, prompting Human Rights Watch to call for an independent war crimes investigation. This is the same military that has killed tens of thousands of innocent civilians in the Iraq war and is now flirting with using an El Salvador type neo-fascist "death squad" option in Iraq. There is a further irony that now, just when the Indonesian military has revealed the lower depths of their inhuman barbarity, the Bush administration is using this disaster to push for restarting military aid to Indonesia.

Past disasters have had a way of awakening new liberation ideas and struggles. Indeed, the 1883 volcanic eruption of Krakatoa in Indonesia, which also created a deadly tsunami, is credited with sparking the long struggle to expel Dutch colonialism. Perhaps today's human solidarity can be a new beginning in upstaging the prevailing trends of capitalist militarism and fundamentalism.

Indonesia interferes with Aceh aid

Continued from page 1

ference with aid delivery. Indonesia's announcement that all foreign troops must leave Aceh by March 26 (later modified) illustrates its cynical mis-use of the concept of nationalism. Without long-term assistance, Aceh will not be able to rebuild its infrastructure and create jobs. The real reason for the policy is to return Aceh to isolation so that the military can continue its crimes against the Achese without the world watching.

PLEASE CONTRIBUTE TO CIVIL SOCIETY GROUPS THAT WILL DELIVER AID QUICKLY AND PROPERLY!

Acheh Center is an association of Acheneese refugees who live in the U.S. Most of us were activists in the civil society movements for self-determination that flowered after the end of the dictatorship in Indonesia in 1998, and then were severely repressed. Most of us were forced to flee Aceh for our lives. We are working to provide direct, immediate aid and financial support to the victims of the disaster, by sending contributions to grass-roots organizations that are able to get relief aid into Aceh quickly, without needing the cooperation of the Indonesian government or military.

Please send checks made out to Acheh Center to:
Acheh Center, USA
P.O. Box 6296
Harrisburg, PA 17112, USA

Tel. (717) 343-1598
achehcenter@yahoo.com

—Mitch Weerth

BLACK/REDVIEW

Continued from page 1

liberalism" of the Johnson administration was its response to the Civil Rights Movement.

During that time Ronald Reagan was a notable opponent of Lyndon B. Johnson's "racial liberalism." He was opposed to the concept of integration and was working hard to gain enough political power to prevent the enactment of any law that would end racial segregation in America. Fifteen years later, when Reagan ran for president in 1980, he opened his presidential campaign against Jimmy Carter at a fairground near Philadelphia, Miss., and told a cheering crowd of 10,000 white people that he believed in "states' rights." The Ku Klux Klansmen who murdered Michael Schwerner, James Chaney and Andrew Goodman in Neshoba county also said they were "states' righters."

The reason Reagan started his 1980 campaign in the South was to establish a Southern strategy to get white Southerners to vote for a Republican candidate by making race a major issue of the election. Reagan won the election and once he was in the Oval Office reduced all funds for desegregation and encouraged court action to end desegregation programs. To gut civil rights enforcement he appointed Clarence Thomas, the Black conservative, to head the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

PLAYING THE RACE CARD

Ronald Reagan isn't the only candidate for president to have played a race card to get white votes. George H. W. Bush, the father of the current president, played it blatantly when he ran for president in 1988. He used the crime of Willie Horton, an African-American convict—who raped a white woman while on furlough—to defeat his opponent, Michael Dukakis, who was the governor of Massachusetts at the time of Horton's furlough. He held Michael Dukakis responsible for Willie Horton's crime and generated fear of the Black "criminal" to propel himself into the presidency.

Bush, like other presidents before him, found Black faces to represent his racist agenda. He appointed Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court, despite strong allegations by EEOC employee Anita Hill of sexual harassment in the workplace. Clarence Thomas' views are conservative in the sense that he believes you have to forget about race once you arrive at high positions in the government. He believes that the Constitution should be interpreted exactly in the spirit in which the founders wrote it, regardless of the fact that many of the founders were slave owners.

Current President Bush might appoint Clarence Thomas Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. The concerns over that stem not only from the conservative views espoused by Thomas, but also by his grudge against those who challenged his nomination in 1991.

