

NEWS & LETTERS

"Human power is its own end"—Karl Marx

Vol. 51 No. 2

APRIL/MAY 2006

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WORKSHOP TALKS

Saying 'no' saves a life

by Htun Lin

In February, Gov. Schwarzenegger, in the last appeal for death row inmate Michael Morales, decided he should die. Morales was convicted in 1983 of the brutal rape and murder of a teenage girl. His execution would add to a long list of those who perished since California revived the death penalty.

Executions at San Quentin State Prison had been conducted cleanly and swiftly, without much incident, before Morales. There were, of course, the vigils of several hundred to a few thousand outside the gates. Bearing witness to yet another state sanctioned murder, these vigils remind the rest of society of the uncivilized basis of our "civilization."

DEATH CHAMBER NO-SHOW

In contrast to the noisy demonstration outside, inside the death chamber a quiet routine unfolds methodically. The journalists, the state officials, the families of the victims all know their proper places. This time, however, the court mandated an additional licensed professional, an anesthesiologist.

Even the condemned knew his role. He knew to climb onto the deathbed, which eerily resembled a hospital gurney, where he would be strapped in. As the needle was inserted into his veins, perhaps he would remember the gratitude he felt toward another health worker when a similar needle delivered a cure for a serious infection—the kind of gratitude I am reminded of by all the "thank you" notes patients leave behind in the hospital where I work.

Morales' execution never took place. The health worker never showed up. The American Medical Association (AMA) didn't give him the blessing to do so. This "non event" was headline news around the world. This time there was no autopsy. Instead, the examination was of the body politic and American "civilization"

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BLACK/REDVIEW

'Covenant' cannot overcome crises

by John Alan

Over 2,000 people in Oakland and another 1,000 in San Francisco came out on March 4 to meetings promoting a new book edited by Tavis Smiley, *Covenant with Black America*, now a bestseller. A leading Black intellectual, Cornel West, heralded these meetings as a possible starting point for a new mass movement. *Covenant* grew out of a panel discussion of 23 prominent Black politicians, academics, community activists and religious leaders that took place in February of 2005 in Atlanta. It was called State of the Black Union.

The panel sent out an appeal asking what people thought were the most crucial problems facing Black America. The response was deep and wide. This input was then compiled into ten chapters of *Covenant*, each of which focuses on one issue. The tremendous response to this appeal, reflected in the initial input and in sales of the resulting book as well as mass outpourings for this tour, shows the depth of the crisis in Black America. Some of the pressing problems *Covenant* covers are the right to health care and well being, the right to educational opportunities where everyone can achieve their full potential, the system of unequal justice and environmental justice.

This effort comes from a range of Black politicians and academics who rose to prominence after the Civil Rights Movement. Ron Dellums, who addressed the

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New challenges to global capital in Latin American battle of ideas

by Peter Hudis

At a moment when the Bush administration is facing a quagmire in Iraq and growing opposition to its policies at home, Latin America may not appear to be its central area of concern. Yet events there are becoming as worrisome to it as those in the Middle East.

A left-wing government under Evo Morales took power in Bolivia in December; a radical who favors nationalizing U.S. mining interests, Ollanta Humala, is hoping to become the president of Peru in April; and a left-of-center government may take power in Mexico if Andrés Manuel López Obrador of the PRD wins its presidential election in July. Meanwhile Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez's effort to create a "counter-hegemonic pole" to the U.S. is becoming an increasing irritant to the Bush administration.

The move to the Left by Latin America's electorate is only one reflection of a continent in upheaval. In Ecuador the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities last month called for a nationwide uprising to protest a possible free-trade agreement with the U.S. In Colombia, the government is being sharply criticized for signing a free trade agreement with the U.S. in late February that may throw 2.5 million Colombians out of work once tariffs are lifted on U.S. agricultural imports.

From Mexico to the southern cone, Latin Americans are expressing disgust with decades of U.S.-sponsored neoliberal restructuring that has sunk 44% of Latin Americans into poverty and made income disparities between rich and poor even worse than ever.

BUSH'S FAKE TALK OF 'DEMOCRACY'

That the Bush administration's policy towards Latin America is coming apart at the seams was seen last fall when its Free Trade Agreement of the Americas died in the face of withering attacks by Chavez and other Latin American leaders. Although the U.S. since



March of tens of thousands opens World Social Forum in Caracas, Venezuela in January.

then has tried to promote an Andean Free Trade Agreement, Morales' election has left that in tatters as well. The administration is responding to this situation by accusing its critics of being "undemocratic."

In February Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said of Chavez: "He's a person who was elected legally just as Hitler was elected legally and then consolidated power and is now, of course, working with Castro and Morales. It concerns me." Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte (ambassador to Honduras in the 1980s when the U.S.-supported government murdered thousands of people in Central America) stated a few weeks later that Chavez is a threat because he is "diminishing freedom of the press" in Venezuela.

Aside from the fact that these advocates of domestic spying, torture, and the use of death squads against liberatory forces in Latin America are hardly in a position to lecture others about "democracy," one thing that cannot be said of Chavez is that he has ended freedom

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Sleeping giant stirs in immigrant marches

Mass gathering in Chicago

CHICAGO—Some 100,000 people converged on the city's center on March 10. It is considered the largest immigrant rights march in the city's history, and possibly the nation's. Drawing participants from the entire region, the demonstration was a statement that in the heart of the country, immigrant labor would be heard and seen.

A march shut down traffic in the downtown Loop where a rally in Federal Plaza took place. Some marchers had not reached Federal Plaza, site of the rally, by the time it ended. The crowd was overwhelmingly Mexican, with representation by Poles, Chinese and Irish. Participants had heard about it through the radio, by word of mouth, and through community groups.

The outpouring exhibited aspects of a general strike. Businesses had to close or find substitutes for workers who left to march. Students left classes to go downtown. Attendance at one high school was cut in half. For employees fired for going to the march, a defense committee has been formed.

The pain felt by some businesses and the surprising show of unity and strength underscored that immigrants, especially the estimated 11 million undocumented, are woven into the U.S. economy. As one marcher put it, "Most people don't realize how much work we do, but it's part of their daily lives. We are putting up all the buildings and cooking all the food. Today they'll understand."

A bill passed the House this winter, H.R. 4437 which intends to overtly stop illegal immigration but, as with previous measures, effectively disciplines immigrant labor all the more. The march was a response. In the same week as Chicago's march, over 30,000 rallied in Washington, D.C. West Coast immigrant protests took place in Oregon and California (see page 3).

—Jim Mills

'I came here for work'

CHICAGO—I joined the march for immigrants. It was a strike. It proved we have power. If immigrants didn't work one day, the U.S. would lose millions of dollars. Immigrants work very hard. I came here for work.

When you don't have documents, it's harder to find a job and the employers are harsher. One of the people trying to harm immigrants said the economy is down because of them. But immigrants work for \$6 an hour and less. In places where there are no immigrants, wages are higher.

If you are born here and the police stop you, you pay a fine and go on your way. If you don't have papers, you're put in jail and deported. Without papers, you can't get a drivers license to go to work, and you can't get a Social Security number. The laws are harder for the documented immigrant too.

The conditions immigrants work under have gotten worse. Before when the boss wanted us to work overtime, we were paid for it. Now working overtime is a favor, an unpaid favor. He says, "Can you do me a favor, and work longer?" and if you say no, he makes a call and you're fired. This happens when someone can't come to work, and everyone covers a part of her job, without more pay.

The union sometimes helps, sometimes not. It used to be that when you had been working at a job for one year, you had full rights. Now it's two years. This means also that you do not get a raise until two years of work. This is against the contract. I called the union about getting my raise after a year. The rep never called back. Worse, a friend was hired as a temporary building cleaner—for two years. He was supposed to be made permanent after six months.

If you work second shift, the boss thinks he can change your shift if he likes. He doesn't ask. He's not supposed to be able to decide for you. Maybe you have

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ONLINE: www.newsandletters.org

PHILOSOPHIC DIALOG

A look at Dunayevskaya's Power of Negativity

by Anne Fairchild Pomeroy

Editor's note: This essay by Anne Pomeroy, professor of philosophy at Stockton College, can be found in the online journal Cultural Logic. We publish excerpts of it and invite your responses. For the complete text, see: <http://eserver.org/clogic/2004/pomeroy.html>.

In Raya Dunayevskaya's *The Power of Negativity: Selected Writings on the Dialectic in Hegel and Marx (PON)*, the editors, Peter Hudis and Kevin Anderson, pull together a vast array of her letters, communications, articles, and speeches concentrating on the Hegelian Absolute Idea. The collection traces the progress of Dunayevskaya's interest in Hegel from its preliminary stages to what can only be described as her ultimate passion. She is nothing if not intense in her conviction that it was time to resurrect Hegel for Marx and contemporary Marxism. The Hegelian Idea was one whose time had come.

How firmly Dunayevskaya believed this was betrayed by the tone of urgency and frustration revealed in so many of the writings in this collection. She so clearly feels she is on to something and yet seems unable to be heard properly on the subject. Perhaps Dunayevskaya's announcement of the necessity of the Hegelian Absolute came too soon—too soon for what she calls the post-Marx Marxists who were too captivated by the new critical theory, too soon for a political landscape still laboring under the misconception that Soviet Communism had proved the wrong-headedness of Marxism, too soon for the diverse and factional mass movements that saw in one another only competitors vying for their slice of a very small pie.

TIMELINESS OF HEGEL

Or perhaps in some sense it was too late. Perhaps the extant interpretations of Hegel (and of Marx, for that matter) simply precluded the openness necessary to hear her plea. Perhaps other voices had already captured the attention of Marxists. After all, Kojève was already lecturing in France on Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind* in the late 1930s.

Regardless, Dunayevskaya herself was, for a period of over 30 years, communicating the urgency of a return to Hegel. In one of her letters to Herbert Marcuse, she accuses him of thinking that she is obsessed by Hegel's Absolute Idea; if such an accusation was made it may indeed have been largely correct. (1) But we would do well to remember that those who appear to harbor "irrational" obsessions today often prove to be tomorrow's visionaries. In other words, I believe that Dunayevskaya may have had good reason for her "obsession."

But the difficulty with this collection of writings is that the enormous quantity of material is not systematically linked. I do not believe this to be the fault of the editors. What is clear is that Dunayevskaya herself was still in the process of drawing the disparate pieces of her analysis together. Although she did treat the subject at some length in *Philosophy and Revolution: From Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao*, there is

NWSA Fighting racism

OAKLAND, CAL.—The organizers of the National Women's Studies Association's (NWSA), Women of Color Caucus and Anti-Racist Workshop were thrilled at the turnout of over 30 women at their all-day workshop in January, "Stop Dreaming, Keep Working." Organizer Pat Washington is a fighter for Black women in academia through her own struggle against San Diego State University (see www.patwashington.org).

This was the fourth annual workshop co-sponsored by both groups. It started out as "stop dreaming, start working," as in stop dreaming about ending racism and start working on it. It has been titled "stop dreaming, keep working" since its second year. This year they had a professional anti-racism educator, Shakti Butler, who gave a workshop on "making whiteness visible." It was mostly her talking, so none of us got to know what others in the room were thinking and doing. She imparted her words of wisdom and we were supposed to exercise them on our own after she left.

At lunch, Betita Martinez gave a very "left" talk: Everything you know is exactly backwards; this country is not founded on freedom and democracy, it is founded on genocide, slavery and the land grab from Mexico. No one would disagree, yet her talk gave no "founding" status to any form of resistance except to say that it has always been great.

An aspect of NWSA history that came up was how, at the 1990 Akron, Ohio NWSA Conference, the women of color and their white allies—including several *N&L* members—walked out (see "Racism splinters women's conference," July 1990 *N&L*). Since then it has been a secret everybody knew, but no one talked about, and a dread. So NWSA is now trying to say what happened, what the organization learned, and in what way it has changed. Unfortunately, that part of the agenda got postponed until the general meeting in June. Clearly, there is much more that needs to be done on the subject of "Stop Dreaming, Keep Working, and Start Dreaming Again."

—Urszula Wislanka

new material here which requires consideration and integration. In *PON*, we are left, then, with a fascinating landscape of provocative fragments which I think require a more systematic restructuring in order to make clear the connections between them.

What seems to me especially necessary is to get Dunayevskaya's Hegel back to Marx—in other words, to close the circle and, in so doing, to connect the pieces into a solid edifice. How much Dunayevskaya herself would approve of the reconstruction I undertake I cannot know. I suspect that I may, in the final analysis, emphasize the immanence of the Idea more than she would care to. But this and other features will remain open to debate.

'WHY MARX, WHY NOW?'

The title of this essay, "Why Marx, Why Now?" clearly plays on the question that opened *Philosophy and Revolution*—"Why Hegel? Why Now?" And it is meant to indicate the contention of my work here: that we do not really understand Hegel for Marx until we return to Marx.

In other words, the two questions elide. In Hegel, Dunayevskaya found the answers to her questions

South Dakota tragedy



Protests in South Dakota against the abortion ban.

The religious Right in the U.S. knew exactly why their leader, George W. Bush, nominated and manipulated the recent approval of misogynists John Roberts and Samuel Alito to the U.S. Supreme Court. Now their plan begins...

South Dakota's Republican Governor Michael Rounds recently signed into law a bill banning all abortions in the state except those necessary to save a woman's life. South Dakota doctors would face five years in prison for performing an abortion. The ban is set to take effect in July unless—as ban supporters hope—it is challenged and ends up in the increasingly right-wing U.S. Supreme Court and results in the reversal of *Roe v. Wade*.

In response, on the day after International Women's Day, hundreds of abortion rights supporters rallied in front of the federal courthouse in Sioux Falls, S.D., as motorists honked their support. Abortion rights advocates reported a flood of donations, volunteers and membership requests since the ban was passed.

But the Right's plan to destroy any control women have of their own bodies does not end in South Dakota. Ten other states are considering widespread bans, most in the South. This growing attack on women's rights here is in contrast with legislation in 15 countries in the last ten years which has relaxed abortion restrictions. But globally, well over 70,000 women die every year from illegal abortions.

Re-criminalizing abortion in the U.S. will be a huge blow to the global women's movement as well as women here. We cannot let that happen.

—MJG

WOMEN WORLDWIDE

by Mary Jo Grey

On International Women's Day, March 8, hundreds of Women in Black, Code Pink, and others gathered at a military recruiting station in Oakland, Cal., to "Say No To War." The march concluded at a Women of Color Resource Center's event, "Breaking Rank: Women of Color Soldiers Speak Out."

