

NEWS & LETTERS

"Human power is its own end"—Karl Marx

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WORKSHOP TALKS

Which side is your union on?

By Htun Lin

In May it was reported that the California Nurses Association has finally decided to join the AFL-CIO, mainly because they got the AFL-CIO to agree to fight along with the CNA on their cardinal issue, single payer health care. CNA sees this as an extension of their struggle to curb corporate abuse in health care.

On the other hand, other union leaders have aligned themselves with corporate abuse. In April, the Change To Win Coalition, a break-off from the AFL-CIO led by SEIU President Andy Stern, announced an impending renewal of their template agreements, which give sweetheart deals to the owners of major nursing home chains.

These contract deals are similar to the Labor-Management Partnership that has been practiced in my shop for many years. Over ten years ago, Stern engineered the Labor-Management Partnership between AFL-CIO President Sweeney and Kaiser HMO.

That was a betrayal of the then ongoing struggle for quality care led by the nurses of the CNA—it undercut support for the nurses' roving one-day strikes. In the workplace nurses are still fighting those battles.

Stern's new sweetheart deals take Labor-Management Partnerships to a new low. In exchange for allowing nursing home owners to have the complete say in working conditions, including denying workers the right to pursue quality care issues, the companies would guarantee SEIU the right to organize the shop.

The only residue of unionism in Stern's organizing drive is getting his hands on more checked off dues. No wonder the deals were relayed to the owners in a secret memo pledging that none of the contents of their agreement would be revealed. One dedicated SEIU activist

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Spying campaign provokes distrust in Bush's agenda

By Olga Domanski

Three festering scandals in the Justice Department reveal an administration hell-bent on killing civil liberties, curbing dissent and, in short, laying the foundations of single-party rule. As early as November 2005, the *Washington Post* broke front page news that the FBI had brokered, without any review, orders to investigate tens of thousands of individuals.

Then on March 13 news that eight U.S. Attorneys had been summarily fired stunned the nation. Evidence emerged, despite his claims, that the dismissals were planned by the Attorney General himself in November. And Senate hearings on May 15 about the terminations exposed divisions within Bush's own ultraconservative cabinet, driven by some who want to distance themselves from his outrageous illegalities.

Much of the testimony from James Comey could have the tenor of a movie script. However more than mere high drama poured forth from the former Justice Department official. He recounted the night in March 2004 when Alberto Gonzales, then Bush's White House counsel, and Andrew Card, then Bush's chief of staff, rushed to Attorney General John Ashcroft's intensive care bedside to get his signature for a document. The document was a reauthorization of Bush's



Protest against war and domestic spying as Iraq war begins, 2003.

warrantless domestic wiretapping program due to expire the next day.

Ashcroft, himself no friend of civil liberties, refused

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BLACK/RED VIEW

Legacy of Jamestown

By John Alan

Recently the Queen of England came to the U.S. to celebrate, with President Bush, the 400th anniversary of the 1607 founding of Jamestown in Virginia, the first permanent English settlement on the North American continent. This historic event has often been portrayed as bringing civilization to a backward people.

The permanent presence of the English over 400 years does not capture the essence of this historic anniversary. A deeper truth is that Jamestown was founded by the Virginia Company of London, a joint stock company interested in trade, at first in looking for gold but, soon after, the production of new commodities like tobacco sold in England and in the English American colonies.

BEGINNING OF SLAVERY IN U.S.

In the process of providing tobacco, the Virginia Company discovered that it needed a reliable source of labor. They turned to Black labor power, supplied at first by Dutch traders who brought Africans. In August 1619 a Dutch Man of War sailed into Jamestown and sold the colony 20 Negroes. They were at first indentured servants who could work off the cost of their passage to America. This practice of trade in Negroes persisted and grew. However, Negroes were treated as a distinct class, strictly thought of as a source of labor power for the colony. It became a practice to change

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HISTORY IN THE MAKING—BE A PART OF IT!

The need for a very different world, built on human foundations, becomes clearer every day. We see it whether we look at George Bush's insistence on continuing the bloody war in Iraq despite the massive opposition at home, or the shilly-shallying of the Democrats on cutting off the funding to end it now. We see it whether we look at the recent Supreme Court ruling on abortion as a prelude to the possible reversal of *Roe v. Wade*, or at the new revelations of Bush's increasing illegal spying on U.S. citizens. **Never was there a greater need for a publication like *News & Letters*.**

Born in 1955, at the height of McCarthyism, *News & Letters* has remained the only journal anywhere dedicated to the philosophy of revolution created by Raya Dunayevskaya as Marxist-Humanism and spelled out in its pages as a unique combination of theory and practice. From our beginning, our principle has been never to separate the voices of revolt—of rank-and-file working people, women's liberationists, youth, the Black dimension and other minorities—from the articulation of a philosophy of liberation. The body of ideas she developed over more than three decades to re-establish Marx's Marxism as a "new humanism" has challenged us to continue the labor she had undertaken to work out Marx's Marxism for today.

That is the aim of News and Letters Committees and of our paper, *News & Letters*.

This year marks 20 years since we undertook to continue that purpose without the presence of our founder. It demands an accounting of what we have achieved and are asking you to help us continue.

First and foremost is our success in bringing forth new editions of Dunayevskaya's "trilogy of revolution," the foundational works of Marxist-Humanism: *Marxism and Freedom*, *Philosophy and Revolution*, and *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*. New translations and international editions have been secured, the latest last year being both a Persian edition and a new Spanish translation of *Marxism and Freedom*. And we were proud to bring out a new 40th anniversary edition of *American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard* and to publish it in 2004 alongside a statement on contemporary Black America—*Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles*. We have also brought out a number of Dunayevskaya's writings for the first time in book

form including *The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism* and a collection of selected writings on the dialectic in Hegel and Marx which we titled *The Power of Negativity*.

At the same time, we have worked out a series of original political-philosophic analyses of the Los Angeles rebellion of 1992; the crises in Bosnia and Kosovo in the 1990s; and a statement on the September 11, 2001 attacks as analysis and critique of Islamic fundamentalism and Bush's drive to war. Our principled positions are testimony to our unshakeable commitment to Marx's Marxism.

In the year ahead, we hope to bring closer to fulfillment the collective, organizational effort we have taken to compile and get published a collection of Dunayevskaya's writings on Marx, unseparated from working out the totality of Marx's Marxism for today in every facet of our work. **We are appealing for your help to continue that work.**

Continuing the publication of *News & Letters* and expanding of our activities requires ever-increasing expenses, despite the fact that we have no paid staff. The bills for printing and office rent have increased steadily every year. These are added to web publishing and communications costs. And postage increases that are threatened to begin this year are nothing less than staggering.

What has moved to the forefront in the problems of all print publications is that the sharing of radical information and debate has vastly changed from 10 years ago. It greatly increases the help we need from you, our readers, to support our print version, especially for prisoners or others who depend on it. Your contributions will help build our internet readership as well, and help Marxist-Humanism find new openings throughout the world.

Contribute on line at: www.newsandletters.org/Appeal.htm. Or send your check to: NEWS & LETTERS, 36 South Wabash, #1440, Chicago IL 60603, USA.

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Abortion ban vs. freedom

by Terry Moon

The Reagan-Bush stacking of the Supreme Court finally bore fruit for the fanatical anti-abortion fringe in the U.S. when the retrogressive and misogynist court decision upheld the outlawing of the DX (dilation and extraction) abortion procedure without an exception for a woman's health. We all knew it was coming as soon as Sandra Day O'Connor retired while Bush was still in office—we knew that Roberts and Alito were lying through their teeth when they intoned that they would respect precedent.

So angry that she read excerpts from the bench, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's dissent reveals the raging hypocrisy of the ruling. This decision:

- Overrides the clear precedent that anti-abortion laws must contain exceptions for pregnancies which endanger the woman's life or health. This makes meaningless the concept of "undue burden."

- Wallows in anti-abortion ideology as it "invokes an anti-abortion shibboleth": women who have abortions "regret their choices," and suffer from "severe depression and loss of esteem."

- Blurs the distinction between the viability and non-viability of a fetus. This ruling puts all abortion procedures in jeopardy.

- Ginsburg railed at the justices who throughout "the opinion refer to obstetrician-gynecologists and surgeons who perform abortions not by the titles of their medical specialties, but by the pejorative label, 'abortion doctor.' A fetus is described as an 'unborn child,' and as a 'baby,'... and the reasoned medical judgments of highly trained doctors dismissed as 'preferences' motivated by 'mere convenience.'"

WOMAN AS REASON

Ginsburg concludes: "A decision so at odds with our jurisprudence should not have staying power." But this is the same kind of illusion that the Feminist Majority, NOW, Planned Parenthood, and NARAL Pro-Choice America are pushing. They are agitating for the passage of the "Freedom of Choice Act" which Bush has said he would veto!

MOVEMENT ILLUSIONS

The Left is not much better. Katha Pollitt, writing in *The Nation*, rightly lashes out at those leading NARAL, whose illusions were revealed by their "policy of supporting pro-choice Republicans." Pollitt thinks "a Democratically controlled Congress would never have passed the Partial-Birth Abortion Act." But 80 Democratic legislators voted for

banning DX abortions.

Yifat Susskind, of MADRE, sees the Court decision as a global conspiracy on the part of the "Bush Admin-



Partly in response to the recent Supreme Court decision, Memphis Women's Action Coalition protests in front of a phony abortion clinic.

istration [which] is a product of the Christian Right." Her answers to how to counter such a movement are not only obvious, but the Women's Liberation Movement has been practicing them for decades: 1. linking abortion rights "to social and economic rights"; 2. "expand our understanding of 'women's issues,'" to include "international peace and security, indigenous cultural survival," and 3. create "a new progressive dialogue that makes more room for religious people...working to counter fundamentalist agendas."

This devastating decision codifies, in the highest court in the land, that women cannot make the most basic decisions about our own bodies and lives, that a fetus' existence is more important than a woman's life; that we need the state to make personal and health decisions for us—in short, that women are less than human. It reveals that we live in a society where any freedom we have can be stripped away at the whim of the state—in this case by five Catholic men.

PERMANENT REVOLUTION

The depths of this imposed alienation from our own bodies, the reality that any freedoms we imagine we have can be stripped from us by so few—this actuality doesn't call for electing a few more so-called "representatives," or including more religious liberals in the women's movement. This blow to women's lives reveals the need for our demand to be for a society based on totally new human relations, the establishment of true freedom where women are comprehended as fully human and make our own decisions about our lives and bodies.

This ruling exposes the lie that we live in a free society. A free society would be one where there would be no need for a private life to shelter us from the abuses of the public sphere, from, for example, a sexist Supreme Court, or from the alienations of our jobs. A free society is one where not only would work no longer be an alienation but one of "life's prime wants," so too our public lives would be so tied up with life that there would be no contradiction between our private and public selves.

Marx said we can do this "only by declaring the revolution to be permanent." If this sounds utopian, consider that what's really utopian is believing that women will ever be free in our capitalist, sexist, racist, heterosexist, alienating society.

WOMEN WORLDWIDE

by Mary Jo Grey

The National Organization for Women, the National Congress of Black Women, and the Coalition of Labor Union Women were among the 14 women's groups, representing over ten million women, who joined with WakeUpWalMart.com on Mothers Day to demand that Wal-Mart end exploitation of its women workers and improve their lives by providing a living wage and benefits, and a workplace free of gender discrimination.

Women and other villagers in southwestern China protested for four days in May against a recent crackdown on violations of the government's one-child policy—limiting families to one child, unless the first child is a girl! Women were forced to undergo mandatory health checks, abortions, and fined up to \$9,000. Demonstrators burned government offices and records, overturned police cars and clashed with riot police.

PHILOSOPHIC DIALOGUE

Zimbabwean feminist speaks

by Shereen Essof

Editor's note: Shereen Essof is a Zimbabwean feminist and revolutionary activist currently based in Cape Town, South Africa. She is known for her role in the women's movement in Zimbabwe. The following interview with her was conducted by Ronald Wesso.

If one looks at the experience of women in Zimbabwe and one looks at the role of the state in relation to women's lives, the state has never had the interests of women at heart. Women have actually never been considered full citizens of Zimbabwe. They are only considered citizens when the state has something to gain. For example, in March 2007 the state held a celebration for International Women's Day under the theme of "stop violence against women," on the grounds that they had passed a domestic violence bill. This is interesting and intriguing, given that at the exact same time you had women being detained and tortured by the very same state.

RW: Let's talk about the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) that has been placed so centrally in these events. What do you think of the MDC?

SE: The MDC was born out of a dynamic process of social justice activism. Many of the people who are in the MDC came out of the trade unions and civic structures, when people realized that the prevailing energy could be turned into some kind of power, some kind of counterforce to the ZANU regime. That is how the MDC was born. The MDC came to prominence on a wave of popular support in that they provided an alternative.

But I think things did not continue in that spirit, with a commitment to true democracy, to a struggle that is guided by principles of freedom and alternatives. There is no sound articulated strategy to fight for change. True change. In very real ways the MDC has adopted the political culture of ZANU.

So it would seem that we are stuck between a rock and a hard place. Does the MDC offer a viable alternative? We should be clear about what the MDC is and what its policies are. While the word "democratic" in the opposition's Movement for Democratic Change evokes pleasant feelings, some of the party's policies are rooted in neo-liberal ideology.

In fact, what needs to be happening now is the building of a mass movement, linking the struggles by women, workers, residents, traders, AIDS activists, students, disability rights activists, debt cancellation activists, the rural poor to start defining the content of the change we want. That means a movement that fights for a new political, economic and social order.

RW: Let us talk a little bit about what some call the normalcy of everyday life in Zimbabwe. Life expectancy for men in Zimbabwe is now 37 and for women 34. What does it say about normality and everyday life?

SE: I read something about Zimbabwe the other day: "Yes there is tension in some places, but for the majority life goes on normally. And unfortunately within that 'normality' is a gross amount of struggle." What is normal? And what is abnormal?

I think that in Zimbabwe right now the lines are incredibly blurred. People find ways to continue and to survive, brutally. Perhaps surviving is resistance.

Inflation is at 1,700%. If you go into the shop today and pay 40,000 Zimbabwean dollars for something, the next day it could cost 65,000 dollars. Not many people are earning salaries that keep up with inflation. The strikes by teachers and doctors are indicative of that. Everyday life in Zimbabwe is for many a life of struggle, hardship and deprivation. A life of brutality, without the basic things that you need to be human.

