

# NEWS & LETTERS

"Human power is its own end"—Karl Marx

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## WORKSHOP TALKS

### French workers defend 35-hour week

by Htun Lin

As a gesture of reconciliation after their public dispute over the war in Iraq, George W. Bush shared an order of French fries with Jacques Chirac, France's president, during Bush's visit to Europe. But the presidents of both countries are in lockstep about one thing: shoving the bill for a precarious economy down workers' throats.

Emulating U.S. efforts to increase productivity, the French president got a parliamentary majority to eliminate France's 35-hour workweek rule. No less than 100 protest demonstrations erupted across France.

Herve Gaymard, the young, recently appointed finance minister, broke a taboo last week by noting in a radio broadcast that France had the lowest employment level of working-age people of any major nation. "How can you compete like that?" he asked.

Banque de France governor Christian Noyer put the problem more bluntly: "We will not beat the competition by working less and opposing the reforms that promote growth." Apparently he presumes that forcing workers to work extended hours will lower unemployment, not increase it.

This is the kind of sophistry we American workers have been hearing during the last decade of restructuring. Rampant overtime and speed-up fed a wildly successful increase in productivity, accompanied by an "unexpected" jobless boom.

Christian Noyer elaborated further, "What really

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## BLACK/REDVIEW

### What is freedom?

by John Alan

*The validity of the public debt of the United States, authorized by law, including debts incurred for payment of pensions and bounties for services in suppressing insurrection or rebellion, shall not be questioned.*

From the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

We could use an historical perspective to illuminate not just the lies the Bush administration is spreading about Social Security, but also how the national debt has been a part of the struggle of African Americans for freedom.

One hundred and forty years ago (in 1865) Henry Highland Garnet, an African-American abolitionist minister, preached to a packed chamber of the U.S. House of Representatives. He called upon members of Congress to: "Emancipate, enfranchise, and educate" the African-American slaves and to call for the ratification of the 13th Amendment banning slavery. By the end of the year, the 13th Amendment was ratified.

Compared with how the original founders of this nation fumbled with the issue of slavery, the 13th Amendment appears as a great leap toward African Americans' freedom. However, once slavery ended, the question "what is freedom" for the emancipated slaves was immediately raised. Slaves were, after all, the source of the crucial labor power that the Southern economy needed.

According to John Hope Franklin: "Most Southern whites, although willing to concede the end of slavery even to the point of voting for the adoption of the 13th Amendment, were convinced that laws should be speedily enacted to curb the Negroes and to insure

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## Crossroads for movement against global capital

by Peter Hudis

PORTO ALEGRE, BRAZIL—

There is no better measure of the accomplishments and contradictions of the movement against global capital that first appeared with the Seattle protests of 1999 than the World Social Forum (WSF), held on Jan. 26-31 in Porto Alegre, Brazil. Organized into 11 "thematic spaces," this year's WSF was the largest since the gatherings began in 2001 as a counterpart to the World Economic Summit in Davos, Switzerland. Some 150,000 people from 135 countries attended this year's WSF, which included 6,800 speakers and over 2,500 panels.

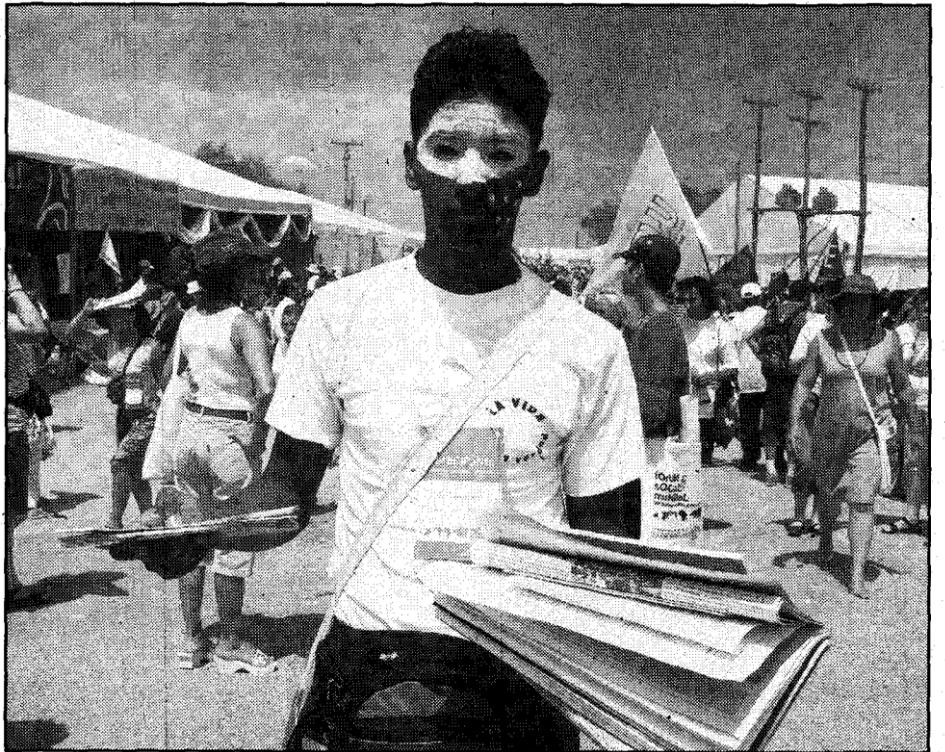
### FREE FLOW OF IDEAS

The WSF has long been important because of its ability to create a forum at which grassroots activists and theoreticians can come together to discuss alternatives to the globalization of capital without being hemmed in by any single line of authority.

Thousands of Dalits and lower-caste Indians turned out for last year's WSF in Mumbai, India, helping to generate a level of political discussion and debate that led not long afterwards to the eviction of the ruling Hindu fundamentalist BJP from power.

This year's WSF was no less successful in maintaining an open, liberatory space, outside the control of traditional parties or political tendencies.

One reflection of this was that the organizers decid-



Youth and ideas at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

ed not to pay the travel and accommodation expenses of celebrity speakers, choosing instead to create a "solidarity fund" to finance the transportation costs of representatives from poor communities. As a result, there was a visible presence of grassroots activists from a large number of countries who rarely get the chance to meet together, ranging from India to Cambodia, and from Bolivia to Haiti.

Also instead of having plenaries where internationally recognized speakers address tens of thousands at a time, all events at this year's WSF were self-organized workshops, involving at the most 2,000 at a time.

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## Political prisoner faces harassment

*Khalvani Malik Khaldun is a political prisoner who is facing continuous harassment by prison authorities for his radical views. These are excerpts from a recent press release. For the full text, contact News & Letters. Contact Khalvani Malik Khaldun, 874304 (Leonard McQuay) at: A-207 SHU, PO Box 1111, Carlisle, IN 47838.*

This saga began 10 years ago, on Dec. 13, 1994, while I was a prisoner housed at the Indiana State Prison (ISP) in Michigan City. The Indiana Department of Corruption filed a homicide/murder charge against me. The state of Indiana then filed a murder charge against me as well. The murder they accused me of was that of an ISP guard. I was formally charged with this crime six years after it occurred, hours after my release from prison on earlier charges. In 2001, I was found guilty by a state court and sentenced to a 60-year term. This wrongful conviction is why I am a prisoner today.

Two years ago, the Indiana Department of Corruption had me transferred from the "Indiana Supermax" control unit in Westville to yet another repressive unit, the "Secured Housing Unit (SHU) in Carlisle, Indiana.

The attitude of 90% of the staff here is one of arrogance. They have a bold, racist character and feel able to do as they please. They claim this is their unit and they'll run it how they choose. For many years they've gotten away with beating prisoners, killing prisoners and provoking prisoners to kill themselves.

I'd like to credit the comrades who came before me who have taken up the struggle to confront this racist system here. They launched lawsuits, grievances and complaints to expose corruption and systematic violence, as victims of this repressive unit. In their spirit and knowing that repression breeds resistance, I am following this tradition. It is what being a prison activist is all about.

While being housed on department-wide administrative segregation on the A East 200 Range, in the SHU, a whole host of state law violations and violations of prison policies and procedures have continuously occurred. These have caused me and several

other conscious prisoners here to launch a variety of complaints and grievances, protesting and exposing as much as we could, with our limited means. Eventually, after many months, slight changes began occurring.

On March 28, 2003, ten guards approached my cell demanding that I give up a religious "ANKH" approved for me by the property officer. I refused to turn it over to them. They left and shortly returned to search my cell for the necklace. They could not find it and got upset, so they confiscated 376 of my personal family photographs, a hot pot and two personal letters, instead. This was their way of retaliating and punishing me for not finding the necklace. The staff running the property room on the SHU destroyed all my pictures and other personal effects on July 9, 2003.

On Jan. 12, 2005, the state of Indiana and the staff at this SHU sent counselor James Linneweber to offer me a settlement for my destroyed pictures of \$145. He came to my cell and handed me a single sheet of paper where he outlined what the state was willing to give me, in his own handwriting in red ink. I read it and refused his offer. He called me a "crazy jackass." He then advised me that I had legal mail and opened it in front of me and began reading it. I told him to stop reading my mail. As I grabbed the materials from the food slot, he started to snatch the papers back, stating that I didn't deserve to win the legal battle he was trying to get me to settle cheaply.

James Linneweber apparently incurred a paper cut at this time, so he started screaming and staged a big scene, claiming I had assaulted him through a thick metal door. The two responding officers quickly agreed to help prepare false statements against me and had me placed in disciplinary segregation lockup. Several unit supervisors entered the unit and I was escorted to the shower. They searched my cell, made me strip and went through my clothes. Thirty minutes later, I was placed back into my cell. I complied. No one gave me a direct order to do anything! Yet, these three officers filed three major conduct infractions against me.

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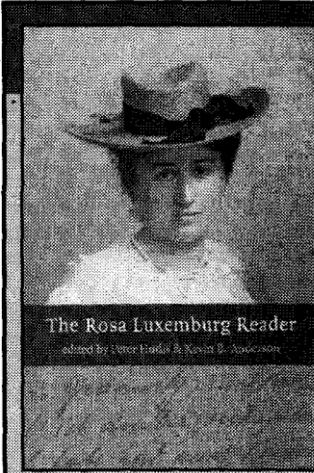
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# WOMAN AS REASON

by Terry Moon

March is Women's History Month, March 8 is International Women's Day (IWD), and March 5 is the birthday of the revolutionary Polish theorist and leader of the 1919 German Revolution, Rosa Luxemburg. It was Rosa Luxemburg's close friend and comrade, Clara Zetkin, who proposed an International Women's Day (IWD) to the Second International, first celebrated in 1911.

Now there is a new work that illuminates what Raya Dunayevskaya, the founder of Marxist-Humanism, called Rosa Luxemburg's "feminist dimension" in her book, *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*. This new work, *The Rosa*



## The Rosa Luxemburg Reader

Edited by Peter Hudis & Kevin Andersen

"[This collection] offers invaluable perspectives on radical thought and practice in the early 20th century. The editors deserve praise for general scholarly excellence—this work is graced throughout by lucid introductions and helpful endnotes.... Highly recommended."

—Choice, January 2005

To order, see page 7.

Monthly Review Press

*Luxemburg Reader*, edited by Peter Hudis and Kevin B. Anderson, is a collection of Luxemburg's major theoretical writings, including some that have never been published in English and some never before published at all. It brings together substantial extracts from her economic, polemical, and theoretic writings with speeches and letters revealing an expansive view of one of the most complex and important woman thinkers and activists of the early 20th century. The excellent Introduction puts Luxemburg's life in context and presents her as a thinker relevant to our age of globalized capitalism and worldwide revolt.

While there are many points of departure for viewing Luxemburg's life and work, one of the most contested claims of Dunayevskaya's work is that Luxemburg embodied a feminist dimension in her life and work. Chapter 9 of the *Reader*, "Writings on Women, 1902-1914," reveals Luxemburg's conviction of the necessity of women's emancipation, especially for the proletarian woman, and, at one and the same time, shows the limitations of her time, especially for a revolutionary feminism.

### LUXEBURG'S WRITINGS ON WOMEN

"A Tactical Question," Luxemburg's attack on the Belgian Social Democrats who abandoned the demand for women's suffrage to assuage the Liberals, leads off the chapter. What Luxemburg is concerned about is not tactics, but principles. And the principle is not only women's right to vote, but "revolutionary methods." She is opposed to any "compromise...that cost us our basic principles" (p. 235).

To her disgust, the Party takes the same ground as the bourgeoisie—claiming women are "not mature enough to exercise the right to vote" (p. 235). How that must have rankled her is expressed when she writes that the "inclusion of proletarian women in political life" of the German Social Democracy as well as in its social life would mean "a strong, fresh wind would blow in with the political emancipation of women, which would clear out the suffocating air of the current, philistine family life that rubs itself off so unmistakably, even on our Party members, workers and leaders alike" (p. 236). She spoke from experience. As Dunayevskaya documents, Luxemburg resigned as editor of a Social Democratic paper because the men refused to grant her the same powers as her male predecessor.

In her 1907 "Address to the International Socialist Women's Conference," a straightforward talk to her women comrades, she strongly advised the women's association to keep its headquarters in Stuttgart, where it could maintain its independent existence. Luxemburg states that it is "You, however, [who] will resurrect this moral center of the International." (p. 237). Dunayevskaya shows us how prescient Luxemburg was in securing the independence of the women's movement. The principle of having an independent socialist women's movement became central when Luxemburg so angered the leadership that they refused to print her articles. Then *Gleichheit* (Equality), the newspaper of the socialist women's movement edited by Clara Zetkin, "was an outlet for Luxemburg's revolutionary views. Indeed it later became the anti-war organ when World War I broke out and the International betrayed" by voting for war.

In the last two essays in Chapter 9 on "Women's Suffrage and the Class Struggle" and on "The Proletarian Woman," one notices a contradiction in Luxemburg's feminist dimension. She is well aware of the tremendous power of the women's movement and of the demand for suffrage which is important politically, and is a demand to be seen as full human beings. Furthermore, in speeches and private letters, her muted critique of the party's sexism and her regard for the work of her women comrades, especially Zetkin, shines forth. Yet her hostility to the bourgeois women's movement is jarring and some of her generalizations untrue, for example: "The bourgeois woman has no real interest in political rights, because she does not exercise any economic function in society." (p. 243). The bourgeois

women's movement did not only agitate for the vote but also for education and equality, and if it was like the movement in the U.S., it believed the women's vote would mean that women's "values" could be asserted into the political realm.

Luxemburg refused to recognize publicly what she had herself experienced. Her public position was that

woman but in the antagonism between capital and labor" (p. 244). Clara Zetkin did not make this dichotomy, as seen in her talk at the founding of the Second International in 1889: "Just as the male worker is subjugated to the capitalist, so is the woman by the man, and she will always remain in subjugation until she is economically independent."