Amnesty International held an online discussion on International Women's Day, concerning the state of women's rights in Darfur, with Gloria E. White-Hammond, national chairperson of the Million Voices for Darfur campaign. Since 2001, she has been involved in obtaining the freedom of 10,000 women and children enslaved during the two-decade civil war. This conflict has resulted in abductions and sexual slavery, rape, torture, and forced displacement against women and girls.

about the nature of the revolution and what is to come in or as the post-revolutionary epoch. But I believe that this takes us right back to Marx—to a real understanding of the meaning of his call for the abolition of wage labor.

Those who have read Dunayevskaya's other work will recognize that this entails connecting together the

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Iranian women beaten

TEHRAN—The peaceful gathering of 1,000 women's rights activists and human rights defenders who gathered in Park Daneshjoo (Student Park) on International Women's Day, ended in violence when they were attacked by plainclothes militia, special anti-riot forces of the Revolutionary Guards, soldiers and police, who beat the protesters relentlessly.

Women gathered to emphasize their support of women's human rights and peace and were charged by security forces shortly after. The sit-in was silent, with protesters holding signs reading: "Discrimination against women is an abuse of human rights," "Women oppose forced aggression or war," "Injustice means discrimination against women."

After security forces filmed the protesters for interrogations, the women were asked to disperse. The protesters started singing the anthem of the women's movement, which calls for changes in their human rights status. When the final statement was read, the security forces dumped cans of garbage on the women's heads, then charged the group, beating the protesters. Even after they dispersed, protesters were followed and beaten with batons. The security forces administered the beatings in teams. Women and men passing by were also beaten. Journalists and foreign correspondents were held in custody and released only after their film had been confiscated.

We hope the international community—especially women's groups and human rights organizations—will stand in solidarity with Iranian women to condemn this violent attack on women's rights defenders in Iran. We urge women's groups in the region and from Islamic countries to protest the violent actions of the security forces against women's rights activists and defenders.

Editor's note: On the same day in Montreal, Canada; Chicago; Dallas; Washington, D.C.; Los Angeles, San Jose, Sacramento, and Fresno, Cal.; demonstrators marched in support of their sisters in Iran.

Betty Friedan's legacy

Betty Friedan died in February on her 85th birthday. Her ground-breaking book *The Feminine Mystique*, published in 1963, captured what she called "the problem that has no name," which she defined as "simply the fact that American women are kept from growing to their full human capacities." She was a leader in a movement that made it possible for women to understand that our frustrations, dissatisfaction, and smoldering anger with the limitations society imposed on us, did not mean we were crazy, or that something was wrong with us. Rather, Friedan's book was an articulation of an Idea whose time had come and part of the movement wherein women recognized that something was wrong with a society that would oppress women and it needed to change—NOW.

The small women's group I was involved with in 1967 sent a representative to the second convention of the organization that Friedan helped found in 1966, the National Organization for Women (NOW). Our group, which included women active in the civil rights and anti-war movements as well as students, looked at what NOW was demanding—equality with men within this capitalist society, the right for bourgeois women to work when poor and Black women had always worked—and rejected it outright. We were not alone. Radical women explicitly rejected equality as a goal and instead demanded **Women's Liberation**.

Friedan was a founder of several important organizations besides NOW, including, in 1969, the organization now known as NARAL Pro-Choice America; but she was important to the movement's development, not only when she was right, but also when she was wrong. Friedan was so fearful of bad press destroying the movement that she let that set her ground. Instead of rejoicing in the rise of Women's Liberation, she saw it as a rival and too radical. Likewise, she did not grasp the lesbian movement as both emerging from the WLM and as a new source of strength and ideas. She so feared the taunts by anti-feminists and the media that "feminist=lesbian" that she coined the expression "the lavender menace."

Friedan was able to transcend some of her inner contradictions, eventually coming to embrace the gay and lesbian movement, for example. The contradiction she never comprehended is that women can never be free under capitalism. Nothing she ever did challenged capitalism or understood the relationship between women's oppression and the mode of production. It is why the WLM has to move beyond her. While it doesn't cancel out what she did accomplish, her limitations reveal why the struggle must continue—and will.

—Terry Moon

NYC transit workers stay militant

NEW YORK—Subway and bus workers, who nearly paralyzed the city during a three-day strike just before Christmas (see February-March *N&L*), are still without a contract as of mid-March. The leadership of Transit Workers Union Local 100 capitulated to pressure and called off the strike without obtaining a contract. They did negotiate a contract in the next few weeks, only to have the union membership vote to reject it in January. Two-thirds of the 33,700 members voted, and they defeated the contract by just seven votes.

On March 17, the local's executive board ordered a re-vote on the defeated contract which management insists is now off the table. Management has offered a worse contract and called for binding arbitration (which can be forced on the parties by the state's anti-public worker Taylor Law), and the union has faced continued legal threats of devastating fines and loss of dues check-off as punishment for the strike (illegal under the same law).

No resolution is in sight. Having failed to eviscerate the Taylor Law's restrictions on public employees, the transit workers may be fated to join other municipal workers, who sometimes work for years without a contract.

At a meeting of some 200 TWU members and their supporters, sponsored by *Labor Notes* on Jan. 27, Steve Downs, a transit worker, described what happened: "The Metropolitan Transit Association had a billion dollar surplus. There was never any reason for it to demand give-backs as it did. We were hurt when other unions who had pledged support for us in pre-strike rallies, then stood on the sidelines instead of defending our strike."

"The union leadership undercut the strike by not using all its options, such as calling out the commuter railroad workers who are under the same management and who were just waiting for us to put up picket lines. The lack of pre-strike planning hurt too—the union didn't even organize picket captains or locations until

the day the contract was up. The workers had to organize our own picket lines.

"The self-organization forced on the workers during the strike has helped us to be organized since then. First we formed a Vote No Campaign, and since we defeated the contract, that has become the Committee for a Better Contract. We are pushing for more participation by the members through rank-and-file meetings, mass rallies and such. There will not be another strike, however, because the workers are afraid they would be brought back prematurely again. I'm not striking for [union president] Toussaint," they say.

"The contract had some good points, but on balance it was bad because it began to shift the costs of health insurance and pensions to the workers. Maternity benefits were only \$200 a week for four weeks. Toussaint called that 'getting a foot in the door,' but if that is so, then the MTA got a foot in the door by having us pay a percent of our wages for health insurance, with no limits."

Other transit workers spoke from the audience, representing various dissident groups within the union. One man called for a TWU membership meeting to elect a new negotiating committee. Another contrasted the union's failure to prepare for the strike to the UPS strike some years ago, for which that union had prepared for a year. Many workers complained about lack of democracy within the union. A young woman supporter introduced her grandmother, whose husband had been a transit worker during the union's militant era in the 1960s. In those days, she said, the union went into communities and educated people before strikes.

Members of other unions spoke about the need to work together to end the Taylor Law and to support each other's struggles. Striking NYU graduate assistants called for a defense committee to defend the seven students who had just lost their grants. A public school teacher requested rank-and-file support for the transit workers—teachers in her school raised money for the strikers—to their union leadership's condemnation of the strike. The meeting ended by discussing plans for a city-wide labor support organization.

—Anne Jaclard



New York Transit Workers, on strike in December.

WORKSHOPTALKS

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was on trial.

State officials thought their machinery of death was well oiled. Everything fit perfectly. Except the appendage that the worker is subject, and not just an appendage to the machine.

Not even one press article saw this as a labor story, but it was. It was the question of labor, "labor ethics" if you will, posed by medical workers, which succeeded in stopping the death penalty. Before this, nothing made any significant dent in denying the right of a state to extinguish an individual life.

The California death penalty has finally met its match—in California labor. The misogynist "Governator" had already met his match in the recent battles with California's nurses, when he tried to gut their hard-won improvement in nurse-patient ratio.

Frontline healthcare workers over the last decade began to ask the questions, what is healthcare? What kind of labor should health workers do? That questioning was so infectious that it reached up all the way to the AMA, which now reminded all doctors that they were bound by the Hippocratic Oath.

But this movement was begun by those of us at the very bottom, with the aides, the housekeepers, and the clerks, as well as the nurses, who took on restructuring and managed care, which we call "mangled care."

THINKING FOR OURSELVES

What do we value in life? What is life? What is government's place in promoting the meaning of life? These questions were already immanent in our daily work on the shop floor, long before a Terri Schiavo propelled this quandary into the forefront of our collective consciousness. Hucksters, con artists, right-to-lifers and legislators tripped over themselves embracing Schiavo while ready to pull the switch on Michael Morales on death row, or a Medicaid patient on her deathbed.

Even the most highly trained medical professionals, doctors, are forced to ask the question, "With all the sophisticated training I have received, why am I reduced to the status of an automaton, instructed to merely manipulate the instruments of my labor, this time to be applied to produce death, while state bureaucrats do all the thinking for me?"

On that night there was a virtual presence of hundreds of thousands of health workers outside the gates of San Quentin. Hovering above the death chamber, like a ghost, was the unrelenting questioning by healthcare workers of the meaning of their labor, which challenges the domination of the State's prerogatives over issues of life and death.

SEIU picket in L.A.

LOS ANGELES—Over 100 members of SEIU Local 99, employees of the Los Angeles United School District (LAUSD), demonstrated Feb. 28 outside the LAUSD Administration Building where the Board of Education was meeting. Local 99 represents 38,000 non-teacher employees, including teachers' aides, bus drivers, mechanics and cafeteria workers.

The demonstration of mostly Latina cafeteria workers also included some Blacks, whites, and Asians. A few of the signs read "Esta enfermo de trabajar sin plan medico" ("Sick without healthcare"), "LAUSD cafeterias need healthy workers," and "Health Care Now for all LAUSD employees."

Mike Garcia, president of SEIU Local 1877 (which represents janitors), told how the prior janitors union, composed of mostly African Americans, was broken in the 1980s by the hiring of low-income Latino janitors. He stated that Local 1877, today composed mostly of Latinos, has been organizing security guards (many of whom are African-American) for three years. He concluded—we can win if we don't divide by race.

After over two hours of picketing, workers entered the meeting hall. The superintendent of the LAUSD, Roy Rohmer, left the meeting before the first worker spoke. A Latina stated that though she's working two jobs, she has no healthcare. Recently she had bronchitis, which cost her \$900 to treat. She asked for more hours on the job so they could qualify for healthcare.

Another Latina stated that there are over 2,000 cafeteria workers without medical benefits. They are rushed in their work to feed thousands of children, who themselves don't have enough time to eat.

A young white woman stated that she's paid for working three-hour days, but she actually works longer. The cafeteria is short of staff. They need more people and more hours. Her husband, who has no health insurance, was recently diagnosed with cancer. She received loud, spontaneous applause from the audience.

A Black woman said she is paid for three hours a day but sometimes works four to six. One more hour per day would qualify her for healthcare. When her kids get sick, they spread their sickness to their classmates because of lack of healthcare. There are over 10,000 district employees without healthcare. She also received loud applause.

At the conclusion of their grievance, the demonstrators left the meeting and chanted, "We'll be back—we'll be back..."

—Basho

Tehran bus strikers appeal for solidarity

CHICAGO—The bus workers of Tehran, Iran should not be left alone in this critical hour of their battle. The Center in Defense of Freedom and Democracy in Iran-Chicago, by circulating this appeal which was released by the Bus Company workers, is organizing international support among progressive individuals and organizations. By sending your name or name of the group that supports the Iranian bus drivers and other Iranian labor activists, you contribute a whole lot. Long live international labor solidarity!

Contact C.D.F.D.I at P.O. Box 486, Highland Park, IL 60035 or cdfdi@yahoo.com.

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To workers, all trade unions and progressive organizations of the world

CONDEMN THE ATTACK ON OUR STRIKE

On behalf of the 17,000 workers and employees of Tehran and Suburbs Vahed Buses Company, we would like to inform you, the labor organizations of the world and all those who are distressed by the violation of the most evident rights of people, that today, Jan. 28, our all-out strike met the unprecedented assault of the security forces of the Islamic Republic.

They raided our homes from the night before; they even took our young kids to prison. They arrested a large number of people—the exact figure for which we still don't have, but certainly over several hundred.

They forced some of our colleagues to drive the buses, by beating them up and threatening them. They enlisted the help of drivers from the armed forces, and set upon us thousands of police and security officers—both uniformed and plain clothed—in order to smash our strike. This is the situation we are in.

What was the strike for? It was for the release of Mr Ossanlou and the other leaders of the union, thrown into jail for no reason at all by bullying. It was for the introduction of collective bargaining, and for the recognition of the union, for a pay increase, and so on. Can you believe that for such demands, they would launch such a brutal and massive war on us bus workers?

This is what the Islamic Republic did, and we have no choice but to continue our struggle with even greater resolve and unity. We ask you our colleagues and fellow workers throughout the world, you who can have your own unions and organizations, to condemn this action of the Iranian state.

We trust that you will call for the immediate and unconditional release of all the detainees, for the recognition of our union and for the meeting of our demands. We expect that you will condemn the assault on our strike and demand the prosecution and punishment of all those who stormed workers' picket lines.

We thank all those trade unions and organizations who have supported our struggles. We have a hard and long battle ahead of us and urge you to continue your support.

—Union of Workers and Employees of Tehran and Suburbs Vahed Bus Company

Sleeping giant stirs

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another job, or your family needs you, but it happens anyway. Amnesty for undocumented workers may help make these job conditions better.

—Martin

'We're workers, not criminals'

OAKLAND, CAL.—Hundreds of immigrant workers and their supporters filled St. Elizabeth Elementary School playground in the heart of Oakland's largest Latino neighborhood, the Fruitvale district, to observe Immigrants' Rights Day. Most speakers at the Feb. 25 event were Latino, but Asian and African immigrant workers addressed the crowd as well. What was foremost on their minds was H.R. 4437, the immigrant-bashing bill introduced by Rep. Sensenbrenner (R-Wisc.), which passed the House in December.

The bill seems to have picked up where California's notorious Prop. 187 in 1994 left off. H.R. 4437, known as Border Protection, Antiterrorism and Illegal Immigration Control Act, calls for a 700-mile double fence (with a patrolled roadway between) along the U.S.-Mexico border. It boosts illegal immigration to an aggravated felony and allows local authorities to enforce immigration law.