But there is something else that is very interesting about everyday life in Zimbabwe. You can arrive at Harare international airport and drive into town and you will see luxury cars everywhere. You will see BMWs. You will Mercedes Benz's. You can go to restaurants and have the best seafood. In the face of all this deprivation you have the consolidation of a very small elite. There are flows of money outside of the formal economy that means that people are making money from the current situation. And for such people it is not in their best interests that anything should change.

RW: What do you think South Africa's role is? What do you think of the many calls on it to intervene?

SE: It is imperative for the South African government and South African Defense Force (SADC) to take action to hasten an end to the oppression of the Zimbabwean people. The existing softly-softly policy of quiet diplomacy to encourage internal dialogue has failed. One needs to listen to the call by Desmond Tutu and civil society organizations in southern Africa for intervention. The Mugabe regime needs to know that it can no longer rely on the unconditional support of the South African government.

RW: What would an intervention from SADC and South Africa look like?

SE: Mugabe must be called to task. He must be called to account. If he is not, all African leaders are as guilty as Mugabe. For a start they need to explicitly condemn the violent actions being undertaken in the name of ZANU-PF and the Zimbabwean government. End all defense force, security and intelligence collaboration. Cease supplies of all military hardware. Cease

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Women in Iran protest

This is a letter of protest from Iranian women and girls who are appealing to all human rights organizations to not abandon us. The most basic right of a human being is the right to choose one's clothing. The Islamic Republic of Iran has taken away this right among other human rights.

Everyday, we witness a new wave of suppression. One day it is the suppression of the just demands of the teachers. Another day it is a crackdown on workers, students and women's rights activists. Now we are witnessing an attack on all women in the name of defending the veil....

Do not let the experience of March 8, 1979 repeat itself. At that time, Iranian women came into the streets to protest against the decree to wear the headscarf. "We did not make a revolution to go backward." Few political and international human rights organizations defended this demonstration. We can see the results of that inaction now.

Iranian women are demanding support again.... We are being beaten for not fully covering our hair with our headscarves or for wearing short instead of long overcoats.... The right to our choice of clothing is not separate from our right to be free. We are appealing to all women's rights activists around the world and political organizations and social activists to defend us.

—Roya Payan, Women's Rights Activist

On Falwell's death

With the death of Jerry Falwell, the decline of the Christian Coalition, and the falling public approval ratings for the religious Right, there is a danger that people will think they are no longer a threat. In reality, its huge number of constantly multiplying organizations influences society on many levels.

Religious Right think tanks like the Heritage Foundation influence Republican Party and Bush administration policy and have boards that include politicians, their wives and speechwriters. Even those funded by corporations and supposedly focused on free enterprise such as the American Enterprise Institute include in their list of issues the "culture war," prayer in school, and school vouchers for religious and private schools.

Religious right-wing law schools like Regent University produce lawyers and judges indoctrinated with the idea that our founding fathers intended this country to be a right-wing Christian theocracy. Religious right colleges and home school curriculums promote this, using false "quotes" concocted by David Barton and his Wall-builders organization and attributed to Jefferson, Madison, and others who believed the exact opposite.

The Discovery Institute tries to insert creationism into public school science classes and replace a view of the world understood through scientific investigation with one dictated by religious and political leaders.

Marriage counseling programs developed by the Campus Crusade for Christ and Chuck Colson's prison ministry promote patriarchy. The religious Right wants to make this "counseling" mandatory before marriage, and a requirement of welfare "reform."

There are groups that fight the religious right, such as Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, People for the American Way, and the Freedom from Religion Foundation. It's a good thing too because, unfortunately, Falwell's bad ideas didn't die with him, but are reincarnated so that we have to fight them again and again.

—Adele

LAPD assault on May Day marchers

LOS ANGELES—On May Day police dressed in riot gear advanced in formation through the streets and into MacArthur Park, where a peaceful rally was being held. They systematically and brutally dispersed the crowd, instilling fear and clubbing anyone (man, woman or child) who didn't move away fast enough, including a TV journalist. It was reported that they fired over 140 rubber bullets. Some of the images shown on national TV were victims of rubber bullets and clubbing.

Over 25,000 people had participated in this afternoon march organized by the Multi-Ethnic Immigrant Workers Organizing Network. They included contingents of Central Americans, Mexicans, Filipinos, Koreans, South Asians, Chinese and Jewish immigrants. The march started in a multi-ethnic area west of downtown and proceeded to MacArthur Park, a Central-American immigrant shopping area. Among the many speakers was a young Black man who emphasized the need for Black/Brown unity.

Two days before the rally permit expired, a caravan of police cars with sirens screeching brought the Los Angeles Police Department to the scene. At one point, seven helicopters circled overhead. Two other squads of police cars followed in 15-minute intervals on surrounding streets before police brutally charged the crowd in the park.

Earlier in the day, over 50,000 attended the march in downtown Los Angeles organized by the March 25 Coalition. Most of the protesters, men, women, young children and older youths, were laborers, students and

supporters of Mexican descent. The many signs included: "There are no borders in the workers' struggles," "Stop the raids and deportations, legalize now," and "A broken family is not humane." Those signs were mixed in among a sea of American flags.

Two weeks later, immigrants and their supporters rallied at MacArthur Park to protest the draconian police repression on May Day. Los Angeles Mayor Villaraigosa was there, as was LAPD Chief William Bratton, as part of his drive to be selected for a new five-year term.

The ACLU and other groups formally asked a federal judge to rule that the May Day police brutality violated a 2001 consent decree, which was imposed in light of the 2001 Rampart police scandal, and, thus, to extend it.

On May 18, a bipartisan Senate committee (joined by Homeland Security czar Michael Chertoff) announced a complex "immigration reform bill" that would give undocumented immigrants a barrier-filing path to documentation and citizenship, while giving corporations their desired low-wage "guest worker" programs. The immigrants answered: "We want amnesty now."

One man stated, "We are undocumented, not illegal. If we're illegal, then NAFTA, CAFTA and foreign corporate investments into our native country are illegal."

—Basho

FOR MORE ON MAY DAY MARCHES AND THE IMMIGRANT WORKERS' RIGHTS MOVEMENT, SEE EDITORIAL ON PAGE 5.

Dr. King and today's living wage battles

PALO ALTO, CAL.—Stanford University commemorated the 40th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s visit to the campus by screening the speech he made at Stanford in 1967. The speech was recorded on film by Allen Willis, also known as Black/Red columnist John Alan, who later rescued the film from the dumpster when TV station KQED threw it away. Stanford University and East Bay Media Center honored Allen Willis' contribution with a Lifetime Achievement Award on April 15.

Dr. King in 1967 seemed to be addressing today's reality. He had just come out against the war in Vietnam, and linked the war abroad with the economic deprivations of people at home.

What made the event come alive beyond the discussion of Dr. King's life and times was the intervention by students, teachers and Stanford workers. They all called attention to a protest happening just outside the hall. Several students had set up a ten-tent encampment on campus and staged a hunger strike there, demanding that Stanford's living wage policy be extended to cover all workers.

In 2003, as a result of another student protest, Stanford had agreed to adopt a living wage policy, requiring that contractors who work on campus pay their employees a living wage, at that time \$11.15 per hour. That policy, however, excluded so many workers that a protest group, Stanford Labor Action Coalition, consisting of workers and students, decided to take further action.

After they had fasted for nine days, the University agreed to changes in the living wage policy so it would now cover more part-time and temporary workers. This victory is a part of the fight for economic justice, with the students and workers still demanding that off-campus facilities, like Stanford's hospitals, also be covered.

—Ursula Wislanka

South African public workers out in force

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA—We had our public sector marches on May 28. We were all relieved that they were so big and peaceful. I attended the one in Cape Town, where about 30,000 public sector workers came out to march—although local papers reported that only 12,000 marched. It was magnificent.

Ordinary public sector workers are saying that enough is enough. They are asking how they can carry out effective service delivery to the masses if they are not appreciated as the workers who are the face of delivering public services.

Public sector workers in South Africa today are very angry, especially because they have found that some members of parliament are getting a 57% pay increase while these same people are refusing to give them a 12% pay increase. Public sector workers have experienced a wage freeze since 2004.

As the Left in the labor movement, we are saying we need to be involved in these struggles, since the working class learns so much during strikes. We enjoyed the march, but we realize that the real work will begin on June 1, when an indefinite public sector strike of one million indefinables is planned to begin.

Some comrades say that it is un-strategic at the beginning to speak about an indefinite strike, since you are exposing your strategy to the enemy. Others argue that if you speak about an indefinite strike, it means that you can call it off any time—even after one day. My view is that I would rather have the leadership take people out on a one-week strike and then work for another week and then have another strike the alternate week. In this way we would show the country that their labor is central to the functioning of the whole country.

In any case, the labor movement, especially the unions of COSATU, seems very organized. They have formed strike committees in all provinces and have met with school students and parents about not having school when the teachers go on strike—more than 60% of the schools in the country were closed because of the strike.

However, there was no presence of the social movement organizations at the march. I really do not know the reason, since they do not need a special invite to attend.

COSATU is the giant—the best organized and most political organization of the South African working class. Despite the bankruptcy of a lot of its officials, there are also those like me and the current COSATU leaders in the Western Cape (and other provinces) who are really sincere socialists who do not support the alliance with the African National Congress.

This strike is a golden opportunity to link it about the public sector workers and service delivery. The strikes are also about the Growth Employment and Redistribution program and the budget allocation for public services. Over the last two years we have seen many social movement-community struggles over lack of service delivery

—Althea MacQuene, Left trade union activist, Cape Town

Immigrant marches celebrate May Day



Over 50,000 workers marched in San Jose, Cal. on May Day, with thousands more marching in Oakland, San Francisco (left), Santa Rosa and other area cities. Even politicians called for a stop to immigration raids, pledging that local police would not cooperate with Immigration (ICE). Hundreds of youth skipped school to attend. Many adults who did not feel safe coming to a march still took a day off work in solidarity.

WORKSHOP TALKS

Which side is your union on?

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said he was in the same room with Stern when the new Change To Win Coalition was formed, but there was "no mention of this kind of sellout deal."

In my own shop, we recently had to take an impromptu vote to decide whether to accept a contract that had absolutely not been discussed outside of insider circles. They told us while we were at our workstations that we had only until the end of the shift to accept the offer. If we did not choose to accept, our local president warned, we would "risk losing" the back wages owed to us.

LOSING JOB RIGHTS

This offer, presented as a fait accompli, included losing fundamental rights like the right to bid on jobs according to seniority. They didn't even pretend that our input mattered when it came to our future in the workplace.

Do these events augur total capitulation to management as the future of unions? This must be stopped. Workers originally created unions out of concrete concerns in their workplaces. Those concerns were not just about wages and benefits but mainly about the meaning of work. Democracy is not about a simple yes or no on a contract vote. Workplace democracy demands an ongoing discussion about our own activity on the shop floor.

Right now our work is alienating. Every day, as we enter the shop, we enter into a de facto partnership not of our own making.

This arises from the fact that we workers have no choice but to sell our labor power in order to make a living. We enter into that deal to earn a paycheck. It is a partnership in which our labor is no longer our own because, once sold to the employer, we have fundamentally relinquished control of it—even though in health care we know how important that labor is to the patients we are serving.

This inherent partnership with management is nothing to celebrate. It's like an albatross around our necks from which we're trying to free ourselves.

But many of our union bureaucrats have gone over

to the other side. Stern's latest deals with corrupt nursing home owners is nothing less than a deliberate attempt by pro-capitalist labor leaders to hijack the labor movement into a complete surrender to the dictates of capital.

CHAINED FOR LIFE

At least our partnership at Kaiser is up for renewal every three years. Stern hopes to sign a contract with one of the nursing home chains that will be in effect for 50 years!

Stern supports capitalists who outsource our jobs, seeing in globalization opportunities for his kind of union movement—for instance, aligning himself with Wal-Mart's vision of "universal health care." Capital's vision of global wage slavery is compatible with company unions. Whether in Beijing or at Wal-Mart, Stern thinks the future of workers resides in partnering with corporate abuse.

Workers in China are not taking the abuse sitting down. We don't hear much about their labor activities, but last year alone there were no less than 60,000 work actions, what government officials call "civil disturbances." We are searching for our own answers just when our labor leaders surrendered to the idea that there is no alternative to globalized capitalism.



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FROM THE WRITINGS OF
RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

EDITOR'S NOTE

As part of our ongoing discussions on what is required to uproot the capitalist law of value, we print the second part of the excerpts from Raya Dunayevskaya's 1948 essay, "Stalinists Falsify Marxism Anew." It originally appeared in *Fourth International*, September 1948. The first part of the essay appeared in our April-May issue. Footnotes are by the editors, except where indicated by "RD." Both have been edited for print. For the original, see *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, 1311-1316.

PART II

In his attempt to lift the theory of value out of its capitalist context and transform it into a "universal theory of value" A. Leontiev at one and the same time asserts that the law of value functions "under socialism" and also that it functioned in pre-capitalist societies. A basis for this is laid by Leontiev not only in his article, "Some Questions of Teaching Political Economy," but also in his pamphlet, *Marx's 'Capital'*, where he tries to prove "the historical emergence of value in deep antiquity." The authorship of this new theory Leontiev modestly ascribes to Engels.

In the book, *Engels on Capital*, published in 1937, there is a little essay in which Engels develops a statement of Marx. This is to the effect that the lower the stage of civilization the closer do prices approximate values, the higher the stage, the more indirect the approximation. (1) In that limited sense (2) of the relationship of value to price, Engels shows how effectively the law of value functioned in the pre-capitalist period. Leontiev is suddenly full of praise for Engels: "Engels' article on law of value and rate of profit, besides being an important supplement to the third volume of [Marx's] *Capital*, is of great value for the understanding of the economic theory of Marxism as a whole."

This "Marxism as a whole" the Leontiev of the pre-1943 vintage interpreted very differently, and precisely in his own introduction to this same essay of Engels: "Whereas at the hands of the Social-Democratic theoreticians of the epoch of the Second International, the categories of value, money, surplus value, etc., have a fatal tendency to become transformed into disembodied abstractions inhabiting the sphere of exchange and far removed from the conditions of the revolutionary struggles of the proletariat, Engels shows the most intimate, indissoluble connection these categories have with the relation between classes in the process of material production, with the aggravation of class contradictions, with the inevitability of the proletarian revolution."