According to *The Washington Post* (Dec. 6-12, 2004), "Thomas retains a special animus for certain civil rights activists and liberal interest groups such as People for the American Way, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, the Alliance for Justice. He blames them, in large part, for the damage done to his reputation. 'These people are mad because I'm in Thurgood Marshall's seat,' he told one visitor.... Thomas keeps a list in his head of who was for and against him during his confirmation hearings. He is still bitter." To have such a man as chief justice does not bode well for the civil rights of any Americans.

History is not changed by courts. Rather it is mass activity that forces the courts to make decisions we now find landmark, such as *Brown v. Board of Education*. If it was just up to the courts, slavery would never have been abolished. But if the mass struggle ends with appointments to courts or elections of officials, it will not be enough to change the society and to uproot racism. Clarence Thomas, like Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice, may be the result of the movement, but they are not the future of it.

China as global factory is incubator of revolt

Continued from page 1

their small size and lack of mechanization, peasants are sinking deeper into poverty. Thus, the vast majority of the populace has no access to the surplus production being spewed out by the industrial expansion.

Since China's growth depends on its ability to attract foreign capital by keeping wages low (80% of world direct foreign investment outside the U.S. in 2004 went to China), urban workers are also unable to reap the benefits of its booming economy. Moreover, millions of workers in unprofitable state-owned enterprises are being laid off, adding to poverty and unemployment.

Though China has a middle class of 100 million, it too is hemmed in by fears of unemployment and the lack of adequate health care and housing. Those in the cities may be consuming a lot more goods than a generation ago, but nowhere near the rate of China's output.

So where is the output in production going? Largely overseas. China's foreign reserves are \$600 billion—in an economy with a \$1,000 billion GDP. It means 60% of China's GDP is tied up in foreign investments. Most of it is invested in U.S. treasury bonds and securities. China is lending the U.S. nearly two billion dollars a day.

In essence, the U.S. is borrowing China's surplus capital to make up for its inability to balance its own books. The U.S. is getting away with a massive trade deficit (and a growing federal budget deficit) by getting China to ship to the U.S. the profits gleaned from its exploitation of its underpaid workers and peasants. Chinese workers are effectively subsidizing the U.S. with low-cost consumer goods and surplus capital that keeps down interest rates and the cost of U.S. capital.

While this enables China to deal with an unbalanced economy in which investment far outstrips consumption, it comes with a downside. The U.S. dollar has declined in value by 30% against the euro and the yen over the last few years. That means the value of China's holdings in the U.S. has plummeted.

China can respond by pulling its investments out of the U.S., but that could trigger a rise in U.S. interest rates and the cost of capital, leading to an economic downturn that would threaten the stability of the world economy. China could increase the value of its currency, but that would make its exports to the U.S. more expensive—and exports drive its economy. China will therefore probably sit tight and try to ride out the storm, even though it effectively means tossing tens of billions of dollars of its surplus capital down a sink-hole.

ONE WORLD

As I was able to see in a trip I took to China at the end of 2004 to attend a conference on Rosa Luxemburg in Guangzhou, one thing is clear: what is happening in China has immediate consequences for what happens in the U.S.

It is most of all seen in the way U.S. manufacturers are rushing to China. If present rates continue, furniture, consumer goods and even car manufacturing will shrink dramatically in the U.S. It was once assumed that as labor-intensive plants moved to China, the U.S.

would still dominate the fields of high-tech and information systems. That no longer appears to be true.

One reason is that in China wages are so low and the control of labor is so strict that its factories are less capital-intensive than those in the U.S. When multinationals move their plants to China, they often strip them of their high tech components since they can obtain high levels of output without them. As a result, it isn't U.S. high tech firms but exporters of raw materials that benefit from China's growth. As *Business Week* put it (Dec. 6): "The U.S. looks like a developing nation. It runs surpluses in commodities such as oil seeds, grains, iron, wood pulp, and raw animal hides."

This also means that China is not experiencing the kind of modernization of its productive forces that defined the industrial revolution in Europe, America or Japan. What Marx called capital's "historic mission"—revolutionizing the forces of production by introducing technological innovations—is not occurring in China as it did elsewhere in the past. The very thing that drives its growth—a plentiful supply of cheap labor—also fetters the development of its forces of production.

The most important force of production is the working class. To see how it is being impacted by the dramatic transformation of Chinese society, we need to begin with where the changes all began—with the peasantry.

