

NEWS & LETTERS

"Human power is its own end"—Karl Marx

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WORKSHOP TALKS

Targeting Blacks as domestic terrorists

by Georgiana Williams

We have to talk about police abuse in Los Angeles. Devon Brown was a 13-year-old African American who took a joy ride in a car. The police were chasing him. They riddled his body with bullets. Since then, they put 80 bullets in the car of a young man in Compton, but none of them hit him. Another brother in Compton had a police chase, and they beat him like they did Rodney King—and that brother is in jail. None of these police has been taken off the police force.

There are about 300 women in LA whose sons have been killed by drive-by shootings. They have organized and meet every Tuesday. It's a good group, they're doing a lot of good work against police abuse. But the reason I didn't join is because the Nation of Islam is a big part of this group, and I don't trust them. I went over there two or three times to see what's going on, but I'm not going back.

I want to speak out about the domestic terrorist law they have in L.A. They refer to all our Black brothers as gangbangers. They have a new law now. If your son is considered in the gang, and he's arrested, they're going to charge him with domestic terrorism. They treat the domestic terrorists the way they treat all the brothers that they picked up after September 11 and have down in Cuba in a camp. They plan to put all these people in a camp and they're never going to be released.

We all have to get involved with this domestic terrorism issue, because what they do in LA, it looks like everybody else follows. We cannot let them put our young brothers in camps just because they call them gangbangers.

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BLACK/RED VIEW

Legacy of Rosa Parks

by John Alan

There is a need to rescue Rosa Parks from the political attempt of President Bush and other leaders to separate her greatness from the dialectics of the ongoing struggles of African Americans for freedom in this nation. Rosa Parks died as we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the historic Montgomery, Alabama Bus Boycott against segregation in public transportation, which was sparked by her act of defiance of refusing to give up her seat on a bus to a white man. Such is the power of what Rosa Parks represented that Bush sent an army officer to bring her body from Detroit to the Rotunda in the National Capitol.

This is also the 50th anniversary of *News & Letters*. The Montgomery Bus Boycott is so fundamental to the beginnings of *News and Letters* Committees that it has been named from the start in our "Who We Are and What We Stand For" statement, alongside the Detroit wildcat strikes against automation, as signaling a new movement from practice that is itself a form of theory (see page 12).

In February 1956, we ran a front-page story "Montgomery Negroes Show the Way," before news of the event was widely known. The original editor of *News & Letters*, Charles Denby, was a Black worker born in Alabama who throughout his life kept a close relationship with the movement in his home state.

I met Rosa Parks at one of our early meetings in Detroit where Denby worked with her along with other African Americans from Alabama. The very first chapter of Part Two of Denby's remarkable life story, *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*, is titled "Visit-

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Mass opposition grows as Iraq occupation festers



Mass protest in Buenos Aires in November against Bush's visit to Argentina.

by Kevin Michaels

While the narrow approval of the draft Iraqi constitution in the Oct. 15 referendum may have been a victory for the Bush administration, the U.S. continues to walk a knife's edge in Iraq. On one side is the prospect of the explosion of a fully fledged sectarian civil war with severe regional implications. On the other side is the drastic erosion of domestic political support for the administration's undertaking in Iraq from both the American people and from powerful figures within the Republican Party itself. The two realities threaten to undermine the ability of Bush and Cheney to freely carry out their agenda.

The passing of the 2,000 mark in the number of U.S. military fatalities in Iraq, with 15,000 wounded, coupled with the long-awaited federal indictment of an influential Bush administration official in the Valerie Plame leak case, has prompted many Americans to thoroughly question the reasons for and the conduct of the invasion and occupation of Iraq.

While the long-term outcome of the Bush administration's difficulties remains to be seen, the war in Iraq is certain to grind on, prolonging its cruel and devastating impact on the Iraqi people.

The constitutional referendum vote had little similarity with the dramatic Jan. 30 election for the national assembly. The turnout was much lower this time and there was little enthusiasm for the event shown from

A parent brings the Iraq war home

ESCONDIDO, CAL.—Proyecto Guerrero Azteca por la Paz (Guerrero Azteca Peace Project) works to raise consciousness in the youth that the best option to combat terrorism or injustice is not the army but to continue in school. When you tell students not to go into the army to get money for college, they say, "Okay, give me something." Our website lists 100 organizations that give scholarships regardless of immigration status, and we are creating \$500 scholarships for students who decide not to join (<http://www.guerreroazteca.org/>).

Along with various groups in San Diego, we visit schools and give the students a flyer with information about their rights to opt out of having their personal information sent to the military and about the military's ASVAB vocational test being given in schools.

We speak out against the war and the occupation of Iraq. At the same time we participate in aid to the immigrant community against La Migra and the Minutemen. The African-American community, like the immigrant community, are being sidelined from education, medical and other services. It's the other war they're in, besides the war in Iraq.

The percentage of African Americans is very high in the Army and Marines, and very low in the Air Force. They are enrolled in the areas with the greatest danger and lowest pay. The rich make the wars, and the children of the working class fight and die in them.

When my son Jesús, who was killed in Iraq, was 11 or 12, we lived in Tijuana. I worked with the community in poor areas, and sometimes Jesús came with me. In one house we found a baby having convulsions. It died from eating cocaine because the father was trafficking drugs. Jesús wanted to join the police, attack the narco-traffickers, and keep children from abusing drugs.

When he was 13, military recruiters at the mall in Chula Vista asked Jesús what he wanted to do when he

any quarter. Even the heavy lifting performed by the Kurdish nationalist leaders in shaping and endorsing the document failed to generate a large turnout of voters in the Kurdish region.

NEW CONSTITUTION

At the close of the period of vote counting the official announcement was that the constitution passed. There had been great anxiety among the parties making up Iraq's government that the constitution might be rejected in three of Iraq's provinces and thus not meet the legal criteria for success.

Even though turnout was high among Sunni Iraqis who had boycotted the Jan. 30 elections and in large measure opposed

the constitution, it was defeated only in Anbar and Salahaddin provinces, strongholds of the fierce Sunni insurgency. The voters there cast their ballots in protest at the federalist content of the constitution and not its conservative Islamic character. The Sunnis are opposed to the very idea of Shi'a and Kurdish prominence in post-Saddam Iraq.

Now the race is on among the Iraqi political parties to cement alliances for elections for the national assembly to take place in December. Widespread dissatisfaction with the current government led by Ibrahim al-Jafari of the Shi'a fundamentalist Dawa party has fractured the deals made at the time of the January elections.

The influential Shi'a religious leader Ayatollah al-Sistani is withholding any endorsement this time around and the Shi'a religious parties, which have fought among themselves but failed to deliver any benefits for those who voted for them, are hastening to retain their prominence in the next government. The Kurdish forces plan to run on their own this time.

Two controversial secular figures—Iyad Alawi and Ahmed Chalabi—are seeking to once again refashion themselves to win the support of those who don't wish to vote for any of the religious parties. Alawi—a former Ba'ath Party official turned democrat—has fashioned an assemblage of secular figures, including the Iraqi

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ONLINE: www.newsandletters.org

— Fernando Suarez del Sola

Women as subjectivity: revolutionary force and reason

by Terry Moon

On the 20th anniversary of the publication of Raya Dunayevskaya's *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future (WLDR)*, we want to look at this 35-year collection of essays through the lens of what Dunayevskaya, the founder of Marxist-Humanism, called her original contribution to Marxism: "Absolute Idea as New Beginning." We do this as a revolutionary exploration of how her re-creation of the dialectic, concentrating on women's struggle for freedom, shows a path out of today's stifling retrogression.

Dunayevskaya gave no brief definition of Absolute Idea as New Beginning, writing: "It isn't only that we

did this great thing by saying Absolute isn't absolute in the ordinary sense of the word—it's the unity of theory and practice; Absolute isn't absolute in the bourgeois sense of the word—it's the question of the unity of the material and the ideal. But who ever said Absolute was a new beginning? None but us. And if we don't understand that original contribution—that we have to begin with the totality—then we won't know what a new beginning is." *

EXPRESSING TOTALITY

How can *WLDR* express totality when confined to the subject of Women's Liberation? It isn't a question of covering all forces of revolution throughout history. Rather, as Dunayevskaya put it: "[E]very one of the historic periods recorded [in *WLDR*] discloses the existence of both a new revolutionary force and a new consciousness—Reason itself—no matter how different the situation or the country in which the events unravel, and no matter how hidden from history, past or in-the-making, it has remained" (p. 3).

We see this re-created, from the rise of today's Women's Liberation Movement; going back to the wives of striking miners in 1949-50, to women's part in revolts worldwide such as Iran 1979 and Poland's Solidarity movement. In each case Dunayevskaya made explicit the revolutionary force and reason residing in women's struggles for full humanness and freedom. Unseparated from that is how Marxist-Humanism met those movements, contributed to their development and was developed by them. In *WLDR* we see created the new relationship between theory and practice that she insisted was indispensable for revolution: "It was as if Hegel's Absolute Method as simultaneously subjective-objective mediation had taken on flesh. Both in

life and in cognition, 'Subjectivity'—live men and women—tried shaping history via a totally new relationship of practice to theory" (p. 6).

Let's look at how Dunayevskaya met the challenge given by sociologists and feminists who wanted her to speak on "The *Grundrisse* [Marx's draft of *Capital*] and Women's Liberation." She said that while "the *Grundrisse* had nothing to do with the 'Woman Question'....the methodology is there" (p. 183). She delved into Marx's concretized of Hegel's statement that if he could put his philosophy in one sentence it would be that the truth is not just substance but Subject (p. 184). Marx concretized Subject as the proletariat. Later, when looking at revolutionary China in the 1850s, she said, "we see Subject as [the] Orient." Then she turns to "look at Subject in the history of women's liberation" (p. 185). Thus she

grounds an expanded notion of Subject directly in Hegelian-Marxian philosophy and makes it explicit for our age.

SUBJECTIVITY OF REVOLUTION

Women as Subject is explored in terms of the indispensability of the Black dimension. She showed that Black women as speakers and generalists inspired white abolitionists and women's suffragists: "It was because of this Subject, this Black dimension, that the philosophic concept in the fight against slavery wasn't just that you would get rid of slavery, but that you would have entirely new human relations. The whole concept of absolute movement of becoming [Marx's expression from the *Grundrisse*] was there" (p. 185). For our day

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Mukhtar Mai speaks

NEW YORK—Mukhtar Mai, Pakistani national symbol and international symbol of women fighting rape and violence, spoke here in November. In 2002, this quiet, impoverished, religious woman who lives in a rural village, suffered a gang rape, ordered by the local tribal council to punish her family for a false charge against her brother. Instead of killing herself or moving away, she began a battle for justice, fighting the local tribal system, the "feudal" landowners, the police and the judicial systems, to get the rapists and the council prosecuted.

She succeeded, but her case against the rapists is on appeal. Now she is battling the military government—President Musharraf at first refused to let her travel abroad denouncing her as an opportunist.

Mukhtar told the audience at Cooper Union, many of them South Asians: "The support you've given me has helped me fight against oppression of the poor and women. Violence is committed by the big landlords, who have all the power and money. To change such conditions, all I have is your support. I want to end oppression through education. I want to provide protection for women. I have people-power with me. Truth will bring victory." In the last three years, no woman has been raped and the tribal council has not met.



Mukhtar Mai

With compensation money, Mukhtar opened the first elementary schools in her village, Meerwala, one for girls and one for boys. They teach the children that women and poor people have rights. She hopes to open a crisis center and a hospital as her area has no medical facility for women. Her first concern is for victims of the earthquake, and she urged us and the U.S. government to provide more relief.

The main sponsor of the forum, Asian-American Network Against Abuse of Human Rights (www.4anaa.org), is working to change Pakistani law, eliminate tribal councils and other parallel court systems, end "feudalism," enforce women's rights, and support Mukhtar's projects. Its president, Amna Buttar, likened Mukhtar to Rosa Parks: "neither woman knew that by making a choice, she would change her story and become an icon for the world."

—Anne Jaclard

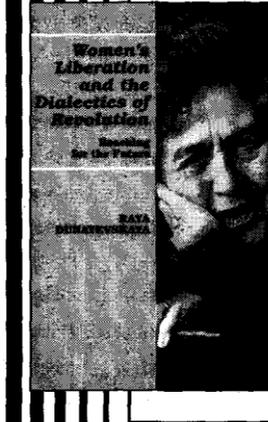
WOMEN WORLDWIDE

by Mary Jo Grey

While yet another of President Bush's right-wing nominees for the Supreme Court, Samuel Alito, will not begin his confirmation hearings until after the first of the year, the pattern of his 15-year history of judicial opinions and rulings is clear. Along with having strong anti-choice views, Alito pushed the federal appeals court in Philadelphia in the worst kind of anti-human direction. He often sided with companies over employees in discrimination cases, and supported rulings which threaten the enforcement of environmental laws. Ralph Neas, president of People for the American Way, warned that "He is a walking constitutional amendment who would undo precedents that protect fundamental rights and liberties that Americans think are theirs forever." Meanwhile, the Supreme Court is not waiting to look at laws affecting abortion rights. On Nov. 30, they will begin hearing arguments on a lawsuit brought by Planned Parenthood attempting to prohibit enforcement of a New Hampshire law restricting young women's access to abortion by requiring parental notification. Is this the beginning of the end?

The Haiti Support Group is calling for action to protect girls and women from an increased number of rapes by armed men, mainly in poor neighborhoods of Port-au-Prince, but also in other parts of the country. Haiti has the highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS outside of sub-Saharan Africa. The London-based organization expressed concern that armed groups are using sexual violence to punish communities and individuals who do not support their political ends.

Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future



by Raya Dunayevskaya
Special 20th anniversary
price \$10 (regularly \$13)
includes postage.

To order, see page 7.

