

## WORKSHOP TALKS

### Workers' lifetime labor stolen again

by Htun Lin

The pensions and health benefits of retirees everywhere are threatened with unilateral cuts imposed by management. This hits workers from the public sector to private industry, like auto and the airlines.

At United, the unions entered into a cooperative arrangement whereby workers were sold employee stock option plans (ESOP) in exchange for deep wage cuts, speed-ups, health and benefit cuts, and other takebacks, in order to help the financially ailing airline. When it no longer served the company's purpose, United dispensed with the ESOP.

When the company later declared bankruptcy, the employee stock options failed. Further, management announced unilaterally it would no longer honor the pension and health benefits of its retirees, and used the bankruptcy judge to throw workers to the mercy of the underfunded Pension Guarantee Board.

When those in the labor movement act as though there is no alternative but to make concessions to capital, there is no end. Capitalists keep coming back for more concessions in all arenas. In California, Schwarzenegger's forces are pushing their special election on us so they can pass more anti-worker initiatives which they were unable to pass through the legislature. There are measures to attack teachers, nurses, and public service workers—our pay, our pensions, and even our job security. But the most deceptive

Continued on page 3

## BLACK/REDVIEW

### Recollecting John Brown's revolt

by John Alan

*In world history we deal with the Idea as it manifests itself in the element of human will, of human freedom.... Objectively seen the Idea and the particular individual stand in the great opposition of Necessity and Freedom—the struggle of man against fate. But we take necessity not as that of the external necessity of fate, but as that of the divine Idea. The question then is: How is this high Idea to be united with human freedom?*

—Hegel on "the individual as subject of history" in *Reason in History*

David S. Reynolds' *John Brown, Abolitionist: The Man Who Killed Slavery, Sparked the Civil War, and Seeded Civil Rights* (Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 2005) has received many favorable reviews in the press. Apparently, a considerable number of people are still profoundly interested in John Brown's October 1859 raid on the Federal Arsenal in Harpers Ferry, Virginia, with armed white and Black followers.

Reynolds tells the reader that John Brown and his armed men quickly took control of the U.S. armory, the arsenal and the rifleworks in Harpers Ferry and then: "All that was now needed was for the word to spread to local slaves, and soon the liberation force would be swelled by hundreds, perhaps thousands of emancipated Blacks.

"At least, that's what Brown thought. He sent a party into the countryside to liberate slaves and take

Continued on page 10

## ON THE INSIDE

- WOMAN AS REASON • Will next Supreme Court end choice? ..... 2**
- WRITINGS OF RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA**
- What is Marxist-Humanism's relation to Marx's humanism? ..... 4**
- YOUTH • An anti-global capital activist views Marx's critique of Proudon ... 11**
- ONLINE: [www.newsandletters.org](http://www.newsandletters.org)**

## DRAFT FOR MARXIST-HUMANIST PERSPECTIVES, 2005 - 2006

# Developing a philosophically grounded alternative to capital

The terrorist attack in London on July 7, which killed at least 50, must be condemned by all who aspire for liberation. There is no justification for this attack, most likely carried out by reactionary religious fundamentalists.

The way in which the attack was timed to coincide with the G-8 meeting in Scotland represents a serious blow to the forces of liberation. Tens of thousands came to Scotland to protest the agenda of the G-8 and to demand a new approach to poverty, racism, and environmental destruction. Thanks to the attack, such voices are being drowned out. The attack will also divert attention from eliminating Africa's poverty and debt, as the effort to sway world opinion to deal with such issues will be subsumed by concerns over future terrorist attacks.

These events show how crucial it is for the freedom movements to firmly oppose all forms of terrorism and religious fundamentalism in the course of projecting a comprehensive alternative to this capitalist system. If that is not done, the "two terrorisms" of the rulers and the Islamic fundamentalists will continue to feed off each other in a way that will divert, disorient, and even destroy the freedom movements themselves.

The attacks occurred on the heels of the recent rejection of the European Union (EU) Constitution in France and The Netherlands. On the one hand, the vote manifested the wide gulf between Europe's elites and the populace. A large percentage of French youth voted against it and in some working class areas 80% voted no. The "no" votes reflected dissatisfaction with Europe's stagnant economy, high levels of unemployment, and fears that Europe will go the way of U.S.-style "free market" economic restructuring as much as concerns over the content of the Constitution itself. Many in Europe clearly fear that the drive for increased integration will become a mechanism for cutting wages and social services in the countries with the highest wages and benefits.

On the other hand, the vote was no triumph for the Left. Those advocating a "no" vote included the neo-fascist and racist Right, which fears that greater EU integration will open the door to more immigration and the loss of national sovereignty.

Moreover Bush found it hard to hide his glee over France's rejection of the constitution—not only because it makes life much more difficult for French President Chirac, who opposed his decision to invade Iraq, but also because it reduces any chance that a politically unified EU will emerge in the near future that could serve as a counterweight to the U.S. global hegemony. It appears that the Right may turn out to be the immediate beneficiary of the present situation.

This is not the first time that European leftists and rightists ended up on the same side of a political issue. In the 1960s many British leftists opposed Britain's entry into the Common Market because they didn't want national capital to be subjected to international capital. As Raya Dunayevskaya noted at the time, such views reflected a complete lack of revolutionary internationalism.(1)

This year's vote on the EU Constitution shows that simply saying "no" does not represent a forward step in the movement for liberation. Much, much more is demanded. The key is not whether one opposes specific aspects of today's reality but whether one projects a concept of the transcendence of capitalism. If



Edinburgh "Vigil for London victims [of bombings] and those of war and poverty," July 7, during the G-8 summit in Scotland.

the radical movement refrains from the arduous theoretic and practical labor needed to meet that challenge, it will repeat the errors of the past instead of posing a viable alternative.

## I. Bush's Wars at Home and in Iraq

### A. Fighting the Right's 'Vision' of the Future

Nowhere is a new alternative needed more than in the U.S., where Bush and the Republicans are trying to impose total ideological and political control.

Bush's lie that his reelection provided him with a "mandate" to push for deep cuts in social security, medicare, and other programs, while doling out tens of billions more to continue the war in Iraq, reflects a serious social crisis.

Real wages for workers in the U.S. today are falling at the fastest rate in 14 years. The modest economic growth has not filtered down to most workers, who are being forced to work longer hours to keep up with the cost of living, especially in light of ballooning costs for health insurance. The lack of health insurance is hitting Blacks and Latinos especially hard; while they make up 29% of the U.S. population, they account for 52% of those without health insurance.

Bush's "answer" is to call for even deeper cuts in social programs and to demand that his tax cuts for the rich be made permanent. His 2006 budget calls for deep cuts in everything from veterans' benefits to the Low Income Heating Energy Assistance Program.

Such policies exacerbate capitalist society's tendency to become more and more class stratified. A recent study showed that for every additional dollar of income earned by the bottom 90% of the population from 1990 to 2002, the richest Americans (one-tenth of 1% of the population) earned an additional \$18,000.

The social dislocations produced by this concentration of wealth and power at one pole and immiseration at the other hits youth and African Americans especially hard. Teenagers seeking employment are having less success in obtaining jobs than at any time since statistics on teenage employment began to be compiled in 1948. In Chicago, only one out of 10 African-American teenagers has a job.

Meanwhile, spending on police and the criminal injustice system continues to climb, even as crime rates decline. The incarceration of an entire generation of African-American youth makes a mockery of the claim that the U.S. is a model of "democracy"—a point projected in many meetings, protests, and forums against police abuse and the criminal injus-

Continued on page 5

Z/Independent Media Center

# WOMAN AS REASON Our bodies are ours!

by Terry Moon

The shock of Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor's resignation was not that it came, but that it came so soon. Women reacted immediately because we know that Bush will use her resignation to nominate someone bent on destroying the rights won by women, Blacks, and workers, and making legal abortion a thing of the past. At the National Organization for Women's national conference over the fourth of July weekend, the young feminist taskforce transformed the meeting, holding strategy sessions and a spontaneous march of 700 women to the Tennessee state capital, chanting the familiar: "Not the church! Not the state! Women will decide our fate!" Thereby women are revealing our determination to control our own bodies and minds.

## APPEALS TO REACTIONARIES

That direct action was a relief from all the emails imploring women to call their congressional representatives. It is those Democrats we're being told to call who have demonstrated how eager they are to downplay abortion rights as they try to appeal to the Republicans' reactionary supporters. Hillary Clinton opportunistically led the way when she declared "respect" for fanatics "who believe with all their heart and conscience that there are no circumstances under which abortion should be available."

O'Connor was seen as someone holding back reaction as she cast the deciding vote that overturned a ban on late-term abortions, banned state-sponsored prayer at high school graduations, preserved narrowly drawn affirmative action at universities, and required the Bush administration to grant hearings to detainees in the so-called fight against terrorism. That's why her resignation is being met by women's groups with phrases like: "Armageddon," "Earthquake in American politics," "Women's lives are at stake," "This is a state of emergency," and "This is it."

## SWING VOTE ELECTS BUSH

But not only were these cases narrowly interpreted by O'Connor, who was appointed by Ronald Reagan as the first woman on the Supreme Court, she was also the swing vote that selected Bush as president over the popular vote of the American people. Her resignation, giving him the opportunity to replace her, was deliberate. *Newsweek* reported that on hearing Al Gore announced as the winner, she exclaimed, "This is terrible," and told her husband she would not retire if Gore would be choosing her replacement.

Crowning Bush may be her most heinous act, but not her only one. When in the Arizona Senate, she voted against busing, opposed gun control, and championed the death penalty. On the Supreme Court she voted to strike down federal laws that barred carrying of firearms within 1,000 yards of a school, a provision permitting disabled state employees to sue their bosses for discrimination, and a provision that let rape victims sue their attackers in federal court. On abortion she voted to let hospital personnel refuse to participate in abortions; dissented from a ruling that struck down an Akron, Ohio ordinance that put regulations on abortion, including a required 24-hour waiting period; and voted to uphold abortion restrictions in Pennsylvania and Missouri.

## RETROGRESSIONIST NOMINEES

Given O'Connor's conservative agenda, the fondness for her now displayed by some women's organizations and liberals is a measure of how retrogressive the times are; that, and the fact that every nominee on Bush's short list to replace her is a diehard retrogressionist on women's rights, affirmative action, environmental concerns, and workers' rights. There is no question that, with her gone, things will get much worse.

What we in the movement have to face is how women's organizations have compromised their principles and are thus partly responsible for the place we now find ourselves. That compromising is reaching new heights as the word "abortion" disappears from our vocabulary, as groups try to downplay abortion rights and emphasize instead that anti-abortion fanatics are also anti-birth control fanatics. The crucial demand for abortion rights has often been criticized as too narrow, as if that demand somehow means that

## Women in Black

**NEW YORK**—The 38th anniversary of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza was remembered here on June 9. More than 100 people joined a protest by Women in Black (Union Square Group), which has held a vigil weekly since shortly after September 11, 2001, to bring attention to the continuing war against the Palestinians. Women in Black is an international peace network, founded in 1988 by Israeli women against the occupation, and since appearing in war zones around the world.

Code Pink co-sponsored the June 9 event and added the dimension of opposition to the U.S. occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan. One speaker, Rabad Abdulhadi, a Palestinian lesbian feminist who teaches in Michigan, spoke about all these occupations and added another: the occupation by the police of New York City. She declared that we can imagine another world, one without domination.

—International feminist

women don't want the right to have children as well. Of course we do. The demand for abortion was never limited to the right to end a pregnancy—and that is one huge reason why it is contested so violently. What we are saying with this decades-long struggle is that no one can tell us what to do with our own bodies. Our bodies are ours! We are saying it is an outrage that any government can tell a woman what to do with her womb, or any part of her body or sexuality. The fight for bodily integrity is, for women, part of what Marx would call our quest for universality, our desire to be whole human beings.

The depth of the retrogression we face is seen in how so many are thinking the most we can demand is that Bush nominate an O'Connor clone. Eleanor Smeal, head of the Feminist Majority, urges us to insist on "the appointment of a woman at least as centrist as Sandra Day O'Connor." Why should we limit our demand for full freedom and personhood to that!? The women's movement doesn't need to compromise more and more. What's required is the opposite. Now is the time to show that the recent March for Women's Lives that brought out the largest demonstration in U.S. history was only the beginning. It is that kind of force and Reason that is the only thing that will stay Bush's hand and move us towards the kind of total uprooting of this sexist, racist, anti-human, capitalist society that is necessary for the quest for universality to be realized.

## NY protest supports Pakistani feminist



**NEW YORK**—Local South Asian and Islamic women's groups turned out June 22 to a press conference and protest against the government of Pakistan for its refusal to permit Mukhtaran Bibi to travel out of the country. Ms. Bibi, who became a women's rights defender following horrific violence against her, was embarking on an international tour June 9 when she was briefly arrested and her passport was confiscated.

Three years ago, a Pakistani tribal council sentenced Mukhtaran Bibi to be gang raped as punishment to her family for an alleged affair between her brother and a woman of a higher-ranking tribe. After the sentence was carried out, she was forced to walk home naked in front of onlookers. Instead of committing suicide out of shame, as is customary for raped women in Pakistan, she began to fight for justice. She got the perpetrators prosecuted and six were convicted, although five convictions were since reversed and she continues to live in fear of retribution.

## SURVIVOR DENOUNCES VIOLENCE

Incredibly, Ms. Bibi refused to move away from her village. She used her compensation money to start two elementary schools (she made sure the children of her rapists could attend them) and a women's shelter, as well as acquire a local ambulance. She began to speak out against honor killings, rapes, acid attacks, and other violence against women in Pakistan. One speaker at the protest said her actions had turned her into a symbol of hope and of loyalty.

Several speakers highlighted the Pakistani government's lies that it enforces women's rights. One speaker pointed out that General Musharraf had denounced NGOs working for women's rights, calling them "as bad as terrorists." Another speaker said, "If this is how the government treats an internationally known woman, imagine how it treats poor women," and told of a recent women's demonstration that was attacked by the police.

## CHANGES FROM GRASSROOTS

In the past 15 years, we were told, most progressive changes have come from the grassroots, not the government. One speaker emphasized that violence against women does not arise from Islam but from male chauvinism, just as in the U.S., violence is not due to Christianity. A speaker from the sponsoring organization, the Asian-American Network Against Abuse of Women, insisted that "we are not unpatriotic for raising conditions in Pakistan in the Western media." Another local woman said, "we need to be supporters, not leaders, of the movement in Pakistan."

—Anne Jaclard

## NOW rally to preserve women's rights

**NASHVILLE, TENN.**—When I left for the national NOW (National Organization for Women) conference here the first weekend in July, little did I know that it would occur when Justice Sandra Day O'Connor decided to retire. Although the right to choose was the main issue, other concerns where O'Connor's vote made a difference included cases involving affirmative action and sodomy.

When the news came down of the O'Connor vacancy, the leadership of Tennessee and Nashville NOW went into action and called for a rally to take place the next day at noon in Legislative Plaza. (This is the spot where the vote to ratify the 19th amendment, which gave the right to vote for all women, took place.)

A press conference occurred on Friday and speakers included NOW President Kim Gandy, Eleanor Smeal representing her organization, Feminist Majority and the former ambassador, Carol Moseley-Braun. At the rally other organizations were represented including Dolores Huerta of the United Farm Workers and Martha Burk of the National Council of Women's Organizations as well as local leaders. Due to time considerations other leaders, such as Medea Benjamin of Global Exchange and Code Pink, were announced but did not give speeches.