EXPROPRIATION OF THE RURAL LABORERS

In the 1970s Deng Xiaoping initiated China's economic transformation by allowing farmers to keep the profits from sales of produce that exceeded state-imposed quotas. Initially farmers' incomes rose dramatically. However peasants were not permitted to own their land; the state provided them with leases to work the land even as urban residents earned the right (by the 1980s) to buy and sell property.

As a result "land reform" in China has benefited city dwellers more than farmers since urban residents can buy and sell property whereas peasants cannot. Since the 1980s farm output and income have failed to keep up with the rising prices of inputs and goods, forcing many peasants to abandon their farms without getting any compensation. Over 300 million have been forced off the land and have moved to the cities to work in the factories, offices, and sweatshops.

Ten million Chinese migrate from rural areas to the cities each year. The key to China's economic growth is this creation of a migrant reserve labor force that now totals 150 million. It represents the largest population migration in human history. Yet it has by no means run its course. The Chinese government aims to "compel" half a billion more peasants to abandon their farms and move to urban areas in coming years.

China today is a textbook case of what Marx called the basis of the whole process of capital formation—the separation of the subjective activity of the laborers from ownership of the conditions of their labor. Marx wrote, "As soon as capitalist production stands on its own feet, it not only maintains this separation, but reproduces it on a constantly extending scale." The separation of the laborers from the conditions of production, Marx showed, turns "the social means of subsistence into capital, and the immediate producers into wage laborers" (*Capital*, Vol. I, pp. 874-75).

In the West the expropriation of the agricultural laborers was achieved by transforming their collective property into capitalist private property. In China the same process is being achieved by maintaining nationalized property. It matters little what form of property is employed to separate the laborers from the objective conditions of production. What is decisive for capital is that the separation occurs.

CHALLENGES POSED BY MASS REVOLTS

Though China's economy is booming, so is worker and peasant resistance.

Over 60,000 unauthorized strikes occurred in China in 2004. Some involved tens of thousands of workers at a time. In mid-December 12,000 women workers making wireless phones sold at Walmart walked off their jobs in a protest over low pay and inadequate health care. In October workers in Xian occupied factories in a protest against poor working conditions and police abuse. And last fall tens of thousands of workers in Wanzhou occupied the parts of the city.

While many of strikes are in response to local grievances, there is growing coordination between workers at different factories, especially in China's southeast coast. The government has responded by imposing martial law and using paramilitaries to break up strikes and public gatherings.

There are also efforts underway to organize peasants on a nationwide basis. In November 100,000 peasants in Sichuan who oppose a dam project seized government offices. It took 10,000 paramilitary troops to quell the revolt. In the same month 50,000 migrant workers rioted in Guangdong over police abuse.

Given conditions in China today, resistance is

inevitable. But many unresolved questions confront the struggles. Many workers oppose the privatization of state-owned enterprises, as it often results in wage cuts or plant closings. At the same time, nationalization is hardly an attractive option. When Mao Zedong nationalized industry in the 1950s it worsened conditions for many workers since they were deprived of independent unions and the right to strike.

Partly for this reason, Han Dongfang, the founder of the Beijing Workers' Autonomous Union that joined with student protesters at Tiananmen Square in 1989 who now lives in Hong Kong, has criticized the anti-globalization movement for focusing almost entirely on privatization as the problem facing Chinese workers. But if both privatized and nationalized industry isn't the solution, what is the alternative?

Han admits that the answer isn't clear. He recently stated, "Look at China's history. We have a history of revolution. And every time...the only thing we got was repeated dictators. So that gave us a lesson, we

don't want revolution any more. But where is the way out if you don't resolve the problem?"

It is hard to see how the problems facing China can be resolved without a revolution. Yet the masses there are unlikely to become committed to one unless there is a view of how to avoid the fate of so many aborted revolutions. The difficulty of the question reveals how much we are suffering from the failure of radicals to develop a perspective of how to create a new society freed from the dominance of capital.

Whether the question of "what happens after" is evaded because it is assumed that nationalized property under the control of "the party" is the answer, or whether it is evaded out of fear of "imposing blueprints" and indulging in "speculations" about the future, the result is the same—masses of people are left without a concept of a new society that can energize and give direction to their struggles.