Claire Horton, a physician at Fruitvale's La Clinica de La Raza, announced that the clinic has taken a formal position opposing H.R. 4437. She went on to say, "We don't care if you just get here from Mexico yesterday. We're going to give you health care." But this could spell the end of La Clinica.

Many participants held up signs that read, "We're not criminals, we are workers." This simple declaration took on another dimension when a day laborer from Nicaragua pointed out that anti-immigrant lawmakers did not count on the unity of Latinos. That worker unity, or cooperation, is what Karl Marx saw as the basis of a new power through which the laborer "strips off the fetters of his individuality and develops the capacities of his species," that is, the capacities of being human.

—David Mizuno'Oto

FROM THE WRITINGS OF
RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

EDITOR'S NOTE

February 2006 marks the 50th anniversary of Nikita Khrushchev's denunciation of the crimes of Stalin at the 20th Congress of the Russian Communist Party. His speech was part of an effort to outflank his rivals in the USSR's leadership and to co-opt within manageable channels mass opposition to his regime. By the fall of 1956, when the Hungarian Revolution broke out against the USSR, his plans were in ruins. The Hungarian revolutionaries of 1956 called for a new society freed of both Russian "Communism" and Western capitalism and helped place Marx's Humanism onto the historic stage.

The 50th anniversary of these events raises the question of what has the anti-Stalinist Left achieved in the course of the past half century. To help generate discussion on this issue, we reprint here a 1965 essay by Dunayevskaya which evaluated the momentous world historic changes that had taken place since the end of World War II. It originally appeared in the December 1965 issue of *News & Letters* under the title, "Why Philosophy? Why Now?" It can be found in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, 6760-61.

Twenty years after the end of World War II, a full generation has grown up, and yet look at our "new," non-fascist world. Twenty years after the British Empire began its dissolution with India winning its independence; sixteen years after Tito broke from Stalin and Mao won power in China; over a decade since the end of the Korean War and true de-Stalinization was begun by the East German workers, who first put an end to the myth of invincibility of Russian totalitarianism (a new stage of freedom which was climaxed, in that orbit by the 1956 Hungarian Revolution); eight years since a whole new world was opened by the African Revolutions that so enveloped whole continents that even in the mightiest imperialist empire, the U.S., Cuba tore away free; not to mention the Negro Revolutions right within this country—all these world-shaking events, and yet, and yet, capitalism is still so firmly in the saddle that it can exude a new form of reaction.

In Europe there is De Gaullism; in the U.S. [John] Birchism; [in Asia] the Sino-Soviet conflict signifies not a break from state-capitalism but within it for the domination over the new Third World of newly independent countries aspiring to establish themselves on new foundations. During the same period the Cuban Revolution [of 1959] was so diverted from its humanist channels that Cuba is now hardly more than a satellite of Russia.

Must we then in the U.S. nevertheless fall victim to the gravitational pull of pseudo-revolutionism—Maoism, Trotskyism, Fidelismo, "pure" Communist Partyism? This, indeed, is the only alternative when one looks for escape, instead of true liberation, which can only be achieved where there is a unity of the movement of liberation and the philosophy of liberation.

PHILOSOPHY BECOMES THE IMPERATIVE

Just as it was no accident that in liberated France after World War II Hegelian dialectics and Marx's humanism became the urgent questions of the day, so in our day the answer to What Now? rests in the rediscovery of Marxist-Humanism.

It is not necessary, in order to expose the void, to return to the death of Lenin and the disarray in the Marxist movement. The need for a philosophy is felt by others than Marxists. While it was true that the question was one of life and death for the Hungarian Freedom Fighters [in 1956] who spoke in Marxist terms, it was raised as poignantly by the African revolutionaries who spoke, instead, of "Negritude," independent African socialism.

Humanism has now become the imperative for the Negro Revolution, for the young intellectual, white and Negro, who sees that "the power structure" will not let it be, and yet considers it sufficient to meet each situation as it arises without having any "preconceived notions."

In order to grasp the need for an underlying Marxist-Humanist philosophy, however, what is necessary is to see philosophy not only "in general," but most concretely and profoundly as the link in the forward movement of humanity. Even for seeing the fork in the road ahead it is necessary, first of all, to clear away the intellectual debris, the "undogmatic," no less than the "dogmatic."

A piecemeal policy is incapable of disclosing the historic link, the continuity in the struggle for freedom, much less anticipate the future course of revolution as it overcomes the counter-revolution that has always appeared at critical moments just when victory seemed in sight. Lessons of history cannot be dismissed with a shrug of the shoulders while one continues to live only for the moment. Unfinished revolutions have ever been the source for the new breath the old class society draws upon to keep on existing.

Sometimes it even appears as "new"—as the democratic Weimar Republic [in Germany in the 1920s] did when compared to the Kaiser regime that preceded it.

Why Philosophy? Why Now?

Yet July 1917 (Kornilov's attempted counter-revolution in Russia) was not just a date on the calendar, nor only a Russian phenomenon that intervened between February (overthrow of the Tsar) and October 1917 (the workers' state). February would never have "gone on" to October without the Bolsheviks. As in Germany in 1919, the Russian Revolution would have been beheaded by the counter-revolution just beneath the surface that rose to the surface on all sides to challenge the workers' power that had been achieved.

History is full of examples of "dead" societies that live on, only to exude a new reaction. Between the defeated 1923 German Revolution and triumphant Nazism a whole decade passed, but the seeds of counter-revolution were present in the murders of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht [in 1919], and in the first Nazi beer hall putsch, which failed in the early 1920s but was also not transformed into any new October. Theory is needed not only to discern the counter-revolution but [also] to overcome it. History may repeat itself, but a missed revolutionary moment perishes into the old decadent society.

MARXISM AND OUR OWN PERIOD

When Hegel complained that philosophy had not responded to the challenge of the French Revolution, he didn't mean that it would have done so if thought "corresponded" to reality. He meant thought too would have to transform reality.

It is this, just this, principle of dialectic, which Marx drove beyond the limits of philosophy when he wrote: "Philosophers have interpreted the world. The point is to change it." Far from this meaning only material change, it meant change also in consciousness, in thought, in the minds of the "educators" as well as those "to be educated." From the moment when Marx first stated that in 1845, to the last breath of life he drew in 1883, it would be hard to find a division between his theory and his practice, a letup in either the development of theory or in participation of revolutionary class struggles—national and international. His theory lives after him because it not only reflected the period in which he lived, but our own period.

By introducing the wage laborer into economies, Marx transformed it from a science of things dealing with profits and wages to one of production relations, concerned with laborers and capitalists at the point of production. By introducing Man into Hegelian dialectics, which had concerned itself with development of consciousness and self-consciousness, Marx put an end to the dehumanization of philosophy. By making the masses the subject of history, he did away with the utopianism of socialism, the bringing in of an "ism" by utopian planners from the outside, instead of seeing the masses themselves reshaping history from the material foundations to its ideas. Only the whole is the truth.

For the Humanism of Marxism, man as creativity, became the point of departure—and the point of return, which transformed reality and [provides] insight into the future. As Marx reshaped *Capital* under the impact of the American Civil War and the struggle for the shortening of the working day, theory itself was transformed from an intellectual debate to a reflection not only of the class struggles but of the pull of the future.

RELATION OF THOUGHT AND FREEDOM

The relationship of thought to freedom hit Lenin with such extraordinary force when the Second International proved impotent in the face of the challenge of World War I [in 1914] that this greatest of all realists wrote excitedly, idealistically, approvingly this paraphrase of the mystic Hegel: "Cognition not only reflects the world, but creates it." And indeed this became not just an ideal, but the actual preparation for the Russian Revolution.

Without such an underlying philosophy, Lenin could not have written *State and Revolution* and made this both the preparation for revolution and the foundation for what happens afterwards to assure the needed breakdown of the division between mental and manual labor, if ever a truly new society was to be created.

The historic continuity was lost with Trotskyism. Having failed to become a polarizing force for any new Marxist regroupment, however, there was no necessity in the 1950s to destroy all its pretensions to historic continuity. With the Sino-Soviet conflict out in the open in the 1960s, however, Maoism is exercising a gravitational pull on the Left, and Trotskyism, which is tail-ending it, is just the non-Stalinist whitewash needed to make Mao's "uninterrupted revolution" and Trot-

sky's "permanent revolution" the way to "revolutionary seizure of power"—as if our whole state capitalist age wasn't proof that willingness to take power and class collaborationism are no longer opposites.

Moreover, for the purposes of the Civil Rights Movement in the U.S., the revolutionary sound is heard above the underlying class collaborationism and therefore can act as a polarizing force for the intellectual Left which thinks it can live very well without a total philosophy. The theoretic destruction of Trotskyism has become a necessity because in our life and times there is a danger that the

whole forward movement of humanity will once again be stopped in midpoint.

The further digging into philosophic roots, the reformulation of this philosophy of freedom for our epoch in ever-new forms must be done by us. Neither Marx nor Lenin could have, in the concrete, seen the problems of our age. This is our task.

Therein lies the uniqueness of Marxist-Humanism. Just as it is no accident that six weeks before the East German workers tore down the myth of Communist totalitarian invincibility [in 1953], we concretized "the Absolute Idea" for our age by showing that the movement is not only from theory to practice, but from practice to theory. This decided the structure of *Marxism and Freedom*, so the concretization of "the second negativity," that is to say, not only the overthrow of the old but the creation and continuity of the new, will determine the structure of a new book [*Philosophy and Revolution*].

No one else has even posed the working out of a new relationship of theory to practice demanded by our age. The re-establishment of the Humanist and Abolitionist roots of Marxism, which were the goals of *Marxism and Freedom*—and which were concretized on the American scene by *American Civilization on Trial* and on the world scene by the chapter on Mao in the new edition of *Marxism and Freedom*—must be extended so that both organizationally and philosophically, the spontaneous movements on a world scale can rediscover the missing link: the historic continuity with the freedom struggles and once and for all have freedom be, individually, socially, totally.

Developing a Philosophically Grounded Alternative to Capitalism

"[Today's realities] show that simply saying 'no' does not represent a forward step in the movement for liberation. Much, much more is demanded. The key is not whether one opposes specific aspects of today's reality but whether one develops a concept of the transcendence of capitalism. If the radical movement refrains from the arduous theoretic and practical labor needed to meet that challenge, it will repeat the errors of the past instead of posing a viable alternative."—Marxist-Humanist Perspectives Thesis for 2005-2006

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PHILOSOPHIC
DIALOG

A look at *The Power of Negativity*

Continued from page 2

material on labor from her *Marxism and Freedom* with the material on Marx and Hegel in *Philosophy and Revolution*. In the final analysis then, I think that *PON* is not really about Hegel but about Marx in the worst (or best) way. For the way in which Dunayevskaya is capable of reading Hegel and particularly the end of Hegel's *Logic* is premised upon her understanding of Marx, of the unity of the Marxian corpus, of the imperatives of concerned praxis for the present and the vision of a future in which real freedom and hence real humanity is truly realized.

The driving premise of *PON* is that post-Marx Marxists have gone terribly awry in their rejection of Hegel's idealism. She says, "we needn't prove the materialism of Hegel [as Lenin was trying to do] but rather the idealism of Marx." She circles around a single still point. The object of her obsession is the last paragraph of Hegel's *Science of Logic*, and she returns to it again and again. This paragraph is, she maintains, essential to understanding what Marx meant by revolution, what comes after the first revolution, the negation of negation, the new beginning, the realization of freedom.

In his *Philosophic Notebooks* Lenin believed he had discovered in Hegel's *Logic* a capitulation to materialism in the transition to Nature indicated at the end of the section on the Absolute Idea. But Dunayevskaya insists that he needed to read on in order to understand Marx fully. Especially important, she believes, are the lines that follow: "The transition here therefore must be taken to mean that the Idea freely releases itself in absolute self-security and self-repose. By reason of this freedom the form of its determinateness which is utterly free—the externality of space and time also is absolutely free for itself and without subjectivity" (*PON*, 72). "The self-determination in which alone the idea is, is to hear itself speak" (*PON*, 105).

The difficulty lies in trying to fathom the totality of Dunayevskaya's meaning. Often, at crucial moments, she will lapse into Hegelian terminology which, when one is attempting to clarify Hegel, can be singularly unhelpful. We need, therefore, to wash a bit of the abstraction off of this material and, more importantly, to make clear and explicit the structural integrity of the whole and, therefore, the rationality of the position.

DIALECTICS AND MOVEMENT

To understand and fully appreciate her accomplishment, it is crucial to recognize that, for her, the beating heart of Marxism is the dialectic. This is why she advocated and practiced a repeated return to Hegel. She hopes that by sending the post-Marx Marxists back to Hegel they will get the dialectic right and, in turn, finally get Marx right.

But in order to understand why Dunayevskaya considered the dialectic to be of such importance it is necessary to recall the text that broke open her understanding of Marx: The 1844 *Manuscripts*. Certainly that Marx was appreciated in Hegel's ultimate. . . is not just Substance, that is, a static thing, but Subject, self-creative and developing. . ." (*PON*, 199).

Marx's focus, however, was not on Subject in the abstract but on the subject as human being and thus also on the human condition. In the 1844 *Manuscripts* Marx clearly articulates the role of the human subject as mediator of the social objectivity. The dialectical or historical materialism of Marx is captured here—human activity is the conscious mediation of settled objectivity to new objectivity.

This particular presentation of human mediation is, in fact, the basis of the critique of capitalism in *Capital*, Vol. I. It holds a place of prominence in the Preface to Marx's *Grundrisse* and stands as the declaration of the nature of human labor opening the chapter on "The Labor Process and the Valorization Process" in *Capital*, where Marx says, "Labor is, first of all, a process

between man and nature, a process by which man, through his own actions, mediates, regulates and controls the metabolism between himself and nature." Marx goes on to indicate, however, that human labor is not like the activity of any other creature. The fundamental difference involves the engagement of ideas. "Man not only effects a change of form in the materials of nature; he also realizes his own purpose in those materials. And this is a purpose he is conscious of. . ." (2)

But this is the alteration upon Hegel: it is we (as concrete imaginative projective beings), not the Idea (as abstraction), who are the motive force, the efficient cause of the dialectical movement of the real/material world. Arguably Hegel himself might agree with this. Certainly he sees the human being enacting and realizing the Idea in or as history, but the difference seems to be one of emphasis. We are pushed, in the final analysis, to ask the question: Is the human being the agent of the Idea or is the Idea its own agent?

