

# NEWS & LETTERS

THEORY / PRACTICE

"Human power is its own end"—Karl Marx

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\$ 1

**DON'T WORRY**

You did not miss the January-February News & Letters. We are beginning 2006 with February-March and continuing bimonthly after that.

## WORKSHOP TALKS

### Workers battling for the next generation

by Htun Lin

Just before Christmas, 33,000 New York City transit workers went on strike, shutting down the country's largest public transportation system for the first time in 25 years. Workers rejected management demands to cut pensions for future workers. Also in dispute was the city's demand to have workers pay for part of health care premiums.

The city's proposed two-tier pension system puts its budgetary crisis on the backs of workers, especially future workers. In spite of the threats to arrest union leaders and million-dollar-a-day fines imposed by the courts, transit workers prevailed in their principled stand against any kind of two-tier system.

#### SAME FIGHT, DIFFERENT STRUGGLE

This strike reminded me vividly of our own eight-week strike in 1986 at Kaiser Permanente, the nation's oldest and largest HMO. Management assured us then that existing workers were not going to be impacted, but in fact would be rewarded with bonuses, as soon as we voted in a new contract which included a 30% wage cut for future workers.

We knew then, as New York transit workers clearly know now, accepting such a proposal meant the beginning of the end of our union by creating divisions between workers old and new. It was not for our own immediate gain that we all stayed out for as long as we did, but to preserve solidarity with future workers.

It is no accident that the New York transit workers union, comprised primarily of minorities and immigrants from places like the Caribbean, is so concerned

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## BLACK/RED VIEW

### Blacks in France

by John Alan

When two French youth, one of North African and another of West African heritage, died from electrocution as they hid from police in an electrical substation, a youth rebellion broke out all over France, starting in the Paris suburbs on Oct. 27, 2005. It spread to 300 towns. One person died and 1,500 were arrested. The youth who rioted are mostly third generation French citizens. They are the progeny of what the revolutionary philosopher Frantz Fanon called the "wretched of the earth," which was his characterization of those who struggled to assert their full humanity in the face of the brutal French colonialism of the 1950s and '60s.

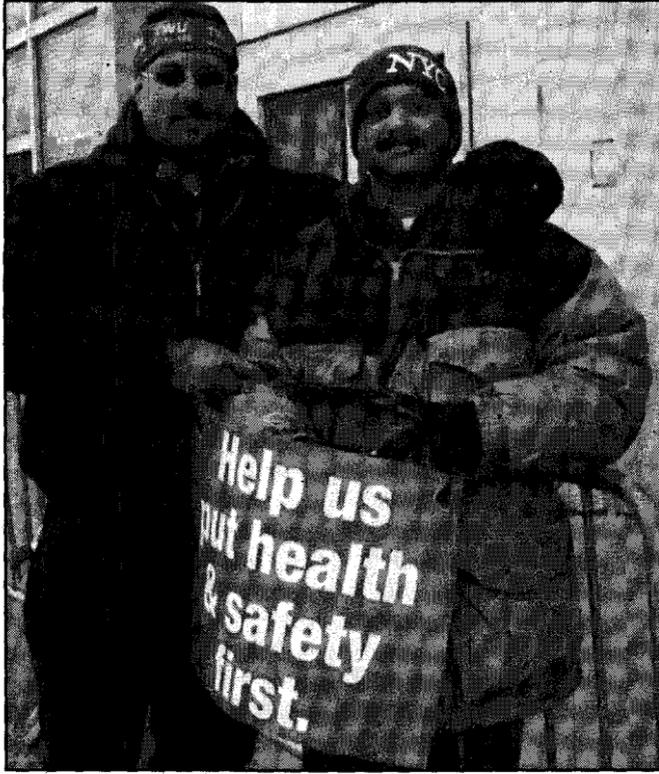
The youth are very direct about the object of their wrath—the constant police harassment of anyone with the "wrong" skin color. French of North and West African descent are still referred to as "immigrants" though they know no other society. The hated interior minister, Nicolas Sarkozy, whose policies have shaped police behavior, is the son of a Hungarian immigrant and, like many from other parts of Europe, has thoroughly integrated into French society. The youth of the suburbs, however, are called "visible minorities."

The youth's unemployment rate of 40% among those colossally reveals the pervasiveness of French racism, a continuing legacy of its colonial past. The law the government invoked to impose curfews in selected areas dates back to 1955 and the war in Algeria.

The French façade of equality of all its citizens has been exploded as a myth. It is an abstraction of French

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## From Iraq war to New Orleans, Bush agenda spawns crises



New York transit workers on strike in December. (See report on page 3.)

by Olga Domanski

The growing opposition that George W. Bush is facing has created a new climate in the country. It appears even in the ranks of Congress, on everything from his war in Iraq to the USA Patriot Act and now the outcry over the recent public revelation of his illegal spying on American citizens. Under attack, however, Bush's agenda, its imperial reach abroad and a drive to a single-party state at home, can become more dangerous.

The shift in the momentum we are witnessing did not begin with the shocking disclosure by *The New York Times* on Dec. 16. There James Risen reported that President Bush had secretly ordered the National Security Agency to eavesdrop on American citizens without obtaining court-approved warrants, which are

constitutionally required. While it is true that front page story unleashed such a storm of protest that it led almost immediately to bipartisan calls for a congressional investigation, evidence of the shift arose much earlier with the growing opposition at home to Bush's war on Iraq.

At the same time, in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, the nationwide wave of disgust at Bush's unconscionable inaction and the problems which persist today stand undeniably high in any measure of the shift of momentum in the Bush agenda. Whether the many-sided and growing opposition to Bush's agenda convinced *The New York Times* to finally reveal secret information it held for more than a year, the war in Iraq is what towers above all else in the questions which have never been as numerous as today.

#### COST OF IRAQ WAR

We are in the third year of the Iraq war and occupation whose excuses have long been completely discredited. U.S. military fatalities recently rose past 2,000 dead and 15,500 wounded. These have contributed to the strong and steady turn away from the support Bush had continued to claim despite his up-and-down approval ratings through 2005. So has the great surge in the blood-letting that greeted the new year after a short-lived lull following the Iraqi parliamentary elections.

The steadiest opposition has been waged by the families of the soldiers sacrificed for Bush's war. The most well-known protest, led by Cindy Sheehan, brought dissent directly to Bush's ranch last summer. Another protest was created to raise the consciousness of youth in the Latino immigrant community. It was organized by Fernando Suarez del Sola, the father of Guerrero Azteca. Del Sola declared, "I consider this the historical moment in the U.S. to achieve a radical change. Since the Vietnam war, voices have never spoken out against the government as strongly as today" (see "A parent brings Iraq war home," November-December 2005 *N&L*).

Support for this war has dropped faster than it had for either of the other two most unpopular wars in U.S. history, in Vietnam and Korea. A generation later,

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## EDITORIAL

### Bolivia at the crossroads

The election of Evo Morales of the Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) as president of Bolivia in December is a defining event. For the first time a leader of the country's indigenous peoples (60% of the population are of indigenous descent), while the parties that dominated Bolivian politics for decades were virtually swept away. The MNR, which led Bolivia's 1952 Revolution, got less than 7% of the vote, while the MIR and ADN, right-of-center parties that spent years in power, failed to win even a single parliamentary seat.

#### MASS HATRED FOR NEO-LIBERALISM

Morales' vote total—54%—reveals the extent of mass opposition to the "neo-liberal" agenda of subjecting Latin America to the dictates of the U.S. and multinational corporations. Bolivia was one of the first countries to be subjected to the privatization and "economic restructuring" that has defined the world economy for the past two decades, and Morales' election has sent a strong message that a new day may be dawning on the continent.

The U.S. quickly denounced Morales' victory, saying it was "concerned" about his support for coca leaf growers—a source of as much as a third of the cocaine that ends up in the U.S. Yet it is very doubtful that the U.S. is mainly worried about Morales because of drugs. Morales repeatedly stated before and after the election that the production and distribution of cocaine will remain illegal in Bolivia. What he opposes is the complete eradication of the growing of coca leaf, which has been chewed for medicinal purposes for centuries in Bolivia, on the grounds that doing so would drive many peasants to starvation.

In fact, the U.S. supported several Bolivian dictators in the 1970s and 1980s who were allies of the drug lords, such as Hugo Banzer and García Meza, because of their brutal repression of workers' and peasants' movements.

What really worries the Bush administration is that the struggles of workers, peasants, women and youth that led to Morales' victory will further complicate its effort to keep Latin American nations in line with its dictates.

#### OPPOSITION TO PRIVATIZATION, ELITE

Since 1999 Bolivia has witnessed the explosive growth of a mass movement opposed to privatization of public services, exploitation by multinationals, and the collusion of the nation's elite with U.S. policies. Mass uprisings in February and October 2003 demanded that profits gained by multinationals from Bolivia's natural gas reserves (Bolivia has the second largest reserves in Latin America) be used to redress the country's crushing poverty. Another uprising in May and June 2005 called for the complete nationalization of Bolivia's oil and gas reserves.

There is a long tradition in Bolivia of support for national control of exports. Bolivia was the first country in Latin America to nationalize its oil; it did so several years before Cardenas nationalized Mexico's oil in the 1930s. The privatization of the Bolivian oil industry in the 1990s produced huge profits for U.S.-based companies, but did nothing to end Bolivia's deep impoverishment.

Morales says he will reverse this legacy by revoking foreign firms' ownership of oil and gas wells and insist that they sign service contracts with his government. These plans to redistribute gas and oil revenue largely follow the approach of Venezuela's Hugo Chavez. Yet while the Bush administration strongly opposes such plans, they are not as radical as may appear at first sight.

In Venezuela, Chavez recently demanded that foreign oil companies become minority partners in the state-run oil industry. He also demanded an increase in

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# For freedom, we must stop Alito

by Terry Moon

Samuel Alito, George W. Bush's latest nominee to the Supreme Court, is the perfect right-wing ideologue for Bush's reign and this stage of capitalism's development. His record shows that he cares nothing for human rights, and has made a career based on finding ways to use the law to thwart and/or destroy what rights do exist, and to block realization of the human urge to self-development and freedom. This man found that the law allows the strip search of a ten-year-old girl who committed no crime; that the murder of a 15-year-old boy, shot in the back by a cop while running from a \$10 robbery, was justified, and the child's age and crime "essentially irrelevant"; who states he is "proud of my contributions in recent cases in which the government has argued in the Supreme Court that racial and ethnic quotas should not be allowed and that the Constitution does not protect a right to an abortion."

## CAPITALISM UNBOUND

Alito worships the state, especially its repressive powers, including the police. His—and Bush's—agenda is to drastically reinterpret the Constitution so that federal regulatory agencies like the National Labor Relations Board, Food and Drug Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration will have no power to protect workers; ban discrimination against women, Blacks, minorities, and immigrants; stop pollution; or keep the food and drug supply safe. Alito's Constitutional interpretation lets loose capitalism to exploit and expand, while denying any and all avenues for redress for those who get in the way of that inhuman juggernaut.

If the craven Democrats fight Alito's confirmation (as we go to press, the vote is pending in the Senate Judiciary Committee), it won't be over women's right to control our own bodies. The opportunist Hillary Clinton made this clear last January as she "reached out" to anti-abortion fanatics, ingratiatingly saying, "I, for one, respect those who believe with all their hearts and conscience that there are no circumstances under which any abortion should ever be available." (My emphasis.) Clinton never explained why she would "respect" those who would cause the death, maiming and misery of countless women.

If the pusillanimous Democrats fight, it will be because they were pushed to do so by civil rights groups, workers and unions, older people, immigrants' rights groups, the disabled, lesbians and gays, almost all mainstream environmental groups, and the poor, as well as women. By no accident, these are the same groups that came together in the largest march in history, the 2004 March for Women's Lives. By pretending to ignore that outpouring, whose rank and file expressed much more than the narrow aspirations of the leadership to put a pathetic John Kerry in office (see May 2004 *N&L*, "Women make history in massive rally"), the Bush administration tried to convince the movement that it was powerless to impact the future. The answer to that drive to control the minds of

## WOMEN WORLDWIDE

by Mary Jo Grey

ASWAT (Voices), a group of Palestinian gay women from different cities and backgrounds in Palestine and Israel, announced the launching of their website: <http://www.aswatgroup.org/english>, a "platform from which we can reach out with our voices to all people." Starting as an email list group four years ago they eventually decided to organize as a group "to provide support for each other and put the issue of sexual preference on the Palestinian societal agenda."

\* \* \*

The annual 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence, an international campaign emphasizing that violence against women is a human rights violation, occurred Nov. 25 (International Day Against Violence Against Women) to Dec. 10 (International Human Rights Day). That period also highlighted World AIDS Day (Dec. 1) and the 16th anniversary of the Montreal Massacre (Dec. 6), when a misogynist gunman murdered 14 women students at the Ecole Polytechnique. The theme, "For the Health of Women, For the Health of the World: No More Violence," highlighted the connection between violence against women and HIV/AIDS. Since it began in 1991, 1,700 organizations in 130 countries have participated.

humanity cannot be retreat or quiescence.

## IDEA OF FREEDOM IN CONTENTION

The nomination of Alito is an ideological act, a furthering of Bush's drive to control our minds and destroy any vision of the future other than capitalism's deadly development and this society's deepening sexism, racism, homophobia, and retrogression. As countless demonstrations have shown, it will take more than millions in the street or a gutless Democratic Party to change what Bush set in motion with control of Congress and now the Supreme Court within his grasp.

What will aid in our struggle for the minds of humanity, for a way to move towards the kind of society that so many long for—one based on truly new, truly human relations—is Marxist-Humanism's re-creation of Marx's Marxism. That makes explicit that Marx's philosophy recognizes the full potential of what it means to be human, and never separates the self-development of every woman, man, and child from the self-development of the idea of freedom.

It is, after all, the idea of what freedom is that is in contention with Alito's nomination. To Bush and Alito, freedom is the right of capitalism to expand and exploit all in its path—all barriers to its inhuman development. To women, Blacks, workers, immigrants, and the poor, freedom is

expressed in our quest for wholeness, for self-development and new, truly human relations. For that, a revolution in thought and in life is indispensable. The fight to stop Alito can't be separated from the fight for freedom. That starts with fighting Alito, now!

## Zapatista women

*Editor's note: Gabriela Martinez Lopez, on a national speaking tour, spoke in Memphis on "Women Confronting Globalization." She traveled with her translator, Jennifer Miller, who represented the Mexico Solidarity Network and contributed to the discussion. We print excerpts of Lopez's talk.*

I'm a sociologist living and working in the Zapatista community since 1997. I feel this is my struggle too, it includes everybody. The indigenous women in rebellion in Chiapas appear as part of an insurgent army where they have gained a place in discussion and action in order to denounce the injustices that men and women have suffered for over 513 years.

With the Zapatista uprising, a space was opened for women to change their own mentality, to reevaluate who they are as women and as indigenous communities. As one indigenous, Commandant Esther, said, "The woman is exploited three times: for being indigenous, for being poor, and for being a woman. And she is exploited equally by her companion."

In a meeting with the maximum authority of the EZLN in March 1993, the insurgent women presented what became known as the "Zapatista Women's Revolutionary Law (WRL)" to reclaim their right to decide when, and with whom, they would marry, and to decide about their own bodies. This is a revolution inside the indigenous community. The women walked from community to community for about ten years, asking women what they would like changed. They put together the demands of thousands and the WRL was born and guides life in the liberated communities.