### FIGHTING CAPITALISM AND SEXISM

Lesbian feminist poet and theorist Adrienne Rich comments on this contradiction in her Foreword to Dunayevskaya's book: "Yet, in her [Luxemburg's] short and brutally ended life, feminism and proletarian revolution never became integrated." Dunayevskaya writes something similar: "Because, however, Luxemburg refused to make any reference to what we would now call male chauvinism, during the hectic debates with [Karl] Kautsky and [August] Bebel, the two sets of activities [the general revolutionary struggle and women's liberation] remained in separate compartments." It is our age that has seen that for women to experience full freedom, both battles must be fought, and furthermore, that, as Marx noted, capitalism exacerbates and exploits all existing antagonisms for its own interests.

Dunayevskaya's book on Luxemburg allows us to understand the complexity of her feminist dimension. While on the one hand Luxemburg worried that agitating for an end to male chauvinism in the movement could break up the revolutionary organization, on the other, she had been talking of and fighting for women since 1902. By 1910-1911 and the founding of IWD, the socialist working women's movement had developed tremendously. When World War I broke out and the German Social Democracy supported German chauvinism, the women's movement became the stalwart center of the anti-war movement. Dunayevskaya concludes that "Once again, everything merged into proletarian revolution, but always thereafter, woman as revolutionary force revealed its presence." This was so because there was a "new stage of feminism" and it was moving "from total concentration on working women's rights to opposing the capitalist system in its

entirety."

The inclusion of the letters from Luxemburg are a wonderful contribution to the *Reader* as they reveal how her passion for human liberation and her outrage at the murder of innocents in the service of capitalism's expansion is intrinsic to who she is. They help us see her as the whole person she was. Her letters to her lover Leo Jogiches show her as confident, competent and deeply in love. Her letters to her women friends, many from prison, show an uncompromising revolutionary discipline, a belief in the power of the mass movement, and a passion for life and for justice that encompasses the world.

The *Reader* confirms that Raya Dunayevskaya was right in insisting that Rosa Luxemburg not only had a feminist dimension, but that it is key in understanding who she was and what revolution meant to her. What the discerning women's liberationist will discover in exploring this, however, is that it compels one to try to understand all of Luxemburg's dimensions. Luxemburg's feminist dimension cannot be separated from her theoretic development, her arguments with comrades and enemies, her confidence and pride in her economic and theoretic abilities, her passion for revolution and her determination to transform our world.

## WOMEN WORLDWIDE

by Mary Jo Grey

On International Women's Day 2005, the World March of Women began a global relay to send the Women's Global Charter for Humanity around the world for discussion and enactment. Adopted in Rwanda in December, the Charter proposes to build a world where exploitation, oppression, intolerance and exclusion no longer exist and integrity, diversity, and the rights and freedoms of all are respected. Its demands include elimination of poverty and violence against women. The relay began March 8 in Sao Paulo, Brazil, and will stop in 53 countries before concluding in Quagadongou, Burkina Faso on Oct. 17.



The Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq (OWFI) held a conference in Baghdad in March. With the "victory" of the Iraqi United Alliance, composed mainly of Shi'ite groups, the demand for the Islamisation of Iraq and its constitution will grow. The conference, "Women and the Constitution," demands a constitution based on secular values, full equality between women and men, and the abolition of all discriminatory articles and laws. We call on all to support the conference politically and financially to help women win a secular constitution in Iraq that will allow them a voice in shaping our own future. To send letters of support, and donations: E-mail: houzan73@yahoo.co.uk Tel: 079 56 88 3001 www.equalityiniraq.com

—From: Houzan Mahmoud, UK representative of OWFI

## Hundreds dead in Guatemala femicidio

**GUATEMALA**—The more than 340 women found murdered in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, since 1993 have been well documented with U.S. women uniting with their sisters in Mexico to demand the killers be found and prosecuted. But when I crossed the border to Guatemala, similar stories appeared daily: women mutilated, raped, murdered. According to the feminist newspaper *La Cuerda* (11/2004), "In the past two years, more than 700 women in Guatemala have died from femicidio," that is, "the mass slaughter of women."

In 2002, 184 women were killed, in 2003, 250 women, and in 2004 more than 300 women (Associated press, 8/28/2004). One third of all homicides against women are related to domestic violence. This message of intimidation tells women to leave the public space and end their role in the development of Guatemala.

Most of the murdered women were poor, between the ages of 18 and 30. Of all domestic violence femicides, one third happened in Guatemala City. Of the homicides recorded, 31% of the women had already reported previous threats. When women do report violence "The police arrive once and never return again" (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights). Vice-president Eduardo Stein says that the Guatemalan government is getting a bad rap because, "the same level of violence exists in other Latin American countries as well" (*Prensa Libre, Lorena Seijo*).

I interviewed Maya, from Grupo Guatemalteco de Mujeres (Guatemalan Women's Organization, GGM), asking what she thought about his statement. She said: "It's not the number that is important; violence against women exists. The major response is that this violence is general, that it's not against women. The

government is not doing much. There's an investigation going on, but it's only in the capital.

"The consensus from women's groups is that the police and governmental response is insufficient to make any difference in women's lives. While there are pro-women laws and the government supported CONAPREVI (National Coordinator for the Prevention of Domestic Violence), little action has been seen. Indigenous women dealing with violence face a judicial system plagued with racism and little bilingual support. In Guatemala City, GGM has one safe house for women and one in Xela, Nuevos Horizontes.

"Two shelters are hardly enough. When women have the courage to speak out, the investigations are usually short-changed and nothing comes of it. Lack of proof ends up meaning that women must endure the possibility of violence happening again, or worse.

"We write about the issue, report on it, and, on a governmental level, CONAPREVI is helping to make laws. We do sit-ins, demonstrations, vigils, marches. Last year we marched against violence against women and a lot of people came out."

Despite bureaucratic walls and a misogynist culture, Guatemalan women are fighting and making the media and government listen. They are changing their society. The fact that I had access to so much information is due to the work of many Guatemalan women.

Contact the U.S. embassy in Guatemala at: www.usembassy.state.gov/Guatemala Av: La Reforma 7-01, Zona 10 (Ask them why the U.S. is considering giving \$3.2 million dollars to the Guatemalan army when it could obviously be used better elsewhere.)

—Jen S.

# China's mine disasters no accident

**DETROIT**—The coal mine explosion that blasted through the Sunjiawan mine in northeast China on Feb. 4 killed at least 211 miners and seriously injured 28 survivors in the worst mine disaster since the Communist Party took control of the country in 1949. As horrifying as this explosion was, however, it pales in comparison to the total of more than 6,000 coal miners who were killed last year—more than 16 deaths a day, hundreds, if not thousands, figures that do not include accidents, if reported officials, more unreported deaths.

Actually the first mine safety laws were passed in 2002. China did not start to record industrial deaths until the late 1990s, and their records are far from accurate.

Behind these appalling deaths is a coal industry with outmoded equipment and technology that is incapable of providing safe mining conditions for an exploding economy that gets 70% of its energy from coal. China is the world's largest coal producer, extracting more than 1.9 billion tons of coal a year. It uses 80% of the coal produced in the world. But even this is not adequate, resulting in thousands of electrical brownouts throughout China.

This energy-hungry economy spawns a chaotic coal industry, often marked by deadly and illegal practices. There are two major mine divisions: larger ones run by the government, and smaller ones with private owners. The larger mines are the safest, but often even these do not have the modern equipment and mining practices needed for safe mining.

**In some respects, the energy dependence on coal in China is similar to the conditions existing in America during the 1950s when I worked in the coal mines in West Virginia. Then coal was king, and provided power for almost everything, including home heat, electricity, railroads, water transportation and virtually all of U.S. industry.**

Many mines in China are depleted, and miners travel deep and far to reach the coal seams, which give off deadly methane gas that requires modern ventilation techniques and equipment to drive the gas out. Without this vital knowledge and equipment, the gas accumulates. A simple electrical spark can set off a deadly gas explosion, which in turn can ignite a much more destructive coal dust explosion.

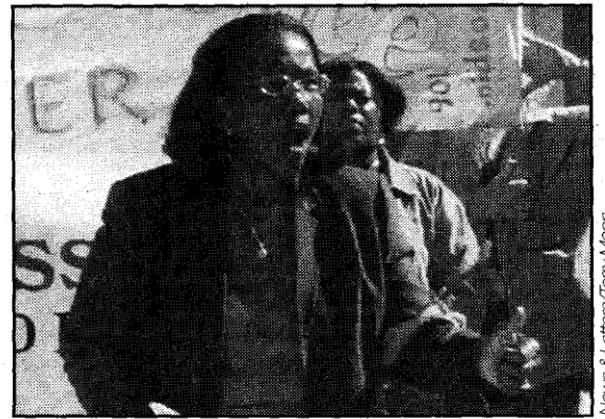
**These were the conditions that resulted in a mine explosion last October that killed 148 Chinese miners, another explosion in November that killed 166 more, and another on Feb. 5, the day after the Sunjiawan mine disaster, that killed 28 more miners.**

The last one was in an illegal mine that had been shut down because it was too dangerous, but reopened by a private "owner," a frequent practice. It is often tolerated because of the voracious need for coal, which also contributes to the deadly unsafe conditions that the miners are forced to endure.

Adding to the horrific conditions of many miners is the fact that millions are migrant workers from rural agricultural areas, often illiterate and easy victims of ruthlessly exploitative mine owners. All is not, however, without confrontations, often bordering on open revolt, among the miners. Reports occasionally filter through of owners who are "educated" by their miners to mend their ways, and killed if they don't.

—Andy Phillips

# Jail privatizing threat



News & Letters/Terry Moore

**MEMPHIS, TENN.**—Approximately 70 people gathered outside the Shelby County building on Feb. 14 to protest the County Commission's efforts to privatize the Shelby County prison system. We chanted and heard talks by unionized prison workers and community activists. At least 35 people stayed afterward to participate in the County Commission meeting.

The prison issue was supposed to be discussed at length, but the commissioners deferred the issue at the last minute. We were not permitted to speak until the end of the meeting, contrary to the commission's own policy, because of an "unfortunate oversight" by chairman Michael Hooks.

County Commissioner Bruce Thompson, chair of the subcommittee on matters of "criminal justice," is leading the effort to turn Shelby County's public prison facilities into the largest private county prison system in America. The Shelby County facilities (the city jail and the county prison) can house fewer than 2,000 inmates, and are occupied at roughly 70% of capacity.

Commissioner Thompson and his cohorts made a request for proposals from private prison companies late last year, with promises of "possibly" expanding the facilities to 5,000 beds. We worry that the only way to fill those beds would be by cracking down on immigrants in a way not done here before.

The Shelby County Commission made this offer in spite of the fact that the private prison industry has had massive scandals involving financial impropriety and prisoner abuse in recent years. One municipality even reclaimed its prison as a public prison.

The private prison industry has been notoriously hostile to its employees. Wages, benefits, and training of prison personnel are always slashed in their efforts to maximize profits. The corrections officers who work in the Shelby County prison system now are unionized. This would surely be nullified by a private corporation in this right-to-work state.

The Mid-South Peace and Justice Center, the Mid-South Interfaith Network, the Women's Action Coalition, the Memphis local of News and Letters Committees, Memphis-based AFSCME Local 1736, and other community and faith-based organizations are demanding the Shelby County Commissioners reject any proposal for privatization.

—Amy

# King-Drew still open

**LOS ANGELES**—Community organizing for a full medical center at King-Drew continues. The recommendations of Navigant, a private turnaround corporation, are being implemented. That includes top-down, highly business-oriented reorganizing of a controlling board, with no real voice for the working staff or the community. They have not publicized how many of the staff will lose their jobs on the pretense of "incompetence," or when the suspended trauma center will reopen.

The staff in the psychiatric department recently passed a test on non-violent methods of handling rebellious patients without resorting to brute force. In a past incident the department had called police and used a Taser stun gun to subdue a patient. Representatives of Medicare and Medicaid acknowledged satisfaction, which means that the \$200 million annual federal subsidy will not be halted. This keeps the hospital open for now.

—Basho

## WORKSHOPTALKS

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worries me is the difficulty that we in France have in understanding the way the world works and how to win in the world."

The "way of the world" indeed. It is a world of an unfettered sweatshop global economy spearheaded by the near slavery labor practices of ruthless emerging superpower developers like China. It invaded the world economy with its relentless drive to lower labor costs primarily through low wages with missionary zeal unrivaled even by the American president's mission to "spread democracy."

### PITTING WORKER AGAINST WORKER

Hundreds of millions of workers, not only Chinese workers but workers all over the globe from India to Thailand, from Germany to the U.S., must adapt to the "way of the world" if they are to survive the competition.

**France is getting ready to do what in Germany is already well on its way—massive restructuring of their economy, emulating the attacks launched against labor already practiced in the U. S. First there was welfare reform and now Social Security "reform." There are new overtime rules and health care cost-shifting.**

The latest attack from Gov. Schwarzenegger of California, having successfully increased patient workload for each nurse, is to increase the number of hours worked before a worker is entitled to a lunch break. In my own shop, healthcare workers routinely work 10-hour to 12-hour workdays, sometimes 16. All this is in the name of "freedom," which the Bush regime equates with "free trade."

The American and the French governments are shoulder to shoulder when it comes to the need to attack workers' gains. Here lies the truly irreconcilable conflict—the one between labor and capital.

Prime Minister Raffarin insisted that big protest marches throughout France would not divert his drive to undo the compulsory maximum 35-hour week, the measure that was the prime legacy of the previous socialist government. This echoed eerily President Bush's attitude towards global outrage against his invasion of Iraq, which hundreds of millions protested worldwide.

### FREEDOM TO EXPLOIT

The new legislation in France allows people to work up to 48 hours a week if they and their employers agree—precisely the rationale being employed by the Bush true believers like Gov. Schwarzenegger with his own new workday and workweek rules.

The weapon of mass deception is the mantra, "the freedom to earn more," employed this time to attack the gains of labor's past struggles—the normal workweek in France. In reality, with the new work rules, the French employers will be able to force longer hours for the same pay.

What kind of "democracy" do we have when we are all "free to choose," but all options offered to us workers represent our own demise? Choose as we may, individually as workers, in the present scheme of things, we really have no choice, in the irresistible self-expansion of capital, and its relentless drive to dominate all aspects of our lives.

One thing is certain—until society transcends capitalism and its alienated mode of production, what Marx said in *Capital* will remain true—the fight over the normal working day will continue to be a "protracted battle" between those who own the means of production and those who own really nothing more than their own labor power.

# Day laborers pay to 'deliver' themselves

**CHICAGO**—Day labor organizers in Chicago rewrote the Illinois Day Labor Services Act which was already the strongest state law protecting day laborers in the nation. But it needed to be made stronger. The revised act allows day labor agencies to continue to deduct fees for transportation from day laborers' paychecks.

I tried to convince the organizers that the so-called "transportation" section was weak because it contained a misconception of labor within the capitalist mode of production. The day labor agencies continue to take the "delivery charges" for their "labor power" from the workers' paychecks rather than forcing normal delivery arrangements to be made as for other commodities. The word "transportation" is never used in association with the delivery of commodities except as an industrial category.