The question is really about which conditions the other. This is not unimportant, as it reaches into the core of the matter—freedom itself. One must ultimately decide whether the human being is going to be posited as the medium of the Idea's self-movement or whether human mediation is accomplished through the Idea. If the latter, then the human being is the ultimate subject as Marx would have it. Is this really what is implied in Hegel? I think not, and certainly Marx thought not.

Marxism is "a philosophy of human activity" (*PON*, 129-130) and it is Marx's focus on the human being, his humanism, that contains an insight not otherwise achieved. In it, he has gone beyond Hegel and has grasped the idealism as it is possessed, enacted, and known by the human being. What is strikingly interesting and appropriate is that Marx's surpassing of Hegel on this matter is a simultaneous retention and is, therefore, a true sublation. For the Idea is no less present, even in some sense no less absolute, but now it is dialectically united with the material reality in human activity.

FREEDOM AND FIRST NEGATION

In order for there to be movement there must be change and in order for there to be change there must be negation. It is the presence of the idea in human consciousness that effects such negation. It is the presence of the idea in human consciousness that gives us our particular power of negation and hence of alteration, for through the idea I can consider formal reality freely. I can consider what is not yet the case by considering other formal possibilities.

But what does this have to do with the analysis of labor in Marx? The real tragedy (and final injustice) of capitalism is the enslavement of the human idea. This is what Dunayevskaya saw so clearly. She understood that labor power is the human potential for creative alteration of the natural world. The political/economic analyses in *Capital* reveal that in the capitalist mode of social relations, the power of creativity which is made possible by the presence of the idea (as negation) in human consciousness is brought for sale on the market. This sale is an act of desperation. "Free" of means of production, "free" of commodities to either sell or to meet basic needs, the would-be capitalist laborer has no choice. (3) Labor power is sold but activated; it is "purposeful activity aimed at the production of use-values." (4) As a result, this power to produce, to mediate, to alter reality by enacting the alteration of form originally "seen" only ideally, is purchased and put to use realizing products, commodities—ultimately realizing only one thing—surplus-value, capital.

REVOLUTION AND SECOND NEGATION

The first negation is the first revolution. For Dunayevskaya this was the negation enacted in the Russian revolution. This is a "no" to capitalism and manifests itself as the mere negation of the institution. In it, the worker carries out a revolution by a negation of her status in the capitalist system. Here the worker says "I am not wage labor." But this initial negation is merely preliminary and has no direction. This is because it is not yet self-conscious. The negation of the negation occurs when this act of self-determination "hears itself speak" (*PON*, 105).

The revolutionary truly hears herself denying her status as capitalist labor and, for the first time, understands its meaning. What does it mean to say that I am not wage labor? It involves a recognition of the positive content of the original negation. By hearing her own self-determination in the "no" to capitalism, the revolutionary recognizes her self as the Subject of the revolution: the one who can say no—the mediator, the free subject of the movement itself. It is one thing to say that a condition is unwanted but it is quite another to understand the power involved in the ability to both think and enact the alteration of the unwanted.

What is unleashed then is creativity itself. The second negation involves the human being (humanity) hearing its act of self-determination as such. It is, therefore, a very special kind of consciousness. A coming to self-consciousness. As the recognition of the

inadequacy of mere negation, as the recognition of the positivity of the act of negation itself as negativity, it entails humanity's self-consciousness as revolutionary. It is revolutionary being (human being) thinking itself.

Here then is the ontology that I think reaches back to Dunayevskaya's earliest understanding of Marxist humanism. The second negation is the negation of the form of social relations that is capitalism and, because the specific operation of capitalism involves the enslavement of the negation itself (the creative power of the human being), the negation of the negation is the real return of the human being to herself, the "freedom of freedom" if you will and thus the ultimate humanism.

The becoming of the Absolute Idea is, therefore, the liberation of human being. Negation is, therefore, absolute because, to quote Hegel, contradiction is the "root of all movement and life, and it is only insofar as it contains a contradiction that anything moves and has impulse and activity" (*PON*, 61). Or, to bring it back to Marx, "there is nothing immutable but the abstraction of the movement—*mors immortalis*." (5)

If indeed all is movement, and if indeed the contradiction is the source of the movement, and if further the human being is the self-determined source of the negativity that can serve as con-

tradiction to any actuality, then humanity is, in this sense, absolute. Therefore, the Idea that is freedom, even operating as it always must on the level of the particular, is still absolute.

CONCLUSIONS

If what I have said regarding *PON* is correct, then there are several immediate benefits to be derived from following Dunayevskaya's lead on the Hegel-Marx connection:

1. We obtain a better and more nuanced understanding of Hegel. Dunayevskaya allows us to understand that the Absolute Idea as a new beginning is entirely consistent with the Hegelian project. We are urged to see that we need not give up on Hegel because of the abstraction of his idealism. Marx certainly never did. He understood that we could not give up on Hegel, the true philosopher of movement, but that we could locate his Absolute Idea not in a transcendent space as an ideal principle driving its actualization with as much iron determinism as any scientific materialism, but rather as humanity's self-consciousness as the source of the new society.

2. We obtain a better and more nuanced understanding of Marx. Dunayevskaya's reintroduction of Hegel provides the only adequate understanding of the historical or dialectical materialism. Any uncritical positing of a vulgar determinism is out of the question.

3. We obtain a better and more nuanced understanding of revolution. Dunayevskaya insists that we pay attention to Hegel, that we probe the *Logic* and the *Phenomenology* again and again so that we can comprehend that revolution is not a mere violent negation of the extant but a coming to consciousness of our own being human—not a party-line dictating the activities of its members but the unity of our thought and action which is the new society.

It is clear that we do not yet hear ourselves speak the first revolution. We are still trying to think the dialectic and our thought in this regard is still so inadequate as to need to be brought back to it again and again. We are still trying to speak the dialectic and because we are still trying to speak it we have yet to hear ourselves speak. There are stirrings of course. This Dunayevskaya saw clearly. There is discontent clearly evidenced in mass movements (*PON*, 245). There are ongoing struggles across the globe—struggles against. We do not yet hear what these struggles reveal about the creative power of the working class. And until such time as we do, we will not yet have realized the revolution and ushered in the revolution in permanence.

But this realization takes us beyond Dunayevskaya because it leads us to see as primary the issue of how such consciousness is elicited. We need to battle for the coming-to-be of human consciousness and this battle will not be easy. Clearly capitalists have become aware of the importance of reproducing an ideology of disempowerment which could, on the view I have sketched out above, only be called an anti-humanism. We must respond in kind. It is a struggle for our shared future.

Notes

1. Raya Dunayevskaya, *The Power of Negativity: Selected Writings on the Dialectic in Hegel and Marx*, eds. Peter Hudis and Kevin B. Anderson (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2002), ref. p. 129.
2. Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Vol. 1, trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), pp. 283, 284.
3. For the description of this double freedom of the worker see Marx, *Capital*, pp. 272-3.
4. Marx, *Capital*, p. 290.
5. Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, trans., H. Quelch (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1995), p. 119.



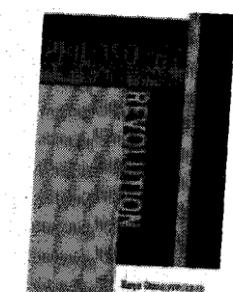
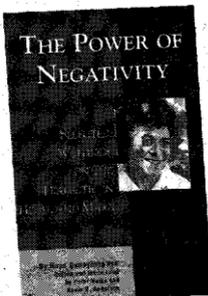
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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

KABUL

Over 1,500 women and men participated in an event organized by the Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan to celebrate International Women's Day, March 8. Participants included a 12-member delegation of RAWA's Italian supporters and a large number of journalists and guests.

Children of RAWA's orphanages, from different ethnic groups of Afghanistan presented patriotic songs in Pashto and Dari. A theatrical play was presented by students of RAWA schools. The Arya musical group came on stage to present songs, but unfortunately the electricity was cut and their performance was interrupted. On behalf of RAWA, Rahima Paenda, a suffering mother whose daughter and son-in-law were killed by a U.S. bombardment in 2001, presented a certificate of honor to the Italians. A certificate of honor was also presented to Mr. Mir Ghulam Nabi, a worker at Kabul Museum. He accepted a big risk during the Taliban regime and took precious museum pieces to his house to save them from the Taliban's drive to destroy all ancient pre-Islamic figures.

A RAWA member introduced Mir Ghulam Nabi: "We regard him and his like as real heroes of the Afghan people, we don't need fake heroes made for us by foreign powers."

RAWA

CHICAGO

We had a wonderful International Women's Day celebration. The theme was "Women Resist." It was in two parts.

On March 4 the Chicago Coalition for International Women's Day heard two panels. The first had an international dimension with speakers from Guatemala, a woman who works with mainly South Asian women, a representative from the Brazilian Landless Workers Movement, and a U.S. woman who spoke on how International Women's Day is celebrated globally as a national holiday. A speaker from NARAL Pro-Choice America spoke on the recent South Dakota abortion ban.

The second panel was more local and

included a former member of JANE, the underground abortion service, who talked about its history when abortion was still illegal. A community activist spoke on how Section 8 and the end of the Chicago Housing Authority is working to improve the bot-

tom line for developers but not the people being displaced. A member of the International Women's Day Coalition and Chicago Peace Pledge spoke on media, specifically the sexist cover of last month's *Vanity Fair*. A speaker from Females United for Action told of a success story of having a sexist billboard taken down.

On March 8, International Women's Day, we rallied and then marched through downtown Chicago chanting: "Health Care is a Right," "Women demand a fair wage; anything else is an Outrage," and "Monday for Education, Not for War and Occupation."

Sue

On March 8 the Center for Freedom and Democracy in Iran-Chicago helped to organize a demonstration at Daley Center. In addition to slogans regarding women's rights, other placards demanded "Free political prisoners in Iran" and "No to war and no to foreign intervention in Iran." The group also distributed the resolution provided by the international women's movement, which read in part: "Today Iranian women are facing their most difficult challenge: the fight for basic human rights. Despite the presence of a theocratic regime dictating every aspect of personal and public life, Iranians are witnessing an unprecedented rise of gender-equality awareness ... They have joined the global women's rights movement and are demanding the basic rights set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

Ali Reza

THE BLACK DIMENSION

The march here in February celebrating Martin Luther King's birthday revealed the concerns the Black community faces in South Central Los Angeles today. They are not seen in the more affluent community of Hollywood's anti-war movements, where the Black community is rarely present. Its concerns are more than an anti-war stance as could be seen in the signs carried in this march. They included "End Execution," "National Black HIV/AIDS," "Fight War, Racism and Poverty," and "Stop Police Brutality."

The message of Martin Luther King's nonviolence was inverted by the presence of military convoys and soldiers in the march. Traffic cones kept the crowd under check. This violent attitude toward a community celebrating the leader of the Civil Rights Movement can be seen recently in the ruling on three white teenagers who savagely violated an unconscious 16-year-old and were given only 21 months of prison. Near-life terms would have been given if Blacks had committed the crime. At the end of the march over 20 police officers were casing the gathering of about 30 teenagers gathered at the corner of Florence and Martin Luther King Boulevard.

Manel
Los Angeles

Watching George W. Bush speak at Coretta Scott King's funeral turned my stomach. She spoke up for the end of the death penalty, the right of gays and lesbians to have freedom from discrimination, including the right to marry (in opposition to her daughter Bernice), and for the end of war, especially Bush's war on Iraq. She was a civil rights activist before she married Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr and until her death supported the MLK Center for Non-Violent Social Change in Atlanta, GA.

Women's Liberationist
Chicago

READERS' VIEWS

how to articulate an alternative to capitalism. You have to turn to Marx. He was opposed to the Marxists in the U.S. who did not support the struggle against slavery. We have to break through some of the misconceptions about Marx that Labor is the only problem and that there is no Black question outside of the labor problem.

Revolutionary
California

BUSH, NIXON AND THE LAW

In my mind there is a very direct relation between Bush's illegal spying and then saying go ahead and pass an anti-torture law. He is clearly not going to be bound by any such law, given his lack of respect for any Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act procedures—as taken up in the February-March issue on how the "Bush agenda spawns crises." That article set an important historic context. Bush reaching for a single party state is a much greater threat than when Nixon aimed for it. Now, when all three branches of government are controlled by Republicans, we have to hope there will be more cracks in their ranks.

Concerned
California

LABOR FIGHTS

The Congressional hearings on mine safety following the Sago mine disaster clearly revealed the delaying tactics of the Mine Health and Safety Administration's officials to avoid taking any action to curb the unsafe practices of mine operators. They were "studying" scores of safety proposals, sent a team of investigators to Australia to learn about mine tracing systems and wanted solutions. But they didn't want to hurry, because many proposals weren't proven. It's the stock action-delaying bureaucratic answer to any call for action. Send it off to study—for years and years and years. The fact is that there are mine safety systems and devices in operation right now in some mines where the union and miners have demanded safety improvements. They don't have to send a team to Australia, they can do it right here, right now—and they know it. But that wouldn't delay action, would it?

Andy Phillips
Detroit, Mich.

What I've been seeing from the youth in the midst of all the crises in the world is that they want a direct focus on anti-capitalism. In a discussion of the last issue of *N&L* for example, they liked the article by Andy Phillips on the miners very much, but some took issue with the

VOICES OF REASON FROM BEHIND THE BARS

We must break past the stratification of "free" and "incarcerated" to become one solid block representing a unified goal. Nobody is free under oppressive capitalism. As long as the prison industrial complex continues to practice forced work (legal slavery) the grassroots job sector for the "free" proletariat will be in perpetual competition. Marx said in his economic writings that "labor is a commodity... the capitalist is always free to use labor and the worker is always forced to sell it."

Prisoners are forced to work in correctional industries, for pennies on the hour, the same jobs that were once free world industries to free world citizens. How can you compete with us? UNICOR, the federal prison industry, has roughly 22,560 "workers." Some of these prisoners work outside the prison in maintenance positions, receiving the average of 12 cents to 40 cents. The workers produce office furniture, clothing, textiles, etc. In order to challenge this malignancy we must make a protracted effort at unifying, forming a symbiosis of thought and action that pans from the prison workers to the "free workers." As a prison activist I encourage Marxist-Humanist revolu-

tionaries to become part and parcel to the prisoner of conscious class struggle.