At the same time we supported the struggle going on in Nashville to reinstate local disability rights. A group of disabled activists were engaged in an ongoing sit-in at the Capitol for disability rights as cuts in the state's program were being considered.

Meanwhile, the conference continued with ongoing workshops, political institutes, issue hearings and films being presented at the same time.

Issue hearings dealt with such subjects as Civil Rights and Racism, Constitutional Equality and Legal Strategies. Workshops (22 held) included "Seeking Justice for Poor and Struggling Families" and "Call Off the Vigilantes: Where is the Safe Harbor for Immigrant Women?"

On Sunday, we voted on the work NOW will do from the 20 resolutions brought forth to the body of the delegates from the issue hearings and petitions that had at least 100 signatures. A few of the resolutions that passed addressed "Strategic Nonviolent Resistance," "Transgendered Inclusion" and "Stop the War" (Iraq).

—Sue S.

## WOMEN WORLDWIDE

by Mary Jo Grey

Legislation to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act was introduced in the U.S. Senate in June and must be approved by Sept. 30 or it will expire. No action has yet been taken. Does the right-wing Republican Congress, already intent on undermining women's rights, also plan to deny us the right to life?

The Feminism and Hip-Hop conference that took place over three days in April at the University of Chicago is the latest in a growing challenge to the sexual objectification of Black women in hip-hop music and videos. The national discussion was ignited last year by women students at historically-Black Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia, when hip-hop star Nelly cancelled a charity event at their campus because they demanded a meeting with him to discuss the demeaning images of Black women in his videos. Response to the Chicago conference was so overwhelming that registration had to be closed early. Young music lovers were joined by feminist scholars, hip-hop journalists, video models and artists. They shared ways to combat this depiction of women as less than human, that results in women being treated that way; to stop broadcasting such images around the world "leading people to believe that's who Black women are," and to end the destruction of women's self-worth. Said one participant, "I was thrilled to see young women come together in a collective voice and say you have to be accountable."

Quebec's unanimous vote to ban the misogynist Shari'a Court is a "victory for all defenders of human rights," said Homa Arjomand, Coordinator of the International Campaign Against Shari'a Court in Canada. She called the decision a positive move towards elimination of interference of religion in the justice system. The struggle continues to overturn Ontario's decision last year to adopt Shari'a law in that province.

Women from Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe met in Windhoek, Namibia to launch the Coalition of African Lesbians with a goal for African lesbian equality and visibility. They are working to secure full human rights and to be respected as full citizens in all spheres of life.

—Information from Women's Human Rights Online Bulletin

# Iraqi unionists defy occupiers and fundamentalists

**DETROIT**—About 50 labor activists came out on June 19 to hear first-hand reports on conditions and struggles of workers in Iraq under U.S. occupation. The first speaker, Amjad Ali Aljawhry, North American representative for the Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions of Iraq (FWCUI), has been in exile since 1995 for his organizing activities. He described the 60% unemployment, the 100,000 Iraqi deaths in the last two years, and the deteriorating infrastructure.

The second speaker, Falah Awan, President of the FWCUI, has been an underground organizer for many years. He wants the Federation to play a role in shaping the future Iraqi society, a society without divisions. For that, he insists, the U.S. occupation must end immediately. He recalled the 60 million worldwide who came out against the war before it began and said we need to reactivate that anti-war movement to end the occupation.

In response to my question about the FWCUI's relationship to the Organization for Women's Freedom in Iraq (OWFI), Mr. Awan discussed the situation of women workers. In textiles, women make half of what men earn. Women must often exchange sexual favors to receive their pay. FWCUI has proposed a Labor Code to end such practices. Because of their principle of full equality, they support and participate in OWFI's events.

—Susan Van Gelder

**CHICAGO**—Below we excerpt remarks by FWCUI leaders and their responses to questions on June 17 at the UNITE HERE hall.

**Amjad Ali Aljawhry:** I'd like to thank all of the unions here in Chicago, especially U.S. Labor Against the War. I'd like to begin with a phrase we've been saying over and over. We want to end the occupation now.

Since the occupation started, the Iraqi people have never seen one single day of peace. Whenever you want to go outside, you need to remember that, 50%, you may not be coming back home. A lot of detonated cars in the street, suicide bombers, rocket-propelled grenades.

The democracy that we've been promised, we've never seen anything from it. Even the election that we had—we call it a phony election—it brought a government based on ethnicity, based on religion, divided the country, divided the society into groups and divisions that deepens ethnic tension and puts society on the verge of civil war.

The government, or the CPA, when they were in place, set wages that for an ordinary worker would be the minimum wage of \$35 per month. It has become \$45 per month per worker, which is not enough to pay half of his rent.

Clothing has become a luxury for these people. The unemployment rate has officially gone up to 40%. We don't believe that. There is no social security, there is

no unemployment insurance. The government is using the same labor code as the former regime.

The health care system is devastated. Corruption is devastating the country. Many projects to build society were called off and the money redirected toward more security. Without withdrawal of the occupying troops, democracy won't be established, the unions that we are representing won't be established.

The situation of women is actually getting worse and worse, where she cannot go outside by herself, but needs an escort. And that escort must be a male.

We were not able to criticize the government of Saddam Hussein, and today we cannot criticize Saddam Hussein himself, even though he is not in power, because of the security situation. If you take a cab, any cab driver has a gun on him, and you don't know if he's pro-Saddam or if he's pro-terrorist groups or if he's pro-government.

The last thing that I would like to say is that the people who are dying are innocent. I'm not saying just the civilians. Our sons, both Iraqi and American, deserve to live a better life in prosperity. They don't deserve death, they don't deserve torture.

**Falah Awan:** The occupation doesn't mean only the presence of the tanks. The occupying troops have installed a government based on ethnic and religious division. It is not a sovereign government, but is a translator of U.S. policy in Iraq.

The Iraqi labor movement has its own alternative to this situation. This is the first time for the labor movement that they can elect their representatives and leaders. Governments have installed unions to represent the worker. Therefore, these unions represent the regime's interests rather than the workers.

We fight for a modern labor code and labor law. And we fight for participation in writing the constitution. We fight to end the domination of the right wing and the reactionary powers in Iraq. We fight to build a secular labor movement in Iraq. This is not the task of Iraqi workers only, but all the workers around the world, and all the libertarian workers, and all the freedom lovers and equality lovers.

Responding to a question about the role of FWCUI in helping to establish workers' councils, especially in

**Nasiriyah:**

Nasiriyah was one of the cities where we have councils. The biggest aluminum plant and the largest power generation station are in Nasiriyah. The workers stood against the government's intention to privatize the aluminum industry.

They didn't do it only to increase working wages and decrease working hours, they demanded improved electricity output in the city. The administration was deliberately operating the station at 25% of capacity. Later the workers found out that the administration has ties to power generator importers. They demanded an end to the corruption.

We organized the workers in councils. We demanded improved health and safety standards, increased wages, and paid days off. But the administration didn't achieve anything because there is no labor code, there is no law that limits or controls its activity.

Responding to how FWCUI would deal with Kurdish aspirations for separatism:

Political freedom is not better than the old days under Saddam. In 1991, when we formed a union of unemployed, there at that time, they opened fire on the demonstrators, and three people were killed, all members of the UI, or the Union of the Unemployed at that time, and two members of the councils. They were the leaders of these unions. That's after they took over the power by some months.

The question of the future of Kurdistan, or the issue of Kurdistan itself, must be redirected to the Kurdish people themselves.

We demand immediate end of the occupation, plus a secular state that separates religion from the state, and ending the conditions of terrorism. These are the immediate demands of the Iraqi society. Ending the occupation doesn't mean the social revolution.

Responding to a self-described socialist who attacked the FWCUI condemning the U.S. occupation and the resistance equally, claiming that the masses of the oppressed Iraqi identified with the resistance against the occupation:

The same question has arisen when I was in France and in Finland and in Japan, that you condemn this resistance and you condemn the occupation. Let me tell you something, bombing a school bus with 25 children, the Left unfortunately, and I want to stress this strongly, the Left doesn't want to distinguish itself from the terrorism and doesn't want to put itself as a representative of humanity.

As a person who believes in the social revolution, you [the questioner] believe that these parties, or these groups, represent classes in society. There are social interests that stand behind them, even the militant ones. These are forms of the bourgeoisie. They fight the United States, not to get rid of injustice in Iraq, but to have their share of government or power.

## UC workers' strike



Ursula Wisniewski / News & Letters

**OAKLAND, CAL**—Coalition of University Employees (CUE), representing 16,000 of the lowest paid workers, mostly women and people of color, at University of California, staged a three-day strike. On June 15 picketers from campuses all over the state filled the street in front of the UC administration building in downtown Oakland.

UC administration is more and more looking at its working people as the enemy. They declared an impasse in negotiations for the agreement for 2003-04 and went to a fact finder. The fact finder found that UC can afford to grant pay raises to clericals, but UC ignored the report. In 2004 two-thirds of the \$20 million allocated for raises went back to the general fund. We have not had a pay raise for three years.

Ordinarily I would not walk a picket line for a short time strike. It won't do a lot. We don't have the whole membership behind us. We need to raise awareness for union support and for the talks. AFSCME took a deal in May that UC is trying to force now on others. They agreed that raises be contingent on getting money from the legislature, but UC gets only 17% of its revenue from state funding. How can a prominent institution like UC treat its workers so poorly?

—UC Davis clerical worker

## Stop homecare cuts

**LOS ANGELES**—On May 24, one day after Coca Cola drivers, bottlers and warehouse workers demonstrated against a lockout, 5,000 homecare workers assembled downtown in a spirited protest against Governor Schwarzenegger's agenda of wage cuts. Mostly women workers came from throughout southern California. Though most present were Latinas, there were many blacks and Asians.

A member of Californians for Disability Rights spoke from a wheelchair and stated that the Governor's proposal to lower the state hourly minimum wage from \$8.10 to \$6.75 would eventually drive patients to nursing homes. A state assembly member added that lowering homecare workers' wages is not about saving money but is a union-busting plan, because care in a nursing home is four times as expensive as homecare.

The president of Local 434B, which organized the rally, said, "We're fighting for a better life for homecare workers—God never intended for one group to have all the wealth," and gave organizers credit for the turnout: "We can turn out 5,000 united homecare workers."

—Basho

## WORKSHOP TALKS

Continued from page 1

proposition is one called "Paycheck Protection Initiative." It's dressed up to look like a proposition to promote union democracy.

This is yet another sinister attempt to bust unions. Its supporters say, who could possibly object to a little more "democracy" in our unions, forcing union bureaucrats to get our individual permission before they spend our hard-earned dollars on political campaigns.

Never mind that company executives don't need our permission to take back benefits contractually promised to us. Never mind that the initiative process has been appropriated by big money corporations that can afford to buy signatures to put anything they want on the ballot and use their deep pockets to promote it in their corporate-owned media.

When Schwarzenegger repeats that he is cleaning up Sacramento of "special interests," he means to get rid of unions. Schwarzenegger has targeted strong public service unions such as teachers and firefighters, but has singled out the California Nurses Association Teachers and nurses are fighting highly successful campaigns to improve the lives of average workers.

Schwarzenegger borrowed \$90 million from public education mandated by a previous initiative, promising to pay it back. Now he refuses to honor that promise, after all his sermons on accountability. Accountability for debt obligations means one thing for the powerful and another for us average folks.

**Congress gave companies the right to renege on pension obligations owed to retirees, yet passed a law requiring individuals to fulfill debt repayment before declaring bankruptcy. The number one cause of personal bankruptcies in the U.S. is a personal healthcare crisis. Where is the "paycheck protection" for that?**

Some economists worry that Bush's desire to scale back social security benefits based on income levels will pave the way for the far right to eliminate it altogether as a "welfare" program. Meanwhile big corporations like Wal-Mart and United are shamelessly showered with privileges to promote their welfare. We have the best democracy money can buy.

We can be assured that the forces of capital will not stop at introducing one legal initiative after another to further erode workers' rights in this protracted battle. We will begin to see any hope of a real democracy only when we reclaim control of our own labor. We need self-determination in our every day working lives, not just at the polls.

## LA protests state cuts

**LOS ANGELES**—In conjunction with a mass demonstration in Sacramento, 15,000 working people (over 60% white) assembled in Pershing Square in downtown Los Angeles to protest Gov. Schwarzenegger's proposed cuts in education, healthcare and other vital services. A focal point of the protest was opposition to an upcoming special election that would rescind Proposition 98, which guarantees 40% of state revenues to public education.

Instead the petition drive sponsored by big business interests would cap money spent on government social services and force automatic cuts if the state budget could not be balanced. This would bypass the Democratic Party-controlled legislature. The governor and the state legislators temporarily suspended Proposition 98 to balance last year's budget with the agreement that the state refund the schools' shortfall the following year. The governor has reneged on that promise.

Another major issue was the fight by the California Nurses Association against Governor Schwarzenegger's attempt to increase the patient-to-nurse ratio.

Many in attendance were teachers and other school workers from throughout southern California, and nurses and other state hospital employees. Signs and slogans included, "Only bullies take money from children" and "My special interest? My students!"

Though there are shortages of funds at all levels of government in today's global economic crises, I heard no speaker promoting tax increases for millionaires, billionaires, and corporations whose taxes have been reduced drastically in the last 30 years.

—Basho

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## FROM THE WRITINGS OF RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

### EDITOR'S NOTE

As part of our focus on the totality of Marx's Marxism (see our Draft for Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, 2005-2006), we reprint excerpts of a text from 1981 entitled "Marxist-Humanism's Challenge to All Post-Marx Marxists." Originally delivered as a talk at the 1981 convention of News and Letters Committees, it appears as an Introduction to the 1991 edition of *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*. The latter contains the full text, which is slightly abbreviated here.

### I. PHILOSOPHIC CONFRONTATION WITH POST-MARX MARXISTS ON THE GROUND OF THE MID-1950S MOVEMENT FROM PRACTICE

Although what we have been talking about all day and will continue to talk about is "organizational responsibility for Marxist-Humanism," I will discard that expression. The reason is this: unless you understand the historic link of continuity, there is no point in saying "Take organizational responsibility for Marxist-Humanism." So I want to challenge what you understand as Marx's Humanism and its relationship to Marxist Humanism.

When I said I was opposed to all post-Marx Marxists beginning with Engels, I didn't mean only the gap between Marx's *Ethnological Notebooks* and Engels's reductionism in *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. I am challenging Engels also on nearly all of his interpretations of the dialectic, not because he betrayed; he didn't. He did the best he possibly could. That's the trouble. The best he could wasn't good enough.

You have to begin seeing what it means to be a great genius, a "thought-diver" like Marx. And if you don't grasp the uniqueness of that, loving Marx won't help. All you would then do, as Engels did, would be to popularize him. Anyone who thinks he understands when it is made bite-size doesn't understand what it means to appreciate and work out and re-create the dialectic at every single stage. Sure, six people will get up who will understand you and not understand Marx—and praise you as the "projector." That doesn't mean Engels had any right to think he was really projecting Marx's whole continent of thought—Marx's Historical Materialism, Marx's Humanism, Marx's "economics," much less his philosophy.

How many people think there is nothing greater than [Franz] Mehring's biography of Marx? It stinks. And not only because he was a Lassallean, which was bad enough, but because, as an intellectual, he thought he could do better in projecting what Marx "really meant." Do you realize that the German Social Democracy didn't even ask Engels—he was still alive, and much superior to them, including Mehring who was the one writing the history—for his views of the history of socialist ideas and organizations, a history he had lived through with Marx and with all tendencies who truly made history?

