

WORKSHOP TALKS

Risks taken for day's pay, in Iraq or U.S.

by Htun Lin

In December a cluster of Iraqi workers lost their lives to a killer posing as a customer for their labor. When the suicide bomber approached the crowd of eager men hoping to be hired for the day, he blew up the targeted workers. The dire necessity to feed their families motivated these workers to pursue these jobs. Many other workers have already been killed in such terrorist fashion. These workers knowingly took a risk.

Millions of workers from China, Africa, Mexico and many other locales also take risks to get work everywhere around the world as they migrate en masse to centers of capital—to Shanghai, to Saudi Arabia, to wherever capital with its werewolf hunger for surplus value devours their low cost labor-power.

On Dec. 12, the largest ever workplace raid in U.S. history took place, affecting 13,000 workers. Not coincidentally, this was at a time after the mid-term elections when Bush was being skewered for his miserable record in his "war against terror."

This raid was orchestrated by the Homeland Security Department. Officials bragged that they netted over a thousand suspects at a dozen plants in half a dozen states, owned by meat-packer Swift.

Just exactly who were these dangerous suspects? They were undocumented workers who got hired by using social security cards bought from those who traffic in such documents. Federal officials at Homeland Security touted their sophisticated sting operation as breaking up a major identity theft ring.

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BLACK/RED VIEW

Political alienation of Martin Luther King Jr.

by John Alan

Recently newspapers across the nation published illustrated stories about the large numbers of people, of all races and classes, and even Presidents of the United States, who came to the Mall in Washington, D.C. to watch the ground breaking for a statue of Martin Luther King Jr. to be put between Presidents Abraham Lincoln and Thomas Jefferson.

Undoubtedly President Bush had political reasons for attending the ground breaking ceremony. But the kind of Martin Luther King Jr. that President Bush needs now is not the historic Martin Luther King Jr. who articulated the aspirations of a large, mass Civil Rights Movement of African Americans during the 1960s and was regarded by many as its major leader. By 1955 Dr. King had become the newest leader in the long African American struggle for freedom in America. That Martin Luther King Jr. would be difficult for President Bush to deal with.

KING MEMORIAL

By placing a memorial to Dr. King among those of Jefferson and Lincoln, the differences between those historic figures and the actual history they represent are obscured. From the start the Enlightenment concept that Jefferson inscribed in the Declaration of Independence—that all men are created equal and that they are endowed with certain inalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness—were meant only for white Americans. African Americans in whose enslavement Jefferson participated responded to that concept in their own way. They wanted to make it concrete. That effort continues to this day when

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Restive currents below Iran's theocratic rule

by an Iranian feminist

George W. Bush's Jan. 10 address on Iraq, and the subsequent U.S. Army arrest of five Iranian diplomats in Irbil, Iraq as well as the deployment of another carrier strike group in the Persian Gulf have been widely interpreted as a declaration of war against Iran. Whether these moves will lead to war, despite the disastrous U.S. invasion of Iraq and the deep opposition to the Iraq war within the U.S., remains to be seen.

If the anti-war movement in the U.S. is serious about stopping this confrontation, it needs to engage in people-to-people solidarity with the opposition movement within Iran, its challenge to the Iranian regime, its debates, aspirations and demands. These issues range from the current debates over the nuclear standoff and Iranian President Ahmadinejad's denial of the Holocaust, to issues of labor, education, man-woman and gender relations, as well as discussions over the economic and philosophical direction of the country.

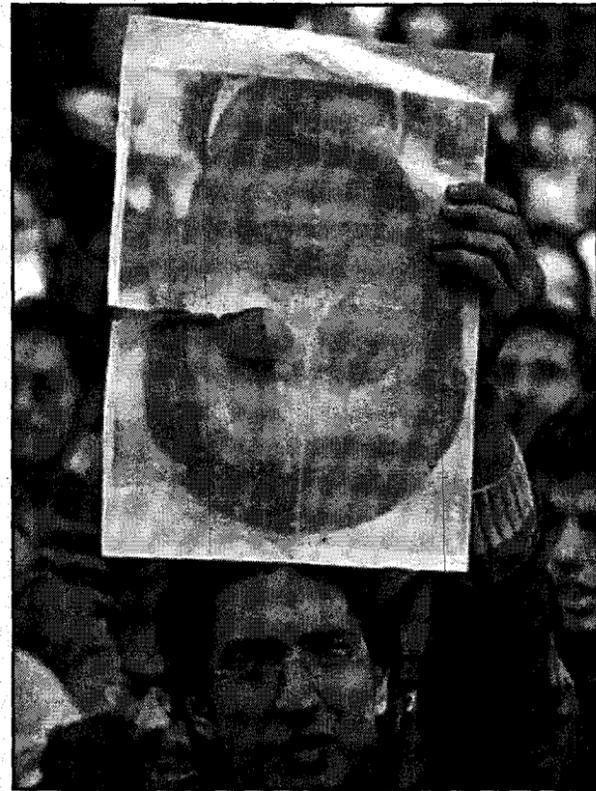
NUCLEAR DEBATE AND HOLOCAUST DENIAL

The Dec. 22 UN Security Council vote to impose limited sanctions on Iran over its failure to halt uranium enrichment has generated a great deal of concern inside Iran. On Jan. 10 the reformist Participation Front issued a "Warning of the Participation Front" in which it proclaimed: "Any isolation and economic sanctions will hurt the dispossessed and vulnerable lower and middle classes most...Achieving peaceful nuclear technology is our country's right. At the same time however, the way to achieve this capability is not through the existing policies and actions...We must avoid any adventurous policy or measure that can increase world suspicion of Iran, such as exiting the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty or holding a symposium on the Holocaust...We must call for peace and life and prove it with our policies on the national and global scale" (peiknet.com).

A few days later, the newspaper *Edalat*, announced a letter from 150 members of the parliament which summoned Ahmadinejad to rush back from his trip to Latin America and appear in front of the Parliament to answer their concerns about soaring inflation and unemployment.

Many student organizations have also opposed Iran's attempts at nuclear proliferation. In an open letter, a group of student activists declared: "Nuclear energy is just an excuse and means for a war of interests [between the U.S. and Iran]. Therefore not only are we for ending the nuclear activities in Iran. We are also for the denuclearization of the world and the obliteration of all weapons of mass destruction in all countries including the U.S., Russia, China, Israel...We support research toward acquiring safe and clean types of energy with the least amount of environmental pollution as a substitute for nuclear technology" ("Name-ye Sargoshadeh-ye Jam'i As Fa'alan Daneshju-i," roshangari.net, 4/6/06).

The Iranian government continues to use the nationalist card, the anti-U.S. imperialist card and the anti-Israel card to turn attention away from the country's internal crises. One of the most outrageous expressions of this drive was the Tehran symposium "The Holocaust—Global Vision," sponsored by the Iranian government Dec. 11–12. It hosted David Duke, head of the



University of Tehran students protested an appearance by Iran President Ahmadinejad, mocked by upsidedown portrait, in December.

Ku Klux Klan, Professor Robert Faurisson, convicted in his native France in 1991 for dismissing the Holocaust, American revisionist historian Veronica Clark, skin-head groups from Germany and rabbis from New York affiliated with a Hasidic sect, Neturei Karta.

Given the banning of all the reformist newspapers which have previously criticized Ahmadinejad's claim, it has been very difficult for Iranians to get a sense of dissenting views on this question. Furthermore many websites which were previously available to Iranian internet users are now being consistently filtered.

In December 2005, soon after Ahmadinejad's original speech denying the Holocaust, the leading reformist daily, *Shargh* which has recently been banned from publication, had published a number of articles critical of Ahmadinejad's statement. One example, entitled "Hitler Was Only a Name" ("Hitler Tanha Yek Nam Bud," 12/17/05), contained the reprint of a *der Spiegel* interview with Whitney Harris, prosecutor of the Nuremberg Trials. He had identified Hitler as the expression of the phenomenon of Fascism which "represented the complete moral collapse of the 20th century," a collapse which, he argued, began with the carnage of World War I and which we face today. Another, entitled "Thoughtless Barbarism" ("Barbariyat-e Nayan-dishideh," 2/1/06), cites Rosa Luxemburg's *Junius Pamphlet* and Hannah Arendt's *Eichman in Jerusalem* and argues that the only way to oppose barbarism is to stand for "collective reason" and "collective memory."

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YOUTH

by Alex Maktoob

Anti-sweatshop struggles

Students from the Purdue Organization for Labor Equality and the Purdue Alliance of Libertarian Socialists, joined by leaders of national and local labor, broke bread on the steps of Purdue's administration building Dec. 13, marking the end of a 26-day hunger strike to force Purdue to adopt a policy aimed at remedying some of the egregious human rights offenses that take place in the production of collegiate apparel.

The policy, the Designated Suppliers Program (DSP), requires Purdue's licensees—companies that manufacture products bearing Purdue's logo—to source from factories that meet a set of requirements: 1) the factory must demonstrate respect for workers' associational rights, 2) allow workers to bargain for a living wage, and 3) demonstrate compliance with Purdue's existing Code of Conduct. Purdue's Code of Conduct already requires its licensees to abide by these conditions and goes further in many respects, including regulating the length of the workday and setting standards that

respect women's rights.

The decision to stop the hunger strike came after Purdue's President, Martin C. Jischke, rejected the proposal after a meeting with striking students that took place a week earlier. His reasons for rejecting the DSP—concerns about antitrust laws, unionization requirements, and price fixing—were all addressed by the students in that meeting. Not only were these concerns addressed, but the President's remarks were in direct contradiction with official Purdue policy as outlined in Purdue's Code of Conduct, a piece of policy that was also pushed and ultimately won by anti-sweatshop hunger strikers in 2001. Furthermore, the President's decision was not even directed to students who invoked the meeting, but to the committee created to "advise" the President on licensing issues. In reality this committee was created to divert student voices and power even at the highest point of student activism Purdue University has seen in years.

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ONLINE: www.newsandletters.org

WOMAN AS REASON

by Terry Moon

Now that Democrats control Congress, there is hope among women's organizations that the proposed labor bill confronting human rights violations in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands will finally pass. The Mariana Islands are a haven for textile sweatshops because 1) they are not required to pay the U.S. minimum wage, 2) they are exempt from the Immigration and Nationality Act, and 3) they are allowed to use the label "Made in USA."

Reforms are greatly needed, as the mostly Chinese, Filipina, and Thai women immigrant workforce is exploited, getting \$3.05 per hour, if they are paid at all, forced to work six days a week, including some 20-hour days. Most are thousands of dollars in debt to so-called "recruiters," who got them the jobs, often under false pretenses; additionally, many pay for company-supplied housing and food to the tune of \$2,100 a year. That these women are fighting to stay is an indictment of how horrible conditions are for them back home.

WORKERS' LIVES IN RUINS

Despite the hope of passage of a woefully insipid bill requiring companies to "gradually" increase the minimum wage, an article in *Ms. Magazine* acknowledges that an "even more ominous" problem threatens: the decline of the textile industry in the Islands. What is afflicting the Mariana Islands is not a local problem.

'No Media Justice'

MEMPHIS, TENN.—Over 3,000 people came to the National Media Reform Conference here in January. Many are part of local struggles, frustrated by local and national media endlessly repeating the propaganda of corporations and government and shutting out movement voices and ordinary citizens.

Many were outraged by the corporate media's subservience to the Bush administration's lies and its war on Iraq. At the same time, participants criticized independent media, media reform organizations and the conference itself for being dominated by white males and for missing certain crucial issues.

Over 100 women and a few men attended the workshop "There Is No Media Justice Without Women." Amid the stories of self-organization of women, especially women of color, the audience expressed anger at the fact that this was the only workshop devoted to women, that panel after panel at the conference was dominated by white men, that women of color were almost completely absent from the lists of plenary speakers, and that gay and lesbian speakers were missing.

Activists from the Memphis Center for Independent Living took over the lunch break with a surprise speakout on the need to shine a light on policies that force people with disabilities into institutions. Both the corporate and independent media have failed to adequately report the atrocities happening in nursing homes, and the movement of people with disabilities demanding home care.

Much criticism was aimed at the mainstream media, including a concrete, searing denunciation by Helen Thomas of the national reporters covering the White House, who spinelessly acted as "stenographers" for the warmongering administration. The other side of the war promotion is the war on independent reporters covering anti-war activities. Sarah Olson spoke of how she and other reporters who had interviewed Lt. Ehren Watada (see "Tule Lake: Dignity and Survival," August-September 2006 *N&L*) have been subpoenaed to testify against him at court-martial. Watada is being tried for refusing to deploy to Iraq. Olson and the other reporters may face six months in prison if they don't testify. Conferees strongly supported her stance of refusing "to act as the eyes and ears of the government."

Olson also drew attention to Josh Wolf, who may soon become the longest imprisoned journalist in U.S. history. Wolf refused to give federal prosecutors his raw footage of a 2005 protest in San Francisco against the G8 summit. Wolf suspects prosecutors are trying to identify political activists. Information on supporting these journalists can be found at <http://joshwolf.net/freejosh/> and <http://www.freepress-wg.org>

—Franklin Dmitryev

Tillie Olsen, 1912-2007

Tillie Olsen, writer, feminist and labor activist, died on New Year's Day, 2007, just short of her 95th birthday.

Join family, friends and readers for a Memorial Celebration of Tillie Olsen's life:

Saturday, Feb. 17, 2007

First Congregational Church of Oakland
2501 Harrison Street (corner of 25th and Harrison), Oakland, Cal.

1:00 p.m. celebration followed by reception

Globalization and women workers

Rather the lifting of the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing (ATC) two years ago, which effectively ended clothing quotas and restrictions for developing countries, has unleashed China to flood the market with textiles made with super-exploited labor, an efficient and developed infrastructure, with ready access to

homegrown cotton. The result means the ruin of a global workforce that is 75% to 90% women from some of the poorest countries on earth.

This is a small fraction of the devastation which only promises to get worse:

- Eleven textile factories have already closed on the **Mariana Islands**, throwing thousands out of work, and the largest garment manufacturing plant is planning to close this month.



- **Lesotho's** key industry collapsed as factories cut 10,000 jobs when Chinese textiles flooded their market.

- Unions and textile organizations in the U.S. are expecting 500,000 of the remaining 664,000 domestic jobs to disappear. Under the quota, China had shipped 941,000 knit shirts to the U.S. When ATC fell, they shipped 18.2 million.

- In **Bangladesh**, where nearly 80% of total exports were in textile, the lifting of the ATC puts 1.8 million factory jobs in jeopardy, along with 15 million more in related industries. Bangladesh may lose 40% of its total exports.

