

NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

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50¢

WORKSHOP TALKS

Life or death at WTO

by Htun Lin

At the latest World Trade Organization talks in Cancun, Mexico, Lee Kyang Hae of South Korea, with fist in the air and a sign reading "WTO kills farmers," committed suicide as a protest against WTO's agricultural policies. He wanted to bring to the world's attention the plight of small farmers in his country.

His suicide so moved the anti-WTO activists who came from all over the world that an intersection near the site was spontaneously renamed "Plaza Lee." All over Cancun, graffiti appeared which read "Todos somos Kyang" (We are all Kyang).

Lee himself was a small farmer, leader of South Korea's union of farmers, and a three time member of the provincial assembly. South Korea's rural communities saw Mr. Lee as a heroic figure, a defender of debt-ridden farmers struggling to maintain an age-old agrarian tradition.

Lee's South Korean compatriots are not alone. From India to Africa, Japan to Nicaragua, and even here in the U.S., small farmers are facing the destruction of their family farms on a scale far more devastating than a locust infestation. The WTO talks at Cancun collapsed because the poorer countries of the world confronted the developed nations over their unfair farm subsidies, totaling over \$300 billion in the U.S. alone.

Before he died, Lee told his compatriots, "I have failed you." His last act expressed his own frustration as well as the despair of small farmers everywhere being swallowed up by huge international capital. As if to say there is no way out from the pull of the vortex,

(Continued on page 3)

BLACK/RED VIEW

Black Latin America

by John Alan

A year ago, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that the Latino population had displaced African Americans as the nation's largest ethnic minority. What this now means, socially and politically, has yet to manifest itself in a significant way. However, it should be noted that the Latino world, both in the U.S. and in Latin America, has a Black dimension deeply embedded in its history and is vigorously alive today.

Blacks first appeared in Latin America as members of Columbus' crew and were among the crew of every subsequent expedition that left a Spanish or a Portuguese port for Latin America. Black slaves were very common in Spain and Portugal even before Columbus discovered the so-called New World. According to Hugh Thomas, the English historian and author of *The Slave Trade*, Black African slaves were numerous on the Mediterranean coast of Spain and were in Italy and elsewhere in Europe. In 1444, Portugal mounted the first seriously organized raid on Blacks to work as slaves in Portugal.

The economy in the Americas was based on a never-ending need for greater and greater numbers of slaves to extract a maximum amount of labor. To get this labor, Spain in 1713 contracted with England to supply its American colonies "with at least one hundred and forty-four thousand slaves at the rate of forty-eight hundred per year" (W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Negro*).

TREATIES OF BLOOD

Slave contracts, known as Asiento treaties, reaped a harvest of wealth for the English slave traders. They fulfilled their Asiento agreement by destroying many villages and killing many people in Africa and shipping hundreds of thousands of Africans to the Spanish colonies in Latin America. It has been estimated that the total number of African slaves imported into Spain

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ON THE INSIDE

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The struggle for India's future

by Maya Jhansi

The Aug. 25 bomb blasts in Mumbai (Bombay) that killed over 50 people were the latest in a series of low-scale attacks that have terrorized India in the last year. Two women, allegedly part of a group seeking revenge for the massacre of 2,000 Muslims in Gujarat by a Hindu mob last year, were arrested, but it is not clear whether they were involved in the six other bombings in Mumbai since December. This group is suspected to have ties with radical Islamist groups in Kashmir and possibly with Al Qaeda. Whatever the case may be, we can be sure that the current coalition government headed by the right-wing Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), will make full use of them to further its own reactionary agenda, including nuclear politics.

We can take some heart in the fact that Mumbai did not erupt in riots following the bombing. The city kept peace, with students and others even coming together to raise their voices against terrorism and communalism. However, the Shiv Sena, another Hindu nationalist group in Maharashtra, and the BJP are using the bombing to kick off their campaign for upcoming state and national assembly elections.

Particularly disturbing is the success the Hindu Right has had in dehumanizing Muslims and other minorities to the point that outlandish lies and propaganda, for example about Muslim fertility rates, have entered mainstream discourse. In Pune, a city known as a center of education because of its many colleges and universities, I saw dozens of copies of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* being sold by pirated book vendors. I asked several of the book vendors about it, and they told me that they sold two to ten copies of *Mein Kampf* a day. A professor at Pune's well-known Fergusson Col-



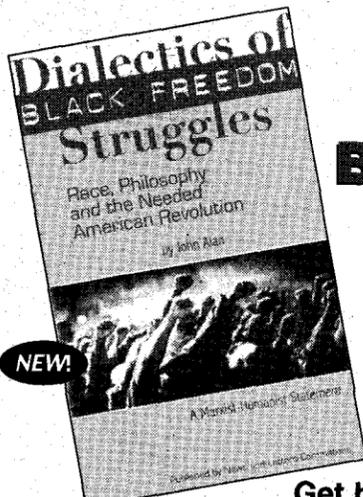
Kolkata, India—Demonstration Aug. 26 against pesticides in soft drinks.

lege told me of a student who named it as his favorite book in a college interview. Although no definite conclusions can be drawn from these observations, they are, at the very least, alarming.

As hard as the Right is trying to win the minds and hearts of Indians, however, much of the lived everyday reality of India escapes the narrow logic of ideology. Everything from popular culture to ongoing struggles and organizing by the deepest and lowest sectors of Indian society show that, while the Right has made important inroads, they have not yet captured the imagination of India.

In the planned industrial city of Faridabad on the outskirts of Delhi, workers and activists from the *Faridabad Mazdoor Samachar* (*Faridabad Workers' News*) talked about their everyday struggles at the factories and against the local and state governments. The government has attempted to demolish the shantytowns, some of them over 40 years old, where workers from companies like Goodyear, Escorts and Whirlpool live. Although Faridabad is a planned city,

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Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles: Race, Philosophy and the Needed American Revolution
By John Alan

From the Preface to **DIALECTICS OF BLACK FREEDOM STRUGGLES**

On June 23, 2003 the U.S. Supreme Court gave narrow approval for the use of race in determining admissions to the University of Michigan Law School. At the same time it rejected an affirmative action program at the University of Michigan undergraduate school whose admissions policy was seen as a quota system because it awarded points to minority applicants. Sandra Day O'Connor was one of the swing votes in the 5-4 decision. Her concern was not in remedying injustices but in what she called "the compelling public interest in diversity." Even though the administration had earlier weighed in with its own opposition to affirmative action, George W. Bush stated shortly after the decision that he applauded the Court for "recognizing the value of diversity...one of America's greatest strengths."

The U.S. military and multinational corporations, both of which are marketing the U.S. all over the globe, are strong advocates of "diversity" as a "compelling public interest." Their use of diversity as a symbol polishes an apple for market that is thoroughly rotten to the core. None of this "diversity" is about helping individuals but is

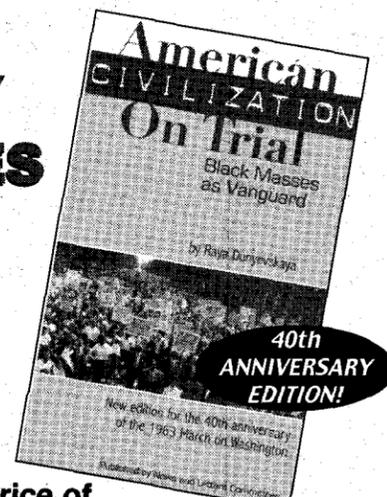
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American Civilization On Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard
By Raya Dunayevskaya

40th ANNIVERSARY EDITION!

about selling American militarized capitalism to the world, using Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice as the face of U.S. imperialism. Booker T. Washington, in the post-Reconstruction period, played this kind of role for the emergence of American capitalism in the South.

The truth is that the racist core of American capitalism is as prevalent as ever. Unemployment among Blacks today is rising at a faster pace than in any period since the mid-1970s. Most of the jobs lost have been in manufacturing, where wages for Blacks have historically been higher than in other fields. Under these racist economic conditions we can't expect African Americans to remain quiescent. We know from African history that the Black revolt is ongoing and permanent.

This statement is being issued on the 40th anniversary of the original publication of *American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard*, which was issued at the height of the Civil Rights Movement in 1963 and republished with new Prefaces and Introductions in 1970 and 1983. The following statement, authored primarily by John Alan, "Black/Red View" columnist for *News & Letters* newspaper over the past 30 years, has been worked

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Challenge from Iraqi feminists

by Anne Jaclard

A radical Iraqi feminist organization has emerged from the ashes of Baghdad, presenting a challenge to women's, anti-war and left movements around the globe, not only to support the Iraqi women, but also to exchange ideas about creating a different world. The Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq (OWFI) was founded in June to stop post-war atrocities against women and to fight for women's equality. By its very existence and in its writings, OWFI illuminates the internationalism of the concept of women's liberation, and invites us to work out its meaning in a new way.

OWFI's Statement of Founding begins: "Women's freedom is the measure of freedom and humanity in society. Not only in Iraq, where women endure the most severe types of discrimination and injustice, but



Women's rights activists from OWFI participated in the Unemployed Union's demonstration in Baghdad on July 29. Photo from German magazine *Frankfurter Rundschau*

serious and rapid steps. OWFI considers itself basically an indivisible part of the great, historic, and universal struggle for women's liberation."

'HISTORY IS IN THE MAKING'

The statement and OWFI's newspaper can open up a dialogue about the politics of the here and now, and its relation to social transformation. This, even as feminism in Iraq is being attacked from all sides, and it is not even safe for women to leave the house! Fundamentalist groups are using the political vacuum created by the U.S. war to terrorize women, to force them to veil, to leave jobs and school, and are even raping and killing them. Yet one of the founders of OWFI, Yanar Mohammed (whose talk on International Women's Day is excerpted in the July *N&L*), chose to launch the organization and its newspaper with the words, "History is in the making. My call to all our readers is: Support women in Iraq—do not feel sorry for them—give them support and solidarity. That is what they need in their challenge to change the grim future being prepared by America."

The Statement of Founding condemns all past, current and would-be future oppressors: the deposed "fascist Ba'ath regime" that legally deprived women of "even the trivial and limited rights and freedoms that men enjoyed"; then the U.S. sanctions that further impoverished women; and now "regressive political changes whether originating from the United States and their destructive wars or the nationalist and Islamist [fundamentalist] movements in Iraq."

OWFI publishes *Mousawat (Equality)* while its sister organization in London, the Iraqi Women's Rights Coalition, publishes an English newspaper *Equal Rights Now!* It also runs women's shelters and plans programs to help women develop job skills, provide legal services, obtain social insurance, and change the Constitution to give women equal rights and eliminate justification for "honor killings" (men killing women family members). It works with the Unemployed Union, which held large demonstrations in July, and with the Worker-Communist Party (no relation to the Communist Party of Iraq).

TO THE U.S.: END RAPE AND KILLING

OWFI initiated a petition campaign to demand that the U.S. occupiers "stop rape, abduction and killings of women." You can sign on at http://www.ipetitions.com/campaigns/Women_in_Iraq. Now OWFI is under attack, not only from the U.S. and fundamentalists, but also from some of the so-called Left, because of demanding that the occupiers guarantee women safety, rather than demanding only that the U.S. get out. These feminists will not allow women to be excluded from the process of trying to realize a completely different way of life. We want to discuss with them, what alternatives are possible? How can we escape the pulls of capitalist and religious unfreedoms?

Some claim to support feminism, yet avoid discussing how to transform society, and truncate the free flow of ideas by the dead end of advocating a "lesser evil"—whether that is considered to be the U.S. or the fundamentalists. Much of the Left around the world falls into such dead ends, some even to the point of making alliances with fundamentalists in the belief they represent the opposite of U.S. imperialism. Such

WOMAN AS REASON

Leftists forget the Iranian experience in 1979, when a genuine revolution against a fascist dictator was hijacked by religious fundamentalists.

Some feminists are drawn to secular capitalist society as a "lesser evil" than religious domination. This posing of the question, as if the two were opposites, likewise means death for revolutionary movements. As the 2003-2004 Marxist-Humanist Perspectives discusses, such "lesser evilism" always "concedes the idea of freedom to the powers that exist. We want instead to change the discussion to how to win the "great, historic, and universal struggle for women's liberation."

To correspond with OWFI or make a donation, contact IWRC at iraqwrc@hotmail.com, or U.S. supporters at j4fasulo@yahoo.com or through *N&L*.

'Meena, Heroine of Afghanistan'

Berkeley, Cal.—On the anniversary of September 11 there was a meeting with readings from a new book, *Meena, Heroine of Afghanistan*, by Melody Ermachild Chavis with an introduction by Alice Walker. Walker read her introduction, stressing what Meena's life meant.

Chavis said, in the voices of the families of victims who oppose the use of their loved ones' memory to perpetuate Bush's war, she heard the voices of the women of Afghanistan. She called her audience and the Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) a "third force" opposed to both Bush and bin Laden. She said, "we are people in the millions who are for civil society, for the rule of international law."

She noted that going to Afghanistan was like going home to her fundamentalist Irish family in Texas—encountering the same church of hatred. She asked, why has fundamentalism grown so much everywhere? Why was science not able to "save" us from it? Her answer was that science is not neutral; it gave us the depleted uranium bombs, for example.

Chavis compared Meena's founding of RAWA in 1977 when she was only 20, to the U.S. Civil Rights struggle. Meena and other women in RAWA decided to advocate for democracy and to practice it in their own lives. RAWA was to be inter-tribal and inter-ethnic.

Chavis compared Meena to Harriet Tubman: though she was hunted, she kept crossing the border to smuggle things in and people out. Meena (and RAWA) are proud of the many schools they founded.

One person asked about the wearing of the burkha. Chavis answered that it is never about the clothes, but about human rights. When the government says you have to wear something to remind you of your devotion, that is an attack on genuine religious feeling.

I raised the question of building solidarity with women of Afghanistan based on their vision of democracy practiced in everyday life. Chavis' translator, an Afghan woman, Latifa, liked the question because she is dismayed at the image of Afghan people as backward and wants to be a partner in a dialogue.

This meeting of genuine solidarity with people who want freedom contrasts with the sentiments at anti-war rallies, where many want to confine our critique to that of the U.S. The need for concrete expressions of what solidarity means has never been greater.

—Urszula Wislanka

Women are human

There are the hundreds of murdered and missing women in Juarez and Chihuahua, Mexico. There's the "accidental" murder of French actress, Marie Trintignant by her boyfriend. ("A slap is never an accident" was the cry from women protesting her death.) There's the "cleansing" of women in Kenya where widows and unmarried women are forced to have sex with the "village cleanser" to force out "evil," or they are forced to give up their land and money. But there is positive work being done by the women affected.