Ryazanov, who was known as the greatest Marx scholar, an archivist and analyst of Marxism, had discovered a great store of writings by Marx which had never been published. He introduced them in a scholarly and historic fashion, and that's how we came to know the young Marx. That didn't hold true for the last writings of Marx, which, though he hadn't deciphered nor had a chance to read, he had the gall to characterize as "inexcusable pedantry." This characterization was directed mainly to what we now know as [Marx's] *Ethnological Notebooks*. As all the rest of the post-Marx Marxists, he was happy enough with Engels's *Origin of the Family*, which was supposed to have summarized Marx's 98 pages of notes on Morgan's *Ancient Society*.

This attitude to Marx's archives, even among the best of "Marx scholars," who rush to publish their own views instead of publishing Marx's unpublished works, is one of the major reasons it has taken us 100 years to find out all that Marx had worked out. Worse yet, we have been left with the impression that Marx was so ill that he did nothing in the last years of his life. The trip to Algiers at the end of his life was described as if it were only a matter of his health, whereas in fact he studied Africa there and "fell in love" with the Arabs. He had written to his daughters, as we have seen, that, nevertheless, [the Arabs] would all go to the Devil if they didn't have a revolution.

Catching the historic link to Marx is not only a matter of finally seeing all his writings, but of grasping, at one and the same time, that something had to happen both in the movement from practice and in the movement from theory. I want to depart for a moment from Marx's day to our age, specifically the years 1950 to 1953. It was after the General Strike of the miners in 1949-50 that I felt we had reached a new stage both in Marxism and in proletarian consciousness. I therefore insisted that a worker be present when I gave my next report on what we then called "Marxism and State-Capitalism" and what became [my book] *Marxism and Freedom*. (Until then, the discussion had been limited to myself, C.L.R. James, and Grace Lee.) Clearly, something was stirring in the world; I felt it very strongly

# Marxist-Humanism's relation to Marx's Humanism

after the death of Stalin, which had lifted a heavy incubus from my brain.

Before the actual outbreak of the June 17, 1953 revolt in East Germany—the first ever from under totalitarianism—I turned to the study of the Absolute Idea, splitting that category into two, i.e., saying that there was not only a unity of theory and practice, but that there was a movement from practice, and not only one from theory.

[Later,] I went to check what Marx had written on Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind*. I found that where I began [in my letter of May 20, 1953] with paragraph 385, Marx had left off precisely at paragraph 384—saying he would return. But he never got to finish.

What makes somebody, a century after the event, without knowing where Marx had left off, start focusing on the very next paragraph? I don't know. I do know that there are certain creative moments in history when the objective movement and the subjective movement so coincide that the self-determination of ideas and the self-determination of masses readying for revolt explode. Something is in the air, and you catch it.

That is, you catch it if you have a clear head and if you have good ears to hear what is upsurging from below. All this happened May 12 and May 20, 1953, six weeks before the actual revolution on June 17 in East Berlin.

That is something very different from just being the first one to translate Marx's 1844 Humanist Essays and Lenin's 1914 Philosophic Notebooks and publish them [in *Marxism and Freedom*] as the basis for what we as Marxist-Humanists were doing on the American roots of Marxism, beginning with the Abolitionists and climaxing in the 1949-50 General Strike of the miners. That is to say, you translate because you have already been on the road to working out all these relations in your own country and your own time. Under those circumstances you cannot possibly look at masses in motion and not feel stirred to the marrow of your bones. That is what happened on June 17, 1953, as the German workers destroyed the statue of Stalin and raised the slogan: "Bread and Freedom!" That is what led to the transformation of "Marxism and State-Capitalism," which became *Marxism and Freedom* by 1957. By then we had become not just a State-Capitalist Tendency, but a Marxist-Humanist group, News and Letters Committees.

### 2. FROM ABSOLUTE IDEA AS MOVEMENT FROM PRACTICE AS WELL AS FROM THEORY TO THE ABSOLUTE IDEA AS NEW BEGINNING (1968-73)

It was different by 1973 and *Philosophy and Revolution*. Why was it different? Because this time it did not come only from the fact that East Europe had arisen against Russian totalitarianism (and there had been a revolt from within the slave labor camps of Vorkuta). This time it came from the revolts against Western imperialism as well. This time it was the youth the world over, as well as the Black revolution.

Unfortunately, all the youth thought was needed was more and more activity, dismissing theoretical debates as "factional struggles" and considering that theory was so easy it could be picked up "en route." These were not just "factional struggles" but historic-philosophic tendencies in a very new form that at one and the same time caught the historic link to Marx and had an original contribution to record. That theory was needed, that there could be no revolution without a philosophy of revolution, was shown by the fact that De Gaulle, without firing a single shot, succeeded in aborting the great 1968 revolt in France.

Something had to be done. The youth in revolt had not betrayed; they thought they were very original in rejecting "factional struggles" and insisting, instead, on more and more activity. But they didn't achieve what they were after. So this time we had to find the link from theory and not only from practice.

Before (1957), we stressed the movement from practice, the split in the Absolute Idea. Now (1973) we were saying Absolute Idea as new beginning, as totality which is just a beginning for a movement forward. *Philosophy and Revolution*, then, with its first Part, "Why Hegel? Why Now?" dug into Hegel as Hegel, as well as into Marx who re-created that dialectic, and

as Lenin rediscovered it in 1914 at the outbreak of World War I. All this was measured against the rise of both a whole new Third World and a whole new generation of revolutionaries.

### 3. 1981: ROSA LUXEMBURG, WOMEN'S LIBERATION, AND MARX'S PHILOSOPHY OF REVOLUTION

The point this time is that in the work on Rosa Luxemburg, which is also on Women's Liberation, which is also on Marx's work as a totality, which is also on Lenin, and which is also on Trotsky, I not only take up revolutionaries, but great revolutionaries who were also theoreticians.

Nobody was greater than Lenin in Russia in 1917 or greater than Luxemburg both in 1905 and 1919; how could they possibly be inadequate for our day? The point nevertheless is that before we spoke about the theoretic void left by Lenin's death, which had never been filled; now we are speaking about the fact that even Lenin, who had made the great philosophic breakthrough [in 1914], had remained ambivalent.

He had philosophically reorganized himself in relationship to Materialism and Idealism, on the nature of the revolution that would not stop at the democratic stage but go all the way to the proletarian and elemental and international revolution. He also was for self-determination of nations as the actual bacillus for proletarian revolution. But, but, but ... he did stop short of reorganizing himself on the Party, though he had introduced many modifications [under the impact of] 1905 and 1917.

He was especially great when he threatened to resign from the leadership and "go to the sailors," if the Party did not put the question of the conquest of power on the agenda. And he didn't stop criticizing the new bureaucracy. But when it came to breaking with the Party then, far from "going to the sailors," he was thinking that the Bolshevik layer was so thin that it was them he must trust fully. We certainly could not accept that. We, who have suffered 30 years of Stalinism, the transformation of the workers' state into its total opposite, a state-capitalist society, and have witnessed new revolts from below, will not accept any vanguardism-to-lead; they have done nothing but mis-lead.

In a word, if Lenin had accomplished as great a reorganization of himself on the Party Question as he had done on the Self-Determination of Nations, we might have had some ground for today, but we don't. And when it comes to the Woman Question, I don't believe he ever thought of reorganizing himself. There we have to start totally anew...

I began by saying that unless Marxist-Humanists fully grasped the historic continuity to Marx's Humanism...on the basis of those new moments in Marx's last decade, the expression, "taking organizational responsibility for Marxist-Humanism," would have no meaning. In a word, my "rejection" of that expression meant that the prerequisite for it was, at one and the same time, catching the historic continuity as well as working it out for our age...

The imperative need to fill the philosophic void in post-Marx Marxism is most clearly seen in Trotsky's reduction of the ground for the Fourth International to a matter of leadership, or, as he put it: "The crisis of the world is the crisis of leadership," as if substitution of good leaders, like Trotsky, instead of bad leaders, like Stalin, would change the course of the world. Instead, as we know, the Fourth International became the still-birth it is. Had he considered, instead, that it was his historic responsibility to fill the philosophic void, he might have found the trail to lead us back to Marx and forward to the transformation of society.

The philosophic concept of leadership became correct, with us, the projection of Marx's Humanism. That is to say, philosophy of revolution rather than the vanguardist party. It becomes all the more imperative that we project all the new moments in Marx that we did discover. And that is not limited to the new in organizational form—committee-form against the "party-to-lead"—that didn't separate theory from practice.

We have all too often stopped at the committee-form of organization rather than the inseparability of that from philosophy. And it is the philosophy that is new, unique, our special historic contribution that enabled us to find historic continuity, the link to Marx's Humanism. It is this which is totally new, not the committee-form of organization, as crucial as that is.

As I put it at the end of the new book: "What is needed is a new unifying principle, on Marx's ground of humanism, that truly alters both human thought and human experience. Marx's *Ethnological Notebooks* are a historic happening that proves [one hundred years after he wrote them] that Marx's legacy is no mere heirloom, but a live body of ideas and perspectives that is in need of concretization. Every moment of Marx's development, as well as the totality of his works, spells out the need for 'revolution in permanence.' This is the absolute challenge to our age."



Marxist-Humanism—a body of ideas containing American roots and world humanist concepts (to order these and other books, see page 12).

# Draft for Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, 2005-2006

Continued from page 1

tice system in the African-American community, which remains the vanguard force for social transformation in U.S. society.

The social divisions that define the U.S. are being exacerbated by Bush, but he did not create them. They are a product of capital's response to the structural crisis that world capitalism has faced since the 1970s. Staving off a further decline in capitalism's rate of profit requires increased immiseration at one pole and the concentration of wealth at the other. Perhaps no society more than the U.S. today better illustrates what Marx called "the absolute general law of capitalist accumulation."

Bush's plans for Social Security are part of capitalism's response to the structural crisis that the U.S. has experienced since the 1970s. His proposal to cut benefits for higher income workers is even more threatening than his effort to introduce private accounts. If a system of scaled-back benefits based on income levels is introduced, Social Security will become a welfare system. If that happens mass support for Social Security will erode, which will enable the Right to later introduce massive cuts in the program. This is extremely dangerous at a time when corporations are trying to defraud workers of their pensions in order to prevent a further erosion of capitalism's rate of profit.

The Right does have a "vision" of the future—albeit a most regressive one. Some rightists are saying that if they get their way on Social Security it will become possible to replace many other government-funded programs with "investment-based personal accounts"—from Medicare and Medicaid to unemployment insurance. Bush's notion of an "ownership society" ultimately means that those without investments in the market would be denied even the most minimal protection of a social safety net.

## B. The Economic Basis of Today's Retrogression

Profound social dislocations and insecurity have resulted from the economic restructuring of U.S. society over the past several decades. They have everything to do with the growth of racism, reactionary politics, and religious fundamentalism here at home.

Deindustrialization and the destruction of family farms, the decline of the union movement with its message of "solidarity forever," economic insecurity and feelings of helplessness in the face of impersonal forms of domination beyond our control have led many to reach for a false sense of security, identity and community based on racism, "moral values" and regressive forms of religion.(2)

The problem is not religion per se, but the failure of the liberals and the Left to project a viable alternative to restructured capitalism.

U.S. capitalism experienced a serious economic crisis following the Vietnam War, when it became clear that it could no longer afford the high costs of both militarization and the welfare state. Then a severe global economic crisis erupted in late 1973, from which the global economy never fully recovered.

In light of the crises of the 1970s, the economic basis of liberalism disappeared. Welfare state policies had been predicated on the notion that economic growth could coexist with relatively high wages and benefits. By the mid-1970s the continued survival of U.S. capi-

talism required it to appropriate value that it was no longer generating in production. It responded with a three-decade long effort to cut wages, benefits, and social programs. U.S. capitalism became increasingly aggressive as part of an effort to obtain the surplus value needed to meet capital's thirst for self-expansion.

These imperatives fundamentally changed the landscape of American politics. The Democrats as well as the Republicans came to recognize that the liberal alternative was no longer a viable option, since a rising standard of living for workers was no longer compatible with the accumulation of capital on an ever-expanding scale.

The radical Left, much of which had assumed that the welfare state and nationalized property would help move society towards "socialism," proved completely unable to deal with this situation. For years the radical Left—including those leftists opposed to state-capitalist regimes that called themselves "socialist" or "communist"—refrained from projecting a comprehensive, philosophically based alternative to the very existence of capital. The ramifications of this failure have by now become all too evident. The void left by the absence of a liberatory alternative has created the ground for the rise of reactionary tendencies like religious fundamentalism.

Religious fundamentalists target the rights of women, gays and youth to control their bodies and minds because they wrongly view such rights as causing the dissolution of family, community, and other social bonds—when it is the logic of capital that promotes their dissolution. Targeting women's rights has become a device to avoid confronting the problems of capitalism by posing the traditional family as a refuge presumably "free" from alienation.

At the same time, racism remains the cornerstone of U.S. capital's effort to maintain economic, political and ideological hegemony. Despite such welcome events as the June conviction of one of the killers of the three civil rights workers in Mississippi in 1964, U.S. society is becoming more segregated and racist. Rates of poverty and unemployment among African Americans are growing in the inner cities. And African Americans die from HIV/AIDS at a 750% higher rate than whites. These horrendous conditions may lead to new forms of revolt by Black America, as it has repeatedly throughout U.S. history—most recently seen in the Cincinnati uprising in 2001.(3)

Clearly the Democratic Party poses no serious opposition to Bush—as seen in how it too endorses cuts in social programs, has failed to filibuster Bush's judicial nominees, and is officially downplaying support for abortion rights.

In light of this situation, it is crucial to build upon resistance from workers, African Americans and other minorities, women and youth. On May 24, 5,000 mostly women healthcare workers rallied in Los Angeles to protest Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's efforts to impose deep cuts in wages and benefits. African Americans and women's groups are taking the lead to oppose Bush's vision of an "ownership society," as seen in efforts by a number of women's organizations to forge alliances with welfare rights groups and others in the African-American community.

Such developments are not limited to the U.S. An especially important expression of women's resistance was the March 8 demonstration of 35,000 women in Sao Paulo, Brazil, sponsored by the Worldwide March of Women. It was held to promote the passage of a charter on women's rights that was first discussed at the

World Social Forum in Porto Alegre in January.

The charter states: "We view patriarchy as the system oppressing women and capitalism as the system that enables a minority to exploit the vast majority of women and men. These systems reinforce one another. They are rooted in, and work hand in hand with, racism, sexism, misogyny, xenophobia, homophobia, colonialism, imperialism, slavery, and forced labor. They breed manifold forms of fundamentalism that prevent women and men from being free... We propose to build another world where exploitation, oppression, intolerance and exclusion no longer exist, and where integrity, diversity and the rights and freedoms of all are respected."

## C. The War in Iraq: Quagmire for Bush—and the Left

The gravest crisis facing Bush is his murderous war in Iraq, which has led to the deaths of 120,000 Iraqis and 1,700 U.S. soldiers. Contrary to Bush's rhetoric about "democracy," the Iraqi people continue to face massive unemployment, a collapse of social services, and deadly attacks by religious fundamentalists and ex-Ba'athists as well as by U.S. troops. Donald Rumsfeld now says that it may take more than a decade before Iraq will be "stable" enough for U.S. troops to leave. These conditions are leading to growing opposition inside the U.S. to the occupation.