Prisoner
Tamm, Illinois

I am very grateful for *News & Letters* striving to inform on a perspective which the general media would consider unorthodox, if not profane. *News, to me,* must be swallowed with a grain of salt, but I find *N&L's* views coinciding with my own on most subjects it expounds upon. Many would say Marxism is entirely based on an ideology of non-conformity and carping. Yet *N&L* exposes alternative views that show capitalism and "democracy," as we know them, are not the ideal and especially not the only choice. Thank you for letting me be part of this movement.

Prisoner
Iowa Park, Texas

end, which referred to the Bush administration gutting health and safety. Some thought it put too much emphasis on Bush, saying that kind of gutting must have been going on before Bush and that capitalism is the real problem.

College teacher
Illinois

HAITI'S 2006 ELECTION

The U.S. is playing against Haiti in a Wild Card game, and the winner is ... ? The U.S. said it had no hand in forcing President Jean-Bertrand Aristide out of office Feb. 29, 2004. That was the first card dealt from the deck. The second card dealt was the new election, but that card kept being held back to allow all the chips (from the UN, IMF and the so-called friends of Haiti) to position themselves for what they want. Finally that second card was dealt. It was the election date, Feb. 7, 2006, 20 years to the day that Baby Doc fled Haiti to France. The third card was to announce the winner of the presidential election, their puppet. "Baby Doc" Bush (who many believe stole the 2000 and 2004 elections in the U.S.) was to take credit for the Haitian election. But the Haitian masses would have none of it. They demanded all ballots be counted and the puppet regime announced the winner. The Haitian masses won with Rene Preval as the new president. The fourth card is the inauguration. The last card is Aristide in Haiti.

Nouveau Toussaint
Chicago

WELFARE RIGHTS

In response to protests from Detroit welfare rights activists, the Detroit City Council voted to raise water rates for suburban customers outside the city limits. Learning such a measure was illegal, they then voted to raise rates for all. Now everyone is angry at everyone else. Meanwhile the affordability plan for indigent customers, brought to the table by activists concerned for 10,000 city residents whose water has been shut off, is buried in a mass of rhetoric and political name-calling.

Activists need to keep up the pressure on the City Council and Water Department to correct widespread problems which contribute to rising costs. Water shut-offs and collection of bills fall unfairly on residents, when industrial and commercial users get away with flagrant violations. Citizens with broken meters wait months for repairs. Further protests in support of the affordability plan are planned.

Rights activists
Detroit

N&L is very educational. Of late, I have been passing my copies on to friends. Then we sit as a group and share our thoughts. You will be receiving requests for order forms in coming weeks from a number who want to have their own copies to study.

Prisoner
Kenedy, Texas

When I read my favorite column, "Black/Red View" in the Nov.-Dec. 2005 issue, I was excited to know that Charles Denby and *N&L* worked with Rosa Parks for the Alabama African American people. What an outstanding woman she was. Actually, there is much good to be said about this country and the Bill of Rights. It is just not being used by the people in power. This is a multiracial country but the only people who seem to be together are the rich who are draining the poor and needy right out of existence. I hope *N&L* may open up the eyes of others to see what this country has done to its people over so many years. There is a great deal of work for all of us to do.

Prisoner
Florida

Ton Keough

MILOSEVIC'S CRIMES LIVE ON

It was startling to hear that Milosevic had died suddenly of a heart attack in the Hague, especially so because of the possibility that he was trying to cheat justice and history by manipulating his own health. His drawn-out trial before the Hague Tribunal seemed inadequate, in any case, to address Milosevic's crimes against humanity.

From the moment in April of 1987 when as a petty bureaucrat he journeyed to autonomous Kosova to decry supposed Kosovar out-rages against ethnic Serbs, Milosevic became the face of Serbian narrow nationalism. But his voice was far from alone—he had the backing of public intellectuals, even those like Mihailo Markovic, a prominent Marxist dissident under Tito, to spew forth his justifications for beginning ethnic wars.

The drive for a Greater Serbia cemented Milosevic's power at the cost of more than 200,000 corpses. He gained allies in high places, beginning with global powers imposing an arms embargo on Yugoslavia. Just as the embargo imposed on Spain in the 1930s wound up throwing roadblocks in the way of those fighting fascist invaders, it was no different in Yugoslavia. When Bosnian forces, in spite of all obstacles, were driving back Serb forces moving to officially partition Bosnia, the UN and the U.S. under Clinton intervened.

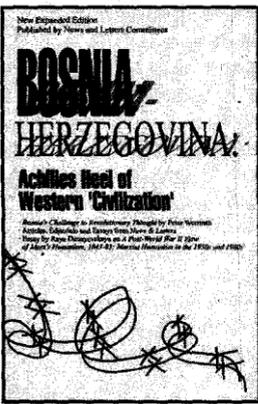
Milosevic also made enemies. I am thinking of the international women's movement. While political and cultural leaders in Europe and the U.S. generally dismissed Serbian expansion as "age-old conflicts," women were prominent among those exposing Milosevic's "ethnic cleansing" as an equally evil synonym for genocide that led both to systematic rape as deliberate policy, and the gruesome massacres of all men and

boys in places like Srebrenica.

I am proud that we in News and Letters Committees, did not remain quiet either. We opposed Serbian narrow nationalism, and our reports in *N&L*, collected in *Bosnia-Herzegovina, Achilles Heel of Western Civilization*, caught the ongoing resistance. We reported how the Bosnian defenders opposed Serbian chauvinism, not with ethnic identity, but with defense of a multiethnic society. Genocide in Bosnia and later in Kosova seems to have conditioned world powers to business-as-usual policies while witnessing genocide on an even more massive scale in Rwanda and now Darfur.

We could not have brought Milosevic to justice without uprooting his malignant legacy. He leaves us with the Balkans partitioned, in a world where "ethnic cleansing"—genocide—is just another tool for rulers to consider.

Bob McGuire
Chicago



STOPPING ALITO

As usual, Terry Moon is right on the money with "For freedom we must stop Alito" (February-March *N&L*). Alito is the worst of the worst of the worst. Bush and the Republicans over time have deviously stacked the U.S. Supreme Court with a Catholic majority, all of whom are strong supporters of the death penalty. Then, the most horrid problem with Alito is his 1997 pronouncement that innocence is irrelevant to him. (See *Lambert v. Blackwell*.) The U.S. Constitution is a worthless piece of paper in the hands of judges to whom innocence is irrelevant.

Robert J. Zani
Tennessee Colony, Texas

With Alito, Roberts, Thomas, Scalia, Kennedy, we are in big trouble in all areas. Hopefully Bush will be out of office before the next Supreme Court Justice retires. If not, maybe the Democrats or independents can get their act together and take over Congress so that the appointment of a crank like Alito will be a non-issue. One thing that the GOP learned from the Thomas hearing

is how to make sure their candidates toe the party line.

Robert T. Wisconsin

When NOW founder Betty Friedan died right after Alito was appointed to the Supreme Court, I thought it must have helped kill her to be ill in such reactionary times and see so much of what she worked for being so quickly destroyed by Bush and his cronies in Congress. In times like these, it's good to remember how quickly things can turn around. I hope she knew about the tens of thousands of Italian women who marched in Italy to keep abortion there legal.

Women's Liberationist Memphis

INVITATION FOR APRIL 29

Our local Women's Action Coalition (WAC) is calling for a rally on April 29 "In Defense of Reproductive Rights." We're sick of seeing what is happening to our right to control our own bodies. In Tennessee, just as in South Dakota, so-called "leaders" are drooling to make abortion illegal. The Senate in Nashville voted 24-9 for a resolution to amend the state constitution to specifically state that women's right to abortion is not protected. Showing how fanatical they are, they voted 21-11 against a version that would have allowed abortion for women who were victims of incest or rape or "if their lives were in danger!"

We plan to rally at the Shelby County Courthouse. Our leaflet reads in part: "Rally to keep women's right to abortion legal, safe, affordable and accessible. Rally to make over-the-counter contraception legal and available for all women. Rally to make sure women never again have to turn to deadly, back-alley and butcher abortions."

Today over 70,000 women die every year and hundreds of thousands more are left maimed because abortion is illegal in the countries in which they live. If you are anywhere near Memphis on April 29, join us. For more information contact: WACmemphis@gmail.com.

Women's Action Coalition
Memphis, Tennessee

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Loss of emergency medical treatment in the Black and Brown community

LOS ANGELES—I believe one of the reasons the Martin Luther King Trauma unit in South Central was closed is because downtown Los Angeles is being remolded into a beautiful center and loft area from all the old beautiful buildings. There was one old department store I can remember years ago near Morningside Hospital, where the paramedics took people for emergency treatment. Morningside Hospital closed after many years, then Daniel Freeman Hospital in South Central was used. But Daniel Freeman had to close its trauma unit because of lack of money. Poor people could not pay.

Then everyone was taken to MLK—the only hospital built in Watts after the 1965 riots. MLK was known for their trauma unit. I remember a shooting on McKinley Avenue near a school. The victim was taken to MLK. The news reported that if they had been taken somewhere else, they would not have survived.

Many of us know Howard Hall, who was accused of the shooting at 56th and Vermont, and that victim was taken to MLK trauma unit. I could name many shooting incidents and the victims were all taken to MLK. MLK was built to provide medical services to south Los Angeles. Now people are dying because there is no longer a trauma unit in south Los Angeles. Harbor General is approximately 20 to 25 minutes away by freeway.

CLOSING OF TRAUMA UNITS

I believe one of the many reasons they closed the trauma units was the wealthy people living downtown did not want to go to MLK for emergency care. They have now added a trauma unit to California Hospital in central Los Angeles. California Hospital has been there for many years without a trauma unit. My friend recently had a car accident just a few miles from MLK, yet they took her to California Hospital.

This system was created to keep the poor people down and make us stay in our own community. Most of

the businesses are not Black-owned. Money made in south Los Angeles does not stay here. It goes home with the owners of liquor stores on every corner. I wish people would not give them business. The owners let you spend your money but won't give you a job.

DEATH ROW KILLINGS

There is something else on my mind—the killing of human beings on Death Row. I am glad that Michael Morales was not executed. (See "Workshop Talks," page 1.) What changed the doctor's mind about participating in that execution? Was it because it took so long to get the needle into Tookie Williams' arm when they executed him? Is it racism, or do the doctors think electric shock is better? Do the doctors have a license to kill?

In California there is a law which allows cops to charge and prosecute supposed gang members of being domestic terrorists. This law is racist to its core.

—Georgiana Williams

Protest Republicans

MEMPHIS, TENN.—The fascist Republicans had their Southern Leadership Conference here in March. I and about a dozen other activists had a little protest



Terry Moon/News & Letters

against Bush and the Republican Party's neo-fascist agenda. We got a lot of positive response from people driving by, a few not so positive, but the real shock for me was engaging these ignorant Republicans who still support Bush (the 36% or so left who do). Would you believe these sheep still believe the lie that Bush invaded Iraq because they attacked us on September 11, 2001? They think Bush has been protecting us from terrorism? Scary.

Harold Ford, Jr., our Democratic Congressman, came by the Peabody Hotel, where the Republicans were meeting, and shook our hands. He said he supports us, until I told him who I was and that I ran against him as a write-in candidate in 2004. He said I disrespected him, and I told him to run as a Democrat and quit running as a Republican and get a backbone.

I saw Tennessee Senator Bill Frist, who won the straw poll at the conference as the favorite candidate for the 2008 Republican presidential race, and booed when he crossed the street to have dinner.

—Jim Maynard

'For Workers' Power'



For Workers' Power: the selected writings of Maurice Brinton
Edited by David Goodwin
AK Press

The name of Maurice Brinton is largely unknown to Americans, yet he was an important socialist writer, activist, and champion of the work of Cornelius Castoriadis on the British left from the early 1960s onwards. AK Press's recent collection of Brinton's writings *For Workers' Power* may serve to extend the circle of those familiar with him beyond the limited number of those in the U.S. who were exposed to the editions published by Fredy Perlman's Black & Red editions in the 1970s.

Brinton, who passed away in 2005, left Trotskyism in the early 1960s to contribute towards building a non-vanguardist and libertarian socialist movement based on the self-activity of workers, all the while maintaining a

career as a neurosurgeon. He became a leading member of the group Solidarity and a translator and proponent of the writings of Paul Cardan, a pseudonym used at the time by Castoriadis.

Much of the material Solidarity published was Brinton's translations of Cardan's work, and *For Workers' Power* contains many of Brinton's introductions to these pieces, along with fascinating journalistic accounts of revolutionary upsurges in France and Portugal.

The bulk of the book is Brinton's two long works, *The Irrational in Politics*, a popularization of the revolutionary period of psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich, and *The Bolsheviks and Workers' Control*, a closely detailed account of the deterioration of workers' self-management in Russian factories from the revolution to the year 1921. Brinton's position on the Russian experience is basically that of left communism, which, though containing much relevant criticism of Lenin's centralizing tendencies, is debilitated by its utter disinterest in Lenin's philosophic reorganization of 1914, an effort towards the renewal of the Hegelian heritage of Marx that still demands study today.

This aspect of Brinton and Castoriadis is what limits the relevance of their work today. Their writings on self-management and the dangers of bureaucratization made great strides toward salvaging an authentic revolutionary position, but their lack of interest in the importance of the Hegelian philosophical current of Marx's thought led toward their abandonment of Marx entirely. Brinton endorsed Castoriadis's identification of Marx's work with positivistic and productivist attitudes of the nineteenth century and claimed that he had to free himself from Marx to remain a revolutionary.

Brinton's work made an indisputable contribution to the movement for social revolution, but the path forward today lies in a direction other than the one he and Castoriadis traveled.

—Kevin Michaels

World Social Forum-Bamako as Africans see it

BANJUL, THE GAMBIA—The World Social Forum (WSF) is a gathering of civil society groups and movements that meets every year in order to try to find solutions to fight against the continued domination of corporation capitalism. For the first time, this year WSF changed its format from one centralized forum to a more global one with events taking place in Bamako, Mali (Jan. 19–23), Caracas, Venezuela (Jan. 24–29), and Karachi, Pakistan. The first WSF was held in Porto Alegre in 2001. The organizers say they began the forum as a response to neo-liberalism and corporate capitalism and to enable activists, NGOs and civil society groups to come together to share ideas, experiences and seek solutions. This is now the sixth year and some people at this year's forum began to question the fact "that nothing seems to be coming out of these enormous efforts."