Women in Kenya have formed co-ops to stand up to community leaders so that a woman is not alone if she refuses to be "cleansed." The Court of Women was organized by Asian women's rights groups to pressure world powers and bring justice to women testifying on forced prostitution—from Afghanistan to India.

Some take for granted that women are human. But there are those who believe that women are only to produce children for men or the state. Remember Rev. Jerry Falwell blaming "feminists" for September 11; and the Promise Keepers calling for the man to be head of the home and the woman to obey him. This leads to support of "cultural" values that oppose the education of girls and women; subjecting women to dowry and so-called "honor killings"; and to being considered as property by fathers, brothers, husbands and sons.

It is up to us to think about what we can do to help stop the violence against women, children, and yes, men. While it can be a powerful statement when activists raise money at walkathons or meetings, these actions don't go to the root of the problem. The very mores of society must be confronted and changed.

—Sue, NOW member, Chicago

Phony clinics abound

Memphis, Tenn.—Everyday pro-life activists use corrupt methods to stop abortion and restrict a woman's right to choose. The recent rise of so-called "crisis pregnancy centers" (CPC), which are at times funded by state and federal funds, exemplifies this deliberate disregard for socially accepted moral boundaries.

There are two such CPCs in Memphis, ironically named "Life Choices," funded by a coalition of Baptist churches. They advertise through TV commercials and billboards, though their religious affiliation is not sited. Thus, the CPC begins its trend of deceitfulness.

Karen Inman, a CPC director, reports that about half the women who call are considering abortion and are not aware that Life Choices does not perform them, or make referrals to abortion clinics.

Before receiving "aid," the woman must take a pregnancy test. Their brochure states: "While waiting for the test results, a trained volunteer shares fetal development, methods and risks of abortion..." Before even receiving her test results, the woman is told that abortions are unhealthy and immoral.

The volunteer is not licensed and holds no applicable degree. Women are dealing with volunteers who harbor an extreme anti-choice agenda. The "risks" of abortion are listed, but in no particular order, which is misleading. It includes everything from minor cervical lacerations to uterine ruptures to death. Though these complications can occur, Life Choices does not report their frequency. Serious threats usually occur only during third trimester abortions, which are rarely performed. This information is not shared with the women. Life Choices exaggerate the risks of abortion, but fail to mention that first-trimester abortion is 11 times safer than carrying a child to term.

Poor women are lured to Life Choices for financial relief. The CPC offers "maternity clothes and baby items as an incentive." They lie about the help women receive from the government. Karen Inman assured, "the government provides for single mothers to live in a decent lifestyle, with all of her needs met, for the first five years of her child's life."

CPCs now outnumber and outfund abortion providers, making their lies more accessible than truth. Women must confront the reality that changing legislation and new right-wing judge nominations are not the only threats to reproductive choice. Abortion rights are being attacked from a new and deceptive angle by CPCs. Without recognizing and confronting their lies and manipulation, women have no chance against this hostile assault on reproductive rights.

—Anna, Memphis

Women's Action Coalition member

WOMEN WORLDWIDE

by Mary Jo Grey

In a victory for Nigerian Amina Lawal and the international women's movement, her conviction and sentence of death by stoning for adultery were overturned by the highest religious court in her state. Unfortunately her victory leaves intact the Sharia law that convicted her. Nevertheless her freedom, after a year of struggle, reveals the strength of the women's movement and the depth of revulsion worldwide for the inhuman death sentence imposed on her.



Amnesty International USA

The Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 was passed unanimously in July by the U.S. Congress. It names a panel to establish national standards to prevent and prosecute prison rapes by and against incarcerated women and men—which were previously ignored by the criminal injustice system as an everyday hazard. States with prisons that continue high assault rates risk losing federal funding or accreditation.

—Information from Women's Human Rights Online Bulletin

Amnesty International is campaigning to stop Turkey's sexual torture of women prisoners. Women in state custody are routinely forced to strip naked during questioning; are beaten severely; given electric shock treatment, and repeatedly raped. Women political prisoners, especially Kurdish women, are at increased risk of violence. Kurdish women are often denied medical and legal assistance. Despite Turkey's despicable record of sexual torture, the U.S. is providing them with a \$6 billion aid package.

—Information from Women's Human Rights Online Bulletin

More than 135 organizations have jointly sent a letter to President Bush demanding he work to ensure the immediate ratification of the UN Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. This Treaty for the Rights of Women guarantees women the right to: live free from violence, a basic education, to vote, access to health care, and the right to own and inherit property. The U.S. is the only industrialized nation that has failed to ratify it.

Solidarity helps Yale workers' strike

New York—The second strike to hit Yale University this year, and the ninth in the last 38 years, ended on Sept. 18 with 4,000 university workers winning significant gains in wages and pensions. Clerical, dining and maintenance workers in Locals 34 and 35 of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees struck for three weeks demanding compensation comparable to their counterparts at nearby universities such as Harvard and the University of Connecticut.

Clerical workers will receive raises totaling 40% over eight years, with 32% for maintenance and dining workers. But the main issue was pensions. "Retiring with dignity" was the overriding theme.

Before the strike, recent retirees with 20 years of service received \$621 a month. Pensions will now increase by 35% over and above raises. Yale won two major concessions, an unprecedented eight-year contract, retroactive to January 2002, and a bonus system to increase productivity that pits workers against each other.

Meanwhile 150 striking dietary workers at Yale-New Haven Hospital represented by SEIU 1199 rejected the hospital's offer, but will return to work while negotiations continue.

This strike drew national attention and support, all too rare for labor causes today. On Labor Day weekend Jesse Jackson—who has come to New Haven before to support striking workers—and 18 others were arrested during a show of support. Two weeks into the strike, a rally of 10,000 people from as far away as Las Vegas and from several national unions led to the arrest of John Sweeney and other labor leaders.

Even presidential candidates Howard Dean and Joseph Lieberman lined up to support the strike in person. Locally, there was overwhelming support for the strike. At the union's request, over 100 professors relocated their classes elsewhere in the city to avoid crossing picket lines. While there was some notable support from students, there were ambivalent.

During the bitter standoff, Yale hired two subcontracting agencies to bring in a cleaning crew composed

mainly of Latino workers. U.S. Rep. Rosa DeLauro accused Yale of "cynical and disrespectful treatment" of Latinos, some of them undocumented, by using them as strikebreakers. Still, in a show of solidarity, 13 of those workers walked off their jobs and joined the picket lines.

To understand the strike's significance, it is important to see the relation between the university and the city that surrounds it. Around 2,800 factory workers remain in New Haven, which once had over 100,000 manufacturing jobs. De-industrialization has made Yale the city's dominant employer. People now leave other companies to work for Yale, but from Yale have nowhere else to go.

Such trends have created an even starker divide between the city's wealthy university and its predominantly Black and Latino residents. Additionally, the university has been buying up real estate, raising rents beyond the reach of poor people and increasing homelessness. According to one resident, 20% of the homeless in New Haven hold jobs in the service and retail sectors.

In other university labor news, 250 full-time and 350 part-time faculty at the Brooklyn campus of Long Island University represented by the L.I.U. Faculty Federation ended a one-week strike on Sept. 11. They were able not only to stave off a proposed workload increase, but to decrease course load from four to three courses per semester.

They made only nominal gains in benefits for adjunct faculty. Still under discussion are health benefits for newly hired full-time faculty. A new university proposal would create a two-tier system with new faculty having to cover half of the health care expenses for their families.

Faculty at L.I.U.'s C.W. Post campus continue negotiations as they enter their third week of striking, although many full-time professors have returned to work. Their union, the C.W. Post Collegial Federation, is also fighting for higher wages, better health benefits and a decreased workload.

—New York student sympathizer

UAW caves in to Big 3

Detroit—The Big Three auto companies—GM, Ford and DaimlerChrysler—won every one of their major demands against the United Auto Workers union in the recently negotiated four-year contract, including agreements to close plants, shifting some health care costs to the workers, and giving management greater flexibility over the control of the workers to increase productivity, in other words, speedup.

Brainwashing for the concessionary contracts began at last year's constitutional and negotiating convention when Wall Street analysts were invited to talk about international competition in the auto market. They were back with UAW leaders in August, in the midst of the negotiations. So it is no surprise the *Wall Street Journal* praised the "great foresight" and "labor statesmanship" of UAW President Ron Gettelfinger.

While the UAW had insisted it would give no concessions in health care, it agreed to have workers pay \$5 for each doctor's office visit, and \$10, up from \$5, for each prescription that is not a generic drug, plus the difference between the generic and brand name drug. That can amount to thousands of dollars when doctors insist on brand name drugs, which many do.

The plant-closing agreement will affect 15-20,000 workers who will be thrown out of work and have difficulty finding another job in this depressed economy. Over the last four-year contract, 50,000 union jobs disappeared. Another 50,000 altogether are projected to be eliminated this time. These workers would not agree to the union and management recognize they are in the same boat. Workers facing layoffs know they are in a different boat altogether and that they are going down in it.

Workers at Delphi and Vestron, the parts suppliers spun off from GM and Ford, will be voting on a contract without knowing what is in it. It calls for the UAW to negotiate details within 90 days; they are expected to set wages below the GM and Ford model, and agree to a two-tier wage structure for new hires.

In still another concession, the union is joining management in agreeing to the provisions designed to reduce absenteeism. Work on the line is grueling and dehumanizing. Workers are often so drained of energy that they are forced to take an occasional day off work to try to regain their strength. But this contract reduces the days a worker can be absent without being fired and further increases work pressures.

Perhaps the most ominous threat to the workers on the line is the "greater flexibility" concession. Workers know that past "greater flexibility" concessions have always meant a harder life on the production line: forced overtime, loss of seniority rights, abolition of classifications limiting management power, and technology that incessantly reduces the work force.

As a retired auto worker said, "You don't know all of the fish hooks in a contract until you work under it. That's when you find out how much you've lost."

—Andy Phillips

Tyson Foods strike

Jefferson, Wis.—At Tyson Foods pepperoni and sausage plant here, 470 members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 538 have been on strike since February. While Tyson CEO John Tyson was paid \$7.7 million in 2002 (up \$3.2 million from 2001), the four-year contract Tyson proposed would freeze wages, begin a two-tier wage structure for new hires, cut sick leave by 50%, and vacations by two weeks.

Tyson also proposed freezing retiree pensions and discontinuing their health care coverage (a \$225 per month loss). Active workers would pay up to \$40 per week more for health coverage. Tyson wants to end severance pay, so the company could shut the plant down with very little notice to workers.

Tyson and the union have not bargained since February. Strikers have garnered considerable support from neighbors, businesses and unions across the country. Tyson is running one shift with scab labor based in Tyson's neighboring county.

Supporters, don't buy Tombstone, DiGiorno or Jack's Pizza; encourage the local Pizza Hut to post a sign "Eat Here—We Do Not Use Any Tyson Products on Our Pizza"; and ask high schools not to serve Schwan's or Tony's Pizza. Donations may be sent to: UFCW Local 538 Strike Fund, 2228 Myrtle St., Madison WI 53704. See www.tysonfamiliesstandup.org.

—Strike supporter

Assi Market update

Los Angeles—In August 2002, the Korean Supermarket fired over 50 workers on the pretense of illegal Social Security numbers, but actually because of their organizing for a union.

There has been no settlement after one year of picketing, demonstrations and lawsuits. Since the firing, the workers, mostly Latinos, have been picketing the market on a daily basis. They have been supported by grassroots organizations, especially Korean Immigrant Workers Advocate and the Immigrant Workers Union.

A Korean immigrant worker was fired by Assi Market for protesting against constant verbal harassment and ridicule of workers and demanding more work in less time for poverty minimum wage. "We won't let Assi Market profit off our sweat and tears. There is no way they will succeed in stopping our will and power to change these inequalities. We won't stand for all this, and we will fight to the end."

—Basho

WORKSHOP TALKS

(Continued from page 1)

for Lee, international capital is an overwhelming force that he could no longer fight, like Hurricane Isabel. We workers may be more accustomed to facing this "storm" right within our everyday activity.

A chorus of voices—from our bosses to our own union officials—presents the imperatives of capital to us workers as an irresistible force. We're told constantly the economy has changed and that we must adapt. We have seen one concessionary contract after another, and unions such as mine even entered into labor-management partnerships.

FARMERS AND WORKERS

There's a parallel between the deals made in agriculture and the deals made by our union bureaucracies with capital. Small farmers like Lee and those industrial workers on the second tier of the economy are the ones bearing the brunt of economic change. Subsidies to American agribusiness are a form of bribery which robs from the livelihood of small farmers everywhere.

In my own shop, they tried to bribe us with "bonuses" to get us to pass two-tier contracts. Our own union officials ended our own strikes against management's two-tier contract demands. Some officials even deluded themselves to claim victory when management allowed the union jurisdiction over any jobs to be created, as if automation "creates" jobs.

In the latest UAW contract, the union gave GM the right to close factories and even sack new workers with lower health benefits and higher co-pays in the name of keeping the company viable enough to continue paying its pensions. The union traded away future job security for existing workers, in order to hang on to what they already had from past contracts.

Keeping U.S. companies afloat, and funding their huge pension liabilities that don't apply to foreign auto makers transplanted in the U.S. with non-union American labor, will amplify the demand to get more out of the existing UAW workforce, with more speed-ups and more cuts to follow.

REAL CONFLICT ON THE LINE

Taking the view that there's a mutual dependence between company and union is no solution for workers on the production line, where the real conflict between labor and management resides. To do so only reduces a labor organization to the role of production commodity.

Every worker has felt this force, this commodity fetish that operates behind the backs of producers like farmers and auto workers who are robbed of their livelihood. Even for us healthcare workers, we go to work every day to focus on taking care of patients. Yet healthcare is treated as yet another form of commodity, which must be rationed according to the dictates of capital.

Under capitalism, we organize ourselves where things we have created have a life and force of their own outside us that dominates us humans, forcing us to relate to each other through these things. This, in essence, is capitalist alienation. It drives many of us to end our own lives. There is nothing natural about it.

Immigrant worker freedom riders

San Francisco—On Sept. 20, several thousand people rallied here to send off the Bay Area contingent of the national Immigrant Workers' Freedom Ride.

"Immigrant workers, living and paying taxes in the United States, want the right to apply for citizenship, to reunite their families, and to have a voice on the job without regard to legal status... rights denied by their undocumented status and outdated laws."