The great contradiction in this is that while support for the war inside the U.S. continues to drop, the organized anti-war movement is not getting stronger. It has instead become smaller and more fragmented over the past year. This has everything to do with its failure to recognize that the choice is not to support either the occupation or the Ba'athist and fundamentalist armed "resistance."

Many in Iraq are voicing opposition to the latter even as they demand that U.S. troops leave the country. This view is especially evident in Iraq's small but growing labor movement. The Southern Oil Company Union has set up workers' councils in 23 areas in southern Iraq and opposes the Islamic fundamentalists and the U.S. occupation. The same is true of the Union of the Port Industry, established by dock workers at Um Qasr. The Federation of Workers Councils and Unions in Iraq recently announced the formation of an Iraqi Freedom Congress dedicated to creating a secular and multiethnic Iraq.

Meanwhile Iraqi women are speaking out against the threat that the future Iraqi Constitution will severely restrict the rights of women by imposing Shari'a law. One of them, the Organization for Women's Freedom in Iraq, has been especially active in calling for the creation of a secular constitution that guarantees women's rights.

Many threats confront Iraq today—from the risk of civil war to the growing power of Shi'a fundamentalists, who enjoy significant mass support. The fact that the democratic Left, labor and women's movements in Iraq are weak is no excuse not to solidarize with them. It only makes developing the links of solidarity more crucial. Opposing the occupation without solidarizing with those Iraqis who are striving to create a truly free society is standing in the way of developing an enduring and effective anti-war movement inside the U.S.

Our work over the past year underlines the objectivity of this challenge. We were not thrown off course by Bush's reelection because, we held, the problems of U.S. society are **structurally** rooted in the nature of global capital and are not a mere result of Bush's personality or the Republican Party. We also were not disoriented by the events in Iraq since we argued that the anti-war movement would not be able to surmount its contradictions unless it opposes both U.S. imperialism and the reactionary "anti-imperialist" currents by forging solidarity with genuine forces of liberation in Iraq.

Most important, we projected ground for surmount-

Continued on page 6

JUST SHOT UP AND OBEY... !!!

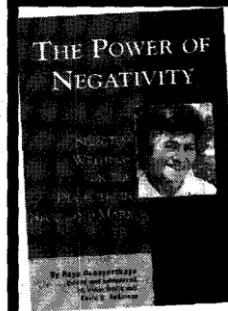


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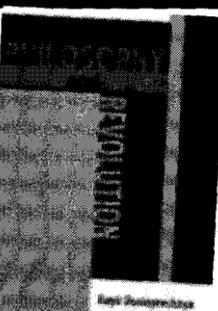
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# Draft for Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, 2005-2006

Continued from page 5

ing the pessimism and accommodationism that has taken hold of many radicals today by insisting that now is the time to develop a philosophically grounded alternative to capitalism through **directly** grappling with such works of Marx as his *Critique of the Gotha Program*. By embarking on our nationwide series of classes on "Beyond Capitalism," we came face to face with Raya Dunayevskaya's concept of the integrality of philosophy and organization, namely working out organizational responsibility for the philosophy of revolution than can help spell out "what happens after" the revolution **before** it occurs.

The classes on "Beyond Capitalism," undertaken as we embarked on a new, bimonthly *News & Letters*, was the highpoint of our effort over the past year to concretize our perspectives. At a moment when large numbers of people around the world are asking about whether there is an alternative to the seemingly unassailable domination of capital, we took it upon ourselves to do something few others have the audacity to consider—probing into the **future**, into the realm of absolute freedom itself.

## II. Challenges Posed by Today's Mass Movements

New freedom movements have emerged in the past year that pose important challenges to radical thought. They range from protests in April that brought down the government in Ecuador to workers' unrest in China, where 60,000 unauthorized strikes and protests have occurred this year. We need to focus here on two especially crucial events—the "Orange Revolution" in Ukraine and new mass struggles in Latin America.

### A. Ukraine's 'Orange Revolution'

Viktor Yanukovich's effort to steal Ukraine's presidential election from Viktor Yushchenko, who campaigned on a promise of greater democracy and civil rights, led to a nonviolent insurrection at the end of 2004 that brought huge numbers of people into the streets of Kiev and other cities. Student groups like Pora, which called some of the first rallies, hoped that 20,000 would show up at them—and were pleasantly surprised when a million poured out into the streets.

Despite the size of the "Orange Revolution," the working class did not play a central role in it—following the pattern of other protests in the former Soviet Union and East Europe since 1989. One reason why Ukrainian workers did not participate in the "Orange Revolution" as an independent force may be that Yushchenko is part of a ruling class faction that favors "free market" reforms and neoliberal economic restructuring. Since coming to power he has expanded civil liberties, partly reformed the state-controlled media, and modestly increased social spending. Yet his government is dominated by capitalist interests that are trying to move the country closer to the U.S.

The "Orange Revolution" has nevertheless helped stimulate a resurgence of pro-democracy sentiment in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and even Russia. If Putin's increasingly authoritarian rule becomes threatened by pressures for democratic change from inside the country, it can have a dramatic effect on the entire world situation.

The new pro-democracy movements this year extend from Georgia to Lebanon and from Togo to Zimbabwe. Robert Mugabe's current murderous effort to "cleanse" the urban poor and unemployed from Zimbabwe's major cities is aimed at eliminating the social base of that country's democratic opposition.(4) He must not be allowed to get away with this horrendous crackdown. If he does, it will make it easier for rulers in other African countries to try to crush struggles for

social justice, especially in Western Sudan.

China remains key to the international situation. Its massive economic growth and intensive government repression has not prevented the emergence of new struggles for social change and democracy.(5) A Marxist-Humanist was able to attend a conference in Guangzhou, China this year, which focused on the importance of Rosa Luxemburg's concept of socialist democracy.

Mass movements for democratic transformation have repeatedly arisen in our time—from South Korea and the Philippines in 1986, to the revolts that brought down the state-capitalist regimes that called themselves "Communist" in East Europe in 1989, to growing demands for democracy in Egypt, Iraq, and Iran today.(6) The less that the Left addresses this widespread quest for democracy, the more the field is left open for Bush to claim to be its "defender"—even as he moves to scuttle democratic rights here at home.

The great contradiction in these democratic movements, however, lies in their stopping short of moving toward a fundamental transformation of social relations. One reason for this is undoubtedly the many failed efforts to achieve a thoroughgoing social revolution, from Russia 1917 to Iran 1979. The defeat of so many efforts at social revolutions by both internal and external factors makes it harder to envision an alternative to capital. The resulting tendency to focus on political changes, while not addressing how to break with the logic of capital, is a major problem of our times.

This relates to the contradictions that showed themselves this year in Ukraine. The problem isn't that

Ukrainian workers are suffering from a "crisis of political representation," as some claim. There has been no shortage of labor parties and other political formations in other parts of the world (some of them avowedly "socialist") that claimed to "represent" the working class—yet that didn't stop the idea of social revolution from

suffering a profound crisis. The problem lies deeper, in the absence of a theoretic articulation of a viable alternative to capital that matches the reason that repeatedly upsurges from spontaneous mass struggles.

### B. Freedom Ferment in Latin America

The need for such an alternative is especially borne out by ongoing events in Latin America, which is experiencing an explosion of new revolts and movements.

In Mexico, a million people marched in late April to protest fabricated charges of corruption by the ruling PAN, as well as the PRI, against the leftist mayor of Mexico City, Andrés Manuel López Obrador. It was the largest march for democracy in Mexican history (see page 12).

In Ecuador, residents in the oil-producing provinces of Sucumbios and Orellana went on strike on May 21 to demand improvements in roads, schools, housing and health care. In Peru, several thousand residents of Espinar province seized a copper mine run by a British-Australian company in May, demanding that it provide the community with \$20 million to fund social programs and protect the environment. Strikes have also been initiated by peasants in seven other regions.

Bolivia is experiencing the continent's most important mass movement—the largest in that land since the Bolivian Revolution of 1952. The movement rejects the entire agenda of neo-liberalism. Bolivia was one of the first countries to be subjected to neo-liberalism in the structural adjustment program imposed in the mid-1980s. The current protests are trying to stop multinational corporations from looting the country of its natural gas reserves, the second largest in Latin America. Multinationals bought the gas at below market value and now sell it back to Bolivians at 12 times the price.

Historical recollection plays a central role in this movement, which is trying to stop global capital from repeating its earlier rape of Bolivia's silver and tin reserves that produced immense profits for world capital while impoverishing Bolivia.

The backbone of the movement—which encompasses factory workers, miners, peasants, teachers, students, and women's organizations—are the indigenous

Aymara and Quechua (as well as Guarani) people, who constitute two-thirds of Bolivia's populace.

The movement contains different tendencies posing distinct demands. One of them, Evo Morales' Movement for Socialism (he won 20% of the vote in the last presidential elections) demands that transnational oil companies pay a 50% tax to extract Bolivia's oil and gas resources. This proposal, which was widely approved in June 2004 referendum, has been rejected by Bolivia's rulers on the grounds that it would "scare away" foreign investors. Other groups, like the Confederation of Bolivian Workers, say the demand for a 50% tax doesn't go far enough. They call for total nationalization of the country's natural gas industry and for closing of parliament.

Demands are growing for the formation of a constituent assembly "to transform political institutions to correct the current situation of exclusion and the lack of recognition of citizen's political rights" by creating (as one recent declaration put it) a political formation in which "sovereignty resides in the people" rather than in the elite.

At the same time, serious threats confront the movement. One is posed by business interests in Santa Cruz and Tarija, where the natural gas is located. They are demanding "autonomy" from the central government in order to negotiate their own contracts with the multinationals—undoubtedly in a way that wouldn't "scare away" foreign investors. The Santa Cruz oligarchs plan to hold their own referendum in August. Some fear that the breakup of the country is possible.

Meanwhile sections of the ruling class are calling for

the army to "restore order." Some labor leaders are also calling upon sections of the army to intervene, on the grounds that only they can "break the power" of the oligarchy.

The events in Bolivia raise many critical theoretical questions. The central role played by the indigenous peoples, whose forms of struggle are often based on pre-capitalist

forms like the Andean *ayllu*, recalls Marx's studies of technologically underdeveloped societies at the end of his life. Marx probed into whether indigenous forms of working the land could become the basis for a socialist society, shortening or even bypassing the stage of capitalist industrialization.(7)

Though Marx singled out the liberatory potential of such indigenous forms, he argued that they could provide a "fulcrum for social regeneration" only if revolutions in the technologically underdeveloped world linked up with a proletarian revolution in the industrialized world that could provide them with needed technology, resources, and solidarity.

Marx's writings on this subject take on new importance in light of contemporary events. The workers and peasants of Bolivia are raising a **revolutionary** demand in insisting that the country's resources be used for domestic development and not be stolen by global capital. At the same time, no society can attain economic development in isolation; a country as poor as Bolivia cannot develop if it is cut off from world trade.

The ultimate success of the movements in Bolivia and Latin America therefore depends not only on what they do, but also upon the links of solidarity that we forge with them. Foremost in this is our opposing any effort on the part of our rulers to intervene against these promising mass movements.

Another focal point in Latin America is Venezuela, where Hugo Chavez has survived several U.S.-inspired plans to overthrow him. Chavez is now firming up support by spending much of the country's oil money on social programs. Venezuela's oil revenue has increased fivefold since 1999, enabling him to curry favor with many Venezuelans—long disgusted with the antidemocratic machinations of the privileged oligarchy—by spending \$3.7 billion on social and agricultural programs in the past year.

Chavez is now proclaiming the need to "roll back neo-liberalism" and "move toward socialism" by bringing more of Venezuelan industry under state control. Despite such proclamations, as of now he has nationalized only a few industries; the oil sector has been state controlled for decades, as has the Alcasa Foundry, a state-owned aluminum company.

What is new, and what has attracted much atten-



Indigenous people, including Aymara, Quechua, and Guarani, constitute two-thirds of Bolivia's populace and are the backbone of its current movement.

CMI / Bolivia Independent Media Center

Learn more about  
Marx's value theory of labor

**Marx's Capital and  
Today's Global Crises**  
by Raya Dunayevskaya

"Labor is *not* the source of all wealth. Nature is just as much the source of use values as labor, which itself is only the manifestation of a force of nature, human labor power."  
—Karl Marx (1875)



Available from *News & Letters* for \$2 (plus postage)  
(See literature ad on page 12)

Continued on page 7

# Developing a philosophically grounded alternative to capital

Continued from page 6

tion, is that Chavez has proposed a system of "co-management" between Alcasa workers and the state. Not long ago Chavez nationalized the Venepal paper company, which workers took over and ran as a cooperative after they were locked out by the owners. More recently, he nationalized the Constructora Nacional de Valvulas (CNV), which makes valves used in the oil industry. Chavez has also called for the CNV to be run under a "shared worker-state co-management" scheme.

While some are hailing this as a sign that Chavez is steering Venezuela towards "socialism," these "developments suggest a deviation from workers' earlier goals," as one report put it. One of the new state-appointed directors of Venepal (a former union bureaucrat)

recently stated at a mass meeting that since "the bosses no longer run the firm" since it is now under state control, the workers no longer need a union to defend themselves. His comments "caused serious concern among [many workers], who worried that the model of co-management and worker agency in the country was setting the stage to become a model for capitalist cooperatives." (8)

Workers in the state electronic company, Cadafe, have also expressed concerns that Chavez's policy of "co-management" between workers and the state will lead to a weakening of unions and increased exploitation at the point of production.

At the same time, independent demands are growing for workers' control of production; some groups are even calling for workers' councils to run production. There has also been a growth in unionization drives in some areas.

The most critical contradiction facing Venezuela is that the army remains largely in control. Unlike the situation in Nicaragua or even Cuba right after their revolutions, no attempt has been made to dismantle the army, which is hardly a liberatory force.

Despite the contradictory character of Chavez's "revolution from above," he is being uncritically hailed by many on the Left, who take at face value the claim that his call for "worker-state co-management" represents a new liberatory path. They fail to keep in mind Marx's point that "if cooperative production is not to remain a sham and a snare" it must be under the direct control of the workers themselves. Marx argued that this cannot be achieved within the framework of the existing capitalist state. As he wrote after the Paris Commune of 1871, "The working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery, and wield it for its own purposes." (9)

The task is not simply to take over state power, but to smash state power as part of moving towards abolishing value production and alienated labor.

Many leftists continue to ignore the fact that calls for nationalization of property or industry are not inherently revolutionary or even progressive. They can just as readily become a vehicle to disarm the workers through the repressive power of the state. Nationalization of industry and property is a necessary but insufficient condition for the transformation of society **only when it is under the direct control of the masses.** Clearly, our age is still haunted by the specter of halfway houses.

They write, "the central point is how the multitude can arrive at a decision" (p. 338). Everything for them comes down to inventing "different form of representation or perhaps a new form of democracy that go beyond representation" (p. 258).

Hardt and Negri's tendency to reduce the question of a new society to political forms of decision making while shying away from the question of how to transcend the capital relation itself, is symptomatic of much of radical theory today.

For many years post-Marx Marxists spoke of transforming the mode of production—by which, however, they usually meant state control of industry or nationalized property. The disastrous outcome of that approach helps explain why for the past 25 years the radical movement has virtually dropped any discussion of transforming the mode of production, focusing instead on civil society, democracy, culture, "self-expression," etc.