Women now have autonomy to make political, economic, social, and cultural decisions for their communities and country. For example, in many indigenous languages, if it's a "custom" that a man hits a woman, it's considered his "right," and there are many things women assimilate in the same way. But changes have been achieved by women speaking among themselves, helping each other overcome fear and defend themselves from injustices they face in their everyday lives. Some injustices include: forced humility, not laughing out loud, not showing your teeth when you laugh, not participating in politics, having to marry who you don't want, and to have as many children as God commands.

In the first peace dialogue held between the EZLN and the government, the demand the women made was to construct infrastructures for preventive sexual and reproductive health, because many indigenous women die for lack of basic healthcare. Today the Zapatistas are constructing five health clinics for women, run by indigenous women.

Many women Zapatistas organized themselves in artisan cooperatives like the one we represent, Women For Dignity. Many women's husbands are away, working in cities for the organization. So they better their families' lives by selling their artistry.

The Zapatistas have embarked on a new national political campaign, the Sixth Declaration. They hope to consult with social bases of all of Mexico to construct a struggle under new principles and methods of clear changes of action and definition of the Left, anti-neoliberal, anti-patriarchal, anti-capitalist, anti-racist. It is, in part, against the power of money, and false values that are introduced by the discrimination of women and ethnicities.

# Muki Bonaparte remembered

"The ideology of a system in which women are considered as 'inferior beings' has submitted Timorese women to a double exploitation: A general form, which applies without distinction to both men and women, and which manifests itself by forced labor, starvation salaries, racism, etc.... Another form of a specific character, directed to women in particular." This voice of freedom fighter Rosa Muki Bonaparte was one of hundreds of thousands stilled by the genocide committed against East Timor by the Indonesian government with full U.S. support.

After 30 years, the truth is coming out as 1,000 formerly classified U.S. documents have been released on the 30th anniversary of East Timor's Nov. 28, 1975 declaration of independence. Presidents Ford, Carter, and George Bush tried to bury the information because, as the director of the National Security Archive's Indonesia and East Timor Documentation Project stated: "We expect...to demonstrate, as these documents do, that Indonesia's invasion and occupation of East Timor, and the resulting crimes against humanity occurred in an international context in which the support of powerful nations, especially the U.S., was indispensable."

As Aceh struggles to recover from the tsunami that devastated the land, Rosa Muki Bonaparte's struggle continues there against the Indonesian government, which, again with a U.S. stamp of approval, persists in murdering those struggling for freedom.

—TM

## Rights under attack

The right wing is intensifying their fight to stop abortion and women's right to contraceptives. At the end of 2005, the Indiana Supreme Court upheld a law requiring women seeking an abortion to get counseling about medical risks and alternatives, and wait 18 hours before having the procedure. January saw Wisconsin Gov. Jim Doyle veto a bill requiring women seeking an abortion to be told a five-month fetus feels pain. In Massachusetts, Gov. Mitt Romney's attempt to veto a bill making the morning-after pill widely available was overridden by the State legislature. In Missouri, Planned Parenthood challenged in court Gov. Matt Blunt's legislation allowing lawsuits against people who help teenagers get abortions not only in Missouri, which has a parental consent law, but in Illinois, which does not! In Illinois, ten pharmacy owners are suing Gov. Rod Blagojevich over a rule requiring state pharmacies to fill prescriptions for the morning-after pill. He mandated the rule after pro-choice demonstrators surrounded a Chicago pharmacy protesting a pharmacist's refusal to dispense a doctor-prescribed emergency contraceptive.

—MJG

## Women as peacemakers

Women have proven, in a variety of conflicts in a wide range of countries and cultures, their ability to bridge overwhelming divides. So why aren't more women included at the peace table? This is not a sexist divide. Extraordinary men have changed the course of history with their peacemaking. But women are the most powerful voice for peace in times of conflict. Is it because women have a biological, innate gift? I would argue this is not the case.

First, men usually come straight from war to the negotiating table. They often can't step back and scrutinize the situation logically. Women, usually excluded from planning and executing violence, often come to the peace table from their homes, focusing on family care and the safety of their community. A British participant in the Northern Ireland peace talks noted, for example, that when the parties became bogged down by abstract issues and past offenses, "the women would talk about their loved ones, their bereavement, their children and their hopes for the future." These deeply personal comments reminded the parties that security for all citizens mattered.

Second, because our voices have been ignored, women have turned to self-organized, grassroots methods of change and are often at the center of non-governmental organizations, popular protests, electoral referenda and other citizen-empowering movements. This ability to transcend conflict and connect with other women was created through necessity.

Third, though social science supports the stereotype of women as generally more collaborative than men and more inclined toward consensus and compromise, I balk at this claim, viewing it as a reason we are relegated to more passive "women's" work. I believe that women's status as second-class citizens has made them adept at finding ways to cope with problems.

The key reason behind women's marginalization may be that everyone recognizes just how good they are at forging peace. A UN official stated that in Africa, women are often excluded from negotiating because the leaders "are afraid the women will compromise." In reality, many rulers don't want the wars to stop.

Women know that the goal is not merely the absence of war, but the creation of a sustainable peace by fostering fundamental societal changes. Women, who are often the real victims of war, understand this in a deep and personal way. Lasting peace must be homegrown.

—Anna M., Memphis

# Bloody hands in West Virginia mine explosion

**DETROIT**—The explosion that ripped through the Sago coal mine in central West Virginia on Jan. 2 set off a two-day chain of events that riveted the attention of the nation on the unfolding drama involving 13 miners, rescue teams, state and federal safety officials, miners' families and the entire community of Sago.

Thousands of written articles and TV reports described the peril of the 13 miners as rescue crews, slowly assembled, cautiously advanced into the mine 11 hours after the blast. Air samples obtained through a hole drilled from the ground into the mine revealed deadly accumulations of toxic carbon monoxide gas. While the miners carried canisters of oxygen, these were good for only 10 hours.

## GRIM DISCOVERY

On the evening of the second day, rescuers reported they found the body of one miner, probably killed by the explosion. Just before midnight, a report reached the church where the families were gathered that the remaining 12 miners were alive, unleashing emotional jubilation. Even though company officials knew by then that only one miner had survived, they waited for three hours to tell the families the truth, that all the others were dead.

Their joyous exultation turned into furious grief. The miners had barricaded themselves in an area with fresh air, but the barricade could not protect them from the deadly carbon monoxide that killed all but one.

Many questions have been raised that need answers: What caused the explosion? Why was the mine allowed to operate when its safety record was three times worse than the average mine? It had 202 safety violations in the past two years, 50 of them since last October. Many of them were serious enough to set off explosions and cause roof falls. Why did it take so long to assemble the rescue teams? Why did only one miner, Randal McCloy Jr., survive? Why were reports from within the mine so miscommunicated? Why did company officials wait three hours to tell families the truth and avoid the emotional roller coaster they endured?

## WHO CARES ABOUT SAFETY?

From my own experience in a coal mine explosion in West Virginia in 1949, I know something about what those doomed miners must have felt. My own explosion resulted from management "miscommunication": one

boss failed to tell my boss how far his crew had cut into the coal, and a dynamite blast in my work area set off a coal dust explosion that knocked me out and threw me about 50 feet.

My face, my hair, my clothing were all saturated with fine coal dust. I was lucky to be alive, along with two others who were injured, but management was never penalized for that violation.

Unlike the Sago mine, the coal mine I was working in was unionized. That can make a big difference where safety is concerned, because a miner in a non-union mine who complains about a safety violation can be fired on the spot. He has no protection from the absolute power that management exercises. Without union protection, I certainly would have been fired for reporting safety violations.

I also know that production is everything in the mine, and a boss will do anything to get that last pound of coal, including risking miners' lives. Like most min-

## Safeway sweatshops



**OAKLAND, CAL.**—Some 200 demonstrators, mostly Latino, in front of Oakland's largest Safeway supermarket supported janitors at Safeway working seven day weeks with no overtime pay for a subcontractor. The Nov. 22 rally organized by SEIU Local 1877 featured janitors from Albertsons supermarkets, and from Oakland, San Francisco and San Jose.

## NYC Transit workers defy anti-union law

**NEW YORK**—Some 37,000 militant transit workers of Transport Workers Union Local 100 nearly brought New York City to a standstill by going out on strike for three days beginning Dec. 20. The walkout followed the expiration of their contract on Dec. 15 and a weekend of negotiating in bad faith on the part of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

As the largest mass transit system in the country, seven million people utilize the city's buses and subways daily. For three days we were reminded of the power of the working class to bring capitalism to its knees at the very heart of its global system. The strike also demonstrated how well placed urban transportation workers are to exploit a vulnerability of capitalism, its need to move workers to work.

Central to the union's demands were maintaining retirement age at 55, vital for transit jobs that are high stress or underground, and opposing payments into health and pension plans from new hires that would have created a two-tier system. Primarily this was about respect on the job, in opposition to the despotic workplace control transit workers labor under.

While the real strike issue was not wages, the MTA proposal of less than an 11% increase over three years may not even keep up with the region's inflation rate, much less compensate for sub-inflation raises under the sellout contract the union signed three years ago.

The transit workers received support from other unions and from workers throughout the city. A rally the day before brought out other city unions, hotel workers, retail clerks, nurses, teachers and janitors.

The union was under assault, however, from major media outlets and the mayor, and from the governor, who has authority over the MTA. In a thinly veiled racist attack, Mayor Bloomberg referred to the mostly non-white workers as thugs, called them selfish and greedy, and threatened to fine each worker \$25,000 per day. A state judge fined the union \$1 million a day.

The TWU International joined the public denunciation, calling for Local 100 to end the strike.

The last time Local 100 walked out was in 1980, for over a week. This time around the leadership, which rose out of the radical New Directions caucus, seemed compelled from below to show its mettle and gain something for the workers. Many accuse it of now being disconnected with the rank and file.

In 1966, under the leadership of Mike Quill, the union staged a major walkout that lasted 11 days, during which the leadership was jailed. In reaction to that strike, a year later the state legislature enacted the extremely harsh Taylor Law, which declared strikes by public employees illegal.

Under that law not only are state and city workers' unions penalized with fines, but each worker loses two days pay for every day they are out on strike. Despite such threats the transit workers took a valiant stand against the further erosion of pay, benefits, and workplace control that afflict workers everywhere within an increasingly globalized capitalist system.

Part of what was at stake was the very effectiveness of strikes and how the public perceives them. The way this strike was framed in public discussion worked to

undermine support for it. All attention focused on the strike's illegality, not on the MTA's illegalities. The Taylor Law provides no protection against management bargaining in bad faith.

## HOLLOW REASSURANCES

Investigations by state officials and the U.S. Mine Health and Safety Administration are underway, and will continue for some time, to "assure that this never happens again"—only it will. Now we come to the most important issue of why this tragedy happened in the first place, and it lies directly in the policies and practices of the Bush administration. It is no secret that this administration has gutted the health and safety agencies in this country, slashing the funding for their operations and cutting the number of investigators that staff them. Moreover, appointed to head these agencies are corporate officials who have turned them into cheerleaders for corporations.

While these agencies have never been adequately funded or staffed, they have been so decimated by the Bush administrators that they cannot possibly cover their jurisdictions—even if there are conscientious investigators, which too many are not. It is why miners and their families, as well as workers in other industries, believe they will never get the truth from MSHA officials, who have no credibility since they have reduced or eliminated fines against coal operators for safety violations, delayed or thrown out reports of violations and often blame workers for the violations. Agencies that were created originally to protect the workers have been turned into corporate weapons against workers.

Nevertheless, workers, especially miners, continue to battle their oppression to maintain their lives and very humanity. It is possible that the Sago disaster will create such a public outcry against the outrages it exposed that demands for much-needed safety reforms can no longer be ignored by officials and legislators.

—Andy Phillips

co-author, *The Coal Miners General Strike of 1949-50 and the Birth of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S.*

## WORKSHOP TALKS

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about the welfare of future workers. I know, as a son of immigrants, the many sacrifices my parents endured in order to provide a better future for their children. Many immigrant families came to America, or elsewhere, for the benefit of future generations.

Mayor Bloomberg of New York City called the predominantly Black and minority workers thugs, just as the French interior minister in Paris had called children of Arab and North African immigrants scum. TWU President Toussaint responded to the Mayor by asking, "You tell me how many thugs you know who wake up at three in the morning to make sure the trains run on time."

Bloomberg's racist demagoguery comes in a climate of politicians playing on fears in a post September 11 world. Workers standing up for their rights has now become, in his words, "irresponsible" and "selfish." He insinuated that the strike was an attack on New York.

## BLUDGEONED WITH 'NATIONAL SECURITY'

We have seen that much of the new obsession with national security has very little to do with any real security, but is, instead, used to attack immigrants. It is also another way to force management's takebacks down our throats.

West Coast dockworkers experienced this in 2002 when port owners had locked them out. Bush invoked a Taft-Hartley injunction to force them back to work on management's terms. West Coast dockers have always been very active, not just with their own immediate interests, but in supporting other workers' struggles internationally.

Bush personally intervened in the dockworkers' struggle because that local labor dispute had the potential of bringing global commerce to a halt. He used the club of "national security" to defeat the dockworkers' strike even after they agreed to leave the picket lines only to load military cargo related to Bush's war in Iraq.

For capitalism, security means providing stability for the free flow of commodities at all costs, specifically at the cost of workers' health and welfare. Where's the security when workers like those in a West Virginia coal mine were allowed to die in a preventable accident because the government didn't enforce existing safety regulations? They allowed the coal company to continue operating while accumulating hundreds of citations for safety violations.

We are fighting for real security by trying to tear down barriers that capital puts up to restrict free movement to immigrate to improve the lot of our families. Another barrier is the one between generations in the form of a two-tier work place. The New York transit workers risked a strike in the face of tremendous legal pitfalls to combat management's proposed two-tier conditions. The firmest international solidarity is required to overcome capitalism's barriers.

## Tehran strikers jailed

The Iranian bus drivers' strike on Dec. 25 paralyzed Tehran. It was called to protest the Dec. 22 arrest of several leaders of the bus drivers union, Sherkat Vahed. The drivers went back to work after Tehran's mayor Ghalibaf promised to release their leaders. On Jan. 7, they continued to press for their demands by driving with their headlights on during the day.

As of Jan. 8, union leader Mansour Osanlou has not been released. In addition, three other union activists have been arrested following the action on Jan. 7.

Other labor activists had already been sentenced to prison terms ranging from two to five years for holding a May Day gathering on May 1, 2004 at the Children's Park in the city of Saqiz. Among the sentenced activists are Mahmud Salehi, the spokesman for the Coordinating Committee for the Creation of a Workers' Organization, and Mohsen Hakimi, the translator of Georg Lukacs' *The Young Hegel*.

For more information go to <http://www.komiteyehamahangi.com>.

—Sheila Sahar

FROM THE WRITINGS OF  
**RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA**

**EDITOR'S NOTE**

In Black History Month in 2006, the racist face of U.S. capitalism and the Bush administration has been exposed in the abandonment of New Orleans in the post-Hurricane Katrina flood. The outrage worldwide, which has not dissipated, calls on us to restate Karl Marx's liberatory vision. Towards that perspective, we reprint part of Raya Dunayevskaya's essay, "A 1980s View of the Two-Way Road Between the U.S. and Africa," first published in 1983, the 20th anniversary of the mass March on Washington for "Freedom Now!" That also was the 20th anniversary of the Marxist Humanist statement, *American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard*. Also called an "Introduction/Overview," the second and third sections are included here. A new edition of the book is available from N&L. See page 7 to order.