The question in this case is: "What is being transported?" The superficial answer seems to be "persons" or "workers." Karl Marx points out that "labor" has a dual character. Labor might be viewed as a subjective activity done by the individual for whatever purpose.

But under capitalism, because the few own the means of production, most people sell their ability to work at a certain technological level to the capitalist at the market price.

The capitalist must make the laborer perform her duties at a level appropriate for the technological level that a particular product can be generally made at. Thus the laborer is not selling his or her labor to the capitalist like a personal piece of work, but is actually selling the potential to produce wealth for the capitalist enterprise (labor power) at a price the capitalist will agree to (the market price).

In the case of a day labor agency, the worker is selling labor power to the agency, which then sells that labor power to produce the goods and services that the client demands. Under normal circumstances, the possessor of a commodity delivers it to the buyer, usually at the expense of the buyer. No commodity other than labor power even has the capacity to pay for its own delivery—and, of course, nobody in his right mind would expect it to.

—Dennis Dixon

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**NEWS & LETTERS**

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 French workers defend 35-hour week

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**BLACK/REDVIEW**  
 What is freedom?

**Political prisoner faces harassment**

## FROM THE WRITINGS OF RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

### EDITOR'S NOTE

Raya Dunayevskaya wrote and lectured on Marx's extensive work known as the *Grundrisse*. Her *Philosophy and Revolution* is one of the first discussions, once the *Grundrisse* was translated into English in the 1970s, which delved into "Progressive Epochs of Social Formations" and the "Automaton" and the worker. In a lecture after its publication, Dunayevskaya spoke at the New School for Social Research in New York on "The *Grundrisse* and Women's Liberation," a topic requested by the sociologists and women's liberationists who invited her. The March 1974 talk was published later in the October and November issues of the *Detroit Women's Press*. Excerpts were published a decade later in *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution* by Dunayevskaya (available from us and on our web site).

Those excerpts are reprinted here in honor of Women's History Month and because of its relationship to our winter meetings on "Beyond Capitalism: Marx's Concept of an Alternative" which embrace the themes from Dunayevskaya's lecture. The chapter has been edited for publication, including added headings. To order *Philosophy and Revolution* and *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution*, see page 7, or go to [www.newsandletters.org/literature.htm](http://www.newsandletters.org/literature.htm).

It is true that the *Grundrisse* had nothing to do with the "Woman Question"; it certainly didn't deal with it in the form in which Marx's 1844 Humanist Essays did. That was where Marx first explained why he called his philosophy of liberation Humanism, stressing his opposition to vulgar communism—the idea that all you had to do to have a new society was to abolish private property. He insisted that until we did away with the division between mental and manual labor that characterizes all class societies, we could not be whole persons and have a new society, no matter what it was called. He pointed out that the most fundamental relationship is that of man to woman, and vulgar communism would not mean any change in that...

You have none of that in the 1857 *Grundrisse*, and yet the methodology is there. At this specific point when Marx was finally an "economist," finally "scientific," and supposedly freed from Hegelian idealism, he was at his deepest in the Hegelian dialectic. I want to begin today with what I used from the *Grundrisse* as the frontispiece to *Philosophy and Revolution*, on the "absolute movement of becoming"—and then carry it through both on the level of dialectics and on the level of women's liberation:

When the narrow bourgeois form has been peeled away, what is wealth, if not the universality of needs, capacities, enjoyments, productive powers, etc., of individuals, produced in universal exchange? What, if not the full development of human control over the forces of nature—those of his own nature as well as those of so-called 'nature'? What, if not the absolute elaboration of his creative dispositions, without any preconditions other than antecedent historical evolution which makes the totality of this evolution—i.e., the evolution of all human powers as such, unmeasured by any previously established yardstick—an end in itself? What is this, if not a situation where man does not reproduce himself in any determined form, but produces his totality? Where he does not seek to remain something formed by the past, but is in the absolute movement of becoming?

### 'ABSOLUTE MOVEMENT OF BECOMING'

There is absolutely no expression in Hegel that is so deeply dialectical and so deeply the new humanism of the unity of the ideal and real as "the absolute movement of becoming." Let's take that at the point when it led Marx to what was new as compared to what it was in the *Communist Manifesto*, or in the 1844 Essays. Yet we will have to see why the dialectic of thought, as great as it was, could only come up to a certain point at which Marx, in turn, had to break with his own past and begin an entirely new dialectic of liberation—that is, the actual activity coming from below, the actual activity of class struggles.

Hegel said that if he had to put his entire philosophy into a single sentence, it would be that in contrast to all other philosophers, he held truth to be not just substance (whether that substance was God or Absolute or whatever you wanted to call it) but Subject. Marx concretized that Subject as the proletariat, the masses. The point was that you were not just the product of history; you were also the creator and the shaper of history. In the *Communist Manifesto* Marx supposedly had dropped all his Hegelianism and thrown the gauntlet to the bourgeoisie by claiming: "A specter is haunting Europe, the specter of Communism." The *Manifesto* had hardly got off the press when there was a revolution.

Now look at how we cannot help but be a product of the age we are living in. When it came to the Orient, at

# Marx's 'Grundrisse' and women's liberation

the time when he was writing the *Manifesto*, Marx said that the Orient was "vegetating in the teeth of barbarism." But in the *Grundrisse* the Orient is presented not only as the longest continually existing civilization, but as in advance of us Westerners. Why were they in advance? Because after the 1848 revolutions in Europe were defeated there was retrogression everywhere. But in the 1850s in China there was the Taiping Revolt. Marx began saying that maybe the revolution could come through the Orient. In other words, here was an activity, an actual revolt; and while the American and British imperialists rushed gun boats to bring "law and order" to China, Marx kept saying that the Chinese ideas were bringing disorder to the West and hurrah for that!

### WOMEN, CHINESE AS REVOLUTIONARY SUBJECTS

In the sections on Pre-Capitalist Formations in the *Grundrisse* Marx brought in the new idea that not only were the Chinese revolutionary, but they were great as artisans. And whereas India, for example, had also fought British imperialism but imperialism had won, China had absolutely endless peasant revolts, and imperialism couldn't conquer them. So we see Subject as Orient.

Now let us look at Subject in the history of women's liberation, at what was new and great from its start in America—the Black Dimension. While the white women Abolitionists were busy making sandwiches to raise money, the Black women were speakers and "generals," were great Reason and not only force or muscle...

Take Sojourner Truth's choice of her very name. Take how she handled the ministers who were taunting her, when she asked, "Don't you believe in Jesus?" And, when they said they did, how she told them, "Well, Jesus is the son of God and Mary. Man had nothing to do with it!" You may or may not believe in the immaculate conception, but the idea that a Black woman in the 1840s and 1850s could tell the white clergy they had nothing to do with religion—that is one of the most revolutionary things you could think of...

It was because of this Subject, this Black dimension, that the philosophic concept in the fight against slavery wasn't just that you would get rid of slavery, but that you would have entirely new human relations. The whole concept of absolute movement of becoming was there...

What is different and unique in the Women's Liberation Movement of our age is that it came from the Left. The women were saying: "We're all supposed to be socialist and free. How is it then that we women keep cranking the [mimeograph] machines and you men keep writing the leaflets?" And because you couldn't say these women weren't really political, weren't theoreticians and hadn't figured out the law of value, you had to begin posing that, if there was going to be a new relationship of theory to practice, the men had to start proving it right now. The women were demanding: "Don't tell me to wait until after the revolution; too many revolutions have soured. I want new relations right here, right now, right in my organization if I have one, right in my philosophy if I have a philosophy." So that what had begun in the 1960s—and was related this time to the Black dimension on a different level—was a question of what is the relationship of theory to practice when it is grounded in philosophy and when it isn't grounded in philosophy.

### HEGEL AND THE LAW OF VALUE

Let's now return to the *Grundrisse* on another level. The first was "absolute movement of becoming." Now let's see absolute in relationship to the new economics that Marx was discovering—the law of value and the law of surplus value, the relationship between constant and variable capital, the fact that it was always a question of dead labor, your own materialized labor, oppressing and sucking dry living labor. Why did Marx have to return to Hegel? Well, Marx complained to Engels that he didn't quite like the way the *Grundrisse* was going. The *Grundrisse* has 890 pages, and on the

very last page Marx says that he really should have begun with the commodity, whereas he had only two pages on it at the end. Marx said the *Grundrisse* was shapeless—he called it "sauerkraut and carrots."

In other words, you had appearance—commodities or money, the market; and you had essence—the exploitation right at the point of production. And everything was mixed up together; the appearance and the essence weren't separated. What was even more important because Marx had been talking of the fact that equality in the market means nothing since that appearance is exactly what hides the actual exploitation and unpaid hours of surplus labor—was that Marx suddenly saw that the form and the dialectic of both appearance and essence and what would be the Absolute meant a relationship of theory and practice...

When it comes to our age, as we have said, what is unique is what has arisen from the fact that the new women's movement came from the Left. We have to ask: Was the Left really considering woman as Reason and not just as muscle? The relationship of all the other forces for revolution—labor, Black dimension, youth—how are they going to coalesce? What will be the philosophy that will bring them together?

### DE BEAUVOIR'S RETREAT, ALTHUSSER'S SPIN

Let me tell you about Simone de Beauvoir in the 1950s. De Beauvoir had written *The Second Sex* and we, Marxist-Humanists and others, were trying to fight that question out because a new element had arisen with World War II when the women were driven into the factories and were now proletarians, fighting not just for equal wages but as part of the workers' revolt. Yet Simone de Beauvoir's conclusion, after she exposed how horrible men are, is that since it's the man's fault that we haven't got as far as we should be, the men must free us. When I described this to the Black factory women I was working with they told me: "It's just like 'white man's burden.'" It was fantastic because the women were saying, no sir! If we let man do the emancipating, we will never get emancipated. It's our job to do it. You couldn't build a mass movement, in the factory or out, whether it's the proletariat, or women, or any nationality, asking someone else to free you, instead of seeing the job as self-emancipation.

In the 1960s, the *New Left Review* tried to impose Althusserism on the women. In his *Reading Capital*, Louis Althusser says you have to read "into" Marx; you have to do the same thing Freud did in listening to his cases' problems. Where does it all wind up—this listening but reading into? This overdetermination—that one single thing can suddenly be the important thing, instead of what Marx was really talking about, the actual class forces that are fighting to overthrow the old and create totally new foundations? It all ends up by Althusser saying to skip Chapter One of *Capital*.

To the contrary, Marx had said the last two pages of the *Grundrisse*, on the commodity, is exactly what had to be brought forward. In many respects *Grundrisse* is greater than *Capital* because when you first speak out, it's everything that is in your head. *Capital* doesn't take up other forms of production like pre-capitalist forms, or art—but *Capital* remains the greater because of what Marx brought forward there: the commodity and the fetishism of commodities. We have to dig into that to bring us both to our world and to what the *New Left Review* is trying to do with women's liberation.

Some women—the latest is Juliet Mitchell in *Woman's Estate*—are trying to say that what Althusser had done with his interpretation of contradiction and overdetermination makes it possible to think that labor isn't pivotal. But what they don't openly say is that what they want you to do is follow that particular chauvinist, Althusser. What is important now, in relation to women's liberation—and particularly so in America, because both the Black dimension in the women, and the Black dimension in labor, and the Black dimension as a national question, are right here, not only in 1861 but in the 1960s and right now—is to begin to see that women must have the philosophy of liberation in general, in particular, in essence, and in mind. It is critical not ever to separate theory from practice or philosophy from revolution, because unless you have that unity you will just end up once more feeling good because you have told off the men, but not having established anything new for woman as Reason.



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REVIEW  
ESSAY

## Why Marx's theory of value matters

by Tom More

This collection of 17 papers and an "Introduction" by the editors "represent[s] the first response by Marxist scholars to the debate initiated by *Marxism and Non-equilibrium Economics* (Freeman and Carchedi, 1996), a work that presented, for the first time in book form, what has become known as the Temporal Single-System Interpretation (TSSI) of Marx's value theory" (ix). The "new value controversy" is the latest chapter of an old debate, going back to the posthumous publication of Volume III of *Capital* (1894) and its misrepresentation, most prominently by Böhm-Bawerk and Bortkiewicz.

What's important is the centrality of Marx's value theory to Marxism as a totality. If *Capital* is the theoretical center of gravity of Marx's thought, then a correct interpretation of the categories and concepts of what is standardly called Marx's "labor theory of value"—value; use-value and exchange-value; the commodity, money, and capital forms of value; abstract and concrete labor; wage-labor; variable and constant capital; and surplus value—will prove decisive for the understanding of Marxism. However what counts as the right meaning of these categories and concepts is as contested

today as it was a century ago.

Bypassing the technical issues raised by *The New Value Controversy*, which are certainly crucial to pursue for anyone interested in the project of recovering Marx's Marxism for our time, we can begin by reflecting on the larger significance of the appearance of this collection at this juncture. We might think of the big picture this way. A century ago, arguments that seemed authoritative claimed to demonstrate that Marx's theory of value was internally inconsistent. The "mainstream" simply accepted this conclusion at face value and adduced it as grounds to dismiss Marxist theory as such as resting on a mistake.

On the other side of the aisle, Marxian economists have had to discern whether Bortkiewicz's and other "corrections" of Marx's original theory count as progress within a "Marxist" paradigm, or whether the project Bortkiewicz launched is really **another theory** of political economy that had too hastily concluded that Marx's theory as it stood was internally inconsistent. Unfortunately the "corrected" versions of Marx's theory both violate the dialectical structure of *Capital* and mangle his most significant conclusions. The significant claim of TSSI is that Marx's own fundamental theoretical results can be shown to stand, that his theory is coherent, and that the longstanding charge of internal inconsistency has been refuted.

Undoubtedly these are high stakes. As the editors argue, "At stake is the nature of scientific endeavor" (xiii). If the Bortkiewicz interpretation (about which I will say more below) is **not** the theory of Marx, "this matters," because "the exclusion of Marx is one of the cardinal implicit tenets, one of the principal ideological pillars, of modern economics....[The] standard basis for this exclusion is precisely and only the assertion that his body of work is inconsistent. The implications of TSSI therefore reach beyond Marxist economists to call into question the foundations of neoclassical economics as a whole" (xiii).

The most worthwhile aspect of the volume is its demonstration of the merits of a new return to the **original** presentation of Marx's theory, on its own terms, within the framework of the three volumes of *Capital* (as well as the *Grundrisse*, *Theories of Surplus Value*, and Marx's other far-flung manuscripts). I will not be able to discuss several of the papers in this collection, which are eclectic and cannot be said to share a unified theoretical perspective. But in their totality, they make it plain that the return to the text of Marx is charged with explosive potential in the academy and beyond it.