Now the Stalinists were not the first to try to extend the operation of the law of value to "the socialist state of Marx." The bourgeois economist, Adolph Wagner, tried to do the same thing in 1883. In no uncertain terms Marx castigated "the presupposition that the theory of value developed for the explanation of bourgeois society, has validity for the 'socialist state of Marx'." Marx reiterated: "...in the analysis of value I had in view bourgeois relations and not the application of this theory of value to a 'socialist state'." (3)

This is the last writing we have from Marx's pen. Engels continued Marx's work, criticizing the then-Marxist disciple Kautsky for treating value in a "Kantian manner":

"Value is a category characteristic only of commodity production, and just as it did not exist prior to commodity production, so it will disappear with the abolition of commodity production."

Precisely. No one could possibly attribute to Engels a view on value other than that held by Marx. In *Anti-Dühring*, written in collaboration with Marx, Engels argued that it would be sheer absurdity "to set up a society in which at last the producers control their products by the logical application of an economic category (value) which is the most comprehensive expression of the subjection of the producers by their own product." (4)

The whole elaborate structure that the Stalinist henchman tries to erect crumbles under the impact of the heavy blows Marx and Engels dealt in their own day to all other theories of value.

"Of course it would be an absurd and scholastic approach," Leontiev states suddenly, "to presume that Marx and Engels could foresee and foretell the concrete, practical way to employ the law of value in the interests of socialism." It could have been foreseen "neither by Marx nor even by Lenin" (my emphasis). Only "the genius of Stalin," continues the Stalinist hireling, could work out the application of the law of value to a "socialist society."

This, we are told bombastically, opens a new state of "Marxist-Leninist economics": "The assertions of Stalin on the fate of economic categories of capitalism under conditions of socialist society and theoretic generalizations from the magnificent experience of socialist construction in the USSR and signify a new stage in development of the science of Marxist-Leninist economics. These statements are among the most important principles of the political economy of socialism created by Comrade Stalin."

The only truth in this statement is that "the political

Uprooting the capitalist law of value

economy of socialism" is wholly an invention of Stalin and his corrupt henchmen.

DIALECTICAL PHILOSOPHY, KREMLIN STYLE

Not the niceties of pedagogy but the pressing needs of the Soviet economy made necessary the revision of the law of value in the Marxist sense. Not by accident the crowning achievement of this revision came with the promulgation of the Fourth Five-Year Plan, which was openly based on "the use of the law of value."

To "make use of the law of value" meant the conscious subordination to the force of this law. How seriously this task was executed by the Soviet intelligentsia can be seen from a lecture on "The Time Factor in the Matter of Capital Investment" that Academician Strumilin delivered to the learned council of the Institute of Economics of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR.

If "a high ratio of socialist accumulation" is to be achieved, states Strumilin, it will be necessary to consider not merely "prime cost" but "full cost": "In order to change from "prime cost" to full cost of the projected articles and their production, it is necessary therefore first of all to add to the paid share of labor that of its share which is reserved as a matter of planned accumulation" (*Bulletin of the Institute of Economics*, No. 3, 1946).

With this as a basis, Strumilin proceeds to calculate the relationship of dead to living labor, of capital investment to rate of profit, thus achieving statistical measurement for calculating the rate of "socialist accumulation" which could be the envy of any bourgeois economist.

Ever since the outbreak of World War II the Kremlin bureaucracy has tried to raise per capita production through the institution of what it has dared call "socialist emulation." This new competition between factories has supplemented Stakhanovism, or competition between individual workers. The totalitarian bureaucracy is attempting to make the maximum speed of production of an individual Stakhanovite into the norm for all workers, factory by factory.

This has only deepened the conflict between the Stalinist regime and the Russian masses. The need arose for a new ideology to discipline the Russian proletariat. The attempt to undermine and falsify every tenet of Marxism was the result.

The new phase of falsifications gained a momentum of its own and could not stop half-way. The very logic of the break with the structure of [Marx's] *Capital* compelled the falsification of its content as well. The next inevitable stage was to distort the significance of Marx's immortal work. It was no longer to be considered the basic work of Marxism, but only of Marx; here "the historical principle" was applied to show that *Capital* was the greatest work ("up to Lenin and Stalin"...

Once the Stalinist bureaucracy laid its brutal hands on *Capital*, it of necessity had to intensify its falsifications of dialectical materialism itself.

If a "revision" of Marxist analysis of the law of value was made imperative by the functioning of the Soviet "socialist" economy, the arbitrariness of bureaucratic planning demanded as imperatively the discovery of a "new dialectical law." There was no way out of the impasse except through the endowment of "criticism and self-criticism" with supernatural powers.

This was the compelling reason why the Secretary of the Central Committee donned the mantle of philosopher, and no Soviet philosopher missed the significance of Andrei Zhdanov's appearance at their conference in June 1947.

A 'NEW DIALECTICAL LAW'

Zhdanov spoke with the authority of the Politburo when he assigned the "philosophic workers" their new task. This consisted in asking them to find nothing less miraculous than "a new dialectical law," one that was "free of antagonisms."

The key passage in Zhdanov's speech is worth quoting in full: "In our Soviet society where antagonistic classes have been liquidated, the struggle between the old and the new, consequently, the development from the lower to the higher, takes place, not in the form of a struggle of antagonistic classes and cataclysms, as it does under capitalism, but in the form of criticism and self-criticism, which is the genuine motive force of our development, the powerful instrument in the hands of the party. This is without doubt a new form of movement, a new type of development, a new dialectical law" (*Questions of Philosophy*, No. 1, 1947; also in *Bolshevik*, No. 16, Aug. 30, 1947. English translation is available in the April 1948 issue of *Political Affairs*).

With the demand for a theory of value that was not at the same time a theory of surplus value, the Stalinists tried to divest the labor theory of value of its class content. With the demand for a new dialectical law free of contradictions, they seek to make not the masses, but the totalitarian bureaucracy ("the critics"), the driving force of history.

Idealism has thus been enthroned in the Kremlin and scientific socialism reduced to the petty-bourgeois socialism of a Proudhon.

Perhaps the best way to describe the vulgar thinking of the Stalinist bureaucracy is to quote what Marx said of Proudhon's way of thinking a full century ago:

"In place of the great historic movement arising from the conflict between the productive forces already acquired by men and their social relations, which no longer correspond to these productive forces...in place of practical and violent

action of the masses by which alone these conflicts can be resolved—in place of this vast prolonged and complicated movement, Monsieur Proudhon supplies the evacuating motion of his own head." (5)

SOVIET PHILOSOPHY AND SOVIET REALITY

The destruction of the warp and woof of historical materialism was made necessary by the very depth of the Soviet crisis. At the very time of Zhdanov's appearance among the learned philosophers, there was published in the Soviet Union a new book by the Chairman of the State Planning Commission, Voznessensky, entitled *The War Economy of the USSR during the Period of the Patriotic War*.

This work is not merely a description of the Soviet war economy, but it is the legal code promulgated by the Stalinist bureaucracy for the development of the post-war economy. It is at the same time an unconscious admission that the bureaucracy has failed to raise the productivity of labor to the level needed "to catch up with" capitalism, let alone achieve the transition to "communism."

The bureaucracy is attempting to resolve the deepening contradictions of the Soviet economy in its usual manner—through bureaucratic stifling of mass initiative. But this is a double-edged sword.

It is true that it is two decades now since the Russian workers have had any control over the Plan. But while this has increased the bureaucracy's stranglehold of the worker, it has also deprived the bureaucracy of any of the practical experience of the workers at the point of production.

The Plan has long been executed without the benefit of the old Workers Conflict Commission, abolished in 1940, but in recent times all previous limits of arbitrariness have been surpassed. The top Planning Commission sets up the plan, and the workers have nothing to do but follow orders. But the complete divorce between the masses and Stalinist state represented by this stage of bureaucratic planning means also the complete loss of objectivity for the planners, and the Soviet economy keeps staggering from one crisis to another.

At the same time purges continue in every sphere: economic, political, philosophic, literary, scientific, pedagogic and artistic.

The cycle of falsification begun in 1943 has reached its culminating point. Marx used to say of classical political economy: for it there was history, but there is no history any longer. Of the Soviet bureaucracy it may be said: for it there once was revolution, but now there is only "criticism and self-criticism." This criticism and self-criticism manifest themselves as purges, more purges, and still more purges. In this sense, the theoretical thinking of the Stalinist bureaucracy has been reduced to what Trotsky once called "the empiricism of a machine gun."

NOTES

1. See *Engels on 'Capital'* (New York: International Publishers, 1937), p. 106.
2. And only in that limited sense since Marx had been most explicit in his expose of Adam Smith's error in considering that the law of value functioned "purest" under simple commodity production. Adam Smith fell into this error, explains Marx, "because he had abstracted [the law of value] from capitalistic production and precisely because of this it appears as if it were invalid" (*Theories of Surplus Value*).—RD
3. Marx-Engels *Collected Works*, Vol. 24 (New York: International Publishers, 1989), pp. 536-37.
4. Marx-Engels *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 296.
5. Marx-Engels *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 103.



Mass protest in Germany against G-8 Forum, May 2007

Independent Media Center/Germany

EDITORIAL

Immigrants' movement still on the march

Strong turnout across the country for the May 1 immigrants' rights marches indicate that the vibrant movement that emerged in spectacular fashion in 2006 is alive and well. In Chicago—in many ways the epicenter of the movement—the numbers participating exceeded the organizers' conservative projections. In Los Angeles, a small but energetic march was brutally attacked without cause by police, who fired rubber bullets into the crowd and assaulted journalists (See page 3). These marches, along with the numerous others that took place across the country, demonstrated that a year filled with racist anti-immigrant backlash and government repression has been unable to diminish the movement's momentum.

The anti-immigrant reaction since May Day 2006 assumed a wide range of forms—from the militia organizing efforts of the nativist Minutemen Project to the more sophisticated media campaign of influential CNN host Lou Dobbs. It also expressed itself in punitive raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents on workplaces and homes across the country. These raids resulted in stories of families being ripped apart—parents being held in inadequate and overcrowded detention facilities and women and children hiding for days at a time in forests to avoid being arrested. In Chicago, a paramilitary-style raid on a shopping mall in the heart of the Mexican immigrant community in late April helped to galvanize participation in the May 1 march.



May Day immigrant workers' march in Chicago.

SENATE BILL

The most dramatic development since the May 1 marches was the unveiling of a major immigration bill in the U.S. Senate. The bill was drafted behind closed doors in close consultation with the White House and

represents a bipartisan attempt to get the immigration issue off the political agenda for the time being. The bill, while offering a long and expensive path towards citizenship for most of the undocumented workers in the country, substantially alters the past precedent of allowing immigrant citizens to bring family members into the country and replaces it with a system based on individual "merit"—a point system defined by such

measures as proficiency in English and completion of education courses. The proposed legislation would also institutionalize a tier of second class "guest workers" who would have no chance at citizenship and—based on past experience with similar programs—would be easy targets for abuse by employers. It also would further militarize the already heavily patrolled U.S.-Mexico border with the construction of a

high-tech fence in long stretches of Arizona, California, and New Mexico.

While the bill has outraged anti-immigrant conservatives with its route to citizenship for undocumented workers, it has also deeply disturbed immigration rights activists. The elimination of the preference for family members, the establishment of a \$5,000 fine, and the requirement that immigrant workers actually return to their home countries to file their applications for citizenship are all being decried as burdensome and punitive.

Wrangling over the bill's contents has begun in earnest, with anti-immigrant forces weighing in forcibly with their reservations. To the chagrin of the conservatives, however, there is strong pressure to resolve the issue in favor of a broadly inclusive path to

citizenship because of the desperate need for labor power in many sectors of the U.S. economy.

The impact of the process of globalization after the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement was that, instead of U.S. corporations relocating their plants to Mexico, the pull of the so-called "China Price" for low wages meant that operations moved from both Mexico and the U.S. to China. At the same time, the removal of import barriers to cheap American corn overwhelmed Mexican agriculture and resulted in people being left with no choice but to leave their small farms and pay smugglers to take them on the dangerous journey north across the border. The same dynamics bring migrants from the countries of Central America and the Caribbean as well, in numbers that exceed by far even those of America's great periods of immigration of the nineteenth century.

LOW WAGE EXPLOITATION

Waiting for them north of the border are vast numbers of low-wage, unskilled jobs as agricultural field hands, janitors, meatpackers and restaurant workers. The employees in these industries are dependent on the enormous traffic in forged documentation to provide them with the basic requirements for employment and are forced to live a life burdened with the anxiety of their tenuous legal status.

While the employers in these industries are dependent on the ready availability of large numbers of immigrant workers, they also exploit their situation by using the threat of their legal status as a way to control and oppress them.

This exploitation has led to immigrant workers being at the forefront of what may yet prove to be a renewal of the U.S. organized labor movement in struggles such as the union organizing drive at the Smithfield Foods meat packing plant in Tar Heel, N.C. and the cross-country boycott efforts of Florida's Coalition of Immokalee Workers.

Whatever deals the politicians and employers may come up with, they will have to reckon with the power of the now-vigilant "Sleeping Giant" of immigrant workers in the U.S.—a force that has dramatically changed the American social and political landscape and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

Humanism of Marx endures: Iranians review Marxism and Freedom

Raya Dunayevskaya's 1958 book *Marxism and Freedom* recently appeared in a Persian-language edition in Iran. Despite the authoritarian clerical regime that has dominated the country since the revolution of 1979, a lively world of newspapers and small journals maintains a precarious existence and manages to carry on discussions of philosophy, politics and culture. We reproduce here two reviews of *Marxism and Freedom* that appeared in such journals.

We live at a time in which Communism has collapsed, capitalism has declared itself victorious and occupies the entire intellectual horizon. Former leftist activists are ashamed and have turned into tailenders of bourgeois alternatives, or proudly proclaim themselves to be on the frontline of the bourgeoisie. The end of history is being declared through the bombing of the innocent people of Iraq. Iranian intellectuals are dying for Hashemi Rafsanjani to be elected [president.] Is there an alternative to capitalism? Is another world possible?

Raya Dunayevskaya, Russian-American thinker and labor activist was born in the Ukraine in 1910 and emigrated to the U.S. at age 12. [At that time] the U.S. Left consisted of large numbers of supporters of Soviet socialism, the Social Democratic front and the Trotskyists. Social Democrats combined a critique of Soviet totalitarianism with praise for bourgeois democracy and concluded with the indispensability of capitalism. Trotskyists followed Trotsky in calling the Soviet government a degenerated workers state. Duna-

evskaya could not be anyone's follower. She herself was a tendency nourished by the lineage of the revolutionary tradition of Hegel's dialectic which had been transmitted to Marx and Lenin. In this way Dunayevskaya broke with Trotsky by presenting the theory of "state capitalism" to describe the Soviet government.