What these statistics mean to the individuals is tragic: loss of income for whole families, women's dreams of moving their children out of abject poverty smashed. Women who leave home to travel sometimes thousands of miles for a job can't just return to their previous lives. Hundreds of thousands of the newly unemployed end up in the flourishing sex trade, putting their lives in danger from AIDS and violence.

One does have to work to ameliorate such suffering, but without a revolutionary perspective, the feminist movement can be lulled into thinking that such halfway measures as the new labor law are more than raggedy band-aids. Even the ethical buying codes that college students strongly agitate for are being found somewhat ineffective. There has been no increase in union membership, women still suffer deep discrimination, and there is no guarantee of a living wage. While there has been improvement in things like health, safety and working hours because these are easy to quantify, everything else stays the same or gets worse. And even those advances are questionable, as China has created clever computer programs that cook

WOMEN WORLDWIDE

by Mary Jo Grey

National opposition and a prisoner lawsuit forced the state of Arkansas to pass a ban on restraining pregnant inmates in labor with chains, shackles or handcuffs. Shawanna Nelson challenged this barbaric practice after she was chained during more than 12 hours of labor before being transferred to a hospital. The guard refused to remove the chains until the actual delivery, despite requests from a doctor and two nurses. "It is not necessary to shackle a woman when you've already got armed guards there who are ready to shoot to kill if necessary," said Democratic State Representative Sharon Dobbins, sponsor of the legislation. Twenty-three state prison systems and the Federal Bureau of Prisons allow the shackling of prisoners during labor and childbirth.

—Information from *Prison Legal News*

* * *

In the Philippines, Judge Benjamin Pozon decided not to downgrade the rape charges against three of four U.S. marines among the original six accused of gang-raping a 22-year-old Filipina at the former U.S. naval base in Subic, Olongapo, Philippines. GABRIELA Network, a Philippine-U.S. women's organization, welcomed this decision but called for heightened vigilance to ensure that the decision is not reversed and immediate justice is achieved for the rape victim. They demand an end to the U.S.-Philippine Visiting Forces Agreement that perpetuates violence against Filipina women.

—Information from *GABRIELA Network USA*

the books on wages and working hours—a scheme that will sweep the industry

HUNGER STRIKE IN MARIANA ISLANDS

None of this can stop the workers' revolt. In the Mariana Islands at the giant plant that is planning to close, the women went on a hunger strike through mid-December. When it ended, they staged a sitdown strike that halted garment shipments. They demanded an overdue government tax rebate and reimbursement of recruiter fees. They held a vigil, threatened to renew the hunger strike, called for justice, marched on the hotel owned by the same corporation that manages their factory and occupied its largest meeting room. What keeps them fighting for these jobs? As one worker said, in China she would make less than a dollar a day.

What is happening to women in the textile trade worldwide is a horrible example of capitalism's werewolf hunger for ever more surplus value. Laws and codes may temporarily slow it down, but capitalism will recognize no limits to its self-expansion. While revolution has become unthinkable to many, including many feminists, it is delusional to imagine that capitalism actually works for those who have to live under it, or has a human direction. Just ask any garment worker who has lost her job.

Women hanged in Iraq

Editor's note: Below we print excerpts of a talk given by Yanar Mohammed, the chair of The Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq, to Radination in December.

Iraqis are surprised that it is possible to take us back 1,000 years in time, to let go of our civilization, our modernity, and to have practices in our street that we have not seen before in the 20th century. These days, you go to the areas controlled by the Islamist militias who are in the government, and public executions of women have become a common thing in some of those main squares. We sent an activist because we heard two women were executed in predominantly Shi'ite parts of Baghdad. A third execution took place in front of him.

He was walking in the street and, all of a sudden, he saw a young woman dragged out of her house by members of a Shi'ite militia. They flogged her in the middle of the street, and then they brought a wire and wound it around her neck. They kept on dragging her. He said she tried to resist by holding the wire so that she didn't suffocate. They went to the closest football field to hang her from the goalpost. They shot tens of bullets into her body with machine guns, although her brother came screaming that they should stop.

In regular cases people do not interfere because of fear or because they don't know what is happening or assume that it has something to do with an "honor killing." I'm not saying that this should be allowed, but in this case her brother came after her and tried to stop them, so they decided to shoot him with her.

Just imagine: these are the political groups who are ruling in Iraq under the blessings of the U.S. occupation. Some of these militias are members of the police force that go around in Baghdad and decide what we can and cannot do. Three women were killed in the same area in public executions by Islamist militias affiliated with the government. There is no guarantee that your life is yours to decide what to do with. They can take away your life for whatever reason.

The more the troops stay, the more we have all sorts of fundamentalists, Islamists, terrorists, pouring on us from all over the globe in order to liberate their so-called holy land from the occupiers. If the U.S. troops were not there, why would these fundamentalists, terrorists be heading to Iraq and why would they stay?

The metropolitan people of Iraq, 80% of the people of Iraq, did not care who was Shi'a, who was Sunni. But with the dawn of the occupation, I remember when we were taken sometimes to meetings, or to see somebody responsible in the green zone, the first question they asked me was whether I was a Sunni or a Shi'a.

In the public sphere, 40% were women—hundreds of thousands of women who were economically independent and living a modern life. I had just finished my masters [degree]. You have almost five generations of educated women who nobody could beat easily. We were able to run for parliament and all political seats. This new so-called democracy has only taken away all our social status, all our economic privileges, and all our political aspirations for generations to come.

The Hamilton-Baker report did not bring anything new. Speaking to an Islamic Republic to bring us the same inhumane situation of Iran into Iraq and the rest of the stuff that came into the report was idiotic and does not have any solution for us in Iraq.

We are a women's group trying to get a big number of women around our campaign, Women Against Occupation, and we are working with the Workers Against Occupation and Students Against Occupation. Our secular alternative will have to start with ending the occupation and then working towards an egalitarian and secular era in Iraq. Our people's alternative will come from the women, the workers, the students and others who are joining us. The secular circle is growing but we need the people of the U.S. to support us.

Law shields owners, not miners

DETROIT—Following the Sago mine disaster in West Virginia that killed 12 miners a year ago, there was a flurry of Congressional and state legislation. Magazines and newspapers and commentators on radio and TV trumpeted the action: Mine Safety Legislation Enacted, Coal Miners to be Protected, New Laws Will Safeguard Coal Miners, Statutes Aim to Cut Coal Mine Deaths, and on and on.

The thinking among the public was that Congress and state legislatures had responded to

WORKSHOP TALKS

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These arrested workers were accused of being recipients of stolen identities, now a major crime against national security in our current Big Brother climate. As one teary wife of an arrested worker yelled, while watching him hauled off to waiting prison buses, "He got the identity only to work, nothing more."

DEMONIZING UNDOCUMENTED WORKERS

Michael Chertoff, the head of Homeland Security, said, "This is not only a case about illegal immigration, which is bad enough; it's a case about identity theft and violation of the privacy rights and the economic rights of innocent Americans."

In Victor Hugo's novel *Les Miserables*, the memorable constable Javert was fixated on arresting the destitute who were guilty of stealing bread. The Javerts of our day would readily point out to us that we live in an era of terrorism, and that we must not let our guard down by feeling sorry for "illegal aliens."

Some on the Left have opined that the Iraqi workers who were blown up while looking for work should not have been collaborating with the imperialist occupiers. The missing element in both of these attitudes is the standpoint of the workers.

The central concern of the day for the Iraqi worker, or the worker from Mexico in the U.S., is how not to be forgotten as a human being. What would constitute a new human society is a question which cannot be understood, much less answered, unless workers are engaged.

One worker analyzed Homeland Security's raid, as he saw his co-workers hauled off, by saying, "Everybody has to do what they have to do to make a living. I agree that it's wrong, but at the same time it's not wrong because, you know, we are human beings."

Many farmers and other employers lost their workforce overnight. In many places of employment, vegetables and fruit are rotting, cows are going un milked, food processing has come to a standstill.

TEMPORARY STATUS

Therefore, Senator Feinstein, a Democrat from California, and Senator Craig, a Republican from Idaho, pushed to give temporary legal status to 1.5 million illegal immigrant workers by creating an even lower underclass with blue cards. They will have to work several years and pay a \$500 fine before they can get permanent legal status.

Brokering with other people's lives is what politicians do. Some capitalist politicians in the U.S. have lately taken positions more in line with the growing anti-Iraq war sentiment in the U.S., but for their own reasons—they have now decided staying in Iraq is too costly, is interfering with business. They want to cut their losses and make a deal with any power within Iraq that is willing.

Will the first casualty of getting back to business as usual be more lives of workers and women? The rule of capital with its permanent war and struggle to extract unpaid labor finds ever new ways to degrade the human being. Only when we workers extend our human solidarity with each other can we hope to get out of the crossfire of hypocritical bourgeois politics and murderous war.

the tragedy by doing something to stop, or at least diminish, the death toll in the mines each year.

The new laws called for more effective communication and wireless tracking systems to be installed, for oxygen canisters to last for two hours instead of only one, for extra canisters and emergency safety areas to be available in strategic locations throughout a mine, and for more safety training for miners.

Called the broadest Congressional safety law passed in three decades and signed by President Bush in June, it looked like long-needed action had finally been taken.

However, what was not in the headlines and reports is that the law will not take effect for two more years, which means that the miners in the nation's more than 600 underground coal mines will face the same dangers that they have been exposed to for two more years—three years after the Sago disaster.

This is obviously the payoff of the business-friendly Bush administration for the coal operators' support of Bush during the last two presidential elections, without which he would not have been elected. It goes along with past actions weakening environmental laws that now permit mountain-top removal mining and enable mine operators to increase coal-burning atmospheric pollutants.

Since the federal law doesn't go into effect for two more years, mine management can avoid any responsibility for deaths resulting from such failures—and there will be many deaths in the mines due to such failures, even though all of these needed safety measures are readily available today, and despite the coal operators' claims that they can't meet the requirements "overnight."

If a coal operator has an order for the equipment required by law, that is considered to be in compliance. Not the delivery of the equipment, but only an order for it. Many operators will wait two years to place their orders and still be within the law, regardless of how long it will take to get delivery. And regardless of how many more miners lose their lives due to these delays.

As 2007 begins we hear about two more West Virginia coal miners who were killed in a mine collapse while they were pillaging, salvaging coal from a seam about to be closed down. The law does not protect miners' lives, but it can protect operators.

—Andy Phillips

Defending Palestinian right to plow land

NEAR HEBRON, OCCUPIED WEST BANK—Last month several friends and I headed down to Tuwani, a small village near Hebron, to support Palestinian farmers who had not been able to plow their fields. Local Jewish settlers have routinely engaged in violence against the villagers, attacking farmers and even children walking to and from school. Israeli authorities have interfered with villagers' access to their fields, save for the land on the Tuwani hillside.

On this day, armed with a recent court decision guaranteeing the villagers the right to work their land, Tuwani farmers attempted to till their land. Israeli and international human rights workers hoped to discourage settler attacks—the plowing was done all at once so as to be too much for the settlers to sabotage.

Three Israelis and I sat atop a hillside as a local farmer and his son sowed seed before we saw a police jeep. Moments later, just as the farmer began to plow, settlers with dogs came toward the farmer.

As they approached, I said, "Shalom." A few settlers sat down at our feet to block the tractor; I attempted to convince them to turn around, to which the settlers replied with curses in Hebrew, so I replied "Shalom." One settler answered, "No peace for you! You're thieves!" I said, "I only wish peace for you," to which he replied, "I only wish death for you."

After 15 minutes Israeli military jeeps and more police jeeps arrived. Eventually the soldiers and police convinced the settlers to leave the area. Several Swedish and English friends accompanied other farmers to their fields, and had similar encounters with settlers.

An English human rights worker grabbed one settler's arm as he swung his fist towards a Palestinian farmer. This settler then turned to the Englishman and attacked him with a walkie-talkie.

As a result of the efforts of the Tuwani farmers, with a bit of support from Israeli and international human rights workers, and with a bit of enforcement on the part of the Israeli military and police, the Tuwani farmers were able to plow all of the land on their side of the hill, all of the land in the valleys, and most of their land on the Havat Ma'on side of the hill.

—U.S. youth

L.A. grabs urban farm

LOS ANGELES—Community farmers in the heart of South Central Los Angeles are fighting unjust removal from the largest urban farm in the nation. The 14 acres of land had served as a communal resource for food, medicinal plants and youth education, as well as for neighborhood gatherings.

For the past three years, the campesinos, mostly from Mexico and Central America, have been battling developer Ralph Horowitz over ownership. Horowitz wants to build warehouses for corporations such as Wal-Mart on the property, which is located on the Alameda corridor that runs from downtown to the ports of San Pedro.

The story behind the farm dates back to the late 1980s, when Horowitz wanted to place a trash incinerator on the site. Through community organizing, the project was stopped. Since Horowitz failed to accomplish what the land was to be used for, the city obtained it through eminent domain and, following the 1992 Los Angeles uprising, granted the littered lot to the community. With the assistance of the L.A. Food Bank, the farm grew into an urban oasis.

However in 2003, with the assistance of Councilwoman Jan Perry, Horowitz purchased the land from the city for only \$5 million. He began pressuring the farmers and the Food Bank with eviction threats. Soon afterward the Food Bank ended its longtime support for the campesinos, fearing legal accountability.

Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, who claims to advocate for a "Green L.A." and showed support for the farmers during his campaign, said he was "powerless."

After an eviction notice was served on the farmers, there were daily protests at City Hall, the Mayor's mansion, and Horowitz's house. Under public pressure, Horowitz told farm representatives that he would sell the land for \$16.5 million. When with the assistance of benefactors they were able to raise that amount, Horowitz refused to sell.

In the early morning of June 13 the Sheriff's Department and LAPD infiltrated the land. Activists stood their ground by chaining themselves to concrete barrels and other solid objects. Hundreds protested the evictions outside. The police stormed in to arrest the remaining activists. "They are against the people, they don't care if we survive," said Michael, 15, a farm volunteer, on the day of the eviction.

During the following weeks activists and farmers marched and rallied, pressuring the city council. When bulldozers came in to level the land, many activists attempted to stop the destruction by blocking the machines.

Since then, the farmers have remained hopeful and have held weekly vigils outside the area. Mayor Villaraigosa has granted the farmers a new smaller site on Avalon and 103rd St. in the Watts district. Many of the farmers and organizers see this as a slap in the face. They still want their land back.