Maria Perla, an East Bay Freedom Rider from El Salvador who cleans hotel rooms, said: "I left my three young children 14 years ago to come to the United States so that I could provide for them. I cry every week when I talk to them on the phone. I am going

Following stops by the Freedom Riders in San Francisco and elsewhere, supporters rally in Chicago Sept. 27 for immigrant workers' rights.

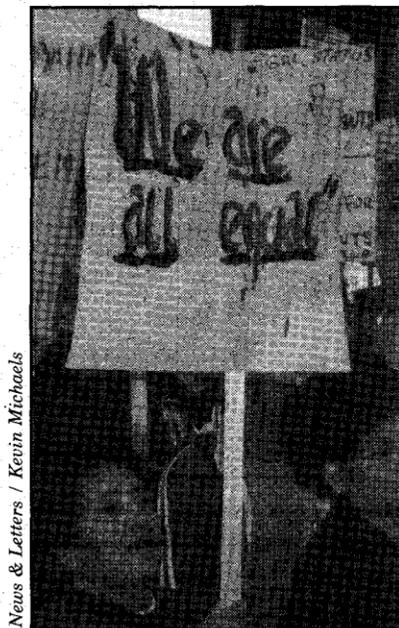
on the freedom ride because I want to be reunited with my children. I am not prepared to wait another 14 years to be a family again."

Jean Damu said: "As a Black worker I support this Freedom Ride because I don't want any people to receive the treatment we received in America. Everybody needs to support immigrant workers because it's the only way to protect our own jobs and life conditions. If we allow bosses to drive a wedge between citizen and non-citizen workers, then we'll all suffer, just as we suffered when they drove a wedge between white and Black workers. It's a historic link between the Civil Rights Movement's Freedom Ride and today."

Another participant observed that of the 130,000 troops in Iraq, more than 37,000 are not citizens. On this six-month anniversary of the beginning of the war, it was poignant to note the difference between the reasons the riders expressed for their activity and the cynicism of politicians who opportunistically flocked to the rally, too, hoping to turn the genuine desire for change into votes to just keep them in power.

The rides converge on Washington, D.C. on Oct. 1 from all over the U.S., ending in New York City Oct. 4.

—Bay Area supporters



News & Letters / Kevin Michaels

From the Writings of Raya Dunayevskaya MARXIST-HUMANIST ARCHIVES

This is the most tragic day in the history of Latin America. In 1970 when Salvador Allende was elected president of Chile, it appeared that Cuba would by no means be the only country that was able to defeat American imperialism and Batista. Now the bloody victory of the military coup and the horrible murder of Allende [are] a victory of counter-revolution that, though it falls mainly on the Chilean masses, will by no means end there. Indeed, it is a start of counter-revolution not only in Latin America, but in U.S. imperialism's continued stranglehold on Latin America.

Already, before ever he was officially designated as secretary of state, Henry Kissinger had put his suave but very dirty imperialistic hands into the cauldron of counter-revolution. As if his calling upon the U.S. ambassador in Chile, Nathaniel Davis, "a month ago" (though he appeared on the scene in Washington this Saturday and returned to Santiago to be present during the coup), meant that U.S. imperialism was not involved in this massacre going on in Chile now!

The fact is, as everyone knows, even before Watergate, the International Telephone and Telegraph Company (ITT) offered the Republican Party one million dollars to stop Allende's election in 1970. After Allende's election, not only did ITT not stop its attempt to topple the regime, but Nixon went so far as to carry out the most vicious economic boycott of Chile so that it could not even draw money from the world bank. At the same time, he had the U.S. Navy in Latin American waters, and we may be sure that Kissinger isn't waiting for official confirmation before he has a whole list of "erudite" alternatives to assure the military coup's victory.

The tragedy, unfortunately, has become fact, not only because of the oligarchy that resisted Allende's agricultural reforms, the comprador bourgeoisie which was in

EDITOR'S NOTE

September 11 marks the 30th anniversary of the vicious U.S.-engineered overthrow of Salvador Allende, the democratically elected leader of Chile. In this coup, thousands of workers, peasants and women were killed by Chilean military forces supported by U.S. imperialism.

Below we publish a letter written by Raya Dunayevskaya to News and Letters Committees on Sept. 13, 1973, just two days after Allende was assassinated and his government toppled and replaced by the regime of Gen. Pinochet. It has been edited for publication.

collusion with U.S. imperialism against the nationalization of basic industries, and the fascistic Patria y Libertad (Fatherland and Liberty), but also because of the grand illusion of reformism. Because Allende gained power through a popular election and parliamentary means, he thought he could rule with the military intact as if they would obey him just because he was the duly elected "commander-in-chief."

Worse still, he did not create a workers' militia for self-defense for coping with the counter-revolution that was preparing its coup ever since he

gained power, for making sure that workers' control of production and not just the nationalization of industry would be the only guarantee of socialism. This was a sure way of guaranteeing that instead of a civil war, we would have a massacre.

As usual with Communists, they were instrumental in keeping the workers unarmed, in making sure that everybody lived under democratic delusions by having as their central slogan, "No Civil War."

Now the masses—peasants, granted some agricultural reform; the workers, freed from imperialist stranglehold in the industries that would now be controlled by strong unions; and the poor in general—will fall into the greatest crisis and retrogression, not excluding death. At least 1,000 died just in the attack on the palace. How many are being shot without anyone knowing? How many are being rounded up for prison, for exile, for terror, for mutilation? What about no less than 10,000 revolutionaries and general dissenters who found refuge in Chile from the horrors of the military regimes in Latin America? What about Hugo Blanco, the famous peasant leader of Peru, a Trotskyist, who had been sentenced to no less than 25 years simply for organizing peasant unions, who was released after eight years but exiled and is living presently in Chile? What about the Party which so



Salvador Allende last seen alive, Sept. 11, 1973.

deluded itself about democracy that it has not prepared any underground way of functioning? When will the massacre stop?

And how, exactly, will Nixon-Kissinger-ITT-Anacosta Copper ameliorate inflation that so cut into the living, poor living, in Chile that was so aggravated by all the machinations of the native counter-revolutionary forces, including the small owners of trucks and their middle-class wives? Will anyone in the Left learn not just to be against what is...by creating such foundations for human relations that cannot succeed without

unifying theory and practice, philosophy and revolution, workers' rule unbound by coalition governments with the bourgeoisie.

It is impossible at this particular moment to develop any more comprehensively the analysis of the immediate

situation. The one good immediate response we heard from our New York local was that they had just participated in a very militant demonstration of 1,000 against the Chilean counter-revolution and U.S. imperialism's participation in it. There was also a demonstration of several hundred before the White House in Washington. Everyone should be on the lookout in every locality and participate actively in all opposition movements against what is happening in Chile and American imperialism's participation in it...

I should also like to call to your attention—I do hope some of you own a bound volume of *Correspondence*—to my editorial on the counter-revolution the U.S. engineered in Guatemala in its July 24, 1954 issue. You will find the following: "If the Communists played any role at all in this revolution, they saw to it that peasants and workers did not take things into their own hands, did not form committees outside government channels, nor arm themselves to defend their few gains."

ON THE SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

Against the Double Tragedy: No to terrorism and Bush's drive to war!

Editor's note: On the occasion of the second anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, we reprint excerpts of the statement News and Letters Committees issued on Sept. 16, 2001. Given the ongoing importance of the issues raised by this statement, we welcome your feedback and comments.

A double tragedy descended upon the world with the barbaric, cruel and inhuman terrorist attack on New York and Washington, D.C. on September 11. The first tragedy was the terrorist attack itself, which created a level of destruction and mayhem never before seen in a U.S. city. The second tragedy, now unfolding, is the response to the attacks by the Bush administration, which has used them to declare a "state of war" and is pushing for total militarization, at home and abroad. As Marxist-Humanists, we oppose both sides of this double tragedy. Our ground is the absolute opposite of mindless terrorism and statist militarism—the idea of freedom...

It is imperative that we completely and totally oppose Bush's effort to respond to senseless terrorism with an equally senseless policy of indiscriminate military intervention, just as we must oppose all efforts to restrict civil liberties at home or scapegoat immigrants and 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.

It is therefore all the more disturbing that some on the Left have only mildly condemned the September 11 attacks and have spent most of their time arguing that the real culprit is—U.S. imperialism. U.S. military intervention against Iraq, Sudan, Afghanistan and its support of Israel, some say, has created a climate which drives opponents of the U.S. to pursue such "desperate measures" as suicide attacks....This amounts to a bizarre spectacle. While the perpetrators of the terrorist attacks remain silent as to their motives and intentions, "leftist" commentators are trying to provide the rationale for them! All we need to know, presumably, are the crimes of U.S. imperialism, and then the reasons for the September 11 attack supposedly become "understandable."

These "explanations" misconstrue the nature of the forces which conducted the attacks. Reactionary Islamic fundamentalism is not simply driven by hatred of U.S. imperialism acts against Iraq, Palestine, or any other country. Islamic fundamentalism is just as much driven by hatred of feminism, homosexuality, workers' rights, etc. Such groups as Afghanistan's Taliban, Alge-

ria's FIA, and the terrorist cells in Egypt which have murdered Marxist professors as well as indigenous writers and singers represent a violent rejection of everything "Western"—especially those aspects of western society created through decades of struggles by workers, women, gays and lesbians and minorities for a more open and free society.

To try to rationalize the September 11 attacks as an "understandable" reaction to U.S. foreign policy skips over the fact that some forces opposed to the U.S. are just as regressive, if not even more so, than U.S. imperialism itself. Yes, U.S. imperialism is a terrible force which wreaks enormous destruction throughout the world. And yes, the U.S. is implicated in the crimes against humanity of the Talibans and bin Ladens—the CIA supported bin Laden when he fought the Russians and as recently as a few months ago the U.S. gave Afghanistan's ruling Taliban \$100 million in aid.

But by the same token, these forces are implicated in the crimes of the U.S. government. Islamic fundamentalism has again and again strengthened U.S. imperialism by taking actions which have undermined revolutionary forces and solidified counter-revolutionary policies. This was true in 1979, when the taking of hostages at the U.S. embassy in Iran by Islamic fundamentalists helped Reagan achieve political ascendancy. That is true today, when an anti-feminist, homophobic fundamentalism of an even more reactionary bent is enabling the inheritors of Reaganism to impose their regressive agenda upon this country.

Those fighting for human liberation need to make it very clear that the attack of September 11 was not a viable protest or response to the U.S. or any of the atrocities it perpetrates around the world. To even hint otherwise is an attack on the freedom movements within the U.S. and internationally and can result only in further isolating leftists from the masses....

In a word, those opposing Bush's drive for war need to take this moment to stop and think. Nowhere is that more important than for the movement against global capital, which reached a turning point in the protests in Genoa this summer. The atmosphere now descending upon this country may well hurt the movement by discouraging activity. Many are even asking whether the opening reached in the anti-globalization movement will be shut down. But the answer to this is not to just beat the drum for more activity, as if repeating familiar criticisms of U.S. policy will by itself suffice.

We live at a moment when political opposition must have a total view in order to be truly effective. We must

take a firm stand against all forms of injustice, whether as propagated by terrorists, U.S. imperialism, or by anyone else, while developing a comprehensive perspective of the kind of new human relations we are for. Never has dialogue and debate on the need for a philosophy of revolution been more important—not alone for the forward movement of the struggles against global capital, but for their very existence....

—Sept. 16, 2001

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EDITORIAL

Human impact of 'job-loss' economy

Economists are at a loss these days to explain what they see as a current rapid growth of the U.S. economy at the same time that there is such a "persistent stagnation" of the "job market." Rather than stagnation, the reality is ever-deepening layoffs, or what is being called the "job-loss recovery."

While industrial production jumped 5% since the recession was declared over at the end of 2001, more than one million jobs have been eliminated in

that same period. The truth is that no less than 2.7 million manufacturing jobs alone have been lost since Bush took office, or over three million jobs in total.

It need hardly be emphasized that any worker can figure out the reason for this. Inasmuch as the term "increased productivity" is taken to mean far more goods being produced with far fewer workers in the same unit of time, there is clearly no reason for employers to hire new workers or rehire those who were cut away. Temporary layoffs are now permanent, while those still employed are burdened with the work of those no longer there. In good old-fashioned terms it is called speed-up—but far more vicious than ever before.

The repercussions are drastic in terms of the health both of those "fortunate" enough to remain on the job and those whose health benefits are the first ones to disappear with their jobs. It is why one of the greatest concerns of auto workers during the recent negotiations between the UAW and the Big Three auto companies was the retention of their health benefits. Not only did the union, however, cave in on the health issue, allowing for higher premiums, but it agreed to a wage freeze and allowed GM to close at least 12 plants, which will lead to thousands of more layoffs.

While the overall national unemployment level for Black America is, as usual, more than double that for white America, even more significant is the fact that the rate at which Black workers are losing jobs and joining the unemployment line since 2,000 is more than twice that of white workers, since Black workers tend to be more concentrated in the hard-hit manufacturing sector.

A DEEPENING CRISIS

In the middle of a crisis such as this, what does it mean that the American people have now been informed by President Bush that the price tag for his wars on Afghanistan and Iraq will cost \$87 billion more than he first thought? Added to the already enormous amount devoted to defense spending, America's military budget will far exceed that of all other nations combined, pushing the 2004 defense budget to no less than \$470 billion—a figure that, when adjusted for inflation, matches U.S. military spending during the Cold War at its peak.

The question is not whether the added billions Bush is now asking for should be used to reconstruct Iraq's schools and hospitals or to salvage those at home. The vast bulk of the \$87 billion first requested will be used, not to restore the water and electricity or any of the

Indiana prison strike

The following statement is issued on behalf of 11 prisoners on the Wabash Valley Correctional Facility Secured Housing Units, and concerns the conditions on said units. Beginning on Sept. 12, 2003, prisoners on the long term administrative segregation range collectively refused to eat food off the Black unit trays.

This is not a hunger strike, but rather a response to the inhumane conditions on this unit. The men on this unit are under indefinite sanctions and the conditions under which they are forced to live are in violation of their human rights.