## SCIENTIFIC THEORY—'EASIER AND RIGHT'

Perhaps Alan Freeman draws the most significant conclusion for Marxist-Humanists. In contrast to what Andrew Kliman calls "the 'Whig interpretation' of the history of economics" (20)—the view that predecessor scientific theories are routinely superseded by successor theories "in a unilinear progressive movement of theory"—Freeman begins his paper with a meditation on the Copernican Revolution: Copernicus achieved his basic conception from an older, even archaic source, Aristarchus of Samos (55). What this demonstrates is that the scientific progress achieved by Copernicus and Galileo "did not come through a forward development of [the] dazzling system [of Eudoxus, Aristotle, and Ptolemy]. It arose in a return to an earlier system of thought with two, and only two, features to recommend it. It was easier, and it was right" (55).

Freeman invites us at least to consider a second example of this more complex account of what constitutes scientific advance than the simple-minded "Whig interpretation." He goes on to show not only that Marx's original theory has the features of elegance and explanatory

power that typically make for superior scientific theories, but also, on the precedent of Aristarchus, the fact that Marx wrote in the 19th century is more or less irrelevant to the contemporary mandate to find our way again to a theory that can explain, among other things, "the outstanding phenomena of the modern global market: mass world poverty in the midst of technical progress and recurrent crisis" (65).

If TSSI can achieve the fertile results several of these papers demonstrate, then Freeman is surely right to conclude "that the time is right to begin work in a new empirical framework, to relaunch Marx's original project and the purpose of his enquiry: to discover the law of motion of the modern economy" (65). I would only add that this discovery is crucial to projecting a genuinely post-capitalist alternative to the vicious present of capitalist society.

For a century now, the controversy in value theory has been so oriented by Bortkiewicz's classic criticisms of Marx's system that the historical reference is still an indispensable starting point. Bortkiewicz had argued that Marx was guilty of self-contradiction in his solution to the notorious "transformation problem." If he were right, then Marx's theory (in its "uncorrected" version) would run aground on the shoals of internal inconsistency.

Marxists rightly deplore the exclusion of value theory from mainstream economics as unscientific and ideological (a principal concern of the editors' lucid "Introduction," ix-xx), but on the other hand, Bortkiewicz's "correction" of Marx has had the ironic fate of supplying a rationale and a justification for censorship at the same time it furnishes a prominent school of Marxian economics with its scientific self-understanding. If Bortkiewicz had successfully demonstrated that Marx's solution is internally inconsistent, then the theory of value would lapse into the incoherence and absurdity its detractors have long insisted upon. Yet to the extent that Bortkiewicz also advanced a "correction" of Marx's "error," it has been taken by major Marxist economists, represented in this volume by David Laibman, to signpost a supposedly royal road to a "20th century Marxism" (Laibman, 4), that is, the "Bortkiewicz-Sraffa-Dobb-Seton simultaneous equations, towards which," Laibman argues, "all roads...apparently lead!" (12). Contrary to Laibman's assertion that Marx himself was the first "20th century Marxist," this rewriting of Marx has occurred to the detriment of Marx's own method of presentation.

## NEW ERA, OLD ERROR

To this list of names could be added Sweezy, Meek, Okishio, Morishima, Shaikh, Steedman, and others including Laibman himself, establishing a canon of "20th century Marxism," post-Bortkiewicz, through which alone, Laibman argues, lies the "one path leading from the 19th to the 21st [century]" (16). The other side to the new value controversy, represented in this volume, includes Freeman, Kliman, Ted McGlone, Fred Moseley, Bruce Roberts, Alejandro Ramos Martinez, Massimo De Angelis, and Stavros D. Mavroudeas, whom Laibman calls the "new orthodox Marxists," or "NOMists" (1). Collectively, they dispute what could be called the "standard" or "20th-century Marxist" view.

They question whether the solutions to the transformation problem (among other issues) through the system of simultaneous equations inspired by Bortkiewicz count as "corrections" of (and therefore implicitly improvements-upon) Marx's own theory; or whether, as the editors put it, although it is "almost invariably portrayed within Marxian economics as 'Marx's theory of value,' [it] is actually a distinct theory in its own right" (xi).

Arrayed against this "distinct theory," the so-called NOMists defend two broad alternatives they claim to represent as Marx's theory in *Capital* and other major texts: TSSI, and a simultaneist, single-system interpretation (SSSI), defended in this volume by Fred Moseley and Bruce Roberts. Leaving SSSI to one side, Andrew Kliman, in "Marx versus the '20th Century Marxists': a Reply to Laibman" (19-35), summarizes what is fundamentally at issue for TSSI: TSSI "diverges from the standard [interpretation] in two simple but crucial ways. Whereas the '20th century Marxists' represent values and prices as two separate, timelessly determined, equation systems, the TSS interpretation argues that Marx conceived of values and prices as magnitudes determined **within historical time and interdependently**. 'Interdependently' means that the 'value' rate of profit,  $s/(c+v)$  enters into the determination of (output) prices, while the sums of value advanced to production, constant and variable capital, depend partly on (input) prices" (22).

For readers interested in coming to a bottom line, Kliman's Table 2.1 (23) is concise and illuminating. This table records how many of "Marx's Theoretical Results" each of the alternatives is able to replicate. The three alternatives are "standard, simultaneous dual-system"

interpretation (represented by Laibman), SSSI (represented by Moseley and Roberts), and TSSI (represented by Kliman, McGlone, Freeman, and others). Of 12 results—grouped into five "equalities and inequalities" (notably including Marx's total price = total value and total profit = total surplus value) and seven "relations of determination" (notably including the thesis that "mechanization itself can reduce [the] profit rate," contrary to Okishio's 1961 theorem purporting to refute Marx's law of the tendential fall in the profit rate; and also that "variations in living labor performed affect [the] profit rate")—Kliman shows that the "standard, simultaneous dual-system" interpretation replicates only two of Marx's theoretical results, negating fully ten of them; that the SSSI successfully replicates the five equalities and inequalities, but none of the relations of determination; and that only TSSI fully replicates all twelve of Marx's theoretical results.

## WITHOUT 'LABOR-TIME'

Obviously, much more is at stake than a mere tabulation. Kliman points to at least the following conclusions: TSSI is able to account for the conclusions that Marx deemed to be the most important and central to his value theory; it is able to account for these conclusions in a way that demonstrates the internal consistency and coherence of that theory, contra Bortkiewicz and his progeny, so that it no longer stands in need of the time-honored "correction"; and it therefore also shows that the exclusion of Marx's theory from the canon of mainstream (neoclassical) economics is baseless, since Marx's value theory is neither internally inconsistent nor incoherent under the TSSI interpretation. The contrary charge had constituted the grounds upon which the mainstream concluded (or rationalized) that Marxian economics did not deserve serious intellectual and scientific engagement.

Finally, Kliman concludes: "The source of the problem is simultaneous valuation itself. **When one stipulates that the magnitude of a commodity's value is identical at two different moments in time, no matter how much the labour-time needed to produce it has changed, one has stipulated that labour-time is irrelevant to the determination of its value**" (28; emphasis in the original). The key to mutual or simultaneous valuation is the equalization of inputs with outputs (whether prices or values). This is the principled atemporality that Bortkiewicz and his successors theorized as a requirement of the transformation of values into prices of production (concerning the controversial ninth chapter of the third volume of *Capital*, "Formation of a General Rate of Profit (Average Rate of Profit), and Transformation of Commodity Values into Prices of Production"). Kliman's point here is that a theory that entailed the conclusion that "labour-time is irrelevant to the determination of [a commodity's] value," whatever other sort of theory it might be, is **not Marx's theory of value**.

The technical issues in play in *The New Value Controversy* would require a lengthier exposition than can be offered in this review. Suffice it to say that our lexicon and argument would be organized on the basis of three related terms of opposition: "simultaneism" versus "temporalism" (what Bortkiewicz originally called "successivism"); the dual-system interpretation of values and prices as separate, tenseless equation systems, versus the single-system interpretation; and the Sraffa-inspired view, which we can call "physicalism"—the reduction of the value composition of capital to its technical composition alone—versus the view defended in this volume by McGlone and Kliman ("The Duality of Labour," 135-50), the punch line of which is this:

What goes unrecognized in [the] view [that the 'physiological' character of abstract labour implies its existence independently of society and history] is that the **specific social character** of the process of production **separates** the workers' physiological activity from their thinking, desires, and intentions.... What goes unrecognized, in other words, is that abstract labour is labour that has the character of being merely physiological, mere exertion, labour alienated from the workers' personality and human being as a whole. The workers' real work, in other words, has a dual, self-divided character (143).

In contrast, Sraffian physicalism has no way of accounting for "the specific social character of the process of production," specifically in the capitalist mode of production (the production process as the valorization process).

## MARX'S INDISPENSABLE METHOD

The physicalism (as it is being labeled here) of the "standard" interpretation goes hand-in-glove with simultaneous rather than temporal valuation, and also a dual-system interpretation as opposed to a single-system one. As Moseley puts it, Sraffa-inspired readings of Marx's theory take "the fundamental givens in Marx's

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## CHINA—GLOBAL FACTORY, SOCIAL INSECURITY, INCUBATOR OF REVOLT

"China as global factory is incubator of future revolt" by Peter Hudis was an important and timely lead article to start off the January-February issue of *News & Letters*. With all the overbearing media focus on Al Qaida and the war in Iraq, the ongoing human rights atrocities in China have virtually been ignored, even by the Left. It is incredible, given that there have been 60,000 strikes in China last year alone, that show the revolt is here and now, not just in the future. For whatever irrational reason the narrow-minded American Left failed to solidarize with Iraqi labor because of their obsession with "anti-imperialism," they also chose to ignore Chinese labor.

At the same time, the lead conveyed a sense of the mutual-aid mutual-destruction symbiotic relationship between U.S. and China in this late stage of capitalism. U.S. exports its jobs and in return China exports its commodities and surplus-labor in the form of newfound capital through prison/factory wage-slave labor.

**Hospital worker  
Oakland**

I really appreciated "China as global factory is incubator of future revolt." I've been thinking of China as the "global sweatshop," and that in a so-called "workers' state." A friend of mine worked in China during the construction of a coal-fired power plant. During his time there, he witnessed a public execution for what he was sure was a minor offense. Today's reality reminds me of Dunayevskaya's writing about Stalin's state capitalism of the 1930s and the visage of Hitler being the "rulers" vision of the future for us. I think it is important to study this article for a long time to come to understand China's role as the U.S.'s "silent" partner and the meaning that it has for the future of humanity.

**Construction worker  
Colorado**

Cheney's latest deception is that Social Security will find in the next decades a drastic reduction in the ratio of workers making contributions to workers receiving benefits. He forgot to add that if we pull away from his myopic view to a bird's-eye view of the newly

restructured global economy, the massive shift in the Social Security fund's domestic worker-ratios is due to a massive expropriation of jobs offshore to places like China, creating an avalanche of social-insecurity on both shores.

**Asian-American worker  
California**

Ross Perot's famous talk of a "sucking sound" as he opposed the trade agreements for taking jobs out of the U.S. really was about the sucking of all surplus value coming to the U.S. from all over the world, but especially China, to finance militarism. At the same time, the way the idea of revolution has been so thoroughly discredited in China makes it amazing that an international Luxemburg conference could be held there, where her idea of masses in control and post-revolutionary democracy was seriously discussed.

**Retiree  
California**

When I read in the January-February Lead that "China is not experiencing the kind of modernization of its productive forces that defined the industrial revolution in Europe, America, or Japan" and that "revolutionizing the forces of production by introducing technological innovations is not occurring in China as it did everywhere in the past," I was reminded of what Marx had stated in his last decade, when he pointed out that his analysis in *Capital* grew out of capitalist society in Western Europe, and was not meant as a universal.

**Asian-American  
Los Angeles**

## WOMEN IN BLACK

This is to alert like-minded women all over the world that the 13th International Conference of Women in Black will take place in Jerusalem at the end of August 2005. The conference will not deal only with the Israeli-Palestine conflict, but with the broader issues of women, war, and peace-making.

The conflict in the Middle East must be solved by both sides together, but since the Israeli army prevents us from entering each other's areas there are

tributed to feminists turning away from Marxism. Women who are both Marxists and explicitly feminists are avoided by those Marxists who think they are divisive issues. Feminists just keep repeating the assertion that Marx had nothing to say on women.

What was important to me was that while both of the articles on Macfarlane in the January-February issue mention that she was also an Hegelian, that wasn't developed. It remains a task to be done. It would illuminate Dunayevskaya's point that women are not only hidden from history, but from philosophy.

**Feminist lecturer  
San Francisco**

Bravo on the January-February issue that began the new bimonthly. I haven't read the pages all through yet, but the material on Macfarlane makes it an exciting experience. Anne Jaclard's book review was very good in tying the political tendencies and economic theories of the 1830s, '40s and '50s to those of today. That was very important.

**Dan  
Springfield**

Highlighting Dave Black's statement that his book was "necessarily and unashamedly a Biography of an Idea" put the finger on what was so impressive about his research—that an appreciation for what she was had to be dug out entirely from what ideas she wrote, given how little was known about her life and how completely she had disappeared so early in that life. Black's book is a remarkable achievement for us.

**Marxist-humanist  
Chicago**

## RESCUING HELEN MACFARLANE FROM OBSCURITY

You will be interested to see the impact that the new book you featured

in your January-February issue had on a member of the Scottish Parliament. Here is the tribute that Tommy Sheridan, a Socialist Party member of Parliament, made as a motion there on February 21: "That the Parliament notes the forthcoming launch of the book, *Helen Macfarlane: A Feminist, Revolutionary Journalist and Philosopher in Mid-Nineteenth Century England*; welcomes the fact that this radical Scotswoman will at last be rescued from obscurity and given her place of importance in 19th century politics and political movements; further notes that it was Helen Macfarlane, under the alias Howard Morton, who first translated the seminal pamphlet, *The Communist Manifesto*, into English ... and played an active role in promoting the politics of revolution and equality throughout her life; and believes that the Scottish Parliament Information Centre should order several copies of her book and that libraries across Scotland should be encouraged to do likewise."

A few days later a writer for *The Scotsman*, picking up on the story, ended his column pointing out that in her translation, the original famous opening sentence was not "A spectre is haunting Europe—the spectre of communism" but "A frightful hobgoblin stalks throughout Europe. We are haunted by a ghost, the ghost of Communism." He added, "Maybe not quite as catchy, but it does have a ring of Tam O'Shanter about it."

**Hobgoblin supporter  
London**

That the history of women like Helen Macfarlane has been hidden has con-



# READERS' VIEWS

great difficulties in trying to plan this conference jointly which we are nevertheless committed to do. We are also determined to bring to this conference as many activist women as possible from distant regions of conflict—in Colombia, Afghanistan, Iraq, as well as several countries in Africa—to enrich us with their experiences. We have opened a communication line where we will be responding to your questions. Our address for this is wib2005@netvision.net.il. We would love to have as many as possible with us this August.