Holding the WSF in Mali was important to Africans for a number of reasons. First it allowed the participants to feel "more connected to the process than if it was held elsewhere." Second, it enabled Africans to lay down their own agenda and discuss issues that are more specific to their countries and needs. Finally the forum in Bamako acted as a preliminary to WSF 2007 to be held in Nairobi, Kenya, and for the other landmark events in 2007 which will mark the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade and the 50th anniversary of Ghana's independence.

There were several major themes at the WSF: War and militarism, security and peace, globalized liberalism, aggressions against peasantry, alliance between patriarchal and neo-liberal systems, and marginalization of women's fight, culture, media and communica-

BLACK/RED VIEW

Continued from page 1

crowd in Oakland, was a very successful Black politician, heading for years the committee that oversees the military when the Democrats controlled the House of Representatives. His election to Congress in 1970 was an expression of the hope many in the Civil Rights Movement held that elected progressive Blacks could make a change. Dellums retired after the Democrats lost control of the House and just before the election of George W. Bush when there was little hope of resolving the intractable social problems that impact the lives of the majority of African Americans.

RON DELLUMS BACK IN POLITICS

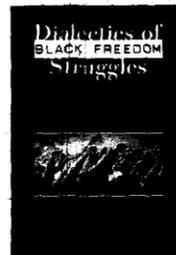
Those problems have become exacerbated under Bush. Dellums, now 70 years old, has come out of retirement to run for mayor of Oakland and got a standing ovation when he said, "The winds of Katrina blew into everyone's living room. It was a metaphor for everything that is wrong with urban America...I'll tell you why I came back. I'm too damn old to be afraid. The *Covenant's* going to be the Bible of the new administration." Upon hearing this Cornel West embraced Dellums exclaiming, "Thank God for this brother here, who steps forward to take the risk."

Why should we believe that a second try at politics for Dellums can effect a solution to this country's problems of race and poverty? According to their website, what motivated the *Covenant* was the appearance of the present crisis as the extreme political divide in the country in wake of the 2004 election. The weakness of the *Covenant* is that it was conceived within this political context without addressing a way to transcend it. Politics is already an alienating step removed from concrete human relations.

NO SOLUTION WITHIN CAPITALISM

Haven't we learned that if one is looking for solutions within politics one is necessarily going to work within the capitalist framework? It is capitalism itself which creates poverty and these divisions within society, and they cannot be resolved without confronting it. That is why Karl Marx pointed to the difference between political and human emancipation.

Recognizing that difference affects not only one's desire for a new mass movement, but also one's relationship to that movement. Inherent in the civil rights struggle itself was a concept of a new society that was never realized. That concept was one where masses of people take control of their lives through their collective action and deliberations. This was the kind of mass self-organization that occurred in the great 1955-56 Montgomery Bus Boycott initiated by Rosa Parks. The Civil Rights Movement also inspired those who narrowed the movement into the political arena. Capitalism's persistent problems, its racism, poverty and unending war-making, mean we have to finish the job of fully articulating a concept of the new society and not look again for a solution only in politics



Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles

Race, Philosophy and the Needed American Revolution
by John Alan

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tion, destruction of ecosystems, international trade, debt and economic and social policies, social struggles, social and human rights. The report on employment and poverty was attended by male and female trade unionists, which ensured there was a gender dimension to the discussions.

Many Africans ask a number of questions. The first of which is, "Who funds the WSF?" It is very difficult to determine who pays for the WSF. It is hard to find any organizations or funding bodies highlighting their role as sponsors.

Their second question is, "Are grass roots organizations represented?" The answer to this highlights the problem faced by many grass roots organizations and explains why so few Africans have previously been unable to attend. Unless groups can find sponsorship from private foundations, attending is almost impossible. Do the people at the forum represent the views of the organizations they represent?

There seems to be a lot of criticisms over the WSF's form, structure and decision-making. What were the focus areas in Bamako this year? What does the WSF mean for Africa? What global solution is the WSF generating?

It is difficult to see exactly what has been achieved after six years of WSF forums. However it is possible that the change in format from one centralized gathering to this year's format spread over three continents may enable more participation and decision-making at grass roots level by activists and civil society members.

—Fabakary Taal
West Africa Correspondent

EDITORIAL Europe, Muslim minorities and 'free speech'

In February, violent demonstrations across the Muslim world targeted Danish and European embassies. Demonstrators were protesting the publication last September by Denmark's largest paper, *Jyllands-Posten*, of a dozen caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad, one of them wearing a turban shaped like a bomb with a fuse attached. Not only did these caricatures mock and stereotype an entire religion with 1.5 billion adherents; they also violated longstanding Muslim strictures against depicting Muhammad, considered a form of idolatry.

DEMONSTRATIONS NOT SPONTANEOUS

These anti-cartoon demonstrations were hardly spontaneous, however. They occurred five months after the event. In addition, they seem to have been orchestrated at the Organization of Islamic Countries annual meeting in Mecca in December, which also called for a boycott of Danish goods. Authoritarian and unpopular Muslim rulers—from Egypt and Syria to Iran—were once again seeking to channel dissent and unrest outward, at the very time they were coming under popular pressure at home.

- In Damascus, where the security police normally forbid all demonstrations, thousands were able to take to the streets and burn the Danish and Norwegian embassies.

- In Beirut, demonstrators destroyed the Danish mission, as well as a Christian church.

- In Tehran, crowds were allowed to set fire to the Danish Embassy, also attacking the Austrian one. The ultra-reactionary President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad, who has denied the Holocaust, issued a call for a contest of cartoons mocking the Holocaust.

- In Nigeria, some 100 died in clashes between Muslims and Christians. It began with a Muslim protest against the cartoons that attacked Christian communities and churches, which led to retaliation by Christian mobs against Muslim communities and mosques.

During the demonstrations, conservative newspapers in a number of European countries reprinted all or part of the offending cartoons. In the U.S., almost all major media refused to publish the cartoons, but several student newspapers did so, again in the name of "free speech."

A FREE SPEECH ISSUE?

On the surface, these events seemed to be a replay of previous controversies. In 1989, as he was dying, and at a time when the theocratic dictatorship he had founded was losing support, Ayatollah Khomeini issued a

fatwa calling for the death of the Anglo-Indian Muslim writer Salman Rushdie, whose novel *The Satanic Verses* had supposedly maligned the Prophet. Rushdie survived, but one of his translators was killed. In 1994, Muslim fundamentalists in Bangladesh drove Taslima Nasreen into exile, after the publication of her novel *Shame*, a feminist critique of women's rights under Islam.

Rushdie, Nasreen, and other intellectuals of Muslim origin have issued a statement defending the right of newspapers to publish the cartoons as a matter of free speech and as part of the struggle against religious fanaticism. One of the signers, Ibn Warraq, wrote in another article of "the inability of the West to defend itself," and went on to praise the "civilizing" effects of the British in India.

In these pages we have frequently attacked Muslim fundamentalism. We have also defended secularism and women's rights against Muslim, Jewish, Christian, and Hindu fundamentalism. However, we think it is simplistic and even dangerous to view the current controversy as one primarily between free speech and religious fanaticism.

THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT

Context is important here. Denmark has only 200,000 Muslims, many of them immigrants, among a population of 5.4 million. They constitute an easy and convenient target for a conservative newspaper like *Jyllands-Posten*. If it were really interested in promoting free speech, why did it refuse, on the grounds that this would "provoke an outcry," to publish caricatures of the Resurrection of Jesus in 2003?

While the international media, dominated as they are by Western nationals, have shown crowds as violent and bigoted, they have not covered the above facts very much. Nor have they covered the fact that the present Danish government survives due to the support of the Far-Right Danish People's Party (DPP), which won 13% of the vote in the last election. Under DPP pressure, funding has been eliminated for hundreds of groups that had aided immigrants. The government also made it much more difficult for Danes to marry foreigners, causing some to apply for citizenship in Sweden, where laws are less restrictive.

One DPP parliamentarian referred to "many points in common between Hitler and Islam." Another stated: "All the Western countries are being invaded by Muslims. Some of them speak politely, but they are waiting to become numerous enough to kill us." According to Bashy Quraishy, President of the European Network

Against Racism, "No European Union country is as Islamophobic and xenophobic as is Denmark."

Given this context, we find ourselves in agreement with Germany's Nobel Laureate Günter Grass: "The drawings remind one of those published in a famous German newspaper during the time of the Nazis, *Der Stürmer*. It published anti-Semitic caricatures in the same style."

When we ridicule Jewish culture, or Muslim intellectuals criticize fundamentalism, this is quite different from when the mass media—in countries where Christianity has been dominant—embark upon the ridicule and stereotyping of religious and ethnic minorities. The editors of *Jyllands-Posten* are not free speech heroes, but bigots and bullies, as much as is the Iranian president. If there are any free speech heroes in this controversy, they are the journalists in the Muslim world who are now in jail for having published some of the cartoons for the purpose of debate, or even for discussing them in a serious way.

THE DANGER

In the period after the 1979 Iranian Revolution, and even more so since September 11, 2001, reactionary political forces the world over have fanned the flames of religious and ethnic fanaticism. Ronald Reagan and Ayatollah Khomeini did so in the 1980s, as did George Bush and Osama Bin Laden after September 11. In the U.S., fundamentalist Christian preachers with White House access have reviled Islam. In more secular Western Europe, despite strong reservations about the U.S. invasion of Iraq, mainstream politicians regularly scapegoat immigrants, many of them Muslim, as the cause of crime and unemployment. This has helped to prevent the anti-war movement from developing into a larger challenge to the system.

In the Middle Eastern and Muslim world, equally reactionary forces manipulate Islam for political ends. In many countries, these forces have replaced the anti-imperialist sentiment. With the rise of radical Islamism, women's rights and the most basic democracy, let alone the prospects for a truly emancipatory revolutionary movement, have been set back immeasurably.

The controversy over the anti-Muslim cartoons published in Europe has helped extremely reactionary forces in both Europe and the Muslim world to gain headway. This is a danger facing all progressive and revolutionary movements, in Europe, in the Muslim world, and globally.

New anti-war group to promote solidarity with struggles in Iraq

NEW YORK—A new anti-war group, the National Organization for the Iraqi Freedom Struggles, is in the process of being launched. The group opposes the Iraq war on the basis of international people-to-people solidarity with the freedom movements in Iraq. Unlike those tendencies in the U.S. anti-war movement which are abstract in the Iraq movement or make abstract pronouncements about the "right to resist" the occupation, this organization makes distinctions among those doing the resisting. Its founding statement demonstrates that it is possible to take an anti-war position that unconditionally opposes the actions of imperialist war and occupation, while not tacitly supporting reactionary forces within Iraq.

Here is its founding statement:

The National Organization for the Iraqi Freedom Struggles (NO-IFS) is a coalition of individuals who have come together to oppose the U.S. war against Iraq by supporting the secular, democratic, and progressive movements in Iraq that are struggling for freedom against the occupation and against the Ba'athists and the political Islamists of all stripes, who aim to impose a theocratic state on the Iraqi people. We intend to be an organized presence within the American anti-war movement on the basis of the following principles:

(1) We recognize the brutality under which the people of Iraq live, due to a recent history that includes dictatorship, wars, economic sanctions, and especially the current occupation by foreign troops, accompanied by indiscriminate killing and systematic torture. The presence of these troops has helped to promote indigenous reactionary forces that often target women, trade

unionists, and innocent civilians. The Iraqi people cannot be free as long as foreign armies occupy their land. We therefore demand the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops and military bases from Iraq, and an end to the U.S.-created "democratic process" that is part of the occupation. We also deem it necessary to stop the "next war" before it happens. To this end, we will help educate Americans as to the causes of continual U.S. intervention overseas.

(2) We recognize the overwhelming, steadily growing opposition to the occupation, and who fight for the rights of women, workers, national minorities, and GLBT people. For instance, we support the efforts of the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq to prevent the imposition of Sharia law and to maintain women's shelters; the struggle led by the Basra Oil and Gas Workers Union, in defiance of threats and assassinations, against the privatization of the industry; the demand for secular government put forward by the Iraqi Freedom Congress, a new coalition of several civil groups; and the IFC's efforts to build a non-sectarian, multi-ethnic society based on neighborhood assemblies in communities of Baghdad and Kirkuk. These struggles and their accompanying ideas are the latest instance of a long and rich history of indigenous Iraqi mass movements for self-emancipation—much of it secular, feminist, and multiethnic—that existed prior to the Ba'athist dictatorship. Although these groups are at present relatively small and weak, this is no reason to neglect them. On the contrary, it is a reason to make our support of them an urgent priority.

Against Iraq occupation

Demonstrations around the world protested the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq which entered its fourth year on March 20.

CHICAGO



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do not support "the resistance" as such. In particular, we oppose all forms of outright or tacit support for the political Islamist and Ba'athist forces that overwhelmingly make up the armed insurgency. We reject all suggestions that non-Western peoples are somehow less entitled than we are to freedom from oppression by foreign and indigenous reactionary forces.

(3) We support the secular, democratic, and progressive freedom struggles in Iraq—the Iraqi women, workers, and youth who have created their own organizations within Iraq, who oppose both the occupation and the terrorist reaction, and who fight for the rights of women, workers, national minorities, and GLBT people. For instance, we support the efforts of the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq to prevent the imposition of Sharia law and to maintain women's shelters; the struggle led by the Basra Oil and Gas Workers Union, in defiance of threats and assassinations, against the privatization of the industry; the demand for secular government put forward by the Iraqi Freedom Congress, a new coalition of several civil groups; and the IFC's efforts to build a non-sectarian, multi-ethnic society based on neighborhood assemblies in communities of Baghdad and Kirkuk. These struggles and their accompanying ideas are the latest instance of a long and rich history of indigenous Iraqi mass movements for self-emancipation—much of it secular, feminist, and multiethnic—that existed prior to the Ba'athist dictatorship. Although these groups are at present relatively small and weak, this is no reason to neglect them. On the contrary, it is a reason to make our support of them an urgent priority.

(4) We advocate that the anti-war movement as a whole adopt this approach to ending the war and occupation—active support for the secular, democratic, and progressive freedom struggles against both the U.S. occupation and the indigenous reactionary forces. This type of solidarity is a central way to build and sustain our movements here. It is by evincing an unyielding, principled commitment to human freedom and to people struggling for freedom—not by explicitly or tacitly supporting a supposedly "lesser evil"—that the anti-war movement and other movements will be able to grow.