ROSA LUXEMBURG IN CHINA

The search for pathways for liberation in a land experiencing economic dislocation and political repression by a single party that still claims to be "Communist" underlines the importance of a conference on Rosa Luxemburg that was held in China in November, at South China Agricultural University in Guangzhou. It was sponsored by the International Rosa Luxemburg Society, the Institute of World Socialism in Beijing, and the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation in Berlin. It included 80 participants from China, Japan, India, Russia, Germany, Austria, France, and Norway. I was the one person present from the U.S. While this was not the first time that a conference on Luxemburg was held in China, it represented the most far-ranging and comprehensive discussion of her work in its history.

Luxemburg's work remains compelling because she did not separate an analysis of what is now termed the globalization of capital from opposition to reformist, bureaucratic and centralist tendencies which stifle mass spontaneity and creativity.

While Luxemburg is not an unknown figure in China, she has usually been presented in a negative light in official discussions. This was not the view of those who attended this conference. Almost every one of the papers given by those from China was supportive of or highly sympathetic to her positions. Most remarkably, nearly every paper given by the Chinese participants focused on her concept of revolutionary democracy and her critique of Lenin's organizational centralism.

Speakers were also present from Germany, who discussed her concept of democracy, her critique of nationalism, and the Luxemburg tradition in the German socialist movement. A woman from Norway spoke on Luxemburg and Hannah Arendt, taking issue with the latter for failing to grasp Rosa's rootedness in Marx. Two papers by scholars from India said it was important to reexamine Luxemburg to recapture Marx's humanism. Narihiko Ito of Japan, who is preparing a 17-volume Japanese edition of her collected works, discussed a manuscript by her on slavery in ancient Greece and Rome that he recently discovered.

I spoke on Luxemburg's writings on the non-Western world, comparing her views of communal forms and pre-capitalist societies to Marx. All of the papers were published in Chinese, and there are plans to publish them as well in English and German.

The conference shows the objectivity of working out "what happens after" today. As Luxemburg put it, "socialist democracy is not something which begins only in the promised land after the foundations of socialist economy are created...It begins at the very moment of the seizure of power." She never wavered from the view that freely associated labor must emerge from the very inception of a revolution if humanity is to have any chance of transcending capitalism: "Socialism must be created by the masses, by every proletarian. Where the chains of capitalism are forged, there they must be broken. Only that is socialism, and only thus can socialism be created." This is not just some distant vision but the perspective we must work out for today.



Multinational shoe factory in China exemplifies the separation of the subjective activity of the laborers from ownership of conditions of their labor.

Don't miss an issue News & Letters in 2005!

Coming next issue...



* Report from the Porto Alegre, Brazil, World Social Forum

* What's new about the New Value Theory debate?

* Struggle against forces of nature and reaction in Aceh

* The mis-interpretations of Marx's Grundrisse

\$5 for one year (six issues)... See page 7.

Queer youth eyes movement's limits

MEMPHIS, TENN.—The Southern Human Rights Organizers' Conference (SHROC) gathered human rights activists across the "Global South." Class solidarity, when recognized, was often articulated as a second thought to struggles against oppression of groups along racial, ethnic, gender, or national identities. Even when working class organizing was expressed, mainly through labor representation, Marxism was rarely mentioned. The representation from the Memphis News and Letters Committees added to the event that I felt lacked any consistent theoretical foundation to either shape their analysis and action or inform their reflection.

There was one LGBT (Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender) workshop, and many in attendance, including myself, who work for Queer liberation. Some others felt insulted that LGBT liberation was equated with their own struggles. While SHROC participants recognized many bourgeois people of color as adversaries, many were unable to identify Queer organizers as their allies in creating a more fair society, one that will deepen our ideal of equality and negate disruptive schisms in working class consciousness. We were told by some that we did not belong; that our parents must have been deficient; that being heterosexual was our "duty to society." The organizers publicly rebuked such divisive ideas and asked me to speak on the issue.

QUEER AND MARXIST

Being both Queer and Marxist, I believe that, while various subdivisions in our struggle for human liberation are not identical, our adversaries spring from the same reactionary factions for the same purpose. The reproduction of the class relationship within our inter-

personal and group interactions obscures the true basis of worldwide oppression, and the most significant power relationship on the macro-social level: the dynamics of class under capitalism.

Right-wing political Christianity is fueling social and political homophobia as Queers have become a convenient enemy of mythological proportions for reactionary groups. Adding prophecy to their analysis (many think we are in the "end times") and fueled by religious news, publications and broadcasts, the more extreme feel that Queer liberation is aligned with the end time persecution of Christians. As one self-described Christian recently said, "You think we can have both, but we can't. You can't have your rights while I have mine. It is an 'either/or' relationship" between the two.