What is the relationship between women's liberation and social revolution?

by Anne Jaclard

Today, most women around the world are as poor and oppressed as at the start of the Women's Liberation Movement nearly 40 years ago, in spite of the movement circling the globe. In this reactionary period, women want to know whether it will ever be possible to construct a society in which women are free; otherwise, there is no reason to continue struggling for it. That is why feminists urgently need to theorize how a non-capitalist, non-sexist alternative to this society could function, and how it might become reality.

To that end, some of us have begun to reinvestigate the relationship between women's liberation and the concept of social revolution. We begin by looking at the relationship of women to capitalism through the eyes of Marx's greatest work, *Capital*.

Capital reveals the true relations disguised by the capitalist mode of production, and the real possibility of creating its absolute opposite, based on the contradictions within current reality—workers' revolts and capitalism's inherent instability. So too do we want to show the possibility of women's liberation that continues on to full individual and societal freedom, in contrast to past revolutions which ultimately left most women in drudgery.

Capitalism is not just one aspect of our world. It is a system that fills and shapes every nook and cranny, driving to mold even personal aspects of life into its service. Very briefly: Capitalists do not care what use values they produce, but only the rate of profit they make. The system's aim is self-expanding value; value expands by pumping labor out of workers. Capitalist production tends to increase the relative magnitude of means of production in relation to workers through the means of technological change, leading to the continuous lowering of "socially necessary labor time," the industry-wide average amount of time needed to produce a commodity.

VALUE DOMINATES ALL WORKERS

As the exclusive determinant of a commodity's value, socially necessary labor time is the very essence of the capitalist mode of production. Because any expenditure of labor that exceeds socially necessary labor time counts for nothing, capitalists are compelled to minimize production costs. **In this way, socially necessary labor time controls production relations, workplace conditions, women's labor, and all the other faces of work in this society, which alienates us from our own mental and physical capacities. Today, a huge amount of value is produced by women in sweatshops around the world. The lives and labor of women who do not**

work for wages, such as peasants, are also dominated by the value-oriented world system.

Some ancient relations of oppression serve capitalism well, so those relations, including sexism, have been transformed and incorporated into modern life. For example, sexism and racism help capitalism to pit workers against each other—"divide and conquer."

If we do away with value production, socially necessary labor time will end, and we can change the nature of work to an entirely new, human basis. This will lay the material basis for women, men and children to work out new human relations and to construct an entirely new kind of society.

SOCIAL RELATIONS

Thus, capitalist production is not mere background for the profound misery of most of the human race. It is not only the process of production and reproduction of things, but the process of production and reproduction of that misery, and the process of production and reproduction of social relations. Marx discusses this in many writings, including *Capital* and *The German Ideology*.

"Be [her] payment high or low, the worker's lot must grow worse," writes Marx in *Capital*, Vol. I. He is referring not only to wage workers, but to the whole family. The passage that reaches this conclusion talks about an alienated work process, beginning with the alienation of mental from manual labor and extending into all aspects of work—and tainting all human relations outside of work as well.

So it is wrong to posit an opposition between women's issues and workers' issues. Counterposing the "mode of production" to "women's oppression," as if they exist within separate realms, compounds many so-called Marxist and feminists' failure to understand the totalizing effects of capital. Conditions on the shop floor and in the home flow out of the mode of production and it cannot be otherwise. Unfortunately we are saddled with a vulgar materialist legacy and an anti-Marxist feminist legacy, both of which perpetuate just such a false opposition.

The fact that capitalism is the system within which sexism is perpetuated today does not mean that there is a purely economic solution to sexism, any more than sexism and economics are separable now. In subsequent essays, we will explore why changing the mode of production is necessary, but not sufficient, to establish socialism and women's liberation. A women's liberation movement is essential before, during and after revolution. Further examination of Marx and Dunayevskaya's philosophy will lay the ground for developing these concepts.

Workers pick up tab for GM and Delphi bailouts

DETROIT—In a rare mid-contract negotiating deal, United Auto Workers (UAW) union leaders agreed to health care concessions amounting to billions of dollars of worker benefits to GM. Hardest hit are retirees, who will pay monthly premiums, annual deductibles and increased prescription costs. Workers will have future wage and cost-of-living increases diverted into a fund to pay health care costs.

GM now has about 500,000 retirees, their spouses and dependents, and 106,000 workers. In 1965, when it had 409,000 workers, 58,000 received retirement benefits. The company is planning to both close more plants and lay off 25,000 more workers in the next year.

Since profits can only come from the unpaid labor of workers, this huge slash in the workforce results in an uncontrollable decline in the rate of profit, despite the fact that worker productivity has increased at least 100% in the last decade through automation and speedup. There is no doubt that these worsening conditions on the production line have taken their toll on the health of the workers, which also increases health care costs to the company.

Retirees now pay nothing in monthly costs, deductibles, co-insurance or emergency room services. The proposed changes will have them pay a \$10 monthly fee, \$150 deductible, \$100 co-insurance, all roughly doubled for family coverage, and \$50 for emergency room service and increases on some prescriptions.

Workers will have the same increases in prescription costs as retirees, but will have future wage increases of 83 cents per hour deferred in September of 2006, as well as cost-of-living increases of 17 cents per hour over three quarters of next year, plus an additional COLA deferral of two cents per hour near the end of next year.

These concessions still have to be ratified by a vote, but since the heaviest blow will fall on the retirees who can't vote, it is expected that they will go into effect.

The last time that mid-contract concessions were negotiated was in the 1980s, when then UAW President Douglas Fraser negotiated away benefits that Chrysler workers had fought for decades to win—all in the name of saving Chrysler from bankruptcy. Chrysler workers still haven't recovered all they lost, and never will.

Today, it is UAW President Ron Gettlefinger who is giving away the workers' benefits that they have fought for so long, and who is no more than a lackey for the auto corporations. The UAW bureaucracy long ago adopted the corporations' motto that "We're all in the same boat," and has worked cooperatively with them.

When the auto corporations were making billions of dollars in profits, the UAW did not make any mid-contract demands on them. Ford and Chrysler, not sur-

prisingly, are now demanding the same concessions from the UAW that GM has won. The auto companies don't want to break the union. They know without the union the companies would be facing the rebellious fury of rank-and-file workers.

The hard fact is that no concessions can save GM—nor any other company. The crisis in production con-

tinues, and despite great increases in worker productivity through automation and other technological changes, the problems keep escalating. The class struggle is increasing and growing more fierce.

To twist the knife more effectively, Delphi announced that it wanted to increase the severance packages for 21 top executives as an incentive to keep these executives who have done a "heck of a job" (as George Bush would say) in managing Delphi.

Delphi Corporation is an automobile parts manufacturer that was formed from GM components in 1999 as a "spin off." GM agreed to continue to buy parts from Delphi for at least five years and to underwrite some of Delphi's pension and benefit costs. Delphi has acknowledged irregular accounting practices dating back to its origin that have overstated its income. In at least one instance, Delphi treated a \$20 million loan from another GM spinoff, EDS, as income.

Delphi has 33,000 unionized workers in the U.S. and 185,000 workers worldwide. The great majority of its plants are already outside the U.S. Delphi claims that unless it slashes wages and benefits drastically, it cannot compete with auto parts manufactured in Mexico, South America and Asia.

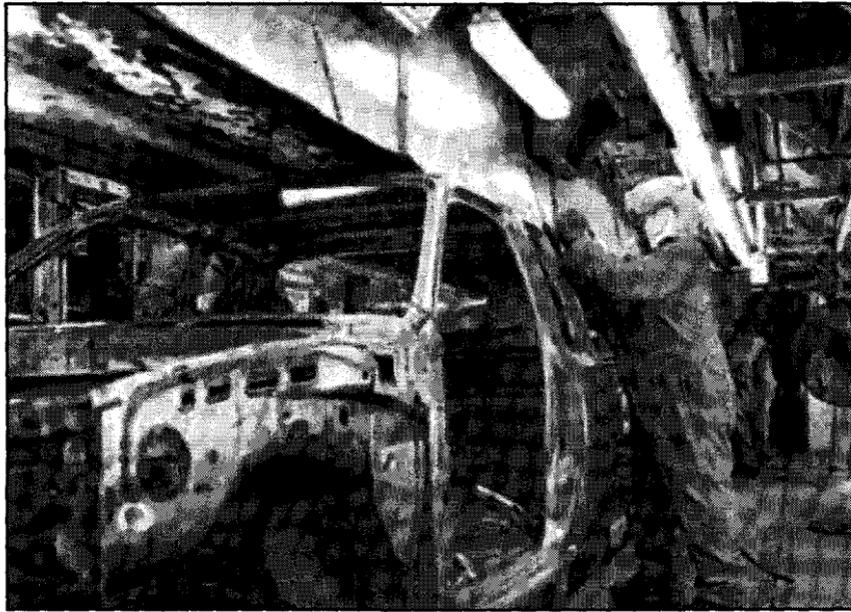
Bankruptcy of corporations is nothing new. Railroads in the 19th century commonly went through bankruptcy and reorganized many times over.

What is new, however, is using bankruptcy to put the power of the state behind wage slashing.

The airline and steel industries have already had similar experiences with bankruptcy. The current CEO of Delphi, Robert S. Miller, took another auto supplier, Federal Mogul Corporation, into bankruptcy. While bankruptcy does not prohibit the UAW from calling a strike, the union has to in essence bargain with a bankruptcy judge who has the federal government backing him up.

Globalization is not the cause of the declining rate of profit of corporations such as Delphi, it is the response to the declining rate of profit. There is no reason to think that \$10 per hour is the last word in wage slashing. Auto workers have historically responded vigorously to much less drastic anti-worker actions than Delphi has just thrown at them, and they undoubtedly will do so now.

—Dan B.



D. Bacon/Ag.org

tinues, and despite great increases in worker productivity through automation and other technological changes, the problems keep escalating. The class struggle is increasing and growing more fierce.

—Andy Phillips

FLINT, MICH.—The Delphi Corporation filed a large number of Chapter 11 petitions for its U.S. operations in the United States Bankruptcy Court in New York City shortly before the effective of a tougher bankruptcy law on Oct. 17. The non-U.S. operations of Delphi are not affected, but it allows them to continue to operate while arranging to make payments to creditors.

The bankruptcy judge will have the power to void collective bargaining agreements. Delphi wants to slash hourly rates from approximately \$27 per hour to approximately \$10-12 per hour, eliminate a jobs bank

Domestic workers meet to end abuses

NEW YORK—On Oct. 8, 12 women testified at a "Domestic Workers Human Rights Tribunal" to horror stories of abuse. The women, mostly immigrants, were forced to enter domestic work to feed their families. All were paid very little and less than they had been promised. All were overworked—not only 18-hour days but some perpetually on call. All lacked any benefits, and many were physically or mentally mistreated.

A woman from the Philippines described an employer who would not allow her to use the family's plates and utensils and made her scrub the floor on her hands and knees. An Indian woman was brought to the U.S. by a "boss." The employer paid the boss \$1,200 a month, the boss then her parents \$200 a month, and she received nothing. After the employer hit her, neighbors helped her go to the police.

A Zambian woman who worked from 6:00 am to midnight, seven days a week, was paid \$250 a month, slept on the living room floor, and was not allowed to talk to anyone. "Animals are treated better," she said. "We cannot let our children and grandchildren experience this. We must get the dignity, respect and justice we deserve."

The "tribunal" decided that the state should pass a "Domestic Workers Bill of Rights," extending greater labor law coverage to domestic workers. Other professionals talked about the need for the federal government and the UN to address the issue.

The problem with relying upon changes in law is that there needs to be the will and money to enforce it. There is little government enforcement of existing labor laws and no reason to believe capitalism will permit effective reforms. This problem was not addressed.

One of the "judges" at the "tribunal" was Ida La Blanc from the Union of Domestic Workers of Trinidad and Tobago. "We are making trouble and we are making history," she proclaimed.

Her union has gotten more rights on paper than the proposed "bill of rights" for New York would provide. "What we really want is recognition of domestics as workers," she said. "Our demands are due to us as women." Her proposal that women all over the world stop working—that will stop slavery—was met with cheers.

The good news at the event was that many domestic workers are organizing into self-help groups, cooperatives and unions, and the movement is international. Their spirit was manifested by the 200 or so women in attendance, who ended the event by chanting "Free, free, domestic workers/ End, end, slavery."

—Participant

Northwest mechanics refuse to cave in

MEMPHIS, TENN.—You don't see as many on the Northwest Airlines mechanics picket line because strikers are getting other jobs. We've been out over two months (see Sept.-Oct. *N&L*). We didn't have a choice to strike. Every time we'd meet the company's demand, they asked for more. If we'd have kept going, we'd be paying them to work.

Most mechanics that are now walking the picket line don't want to go back anyway. I doubt I'd go back. The day we walked out, I felt a big pressure lifted off me. You'd walk in there and you'd just feel it in the air. But you come out here and walk with guys you've known for years and friends, and you get away from that mess.

One person from maintenance control because he didn't want to be around when something happens, like when a plane goes in the ground. I think it's only a matter of time.

The other day the scab mechanics had a write-up that was a no-go item. The mechanic wanted to change the write-up to an info-only, but the captain wouldn't do it. That's what we're dealing with. I tell everybody not to fly Northwest.

They're supposed to cut quite a few jobs from flight attendants and pilots, but the IAM (International Association of Machinists) is burying its head in the sand. They represent the ticket counter people and bag handlers, they're going to be gone—the station here in Memphis is supposed to become all part-time.

The IAM thinks they're going to get an 18% cut. It's going to be a lot more than that. If everybody had gone together, we'd have all been back to work. That's why we got out of the IAM, because they have no leadership. The old IAM was a good union. It's nothing now.