**Gila Svirsky  
Jerusalem**

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

Raya Dunayevskaya's critique of Stephen Bronner's collection of *The Letters of Rosa Luxemburg* was beautiful because so much of her own work on Luxemburg was encapsulated in it. It is important to let Luxemburg just speak for herself, but that doesn't happen with a mere chronological ordering of her letters. Dunayevskaya's interpretive engagement with Luxemburg's ideas reveals how great she was on freely associated workers running their lives. However the way Marx developed that concept in *Capital* is what Luxemburg dismissed as "rococo." When Marx develops how cognition of the objective world is mediated by the abstractions that shape human relations between workers and projects freely associated labor as a new freedom that is at the same time a new self-consciousness, it is thoroughly Hegelian.

**Ron Brokmeyer  
California**

Dunayevskaya's essay in the January-February issue was wonderfully focused on revolution. She proposes making two divisions of the letters: one, "Heroism of Masses vs. Opportunism of Leaders"; and the other, "From Theory and Anti-War Agitation to Prison and Revolution." At first blush, that seems very little to suggest. Yet what she is doing is using less than 20 words to show the direction of Luxemburg's thought. It shows the importance of making philosophic categories.

**Franklin Dmitryev  
Tennessee**

## BEYOND CAPITALISM

The program you are presenting in your emails on your New York classes appears extremely abstract. No one has all the time to read through a thicket of weighty material concerning "the Gotha program." What was it Karl Marx had to say about it that would make someone want to hear a presentation about it?

I understand the need to define the "day after revolution" and I can certainly agree with the idea of eliminating greed, hatred and ignorance from people's hearts. But I can't see anything in your program that makes practical sense.

**Still Interested  
New York**

I'm writing to you because of my interest in the classes you announced in the January-February issue on "Beyond Capitalism: Marx's Marxism as ground for an emancipatory alternative." I've been reading *N&L* for about two years now. It was the reprints of Raya Dunayevskaya's various writings which initially caught my attention and fueled my interest. Her grasp of Marxism is definitely impressive, but even more so is the ability to clearly demonstrate the practical relevancy of Marxism as a vital element in the overall political discussion in society today. I can see the necessity for a critical discussion that provides an alternative view, a realization beyond capitalism.

It's out of a real desire to take an active role in preparation of the liberatory philosophy of Marxist-Humanism,

and to be able to achieve this objective that I endeavor to situate myself within the company of those best qualified to assist me. That is, teach me the things I need to deepen my comprehension of Marxist-Humanism. Although I'm a prisoner, presently confined in a security housing unit (SHU) at a state prison, I believe there has to be some form by means of which I can take part in this study class.

**Prisoner  
California**

*Editor's Note: Our correspondent has been sent a class brochure, some of the readings, and an invitation to submit his comments.*

## FIGHT POLICE BRUTALITY

I remember April 29, 1992. The four verdicts on the police officers in Simi



Valley. All not guilty, not guilty of beating Rodney King. Oh, how I hurt. Why, white America? I

know they saw what we saw, it was on videotape. In 2002 an Inglewood police officer beat Donovan Jackson and another cop filed a false police report. Two trials later, two hung juries. Why, white America? They saw what we saw. It was on videotape. Then those two who were charged with excessive use of force turned to the same court system and filed reverse discrimination charges. There were two trials and they were awarded 2.4 million dollars. Why, white America? You must have seen what we did not. It was not on videotape. Now we have the news that another officer who beat Stanley Miller with a flashlight is not going to be charged. Why, white America? This was on videotape.

I want to ask the friends of *News & Letters* to continue to stand up for justice. There are those of us in the African-American community who feel that Black and Brown lives mean nothing to the power structure. The revolution is on through legislation, education, economics and rightness of good people. There will be change, but don't look for it on videotape. The revolution will not be televised. The struggle continues.

**Molly Bell, Community Activist  
Straight out of Compton  
California**

On Feb. 18, what caused the death of Mandel al-Jamadi at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq was finally publicized. It was the torture technique called "Palestinian hanging," which is named for its use by the Israeli military against Palestinian prisoners. The suffocation that brought about his death from this torture is quite similar to that suffered by those crucified by Imperial Rome. So much for the "Christian" fundamentalism of the Bush administration that has been perpetrating these crimes.

**Activist  
Chicago**

## QUEER LIBERATION

The piece by the student human rights activist on the recent Southern Human Rights Organizers Conference (January-February 2005 *N&L*) was a refreshing, unabashedly revolutionary article. I appreciated him saying the class struggle is the universal and most significant power relationship under capitalism, and yet saying that LGBT gets short shrift. He has a double criticism, saying LGBT is important both to have a more unified movement and for its own sake. He's not afraid to say we need theory. A lot of radical youth are radical only on the practical, political side, not on philosophy.

**Brown Douglas  
Memphis**

**DIALECTICS OF BLACK FREEDOM STRUGGLES**

Marxist-Humanists honor Black History Month by struggling, which includes the struggle on the level of ideas about liberation. When you read the essay by Khalfani Khaldun in the January-February issue you see his struggle in several ways. He is in a fight for his life and his right to speak, against prison authorities keeping him behind bars long after he was supposed to have been released. Against the forces arrayed against him, he has founded a study group which investigates revolutionary ideas. His essay thus becomes something of a summary of the discussions he and his comrades have had on two books published by News and Letters Committees, *Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles* and *American Civilization on Trial*. He describes News and Letters Committees as "taking the struggle to the next level, where the process of dialectical stages of development takes place." I believe this can easily refer to the struggles of opposites that Hegel called dialectics and which Marx called the class struggle, revolution in permanence, and other names. Discussing real struggles in this context constitutes actual solidarity.

**Prison abolitionist  
Illinois**



was briefly a development which arose in response to the rise of monopoly capitalism. Of that forgotten one and a quarter million Black populists, Dunayevskaya says they anticipated the rise of American imperialism in a way that the populist intellectuals such as the muckrakers did not. I see Khaldun's essay as an attempt, among other things, to clarify the agents which mask racist, alienated relationships.

**Jim Mills  
Chicago**

Khaldun's essay shows the diversity of voices that are attracted to the pull of the idea of Marxist-Humanism when it is presented historically and concretely as in the two pamphlets he reviews.

**Activist/Intellectual  
California**

The point of contention Khaldun mentions is not clear to me. It appears to refer to the question of Garvey. Much of what he says is not in disagreement with *American Civilization on Trial* in the section on Garvey that talks about nationalism. That is where Dunayevskaya works out a precise position that it is a question of an oppressed nationality. She relates it to Lenin on the National Question, saying what is decisive is that it brings forth revolt from the masses of people. That chapter was key in the pamphlet and I think Khaldun honed in on it.

**Environmental justice activist  
Memphis**

Where Khaldun analyzes the contradicted history of American so-called democracy, he is correct that "New Afrikans, then and now (that is, at the writing of the Declaration of Independence and under George W. Bush) are still viewed as chattel property of the state." On the other hand, the dialectic in *American Civilization on Trial* traces a development that is really two developments: the maturing of the Black mass struggle and the greater masking of oppression as time goes by. For example, the appearance of the now forgotten one and a quarter million Black populists is an important moment which

**REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS**

Our reproductive rights group, NARAL Pro-Choice America, has begun an appeal to anti-choice people to join a campaign to prevent unwanted pregnancies through better access to birth control, and thus to reduce the need for abortion. Although this sounds good—and better birth control was the women's movement's original demand along with the right to abortion—the appeal seems to be a cynical ploy. For reasons including their desire to subjugate women, anti-choice groups are not

**Anti-war activist  
Illinois**

going to work with pro-choice ones and are not going to promote birth control. NARAL must know this. It appears to be doing this in an attempt to gain support from the so-called "middle" who won't take a stand, but who, we are supposed to have learned from W's re-election, share his "values." In short NARAL is attempting to look like the Right. This indicates the abandonment of arguing the logic of its own cause, a capitulation to the Right which will inevitably lead to defeat.

**Anne Jaclard  
New York**

**FEELING A DRAFT**

I know the politicians are saying the Bush administration is not going to attempt to reinstate the draft, but they are still in a quagmire in Iraq and I read that a professor at the Air War College said the Army is "near the breaking point." All four services were reported to have missed their enlistment quotas last year. And now I've heard that Bush has given the Selective Service System a set of "readiness goals" to be implemented by March 31. It includes a stipulation that the System would have to be ready to be fully operational within 75 days. I don't know about anyone else, but I am definitely feeling a draft. I expect that opposition to what seems to me a real possibility for an attempt to reinstate the draft will be heard loud and clear in the protests to be held the weekend of March 19-20, the second anniversary of the war on Iraq.

**HEALTH CARE CRISIS**

All of us in the health care world know that the U.S. can boast about having the most modern health care facilities in the world. But the most recent statistics have made it abundantly clear that while some U.S. citizens have access to them, a staggering 44 million people (17% of the population) have no health care at all because of the crippling costs of insurance. Many others discover their insurance doesn't provide full coverage just when they need it most. One third of all personal bank-

ruptcies are the result of health care bills. Despite a massive 14% of gross domestic production (GDP) being spent on health care, the U.S. ranks 37 out of 191 countries in terms of the health of its citizens. That is the lowest ranking for any industrial country. Nobody needs statistics to understand this in human terms. It is a crisis.

**Nurse  
Britain**

**OSCAR TEST**

While I applaud with others that the Oscars are finally recognizing Black actors, their total house is still not in order. The new format for awarding Oscars in technical categories brought the nominees on stage together as the winner was announced. With the possible exception of costume design, most of the categories' nominees were a sea of white men. It seems like affirmative action, in hiring and nominating, is much more necessary than many in this country would like to think.



**Mary Jo Grey  
Illinois**

**LABOR MOVEMENT, 2005**

I'm disconcerted to hear labor advocates these days even bringing up, much less relying on, the "good intentions" of "good employers." The generic justification in the back of every employer's mind these days is "we have to compete with China." Can you imagine an amicable agreement of "good intentions" between a migrant Chinese worker who owns nothing more than his hands and the clothes on his back and ruthless Chinese industrialists who have the backing not only of world capital but a state discipline machinery created back under Mao? The same "good intentions" of employee-employer agreement is the rationale now being used in France as they too roll back the clock to get rid of their mandatory 35-hour workweek. Western "democracy" is looking more and more like Maoist re-education camps these days.

**Non-amicable worker  
California**

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By RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

- The Power of Negativity: Selected Writings on the Dialectic in Hegel and Marx** by Raya Dunayevskaya.....\$24.95
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- NEW! Philosophy and Revolution: from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao** 30th Anniversary issue, 2003.....\$24.95
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- Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future** (1996 edition).....\$15.95
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# Eugenics today incarcerates 'less desirable'

by C.C. Simmons

The *Dallas Morning News* published an editorial denouncing eugenics—genetic manipulation and selective breeding of the human race—and those who would practice it. Most often, eugenics appears as a government-sanctioned program that encourages procreation among only those who are deemed more socially acceptable, while discouraging or preventing breeding by the less desirable members of society.

The last large-scale, government-sanctioned experiment in eugenics began 70 years ago in Europe under the auspices of the Third Reich. Aryan women who bore Aryan sons were rewarded by the government with extra food and clothing. The non-Aryan members of the population were treated less well; many were surgically sterilized while others were consigned to the notorious work camps where it was unlikely they would reproduce and even less likely they would escape—ever.

## GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED EUGENICS

Government-sponsored eugenics did not end with the fall of the Third Reich, however; it only became less obvious. Cleverly packaged with the popular tough-on-crime crusade, eugenics is now practiced by imprisoning those deemed less desirable. By using the criminal justice system to legitimize the selection and removal of undesirables, we have progressed from eugenics-in-theory to eugenics-in-practice.

More than two million adult men and women are

## Prisoner harassed

Continued from page 1

They scheduled me to appear before the conduct adjustment board on Jan. 19, 2005. My lawsuit hearing was also scheduled for that same day!

## MODERN DAY LYNCHING

This hearing symbolized a modern day Jim Crow lynching. The chairman of the board is a white racist, displaying tyrannical behavior. I presented a statement of facts, a prisoner witness statement and the sheet given to me by Linneweber offering me the \$145 settlement. Lt. Brough refused to read my statement. They then ordered me out of the room, so the board could deliberate my fate.

This was the story of my life! Deliberations lasted about 20 minutes. The board found me guilty of all three conduct violations, even though they knew the staff had lied to them. It was their way of punishing me, the bold, Black prisoner, for not accepting their paltry settlement offer. I am guilty of saying "no!" to a bunch of Jim Crow, deep South, arrogant racists! This, once again, is a clear-cut case of how corruption rules the day and how their word is the only one ever considered as being truthful.

I've tried to tell how I am being set up as a walking target. I've been at this facility for two years and many white officers here are extremely disgruntled towards me due to all the complaints I've filed on behalf of myself and other brothers.

Many of my complaints have sparked the Indiana Board of Health to cite the SHU five separate times for health code violations. The Indiana State Police have launched investigations into the racist attitudes by staff, due to my complaints. I've filed complaints about the phones in the visiting booths, group recreation, sanitation, poor quality food, broken trays, misuse of recreation funds by administrative staff, torn clothing.

## FORCED PRISON DRUGGING

On Jan. 21, 2005, eight SHU officers approached my cell and demanded that I come to the door. They cuffed me up and I was taken to the disciplinary segregation B-East on a psych-patient range. As I entered the cell, I noticed that the bed had these four-way metal grooves welded into them. This is a cell that prisoners are strapped down to be shot up with psychotropic drugs. There is no way I belong on this range, but it is the state's way and plan to fix me. I have not as yet been subjected to take any "medications." I am the only prisoner on this range who is not being sedated.

These conspirators are all happy now that they have succeeded in putting me in an uncomfortable situation. I can no longer buy food from the prison commissary. I am forced to consume prison meals exclusively. These "meals" have extremely small portions. I can only have 10 books or magazines in my cell.

I've filed three separate disciplinary appeals forms, contesting the charges and the sanctions placed upon me, subjecting me to 18 months in the hole. They are sent to the facility superintendent first, then downstate to the final reviewing authority in Indianapolis.

## STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND

I'm currently a stranger in a strange land, where all prisoners around me are heavily sedated by mind-controlling drugs. This is where many of the last, lonely, and the forgotten dwell. I can sense the spirits of countless restless souls. I will not be counted among those claimed by this man-made hell. My soul screams freedom daily!

**Calls of Protest and Support can be made to:**

- Commissioner J. David Donahue (317)232-5711
- Southern Regional Director Steve McCauley (317)232-577, or smccauley@coa.doc.state.in.us.

currently imprisoned nationally. The ethnic mix of the nation's current prison population seems to reflect the private agenda and biases of eugenicists who seek to rid our population of undesirable members. If the present rate of incarceration remains unchanged, 6.6% of all U.S. residents born in 2001 will eventually go to prison—5.9% of whites, 17.2% of Hispanics and 32.2% of African-Americans.

To achieve this removal by socially and politically correct methods, eugenicists manipulate the criminal justice system in subtle—and not so subtle—ways. In Chicago, Prof. Larry Marshall, director of the Center on Wrongful Convictions, reported that Cook County prosecutors had a contest every week where they would look at who got convictions of African Americans and who had the biggest, heaviest African Americans. Whoever did would get free beer that Friday night when they went out to the bar.