—Joseph

Nurses fight cuts



Chicago—Union nurses and other healthcare workers held a candlelight vigil and demonstration in front of the John Stroger Hospital emergency room on Jan. 18. Stroger Hospital is one of Cook County's few public hospitals. The nurses were protesting impending drastic financial cuts announced by the Cook County Board. The rally's speakers denounced the impact the cuts will have on health care for the poor.

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RECLAIMING

MARX'S
'CAPITAL'

A Refutation
of the Myth of
Inconsistency

Andrew Kliman

FROM THE WRITINGS OF RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

EDITOR'S NOTE

The following essay by Raya Dunayevskaya, originally delivered as part of a lecture to Union W.A.G.E. (Women's Alliance to Gain Equality) in 1975, deals with an issue that is central to any commemoration of Black History Month and Women's History Month—the interconnection between women's liberation and the Black dimension, both in the U.S. and internationally. The essay was originally published as chapter 7 of Dunayevskaya's book *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press: 1985).

To grasp the Black Dimension is to learn a new language, the language of thought, Black thought. For many, this new language will be difficult because they are hard of hearing. Hard of hearing because they are not used to this type of thought, a language which is both a struggle for freedom and the thought of freedom.

Take the question of the language of activity in the Underground Railroad where Harriet Tubman was one of the greatest conductors. She didn't just escape from the South. She returned 19 times, and she brought out 300 people—and there is more. In a few books you will find her name and they will acknowledge that she was a conductor and a great one. But do they speak of all the creativity that goes into being a conductor of the Underground Railway, that you become a guerrilla fighter as well as a conductor, that you're a leader of men and women? Just look what it means to know your country, the South, so that you not only bring out Blacks, but are the leader of a battalion of whites.

When we move to the period after the Civil War when slavery was abolished we see that even such greats as Frederick Douglass—who had been with the women in their battles before this struggle for the 14th Amendment—now were willing to drop the demand for the inclusion of the vote for the women; and we find that Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman separate from Frederick Douglass. They insist on continuing the struggle for women's liberation.

Listen to the poetry of Sojourner Truth's prose: "I am coming from the land of slavery." This is **after** the Civil War was won by the North. She turns to her own Black people, appealing for continuation of the struggle for women's vote: "I hate to see my Black man being as bad as the white man." Then turning to the greatest of them, who are stepping aside, she says that it is "short-minded" to stop the struggle at getting the vote only for Black men.

AMY GARVEY AND WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

In the concentration on the struggle for freedom, the Black dimension in women's liberation extended the whole philosophy of human liberation. Now if we jump to the early 20th century, we find the same thing. A much underrated woman in that sphere is Amy Jacques Garvey. She wasn't just the wife of Marcus Garvey. She both edited the women's page in *Negro World* and edited Garvey's works after he died, giving to them a great name—*Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey*.*

Here she is, writing in 1925: "A race must be saved, a country must be redeemed, and unless you strengthen the leadership of vacillating Negro men, we will remain marking time..."

"We are tired of hearing Negro men say, 'There is a better day coming,' while they do nothing to usher in

Black dimension in women's liberation

the day. We are becoming so impatient that we are getting in the front ranks, and serve notice on the world that we [she is talking about Black women] will brush aside the halting, cowardly Negro men, and with prayer on our lips and arms prepared for any fray, we will press on and on until victory is ours..."

"Mr. Black man, watch your step! Ethiopia's queens will reign again, and her Amazons protect her shores and people. Stengthen your shaking knees, and move forward, or we will displace you."

AFRICAN FREEDOM DIMENSION

Or take the African continent where, again, it was not the educated men, but illiterate women who added a new page to history, when, in 1929, the British imperialists in Eastern Nigeria decided to tax the women. They got so furious they went on spontaneous strike—

less others injured.

What happened right here in the U.S. in 1960? It is true it was the wonderful North Carolina youth who sat in at a restaurant lunch counter and started the magnificent Black Revolution. But the fact is that, **five years earlier**, one solitary woman, Rosa Parks, a seamstress, refused to give up her seat on a bus and got arrested, and the incident so aroused the youth that the entire Black population behaved in a different manner than they had ever dreamed of. They decided they would all go to the courthouse; they organized their own transportation and boycotted all the buses; they inspired Rev. King to be with them, and they kept all decisions in their own hands by meeting three times a week. The new stage of Black revolt began there.

Right up to our own period we find there is a double rhythm in revolution. The overthrow, what is called the

first negation, is saying **No** to what is. But the second negation, the creation of the new, is harder, because you want to have entirely new human relations. In addition to all the great Black women I have mentioned, there is another in the new Women's Liberation Movement, Doris Wright, who raised exactly this question when she said, "I'm not thoroughly convinced that Black liberation, the way it's being spelled out, will really and truly mean my liberation. I'm not sure that when it comes time to 'put down my gun,' that I won't have a broom shoved in my hands, as so many of my Cuban sisters have."

She was not putting the question down as a condition—"I will not make a revolution unless you promise." She was posing the question of what happens **after**. That is what we have to answer **before**, in the practice of our own organizations, our own thought and our own activity.



World march of women, 2005

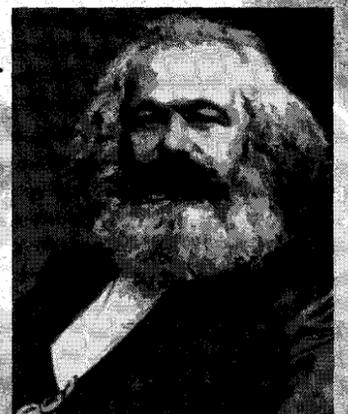
which was, of course, called a "riot." The great Aba riots. It was not only spontaneous, it was against all the advice of everyone, including the educated males. It was not only against British imperialism, but against their own African chiefs, who had not defended them. Above all, they crossed all tribal lines. And they won, though not until after 40 women were killed and count-

*In 1983 the University of California Press published the first two volumes (1826 August 1919; Aug. 27, 1919-August 1920) of a projected monumental ten-volume survey, edited by Robert A. Hill, under the title, *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*. It is the most scholarly research ever undertaken on Marcus Garvey.

Announcing a nationwide series of discussions on

Marx for Today

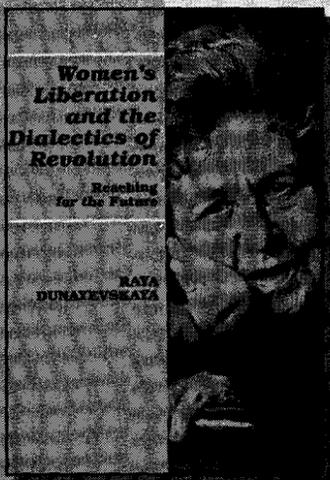
The developments of our time, such as the globalization of capital and the glaring inequality, war, and environmental destruction it is producing, have led to renewed interest in Marx's critique of capitalism. Marx's work addresses questions that are only first now being widely asked—such as is there an alternative to existing capitalism and the failure of what called itself "socialism" over the past 100 years? Can humanity free itself from value production and alienated relations? These unresolved questions call for a wide-ranging exploration of what Marx's thought means for today. Few thinkers more directly addressed this than Raya Dunayevskaya, founder of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S. We will explore central issues in Marx's thought by studying a number of her writings on Marx, many of which will be included in a forthcoming book centering on her writings on Marx. We will also read selections from Marx and other writers.



For dates, times, and locations of the meetings, as well as for the syllabus of readings for each meeting, contact the nearest local of News and Letters Committees in Chicago, New York, Detroit, Memphis, Los Angeles, and San Francisco Bay Area

- MEETING 1: Marx vs. Post-Marx Marxism: Marx, Lenin and Luxemburg and the Search for an Alternative to Capitalism
- MEETING 2: Capitalism's Law of Value: What it is, What is Needed to Abolish It (I)
- MEETING 3: Capitalism's Law of Value: What it is, What is Needed to Abolish It (II)
- MEETING 4: The Despotic Plan of Capital vs. 'New Passions and New Forces' for Liberation
- MEETING 5: Capital, Technology, and the New Society
- MEETING 6: Marx's Concept of the Transcendence of Alienation
- MEETING 7: Marx's *Capital* and Today's Global Crises
- MEETING 8: Marx's Humanism, Women's Liberation, and Non-Western Societies
- MEETING 9: Marx's Philosophy of "Revolution in Permanence" for Today

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



Introduction and Overview Latin America, the U.S.
Part I: Women, Labor, and the Black Dimension Part IV: The Missing Link—Philosophy—in the Relationship of Revolution to Organization
Part II: Revolutionaries All
Part III: Sexism, Politics, and Revolution—Japan, Portugal, Poland, China. \$12.95 (plus postage) to order a copy, see page 7

ESSAY

The Theory of Revolution in the Young Marx

by Eli Messinger

This study of the development of Marx's theory of revolution—using Marxism as its method—focuses on the formative years of 1842-1848. It is unusual and especially valuable in drawing connections between Marx's theoretical concepts and his deepening involvement in this early, ideologically vibrant period of European working class activity. Michael Löwy successfully shows how Marx's distinctive theory of revolution—the self-emancipation of the working class—crystallized, at least in part, out of his actual interactions with workers and their organizations, in conjunction with Marx's profound critique of Hegel's philosophy and of other Young Hegelians.

Löwy's *The Theory of Revolution in the Young Marx* was originally published in French in 1970. It has only recently been translated into English (the translator is not named) as part of the *Historical Materialism Book Series* sponsored by the London-based quarterly of that name. This publication is timely in light of the growing, international movement that urgently seeks an alternative to capitalism.

At least some in that movement have put revolution back on the agenda after decades in which it was scornfully dismissed as poppycock. Löwy makes it abundantly clear that the kind of revolution Marx came to conceptualize is a social revolution, which goes far deeper than a political grab for power.

Michael Löwy is a well-known sociologist in France. He was born in Brazil and his work is widely discussed in Latin America as well. This book is a well-constructed, lucid, readable, largely chronological

account of the events, persons and ideas in Marx's milieu, and how they affected the course of Marx's thought. In the process, Löwy introduces us to writings by the young Marx that are rarely cited but deserve to be.

Löwy views Marx's actual meetings with workers, starting in late 1843 when he arrived in Paris, and his increasing involvement with revolutionary socialist associations, as major formative experiences in his theoretical-political evolution. Löwy's monograph fills in the gap between strictly biographical studies of Marx, which give little attention to his thought, and, conversely, studies that treat his intellectual/political growth apart from the workers' movements of that day.

Marx was caught up in the swirl of intellectual and political currents that were bred by the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, and Hegel's philosophical revolution. From these seemingly disparate elements, Marx, in the remarkably short space of a few years, was able to develop what Raya Dunayevskaya called "a new continent of thought" (*Philosophy and Revolution*, p. 53).

UPRISING OF SILESIAN WEAVERS

Löwy examines the consequences for Marx's political thinking of his theoretical separation between the state and civil society: Marx voiced vigorous support for the 1844 revolt of the Silesian weavers. Marx's comments, called "Critical Marginal Notes on the Article 'The King of Prussia and Social Reform' by a Prussian" were published in August 1844, in the Paris newspaper *Vorwärts*.

For Löwy, the "Critical Notes" are not yet appreciated as "the point of departure for the intellectual journey that led to the *Theses on Feuerbach* and *The German Ideology*... in which his theory of the revolutionary self-emancipation of the proletariat took shape" (p. 91). On what basis did Löwy make that judgment?

What is needed, Marx contended, is not so much political revolt as social revolution involving "the standpoint of the whole because it is a protest of man against dehumanized life."

He wrote, "The state is based on the contradiction between public and private life, on the contradiction between general interests and private interests...Indeed, confronted by the consequences which arise from the unsocial nature of this civil life, this private ownership, this trade, this industry, this mutual plundering of the various circles of citizens, confronted by all these consequences impotence is the law of nature of the [state] administration" (Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, [hereafter CW], Vol. 3, p. 198).

Marx's very positive attitude toward the uprising of the Silesian weavers can serve as an example of Löwy's methodological point that the significance and meaning of an objective event will be determined, in large part, by the theorist's ideological "receptivity."

What of the thought of the weavers themselves? Marx wrote "that not one of the French and English workers' uprisings had such a theoretical and conscious character as the uprising of the Silesian weavers...The Silesian uprising begins precisely with what the French and English workers' uprisings end, with consciousness of the nature of the proletariat" (CW 3, p. 201). He concluded that the weavers' revolt had implicitly announced its opposition to the society of private property. On what basis did Marx reach such a broad and far-reaching conclusion? The Silesian workers had destroyed not only the machines but also account books and titles to property. Their struggle had

thus been directed not only against the visible enemy, the factory owner, but also against the hidden enemy, the banker, and thus capital itself.

Hence Marx proudly called the German proletariat "the theoretician of the European proletariat....A philosophical people can find its corresponding practice [praxis] only in socialism, hence it is only in the proletariat that it can find the dynamic element of its emancipation" (CW 3, p. 202). Löwy uses the term "praxis" rather than "practice" in his translation. For Löwy, the decisive development in Marx's theory of revolution was that socialism was no longer presented as pure theory, an idea "born in the philosopher's mind," a "philosophical communism," but rather as praxis. Löwy remarks: "In discovering in the proletariat the active element of emancipation, Marx, without saying a word about Feuerbach or philosophy, breaks with the schema to which he had still adhered" in his critiques of Hegel's philosophy of the state. "By this practical stand taken on a revolutionary movement the path is opened to the *Theses on Feuerbach*" (p. 95).

LÖWY'S SHORTCOMING: PHILOSOPHIC DIMENSION

Unfortunately Löwy overlooks Marx's selective appropriation—a term coined by Norman Levine—of Hegel's dialectical philosophy. This is not to deny that Löwy is a nuanced and comprehensive historian of ideas who is aware there is a philosophical dimension of Marxian thought.

For instance, in his essay, "From the *Logic* of Hegel to the Finland Station in Petrograd," Löwy demonstrated the practical impact of Lenin's reading, while in exile, of Hegel's *Logic* on his political thinking at the fateful moment of his return to Russia (See his *On Changing the World*, 1993).

Yet Löwy stands apart from the "Hegelian Marxists" of the 20th century such as Lukács, Korsch, Marcuse and Dunayevskaya who see in that philosophical dimension the very essence of Marx's concept of revolution. Löwy tends to downplay the relation between Marx's philosophical perspective and his theory of revolution. For Löwy it was an important advance in Marx's concept of revolutionary agency—and there is much truth in his—when he gave up the idea of "philosophical communism" in which "revolution begins in the brain of the philosopher." Revolutionary impulses and ideas, Marx said explicitly only a few years later in *The Communist Manifesto*, have their source in a revolutionary class, the proletariat. But it is important to keep in mind that Marx characterized the revolutionary proletariat as both independent and "self-conscious," that is, aware of its historical role, not a thoughtless mass. Recall, too, that Marx had seen in the uprising of the Silesian weavers a "consciousness of the nature of the proletariat," the expression of a "philosophical people" (CW 3, p. 201).