Ten years ago when we took a pay cut we had to buy NWA stock; I believe it was at \$39 or so a share. For 10 years, they promised us we'd get it back at what we paid for it. Three days before we were supposed to get it back they found some loophole in the state of Delaware that says they don't have to give it back to us. All they do is lie to us. Most people are tired of it. I'm sure with the Bush administration we're going to lose any pensions, too.

This isn't just about unions, either. It's about every billion-dollar job in the country, whether you're union or not. The government's going after them. It's the world economy that they want.

—Striking mechanic

WORKSHOP TALKS

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I call them dysfunctional sisters and brothers. The reason I call them dysfunctional is because they don't have jobs. There's nothing in L.A. for young people. They want young people to work for \$5.35 an hour. You cannot pay rent if you work for \$5.35 an hour.

Did these kids bring the drugs into LA? They need to start in Washington and get rid of the people who are bringing in the drugs, because I don't know any African American with a cargo plane or a cargo ship to bring the drugs into South Central.

Some of the brothers found out they can make money on drugs, and they're making money. And they're now deciding this is wrong. But if they stop bringing the drugs in, the brothers won't be able to sell them and the users won't be able to take them.

They have another law that says if your son is picked up and you're on welfare, they're going to charge you a large amount of money. It's just awful. I went back to the old neighborhood because they called my sons gangbangers. I'm no longer over there.

What happened in New Orleans is missing I could understand from L.A. I have family in Mississippi and I have family in New Orleans. I received calls after Hurricane Katrina and heard about what was going on in New Orleans before they put it on the air. It was nothing but racism.

I received a call from a man who's been coming to New Orleans since in the 1960s. He said, "Where did all the white people go? How did all the white people get out? Nothing left but the Black people?"

I received a call from a family that made it out of New Orleans to Texas. They didn't want to stay in the Superdome because all you smelled was death. They had dead people in there, people dying, she said. No place to lay down, so somebody told them to go to Garland, Texas. And they went to Garland. They said they were told to go to the Red Cross, and the Red Cross told them to go back to the Astrodome in Houston. So they told me to make sure nobody gives any money to the Red Cross because it is not going to help you.

FROM THE WRITINGS OF RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

EDITOR'S NOTE

A crucial issue in radical theory remains how to eliminate capitalist value production. The following article, written in 1945, represented an historic intervention into that debate. In 1943 an article in the Russian journal *Under the Banner of Marxism* declared that the law of value—which Marx had always said defines capitalism—operates under "socialism."¹ Dunayevskaya translated the essay and published a critique of it in the *American Economic Review (AER)* of September 1944, entitled "A New Revision of Marxian Economics." It was reprinted in the April 2004 *N&L*. Her critique drew responses from the radical economists Paul Baran (*AER*, December 1944) and Oscar Lange and Leo Rogin (*AER*, March 1945). Her rejoinder, published in the September 1945 issue of the *AER*, is reprinted here for the first time. All page numbers are to the original articles in the *AER*. The footnotes are abbreviated. The original can be found in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, 213–217.

Professors Oscar Lange and Leo Rogin and Mr. Paul A. Baran have challenged my contention that the recent Soviet article from *Under the Banner of Marxism* marks a radical departure from orthodox Marxism. Although these economists apparently agree that the article is not a revision, but a reaffirmation, of Marxism, they, nevertheless, reach different, even directly contradictory, conclusions on the principal point of theory in the Soviet statement, namely, that the law of value operates under "socialism."

Lange affirms positively that Marx "held the view that the theory of value applies to a socialist economy" (p. 128). Baran states categorically that the law of value is a "principle ruling the working of a capitalist society" and that the only consequence of trying to apply that notion to socialism "is to deprive the 'law of value' of all its meaning and significance" (p. 869). Rogin avoids any discussion of the concept of value. The confusion among these learned minds suggests the necessity of a restatement of the law of value in its Marxian sense.

Lange arrives at the conclusion that the law of value operates in a socialist society through an erroneous construction of two quotations from *Capital*. In the first, from p. 90 of Vol. I, where Marx is describing "a community of free individuals," he carefully refrains from any use of the word "value." The quintessential point of that whole section on "The Fetishism of Commodities" is to prove that "to stamp an object of utility as a value is just as much a social product as language";⁽¹⁾ it is the language of "bourgeois economy." Hence, when Marx "by way of a change" speaks of a society other than capitalist, he uses, not the word "value" but the expression "labor time."

In the second quotation, from p. 992 of Vol. III, Marx uses the phrase "determination of value" (*Wertbestimmung*) in the general or descriptive sense meaning evaluation and not in the categorical sense of a theory or a law of value. Marx had nothing but contempt for those who, like A. Wagner, tried to lift the theory of value out of its capitalistic context and transform it into a "universal theory of value."

As I showed in my commentary (p. 561), he castigates "the presupposition that the theory of value, developed for the explanation of bourgeois society, has validity for the 'socialist state of Marx.'" He reiterated time and again that "in the analysis of value I had in view bourgeois relations and not an application of this theory of value to a 'socialist state.'"⁽²⁾ In *Anti-Dühring* Engels stated that in a socialist society: "People will be able to manage everything very simply without the intervention of the famous value."⁽³⁾

In contrast to Marx and Engels, Lange not only asserts that the law of value applies to a socialist society but further stretches the meaning of "law of value"⁽⁴⁾ by saying that in its "pure form" (p. 129). Marx considered it applicable "only under conditions of 'simple commodity production.'" In reality, Marx criticized Adam Smith for just that assertion. Smith, he explains fell into that error because he had "abstracted [the law of value] from capitalistic production and precisely because of this it appears as if it were invalid."⁽⁵⁾

Starting with the labor theory of value of Smith-Ricardo, he showed that the unequal exchange between the capitalist and the worker was not a "deviation" from the law, but its very basis. He transformed the classical labor theory of value into the theory of surplus value. Value, he wrote, was a social relation of production "specifically capitalistic."⁽⁶⁾ **Marx's theory of value is his theory of surplus value.**

Lange confuses the law of value with the formation of price through a misinterpretation of the Marxian thesis that the lower the stage of production the more do prices reflect values; the higher the stage of production the more do they deviate from value. He considers that if value and prices do not correspond, the law of value does not function in its "pure form" (p. 129). Marx, on the other hand, maintained that the deviation of price from value is not an aberration of the law of value but only of its **manifestation**; no matter how individual prices deviate from value, the sum of all prices, according to Marx, is equal to the sum of all val-

The law of value in capitalist society

ues. The law of value remains dominant.

Marx treated market phenomena only as manifestations of the production relationship between capitalist and worker. The organic composition of individual capital, as well as market competition, affects the division of profit among capitalists, but not the surplus value itself. Surplus value is a given magnitude arising only from the process of production. Marx insisted that the struggle among capitalists to effect what he called "capitalist communism" was of no concern to the worker. He analyzed these market phenomena only in order to prove the oppressively dominant position of "self-expanding value,"⁽⁷⁾ or the primacy of the production relationship. Lange is much too preoccupied with the formation of price. Marx did not write 4,000 odd pages—the *Theories of Surplus Value* Marx intended as part of Vol. III of *Capital*—as an essay in price analysis. *Capital* is an analysis of the capitalist process of production, the capitalist process of circulation and capitalist production "taken as a whole." It is an analysis of **no other system.**

Lange, on the one hand, assumes that the USSR is a socialist, that is, non-exploitative order, and, on the other hand, that the dominant economic law of capitalism operates there. By abstracting the exploitative content of the Marxian theory of value, Professor Lange has indeed deprived that theory "of all meaning and significance."

Rogin's central thesis is equally incorrect, although his error is more difficult to isolate because he completely ignores the concept of value and considers only the distributive principle under socialism. Because I called attention to the traditional Marxist principle, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need," Rogin intimates (p. 138) that I have fallen into the error of "vulgar socialism," which, as Marx has stated, considers "distribution as independent of production, thereby representing socialism as turning principally on distribution." However, my only purpose in referring to the slogan was to show the contradiction between the Soviet doctrine that socialism has been "irrevocably established" in the USSR, and the repudiation of that slogan for that country.

Worse than that, the Soviet economists reject another Marxist formula—the payment of labor according to the "natural measure of labor": **time**—which was postulated for a society "as it emerges from capitalist society," that is, one still tainted "with the hereditary

diseases of the old society" (p. 138). For both these formulas the Soviet economists substitute the principle of "distribution according to labor."

Professor Rogin apparently accepts the identity of the "natural measure of labor," time, with the new formula, which is explicitly based on the instrumentality of money, the price expression of value. Time and value, however, are not equivalents. To Marx value is not a quantitative relationship but a qualitative relationship, that is, a class relationship. He asserted that the analysis of the contradiction between use-value and value in the labor of the worker, considered as a commodity, is his original contribution to political economy, and the pivot around which political economy revolves.⁽⁸⁾ According to Marx, it is the use-value of

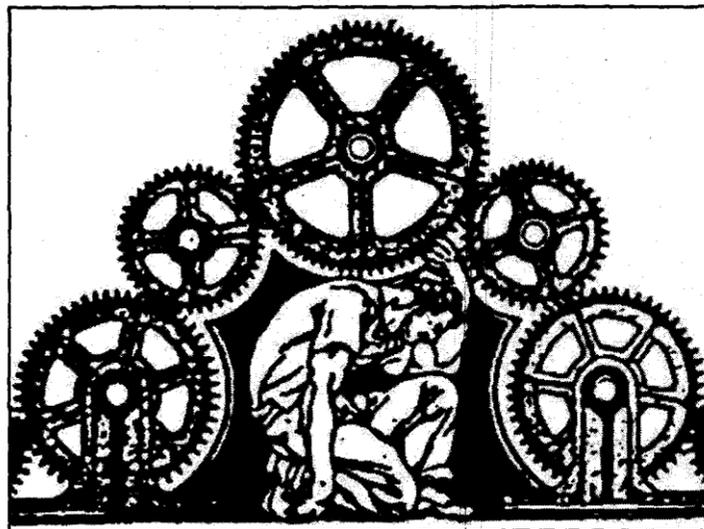
the specific commodity, labor power, that creates surplus value. This is what the Soviet economists have restored for Russia. This is not a "distributive" principle, nor is distribution the specific concern of the Soviet economists. They know that where labor has created no new value, not even a "socialist society" can appropriate and distribute.

The new Soviet formula for distribution is in reality a euphemism for the realities of produc-

tion. Class relations⁽⁹⁾ in Russia compel them to make "surplus labor" the main aim of production. The Soviet economists are only stating in theoretical language that economic reality which was given mathematical exactitude by Academician and Chairman of the State Planning Commission, N. Voznessensky, in his speech to the 18th All-Union Conference of the Russian Communist Party just before the outbreak of the Russo-German war. "The plan for 1941," he said bluntly, "provides for a 12% increase in productivity of labor and a 6.5% increase in average wage per worker."⁽¹⁰⁾ By assuming the existence of "socialism" in the USSR, and accepting at the same time the principle of "distribution according to labor," Rogin is, in reality, accepting the applicability of the law of value under "socialism."

Here likewise Baran makes his error. He avers that the Soviet economists' acceptance of the law of value under "socialism" is merely the result of a "terminological muddle surrounding the notion of 'law'" (p. 861). The Russians, however, are not muddleheads. They have deliberately accepted the validity of the law of value for the Soviet Union because in the economic cat-

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A new look at the Russian revision of Marx's concept of 'directly social labor'

by Andrew Kliman

Why return to a more-than-60-year-old debate over whether the USSR was subject to the Marxian "law of value" and what that meant? Does the issue even matter now, given that the USSR and its satellites have been defunct for more than a decade?

In its time, this was a very important debate. In 1943, a leading Russian theoretical journal published an article, ostensibly about the "Teaching of Economics in the Soviet Union." The next year, Raya Dunayevskaya translated it, got it published in the *American Economic Review (AER)*, and commented upon it there. For her, the article's key claim was that the law of value holds under socialism. All parties acknowledged that this claim revised prior Russian doctrine; Dunayevskaya argued that it also departed from the views of Marx and Engels. The Russians were revising their doctrine, she argued, in order to make it fit Russian reality—a reality in which the law of value did indeed hold, a reality which was therefore (according to the concepts of Marx and Engels) not socialist but capitalist.

Her comment impelled responses from leading pro-Stalinist intellectuals—Paul Baran, Oskar Lange, and Leo Rogin. These responses, and her rejoinder, also appeared in the *AER*. Baran, a Stanford professor, was Paul Sweezy's sidekick at the *Monthly Review*. In his response to Dunayevskaya, Baran treated Sweezy's then-recent book, *The Theory of Capitalist Development*, as the authoritative word on Marx, citing it three separate times in nine pages. Lange, a University of Chicago professor, was already famous for supposedly having proved, in a debate with Friedrich Hayek, that a "socialist" (that is, centrally planned) economy could operate "efficiently." After the war, he served as Polish ambassador to the U.S., Polish delegate to the UN, and chairman of the Polish State Eco-

nom Council. Leo Rogin was a UC Berkeley professor, a teacher of and a major influence upon J. K. Galbraith.

But again, why return to this debate now? Is it just a matter of reliving the past?

It is true that "What is the class character of Stalinist Russia?" is no longer a burning question. But underlying this question are other questions—"What is capitalism?" "What is socialism?"—that have become even more relevant, in the light of the emergence of new movements against global capital, and the renewed discussion of potential alternatives to capitalism. It is important not to let "Another World is Possible" remain a mere slogan. "Another world" needs to be theorized concretely in order to become a real possibility rather than an abstract one.

In light of this project, certain aspects of the *AER* debate have assumed renewed importance. One such aspect is the meaning of Marx's concept of "directly social labor" (ably discussed by Seth Weiss in the July-August *N&L*) and its relation to money, abstract labor, value, and commodity production.