**EMERGENCE OF THE THIRD WORLD AS MARX FORESAW IT**

What *American Civilization on Trial* reveals is both Marx's deep American roots and his Promethean vision. Take the succinct way in which Marx pinpointed the situation in the Civil War at its darkest moment, as the war dragged on and the Southern generals were winning so decisively as to produce a defeatist attitude in the North. Where others looked at the military forces, Marx looked at the forces of revolution: "A single Negro regiment would have a remarkable effect on Southern nerves...a war of this kind must be conducted along revolutionary lines" (Letter from Marx to Engels, Aug. 7, 1862).

From his very first break with capitalism, as he discovered a whole new continent of thought and of revolution which he called "a new Humanism," capitalism is what Marx critiqued and fought against throughout his life. Here is how he described the origins of European capitalism:

"The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of Black skins, signaled the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production" (*Capital*, Vol. 1, p. 823, Kerr edition).

The unmasking of Western civilization's racism by its Black dimension in revolutionary moments of mass upsurge makes imperative a most serious return, on this centenary of Marx's death, to his critical, revolutionary unmasking of Western civilization's capitalist foundations...

Frantz Fanon was absolutely right when, in our age, he wrote: "Two centuries ago, a former European colony decided to catch up with Europe. It succeeded so well that the U.S. became a monster..." The extreme urgency of dealing with that global monster today demands that the struggles be tightly woven together with a total philosophy. As we work it out for our age, what is needed is a concentration, at one and the same time, on 1) the trail to the 1980s from Marx's last decade, and 2) revolutionary Black thought.

It was in his last decade that Marx discovered still newer paths to revolution. Present-day existing state-capitalisms calling themselves Communist, like Russia and China, have totally abandoned both the philosophy and the actuality of Marx's "revolution in permanence." Marx, on the other hand, began introducing fundamental changes in his greatest theoretical work, *Capital*, which disclosed his new perceptions of the possibility of a revolution in technologically underdeveloped lands before the technologically advanced West.

Take the simple word "so-called" placed by Marx in the title of the final part of *Capital*: "The So-Called Primitive Accumulation of Capital." Though that word has been disregarded by post-Marx Marxists, it touches the burning question of our day—the relationship of technologically advanced countries to the technologically underdeveloped Third World. Marx was saying with that word, "so-called," that it wasn't true that capitalism's carving up of the Asian and African world characterized only the primitive stage of capitalism.

To further stress that technologically advanced capitalism has not at all left behind the so-called primitive stage of turning Africa into "a warren for hunting black skins" and forcing them into slavery in "civilized" countries, Marx subordinated the whole section of Part 8 and made it integral to Part 7, "Accumulation of Capital." There it reached its highest point—the concentration and centralization of capital. Thereupon, Marx added a whole new paragraph to the 1875 French edition of *Capital*, which showed that this continued outreach into imperialism "successively annexed extensive areas of the New World, Asia and Australia."

As Marx then turned to study pre-capitalist societies, be it of the Native Americans, the Indians in Morgan's *Ancient Society*, or the Australian aborigine designated by Marx as "the intelligent Black", he hit out against anyone trying to transform his chapter, "The Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation" into a "Universal." Marx insisted that he had been describing the particular, historic stage of Western capitalism; that other societies need not follow that path. If they did, they would "lose the finest chance ever offered by history to a people and undergo all the fatal vicissitudes of the capitalist regime."

tudes of the capitalist regime."

**REVOLUTIONS IN PHILOSOPHY & IN FACT**

Marx's projection of the possibility of a revolution coming first in technologically underdeveloped lands achieved a new meaning for our age with the emergence of a whole new Third World, as well as new mass struggles and the birth of new revolutionary forces as reason. The Black dimension in the U.S. as well as in Africa showed that we had indeed, reached a totally new movement from practice to theory that was itself a new form of theory. It was this new movement from practice—those new voices from below—which we heard, recorded, and dialectically developed. Those voices demanded that a new movement from theory be rooted in that movement from practice and become developed to the point of philosophy—a philosophy of world revolution.

Our very first major theoretical work, *Marxism and Freedom*, cast in the context of that movement from practice, was followed by a series of pamphlets in which the voices of all the revolutionary forces — workers, Blacks, women and youth—could be heard: from *Workers Battle Automation to Freedom Riders Speak for Themselves*, and from *The Free Speech Movement and the Negro Revolution to Working Women for Freedom*. Indeed, it was not only the voices of the Freedom Riders we heard in 1961, but the story of the magnificent Black women in Mississippi who called themselves "Woman Power Unlimited" and came to the aid of the jailed Freedom Riders.

*American Civilization on Trial* cast a new illumination on the two-way road between Africa and the U.S. via the West Indies by showing that what, to the capitalists, was the triangular trade of rum, molasses and slaves, was, to the Blacks, the ever-live triangular development of internationalism, masses in motion and ideas. This triangular development remains the dominant force to this day.

In our epoch, the dynamism of ideas in Africa comes out in sharp focus as we contrast it to the weary American bourgeois ideologues who declared the 1950s to be "the end of ideology" just when a whole new Third World emerged. As against what the capitalist ideologues wrote then, consider the 1959 speech by Leopold Sedar Senghor to the Constitutive Congress which united Mali and Senegal:

"A nation that refuses to keep its rendezvous with history, that does not believe itself to be the bearer of a unique message—that nation is finished, ready to be placed in a museum. The Negro African is not finished even before he gets started. Let him speak; above all, let him act. Let him bring like a leaven, his message to the world in order to help build a universal civilization...Let us recapitulate Marx's positive contributions. They are: the philosophy of humanism, economic theory, dialectical method."

It is true that Africa, too, has since undergone many retreats, as the Union of Mali and Senegal has broken up and Senghor has retrogressed in thought, as well. It is not true that the mass freedom struggles have abated. Nor is it true that Senghor represents all of African thought. Frantz Fanon was the opposite, both in thought and in act, and it is his philosophy that is alive as far as South Africa is concerned and, indeed, can become a foundation for today's freedom struggles worldwide. It was this new stage in the two-way road that we presented in our 1978 pamphlet *Frantz Fanon, Soweto and American Black Thought*.

If we return to the year 1959, when Senghor made the Address to his Congress, we find that to be the same year that Frantz Fanon addressed the Second Congress of Black Artists and Writers meeting in Rome, where he said: "The consciousness of self is not the closing of a door to communication. Philosophic

# Marx and the Black World

thought teaches us, on the contrary, that it is its guarantee. National consciousness, which is not nationalism, is the only thing that will give us an international dimension."

Furthermore, this was not philosophy for its own sake or history as past, because Fanon was contrasting the Black worker to the Black intellectual in that battle against colonialism:

"History teaches us clearly that the battle against colonialism does not run straight away along the lines of nationalism...It so happens that the unpreparedness of the educated classes, the lack of practical links between them and the mass of the people, their laziness, and let it be said, their cowardice at the decisive moment of the struggle will give rise to tragic mishaps." (*Wretched of the Earth*, p. 121, Grove Press edition)

In this, too, Fanon's vision saw far, which is why the final chapter of the 1973 work *Philosophy and Revolution*—"New Passions and New Forces: The Black Dimension, the Anti-Vietnam War Youth, Rank-and-File Labor, Women's Liberation"—quoted the American Black auto worker who gave the philosophy of Humanism its sharpest edge:

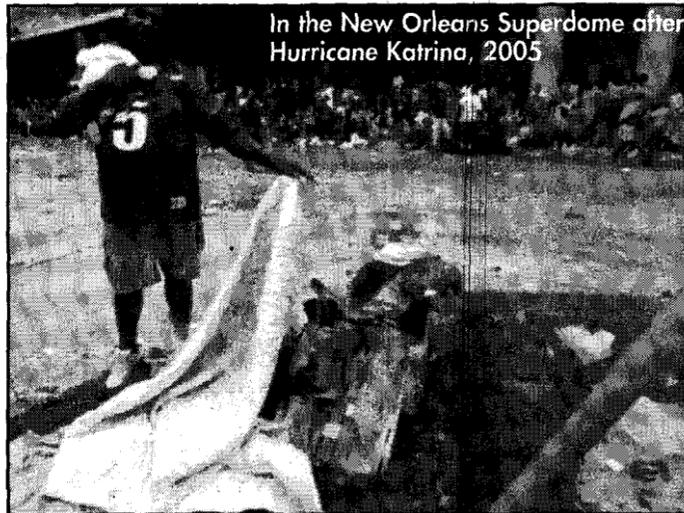
"There is no middle road anymore. The days we accepted 'we have to take the lesser of two evils' are gone. You have to go to the extreme now. Racism is the issue here, and to rid ourselves of that, to be Humanist, we need a revolution."

The Black Consciousness Movement recognizes Fanon as a great Third World theorist, at the same time that they recognize Steve Biko's unique creativity in the Soweto uprising in 1976 and in founding their great new movement. This is precisely why South Africa's barbaric apartheid system murdered Biko in September 1977.

It was no accident that Charles Denby, the Black production worker-editor of *News & Letters* since its birth, felt impelled in 1978 to add a new Part II to the story of his life which had been published in 1952 as *Indignant Heart*. Thus, Part II of *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal* begins with the Montgomery Bus Boycott in the very year *News and Letters* Committees was born and ends with a chapter on "The Worldwide Struggle for Freedom" which discusses "the American Black identification with Soweto and Biko, with Fanon and Caribbean thought." It becomes clear why this story of Denby's Life, North and South, which sums up a half century of freedom struggles, from the struggles of rural Blacks in the South to the wildcat strikes of Black workers in the North, concludes with this Black worker's declaration: "I consider my story as part of the worldwide struggles for freedom."

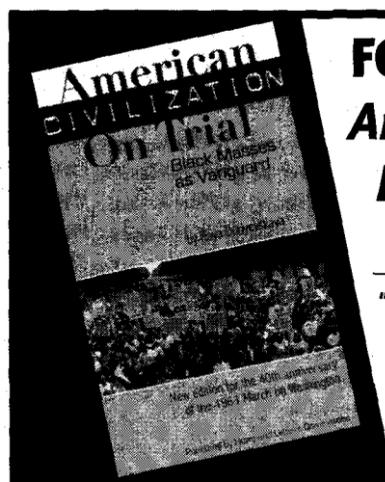
It is in Azania (South Africa) that the most exciting events are now unfolding, revealing how the mine workers there are both organizing and thinking their own thoughts. A simple word—"Amandla!" (Power)—tells how new a stage they have reached. It is this word which Teboho Noka, an organizer for the National Union of Mine Workers, used in order to stress that not only are they fighting for different conditions of labor and higher wages, but for "Amandla"—adding: "It shall be ours." It is that feeling of fighting for nothing less than freedom which transforms the struggle from a mere trade union battle to one for a whole new society.

Like Marx in his day, Fanon, in our age, declared his philosophy to be a "new humanism," as he developed it most originally in his *Wretched of the Earth*: "Comrades, let us flee from this motionless movement where gradually dialectic is changing into the logic of equilibrium. Let us consider the question of mankind" (p. 254). "For Europe, for ourselves and for humanity, comrades, we must turn over a new leaf, we must work out new concepts, and try to set afoot a new man" (p. 255). "This new humanity cannot do otherwise than define a new humanism both for itself and for others" (p. 197).



In the New Orleans Superdome after Hurricane Katrina, 2005

Plant One



**FOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2006**

**American Civilization on Trial:  
Black Masses as Vanguard**

by Raya Dunayevskaya

"The unmasking of Western civilization's racism by its Black dimension in revolutionary moments of mass upsurge makes imperative a most serious return, on this centenary of Marx's death, to his critical, revolutionary unmasking of Western civilization's capitalist foundations."

To order, see page 7.

# PHILOSOPHIC DIALOGUE **Dunayevskaya's Power of Negativity: a critique**

Editor's note: The following review of Raya Dunayevskaya's *The Power of Negativity: Selected Writings on the Dialectic in Hegel and Marx* (edited and Introduced by Peter Hudis and Kevin B. Anderson, Lexington Books, 2002) by Chris Arthur appeared last year in the journal *Studies in Marxism*. We publish Arthur's review along with a response by Kevin B. Anderson. The next issue of *N&L* will contain Arthur's response to Anderson and Anderson's rejoinder.

by Chris Arthur

Author of *The New Dialectic and Marx's Capital*

Raya Dunayevskaya (1910-1987) was an original Marxist thinker and activist. She once served as Trotsky's secretary; but, together with C. L. R. James, she broke with mainstream Trotskyism, and developed a theory of state-capitalism supposed to comprehend Roosevelt, Hitler, and Stalin. She and James took up the study of Hegel's *Logic*, following in the footsteps of Lenin in 1915. Having broken also with James, from the mid-50s she developed her own self-styled "Marxist-Humanism." She was one of the first to study Marx's 1844 *Manuscripts*, and Lenin's philosophical notebooks. Indeed she had to translate both for herself since English language versions were still lacking.

The first fruit of this work was her pathbreaking *Marxism and Freedom* (1958). Digging still deeper into Hegel, she wrote *Philosophy and Revolution* (1973), and many other books and articles. The volume before us, *The Power of Negativity*, is a selection from her numerous letters, notebooks, and articles, on the dialectic in Hegel and Marx, written in her inimitable lapel-grabbing style. It should be said straightaway that this is not for the beginner. But for those already acquainted with Raya Dunayevskaya through one or more of her works, it provides fascinating background on the development of her thought.

The editors contribute a lucid introduction. However, they begin with the claim that the current return to Marx is characterized by "relative silence on Hegel and the dialectic." This is simply not true. Besides the book by Moishe Postone, which they do mention, there is a burgeoning "new dialectic" (as I once termed it in a review), marked by an interest in Hegel's logic as the key to the "systematic dialectic" required to come to grips with Marx's *Capital*. For example the following Marxists have all in various ways appropriated the dialectic: R. Albritton; C. J. Arthur; J. Banaji; R. Bhaskar; M. Eldred; I. Fraser; I. Hunt; M. Lebowitz; J. McCarney; P. Murray; S. Sayers; B. Ollman; M. Postone; O. Reuten; T. Sekine; A. Shamsavari; F. C. Shortall; T. Smith; H. Williams; L. Wilde; M. Williams.

In Dunayevskaya's own time she had few interlocutors outside her own small circle; but this book includes letters to Marcuse, Fromm, G. A. Kelly, and others. Indeed Marcuse posed sharply the question which Dunayevskaya's appropriation of Hegel raises: why, he asked, did she need Hegel's Absolute Idea? Why translate Marxism into Hegelian idiom when she could speak the original language? (p. 104).

In the end I do not think she had an answer to that. This is because she fails to think through Hegel's problematic in its own terms, and systematically relate it to Marx's. Instead she uses Hegel externally, persistently picking up some figure, or mere phrase, ripping it out of context, and incorporating it within her own agenda (which largely concerns such questions as revolutionary agency, organization, and the new society—or "what happens the day after?"). Often this serves well enough to make a telling point, but not essentially.