In Tulia, Texas, undercover narcotics cop, Thomas Ronald Coleman, cruised poor Black neighborhoods in 1998 seeking to purchase drugs. In all, 38 people—35 of them Black—were convicted of selling small amounts of cocaine and sentenced to prison for up to 90 years. Every conviction relied solely on Coleman's testimony. Problem was, Coleman lied. In the investigation that followed, some defendants proved they were elsewhere when Coleman said he bought drugs from them. When the purity of the evidence was finally questioned, investigators speculated that Coleman had obtained a tiny amount of cocaine, then diluted it with a white

substance to manufacture multiple bags of evidence.

State District Judge Ron Chapman found Coleman's testimony to be so unreliable that he recommended all 38 cases be overturned. In 2003, the 18-member Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles voted to recommend pardons for 35 of those convicted.

## STERILIZATION OF PRISONERS

Selective imprisonment and manipulation of the criminal justice system are only two of the methods to curtail breeding by undesirables. Texas, for example, has borrowed a technique from the Third Reich and legitimized the surgical sterilization of criminals. As the *Dallas Morning News* editorial correctly pointed out, the NAACP was right to sound the alarm about the use of genetics to control and improve society. Eugenics leads not to Utopia, said the editorial, but to Auschwitz.

## Community opposes police injustice

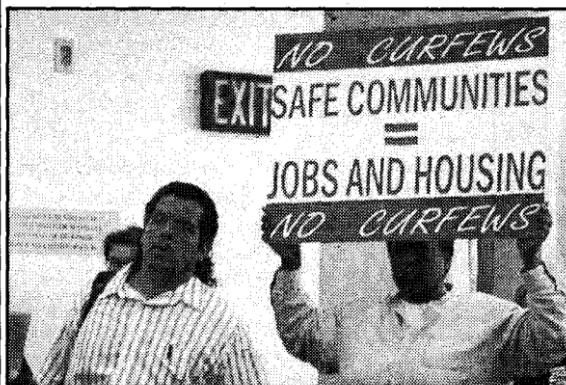
LOS ANGELES—There is a lot of talk in the community over the jury acquitting police officers for beating a Black youth on the dashboard of a car in the city of Inglewood for protesting the way the officers were interrogating the youth's dad. There is also a lot of talk over the closure of the trauma center of King-Drew Hospital and taking away community control of the hospital by the removal of the long-time community representative, Lillian Mobley, under the pretext that she is too ill to be part of the executive board of Charles Drew University. There is a lot of talk over a police officer beating a Black motorist with a flashlight, caught on video, but insufficient in the eyes of the police commissioners to prosecute the policeman for use of excessive force since "a video does not show the whole story." And, there is a lot of talk over the police shooting of a 13-year-old Black youth, Devon Brown, called "justifiable" by the Los Angeles Police Department.

All these excuses are to keep the Black community in line. As a Black person told me, "How do they expect us to rise up from poverty if every time we try, they grab us by the shoulder and push us down?" Is justice possible under this capitalist system?

In his *Ethnological Notebooks*, Karl Marx formulated that the "transformation of gens to civil society is accompanied by conquest, caste, and differentiation in the social rank." These are the bases under which Black people are (mis)treated in the inner cities of this nation. The foundation of justice in a civil society is equality, yet neither justice nor peace is possible under this "civil society." We have to get back our "human" rights from this system. We have to rethink an alternative to this capitalistic society.

—Manel

## No Oakland curfew!



More than a hundred former prisoners and their supporters protested Oakland (Cal.) Mayor Jerry Brown's proposal to impose a curfew on ex-felons. The mayor blames the former prisoners for Oakland's crime, rather than the economic disaster all Oakland residents face, which weighs particularly heavily on anyone with a record as they are routinely denied both job opportunities and housing.

## BLACK/REDVIEW

Continued from page 1

their role as a laboring force in the South. These laws bore a remarkable resemblance to the ante-bellum Black Codes and can hardly be described as measures which respected rights of Negroes as free men."

The radical Republicans in Congress, in order to protect the civil and political rights of the emancipated slaves, drafted at once another amendment, which granted state and federal citizenship to all persons born and naturalized in the U. S. (with the exception of Native Americans). Its purpose was to nullify the 1850 Dred Scott decision in which the Supreme Court ruled that neither slaves nor their descendants were citizens. Thus the 14th Amendment gave a legal foundation for the federal government's active and compelling interest in the civil rights and freedom of all citizens.

## ON THE 14TH AMENDMENT

What is in the headlines, however, is the provision of the 14th Amendment which set the ground for a truly national economy by holding that national debt obligations were, as Senator Wilson of Massachusetts put it, "as sacred as the blood of our heroes poured on battlefields" (speech to the first session of the 39th Congress in 1866). Over time that provision of the 14th Amendment has been used primarily for the benefit of corporations, as a secure instrument to park their resources for future investment. However, in 1866 debt obligations included not just business investments but pensions for millions of veterans, widows and orphans who paid the price for concretizing the idea of freedom in the Civil War.

An important part of the post-Civil War debate over the 14th Amendment focused on the issue of repudiation of debt. The provision was included and passed to totally repudiate debts incurred by the traitorous slavery while holding the national debt sacred. Wily Southern sympathizers were floating the idea of repudiating the national debt if not outright, then through the back door by taxing federal bonds or inflating the currency by printing money. In addition, they still wanted to tax everyone to pay off the Confederate debt.

The importance of honoring the national debt was a part of the price of securing national liberty—or as Representative John Bingham put it, "the Nation that

## 'What is freedom?'

won't keep faith with its defenders, living and dead, is not fit to have defenders, and cannot have them long" (speech in Bowerstown, Ohio, Aug. 27, 1866). I remember, when I was a child, seeing African-American Civil War veterans who were still living, even if poorly, on those meager pensions.

## ORIGIN OF SOCIAL SECURITY

It is my generation that was the first to include in the social benefits not just veterans but all citizens by establishing Social Security in August 1935. On the heels of the Great Depression that left millions destitute, and in fear of a revolution, the Roosevelt administration proposed a collection of modest taxes on wages, which would allow older workers to receive pensions. That program changed the experience of old age in America from hell for the poor, to somewhat secure retirement for many millions, including myself.

Today, far from being even near bankruptcy, as President Bush claims, American workers have \$1.6 trillion accumulated in a Social Security trust fund, which holds U.S. government debt obligations. According to the Congressional Budget Office this surplus is able to fund Social Security pensions fully until at least 2052 and maybe longer. Republicans in Congress like Senator Allard in Colorado now say that that surplus, which is pension money taken from workers, doesn't exist.

## BUSH'S BIG LIE

The new repudiators of the national debt, when it comes to workers, are Bush and today's Republicans who are manufacturing a big lie that Social Security is in crisis and care little about honoring the 14th Amendment, although they are sworn to uphold the Constitution. The only part of debt honoring today that interests Republicans is that held by business interests. Bush tremendously expanded the national debt for war and through huge tax cuts for the wealthy.

What repudiators then and now have in common is the sacrifice of the welfare of the ordinary worker. Today we need to expand the idea of freedom beyond what was articulated by the 14th Amendment to not stop at civil rights and political freedom, but to work out freedom and self-determination that begins with workers in their everyday lives.

# EDITORIAL

Chaos, fear and the oppressive presence of U.S. and British troops continue to be realities of life for ordinary Iraqis. While a resurgence of suicidal bomb attacks since the Jan. 30 elections threatens to erase from memory what transpired that day, it is important to revisit the event to be prepared to understand Iraq's present and immediate future.

The period leading up to the elections was one of uncertainty and trepidation. The possibility of a wave of violence directed against voters and polling sites, combined with the shroud of secrecy that had covered almost all aspects of the preparations for the election, made the early morning of Jan. 30 one marked by great anxiety.

Yet despite the pervasive fear that the worst might happen, the people of Iraq, who have suffered almost two years of daily violence and material privation since the U.S. launched its invasion in 2003, began to come out into the streets of their country and walk to polling sites, the locations of which had only been revealed to them that morning. They had to make their way on foot because all automobile traffic had been banned by the authorities for the day.

The turnout had an unmistakable element of mass spontaneity. Mothers decided to gather their children together and make their way through the streets to cast ballots. People who had successfully voted early returned home to knock on the doors of their neighbors to convince them to make their way to the polls. Even the sound of the nearby explosions of mortar shells did not deter people from standing in long lines to vote.

Despite the fact that the elections were organized entirely by a government appointed by the United States, the Iraqi people used the opportunity to make a strong statement that they—and not President Bush and his war cabinet—would from this point on shape their future. In fact, the candidate most closely identified with the U.S., strongman Iyad Allawi, fared relatively poorly.

**The eight million people who cast ballots took the narrow form of a parliamentary election held under adverse conditions and infused it with a content that had an implicit sense of defiance:**

**defiance to the U.S. military, defiance to the sectarian perpetrators of mass murder in the name of resistance to the invaders, and defiance to the now past regime of oppression maintained by Saddam Hussein and his henchmen.**

As was anticipated, most Sunni Iraqis—out of fear for their safety or hostility to the appointed government—did not vote. Turnout in the Shia and Kurdish areas was high, despite election day violence that killed as many as 44 people. It was no secret that the leaders of these groups had a disciplined political strategy to use the elections to solidly establish their position in post-Saddam Iraq. Much to their credit, these groups were not dissuaded from carrying out their plan by the violent and sectarian tactics of the resistance. In addition to the main voting, the long-oppressed Kurds even carried out an unofficial referendum on independence that resulted in overwhelming approval for an independent country.

Now, however, the question is this: has Iraq put its authoritarian past behind it only to embark upon a future of religious fundamentalism?

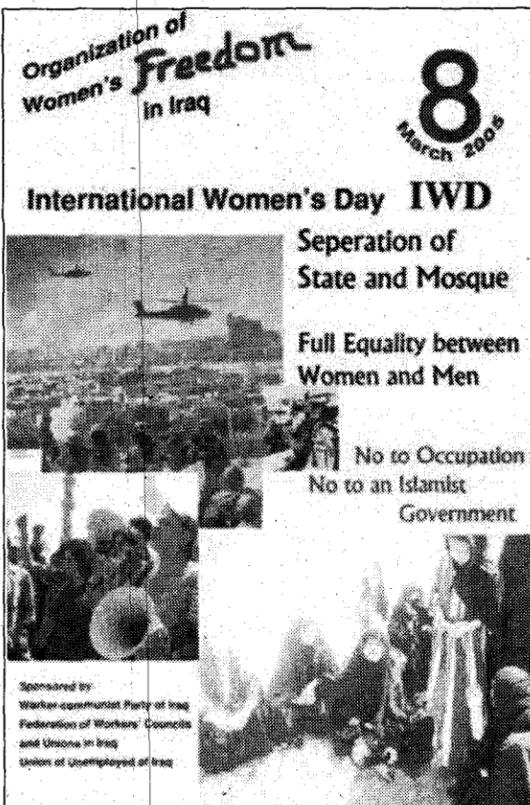
The biggest winner of the election was the United Iraqi Alliance, a broad slate of Shia religious and secular groups that had been openly endorsed by Ayatollah Sistani, the most influential leader of Iraq's Shia majority. The Alliance contains the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq and the Dawa party, two large fundamentalist groups

with strong ties to conservative forces in the Iranian government. The religious leaders of the Alliance have made it clear that they want an Iraq governed by Islamic legal principles and both of these groups are vying to secure the office of prime minister.

Yet a fundamentalist future is not written in stone. The strong Kurdish showing represents a powerful voting bloc for secularism and the unity of the United Iraqi Alliance does not seem likely to survive the parliamentary maneuvers underway to select the prime minister and president. If the Alliance fractures, the strength of political Islam in the new assembly may be diluted.

The Jan. 30 elections marked a turning point in Iraq since the invasion. While the reactionary resistance continues to take the lives of ordinary Iraqis and the oppressive U.S. military has no plan to vacate soon, the Iraqi people have made a small but substantial step towards governing their own affairs. This period calls for opponents of the war and supporters of the Iraqi people to extend their solidarity more firmly than ever to the forces that can chart out a new path

for Iraq: the women fighting both traditional and religious repression, the national minorities struggling for self-determination and the workers who are engaged in the task of building an independent labor movement.



International Women's Day poster in Iraq: Women fight all oppressors.

## Achenese struggle continues in aftermath of tsunami

**NEW YORK**—Acheh Center NYC was founded at a meeting here on Feb. 23, at which Munawar Zainal of Acheh Center USA discussed the history of Acheh's grassroots movements for self-determination and the post-tsunami conditions in Acheh. His remarks follow.

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The grassroots movements started in 1998 after Suharto fell from the presidency. Students, women and people in many professions formed strong, widespread movements. They told Indonesia and the Free Acheh Movement (the guerrilla independence movement called GAM): with regard to everything concerning the future of Acheh, please come to us and ask our opinion. A congress of high school and university student organizations called SIRA mobilized people in support of a referendum on Acheh's political status. Even the rickshaw drivers formed an organization. In 1999 and 2000, the grassroots movements held huge demonstrations calling for a referendum. The response from Indonesia was severe military repression, and after martial law was imposed in May 2003, the movements

were crushed. Activists had to flee Acheh for their lives; people who remained were intimidated by the military and, some say, by GAM too.

Since May 2003, the only thing that those of us in exile can do is distribute information about the repressive situation. Acheh Center USA has been doing that work. Then suddenly the tsunami hit (Dec. 26), and now many people want to support Acheh, but only by giving humanitarian aid for the victims. We need people to think also about the root of the conflict and the violence by the military that is still going on. In the two years I have been in the U.S., I've been to Washington many times to lobby for the U.S. to pressure Indonesia about its human rights abuses. I've been told by friends not to talk about a referendum, just to talk about human rights violations and tsunami aid. It makes me sad to see democratic activists trying to limit democracy. In addition to humanitarian aid, it is very important to support the resolution of the conflict. Most Achenese want a referendum; we should support this perspective.

Achenese want to determine our own future. Our experience with Indonesia is that everything is planned from the top down. Even the tsunami aid is being handled in that way. For example, Indonesia has made a master plan for the reconstruction of Acheh, without asking the Achenese anything about it. The government is building settlement camps for the refugees, but is refusing to rebuild their villages. It plans to forbid living within two kilometers of the sea. This will destroy countless communities and livelihoods.

Many American and European aid agencies have the same attitude. They send foreign-made fishing boats and equipment, but the Achenese have their own traditional ways of building boats and nets. What they need is help in rebuilding things their own way. First, we need the basic infrastructure rebuilt. With their houses and ability to work restored, people could support themselves.

Today, the military has divided up Acheh into sections in order to destroy the community structures in which resistance to Indonesian rule was based, and to

create conflicts between the Achenese and Javanese populations of Acheh. Right after the tsunami, soldiers went to the refugee camps, found the heads of villages and demanded that they sign over their land to the military part of the plan to relocate people and to divide the province.