Anti-Marxism has been a guiding force in our government for decades. When local, state, and federal governments tried to destroy the civil rights movement, it was often done in the name of containing the communist threat.

IDENTIFYING WITH CHRISTIAN RIGHT

This succeeded in justifying repressive actions in the minds of Americans and pushing the civil rights movement more solidly into the church. The ruling factions recognized Marxism as the true threat to their power and channeled the discontent of the Black community into more "safe" means of Christianity. If the business classes now, as many feel, influence the norms of most Christian organizing, this filters into the Black community through the institutions many equate with their struggle for liberation.

Deficiencies in mainstream LGBT organizing are

also responsible for the ease with which we have been targeted in communities of color and the working class. Urban Queer organizing has been largely a middle class, white phenomenon. Racially segregated groups have arisen as those activists with the most access to physical and institutional resources have excluded others.

Class struggle is the universal element in the struggle for human liberation. As long as working class people focus on the Queer threat, they will never organize effectively against their class enemies. As long as Queer people align themselves with the bourgeoisie for their short-term goals, we will never understand the nature of our own oppression or how closely tied it is with the oppression of the working class. Only by seeing our struggles within a broad human rights framework will we achieve the social change we seek. Marxism is our greatest tool within this framework.

—Michael C. Ide

Student human rights activist

'W=Wrong' in Memphis



MEMPHIS, TENN.—About 150 people decided that instead of watching the inauguration of four more years of disaster, we would march through mid-town in protest of all those who have died because of President George W. Bush's first four years in office. In Memphis, there are many demonstrations attended by 50 people or less, so we felt satisfied joy as people kept pouring into the gathering place. Youth and families—many with grade school children, dominated the crowd.

The enthusiasm to show our opposition to Bush was palpable and creative. There was a huge peace dove puppet. People from the Mid-South Peace and Justice Center, who sponsored the march, also made foam core doves suspended from strings at the ends of sticks. They floated with us as we walked.

As we walked down the busy rush hour streets, hundreds of motorists honked their horns in solidarity. With this kind of opposition to Bush coming from the Mid-South and buckle of the Bible belt, Bush's next four years will be rocky indeed, and not just for us, but for his administration.

—Terry Moon

Confronting Israeli land seizure

JAYYUS, OCCUPIED PALESTINE—As members of the Mid-South Peace and Justice Center of Memphis, Tenn., we assisted the locals in Jayyus in holding on to their land and livelihood. Jayyus is where the apartheid wall, built six kilometers inside Palestine, separates the villagers from much of their land. Their land was confiscated to build the barrier that separates them from their livelihood. This wall has gates and sometimes the Israeli government issues permits to the property owners to work the field but they, typically, may only issue them to the octogenarians.

Jayyus not only separated the farmers from their fertile lands but also the villagers from the water supply. On the western side of the wall is the Sufin settlement, built in 1986 on confiscated land (as was the dump for the settlement). Some of this land has been blasted with dynamite to make a quarry. This expanding Israeli settlement is prime real estate.

Tafik Salim owns land west of the wall/barrier. In the past two weeks Israel uprooted 550 of the olive trees he planted 32 years ago. On Dec. 30, international observers watched Israeli trucks haul away the last of the trees to be sold to Israelis. This is a growing trade.

The Ma'aleh Adumim settlement, which is expanding and linking with other illegal settlements and will soon cut the West Bank in half, reminds me of resort areas in Destin where the wealthy vacation. Israel will not grant Tafik a permit to reach his own olive groves. On Dec. 31, townspeople, international supporters, and Israeli peace and solidarity activists gathered to do what Israel will not allow him to do: pick up the pieces and nourish his land.

On Jan. 1, we rode behind Saleh's tractor to confront the gate/checkpoint and wait on the other side for Israeli peace and solidarity activists. Saleh and Sharif, the main organizer of today's events, left to go wait for the Israelis to show up. Just as we were thinking that they got turned away at a checkpoint, Saleh came and told us to hurry to the top of the hill, where we saw two busloads of smiling faces "escorted" by Hummers, a bunch of teenagers and young 20-somethings with big guns, the media, and a hefty police presence.