The Russian article acknowledged that two of the three contradictions of commodity-producing society that Marx identified continue to exist in "socialism." Products still have a dual character of use-values and values. Accordingly, labor is both concrete and abstract—use-value-producing labor and value-creating labor.

But what follows immediately from this second contradiction, in Marx's presentation (in chapter 1 of *Capital*, Vol. I)—a contradiction between private and social labor—no longer exists in socialism, according to the Russian article. "[T]his dual character of labor [concrete labor and abstract labor] is no longer linked with the contradiction between private and social

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ESSAY

Russia's 1905 revolution has enduring legacy

by Kevin Michaels

The Russia of 100 years ago was a society difficult to imagine today. It was an empire stretching from Poland in the west to Manchuria in the east and comprised of many oppressed nations in between. The empire was ruled by an absolute monarch, Tsar Nicholas II, who was not only a political leader, but as head of the Orthodox church, a religious one as well. His rule was based on a small class of aristocratic landowners and the military officers drawn from that class.

Nicholas was strongly devoted to the three traditional principles of Tsardom: autocratic rule, Orthodox Christianity and a belief in the superiority of the Slavic people. Although some of his predecessors had made efforts to reform the institutions of Russian society—the most thoroughgoing one being Alexander II's liberation of the empire's serfs from feudal bondage in 1861—Nicholas was a conservative and a true believer in the sanctity of his office, an institution that had not fundamentally changed since the time of Ivan the Terrible, Russia's first ruler to assume the title Tsar.

Although Russia in 1905 was predominantly an agrarian society with a rural population, capitalism had begun a relentless penetration into the economy. Investors drawn by the prospects of extremely low wages had built large factories in St. Petersburg, at the time Russia's imperial capital, and a class of exploited workers drawn into the city from the countryside was steadily growing.

These workers were looked to by the Russian Marxists as the strongest social force in the battle against the Tsar and his oppressive rule. The Marxists had emerged as the most vital tendency of Russia's large and thriving revolutionary movement as populism declined from its traditional position as the country's predominant radical trend. The populists—or Narodniki—were focused on the huge peasant class as Russia's revolutionary force and employed terrorist tactics in their struggle. They even managed to assassinate the reforming Tsar Alexander II in 1881, an act which provoked a massive police effort of repression.

Marx himself contributed to the debates within the nineteenth century revolutionary movement over the revolutionary potential of the peasant class. In the last decade of his life, Marx developed a profound interest in Russia. He studied the language and read deeply on economic and social questions concerning the vast country, taking a particular interest in the works of the revolutionary populist theorist Nikolai Chernyshevsky. Marx had long recognized the danger represented by the absolutist Tsarist government to the possibility of revolution in western Europe when the Russian army was used to put down the democratic revolution in Hungary in 1849 and had championed Polish freedom in the name of the International Working Men's Association.

In the course of his studies, Marx became increasingly convinced in the potential for a social revolution occurring in Russia itself. In correspondence with the exiled Russian revolutionary populist Vera Zasulich and in one of his last published writings, the preface to the 1882 edition of the *Communist Manifesto*, he discussed just such a possibility. One hundred years ago this year, the revolution in Russia Marx anticipated became a reality.

A DRAMATIC YEAR OPENS

In January of 1905, a priest of the Orthodox church named Father Gapon led a march of hungry and dissatisfied peasants to the gates of Tsar Nicholas II's Winter Palace in St. Petersburg. They intended to present the Tsar with a petition of grievances from the masses of the Russian people, who were suffering from the oppression of the landlords in the countryside and the capitalists in the newly-built factories in the cities. The Tsar and his government were at the time on the verge of a serious defeat in the eastern reaches of the Empire at the hands of the rising military power of

Japan. In no mood to open up discussion on Russia's social question, the Tsar's officers ordered troops to fire into the crowd and killed as many as a thousand.

Word of the massacre spread quickly and the people of St. Petersburg revolted. After a long period of dormancy following the crushing of the Paris Commune in 1871, revolution had returned to Europe.

1905 unfolded as a succession of revolts and reactions. Strikes, the creation of councils of workers' representatives, a mutiny among the sailors of the Black Sea naval fleet that was immortalized by the director Sergei Eisenstein in his film "Battleship Potemkin," and uprisings on the part of all the oppressed nations



Peasants at work in the countryside of old Russia.

of the Tsarist empire were among the year's events.

One of the forms reaction took was a large number of murderous pogroms against the Jews of the Russian Empire. The massacres were stirred up by police agents and carried out by organized anti-semitic mobs called the Black Hundreds. A particularly large pogrom took place in Odessa in October.

The revolution spread to the countryside as well, where the peasants—the majority of Russia's population—lived and toiled in abysmally poor conditions. The American socialist William English Walling, who traveled to Russia with his partner Anna Strunsky in late 1905 to chronicle the revolution, described what took place all across rural Russia in his book *Russia's Message*:

Suddenly the latent class-hatred between the village and landlord broke out into a gigantic class war. The countryside from Poland to the Urals and from the Black Sea to the Baltic was lighted up within a few weeks by the fires of thousand of country mansions—in all some fifty million dollars of property was destroyed. Everywhere the movement was similar, since it was everywhere invited by a common situation and founded on the same peasant nature.

Nicholas and his ministers, in addition to reacting with force in typical absolutist fashion, also realized that the severity of the threat confronting them gave them no choice but to yield some reforms. When the announcement of the creation of a strictly consultative representative body was rejected by the workers and peasants, Nicholas was forced to relent. The Tsar's most liberal minister, Count Witte, convinced him of the necessity of letting elections for a representative body take place and in October, Nicholas released a statement granting basic, albeit strictly limited, liberal rights.

The revolutionary year 1905 drew to a close with two events of enormous importance. In October, the St. Petersburg soviet of workers deputies carried out a massive general strike and in December, the Moscow soviet organized an armed uprising. The workers of the city built barricades and held off the Tsar's Cossack troops for days before being ruthlessly put down. Although political and social unrest continued well into 1907 and inspired a kindred revolution in Persia, the Russian revolution had extinguished itself.

IMPACT ON THEORETICIANS

Much of the greatness of the events of the revolution of 1905 stems from their utter spontaneity. No one had anticipated the events, neither the agents of the Tsar's secret police nor the leaders of Russia's large and vibrant revolutionary movement. The meaning of those events, and their implications for the prospects of a successful revolution in Russia, were to occupy the work of three of the greatest Marxists of the Russian empire for years to come: Lenin, Luxemburg and Trotsky.

Lenin, from exile in Switzerland, hailed the revolution and strove to clarify its immediate political implications for Russian Marxists. In his article "The Two Tactics of Social Democracy," he argued that it placed the slogan of "the democratic dictatorship of the peasantry and the proletariat" as the program for revolution. He castigated the Mensheviks, with whom he had broken only three years before, for their insistence that only a bourgeois revolution was possible and that Marxists had to limit all of their actions to support for Russia's liberals in carrying out a strictly limited agenda of political change.

Rosa Luxemburg, a leader of the Polish and German Marxists, drew on the experience of the strike waves of 1905 to hurl the challenge westward at the reformism of the German Social Democratic Party. In her pamphlet, *The Mass Strike, the Political Party and the Trade Unions*, she sought to criticize the entrenched electoralism of the German party with the revolutionary potential of the general strike that had proven so powerful in Warsaw, St. Petersburg and along the Russian railways in 1905.

It is with Trotsky's name, however, that 1905 is most closely associated. He served as the president of the St. Petersburg soviet and helped to lead the October general strike. As a result of his activity, Trotsky was convicted by the Tsar's courts and sentenced to exile in Siberia. Together with a now-obscure fellow Russian revolutionary named Parvus, Trotsky called his summation of 1905, the theory of permanent revolution, meaning that the bourgeois democratic tasks of the revolution could be carried out only by the proletariat. The revolution would end in success only if it was permanent, that is, if it did not stop at democratic goals but continued into a fully-fledged socialist revolution led by the urban workers.

Trotsky's original and daring thesis was rejected by almost the entirety of the Marxist movement of the time. While it did not play a great role in his thinking again until his battles with Stalin over the direction of the development of Russian society in the 1920s, the theory of Permanent Revolution elaborated in 1905 earned him a place among the universally recognized leaders of Russian Marxism.

None of the three revolutionaries, however, despite their praise of the actions of the masses and their closeness to the events of the year, made a theoretical category out of the phenomenon of the St. Petersburg soviet. This new form of organized working class activity, which was to play such a central role when it reappeared just over a decade later, was strangely peripheral to the conclusions drawn by the three.

Historians may say that the 1905 Revolution was a failure, but the events of that year have a greatness that even the passage of 100 years cannot diminish. Though the 1917 revolution was an event on a higher historic scale, an air of tragedy hangs over it because of the eventual degeneration of the advances won that year. In contrast, 1905 has a sense of openness and possibility, a sense that a new beginning had been undertaken after centuries of oppression and reaction.

Lenin captured this aspect in a lecture on the events of 1905 he delivered in Switzerland in 1914, in which he said, "dormant Russia was transformed into a Russia of a revolutionary proletariat and a revolutionary people." Russia was truly transformed that year and the struggles its people threw themselves into opened up a century of worldwide revolutionary change.

Learn more about 1905 in Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution by Raya Dunayevskaya



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CAPITAL

FRANCE: PART OF GLOBAL REVOLT OF THE DISPOSSESSED?

The way the uprising in the Parisian *banlieues* spontaneously spread to dozens of cities throughout France and then to Belgium and Germany suggests that this is part of a continent-wide rising of youth against the empty promises of economic development and integration. A match has been lit that may not easily go out.

Student Chicago

One thing that frustrates me in trying to understand what is going on in France is that no one tells us what the youth involved in the riots are saying. Everyone seems to have an analysis of what is happening but no one seems to ask the youth why they are doing these things.

Feminist Missouri

As a recent immigrant to the U.S. who once lived in France, I can assure you that what many youth are feeling in Paris, Lyons and elsewhere is not so different from what African Americans here say about police abuse and insensitive government bureaucrats. This is about racism, not religion.



Pakistani immigrant Illinois

Lutte Ouvriere, one of the main leftist (Trotskyist) parties in France that often gets over 5% of the vote in national elections, has pretty much written off the revolt in France as the work of a disorganized mob. They wrote in their newspaper on Nov. 1: "Clearly, the principal victims of this violence are the inhabitants of these suburbs...when the youth take on firemen as representatives of authority, it doesn't show a very high level of political consciousness." Where is the "political consciousness" of these "leftists"? Can't they realize that there is purpose and reason when young people take to the streets against unemployment, police abuse, and poverty? Perhaps such attitudes explain why the French Left seems as distant from the uprising as the political leaders in Paris or Brussels.

Anarchist Illinois

What worries me is that this divide between recent immigrants from North Africa and the Middle East and the native residents of France will provide a new recruiting ground for the Islamic fundamentalists.

Concerned New York

The revolt in over 100 suburbs in France is an uprising of a generation of disaffected youth who face a 40% unemployment rate, racism, and police abuse. Over half of those arrested are between 12 and 18 years old. Most of those involved in the "riots" are not of recent North African or Middle Eastern origin. They are second or even third generation descendants of immigrants. Most were born and raised in a country that has completely marginalized them. There is no evidence of participation by Islamic fundamentalists in the street actions and the slogans of political Islam has not been heard in them. This is a revolt from within European civilization, not from outside of it. The youth want to obtain the fruits of a civilization that has long been denied to them—much as African Americans in Watts 1965, Los Angeles 1992, and Cincinnati 2000 revolted against social conditions in the U.S. to obtain the freedom, democracy and economic development so long denied to them. With these "riots" we are facing a globalization of the marginalized in reaction to the marginalization produced by globalization.

Peter Hudis Chicago

If you want to understand the angry young North Africans who are causing all this upheaval in France, just listen to the music most of them spend much of their

time absorbing—hip-hop. They know a lot more about the culture of African Americans than their own French rulers know about them.

Freedom fighter Indiana

The recent revolt by immigrant African youth was sparked by—surprise, surprise—police brutality. Connecting the dots from Los Angeles to Benton Harbor, Michigan to Paris isn't hard if you're paying any attention. When youth start connecting our revolts and understand that a philosophy of liberation can guide anger in the streets into a full-fledged liberation struggle, then we'll be a real threat. Call it a "riot" and marginalize it at your own risk.

Brown Douglass Memphis

The Right is saying the French are getting what they deserve for not supporting Bush. The real story, of course, is that French society and French-style capitalism is thoroughly racist, just as it is in the U.S. Now that their abstract egalitarianism has been totally exposed, they are making noises about giving ghetto youth more opportunities. It reminds me of stories from Detroit after 1967 when employers set up offices in the ghetto, very briefly, welcoming the so-called "hardcore" unemployed into jobs. The real question for today is whether the minority youth of France become the spark to re-ignite a new anti-capitalist movement in Europe.

Black senior citizen California

HURRICANES AND CAPITAL

Hurricanes are influenced by human action. Most global scientists agree that our dependence on petrochemicals caused global climate change, which has warmed the oceans. The attack on nature is more evident in the creation of levees to keep the mighty Mississippi at bay and in the huge canal system designed to allow for the easy pumping and transport of oil and gas through the bayous to the Mississippi. The construction of canals and draining of much of the bayous has eliminated a major source of absorption which, like a sponge, soaked up the natural fluctuation of the river and water from storms like Katrina. The oil and gas industry pushed the Corp of Engineers to do much of this interference with the ecology of the Gulf Coast. In New Orleans, the high land was inhabited by the rich and the low land (which flooded the worst) was where the poor lived. It only reinforces our vision of capital as rapacious at every turn. There is hardly a place we can look that does not reveal its vile teeth marks.