The refugees want to go home, not to the military barracks that are being built for them. People are pitching tents over the rubble of their houses as a way of preserving their right to return. All they want is a few building materials to rebuild their houses.

Indonesia is still interfering with the aid sent for the refugees from around the world. A thousand tons of supplies are said to be in storage in the airport, under military control. People need the permission of the military to resume fishing, to open a shop, to get married, to do anything. And the military is still hunting and killing GAM and civil society activists. Recently an American journalist in Acheh got some help from a local activist, and after the American left, the activist and his entire family were kidnapped. I am trying to help the journalist find them.

Negotiations between Indonesia and GAM for a cease-fire have not succeeded; GAM declared a cease-fire right after the tsunami, but Indonesia refuses to do so. I was interviewed on the radio about the latest meetings in Helsinki, and I said, "Acheh is like a woman. Indonesia says the woman belongs to Indonesia, and GAM says she belongs to GAM. I say, why not allow the woman to decide who she wants to be with?"

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# Crossroads for movement against global capital

Continued from page 1

This allowed for more face-to-face dialogue and less demagogic speech-making by self-appointed left-wing "spokespersons."

The one exception was the speech given by Luiz Ignacio da Silva (Lula), leader of the Brazilian Workers' Party (PT) and president since 2003. His speech capped a rally of 200,000 that opened the event. The PT had long been a moving force behind the WSF, but after two years in power—in which Lula's PT has adopted much of the neo-liberal economic policies that the WSF was created to oppose—there is growing disillusionment in Brazil over his rule. This was reflected in the boos he received from parts of the crowd, though many also cheered Lula—especially when he attacked Bush.

## WHAT'S THE ALTERNATIVE?

The fact that dissatisfaction with the PT's policies did not dampen the turnout—85% of those present were from Brazil—indicates that the movement against global capital has not yet run its course. If anything, the criticism of Lula's policies helped raise the level of discussion. Many said recent events in Brazil and elsewhere make it more important than ever not just to critique globalized capitalism but to determine what kind of new society we are for.

One reflection of this is the widespread view among many that the notion of seizing power and then only afterwards figuring out how to reorganize society is no longer valid. This perspective was especially predominant in sessions sponsored by indigenous rights groups and at the international youth encampment, where 35,000 camped out (at least 80% of the crowd at the WSF was under 30 years of age).

As the Movimiento Raiz, based in the Andean region, put it: "We refuse to be articulated around the paradoxical and frustrating strategy of 'resisting power by becoming power yourself' and 'to take power with the goal of afterwards changing society' which ended in the massive retreat of the extinct 'socialist' camp facing capitalism, which facilitated the counter-revolution of global capitalism, euphemistically named 'globalization.' Our democracy should be a total, social, direct, alternative and planetary democracy. A new network of new theories is needed with new movements which reinvents and redefines socialism and democracy."

This perspective also characterized the many sessions devoted to feminism, some of which had as many as 1,500 women from 30 different countries in them at a time. Some were devoted to the upcoming Women's Global March for Humanity, which will begin on March 8 in Sao Paulo and end in Burkino Faso in October. The march plans to visit 50 countries, visiting rural areas as well as cities. The diverse group of women who spoke, ranging from Canada to South Africa to Dalits from India, made it clear that they wanted the discussions at the WSF to lead to greater coordinated action by women around the world instead of relying on state powers.

The hunger for new ideas to address alternatives was palpable throughout the WSF, though few sessions addressed specific theories that can help illuminate the content of a non-capitalist society. The difference between Marx's concepts and those of many post-Marx Marxists was raised only rarely.

One exception was a panel on "Rosa Luxemburg in the 21st Century." It included a vibrant discussion on what the founder of Marxist-Humanism, Raya Duna-

## Jamaican gay bashing

**CHICAGO**—Two activists with Jamaica Forum for Lesbians, All-Sexuals and Gays (J-FLAG) spoke out Feb. 11 at an Amnesty International OUTFront! forum on the climate of murder they faced in Jamaica. Even as they dared to speak out in Chicago, they chose to use only their first names because of the threat to anyone identified as gay in Jamaica.

Karlene testified that if you are gay or lesbian or merely perceived so by others, when you leave your house in the morning you are not guaranteed that you will return that night. Even within the family, a man got youths to beat up his own son he suspected was gay.

Popular singers like Capleton and Elephant Man feel free to detail how "battyboys" (gay men) and "sodomites" (lesbians) should be burned, drowned or stoned. But government policy, Rastafarian and mainstream church statements, and police non-intervention have fostered an open season on lesbians and gays.

Gareth told how they had been able to carry on the work of J-FLAG since 1998, but with no open address. Their telephone line alone gets murderous threats every day.

A demonstration the next day at Moody Memorial Church and the residence of Cardinal George reminded us that church efforts to make gay bashing state policy, while more deadly in Jamaica, exist here too.

—Supporter

yevskaia, called "the problematic of our day—the question of socialist democracy after the revolutionary conquest of power."

A question posed by a 19-year-old woman—which followed a discussion in which Brazilian youth asked questions about Marx's Humanism, its difference from Marxist-Leninism, and the relation between social revolution and Marx's critique of alienation—summed up the challenge being posed by many young activists today: "I don't know much about Luxemburg. I haven't read much theory. But I have many questions. Two years ago we were all so excited about Lula's election. We thought things would change. But now we see he won't fight for the workers. Everyone now feels so alienated. How do we know this won't happen again and again? I want to keep fighting but I'm not sure what's the point if we're going to keep going through this. How can these ideas you are discussing help us stay in the fight for a different society?"

## INTERNAL CONTRADICTIONS

The strength of the WSF also reflects weaknesses, both politically and philosophically. The desire to have open dialog and to avoid the factionalism of the old vanguardist Left sometimes led to a reluctance to raise contentious issues. One expression of this is the tendency to focus on "neo-liberalism" and criticism of the U.S. while saying little or nothing about Islamic fundamentalism and other tendencies that adopt a narrow anti-imperialist position.

Many speakers virtually equated "neo-liberalism" and even capitalist globalization with the U.S.—as if the world isn't full of oppressive regimes and sub-imperialisms outside of direct U.S. control. Likewise, in several panels the "Iraqi resistance" was uncritically heralded—even though much of this "resistance" has been busy murdering Iraqi trade unionists and feminists who don't accept a fundamentalist or neo-Ba'athist agenda. Many seemed reluctant to criticize such regressive tendencies on the grounds that opposing the U.S. as the enemy of humanity trumps all other concerns.

The failure to recognize that we face not one but two enemies—established society and tendencies that oppose it in the name of anti-human agendas—can hardly enable the movement against global capital to overcome the lack of clarity it exhibited in response to the attacks of September 11, 2001.

Another problem was the lack of concrete, rigorous discussion about the content of a new society. It is one thing to say "another world is possible"; it is quite another to engage in the theoretical work of addressing how to create a new society freed from the dominance of capital.

Some at the WSF went no further than calling for a redistribution of global resources while refraining from any socialist or revolutionary perspective. Others who consider themselves revolutionary and who realize the futility of reducing everything to seizing power concluded that what is needed is to carve out autonomous zones freed from the impact of capital wherein we can "try to live differently."

However such a notion cannot long hold the attention of humanity so long as global capitalism is bent on destroying any haven that tries to remain freed from the capital-relation.

Much of the movement has absorbed a key lesson of the aborted revolutions of our time—namely, that having a centralized leadership or a vanguard party is the road to disaster. This creates an openness to decentralized forms of organization and calls for genuine democracy, but it does not by itself lead to filling the philosophical void in articulating an alternative to capitalism. And when there is a void the old can rush back in to supply easy answers.

## A RETURN TO STATISM?

One expression of the tendency to hem in a new reality into an old duality was the "blueprint document" signed by 19 intellectuals as the WSF was ending that outlined specific "programmatic goals" that the movement should focus on. This 12-point document, hammered out in the privacy of a hotel room, called for debt cancellation, a Tobin tax on international financial transactions, "equitable terms of trade," and moving the UN from New York to a "southern" location. The signers of this rather unradical document included Candido Grybiwski, Jose Saramago, Tariq Ali, and Immanuel Wallerstein. It is doubtful that this document will have much impact, since it was viewed by many as contradicting the horizontal, democratic character of the WSF.

More serious is the attraction of Hugo Chavez's "Bolivarian Revolution" in Venezuela. Chavez spoke as the WSF was ending in Gigantinho Stadium in Porto Alegre. Tens of thousands at the WSF turned out for his speech, hoping that he would present himself as a

radical alternative to Lula. Chavez chose not to criticize Lula in his speech, though he did energize the crowd by proclaiming for the first time that he is in favor of "socialism."

Chavez declared: "We must transcend capitalism. But we cannot resort to state capitalism, which would be the same perversion of the USSR. We must reclaim socialism as a thesis, a project, and a path, but a new type of socialism, a humanist one, which puts humans and not machines or the state ahead of everything. That's the debate we must promote around the world. The WSF is a good place to do it."

The question is what Chavez really means by such lofty words, since much of the movement against global capital had been wary of his populism out of fear that he favors a top-down "revolution" that acts "in the interests" of the masses instead of allowing them to transform society on their own.

Yet such criticisms of Chavez are increasingly taking the back seat—partly out of a sense of desperation over other alternatives and partly because many harbor illusions that "nationalized industry" is an alternative to "neo-liberalism."

Chavez is surely playing the nationalization card. In January he nationalized Venepol, Venezuela's largest paper products plant. It was closed by its private owners several years ago as part of an effort to unseat Chavez; in response, workers occupied the plant and ran it on their own through workers' self-management until last September, when it again closed. Chavez now plans for the state to run the plant, with a promise that it can be "converted" into a co-management structure between the state and workers at some unspecified future date.

Many leftists are hailing this as a "revolutionary" act—even though it was announced that the plant will be organized by the Labor Ministry. Chavez also plans to create several state-run food-processing plants to "break the monopoly" of the private sector and to nationalize plants in the key industrial region of Guayana. It should be noted that several plants in the region that are already state-run, like Alcar, an aluminum processing plant, have experienced conflicts between workers and management.

Given Chavez's increasing penchant for nationalized property, it is no wonder that he recently warmly praised Russia's President Putin, who has sought to move Russia away from the wholesale privatization of the 1990s.

While the ultimate trajectory of Chavez's "Bolivarian Revolution" is far from clear, the fact that many in the movement against global capital are jumping to embrace him is a disturbing sign. In the absence of a comprehensive concept of a new society that transcends both free market privatization and statist nationalization, many are reverting to the old notion that the nationalization of property represents the negation of capitalism—despite almost 100 years of evidence to the contrary.

The promise of the WSF, and of the movement against global capital as a whole, will be thwarted by accepting half-way houses or shortcuts to liberation. The fact that the WSF continues to grow, as seen in plans to hold several regional forums around the world in 2006 and a unified WSF in Africa in 2007, is a welcome sign. For the movement not to become compromised by existing society, however, the development of a comprehensive concept of a genuine alternative is imperative. That is not just for "others" to engage in. It is the task facing us all.

## Value theory debate

Continued from page 5

theory [to be] the physical quantities of the technical conditions of production and real wage" (44). But this physicalist substitution of "technical conditions plus real wages" for Marx's own value categories (crucially including "abstract labor") renders the theory of value redundant (as Paul Samuelson famously argued in 1971).

What is at issue, therefore, is the status and role of Marx's value categories, against the claim that Marx-like results can just as well be derived directly from the physical data without recourse to the specific social character of the capitalist mode of production (the milieu in which the value categories not only make sense but also explain the capitalist social relations that otherwise fall through the nets).

*The New Value Controversy and the Foundations of Economics* does us the favor of projecting new life into a theory cast by too many too hastily into the dustbin of history. Moreover if we want an alternative to capitalist society, we need to know what capital is. Nothing is more indispensable to this aim than the right interpretation of Marx's theory of value, as Marx himself insisted on occasions too numerous to count.



Dalit ("untouchable") delegates from India amplify their struggle through the World Social Forum.

## YOUTH

## A look at the young Marx's humanism

by Carlos Saracino

An extensive analysis of Marx's early works, especially his 1844 *Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts*, is a prerequisite for understanding of Marxism "as a totality," a phrase that I borrow from the 20th-century Marxist-Humanist philosopher, Raya Dunayevskaya. It is here that we cannot fail to find human beings at the center of his inquiry: as the premises of their own history, the makers of their own existence, and the inventors of their own reality.

Indeed, no other thinker focuses so widely on humanity in order to explain the latter in all its aspects. Marx writes that in "direct contrast to German philosophy which descends from heaven to earth...we ascend from earth to heaven." Throughout history—and Germany is certainly not alone in this—writers and thinkers have explained the existence of human beings in all their aspects (from society to art) by resorting to all sorts of mystical explanations, of which the gods have usually been the most prominent. Yet Marx reverses this relationship: gods come to be explained through the (contradictory) existence of human beings.

It is with this purpose of illuminating Marx's humanism that I will discuss below what I believe to be one of the most important of Marx's early writings, *The German Ideology* (1846). Although Engels wrote part of this text, I will refer below only to its main author, Marx.

Many believe that Marx dissipated his previous humanism here, coming to embrace a more mature scientific materialism. Yet where they see a Marx rejecting all idealism and embracing a scientific-empirical method that necessitates relentless action, I see a Marx that further expands his 1844 humanism by expounding his practical-idealist method to show the universality of human beings and the dual nature (conscious and material) of their existence, which is not a sharp dichotomy but an incessant dialectical relationship.

As Marx writes in *The German Ideology*, "circumstances make men just as much as men make circumstances." The key, then, is not the difference between idealism and materialism, but Marx's rejection of two one-sided perspectives, abstract idealism and scientific empiricism.

## THE FUNDAMENTAL PREMISE

Marx dispels all mysticism and legend regarding the origin of humanity, seizing the fire from the gods and bringing it down to earth and its rational inhabitants. Such a Promethean view of humanity is articulated by Dunayevskaya in her *Marxism and Freedom*. Thus, he writes, "The first premise of all human history is...the existence of living individuals."

As Marx wrote in "Alienated Labor" (1844), humans exist not on their own, in virtue of themselves, but as part of nature, as part of that which is the only thing that exists in virtue of itself; thus human material existence depends on nature, "for nature depends on itself." From this follows the first historical act of humans, who depending on nature for sustenance must acquire or produce their means of subsistence, an act which in turn constitutes the production of their "actual material life." Hence, humans' productive activity is their life-activity.

To better understand what Marx means by human production, we must refer again to his essay on "Alienated Labor": "man produces freely from physical need and only truly produces when he is thus free; ... thus man also fashions things according to the laws of beauty." Thus, he presupposes the existence in humans of a free, universal consciousness, capable of relating to the material condition multilaterally. From such a concept follows Marx's idealist-materialist statement to the effect that "free conscious activity is the species characteristic of man." But we notice immediately that Marx can by no means be compared to the abstract idealists, for his view is ultimately bound to the relationship between consciousness and its material condition, and not solely on inward, subjective perceptions.

