

# NEWS & LETTERS

THEORY / PRACTICE

"HUMAN POWER IS ITS OWN END"—KARL MARX  
JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2004

Vol. 49 — No. 1

50¢

## WORKSHOP TALKS

### Unity or betrayal

by Htun Lin

Two major health-care workers' unions in California, Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 250 and the California Nurses' Association (C.N.A.) announced on Dec. 15 that they have established a "mutual cooperation agreement that will unite 330,000 members behind a shared objective of improving working conditions for healthcare workers and the quality of care for patients in California."

Formerly rival unions competing for the membership of healthcare workers in California, both union bureaucracies finally came to their senses and realized that union workers everywhere have a major battle to confront as more and more corporate employers are declaring war on workers' health benefits by demanding major concessions.

This union-to-union solidarity comes in the middle of a major strike in Southern California by workers at Safeway and Von's who are members of the United Food and Commercial Worker's Union against management demands for health and benefit concessions and two-tier wages. It is critical that labor takes a stand in solidarity with each other and other workers in other unions.

Employers have negotiated as a bloc with UFCW over healthcare cutbacks. They locked out workers at Albertson's, Kroger, Ralph's and other stores who were not even involved in the labor dispute.

Striking workers at Safeway for the first ten weeks had been supported by the solidarity of 8,000 Teamsters, big rig drivers and warehouse employees, who refused to cross the grocery workers' picket lines. Despite the chains hiring replacement workers, many stores had noticeably fewer items in stock, particularly

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## BLACK/REDFVIEW

### The socialism of Hubert Harrison

by John Alan

A *Hubert Harrison Reader*, edited by Jeffrey B. Perry, is an extensive collection of articles from various journals and newspapers written by Hubert Harrison (1883-1927). Born in the Danish West Indies island of St. Croix, he arrived in New York City in 1900 where he continued his education mostly on his own. He was a speaker for the Socialist Party and then for the Industrial Workers of the World in the New Jersey Silk Strike of 1913. He became a street corner orator in New York in the 1920s, usually drawing a big crowd.

His pervasive presence as a soapbox speaker led him to be called "the father of Harlem radicalism." He was a major African-American intellectual and activist who combined a passionate concern over race and class issues. He has largely been forgotten, yet some aspects of his life are important to revisit for today.

#### RACE AND CLASS STRUGGLE

As a member of the Socialist Party he challenged it to confront U.S. racism. "Socialism," he wrote, "is here to put an end to the exploitation of one group by another, whether that group be social, economic or racial...the affirmation of this is the present duty of the Socialist Party." (p. 59). Addressing socialists he wrote, "the ten million Negroes of America form a group that is more essentially proletarian than any other American group" (p. 71).

It was the "essentially proletarian" character of African Americans that led him to the formulation that African Americans are "Negroes first." This was not a

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## Capture of Hussein fails to secure a frayed occupation

by Kevin Michaels

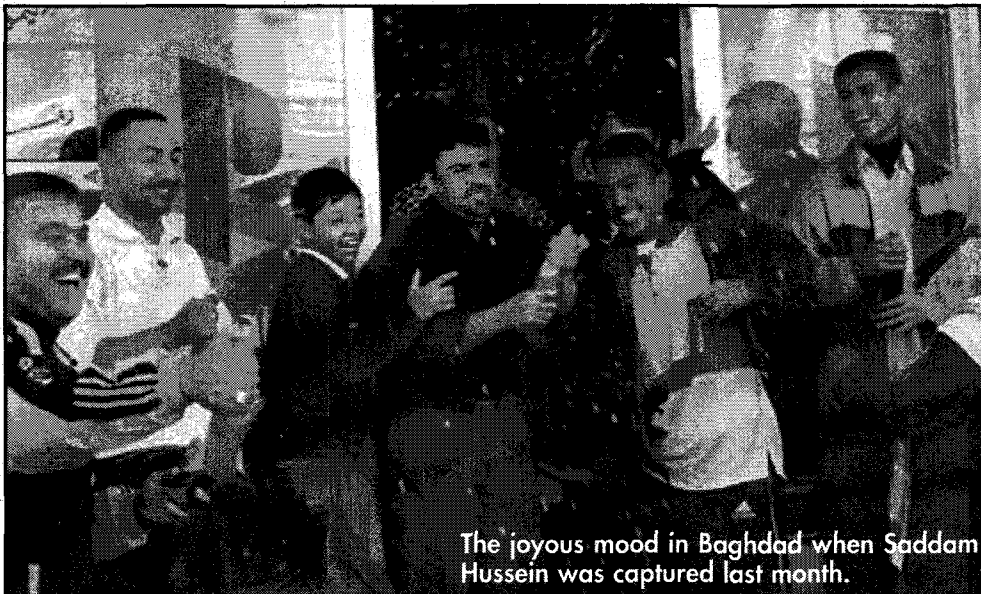
Violence, unemployment, and uncertainty grip the lives of the people of Iraq under U.S. occupation.