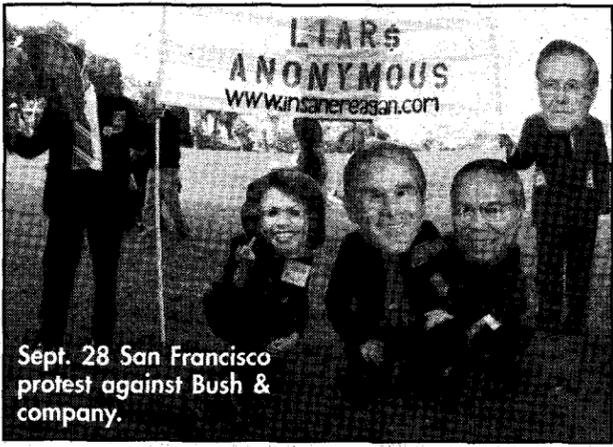
We on the outside have been monitoring the situation and have seen that there are no incentives given to these men to work toward their release and the system is simply warehousing them and therefore feels free to violate their human rights. We are sending this message in an effort to provide impetus to those political officials whose job it is to see that such claims are investigated and corrected.

Among the 13 demands are:

- An end to indefinite terms of administrative segregation.
- An end to food deprivation tactics.
- An end to non-contact family and attorney visits.
- An end to the denial of self-improvement opportunities to prisoners on the secured housing units.

We on the outside associated with the men on long term Secured Housing Units/Administrative Segregation status, who are the focus of these demands, will continue to monitor the response to these demands, realizing that it is in the long-term interest of all citizens that men confined thus are afforded their constitutional guarantees and fit living conditions.

—Committee for Freedom for Khalfani Malik Khalidun (contact Mark at elsapo37@yahoo.com)



Sept. 28 San Francisco protest against Bush & company.

Independent Media Center

devastated infrastructure of Iraq, but to increase the military and intelligence capabilities of the occupiers.

The question is rather how Bush has managed, under the cloak of a "war against terrorism" to bloat the military budget to such an unprecedented size at the very moment the U.S. is suffering its deepest fiscal crisis in half a century. This year's federal deficit will be no less than \$455 billion, while

billions of dollars in social benefits are being slashed from state budgets. The price the American people are paying to help fund Bush's permanent war is enormous.

At the same time, how could it be that two years ago a budget surplus of \$353 billion was predicted, whereas a deficit of \$540 billion is expected next year.

DIVE FROM SURPLUS TO DEFICIT

Although the heavy costs of Bush's permanent war—piled on top of his unconscionable tax cuts for the rich, planned to reach \$3 trillion over 10 years—bear a large share of responsibility for the shocking dive from the budget surplus of the '90s to the enormous deficits

BLACK/RED VIEW

(Continued from page 1)

ish America is 1,552,000 over the whole period of the slave trade. That figure does not contain the number of African slaves imported to Brazil, which has been estimated to be more than three and a half million. The ravenous hunger Spain and Portugal had for African slave labor has been explained in many spurious ways, such as Blacks were stronger than the Indians and had a greater resistance to the white man's diseases.

Karl Marx described this period in history: "The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the indigenous population of that continent, the beginnings of the conquest and plunder of India, and the conversion of Africa in to a preserve for the commercial hunting of black skins, are all things which characterize the dawn of the era of capitalist production."

Black revolts, conspiracies and a myriad of other forms of resistance to enslavement went on throughout the history of African slavery in Latin America. Brazil was plagued by Black resistance throughout its entire history as a slave-owning nation. It could not prevent or stop massive Black revolts with punishment or terror.

Of course, Brazil is not the only Latin American country to feel the power of Black resistance and rebellion against slavery. W.E.B. Du Bois wrote in *The Negro*: "Before 1530 there were enough Negroes in Mexico to lead an insurrection, where Negroes fought desperately, but were overcome and their ringleader executed."

Later the followers of another Negro insurgent, Bayano were captured and sent back to Spain." Both W.E.B. Du Bois and Hugh Thomas contend that: "African Muslim slaves were more difficult to control for, as the Brazilians found in 1830s in particular, some of them were at least as cultivated as their masters, and were capable of mounting formidable rebellions" (*The Slave Trade*, by Hugh Thomas).

THE PROBLEM TODAY

Of course, there are no slaves in Latin America today. However, the race division, which was created by slavery, has never been absolutely purged from many Latin American countries, but has merged with the class division.

For example the *Crisis* (November/December 2002) published an article on how Afro-Ecuadorians are now engaged in a struggle to prevent their ruling class from "whitening" Ecuador by manipulating the census to undercount Afro-Ecuadorians which would make them an invisible ethnic group in Ecuador's population.

Today, in Colombia, racism and classism combine to keep Afro-Colombians in a permanent status of second-class citizenship. Although Afro-Colombians and the indigenous people have a constitutional jurisdictional authority over their communities in Colombia, the state at the same time maintains a military presence on their land and both have lost much to government mega-development and landlord encroachment. To stop this encroachment Afro-Colombians and the indigenous people have formed a new political group, the Unity of Afro-Caucano Organization.

This ethnic unity of Afro-Latinos and indigenous people, of course, is a great leap forward in the battle against racism and classism in Latin America. Capitalism has put us through a history of genocide and slavery leading to today's poverty and exploitation of labor. As we try to discern the meaning of ethnicity for today, however, we should pay close attention, not just to numbers, but to the concrete history of each group's struggle for liberation.

at the end of the first three years of Bush's stolen presidency, the truth is that that dive began even before he took office. A number of economists believe the surplus was "essentially ephemeral" in that it was based on a stock market boom that declined at a "breathtaking" rate once the bubble burst.

To understand what we are witnessing today demands a return to the structural changes capitalism underwent in 1975, when the overwhelming preponderance of constant capital (or machinery) over variable capital (living employed labor) resulted in the greater and greater decline in the rate of profit for the capitalists.

Marx, in his greatest theoretical work, *Capital*, foretold this when he showed that, because labor-power is the source of all value, including surplus value, as fewer workers are employed relative to constant capital in the production process, what follows is the tentential decline in the rate of profit.

Capitalism's response was an intensive effort after 1975 to cut wages and benefits and to send jobs to the low-wage corners of the global economy. At the same time capitalists tried to increase productivity with ever more high-tech labor-saving devices.

In a recent piece on disappearing factory jobs in Canton, Ohio, one *New York Times* reporter recorded the voices of workers who had just lost their jobs after long years in the factory. One of them bluntly called the capitalist's threat of moving their jobs to lower wage locations offshore "a form of terrorism." While all the workers interviewed were clearly angry and worried at the jobless future awaiting them, the prevailing view seemed to be that there is no "simple answer" to the crisis. What is becoming clear is that there is no answer within the confines of the present system. This makes the search for an alternative to the barbarism of capitalism a life and death issue for humanity today.

Execution halted

Memphis, Tenn.—Will the case of Philip Workman lead to the unraveling of layers of corruption in the Memphis Police Department, the Shelby County District Attorney's Office, and the Shelby County Medical Examiner's Office?

Memphis Police Lt. Ronald Oliver was killed when he responded to a robbery call at a Wendy's Restaurant. Workman had robbed Wendy's and fled as police arrived. An exchange of gunfire took place. Lt. Oliver was killed, and another Memphis police officer was wounded, as was Workman. A jury found that Workman killed Oliver, and sentenced him to death.

The jury based its conviction on the testimony of Harold Davis, and Police Officers Aubrey K. Stoddard and Stephen Parker. Evidence uncovered since, which raised doubts about Workman's guilt, led to ongoing legal battles that reveal the corruption that led to the original conviction.

Harold Davis claimed he saw Workman shoot Oliver, but at an evidentiary hearing in 2001, Davis admitted that he did not see Workman shoot Oliver. He came forward seeking reward money, and police and prosecuting attorneys coached him in his original testimony. Further, prior to the evidentiary hearing, Davis was hidden from defense attorneys by prosecutors and police—with the full knowledge of the presiding judge—even as defense attorneys were asking for a delay so that they could locate him.

More corruption is revealed in that for 18 years the Shelby County Medical Examiner's Office denied it had an X-ray of Oliver's body. Workman's gun had been loaded with hollow point bullets that cause a larger exit than entrance wound. When the X-ray was finally turned over to defense attorneys after protracted legal battles it showed an exit wound smaller than the entrance wound, and that the bullet had not fragmented in Oliver's body. The prosecution had argued that the exit wound had been smaller due to fragments left in Oliver's body. With the x-ray they had sought to keep from defense attorneys, it is a medical certainty that the bullet that killed Oliver did not come from Workman's gun.

So who did shoot Oliver? Officers Stoddard and Parker testified that they did not fire their weapons. However, a Memphis Police Report, not presented at the original trial, states that Oliver, Stoddard and Parker exchanged gunfire with Workman. An eye-witness, who did not testify at the trial, saw Parker fire a shotgun, and medical records show that Workman was treated for a shotgun wound. Clearly persons other than Workman and Oliver fired weapons. Most likely Oliver was killed by so-called "friendly fire."

But the state was still moving to execute Workman when a surprising announcement was made on Sept. 15: Tennessee Governor Phil Bredesen issued a temporary reprieve until Jan. 15, 2004, due to an ongoing federal investigation related to the case that had begun 15 months ago. Anti-death penalty activists believe it is related to Shelby County Medical Examiner O.C. Smith.

Fifteen months ago, Smith was found wrapped in barbed wire with a bomb strapped to his chest outside of the Medical Examiner's Office. He claimed the person who had done this told him it was because of the

(Continued on page 9)

The Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles: Race,

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by Raya Dunayevskaya

From CHAPTER 1 • Permanent War or "Revolution in Permanence"?

It is not just the rulers who try to render invisible the revolutionary Black dimension, through the politics either of silence or of cooptation. Even many who oppose the U.S. drive for single world domination through incessant military intervention overseas fail to recognize the vanguard role of African Americans. It isn't alone a matter of the difficulties the anti-war movement has faced in bringing large numbers of African Americans out to its rallies and demonstrations. It's a question of making a **category** out of what has emerged from crucial turning points in U.S. history and building on that category as a way to take on the realities facing us in today's retrogressive political climate. The anti-war movement will not be able to adequately oppose the U.S. drive for permanent war unless it connects with the voices, struggles and reason of the Black dimension...

For centuries African Americans have organized and revolted against the legacy of the contradictions of American "democracy" and its perversion of the notion of freedom. In doing so, what has been revealed is not only a deep divide of Black masses from the police and the state, but also from the Black political representatives who try to speak for them. The challenge is to meet this movement by articulating how its independence is a manifestation of the irrepressible idea of freedom—a manifestation of the concept of absolute negativity that can become a universal pole of attraction...

Cincinnati's Black revolt of 2001 was as deep an expression of the opposition to global capital and its restructuring and structural adjustments as that which emerged in the anti-globalization protests in Seattle in 1999. We cannot just repeat the old anti-imperialist slogans, as many post-Marx Marxists do, as if there isn't anything new to rethink in light of the present reality of globalization. Neither is the answer some new form of the old narrow nationalist tendencies in the Black movement which retreat from challenging capitalism...

From CHAPTER 2 • The Struggle for Civil Rights and the Limits of Political Emancipation

Three centuries of history have shown African Americans that racism and exploitation can't be eliminated politically. The practice of politics has often been a barrier to Black freedom even as it offered a limited kind of freedom. Marx said that to conceive of transcendence in purely political terms may end in the reestablishment of society as an abstraction against the individual and that this would only reestablish alienation in another form...

Though it seemed at first to hold much promise, Stokely Carmichael's "Black Power" ultimately failed to pose a challenge to the American capitalist system. Carmichael defined it originally, with the help of Charles V. Hamilton, this way: before a group can enter a pluralistic society, it must close ranks in order to gain bargaining strength—the same way other white ethnic groups did to exert political power by bloc voting. In effect, this approach channeled the Black Power movement into reformist politics, arguing that Black people had to strengthen themselves economically and politically by separating themselves from whites but by remaining within the capitalist system.

In essence this was a retreat. It proposed not to change the white-controlled capitalist world outside but make the Black world inside "stronger" economically and politically by promoting the Booker T. Washington's ideal of self-help and self-advancement through Black capitalism. This is the same strategy that Farakhan's Nation of Islam has long advocated.

Marxist-Humanists, however, argued that Carmichael's Black Power position was a "reverse of history" in that Black labor had already integrated the labor unions and saved the CIO by forming Negro caucuses for the upgrading of Black workers and for the ending of lily white departments. They did this against the opposition of the union bureaucracy. Black labor played the pivotal role in advancing the labor movement as well as the goal of freedom and democracy. To argue that it needed to retreat to gain strength seemed a backward move...

Far from dividing the Black community as the Black



Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles: Race, Philosophy and the Needed American Revolution
By John Alan

nationalists claimed, Black feminist activists and theorists have raised profound human questions about the meaning of liberation for all Black people. Just as the Black Power movement gave birth to the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s and 1970s, the Women's Liberation Movement created the conditions for a Black women's literary renaissance. Such writers as Audre Lorde, June Jordan, Ntozake Shange, Toni Cade Bambara, Alice Walker and Toni Morrison raised profound questions about man/woman and woman/woman relationships within the Black community. Whereas the Black Arts Movement issued a challenge to the white racist world outside, Black women writers from the 1970s onwards focused on the contradictions internal to the Black community, such as sexism, homophobia, domestic violence and incest...

From CHAPTER 3 • Dialectics and Economics: The New Challenges Posed by Globalized Capital

The Los Angeles rebellion of 1992 briefly ignited a new stage of urban revolt on a national level, expressing a deep consciousness about the limits of U.S. society. The revolt challenged revolutionaries to recognize and develop this emerging consciousness into a new organization of thought. Without such an organization of thought, even revolts as deep as the Los Angeles rebellion risk expending themselves in what Hegel called "first negation"—that is, focusing on what they are against without projecting a socialist humanist vision of what kind of new society they are for. Without such an organization of thought, social movements can be diverted into the confines of old political tendencies and ideas...

Black masses today continue to be engaged in both a struggle against capitalism and an internal struggle against their own Black middle class, which is ideologically and economically integrated into the crevices of capitalism. This internal struggle is crucial because, while Black masses in practice do challenge and show that the bourgeois theory of the state is a mere mask that hides the class rule of capitalism, the Black leader will follow capitalism and say it's only through the bourgeois state that African Americans can be emancipated. Thus the inherent absolute negativity of the Black movement from practice is set back.

The ongoing struggles of African Americans shows that the dialectic of the Black dimension spontaneously resists such retrogression. The integrality of absolute negativity with the self-activity of Black masses has continuously come to life...