These issues are important, but what's been left aside is any discussion of how to transform the economic structure of capitalism. The bankruptcy of unilinear evolutionist or economic reductionist perspectives has led to a new situation in which many now embrace either multilinear or non-economic approaches to social change. Yet the more recent approaches do not represent a transcendence of the limitations of the former.

The failure by post-Marx Marxists to transform production relations because they fetishized property forms has led many to now act as if the most we can reach for is to transform the political and cultural superstructure of capitalism. In both cases transforming alienated labor and the capitalist mode of production is left untheorized.

In sum, the problem we face today is not "economic determinism." The problem is discussing everything except transforming the social relations of capital. It is not up to us to choose what ideas should or should not be contested by Marxist-Humanists. History decides that for us. We are judged by whether we look in the historic mirror and respond accordingly.

The task is neither to return to the economic reductionism of the old Left nor to refrain from the theoretical work of developing a viable alternative to capitalism. Developing a philosophy of liberation that addresses "what happens after the revolution" does not mean "imposing" some "program" upon the masses. It is instead the way to meet the questions and challenges posed by mass self-activity.

## III. Philosophic Challenges Posed by Today's Realities

In light of the crisis confronting today's radical movement, revolutionaries need to focus on the long-term perspective of developing a comprehensive philosophic alternative to capitalism instead of responding in a defensive or partial manner to immediate crises. Over the past year Marxist-Humanists have been directly involved in this challenge by engaging important tendencies in radical thought with our ideas. (10)

Especially important was our participation in the 2005 World Social Forum in Brazil. This event, attended by over 160,000, showed that many around the world know that capitalism is bankrupt, that the planet is facing ecological destruction, and that it's crucial to show that "another world is possible."

However, there are an array of different approaches to the question of what constitutes an "alternative" to existing society. Some go no further than posing the need for a redistribution of global resources while refraining from any socialist or revolutionary perspective. Others consider themselves revolutionary, but what they mean by this is carving out "autonomous zones" freed from the impact of capital wherein they can "try to live differently." Others realize that only a social revolution that uproots the capital relation can save humanity, but they do not know how to address how that can be done in a way that avoids the aborted revolutions of the past 100 years.

As a result, there tends to be a lack of concrete, theoretically rigorous discussion about the actual content of a new society in the movements against global capital.

This problem is reflected in the work of such theoreticians as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. Their work has generated much attention because of their effort to explain the changed world reality of the past few decades in a way that rejects neither Marxism nor the importance of mass self-activity. They write in their newest work, *Multitude*, "Even when labor is subjugated by capital it always necessarily retains its own autonomy, and this is ever more clearly true today with respect to the new immaterial, cooperative, and collaborative forms of labor" (p. 54). Since they see such struggles as immanent to the very movement of capital, they do not pose the need for an external unifier of opposites, like the old "vanguard party to lead."

How does Negri and Hardt's work fare when it comes to projecting a vision of the future? Their previous book, *Empire*, suggested that the goal of a new society is so immanent in spontaneous struggles that there isn't a need to theoretically articulate the goal at all. For this reason, their book contained little discussion of the role of organization. It concluded, "only the multitude through its practical experimentation will offer the models and determine when and how the possible becomes real" (p. 411).

*Multitude* may seem to move in a different direction, since they now write: "We have to search for a post-capitalist political alternative today" by developing a "new model of sovereignty." They say that developing such an alternative "is anything but spontaneous and improvised" (p. 354). However, they view the task of envisioning an alternative primarily in political terms. They say little or nothing about how to transform the mode of production or economic relations, calling instead for "a new science of democracy" that can determine the proper political form to realize freedom.

## IV. Towards New Beginnings in Marxist-Humanism

"...from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs" to this day remains the perspective for the future, yet the Marxists who keep quoting it never bother to study just how concretely that arose from the critique of the supposedly socialist program, and what would be required to make that real."

—Raya Dunayevskaya

Our experiences of the past year show that our organization is not the only one to "defend" the idea of spontaneous self-activity. Nor are we the only ones to say that mass practice gives rise to new theory. In the aftermath of the failure of statist "socialism," the emergence of new social movements, and postmodernism, many now say that common peoples' actions are expressions of theory. What none except the philosophy of Marxist-Humanism say, however, is: 1) the movement from practice is a form of theory—a form, not the form; 2) theory is not the same as philosophy; and 3) the philosophy that is needed is not just any philosophy but Marx's philosophy of "revolution in permanence" developed to its next stage of dialectical development.

The fact that there is little discussion of Marx's Marxism, including in the movements against global capital, pinpoints the historic-philosophic barrier to working out an alternative that remains to be resolved. The root of the problem lies in the evasion or rejection of Marx's philosophy of revolution. It is this which has led people to assume that there is no alternative other than to accept under various names a self-limiting revolution.

When Raya Dunayevskaya first took issue with the idea of the "self-limiting revolution" in the 1980s, she did so by noting that its main author, Jacek Kuron of Poland's *Solidarnosc* movement, had earlier said that he had gone "beyond Marxism." She wrote: "Why choose between either of the two global superpower alignments? Does 'beyond Marxism' mean you have given up the class struggle?" She noted that despite the great self-activity of Polish workers, "the philosophic rudder of Marx's Humanism is yet to be embraced by the organized working class." (11) This was the decisive issue. The collapse of any effort to connect mass activity to Marx's philosophy of revolution allowed the idea of a "self-limiting revolution"—as well as pawns to religion and the "free" market—to take hold.

Today we face a kind of vicious circle. The lack of a



Pro-choice demonstrators confront Christian Right anti-abortion march in San Francisco earlier this year. Will Bush's Supreme Court nominee try to erase women's right to birth control and abortion?

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Continued on page 8

# Draft for Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, 2005-2006

Continued from page 7

vision of the future on the part of the Left fails to provide mass struggles with a liberatory direction; and the resulting tendency of many struggles to shop short of a total uprooting further reinforces the pragmatism and accommodationism of the Left.

To break out of this vicious circle we must grapple with and project the **totality of Marx's Marxism**.

Totality means the **whole**—the economics, politics, and philosophy. Restating Marx's Marxism entails being responsible for the **whole** of his concept of "revolution in permanence." "Revolution in permanence" means more than ceaseless struggle. It means struggle in pursuit of a specific goal—the end of the capitalist law of value and of class society; the end of racism and of alienated man/woman relations; the abolition of **all** social relations in which our human potential is objectified in an alienated manner.

The perspective of assuming responsibility for the totality of Marx's body of ideas is a unique contribution of Marxist-Humanism.

As Dunayevskaya argued, "We must turn to Marx—the whole of Marx. Without his philosophy of revolution, neither Women's Liberationists nor the whole of humanity will have discovered the ground that will assure the success of the revolution." She wrote in the same book, "Clearly, there is no substitute for the totality of Marx as organization man, as political theorist, as visionary of a future social order." (12)

How then can we follow through on the work we have begun over the past year in developing a philosophically grounded alternative?

It is not possible to develop an alternative to capitalism without building upon the forms of self-organization that have emerged from past and ongoing freedom struggles. Dunayevskaya explored this issue in a book she planned to write on "Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy." It remains a difficult issue to explore, however, because intellectuals and historians have often skipped over what has been achieved by masses of people in moments of revolt.

Yet while exploring spontaneous forms of struggle is a crucial part of developing an alternative, we "can't solve the problem here," as Dunayevskaya wrote in 1987. (13) She wrote, "The point is that of the years 1924-29, 1929 to today, World War II, and all those national revolutions, the rise of a Third World and the endless continuing struggle, and nowhere in sight, not even in telescopic sight, is there an answer to the questions, what happens after the conquest of power? Why so many aborted revolutions? What type of party or organization? What have the various forms of spontaneity—councils, soviets, committees, associations, communes—achieved? And why when they did come close to power, it was the political organizations that didn't take them over so much, as that they themselves looked to be taken over?" (14)

Masses of people do not "look to be taken over" by groups other than their own because they are "backward." On the contrary, they "look to be taken over" because they are in search of groups of theoreticians that can help answer their quest to know "what happens after" the revolution. One expression of the **reason** of the masses is that they **spontaneously** search out groups **different** from their own to meet their quest for reorganizing production and human relations. Yet when no organization exists that can help answer such questions, they can get taken over by groups that aren't defined by developing a philosophically grounded alternative to capitalism.

In sum, transitions or revolutions are no longer sufficient to bring forth a new society. Even revolution, crucial as it is, will not lead to a new society if an organizational embodiment of a philosophy than can answer "what happens after" the revolution is missing.

Recognition of this problem led Dunayevskaya to initiate a far-reaching reexamination of the work of Hegel, Marx, and Marxist-Humanism in the last years of her life. At issue was the inseparability between dialectical philosophy and organization. The predominant approach toward organization among post-Marx Marxists has been to stress either the need for an elitist vanguard party or for decentralized and spontaneous forms of organization. Dunayevskaya instead explored the role of an anti-vanguardist "group like us" who "know that nothing can be done without the masses, and are with them, but [such groups of] theoreticians always seem to be around too." (15) In exploring this issue, she returned with new eyes to the philosophic moment of Marxist-Humanism, her 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes."

A new reinterpretation of Hegel's Absolutes is central to Marxist-Humanism's original contributions. In contrast to those who stress Hegel's method while

rejecting his Absolutes as some mystification, Dunayevskaya held that the realities of our age made it imperative to unearth the vision of freedom that is contained in the culmination of Hegel's system in Absolute Knowledge, Absolute Idea, and Absolute Mind.

The first work of Marxist-Humanism's "trilogy of revolution," *Marxism and Freedom*, singled out "the vision of the future which Hegel called the Absolute and which Marx first called 'real Humanism' and later 'communism'" (p. 66). Her next work, *Philosophy and Revolution*, projected the new category of "Absolute Negativity as New Beginning"; it represented her unique philosophic contribution to Marx's Marxism. This emphasis on the importance of Hegel's Absolutes was further developed in the third work of the trilogy, *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*. It led to renewed explorations of Hegel's dialectic "in and for itself."

This culminated in her writings of 1986-87, in which she returned with new eyes to her 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes" from the vantage point of the problem of organization. She was not simply concerned with defining the "right" form of organization. On the contrary, as she later elaborated in discussing her commentary on the final three paragraphs of Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind* in her 1953 Letters, "I end not with the form of organization, but instead say, 'we have entered the new society.'" (16)

Dunayevskaya's work on the "dialectics of organization and philosophy" showed that a Marxist organization's historic right to exist depends on its assuming responsibility for the philosophy that can spell out "what happens after" the revolution. Her development of this unique Marxist-Humanist concept of organization caught the link of continuity with Marx's concept of organization.

Marx fully concretized his "philosophic moment" of 1844 for organization in his 1875 *Critique of the Gotha Program*, which contained his most detailed discussion of a future socialist society. His *Critique* shows that the mark of breaking with capitalism comes by replacing production relations based on socially necessary labor time with new human relations based on directly social labor. A new society for Marx is not the result of changed relations of distribution. It is marked by freely associated laborers breaking with abstract labor and alienated production relations. There can be no true transformation of human relations, including of gender, race, and family relations, so long as production is based on socially necessary labor time and abstract labor.

It isn't that post-Marx Marxists were unaware that in 1875 Marx posed the ultimate goal of a new society as "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs." It's that they failed to grasp the significance of the fact that Marx projected the path to this goal in an **organizational** document. As Dunayevskaya wrote in *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs" to this day remains the perspective for the future, yet the Marxists who keep quoting it never bother to study just how concretely that arose from the critique of the supposedly socialist program, and what would be required to make that real" (pp. 156-57).

For many years we have condemned the limitations of gradualist and stagified approaches that fail to spell out a total uprooting of capitalism. Such approaches are very widespread today, as seen in leftists who stress the "permanence" of alienation and the "impossibility" of transcending value production. We need to combat such tendencies by envisioning the **specific** steps that according to Marx are required to reach a totally new society, instead of assuming that the absolute can be reached like a shot out of a pistol.

Our age is crying out for a philosophy that can address "what happens after the revolution" and for an organization that takes responsibility for that philosophy. It cannot be achieved without a direct encounter with Hegel, especially with the concept of "absolute negativity," any more than it can be achieved without the contributions of Marx and Marxist-Humanism. This doesn't mean that Marx supplies "the answer" to every issue. While Marx provides the ground, we also need a roof. But we can't get to the roof unless we grasp the foundation. And we must not take the foundation for granted in an era when an entire generation of radicals have abandoned Marxism. To deal creatively with the many unanswered questions associated with working out an alternative to capital, we must hold firmly to, and delve further into, the **totality** of the Hegelian-Marxian dialectic through the mediation of Marxist-Humanism's unique contributions.

This perspective seeks to define our tasks for 2005-2006. We aim to further develop our bimonthly publication, *News & Letters*, in a way that provides the time and space to develop a publication **and an organization** that brings together the questions being posed from below with the philosophic restatement of Marx's

Marxism.

This involves ensuring that our publications contain both theoretical material that addresses the central problems of our times and that we elicit the questions and sentiments of common people that can make it clear what those central problems are. Most of all, it involves having an active **organizational** dialogue between the voices from below and philosophy. Only through this process can we achieve our foremost task, philosophic and organizational growth.

Central in this will be furthering the work that we have done over the past year in the battle of ideas, both in the pages of *News & Letters* and in outside presses and conferences. We will also need to deepen our participation in ongoing movements events and activities, especially in women's liberation and the Black dimension. Our efforts to broaden the perspective of the anti-war movement becomes especially important in the coming year in light of growing opposition in the U.S. to the occupation of Iraq.

Most important, we need to continue the effort to develop a philosophically grounded alternative to capitalism, even when this means challenging some of the core assumptions of many in the radical movement.

For this reason a major focal point of our work over the next year will be the collective organizational effort of compiling a new collection of Raya Dunayevskaya's writings on Marx. We view this task as a way to follow-through from our compilation of *The Power of Negativity: Selected Writings on the Dialectic in Hegel and Marx*, which remains one of the most outstanding accomplishments of our effort to continue Marxist-Humanism.

The effort to continue Marxist-Humanism requires that the writings of the founder of Marxist-Humanism be made widely available. However, these writings cannot be treated as an icon that one bows to but fails to concretize for the changed realities facing us today. Our aim in compiling a new collection of Dunayevskaya's writings on Marx is to bring her insistence on working out the totality of Marx's Marxism for today into **every** facet of our work.

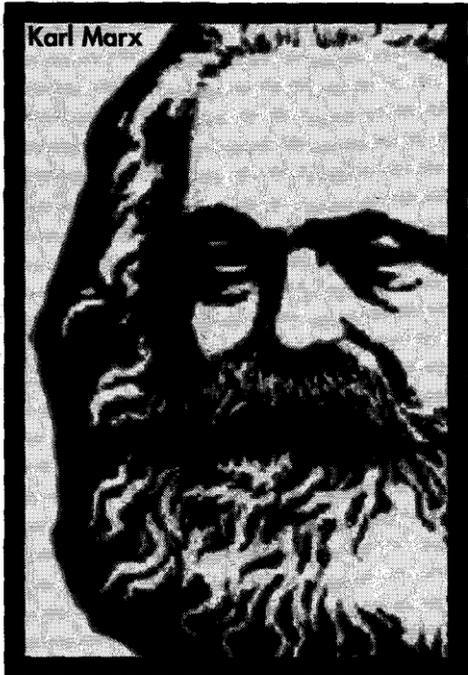
It is not possible to address and build upon the quest for universality that shows itself in ongoing freedom struggles without the active work of restating, redeveloping, and re-creating a body of ideas. We do not aim to simply repeat the conclusions of prior philosophic breakthroughs. We seek to internalize those breakthroughs in such a way as to **restate** for our day Marx's vision of a new society.