A typical example is her drawing on Hegel's move from the Absolute Idea to the *Realphilosophie* in order to speak about the advent of socialism. The two topics have nothing whatsoever to do with each other. What might have been relevant to the meaning of revolution would be a study of Hegel's philosophy of history and his claim the modern state embodies the Idea of Freedom. Another example is the slogan (wielded liberally) she picked up from Lenin's notes on Hegel's *Logic*, viz "subjectivity = freedom" (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 164). In the context of a transition in the *Logic* this makes some sort of sense because it is the freedom of thought that is at issue there, and especially the

ability of thought to be self-reflexive. But does this mean freedom as such is subjectivity?

Friendly commentators on Hegel deny he says that, citing the social philosophy which locates freedom in objective spirit. Unfriendly ones charge Hegel precisely with interiorizing all objectivity. Certainly Marx in 1844 and 1845 considers Hegel's great mistake to have been developing subjectivity one-sidedly to the extent of conflating "objectivity" and "estrangement."

Dunayevskaya's position reminds me of Bruno Bauer. Indeed, more generally Dunayevskaya provides a "Young Hegelian" reading of Hegel as the philosopher of absolute negativity; moreover, as a post-Marx Marxist she provides also a Young Hegelian Marxism in which philosophy and revolution are equal partners. It



is significant that the only major work of Marx's that she does not cite is *The German Ideology*.

Although Dunayevskaya tries to be scholarly within the constraints of the materials available to her, she occasionally makes bizarre mistakes.

a) A simple case is that of Marx's 1861-63 manuscript, in which he decided to bring forward the treatment of rent, consigned in the six-book plan given in the Preface of the 1859 *Contribution*, to a place following *Capital*. Dunayevskaya inexcusably says that at this date Marx took the topic out of Vol. I of *Capital* and held it back to Vol. III! (p. 130) It was never, ever, to be

in Vol. I, where land was always to be "set at zero." Equally inexcusably the editors endorse this error (p. 135 note 7).

b) A more complicated case is that of Hegel's major triad (Logic/Nature/Spirit) discussed in three "syllogisms" at the end of his *Encyclopaedia* (paragraphs 575, 576, 577). Dunayevskaya makes a big thing about her claim that these were not in the original edition of the *Encyclopaedia*, and first appeared in the 1830 edition just before Hegel died in 1831 (see pp. 178, 195, 205, 330; plus an editorial endorsement p. 13 note 18; cf. also *Philosophy and Revolution*, p. 39). But—alas—these syllogisms were in the original edition of 1817! (paragraphs 475, 476, 477). They were unaccountably omitted in the (much larger) 1827 edition, where Hegel greatly expanded paragraph 574 (¶474 in 1817) and then threw in a passage from Aristotle to conclude. In the 1830 edition the paragraphs come back in (¶575-77) prior to the Aristotle quotation. (All three editions are now available in the *Gesammelte Werke*.)

It is the double appearance of these paragraphs that explains variation in citations from paragraph 575 of the sentence "Nature, standing between the Mind and its essence, sunders itself/them...." "Them" descends from the first edition (*trennt sie*) and "itself" (*trennt sich*) from the third. According to Dunayevskaya (p. 330), A. V. Miller wrote her saying he should have corrected Wallace's translation from "itself" to "them"; but it is not clear if he knew Wallace's source was the third edition, and, if he did, why he preferred the first here (although modern editors generally do).

c) Finally a sin of omission. Dunayevskaya does her utmost, encouraged, by Lenin's views, to see Hegel "stretching out a hand to materialism" in so far as Nature is included in his system. But when speaking excitedly about "Hegel's Absolutes" she is silent on the fact that Hegel's dialectics culminate with Absolute Idea, and with Absolute Spirit, but where the *Philosophy of Nature* is concerned it culminates—not with an Absolute, but—with death! Hardly an equal partner with the other spheres! Yet anyone writing such a philosophy of Nature today would surely recognize, not merely the need for the universal-field equation, but the universal at work in the ecological system, and prefer to "the selfish gene" the "Gaia hypothesis" of James Lovelock, as the self-sustaining Absolute.

To conclude: Dunayevskaya is right to draw from Hegel the thought of "the power of negativity," just as she is right to read in Marx "the revolution in permanence." But what she lacks is a theoretical structure; all we get is the sticking together of discrepant elements. Sympathetic as I am to the project of illuminating Marx through a study of Hegel, Dunayevskaya's work is an instance of how not to do it.

## **Philosophy and revolution as equal partners: Response to Arthur's critique of Dunayevskaya**

by Kevin Anderson

Co-editor of *Dunayevskaya's The Power of Negativity* and author of *Lenin, Hegel, and Western Marxism*

Chris Arthur, a well-known British Marxist economist, begins his review of Dunayevskaya's *The Power of Negativity* with a brief appreciation of Dunayevskaya as "an original Marxist thinker and activist," who wrote in an "inimitable lapel-grabbing style." More substantively, Arthur notes that she "was one of the first to study Marx's 1844 Manuscripts" and also terms her *Marxism and Freedom* (1958) a "pathbreaking" book. Additionally, he terms the introduction by editors Peter Hudis and me "lucid." When Arthur gets down to specifics, however, he becomes almost dismissive, after which he sums up his view of the book as follows: "Sympathetic as I am to the project of illuminating Marx through a study of Hegel, Dunayevskaya's work is an instance of how not to do it." I think this conclusion is totally unwarranted.

Arthur's most important criticisms of Dunayevskaya center on Hegel's absolutes, which Arthur rejects as any basis for Marxism. He identifies with Herbert Marcuse's early objection, in his correspondence with Dunayevskaya: why do we need the absolute idea to get at the subjectivity of self-liberation?

Of course, Arthur's own position is almost as far removed from that of Marcuse as it is from Dunayevskaya's, as is seen in his characterization of Dunayevskaya's position as a "Young Hegelian" reading of Hegel as the philosopher of absolute negativity, referring also to her "Young Hegelian Marxism in which philosophy and revolution are equal partners." (For example, I doubt Arthur would agree with Marcuse that "Marx derives all that is essential to his view of dialectics from Hegel"—see his "Dialectics," in *Marxism, Communism, and Western Society*, 1972, p. 416).

In dismissing the notion of absolute negativity, Arthur conveniently ignores Hegel's actual statements about absolute negativity, presumably counting on the contemporary reader's general aversion to any form of absolute. In fact, as we point out in our introduction to *The Power of Negativity*, Hegel introduces the concept of absolute negativity in the *Science of Logic* by calling second negation, or the negation of the negation—which he contrasts to "first negation" or "negation in general"—nothing less than "absolute negativity."

On the one hand, he calls such an absolute negativity "concrete." On the other hand, Hegel attacks negation in general or first negation as "only abstract negativity," because it lacks the positive content afforded by some form of determinacy (*Science of Logic*, Miller trans., p. 116). Surely it would have been harder to dismiss "absolute negativity" as a vestige of a Young Hegelian sort of idealism were Arthur to have acknowledged that it is the source of a core category in Marxist dialectics, negation of the negation or second negativity. Thus, on absolute negativity or negation of the negation, Arthur disagrees with Marx as much as with Dunayevskaya.

In bringing in Dunayevskaya's exchange with Marcuse, Arthur is also suggesting something more specific—that contra Dunayevskaya, Hegel's absolutes are irrelevant to Marxist dialectics.

In her discussion of Hegel's absolutes, beginning with her 1953 Letters (published in *The Power of Negativity*), Dunayevskaya uses the closing paragraphs of Hegel's major works on the absolute, especially those in *The Philosophy of Mind*, the final volume of his *Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences* (1817-30)—often referred to as Hegel's "system"—to carve out a new concept of dialectic.

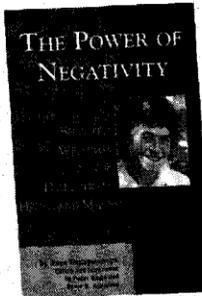
In her interpretation, Hegel's system did not end in closure, in the end of history, as Engels maintained, but in a process of self-movement and becoming, as seen particularly in the last sentence of the last paragraph (¶575) of the last (1830) edition of the *Encyclopedia*, where the topic is "self-knowing reason": "The eternal Idea, in full fruition of its essence, eternally sets itself to work, engenders and enjoys itself as absolute Mind" (*Philosophy of Mind*, p. 315).

In probing the "final syllogisms" in paragraphs 575, 576, and 577, Dunayevskaya elaborated a concept of absolute negativity as new beginning, one in which a variety of liberatory forces—rank-and-file workers, Blacks, women, and youth—were reaching for philosophy by activities so creative that they challenged not only the structure of the system, but also its thought, especially the type of technocratic rationality that dominated postwar capitalism. (She had in mind events like the 1953 Berlin workers' uprising, as well as mass strikes by miners against automation and the Montgomery bus boycott in the U.S.)

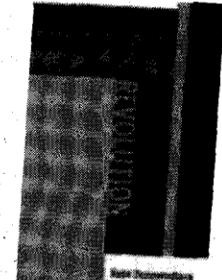
continued on page 8

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

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



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## TARGETTING THE LAW OF VALUE: ON MARX AND MARXIST HUMANISM

Thanks for sharing the outline of the new book you are planning as a combination of Marx's and Dunayevskaya's works. What a great idea! I am particularly interested in the proposed chapter about how the USSR was a capitalist society. I have always been puzzled by the contradiction of considering the USSR socialist. I am often called a "communist" for my idealism or concern for community. Depending on who is calling me a communist, I am offended or honored. If someone means the communism Marx referred to in the *Communist Manifesto* I am honored. Most people use the swear word and I am offended because they don't know what it means. My question is how the difference between communism and socialism is played out in the real world.

Reader and supporter  
Massachusetts

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In Dunayevskaya's column on "The law of value in capitalist society" (November-December *N&L*) her critique of "Marxist" economists in the U.S. who accepted that Marx's law of value can exist in a socialist country, reminded me of how some U.S. and Canadian governments have dealt today with the problem of regulating the levels of various contaminants to the environment. She showed that when the Soviet economists were faced with the economic reality of extracting surplus value from Russian workers as a matter of state policy, they had the choice of revising the notion that the USSR was a socialist state or revising Marx's notion that the law of value is specific to capitalism. As she pointed out, they took, not surprisingly, the more convenient option of revising Marx.

In certain jurisdictions in the U.S. and Canada, when it was determined that deadly contaminants in the air are a product of the incineration of solid waste, such as furans and dioxins, had risen beyond what was considered safe levels, it put them in the uncomfortable position of having to take costly measures in order to comply with their own environmental regulations. However, a less onerous path was available to them. They simply lowered the standards so that the existing levels were no longer "considered" to be unsafe. Problem solved—and the politicians, although not the population, could breathe easier.

Roger  
Ecuador

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Your periodical is the best source of information of a political nature in circulation today. Your writers demonstrate not only the practicality of the concept Marxist-Humanism, but its underlining relevance to social relations beyond capitalism. I have to underscore the importance of the writings of Dunayevskaya. Her unyielding resolve to not compromise or misrepresent Marx's Marxism distinguishes *N&L* from all other so-called Marxist publications.

Strong supporter  
Crescent City, California

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## REMEMBERING DIXON COLLEY

"If what one is saying is right and one strongly believes it is, one should go on saying it up to one's grave."—D. Colley

Jan. 17 marks the fifth commemoration of the demise of William Charles Dixon Colley—a seasoned and principled journalist who was the doyen of the Gambia press. Uncle Dixon, as he was called, attended Wesley Primary and Boy's High School in Banjul, and when he completed his formal education, became a school teacher at his alma mater. His career as a media practitioner started during his school days. He was on the staff of the *Sunday Observer* and a freelance journalist for the *Guardian* in Port Harcourt, Nigeria in 1939. After becoming editor of *African Outlook*, an independent quarterly forum for Africans published in London in 1962, he became editor of *Africa Nyaa-to* and later of *The Nation*, a newspaper in Banjul. He was a freelance correspondent for the *Gambia Echo*, and in 1974 served as correspondent for BBC, Reuters, and *Sunday Express* in England.

He was the editor and proprietor of The Gambia's oldest newspaper, *The*

As one who has been trying to generate discussions on the importance of Marx at my college, I found Andrew Kliman's essay on "A new look at the Russian revision of Marx's concept of 'directly social labor'" very helpful. Whenever I discuss Marx students keep raising the objection that the USSR was in some way "socialist" and so Marx is a thing of the past. Kliman's discussion of how the USSR could not have been socialist because the law of value and indirectly social labor prevailed in it undercuts the central objection many have to accepting the relevance of Marx's ideas.

Carlos  
Purdue University

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I want to thank Andrew Kliman for pointing out the fallacy of the Stalinist claim that the USSR was "socialist" because in it labor was directly social. Kliman's discussion of how labor was not directly social in the USSR helps us see why the USSR was state-capitalist. Marx often argued that directly social labor does not exist in capitalism. So did Dunayevskaya. She wrote: "If goods were produced by labor in direct social relations there would be no two-fold character of labor and the reason for the social division of classes and the realization of surplus value would vanish...that is preliminary to full communism."

Student of Marxist-Humanism  
Chicago

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Although the debate in the 1940s over whether the law of value operated in the Soviet economy may seem distant to today, Oskar Lange and Paul Baran's response to Dunayevskaya's "A New Revision of Marxian Economics" foreshadowed the positions that defined radical theory in the decades afterward. Lange's argument that the law of value is compatible with "socialism" anticipated today's "market socialists," whereas Baran's discomfort with the idea that the law of value operates under socialism anticipated the views of Mao and Pol Pot, who thought the total suppression of the market equals "socialism." We have a lot to learn for today from both Dunayevskaya's critics and her response to them.

Sociologist  
Illinois

## THE BLACK WORLD

The domestic terrorism laws in Los Angeles that Georgiana William's wrote about in the November-December issue are not new. The most aggressive one was passed in 2000, called Proposition 21. The war on Black youth in the U.S.—especially Black males—is a universal constant, and the Black community is losing what clout it used to have, now that Democrats and Republicans are courting the Hispanic and Asian communities. When crack cocaine was first being introduced into the country, especially into the Black communities, the leadership should have been screaming about where the stuff was coming from and who

*Nation* from 1963 to 1993 and secretary general of The Gambia Press Union from 1983 to 1993. That year he was nominated as the Veteran Journalist in The Gambia for the International Organization of Journalists prize in Prague, Czechoslovakia in recognition of his long and dignified career. He stood for the principles of freedom of the press throughout his life and was known for his uncompromising stance. In spite of all the harassments in the course of his career, he remained unequivocally committed to the freedom of expression of the press and in general.

As part of celebrations marking the day, the new office of *The Nation* newspaper—situated at Brikama kabafita, Brikama Town, P.O.Box 334, Banjul—was officially opened. The office also houses the William Dixon Colley Memorial Library for Newspapers, which gives Gambians and researchers the opportunity to have access to old and present newspapers published not only in The Gambia but elsewhere in the world as well.

Fabakary Taa  
The Gambia

# READERS' VIEWS

was bringing it in for the youth to use or sell.

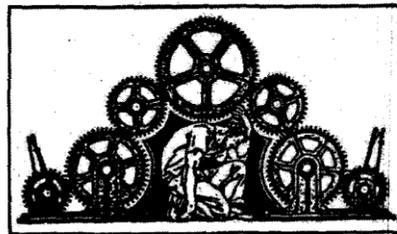
As Williams noted, Black kids don't have planes or the resources to fly that stuff from Colombia or Panama. It wasn't seen as a real problem until middle-class white kids started getting cracked out, until the hood came downtown with the guns. Had it stayed in the ghetto with just the money coming downtown, no one would have cared except the communities of color. The Black leadership disenfranchised itself by feeding into the hype of "law and order" that was being sold to them like a sordid bill of goods that really didn't pertain to them at all.