Marx wrote additionally: "As philosophy finds its material weapons in the proletariat, so the proletariat finds its spiritual weapons in philosophy" (CW 3, p. 187). According to Löwy, however, this well-known formulation is "not yet Marxist" (p. 59). I would argue that for Marx there was no contradiction between recognizing the proletariat as the agency of revolution and recognizing the philosophical dimension in revolution.

THE 1844 MANUSCRIPTS

It is in his treatment of the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* that Löwy most clearly falls short in his recognition of the philosophic dimension in Marx's theory of revolution. Löwy's appreciation of the *Manuscripts* lies primarily in its economic analysis of the proletarian condition.

Because Löwy tends to avoid discussing the philosophic aspect of Marx's theory of revolution, he shrinks from many of the assertions in the manuscript, "Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic and Philosophy as a Whole." Dunayevskaya, in contrast, hailed that manuscript. She saw both its criticism of Hegel in limiting transcendence only to the realm of thought, and, at the same time, its embrace of Hegel's dialectic method, which Marx "praises, takes over, develops." What Hegel calls "the dialectic of negativity," Dunayevskaya wrote, Marx affirms as "the moving and creative principle."

She insisted "that for Marx as for us today, nothing short of a philosophy, a total outlook—which Marx first called, not 'Communism' but 'Humanism,' can answer the manifold needs of the proletariat" (*Marxism and Freedom*, pp. 57-59).

Löwy maintains that some themes of the 1844 *Manuscripts* "were to be flatly abandoned by Marx in his later writings" (p. 90). These themes include "positive humanism" and the idea that communism is not the final goal but "merely the 'revolutionary moment' beyond which lies 'truly human society'" (p. 90). These issues turn on the all-important concept of the negation of the negation. Löwy, again sees Marx as recapitulating Feuerbach's line of thought by conceiving a direct parallel between religious alienation and the alienation of labor. This would transpose the goal of disalienation to atheism, on the one hand, and, in the case of labor, to communism.

THE NEGATION OF THE NEGATION

But Marx takes pains in his "Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic and Philosophy as a Whole" to distinguish his appreciation of the negation of the negation from both Feuerbach's stunted, abbreviated concept and from Hegel's abstract concept. Löwy notes Marx's favorable assessment of Feuerbach for "his opposing to the negation of the negation, which claims to be the absolute positive, the self-supporting positive, positivity based on itself." Marx does hold onto this aspect of Feuerbach's thinking—positivity based on itself—and goes further with it. It appears in Marx's 1844 writings as the idea of "the creation of man through human labour...his birth through himself, of his genesis" (CW 3, p. 305). This amounts to a positive humanism based on itself, not on some other foundation.

However, Marx is critical of Feuerbach's concept of negation of the negation when it is viewed "only as a contradiction of philosophy with itself—as the philosophy which affirms theology (the transcendent, etc.) after having denied it" (CW 3, p. 329). Marx sees no need to remain with atheism which "postulates the existence of man through this negation [of God]; but socialism as socialism no longer stands in any need of such a mediation. It proceeds from the theoretically and practically sensuous consciousness of man and of nature as the essence" (CW 3, p. 306).

This does not mean a rejection of the Hegelian concept of negation of the negation, however. For in this 1844 "Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic," Marx also identifies Hegel's concept of negativity as the most crucial point for his own dialectical vision. He does so early in the essay, when he refers to "the outstanding achievement of Hegel's *Phenomenology* and of its final outcome, the dialectic of negativity as the moving and generating principle" (CW 3, p. 332).

Marx affirms the real human being and practical sensuous consciousness in the following stirring passage: "Whenever real, corporeal man, man with his feet firmly on the solid ground, man exhaling and inhaling all the forces of nature, posits his real, objective, essential powers as alien objects by his externalization, it is not the act of positing which is the subject in this process: it is the subjectivity of objective essential powers, whose action, therefore, must also be something objective" (CW 3, p. 336).

As we might expect, Marx takes Hegel to task for considering the negation of negation solely in the sphere of ideas.

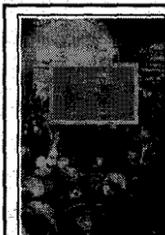
POSITIVE HUMANISM

Yet Marx also credits Hegel with discovering the only true and positive concept of the negation of the negation. We can discern both sides of Marx's critique of Hegel in the following: "But because Hegel has conceived the negation of the negation, from the point of view of the positive relation inherent in it, as the true and only positive, and from the point of view of the negative relation inherent in it as the only true act and spontaneous activity of all being, he has found the abstract, logical, speculative expression for the movement of history, which is not yet the real history of man as a given subject" (CW 3, p. 329).

For Marx, the supersession of alienation comes about "through the supersession of the objective world in its estranged mode of being," and most fundamentally in the alienated labor that characterizes the capitalist mode of production. Marx returns to the metaphor of religion to explain his concept of positive humanism: "atheism is humanism mediated with itself through the supersession of religion, whilst communism is humanism mediated with itself through the supersession of private property. Only through the supersession of this mediation—which is itself, however, a necessary premise—does positively self-deriving humanism, positive humanism, come into being" (CW 3, pp. 341,342).

Löwy sees "positive humanism" and the related notion of the limits of communism and its transcendence as ideas of the young Marx "that were to be flatly abandoned in his later writings." He is troubled and perplexed by Marx's assertion that "Communism is the position as the negation of the negation, and is hence the actual phase necessary for the next stage of historical development in the process of human emancipation and rehabilitation. Communism is the necessary form and the dynamic principle of the immediate future, but communism as such is not the goal of

continued on page 9



The Theory of Revolution in the Young Marx by Michael Löwy
Koninklijke Brill
NV, Leiden, The Netherlands,
2003



BUSH'S NEVER-ENDING WAR

At a fundraising event in Alameda, Cal. for Lt. Ehren Watada's legal defense, the film "Ground Truth" was screened. In it several Iraq War veterans talk about how they are or are not coping with the bodily and/or mental damage they sustained overseas. All of them expressed how willing they had been to engage in combat before deployment. The column asked why are these conditions tolerated: "Could we be lured into thinking that way because we subscribe to some form of 'there is no alternative'? Is it because when we look out the window capitalism is everywhere, as far as the eye can see? Whatever happened to the mind's eye?" Since June 2006 Lt. Watada has been publicly stating that he will not participate in creating more of the awful casualties on all sides of a war he believes the U.S. is prosecuting illegally.

I was drawn to reflect on Lt. Watada's case because of the December-January "Workshop Talks" column, which discusses the consequences of not asking yourself why you do what you do—whether you're part of the health care industry, military-industrial complex, or any production force under capitalism. It was the mind's eye that finally opened in Ehren Watada. He would probably agree that what needs to be carried out now is "the concrete and specific task of organizing our own minds."

Reader
Oakland, Cal.

How many Americans know that President Bush has now quietly claimed sweeping new powers to open our mail without a judge's warrant? It was done when he signed a "postal reform bill" into law on Dec. 20 and then issued a "signing statement" to declare his right to open our mail "under exigent circumstances." It contradicted the very bill he had just signed. I think it's all part of his "terrorism" war. It smells to me like the very same justification he claimed for the secret warrantless domestic electronic eavesdropping that was revealed a year ago. Whatever happened to all the noise from the liberals in Congress about investigating that?

Worried even more now
Chicago

I have a problem understanding President Bush's "vocabulary." He says he is going to send over 20,000 more troops to Iraq. But his administration keeps insisting that this is a "surge" or an "augmentation" in troops, and not an increase. If there are 140,000 U.S. troops there, and 20,000 are added, it seems to me to be an increase. Is there something about the words "surge" and "augmentation" that nullifies the word "increase"? Does "increase" under Bush now mean "decrease" or what?

Puzzled
Detroit

One thing very few have mentioned about Bush's "troop surge" in Iraq is that the plan calls for three Kurdish brigades to patrol Baghdad along with U.S. troops. The Bush administration must have decided that they couldn't trust the Iraqi government's forces to keep the Shi'ite militias in line, so

they're using Kurds. I wouldn't be surprised if what dominates headlines in coming months is an outbreak of fighting between Kurds and Shi'ite factions.

Anti-war activist
Indiana

It isn't only the Bush administration and the Democrats who don't seem very concerned about what will happen to the Iraqi people if the U.S. were to withdraw from Iraq tomorrow. I don't hear much discussion of that in the anti-war movement either. Shouldn't we be concerned that even a worse bloodbath may be in the offing?

Subscriber
France



RETURNING TO MARX'S CAPITAL

Raya Dunayevskaya's 1978 critique of Ernest Mandel (December 06-January 07 *N&L*) is very timely. In this time of growing prestige of the market socialists, it is important to be reminded that many of these economic questions have been addressed in the past. Of particular importance are Marx's analyses of the unemployed army in his absolute general law of capitalist accumulation, and the place of the concept of freedom in creating the revolutionary subject. Both remind us to keep people at the center of our philosophy.

Revolutionary Sociologist
Tennessee

Mandel's interpretation of the industrial reserve army is supposedly based on Marx's *Capital* but Dunayevskaya sees him making it one-sided. Mandel's conclusion, that capitalism needs to be overthrown by the revolt of the working class, is separated from his theory of the unemployed army. If you only look at it as what helps capitalism assure its labor supply and discipline the workers, you're falling into what she says leads you to violate Marxism. She emphasizes two inseparables: dialectic methodology and revolt of the workers. It is why she makes a big point of something that would strike many Marxists as making a mountain out of a molehill: leaving out the word "freely" from "freely associated labor." In the age of state-capitalism, we have to grasp how close are revolution and counterrevolution.

F. Dmitryev
Memphis

IRAN'S HOLOCAUST DENIAL CONFERENCE

When the Iranian foreign ministry's Institute for International Studies called for papers on its web site for a two-day conference in Tehran in December, it fooled no one as to its pretense to "scholastic objectivity." The 81-year-old

READERS' VIEWS

head of the International Association of Holocaust survivors, Noah Flug, was asked to attend with a group of Holocaust survivors and also invited Ahmadinejad to visit Auschwitz, stating "our evidence, the story of Holocaust survivors, will serve much more than any research document presented by historians to establish the truth."

Khaled Mahmid, a Palestinian scholar from Nazareth, who has founded the only Muslim Holocaust Museum, also responded to the call for papers. Unlike Noah Flug, his paper was accepted. His hopes were dashed, however, when, after repeated calls to the Iranian Embassy in Amman, Jordan, he was finally told that "Israelis don't get a visa." He said he had "wanted to tell Iranians that when you play down the Holocaust or deny it, you are directly hurting the Palestinians who are in camps."

As it turned out, while the conference succeeded in getting worldwide publicity, it failed to prevent the student demonstrators in Tehran on that very same day from confronting Ahmadinejad and chanting "Death to the Dictator" and "We want freedom of expression."

Raha
California

Am I the only one who is annoyed that not long after inviting a number of white supremacists, racists, and Holocaust deniers to Iran for a conference, Iranian President Ahmadinejad flew to Venezuela and was embraced and praised as a hero by Hugo Chavez? How can leftists claim to be against racism in the U.S. when they make excuses for racists like Ahmadinejad?

Psychologist
Costa Rica

DEADLY MANEUVERING

What did it mean that President Bush signed legislation on Dec. 18, 2006, which committed U.S. nuclear technology and fuel to India? He started the war in Iraq, wrongly accusing them of development of "weapons of mass destruction" and now threatens war on Iran and North Korea because of their potential nuclear weapons programs. This may be political maneuvering to contain China, a rising capitalist power that threatens U.S. world dominance. Capitalism, in all its forms must be abolished and replaced with a new, non-value-producing society before a nuclear holocaust destroys life as we know it.

Japanese-American
Los Angeles

We witness some fantastic spectacles—like Bush's visit to China to promote "free trade" as the solution to all the world's problems, at the very time when China had just sentenced to 10 years in prison a poet and journalist, Shi Tao, for sending out an email describing the Chinese order to the media to downplay the 15th anniversary of the 1989 Tiananmen events. Never have Marx's

much for your work!

Prisoner
Iowa Park, Texas

Too many prisoners are neglecting to look forward. I feel it doesn't matter if you are doing one single night in jail, or serving multiple life terms, you have a moral obligation to make the guards' lives miserable and disrupt what idiotic "programs" are forced on you. The one rule is to never use violence. Force them to write more paper work, hold them accountable for every facet of our meager existence, utilize every legitimate method of proceeding with every possible grievance. Bury them in paperwork. Ghandi and Dr. Martin Luther King knew that you had to keep your focus and act with dignity. We have to follow their lead because the alternative is capitulation.

Prisoner
Vacaville, Cal.

words from the *Communist Manifesto* sounded more like today: "The bourgeoisie...in place of the numberless freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom—Free Trade."

Urszula Wislanka
California

WOMEN AND WELFARE



Part of what's going on with different administrations trying to destroy welfare is their attempt to make impossible the kind of welfare organizing that went on in the 1960s and 1970s. Few are doing the kind of work Johnnie Tillman did, demanding that women's labor as caregivers and those responsible for the next generation be respected as important work that should be compensated; demanding that women on welfare be treated as human beings.

Terry Moon
Memphis

It seems likely that welfare reform was motivated by the drive of capital and the racism and sexism inherent in the American system. Sexism and racism are real forces working against women and people of color in this country. Under capitalism they are institutionalized in novel ways.

Amy Garrison
Memphis

While welfare "reform" does help create capitalism's army of unemployed, when it is cut off, many women have to go back to abusive husbands to survive. The Bush administration has been trying to get marriage programs into welfare programs, clearly an ideological component. The new welfare rules are an attack aimed at women and children that also has an effect on the working class. Any attack on women is an attack on society in general.

Adele
Tennessee

SCHOOL CLOSINGS A DEATH BLOW

In an effort to balance the budget the closing of 52 public schools in Detroit by June has been proposed. School staff and parents are devastated. So many went to the School Board meeting Jan. 11 that they could not get into the room. Detroit residents act as if they are in mourning because closing schools can be a death blow to an entire community.

One teacher said, "Our middle school is the only one in our area and we already have a 25% absentee rate. If it is closed, many more kids (who will have to catch a bus to their new school) will not come, and the Bangladeshi children will go to the nearby charter school, so we will lose not only the state funding but that whole culture in our educational system." Our union rep said "it feels like we are being set up to fail." He is right; teachers' unions have never been so threatened as now.