In other words, concretizing the "creativity of cognition" defines *News and Letters'* Committees historic reason for being and explains why we ask all whom we can reach for their help in developing new beginnings in Marxist-Humanism.

— The Resident Editorial Board

## NOTES

- 1) Dunayevskaya wrote, "Unfortunately, the capitalistic class is much more class-conscious than the working class movement and know they must give up some national prerogatives if they are to survive at all...One [side] is prepared to be 'for' the Common Market because it is a step toward a United States of Europe; the other is 'opposed' to it on the basis of taking away some 'independence' of Britain." See "The Berlin Crisis, the European Common Market and the International Class Struggle" [Weekly Political Letter of July 14, 1961], in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, no. 2938.
- 2) See "New Pope Anoints Religious Fundamentalism," by Kevin Anderson, *News & Letters*, May-June 2005.
- 3) For more on this, see *Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles: Race, Philosophy, and the Needed American Revolution*, by John Alan (Chicago: News and Letters, 2004).
- 4) For more on the recent events in Zimbabwe, see p. 12.
- 5) See "China as Global Factory is Incubator of Future Revolt," by Peter Hudis, *News & Letters*, January-February 2005.
- 6) For more on the recent elections in Iran, see "Our Life and Times," p. 12.
- 7) For an analysis of Marx's writings on indigenous societies during the last decade of his life (1872-83), see *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, by Raya Dunayevskaya (Champaign-Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991).
- 8) "Venezuela Expropriates Abandoned Value Factory," by Jonah Gindin, *Venezuelananalysis.com*, April 28, 2005.
- 9) See Marx's *The Civil War in France*, in *Collected Works*, Vol. 22 (New York: International Publishers, 1986), pp. 333, 328.
- 10) See especially Tom Jeannot's review of *The Power of Negativity: Selected Writings on the Dialectic in Hegel and Marx*, by Raya Dunayevskaya, in *The Owl of Minerva*, Fall/Winter 2004-05, Vol. 36. No. 1 and Peter Hudis' critique of Moishe Postone's *Time, Labor and Social Domination* ("The Death of the Death of the Subject"), in *Historical Materialism*, Vol. 12, Issue 2, 2004.
- 11) "The Trail in the 1980s for Transforming Reality," by Raya Dunayevskaya [Sept. 5, 1981], in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, no. 7108-7109.
- 12) *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, pp. 109, 158.
- 13) "One possible outline for Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy" [May 11, 1987], in *Supplement to The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, no. 10922.
- 14) "Another 'Talking to Myself,' this time on what has happened since 'Not by Practice Alone,' 1984-87" [May 19, 1987], in *Supplement to The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, no. 10955.
- 15) "Presentation on the Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy," in *The Power of Negativity: Selected Writings on the Dialectic in Hegel and Marx*, by Raya Dunayevskaya (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2002), p. 7.
- 16) "Talking to Myself," [May 13, 1987], in *Supplement to The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, no. 10932.



**FOR TERRY SCHIAVO**

It is a measure of the depth of their collective guilt that every sector of the American political class—including the executive, legislative, and judicial branches at both the federal and state levels, Democrat and Republican alike—weighed in on the Terry Schiavo case. Politicians thought they could redeem themselves by creating a spectacle of feigned concern over one human life even as they snuffed out the lives of dozens, hundreds, millions of others. The war in Iraq made politicians desperate to divert attention from that carnage.

From time to time, individuals appear whose dire situation exposes the manifold ugliness of this capitalist world in excruciating detail. In so doing, they provide an awakening of consciousness for those who choose to open their eyes and see. This is the precious gift I saw Terry Schiavo giving us. Terry Schiavo has finally died. May she rest in peace. Now it is time to pull the feeding tube from comatose capitalism.

**Ex-Postal Worker  
Michigan**

**A DO-ABLE FIGHT**

May I recommend a book—*Bury the Chains* by Adam Hochschild, Houghton Mifflin Company. A history of the anti-slavery movement with much of interest, not least of which is the very small number of dedicated men and women who fought for freedom for all, and the speed with which they were successful. One of the many interesting facts cited states that (only) 200 years ago some three-quarters of the earth's population was in bondage in some form or another—from the serfs of Russia, to the crofters of Scotland.

Slavery still exists today, and we must fight against it. But the scale and the acceptance of it is very different indeed. I cite all this because I think there is relevance to those of us who want to live in a different world. There is a fight to be won. And it is do-able.

**Longtime supporter  
Vancouver**

**SREBRENICA REMEMBERED**

Stories of violent death, devastation and terrorism are now an indelible part of the collective human memory. In July 1995, in Srebrenica, a Bosnian silver-mining town only a few hours drive from major European capitals, Serbian forces killed nearly 8,000 women, and children in the presence of UN peacekeepers charged with protecting them. Ten years later genocide continues to echo through an often complacent world. Since Srebrenica, we have witnessed genocide in East Timor, Rwanda, Congo, Sudan, the Middle East and elsewhere. We see new resistances rise while the old fall away

**GERARD VANDERHAAR**

Memphis lost a vital peace and justice activist when Gerard Vanderhaar—co-founder of the Mid-South Peace and Justice Center—died in June of pulmonary fibrosis. Gerry's passion was non-violence and peace. He taught it, wrote about it, and lived it. His retirement in 1996 from a position as Professor Emeritus of religion and peace studies at Christian Brothers University meant only that he had more time to give the movement. His books include *Beyond Violence: In the Spirit of the Nonviolent Christ*; *Words of Peace*; and *When Good People Do Bad Things*.

Gerry believed in "respectful dialogue, in the interest of searching for a more complete truth." It was evident in his ability at meetings to bring an argumentative discussion back to what was important. His philosophy of nonviolence created an optimistic activist who believed that "The story of the human race is characterized by efforts to get along much more than by violent disputes, although it's the latter that make the history books. Violence is actually exceptional. The human race has survived because of cooperation, not aggression."

Gerry was one of those rare individuals who lived his ideas. His death was a tremendous blow to the peace and justice movement in Memphis—not because Memphis is small, but because Gerry was so very large and important to the movement.

**Terry Moon**

**READERS' VIEWS**

**MARX'S HUMANISM AND A NEW ECOLOGY**

The majority of those offering an ecological critique of society who are not part of the Left advocate a "return to nature" or, as Peter Hudis put it in his essay in the May-June issue of *N&L*, "surrender the notion that economic development, industrialization, and modernization can in any way be considered 'progressive.'" Not only does this view ignore the real human needs of billions of the world's population, it ignores two other important points.

First, Marx's concept of labor, expressed in *Capital*, as "the universal condition for the metabolic interaction between (hu)man and nature, the everlasting nature of human existence" is borne out 150 years later by a wealth of studies of human evolution, anatomy and physiology. Not only did humans evolve from highly social tool-making ancestors, but many human ailments stem from abnormal (read: factory-imposed repetitive motions) human activity or the lack thereof.

Second, advocating a "return to nature" places a theoretical false dichotomy between humans and "nature." What is natural is that organisms in nature interact and thereby change their environment, for better or

worse. Human impacts have drastically altered the "natural" environment. What is new is the degree to which capitalism invades every aspect of human interaction with the environment. Engineered agriculture with patented seeds and genetically modified food is a quantitative leap from the old-fashioned methods of domestication and breeding and drastically increases the power and control over the world's food supply, gene pools and agricultural product. The increase in biology-for-profit robs the world of anything that doesn't make money—Viagra is more important than wiping out HIV.

Environmentalists may think they are experts on the environment, but the truth is that workers were the first environmentalists, protesting the pollution and inhuman conditions of factory work. There is so much in Marx that can show this, notably his writings on the working day. Perhaps as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of *N&L* we could bring out some of the workers' and columnists' voices, along with Marx's, in this context.

**Susan Van Gelder  
Detroit**

but the fundamental problems of ethnic hatred and state-sanctioned murder remain. We have to answer: how do we respond to genocide in a world that continually emphasizes and exploits differences between varied groups and deals with crisis by scapegoating certain groups and allowing violence against them. This is the theme of the art exhibit dedicated to the victims of Srebrenica at the Gallery of Links for International Promotion of the Arts.

**LIPA Gallery, 410 South Michigan Ave.,  
Chicago, IL 60605**

**END SUDANESE GENOCIDE!**

Across the country, universities and state legislatures are finally taking action to divest from companies operating in Sudan. These initiatives send a message to the Sudanese dictator, General Bashir, and will place a significant strain on his ability to buy weapons and airplanes used to carry out genocide within Sudan. Illinois has just become the first state to pass Sudan divestment legislation, which prohibits Illinois from investing in companies doing business in Sudan. It joins both Harvard and Stanford University already on record in this kind of divestment. The drive is now on to get other universities and states to follow suit. Information on how to support the work can be found at [www.SudanActivism.com/divestment.html](http://www.SudanActivism.com/divestment.html).



**Jesse Sage  
American Anti-Slavery Group**

**REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS**

To think it is impossible for women to lose the right to abortion is to ignore the ruthlessness of Christian fundamentalism and the fanaticism of the anti-abortion movement. Both these movements are founded on an antihuman philosophy that sees women as less than human. So do any politicians who would trade away our abortion rights in the hope of getting elected.

**Abortion rights supporter  
Tennessee**

Good news for reproductive rights comes from New York State, where the legislature passed a law giving women greater access to emergency contraception (the "morning after" pill). The law would allow pharmacists and nurses to obtain blanket prescriptions for the pill and dispense them to any woman who asks for them, saving the need to first see a doctor. Since emergency contraception is more effective when taken within 24 hours, the new law would prevent

thousands of unwanted pregnancies. Unfortunately, Governor Pataki still has to approve the measure and has remained silent about it as of the first week of July.

**Women's Liberationist  
New York**

In the many important points Kevin Anderson made in his article on the new Pope's anointing religious fundamentalism (*N&L* May-June 2005), one of the most important was his quoting Polly Toynebee that "No one can compute how many people have died of AIDS as a result of [the Pope's] power, how many women have died in childbirth needlessly, how many children starved in families too large and poor to feed them."

We can add to this that what has been computed is how many women have died each year because of unsafe and butcher abortions, carried out in countries where it is illegal. The estimates run from 45,000 to 100,000. I tend to think the higher number is the most accurate because so many of these deaths are covered up, unknown, or subsumed under the label of "maternal deaths."

**Women's Liberationist  
Memphis**

**VOICES FROM WITHIN THE WALLS**

When I was young I was part of a street gang. We thought we were tough, patrolling our little neighborhood and looking for trouble, but when the police, came we would run. Who's the real gang here? We call ourselves gangsta's but the real "G" men are gang banging on a world scale, not a street scale.

They make rules and break them in the same sentence—now that's gangsta! They charge every working stiff taxes to be in this country and take it off your check before you see it—that's gangsta! They even tell you that these taxes are for domesticated purposes but when you get a loaf of bread you get taxed again—that's gangsta! You hear about an astronomical deficit the government owes, to what?—when it makes its own way. That's really gangsta! As I see it, all of us who think we're gangsta better think again about who's the real gang here.

**Prisoner  
Susanville, California**

It's bad enough to have to do time for whatever reason, but for women their punishment is triple jeopardy. They say the state takes care of us, but if you have an illness the nurses and doctors treat you like an off-brand cow that's about to be butchered. People on the outside don't understand and have left the majority of women in prison for dead.

It's OK for them to work us like mules

**THE ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT**

It was recently noted in *N&L* that some peace groups have put women's issues on the backburner. Here in New York a recent debate has arisen over whether peace and justice and other anti-war organizations should take a stand on race issues and talk about how war affects people of color. One argument for keeping a narrow focus on the war was that narrowing it that way would bring a "broader constituency." But addressing the effects of war on people of color is what would bring in more people. We need to think about who we really want in this movement—and the answer to that is that we want everyone.

**Andy  
New York**

It is good to see that a critical attitude to the reactionary elements of the Iraqi "resistance" seems to be gaining ground in the anti-war movement. A year ago *N&L* seemed like a lonely voice in the movement. Now more and more on the Left are adding their voices to denounce the Ba'athist/fundamentalist killings of labor organizers, oppression of women, and so on. The Campaign for Peace and Democracy, for example, is asking anti-war activists to sign a Statement Condemning Attacks on Iraqi Trade Unionists. It is important to support this trend by publicizing it.

**Anti-war activist  
Memphis**

The War Resisters League has been circulating an important leaflet aimed to help in organizing a youth-led counter-military recruitment movement as a key part of ending, not just the war in Iraq, but the spread of militarism and violence in our society. They are urging youth to organize their friends to demand "equal time" to hear both sides if military recruiters are allowed into their schools. They're letting students know that it's a Federal law for public schools. The flier they are circulating deals with the many myths the military recruiters have been peddling vs. the real truths about college funding, job opportunities, and benefits for vets. Those interested can download them from [www.warresisters.org/youth.htm](http://www.warresisters.org/youth.htm).

**WRL supporter  
Chicago**

**You can find News & Letters at these bookstores....**

Sabo's Infoshop  
1317 East Fulton  
Grand Rapids, MI 49508

Leftofcenter Bookstore  
1043 W. Granville  
Chicago, IL 60660

mentally and physically, seven hours a day, five days a week for 30 cents an hour. If I had a sweat shop in downtown L.A. not paying minimum wage the state would close me down.

How is it that women of America get so much time in prison but so little help? Is that what they mean when they say it's a woman's world? We're being stripped of our identities and everything that connects us to the outside world. Is anyone listening?



**Woman prisoner  
Chowchilla, California**

The Texas State legislature recently voted to reduce further the state prisoners' daily meal caloric content to 1,800. One thoughtful guard at the Hughes prison near Gatesville, genuinely concerned that prisoners would become malnourished, distributed "Eat twice" passes which allowed prisoners to go through the serving lines twice at prison dining halls. "In my 11 years as a guard, I've never seen the prisoners' food this bad," he said.

**Prisoner  
Gatesville, Texas**

## Environment Day solidarity

**SAN FRANCISCO**—In preparation for the United Nations World Environment Day finale, a huge outdoor stage was set up at San Francisco Civic Center on June 4. Mayor Gavin Newsom summoned environmental experts and fellow mayors to the United Nations' birthplace to exchange ideas on tackling problems in major urban areas, where most of the world's energy is consumed and most of the pollution generated.

Hours before the main event a 200-strong rally, organized by people the mayor had not invited, took place off stage right. Representatives of predominantly Black Bayview-Hunters Point neighborhood demanded that Pacific Gas & Electric Co. and Mayor Newsom take steps to close

the toxin-belching Hunters Point power plant. After several residents attested to that region's disproportionately high incidence of respiratory illness, a number of supporters took the mike.

Among the latter were two Berkeley-based groups that perform traditional Okinawan music. Members of Genyukai Berkeley play sanshin (3-string lute) and sing. Ryukyu Damashii does percussion and dancing.



Okinawan drummers perform at unofficial protest against ecological destruction and militarism.

Since 2002 they have performed together in anti-war marches and at other events. Speaking for both groups drummer Miho Kim, a Japanese woman of Korean descent, extended solidarity to the Hunters Point activists on behalf of Okinawans involved in their own struggle for environmental justice.