After a commanding police officer grabbed a bullhorn and announced, "This is private property," Jews, atheists, Britons, Americans, Swedes, Christians, Muslims, men, women, young, old, hippies, professionals, punks, and country and city folk all started digging and dragging rocks and taking pictures and sharing water.

We proceeded to where mature olive trees once stood

and planted 50 new trees in about 20 minutes. Police and military took movies, organizers gave interviews, and people shared the responsibility of making right of this terrible wrong in tremendous spirit.

When we ran out of work we demonstrated, marching towards the gate that Tafik Salim was not permitted to pass through. The military were stopping folks and pulling their Humvees in front of the procession, but people just kept flanking and snaking and zigzagging en masse towards that gate. They couldn't stop something this great.

Everyone was stopped just 20 yards from the gate, and the slogans and shouts of encouragement across the gate to the villagers' demonstration began.

As the demonstration went on, Sharif Omar and a few other organizers, local folks, and Israeli activists, began negotiating with police to pass the barricade. It would have been difficult to say no with so many eyes on this spot. Sharif and others carried an uprooted olive tree across the gate and presented it to Tafik.

—Mid-South Peace and Justice Center members

Community fights hatchet job on hospital

LOS ANGELES—The Southern Christian Leadership Council, Los Angeles (SCLCLA), and the Martin Luther King Legacy Association (MLKLA) sponsored a "Save King/Drew" forum on Jan. 15 at the Watts Labor Community Action Center. King/Drew serves a large population of poor Blacks and Latinos. The topic, "What is the Hospital to Be," took into consideration a report by Navigant and extremely one-sided and politically motivated "reporting" by the *Los Angeles Times*.

150 people attended, including union members and spokespersons, grassroots activists, community members, King/Drew staff, including doctors and nurses, religious leaders and elected political officials. There were very few youths present.

Navigant is a private turnaround corporation, hired by the Los Angeles County Board of supervisors for \$13.2 million to analyze problems and recommend solutions. Many see its assessment and solutions as being against the interests of the poor community. During the forum, a King/Drew staff member said that Navigant people never spoke to nurses at residences; they just talked with the "chiefs."

A Jan. 6 *Los Angeles Sentinel* article titled "Assemblyman Mervyn Dymally Responds to Navigant's King/Drew 60 Day Report," states:

"The first part of this initial Navigant report focuses on the positive. Praising employee and physician pride in the hospital, employee commitment and loyalty . . . diversity of work force and community support. The initial praise . . . on the overarching structural problems in the L. A. County healthcare system that created the King/Drew situation could easily obscure Navigant's and the county's true intentions."

The report proposes elimination of the pediatric and intensive care units, downgrading the neonatal unit, eliminating some residency programs, outsourcing essential services, including pharmaceutical services, adding more management positions, and says nothing about bringing back the Trauma Center. The article ends:

"I would not be surprised if the final report recommends mass transfer to other facilities in the county and/or layoffs. Furthermore, there is a strong focus on 'productivity' issues in this report that further suggests a business-minded approach

that will call for the elimination of staff. Finally, taking this entire report into perspective, it seems that the ultimate vision for King/Drew is to turn it into a community clinic with significant services outsourced to other facilities."

After the mass demonstration and hearing last November and the L. A. County Board of Supervisors vote to "temporarily" close the Trauma Center, the *Los Angeles Times* published many articles attacking King/Drew Medical Center. The Dec. 8 issue featured four Black and Latina victims of "incompetent," "lazy," "cheating," and "unqualified" nurses, doctors and pharmacists, without once accusing management, nor Dr. Thomas Garthwaite of the L. A. County Department of Health Services, nor mentioning the acute shortage of staffing. The article completely ignored the hours of testimony by community and staff members at a November hearing (See December 2004 *N&L*).

Presently, there are over 200 nursing vacancies out of 500 plus positions. On Jan. 8, a union representative stated that the county cut over 100 nursing positions last year. Those who remain are forced to work under an impossible load as if they were machines and not human beings with no time for caring or humane treatment. This is in spite of temporary nurses filling some of the slots. During the forum, when a nurse spoke of a need for specially trained nurses at pediatric ICU, a doctor said that goes for neonatal care as well.