From her point of view, neither superpower (the U.S. and the Soviet Union) could present a program for human liberation. The difference between them was simply over the form of expropriation of exploited labor. While Western bourgeois capitalism presented the freedom to sell the individual's soul on the market, the Soviet Union presented the alternative of obeying the strict discipline of the [one] party state. In Dunayevskaya's view, the state in the Soviet system was both a motor for accumulation and a means for controlling labor.

The post-Trotskyist Johnson-Forest Tendency accepted her economic analysis, but when she returned to Marx's humanism during the course of the 1950 Miners' general strike, the foundation for her complete break from the Trotskyist tradition was created. The Johnson-Forest Tendency rejected Humanism as a religious or Existentialist category.

Dunayevskaya was the first to translate Marx's 1844 *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* into English. Unlike many Marxists who limit Marx's humanism to the writings of his youthful period, she considers humanism to be the determinant element of the whole of Marx's philosophy and the divide between Marxism and state capitalism in the Soviet Union and China. *Marxism and Freedom* is the product of this view.

Basing herself on Marx, Dunayevskaya's [work] presents a fundamental critique of Stalinist and Maoist systems and continues to issue a call for a better and completely different world at a time when any hope for an alternative to the capitalist system has been lost...

Part III, "Marxism: the Unity of Theory and Practice," which explains the relationship of the process of writing *Capital* to the U.S. Civil War and the radical democracy of the Paris Commune is Dunayevskaya's original masterpiece. She counter poses the humanist essence of the *Grundrisse* and *Capital* to the dominant mechanical and impure views of Marxists and proves that the foundation of Marx's critique of political economy is humanist and dialectical.

—Keyvan, from the journal *Aftabkaran*

Considering the existing intolerable and tormenting censorship and cultural mass murder, if one can name a few good books that one has read during the past year, one need not be too concerned about how long ago these books were published. But *Marxism and Freedom* by Raya Dunayevskaya does not fall into this category. This book was published this year and I am not certain that many people have read it.

It has some very interesting introductions of which I consider those by Joel Kovel and Herbert Marcuse to

be very useful. Each one, especially Kovel's, praises Dunayevskaya's work while at the same time singling out her weaknesses. In my view, Dunayevskaya considers herself completely belonging to the Hegelian Marxist branch and goes as far as putting Hegel's Absolute Idea in the place of the Marxian expression, praxis, and calls the unity of theory and practice, not praxis but the Absolute Idea.

In an article written near the end of her life, and in the course of praising Lenin for analyzing and dissecting the entirety of Hegel's *Logic*, she fundamentally critiques Lenin for not being able to extend the results of his research on Hegel to the question of the party and organization, and hence defending the incorrect theory of the vanguard party which he had developed in *What Is To Be Done*, prior to his research [on Hegel]. Of course, Dunayevskaya never had the chance to make true to her promise and develop her own theory of the party on the basis of Hegel's philosophy.

But in my view what distinguishes the entirety of her work is her Marxist humanism which has been greatly influenced by the discovery of Marx's 1844 *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* of which she was the first English translator. This is what gives *Marxism and Freedom* its special and superior status.

She was of the mind that "Marxism is a theory of liberation or it is nothing. Whereas Marx was concerned with the freedom of humanity, and with the inevitable waste of human life which is the absolute general law of capitalist development, Russian communism rests on the mainspring of capitalism—paying the worker the minimum and extracting from him the maximum. They dub this 'the Plan.' Marx called it the law of value and surplus value."

On the other hand, Marx believes that capitalism creates preconditions for a life free of toil, poverty, injustice and stress while at the same time, it intensifies toil, poverty, injustice and stress. Like many others, Dunayevskaya considered Marxism and proletarian revolution to be the fundamental means of resolving this mortal contradiction and creating a society based not on "exchange value" and profit but "use value" and human needs.

It often seems that in contrast to Marx's ideas, Dunayevskaya is too philosophical and so-called "super Hegelian," and does not pay attention to the fact that the mature Marx put aside philosophical language and turned to specific and exploratory studies. However, we need to do justice to her and agree with Marcuse that this work "shows not only that Marxian economics and politics are completely philosophical and philosophy is from the beginning economics and politics." In my view, without this inseparable and dialectical combination of politics, economics and philosophy, *Marxism and Freedom* would have lost its current attraction. On the whole, the translation is lucid and readable.

—Akbar Masum Beigi, from the journal *Naqd-e No*

Marxism & Freedom

By Raya Dunayevskaya

A Persian translation of a classic of Marxism



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CORPORATE CAPITALISM'S AGENDA FOR TODAY

Coal companies as they existed 50 years ago are a thing of the past. Virtually all of them are now a part of huge energy corporations, and they are salivating about new legislation being proposed to produce gasoline from coal. The technology to do this has long been known, and a few such facilities exist, but they can't compete with low-cost oil. High-cost oil, however, does make it feasible to compete. But because such coal-to-liquid facilities are very expensive, the coal interests are demanding guarantees, and among them is that the Department of Defense commit itself to a 25-year contract to buy it. We're talking here about staggering amounts of billions of dollars. During World War II, corporations had their cost-plus contracts, and in Russia, Stalin had his five-year plans, but those guys were pikers compared to these coal consortiums.

**Ex-coal miner
Detroit**

I'm sick and tired of hearing complaints about how "Chinese" goods are flooding the world market, taking away jobs and destroying local businesses. How come almost no one tells us that the companies making these "Chinese" goods are transnational corporations, most of whose profits end up in the U.S.? There is a lot of racism in this talk of the "invasions" of cheap Chinese goods that fits the agenda of corporate capitalism.

**Angry worker
Chicago**

When it was first reported that Cerebrus Equity would buy Chrysler Corporation from Diamler-Benz, both Canadian Auto Workers union President Buzz Hargrove and United Auto Workers president Ron Gettlefinger said they were assured that Chrysler would not be gutted, and repeated those assurances to their rank-and-file workers. It reminded me of the time several years ago when Diamler-Benz merged with Chrysler and everyone was assured that it was a merger of co-equals and that Diamler-Benz did not control. Rank-and-file workers knew better and said the German company was their new boss—and they were right, of course. They are skeptical about the most recent assurances about not gutting Chrysler, and hoping they are wrong about their doubts.

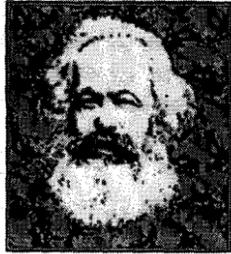
**Auto observer
Detroit**

Everyone at work talks about how awful it is that the corporate execs are making these huge bonuses while we are struggling to get by. Everyone is sick of the Iraq war and sees Bush as a total imbecile. No one argues with me that this system stinks. But then nothing happens. It's because nobody ever talks about what's the alternative. You have to start doing that, otherwise people will stop listening to you.

**Employee
Rosemont, Illinois**

UPROOT LAW OF VALUE

To this day, some Marxist theoreticians act on the basis of Stalin's order to break from the structure of Marx's *Capital*. In her column in the last issue, Raya Dunayevskaya shows it is done to get away from Marx's analysis of the commodity and thereby hide "social relations behind the fetishism of commodities." The Stalinists could retain the theory of labor as the source of value by acting as if it is a quantitative matter — as long as they can hide the qualitative determination of value and abstract labor as alienating and exploitative. So today any perspective of uprooting the capitalist law of value has to revolve around how a new human society can break down that alienation of labor.



Those who want to change Marx's theory to begin from something other than the commodity end up far from this perspective.

**Revolutionary
Memphis**

GLOBAL WARMING OR REVOLUTION?

The editorial last issue on climate change was good but I think too general to be controversial. It rightly points out that the debate is no longer a fight for recognition of the problem. Theorizing a solution requires getting more specific and asking difficult questions with no easily forthcoming answers. The fundamental issue seems to revolve around discovering an abundant renewable source of energy to rival energy-intensive fossil fuels. Is it possible to solve the problem of climate change within

READERS' VIEWS

capitalism? Capital's relentless drive for accumulation has created the problem and often been an obstacle to a solution, but could accumulation not continue with different sources of fuel? I can imagine a three-fold increase in the price of oil necessarily breeding invention. Nor can we simply assume socialism will provide a solution. If socialism means more productivity, will the problem persist? If we continue to rely on oil, I don't see why it wouldn't. This is why so many eco-activists turn away from socialism and look to small-scale economies of the past for a "solution."

Marxist-Humanism is uniquely poised to contribute to this battle of ideas. We won't know what opportunities socialism may open up unless we continue to theorize an alternative to capitalism. Could it be that the solutions to the ecological problems of this current mode of production are the same as those for a new mode of production? We should think about it more.

**J. Skolnik
Brooklyn, New York**

END OF WELFARE

Some "Readers' Views" in the February-March issue implied that my analysis of "the end of welfare" as part and parcel of the capitalist system excludes or neglects the forces of sexism, racism and ideology. They do not see that those factors do not comprise separate systems in the world but are aspects of a totalizing capitalist system which incorporates into itself all the "isms" that help it to divide and conquer the working class. People who avoid theorizing capitalism today in favor of abstract denunciations of various oppressions have little chance of contributing to Marx's or Dunayevskaya's ideas, which center on the need to transcend capitalism as vital to women and everyone else striving to build a new society.

**Anne Jaclard
New York**

ANTI-ABORTION LUNACY

There are many things that show how lunatic the anti-abortion crowd is. The latest is their effective protest against the new vaccine, Gardasil, that protects women from the virus that causes most

cervical cancer. To be effective, it should be given to girls entering the sixth grade. The fanatics insist that giving girls this life-saving vaccination would promote promiscuity! Forget the actual facts that it doesn't; and that even if a woman or girl has only one sexual partner the virus is so pervasive in our society that she could still get the disease. Forget further that one in four women age 14 to 59 is already infected with HPV. While we know those protesting are lunatics, what of the governors and others who cave in to their ludicrous demands?

**Women's liberationist
Memphis**

RECLAIMING MARX'S CAPITAL

The excerpts in the April-May issue from Andrew Kliman's *Reclaiming Marx's 'Capital'* show that the standards of interpretation, argumentation, and reasoning, which no one any longer seems to think necessary, are in fact vital for revolutionary thought. Too many radicals don't realize that more than hope and propaganda is needed in the battle of ideas. If Marx's theories of value, price, profit and crisis don't hang together in a coherent way, we might as well throw out all of *Capital* because it would be worthless as anything more than a book of inspiration. This is the most important point the excerpts made.

**Joshua Howard, New Space
New York City**

I found the excerpts from *Reclaiming Marx's 'Capital'* very thought provoking. The debate surrounding Marx's trenchant analysis and practical theorizing on the destabilizing effects of the fundamental mechanisms of the capitalist mode of production is, it appears, ongoing. The labor theory of value and its complement, the theory of the falling rate of profit, are central, even today, to a correct modern analysis of political economy. Yet capitalist propaganda has employed a subtle sleight of hand coupled with smoke and mirrors to obscure their assured validity.

**Christopher Thomas
Florence, Arizona**

ANTI-CAPITALIST STRUGGLES IN THE 'NEW' SOUTH AFRICA



Your take on "Anti-capitalist struggles in the 'new' South Africa" (April-May *N&L*) is probably one of the best I have read. We South African activists usually cringe when we come across something written about us because often outsiders miss the nuances, yet still want to make proclamations as many of the ultra-left do. Your article was inspiring and engaging. The section that deals with the social movements really conveys the mood, struggles, and challenges.

**Trade Union activist
Cape Town, South Africa**

Disadvantaged communities in South Africa have previously not been exposed to issues of the environment. Our struggle during the apartheid era was focused on bread and butter issues and on racial apartheid itself. And even now issues like climate change and global warming are alien to the struggle of the Black working class in South Africa. We would like to link issues of environmentalism to global capital in terms of how they are intertwined so as to broaden the consciousness of the masses in their struggle for emancipation.

**Mncedi
South Africa**

Peter Hudis' "Anti-capitalist struggles in the 'new' South Africa," is spot on in terms of its analysis of the root causes of the present problems poor communities are experiencing. However, it should be borne in mind that the ANC's capitulation to neo-liberalism happened before the 1994 democratic elections. The adoption of GEAR was merely the formal endorsement of a process that was already underway. In 1992, the ANC was part of the Transitional Executive Committee (TEC) and the latter included the ruling National Party Government. The ANC as a party to the TEC agreed with the NP government to obtain a loan from the International

Monetary Fund of R800m. The loan came with the usual structural adjustment conditions and they were endorsed. This was done in a very secretive manner. The mass movement was never consulted on this loan. The final version of the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP), that became the election platform of the ANC in 1994, whilst containing social democratic sentiments in its general objectives, had strong neo-liberal prescriptions in relation to the actual macro-economic strategy. The White Paper on the RDP released in 1994 by the newly elected ANC government had all the elements of a neo-liberal macro-economic framework. The memorandum accompanying the Bill on the new Labor Relations Act released in 1995 unequivocally advocated for a labor market that avoids rigidities, that is more international competitive and its provisions facilitated the emergence of a more flexible labor regime. These comments do not detract from your overall analysis; they merely highlight the prior indices on timeline in the slide of the ANC towards neo-liberalism.

**John Appolis
Johannesburg, South Africa**

COSATU is very divided over the issue of Alliance with the ANC and even more divided over Zuma who many of us say is a rapist. However the bureaucracy, including the South African Communist Party which has a big influence on the labor movement, is obviously politically opportunistic. Zwelinzima Vavi is eyeing the Deputy President job should Zuma become president (and god forbid!). COSATU is very powerful in South African politics and its leadership knows this. If only the workers of COSATU and the broader South African labor movement knew how powerful they are...then they would do things independently and gather thousands of supporters and intellectuals on their side.

**Activist
Cape Town, South Africa**

I look forward to reading more about what Rosa Luxemburg's ideas mean for women activists here and finding out more about Raya Dunayevskaya. I found the article by the Iranian feminist in the February/March issue of *News & Letters* very interesting. But I also picked up on "The Black Dimension in Women's Liberation" from the writings of Raya Dunayevskaya in which the Aba riots are described. Her discussion is very useful in terms of describing how women have always organized when their rights have been infringed and that "feminism" is not such a western concept after all.