For more than a year women and men from the Henoko district of Nago City, Okinawa have been staging a sit-in on the preliminary structures of a new offshore U.S. Marine Corps base for Osprey helicopters. Kim, who visited Henoko in December 2004, recalled that most of the resisters were elderly. The calm, shallow waters of Henoko Bay allow for relatively easy construction. The bay also provides one of the few places suited to the endangered dugong (sea cow). The worldwide dugong population is about 100,000 but the Okinawa dugong number no more than 50 animals. A United Nations Environmental Program report refers to Henoko Bay as "the most important known remaining dugong habitat in Japan." Photographs taken by

resisters show that wherever posts have been driven into the sea floor the coral reef is dead and no sea grass, the dugong's only diet, can be seen.

Defending the dugong is part of a movement to shut down U.S. military bases in Okinawa that began in 1995 after a 12-year-old girl was gang-raped by three U.S. Marines. Okinawans have since become more expressive of their growing intolerance to the culture of violence promoted by both the United States and Japan. In a 1997 Nago City referendum 80% voted against the proposed air station over Henoko Bay. At today's rally Wesley Ueunten, a Hawaiian of Okinawan descent and founder of Genyukai Berkeley, sang a ballad in the Okinawan language commemorating the Battle of Okinawa, the bloodiest confrontation between Japanese and American forces on "Japanese soil" (Japan brutally annexed and colonized Okinawa in 1879). In the process of trying to decimate one another the two sides wiped out a quarter of the Okinawans.

That U.S. military personnel to this day consider the battle a successful campaign to liberate Okinawa is seen in their frequent reference to the incessant racket of warplanes as "the sound of freedom." Sunao Tobaru, who grew up in Okinawa and founded Ryukyu Damashii after he moved to Berkeley, said children are going deaf and babies have gone into seizure at the pulsating roar of attack helicopters. Tobaru and Ueunten estimate that the typical Okinawan has lost a year of education due to jarring interruptions from "the sound of freedom."

An ad hoc committee of San Francisco Bay Area Okinawans is working on a petition urging officials to abandon construction of the Henoko air base. It will be sent to Donald Rumsfeld, Condoleezza Rice and their Japanese counterparts in time for the base closure and realignment conference. A finalized version should be available for signing and transmission by late July at [www.peacefighter.org](http://www.peacefighter.org). —David Mizuno-Oto

## Disability rights activists fight cuts

**NASHVILLE, TENN.**—TennCare beneficiaries and activists from the Tennessee Peace and Justice Center, the Memphis Center for Independent Living (MCIL) and ADAPT, a radical grassroots disability rights group, have occupied Tennessee Governor Phil Bredesen's office since June 20, demanding that the Governor stop disqualifying Medicaid enrollees and have an open public hearing on TennCare, the Tennessee Medicaid program.

The individuals have been steadfast in their belief that the Governor is committing an unconscionable mistake in his proposal to devastate TennCare. We spent the weekend in the Governor's office, sleeping on the floor, unable to get food, water or blankets from allies holding vigil outside the locked public building.

In the beginning, 12 people slept overnight in the Governor's office to highlight our demand that Bredesen meet publicly and clarify the huge healthcare cuts he has proposed. Bredesen was elected promising to fix TennCare, but without any public involvement, he has broken his promise and is proposing only minimal Medicaid coverage in Tennessee.

"We believe in what we are doing," said Randy Alexander of Tennessee ADAPT from the Governor's office, "That belief is growing. More and more people are here every day and night. It's a fantastic feeling after a hard day to see 50 to 60 people outside the window holding a candlelight vigil."

"I remember April 8 when we delivered to this office a ten-point plan, developed by experts who know about healthcare, and we asked for a speedy response from the Governor. The plan called for the State to save \$649 million and allow qualified TennCare recipients to stay on the rolls," recalled Dr. Dwight Montgomery of the Memphis chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC), who joined the protesters. "The Governor has never considered what we presented on April 8."

Gov. Bredesen has been hyping his healthcare draft. He gave speeches in Washington, DC, painting his untried proposal as accomplishment. He proposed eliminating healthcare for over 300,000 people in an effort to save the state money, but because Tennessee gets a federal match for the state Medicaid program, his plan results in hundreds of millions of dollars less for the healthcare of Tennessee citizens.

More people join the nightly vigil that is held outside the building after it is locked for the evening around 6:00 pm. Our office is receiving e-mails, phone calls and letters from across the country. The whole nation is looking at Tennessee right now and the support is really fantastic.

Bredesen called the events in his office "a circus." Activists spending the night in the office see the occupation and growing support as democracy in action and we are irritated that he has such a shallow view of the citizens that elected him. "If the Governor wants to engage in name-calling," said Alexander, "we will just take the high road."

—MCIL Activists

## BLACK/RED VIEW

Continued from page 1

captive their masters. Three whites (Steven, Cook, and Tidd) and three Blacks (Larry, Green, and Osborne Anderson) were assigned to do the job. Brown wanted this important mission, which he believed would initiate the liberation of Virginia slaves, to be undertaken by a racially mixed group."

But no slaves appeared to support Brown's insurrection. Reynolds points out that there were many reasons. Fear may have kept the slaves away. For example, Reynolds writes, "Harrison Berry, a Georgia slave, argued in an 1861 pamphlet that blacks did not join Brown because they feared certain, horrible death if they were later captured."

But fear had never stopped slaves from revolting. There had been a long sequence of Black uprisings, as seen in Nat Turner's revolt in 1831 and many, many others.

Without mass support, Brown and all the men with him were captured and those who were not killed in the fighting were all hanged. According to Reynolds, the after-the-fact support of those who applauded Brown's cause, while condemning his method, so aggravated the South that they plunged into the Civil War.

Brown's vision for the changes in the U.S. law and in Black participation in government was well ahead of his time. But it was not forgotten. In 1906 the Niagara Movement, a precursor to the NAACP, held its founding conference in Harpers Ferry.

I remember going on a field trip to Harpers Ferry when I was a teenager in high school in the 1930s. It seemed a dreary place. Since we were all Black students we knew they would not serve us so we never even tried to get any soda or coffee. The teacher, Mr. Joyce, wanted to show us, in addition to the armory, the railroad station and the Black college in the town, because he wanted to impart to us how important this site was.

### SIGNAL HAD BEEN GIVEN

The one who appreciated the importance of the attack at the time it happened was Karl Marx. Marx wrote Engels on January 11, 1860: "In my opinion, the biggest things that are happening in the world today are on the one hand the movement of the slaves in America started by the death of John Brown and, on the other, the movement of the serfs in Russia... I have just seen in the Tribune that there has been a fresh rising of the slaves in Missouri, naturally suppressed. But the signal has now been given."

Marx was writing this in England, at the time the center of the industrial world empire. Both U.S. and Russia were provincial backwaters in Europe's view. Yet he was so attuned to the actualization of freedom in the world, that he knew that the challenge from the slaves would be a new beginning of freedom for everyone, especially in re-energizing the labor movement. As Dunayevskaya shows in *Marxism and Freedom*, Marx reshaped the very concept of what theory is on the basis of the actual struggle against slavery.

The idea of freedom continues to be a driving force in human history. As the new biography shows, John Brown's effort to realize freedom was limited by his own particular will. Yet the idea unfolded in spite of that. The task of our age is to overcome that gap by realizing the unity of the particular individual with the idea of freedom itself as necessity.

## No peace, no rebuilding in Aceh

Six months after last December's tsunami killed more than 200,000 people in Aceh, the Indonesian government has still made little effort to rebuild. Bodies continue to be pulled from piles of rubble and most refugees still live in camps. Most of the rebuilding Aceh has seen has been done by NGOs and foreign government aid agencies. Millions of dollars of Indonesian government funds earmarked for reconstruction and relief have disappeared due to graft, according to reports recently sent to parliament.

After the tsunami killed 2,000 teachers and destroyed thousands of schools, the schools were closed for three months. As a result, most junior and senior high school students in tsunami areas failed this year's national exams. The juniors have to repeat a year and the seniors cannot go on to universities.

The government's master plan for rebuilding Aceh has not even been funded, yet a secret memo from the defense minister to the finance minister demanded an additional \$55 million be allocated before the end of June for fighting the independence movement in Aceh. This gives the lie to Indonesia's claim to have recently lifted the "civil emergency" (martial law) in Aceh. The military is still killing Achenese civilians as well as Free Aceh Movement (GAM) fighters daily.

Indonesia's war against GAM continued even during a European Union monitoring team's visit in late June in expectation of a peace agreement being signed soon. Four rounds of peace talks have been held in Helsinki, and two more sessions are scheduled. Some progress has been made but no agreements have been reached. One observer remarked, "The talks are important to give the Achenese hope that there is light at the end of the tunnel."

Meanwhile, nationalists in the Indonesian parliament oppose even talking to GAM, urging the military to crush the rebels instead—which it has been trying to do for 29 years. Indonesia's military effort has included

extreme repression of civil society organizations working for independence. The military is already forcing Achenese villagers to demonstrate against the peace talks and international monitors. The military is still a strong force in the Indonesian government, and some reform politicians think there is no hope of weakening its hold unless peace is achieved in Aceh.

Indonesia uses many tricks to try to distract people from its utter failure to aid and reconstruct Aceh and its continuing corruption. In 2001, the government ordered Shari'a (religious law) to be implemented in Aceh against the wishes of the Achenese, as part of Indonesia's propaganda that Aceh is fighting to be more Islamic rather than for human rights. Shari'a punishment was not used, however, until recently, undoubtedly to scare the foreign aid workers there now. In June, several people were ordered caned as punishment for gambling 50 cents each. This caused Achenese to exclaim that caning is used only against the poor, and to ask why the governor of Aceh, who was convicted of stealing millions of dollars, was not caned—nor the military that runs so much in Aceh, from gambling and prostitution to extortion, drug trafficking and illegal logging.

Indonesia is still trying to force all foreigners out of Aceh so it can carry on military operations with impunity. Even though many aid workers have been unable to renew their visas, some have stayed on without permission due to the dire need. In June, a Red Cross worker from Hong Kong was shot in the neck near an army post. Each side claimed the other had shot her, but as GAM pointed out, only Indonesia wants the foreigners to leave—GAM wants Aceh to remain open to foreigners, whose presence provides a little protection against military abuses.

—Acheh Center NYC  
([achehcenter@yahoo.com](mailto:achehcenter@yahoo.com))

## YOUTH

## Marx, Proudhon and alternatives to capital

by Seth Weiss

Marx's critical dialogue with the work of the French anarchist thinker Pierre Joseph Proudhon spanned several decades—from his youth haunting the cafes of Paris, where he had occasion to meet Proudhon and discuss German philosophy, through the writing of the *Grundrisse*, *Capital* and the *Critique of the Gotha Program*. While largely ignored in the present, Marx's critique of Proudhon remains of real import for all of us struggling to break the hold of capital over our lives and our world.

Three aspects of Marx's critique will be explored here: (I) the limits of reforms in the sphere of circulation; (II) economic laws and the possibilities which politics and consciousness offer for their transcendence; and (III) Marx's still largely uncharted concept of "directly social labor."

**'FAIR TRADE'**

In his 1846 *Philosophy of Poverty*, Proudhon locates a contradiction between use-value and exchange-value—a contradiction which he holds as the basis of poverty, inequality, and economic crises. With what he terms "constituted value" or "synthetic value," Proudhon, drawing on the value theory of classical political economy, endeavors a resolution of the contradiction. "Synthetic value," Proudhon maintains, is the ground for abolishing unequal exchange. (1) What Proudhon is proposing, in practical terms is that one commodity which requires, for instance, four hours to produce will exchange with any other commodity that requires four hours to produce. For Proudhon this would be a situation of equality: equal contributions to society receiving equal rewards from society.

A year later, in his 1847 *Poverty of Philosophy*, the only book that he wrote in French, Marx tears this formulation to pieces. Proudhon, Marx argues, "give[s] as a 'revolutionary theory of the future' what Ricardo expounded scientifically as the theory of present-day society, of bourgeois society, and...thus take[s] for the solution of the antinomy between utility and exchange value what Ricardo and his school presented long before him as the scientific formula of one single side of this antinomy, that of exchange value." Moreover, says Marx, "relative value [or exchange-value], measured by labor time, is inevitably the formula of the present enslavement of the worker, instead of being, as M. Proudhon would have it, the 'revolutionary theory' of the emancipation of the proletariat."

Marx understood the law of value rather differently than Proudhon: not in terms of "equality" but in terms of "inequality." What appears as an equality is just that—an appearance—because it is not individual, concrete labor that has a tendency to exchange in equal ratios, but only socially average, abstract labor. In *Capital*, Marx shows that the value of a commodity is determined by the amount of "socially necessary labor-time" required for its reproduction—any labor-time beyond that which is socially necessary is simply wasted (i.e., labor-time during which no value is created). (2)

The fact that our labor doesn't count equally is not because of unequal exchange, but because our labor is not counted equally in the first place—in the process of production. The labor of some workers counts more than the labor of other workers in production. One worker, for instance, may be stronger or faster than another worker; one worker may be working with more modern technology than another. Only socially necessary labor, labor which measures up to the social average, is registered in our society.

Marx maintains that relations of exchange are rooted in the relations of production. Unequal exchange, or rather what appears as unequal exchange, ultimately can't be overcome without uprooting present production relations and transcending value production.

Much of the Left today—including both anarchists and Marxists—continues to locate the roots of poverty, inequality and economic crises in the realm of exchange and to prescribe remedies that focus on exchange. This is particularly pronounced in the anti-globalization movement. Think about campaigns for "Fair Trade" (rather than "Free Trade") and the work of organizations like Global Exchange and Trade Craft. Consider also the recent Life After Capitalism conference at the CUNY Graduate Center, which featured panels promoting gift-exchange and barter as alternatives to capitalism. The panel on the latter was called "The Barter System in Argentina: is it Possible in our Town?"

Marx's critique of Proudhon demands that we consider whether efforts at abolishing markets or changing property relations can offer ground for real social transformation. In this, it also demands that we rethink the experience of the Soviet Union, China, Cuba and the other so-called "socialist" countries. The new global justice movements have largely rejected this experience as a model—they have rejected the vanguard party, the seizure of state power, the five-year plan. This is plainly sensible—but it is a partial critique: it is not sufficient to counterpose new decentralized and anti-authoritarian movements to the old vanguardist movements. Like with Proudhon's work, there is a failure to look closely at the mode of production itself. To be sure, some property relations were changed and some wealth was redistributed in the so-called "socialist" countries, but value production was simply not overcome and labor remained alienated.

A second feature of Marx's critique of Proudhon that deserves attention is his treatment of economic laws and their transcendence.

**CAN POLITICS BREAK THE LAW OF VALUE?**

Proudhon argues that the contradiction he finds between "use-value" and "exchange-value" is also a contradiction between "supply" and "demand." Proudhon's concerns are practical in nature. The 1840s, known as the "hungry forties," witnessed severe economic crisis across the continent, culminating in the revolutions of 1848. In a crisis demand drops off—things can't be sold and prices fall. Proudhon says that the contradiction between supply and demand can be overcome if commodities are made to exchange directly in proportion to the amount of labor required for their production. Set prices equal to values, so that supply and demand find equilibrium, and voila: commodities will always be exchangeable and at a fair price.

Marx maintains, in the *Poverty of Philosophy*, that Proudhon "inverts the order of things." For it is when supply and demand come into balance that prices equal values. (3) Marx jokes that while everyone else ventures outside for a walk when the weather is good, Proudhon would have us leave the house to insure good weather!