Teacher
Detroit

SALUTE TO THE YOUTH

This is a message to the Purdue fasters whose story appeared in the December 06-January 07 *N&L*:

My hat goes off to your hunger strike. Consider it an early gambit in what will likely be a long struggle. In the long haul, I predict you will prevail. Your cause is just. You have my admiration.

Eli Messinger, M.D.
New York

VOICES OF REASON FROM WITHIN THE PRISON WALLS

I have been locked up for 17 years on a 20 year sentence so I know what life without freedom is like. They do not pay us here and neither work time nor good time are worth the paper they are written on. I came up for my first parole in 1994 and have always been turned down, so I know what slavery feels like. I see our government becoming a police state where the people have less freedom and fewer rights each day. I see your paper as information on the movement to better mankind.

Prisoner
Huntsville, Texas

As a political prisoner for the last 42 years, and totally anti-government in its present form, I can relate to most of the issues you write about. I would, however, like to see you put a special effort into what is a real cancer within our society—private prisons. The entire concept of locking people up specifically for

profit is slavery. The private prison companies make no secret that they give millions to various political committees and local mayors to obtain approval to build their prisons in otherwise welfare/foodstamp/unemployed and unemployable areas of the country. I am an old man, 72 years of age and have not had any type of rule infraction for more than 10 years and nothing of a serious nature in my entire 40 plus years serving my sentence. When one in every 35 citizens of a country is in some way controlled by the "justice" system, something is definitely wrong.

Prisoner
Colorado

What makes *N&L* a very necessary challenge to the status quo is that it proposes alternatives to already tried and unsuccessful policies and institutions, daring its audience to promote revolutionary novelty. Thank you very

REFLECTING ON THE NOVEMBER ELECTIONS

The Old Left's emphasis on the November election was that it doesn't make any difference who won, because the Democrats won't save you. The Lead in the last issue didn't overlook that but showed that the elections reflected the signs of revolt and unrest. It's easy to dismiss the importance of the election because election results often don't measure up to the discontent they reveal.

**Observer
Escondido, California**

The Lead on the election discusses the Democrats gaining control and moving to the right, so it won't mean a whole lot. There is no timetable for withdrawal from Iraq in the Baker Commission Report, so Bush takes it as a green light.

**Senior Citizen
Detroit**

During the first week of the new year the ABC nightly news interviewed three new Congresswomen, all Democrats. I was enraged at the response by the woman from Kansas, Nancy Boyda. Someone needs to tell her that she doesn't have to do only what Bush says, as she seems to think is now required, nor even agree with him or rubber stamp him. She is there to represent and vote the desires of her constituents, most of whom want the war to end. Can we get Obama to tell Pelosi to tell this woman what is her purpose in Congress?

**Fuming
Chicago**

If the defeat of the Republican political machine in the November election is measured as anti-war, it is not because the Democrats swung their weight in that direction. If anything, we were witnessing a punishment of failure. A change in the administration does not dismantle the war machine.

The ruling class is able to learn from both victory and defeat. We should do the same because they have now assembled a large army trained in urban warfare and against non-combatants. In terms of Iraq, solutions might be sought in the grooming of a strong man, leaving Iraq to its fate while servicing both cor-

ruption and oil. But our greatest danger lies in apathy, demoralization and conservatism. We need a little boldness as well as clarity. In these confused and confusing times we need philosophy more than ever. It will not be easy.

**Pat Duffy
Britain**

So the Republicans lost their stranglehold on Congress and the Democrats are enjoying a surge of power in state governments across the nation. I was not too surprised by the November election. With a massive moral and economic failure in Iraq, and no end in sight; with skyrocketing national debt, gross incompetence, scandals and a blatant disregard for the Constitution, how could Americans not demand a change? While not surprised, I was disappointed—and appalled—that we barely heard anything about climate change, or the devastating economic and ecological consequences of logging or outrageous mining, grazing and drilling practices. The track record on both sides of the fence is reprehensible. I urge your readers to help step up the battle against greed and for our most treasured wild places, by extending support to Native Forest Council. Information on the Council and its program is available by writing to them at PO Box 2190, Eugene, Oregon 97402 or by clicking onto www.forestcouncil.org. We have to intensify our essential work to save what's left and restore what's been lost.

**Tim Hermach
Eugene, Oregon**

THE MIDDLE EAST

I appreciated Ali Reza's work to explore the role of philosophy in the Middle East in the December 06-January 07 N&L. The dominant ideologies of this time are Islamist and liberal capitalist. The place of a secular Left has shrunk. The need for a third way is critical and cannot be underestimated. The lives of all people are at stake, particularly women, children, workers, and various minorities (sexual, religious, ethnic). At a time when many on the Left are praising any anti-imperialist in the

Middle East, Reza reminds us it is important to oppose all who do not support a truly free human being

**Allan
Memphis**



**POLICE
TERRORISM**

How can we pretend to be fighting terrorism when our nation's police are using more and more terrorism against our own people? Police all across the nation are out of control. Recently, a man here in Lafayette, LA died shortly after being tasered. Like the shooting by New York police that took the life of a young man about to be married, there was no possible justification. No one can feel safe, particularly Black people and Muslims, but actually anyone who seems to them slightly different in any way. Is it to keep us all in a state of extreme fear? We have to seek unity against this kind of terrorism without trampling on our differences.

**D.T.
Louisiana**

**COOPERATIVE LABOR:
A DEBATE**

I appreciated the discussion between Andrew Kliman and Htun Lin (December 06-January 07 N&L) on whether "workers actually manage the workplace, even as the capitalists control the money," since it speaks to the issue of whether a new society is based on taking over conditions that now exist in capitalism. It isn't an easy question to answer. Many years ago the editor of N&L, Charles Denby, had a debate with another worker, Angela Terrano, over whether or not workers will be able to make use of existing forms of technology in a new society. The issue wasn't settled in that one debate—largely because workers have differing views on such questions. All the more reason to continue the discussion on such issues today.

**Historian of Marxism
Illinois**

In Andrew Kliman's critique of Htun Lin's October-November "Workshop Talks" column, he questions the way Htun draws a relationship between workers striving to take control of their own cooperation on the ground of and the reach for a non-value producing future. Htun's suggestion that the ongoing struggle in health care is a reach for a different future is not an assertion that it alone constitutes a full break "with the enslaving laws of capitalist production." I saw the point of Htun's column as showing how the antagonism within cooperative labor under capitalism provides a way to discern aspects of a non-value producing form of directly social labor of the future. Marx himself provides a direction in the way he kept discerning, in the struggles of cooperative labor, including the Paris Commune in his lifetime, the pull of a different future beyond capitalist production.

**Ron Kelch
California**

You can't just keep repeating in every Workshop Talks column that "we all know we need revolutionary change immediately." Sometimes you just want to engage what the workers are thinking, with the need for revolution being implied. But if you critique a column like Htun Lin's for not pointing beyond capitalism, then it is your duty to be specific about what is beyond it. Kliman's critique didn't show how to get to any reality beyond value production, either.

**David
California**

After rereading Raya Dunayevskaya's *The Power of Negativity*, I came across a statement which speaks to the debate over workers' control: "In reading this final chapter, the Absolute Idea, Hegel is through with all which we would politically describe as 'taking over'; that is to say, capitalism will develop technology so perfectly for us that all the proletariat will have to do will be to 'take over.' As we reject this concept politically, Hegel rejects it philosophically. He has now so absorbed all the other systems that, far from taking over, he is first going back to a totally new beginning."

**Old Radical
New York**

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Oaxaca: a land of repression and resistance

Oaxaca is a land of revolutionary upsurge, repression and resistance. At the present moment repression with a *mano duro* (hard hand) is the order of the day as Oaxaquenos, who have been active in the upsurge, are picked up on the streets, beaten by local or state police as a warning to spread fear in the community, and then released. Others remain imprisoned weeks after being swept up by the federal prevention police, who viciously broke up a protest march in late November. Ulises Ruiz, the fraudulently elected, corrupt governor and undoubtedly the author and manipulator of the present repression, still remains in power.

This continuous repression must not obscure what has occurred from May/June through November, and continues in open and underground ways—the emergence of an Oaxaca in revolt, first responding to Ruiz's crude attempt to crush a teachers' strike, and then blossoming and developing in a multitude of ways, encompassing the indigenous, women, youth, and people from the city and the countryside, all joining the striking teachers. Indeed, one often finds indigenous, teacher, woman, within a single person. It is truly the population to a woman, man and child taking matters into their own hands.

Among the Oaxaca uprising's important aspects: 1) the creation of APPO, the Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca, (Asamblea Popular de los Pueblos de Oaxaca), rooted in an indigenous tradition became the most crucial forum to organize action and express ideas from below; 2) the participation of women, who took matters into their own hands and seized a radio and television station, thus finding and speaking with their own voices; 3) the youth, particularly from the university, who fought to defend and extend the gains of the struggle, including the important act of seizing the university radio station when the teachers' Radio Planton was destroyed; 4) the neighborhood activists, who, particularly in poor areas, defended their streets, building barricades in the evening to stop the caravans, and pouring out to participate in the mega-marches that stretched from the summer into the fall; 5) the teachers, tens of thousands strong, who had catalyzed the rebellion with their initial strike and occupation of the central plaza, and continued to remain at the heart of the occupation of Oaxaca City; 6) the teachers, campesinos and others from outside Oaxaca City who created their own *asambleas* where they lived, and traveled to the capital to join the protests; 7) And always, always, the indigenous dimension, the heart and soul of Oaxaca.

UNFOLDING OF THE OAXACA REBELLION

On May 22, the Oaxacan teachers organized under section 22 of the National Union of Educational Workers (El Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores Educativos, SNTE). After a week of fruitless negotiation, the teachers and their supporters occupied the central square and dozens of surrounding blocks. Rather than forcing a settlement in a few days, the teachers found themselves in an open battle with the Ruiz regime. In the pre-dawn hours of June 14 Ruiz sent state police to attack the sleeping teachers, many of whom were encamped with their families. Facing physical force, including large amounts of tear gas, the teachers were driven from the central plaza, their encampment broken up. The teachers refused to yield, battled back, and after several hours, took over the center of the city.

The government's unprovoked attack, designed to terrorize and break the teachers, proved to be a major turning point. Not only did the teachers in a courageous and determined manner hold their own, but an outraged citizenry throughout the state of Oaxaca came to the aid of the teachers and saw the battle as their own. Two days after the attack a third mega-march was held. The more than 300,000 who poured out included members from indigenous communities from the coast to the sierra. The following day the movement created a revolutionary form to catalyze its struggle—the Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca, APPO.

APPO—THE INDIGENOUS ASSEMBLY INFUSED WITH NEW CONTENT

APPO is the synthesis of many movement organizations. Hundreds of organizations would eventually come together "in all colors and flavors" to become part of APPO. The central demand was the removal of Ruiz. As the movement developed, this came to mean not only his person, but all the representatives of the political authoritarian system which had been in power for some seven decades. APPO was anti-systemic. At the same time there was the beginning of the construction of popular power.

How to communicate with Oaxaca's multitude was central to this construction. With the teachers' Radio Platon smashed, students at Benito Juarez Autonomous University of Oaxaca took over the university radio station. It became one of APPO's principal

ways of reaching the city's masses, informing them of news of the movement, of marches and other protest activities, as well as warning of state police threats—communication *desde abajo*, from below.

Because the state government greatly feared this revolutionary communication from below, they organized their police force and their "private" underground forces to carry out assaults on the movement-controlled communications. To protect itself, APPO organized its own security forces and used its communications media to defend the rebellion. Appeals went out over the air to guard the radio station(s) and resist government attacks. One form of resistance was the building of barricades to protect the occupation of the center of the city, the radio stations and transmission



Citizens take to the streets in ongoing protests in Oaxaca.

towers in the movement's hands, and in general to prevent secret night attacks by the government-sponsored forces. Sometimes these were fortified permanent-type barricades including using commandeered buses. Others were temporary barricades to stop the movement of caravans in the evenings.

When a call went out to construct such barricades it was answered immediately with the construction of several hundred the first night.

APPO's form of representation was simple and direct, born from indigenous practices. Decisions were taken in *asambleas* in which all participated. While there are spokespersons, the organization is horizontal, not with a hierarchy of leaders. Activists speak of APPO not only as an immediate form of organization, but as a spirit of rebellion and communalism that has grown over many, many years.

APPO WOMEN FIND THEIR OWN VOICES

Aug. 2 marked an important leap in the movement, when a group of APPO women seized the state television and radio stations whose signal covered the state. A new stage in the struggle had arrived. Now working women, indigenous women, who never had a chance to tell their stories in public, to present their ideas, were able to speak, to find their own voices and be heard in a way they had never been heard before.

The women were everywhere. Not alone at the radio and television, but in the numerous mega-marches as well as *La marcha de las caserolas* (the march of women beating their pots and pans with wooden spoons). They were building the barricades and defending them. They brought food to those operating the radio stations.

If Oaxaca City was the storm center of the upsurge, the countryside was by no means passive. During the months of the uprising, many communities in Oaxaca took the initiative to form their own local APPOs. They traveled to Oaxaca City to participate in the mega-marches. These communities had as well felt the

Protests continue against police murder

NEW YORK—The police murder of Sean Bell on Nov. 25 has been followed by two months of demonstrations by the African American community against police racism and abuse. Bell, an unarmed Black man, was leaving his bachelor party at a strip club in a "rough neighborhood" in Queens on the night before he was to be married. He was killed and his two friends wounded in a hail of 50 bullets fired by four undercover cops, who gave no warning and had no reason.

On Jan. 1, Bell's family began a 50-day, 24-hour daily vigil across from the police station in the Jamaica section of Queens, where the four cops are stationed. "There is a need for people of all backgrounds and all persuasions to participate in the vigil in shifts, day and night," says the call for participants and supplies.

A demonstration of perhaps 5,000 was held Dec. 16: a march down Fifth Avenue in Manhattan at the height of Christmas shopping. Smaller protests took place near police headquarters and on Wall Street, and many more have been held in Queens. At a Dec. 6 protest rally to "Resist Fascism and the Rise of the American Police State," the close to 2,000 in attendance were nearly all Black except for a few left groups, including News and Letters. While the nationalist sponsoring group led chants of "Black Power" and "No Justice, No Peace," there were also signs demanding the abolition of the racist death penalty, to free Mumia, and, from the Audre Lorde Project (named for the Black lesbian poet and activist): "Stop racial profiling and gender policing."