**Revolutionary Feminist
Cape Town, South Africa**

I agree with your outline of how Marxism has been treated by many generations of activists. You mentioned that Rosa Luxemburg differed with and criticized Lenin and Trotsky on the questions of the revolution that was taking place in Russia in front of their eyes. Later events proved that Rosa's perspectives were right and she had an insight on a number of theoretical questions in a period engulfed with revolutions and civil wars. I would like to know more on that area, and would be grateful for sources that can help me on that.

**Township activist
South Africa**

I have begun reading the works of Dunayevskaya. I wish she had developed her thoughts on connecting Fanon and Hegel further, but what I have read in *The Power of Negativity* is fascinating reading indeed.

**New reader
Durban, South Africa**

Thanks for your insights into the Hegelian aspect of Marx. I have only attempted Hegel piecemeal. I suppose I shall now have to make a braver attempt at understanding him.

**Black Intellectual
Durban, South Africa**

MALALAI JOYA NEEDS YOUR URGENT HELP!

After Malalai Joya's return from a successful international tour and interview with a local TV station in Kabul, the warlords and criminals in the Afghan Parliament and Senate tried hard to silence Joya and kick her out of the Parliament.

They have used one of her recent comments during an interview as a justification for their move. In the interview, she expressed that the Afghan Parliament is worse than an animal stable whose many members are the murderers and enemies of Afghan people. On May 21, 2007, the Parliament, dominated by warlords and drug-lords, suspended Joya for three years and ordered the High Court to file a case against her. They also directed the Interior Ministry to restrict her movements to within the country.

In a press conference in Kabul, Joya announced that she will continue her

fight against the warlords and drug lords. She is ready to face an independent court and will use the opportunity to expose the enemies of the Afghan people. The majority of ordinary Afghan people strongly support Joya and she is receiving many phone calls, letters and emails of solidarity. We urge all her supporters and well-wishers to help Joya by filing your protest with Afghan officials for expelling Joya while the terrorists and human rights violators in the parliament were provided immunity before any court for their past crimes.

Write to mi@malalaijoya.com for addresses to send your letters of protest.

Defense Committee for Malalai Joya



IMMIGRATION REFORM

The proposed immigration reform bill is wrong because no people are illegal. The guest worker program is just exploiting the immigrants who would be doing the work at sub-minimum wage. After 8 to 10 years they would have to go back in line and pay a fine of \$5000, another form of exploiting them. It would bog down the process of getting here legally. This is another example of how wrong our foreign policy is. But there is no way to get a good foreign policy out of capitalism; we need a complete change of our system. It would be better if there were a cross-border program like Doctors without Borders, to help people instead of exploiting them as our government does.

Dan P. Michigan

WHAT'S IMPEACHABLE?

Why were the Republicans able to so easily impeach Bill Clinton, yet a Democratic Congress cannot even pass a veto-proof Iraq funding bill that includes a date for troop withdrawal? Disgusting as the Monica Lewinsky scandal was,

how could that be considered worse (an impeachable offense) than a four years-and-counting unconscionable war that has killed so many thousands of people on both sides that we don't even know the exact number. How can a president with barely a 30% approval rating have the upper hand? And we have more than a year and half to an election that could give us something even worse.

Mary Jo Grey Chicago

ANTI-WAR STRUGGLES

Our counter-recruitment group had our first experience with an information table at a Memphis High School. We set up in the cafeteria and it went great. The kids were really interested, took our literature and talked with us. Mike always has a piece of duct tape with the number of U.S. military women and men who have been killed in Iraq stuck to his shirt. The students asked about it and several of them started pinning the numbers to their shirts and blouses as well. As of May 27 that number was 3,454.

Counter-recruitment activist Memphis

Htun Lin's column, "Iraq war follows wounded vets home" in the April-May N&L exposes the oft-repeated lie of Bush-Cheney and the Right that it is the Left that does not support the troops, implying that they do. Since it is the right wing, because they have been in control, who have allowed the returning wounded to be abused and neglected, their deceit is laid nakedly bare. Since so many Louisianians have expressed their disgust with the situation, as I have, Republican Congressman Charles Boustiani gestured his concurrence by visiting regional facilities for the hospitalized vets. According to correspondence I received from his office, he, too, was "outraged." But total indifference to the veterans has been the rule throughout the history of the U.S. Have we so easily forgotten the veterans of the Vietnam War? Do we not realize millions of them number among the homeless?

Letters and petitions are OK as long as nothing else can be done, in the short term. But in the longer term revolutionary change is in order concerning the ways our leaders find to engage us in the wars that create the torn veterans.

Thanks are owed to N&L for printing the real news. I'm enclosing a small donation to help you keep going.

Supporter Louisiana

THE BRITISH SCENE

What do the recent UK local elections mean? For the ruling class, nothing. The show goes on. There is a fragmentation of the national political groups, the growth of nationalism and racism and the absence of sense. The anti-war party of the liberals appears to have collapsed. The Labour Party is claiming a victory as their organization shrinks. The Conservatives are claiming a victory and indeed gained an extra 800 councillors. Local politics has historically been seen as dominated by corruption and opportunism: The lack of interest and control has not changed despite local government reforms. The growth of postal voting has helped speed up the opportunity for fraud and rigging.

Patrick London

NORTHERN IRELAND:

IS THE CONFLICT OVER?

Is the conflict in Northern Ireland over at last? Two parties that historically represent opposite extremes of the national question — the Democratic Unionist Party and Sinn Fein — have become unlikely partners in the province's devolved government. The divide between Protestants/Unionists and Catholics/Republicans has been contained and institutionalized rather than overcome in this new political settlement. The society remains very divided, with the two communities often living in separate neighborhoods and going to separate schools. However, the desire for peace is strong in both communities. Now that the national question has reached a weary compromise, social issues may come to the fore. The economic context has been transformed as the Republic of Ireland has undergone such rapid economic growth that it has overtaken the United Kingdom in GDP per head.

Richard Bunting Oxford



VOICES FROM WITHIN PRISON WALLS

I am an aspiring writer/composer. Enclosed are a few words I wrote down for your review: It's a death threat being anti-oppression. Battling disfranchise and abuse with strong speculations. Generating knowledge and strength into a useful weapon. Articulate and bear arms for legitimate reasons. Allegiance and stoned hearts against foul agony. The stronger, more aggrandized. Can't stop, nor can the enemy keep a warrior down. It's strife until death or victory. Equality as a whole in all human life is demanded. Irregardless of geographical or affiliation differences. For all who recognize oppression against them, delete criminal mindset and rebirth with the revolution.

Prisoner Corcoran, California

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by C.C. Simmons

In September 1986, the body of teenager Deanna Ogg was found in Texas. Ogg had been raped, bludgeoned and stabbed to death. About the same time, Roy Criner, 21, had bragged to his friends about picking up a hitchhiker and forcing her to have sex with him.

While no other evidence connected Criner to the crime and despite his protestations of innocence, he was charged, tried, convicted and sentenced to 99 years in prison.

Ten years later, DNA tests showed the sperm found in Ogg was not Criner's. Criner's attorneys moved for a new trial and, in January, 1988, the trial court granted their motion. Four months later, the highest criminal court in Texas, the Court of Criminal Appeals (CCA), overruled that approval and denied a new trial.

Sharon Keller, writing for the CCA, seemingly abandoned science, law and common sense when she declared, "The new evidence does not establish innocence." DNA was not enough. It seemed, said court-watchers, that Keller wanted to keep Criner in prison, while totally unconcerned that Ogg's true killer remained at large.

In 2000, DNA tests were run on saliva from a cigarette found near Ogg's body. That DNA matched the sperm found in Ogg, but neither DNA matched Criner. A month later, the county sheriff, district attorney and trial judge joined in asking for a pardon for Roy Criner. The Board of Pardons and Paroles unanimously voted in favor of a pardon. In August, 2000, Governor DUBYA briefly interrupted his run for the White House and set Criner free. By the peculiarities of Texas law, and without an acquittal, Criner remains a convicted murderer-rapist with a governor's pardon in his pocket.

To some, the Criner case was clear evidence that the CCA was little more than a cabal of right-wing, all white, Anglo, pro-prosecution ideologues with a convict-at-any-cost agenda.

The national media described the CCA as a powerful group of nine Republicans whose goal seemed to be to slake the state's bloodthirst for executions. Only 3% of the death penalty convictions that came before it were reversed, less than any other state's high court.

To understand the actions of the CCA, one must understand its now-President Judge Sharon Keller. Under Keller's increasing domination, the CCA ruled that almost any defect in the prosecution's case, no matter how grave or outrageous, was "harmless."

"For ten years now, she has not wavered in her ambi-

Infant mortality rises in deep South

The infant mortality rate in Mississippi and neighboring states of the deep South reversed in recent years and is now climbing. The infant mortality rate—deaths by one year of age per thousand live births—is a good barometer of the overall health of a population.

The infant mortality rate in Mississippi fell to 9.7 by 2004 but in 2005 rose sharply to 11.4. This rate hike means that 65 more babies died in 2005 than in the year before, for a total of 481 deaths.

The rate in the deep South stands well above the national level. These states have large Black populations and expanses of entrenched poverty. But the racial disparity is evident even at the national level which stood at 14.0 for Black babies but only 5.7 for whites in 2003, the last year these figures were compiled nationally.

There are multiple and overlapping reasons for this disturbing increase in infant mortality, including: premature and low-weight births; congenital defects; and, especially among poor, Black adolescent mothers, deaths from accidents and disease. Obesity in the mothers makes diagnostic tests more difficult and can be the forerunner of diabetes and hypertension which can, in turn, lead to malnutrition in the fetus.

Cutbacks in social programs contribute to pregnant women not receiving regular prenatal care. In recent years, poverty in Mississippi has worsened. However, welfare payments have declined under the leadership of a fiscally conservative governor who also reduced funding for outreach to pregnant women.

A director of the Children's Defense Fund highlighted the connection between funding for the poor and the longevity of their babies: "When you see drops in the welfare rolls, when you see drops in Medicaid and children's (health) insurance...unborn children suffer." Transportation to clinics and to Medicaid enrollment centers is also a major issue.

We thus see a complex interweaving of biological and socio/political factors at work in influencing the survival of infants.

Dr. H. Jack Geiger, who played a major role in starting a community health center in the Mississippi Delta in the 1960s, commented: "No health services can overcome the effects of social policies that devastate the lives of the poor....We should be enraged, and ashamed, that these preventable excess deaths continue, and increase, among us."

—Eli Messinger

Killer Keller and the Death Squad

tion to see the state win every case," remarked one veteran court observer. "I don't know how she sleeps at night," said a friend from the 1970s. "She believes she is doing the work of God," noted an ex-staffer.

Among Texas legislators, she is known as "Sharon Killer," no doubt for her steadfast refusal to reverse death sentences. Among the other eight CCA judges, she is referred to as "Mother Superior" for her studious and diligent devotion to upholding the state's position, however flawed, on any case brought before her court.

In 1999, the Texas legislature passed a law which authorized the CCA to prepare a list of "approved attorneys" who would handle the death penalty cases for indigent defendants. The list included many sub-competent attorneys who had no idea how to prepare a petition for a writ of habeas corpus for a condemned prisoner. Some suggested the CCA purposely selected marginally competent attorneys for the approved list. The CCA has never removed a lawyer from the approved list for disciplinary or competency reasons.

The unfairness of the system is glaringly apparent from the mismatched teams that debate their cases before the CCA. For the defense, a single court-appointed attorney, shamefully underpaid and without benefit of an investigator or a researcher, is pitted against the enormous resources of the state supported by a group of staff lawyers called the "Death Squad," who work on nothing but death penalty cases with the objective of upholding a conviction.

Can there be any doubt why Texas executes more prisoners than any other state in the nation?

Prison activists rally

OAKLAND, CAL.—On May 23 dozens of prison activists protested at the State of California building here, giving voice to the over 3,300 prisoners who signed a petition opposing an ominous turn in the continuing struggle against this state's inhuman prison system. California's legislature and Gov. Schwarzenegger reached an "agreement" early in May to build 53,000 new prison and jail beds at the cost of \$7.9 billion! Prisoners are speaking out even though they are the ones now suffering unconscionable overcrowding and, subject to retaliation from the guards.



This completely undemocratic agreement once again poses prison construction as a solution to an out-of-control failed prison system, which is under a threat of federal takeover and facing a federal judge's impending order to cap the prison population. This deal was reached with no public hearing, no public debate, and the Legislature had no bill language before their vote. The funding via revenue bonds bypassed voter approval (California voters consistently voted down spending more money on prisons in recent years). Servicing the debt will cost hundreds of millions of dollars annually, one expert estimating \$330 million a year by 2011, money that will have to be taken from budgets for higher education or other state priorities. California is the first state in the nation which will soon spend more on prisons than on universities.

The shocker with this deal is that while all unions, except the guards' union (CCPOA), have always opposed prison expansion, this time SEIU did not oppose it. Apparently the prospect of a few more dues-check-off jobs has become irresistible to SEIU leadership (see Workshop Talks column on page 1 for more on SEIU's complicity with capital).

Conditions in prisons are steadily worsening: women prisoners at Central California Women's Facility, for example, are housed eight to a cell (built for four). They have recently lost their gym to house more beds and now more beds are being put in their day-rooms. Prisoners say that food portions are reduced, so many are hungry. All rehabilitation programs have been cut, and even Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous meetings have been reduced to once a week, virtually ensuring that prisoners leaving the institution will come right back.

There is no way to "fix" this problem within the current system. Politicians are not listening to common sense reforms, such as reforming the parole board, reforming the 3-strikes laws, releasing non-violent offenders, etc.

Prisons are an expression of the completely anti-human direction in which capitalist society is heading: giving the "surplus" population the choice of either dying in war or being warehoused in prison.

—Prison activist

BLACK/RED VIEW

Continued from page 1

their status as indentured servants into permanent slaves. Slavery, the perpetual ownership of other human beings and their descendants, became formally legalized in 1660.

CAPITALISM BUILT ON SLAVE TRADE

Capitalism, as Marx pointed out, grew up as a world system on the basis of the slave trade, which originated from a distinction between white and Black servants. Only recently have four states—Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina and Alabama—formally apologized for their role perpetuating slavery. That is easy for them now that the racist character of capitalism has taken much subtler forms. This is what we should be reexamining on the 400th anniversary of the founding of Jamestown.