In the course of his discussion of these issues in the *Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx draws an important distinction between the role of a "legislator" and that of an "economist." As a legislator, Marx tells us, Proudhon is free to decree the abolition of the law of supply and demand. However, says Marx, "[i]f...he [Proudhon] insists on justifying his theory, not as a legislator, but as an economist [my emphasis], he will have to prove that the time needed to create a commodity indicates exactly the degree of its utility and marks its proportional relation to the demand..." A legislator—and for Marx's legislator we could easily substitute a central committee, a workers' council or a worker-run co-op—may be able to decree that one hour of labor is equal to another. However, what will happen when demand for a product—as with typewriters in the advent of the personal computer—drops off? The labor that went into the production of the typewriters will no longer count—they simply won't sell, their price will fall, workers will lose their jobs.

While Proudhon was content to remain a captive of the commodity-form, there are many of us today who want to transcend commodity production and transcend capital. Can we legislate the abolition of commodity production? Can politics break the law of value?

Too often we seem to be thinking like Marx's "legislator." Much of the Left today—from Stalinists to social democrats to anarchists—seems to believe that politics are in command. Too often, regardless of whether one's program demands seizing state power or smashing state power, the problematic remains limited to matters of political power, consciousness, and organizational form.

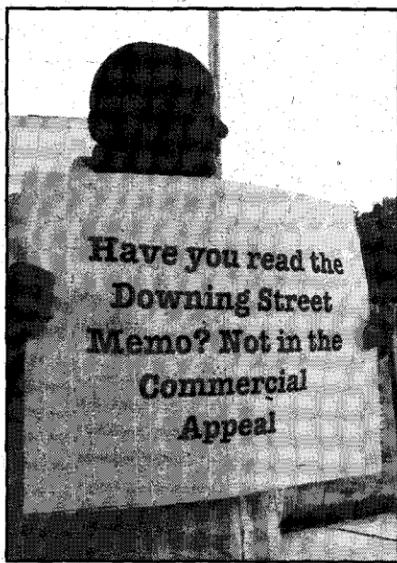
Proudhon's interest in the equilibration of supply and demand led him to advocate the abolition of money. In the course of his critique of this aspect of Proudhon's thought, Marx elaborates a crucially important notion—namely that of "directly social labor"—which is still not well understood.

**DIRECTLY SOCIAL LABOR**

Marx develops the concept of "directly social labor"

**Protest Iraq news bias**

**MEMPHIS, TENN.**—Protesters picketed outside the main daily newspaper here, *The Commercial Appeal*, because we are fed up with their refusal to print the Downing Street Memos, which document the Bush



Protest targets pro-Bush omissions.

administration's determination to go to war on Iraq and to deceive the people about it. *The Commercial Appeal* has terrible coverage of the Iraq war, although, surprisingly, the editorial page is pretty good. After meeting with some members of the editorial board, we decided to go ahead with our protest because we believe that

without public pressure to print actual news, nothing will change. Our July 4 picket in 90-degree heat went well with participants from the Mid-South Peace and Justice Center and News and Letters Committees. The overwhelmingly positive response that we got from drivers-by showed that many Memphians agreed with our protest. —Participant

or "immediately social labor" in critical dialogue with the work of Proudhon, the Ricardian socialists and later with the followers of Ferdinand Lassalle. In endeavoring an equalitarian application of Ricardo's theory, Proudhon and left Ricardian thinkers like John Gray, advocated what we would today call monetary reform: they sought to replace money with "time chits" or "labor money." These "time chits" were designed to directly reflect labor time. In other words, in exchange for a commodity that took, say, 12 hours to produce, the producer would receive a certificate from a bank entitling her to any other commodity that took 12 hours to produce. Proudhon and Gray wanted every commodity to be directly social, directly exchangeable, with every other commodity in the same way that money is directly social. Proudhon and the other "time-chitters," as Marx calls them in the *Grundrisse*, thought the mediation of money stood in the way. (4)

Marx, however, cautions us not to get caught up in money's dazzle and sheen. Money, Marx argues in Volume I of *Capital*, crystallizes out of a contradiction within the commodity itself: a contradiction in the commodity between "use-value" on the one hand and "value" on the other hand; a contradiction between "concrete labor" (labor which produces use-values) and "abstract labor" (labor which produces value); and a contradiction between "private labor" (the labor of the individual) and "directly social labor" (the labor that society counts). One can't then abolish money without abolishing the commodity-form.

Proudhon's "pious wish" to abolish money without abolishing commodity production, Marx says in *Capital*, is rooted in "the illusion...that all commodities can simultaneously be imprinted with the stamp of direct exchangeability, in the same way that it might be imagined that all Catholics can be popes." In other words, as long as there are commodities, one commodity will necessarily take the form of Pope ruling over all the other commodities.

In the 1875 *Critique of the Gotha Program*, Marx again returns to the issue of "directly social labor." Marx's characterization here of a higher phase of communism in which society will inscribe upon its banners "from each according to her ability, to each according to her needs" is well known. His characterization of the lower phase of communism remains poorly understood. In this lower phase, Marx says:

[T]he individual producer receives back from society...exactly what he gives to it...He receives a certificate from society that he has furnished such-and-such an amount of labor...and with this certificate he draws from the social stock of means of consumption as much as the same amount of labor costs. The same amount of labor which he has given to society in one form, he receives back in another.

This sounds very much like the proposals of Proudhon and other "time-chitters" that were the subject of decades of invective from Marx. There is, however, a real difference between what Marx is suggesting and the formulations of Proudhon—if we can get at this difference, we will have understood not only Marx's critique of Proudhon but also have discovered one of the real clues that Marx has left us for figuring out how to transcend capital.

The difference is that, here, labor is "directly" or "immediately" social. Unlike in the formulations of Proudhon and unlike in our own commodity-producing society, where the exchange of equivalents exists only in the average, here there would actually be an exchange of equivalents in the individual case. "[N]ow," as Marx notes, "in contrast to capitalist society, individual labor no longer exists in an indirect fashion but directly as a component part of total labor." So here, right from the beginning, Marx is telling us that the law of value will not hold. The labor, Marx says, employed in the production of products will no longer take the form of a material quality possessed by them; the products of our own hands will no longer have control over us.

While Proudhon is not well remembered today, the kinds of ideas that he advanced have become conventional wisdom on the Left, particularly in the new global justice movements. A return to Marx's critique of Proudhon offers a salutary antidote to such conventional wisdom and, perhaps, a path forward for all of us searching for real alternatives to capital.

**NOTES**

1. Ricardo's *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*, which posits labor as the source of value and labor-time as its measure, had been translated into French more than a decade before Proudhon's *Philosophy of Poverty* was first published.
2. "Socially necessary labour-time is the labour-time required to produce any use-value under the conditions of production normal for a given society and with the average degree of skill and intensity of labour prevalent in that society" (*Capital*, p. 129, Penguin edition). In the *Philosophy of Poverty*, Marx posits the labor-time required by the most productive workers (rather than "socially necessary labor-time") as determining the magnitude of value.
3. Strictly speaking, as Marx shows elsewhere, when supply equals demand, prices in the market equal prices of production, not values.
4. Ideas of this kind still remain with us today—e.g., alternative currency schemes like "Ithaca Dollars," the "LETS-system" and "Burlington Bread" (which is denominated in "slices").

**OUR LIFE AND TIMES**  
by Kevin A. Barry

**Reactionary gains presidency in Iran**

The election of an arch reactionary fundamentalist, Mahmud Ahmadinejad, to Iran's presidency on June 23 stunned the world. It is important to view this election in context and to not lose sight of the current situation in Iran as a whole.

During the first round of the presidential election on June 12, seven candidates approved by the Council of Guardians led by the Supreme Religious Leader, Ali Khamenei, had been allowed to participate. Only one reformist candidate, Moin, a follower of president Khatami, was allowed to participate after being disqualified.

Given the undemocratic character of the election, a movement to boycott voting had gained ground among millions and had been supported by Nobel Laureate Shirin Ebadi and other dissident intellectuals. Thus it is estimated that 30-50% of the 48 million eligible voters did not vote. This figure stood in contrast to the 80% who did vote in 1997 when there was much hope in Ahmad Khatami's reformist campaign.

The government, in turn, engaged in extensive fraud by issuing false and pictureless identity documents. In addition, there was a campaign by the military to order the Basijis and Pasdaran (Morality Police) to force others to vote for Ahmadinejad.

Once the Council of Guardians announced former president Hashemi Rafsanjani and Mahmud Ahmadinejad as the two run-off candidates, even government insiders such as Ayatollah Karubi, who claimed that he was one of the two candidates with the highest number of votes, protested the fraud.

During the second round of election, the government claimed that 60% of voters voted, of which 60% voted for Ahmadinejad and 35% for Rafsanjani. Even if these figures are correct, that leaves Ahmadinejad with 36% of eligible voters. That is not a landslide victory.

Many analysts have written about Ahmadinejad's appeal to conservative sectors of the poor among residents of south Tehran and the rural population. His fundamentalist credentials go back to the time of the 1979 revolution when he organized Islamist students



Women denounce Iran's constitution.

on campuses to attack leftists and feminists. In addition to being an army commander during the Iran-Iraq war, he had gained a reputation for personally carrying out Khomeini's orders to execute Mujahedeen (dissident Islamic activists) political prisoners in 1988. Most recently, as mayor of Tehran, he has spoken out against the meagre freedoms that women have informally gained to wear a looser Hijab, and has boasted that he would not have a woman in his cabinet.

There is no doubt that Ahmadinejad's support for government subsidies and his misogyny did attract a sector of Iranian voters. It is also true that Rafsanjani, one of the richest men in the world who is notorious for his corrupt and murderous practices as former president, could not take votes away from Ahmadinejad.

What needs to be confronted, however, is that for the reformist followers of President Khatami as well as the growing opposition which had called for boycotting the election, the only projected alternative was free market capitalism. In his "Second Manifesto on Republicanism," Akbar Ganji, an imprisoned journalist who is currently on a hunger strike at the Evin prison, and is one of the theorists of the independent opposition movement as well as the boycott campaign, presents a model of democracy based on the ideas of Karl Popper, Richard Rorty and Gandhi. He advocates a velvet revolution like in the former Czechoslovakia against totalitarian Communism, based on democratic free market capitalism.

Thus at the moment no opposition platform inside Iran is theorizing an alternative to both free market capitalism and totalitarian state capitalism. Movements opposed to fundamentalism, misogyny and Persian chauvinism, however, are alive among large sec-

tors of women, youth and ethnic minorities.

On June 12, hundreds of women participated in a demonstration at Tehran University to oppose the Iranian constitution for discriminating against women. Many more women as well as male supporters who wished to join them were barred by police and forced to stand on the other side of the street. The demonstrators chanted: "We are women, We are citizens but we have no rights." This was the first demonstration of women against sexual discrimination in the constitution since the 1979 revolution.

An ongoing sit-in in defense of political prisoners who are on a hunger strike is being supported by organizations of youth and intellectuals. Youth under the age of 25 constitute half of Iran's population of 70 million. The majority of them do not defend Ahmadinejad.

There is fear that further repression under Ahmadinejad's rule would lead to mass arrests of dissident intellectuals, and women who do not observe the strict dress code of the Islamic Republic.

—Sheila Sahar  
July 3, 2005

**Remember Srebrenica**

Ten years ago, the outright genocide launched by the Serbian regime of Slobodan Milosevic reached its gory climax at Srebrenica, Bosnia. As Serbian forces captured the town, General Ratko Mladic promised to spare the lives of all who surrendered their weapons. Instead, he separated men and boys from their families and his forces coldly massacred all 7,000 of them.

This vast operation involved meticulous planning, since it was carried out under the noses of a small force of Dutch United Nations peacekeepers, which actually helped Mladic separate off those who were to be killed. Frantic pleas from the UN commander for more support had been ignored by the U.S. and European powers, which had declared the mainly Muslim population of Srebrenica a "safe zone."

This is part of the genocide for which Milosevic stands trial today at the International War Crimes Tribunal at The Hague. This June, video footage of uniformed Serbian police executing unarmed prisoners surfaced. Shown on Serbian TV, the video forced many to question the web of lies that Serbian nationalist propagandists, such as the philosopher Mihailo Markovic, had spun for years. In this version of history, Serbs were the eternal victims, the eternal anti-fascist progressives. In this mythic construct, charges of Serbian genocide or even war crimes were lies concocted by those who hated Serbia, by a supposed alliance of U.S. imperialists, Muslim fundamentalists, German neo-Nazis, and the Vatican.

Serbia remains in deep denial that it continues to give refuge to Mladic and Radovan Karadzic, the two biggest war criminals besides Milosevic. Gradually, Serbian opinion is moving toward a confrontation with its government's criminal actions, and sentiment is beginning to turn against Mladic and Karadzic.

**Ethiopian students**

Students took to the streets of Addis Ababa in June to protest fraudulent elections that had returned the ruling Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) to power, defying Prime Minister Meles Zenawi's ban on post-election demonstrations.

Government forces opened fire, killing 26 youth. They also arrested over 3,000 people. Construction workers sprung to the students' defense, pelting police with rocks. Next, taxi drivers and other urban workers went on strike to protest the murder of the youth. Some days later, under severe internal and external pressure, the regime released many of those it had jailed and agreed to investigate the elections. It made no apologies for the student deaths, however, nor did it agree to investigate them.

**Zimbabwe's civil war**

Robert Mugabe, the former independence fighter, who has transformed liberated Zimbabwe into a vicious one-man dictatorship that tries to justify itself by anti-imperialist demagoguery, is no longer content to intimidate the democratic opposition and the media. In true Stalinist fashion, he has launched a preventive civil war, no longer against the weakened opposition as such, but against its social base.

With unemployment standing at 70% and with urban areas seething with discontent, Mugabe has bulldozed the shantytowns of the capital, Harare, driving these "illegal" residents into tent cities in distant suburbs, or into the countryside.

At least 300,000 and perhaps over a million people have seen their housing destroyed, this in a country with a severe housing shortage, in what the regime calls "Operation Drive Out the Rubbish." Zimbabwe's total population is only 10 million.

A number have been killed, including small children. The Progressive Teachers Union estimates that 300,000 uprooted children have stopped attending school. Those evicted face winter temperatures that can drop to 40F/7C.

**Mexico City march**

Andrés Manuel López Obrador (often referred to as AMLO) seems to be in the best position to contest the 2006 presidential elections following the April "silent march" of some 1.2 million in Mexico City, organized to fight Vicente Fox's efforts to disqualify AMLO from the 2006 race. In the weeks after the march, Fox was forced to drop his campaign against López Obrador, who will be leaving his post as Mexico City mayor at the end of July to start his bid for the presidency.

The march was ten times as large as a "typical" protest in the city's Zocalo, and is being referred to as the largest single protest in Mexico's history. Many marchers who were interviewed there insisted they came out not so much because they are uncritical supporters of AMLO, but to oppose Fox's underhanded efforts to rid his party (PAN) and the PRI of the AMLO threat. They came out to support Mexico's fledgling democracy, which Fox has spent the last five years making a farce of.

AMLO himself does not make any pretense of being someone who can respond to demands for profound social change. Though he once lived among the indigenous people of the state of Tabasco and fought for improvements in their living conditions, he now insists those days are long gone, and defines himself as a "centrist." He also rejects any comparisons between himself and other leftist-leaning reformers in Latin America who have come to power in recent years.

—Mitch Weerth

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