Prison rights activist  
Wisconsin

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I'm annoyed at the way everyone is getting on the bandwagon about Rosa Parks. If my memory doesn't fail me, Parks worked in the office of the Pullman Porters Union Hall. Contact with A. Philip Randolph certainly had some influence on her determination. Randolph forced FDR to integrate the military by threatening to march on Washington! He resisted all kinds of pressure to call off the march, even by some union "leaders." I appreciated your material on Rosa. Keep up the good work.

Former member, UAW-UE-Teamsters  
Philadelphia



## LABOR DIMENSION TODAY

During the Sago mine disaster there was a TV interview with Wilbur Ross Jr., CEO of the International Coal conglomerate that owns the mine. He said he had not taken over the mine until November 2004, so his company wasn't responsible for the many safety violations of the last year. Now the truth has come out that he had owned the company that owned the mine since at least 2001, which he conveniently did not mention.

Retired worker  
Michigan

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I went to the TWU rally for the transit strikers in midtown during the negotiations. There were thousands of workers there, many from other unions in support: hotel workers, retail clerks, nurses, teachers, janitors, and more. The transit workers I talked with were concerned about their health benefits. One said the MTA proposal would reduce sick days from 12 to seven a year. Another complained that their health insurance co-payments are too high: \$45 per doctor's visit. It is clear that the bourgeois press saying that the workers are well off and that the strike is only about a two-tiered future is dead wrong.

Strike supporter  
New York City

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About 500 members of "Soldiers of Solidarity"—UAW members from threatened companies like Delphi, Ford and GM—picketed the press opening of the Detroit International Auto Show on Jan. 8. Although they hoped to attract national and international coverage, the local reporting was minimal. Ramifications, however, of the corporate scramble for profits played out in corporate mergers and downsizing which are moves to break unions and get rid of underfunded pension and health care costs, will be major, both locally and internationally.

I finally unearthed a statistic for unemployment in the City of Detroit: 15%. It is probably double or triple for young people. As people are laid off, taxes decline and Detroit has cut services like buses, which are at best very unreliable for taking city residents to the jobs further and further out in the suburbs.

Teacher  
Detroit

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The Living Wage movement is building toward a victory for working people in Memphis. A rally on International Human Rights Day, Dec. 10, in Church Park on Beale Street brought 150 community, church and labor activists together. The rally was organized to mobilize support for a local ordinance that will require that a living wage be paid to all employees of the city, of all companies that receive tax deferrals, and those that directly contract with the city. The ordinance defines living wage as \$10 with benefits, or \$12 without benefits.

There will be a swift and strong corporate backlash to the living wage law, if the ordinance is passed. But in light of the stirring transportation strike and victory in New York, maybe the tide is turning for workers. The success of the Living Wage Movement may be a major turning point for organized labor. Making wages not a workplace issue but a community issue would be a groundbreaking transition for all workers.

Rally participant  
Memphis

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The major issue here is the restructuring of union contracts and job losses that will be affecting Detroit. Jobs will grow scarcer and harder to get for city residents. For example, nursing home jobs like nurses aides are in the suburbs, and bus service is worse than ever. Those jobs pay up to \$9 an hour. In the city, my friend who works at a fast food place makes \$5.25 an hour and often gets no lunch break. The vision of collective action doesn't seem to be around any longer.

Still employed  
Detroit

## THE OKLAHOMA SCENE

Hurricane Katrina created thousands of "displaced" people who have relocated to states like Oklahoma and Texas. Aside from looking for new jobs, housing and means of transportation, those with chronic illnesses are having trouble finding health care and facilities. Also, accusations of price-gouging on the part of oil companies have been skeptically dismissed as empty rhetoric by many here.

It is hard to justify the recent federal energy bill which gives generous subsidies to the energy industry, including nuclear power. The priority of "energy policy" seems to be a hodgepodge of giveaways unlikely to achieve its stated goals of ensuring energy and limiting consumption. We have often criticized excessive farm subsidies as harming farmers in developing countries, such as cotton farmers in Africa. A recent attempt to close local Farm Service offices funded by the Agricultural Department was widely criticized by local officials. The Agriculture Department backed down from the local-office closing plan. Programs such as soil and wetlands conservation require registration and sign-up, which usually occur at the local FSA office. I am less sure that agricultural subsidies are harmful to developing countries as a whole, but some products, such as tobacco and sugar, should not be subsidized at all.

Allan Mul  
Seminole, OK

## A CORRECTION

Readers of *N&L* should know that a sentence appearing in last month's lead article was garbled through the author's haste. Anyone who has followed the actions of the Bush administration recognizes that the sentence "The rhetoric of democracy and humanitarianism was now wedded to strong military action, with the former taking dramatic precedence over the latter in practice" should read "with the latter taking precedence over the former."

Kevin Michaels  
Chicago

**WOMEN'S LIBERATION AND REVOLUTION**

In her article in the November-December issue, Terry Moon addressed the category "Absolute Negativity as New Beginning" specifically for women by revisiting Raya Dunayevskaya's writings in *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution*. I saw the crux of her argument as seeing Absolute Negativity as a new view of totality. One way I think of Absolute Negativity is as a process of the Universal particularizing itself in the Individual and the Individual cancelling its particularity. When Dunayevskaya named four forces for the American revolution, she was not adding to Marx something he omitted; she was pointing to several particulars specific to the American experience, one of which is women's liberation. From within a revolution women are a particular subjectivity that drives the idea of freedom for everyone.



**Ursula Wislanka**  
California

The prevailing discourse among Marxists makes revolution into an abstract negation, as though the struggles for freedom in all its dimensions isn't absolutely integral to overcoming value production. When women recognize their struggle to be human in this process of the universal particularizing itself, there would be, to paraphrase Hegel, nothing like it in its uncontrollable strength.

In 1984 Marxist-Humanists undertook a series of classes on Dunayevskaya's archives in order to relate those documents ranging from the 1920s to the 1980s to our current challenges and perspectives. When I prepared a report on women's liberation in those archives I took up the documents chronologically, finding that many of Dunayevskaya's writings presaged development in the new Women's Liberation Movement of

the 1970s. Dunayevskaya, however, developed the chronological summation of her work philosophically. She arranged her writings into categories which brought out the women's dimension of revolution, past and present, all over the world. Her section "Women, Labor and the Black Dimension" revealed not only a hidden revolutionary history of action and thought, but its integrality with all revolutionary developments.

"Revolutionaries All" focused on revolutionary contributions of women revolutionaries. "Sexism, Politics and Revolution—is there an organizational answer?" showed the political distortions of the freedom movement which so quickly derailed revolutionary beginnings, answering the question in the negative and pointing toward Dunayevskaya's conclusion: "The missing link—philosophy—in the relationship of revolution to organization." As we confront today's increasingly conservative atmosphere (why have we allowed a TV program called "Wife Swap" to exist?) in which we still battle for reproductive freedom and economic security for women worldwide, Dunayevskaya's message is even more relevant if we are to achieve a new society based on human needs and freedom.

**Susan Stellar**  
Detroit

Editor's Note: To mark the 20th anniversary of Dunayevskaya's classic work, we have made it available at a special price to *N&L* readers for only \$10 including postage. See order blank below.

I am appreciative of the information and knowledge illustrated throughout the pages of *N&L*. I particularly appreciate brother John Alan's articles and those concerning women's liberation. I believe that without the woman, liberation and independence for any oppressed and disenfranchised people will not blossom into reality. It's important that we see to it that her humanity and rights are protected. Your paper emboldens brothers like me to take a stance against injustice and fight for something greater than our individual selves.

**Prisoner**  
Wisconsin

**THE BRITISH SCENE**

The system is wracked by crises with no alternative presented. The Conservative Party is rearming to reclaim center ground from both Labour and the Liberal party, which has cracked into left and right wings. The leader, Charles Kennedy, has been offered as a scapegoat under the pretext of his addiction to drink. No such impediment existed to the war-time leader, Winston Churchill. Indeed, the most successful reformed drunk is the leader of the western democratic movement, George W. Bush.

The focus on Kennedy's addictive or mental health problems shows the flaws in the British health service, where deaths due to alcohol addiction have doubled. Over 30 years ago, it was possible to access addictive disorder units and specialists. Many of those clinics have closed. Services are still possible at clinics where entrance may cost \$20,000 or more. The penalty of non-treatment has recently been played out with the death of the football icon George Best. Kennedy may be deemed lucky to be able to afford private medical treatment. The irony is that the medical establishment has the highest incidence of drug and drink addiction and rates of suicide. The rising drink, drug and crime among the very young is the saddest part of the story.

**Pat Duffy**  
Britain

**FIGHTING BUSH'S WAR**

The bourgeois press is useless. Bush told a grotesque lie when he said that the number of Iraqis killed since the U.S. invasion was about 30,000. In November 2004, *The Lancet*, a prestigious British medical journal, concluded that 100,000 civilians had been killed in Iraq by then. Even when it was first announced, the press buried the story. This was no politicalized figure. The paper was written by researchers at the Johns Hopkins University, Columbia University and Baghdad's Al-Mustansiriyah University and was based on a door-to-door survey of 8,000 people in 33 randomly selected locations in Iraq.

**Sickened by the lies**  
Memphis

The study showed that the risk of violent death had increased 58-fold since the war began. As is the norm in a war situation, more than half of those who died from violence and its aftermath since the invasion began were women and children. Where was just one reporter who could ask Bush about the study and expose his obscene lie?

I liked the article in the November-December issue by Fernando Suarez del Sola, whose son's death inspired his Guerrero Azteca Peace Project—with one exception. I am a former soldier who volunteered in time of war and I remember vividly how soldiers were treated, even if they did not go to Vietnam. I supported the men and women serving around the world 100% because even though I do not agree with the politics of why we are there, I know the realities of being scared witless while someone is trying to kill you—regardless of whether it is for the right or wrong reasons. I remember how Taps sounds in real life when you are standing at attention, helping to fold a flag, and having to salute the mom, dad, sisters and brothers of a kid that you grew up with, trying to get them to believe that he died bravely and all that b.s. Remembering all that is why it bothers me when wanting to end this war so other troops don't get killed is equated to being a traitor and not supportive of the troops. Hell, what better way to support them than to want them out of harm's way?

**Robert Talliaferro**  
Wisconsin

The words of former Senator Eugene McCarthy bear remembering. In an interview a month before the 2003 invasion of Iraq, he compared the Bush administration with the characters in the William Golding novel, *Lord of the Flies*, in which a group of boys stranded on an island turn to savagery. "The bullies are running it," McCarthy said. "Bush is bullying everybody."

**Former postal worker**  
Battle Creek, Mich.

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# Philosophy and revolution as equal partners

continued from page 5

The creativity of these liberatory forces needed to be met by an equal creativity in philosophy, one that would base itself on new readings of Hegel and Marx in light of the times. In those 1953 Letters, Dunayevskaya argues that the concretization of Hegel's final syllogisms for the social world would mean nothing less than, "We have entered the new society" (*The Power of Negativity*, p. 30).

Admittedly, "the eternal idea" enjoying itself "as absolute mind" seems at first glance to be miles away from any form of Marxist materialism and it is not surprising that Arthur, who opposes the notion of "philosophy and revolution" as "equal partners," would strongly oppose this kind of appropriation of Hegel.

Although no other Marxist philosophers centered their entire dialectical perspective on Hegel's absolutes, Dunayevskaya is not the only prominent Marxist or Hegel scholar to have seen the discussion of absolute mind at the end of Hegel's system as having important implications for today. In his *Eros and Civilization* (1955), Marcuse intones, "Hegel's presentation of his system in his *Encyclopedia* ends on the word 'enjoys'" (p. 116). It is also important to underline that Hegel did not add the sentence in question until the third and last edition of the *Encyclopedia*, in 1830. Several academic Hegel scholars have also taken up the final paragraphs of Hegel's system, in order to attack the notion that Hegel is ultimately a philosopher of closure and totality, as so many have charged.

For example, T. Geraets holds that this "eternal idea" acts "eternally, that is to say without ever putting an end to history." Further, as Geraets notes, "the changes [Hegel] brought into the 1830 edition are the most important" concerning the final syllogism in ¶575 ("Les trois lectures philosophiques de l'Encyclopédie," *Hegel-Studien* 10, 1975, pp. 254, 250). More recently, John Burbidge argues: "Whereas in 1817 [the three final syllogisms] summarize what has gone before, in 1830 they offer the pattern of further developments" ("Hegel's Absolutes," *Owl of Minerva* 29:1, 1997, p. 32).

Arthur not only dismisses Dunayevskaya's pre-occupation with Hegel's absolute, but he also tries to argue that Dunayevskaya is an unreliable commentator on Hegel by examining what she says about the final syllogisms in the three editions of the *Encyclopedia*—1817, 1824, and 1830. Specifically, he argues that Dunayevskaya was factually incorrect when she stated that Hegel had added these three syllogisms only in the last edition of that work, published in 1830, in a kind of culmination of his life's thought (see *The Power of Negativity*, pp. 178, 195, 205, and 330).

In fact, although his claim is partially true, I do not believe that it seriously undercuts Dunayevskaya's interpretation of the three final syllogisms.

As Arthur points out, we can easily check these facts today through the three editions of the *Philosophy of Mind*, each conveniently republished since 1989 in volumes 13 (for the 1817 edition), 19 (1827 edition), and 20 (1830 edition) of Hegel's *Gesammelte Werke*. As against Dunayevskaya, Arthur writes that the three syllogisms appear first in the 1817 edition, are dropped in the 1827 one, and then "come back" in the 1830 edition. This is the main evidence for his charge that Dunayevskaya "occasionally makes bizarre mistakes" in her reading of Hegel and Marx. Unfortunately, the rigorous Arthur himself gets a bit confused as he winds his way through the various editions of Hegel *Philosophy of Mind* in German. While it is true that some of the language of the three final syllogisms is already there in 1817, some of it is not, as attested to not only by Dunayevskaya, but also the Hegel scholars Geraets and Burbidge cited above.

In particular, the crucial sentence about the "eternal idea" engendering and enjoying itself as absolute mind is not included in the 1817 edition. It is introduced for the first time in 1830, as Dunayevskaya stresses correctly, and Arthur fails to notice. Therefore, as far as this crucial sentence is concerned, Arthur is wrong and Dunayevskaya is correct. (However, Dunayevskaya could have expressed herself more precisely on the changes from 1817 to 1830, and we certainly should have done so in our editorial notes, something we will correct in the next printing.)

Arthur also criticizes Dunayevskaya for suggesting that in the early 1860s, Marx moved the discussion of landed property to a later part of his "economics," from Vol. I of *Capital* to what became Vol. III, while in fact this material was "brought forward." In other words, it was to come sooner (not later) than in the plan for "six books" on "capital, landed property, wage-labor; the State, foreign trade, world market" mentioned in the preface to *The Critique of Political Economy* of 1859 (*MECW* 29, p. 261).