In the Civil Rights Movement Blacks won formal political freedom, but racism persists in the economic deprivation of Blacks as capitalism continually restructured its manufacturing sector where Blacks did make some economic progress. Now Blacks are forced into much lower paying jobs through so-called welfare reform even as educational opportunities for the poor are dramatically reduced. Blacks disproportionately make up U.S. capitalism's reserve surplus population, which often ends up in American prisons. The ongoing challenge, as I put it in *Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles*, is to deepen the freedom idea beyond civil rights to totally challenge capitalism.



Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles

Race, Philosophy and the Needed American Revolution
by John Alan

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Execution of Philip Workman

MEMPHIS, TENN.—On May 9, Philip Workman was executed at Riverbend Correctional Facility in Nashville, Tenn. At the prison nearly 100 opponents of the death penalty demonstrated against the execution, while in Memphis outside of Immaculate Conception Cathedral some 40 people gathered in opposition.

Workman was convicted of the 1981 shooting of Lt. Ron Oliver during a robbery of a Wendy's restaurant. While Workman never denied the robbery, evidence brought to light after his initial conviction showed that he did not fire the shot which killed Lt. Oliver.

Only one witness, Harold Davis, claimed to have actually seen Workman shoot Lt. Oliver. But since the initial trial, Davis, who had a history of calling in false tips to police in the hopes of a reward, confessed that he perjured himself and actually was not present at the crime scene.

An X-ray of Lt. Oliver's body, "lost" for 18 years by the Medical Examiner's Office, and other ballistics evidence led forensics expert Dr. Cecil Wecht to conclude that "to a degree of medical certainty" the bullet that killed Lt. Oliver could not have come from Workman's gun, a .45 caliber pistol. Wecht's testimony is based both on the size of the exit wound and on the fact that the bullet exited the body at all. Both are inconsistent with the gun and ammunition Workman was using.

This and other evidence indicates that Oliver was killed by another police officer on the scene, an incident of "friendly fire." In fact, the Memphis Police Department has for years used this case to illustrate the dangers of "friendly fire" in responding to a crime scene! Five of the jurors from Workman's trial, the original prosecuting attorney, and Lt. Oliver's daughter all called for clemency for Workman. Clemency was denied by a Pardons and Parole Board appointed by Tennessee Gov. Philip Bredesen, and Workman was executed without any court having substantively considered these facts.

Workman rejected a final meal and instead requested that a vegetarian pizza be delivered to a homeless man in Nashville. Prison officials denied his request. When word of this got out, people around Nashville began ordering pizzas to be sent to homeless shelters around the city. Workman's request soon generated pizza deliveries to homeless shelters across the United States. In Memphis, a place of hospitality for homeless persons called Manna House served pizza to some 50 people two weeks after Workman's execution. The mostly African-American men present told many stories of their experiences with police brutality and their times of imprisonment.

The execution of Philip Workman illustrates once again how the death penalty is applied in this country as an instrument of state terror without regard for facts, fairness, or respect for human dignity.

—Peter R. Gathje

Organizing the unemployed in South Africa

Editor's note: John Appolis is a leader of the The General Industries Workers Union of South Africa (GIWUSA). He joined it when he and other militants were purged from one of COSATU's affiliates. He is also active with the Anti-Privatization Forum.

By John Appolis

JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA—The trade union movement has, on many occasions, dedicated itself to the organizing of the unemployed. The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), for instance, at its ninth National Congress in September 2006, reiterated the urgent need to organize the unemployed and, to this extent, adopted many demands relating to the unemployed. In most cases however there is no systematic theorization of, firstly, the nature and role of unemployment in the capitalist accumulation regime, and secondly, the organizational strategies and adjustments necessary to undertake such an endeavour.

GIWUSA's experience of organizing the unemployed over the past three years has shown that there is no substitute for the hard, solid and sustained organization of the unemployed. The relegation of this task to an appendix of organizers' overall work is not sufficient. Further, once-off mass campaigns and general strikes around the issues of unemployment, whilst very necessary and to be undertaken and supported, only serve to illuminate the problem. If this type of action is not either preceded or followed by the actual organizing of the unemployed, then again there will be no real forward march in this arena.

THE NATURE OF UNEMPLOYMENT

This theorization of the nature of and role of unemployment under neo-liberal capitalism not only places our organizing initiatives on a sound and sustained footing but also provides a buttress to the propaganda of the government that it cares for the unemployed. Recently the government trumpeted the fact that the economy has created new formal jobs. What it does not show is that the rate at which jobs are being created is vastly inadequate to stem the tide of unemployment. Ironically there are already attempts afoot on the part of the Reserve Bank to choke off consumer-driven economic growth by the raising of interest rates.

This contradictory nature of official economic policies is endemic to the neo-liberal agenda of the South African ruling class. Unemployment in the country is structural, permanent and mass. Since the 1970s formal employment has been in steady decline. This decline is a direct result of the structural changes that have occurred in the economy where the primary sector has diminished, new technological changes accompanied by a fundamental reorganization of work were effected. Hardest hit were mining and manufacturing jobs. The picture that graphically emerges is that, if you fall in the age group 16-34, you most likely would not find a permanent job—statistically 70% of this age group have never worked. More significantly, 56% of all unemployed people have never worked.

A major contributor to the unemployment crisis has been the macro-economic growth strategy of the government—the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Programme (GEAR). It is commonly recognized that government's program of privatization, liberalization of trade through the removal of tariffs, financial liberalization and fiscal austerity since 1996 are the main culprits. Under the ANC government's watch more than one million jobs were lost between 1994-2003 in both the public and private sectors.

The pretense that it has a strategy to tackle the crisis of unemployment rings hollow upon close scrutiny. The so-called government strategy of setting up a public works program in the form of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) to provide short term employment whilst waiting for economic growth to

absorb the unemployed has been shown to be a complete failure. The EPWP offers short-term employment but the structural economic problems are not transitional problems. The EPWP only delivers a maximum of 200,000 temporary jobs each year. These jobs are considered not additive, i.e., it is not 200,000 in year one, rising to 400,000 in year two and so on. The government has committed itself to halve unemployment by the year 2014, but to achieve this target, at least between 400,000 and 750,000 additional formal jobs per annum need to be created.

The underlying assumption inherent in the EPWP, that unemployment is a transient problem, is fundamentally flawed. And it is situated within the conservative fiscal policies of the government and is designed within the budgetary constraints of the medium term expenditure framework.

EFFORTS TO ORGANIZE THE UNEMPLOYED

With this understanding in mind, the union in 2003 formally integrated the Masibambane Unemployed Project (MUP). Initially, the MUP organized only ex-members of the union, but as the MUP became known in the townships, workers from other industries and trade unions started to join the MUP.

The initial response of MUP was to encourage these other unemployed workers to approach their own unions to get them to undertake similar unemployed organizing initiatives. Once these endeavors proved to be in vain, the MUP had to deal with the question of who are the unemployed. Out of this question flowed a further question: should Masibambane organize all the unemployed or only retrenched and dismissed workers? This is an ongoing debate within the structures of the union and MUP.

In addressing the problem of unemployment and the associated social problems, MUP has embarked upon a number of campaigns.

Campaign for First Preference: At the time of retrenchment negotiations, trade unions—including GIWUSA—ensure that the retrenchment agreements contain the "First Preference Clause." This means that when new employment opportunities arise in the company that has retrenched workers, then the retrenched workers are to be given first preference to access those opportunities. However, employers have largely ignored this provision and have employed other people with no regard to their obligations under the retrenchment agreement.

The MUP along with GIWUSA have targeted these companies, staged marches, negotiated with employers on this matter and declared disputes where no agreements could be reached. This is an ongoing campaign.

The Pension Surplus Campaign: This is the second campaign initiated by MUP. It is calculated that there is an 80 billion rand [\$11 billion] surplus in different pensions funds throughout the country. This surplus came about because workers were not paid out their share of the surplus in the pension funds at time they were either retrenched, dismissed or transferred out of the funds.

Co-operatives: In 2004 the MUP initiated discussions on co-operatives as possible ways of generating income for members of MUP. A series of workshops were organized outlining what co-operatives are, the government's proposed legislation and the requirements for setting up co-operatives.

Campaign on the Right to Work, to an Income



Forum against globalization, Cape Town, 2007

and Poverty Alleviation: In August 2004 the MUP launched this campaign. Its basic rationale was that our members are unemployed for a very long time, that unemployment is not our problem, and that we are willing and able to work but there is no work.

The present Unemployed Insurance Fund (UIF) is totally inadequate. Access to the UIF depends on how long a worker has contributed to the Fund. Nevertheless, it has a maximum of 12 months. After a worker has used up the UIF, then there is no access to an income from the government.

To structurally integrate the unemployed, the union has effected a constitutional change where a member remains a member when he/she becomes unemployed. The implication of the constitutional change is that

unemployed members have rights and obligations similar to the employed members. One requirement is that the unemployed members must participate in the structures of the MUP.

For historical reasons MUP is based in Gauteng and in five townships. In each township where it is located there exists a MUP Committee that meets once every fortnight. On a monthly basis delegates from the MUP Committees meet in a co-ordinating committee and delegates from the co-ordinating committee attends the Union's Branch Executive Committee (BEC).

THE LESSONS

Our experience has shown that organizing the unemployed is doubly difficult in a context of rampant job insecurity, casualization, outsourcing and abject poverty. What we must remember is that the workplace of today is unrecognizable from that of the previous decade. The structural reorganization of work has brought in its wake a divided, fragmented working class with workers locked in a competitive battle for survival against each other. This competition between the different layers of workers requires careful mediation on the part of the union.

For instance, in respect of the First Preference Campaign, tension arises between the permanents and the unemployed because where employment opportunities—whether permanent/causal/temporary—arose after retrenchments, it is sometimes found that relatives of permanents have been brought in to fill them.

Within the ranks of the unemployed there are competing interests between the young and the old. Our First Preference Campaign and Pension Surplus Campaign incorporate largely the older members of MUP. This generates tension over the prioritization of campaigns, allocation and utilization of scarce resources. Further, the Union has to balance the utilization of its scarce resources—be it person power, infra-structural resources—between the needs of the subscription-paying employed members and that of the MUP. The Union itself is small and independent with a membership of 14,000 and totally reliant on union subscriptions for funds. Understandably the need to find an appropriate balance between ensuring a constant inflow of funds for the continued financial viability of the union and undertaking the organizing of the unemployed becomes more acute for a small union like ours.

Despite the difficulties thrown up by the socio-economic context and the union's organizational make-up, the unity thus far forged between the employed and unemployed has assisted the Union in making advances. At times of strikes, MUP became an important ally in showing solidarity by staging pickets and discouraging the unorganized unemployed not to scab. We can only hope to build on these first steps.

A feminist from Zimbabwe speaks for herself

continued from page 2

to roll over all loans. Respond sympathetically to asylum requests. The argument that it is wrong to intervene in the internal affairs of a sovereign country is no longer sustainable. Without international intervention against apartheid, the struggle for liberation in South Africa would undoubtedly have taken longer and been even more bloody.

RW: So Shereen, how do we get from beastliness and brutality to humanity and tenderness?

SE: Chirikure Chirikure in his poem "Smoke, dust, tear gas" hints at this: "In the heavy, belching clouds of dry dust there in your tired, barren patch of rocky land you could still tender the grey, shrivelled crops, weeding the way to the starving family's future...in the crude, suffocating thunder of enemy tear gas, there in your tense neighbourhood turned into battlefields, you could still see the damp, blood-soaked secret paths, tenderly shuttling to give direction and inspiration to the cause...in the perfume, tobacco, alcohol and laughter fumes, there in the extensive, excited victory celebration parties, your eyes could stretch beyond the beaming rainbow knowing that out of the brutality, there is the humanity, that this is only but a seed germinating..."

RW: Are there such spaces for the creation of this humanness in Zimbabwe, or at least in the process of creation?

SE: I think the spaces have to be created. They are not just delivered to you on a platter. People are creat-

ing the spaces. Women are creating the spaces. There have been a number of women who have been very involved in the 1980s and the 1990s who because of political and social and economic reasons are now scattered around the region. Who have reached out to each other in order to create those spaces to see what possibilities can spring from that. So spaces have to be created, and they will be.

RW: Tell us about the Feminist Political Education Project.

SE: The Feminist Political Education Project (FEP) in some ways was born out of shared experience and friendships. Shared experience within the women's movement and within the National Constitutional Assembly across the MDC, in that the women who came together to form the project were friends.

They understood the urgent need for something. In 2003 we didn't know what that was, but we agreed that as an alternative to the way that the mainstream works we would come together as a very loose network. We would not consolidate as an organization. We would pool our skills and resources and come up with interventions based on what was happening at a particular time in the country and create spaces for women to come together both to share and reflect but also to think through ways of doing even in the limited room that exists in Zimbabwe right now to organize and to do. We have been working since 2003. The FEP is a space of hope.

RW: Are there any other projects or groups or move-

ments that you would urge people to join and build?

SE: I think the Zimbabwe Social Forum is an important space in the struggle against globalization and in building mass based resistance on the ground. You know, that's important. I think Zvakwana is important. SW Radio is important. Many formations that are contributing to the dreaming of a new dispensation.

RW: What are the prospects for Zimbabwe?

SE: Things may get worse before they get better but things are going to come to a head either way. People outside and inside the country are preparing for that. They are consolidating networks to come with strategies. The pressure is now on. It's a different game.

RW: What would true freedom and democracy look like?

SE: A Zimbabwe that confronts its various pasts and names the violations its peoples have suffered; freedom would look like a space to look at the militia in the eye and say, "you violated me." It would be a chance to talk back to the commercial farmer, for all those years of exploitation and abuse. To be able to point a finger at the minister and the war vet and ask: why? It would allow for a woman to define the Zimbabwe she wants to live in. Is that not what democracy is about? A chance to be listened to. And be heard. An acknowledgement of the pain endured? A piece of land to call one's own would go a long way. Space to be a citizen. Speaking on our own behalf. Defining our own futures. Ukuba ngumuntu—muntu. To become people. Our personhood restored.

Spying campaign provokes distrust in Bush's agenda

Continued from page 1

to sign it. He and the Justice Department had already been chided by the courts for offering spurious reasons to spy on individuals, and was not ready to authorize an illegal and unconstitutional program. He threatened to resign instead, along with Comey and other top Justice Department officials, including even FBI director Robert Mueller. Rather than back down, Bush "defused" the crisis by illegally continuing the program without the authorization.