NO-IFS is asking people to lend their names to support the statement and help build the organization. You can find information on how to support the founding statement on its website, www.no-ifs.org; or write to NO-IFS, P.O. Box 5, Planetarium Station, New York, NY 10024-0005, or email mail@no-ifs.org.

NEWS & LETTERS
VOL. 51 / NO. 2 APRIL / MAY 2006

News & Letters (ISSN 0028-8969) is published bi-monthly. Subscriptions are for \$5 a year (bulk order of 5 or more, 25¢ each) from News & Letters, 36 S. Wabash, Room 1440, Chicago, IL 60603. Telephone (312) 236-0799. Fax (312) 236-0725. Periodical postage paid at Chicago, Illinois. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to News & Letters, 36 S. Wabash, Room 1440, Chicago, IL 60603. Articles may be reprinted verbatim if credited to "News & Letters."

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News & Letters is printed in a union shop. 759-C

News & Letters is indexed by Alternative Press Index.

New challenges to global capital in Latin America

Continued from page 1

of expression. The open and vibrant debate that is taking place in Venezuela over whether or not his "Bolivarian Revolution" is a viable path to the future is proof of it.

A lively debate is in fact taking place in Latin America today among democratic grassroots groups of indigenous peoples, feminists, workers, national minorities and youth. There are few places to get a better sense of the battle of ideas taking place there than at the World Social Forum (WSF), held in Caracas, Venezuela in late January.

THE WORLD SOCIAL FORUM

This year's WSF in Caracas, attended by 80,000, took place in a radically different context from last year's gathering in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

Last year's event was held in the midst of growing mass disillusionment with the accommodationist stance of Lula da Silva's Workers' Party (PT). Although the PT came to power through decades of struggles by movements from below of metal workers, feminists, Christian base communities, and the Landless Peasants' Movement, Lula has adhered to the neoliberal policies that the masses expected him to challenge.

No mass upsurge preceded Chavez's rise to power. He became president through a national election in 1999 after having earlier staged an abortive military coup. Since then, his promotion of what he calls "Bolivarian Socialism" has created an opening that many in Venezuela are using to promote radical demands, at the same time that many questions are being asked about where his "revolution from above" is headed.

The Venezuelan political context directly impacted this year's WSF. It had a larger presence of traditional Marxist-Leninist tendencies than previously. For the first time 850 participants attended from Cuba.

Most important, whereas at previous WSFs it was rare to hear extended discussion of "socialism," let alone a serious analysis of what constitutes a non-capitalist society, this year's WSF was dominated by much discussion of socialism—in part because Chavez has anointed the "Bolivarian Revolution" as a project of "socialist reconstruction."

The question is what is meant by such discussions of socialism and whether the radicalization that characterizes Venezuela today will accentuate or impede the search for a viable alternative to capitalism.

BATTLE OF IDEAS IN VENEZUELA

Chavez's attraction for many inside and outside of Venezuela lies in his attacks on Bush and in his effort to funnel Venezuela's oil wealth into social programs.

Chavez is using a fourfold increase in oil revenue

since 1999 to forge a "counter-hegemonic" pole to the U.S. He is selling oil at below market prices to several friendly Latin American countries. He has floated bonds to help Argentina pay off its debt to the International Monetary Fund. And he is also trading oil for commodities (like soybeans) as part of an effort to curry favor with Morales' Bolivia.

His ambitions extend even further. He is forging close relations with China and talks of using its technological expertise to bypass Venezuela's dependence on the U.S. He is also trying to forge a "strategic alliance" with Iran. Venezuela is one of only a handful of countries that opposes placing restrictions on Iran's access to nuclear technology. This is occurring at the moment when Iran's right-wing president is cracking down on its labor movement, as seen in the arrest last month of 1,000 striking bus drivers (see page 3).

Inside Venezuela, Chavez is solidifying his mass support by funneling much of the nation's oil revenue into social programs. This year 41% of Venezuela's budget is earmarked for spending for health care, literacy, housing, and other needs. It represents the largest and most comprehensive program of social spending in Latin America.

He has also set up a dozen "missions" that provide emergency health, education, and welfare as well as paid subsidies to the poor. The missions are financed out of the growing oil revenue under a separate budget subject to Chavez's personal discretion.

While many at the WSF hailed these moves as proof that Venezuela is moving in a "socialist" direction, such policies have done little so far to dent the nation's massive unemployment. Only 37,000 new jobs have been created in the past year. And many in the missions complain of never getting paid for their work or being paid only occasionally.

Many working people also complain about growing bureaucracy and the risk of one-man rule. Chavez's tendency to appear on television several evenings a week to give four-hour speeches has many critiquing him for a cult of personality and "Bonapartism."

The most applauded as well as contentious aspect of Venezuela concerns the explosive growth in cooperatives. Thousands have sprung up, encompassing everything from food vendors to health care providers to efforts to form cooperatives in industrial enterprises.

These cooperatives, which are also funded by the state from oil revenues, are touted by the government and its supporters as a way to "popularize capital." As one official put it, "The principal idea is that cooperatives or development zones should integrate with other cooperatives to add value through processing and transformation" while avoiding intermediaries such as foreign corporations or private businesses.

Most cooperatives are contracted to sell goods to the government, which gives it a significant role in determining which ones thrive and which fail. At the same time, many socially conscious activists are creating nonprofit cooperatives that provide health care, housing, and social assistance to raise the standard of living of Venezuelans.

Thus the situation in Venezuela is highly contradictory. While some programs being enacted from above have a bureaucratic or state-capitalist stamp to them, large numbers of people are making use of the present situation to press for radical changes on their own.

WHAT IS SOCIALISM?

Such distinctions often did not get made in discussions at the WSF, however, where enthusiasm over Chavez's specific policies tended to trump serious analysis of them.

Even government ministers admit that some enterprises are being turned into cooperatives "not with the intention of transferring power to their workers, but to evade taxes from which cooperatives are exempt." Minister for Popular Economy Elias Jaua stated: "There are many cooperatives that are registered as such on paper, but which actually have a boss who is paid more, salaried workers, and unequal distribution of work and income." Many workers in the cooperatives earn less than the minimum wage, \$188 a month, as they are not subject to national labor laws.

Yet many at the WSF argued that capitalist relations will erode as "social ownership of the means of production" and the elimination of private competition take hold. Clearly there is a growing tendency in today's movements against global capital to return to more traditional approaches that focus on nationalized property and statification of natural resources as the

solution to the problems of neoliberalism.

There is nothing wrong with demanding that global capital be prevented from continuing to rob the natural and human resources of Latin American nations. Just as it is vital for workers to demand a more equitable redistribution of the surplus value that is robbed from their hides each day at work, so it is important for the nations of the South to demand a redistribution of wealth from global capital.

Yet by the same token, just as a worker who obtains a wage increase still lives in a capitalist environment in which those gains can be readily taken away, a popular regime that demands a redistribution of the surplus value robbed from its people by multinational corporations still exists in the context of the world market and capitalist social relations.

In a word, socialism is not the same as nationalized industry and property—even when a "co-management scheme" operates between workers and the state.

As Raya Dunayevskaya put it: "Even where a state like Cuba is protected from the worst whims of the world market and where state planning is total, the price of sugar is still dependent upon the socially necessary labor time

established by world production. In a word, to plan or not plan is not the decisive question. The state of technological development and the accumulated capital are the determinants, the only determinants when the masses are not allowed their self-activity" (*Philosophy and Revolution*, p. 225).

WHICH WAY AHEAD?

The turn back to statism in much of the movement against global capital is by no means complete, including in Venezuela. Independent movements are gaining strength there, such as an abortion rights movement.

The growth of the women's movement explains why Venezuela is the only Latin America country with a constitution that recognizes housework as economically productive activity. Housewives are now able to obtain social security benefits.

However women are still underrepresented in the government. Only 12% of the members of the National Assembly are women. Demands are being raised that 50% of its seats be reserved for women candidates.

Many are probing into a genuine alternative that avoids the dead ends of both neoliberalism and state-capitalism. This was reflected in an "Alternative Social Forum" held at the same time as the WSF by Venezuelan anarchists. Its sponsors stated at the forum: "In the last four years Venezuela has undergone a polarization induced by the top players vying for power against the new Chavez bureaucracy that has supplanted the previous one. Part of the demobilization of the social movements answers to this logic: having taken part in, and assumed blindly, the agenda imposed from above, postponing their own claims. Another chapter belongs to the expectations created by some of the social activists faced with a 'progressive and left' government, spokesmen of a discourse that assumes the language of the movements but whose policies go in the opposite direction."

Clearly an important debate is going on in Venezuela and elsewhere in Latin America over the direction of the movements against global capital—even if the initiative for now rests with those favoring a return to more statist tendencies of the old Left.

One reason for this shift is that while the movement against global capital has raised the important slogan "another world is possible," it has tended to avoid an in-depth discussion of exactly what constitutes a society that negates and transcends capitalism.

Reticence about imposing programs and devising "blueprints for the future," both of which have been integral to the anti-vanguardist nature of the movements against global capital since their inception in the Seattle protests of 1999, is understandable. Yet no movement can live forever on generalizations and good intentions. If anti-vanguardists fail to spell out in precise and specific terms the basic features of a socialist society that transcends the parameters of value production, other less liberatory tendencies will surely do so instead. This is what we are now witnessing, as many who want to know "what is socialism" find the more that traditional, statist leftists are the ones who have a ready-made answer to their questions, albeit a superficial one.

The debate is by no means finished, yet it will not be brought to a successful finish unless we concretize the creativity of cognition by spelling out "what happens after" the revolution, **beginning right here and now.**



The World Social Forum was a global event with gatherings in Caracas, Venezuela, Karachi, Pakistan, and Bamako, Mali (above). For a report on the Bamako WSF, see page 8.

Independent Media Center

Pyeongtaek farmers

DAECHURI, SOUTH KOREA—9:30 a.m., March 15. Two backhoes begin gutting the rice paddies on the far side of the fields. Nearly one thousand riot police stand at the edge of the field, armed with batons and shields. Thousands more are posted around the periphery of the village. An untold number wait at adjacent Camp Humphreys Army base, while hundreds monitor street intersections and key access points to the area, preventing any tractors or farming equipment to arrive for the March 17 spring cultivation.

As the supporters realize that the destruction has already begun, they race down the long narrow concrete path that divides the vast fields. Protestors immediately surround the machines, who halt their excavating so as not to crush anyone. Someone climbs on top of the giant arm and secures himself to it. Elderly women lie down in front of the massive treads while people attempt to get inside the cab of the backhoe.

Unable to continue the digging, the machines stand idle. The residents of Daechuri have feared this moment for years, the day their land would be transformed into dead earth, a mere platform for the U.S. military to expand its operational base.

Suddenly the backhoes begin moving again, but instead of continuing their excavation, they begin refilling the pits with the dirt that they had just removed. Elation passes through the crowd upon seeing the workers disobey orders and follow their hearts.

Then the military riot police move into action, cutting off all sides. They occupy two bridges to prevent any more protestors in the village from joining. For a while there is a stand-off. An 80-year-old woman feints and is taken to the hospital. Police begin to arrest people.

Many protestors resist and are beaten down. Elderly villagers hurl mud at the police. Some cut through the fence and set small fires on the army base. The struggle continues for hours with neither side gaining or losing much ground.

Before nightfall, the police backed off, the day had been won, the fields still exist. Forty people are arrested. Many are injured, with broken wrists and ankles. At least two are still hospitalized in serious condition. Injured, exhausted, and running low on supplies and reinforcements, the residents of Daechuri and supporters of the Peace Village fear what will come tomorrow.

Find out more from the Pan-S.Korea solution committee against U.S. base extension in Pyeongtaek (<http://antigizi.or.kr/english/>) and Save the Pyeongtaek Farmers! (<http://www.saveptfarmers.org/>)

—Supporter

Workers battle privatization in El Salvador

El Salvador's recent past is peppered with privatization attempts that led to increased prices, mass firings and, in some cases, massive popular resistance to defend access to public services. The sale of the telecommunications and the attempt to privatize parts of the public healthcare system provide starkly contrasting outcomes.

In 1998, ANTEL, the former state-owned telephone company, was sold to France's Telecom, which then sold it to America Mobil. The sale and re-sale led to the layoff of 5,000 workers, the loss of seniority, salary cuts and the dissolution of ASTEL, the ANTEL workers' union. Three years passed before workers could overcome government obstacles and legally re-constitute a union, now known as SUT-TEL.

Not all government attempts at privatization have gone according to plan. In 2002, the nurses and doctors of the Salvadoran Social Security Hospital System went on strike to oppose the implementation of a healthcare voucher system and the privatization of hospital janitorial services.

Tens of thousands took to the streets in "white marches" (named for hospital employees' white scarves). Resisting jail and constant repression, healthcare workers and supporters forced the government to

retract its privatization proposal. Moreover, the Legislative Assembly passed the "State Guarantee of Health and Social Security," written by activists to protect access to care and bury the healthcare privatization issue. Doctors and nurses fired for taking part in the strikes were ordered re-hired by the Supreme Court.

Resistance to water privatization has been common



Members of water workers' union condemn water privatization.

throughout Latin America since the 1980s. But the resistance in Cochabamba, Bolivia in 2000 raised eyebrows because of its mass character and its principled opposition to corporate control of water.

The Bolivian government granted Bechtel-sub-sidiary "Aguas del Tunari" a 40-year contract to run Cochabamba's water system in 1999. The contract imposed fines for home rainwater collection and a 100% rate hike. The increase meant that many fami-

lies who could afford it were spending one-fifth of their monthly incomes on potable water. In January 2000, a four-day strike against the Aguas de Tunari contract froze the city.

Marching off against government repression, further marches resulted in 200 people injured, and one dead. When the government desperately negotiated a rate rollback with Aguas de Tunari, movement leaders didn't budge. Finally the government nullified the contract and created a new publicly elected water commission.

Bechtel, for its part, is suing Bolivia in World Bank arbitration court for \$25 million for breach of contract.

Movements in Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica have stalled or stopped water privatization plans. All three countries, however, have initiated "pilot projects" allowing private investment in some cities.

Historic memory of Latin American resistance to privatization is not lost on Salvadoran officials as they continue their march to decentralize the public water company and implement co-investment.