Again, while there is some technical imprecision here (both in Dunayevskaya and our notes), the main point for Dunayevskaya, which I do not think Arthur would contest, is that Marx left the discussion of landed property—as well as many debates with Ricardo and other theorists found in the *Critique*—out of Vol. I of *Capital* in order to concentrate there on the capital-labor relation. As Dunayevskaya argued in her *Marx-*

*ism and Freedom* (1958), in Vol. I Marx, "instead of keeping up a running argument with theorists," as had Hegel in the *Science of Logic*, "relegated the history of theory to the end." In this way, she wrote, he "created a new dialectic instead of applying one," thus moving beyond the applied Hegelian structure of *The Critique of Political Economy* of 1859 (p. 91).

As to Arthur's point on ecology and nature, I am not very familiar with the literature he cites, but I would mention that one of today's most important Marxist ecologists, Joel Kovel, has a very different appreciation of Dunayevskaya's work, as seen in his introduction to the 2000 reprint of *Marxism and Freedom*.

Arthur also criticizes our introduction for its claim that there is a paucity of discussion of Hegel and dialectics today, even amid a revival of interest in Marx's critique of capital. I think our claim can be easily upheld by contrasting our period with that of the 1960s and 1970s. In the earlier period, dialectical thinkers like Marcuse, Sartre, Gramsci, Fanon, and



Lukács—all of them indebted to Hegel—dominated philosophical debate on the Left. Today, anti-Hegelian and anti-dialectical thinkers dominate that philosophical debate, as seen most prominently in the writings of Hardt and Negri, or the varieties of structuralism and post-structuralism in academia.

In particular, Arthur chides us for failing to mention

## Fight to save hospital

**LOS ANGELES**—The Save King/Drew Medical Center coalition gathered at the Watts Labor Community Action Center on Dec. 10 to update everyone on ongoing events, including changes in the leadership of the county's Department of Health Services and the Medical Center.

The Save King/Drew Coalition's goal is to improve King/Drew as a comprehensive medical center and to prevent it from becoming privatized. King/Drew Medical Center was founded after the 1965 Watts uprising to serve the Black community. Today, it serves over a million poor Blacks and Latinos in South Central L.A.

A panel of King/Drew staff, union members, community activists and religious personnel spoke on various related issues. They included local grassroots organizations working on issues such as homelessness and drug rehabilitation.

A spokesman for SEIU Local 660 representing L.A. County employees stated that the immediate goal is to pass an upcoming Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services inspection. Failing would mean a loss of \$200 million of federal funding annually, without which King/Drew will be in danger of closing.

Dr. Thomas Garthwaite recently resigned as chief administrator of the L.A. Department of Health Services to take a job with Catholic Health East, a national Catholic hospital association. Prior to his resignation he stated that the medical center is unprepared to pass the coming inspection and that if funding is lost "he would recommend closing King/Drew or handing control of it to a private hospital chain."

Garthwaite recommended closing the trauma center in order to save the rest of the hospital. This resulted in a mass protest by thousands and hours of hearings by outraged community people at the King/Drew site.

After the trauma center was temporarily closed in March, he recommended closing the obstetric, pediatric and neonatal units while expanding outpatient services. This recommendation was voted down by the county board of supervisors. After the King/Drew trauma center was closed, the private California Hospital 10 miles away opened a trauma center with funding assistance from the L.A. Board of supervisors.

It was during the three years while Department of Health Services was led by Dr. Gaithwaite that King/Drew's accreditation faltered. He failed to fill the many vacant nurse slots with competent replacements. Some temporary nurses were hired with higher compensation than permanent nurses, adding to the low morale among the staff.

Congresswoman Maxine Waters, who moderated the event said, "Don't ever think we're too weak. We are, through self-determination, fighting for a well run, comprehensive medical center to serve the urgent needs of this poor community."

—Basho

the debate over "systematic dialectic" in which he has participated. We did not mention it because: 1) Its impact on the larger debates mentioned above has been fairly limited, something I am certainly not happy about. 2) This kind of systematic dialectic is somewhat removed from Dunayevskaya's work, not only in its assumptions, but also in the issues it addresses. I am sorry if Arthur felt slighted, especially since I have great respect for some of his scholarly work on Marx, especially in his edited volume, *Engels Today: A Century Appraisal* (1996).

In closing, I want to underline my disagreement with Arthur's rejection of a "Marxism in which philosophy and revolution are equal partners."

First, this would mean rejecting some of the best in Marx. Think of his magnificent 1843 statement, "The head of this emancipation is philosophy, its heart is the proletariat. Philosophy cannot be actualized without the abolition [aufhebung] of the proletariat; the proletariat cannot be abolished without the actualization of philosophy" ("Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right," in *Marx's Early Political Writings*, ed. O'Malley, p. 70).

Second, one can read Arthur's "philosophy and revolution as equal partners" against the grain. In critiquing Dunayevskaya, Arthur has created a felicitous phrase that describes, I believe, what we really need today as well: a radical reading of Marx that places philosophy at the center, one that would help us to move beyond the present impasse of the movements against global capital and imperialism.

To take one example, a Marxism grounded in Dunayevskaya's revolutionary humanist perspectives could help us to critique not only global capitalism and the American imperial agenda, but also those tendencies in today's anti-war movement that are willing to ally themselves with any forces—even if misogynist, heterosexual, or fundamentalist—as long as they oppose U.S. imperialism.

## BLACK/RED VIEW

Continued from page 1

capitalism, which has no place for this huge minority. The cars that burned are a symbol of affluence and mobility, which the ghetto youth lack. Though "visible minorities" make up 10% of the population there are none in parliament.

For many years talented Black artists from the U.S., such as Josephine Baker, James Baldwin, and Richard Wright, were drawn to Paris, which seemed enchanted with Black American culture. France's interest in culture doesn't extend to recognizing the full humanity of the African French in their midst. The solution some French bourgeoisie now propose is no better than what this country did back in the 1960s: affirmative action. As we have witnessed in the U.S., without a full revolution that overturns capitalism and its racist core, these half-way solutions unleash a racist backlash in the name of color-blindness and abstract equality.

Born in the French colony of Martinique, called a Department of France, Fanon dealt with the specifically French form of racism. He challenged the notion that freedom simply meant turning colonized people into Frenchmen. Those few elite who bought into that myth merely had a "white mask," while real freedom could only be achieved in a struggle through the particular circumstances oppressing them. Thus, he saw a reach for a much deeper concept of freedom coming from the revolt of those "wretched of the earth."

He immersed himself in the Algerian revolution against the brutal French colonial rule but was ruthlessly critical from within the revolutionary process. He criticized the prevailing ideas of the Algerian leaders as well as Black intellectuals who looked too much to culture and the past. He said, "we don't want to replace one form of barbarism with another form of barbarism." Fanon's concept of a "new humanism" as the absolute opposite of capitalist racism can help today's French African youth as they look for a way to find a new freedom from within French society where narrow concepts like Islamism pose a false alternative.

Fanon saw the colonial revolutions reaching for something totally new, which he called an "untidy affirmation of an original idea propounded as an absolute." He said Blacks shouldn't try to be white in a system where just because you're white you're rich. That would reproduce the old system.

The African revolutions did get sucked into the old as African leaders turned to neo-colonialism and looked to technological development and not mass creativity as that which determines the future.

The discontinuity today is that the French African youth in the midst of French capitalism are still trying to find a human pathway out of the legacy of the failed revolutions of the past. They are challenging abstract concepts of freedom like "color blindness" of French democracy, which is concretely experienced as racism. It means being invisible when it comes to employment, educational and housing opportunities but being a "visible minority" under constant police harassment.

## EDITORIAL

## Bolivia at the crossroads

Continued from page 1

the companies' royalty payments, from 1% to 30%, and in their taxes from, 34% to 50%. The oil companies, lush with profits from high oil prices, readily agreed.

## QUESTIONS ABOUT VENEZUELA

Many have hailed Chavez's actions as a sign that "Venezuela is moving toward socialism," but some leftists in Venezuela have criticized the agreement for giving foreign oil companies the same kind of joint-venture arrangement they had long ago agreed to with Russia, Saudi Arabia, and North African states.

Morales may find it difficult to obtain even such a modest degree of control over oil and gas revenues. The largest importer of Bolivian gas is a Brazilian company, Petrobras. If Morales nationalizes Petrobras' holdings he is bound to antagonize Brazil.

It seems therefore unlikely that his election will lead to the emergence of a "counter-hegemonic U.S. bloc" consisting of Bolivia, Venezuela, Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina.

Another problem is that 100,000 Bolivians are employed in foreign-owned clothing and jewelry firms in El Alto, a base of the mass movement. Their main customer is the U.S. market. If the U.S. decides to retaliate against efforts to nationalize the gas industry by pulling its investments out of El Alto, serious economic problems will result.

Morales is trying to tame such fears by stating, "Unfortunately, it will be my duty to respect these neo-liberal laws. Some changes we will be able to make by

decree, others through the legislature, but immediately there aren't going to be great changes because there are 20 years of neo-liberal laws that can't be erased in one swipe." MAS's vice-president Garcia Linera has stated that the aim of the new government is to develop "a national Andean capitalism."

While this lends support to the notion that Morales may try to follow Brazilian President Lula's accommodationist approach with global capital, it may not be easy for him to do so. Unlike Lula's Workers' Party, MAS is a coalition of competing ideas and interests rather than a disciplined, hierarchical party. It will therefore be much harder for Morales to stay in control if he wanders too far from the grassroots. A number of tendencies to the left of Morales, especially the miners' union, are already calling for a series of regional people's assemblies in March as a way to pressure the government from the Left.

Whatever results from such efforts, the rise of an Aymara Indian to the presidency is an historic event in itself. For generations the indigenous peoples of Bolivia have been subject to incessant abuse by ruling powers and have been treated as pawns by the political parties, including by many on the Left. Morales' victory could not have

been possible without a decades-long indigenous consciousness movement that helped reshape national politics.

## INDIGENOUS CONSCIOUSNESS

The danger that the movement now confronts is that the new leaders may try to use their hard-won credentials as indigenous activists to justify a policy of class accommodation with national capitalist interests.

Bolivia today is not the same as it was decades ago, when it had a powerful Marxist-led trade union movement. Prior to the 1980s discussions within the Bolivian Left centered on debates over the exploitation of labor, whereas today they tend to focus more on ownership and development of natural resources.

Yet today's struggles are raising a series of questions that demonstrate the continued viability of the mass struggles—questions like can nationalized industry truly free Bolivia from the world economy? What kind of developments are needed, nationally and internationally, to break the power of capital and underdevelopment?

We need to help ensure that the Bolivian people obtain the breathing and thinking space needed to work out these questions by insisting that the Bush administration not interfere with their choices and that we work to stay the hand of any U.S. retaliatory actions.



Evo Morales, newly-elected president of Bolivia.

Independent Media Center

Condition of Aceh  
... one year later

**BANDA ACHEH**—"There is no sign of any building or development at all," reports a political exile who recently returned to Aceh a year after the tsunami that killed some 200,000 Achenese and left many more homeless and unemployed, "Thousands of people are still living in tents. They receive food, but have no jobs and receive neither job training nor treatment for the mental illnesses caused by losing family, homes, and for many, their entire villages."

## TSUNAMI DESTRUCTION UNTOUCHED

Our observer, who lost some 100 members of his family in the tsunami, was shocked to see the destruction of the capital city still untouched. "In Banda Aceh, you see many international workers, but no results from their presence. A half kilometer from the center of the capital there are tent-cities for the homeless. The roads to the west are still no good. Indonesia brings in workers from Java, while the Achenese have no jobs."

The good news: "The peace accord is holding, and 80% of the people no longer live in fear of the Indonesian military." After 29 years of the guerrilla fight for independence, after most of the last two decades spent under martial law and intense repression that killed tens of thousands of civilians, and after seven years of mass civil society organization and demands for self-determination, an agreement was reached last summer between the Free Aceh Movement's fighting force, known as GAM, and the Indonesian government. Our observer confirms that some democratic rights guaranteed by the peace agreement have been instituted, such that GAM and civil society groups, whose members used to be killed on sight, can now meet above ground.

## FUTURE STAGES OF PEACE AGREEMENT

The next stages of the peace agreement may prove harder: Aceh is to be permitted expanded self-governance and to form local parties and run candidates for offices in a spring election. Since Indonesia has yet to pass the laws needed to implement these rights, however, no one knows yet whether or how the elections and new government will work.

The peace accord came about following the tsunami, which opened up Aceh to foreign scrutiny and caused relief donors to press for peace so they could administer their money. People-to-people relief efforts for survivors continue; contact *N&L* for more information.

—Anno Jaclard

## The French 'riots' reconsidered

**MONTPELLIER, FRANCE**—The government and the media blame the riots in France alternately on "Islamic fundamentalists" and on "the dirty rabble" ("la canaille") spawn of "promiscuous polygamists," whom Interior Minister Sarkozy proposes to "scrub away with a high-pressure hose" (*Karcheriser*). The scrubbing takes the form of violent police sweeps that remind me of the anti-Algerian ratonnades ("rat-extermination expeditions") I witnessed as a student in Paris 50 years ago.

The riots were provoked not just by deliberate racist taunts. They weren't about Islam, although the media and the government here like to play it that way. Like the riots in the U.S. (from Harlem 1964 to LA 1992) they're about police brutality. They're about dead-end kids of Arab, African and West Indian descent, most of whom have never seen the inside of a mosque—or the inside of a factory. They're about the redundant "French" children of "immigrants" from France's colonies—imported as laborers and parked in barren projects with minimal services.

The religious issue is a red herring. The problem, besides unemployment, is discrimination. There is no legal segregation here, but after 20 years in Montpellier I can't recall seeing a single Arab policeman, nor indeed any Arab civil servants behind plastic windows at post offices, railroad offices, state agencies. Nor are Arabs visible as on-camera news reporters or facing the public in business and shopping areas (except as security guards). There are apparently no Arabs in the National Assembly to speak for France's estimated six million (?) Arabs. (Since the Republic is officially colorblind no records are kept). France really is colorblind—in denial about seeing its own racism.

Instead of facing up to an unbroken tradition of institutionalized anti-Arab racism dating from the conquest of Algeria in the 1830s, the French establishment conjures up the myth of dominant political Islam—only to submit to it by empowering the conservative Imams as the legitimate spokesman for the ghetto kids in the hope of restraining them!

—Richard Greeman

## Marcuse conference

A "Reading Herbert Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization* After 50 Years" conference was held at Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia, Nov. 3-6. There were nearly as many themes as speakers, 34 over the four-day event. This diversity of themes could be interpreted in one of two ways: either as a reflection of the richness of Marcuse's text or as the fragmentation, which all of Marcuse's theoretical works attempted to forestall, of the philosophic effort to grasp the current moment of the social and intellectual crisis.

Perhaps the most controversial subject emerged during a discussion period after papers by Steven Bronner on Marcuse and "the birth of critical political theory" and Peter-Erwin Jansen on "the Marcuse reception in Germany." Bronner explained Nazism as a pre-Enlightenment cultural response to economic, political and social crises. Jansen, to the contrary, argued that Nazism—including the technologically-based manipulation of culture and politics—was one outcome among several possibilities opened up by the science, technology and social values rooted in the Enlightenment itself. The issue is important in "placing" *Eros and Civilization*, since this, Marcuse's "Freud book," had been Marcuse's first publication since his very different and seminal work, *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory*, which had appeared 14 years earlier, just before the Nazi Holocaust began to unfold.

As I argued in my paper, "The Marcuse/Dunayevskaya Correspondence and Marcuse's 'Philosophic Interlude' in *Eros and Civilization*," Marcuse himself indicated in the chapter on philosophy in *Eros and Civilization* that Hegel's dialectic, the height of philosophic thought defining the Enlightenment, resigned itself to achieving freedom in thought only, a process of "endlessly projecting and transcending productivity of being" coming to "fruition in the perpetual peace of self-conscious receptivity."