From CHAPTER 4 • Prisoners Speak for Themselves: People of Color and the Prison Industrial Complex

The exponential growth in the prison population has given rise to a new kind of literature, a kind of American samizdat. Prison writers like Khalfani Khaldun, Kevin Glover, D.A. Sheldon, Todd Morrison and many others have educated themselves while behind bars and turned their intelligence towards understanding the anti-human system of imprisonment as a first step to

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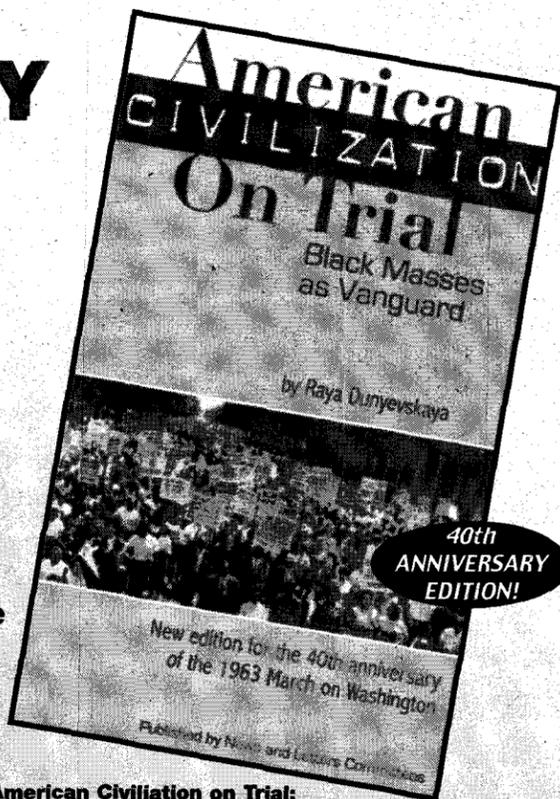
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**American Civilization on Trial:
Black Masses as Vanguard**
By Raya Dunayevskaya

the revolutionary change that will do away with it...

From prisoners:

"Globalization also ensures that the U.S. prison industrial complex is not an encapsulated environment, for it involves much more than a police-state infrastructure of law enforcement. In the U.S. it has become a means to globalize trade at the expense of prisoners, their families, workers within the country, and workers in other lands"...

"Much of what I know I've learned in prison—to read and write, to think and feel. What I understand about society and life in general I've learned while incarcerated. Most of it is theoretical, since I've had little chance to put my ideas into practice. I grew up incarcerated. From the inside I've learned about human existence outside of myself. Once the world was me; I had no other understanding aside from that..."

"When I act, I include every person, regardless of race, sex, belief, sexual orientation or financial stature. I consider myself and many others with me political prisoners, because it was politics that put us here. Laws written by politicians have created an "open season" on anyone not in the mainstream of prefabricated social norms..."

"We're all in the jail of the mind—it seems we have to break out of that jail before we can get out of this one"...

CHAPTER 5 • The Self-Determination of the Idea in the African-American Struggle for Freedom

The limits encountered by efforts at political emancipation do not prove the futility of the struggles by Black masses for freedom; nor does it prove what Derrick Bell has called "the permanence of racism." Rather, it points to the difference between political and human emancipation. The distinction between the two was integral to Karl Marx's entire new continent of thought and of revolution...

Today there is a tendency on the part of many leftists to dismiss all forms of nationalism, as if all struggles for national liberation are inherently reactionary. The situation was very different several decades ago, when the tendency was toward uncritical support of all forms of national liberation. In contrast, Lenin's writings on "the national question" put forth a position that was not uncritical of national movements, yet he was the first major political theorist, Marxist or non-Marxist, to grasp the importance of anti-imperialist national movements for the politics of the 20th century...

Much current scholarship seems content merely to point out that the Communists after 1928 were involved with Black America and vice versa, especially when it comes to culture, without attending to the important philosophical and political differences within the Left. Instead, everything is reduced to a question of strategy, so the reversals of the Communist Party regarding the Black liberation are seen as pragmatic decisions, rather than as evidence of opportunism and class betrayal.

Robin D.G. Kelley goes so far as to say that there were no important Black critiques of Stalin's crimes,

potentially, he argues, because Stalin's crimes weren't known until 1956, when Khrushchev made them public. This not only ignores the important critiques of Stalinism by the likes of Claude McKay and C.L.R. James, but it totally ignores the important efforts of the anti-Stalinist left to create an alternative liberatory socialism inside the U.S...

In *Marxism and Freedom* Dunayevskaya did groundbreaking work to show that the Black struggle, far from being external to Marx's philosophy, was intrinsic to it, pointing especially to how Marx's attentiveness to Black struggles inside the U.S. led him to reorganize his greatest theoretic work, *Capital*. Her view was a leap in

American Marxism. As we've seen, post-Marx Marxists tended to view the U.S. struggle as less militant than the European—primarily because they relegated the Black dimension to a subordinate position and often saw it as a diversion from the class struggle altogether. Marx, Dunayevskaya argued, saw it in the opposite way...

What informed Frantz Fanon's whole life was a commitment to the absolute independence of the deepest subjects of revolution, especially the Black dimension, as a path to a new reciprocity between all peoples—a "new humanism." Political leaders of the dominant party were especially a target of his wrath: he called "the single party...the modern form of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, unmasked, unpainted, unscrupulous and cynical"...

Our problem today is not that a new objective development of capitalism has made the vanguard character

From the Preface to DIALECTICS OF BLACK FREEDOM STRUGGLES

(Continued from page 1)

out through a collective process of dialogue and discussion in News and Letters Committees, the only Marxist-Humanist organization in the U.S.

American Civilization on Trial is a comprehensive study of the historic struggles of African Americans to be free, from a dialectical and humanist perspective. It remains central to working out a Marxist-Humanist perspective for today's freedom movements. The task is not simply to repeat or update the conclusions of *American Civilization on Trial*, but to re-create its dialectical methodology in light of the struggles, contradictions, and questions facing us today.

Needed more than ever is what Raya Dunayevskaya, the founder of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S., called in *The Power of Negativity*, giving "a philosophic structure to concrete events."⁽¹⁾ That is, the challenge is to understand ongoing history not merely as a sequence of events, nor even to uncover the root cause of ever-resurgent racism and classism, but to grasp the self-movement of the freedom idea within the revolts in civil society. That is the only way to discern the elements of the new society which are present in today's spontaneous revolts. Without a philosophic structure, the revolts invariably get pulled back into the framework of bourgeois politics.

The philosophic structure developed by Marxist-Humanism is itself an aspect of the self-determination of the Idea of freedom. It is a way to fully appreciate once again the continuing African-American opposition in our post-September 11, 2001 world. African Americans are revealing that the Idea of freedom cannot be relegated simply to overcoming terrorism and religious fundamentalism, of which we have a version here at home with the Christian Right which surely has the ear of George W. Bush. Rather, the Idea of freedom has to be worked out and deepened from within this racist, alienating society. That means taking on all political-theoretic-philosophic tendencies that truncate the aspirations for full freedom and self-determination.

The critical need today is to work out a new unity of theory and practice, rooted in the self-activity of the

of the Black struggle to the whole American development an outmoded idea. Our task instead is to bring to the fore the underlying philosophy that made such a profound recollection of the role of Black masses in the development of the Idea of Freedom.

The parallelism between Black and labor struggles is not an insurmountable barrier. As Dunayevskaya wrote, "Only when these two great movements coalesce do we reach decisive points in U.S. development." This speaks to the need to bridge the gap between anti-capital globalists and those fighting the criminal (in)justice system today. What is needed to bridge that gap is the unifying philosophy of a new Humanism specifically Marxist-Humanism...

As Dunayevskaya wrote in a retrospective/perspective of Marxist-Humanism in 1983, "What is totally new is that we place philosophy of revolution and not just committee form as ground for organization. In a word, we do not stop, as Rosa Luxemburg did, with full appreciation of the genius of the masses in action. Rather, we deepen that with such a philosophic penetration of that action of the masses that we call their attitude not just force but Reason, and Reason means the totality and new unification with the movement from theory."

Next month

American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard

by Raya Dunayevskaya

- Preface to 40th Anniversary Edition
- Contents
- Excerpts

subjects of revolt. For Marxist-Humanists that unity rests on what Hegel called "absolute negativity"—not alone on the destruction of the old, but upon the idea of the new.⁽²⁾ Hegel's dialectic is based on the full realization that "every beginning is the result of some other mediation."⁽³⁾ This means we cannot stop with opposition to this racist society, but must work out what we are for in terms of the power of the Idea of freedom. The persistence of the African-American struggle has created many new mediations in the freedom idea in this country. The point of recollecting the history of these struggles is to overcome the tendency to accept any new stage as a fixed result, instead of realizing the power of mediation—dialectical mediation, the struggle for altogether new, human beginnings.

As the Introduction to the 1983 edition of *American Civilization on Trial* put it, "To separate a philosophy of liberation from the struggle for freedom is to doom us to yet one more unfinished revolution such as has characterized the U.S. from its birth, when the Declaration of Independence was meant for white only and left the Black enslaved...it has become clear since the 1960s that even the greatest actions need the direction that comes from a total philosophy of freedom. What is needed now is to concretize such a philosophy of freedom as the reality for our age."

We believe this book will make an important contribution to achieving this goal.

—The National Editorial Board
News and Letters Committees

NOTES

1. See "Dialectics of Revolution and of Women's Liberation," in *The Power of Negativity: Selected Writings on the Dialectic in Hegel and Marx*, by Raya Dunayevskaya (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2002), edited by Peter Hudis and Kevin B. Anderson, p. 301.
2. For a full discussion of the concept of absolute negativity, see *Philosophy and Revolution: from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao*, by Raya Dunayevskaya (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003 [orig. 1973]), especially chapter 1, "Absolute Negativity as New Beginning: The Ceaseless Movement of Ideas and of History."
3. See "Notes on Hegel's *Phenomenology*," in *The Power of Negativity*, p. 43.

BEYOND CAPITALISM?

Raya Dunayevskaya's article on "The Cooperative form of labor vs. abstract labor" (August-September 2003 *N&L*) has a lot to do with the question of what happens after revolution. Where she wrote that the only way a fundamental change in society can be achieved is for workers to "engage in a self-activity so different from their present work as to make the scientists outside the plants as unnecessary as the capitalists inside the factory," I kept thinking of a recent forum here on "Beyond Capitalism?" where people were asking how can we get beyond capitalism? Her essay gives a glimpse of what "beyond capitalism" would look like when "an entirely new mode of labor in an entirely new form would appear." I see this challenging all those who think they can make capitalism benign. It can't be done as long as value production continues.

**Women's Liberationist
Memphis**

I used to read a lot of fantasy novels that stretch your mind about doing things differently, like those by Ursula LeGuin. They showed people doing things that trashed the separation between mental and manual labor. Why do we have to go to a sci-fi fantasy for a vision of doing things differently? The archives column laid out the problems we confront very well.

**Tom
San Francisco**

The question of freely associated labor, as opposed to the despotic plan of capitalism and the crises it generates, is more relevant today than ever. The recent auto contract negotiations reflect the contradictions we face today, where ever-increasing pressures of production continue to exploit and depress the workers. We can't know exactly what kind of society freely-associated labor would produce, but I think we can be certain it would not be characterized by the kind of fear capitalism generates today.

**Retiree
Detroit**

BUSH AND THE GAG RULE

Now President Bush has cut off funding to organizations providing reproductive health care to refugees, denying basic health services to women who have fled their countries to escape the horrors of civil wars and chaos. He accomplished this by quietly expanding the global gag rule that prohibits foreign organizations (that use their own, non-U.S. money to perform, counsel, refer, or advocate safe abortion services) from receiving U.S. family planning assistance administered by the State Department. Until now, the global gag rule that Bush reinstated the very first day he took office has applied only to family planning programs funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development.

This comes on top of the news earlier this month that he had defunded the Reproductive Health for Refugees Consortium, because of the participation of a British-based reproductive health provider which also provides abortion. Disregard the fact that. This group was



have fled their countries to escape the horrors of civil wars and chaos. He accomplished this by quietly expanding the global gag rule that prohibits foreign organizations (that use their own, non-U.S. money to perform, counsel, refer, or advocate safe abortion services) from receiving U.S. family planning assistance administered by the State Department. Until now, the global gag rule that Bush reinstated the very first day he took office has applied only to family planning programs funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development.

ANNOUNCEMENT TO OUR READERS

We wish to alert readers of *News & Letters* that a group which expressed affinity with some of our ideas, the Ukrainian Workers' Group (UWG) in Kiev, has turned out to be a sham outfit that simultaneously falsely claimed (under several different names) to be an associate of a number of other radical organizations in the U.S. and Britain. We have severed all connections to them and call on all other organizations to do the same.

In light of false innuendos and statements that have circulated on the internet regarding our relation with the UWG, we wish to make it clear that at no time did *News and Letters* Committees either fund this organization or consider it an affiliate of our organization. As opponents of the concept of a "vanguard party to lead," we do not try to set up "clones" of our organization.

READERS' VIEWS

funded to provide HIV prevention services in Angola that have nothing to do with abortion.

**Outraged
Illinois**

LABOR'S HARD TIMES

Hard times have really come again to the Smoky Mountains. Of all the factories near Maggie Valley where I live, only Champion Fibers is still open, and that's with only a skeleton crew on one shift. This area has been built around tourists since World War II, but this year they closed down the "Ghost Town" attraction, and you can get a motel room for \$14 or less, instead of the \$60 or more one used to cost. The economy has left the county strapped for cash. They raised the taxes on one fellow living out of town in a shack on just a big garden plot from \$40 last year to \$460 this year. I'm grateful I have my pension.



**Musician
North Carolina**

When Berkeley Bowl produce store fired Arturo Perez, another worker who was active in the unionization efforts there (see "Firing spurs Berkeley Bowl union rally," August-September *N&L*), another walkout was staged by about 17 cashiers and other workers. They came out wearing United Food and Commercial Workers T-shirts and greeting members of the community who were shouting, "Bring Arturo back!" We're hoping Berkeley Bowl gets the message that they cannot succeed against this alliance of workers and the community.

**Supporter
Oakland**

Burma is a country known for its abysmal human rights record. British American Tobacco (BAT) is not only one of the last multinational corporations to operate in Burma—but does so openly as partners of the Burmese military. The International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) is calling on BAT to withdraw from Burma. They have received the support of human rights groups and trade unions all over the world. But BAT will not budge. After all, profits are at stake. I'm trying to help build the campaign against them by passing this message on and asking others to do the same with their co-workers and fellow union members.