Allan L. Memphis

VOICES OF REASON FROM WITHIN THE PRISON WALLS

The atrocious lack of support and relief for the victims of Katrina is unimaginable. Five years ago I lived in Lafayette, Louisiana, and the separation of classes is so profound that one must actually endure the inhumanity associated with it in order to have any rational idea as to its scope. The press has raised the race issue, but they are off the mark. The fundamental problem relates to the unfair distribution of wealth, and the apparent priority of property over people.

In the months and years to follow, we shall witness further posturing and various mainstream political parties will point the finger at each other. In the end, nothing will change and those who could afford the necessary insurance will be paid off, while those that were barely making a living and had no actual property, will still have nothing. Apparently if you don't have a Platinum VISA Card, you don't count as a human being.

Prisoner Vacaville, California

READERS' VIEWS

STOPPING BUSH'S CRIMES

George W. Bush has demonstrated his disdain towards the well being of the American people and humanity at large over and over—not only by sending thousands of young Americans to die in his jihad against Iraq, but in his non-response to the latest string of natural disasters. I think three things should be done. First he should be impeached. Second the UN should charge him for the war crimes he has committed. Third, he should be punished for his terrible crimes against humanity. As Americans we all have a responsibility to see that our country is run to meet the needs of the American people. We need to take our country back before it's too late.

New subscriber Wisconsin

At our regular Wednesday morning street peace demonstration here, an African-American woman who was driving a MATA bus opened her window to correct one of the signs we were holding that said "Bush lied, 1,000 died!" She yelled, "It's 2,000 now." Her outrage was echoed in the honking horns and other positive reactions we got from those driving by. I couldn't help but think about the hundreds of thousands of Iraqis who died and continue to do so—about 1,000 a month in Baghdad alone—because Bush lied.

Feminist Peace Activist Memphis

In the wake of Katrina, two Black activists have launched a new, online organization, ColorofChange.org, to give a stronger voice to Black concerns in U.S. politics. In its first month, the site attracted 10,000 members. One of the founders is James Rucker, a veteran leader of online activism. The other is Van Jones, executive director of the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights. They say their early success is a sign that Katrina was a "wake-up call" for many "middle-class Black folks like ourselves (who) got a clear dose of reality. While many of us are doing well, millions of our folks have been left behind. When we saw the TV screens, the emotions were almost universal." They say the poor Black folks they left behind were no longer invisible after Katrina hit. They are asking for all people to become the color of change.

Correspondent Bay Area

I am a 17 year old activist, so the moment I heard about a march planned for Dec. 1 to rally in New York City's Union Square and then to march to Wall Street, I knew I had to get involved. I'm organizing for a strike at my high school and I'm inviting everybody that I can to join the event. I want to get the recruiters out of our schools and our troops out of Iraq. Please help me spread

the invitation to join us.

High School Student New York

THE TERMINATOR'S DEFEAT

It was no accident that nurses and teachers took the lead in deflating Arnold Schwarzenegger's larger than life public persona as well as his agenda put forth in four defeated propositions he put on the Nov. 8 ballot here. If the victory over the Terminator gave new life to the labor movement, as many pundits are now saying, it arose out of an ongoing struggle in the workplace in a profession dominated by women.

Labor activist California

The defeat of Arnold Schwarzenegger might be a "Pyrrhic victory." Some \$200 million was spent in this useless battle introduced by the corporate powers which Arnold represents. As one teacher said, "Imagine all the things that could have been done with all that money for the classrooms" while the unions had to fight a rearguard battle and Arnold blew hot air about "improving education" by attacking the teaching profession. It's almost like Conan the Giant threatening to strangle the goose if she doesn't lay enough golden eggs.

Healthcare worker California

PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER?

Three cities inscribe the moment in the Fall of 2005: Baghdad, New Orleans, and Toledo. As we put the complex, multifirm pieces together to try to project a vision of the future alternative to the commodity form of life, Baghdad is finally of a piece with Pretoria, Lagos, Caracas, Buenos Aires, Port Au Prince, Karachi and Hanoi. New Orleans is finally of a piece with the suburbs of Paris. Toledo is finally of a piece with Brixton. Everybody who shops at Walmart is connected with a slave labor camp in China. The American exchange of wage-labor with capital is stretched to the breaking point. A wasteful military-industrial-complex siphons off the wealth of society, capital leads in the race to the bottom, and whole divisions of the industrial-reserve army are in the lockdown of a vicious prison-industrial complex in a country with the highest rates of incarceration in the world.

Bush is just a symptom, serving the imperatives of the law of value. People can be guided by the theory that emerges from their own experience, as they reach for an idea imminent in the philosophy of freedom: their own self-transcendence into the universal possibilities of the human subjects of history.

Tom More Spokane

I would like to thank you for finding a donor to let me read *N&L*. I really love it. The articles about Bush and his big lies are great, because it is the truth.

Prisoner Ralford, Florida

Thanks for remaining on the frontlines in the battles against oppression and tyranny. Over the last 10 years I have not found a publication that continually wages war against the atrocities which too often escape the notice of the mainstream news publications. This is the 10th year of my unjust incarceration. *N&L* has helped me over the years to put my own struggles in proper perspective in light of the larger menace the state of Texas and the U.S. government has instituted by the establishment of the multi-billion dollar prison-industrial-complex. Thank you for keeping hope alive!

Black Cheyenne Texas

I believe that America was built on a lot of scheming and trickery of Caucasians. But your paper has such good history that I am being brought more into the true knowledge of history. The most important parts of *N&L* for me are "Black-Red View" and "Workshop Talks."

Prisoner Sanderson, Florida

Thank you for the privilege of reading your paper. As one who is held captive in one of California's toughest concentration camps, it does more than suit the purpose to have a positive outlet. Most people believe the "hype" too often. Your paper sets the record straight. I'm a firm believer when it comes to education on all levels. Crime, whether it is petty or serious, comes from lack of education 98% of the time.

Prisoner Crescent City, California



I found the essay "A proletarian critique of Starbucks" in the last issue of *N&L* interesting, important, and relative to *N&L's* recent classes on Marx's analysis of the Gotha Program. It's an analysis of what capitalism is. T.C. Autumn's statement "All retail laborers are a cost as they do not produce value" seems correct. It means to me that although they produce "profits" for the companies, they do not produce "surplus value." It means that surplus value and profits are two different things. However, I disagree that the Starbucks workers "produce nothing." The Starbucks worker does more than exchange commodities for money. Just as a cook produces a meal, the Starbucks worker produces a drinkable cup of coffee. A cook can make a meal and produce value under capitalism, or he can cook a meal for friends and not produce value.

**Basho
California**

What does it mean to have a revolution? Does it mean with guns or is it about new human relations? Capitalism interjects itself between people. "Free trade" means freedom for things vs. people who are left in captivity. When the World Bank talks about an anti-poverty program it means building a dam and evicting masses of people who then have no way to make a living. They create a huge surplus population who were poor but then are made absolutely destitute. If new machinery coming into a factory freed people to do creative things it would be great but it is just used to dominate the workers. When TV first came out, teachers saw it as a wonderful educational tool, but it wasn't developed for education but for commercials.

**Jan
California**

Marx helped us to focus on the root causes of the crisis we face: the undermining and destruction of the original sources of all wealth, the worker and

nature. What is called for is a revolution that will place the worker and the earth in their rightful place, creating a social system that sustains, enhances and empowers all organisms to live. Creating a system that is not only aware of humanity and nature but that is designed to embrace and celebrate their existence. Viva la revolution.

**New Marxist-Humanist
Memphis**

I was wondering why Bush was undertaking such a vigorous attack on a disease peril like bird flu that hasn't actually yet emerged. His outrageous ignoring of a real crisis like what we saw in New Orleans made me question what asking Congress for \$7.1 billion to prepare for the possibility of a flu pandemic was really all about. Then I saw that the report on it in the *Chicago Tribune* of Nov. 2 said: "The plan which Bush outlined would take years to implement and may be of most immediate benefit to drug companies that make flu vaccine." It was just a matter-of-fact report, but it sure answered my question.

**Ready for the revolution
Chicago**

As I was going over the news on msn.com, I came upon an article about sneaky companies and their pension plans I'd like to share. The article is about the way most companies hide huge pensions for their CEOs. It was revealed by the new boss at the Securities and Exchange Commission, Christopher Cox. He's concerned about what the truth of the "stealth" pensions might mean for investors, but I thought it was important for all of us to know. He takes Pfizer as his example, where their CEO Henry McKinnell earned more than \$38 million between 2002 and 2004 in salary, bonus, stock grants, options and other incentive payments. That's a lot, but what blows my mind is that his pension plan adds to that nothing less than "an \$83 million dollop of retirement pay."

It's not that I think any of us would be surprised by what Michael Brush wrote. It's just that seeing a major columnist putting it down in black and white for the public-at-large is both heartening and disheartening at the same time, especially in light of the way the pensions of so many ordinary workers have just been thrown into the waste bin after years and years of hard labor.

**Observer
Illinois**

WHY THE ID?

In your article "Iraq's reaction draft institution" (Our Life and Times, September-October *N&L*), you give credit to Doug Ireland for being a notable exception to the way the voices of Iraqi women's groups have had their voices ignored by much of the leftist and progressive media, writing that "A notable exception is the writings of gay journalist Doug Ireland's articles for *ZNet*." Why do you identify him as "gay"? He has the credentials, his orientation is not (should not be) of concern to anyone.

**Longtime supporter
Canada**

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

It is estimated that the dangers of environmental hazards are 30 times more dangerous than that of terrorism. We have had a year of disasters—Thailand, Indonesia, U.S. and more recently Pakistan. In the UK hundreds of thousands of families have been affected by flooding. It is easier for the state to silence or ignore its critics than to introduce new policies. I have been waiting for the Green Party or ecological groups to make some progress in the area, but the right to roam, recycling household waste and protecting the fox seem to be the most that can be achieved. They seem to have come to a dead end.

Unless the vested interests are challenged, unless the corruption and mal-administrations are exposed, the trajectory of natural disaster coupled with incompetence will continue. Who is willing to challenge it?

**Pat Duffy
Birmingham, England**

**MARXISM, HUMANISM
AND THE LEFT**

I have had the opportunity to read several issues of *N&L*. I can't tell you how wonderful it is to see a periodical with the zest and intelligence that your publication possesses, and with a clear mandate to dialectically combine Humanism and Marxism in a world where all too often the Marxists shun the Humanists and the Humanists fear the Marxists. Please add my name to your subscription list.



**New Reader
Calgary, Canada**

Marx, even while describing how capitalism undermines itself, also points to the possibility of the positive creation that can happen with workers creating something new. What's cool about News and Letters Committees is that it is always looking for that. That's not always evident in Left thought. Always looking for the force of revolution that is in the present is what I liked about the article on TennCare and the Lead on New Orleans in the September-October issue. They were about who are the actors working for that new day now.

**Eco-Marxist
Tennessee**

VACATION POSTCARD

We are visiting the Isle of Man and just beginning to find out something about its history and politics. It's an interesting example of how a very small country can be self-governing and have a distinct national identity. This claims to be the first place in the world where women got the vote on equal terms with men—in 1880. The Manx language is clearly enjoying a revival, although it nearly died out in the 20th century.

**Vacationing readers
Britain**

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EDITORIAL

The death of Rosa Parks on Oct. 31 immediately pulled the story of the momentous Montgomery Bus Boycott she had set in motion 50 years ago off the dusty shelves of history and put it on the front pages of newspapers. So great was the outpouring of recognition for the historic importance of her act of defiance, when she refused to give up her seat to a white man, went to jail for it, and triggered the Civil Rights Movement that changed the face of America, that it forced Congress to approve nothing less than a resolution allowing her remains to lie in honor in the Capitol Rotunda, the first woman ever to be so honored.

THOUSANDS POUR INTO FUNERAL

The real measure of the recognition of Rosa Parks' importance, however, was not this formal honor, so much as the seven hour funeral filled with songs and passionate eulogies in Detroit, where thousands poured into the Greater Grace Temple for the service, many having spent the cold night on the sidewalks outside hoping to ensure they could get in. That President Bush failed to do so much as send a representative was duly noted as a sign of his complete disregard for how deep is the respect of the American people for Rosa Parks and what she represented.

The importance of the Montgomery Bus Boycott that remained in the consciousness of Americans across the whole land 50 years later, was caught and recorded as it erupted by *News & Letters*, which had been founded that same year. Raya Dunayevskaya, the founder of Marxist-Humanism, put it on the same level as the Hungarian Revolution against Communism that erupted less than a year later. What both events manifested was the simultaneity of the spontaneity of action and the organization of thought that marked each of them. She saw this as signaling a movement from practice that was itself a form of theory. *N&L* was

BLACK/REDVIEW

Continued from page 1

ing Montgomery" and contains a unique account of events in Montgomery from his discussions with Rosa Parks and Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.

MONTGOMERY BUS BOYCOTT

What comes across in Denby's account is that the greatness of those two participants was their ability to relate to the unfolding drive for freedom among the Black masses reaching for self-determination. Denby describes how Reverend King and Rosa Parks both were surprised by the initiative of the masses at each stage. The daily paper, the *Montgomery Advertiser*, made a racist editorial comment along with reprinting a leaflet which students put out calling for a one-day boycott to protest the arrest of Rosa Parks. It was meant to expose the alarming activity of the students, but when word got out that way, 80% of the people joined the boycott. Most established Black and labor leaders at first opposed it, but it continued to grow.

This signaled the beginning of the whole Civil Rights revolution and the many-faceted revolts of the 1960s. Many have tried to confine the meaning of the Civil Right Movement to politics or getting a few high placed African Americans in government and industry. That's where today's iconography wants to freeze the legacy of Rosa Parks. Some of those who found a place in U.S. capitalism are complicit in helping Bush in that effort.

RACISM STILL PERSASIVE

In spite of the African-American spokesmen who were brought into capitalism as a way to blunt the movement, racism continues to pervade U.S. capitalism. See, for example, the way the poor and African Americans in New Orleans were abandoned in the wake of Katrina to fend for themselves.