Of the many testimonies of substance, one was by a Black woman who grew up in the neighborhood. As an eight-year-old child, she was impressed by the ethnic diversity at King/Drew, but when she started to work there, she didn't know of all the internal problems. She is now a shop steward and said the crisis has been building for years. She said there should be ten RNs but there are only three, morale is low, and the problem is management, especially Dr. Thomas Garthwaite, who has not been doing his part.

The Jan. 15 forum ended with public comment. Then Maxine Waters had the original King/Drew Mission Statement read: to provide treatment with competence and compassion. She stated that we don't want a community clinic. We want a comprehensive quality medical health center that includes a medical school.

—Basho

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OUR LIFE AND TIMES

by Kevin A. Barry

As the U.S.-sponsored election approached, the armed resistance showed increasing strength and audacity. In January, the resistance assassinated the governor of Baghdad Province and, in another incident, the city's deputy police chief. In December, a suicide bomber had managed to infiltrate a U.S. military base in the large city of Mosul, killing 22 people, 14 of them U.S. soldiers. Mosul has become the center of the resistance after U.S. forces drove them from Falluja. The Falluja operation nearly destroyed the city, with even official Iraqi sources acknowledging over 2,000 deaths.

The U.S. government refuses to give figures for Iraqi deaths since the 2003 invasion, but reliable estimates put the number at over 100,000. U.S. brutality and destructiveness have dissipated whatever gratitude might have existed after it drove the genocidal Ba'athist regime from power.

A U.S. torturer at Abu Ghraib Prison, Charles Graner, received a ten-year sentence in January. During the same period, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who gave the order to bend the Geneva Conventions, was part of a handful of top officials who kept their posts in the second Bush administration. The author of the Bush legal doctrine justifying torture, Alberto Gonzales, was then nominated for attorney general. (And some thought there could be no one worse than the Christian fundamentalist John Ashcroft!)

Since 2003, much of Iraq's cultural heritage has been destroyed by looting and armed conflict. The destruction continues. The same day Graner was sentenced, the British Museum released a report charging that U.S. troops have caused irreparable damage to archeological sites at Babylon. Paving stones, 2,600 years old, have been crushed by tanks and trenches dug through archeological deposits.

The armed resistance, which has issued no political platform, is composed of disparate authoritarian tendencies, from Ba'athist operatives to radical Islamists, the most fanatical of whom have embraced Al Qaeda.

Victory in Ukraine

The mass, disciplined Ukrainian democratic movement followed through its November-December nonviolent insurrection with a decisive 52% (vs. 44%) electoral victory for its representative, Viktor Yushchenko. Among the first fruits of that victory was the announcement that Ukraine would withdraw its 1,600 troops from Iraq.

Russia's Vladimir Putin accepted an outcome he never wanted with sullen resignation. Nothing is worse for an authoritarian like Putin than to look weak, which is what happened after he blatantly interfered on behalf of the losing side in Ukraine. At home, Putin has muzzled rival political parties and the press, all the while continuing a war without end in tiny Chechnya where up to 200,000 (out of only one million) have been killed since 1994.

After Ukraine's changeover, Putin gave a very telling speech. Reflecting his early Stalinist and police training, he lashed out at the prospect of "permanent revolution" in the lands of the former USSR. In addition, his spokesmen complained that the Ukrainian events actually resembled (horrors!) Poland's Solidarnosc.

It was Putin's bad fortune that his draconian cuts in retirement benefits took effect only a week after Yushchenko's victory. Suddenly there were mass protests in the streets of dozens of Russian cities, the largest since Putin came to power in 2000. Finally his attempt to influence Ukraine was working, but this time in reverse.

Iraq on the eve of elections

One of the latter groups, Ansar al-Sunna, stated: "Democracy is a Greek word meaning rule of the people, which means that the people do what they see fit. This concept is considered apostasy and defies the belief in one God - Muslims' doctrine" (*The New York Times*, Dec. 31, 2004).

This helps explain why the armed resistance targets not only U.S. forces and their lackeys, but all independent expressions of democracy, socialism, as well as intellectual life. They have assassinated trade unionists (see p. 3), placed bombs in the History Department of Baghdad University, and massacred civilians, especially Kurds and Shi'ites. Unfortunately this has not stopped some in the anti-war movement from supporting the armed resistance. (For a critique, see "Resistance or Retrogression?" *News & Letters*, November 2004).