Marcuse's conclusion on Hegel's dialectic was the endpoint of a philosophic trajectory of his own, which between the 1930s and 1950s decreasingly attributed practical intention and potential to Hegel's dialectic. In contrast, the 1954-1979 correspondence between Marcuse and Dunayevskaya clearly shows that Dunayevskaya, in the year before she initiated correspondence with Marcuse and two years before *Eros and Civilization*, was published interpreted the culmination of Hegel's philosophy as integral to achieving freedom in a post-capitalist society. In the initial correspondence with Marcuse and elsewhere she debated Marcuse on this issue and later continued to develop the "culmination" of Hegel's philosophy as a vital dimension of Marx's Marxism.

Douglas Kellner argued that Marcuse's work "from beginning to end" was Hegelian and Marxist: *Eros and Civilization* was primarily an attempt to understand Nazism by investigating the concrete individual in Western society. In response to a question from the floor, whether Nazism might be better explained by the failures of non or anti-philosophical types of "Marxism" prevalent in the first half of the 20th century—Social Democracy and Stalinism—Kellner conceded both explanations were needed.

—Russell Rockwell

**CHICAGO**—In a society that values commodities and private property over human life, the sons and daughters of North African immigrants respected their qualitative values (and the subjectivity of police brutality victims) by destroying what destroys us as a whole.

It is true that we need more than just riots and other direct actions like looting, sabotage, and wildcat strikes to negate existing conditions and create more desirable ones. The French youth also are taking an important step forward by realizing their collective action has the power to effect existing conditions.

To their credit, they have followed the patterns of autonomy that other poor Black rebellions and revolts against late capitalism such as Watts, the LA Rebellion, and Benton Harbor followed by refusing representation from leftist, religious, and nationalist partners. While we should avoid the ideological trap about the "clarity" of youth (anybody who has lived through adolescence knows how confusing it can get) proletarianized people everywhere have gut reactions against authority in all of its flavors.

The Left in general has nothing relevant left to say to those who want freedom now. The 20th century saw the gradual retrogression of much of post-Marx Marxism into state capitalist dictatorships and parliamentary parties that replaced revolution with gradualism and bourgeois democracy. There are still anarchist currents that fetishize earlier responses to earlier forms of capitalism, such as anarcho-syndicalism, at the expense of rigorously analyzing the present.

Perhaps the core problem of the Left has been that many leftists want to organize others instead of organizing themselves first. They see themselves abstractly and by extension see others as victims and/or potential recruits and/or constituencies within Power's terms and so on. They can't or refuse to see aspects of themselves in others.

People throughout the French suburbs are communicating more now—whether they agree or disagree with the riots. Critics of riots tend to forget that they could open up more unfiltered public communication than passive acts like voting.

—Ken Wong

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# Bush agenda spawns crises

Continued from page 1

many are remembering that Vietnam was a quagmire, just as it has become clearer by the day that Iraq has become one also.

Voices from below, including from within the armed forces, rose early and have kept growing. That kind of opposition between the ruled and the rulers is reflected, once it becomes serious, in cracks within the ruling class itself. Now anti-war sentiment is gaining voice within Congress. The most unexpected rumbling came from usually hawkish Marine veteran and 17-term Democratic Representative from Pennsylvania, John Murtha. On Nov. 17 he made a sudden call for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq.

Just before that event Republican Senator John McCain—another decorated veteran—won a harsh fight with the White House to have a ban on torture passed. McCain's amendment passed with 90 votes in the Senate, and with 107 Republicans joining all the Democrats in the House vote.

It was then that *The New York Times* revealed Bush's clear abuse of power and opened wide questions of criminal activity from many corners.

Arlen Specter, the Senate Judiciary Committee chairman, lost no time in condemning Bush's domestic spying as "inexcusable...clearly and categorically wrong" and in announcing that hearings would be held quickly. They are scheduled for February. And immediately upon publication of the disclosure of the NSA operation, Barbara Boxer, Democratic senator of California, for the first time suggested that legal scholars should explore whether Bush's authorization of secret spying was an impeachable offense.

## SELF-ARROGATION OF POWER

The White House immediately launched an intense public relations "blitz." Bush defended his policy insistently by claiming Congress had approved the eavesdropping right after the September 11 attacks by authorizing "all necessary and appropriate force" against the groups responsible for the attacks. Congress authorized, he insisted, his bypassing of the secret courts that had been set up in the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act in 1978. A number of stories soon emerged which revealed how seriously the legality of Bush's actions had been questioned at the time, but never publicly raised.

New attention was now given also to an earlier, Nov. 6, front page article in the *Washington Post*. It revealed the FBI had issued "more than 30,000 national security letters a year." The letters ordered banks, credit agencies, telephone companies, and libraries that pro-

## 'Tookie' Williams vigil

**SAN QUENTIN, CAL.**—Stan "Tookie" Williams was scheduled for execution at midnight on Monday, Dec. 12. I got to the vigil at about 7:30 p.m. Many people had already arrived, some as early as 8 a.m., so it was difficult to get through the crowd to be near the performance stage. I saw several acquaintances from the Marin Peace and Justice Coalition.

Our anger was subsumed by the inevitability of what was going to happen and why we were there. The vigil was a celebration of our political stance. We were glad to be thumbing our noses at the injustice system and Gov. Schwarzenegger in particular. Bringing our bodies into the fray, we knew, was the important statement. Many people expressed appreciation for my slogan "An Eye for and Eye Makes the Whole World Blind."

Angela Davis, Mike Farrell, Jesse Jackson, Jamie Foxx and other celebrities spoke and a Native American woman sang wildly and passionately. The speakers expressed gratefulness for Williams' redemption and sadness that the state would murder him in spite of it.

The vigil for Williams held a mirror up to the ordeal the U.S. is going through. There was a huge emphasis on the idea that we must make the end of Williams' life be an impetus in the movement towards resistance to oppression.

African-American, Hispanic, and white youths read from Williams' writings, which expressed encouragement to resist peers, reject gang membership, and work for peace in the neighbor-"hood."

As the midnight hour approached, no call was made for a silent vigil. People on the stage kept talking and reading. I became extremely alert to the fact that Williams had only 30 minutes to live—then 15 minutes.

My thoughts went, "Now he is being brought into the death chamber," "Now they are strapping him onto the gurney," "Now they are injecting the poison," "Now Stanley 'Tookie' Williams is experiencing death," "What must his ordeal be like?"

When no announcement confirmed that he was dead, I thought, "What has happened. What has gone 'wrong'?" I became angry that this craven government was afraid to come out to this huge crowd and tell us the shameful deed was done. Where was the announcement?

Finally, at 12:35 a.m., we heard, "It's all over. Stan is dead." But the crowd did not seem to mourn. The stage performances had continued up to that moment. We did not sing a sad song. We just dispersed. There were so many people that the traffic jam lasted two hours. Even though my house is only 20 minutes from San Quentin, I didn't get home until 3 a.m.

—January

vide public access to the Internet to turn over financial and other records about anyone the FBI chooses, even those not suspected of any wrongdoing.

It is no surprise that in the face of the swelling outcry about the disclosure of his secret spying, Bush's "defense" soon switched to the offensive. He moved to have his critics investigated, declaring that whosoever had unmasked his secret had committed a "shameful act."

Less than half a dozen out of the 19,000 requests for wiretapping have been turned down by the secret courts since they were established by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act created. So why does Bush still feel the need to circumvent so-named FISA courts? Have there been even more transgressions involving domestic surveillance yet to be reported?

## WILL FISSURES GROW?

How deep or how superficial are the differences within the ruling class? We cannot avoid measuring the Democratic and moderate opposition against the fact that they were aware of the "secret courts," which existed for decades, without ever questioning them.

Even McCain's bill to ban torture was in the end endorsed by Bush because it still allows the administration to define torture as they see fit. Barbaric techniques like "Waterboarding"—to make a captive believe he or she is being drowned—has been used for years and can apparently still be used.

Even the most impassioned of those speaking up, from McCain to Murtha to Boxer, were briefed years ago about the administration's "detention procedures" as well as NSA spying.

## GHOST OF NIXON

It can be helpful to look to the mid-1970s when the against the kind of "abuse of power" now being leveled against Bush were the same charges then leveled against Richard Nixon. In 1974 the articles of impeachment drawn up against Nixon, which forced his resignation, focused on the abuse of his presidential powers based on warrantless wiretaps and illegal surveillance. The very Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act Bush is now charged with violating came out of the work of the special committee chaired by Senator Church that followed that experience. The purging of Nixon did not mean getting rid of Nixonism, a fact proved by the way

Nixonism was followed by Reaganism, and Reaganism by Bushism. With each retrogressive administration, in a different period and with new intensity, it becomes ever clearer that repression will not be stopped until we uproot the whole dehumanized system.

The 1972 Watergate break-in awakened the press to the dangers of Nixon's attempt to neutralize even loyal opposition. But his drive for a single-party state was already well-known to victims of spying and repression. They included civil rights leaders, especially Martin Luther King Jr., and the anti-war movement which escalated upon Nixon-Kissinger's high-handed invasion of Cambodia in 1970.

## STORM AFTER KATRINA

That is why, important as is the crack within the ruling class today, what will be decisive is the growing opposition to the ravages of the war in Iraq and the continuing outrage over the disastrous response of the rulers to the victims of Hurricane Katrina. Both have raised questions about the very structure of U.S. society.

The anger expressed today by New Orleans residents and others is directed not only against Bush but against the

mayor, the governor, FEMA, the federal government, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the rightwing think tanks. The last are arguing that the Ninth Ward, the heart of the Black population, should be turned back into a swamp.

Nor can this be separated from the first signs of a possible revival of labor activity. Foremost was the recent strike of the 33,000 transit workers in New York City (see page 3). The most significant aspect of the strike was that health care benefits and pensions for future union members, not wages, was the top issue.

The Sago Mine disaster in West Virginia (see page 3) also reminded the country of the criminal disregard of U.S. capitalism toward human life and underlines the need for the total uprooting of a society which gives all importance to commodity production.

It is in this context that the possibility of a "new climate" for the struggle against Bush becomes important to examine. Ending the ever-deepening crises we face—from the bloody war in Iraq to the life-sucking crises we face right at home—rests with the increasing opposition we see rising from below. That battle, it becomes more and more clear, will not end until we uproot the whole barbaric system.

LOWER NINTH WARD LAND GRAB  
TARGETS  
BLACK HOMEOWNERS, ELDERLY & WOMEN

NO DEMOLITION  
WITHOUT OUR CONSENT

THE PEOPLE  
MUST DECIDE

LOWER 9th WARD RESIDENTS MUST BE CONTACTED & ASSISTED  
BEFORE THE CITY BULLDOZES HOMES.

If you are a Lower 9th resident & want to join the lawsuit to stop the city from bulldozing homes without contacting owners, call the People's Hurricane Relief Fund at 504-219-9207. Also visit the Common Ground site on the corner of Desonde and N. Derbigny.

Katrina Information Network



by Robert Taliaferro

To change opinions about the multi-billion dollar capital enterprise known as Wal-Mart, consumers were inundated with its "Home for the holidays" campaign that included racially and gender diverse spokespersons. It was an effort to detract from the critics of the Walton family, owners of the Wal-Mart dynasty.

The Walton family is considered the richest family in the world with a fortune of nearly \$100 billion. Though they seemed to support the family-oriented concept of "being home for the holidays" for their consumers, the same comforting policy does not extend to those the company employs. They could not afford to stay home for the holidays due to the need to work for the low salaries that Wal-Mart pays its associates.

## BIGGEST EXPLOITER

Wal-Mart is currently this country's largest private employer and is not a union shop. It so bitterly opposes unions that it specifically trains its supervisors to deter, report, and oppose any hint of unionization. The resulting lack of representative protections for its workers presents a smiling face to its customers who supply its economic base, but creates a Third World-like work atmosphere for its employees.

The company is currently involved in several employee class action lawsuits, including a sex-discrimination suit representing nearly two million women. Additionally several communities have refused to lie down and succumb to Wal-Mart's incursions into their towns. Wal-Mart, much like the private prison consortium Corrections Corporation of America, is known for its low wages, disregard for labor laws, and targeting of poor communities for stores. This has resulted in towns and labor unions uniting to make fighting these new stores a top priority.

The past holiday gave Wal-Mart a perfect forum for its attempt to appear more diverse, and in true capitalist style, it seemed to target poor and minorities by depicting popular entertainment icons in those com-

## Wal-Mart's (dirty) new look

munities as avid fans and Wal-Mart shoppers.

Wal-Mart did contribute \$20 million of goods and services to the Katrina relief effort with a much better logistical efficiency than the U.S. government could muster in its tepid response to the tragedy, and Wal-Mart now supports a program called "Voices of Color." But, in that process, it also plays both sides against the middle as it also contributes heavily to ultraconservative political action committees.

Though supporters of the company will discuss how diverse Wal-Mart has become since the death of its founder Sam Walton, that diversity often does not reach into the depths and pockets of its own workforce who toil long hours with few—if any—protections in place to deter abuse. A large percentage of their workforce is made of people of color, single mothers, and the elderly attempting to supplement Social Security or minimal retirement benefits.

## WORKING POOR

Most Wal-Mart employees cannot afford viable health care despite long hours and injuries incurred on the job. If a Wal-Mart associate is sick, she must provide documentation of a sort that even prisoners do not have to supply, before they can be confident that their illness will not cost them their job.

Hillary Clinton, a former board member of Wal-Mart, once noted that the company was "the best America had to offer." All the while, the company was lobbying for more tax breaks for the rich while their "associates" languished in sweatshop-like conditions that, had they occurred in a Third World country, would spark the condemnation of nations, even the U.S.

One has to wonder if the artists featured in the "Home for the holidays" campaign were aware of Wal-Mart's policies towards its workers since all of the entertainers featured are avidly protected by agents and unions that do not allow them to be abused by corporate sponsors such as Wal-Mart. This is the same Wal-Mart which systematically refuses those same protections for its employees, especially its associates and greeters, who are required to appear cheerful.

# Beyond private property & communism

by Alex Maktoob

Many youth today are asked to read classical Greek works in their philosophy, political science, and literature courses to lay the groundwork for much of the rest of Western thought. Politically and philosophically, the groundwork lies in the work of Plato and Aristotle. Plato's gives us the concept of the Forms—the abstraction of ideas—while Aristotle's direct critique of the Forms allows for a more pragmatic and empirical view of the world.

However the academic courses that discuss these philosophers do not often touch on how dramatically radical these proposals are, from the abolition of private property to the equality of women—ideas that are throughout investigated in the writings of the young Marx, and indeed, are not complete without these writings.

## PROPERTY 'SAVIORS'

Regarding property, Plato's Guardians, the governing class in his Republic, are not to own any property and are to live on property that belongs to the community. He holds that being without property and wealth will keep the Guardians incorruptible and that "[t]his manner of life...will make them the saviours of the commonwealth."

In *The Politics*, Aristotle opposes this idea of common property, remarking that property should be owned in private and used in common. However this is not an accurate attack on property held in common, since the property may very well be owned in private by another class and allowed for the Guardians' common use.