Raya Dunayevskaya, in her first major theoretical work, *Marxism and Freedom* (1958), brought out the reason of the boycott as its unfolding 13-month-long spontaneous mass self-organization. She wrote: "The spontaneity of the walkout and the organization of their forces to keep up the boycott...is truly historic and contains our future." She said the greatest thing about the boycott was "its own working existence" (p. 281), using the same phrase that Marx used to describe the Paris Commune.

NEED FOR PHILOSOPHY

As we said in the Preface to *The Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles: Race, Philosophy and the Needed American Revolution*: "Needed more than ever is what Raya Dunayevskaya, the founder of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S., called in *The Power of Negativity*, giving 'a philosophic structure to concrete events.' The challenge is to understand ongoing history not merely as a sequence of events, nor even to uncover the root cause of ever-resurgent racism and classism, but to grasp the self-movement of the freedom idea within the revolts in civil society. That is the only way to discern the elements of the new society which are present in today's spontaneous revolts. Without a philosophic structure the revolts invariably get pulled back into the framework of bourgeois politics." (p. 2)

Celebrating the life of Rosa Parks

created that year so that the voices of revolt from below could be heard unseparated from the articulation of a philosophy of revolution for our age. (See John Alan's "Black/Red View," page 1.)

Yet it is the very greatness of the movement Rosa Parks set in motion that demands a look at where we are, 50 years later. None of those, preachers and politicians alike, who gave her such justifiable praise at her funeral in Detroit, failed to note how far we still must go to end racism and achieve true freedom. What is needed for that, however, is to recognize the persistence of racism for what it is—a social manifestation of capitalism.

Nothing more exposed how deep and permanent is the racism deeply embedded in American capitalism than the way Hurricane Katrina tore the veil off of the racial and class divides that forever continue to put American "civilization" on trial. It showed us the breadth and depth of the social crises ready to erupt in all the many other "New Orleans" across the land.

STATE OF BLACK AMERICA 50 YEARS LATER

- The brutal beating of a 64-year-old man by police in New Orleans little more than a month later, in the aftermath of Katrina, could have happened anywhere. All that its being caught on videotape meant was a flashback to Rodney King's beating as the police pleaded "not guilty" and asked for "understanding" of the "trying times."

- The uprising that erupted in Toledo, Ohio, about the same time in mid-October, broke out in anger at police who had come to protect a neo-Nazi group that planned a march in a neighborhood whose residents were deadset against allowing it. It immediately evoked memories of a rebellion that broke out in Benton Harbor, Michigan against police abuse two years ago—and Cincinnati two years before that—and Los Angeles a decade before that. All of them were signs of the anger that exists in African-American communities across the U.S., ready to explode at any time. There can be few Americans looking at the pictures of burning cars in Paris who do not recognize in them the same kind of angry youth ready to lash out at the police brutality, discrimination, unemployment and poverty they suffer daily right here.

- The percentage of Black unemployment has consistently been double that of white workers for decades. A new report has now indicated even more shocking figures concerning the steep decline in Black union membership over the past five years. While white union membership is down 5.4%, the number of African Americans in unions, which crucially means better-paying jobs, has fallen by 14.4%—and the trend

promises to accelerate as the auto and parts suppliers cut their heavily Black work force to the bone. (see stories, page 3). At the same time, the past 20 years have seen the incredible buildup of the prison industrial complex in which no less than two million men and women are held in jails and prisons, turning them into what many see as warehouses for our unemployed youth, heavily Black and brown.

There is no question that we have a very long way to go to win a new human society and end the racism that is so deeply imbedded in American capitalism. What becomes important is to see that this does not mean that the courage and reason of the African-American freedom fighters who refused to accept segregation and opened a new stage in the struggle for freedom 50 years ago has meant nothing.

What it does mean is that the struggles that are sure to continue cannot be separated from a philosophy of liberation. Without that we are left with one more "unfinished revolution"

such as has characterized the U.S. from its birth. What is demanded to uproot the permanence of the racism we continue to suffer is nothing less than the concept of "absolute negativity" that Marx called "revolution in permanence."

Women as subjectivity

Continued from page 2

she makes explicit what was new in the Women's Liberation Movement: women from the Left refusing to wait until after the revolution, who "want new relations right here, right now, right in my organization" (p. 186-87).

Finally, Dunayevskaya takes issue with the structuralist philosopher Louis Althusser, whose "read[ing] 'into' Marx" opens the door to thinking that labor isn't pivotal; whereas Dunayevskaya showed what is in Marx and that it is crucial to "see that women must have the philosophy of liberation in general, in particular, in essence, and in mind. It is critical not ever to separate theory from practice or philosophy from revolution, because unless you have that unity you will just end up once more feeling good because you have told off the men, but not having established anything new for woman as Reason" (p. 187).

There is no easy definition of Absolute Idea as New Beginning, which is why *WLDR* is indispensable reading. As Dunayevskaya re-creates the dialectic by investigating women's struggle for freedom worldwide, she describes the events unseparated from what is actually emerging from the struggle and from a philosophy of total freedom that is a summation of the revolutionary thought that came before. In doing so, she gives a direction to today's movement and shows how women's liberation can be a path to the Universal of freedom when it refuses to separate itself from Marx's revolution in philosophy.

* April 18, 1976, Presentation to the East Coast NEB, "Our Original Contribution to the Dialectics of the Absolute Idea as New Beginning..." (Reprinted in November 1993 *News & Letters*)



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CENTRAL AMERICAN JOURNAL

Hurricanes, neoliberalism, resistance

SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA—A month traveling and speaking in several Central American countries—Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica—brings one face to face with some of the stark realities as well as some of the hopes and aspirations of people in a part of the Third World: the unnatural consequences of natural disasters, the unmitigated poverty and inequality of capitalism's neoliberal face (including the arms one finds almost everywhere to keep order) and at the same time an interest in ideas and activities of liberation, especially among the youth.



The rains and flooding from the series of tropical storms and hurricanes that have crossed the Caribbean and hit Central America this fall have meant the death of thousands and homelessness for tens of thousands in the region.

In Guatemala an entire village was covered in a sea of mud, burying close to 1,000 people. Hundreds lost their lives in El Salvador and in Nicaragua when rains and flooding destroyed neighborhoods and villages. But as with the devastation from Hurricane Mitch in Honduras in 1998, the socioeconomic components contributed significantly to the tragedy.

The export-oriented agricultural model has helped lead to massive deforestation, soil erosion and pesticide contamination—resulting in a denuded land far more vulnerable to massive storms. In recent decades the rural population, forced from these export-oriented agricultural lands, ended up in mass migrations to the cities or to more marginal lands in order to grow subsistence crops in the countryside.

In the cities, squatter settlements form on hillsides, or in flood plains because that is where a little land is available—further stripping vegetation. Those who try to do subsistence farming on more marginal areas end up further degrading the land. "Development" projects, often done without environmental controls near cities, further degrade and contaminate the land.

The natural power of hurricanes pummel regions with significant prior environment damage. The unnatural tragedies we have seen in Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua this year are the consequence.

To be in the capital cities like Guatemala City, San Salvador and Managua is to witness the vulgar, harsh consequences of neo-liberalism in everyday life.

One goes into a grocery store in Guatemala City to see food prices often higher than in the U.S. And this in a city where salaries for workers, among those that can find a job, are far less than \$10 a day.

Whoever shops in these markets or eats in the fast-food outlets in San Salvador and Managua are certainly not the overwhelming majority of the people who, when they can shop at all, do so in poorly stocked tiny food stores—perhaps buying a few potatoes, or a little rice, and, if they are able that day, a small piece of chicken. Life is hand to mouth, each day is a challenge.

The "informal economy" abounds. You take a bus outside Managua, and before it leaves half a dozen or more vendors of cookies, small cakes, sodas, water, pour through the bus trying to sell their goods. What can they earn in a day—two or three dollars? I am told the life in the rural areas is even more difficult.

There are people who can afford to go to the glitzy shopping centers that one finds dotted throughout Managua, but it is an upper-middle class and small ruling class. In El Salvador it is an even smaller and more tight group, who control by raw power.

In the block where I lived, shotgun carrying guards roam 24-hours a day. Armed guards are everywhere in San Salvador, Guatemala City and Managua. Armed guards seem to be the one means of employment—in stores, in neighborhoods, in the streets. The one progressive daily paper in San Salvador calls for the

"depistolization" of the country. No chance so long as the deep inequality and immiseration continue.

One shock for me in Nicaragua is to see how little of the Sandinista revolution, with years in power, is in evidence. The Sandinistas are in the legislature. But it means so little now. The vision of a new society is completely absent—only political deals and trying to obtain power is in evidence.

Meanwhile, illiteracy is back up and neoliberalism runs amuck. I am not sure what the U.S. has to fear from a possible Sandinista electoral victory in the next election.

In El Salvador one feels great sadness at the almost decades of war waged by death squads and the right-wing military, which ended less than a decade and a half ago. I went to a part of San Salvador city where chiseled upon the walls of one part of the city are thousands and thousands of names of the civilian deaths and disappeared from the late 1970s to the early 1990s, divided year by year—some 40,000 names, though perhaps as many as 80,000 may have been killed in a country of only five million.

It was an honor for me to return to two universities in San Salvador to give presentations on ongoing liberation movements in Latin America in relation to emancipatory philosophic thought. I found rich discussion among students who came to participate. This was true not only here, but also in public talks and individual conversations I had in Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica on today's liberation movements and ideas in relation to the Hegelian dialectic, the ideas of Marx, and of Marxist-Humanism.

I found a strong resistance to Bush's policies globally, including his economic imperialism within Central America, a willingness to look as contradictions within the freedom movements of their own countries, and a deep interest in finding pathways forward, including an openness to a dialogue on Marxist-Humanism.

—Eugene Gogol

Crisis in Ecuador

A major problem that we have in Ecuador is the politicized judicial system. The current chapter of our eternal political crisis was sparked last December when now-deposed President Lucio Gutiérrez sacked the entire Supreme Court and appointed replacements to do his bidding.

The crisis in Ecuador is once again starting to come to a head. "Que se vayan todos!" (Out with them all!) was the cry of the popular movement that ousted Gutiérrez last April. "All" refers to the vice president who replaced Gutiérrez, the entire Congress and the entire judicial system.

It is clear to the rulers of the country that something has to be done to avoid a genuine revolution. So they are busy arguing about how to rearrange the furniture on the Titanic. The president and Congress cannot agree on whether there should be a popular referendum or a constitutional assembly or a constituent assembly. Whatever they come up with in the end, you can be sure that it won't allow for fundamental change.

Any kind of "popular" assembly will likely be stacked with political party hacks; and just in case somehow the voice of the people accidentally sneaks through, its powers will be limited to making cosmetic changes. Sinking the free trade talks, defying the IMF, and breaking the military treaty with the U.S., which allows a U.S. air base in the Ecuadorian port at Manta, are highly popular demands that are definitely off the table, as far as the government is concerned.

I guess it is too much to expect the president and the Congress to write their own epitaphs. Over the past 10 years Ecuador has been playing the game of musical presidents (three coup d'etats, eight different presidents), and absolutely nothing has changed. The leaders of all the popular grassroots movements are once again calling for mass demonstrations. A new uprising is almost inevitable. The question is whether it will once again be betrayed by the cunning of the military (backed by the political and economic elites, who in turn are backed by the U.S. government) or the lack of revolutionary vision on the part of the leadership.

—Supporter in Ecuador

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'Murders Most Foul'

Murders Most Foul: Poems Against War by a World Trade Center Survivor, by Sam Friedman, \$7.00. Order from *News & Letters* (add \$1 postage).

Sam Friedman's booklet of poetry, *Murders Most Foul*, was written for the Central Jersey Coalition Against Endless War for use in the anti-war movement. Sam is a September 11 survivor and a long-time socialist activist whose movement work embraces struggles from civil rights to the multi-racial.

His passion for "unsettling" people is reflected in poetry that becomes meaningful in the space between it and the world. It takes a brave plunge to weave emotions, ideas, and insights—anger, anguish, hope—into a poetic creation for change and transformation (one of Sam's important themes).

His poems probe the present:

How many hours to teach this parents' child to crawl an inch too far and meet a cluster bomb's curse?

Ask not those upstream about torture, about prisons, but forgive them not for they choose not to know.

And his poems see beyond the present:

when once we can see to rip out this system and set ourselves free.

We share deeply with Sam this vision in his poem "Privilege," and that in "If Humanity Wins," which goes on to imagine us,

as we build our embraceable new global city from the petals and rootings of dreams.

—Sheila Garden

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Mass opposition grows to Iraq occupation

Continued from page 1

Communist Party, to recapture the office he held with the full confidence of the U.S. until he was resoundingly turned out in the January elections.

Chalabi—a favorite of the ideological U.S. Defense Department policy makers who helped build the case for the war until the wholesale discrediting of the information he provided became a liability—is also marketing himself as a secular democrat.

THE SO-CALLED INSURGENCY

Unlike the January elections, Sunni political and religious parties now plan to campaign for seats in the assembly. The U.S. desperately hopes that this development indicates that the elements of Iraqi society that have up until now lent support to the violent campaign against U.S. troops, Iraqi security forces and ordinary Shi'a civilians are turning to political channels to express their opposition.

This hope seems to be misplaced however. The sheer scale of the mayhem carried out by the insurgency has grossly exacerbated the sectarian tensions that underlay the long rule of Saddam's Ba'ath Party. The death toll of civilians from the car bombings and assassinations perpetrated by the insurgents continues to accumulate to the extent that the rift between the formerly powerful Sunni Iraqis and the now-dominant Shi'a majority may not be reconcilable in the realm of parliamentary politics. A personal appearance by Iraqi president Jalal Talabani to former members of Iraq's army—demobilized in the early days of the occupation—to join the new security forces went nowhere.