**Pat Duffy
Britain**

The men and women of the Chicago Transit Authority rank-and-file looked like a sea of blue in their uniforms at their rally outside CTA headquarters at Merchandise Mart Plaza on Aug. 8. They had been working for three years

and eight months without a contract and clearly had had enough. Some brought their children—and passengers on buses and elevated trains passing by gave thumbs-up to their shouts of "No contract, no service!" The security force had to put their hands in their ears because of the deafening chants for a "Fair Contract!" They kept up the clapping and chanting for several hours. Nearly two months later, negotiations are still going on. As one CTA employee put it, this is a story still "to be continued."

**George Wilfrid Smith Jr.
Chicago**

Here's a statistic that makes you stop and think: Every year around two million workers die because of their jobs. Every day more people die at work than died in the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. In the modern world, it seems that the workplace has become a real weapon of mass destruction.

**No statistician
Chicago**

MARTIAL LAW IN ACHEH

Thank you for your solidarity work for my beloved homeland. Many innocent Acehese in villages throughout Aceh are suffering from barbarous acts by the Indonesian military. Since the activists have been arrested or fled for their lives, the military (TNI) is forcing the remaining groups to appear as if they support the military operation and the martial law that was imposed. In the villages, the TNI forces women to accompany soldiers into battle, claiming they will help to collect the bodies of the villagers killed. In fact, TNI uses them for human shields.

There is an enormous ignorance about the human tragedy among Indonesian communities. Your article in the August-September issue of *N&L* was excellent because, while the focus was on Aceh, you tried to cover the independence movements in other parts of Indonesia as well, such as Papua, Maluku, and East Timor.

In the relocation camps, a humanitarian disaster is developing among the tens of thousands of internally displaced refugees. Malaria and skin diseases are rampant. The last humanitarian aid organization left Aceh in September and none are allowed in.

**Student
Aceh**

Editor's note: Readers wanting more information or to send donations for humanitarian aid should contact mutualaid@earthlink.net or acehcenter@yahoo.com.

THE CANADIAN SCENE

The political debate in Canada these days is over same sex marriage. Three provincial courts have ruled that it is discriminatory to deny same sex couples legal marriage, but right-wing provinces such as mine are fighting this tooth and nail. We have our own version of the Christian Right and they are cranking up the rhetoric. The Federal government has promised legislation, but we are also in the midst of a leadership change in the governing Liberal Party. All in all, it is an uncertain time for Canadian politics. Of course, while this debate rages, other questions on health care, education etc. are all down-played. What a surprise!

**Researcher
Alberta, Canada**

Canada has been pressured by the U.S. to participate financially in the next version of "Star Wars." You don't have to be a rocket scientist to know that even if this project should succeed, there is no way that an anti-ballistic missile (ABM) could distinguish between five or six decoys and the actual warhead. More important, 9/11 proved that much more danger is lurking in suicide terrorists using box cutters and civilian airlines, against which ABMs are totally useless. Under these circumstances why all the bother about ABMs? I see the simple reason as the fact that Boeing,

Raytheon and the other military hardware contractors have to increase their profits. Perhaps, to maintain its so-called friendship with the powers in the U.S., the Canadian government should negotiate an outright gift to Boeing, Raytheon and others who would benefit from the project. Of course, it would be better if the Canadian government priorities were the welfare of Canadians, homeless, children, healthcare, instead of the health and profit of the U.S. military contractors.

**Georgio
British Columbia, Canada**

READING, WRITING, REVOLT

The book by Elizabeth McHenry that John Alan took up in his column on "Reading, writing, revolt" (August-September 2003) shed light on an important question. During the early 19th century, literacy and literature spanned all walks of life and culture. Some of the best "unknown" writing came from that time period—Black, Indian, Asian and white writings on a variety of topics.



Black literacy poses a threat even today, especially on the new plantations—prisons. Black subordination is still an immutable concept within some aspects of the culture. Smart people of color in prison who are extremely literate can cause big problems—just like on the plantations of old. Slavery has not ended in this country, just rerouted to a different perspective.

**Robert Taliaferro
Wisconsin**

John Alan's Black/Red View column on "Reading, writing, revolt" and Terry Moon's essay on women in Afghanistan spoke to each other. Alan showed that for Blacks in the U.S. "literacy was a dimension of the struggle to be free." Moon shows the same is true for women in Afghanistan who, under the threat of death, had set up hundreds of clandestine reading and study groups in their homes—just as slaves had done in America. David Walker's cry that racists think "God made Africans for nothing else but to dig the mines and work their farms" is echoed in the Afghan woman who said, "All our hopes have been consigned to the dustbin of history ... It is a pity they don't recognize us as individuals, as fellow human beings."

**Women's Liberationist
Memphis**

The rebellion in Benton Harbor appeared as a blip in the national news media and then it was gone. Your article on it in the August-September issue was important because it showed that the struggle continues.

**Peace activist
Tennessee**

ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

The best gift imaginable for Rosh Hashana, the Jewish New Year, was the news released just before Sept. 26 that 25 Israeli Air Force pilots had sent Air Force Commander, Dan Halutz, a letter saying: "We are opposed to carrying out attack orders that are illegal and immoral of the type the State of Israel has been conducting in the territories." There are already dozens of pilots who refuse to participate in assassinations but get out of them quietly in private arrangements. The weakness of the list of refuseniks, so far at least, is that only two pilots of attack helicopters signed the letter. They are the ones who carry out almost all the assassinations. The letter asserts that the illegal and immoral actions they are refusing to carry out are "a direct result of the ongoing occupation which is corrupting all of Israeli society... fatally harming the security of the state of Israel." They declare that they will continue to serve in any mission that is in defense of the state of Israel. To all of this, I say, Shalom.

**Gila Svirsky
Jerusalem**

Eyewitness account: new stage of struggle in Chiapas

Chiapas, Mexico—In the green highlands of Chiapas, under a sky that alternated bright sunshine and dense fog, 15,000 Zapatistas and representatives of Mexican and international civil society gathered in the autonomous community of Oventic, Aug. 8-10. Skimasked Zapatista leaders announced a dramatic new stage in the struggle for indigenous autonomy and against neoliberal reforms that threaten the very existence of rural Mexico.

The gathering had a festive air, celebrating a decade of Zapatista resistance. International guests arrived with colorful backpacks teeming over with camping gear and canned tuna. Hundreds of university students and representatives of civil society arrived from Mexico City in hastily organized caravans. Zapatista support communities sent representatives by the truckload, with traffic backed up nearly a mile on the two-lane road outside Oventic. Stands selling tamales, paletas, coffee, arroz con leche and handicrafts lined the entrance road, while 66 teams competed in a spirited basketball tournament and people danced until five in the morning to live cumbia and banda.

FIRST PUBLIC GATHERING SINCE 1991

Subcomandante Marcos, in his role as temporary spokesperson for the Zapatista autonomous communities, announced the gathering in late July, the first public call by the Zapatistas since the 2001 caravan to Mexico City that demanded constitutional reforms and autonomy for Mexico's 12 million indigenous. The time was ripe, argued Marcos, for rejuvenation of the autonomous movement.

Nearly 60% of Mexicans refused to vote in June's mid-term congressional elections, an historic low indicating a crisis of legitimacy for Mexico's political class. With the PAN losing a quarter of their seats in the lower house, Fox faces three years of a lame duck presidency. The Zapatista meeting would offer a genuine alternative to corrupt politics-as-usual at the service of international capital. *Mandar obedeciendo* (lead by obeying) is the core principal for the Zapatista movement, where leadership responds to the demands of the people.

Over the past decade, Zapatista support communities developed autonomous governing structures that are consistent with traditional indigenous norms. They created five regionally based political/cultural centers of resistance called *Aguascalientes* that served the 38 autonomous municipalities. The autonomous municipalities built schools, health programs and economic development projects, carrying out all of the functions of the "constitutional" government centers and representing the de facto implementation of the stalled San Andres Accords.

On the evening of Aug. 8, the Zapatistas announced the "death" of the *Aguascalientes*, to be replaced im-

mediately by five "Caracoles" (literally conch shell) and five Juntas of Good Government, one for each *Caracol*.

"The Juntas of Good Government are an important advance in our struggle for the recognition of indigenous rights and culture in Mexico and a good way to resolve existing problems. We congratulate everyone, because this advance is possible through the support of Mexican and international civil society," said Marcos. "From now on, everything related to the Rebel Zapatista Autonomous Communities will be handled by the [autonomous] authorities and by the Juntas of Good Government."

The Juntas will also address relations between Zapatista and non-Zapatista communities. According to Comandante David, "It is not necessary to be Zapatista in order to be served and respected by the Autonomous Municipalities in any part of our territory. By being a member of the community or of the municipality in which you live, you have the right to be served. What I am asking those who are not Zapatistas, those who are not in agreement with us or those who do not understand the just cause of our struggle, is that you respect our organization...and the Juntas of Good Government."

Zapatista relations with non-Zapatista communities have been tenuous in some parts of Chiapas, and openly violent in others. Army-backed paramilitaries present the most serious problems. According to CIEPAC, a research group monitoring the conflict, 10,000 indigenous remain displaced since the 1994 uprising.

TEN YEARS OF NAFTA, DECADE OF EZLN

On Jan. 1, 1994, the Zapatistas timed their uprising to coincide with the initiation of the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), part of a long line of neoliberal business plans that impoverished Mexican (and U.S.) rural areas. NAFTA allowed U.S. agribusiness to flood the Mexican market with low quality,

highly subsidized corn. The flood of U.S. corn forced small-scale Mexican growers out of the market. 90% of Mexico's corn production had been cultivated on parcels of 10 acres or less. Many of the 18 million campesino producers continue to cultivate the sacred crop out of obligation to tradition and for family consumption, but an increasing number are forced to migrate part of each year in search of paid employment, unable to sell their excess production in disappearing local markets.

NAFTA also impacted land tenure. In preparation for the approval of NAFTA and at the insistence of U.S. counterparts, the Salinas administration reformed article 27 of the constitution in 1992, abolishing the ejido program that awarded communally owned lands to campesino communities. More than half the farmland in Mexico is held in ejidos. For the first time since the Mexican revolution, campesino communities are now vulnerable to privatization and loss of their lands.

NAFTA is only one pillar of corporate globalization's broad reach in southern Mexico. Two decades of World Bank structural adjustment programs and decapitalization in rural areas have bankrupted the countryside. Fox's Plan Puebla Panama, an attempt to attract international investment, does not address the needs of local communities. And ten years of extensive military presence in indigenous communities has torn at the fabric of community life.

WOMEN'S INFLUENCE REMAINS STRONG

The gathering at Oventic also reaffirmed the critical roles of women in the movement and their "struggle within the struggle" to achieve gender equity. Comandante Rosalinda emphasized the inclusion of women in the movement: "The only way to achieve what we need is to organize ourselves well, to be strong in our resistance in Autonomous Municipalities. But, to do that work, all of us need to participate. We must all be self-motivated. Women cannot be left behind."

Comandante Fidelia added, "Today we are calling on the Mexican people, the men, demanding respect as the women we are. ... Because sisters, you know quite well that women are there, in the countryside and the city. We are working. Our rights are being violated. [The men] do not respect us. That is why, today, we are inviting the women of Mexico and the world, and all the women in the cities, and those who are organized in the corners, those who are not listening to us but who my voice will reach. We are going to make compulsory our respect as the women we are, even if [the men] make their sad little faces... I am not scolding them. Listen carefully. It is called obligation, respect for us as the women we are."

The Oventic gathering left everyone with a shared sense of hope and purpose. It remains for Mexican and international civil society to answer the question— are we prepared to make the journey with them?

—J.W.



Participant in Oventic, Mexico, gathering.

Chiapas Independent Media Center

Hugo Chavez and his Venezuelan revolution

A number of years ago the Marxist-Humanist philosopher Raya Dunayevskaya wrote: "An idea that is not aimed toward liberation or freedom cannot be called an idea." This is true in the case of Venezuela and the "revolution" that President Hugo Chavez is currently trying to implement.

Based on the old anti-colonial ideology of Simon Bolivar, "liberator" of South and Central America, Chavez has been trying to carry on a revolution that he calls the Bolivariana Revolution. But this has nothing to do with a revolution to establish a new society based on new human relationships.

The government of Venezuela has halted the sale of crude oil to the Dominican Republic and recalled its ambassador. According to the Venezuelan government, a coup against Chavez was planned in the Dominican Republic by ex-Venezuelan President Carlos Andrés Pérez, a Social Christian Democrat. Pérez has been living in the Dominican Republic for several years and has invested large sums of money in newspapers, banks and hotels that he stole from Venezuelan workers while he was president.

Dominican President Hipolito Mejia is fully supporting Pérez. Chavez's government has tried to extradite Pérez so that he can be indicted for criminal acts, but so far this has been in vain.

At the same time, the Dominican Republic has been importing oil from Venezuela via an accord similar to ones arranged with Cuba and other Latin American countries. The president of the Dominican Republic therefore has been playing both sides of the fence in a very hypocritical way.

CHAVEZ AND THE LEFT

Many groups on the Dominican Left have been uncritical of Chavez's Bolivariana Revolution. Many have portraits of Chavez which refer to him as the Vladimir Lenin of Latin America who will liberate the whole continent from the yanqui imperialists.

The anti-yanquism of Chavez is not a genuine anti-imperialist stand. If the Soviet Union were still around the Left would be leaning toward the Soviet imperialists in the same manner that it is leaning toward the Chinese imperialists. The Cuban state-capitalist autocrats have likewise given full support to Chavez because Venezuela has been the main provider of crude oil to Cuba since after the fall of the USSR. In exchange Cuba has provided Venezuela with technical and medical support as well as military information.

Even the Venezuelan Communist Party is supporting the Bolivariana project; they are old hard-core Stalinists who also collaborated with prior governments of Venezuela. Along with the Trotskyists, they view the Venezuela government as a step toward socialism.

It is a big mistake to portray Chavez as a socialist and a liberator. There is no sense of liberation and there is no philosophical basis in this "revolution" to "liberate" factory workers and peasants. The old conception of transferring private property into state hands guides these people, even though it has been proven that nationalized property is not socialism but just another form of exploitation—state-capitalism.

THE OPPOSITION

Though the opposition to Chavez has created great damage to the Venezuelan economy through boycotts, strikes and conspiracies, his government has not been able to carry over the land reforms that it promised to the peasants. Working conditions for urban workers have also not improved, despite the continuing export of oil to many countries.