City-wide, the reaction to Bell's murder has been less than the massive outpouring after the police murder of Amadou Diallo in 1999. In both cases, the murdered man did not have a weapon and was doing nothing wrong when he was cut down by insanely large

repressive hand of the state government for decades.

Our concentration on the creativity of the movement is not meant to minimize the repression which Oaxaquenos face day in and day out, and which is being expressed with particular viciousness, brutality and outright murder in the battle for Oaxaca over the last seven months. At least 17 people have been murdered directly during, and because of, their participation in the movement. Hundreds have been arrested and many of those remain as political prisoners. However, the battle for Oaxaca is far from over. We will see what form it will take in the period ahead.

—Eugene Gogol

BLACK/RED VIEW

Continued from page 1

racism still pervades American society.

Jefferson, the slave owner, was a racist who felt African Americans, one fifth of the U.S. population at the time, were innately inferior. Jefferson at one point tried to deal with his own hypocrisy by suggesting that maybe African Americans could be granted those "inalienable" rights eventually, but only after being sent to Africa or the Caribbean.

COLONIZATION OF AFRICAN AMERICANS

Much later Lincoln invoked Jefferson's idea that "all men are created equal" in his immortalized Gettysburg address. Yet, like Jefferson, he urged Congress to colonize African Americans by sending them out of the country as a way to solve the race problem in the U.S. Though he opposed slavery, Lincoln felt African Americans could never be treated equally in this country. Karl Marx supported the North in the American Civil War and ruthlessly criticized Lincoln for having to be dragged into issuing the Emancipation Proclamation. When, after the Proclamation, Lincoln started enlisting African American troops in the Northern army, as Marx and the Abolitionists were urging, he paid them less than white soldiers.

Some studies of Dr. King's thought have reduced his philosophy to being merely about nonviolence. But Dr. King's nonviolence was about creating a new society, setting "a new man afoot." African American masses gave a new content to the idea of equality in America initiated by Jefferson and repeated by Lincoln. Dr. King's greatness was not just repeating the idea as an abstraction but seeing how African American masses kept making it something completely new in their activity.

African Americans didn't always agree with Dr. King about his concept of nonviolence, especially in the north, but Dr. King kept participating in new aspects of the idea of freedom concretely unfolding among the masses. By the time he was assassinated in 1968 Dr. King had moved on to expand the movement beyond political freedom and toward economic freedom, supporting sanitation workers in Memphis inseparable from his opposition to the Vietnam War. This living legacy, beginning from the concept of a whole new human being, becomes totally alienated when politicians think they can enshrine the idea of freedom in their marble monuments and statues.

numbers of bullets by gun-happy cops.

Demonstrations endorsed by Bell's family have been fairly low-key calls for justice (indictment of the cops) and have specifically rejected "the rhetoric of violence or revenge or disrespect for the NYPD...[or] individuals or organizations trying to use the tragedy of Sean Bell's death for outside agendas," according to Brooklyn activist Kevin Powell. Black nationalist groups have staged demonstrations without the family, but although their rhetoric is stronger, they have called for little or nothing more than firing the police chief and jailing the cops involved, and some called for the boycott of white-owned businesses. The demonstrations, other than the Dec. 16 one, have been much smaller than the many thousands who turned out every day for weeks on end in 1999.

We can't say whether the milder reaction results from the influence of the Rev. Al Sharpton, who appears with the family and could have made a secret deal with the mayor, or whether African Americans are less incensed because Mayor Bloomberg condemned this killing instead of defending the cops as Giuliani did with Diallo, or whether people are just discouraged about the possibility of changing the nature of the police force within current society. No one was taken in by the first statement the police made after the killing: that it couldn't be racist because one of the cops was African American. This led to interesting discussions about the constant factors in police killings: the victims are usually Black or Latino young men, and the police often shoot without provocation in Black neighborhoods. It's clear to everyone that such killings are not solely the result of racist individuals, but of the entire policing culture in this racist society.

—Protesters, N&L Committee

EDITORIAL**Bush's surge forces Iraq to the precipice**

The plan George Bush announced in his highly anticipated speech of Jan. 10 was a massive rejection of the accumulating domestic criticism of the Iraq war. The President has in effect turned a blind eye to both the defeats meted out to Republican Party candidates in the midterm election and the moderate recommendations contained in the recently-released Iraq Study Group report on the war.

Instead, he re-committed himself to pressing on with a war that has wreaked havoc on every level of Iraqi society with a plan that threatens to intensify the conflict and perhaps even drive a wedge between the U.S. and the Iraqi government.

In all actuality, Bush's plan contains little that is new. The most attention-grabbing element of the speech was the announcement of his intention to once again attempt to regain control of Baghdad, this time with a commitment of an additional 20,000 U.S. troops. Previous efforts to pacify Baghdad in cooperation with Iraq's small and undependable army were unsuccessful. Outside of the Green Zone, the capital city's streets

remain controlled by sectarian militias and criminal gangs.

The primary objective of the U.S. campaign in Baghdad will be the Madhi Army, the large militia of the influential Sh'ite cleric and politician Moktada Sadr. Moktada—a harsh critic of the U.S.—is engaged in a dual strategy. He has one foot in the government, in which his party is represented and which has lent much-needed support to the politically weak prime minister Nuri al-Maliki. The other aspect of his strategy is one of strident opposition to the U.S., which manifests itself both in his rhetoric and the actions of his militia. While Moktada may be wise enough to order his fighters not to directly confront the impending increased American presence in Baghdad, the potential exists for conflict that may spiral out of control.

CONFRONTATION WITH IRAN

Another element of the speech which represents equal potential for great impact is the announcement of a policy of active opposition to Iran's substantial influence inside Iraq. Bush claims that Iran is covertly supplying arms and training to militias carrying out attacks on U.S. forces. While this accusation is in all likelihood accurate, Iran at the same time openly supports the Sh'ite-Kurdish alliance that makes up Iraq's government. By antagonizing Iran's aims in Iraq, Bush risks estranging the very Iraqi government that he has enabled to come to power and has heretofore supported. A rift with the Sh'ite and Kurdish parties—over the Iran issue and the issue of the rules under which the new troops will be deployed in Baghdad—would open up an entirely new level of difficulties for the U.S. in Iraq and could make Bush's whole endeavor untenable.

The magnitude of this risk was in evidence shortly after Bush finished his speech. In a move that was undoubtedly carefully planned to send a strong message, U.S. soldiers entered an Iranian government consulate in the Iraqi Kurdish city of Erbil and arrested the personnel inside. This led to an enormously danger-

ous situation in which Kurdish soldiers confronted the U.S. troops and prevented them from leaving the area. It took immediate and high-level negotiations between Kurdish political leaders and the U.S. to end the stand-off, although the Iranians have yet to be released. This event, which is at least the second of such confrontations to have taken place recently, may foreshadow other serious conflicts to come.

OPPOSITION AT HOME

While reaction to Bush's speech at home was overwhelmingly negative, it appears that nothing will stand in the way of him carrying out his plan. The high expectations raised by the Democratic Party victories in the midterm election are diminishing as it becomes clear that the new majority may simply accede to Bush's wishes and refrain from mounting a serious opposition by voting against funds for the war. Instead of opposing the war, Democratic Senator Dick Durbin's official response to Bush's speech blamed the Iraqi government for all the problems the U.S. has brought upon the country.

While the war has had little direct impact on the lives of most Americans up to this point, Bush's plan will increase the stress on the already hard-pressed reserve and National Guard forces that make up much of the U.S. force in Iraq, subjecting them to even looser deployment guidelines than already in place. The economic and psychological impact of the long tours of duty for both the reserve and regular army troops will not make the war any more popular. The number of U.S. fatalities has already surpassed the 3,000 mark and the pace of debilitating injuries inflicted on soldiers by roadside bombs and sniper attacks continues unabated. It may not be long before maintaining the U.S. troop commitment becomes a serious challenge.

Large numbers of Americans have opposed the Iraq war from the moment it became clear that Bush was intent on invading the country, regardless of either domestic or international opinion. For much of the almost four years of the war, Bush was able to prevail against his critics because of the relatively limited character of the U.S. commitment and, more importantly, through his and Dick Cheney's persistent and deceptive characterization of the conflict as part of his war on terror. Those days are over however, as opposition to the war is becoming more open and more mainstream. If parts of American society that have not previously participated in the anti-war movement in large numbers, such as Black Americans and other working people now become involved, the room for Bush to maneuver will be significantly narrowed.

As the anti-war movement prepares for the fourth anniversary of the war in March of this year, drawing these new elements into active participation will help to build a serious challenge to Bush and his war administration.

Theory of revolution in the young Marx

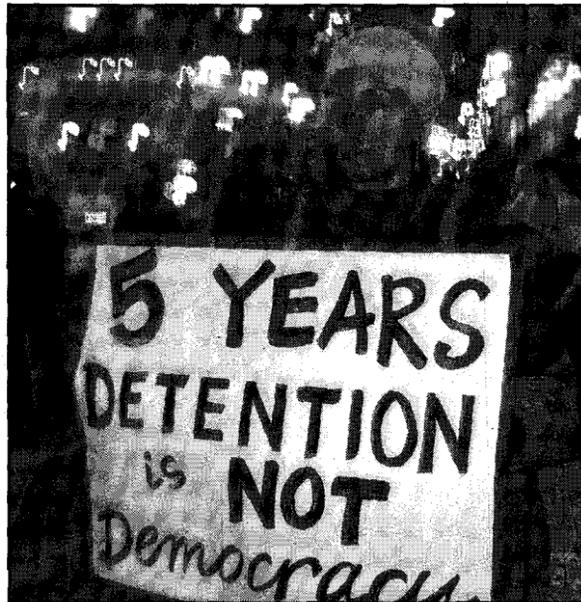
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human development, the form of human society" (*CW* 3, p. 306). Again, we find Löwy unappreciative of this dialectical and open-ended dimension of Marx's theory of revolution.

Löwy likewise sounds critical of the idealistic tenor of Marx speaking "even of the 'self-transcending' of communism and its 'transcendence' by consciousness" in the following passage: "It takes actual communist action to abolish actual private property. History will lead to it; and this movement, which in theory we already know to be a self-transcending movement, will constitute in actual fact a very rough and protracted process. But we must regard it as a real advance to have at the outset gained a consciousness of the limited character as well as the goal of this historical movement—and a consciousness which reaches out beyond it" (*CW* 3, p. 90).

Did the concept of positive humanism disappear in Marx's later writings as Löwy asserts? I think not. In *Capital*, volume 3, to take just one example, Marx stated: "The realm of freedom really begins only where labour determined by necessity and external expediency ends; it lies by its very nature beyond the sphere of material production proper....The true realm of freedom, the development of human powers as an end in itself, begins beyond it, though it can only flourish with this realm of necessity at its basis. The reduction of the working day is the basic prerequisite" (*Capital*, Vol. 3, [Penguin Classics, 1981], pp. 958, 959, my emphasis).

Despite these deficiencies in its discussion of the relation of Marx's theory of revolution to dialectical philosophy, this book makes an important contribution to revolutionary Marxist thought. It does so particularly by richly documenting its thesis of an integral connection between the development of Marx's theory of revolution and the early thinking and activity of the working class which he interacted with after his arrival in Paris in 1843. This close connection itself reflects Marx's distinctive theory of social revolution: the self-emancipation of the working class through its own praxis.

Fifth anniversary of Guantanamo internees

CHICAGO—Activists across the country marked the fifth anniversary of the opening of the U.S. prison camp at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba with demonstrations. In Chicago 100 held a large protest outside the Dirksen Federal Building. The Bush administration is holding 400 detainees in the prison without charges and without any foreseeable end to their internment. In June of 2006, three Guantanamo prisoners carried out simultaneous suicides to protest the dire conditions in the camp.

Los Angeles cops harass homeless people

LOS ANGELES—A demonstration was held in Los Angeles's Skid Row district on Dec. 22 in front of the Los Angeles Police Department's Central Division. A hundred people, mostly Black, but also many whites as well as brown and Asian activists, were there to voice opposition to ongoing attacks on the homeless and poor by police using illegal and brutal methods in the interest of gentrification of the downtown area. A few reporters from television, radio and print media were present.

Downtown community residents and Community Action Network sponsored the event. They were supported by some homeless people and members of organizations such as Hippie Kitchen, a Catholic workers group that feeds the homeless and poor in Skid Row, News and Letters Committees, the Bus Riders Union, individual activists, Independent Media and others.

A community "citation" and "notice to appear" indicted LAPD Chief William Bratton and Central Division head Andy Smith for the "lawlessness of police and the racist criminalization of an entire community." The violations by the police included theft,

assault, intimidation, false arrests and detention, conspiracy and civil rights violations. The community also indicted Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa for uncritically supporting the activities of the LAPD.

Testimonies included the story of a white woman who was taken from her home, beaten up and then forced into a hospital against her will. A Black man described being brutalized in a public park for no reason. He had to seek treatment at a VA hospital after the incident.

LAPD Central Division officers also continue to harass people on the street by carrying out sweeps for outstanding warrants.

There were lively chants and signs at the demonstration, including: "House the homeless, don't harass them" and "Crime alert—wanted—LAPD."

One person stated the police activities are reminiscent of the southern "White Citizens Councils" that fought against the civil rights movement.

A spokesman listed points of demand and stated that gentrification will not take place without the community's input.

—Basho

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Contact for information

MEMPHIS & MISSISSIPPI

1910 Madison Ave, PMB 59

Memphis, TN 38104

memphisnlc@gmail.com

INTERNET**Email**

arise@newsandletters.org

WORLD WIDE WEB

www.newsandletters.org

banandl@yahoo.com (Oakland)

INTERNATIONAL MARXIST-HUMANISTS**London Corresponding Committee**

BCM Box 3514, London, England WC1N 3XX

http://www.thehobgoblin.co.uk, hobgoblinlondon@aol.com

Restive currents below Iran's theocratic rule

Continued from page 1

On the second day of the Holocaust symposium, Dec. 12, Ahmadinejad was also scheduled to speak to a group of students at Amir Kabir Polytechnic University on the occasion of "Students Day" which commemorates the struggles of students against the former Shah's regime. No sooner had he started speaking than he faced an angry audience of 700 who chanted, "You are the source of prejudice and corruption," "Down with the Dictator," "You militarist, leave the universities alone," "Liar, get out," "We don't want the government of force," "Freedom is our absolute right," "Freedom, Freedom," and "Resign, Resign."