## MODE OF PRODUCTION AS EXISTENTIAL DETERMINANT

In *The German Ideology*, Marx takes a closer look at the life-activity of human beings and its results, for, as he has shown, what they are is determined by their production, and thus the way in which they produce must determine the way in which they are: "What

[human beings] are...coincides with their production, both with what they produce and with how they produce it."

Consciousness, in Marx's view, is a reflection of humans' material existence in all its facets—and since the latter is conditioned by the means, the mode and the object of production, then so is the former. Thus, "The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life." All "mental production," from metaphysics to religion, is conditioned by—yet not confined to—the material factors determining production as well as the material relations ensuing from the latter. More specifically, Marx makes clear that humans are the creators of their own ideas and conceptions, and thus he parts completely with other-worldly concepts: "Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of men is their actual life process."

## THE FIVE MOMENTS OF HISTORY

Marx now offers a more systematic view of history, its development and the concomitant rise of consciousness that is in direct contradiction to the ideologists' view. He takes us back to where we started: "the first premise of all human existence and, therefore, of all history... [is] that men must be in a position to live in order to be able to make history." Thus, human life involves the satisfaction of basic needs.

The second premise of history, simply stated, is that the satisfaction of the first needs, which involves both the "action of satisfying...[as well as] the instrument of satisfaction," leads to the development of new needs. We can call this second premise the driving force of development. A very important point here is that Marx does not merely confine his view of human need to scientific and economic development, but also to all sorts of creative activity, from art to poetry.

For instance, World War II spawned several scientific inventions, such as the jet engine, which later became necessary to air travel (a need we had acquired earlier). Yet simultaneously, Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* (one of the greatest works by one of the greatest painters in history) was a reaction to the international political climate, and more specifically, to the murderous nature of Nazi aerial war tactics in fascist Spain. Thus, a change in the social relations during that period resulted not only in technological and scientific advances, but also in artistic developments (e.g. the advancement of Cubism).

Lastly we proceed to the third premise of human history, which is that "people, who daily remake their own life, begin to make other people, to propagate their kind: the relation between man and woman, parent and children, the family." The family is the first social relationship, yet with increased development it becomes subordinate to the state.

All three premises of history, says Marx, exist from the very first, not as chronological stages but as "three 'moments'...which have existed simultaneously since the dawn of history and the first men, and which still assert themselves in history today." Thus he writes: "The production of life, both of one's own in labor and of fresh life in procreation, now appears as a double relationship: on the one hand as a **natural**, on the other as a **social**, relationship" (my emphasis). Marx defines a social relationship as "the co-operation of several individuals, no matter under what conditions, in what manner, and to what end."

Now we come to see a fourth "moment": a certain mode of production must be coupled with a certain mode of cooperation, which Marx defines as a "productive force." The productive forces accessible to human beings in a given society determine the nature of that society, and hence, human history "must always be studied and treated in relation to the history of industry and exchange" (my emphasis).

Marx now comes to the fifth "moment," consciousness. Having established four basic premises of history, he says that we also come to know that humans have consciousness, yet that it is "not inherent, not 'pure' consciousness." Consciousness, like all of human existence, is bound by matter, and thus consciousness first expresses itself through its material form: language. But once again, we note his implacable emphasis on the material condition, which is not to say that consciousness is completely subordinate to matter, but that it is conditioned by the latter. "Language," Marx

says, "is as old as consciousness, language is practical consciousness that exists also for other men...**language, like consciousness, arises from the need, the necessity, of intercourse with other men**" (my emphasis).

As humanity develops, the division of labor ceases to be solely sexual (arising from the inevitability of the differing roles of man and woman in procreation), or spontaneous (arising out of natural predisposition, "needs, accidents, etc."). It is at this point that division of labor proper—the "**division of mental and material labor**" [emphasis added]—makes its first appearance, with the priests entering history as the first ideologists.

Only at this point, Marx argues, can consciousness become "other than consciousness of existing practice... [representing] something without representing something real." Consciousness is now in a position to free itself from the fetters of the material world, and only now can it venture into religion, philosophy, etc. Yet even if the latter comes into contradiction with existing socio-political relations, it is only because consciousness itself, even its "unfettered" manifestations, never ceases to represent at least part of the active life-process of human beings, and thus the material reality by which it is conditioned; thus Marx writes that if any of these "pure" manifestations of consciousness come into conflict with existing relations, it is only because "existing social relations have come into contradiction with existing forces of production."

Consciousness, as a part of human existence since the first moment in history, constitutes an essential reflection (or a dialectical negation) of the existing forces of production and society. Yet insofar as consciousness is interwoven with material activity and reacts to the latter just as much as the latter reacts to it, we see that **it too can affect change**. But we make this claim carefully, lest we should forget the material medium on which consciousness must, so to speak, exert and manifest itself: the world that we have built through our conscious-material life-activity can only change—**truly change**—by means of a change in the latter.

## THE HUMANIST PATH TO REVOLUTION

We have now seen the materialist premises underlying the whole of Marx's Humanism. We have seen him take the first certainty, the self-evident fact of all of human existence—human existence itself—and build from it a whole new way of looking at the world and its rational inhabitants. Human beings are no longer made in the image of God, nor **are** we because we think—*Cogito ergo sum*—we now see that God was made in our image, and that we think because we **are**! And who but human beings, by the very **process** whereby they live could have created all of this? This is all too evident to us.

What strikes us now with more force than ever is that inherent in the very core of Marx's thought, from the very first, is the path to revolution. **Any and all change in human society derives from a change in the mode of labor, and a free society must of necessity be a society wherein individuals associate freely and spontaneously—wherein they freely relate to the activity and object of production.** Thus we see that freedom as an idea no longer retains any independence or any hope of effecting change by itself, for freedom in actuality can be nothing but freedom and spontaneity in production.

We also see that the "uprooting of existing social relations"—the patriarchal family, class society, etc.—depends as much on the development of theory, insofar as producing real change is concerned, as on our actual life-activity. Theory acquires its merit and relevance, not insofar as it is a clever logical abstraction or a castle in the air, but insofar as it is **practical theory**, that is **insofar as it has the power to influence and direct action.**

Marx has empowered humanity with the fire of creation—it is for no other reason that Dunayevskaya calls Marx's view Promethean. He writes of human beings that not only create their **own** existence by means of production but that "daily remake their own life": thus the world in which we wake up tomorrow will forever be of our own making. Whether we exterminate all life on earth, or whether we build the material foundations for a new social order—so long as we exist remains **our** choice.

"Human Power is its own end."



Marx as a radical student

## NEWS &amp; LETTERS

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## OUR LIFE AND TIMES

# Auschwitz shadows Bush, Europe

by Kevin A. Barry

George Bush's February trip to Europe was full of diplomatic niceties, but did little to stem the inter-capitalist divide between the U.S. and Europe. In Germany, as Bush's motorcade rode through the silent streets of Mainz, cleared for "security" reasons, 15,000 anti-war demonstrators gathered in the distance. A town meeting had to be cancelled after the German government denied a U.S. request to screen out "hostile" participants as undemocratic. Recent polls showed that even Russia's authoritarian Vladimir Putin is viewed more favorably than Bush! He had to travel 400 miles further east, to tiny formerly Communist Slovakia, before he could find a sympathetic crowd.

Nonetheless, at least at the inter-capitalist level, Bush was on stronger ground than last year. He has been re-elected to head the sole remaining superpower. The Iraq elections went far more smoothly than anticipated. And the weak U.S. economy is still much stronger than those of its European counterparts. In 2004, unemployment across the European Union (EU) averaged 8.9% (vs. 5.4% in the U.S.), with the economic growth rate a mere 2.2% (vs. 4.3% in the U.S.). This underlies German Prime Minister Gerhard Schroeder's drive to roll back Germany's welfare state.

With German unemployment at its highest level since 1945, it is doubtful that Schroeder's beleaguered social democratic government will give up its most important source of popularity, opposition over Iraq, and over U.S. unilateralism more generally. (Even Putin has signed the Kyoto Protocol on global warming, allowing this international treaty to go into effect.)

The diplomatic smiles between Bush and France's Jacques Chirac may have had slightly more substance. They are largely in accord over Lebanon. Moreover, just as Bush has always felt an affinity to Putin's brutal war in Chechnya, he surely sympathizes with Chirac's efforts to end one of the most significant gains for labor of the 1990s, the 35-hour week. Despite demonstra-

tions by hundreds of thousands of workers on Jan. 20 and Feb. 5, Chirac has already pushed this retrogressive change through the lower house of parliament.

All of this is occurring in the context of the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp on Jan. 27, 1945, at a time when Europe has seen a rise in anti-Semitic and racist incidents. Because Auschwitz was liberated by Russian troops (in the U.S. at the time, Soviet newsreels of the emaciated survivors were dismissed for months as Communist propaganda), the anniversary received little attention in the U.S., which was not among the 50 countries whose

heads of state attended the on-site commemorations, alongside 1,000 very elderly survivors. In 2005, in that place of horror where Nazis murdered 1.5 million people, two-thirds of them Jews, there were many stirring speeches.

Ukraine's Viktor Yushenko, whose father survived Auschwitz as a Red Army prisoner, vowed that "anti-Semitism and xenophobia" would "never again" be allowed to dominate his country. Putin condemned Nazi brutality, but did not specifically mention Jews, here following the old Stalinist line. (In Russia itself, reactionaries and Stalinists introduced legislation that would have banned many Jewish organizations, something Putin's forces quickly quashed.)

Poland's Alexander Kwasniewski saluted all who fought against the Nazis, including the Russians, and singled out "the horrific fate of the Jews." Nonetheless, Polish politicians attempted to bloc European Parliament language mentioning that Auschwitz was "in Poland." They wish to celebrate Poland's massive and heroic resistance without acknowledging those who collaborated, let alone the contradictions of the resistance itself. Such problems are not limited to Eastern Europe. In February, the anniversary of the destruction of Dresden by allied bombs was marred by a demonstration by 5,000 neo-Nazis, who were answered by thousands more carrying white roses, a reference to the anti-Nazi student movement of that name.

## Togo seeks democracy

The death of military dictator Gnassingbe Eyadema has touched off a strong democratic movement in this small West African country. Throughout February, mass demonstrations and strikes confronted the military, which first tried to install the dictator's son, Faure Gnassingbe, to fill out his father's term through 2008.

That tactic failed, not only because of the demonstrations, in which three gave their lives, but because more powerful pressure was brought to bear on Togo by leaders of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

After three weeks of internal protests and outside pressure from ECOWAS, Faure Gnassingbe resigned. The regime now promises a multiparty election.



People protest in Lome, Togo.

## Middle East talks

The chances for a permanent settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict are greater today than at any time since 2000. Since the Palestinian Authority elections in January, Israel's Likud-Labor coalition government has finally begun to make some important symbolic concessions. For example, Israel announced that it was suspending two of its most provocative and humiliating tactics: 1) demolition of the homes of the families of Palestinian terrorists, and 2) assassination of Palestinian militants. This means that the truce declaration at the February Palestinian-Israeli summit at Sharm el-Sheik, Egypt, stands on firmer ground than the short-lived ceasefire of 2003, when neither of these provocations was ended.

The Palestinian Authority has, as in 2003, obtained ceasefire pledges from the two largest organizers of terrorist attacks inside Israel, Hamas and Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade. The reorganized Palestinian leadership has also hinted that it would accept a realistic compromise on the demand of five million refugees to return to Israel proper. Will it make an explicit declaration on this most crucial issue for Israel?

Beyond its declared aim of evacuating the Gaza Strip and the symbolic moves mentioned above, it is unclear if the U.S.-backed Israeli state is prepared to make serious compromises over territory. Will it continue to construct a separation wall inside Palestinian territory? Is it ready to cede the whole of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, the geographical requirement for a viable Palestinian state? The present ceasefire benefits the occupier more than the occupied, since it freezes the status quo, but the patience of the occupied is not infinite.

## Milosevic war trial

For two years, the trial of Serbian war criminal Slobodan Milosevic has ground on at The Hague. The International War Crimes Tribunal has permitted him to present a totally ideological defense aimed at Serbian nationalist opinion.

Rather than attempting to rebut concrete charges concerning 200,000 killed, millions driven from their homes in "ethnic cleansing," or countless rapes in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Croatia—all at the hands of Serbian forces—in November Milosevic called as his first witness the region's most famous philosopher, Mihailo [Mihajlo] Markovic. Once a principled socialist humanist, but since 1986 a rabid Serbian nationalist, Markovic obliged by testifying that in Serbia in the 1980s it was the Albanian minority that was oppressing the Serbs.

As to Milosevic's infamous March 1989 speech calling for "armed" Serbs to "battle" the region's ethnic minorities—Markovic testified that Milosevic was really defending the "need for unity, national equality, and tolerance." He held that Western imperialist powers wanted to splinter Yugoslavia.

Markovic has earned a place among those philosophers of the age of state-capitalism who used their dialectical skills to justify the most inhuman forms of oppression, from Heidegger and the Nazis, to various "progressives" and totalitarian Communism, to Foucault and Khomeinism.

## Lebanon opening?

The assassination of liberal politician Rafik Hariri has sparked a vast democratic movement that includes members of all this fractured country's major religious groups—Christians, Sunni Muslims, and Druse—except for Shi'ite Muslims. At a huge public funeral—attended by women as well as men at the invitation of Hariri's Sunni family, in defiance of Muslim tradition—participants laid the blame at Syria's door.

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has continued his father's policy of dominating Lebanon through the presence of 15,000 Syrian troops and control of the Lebanese police and intelligence apparatus. Syria has not hesitated to use intimidation, including assassination. Last September, it humiliated nationalist sentiment by pressuring the Lebanese parliament to change the constitution to permit President Emile Lahoud to serve another term, something Hariri opposed.

In today's Lebanon, "the scent of Kiev wafts in the air," as *Le Monde* aptly put it. A few days after the funeral, 100,000 took to the streets to accuse Syria, this in a country of only 3.7 million people. Since then, young men and women with Lebanese flags painted on their faces have camped outside parliament. The government retreated a bit, as the pro-Syrian prime minister and his cabinet resigned, but Lahoud stayed on.

With U.S. troops on its doorstep and serious Israeli-Palestinian negotiations underway, Assad junior seems either to have miscalculated, or to have lost control of his father's military-intelligence apparatus. In any case, Syria has misjudged the political climate, unlike the Lebanese opposition.

It was shocking to hear longtime anti-imperialist Walid Jumblatt, the Druse leader who now heads the opposition, tell the *Washington Post*: "This process of change started because of the American invasion of Iraq. I was cynical about Iraq. But when I saw the Iraqi people voting three weeks ago, eight million of them, it was the start of a new Arab world."

That may be true. But what do the Lebanese democrats think about the country's 415,000 Palestinian refugees, confined to camps and denied citizenship or even the right to work? Or about the Shi'ite community, the country's most impoverished, where the pro-Syrian fundamentalists of Hezbollah hold sway?

## 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*.