The number of deaths of civilian and members of the security forces, which the U.S. military had long claimed to not be counting, was recently estimated to stand at 25,902 since January 2004 in a table included in a military report to Congress. Many commentators say that the figure given in the report is far too low.

The insurgents seek to make Iraq ungovernable and to murder or force into emigration any independent figure inclined to resist their efforts. Their targets include journalists, political activists, and proponents of women's rights. Their strategy is to clear the field for a struggle between the Ba'athist-Sunni fundamentalist alliance and the religious Shi'a forces that will persuade the U.S. military to leave the country.

Further complicating the picture are the charges by many in the Sunni community that members of the Shi'a fundamentalist parties are using their positions in the security services to carry out retaliatory assassinations.

The fighting between the U.S. and the insurgents continues to wreak a huge toll as well. Intense combat has been underway almost nonstop for months in the Euphrates river towns between the Syrian border and Baghdad, most recently in the town of Husayba.

The U.S. operations are intended to cut off the route of travel and supply for foreign insurgents crossing from Syria into Iraq. There are reports that aerial bombardment by the U.S. in this offensive has resulted in numerous civilian casualties. Furthermore the intrusive house-to-house searches carried out by U.S. troops continue to breed indignation even among those not inclined to support the insurgents.

Dramatic testimony gathered by Human Rights Watch from soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division has made it clear that those rounded up in these sweeps routinely face brutal treatment that amounts to torture. It is clear that Bush administration's decision to embrace torture as an interrogation technique

was not limited to implementation in Abu Ghraib prison, nor did it end with the convictions of the few enlisted soldiers who were charged with carrying it out there.

DOMESTIC OPPOSITION

Increasing numbers of Americans are expressing deep dissatisfaction with the Iraq war and the obstinacy of the Bush administration in prosecuting it. Large numbers of people not usually inclined to attend demonstrations are being moved to participate in events like the spontaneous vigils held across the country on Oct. 26 to mark the 2,000th U.S. military fatality in Iraq. High school and college students are also building a vibrant anti-military recruiting movement. Recent approval polls show that approval ratings of the president are crashing.

The indictment and subsequent resignation of I. Lewis Libby, a powerful adviser to Vice-President Dick Cheney, in the Valerie Plame leak case has prompted many to once again examine the whole rationale behind the war. The leak revealed the identity of a CIA agent married to diplomat Joseph Wilson, a critic of the administration's claims about Iraq's arms programs. Her identity was leaked to several journalists in an attempt to discredit him. The convoluted details of the case, though, are less important than at least one conclusion one can draw from it, namely that the arguments for invading Saddam's Iraq were so thin that powerful and strategically placed figures in the administration like Libby and Karl Rove were willing to break the law to silence anyone with the least potential to derail the endeavor.

An argument popular among critics of the Iraq war suggests that the entire affair was the result of a virtual coup d'etat achieved by interventionist conservative thinkers sympathetic to the regional aims of Israel's Likud party. But this theory downplays the fact that the Clinton administration committed the U.S. to the goal of regime change in Iraq with the Iraq Liberation Act of 1998, a bill long pre-dating the September 11 attacks that contained much of the democratic rhetoric put to use in building support for overthrowing Saddam.

Now that the villains of this interpretation of the war—Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle and Douglas Feith—have fallen from grace or moved on to bigger and better things, it may be easier to see that the real motivation behind the war was the change in the global political situation since the Gulf War of 1991. At that time, with the enormous changes in Russia and East-

ern Europe still underway, the so-called realist trend of conservative policy thinking prevailed.

Although George W. Bush's father characterized the era as the "New World Order," the memory of the bipolar world was still too fresh in the minds of those in power to attempt to fashion a radically new global political arrangement.

Although the Shi'a and Kurds of Iraq rose up in arms against Saddam's police state, the U.S. permitted the Iraqi government, still reeling from the decisive

defeat by the U.S.-led coalition, to put down the massive rebellion with its helicopter gunships. The oppressive social and political order of the Middle East was to be kept firmly in place.

During the Clinton years, the position of the U.S. as the sole superpower began to solidify. As barriers to free trade and capital investment were

diminished, the U.S. stood starkly as the world's most attractive place to invest. The huge trade deficit of the U.S. was and continues to be sustained by this massive importation of capital. During this period however, diplomatic rhetoric of human rights and humanitarian intervention coexisted with tolerance of ethnic cleansing and genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Rwanda.

A decade later, with U.S. military and economic capability far ahead of any rivals, the time was ripe for an attempt to resolutely establish American global dominance.

Although George W. Bush campaigned in 2000 as an opponent of what he called "nation building," the September 11 attacks gave him, and the interventionist conservatives gathered around him, an opening. The rhetoric of democracy and humanitarianism was now wedded to strong military action, with the former taking dramatic precedence over the latter in practice. The invasion of Iraq was seen as opportunity to demonstrate the permanence of the new arrangement. Great Britain, although it has one foot in the European Union, was ready to sign on to this new effort.

Now the U.S. is confronted with a substantial and open-ended military commitment in Iraq. At the same time, it must attend to its responsibilities elsewhere on the globe as the sole superpower, principally in Korea, the site of the last marker of the Cold War, in other words, a country divided between. The cost of the war is causing concern among fiscal conservatives in the Republican Party. The military is struggling to retain troops and to meet its goals for recruiting new ones. The army has resorted to dropping its standards on aptitude tests to maintain its ranks.

The cost of the U.S. drive for world domination—measured in dollars and human lives—is proving to be a difficult one for George W. Bush to bear.



Feminist group Code Pink protests at New York City Veterans Day parade.

New workers struggles in Iran pose vital questions for freedom movements

In Iran workers strikes are occurring under the nose of one of the most brutal regimes in the world. They are organizing against unpaid wages, unhealthy working conditions, and cuts in social benefits. In some cities of Kurdistan workers have opposed the regime's army and the national guards.

There has been a growth in the number of independent labor unions which function in an environment as dangerous as that facing workers in Columbia, Burma, China, or Zimbabwe. The struggle of the Tehran Transit Bus Drivers Association is especially important.

Several months ago, Tehran's bus drivers demanded a wage increase and social benefits. In response, they were attacked by a government sponsored group, the "worker's house," which had the support of the police. The union leaders were arrested and were not only sent to jail but also lost their jobs. After this incident the bus drivers increased their activities. On Oct. 16, they demanded the release of the drivers and the prosecution of those who attacked them.

Government officials refused to accept these demands. So on Oct. 25 the workers decided to continue their struggle by not charging passengers any fees for riding the buses. This had a major political impact. The drivers forced the government to accept their union and listen to their demands. Most of the arrested drivers were released and are back at work. During just the last three months over 2,000 workers' strikes, demonstrations, and picket lines have occurred in Iran. About 80% are over unpaid or delayed wages. Most private companies are unable to generate any income and workers are the ones made to suffer.

Iran, like many other underdeveloped countries, is suffering from capital restructuring and privatization. The corrupt government, with help of the IMF and the World Bank, has created much misery for working people. Over the past five years 3,000 small or mid-size workshops have closed. Although the government promotes capital investment, most private companies are closing because they are unable to compete on the world market. The drive for greater privatization (70% of industrial workplaces are run by the government) has brought only unemployment to the workers.

This is happening while the main source of Iran's income remains oil. Most of the oil income is wasted or used by officials of the regime and its dependent allies for private use or to spread Islamic fundamentalism abroad. Corruption and the lack of security for investors has led to growing unemployment and misery for poor people while also making a section of the bourgeoisie unhappy. In response, some of the bourgeoisie have joined the opposition while arguing for more privatization of capital. There are also calls for a secular republic among part of the opposition.

This shows how important it is for workers to have an independent movement and a vision of their future advancement. An independent workers union is just the first step. Workers in Iran know that they are not going to overcome the bourgeoisie if they keep the same system. As the strikes by the bus drivers show, the workers need to not only oppose the Islamic regime but also must organize themselves with new vision that directs the opposition beyond capitalism.

—Ali Reza

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On the revision of Marx's concept of 'directly social labor'

Continued from page 4

labor which is characteristic of commodity production on the basis of private property. The labor of individual workers engaged in socialist enterprises has a **direct social character**. Every useful expenditure of labor is **directly rather than indirectly part of the social labor...** (emphases added).

This uncoupling of "indirectly social labor" and commodity production flatly contradicts the position of Marx, who wrote in *Capital* that Robert Owen's "labor-money" "presupposes **directly socialized labour**, a form of production **diametrically opposed to the production of commodities**" (Penguin/Vintage edition, pp. 188-89, note 1, emphases added).

What's at issue here is not "orthodoxy," but the meaning of theoretical categories. In Marx's theory, there is a necessary, internal relationship between commodity production, the duality of concrete and abstract labor, and the split between private and social labor. So when the Russian article declares that these categories have become uncoupled, it is **redefining** them, altering their meanings. What the article means by directly and indirectly social labor is not what Marx meant.

What **did** Marx mean when he said that directly socialized labor is "diametrically opposed to the production of commodities"? And how did the Russian article revise that concept? The reason why it held that "Every useful expenditure of labor is directly rather than indirectly part of the social labor" in the USSR was that it had "abolished that characteristic of commodity production by which...labor...finds no social recognition because the commodity it produced remains unsold....In socialist society, all labor that is useful to society is rewarded by society."

In other words, the article contends that the sale of the commodity is what turns private labor into social labor in a commodity-producing society based on private property. Thus labor is only indirectly social; an act of private labor counts as social labor—"finds social recognition"—only when, and if, the commodity it produced can be sold. In Russia, however, a worker's labor counted as social labor whether or not the commodity could be sold. Labor was therefore directly social.

However, this is not what Marx meant by the distinction between indirectly and directly social labor. As far as I am aware, no writing of his identifies the **sale of the commodity** as the intermediary that turns private labor into social labor in a commodity-producing society. In his theory, the intermediary is **money**:

"Labour on the basis of exchange values presupposes, precisely, that neither the labour of the individual nor his product are **directly** general; that the product attains this form only by passing through an **objective mediation**, by means of a form of money distinct from itself" (*Grundrisse*, Penguin/Vintage ed., p. 172). "[I]f the labour-time contained in commodities [were] **immediately social** labour-time...it would indeed be impossible for a specific commodity, such as gold or silver, to confront other commodities as the incarnation of universal labour and exchange-value would not be turned into price; but neither would use-value be turned into exchange-value and the product into a commodity" (*Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Progress Publishers, pp. 84-85).

Thus, in Marx's theory, an act of private labor becomes social labor in a commodity-producing society because its product, the commodity, is equal to a certain amount of money. Yet the existence of money is not the cause, but the reflection, of the indirectly social character of labor. One commodity, money, is directly social ("universal") only because others are not; accordingly, the labor that produces the money commodity is directly social only because other kinds of labor are not. These dualities in turn reflect the split within the commodity between use-value and value—all commodities appear to be mere use-values, except money, which appears to be value—and thus the split between concrete, useful labor and abstract, value-producing labor.

Now the Russian article acknowledged that money in the USSR played the same intermediate role as in

other commodity-producing societies. "In the planned socialist economy of the USSR, commodities...have **prices which are money expressions of their value**" (emphasis added). Dunayevskaya drew attention to this statement both in her original comment and in her rejoinder. She wrote in her comment: "The document states that...distribution according to labor' is to be effected through the instrumentality of money. This money is not script notes or some bookkeeping term but money as the price expression of value. According to the authors, '... the measure of labor and measure of consumption in a socialist society can be calculated only on the basis of the law of value.'"

Thus, as Dunayevskaya correctly suggests, a key pillar of the article's contention that the law of value exists in socialism was the fact that money **as the expression of value** existed in Russian "socialism." The article reached this conclusion through a critique of the notion that labor under socialism could be measured, not by money that expresses value, but **directly**, "in hours or days, in what Marx calls the natural measure of labor"—that is, the time of labor, labor hour, labor day, etc.... [T]he difficulty is that the labor of the citizens of a socialist society is not qualitatively uniform....a distinction between physical and intellectual work still exists....there exist differences between skilled and unskilled work....One sort of occupation is better equipped technically than another...."

Thus, the article concludes, "All this signifies that the hour (or day) of work of one worker is not equal to

the hour (or day) of another. As a result of this, the measure of labor and measure of consumption in a socialist society can be calculated only on the basis of the law of value." **Hence, the reason why the law of value operates in "socialism" is that an hour of work of one worker is not equal to an hour of another.**

Immediately following is a statement about directly and indirectly social labor under "socialism": "The calculation and comparison of various kinds of labor are not realized directly, by means of the 'natural measure of labor'—labor time—but indirectly, by means of accounting and comparison of the products of labor....The products of socialist labor have value. From this follows the utilization of such instruments as trade, money, etc."

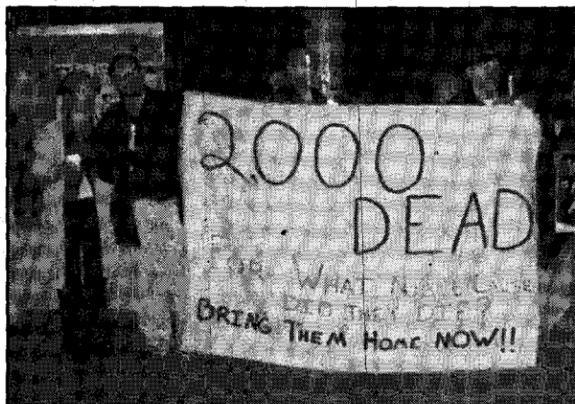
In other words, because one worker's labor-hour is not equal to another's, an hour of labor does not count **directly** as an hour of social labor. The amount of social labor a worker performs instead depends upon the **quantity and value** of the products of her "socialist labor." Value, expressed in money, is the intermediary that turns an hour of actual labor into some amount of social labor. This statement is an implicit acknowledgement that labor in the USSR was not directly social in **Marx's** sense of the term "directly social labor."