Students continued to interrupt Ahmadinejad's speech, challenging his effort to "cleanse" the universities of secular and liberal professors, and opposed the government's practice of banning "three star students" who have three marks against them for being involved in political activities against the regime. Ahmadinejad went on to speak about his views on the Holocaust and his nuclear ambitions. Students began to hold portraits of Ahmadinejad upside down and then set them on fire. Many were badly beaten by the government paramilitary units. Students were especially angry because in June, the headquarters of their duly elected Islamic Student Council had been bulldozed in the dark of night with permission from the university president.

STUDENT, FEMINIST, LABOR, ETHNIC PROTESTS

Since the rise to power of the Islamic Republic following the 1978-1979 Iranian revolution and the full imposition of counter-revolutionary rule in 1981, followed by the executions of tens of thousands of student activists, there have been two waves of large scale student protest in 1999 and 2003. In each case protests were viciously suppressed by government troops and paramilitary units. Several student leaders arrested in 1999 and 2003 still languish in jail.

A week before the Dec. 12 protest, another student rally of 3,000 had been held at Tehran University, also on the occasion of "Students Day." There, students chanted, "Down with the Dictator," "Students and Workers Unite," "Free the Political Prisoners," "Socialism or Barbarism," and "Society's Emancipation is Women's Emancipation." One student speaker declared, "We now have to fight on two fronts: against internal dictatorship and foreign imperialism. Just as we challenge the internal suppression, we must oppose the threat of foreign military invasion and foreign sanctions which put ordinary people under double pressure" ("Tajamo-e Bozorg-e Daneshjuy-i Dar Daneshgah-e Tehran," roshangari.net, 12/6/06).

A few days later, the results of nationwide municipal elections held Dec. 15 proved that this deep discontent is not simply a phenomenon limited to students. Eighteen months after Ahmadinejad's election, his allies failed to win control of most local councils.

This growing discontent has also been seen in ongoing labor protests ranging from the attempted strike by the Bus Drivers Union in December 2005 to sit-ins in front of parliament to oppose revisions to the 1990 Labor Law. These revisions will reduce workers' rights and benefits and aggravate the practice of non-payment of wages and mass firings. While the leader of the Bus Drivers Union, Mansour Osanloo was released from prison recently, Bus Drivers Union activists and their families have continued to face harassment and periodic imprisonment over the past year. In mid-January, on the occasion of Ahmadinejad's trip to Venezuela to meet with his friend Hugo Chavez, the Bus Drivers Union sent an open letter to the Venezuelan Workers Syndicate and demanded that they confront Ahmadinejad in defense of Iranian workers (peiknet.com, 1/17/07).

While struggles over laws that affect education, labor and women's rights are quite significant in any country, the idea of legal changes which positively affect women's rights is considered revolutionary in Iran today. Thus women's rights activists led by Nobel Laureate Shirin Ebadi have initiated a wide "One Million Signatures Campaign" to demand an end to discriminatory laws against women in Iranian law which is based on Quranic Shari'a Law.

The campaign is a follow-through from the peaceful protest of the same aim which took place on June 12, 2006 in Tehran and was brutally attacked by female government police. There are other campaigns to defend women who are on death row for having "committed adultery" or for killing men who attempted to rape them. Iranian feminists have been quite vocal in writing for and creating websites which discuss politics, sexuality and theory.

The Iranian government also faces continuing discontent from ethnic minorities such as Kurds, Azeris and Baluchis. In July 2005, the body of young Kurdish opposition activist Shivan Qaderi was tied to a jeep in the city of Mahabad and dragged in the streets. His murder led to many demonstrations in neighboring Kurdish cities which the government attacked by deploying large numbers of troops. Several prominent Kurdish human rights activists were arrested and tortured. The following year, in May 2006, the publication of a cartoon in a government newspaper in Iran which depicted Azeris as roaches led to protests by thousands of Azeris in Tabriz.

ECONOMIC SITUATION AND LABOR

In order to better understand the context in which these protests are taking place, it is important to look at the economic situation in Iran today and the

prospects that the current situation offers to the majority of the population. In their new book, *Class and Labor in Iran: Did the Revolution Matter* (Syracuse University Press, 2006), Farhad Nomani and Sohrab Behdad remind us of how a fundamentalist regime was able to gain power in Iran after the 1978-79 Revolution. They examine how this regime has fared in relationship to its economic promises.

They review how the ideas of Ali Shariati gained support in the 1970s because he equated Islam with the struggle of the dispossessed and an "unequivocal opposition to capitalism, private ownership and class exploitation." Even though Shariati did not support direct democracy, his ideas sounded different from the hateful pronouncements that we now know from Al Qaida. His call for a "monotheistic classless society" and an "Islamic Socialism" gained many adherents especially among youth. (For further discussion of the limitations of Shariati and his dangerous concept of Martyrdom, see *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution* (2006) by Janet Afary and Kevin Anderson.) While Ayatollah Khomeini did not agree with Shariati's ideas about a classless society, he did use the ambiguous concepts of "justice" and "class balance" to gain more adherents.

Nomani and Behdad remind readers that shortly after the revolution, the workers councils were banned and replaced by government-run Islamic workers councils. Within the first nine years of the revolution, the reality of class inequality, poverty, war, sanctions and the glut in the oil market made the government of the Islamic Republic abandon any talk of an Islamic Utopia and compelled the introduction of some free market reforms to cut subsidies and price controls.

Today the state is the country's largest employer and runs Iran's capitalist economy mainly through income generated by monopolistic access to oil and real estate speculation. A mafia-like collaboration of foundations run by Khomeini's original merchant base, whose offspring are now military and paramilitary leaders and state enterprise owners, runs the state enterprises with the assistance of the post of Supreme Religious Leader which is now occupied by Ayatollah Khamenei. Ahmadinejad is the latest face of this phenomenon.

Those capitalists who will benefit from full scale free market reforms, which can accelerate the rate of accumulation of capital and invite foreign investment, are represented by Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, former president of Iran and current member of the powerful government Council of Guardians.

After three decades of the Islamic Republic: 1. The real rate of unemployment (14% by official estimates and 30% by unofficial estimates) is now higher than 1976. 2. Real wages and salaries are still below what they were in 1977 whereas proprietors' income and profits of capitalists have increased. 3. The low rate of participation of women in the formal economy, in contrast to their extensive participation in the informal economy, arises from exclusion from the labor market or segregation which limits work to areas where male participation is barred. 4. The standard of living of the rural population has improved.

The "Achilles heel" of the Islamic Republic remains unemployment. Seventy percent of Iran's population of 68 million are below age 30. More and more students, 60% of whom are women, are graduating from college and cannot find jobs. According to Nomani and Behdad, "The best that the overwhelming majority of the youth ('educated' or otherwise) can expect would be a working class position. Many will not be able to secure even that. The failed expectation of the youth will be the major political and social dilemma of the current decade in Iran."

Iranian youth are not only concerned about their economic future. They are also deeply interested in philosophical debates about a democratic alternative to religious fundamentalism and to the cynicism which has followed the collapse of Communism. The Islamic republic's assault on independent thinking, its arbitrariness as far as laws are concerned and its attempt to control every aspect of people's lives have made

young people hungry for ideas that affirm human self-determination and human reason.

ISLAMIC REFORMISTS, SECULAR THINKERS

Most secular intellectuals and Islamic reformists are deeply interested in the ideas of Immanuel Kant and Jürgen Habermas as well as pragmatists such as Richard Rorty and Karl Popper. Akbar Ganji, a dissident journalist who became known to the world through his long hunger strike last year, has based his manifestos on the ideas of the above thinkers. He hopes that Iranians will create a type of liberal democracy that is more moral than the existing liberal democracies. He also argues for a type of pluralism that is not relativist since there are certain values that are absolute. Such values include the complete equality of women and men ("Jomhuri-ye Jomhuriha," roozonline.com 17 Khordad 1385, 6/7/06).

Another Islamic reformist thinker, Abdolkarim Soroush, argues that while democracy cannot be deduced from Islamic sources such as the Quran and the Hadith, it is possible to establish models of democracy that are compatible with Islamic values and ideals. He argues that as opposed to liberal democracy, procedural democracy which is based on the separation of powers, can be compatible with Islamic Shari'a. At the same time, he argues that the world is full of mysteries that can only be intuitively discovered by larger than life individuals through a leap of faith. The prophets are such figures (See Professor Ali Paya, "Soroush: Aqlgare-ye Moradad," noandish.com).

Another prominent Islamic reformist thinker, who is least known in the Western world, is Mohammad Mojtaba Shabestari. In *A Critique of the Official Reading of Religion (Naqdi Bar Qara'at Rasmi Az Din, Tehran: Tarh-e No Press, 2001)* he argues that Islam as a religion does not possess the political, economic and legal systems that would transcend all time periods. The role of government among the Muslims is not to legislate the rules of Islam. Shabestari writes that "There can be multiple readings [of the Quran]. In order to achieve the truth we must critique any interpretation...and specify its degree of accuracy" (p.7).

Similar to Islamic reformist thinkers, prominent secular thinkers have also based themselves on the ideas of Kant and Habermas. Ramin Jahanbegloo argues that liberalism exerts a strong pull on Iranian dissident intellectuals today because it "goes against any form of determinism (religious or historical)" and "represents a check on the arbitrary and authoritarian tendencies" ("A Dialogue with the Iranian Philosopher Ramin Jahanbegloo" in Danny Postel, *Reading Legitimation Crisis in Tehran, Prickly Paradigm Press, 2007, p. 77*). He especially attacks the majority of Iranian Marxist tendencies at the time of the 1979 Iranian Revolution for not having read Marx's own works and instead representing Stalinist or Maoist tendencies which colluded with Khomeini in various ways. He concludes that the new generation of youth have become anti-utopian and reject any pre-given consensus as a foundation.

Jahanbegloo is quite right to attack the Stalinist and Maoist Iranian Left for colluding with Ayatollah Khomeini during the first years of the Islamic republic. However he is mistaken in rushing to the conclusion that Iranian workers have never been interested in socialism or that Iranian youth have become categorically anti-utopian. Translations of works by Marx and on humanist Marxism are being published and read alongside the translations of Kant and Habermas. The Persian translation of Marx's *1844 Manuscripts* which was published in 1999 has undergone three reprints and will soon be published in a fourth. Works like Mikhail Lifshitz's *Philosophy of Art of Karl Marx*, Lukacs' *Young Hegel*, and Raya Dunayevskaya's *Philosophy and Revolution and Marxism and Freedom* are being translated, read and discussed.

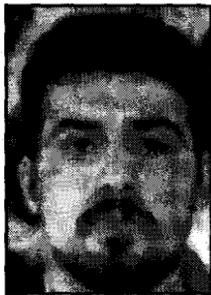
While secular intellectuals like Jahanbegloo and Babak Ahmadi agree with Islamic reformist thinkers in their attraction to Kantian liberalism as an alternative to the existing repressive fundamentalist regime, none claims that liberalism can overcome the reality of capitalist exploitation and alienation.

WHAT KIND OF SOLIDARITY?

Marxist-Humanists have had a deep and sustained relationship of solidarity with the Iranian freedom movement since 1978 and had articulated a principled opposition to Khomeini's counter-revolutionary anti-imperialism before his ascendancy to power. The Iranian freedom movement today is a beacon of hope for a Middle East engulfed in religious fundamentalism, war and hatred. Any attempt to dismiss this movement or downplay it is a disservice to the Left and to humanity.

There are several ways U.S. activists can express solidarity with Iranian freedom fighters: publicize the case of Ahmad Batebi, a 28-year-old student activist who has been languishing in jail since 1999 and continues to speak out despite torture and solitary confinement; contact the "Million Signatures Campaign" at forequality@gmail.com and online feminist magazines at info@tribune.com or info@herlandmag.com; and communicate with the The Bus Drivers Union at otobos@gmail.com.

Clearly any declaration of war by the U.S. government on Iran has to be opposed because it will lead to loss of lives among Americans and Iranians and will only allow the Islamic Republic to further crack down on its internal opposition.



Thinking different in Iran: Ahmed Batebi, Ramin Jahanbegloo, Shirin Ebadi, Akbar Ganji, Mohammad Abdipoor.

YOUTH

Campus anti-sweatshop struggles

Continued from page 1

The strikers' declining health was also a reason for ending the strike, as day-by-day students were losing weight at a severe rate and visiting emergency rooms more frequently.

The end of the hunger strike without the signing of the DSP hardly means that it was ineffective. The response from the action was enormous, prompting the most media attention a single DSP action has ever achieved. The students camped out in a building next to the student union, studying, sleeping, and living there.

Our experiences were mainly positive; although some students chose to heckle us in childish manners, more often those who stopped by the encampment wanted to learn about the campaign and showed their support by signing our paper petition, which gathered over 1,800 signatures. In addition, an online petition gathered a near equal amount of signatures from people all over the world, from students to factory workers, from California to Kenya.

Student-worker solidarity was the central theme of the hunger strike. Workers that produce collegiate apparel were fully behind the strike and presented their support in many different ways. Kenyan garment workers in particular pushed for President Jischke to accept the proposal, making a video and posting it to the Internet, and calling his office directly, only to have the phone hung up on them.

Many different workers and labor groups supported the action, not only those from the garment industry. A worker from a nearby steel fabrication plant pledged his support by giving us a metal disk inscribed with "DSP" and his signature, while Purdue's own custodial staff and service workers (some of the lowest paid in schools similar in size to Purdue) emphatically voiced their support when signing our paper petition.

At the breaking of the fast, national and local leaders of the AFL-CIO as well as the United Steel Workers pledged their full support of the effort, giving Purdue until March 21 to sign the DSP or be prepared to face the combined effort of hundreds of thousands of union activists and unfaltering student will and ability.

USAS BACKGROUND

Passage of the DSP is part of a larger campaign known as the Sweat-Free Campus campaign, which is

coordinated by United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS). USAS originated in the mid-1990s by UNITE interns organizing around anti-sweatshop campus campaigns. Since then, USAS has grown to over 200 campuses across the U.S. and Canada, making it one of the largest student activist groups in these nations. It also began taking on different labor rights issues including breaking campus contracts with Coca-Cola with regards to that corporation's ruthless attack on union leaders in Latin America and pushing universities to provide associational rights and a living wage for workers on campus.

Campus chapters of USAS, like the Purdue Organization for Labor Equality, have relative autonomy concerning what actions they want to perform, meaning they can take part in a larger campaign or act independently. With this structure, USAS serves as a coalition against sweatshops rather than a dogmatic, hierarchical organization.

Another distinction of USAS from earlier incarnations of the anti-sweatshop movement has been its constant dialogue with the very workers who produce collegiate apparel through its intern programs and the Worker Rights Consortium, an independent monitoring group created as a result of USAS efforts.