However we do not know who owns the Guardians' common land, Aristotle states, since Plato does not describe the material state of living for the farmers, artisans, and the rest of the lower classes. If they, farmers and so on, do hold property in common, then there is no need for the Guardians, since there would be nothing differentiating these classes from their rulers. Thus these classes would not gain anything from the Guardians' rule. But if property is held in private, then there will be class conflict between the non-ruling classes and the Guardians, not exaltation to the level of "saviors" as Plato has proposed.

Plato also does not consider the corrupting power of power itself, whether it is through acquisition of land or not. In the same vein, not to leave "The Philosopher" unscathed, Aristotle writes that for those that hold private property, "moral goodness will ensure that the property of each is made to serve the use of all." That, however, conflicts with his earlier statement, that there are those whose sole goal is to acquire wealth, "as though to make money were the one aim and everything else must contribute to that aim." Here the Greek philosophers are at a stalemate, and a different view is needed to come to a logical conclusion.

## MARX'S ALTERNATIVE

That alternative can be found in Karl Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*. Marx states that the kind of private property suggested by Aristotle cannot be maintained by "moral goodness," but rather another sustaining factor. In a section titled "Rent of Land," Marx says:

"The landlord being interested in the welfare of society means, according to the principles of political economy, that he is interested in the growth of its population and manufacture, in the expansion of its needs—in short, in the increase of wealth; and this increase of wealth is, as we have already seen, identical with the increase of poverty and slavery."

That is, the landowner is one of those that Aristotle suggests is concerned with the "art of acquisition" and not in the welfare of his city. However Plato's form of communism for the Guardians is what Aristotle has described as property held in common, such that it will be neglected and not cared for as much as by one who owns the land privately.

Marx calls this kind of property distribution "crude communism," or the first negation of private property. In the section known as "Private Property and Communism," he writes: "Just as woman passes from marriage to general prostitution...so the entire world of wealth (that is, of man's objective substance) passes from the relationship of exclusive marriage with the owner of private property to a state of universal prostitution with the community."

To resolve the conflict between Aristotle's miserly private property and Plato's "crude communism," Marx proposes the transcendence of both of these forms in the second negation of private property. In this "higher phase of communism," human beings are not self-estranged and separated from their humanity. Indeed, human beings return to their place as social beings and reclaim their humanity. This communism is humanism, since "[t]he abolition of private property is therefore the complete emancipation of all human senses and qualities, but it is this emancipation precisely because these senses and attributes have become, subjectively and objectively, human."

In reading Marx in regard to the Greek philosophers' works, we can realize the shortcomings of their proposals: Plato's lower form of communism producing a "general prostitution" of property, and Aristotle's private property serving to benefit only the landowner. Marx thus poses an alternative to Plato's community of Guardians and Aristotle's criticisms, one that works to return humanity to the human.

# Youth prison protest



Oakland, Calif.—Hundreds of young people and activists came out on Nov. 16 to demand that the notorious California Youth Authority prisons be closed, starting with the Chad facility. Chad was the scene of recent violence and several deaths. This was one in a string of events to try to bring public attention to the problems with the abusive and failed prison system.

# Fighting militarism in Memphis schools

MEMPHIS, TENN.—The Memphis Counter Recruitment Coalition (MCRC), sponsored by the Mid-South Peace and Justice Center, aims to alert school teachers, administrators, parents and students of the realities of signing up for the military. MCRC understands that in a militarized society, much of the information is incomplete or wrong. For example, one Army captain told high schoolers at Kingston High last year: "Yeah, it's a threat over there [Iraq], but if you pay attention you'll come home safe and nothing will happen to you."

## MILITARY DECEPTIONS

Military recruiters, like used car salesmen, bend the truth. It's considered necessary for national defense. Public policy provides military recruiters with a decided edge over recruiters from colleges and corporations. The federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) mandates that all public high schools accepting federal money turn over their student roster to the military. That seven a.m. phone call might be an Army recruiter wanting to speak with your son or your daughter.

If this were a commercial telemarketer, you might be able to do something. Actually there is a way, but few know about it. The NCLB Act allows parents to place their child on a "no-call" list and requires school districts to inform parents of this right. Yet Memphis schools have avoided this requirement and last year, only a handful of parents took advantage of this. MCRC reminded the school board of this legal requirement. We offered an informative flyer they might use at school registration. To our surprise the board used the flyers, sending them out to Memphis parents. The number of parents who returned the "opt-out" flyers numbered 1,600, about 5%.

## ARMY'S FRIEND: THE PRINCIPAL

The military also offers deceptive information about money for college. High schoolers are rarely informed how new recruits must first pay for the privilege of joining the program. Twelve hundred dollars is taken from his or her paycheck even before eligibility begins. After the down payment is collected, reality sets in. Less than half of those who pay ever receive a dime.

Perhaps the most egregious examples of official chicanery belongs to the enlistment contract. Buried on page two is what's known as the "loophole" clause. Section 9b states: "Laws and regulations that govern military personnel may change without notice to me." MCRC members felt that students' incomplete understanding of what they might be signing was too important to wait for school officials to react. We decided to share this information directly with the students.

We took to the streets. Beginning at Wooddale High School, we handed out pamphlets that contain the text of the military enlistment contract and points out what to watch out for, such as the loophole clause. The principal ordered us to move 1,000 feet from the site, ordered the students not to take the flyer, and actually took flyers away from them. The students gained a valuable lesson in the tenuous relationship between government and free speech.

To date we've distributed over 7,000 pamphlets to half the Memphis high schools. Our plans include speaking before the school board meeting, and requesting private meetings with each Commissioner. We want to set up tables at the spring career fairs, and post counter-recruitment literature, and, of course, continue the leafleting.

—George G.

# Food crisis in Mali continues

THE GAMBIA—Mali is not in a state of famine. Instead, like many countries in Africa, Mali suffers from deep rooted poverty resulting in many deaths every year. This issue can be addressed by long-term development and investment.

Mali lies in the arid Sahel desert that stretches over 3,500 kilometers from Mauritania in the west to Chad in the east. Years of successive drought and a vicious plague of locusts in 2004 left crops and vegetation stripped bare. As a result, food stores across the region are empty, herds of animals have died and millions are hungry.

Mali is one of the poorest of the world's countries. The average Malian lives under the mercy of poverty with not enough money to eat the food available in the market. In towns like Gao in eastern Mali, skeletal, malnourished babies can be found in homes just yards from markets where essential foodstuffs are available.

In the fields outside the capital, Bamako, farmers, be they men, women or children, can be seen bent double at their fields turning the soil for hours with the hope that they will have a good harvest.

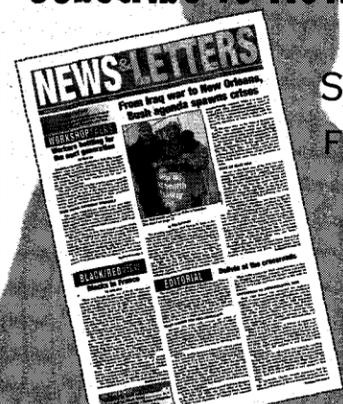
The government of Mali, which has distributed 30,000 tons of food since the end of 2004, as well as having subsidized staple foods and organized food-for-work programs, has been praised by many the world over for its handling of the crisis. The negative side is that it used up its limited stocks of food too early and the emergency food reserves are empty.

Mali needs free food distributions since Malians had lowered their consumption to cope with their predicaments.

Communities have begun selling breeding animals from their herds, weakening their position in future years. However the humanitarian workers and the government have all been working well during difficult times to prevent the situation from escalating.

—Fabakary Taa

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## OUR LIFE AND TIMES

by Kevin A. Barry

# China: capital, the WTO, and labor unrest

New economic data released in December showed China as the world's fourth largest economy, with its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for 2004 estimated at \$2 trillion. This means that only the U.S., Japan, and Germany now outproduce China, with Germany soon to be surpassed as well, as Britain and France have been in recent years.

Even as China's economy has experienced very high annual growth rates of around 10% in recent years, the vast majority of the increase has gone to capital accumulation rather than consumer goods. This is especially true of basic goods for working people. To take one example, during the six years from 1997 to 2003, domestic clothing consumption rose by only 22%, less than 4% per year.

This process of capital accumulation, one of history's most rapid and far-reaching, has gone hand-in-hand with ruthless exploitation of working people. Denied

## Sharon and Palestine

As Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's debilitating stroke seemed to end his political career, the consequences of his policies continued to boil over. Known throughout the world as the "butcher of Beirut" for his role in the 1982 massacre of over 800 Palestinian civilians at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps, Sharon also sparked the Second Intifada with a provocative visit in 2000 to the Al Aksa Mosque, Jerusalem's most important Muslim religious site.

Since coming to power in 2001, Sharon has used unprecedented levels of force to crush the Palestinian uprising. These have included targeted assassinations, one of which killed Sheik Ahmad Yassin, the leader of Hamas, in 2004. Far from weakening the fundamentalist and anti-Semitic Hamas movement, this assassination had the opposite effect. Today Hamas support stands as high as 40% in some polls of Palestinian voters. This upsurge is due also to corruption, authoritarianism, and disarray within the more secular Fatah movement, hitherto dominant in the Palestinian territories.

The U.S. government and media are praising Sharon as a peacemaker because he evacuated the Gaza Strip last year. While this was certainly more than a token concession, the Israeli leadership thinks it can keep control of Jerusalem, while walling up the Palestinians in Gaza and parts of the West Bank, as a de facto peace settlement. This is a grand illusion, just as much as is the Palestinian leadership's talk of a right of return of all refugees to Israel proper.

## Bosnia anniversary

It is the tenth anniversary of the Dayton Accords, the rotten U.S.-orchestrated compromise that ended the Bosnian and Croatian Wars of 1991-95 by ceding over half of Bosnian territory to Serbian forces. Some 200,000 were killed in those wars, mainly at the hands of Serbian nationalists, with most of the victims Muslim or Croat civilians. Top Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic is on trial for genocide at The Hague, while the other two biggest war criminals, Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, who ordered the 1995 Srebrenica massacre of 7,000 Bosnian men, remain at large. Supposedly the post-Milosevic Serbian government is helping the war crimes prosecutors to track them down, but...

In December, the dissident Serbian Radio B92 reported that, during the past decade, General Mladic's military pension has been paid every month into his bank account. His relatives and two Serbian military officers are authorized to make withdrawals.

the right to organize, and with few other legal protections, workers face low pay and harsh and unsafe conditions. At the bottom is a floating population of some 100 million migrant workers, driven into the cities by rural poverty and unemployment, and without any rights whatsoever. Even if migrants are killed in an industrial or mining accident, this may not be included in the official death toll.

These issues came to the fore around the case of Wang Binyin, a young migrant worker executed last October. In a situation reminiscent of an Emile Zola novel, Wang had worked for two years in a factory, but his pay was withheld, a common situation for migrant workers. Even after his father called to ask for money for an operation, Wang received only the first year's pay, this with heavy deductions for board and other fees. At this point, he lost his temper, stabbing four foremen to death. In a jailhouse interview, Wang stated: "I want to die. When I am dead, nobody can exploit me anymore. Right?"

Intellectuals, journalists, and bloggers took up Wang's case, but this discussion was soon suppressed. As Cai Chongguo, European representative of the *China Labour Bulletin* wrote recently, the state "forbids intellectuals and journalists from getting involved in worker and peasant questions" (*Le Monde*, 12/17/05). Clearly, the regime fears the type of unity of worker and intellectual that has characterized so many successful revolutions, from Russia 1917 to Poland's Solidarnosc.

Class tensions were also evident in December, when some 20 residents of Dongzhu, a fishing village in Guangdong Province across the bay from Hong Kong, were shot to death by police. Villagers had gathered to protest construction of a giant power plant, which involved filling their small bay with landfill. This would have destroyed their livelihoods, possibly turning them into migrant workers too. Coverage of these events, the bloodiest since Tiananmen Square in 1989, was blocked in Chinese media and internet sites. But the relatively freer media of Hong Kong, including TV,

## Australia riots

In December, 5,000 white youth went on a rampage at a beach near Sydney against those who were or were thought to be Muslim or Arab. The white youth had gathered after internet text messages spread rumors about "Lebanese" attacks on peaceful white Australians. Those messages, which neo-Nazi and skin-head groups helped spread, also called for a gathering at the beach to attack the supposedly threatening "Lebanese." At the beach, some wore T-shirts saying "Ethnic Cleansing Unit" or "We Grew Here, You Flew Here."

In fact, nearly a quarter of Australia's population of 20 million is foreign born, and there are some 300,000 Muslims living in the country. Over the years, politicians like Prime Minister John Howard have stayed in power by appealing to racist, anti-immigrant sentiment. Howard began the policy of placing asylum seekers in remote detention camps in harsh climates. He also accused them of throwing their babies into the sea to gain sympathy. In addition, Howard has taken advantage of Islamist terrorism, especially the 2002 Bali attacks that killed nearly 200, many of them Australian tourists.

was able to reach much of industrialized southern China with detailed reports.

The anxiety of the Chinese rulers was not decreased when, during the same week, anti-globalization activists from around the world converged on Hong Kong's World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting. Protesters shouted "No Bush!" and "Down WTO." They slightly damaged the U.S. Consulate, while South Korean farmers managed at another point to break through police lines. Some 10,000 police were on hand to confront only a few thousand demonstrators. Alongside the action on the streets were forums where activists from around the world shared experiences.

One of them, Shamima Nasrin from Bangladesh, decried the effects of trade liberalization on her sister workers: "70% of garment workers are women; most of them will lose their jobs and end up being trafficked or going into prostitution."

As we went to press, 14 WTO protesters were facing trial, nine of them Korean farmers. We demand freedom for these and all other political and classwar prisoners in China.



WTO protests in Hong Kong in December.

## Life and struggle on Mexico's border

The year 2006 portends many challenges for undocumented immigrants and their supporters. On Dec. 30, Guillermo Martinez, a 20-year-old from Guadalajara, Mexico, was shot in the back and killed as he and his brother were trying to cross the heavily fortified border at Tijuana-San Ysidro, to visit family in Pasadena, Cal. The Border Patrol agent who shot him, himself a Mexican, claimed Guillermo had thrown rocks at him.

This horrific event, which evokes the Israeli military's treatment of rock-throwing Palestinians, occurred two weeks after the House of Representatives passed some of the most draconian anti-immigrant legislation ever (HR4437, brainchild of James Sensenbrenner and Peter King). It authorizes the construction of 700 more miles of fence through parts of California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, criminalizes anyone who lends any kind of aid to someone they know to be in the U.S. illegally, provides for the deployment of the military along the border, and makes it easier to deport immigrants without giving due process. It hasn't passed the Senate yet. Even the Catholic Church has sent a formal request to Congress and Bush demanding they not make it law.

The murder of Guillermo Martinez has enraged Mexicans on both sides of the border, who listen to the stories every day of someone dying trying to get into the U.S. Several protests have been held on both sides of the border. Fueling that rage are comments from officials like Michael Chertoff, Secretary of Homeland Security, who came to San Ysidro for a press conference Jan. 5 to say that while the killing will be investigated, the Border Patrol will continue to pursue a policy of "zero tolerance" towards anyone they feel threatened by. He added that the job the Border Patrol does along the 2,000 mile border is a "humanitarian" one. The administration of Vicente Fox has also been the target of protests, as he has done nothing but bow down to Bush's refusal since September 11, 2001 to negotiate reforms to the antiquated immigration laws.

—Mitch Weerth

## 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.