The press quickly compared the drama Comey had exposed to the "Saturday Night Massacre" in the Nixon administration. On Oct. 20, 1973 Nixon dismissed independent special prosecutor Archibald Cox. Attorney General Elliot Richardson and Deputy Attorney General William French Smith resigned. The departures announced a separation by much of the establishment from Nixon's extra-constitutional cover-up of the domestic espionage against the Democrats, the party out of power, in what became known as the Watergate scandal.

However there is a significant difference between that event and what the *Washington Post* called the "Wednesday Night Ambush" in 2004. Whereas Richardson and Ruckelshaus resigned rather than follow Nixon's order to fire Cox, the threats by Ashcroft and Comey to resign in 2004 were not consummated. The truth is that the "Saturday Night Massacre" was a large-scale firing by Nixon of administration members to save himself from impeachment. No such threat faces Bush today. And very few current administration officials are openly breaking ranks. But cracks even within ruling circles have emerged.

NO HEROES HERE

The real surprise in Comey's story was the role played by Ashcroft, who had long been the personification of the reactionary presence of the Christian Right in government and an undisputed hawk in the "war on terror." He considered Bush's illegal program too much to allow to go undisputed. There is no "hero" to this story. Much was learned from Comey's whistle-blowing, and much of his testimony was praised by Democrats who have long criticized the surveillance program. Comey, however, was not opposed to the eavesdropping. What he was demanding was a valid legal rationale for spying that would be valid in today's current reactionary atmosphere.

Nor can the Democrats claim to be heroes. They have much to answer to for having given Bush a free hand in his "war against terrorism," which has really been a war on immigrants, activists, and voter registration drives. They have dirty hands for allowing all the illegal spying measures against American citizens as well as against supposed "terrorism" suspects. And they caved in to Bush when they had a chance to either defund the war or show a little backbone.

One and a half years ago, when the extent of Bush's illegal wiretapping was revealed by the *New York Times*, on Dec. 16, 2005, so clear was Bush's abuse of power that it had opened wide questions about whether it constituted outright criminal activity. Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Arlen Specter called for hearings to be held quickly, and Barbara Boxer called for investigating whether Bush's authorization of the clearly unconstitutional secret spying was an impeachable offense. We seemed to see the beginning of the kinds of "cracks" in the ruling class that occur as crises grow deeper and demand resolution.

LEGACY OF COUNTER-REVOLUTION

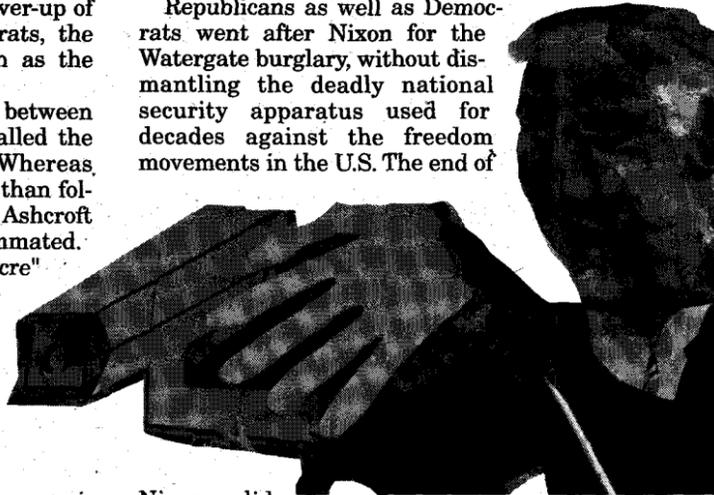
That resolution will surely not be coming from more and more "hearings" rather than from reversing the policies behind the actions. It is necessary to look at the roots of Bush's assault on civil liberties. The abuses of power extend further back than the most obvious path from Nixonism, to Reaganism, to Bushism. The ruling class's use of the apparatus of the national security state against its own citizens arose even earlier than McCarthyism in the early 1950s.

The incidents of Black revolutionaries murdered at the hands of the FBI and the local enforcers in the 1950s and 1960s offer vivid testimony to a history of the U.S. targetting police powers on dissenters. So too does the surveillance on Martin Luther King Jr. and

Malcolm X in the 1960s, on orders by liberal presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson. This pattern of repression extends back all the way to the 1920s, when the U.S. ruling class's reaction to the Russian Revolution took the form of the Palmer Raids in which revolutionaries were imprisoned or deported.

What is important about Nixon's Watergate break-in in 1972 is that it alerted the press to his attempts to neutralize even his "loyal opposition" as he pursued his goal of establishing a single-party state. What brought him down, finally forcing his resignation, was a combination of public revulsion over the scandal and the massive anti-Vietnam War movement that finally ended that bloodletting. He was also forced from power by a section of his own ruling class which considered him expendable because of his excesses, against themselves included.

Republicans as well as Democrats went after Nixon for the Watergate burglary, without dismantling the deadly national security apparatus used for decades against the freedom movements in the U.S. The end of



Nixon did not mean the end of Nixonism.

Since then, we have seen the continued consolidation of the national security state, not only under Reagan, but under Clinton and the two Bushes. It has been dusted off and used when needed. Remaining constant but intensified has been the U.S. drive for single world mastery. Each of those figures has fulfilled their historic role in that drive.

PERSISTENCE OF REPRESSION

The extent of intrusion of the state into all our activities can be seen from just three kinds of encroachment, only sometimes making headlines:

- The Army is attempting to control blogging by soldiers. The changes made on the Army's regulation on operations security, AR-530-1, was revised March 20, directing Army personnel to "prevent disclosure of critical and sensitive information in any public domain to include but not limited to the World Wide Web, open source publications and the media" and to "consult with their immediate supervisor and their OPSEC officer for a review prior to publishing or posting information in a public forum." That public forum includes letters, articles for publication, email, blog postings and discussions in online message boards.

Jason Hartley, a sergeant in the New York National Guard who turned his blog into a book, *Just Another Soldier*, summed up the feeling of the entire blogging community about the new regulation as "chilling, very chilling." Meanwhile the blogging continues to grow. Milblogging.com, a web site that tracks military blogs, reported on May 4 that it counted 1,709 military blogs from 30 countries and 3,240 registered members.

- The breadth of the attacks can also be seen in the current attempt in U.S. District Court in Eugene, Ore. to impose terrorism sentences on ten environmental activists. They had earlier accepted plea deals for crimes of property destruction. The crimes, now charged under the government's "Operation Backfire," involved damage to property but the defendants showed that they had gone to great lengths to ensure that no humans or animals suffered harm. Most of the crimes were for arson for which the median sentence is normally five to eight years. If accepted by the court, the new terrorism enhancements could land the young defendants in maximum security prisons for over 30 years.

- National Security Letters (NSLs) have been around since 1978 when the FBI was given the power to use them to investigate what it judged to be foreign

threats. NSLs became something altogether different after the September 11, 2001 attacks and the passage of the USA Patriot Act. The new Department of Homeland Security, the Pentagon, and the CIA were empowered to issue NSLs to investigate anybody the administration branded as a threat to national security.

The FBI issued 140,000 demands for information about individuals from travel agencies and internet service providers to libraries and eBay, between 2003 and 2005. This aggressive program, consistently underreported before then, has acquired internet and phone logs as well as bank transactions.

No one less than the Justice Department's inspector general exposed this part of Bush's ominous spying agenda in March. These investigative demands are issued without a showing of probable cause or prior judicial approval and come with a severe gag order attached. This shields the FBI from complaints and paves the way for the spread of surveillance. A broad swath of internet and phone users, especially young people, assumes that all communications are monitored and hate the government for that reason.

UPROOTING NEEDED

These struggles against the invasion of privacy are part of a much wider and deeper struggle today against all of Bush's policies. His intransigence against ending the war in Iraq, gutting government spending on needed social programs, and assault on abortion rights show the contours of an attack on all the gains of freedom movements of the last 50 years. These attacks escalated as capitalism underwent a major economic retrenchment and restructuring in the mid-1970s and became institutionalized with the rise of Reaganomics in the 1980s.

In the same token, the collapse of the USSR in 1991 did not remove a rationale for the U.S.'s drive for world hegemony. It emboldened that drive and produced the imperialist agenda of George Bush. Even before then, that drive determined the Reagan agenda. And that drive for global domination positioned Bush for his post-9/11 role as invader and top cop. As we wrote immediately after that attack:

"It is imperative that we completely and totally oppose Bush's effort to respond to anti-human terrorism with an equally inhuman policy of indiscriminate military intervention, just as we must oppose all efforts to restrict civil liberties at home or scapegoat Muslims, immigrants or people of color. But an effective opposition to this new militarism will not emerge unless we project a total view rooted not just in what we oppose, but what we are for." ("Terrorism, Bush's retaliation show inhumanity of class society," *News & Letters*, October 2001).

That is a far more difficult and fundamental task than simply holding a hearing—or winning an election. It demands nothing short of uprooting capitalism and envisioning a philosophically-grounded alternative to capitalism.

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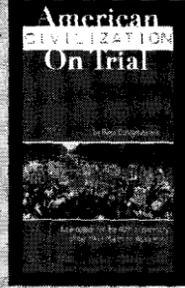
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by Raya Dunayevskaya



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A Shell of democracy in Nigeria

by Shawn Hattingh

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA—On May 16, Father Kukah visited the University of Cape Town to discuss the recent Nigerian elections. Kukah was appointed by the Nigerian state to "reconcile" the Ogoni people and Shell. Indeed, he has been working around the clock to get Shell back in Ogoniland through "reconciliation." Ever since Shell was kicked out of Ogoniland 13 years ago by popular protests, it has been desperate to get its grubby paws back on that area's oil.

Being so close to the Nigerian government, Kukah had a skewed view of the recent elections. He noted that even though the Nigerian election was flawed, it was a step forward from the previous military dictatorships that existed in Nigeria. What Kukah failed to mention, however, was that the rigged election results will not lead to an ounce of change in the lives of most Nigerians. For as long as the present system remains in Nigeria, the majority of Nigerian people will not see the benefits of Nigeria's oil.

He also failed to mention that the true holders of power in Nigeria are not the Nigerian people or the political parties that may claim to represent them. The real holders of power are rather the IMF, World Bank and the huge multinational oil companies that are sucking the resources out of that country. Certainly these institutions are not about to let go of the lucrative stranglehold they have over Nigeria or its resources.

The World Bank and IMF have controlled the Nigerian economy for over two decades. They set the spending priorities of the Nigerian government, not the token figures who sit in the Nigerian Finance Ministry. Indeed, it is the IMF and World Bank that have dictated that Nigeria should focus its spending on debt servicing rather than on education and healthcare. They are responsible for forcing Nigeria to liberalize every aspect of the economy. This has seen the Nigerian state clamping down on workers rights; privatizing every

government function including healthcare and education; relaxing environmental laws; and allowing multinational corporations to repatriate all of their profits out of Nigeria.

Kukah also failed to note that the biggest beneficiary of the situation that exists in Nigeria has undoubtedly been Shell. Shell has been operating in Nigeria since 1958 and is responsible for over 80% of the oil that is extracted from the Niger River delta. This has seen Shell producing 400,000 barrels per day since. The result: Shell has made hundreds of billions of dollars. Most of this money has been whisked away by Shell, while a trickle has been handed on to corrupt Nigerian elites to keep the black gold flowing smoothly.

Although Shell has drilling operations in over 28 countries, 40% of all its worldwide oil spillages occur in the Niger Delta. Since 1976, it has been calculated that Shell has been responsible for over 3,000 oil spills in the Niger Delta. The way in which Shell has dealt with these oil spills has been to set them alight. This has seen the land on which these spills have occurred becoming totally infertile and unusable. All of these spillages have also resulted in the death of aquatic life in rivers in the Niger Delta. Most of the water sources that are used for human consumption have been smothered with oil.

Shell also flares the natural gas in the Niger Delta that is associated with oil extraction. Indeed, 2.5 billion cubic feet of gas is flared in the Niger Delta every day. This has seen massive amounts of greenhouse gases, such as CO² and methane, being pumped into the

atmosphere. The Nigerian oilfields release more greenhouse gases than all of the rest of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa combined. Due to this massive amount of air pollution, the Niger Delta regularly experiences acid rain.

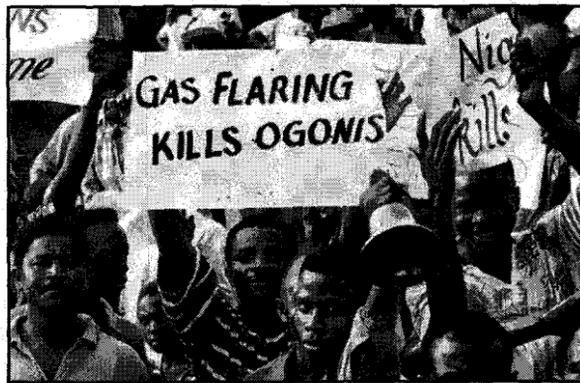
Shell, with the assistance of the Nigerian state, have also expropriated vast tracks of land from the indige-

nous population, with little or no compensation. By 1993, the people of the Niger Delta, spearheaded by the people of Ogoniland, struck back. They began to peacefully occupy the oil installations within the Niger Delta. The response from Shell, along with its allies in the Nigerian state, was swift and ruthless. Since 1993, over 2,000 people in the Niger Delta have been murdered by Nigerian state forces at the bidding of Shell. These victims

have included people such as the activist and poet, Ken Saro-Wiwa. His crime—questioning Shell's right to pillage the Niger Delta.

Shell's involvement with the Nigerian state and the military is so extensive that it has even openly admitted that it funds the Nigerian forces that are deployed in the Niger Delta. Shell has also let it slip that on at least two occasions it has directly paid military officials to storm specific villages.

Naturally, being a government and Shell man, Kukah failed to mention anything about these atrocities. His solution to the problem of the Niger Delta is to tell the people of the Delta to stop resisting multinational oil companies, such as Shell. For Kukah there is simply no alternative. Fortunately, the peoples of the Niger Delta have not heeded the advice of the Shell stooge.



Protest against Shell's Nigeria operations.

Ecuadorian politics in transition

QUITO, ECUADOR—In Ecuador there is no question that aspirations for social and economic justice have been unleashed, and there is no telling where it may lead. Rafael Correa, served only a few months as Finance Minister in 2005. He was forced to resign when he defied Wolfowitz and the World Bank by daring to unilaterally alter the agreement with the World Bank that would channel surplus oil revenue into health and education instead of servicing the debt. This single act catapulted him to the presidency in November 2006 with a landslide victory over banana magnate Alvaro Noboa, Ecuador's richest capitalist. It is delightfully ironic that Wolfowitz is history while Correa has ascended to the presidency.