While the anti-sweatshop movement in the early '90s focused on executing actions that would be potentially detrimental to garment workers, the dialogue between students and workers has made it such that USAS campaigns focus on pushing for the same demands that workers are fighting for at their own factories. These two factors have made the USAS model attractive for many young activists with an interest in leftist politics and/or human rights issues.

POSTMODERNIST INFLUENCE

However, while the structure of USAS is not dogmatic and the organization has opened a dialogue between students and workers, it contains a number of philosophical problems. Although USAS does not have an express ideological position, it puts forth a set of ideas called its "principles of unity." These principles stress a focus on reaching decisions democratically and reducing prejudice through "anti-oppression tactics."

The most significant aspect of this set of principles, however, is that although there is so much emphasis on remedying the miseries of capitalism—a system that the document recognizes as "a flawed system" with "inherent defects"—it refuses to take the next logical step and be expressly anti-capitalist.

Recognizing the flaws in capitalism and pointing them out is one thing, but retreating right before stating that its abolition is needed is another. As a result, the "anti-oppression" that USAS endorses takes all the faults of capitalism, "racism, sexism, homophobia, classism" (a prejudice against those without a high level of

income!) as separate forms of oppression, all to be fought on various disjointed fronts.

To combat this oppression, USAS institutes a caucus system "to confront the prejudices we have internalized as the result of living and learning in a flawed and oppressive society." This caucus system separates targets of oppression and their "oppressors," having the "victims" find ways to channel their oppression, while the oppressors degrade themselves to the level of victims to deal with their own prejudices.

This kind of "self-development" and training reeks of post-modernity, the notion that oppression is an individual decision and that all forms of oppression are the result of individual prejudice. Post-modernity and its identity politics cannot see that each of these forms is just a moment in the destructive process, in the rendering of our subjective human potential from our historical reality. Without requiring the dialectical negation of capitalism as an essential step in gaining our humanity, United Students Against Sweatshops and the student anti-sweatshop movement perpetuate the "is-ness" of capitalism along with all its atrocities.

This is why it is important for members of the student and youth movements to use organizations such as USAS and its affiliated organizations not only to organize on social justice issues, but also to open these organizations up further and show how these struggles are all connected in an effort against capital. These organizations also serve as an idea exchange where students and youth can explore real workers' struggles. Through this exchange and development, we can seek a unity between theory and practice that, instead of perpetuating existing oppression with identity politics, seeks to puncture our fetishized existence and overturn the logic of capitalism.



Students, in a sit-in in administration offices, demanded the University of California-Berkeley's use of sweatshop labor in the production of collegiate apparel and pressed for adoption of the Designated Supplier Program and a "sweat-free UC" last year. Campus protests with similar objectives continue elsewhere like the Purdue University hunger strike.

Right scripts sex ed courses in Michigan

DETROIT—A quiet victory for the right wing in Michigan is the state public school HIV/AIDS and sex education policy. Unlike any other curriculum area, legal restrictions cover everything from a complicated approval process for all materials to the rights of parents to opt out of the curriculum to topics and information that may not be discussed at all.

Although school districts in Michigan are "required" to teach about dangerous communicable diseases including HIV/AIDS, they may "choose" to teach sex education. Half of Michigan school districts have chosen to teach "abstinence only" curricula, which means that no other form of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections prevention may be mentioned.

Detroit Public Schools has chosen the less restrictive "abstinence based" curriculum. The law specifies a comprehensive approach which includes teaching students legal, emotional and economic consequences of sexual activity, defines criminal sexual conduct, and how to control personal behavior. Yet "sensitive subjects" are actually scripted: for grades 5 and under, condoms are not to be discussed as a means of preventing pregnancy. For grades 6-12, the suggested response to a question is, "Condoms prevent the transmission of diseases during sexual intercourse. Con-

doms also help prevent pregnancy." Homosexuality must be discussed only as, "all human beings have feelings and rights to live their lives as they choose without persecution."

Although there is much of value in the Detroit policy, it is disturbing that so much of the right wing philosophy has been allowed to prevail in the state law. Much of the content is valuable despite the restrictions, but the far-reaching detail of the law has ominous implications for other curriculum areas that the Right wishes to control. After a protracted battle, language to discredit evolution was defeated in the updated science curriculum standards.

The detailed procedures, restrictions and guidelines also reflect the Right's desire to determine not only what is moral, but to limit what is considered appropriate human thought and behavior. The downplaying of pregnancy prevention by the unrealistic over-emphasis on abstinence reflects their disrespect for women as full human beings. In every other subject area, teachers are expected to make curriculum content "our own" and add to the basic materials anything and any viewpoints that will make it real for our students. But in this area the teacher's professionalism is to be reduced to following orders.—Public School Teacher

Acheh holds historic election

After 30 years of revolt against the central government, after decades of military repression against both the armed independence movement and recent mass civil society movements, after suffering large-scale death and destruction in the tsunami two years ago, and following the signing of an unprecedented peace agreement in August 2005—Acheh, Indonesia, chose its own regional government for the first time in December 2006.

The peace agreement mandated the election, in which candidates were allowed to run as independents instead of members of national parties, for the first time anywhere in Indonesia. In a clear rejection of the Jakarta government, the winners by a landslide came from the former independence movements. The new provincial governor is Irwandi Yusuf from the formerly armed Free Aceh Movement (GAM), and the deputy governor is his running mate Muhammad Nazar, a former student leader and head of SIRA, a leading organization in the massive civil movement that had campaigned for a referendum to determine the future of Aceh. Both men spent much time in jail, and both escaped being killed by the military or the tsunami only by chance.

One Achenese termed this the fairest election ever conducted in Indonesia due to international monitors and massive local mobilization. LINA, a women's organization formed since the peace that now has 30,000

members, campaigned throughout the villages and turned out a women's vote 25% higher than ever before. Earlier, when the election process was stalled by Jakarta's failure to pass the necessary legislation, the women's group organized a rally of 100,000 people. LINA is also engaged in women's health, education and economic projects.

"It's good to see our side getting a chance," one woman told N&L. "Now the key is whether GAM can deliver, whether it can make the fishermen and women happy."

The right to run independent candidates arises out of GAM's consultations with representatives of SIRA and other groups during the peace negotiations. GAM won greater civil rights for the Achenese, along with limited political autonomy and a bigger share of the revenues from its natural resources, in exchange for giving up the fight for independence.

The peace accord also provides for the future establishment of local political parties, which will allow GAM to transform into a political party able to fight for anything short of independence at the ballot box. But before local parties can be established, the House of Representatives in Jakarta must finish drafting and then pass more legislation, and it has been dragging its feet. Jakarta undoubtedly fears that other regions of Indonesia, several with independence movements, will demand the same right. —Anne Jaclard

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OUR LIFE AND TIMES

By Kevin A. Barry and Mitch Weerth

Thousands of jubilant residents of Santiago, Chile rushed into the streets to celebrate when Augusto Pinochet died at 2:15 p.m. on Dec. 10. The festive atmosphere was not only inspired by those who suffered most under the 1973-1990 dictatorship—families of those murdered and the survivors of torture and imprisonment—but today's youth and working class who suffer from the ongoing legacy of that era.

Jubilation was also heard from around the world, just as Pinochet's repression was felt around the world.

Somalia invasion

In a stunning reversal of fortune, invading Ethiopian troops routed Somali Islamists in December and January. Since the summer, the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) had been expanding its control, to the point where it dominated virtually the entire country. But the UIC collapsed suddenly, surprising most observers.

The Ethiopians are clearly proxies of Washington. This was illustrated by the visit to Ethiopia in December of General John Abizaid, overall commander of U.S. forces in the Middle East. This visit took place just before the invasion. Unrest has already broken out against Ethiopian troops. Many also expressed outrage over a U.S. air attack aimed at supposed Al Qaeda elements, but which appears to have killed innocent civilians instead.

Why did the Islamists collapse so quickly, despite their bombastic rhetoric about fighting to the death with the help of "thousands" of foreign volunteers? There is much resentment against the UIC for sending untrained high school youth into early battles against the experienced Ethiopian Army, especially after hundreds of those youths were killed. Moreover, although the UIC had provided a modicum of peace and stability after 15 years of warlord violence, many had begun to chafe under their repressive rules.

The U.S. and other powers are attempting to orchestrate the dispatch of an African Union peacekeeping force, in order to prop up a provisional government that is little more than a coalition of warlords. Whether the Islamists will be able to regroup remains to be seen, but they should not be counted out.

Japan moves Right

At the end of 2006, Japan's new Prime Minister Shinzo Abe orchestrated three important moves to the Right. First, a new education law was passed that promises to renew nationalism and "tradition." Students will be graded on their "patriotism" and teachers disciplined for failing to make students sing Kimigayo, a national anthem identified with imperial Japan.

Second, another new law changes the Defense Agency into a full-fledged Defense Ministry. For the first time since World War II, overseas missions will become a major focus. As a followup, Abe visited NATO headquarters in Brussels in January, a first for a Japanese head of state. Third, the government ended 2005 by hanging four prisoners. This ended a de facto moratorium on capital punishment that had been in effect since September 2005.

Abe, like his predecessor Junichiro Koizumi, has been playing on public fears over a nuclear North Korea and over China's growing might. At home, Koizumi moved Japan toward neo-liberalism, slashing social benefits and removing impediments to capital accumulation in a desperate effort to end economic stagnation. Today, Abe faces popular anger over deepening economic inequality.

The repressive legacy of Pinochet

He was admired by rulers and despised by workers everywhere for the sinister, murderous, lying thief that he was. Outside Chile the only one who dared publicly to express sadness for his passing was Margaret Thatcher. Inside Chile the divisions and lies that Pinochet sowed were on display when some 50,000 attended his funeral; continuity from the 1988 plebiscite when more than 40% voted in favor of him staying in power.

Chile's President, Michele Bachelet, denied Pinochet a state funeral, though she allowed the military to give him a full military funeral (they draped him in the presidential sash), and even sent her minister of defense to participate. Certainly nothing less was expected of her. This "socialist" president of today works closely with the military that is, for the most part, the same one that ruled up until 1990, complete with rapists and assassins who hide under the cover of Pinochet's 1978 amnesty law.

Pinochet died unpunished, as did his fellow dictators



"Today the murderer dies" read one sign as Chileans celebrated Pinochet's death.

Banzer of Bolivia and Stroessner of Paraguay. Much is still unknown about the crimes committed by them. Operation Condor, the alliance between five South American regimes, assisted by the CIA, that allowed them to pursue, torture, and murder dissidents in each other's countries, is still mostly shrouded in mystery.

The CIA has admitted it participated but refuses to release more files on it. Pinochet, when questioned by the Chilean judge Juan Guzman in 2004, claimed that if it did exist it was the responsibility of mid-level officers, something he wouldn't know about. This clear and concise lie, coming from one supposedly too demented to stand trial, was ironic given his insistence that "not even a leaf stirred" in Chile from 1973-1990 without him knowing about it.

Details of Pinochet's crimes will continue to be revealed for years to come. Names of perpetrators cited in the 1990 Truth and Reconciliation Commission, appointed by President Alywin, will not be released publicly until 2016. The 2004 National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture, appointed by President Lagos, heard among others the testimony of 3,400 women, many of whom never spoke before about their experiences. It revealed that 94% of the approximately 30,000 jailed were tortured. It also stipulated that details of testimony and names of the accused will not be released until 2054.

Only recently (2004) was it learned that Pinochet amassed a fortune over the years of \$27 million stashed in secret accounts outside Chile. The details of his theft, revealed in a U.S. Senate investigation and then a Chilean investigation, was a great blow to Pinochet supporters who long insisted on the tyrant's

"honesty." Perhaps more discoveries will be made like the "archives of terror," found in a police station in Paraguay in 1992. Perhaps one day details will also be revealed of Henry Kissinger's collusion with Manuel Contreras, the head of Chile's secret police (DINA), who was on the CIA payroll from 1975-77, and is one of the few who has done time for their murders. He was convicted and jailed from 1993 to 2001.

Other aspects of Pinochet's legacy, however, are of more immediate concern to today's youth who are looking for alternatives to the stratified society Chile is today. One day before he left the presidency in 1990 Pinochet created the Ley Organica Constitucional de la Ensenanza (LOCE). This education law stipulates that schools be funded by grants to private companies, without any oversight. This has created a two-tiered system: the wealthy have good schools and the poor are crowded into run-down buildings with few materials.

In April and May last year the student organization Asamblea Coordinadora de Estudiantes Secundarios (ACES) held a national strike that hundreds of thousands of students (secondary and college) and teachers participated in. Dozens of schools were occupied. The strike resulted from the breakdown in negotiations with the Bachelet administration over repealing the LOCE. This ongoing rebellion is known as the "rebellion de los pingüinos" the "penguins" being the youth in their school uniforms.

The idea of letting capitalists run the schools without oversight was a natural outgrowth of a dictatorship that ran the military without oversight. The military is still funded by 10% of copper sales going directly to them without oversight from the government.

The increase in the price of copper in recent years has allowed this military to outfit itself with new F-16 fighter jets and submarines from the U.S., a process that Bachelet previously participated in while she was minister of defense under Lagos. In 1970-73 Salvador Allende had the tragic illusion that the transnational capitalists like ITT and Anaconda could be fought while leaving the Chilean military intact. Today the "socialists" in power embrace both the transnational corporations and the military that Pinochet led for 17 years. This is the legacy that today's activists have to confront.

Palestinians on Holocaust

Although the U.S. media covered this up, two prominent Palestinian intellectuals spoke out against the Holocaust denial conference in Tehran. Mahmoud Al-Safadi, a former political prisoner, wrote an open letter to Iran's President Ahmadinejad, part of which reads:

"Perhaps you think that the act of denying the Holocaust places you at the vanguard of the Muslim world and that this refusal constitutes a useful tool in the combat against American imperialism and Western hegemony. By doing so, you actually do a great disservice to popular struggles the world over."

"Concerning the struggle of my people for their independence and their freedom: Do you perhaps regard the negation of the Holocaust as an expression of support for the Palestinians? You are mistaken. We will not win our victory and our independence by denying the genocide perpetrated against the Jewish people, even though the forces who occupy our country today and dispossess us are part of the Jewish people." (Full text: <<http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/alsafadi141206.html>>)

Attorney Khaled Mahamid is the curator of the first Holocaust museum in the Arab world, in Nazareth. He tried to attend the Tehran conference, where he planned to bring photographs and other evidence, but the Iranian government denied him a visa. Mahamid complained that Israel's Yad Vashem museum offers translations into many languages, but not Arabic!

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.