At a November 2005 forum on water management at the San Salvador Sheraton Hotel, a government water technician obediently explained, "Co-investment is not the same as privatization. We're not talking about a Cochabamba here." Activists in the audience roared, but the declaration revealed the government's cognizance of recent history: officials here have tweaked their strategy and are planning a one order, gentler privatization, and they're hoping no one notices.

Meanwhile, residents like Azucena in San Martín continue to suffer the effects of an underfunded public water system held hostage by the drive to privatize. "They charge me about \$7 per month, but water only comes every three days," she says. "I don't know who is responsible, but service should be better."

—Paul Pollack

Further debate on Dunayevskaya, Hegel and dialectics

Editor's note: In the last issue of *News & Letters*, we published a review of Raya Dunayevskaya's *The Power of Negativity* by Marx scholar Chris Arthur, as well as a response by Kevin Anderson, one of the editors of the book. Below we continue the debate with a response by Arthur and a rejoinder by Anderson.

★ ★ ★

I do not at all discount the notion of absolute negativity. I am with the old Engels who counterposed Hegel's method, rooted in the absolute negativity of reason, a dialectic which is in essence critical and revolutionary, to Hegel's "system."

The problem with the notion of absolute negativity is its abstract character. It reduces all real movement to a purely logical category, complains Marx (*Marx-Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 343; MECW 6, p. 164). It is fine as a slogan against static closed metaphysics. But it cannot substitute for analysis (MECW 6, p. 163). This is a problem when the explanatory value of relating such abstract categories to reality comes in. As Marx said in 1843, Hegel does not provide the logic of the body politic but merely its bodily images for logical categories (MECW 3, p. 16). So I am uneasy when Dunayevskaya finds all social struggles express the self-same "absolute negativity."

Moreover I disagree with Dunayevskaya in her attempt to recuperate for Marxism the "Absolutes" of Hegel's system. I am glad that Anderson acknowledges she was wrong to say the syllogisms and Ideas, Nature and Spirit first appeared in 1830. However, he is right to point out that the very last sentence first appeared then. But I fail to see the connection of this sentence with any "new beginning." This sentence says that everything that has happened, is happening and will ever happen is just Absolute Spirit playing with itself, a sentiment he already expressed in the Preface to the *Phenomenology*. The problem here is that this "mystical subject-object" (MECW 3, p. 342; MECW 4, p. 167) internalizes every relation and transition. "Hegel replaces the real connection between man and nature by an absolute subject-object which is at one and the same time the whole of nature and the whole of humanity, the Absolute Spirit" (MECW 4, p. 167). As Marx complained in 1844, this Absolute has no objective relations, hence it is a mere thought (MECW 3, p.

337). Thus there is a deep connection between Hegel's monological ontology and his idealism.

In conclusion, my own appropriation of Hegel's Absolute is exactly opposite to that of Dunayevskaya. If capital becomes absolute, it excludes new beginnings by definition. The question arises whether and where there is a pure self-referring movement not requiring mediation in something outside itself? There are two cases: 1) the logic, in which thought deals with thoughts; 2) the form of value, generated through a practical abstraction from the natural bodily form of wealth, and gaining self-movement through the circuit of capital; but although having the inner drive to become absolute capital cannot produce its "others," labor power and nature. Hence "new beginnings" require the liberation of productive activity, and Nature, from their subsumption under the totalizing logic of capital.

—Chris Arthur, author of *The New Dialectic and Marx's Capital*

Are we really to go back to Engels's *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy* of 1886 as ground for today? There, as is well known, Engels made the (infamous) distinction—not to be found in Marx—between Hegel's "method" and his "system." This ultimately untenable distinction has plagued Marxists ever since, especially when coupled with Engels's assertion, in the same paragraph, that Hegel's "absolute idea" put forward a notion of "the end of history" (MECW 26, pp. 360-61). In this way, Engels anticipated not the creative dialectical investigations of Lenin (after 1914), Lukács, Lefebvre, Marcuse, and Dunayevskaya during the 20th century, but the banal utterances of Fukuyama, who (mis)appropriated the work of the great revolutionary philosopher, Hegel, for his own neo-liberal ends. Another problem with Engels on dialectics is the notion that all of philosophy can be divided into two "great camps," that of "idealism" (conservative) and that of "materialism" (progressive). In this scheme, Socrates and Plato, the founders of the dialectic, are conservative, and the crude materialists Machiavelli and Hobbes progressive.

As to Marx's rejection of Hegel's absolutes, Arthur quotes most selectively.

For example, he does not mention Marx's formulation, "the absolute general law of capitalist accumulation," this in the discussion in *Capital*, Vol. I of rising unemployment as an outgrowth of capital accumulation (Fowkes trans., p. 798, *emph. added*). Nor does he mention Lenin's view that at the end of the Absolute Idea chapter of the *Logic*, Hegel "stretches a hand to materialism" (*Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 234). (Space does not permit a discussion of Dunayevskaya's attempt to go beyond Lenin on this point.)

I am glad that Arthur acknowledges that in criticizing Dunayevskaya's "errors," he misread the German original concerning the final syllogisms of Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind* (1817-30). This was the last volume of Hegel's "system," *The Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*. Arthur now concedes that Hegel's final sentence, wherein the idea "engenders and enjoys itself as absolute mind," was added only in 1830, as Dunayevskaya maintained. But Arthur still fails to see how this sentence could be connected to new beginnings for human emancipation. Of course, if we adhere to the

Engelsian framework, Hegel must be doing something reactionary here, since this is the end of his "system." No matter that Marcuse (1955) and Dunayevskaya (1953) thought otherwise, and used this passage to work out an emancipatory dialectic in anticipation of the 1960s.

Be that as it may, Arthur needs above all to consider this. Marx's core dialectical category, "negation of the negation," the one that he singles out in both the 1844 *Essays and Capital*, is but another way of saying "absolute negativity." For as Hegel writes in the *Science of Logic*: "But in all this care must be taken to distinguish between the first negation as negation in general, and the second negation, the negation of the negation: the latter is concrete, absolute negativity, just as the former on the contrary is only abstract negativity" (Miller trans. pp. 115-6). If this passage is an expression of Hegel's "method," as against his "system," then why does it include the absolute at its very core?

Arthur now seems to regard his differences with Dunayevskaya as ones over interpretation, rather than her supposedly error-ridden Hegel scholarship. Nonetheless, it is too bad that Arthur, who has written some fine critiques of Engels on *Capital*, would still attach himself to Engels on dialectics.

—Kevin Anderson, co-editor of *The Power of Negativity* and author of *Lenin, Hegel, and Western Marxism*

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OUR LIFE AND TIMES

by Kevin A. Barry and Mitch Weerth

Called a "tsunami" by many, the Hamas victory in the Jan. 25 Palestinian elections is a major turning point in Middle East politics. In a stunning upset, this well-organized Islamist party, often linked to suicide bombings, but also known for its network of social service organizations, defeated the nationalist Fatah movement, obtaining a two-thirds parliamentary majority. Fatah has dominated the Palestinian liberation movement since the 1960s.

Above all, the Hamas victory symbolizes the long-term shift in the Middle Eastern and Muslim world away from secular nationalism or socialism, and toward various forms of Islamism. Given the importance of the Palestinian cause to Arabs and Muslims everywhere, the defeat of secular nationalism by Islamists in Palestine is sure to strengthen Islamism elsewhere. Moreover the Hamas victory comes on the heels of the strong showing by the Muslim Brotherhood in the recent Egyptian elections.

Even before the Hamas victory, the other Palestinian tendencies had made many concessions to

Mexican mine disaster

The Feb. 19 explosion at the Pasta de Conchos coal mine in San Juan de Sabinas, Coahuila that killed 65 miners has had ongoing repercussions in Mexico. A two-day general strike of mine workers was held on March 1-2 that affected eight northern and central Mexican states, halting production at 70 companies. The strike involved 270,000 workers and was only the second time since the founding of the national mineworkers union in 1934 that a general strike has been called. Then, on March 7, 30,000 workers rallied in Mexico City in support of miners. Both of these events were held in part because the Vicente Fox administration has moved to remove the president of the mine workers union, Napoleon Gomez Urrutia, who expressed some mild criticism of the general state of mine safety in the days after the explosion.

The families of the 65 miners killed and their supporters have continued with their protests at the offices of the owner of the mine, Industrial Minera Mexico, and its parent company, Grupo Mexico, because the owners say it will take them months to dig the bodies out. The conditions in the mines has deteriorated greatly in recent years. Union workers work alongside "contratistas," other workers who are legally self-employed (and non-union) but are doing the exact same jobs. After a youth was killed in a mine in Queretaro, March 7, it was reported that only one of the 60 mines in that state is operating legally. The rest are "abandoned" mines.

Haitian elections repudiate U.S. interference

The February elections in Haiti were a clear repudiation of the U.S.-orchestrated overthrow of leftist President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 2004. Despite international pressure of various kinds, the Haitian people voted overwhelmingly for René Prével, a close colleague of Aristide, now living in exile in South Africa.

Prével got over 50% of the vote in the first round, while his nearest opponent, the neo-liberal Max Manigat, received only 12%. Manigat protested the fact that a recount eliminating fraudulent ballots had put Prével over the top, but left-of-center candidates like Evans Paul conceded to Prével.

Recent reports, especially Walt Bogdanovich and Jenny Nordberg's "Mixed U.S. Signals Helped Tilt Haiti Toward Chaos" (*New York Times* 1/29/06), have proved the extent of U.S. meddling in the 2004 over-

Significance of the Hamas victory

Islamism. To take one example, there is by now only a single movie theater operating in the Palestinian territories. Therefore it will be very hard for Palestinians to see Hany Abu-Assad's "Paradise Now," the brilliant film about the Second Intifada and its contradictions.

The Hamas showed how years of Israeli repression and murder have backfired. Take for example Israeli President Ariel Sharon's "brilliant" decision to assassinate the elderly and infirm Hamas spiritual leader Sheik Ahmad Yassine with a missile in 2004, after which he boasted that Hamas was finished.

The Israeli government used the Hamas victory as a pretext to lay siege, March 15, to a Palestinian prison in Jericho on the West Bank and seize six prisoners charged with killing an Israeli cabinet minister in 2001. They said they feared the six would be freed.

The size of the victory in January seemed to stun even its leadership, who, like the rest of the world, had expected a Fatah victory with a strong Hamas showing. It later emerged that the large parliamentary majority masked a popular vote of only 44% for

Hamas, largely because the fractured Fatah movement often ran multiple candidates in the same district.

Most international discussion since the election has turned on whether Hamas will moderate and negotiate with Israel. On the Right, the Bush administration and the Israeli political establishment say Hamas must be pressured into changing its rejectionist stance toward Israel and renouncing terrorism. Such tactics, including Israel's illegal impounding of Palestinian tax money, will increase support for Hamas.

Progressives and pro-Palestinians claim that Hamas is ready to moderate and that, in any case, its victory was an expression of anti-corruption and democratic sentiment, as well as disgust with the failure of the Oslo framework to bring about a viable Palestinian state. According to this view, Hamas is more a radical nationalist party in Islamist garb than a deeply Islamist movement. This may turn out to be illusory.

To be sure, the Hamas electoral campaign concentrated on corruption, gangsterism, and authoritarianism inside the Fatah-dominated Palestinian Authority, while downplaying its denial of Israel's right to exist and its reactionary stances on culture and gender. Nonetheless if Palestinian voters were merely rejecting corruption, gangsterism, and authoritarianism, they had many other choices, such as the secular leftist party of Mustafa Barghouti.

While Hamas is not as fanatical as many other Islamist movements, its overall program includes many restrictions in the spheres of gender and culture. Progressive and secular Palestinians may resist such measures. It should be noted that in Qalqiliya on the West Bank, where Hamas has governed locally for a year, not a single Islamist won this time around. This stemmed from their banning of a popular cultural festival because it did not segregate men from women.

Chile under Bachelet

Michelle Bachelet, the first woman to be elected president of Chile, was inaugurated March 11. She considers herself a "socialist," but insists she "wears many hats" and makes no claim of intending to antagonize relations with the U.S. by asserting more state control over the economy.

Bachelet's father was an official in the Allende government until the 1973 coup, then was jailed, tortured, and died in prison. Bachelet and her mother received similar treatment but were then allowed to leave the country for exile. She returned in 1979 and became a doctor. She served as health minister, then defense minister, under the outgoing president Ricardo Lagos.

Her cabinet of 20 will include ten women. Women's groups hope that she will push through improvements in the laws on reproductive rights, but a major difficulty is that the legislature continues to have only 10% women, a sad legacy of the 15 years of post-Pinochet governments. Bachelet's close identification with the economic restructuring begun during the dictatorship, which has created one of the sharpest divides between rich and poor of any Latin American nation, meant that her campaign garnered very little enthusiasm among the youth despite the fact that she was up against the billionaire businessman Sebastian Pinera.

In addition to having to prove that her "socialism" will mean something for the poor, Bachelet will be challenged to help the Mapuche indigenous people and their supporters in their battles against corporate timber interests in the south of the country. A draconian "anti-terrorist" law promulgated under Pinochet has been used against the Mapuche in recent years to dissuade them from destroying timber company property. Supporters like the lawyer Myriam Reyes Garcia are facing legal battles themselves for standing up for them.



Hundreds of thousands of students, workers and jobless took to the streets in cities throughout France for three major protests in March to oppose the conservative government's attempt to gut job security for young workers. The First Employment Contract (CPE) would allow employers greater "flexibility" to terminate new employees under 26 years old at short notice.

Ostensibly this would encourage employers to hire more youth, helping to reduce a youth unemployment rate of 20%, which reaches 40% in the urban ghettos. "Our revolt is...to keep what we have," said Nadjet Boubakeur, leader of the student movement UNEF.

The powerful C.G.T. labor union threatened a one-day general strike if the government takes no immediate action to cancel the law. Over 68% of French citizens oppose the legislation.

throw of Aristide. While official U.S. policy favored compromise between Aristide and his conservative opponents, the International Republican Institute (IRI), a wing of the Republican Party, operated on a parallel track, telling those same opponents (and their armed allies) to wait for Aristide's overthrow.

At the same time, the Aristide legacy is a mixed one. On the one hand, he championed the oppressed, in this the poorest country in the Western hemisphere. On the other hand, he resorted to warlordism, allowing criminal gangs to flourish, so long as they kept the small externally supported opposition in check. The more "moderate" Prével will surely try to placate mass hunger for change without offending the Bush administration, but the class contradictions in Haiti may be too deep for such a policy to succeed.

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 nuclear 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.