Unlike past presidents who have promised struc-

tural reform, Correa has already shown that he means business. He has made it clear that he will not renew the treaty that allows for a U.S. military base on Ecuadorian soil. He expelled from the country the very World Bank representative who had reneged on the promised loan, accusing the World Bank of blackmail. His major campaign promise was to hold a popular referendum that would trigger a Constituent Assembly with plenary powers to re-structure Ecuador's political system. The referendum passed in April with an impressive 82% of the vote. He has successfully neutralized a traditionally obstructionist Congress.

Correa doesn't back-room deal with the rightist political parties, but appeals directly to the Ecuadorian people for support of his program, which he describes as Christian Socialism. He is the only Ecuadorian president in recent history to join workers in May Day celebrations, where he promised to end capital's domination over labor. His friendship and alliance with Venezuela's Hugo Chavez and Bolivia's Evo Morales is no secret.

Having said all this, one has to add that there is no reason yet to believe that Correa's idea of socialism is not of the "top down" variety or that he understands that the nationalization of resources, while perhaps a step in the right direction, does not equal socialism. He seems to think, naively in my opinion, that extensive "microcredit" programs can solve the country's massive unemployment problem.

Although it appears at present that Correa has the popularity to win control of the Constituent Assembly, this is not a certainty. As well, in Ecuador poverty is so widespread and corruption is so deeply embedded in virtually every public institution, that a mere restructuring of the political system without genuine revolutionary movement from below is doomed to failure.

—Observer

Queer notes

by Elise

Participants marched to the cheers of bystanders in the first legal gay pride parade in Warsaw on May 12. For the past three years, former Mayor Kaczynski, currently Poland's President, banned pride parades. The European Union's Court of Human Rights ruled Kaczynski's bans illegal. However, this year has also witnessed Poland's State Prosecutor's office ordering prosecutors in several municipalities to look into the conduct of gays and lesbians on unspecified charges of pedophilia. Education Minister Giertych's has also unveiled a vague draft legislation criminalizing the promotion of homosexual propaganda in schools.

★ ★ ★

Action has been taken against the Jackson Township school district in Ocean County, N. J., after it was determined that not enough was done to prevent the harassment of a bisexual high school student. J. Frank Vespa-Papaleo, director of the New Jersey Division of Civil Rights, pointed out that school authorities were notified a number of times about the harassment. Officials of Jackson Memorial High School will challenge the state's findings.

'Step it up' fights global warming

MEMPHIS, TENN.—As part of the national Step It Up days of action on climate change, a series of events took place here in April. These included two street corner protests, which got lots of support from passing drivers, two church services, and a group of high school girls making posters to put up around town.

We highlighted the demand for binding laws to cut carbon emissions 80% by 2050. More and more people are angry at the administration's do-nothingness in the face of growing evidence that the damage from global warming has already begun.

This anger is turning to action, as seen in the rapid growth of the Step It Up 2007 actions, which started as a proposal posted on a website by six recent college graduates in Vermont and their adviser, long-time environmental activist and writer Bill McKibben. In little more than three months, local groups new and old in all 50 states joined in to hold 1,460 events the same weekend.

STUDENTS LEAD MOVEMENT

Step it Up 2007 is part of a larger movement, including groups at colleges and universities. Students have taken the lead across the country in promoting sustainable energy use. Students at the University of Memphis and at least 17 other colleges and universities in the U.S. and Canada have voted for "green fees" to decrease their schools' carbon emissions. Organizing of the Campus Climate Challenge has spread to dozens of universities and some high schools.

Though it was the largest ever protest against global warming, Step It Up was underreported. In a radio interview in April, McKibben pointed out a change. The Step It Up proposal to cut carbon by 80% was laughed at in January. But by April, it was being seriously proposed by politicians including presidential candidates Bill Richardson and Dennis Kucinich.

IMPACT ON POOREST

The impact of global warming will be mildest in zones where most of the industrialized world lives, while the severest impact will be on the poor, especially those living in marginal agricultural land, coastal regions, and flood zones. International agencies are warning of potential large-scale migration of climate refugees.

Global warming is such a serious problem that society will have to change. The question is, "What type of change will that be?" Even the "progressive" representatives of the ruling class, such as Al Gore, are projecting that it is a "moral, not political" problem. Countering impulses toward a total reorganization of society, official voices channel the movement toward what is achievable within the contours of capitalist production.

This way of adapting to climate change would greatly worsen the conditions of life and labor of billions of mainly poor and working-class people, with special hardship falling on people of color and women—but affording some protection to many of the most affluent.

—Environmental justice activists

Changes in Bulgaria

SOFIA, BULGARIA—On Jan. 1, 2007, Bulgaria and Romania joined the European Union (EU). This is the manifestation of the pledge the two former communist states have made to the rest of Europe to continue to develop as capitalistic countries. Despite the fact that Bulgaria and Romania have the lowest standard of living from all of the EU members there is an optimistic view that only good will follow. This hope has cast a shadow on the true problems that are slowly rising in the two young democracies.

Europe has always been the target for Bulgaria since the fall of communism. For most people here the question has been East vs. West. East towards Russia, i.e., communism, or West towards Europe, i.e., capitalism. Since the collapse of communism and thus the omission of one of the options people have conceded and given up the idea of an alternative to capitalism.

Now that the march west has begun Bulgarians are anticipating change. What type of change is a good question. The myth is that the EU will bring an end to the years of political instability, greed and corruption that have plagued the country for the last 15 years. The truth is that it will be difficult for the EU to bring about those changes when it is suffering from the same symptoms itself. Change is coming, although not the one anticipated.

In the last decade Bulgaria has experienced, and is continuing to experience, a population shift. The citizenry of the countryside and smaller provincial towns are massively relocating to the bigger, more economically developed urban centers. The capital, Sofia, has grown from a city of 1,000,000 to 2,500,000 in the last 10 years. In a country of roughly 7,400,000 people this means that one third of the population now lives in the capital.

The most disappointing change has been the development of a nationalist movement fronted by the nationalist political party ATAKA. The lack of economic prosperity along with the accelerated transformation of the country from communism to capitalism has alienated the public. The friction between the three largest ethnic groups—Bulgarians, Turks, and Roma—is constantly growing. Few believe that ATAKA will create a meaningful political base. At the moment they are insignificant to the political process but if they continue to grow at the rate they are today, ATAKA may become a significant political player.

—Anton

OUR LIFE AND TIMES

As Iraq war and deaths enter fifth year

by Kevin A. Barry and Mitch Weerth

As the Iraq war and occupation continue into a fifth year, U.S. and Iraqi casualties have remained high. April and May saw the highest two-month U.S. death toll since the war began, with no end in sight. U.S. public opinion has turned sharply against the war, coming closer to world opinion, which opposed it from the start.

But the U.S. government remains locked into the war, also with no end in sight. Congress, now dominated by supposedly anti-war Democrats but fearful of Bush's charge of failing to support the troops, has ignominiously caved in on the war budget. Only a pitiful 29 Senators voted to de-fund the war—by March 2008!—after months of posturing.

Inside Iraq, the Sunni jihadist resistance, part of which is linked to Al Qaeda, continues to launch attacks at will against military, government, and civilian targets. Despite the "surge" of U.S. troops designed to stabilize Baghdad, the jihadists have lobbed shells into the heart of the Green Zone, headquarters of the U.S. occupation and the Iraq government. In another attack, they managed to kill over 150 people waiting at

Right wins in France

The election of Nicholas Sarkozy to the presidency in France represents an important shift to the Right. Sarkozy's solid victory in the May runoff election over Socialist Party candidate Ségolène Royal was grounded above all in his ability to win over voters who had earlier backed the neo-fascist Jean-Marie Le Pen.

After his election, Sarkozy moved with lightning speed to appoint a young cabinet with significant women's participation, a first for France. He also recruited a popular public figure, the Socialist Bernard Kouchner, as Foreign Minister. Kouchner's humanitarianism led him to support the 1999 Kosovo war, but this humanitarianism was so abstract that he also became one of France's few supporters of Bush's imperialist invasion of Iraq.

Sarkozy won the presidency by courting the anti-immigrant, "law and order" vote, especially the Le Pen supporters. He never took back his racist language during the 2005 ghetto uprisings about cleaning up the "scum" with an "industrial-strength cleaning." Up to now, the traditional Right has not been able to cut into Le Pen's vote, which has run at 15 to 20% in national elections. It was only because of this split on the Right that the Socialists and the Left, which have been able to muster at most 40% of the vote, have been able to come to power at times in recent years.

That period seems to be over. Moreover, during the first round of voting, in April, the Marxist Left did especially poorly, with the Communist Party at a humiliating 2%, its lowest score ever. The one bright spot here was that the anti-Stalinist Marxist Olivier Besancenot did better, with 4%. Overall, though, the April vote was a sobering one for the part of the Left that has opposed neo-liberalism. These groups overestimated their impact on the "No" vote in the 2005 referendum on a European Union constitution, failing to recognize how many of the negative votes actually came from the nationalist Right.

France now faces a younger, more energetic Right under Sarkozy, which will try to move toward a neo-liberal economy, getting rid of hard-won social advances like the 35-hour week. The youth have already indicated their determination to fight him every step of the way. Pro-immigrant students occupied a few universities the day after the election, while minority youth confronted police in the ghettos. Organized labor has also warned it will fight Sarkozy's economic policies.

a bus hub in Shi'a Sadr City.

In response, Shi'a fundamentalist militias with links to the state have exacted an equally terrible revenge upon Sunni civilians. Baghdad is slowly being divided along sectarian lines, with many Sunnis being driven out of the city altogether. In the largest exodus in the Arab world since the flight of Palestinians from Israel

Russia flexes muscles



Gay rights demonstrators in Moscow were later attacked by right-wing thugs as police stood by.

Riding high global oil prices and taking advantage of the U.S. quagmire in Iraq, Russia has begun to reassert itself as a Eurasian power. It has attacked U.S. plans to locate missile bases in Poland and the Czech Republic, rattling Western Europe, which depends upon Russian natural gas. In Central Asia, it has outmaneuvered the U.S., which had sought to set up a natural gas pipeline from Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan that would have bypassed Russia. Russia also turned to Greece and Bulgaria to contract an oil pipeline to bypass Turkey. This would serve as a counterweight to an even larger U.S.-sponsored pipeline running from Azerbaijan to Turkey, but bypassing Russia.

At home, the regime of Vladimir Putin is moving in an increasingly authoritarian direction. On May 27, police allowed thugs from the Orthodox Flag Bearers and the neo-fascist Black Hundreds to physically attack gay rights demonstrators in the heart of Moscow, among them visiting members of the European Parliament. Police also attacked or prevented a number of small pro-democracy demonstrations in various cities.

Cuban terrorist freed

Luis Posada, who had been detained in the U.S. since he entered the country in 2005, is again a free man since the immigration charges against him were dropped on May 8. He is reportedly living again among his admirers in the Miami community of rightist Cuban exiles. Posada, 79 years old now, was trained by the U.S. in explosives, sent on the Bay of Pigs invasion, and participated in many CIA financed terrorist adventures in South and Central America over the years. He has admitted that he participated in the 1990s bombings of tourists in Havana and FBI documents accuse him of orchestrating the 1976 bombing of the Cubana airlines flight from Tobago that killed 73. Yet the U.S. refuses to bring him to justice or honor the Venezuelan government's request to extradite him (he had become a naturalized citizen there by the time of the 1976 bombing).

during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, hundreds of thousands of Iraqis, mainly Sunnis, have fled to neighboring countries, especially Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.

At the same time, thousands of non-Iraqi Sunnis from all over the Arab world and beyond continue to pour into Iraq to fight the U.S. and the Shi'a-dominated government. Some of them are being recycled back to their home countries to launch jihadist attacks, in a pattern reminiscent of the "Afghan" Arabs of the 1990s. In fact, Iraq offers far better training than Afghanistan's mountains for operations in the urban centers of North Africa and the Arab Middle East, or even Europe and North America.

The other clear beneficiary of the war is the Iranian fundamentalist state. The U.S. invasion has removed Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist regime, which invaded Iran in 1980 and used poison gas during the long Iran-Iraq war. That war, which lasted until 1988, killed hundreds of thousands on both sides. Today, a pro-Iranian regime is being consolidated in Baghdad. The U.S. encounter with Iranian diplomats in Baghdad on May 28, which was the two countries' first public meeting in over three decades, is a tacit recognition of these facts on the ground.

The genuinely progressive Iraqi forces—the small leftist parties, the feminist groups, and the trade unions—have up to now been overwhelmed by religious fundamentalists, whose civil war is beginning to turn Iraq into another Lebanon.

Pope's trip to Brazil

Pope Benedict XVI visited Brazil May 9-13 in part to help make the Catholic Church "more dynamic" (his words) in Latin America, and in true Ratzinger style succeeded in showing the world exactly why the Church has been "hemorrhaging" followers, as Brazilian Cardinal Claudio Hummes has put it. Before arriving he took a hard line against the historic passage of a law in Mexico on April 24 that legalizes abortion during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. (The law only applies to Mexico's capital, but it adds Mexico to the short list of countries in Latin America, Cuba and Guyana, where abortion is legal.) The Pope sided with Mexican bishops that have called for excommunicating legislators who voted for the new law, an approach that is at odds with both President Lula's attitude and liberation theologians, who want the Church to start treating women as human beings.

Speaking to the opening of a conference of Latin American bishops, he took up the relationship of Christianity and indigenous cultures, assuring the bishops that "the proclamation of Jesus and of his Gospel did not at any point involve an alienation of the pre-Columbus cultures, nor was it the imposition of a foreign culture." This lie, apparently intended to assure his audience that being more "dynamic" does not include reaching out to women, Blacks, and indigenous peoples, had to be retracted a week later following an outcry from indigenous groups. He then said that "it's not possible to forget the suffering and injustices inflicted by the colonizers" on the indigenous peoples.

In addition to lecturing the bishops on how much creativity would be allowed in their attempts to stem the Church's slide, the Pope was clearly concerned about his old nemesis, Liberation Theology. He continues to assert that priests who speak out against poverty are being too political, though he has never spoken against the Church's open support for right-wing dictators in the region. None of the 266 observers invited to the conference are from the estimated 80,000 "base communities" (established by adherents to liberation theology) in the country, and only 30 are women.

NEWS AND LETTERS COMMITTEES

Who We Are And What We Stand For

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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