Since Venezuela is the fourth largest exporter of oil on earth, the dream of the U.S. capitalists has been to control it and preserve Latin America as its backyard. This is the main reason the U.S. does not want a "nationalist" president in power in any country in Latin America.

Genuine Marxists should not take the position of the Maoists in Venezuela—who supported last year's coup attempt against Chavez which was approved by the U.S. The Maoists supported the coup in the same manner that they publicly gave support to Pinochet's government in Chile in the 1970s, on the grounds that Pinochet was against the USSR.

The Catholic Church is also a big opponent of Chavez because they can no longer obtain money, influence and wealth from the Venezuelan people. Carlos Andrés Pérez's presidency was heaven on earth for the Vatican and the Catholic Church.

Only the autonomous and indigenous actions of the people of South and Central America and the Caribbean can free themselves and bring an end to the unfinished revolutions. Struggles based on a philosophy of liberation can establish a society of freely associated labor and new human relations.

—Marcos, Los Angeles

Execution stayed

(Continued from page 5)

Workman case. Smith had testified at Workman's clerkly hearing that he had evidence proving Workman's gun had killed Oliver, contrary to the x-ray evidence that had emerged. His evidence, however, was a series of dubious claims about metallic fragments that could not be corroborated by any other researcher.

An extensive police, FBI, and ATF investigation began with local anti-death penalty activists the initial focus. But until the Governor's announcement this investigation seemed to have faded away. Questions have been raised about whether the attack on Smith was a hoax.

With the execution temporarily stopped due to this investigation we're hoping that the full story of the case and the corruption surrounding it may build momentum to at least a moratorium on executions, if not outright abolition.

—Peter Gathje

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The struggle for India's future

(Continued from page 1)

with housing for supervisors, managers and officials, there is no space allotted for workers' living quarters.

Thousands of women, children and men, joined by residents from neighboring shantytowns, have come together to protect their homes by blocking demolition machinery and blocking roads and railroads. Several shantytowns have been demolished, but several have been saved by the spontaneous efforts of the residents.

This is the kind of struggle that is ongoing but doesn't make the papers—and is not controlled by any party. Such struggles show that, though the Left in India has sunk into lower abysses of insignificance, there is both everyday resistance and a search for alternatives to existing society.

DANGER OF RIGHT-WING POPULISM

It seems, however, that it is the Right more than the Left that is trying to speak to the strivings of people for a better life. The sectors that once formed the base of the Left parties—workers, peasants, adivasis (so-called tribal peoples), Dalits and women—are being actively wooed by the Right in an ingenious and nefarious strategy of fascist populism.

Indeed, most alarming is that today the largest labor union in India is the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), organized by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the leading organization of the Hindu Right. With a staggering membership of 7.6 million, the BMS has surpassed not only the Communist Party-controlled Center of Trade Unions but also the Congress Party-controlled Indian National Trade Union Congress.

The BMS statement of principles declares their "conviction that [the] class concept is a myth." Claiming to balance the pulls of capitalism and socialism, the BMS argues that "maximum production is the national duty of labour." It tries to soften this obviously corporatist and authoritarian goal with a call for restricted consumption and fair distribution.

In addition to the BMS, there is the Bharatiya Kisan Sangh, which has large numbers of farmers, peasants and agricultural laborers. This is an organization that has consistently opposed the struggles of the Save the Narmada River Valley Movement. The largest organization working with the adivasis, the poorest and most marginalized sector in India, is the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram, run by the RSS. There is also a Hindu nationalist women's group, Stri Shakti.

The Hindu Right has also pulled many Dalits into their fold. Several have written about the mobilization of Dalits in the pogrom against Muslims in Gujarat. In Maharashtra, the Shiv Sena has succeeded in recruiting, among others, the once-radical Namdeo Dhasal, co-founder of the Dalit Panthers and one of the greatest modern Marathi poets to come out of the Dalit literary renaissance of the 1970s.

It was not for nothing that Hitler felt compelled to call his party national-socialist. Likewise, though the Hindu Right clearly represents the high castes and classes, it has made a mammoth effort to draw the masses into its fold and has co-opted and twisted the language of the Left to do so.

UNDERSTANDING THE HINDU RIGHT

The Hindutva movement cannot properly be called a

religious fundamentalist movement. Fundamentalism revolves around the attempt to politically and socially realize and enforce one particular interpretation of a sacred text as the only valid one.

This kind of fundamentalism would likely not go over well in a civilization as diverse as that found on the Indian subcontinent. The "fact" that India is 85% Hindu ignores that within that 85% lies not only caste, gender, regional, linguistic and class differentiation, but a whole spectrum of competing religious traditions (some part of emancipatory movements) that do not see themselves as one. The claim that India is 85% Hindu is an oversimplification that the Hindu Right is at pains to make a reality.

Contemporary Hindutva, though it mobilizes religion in the service of politics, is much more interested in establishing Hindu unity through a nationalism of the "blood and soil," than through the imposition of a particular religious sectarianism. This can be seen most especially in the resurrection by the Right of the Hindu nationalist V.D. Savarkar, the author of the 1923 work *Hindutva*. The BJP opened the year 2003 by unveiling a portrait of Savarkar in the Parliament building, next to the portrait Mohandas K. Gandhi. This caused a huge stir in parliament, in part because Savarkar had been arrested, though never convicted, for masterminding Gandhi's murder.

Savarkar started out his career as a militant freedom-fighter, but then increasingly became involved in the Hindu nationalist cause. In *Hindutva*, Savarkar wrote, "Some of us are monists, some pantheists; some theists and some atheists. But monotheists or atheists—we are all Hindu and own a common blood" (56).

Savarkar called for an end to caste hierarchy, religious ritual and superstition. He wanted to throw out Brahmin orthodoxy. To him, Hindutva was defined, not by religious practice, but by a feeling of solidarity generated by hatred for the Other, specifically the Muslim. The heir apparent to Savarkar's philosophy is none other than Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the Prime Minister of India, who had, in the 1970s, famously challenged the Brahmin orthodox RSS to open its doors to the lower castes.

The Hindu Right is no Taliban. They cater to multinationals, pander to the U.S., and promote science and technology. The focus on Hindutva as a form of religious fundamentalism to which secularism is counterposed has detracted attention from its nefarious populism. The gap between the rhetoric and the reality of the BJP is easy to point out, but what party does not have this gap? Indeed, this is the crux of the matter. The successes of the BJP and the Hindu Right have been made possible by a politics of cynicism that has imprisoned the political life of the country, at least since the State of Emergency called by Indira Gandhi in 1975.

WHERE IS THE LEFT?

The Emergency was unleashed in order to help the Congress Party stay in power, but the real object was to crack down on the vibrant radical movements that erupted in the early 1970s: the Naxalite (Maoist) insurgencies, the women's movement, workers' and peasant organizing and various regional movements for separate statehood. Indira Gandhi's goons rounded up, imprisoned and tortured thousands of socialists,

Communists, Naxalites and other oppositional forces (though it should be remembered that the Communist Party of India supported the Emergency).

Included among the opposition forces was the RSS, also banned by Indira Gandhi at this time. She could have done them no bigger favor. They came out of the Emergency with a whole new public face and a clearly worked-out strategy.

After the Emergency, alliances with the Jan Sangh, predecessor of the BJP, by the socialists and Communists gave the Hindu Right a national presence they never previously had. Great socialist leaders, like Jayaprakash Narayan and Lohia, justified this power brokering as necessary for the defeat of the Congress. Forgotten were the many movements at the ground level.

Several of these movements protested against this politics of expediency. For example, the Shetkari Sanghatna (a farmers and peasants rights group) in Maharashtra resisted the pressure to compromise with the Hindu Right, and instead led campaigns to expose their hypocrisy.

The Emergency ended any claim of the Congress Party to be the heir of India's struggle for freedom from the British, but it also ended almost every other party's claims to the same. The idea of principled politics was gone. In the 1980s and 1990s, the downward spiral of the Congress could be seen in their plunge into communal politics, particularly the vicious pogroms against Sikhs following the assassination of Indira Gandhi. In the 1980s, it was the Congress that laid the groundwork for the destruction of the mosque by the BJP in Ayodhya in 1992.

CHALLENGES FROM BELOW

The other side of the 1990s was the unprecedented participation of the lower castes, including Dalits, in the political process. The collapse of the Congress meant the growth of regional and caste-based parties, which many have seen as a harbinger of true democracy. But this politicization is very quickly being swallowed up by the cynical politics of opportunism, self-interest and corruption.

The hope for genuine democracy in India does not reside in Delhi but in the movements that have consciously rejected electoral power politics and have raised the most profound questions about India's future.

The Emergency did not succeed in crushing the new movements that had arisen in the 1970s. Throughout the 1980s, India continued to witness the growth of the women's movement, and farmer and peasant organizations, as well as environmental struggles that have attracted the attention of the world.

India's various environmental movements, from Chipko to today's struggle to save the Narmada Valley from the ravages of a proposed big dam, have posed some of the most important philosophic questions of our generation: Is capitalist industrialization the only way to meet our needs? What is our relationship to the earth? To each other?

Though the Narmada movement suffered a serious setback two years ago, when the supreme court lifted the six-year stay on the building of the dam, the struggle there and in many other places in India is far from over. One convoluted idea floating around the government is the plan to link together all the rivers of India. It is precisely this hubris that the environmental movement challenges us to reject.

Many feminists and activists are engaging in a self-critique of their assumptions, particularly their acceptance of the idea that industrial development and scientific knowledge would eradicate the problems of poverty, illiteracy and hunger, and set the stage for the development of socialism.

In the collapse of these Nehruvian ideals of modernization through rapid capitalist industrialization and centralized state control, new openings for a genuine Indian socialism have emerged. The new movements have raised new questions that deserve serious thinking and rethinking, not platitudes and slogans. Addressing these new challenges from below is probably the best—maybe the only—way to ensure that Hindutva is not the future of India.

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Myths and realities of the vast eastern blackout

by Franklin Dmitryev

The blackout that spread from Ohio to New York to Ontario on Aug. 14 galvanized both environmentalists and anti-environmentalists. Most measures that politicians proposed would not have helped a bit. The Bush administration repeated what has been in its energy plan from day one: more production, more fossil fuel and nuclear power plants, more transmission lines—ignoring the fact that there is actually a glut of power in most of the country. Moreover, the blackout occurred on a day of only ordinary summer demand, so there's no question of a lack of capacity.

Talk of an "antiquated" or "third-world" power grid is an exaggeration, and adding transmission lines would make the system more complex and therefore probably more fragile. The one true statement from the Department of Energy was, "Consumers will have to foot the bill."

Free market fanatics claim that the blackout proves the need for more deregulation. In reality deregulation has allowed utilities to reduce their investments in transmission by hundreds of millions of dollars over the last several years. It has also meant layoffs of thousands of utility workers.

For instance, Niagara-Mohawk Power failed to react adequately to the emergency, after having raised prices, laid off 800 workers in New York and slashed investment in the grid system it operates.

At the same time, deregulation has spawned sales of huge amounts of power over long distances. This is like driving from New York to Colorado to go grocery shopping. The corresponding rise of traffic on transmission lines not only wastes electricity, but strains the system. While energy demand on the grid is up 35% in the last 10 years, wholesale transactions on the grid are up 400%. But unused capacity generates no profit, so network operators have very little margin left for emergencies.

But those who chalk all the problems up to deregulation are mistaken. As a New York Assemblyman pointed out, major investments in transmission lines by the state and utilities ended in the 1970s, long before deregulation. The latter did not start the trend, but only served as a means to continue it.

Underlying the lack of investment in infrastructure is the structural economic change manifested in the global economic crisis of the mid-1970s. The falling rate of profit has led to a relative fall in productive investment and desperate cost-cutting. Deregulation didn't come from a sudden attack of greed that capitalists had managed to repress for 40 years but rather

from the drive to shore up the rate of profit by eliminating expenses for things like environmental protection, social benefits and infrastructure maintenance.

In that light the fog of illusion begins to lift from solutions proposed from the Left, which rely on technology, market tuning, or state planning. A number of technical solutions for the grid's problems have been put forward, mostly very sensible, and some, such as solar power and electronic switches, have been practical (if not cheap) for 30 years.

Seldom is the question raised: Why haven't they been implemented? When it is, the answers tend to be like that of long-time anti-nuker Harvey Wasserman: "because the utility—and fossil/nuke guys fund the politicians in power"—which lets off the hook the capitalist system, and overlooks the innate cost-cutting drive of contemporary crisis-ridden state-capitalism.

Similarly, environmentalist Amory Lovins, believing that "The real cause is the overcentralized power grid," advocates "letting all options compete fairly." He forgets that free competition carries within it the seeds of monopoly and corruption.

Support Stephen Funk



Stephen Funk, the only conscientious objector to this war to go public, was cleared of the charge of desertion, but convicted of absence without leave and sentenced to six months in the brig and a dishonorable discharge. Demonstrations for his support were held during his trial Sept. 3-5 in San Francisco (above), New Orleans, Chicago, Seattle and Atlanta.

The Marxist and humanist legacy of Henri Lefebvre

by Liam O' Ruairc

Henri Lefebvre: Love and Struggle-Spatial Dialectics by Rob Shields (London: Routledge, 2000)

Henri Lefebvre (1901-91) was an independent French Marxist theoretician. An original, nonconformist thinker, Lefebvre was a prolific writer; in his lifetime, he published more than 60 books and 300 articles! In spite of his importance, very few studies have been devoted to Lefebvre's thought.

Lefebvre was the first to make accessible to the general public key writings of Marx and Lenin that were unknown outside Russia and Germany. Marx's early writings, such as the 1844 *Manuscripts*, were first published in Moscow in 1932. Lefebvre, with Norbert Guterman, published the first foreign language translations in 1934.

In 1938 he was responsible for the first foreign-language translation of Lenin's *Notebooks on Hegel and the Dialectic*. Lefebvre also published the same year an anthology of key extracts from Hegel's writings. Until then Hegel's philosophy was virtually unknown in France (Wahl and Kojève had just begun their Hegel seminar) and Marxists ignored it.

Lefebvre wrote the first major theoretical work to advance a new reconstruction of Marxism on the basis of Marx's early work and Lenin's writings on Hegel and the dialectic: *Dialectical Materialism* (1939), published the same year as Stalin's *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*. The contrast couldn't be greater.

His conceptual innovation is to have shown the centrality within Marx's thought of the concepts of "humanism," "alienation," "fetishism," "praxis," "total man." His originality is evident if one compares his methodological understanding of Marx and Lenin on dialectical materialism with the writings of Maurice Cornforth or, for a recent example, John Rees' *Algebra of Revolution*.