Thus the article contends, on the one hand, that labor is directly social in "socialism," but that, on the other hand, the more output a worker produces, and the more valuable her product, the greater is the amount of social labor she performs during an hour of actual labor. All useful labor is supposedly directly social. But **how much** directly social labor it is depends upon the mediation of value and money. As Orwell might have put it, all labor is directly social, but some labor is **more** directly social labor than others.

To try to distinguish their society as a "socialist" one, the Stalinists were trying to make the direct sociality of labor a purely **qualitative** issue and to divorce it from the quantitative issue. If the Plan recognized all labor as social, then supposedly all labor was directly social, even though an average worker's labor might count only as one half or one tenth as much labor as an intellectual's. The fact that money and value mediated the quantitative relationship somehow did not stop labor from being directly, or immediately, social.

Thus we see the danger in emphasizing qualitative issues at the expense of quantitative ones. Some people suppose that qualitative matters are profound, while quantitative matters are beneath them. But without careful attention to the quantitative issues, it would be very hard, if not impossible, to answer the Stalinist contention that labor was directly social in the USSR. We could say that laborers weren't freely associated, but it is hard to see how we could deny that their labor was directly associated.

Remembering victims of Bush's Iraq war



MEMPHIS—At a vigil sponsored by the Mid-South Peace and Justice Center, 100 gathered at the corner of Poplar and Highland on Oct. 26 to mourn the carnage caused by Bush's illegal and immoral war on Iraq. We joined cities around the world to grieve and protest the 2,000th U.S. soldier killed in Iraq.

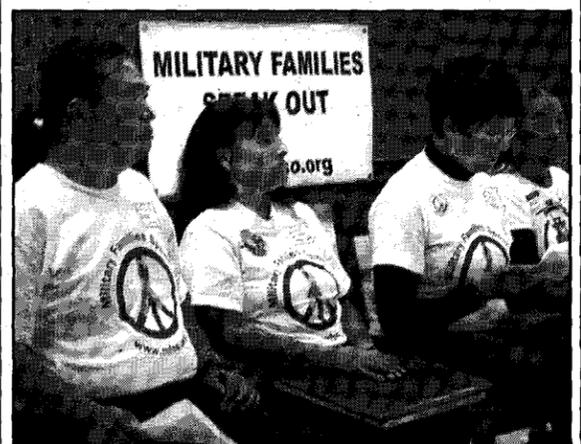
The human cost of this war extends beyond the \$217 billion spent to occupy Iraq. Over 2,000 U.S. soldiers will never come home to their families, over 15,000 more will return maimed and disabled, while tens of thousands more will suffer the long-term psychological repercussions of killing the innocent. These figures pale in comparison to the 100,000 Iraqis who have lost their lives in a war the majority of the world opposed.

Meanwhile, those in need in our own country continue to fight in a war of their own. Every day thousands go hungry, hundreds die, and countless more suffer because Bush's government would rather fight wars than provide living wages and universal healthcare.

Starting at our weekly morning vigil, we began reading the names of the 2,000 who have died in this war. This solemn witness continued throughout the day. By the time our evening candlelight vigil started, we had 1,000 names left. As we tolled the bell that evening we were reminded that each ring represented not just one U.S. death, but also 100 Iraqis. That is something that we must never forget. Their families grieve as ours do, the pain is the same, but the responsibility is ours.

—Jacob Flowers

Stop military recruiting!



A session of "Military Families Speak Out" held at a conference against military recruiting held at the University of California, Berkeley.

The law of value in capitalist society

Continued from page 4

egories used by Marx in *Capital* they have found the theoretical reflection of economic reality. Since, however, Marx's entire analysis of the law of value is based upon its specifically capitalistic content, the Soviet economists were constrained either to revise the concept that the Soviet Union is a "socialist society," or to revise the concept that the law of value is dominant only in a capitalist society. It is not surprising that they chose to revise Marx instead of the Soviet Constitution.

The Soviet economists have solved their dilemma. It is up to Baran to solve his dilemma of assuming, on the one hand, that Russia is a "socialist society" and, on the other hand, asserting that the law of value is dominant only in a capitalist society.

He has deepened his contradictory position by approving the proposal that in the future teachings of political economy the structure of *Capital* be not followed in order that factual information be introduced to "form the backbone of the course" (p. 863). It is not merely a question of supplying factual information—Volume I, the most abstract volume of *Capital*, is full of

historical and statistical data. It is a question of severing the indissoluble connection between the dialectical method of Marx and his political economy. It follows inexorably from the break with the Marxian concept of the law of value. Soviet economic theory finally reflects economic reality. Does Baran propose instead that the reality and the theory reflect his presupposition that Russia is a "socialist society"?

Author's Notes

1. p. 85. All references to *Capital* are to the Kerr edition.
2. *Arkhiv Marksas-Engelsa* (Moskva, 1930), T. V., c. 386.
3. *Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science* (New York, International Publishers), p. 346.
4. Lange's promiscuous use of quotation marks for value and law of value, where no such expression is used by Marx, seriously distorts Marx's meaning (cf. p. 129).
5. *Teorii Pribavochnoi Stoimosti* (Moskva, 1932), T. III, ch. 3, c. 55 (*Theories of Surplus Value*).
6. *Arkhiv Marksas-Engelsa* (Moskva, 1933) T. II (VII), c. 7.
7. *Capital*, Vol. II, p. 120.

8. *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 48.

9. Baran questions (pp. 869-70) my "gratuitous" assertion that classes exist in Russia since the material he has read points in the "opposite direction." He therefore assumes that I base my conclusion on the wide differentials in income. Income differentials in the USSR are not sublimated from all exploitative vices; they too are only a manifestation of the actual production relations. If Baran cannot accept the evidence of the existence of class differentiations from English works, such as *The Real Soviet Russia*, by J. Dalling (New Haven, Yale Univ. Press, 1944), the chapter on plant managers by Dr. Schwarz in *Management in Russian Industry and Agriculture* by Bienstock, Schwarz and Yugov (New York, Oxford Univ. Press, 1944), and *Workers before and after Lenin* by Manya Gordon (New York, Dutton, 1941), let him consult the original documents on the 1939 population census and the analysis of the occupational classifications, especially of the "classless" group known as the "intelligentsia" by V. Molotoff, the results of the Five Year Plans and the analysis by J. Stalin, as well as the minutes of the congresses and conferences of the Russian Communist Party. All of these offer a fertile field for reflection.

10. N. Voznessensky, *The Growing Prosperity of the Soviet Union* (New York, International Publishers, 1941), p. 40.

OUR LIFE AND TIMES

by Kevin A. Barry

So far, the October earthquake in Pakistan has killed more than 70,000 people, with the toll mounting daily. It has displaced an additional three million people, many abandoned in remote mountain villages cut off from the outside. Others are awaiting shelter in rudimentary and inadequately provisioned camps that have been set up by the government and international agencies. There are not nearly enough heavy tents in the entire world to shelter this mass of people, even if the various armies of the world were to donate theirs, something they would of course never do.

The quake occurred in one of the most militarized parts of the world. The Pakistan government, a military regime backed by the U.S., has nuclear weapons and jet fighters. Yet nearly 50% of the country's population remains illiterate, something that affects women disproportionately. Poverty is endemic, with per capita annual income a meager \$600 per year. Thus, many of the quake victims were living at the edge of disaster, even before the quake struck.

Its epicenter was in Kashmir, a predominantly Muslim area, the eastern (and larger) part of which is occu-

Pakistan earthquake's contradictions

piated by India. Pakistan-backed militants, many of them fundamentalists, have fought a long civil war against the Indian occupation. The Indian military maintains a huge force in Kashmir, and India too possesses nuclear weapons. The nuclear-armed U.S. is deeply involved in the region as well, with aircraft carriers off Pakistan, and ground troops in Afghanistan, whose border with Pakistan is only a few hundred miles to the west of the quake's epicenter. Al Qaeda and the Taliban maintain bases along the same border, where they are engaged in a low-level guerrilla war against the U.S.-backed Afghan regime.

All of these powers, great and small, have called for aid to the earthquake victims, and claim that they are trying to help. But none have called a ceasefire, or lessened their military operations. Many other countries have pledged large sums, or sent aid and rescue teams.

Severe obstacles will prevent this aid from getting through in time. Much of the promised international aid has not arrived. Even though it has a large helicopter force in Afghanistan, the U.S. has sent only a token number of helicopters, which are vitally necessary for reaching isolated mountain villages. The corrupt and authoritarian Pakistan government and mil-

itary have not been able to administer and coordinate the aid in an honest or effective manner. Various Islamic fundamentalist groups are carrying out small-scale aid projects, but also threatening to attack Westerners providing aid. The Indian government's token offer of aid was turned down for nationalistic reasons by Pakistan's military, while negotiations to open the border between the Indian and Pakistan sides of Kashmir have proceeded at a snail's pace. Some traditionalist men are refusing to evacuate their families, for fear they would be unable to keep their wives and daughters in seclusion in a refugee camp.

Class, imperialist, military, gender and other contradictions of our capitalist order have made it a certainty that thousands more will die this winter, in what began as a natural disaster, but is now a human-made one. In the past, such situations have destabilized governments and even social orders.

Anti-Bush protests in Argentina

Protests against Bush's appearance at the fourth Summit of the Americas in Argentina Nov. 4-5 were held in at least 200 cities in that country. Brazil, Venezuela, and Uruguay also had anti-Bush events. The largest marches were held in Mar Del Plata, south of Buenos Aires, site of both the summit and a counter-summit (the third of its kind) that was held in the days leading up to the arrival of Bush and the other 33 heads of state (Castro was not invited).

Bush, who has succeeded in becoming the most hated U.S. president in history in Latin America, was sent away with his tail between his legs, and Mexico's Vicente Fox lost much political capital fighting for Bush's agenda, which was to use the summit as a way to re-launch the stalled negotiations over the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA, or ALCA in Spanish). Since the theme of the summit had nothing to do with FTAA, and since the host of the summit, Argentina, is the country that has suffered a horrific meltdown of its economy since 2001 as a direct result of U.S.-inspired trade liberalization, Bush's arrogance in insisting on discussing FTAA only served to fuel the flames of the protests.

The Bush-Fox plan (with Panama's help) was to have all of the summit participants commit themselves to serious FTAA talks in early 2006. Hugo Chavez of Venezuela came with the intent to somehow definitively bury FTAA forever, and both Kirchner of Argentina and Lula of Brazil, along with Uruguay and Paraguay, hoped to prevent any mention of it in the summit's final statement. None of the parties seemed to get all they wanted, though the fact that Bush did not succeed in getting a clear commitment to FTAA led Chavez to proclaim that the weekend will mark a historical new beginning in South America because five countries (the Mercosur countries plus Venezuela) refused to bow down to him.

While Bush quietly went to Lula's ranch to have barbecue after his failure, Fox went on a tirade against Kirchner, claiming that it was his fault as host of the summit that led to the lack of consensus on the FTAA, rather than the endless deepening poverty in the region. He also suggested that the 29 countries should proceed to FTAA talks without the five dissenters, despite the fact that those five comprise about half the economic output of Latin America. The issue is to be discussed again in December at WTO talks, so there's still a chance that FTAA will be resuscitated in 2006.

—Mitch Weerth

Parisian revolt spreads through West Europe

As we went to press, the anti-police, anti-government rebellion in France had gone on for more than two weeks, beginning in late October. It broke out in Clichy-sous-bois, a small and impoverished enclave populated mainly by North African immigrants and their descendants. The spark was the deaths of two youths, one of them only 15 and the other 17, who were electrocuted when they entered a power sub-station. They were apparently fleeing police.

By the second week, the unrest had not only engulfed the Paris suburbs, but also reached into Paris and numerous cities across France. It then spread into several cities in Belgium and Germany. Over 7,000 automobiles were set afire—long a popular tactic of alienated youth. Police also came under attack, as did firefighters.

French Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy fanned the flames with his provocative comments about the need to clean up "scum," which was widely interpreted as the racist demonization of an entire community. But it played well with the French Right, as he maneuvered to run for president in the next elections.

The anger of North African youth has been simmering for decades. In most of their communities, unemployment stands at 30%, three times the national average. These communities now constitute over 10% of the population, locked into patterns of job and housing discrimination. They also face rampant police brutality and harassment. "We just want to be recognized as human beings," one young woman told the BBC.

The French political establishment, including the big leftist parties and trade unions, has very little contact with these communities. Nor does the student movement. The grievances of these ghetto communities were not really represented during the Oct. 4 strike against government economic policies, which involved nearly a million people, except at the very general level of attacking the high rate of unemployment.

The government has fought back by resorting to a highly controversial emergency decree, first passed into law in 1955 during France's colonial war against the Algerian independence movement, that permits the imposition of local curfews. The government did not impose such a measure even at the height of the massive student and worker unrest in May 1968. Such measures will do little or nothing to address the real source of this mass upsurge against discrimination.



Hundreds took part in a silent march through a suburb of Paris in memory of the two teenagers whose deaths as police chased them sparked a national revolt.

Ethiopian elections

In November, demonstrators took to the streets to protest fraudulent elections last May, which returned to power the Stalinoid government of Meles Zenawi. As it had last spring, the Zenawi regime responded with gunfire against peaceful protesters. The latest demonstrations began as taxi drivers sounded their horns in response to a call by the largest opposition group, the Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD).

As we went to press, 46 people had been killed by the regime, already more than last spring. As heavily armed police and soldiers patrolled the capital, Addis Ababa, demonstrations broke out in other cities. The CUD also called for a general strike.

NEWS AND LETTERS COMMITTEES

Who We Are And What We Stand For

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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