So far, at the urging of religious leaders like the relatively moderate Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the 60% Shi'ite majority has refused to respond in kind by attacking Sunni civilians, even after incidents such as the murder of pilgrims on the road to Najaf, or the car bombs in Najaf and Karbala that killed some 60 people. At the same time, however, many Shi'ites have been drawn to parties that advocate what could at best be described as fundamentalism light.

There are very, very few voices on the ground independent of both the U.S. and the Ba'athist-fundamentalist resistance. Even the Communist Party is playing the electoral game and supports the U.S. occupation. Only smaller groups like the Worker Communist Party have put forth a principled secular leftist position in the middle of what they term "a war between American and Islamic terrorism."

— Jan. 17, 2005

Agreement in Sudan



Sudanese refugees hope to return to a peaceful homeland.

An agreement ending 21 years of war on the predominantly non-Muslim South in Sudan was signed in Kenya on Jan. 9. Most southerners follow Christianity or indigenous religions. During the war, the North, led by a succession of Islamist military dictators, attacked the South. It murdered, raped, and enslaved civilians. It also armed southern "Arab" tribes to attack their neighbors. The war also had a racist dimension, in that most northerners consider themselves "Arab," most southerners "African." Some two million people lost their lives, many to disease, and four million had to flee their homes—in short, genocide. But the southerners refused to give up and have now won a limited victory.

According to the agreement, brokered by the U.S., John Garang, the leader of the largest southern resistance movement, has become a vice president of Sudan. Shari'a law will no longer be imposed on non-Muslims. Oil revenues will be divided equally between North and South. In 2011, a referendum on southern independence will be scheduled. Thousands of refugees have already begun to return.

The big problem is that, in the past, the Sudanese military rulers have broken many previous agreements by claiming that they have stopped hostilities, while working instead through paramilitary proxies. That is exactly what they are doing today with the Janjaweed militia in another region, Darfur. In this racist war, a million non-Arab but Muslim Blacks have been driven from their homes, with tens of thousands killed or raped. There are indications that since the peace agreement with the South was signed, the regime has launched a greater military buildup in Darfur. Here the genocide continues, shrouded in silence.

Palestinian vote

The first Palestinian presidential election in nine years was held in the Israeli occupied territories, on Jan. 9. Of the 1.8 million eligible voters, 70% participated in the election in which Mahmud Abbas, the new chair of the Palestine Liberation Organization, received 62.3% of the vote. The other main contender, Mustafa Barghouti, the head of the Palestine National Initiative, received 19.8% of the vote.

In the name of national unity, Marwan Barghouti, a Fatah leader associated with the Al Aqsa faction who is currently imprisoned in Israel, had withdrawn his candidacy and had reluctantly accepted Abbas as the Fatah candidate. However, there are sharp divisions below the surface.

Most of the 170,000 Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem were forced to travel long distances and cross check points to get to the West Bank and Gaza to vote. The remaining 5,000 who were allowed to vote locally had to do so through absentee ballots at post offices. In this manner, the Israeli government maintained its disputed claim to sovereignty over East Jerusalem.

Prior to the election, Mahmud Abbas had released a statement in which he criticized the militarization of the second Intifada and condemned suicide bombings against Israeli civilians. This statement also reflected polls that indicated that 51% of the Palestinian population of the occupied territories opposed suicide bombings. A poll conducted by Birzeit University also revealed that the public's priorities were in the following order: an Israeli withdrawal; economic improvement; resumption of peace talks with Israel. Even Hamas, which had boycotted the presidential election, had made it clear that it would respect the process and would be willing to cooperate with the elected president. Despite the murder of eight Palestinian children by an Israeli tank shell on Jan. 4, the mood in anticipation of the election remained optimistic.

A few days after the Palestinian presidential election, however, Israeli Prime Minister Sharon used a bombing and shooting attack sponsored by Hamas and Al Aqsa at a Gaza checkpoint, on Jan. 14, to cut all contact with Abbas. He has now declared that he will not renew contact with Abbas until Abbas stops all acts of violence against Israelis.

Clearly this is an impossible task without an end to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. Sharon is intent on carrying out his plan to withdraw from Gaza in order to keep most of the West Bank and all of East Jerusalem. The presence of the Labor Party in the new government coalition will not make any difference given Labor's shameful history.

—Shella Sahar
Jan. 15, 2005

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*.