Two important works by Lefebvre not discussed by Shields are *Marxism* (1948) and his 1956 book on Lenin. Alienation and the dialectic were the cornerstone of Lefebvre's reading of Marx. The author notes that by extending alienation into the key concept in an entire critique of modern life, Lefebvre oversimplified Marx's and Engels' different uses of the concept. By extending the scope and meaning of alienation, Lefebvre had somewhat misread Marx. However, it is debatable to say that, for Marx, alienation was specific and restricted to the economic sphere.

It is unfortunate that Shields does not discuss some of Lefebvre's contributions in more detail. In 1947, for example, Lefebvre wrote a book called *Formal Logic and Dialectical Logic*, a brilliant systematic treatise

written from the Marxist viewpoint. His philosophic testament, *Return of the Dialectic* (1986), is also virtually unknown.

Lefebvre is also significant for being perhaps the first Marxist to recognize the importance of Nietzsche. His 1939 defense of Nietzsche against appropriation by fascists and vilification by Marxists is perhaps the best Marxist analysis of the thinker that has been written. Shields is right to note that Lefebvre is "an exemplary reader of theory as well as a radical producer of non-systematic theories but key insights and methodologies. In so far as this is true his work remains open-ended: a toolkit for progressive action now."

Lefebvre innovated by extending Marxist analysis to the sphere of "everyday life" and problems of urbanism—questions that had been ignored by the Left. He witnessed after World War II the rapid modernization and urbanization of French life. His critique of the "bureaucratic society of controlled consumption is reminiscent of Marcuse, but suffers from a certain impressionism.

Lefebvre made a more significant contribution by making the city an object for Marxist thought. For Shields, Lefebvre's lasting contribution will be his 1974 book on *The Production of Space*, which redirected historical materialism towards a spatial problematic. This is the best part of Shields' book. Lefebvre transcended the dialectic into spatial terms.

"What exactly is the mode of social relationships?" he asked. "The study of space offers an answer according to which the social relations of production have a social existence; they project themselves into a space, becoming inscribed there, and in the process producing that space itself. Failing this, these relations would remain in the realm of 'pure abstraction,' that is to say in the realm of verbalism, verbiage and empty words."

From this Lefebvre develops a rich theory of the development of different systems of spatiality in different historical periods. His history of the different "modes of production of space" completes Marx's analysis of modes of production in urban, attitudinal and environmental terms. This is not just a theoretical question. A communist revolution must not only change the relationship of the proletariat to the means of production, but also create a new spatialization.

His theory provides a bridge from Marxist thought to environmental politics. Lefebvre advocated alternative and revolutionary restructurations of institutionalized discourses of space and new modes of spatial praxis ("differential space"), such as that by squatters or Third World slum dwellers, who fashion a spatial presence and practice outside the prevailing norms of

More political solutions include that of *The American Prospect's* Robert Kuttner, who stressed the state's "crucial planning role," and *The Nation's* William Greider's "demanding a new deal" whereby "the regulatory system can be repaired, restored, reformed." When Greider asks, "Where are the left-liberal thinkers with new concepts?" it is clear that the new concepts are to be confined within a state-capitalist framework. But state planning and intervention are precisely what led to the proliferation of nuclear plants.

The blackout is only the latest manifestation of capital's drive to accumulate even at the expense of the very conditions of its continued existence—the infrastructure, the environment and human health.

Bookstore harassed!

Indianapolis, Ind.—Over the past weeks, Solidarity Books has experienced an increasing amount of police repression. There has been a stream of undercover police agents in and out of the space, marked and covered police cars and tech vans parked on the Boulevard Ave., and allegations of responsibility for vandalism at a downtown Starbucks and at St. Mary's Church (the parish providing the National Governor's Association protests with a convergence space).

This came to a head on Aug. 14. After forming a perimeter around the collective space, the police pulled over two cars as they tried to leave, claiming minor traffic infractions. Tickets were issued to many of the cars parked outside, as fire marshals demanded entry for a safety inspection. These marshals lacked any complaint or report, let alone a warrant. Nevertheless, they entered accompanied by police officers who were supposedly protecting them. Police searched every room in the house, including personal belongings of the collective members who live on the second floor.

The police were followed by officers with the ATF, bomb squad, and the Seattle Police Department (who stated that they were acting as consultants to the Indianapolis Police Department). There were no weapons or other contraband in the space.

We had set up a phone list prior to the raid, and had between 30 to 50 supporters on the scene within a half hour. We staged an impromptu rally, and also amply documented the raid, with notetaking, photo cameras, and video cameras. Apparently due to this show of strength there were no arrests made.

Please voice your opposition to the police repression we are experiencing. Get in touch with us at: solidaritybooks@riseup.net

enforced capitalist spatialization ("abstract space"). As a dialectician, Lefebvre understood that space and time were two categories that couldn't be separated. Before his death, he was working on a "rhythmanalysis" to link different rhythms (cyclical, linear, etc.) with different modes of spatiality.

The book doesn't emphasize enough how Lefebvre's thought was always intimately connected to political practice. Although for most of his life he was a university lecturer, he was never an "academic Marxist." Lefebvre always sought to unite thought and action. He was a member of the Communist Party of France from 1928 until he was expelled in 1957 for his heretical ideas. He later associated with a variety of left-wing movements and causes.

His books are echoes of all those struggles. One must read his books on urbanism and the city for example, with the battles between local communities and the planners and speculators regarding "redevelopment" and "slum clearance" in mind. His studies on rural sociology are related to the struggles of peasants.

Lefebvre recognized the importance of so-called new social movements, like anti-racism or the struggles of oppressed nationalities like the Basques. Shields' book is to be welcomed for defending the contemporary relevance of Henri Lefebvre's contributions.

Harvey Milk school

New York—Opening day at Harvey Milk High School featured a "battle" between anti-gays on one side of the street and, on the other side, several hundred supporters to protect the students entering the nation's first public high school for queer youth. The anti-gay minister Fred Phelps (who picketed Matthew Shepard's funeral) led about nine of his minions in the Bible-waving and chanting.

Harvey Milk was given \$13.2 million by the City to expand. This covers a very small percentage of the necessary openings. It is long known that LGBT youth face a greater degree of bullying than any other students in American high schools. A 2001 Human Rights Watch report stated that this group has not been getting an education. Students come to Harvey Milk as "safety transfers." The system shifts students out where they're physically or emotionally abused.

Most of Milk High's population (there are some non-LGBTs) were tormented by their classmates because of their perceived or actual sexuality. Two students said that they had previously attempted suicide. New York is one of 42 states that doesn't offer legal protection to students based on their sexuality.

—Sheila

OUR LIFE AND TIMES

by Kevin A. Barry

As the U.S. occupation grinds on, several spectacular terrorist attacks have unnerved even the triumphalist Bush administration. Gone are the illusions of April that the occupation would be as easy as the war. There are almost daily attacks on U.S. soldiers and U.S. killings of innocent Iraqi civilians.

On Sept. 22, a suicide bomber killed a guard outside Iraq's United Nations headquarters in Baghdad. On Aug. 19, a truck bomb had demolished the building, killing 23, including top UN official Sergio Vieira de Mello. This attack was condemned throughout the Arab world, where the UN is often regarded as sympathetic to the Palestinian cause.

On Sept. 20, a member of the U.S.-appointed Governing Council, Akila al-Hashimi, was hospitalized in critical condition and later died, after being shot on her

Faulty 'road map' to Middle East peace

The "Road Map" to peace had many loopholes which set the stage for the current escalation of violence and relentless raids on Palestinians by the Sharon government. By not definitively recognizing the Palestinian right to a state within the West Bank, Gaza and part of Jerusalem, and by allowing Israel to violate the terms of peace negotiations on the basis of any single act of violence committed by the Palestinian side, the "Road Map" was faulty from the start.

On June 29, the Palestinian prime minister, Mahmud Abbas, was able to negotiate a ceasefire agreement on behalf of the Palestinian organizations Fatah, Hamas and Islamic Jihad. They agreed to stop all attacks inside Israel and inside the occupied territories. In exchange they demanded an end to Israel's targeted killings, the withdrawal of the Israeli army to the posts they occupied in September 2000, and the beginning of the release of over 7,000 Palestinian prisoners.

Israel violated the terms of this agreement from the very beginning. Very few Palestinian prisoners (300-400) were released, army raids and arrests in the West Bank and Gaza continued, and illegal settlements continued to be built even though polls had shown that 75% of Jewish settlers were willing to leave the occupied territories in return for compensation from the Israeli government. Israel's Separation Wall continued to cut into major portions of Palestinian territory.

On Aug. 10, the Lebanese Hizbullah fired mortars toward Israeli army posts on the Lebanese border, in response to which Israeli warplanes attacked Hizbullah positions. Soon the ceasefire unraveled when Palestinian suicide bombers blew themselves up in an Israeli market. The Israeli army then killed an Islamist leader, Muhammad Sidr, in Hebron.

On Aug. 20, a Hamas suicide bomber blew up a bus packed with Jewish families in Jerusalem. Twenty-one people were killed and many were injured. The next day Israeli helicopter gunships assassinated an important political leader of Hamas, Ismail Abu Shanab, and his bodyguards. Abu Shanab was the only Hamas leader who had recognized the existence of Israel and did not advocate its extinction. He had supported the continuation of a ceasefire.

From this date on, Israel further intensified its raids, home demolitions and targeted killings. On Aug. 24, Palestine Authority and Hamas leaders proposed a renewed truce. But the Israeli army responded by more targeted killings of Hamas leaders. It also opened Temple Mount, one of the holiest sites for Muslims, to Jewish visitors, while preventing access to Muslim worshippers.

On Sept. 4, Prime Minister Mahmud Abbas gave a speech to the Palestinian parliament in which he called for an end to the cycle of action and reaction. Faced with the actions of the Israeli government,

way to work. On Aug. 29, a car bomb outside the world's most sacred Shi'ite religious site, the Imam Ali Mosque in Najaf, killed 95 people, among them Ayatollah Bakr al-Hakim, who seemed to be the target. The Shi'ite community's most important political leader, al-Hakim had been working with the U.S.

The sources of these attacks remain a mystery. They seem to aim at sowing fear, confusion, and ethno-religious tension, rather than gaining popular support. As widely predicted beforehand, Bush's reckless invasion has served only to strengthen the very type of religious fundamentalism out of which the horrors of September 11 emerged.

These dramatic events completely crowded off the stage a truly historic one: the capture of "Chemical Ali," the Ba'athist official who ordered the genocidal poison gas attacks on the Kurds in 1988. In that peri-

attacks from within the Palestine Authority, as well as attacks from Palestinian Islamists, some of whom attempted to enter the parliament session with clubs and swords to kill him, Abbas was forced to resign on Sept. 6.

Later that day, Israeli army missiles attempted to assassinate Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the highest ranking Islamist leader among Palestinians. Yassin, who survived the attack on his apartment in Gaza, was slightly wounded. The destructive effects of this assassination attempt may truly be terrifying.

At this point, Sharon's government has avoided the responsibility of speaking with a new Palestinian prime minister, Ahmed Queria. Instead, once again, it used its old tactic of blaming the corrupt Yasir Arafat as the source of all the Palestinian suicide attacks, and threatened to expel him from the occupied territories.

Once again the issue of Israel's provocations and its refusal to abide by the terms of any peace negotiations, was subsumed under the status of Arafat. The UN Security Council, under U.S. pressure, vetoed a resolution against the expulsion of Arafat. Later the majority of the UN General Assembly condemned Israel's threat of expulsion.

As of Sept. 21, the Palestine Authority has called for another ceasefire and for international peacekeeping forces in the region. The intensity of the Israeli raids, its building of the Separation Wall and the support that these attacks continue to receive from the Bush administration, has made the idea of any peace negotiations impossible. Some peace activists are warning that the Separation Wall, which upon completion will cut into 50% of the existing occupied territories, will make a two state solution virtually impossible.

—Sheila Sahar
Sept. 24, 2003

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od, the Ba'athists killed 100,000 Kurds, at a time when Iraq was a quasi-ally of the U.S.

The sudden collapse of the Iraqi army this spring has allowed Shi'ite clerics to assume various degrees of power in much of Baghdad and southern Iraq. Shi'ite Islamists have pressured women into wearing the veil and have attacked liquor and movie rental stores. Clerics have been permitted to set up informal religious court. The U.S. also allowed them to block what was to have been the appointment of Iraq's first woman judge, Nidal Nasser Hussein, in Najaf.

At the same time, however, Iraq's secular Left, long repressed by the Ba'athist regime, has been trying to assert itself in the face of the occupation, the Shi'ite Islamists, and the terrorist attacks. One of these groups is the Workers Communist Party (WCP), which has set up a headquarters in downtown Baghdad. In a back room, protected from religious fanatics by armed WCP guards, the Organization for Women's Freedom maintains an office. It publishes the newspaper, *Equality*, whose banner headlines proclaim, "No to the compulsory veil." It demands complete legal equality for women, separation of state and religion, and full participation of women in all spheres of public life. (See "Challenge from Iraqi feminists," p. 2.)

The WCP has also helped to organize a Union of the Unemployed. After repeated demonstrations for aid to the unemployed that met no response, they set up a tent city outside U.S. occupation headquarters. Instead of negotiating, however, U.S. troops arrested them. Rather than aiding the unemployed, the current U.S. economic plan for Iraq would set up a ruthless "free market" economy, allowing international capital to take over banking and other major sectors.

South Korean strikes



Railway workers rallied during mass labor protests.

During the past few months, South Korean workers have taken advantage of the limited political space opened up by the election to the presidency of Roh Moo Hyun, who has been slower to crack down on labor than previous leaders. After bank workers won a small victory in June against international capital, railway workers followed suit by shutting down 90% of freight and 50% of passenger service in a four-day strike.

In July, workers at Hyundai Motor Company began what was to become a 47-day rolling strike. In the end, they won some major concessions from capital, including an 8.6% pay raise. Hyundai workers also won a five-day, 40-hour week, a change from their previous 5.5 day, 44 hour week, without any reduction in pay. (Almost all Korean workers are still in the latter situation, or worse.) Workers from other major auto companies immediately pledged to follow suit.

Despite these major gains, which were achieved in a slowing economy, most South Korean workers inhabit a vastly different world, that of the small company. Here, the week often stretches to 50 hours and pay averages only \$1,300/month. In addition, more than half of the working class are day laborers and temporaries with few benefits.

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*.