Despite the general relief at the fact that the now-captured Saddam Hussein has no chance of returning to rule over the country, Iraqis face a present and future defined by the authoritarian U.S. occupation and the bloody campaign carried out by surviving elements and sympathizers of the old regime. Taken together with the upsurge of confidence on the part of conservative Islamic leaders, these features of Iraq's reality chart a perilous course for freedom for the country's wage workers, ethnic minorities, women and young people.

The people of Iraq greeted the news of the Dec. 15 arrest of Hussein with elation. The capture of the dictator brought to an end a long and fear-ridden period of Iraq's history. Since his rise from the ranks of the security apparatus of the Ba'ath Party to absolute power over the country in 1979, Hussein constructed an efficiently centralized and fiercely repressive police state based on a narrow and elite section of Iraqi society.

#### SADDAM AT FRONT OF SORDID LINE

The list of crimes amassed by Hussein and his regime is prodigious. Setting aside the inner-party rivals murdered in his rise to power, he violently oppressed the huge Shia community of Baghdad and



The joyous mood in Baghdad when Saddam Hussein was captured last month.

the country's south, carried out a genocidal campaign of extinction against the Kurdish minority of the north and launched two wars: one against Iran involving bloodshed on a gargantuan scale—perhaps as many as one million dead—and another against Kuwait that eventually led to his downfall.

While it is not clear under what arrangements Hussein will be charged and tried, any thoroughgoing effort to delve into the facts of his regime will not only expose his guilt, but also the culpability of numerous governments who aided and abetted his regime in order to further their own interests. The U.S., Britain, France and Germany will no doubt all work to minimize the revelations about their substantial state and private involvement in the maintenance and support of the Ba'ath regime.

Indeed, former Secretary of State James Baker,

(Continued on page 10)

## On the line: L.A. supermarket strike

LOS ANGELES—Today it looks bad for the strikers and the UFCW against the three supermarket chains in Southern California. Today the unions are very low on funds. They have cut picket duty pay from \$40 a day to \$20 a day, and many picketers have quit picketing.

The day after the UFCW announced a strike against Vons, management at Ralphs and Albertson locked out their workers. It was obviously a pre-planned strategy among the Big 3 supermarket chains. Thus, union funds to pay picketers were being depleted three times as fast.

#### COMPANIES RESORT TO SCABS

When the union decided to lift the picket lines from Ralphs, there was grumbling among workers that it went against their interests. It was soon discovered that, according to a prior agreement, stores that were not being picketed would share their revenues with the stores still being picketed.

Today, contrary to a month ago, there are very few picketers or none at all at the Sunset/Virgil and 3rd/Vermont Vons, although the parking lots are still nearly empty. Vons has been using bargain sales to keep customers crossing the picket lines, although most walk out with only a few items. Some apologize for shopping, and use various excuses.

The *Los Angeles Times* reported that union spies have stated that 50 to 100 union workers have scabbed and gone to work. On management's recommendation, they have used the social security numbers of relatives to evade detection. It has been reported that 30,000 replacement workers are in place.

A Vons worker stated that many workers who crossed were fired after a single mistake. She said they

should not have crossed. I recall a young Black man who stocked shelves saying, "I need to get a job." He mentioned the cut in picket duty pay from \$40 a day to \$20.

At the beginning Teamster truck drivers supported the strikers by not delivering goods. But they soon caved in when management brought in a strike-breaking company. I witnessed two deliveries made by scabs, and there was nothing the picketers could do.

#### CAN STRIKE BE TURNED AROUND?

During the U.S. Civil War, when the South was winning, Karl Marx said that one Black regiment in the Union Army would have a potent effect on Southern nerves and turn the war around.

If theory grows from practice and we know of the actual development of events since the grocery strike began last Oct. 11, what then can we deduce from the strike? And is it still possible to turn the strike around in favor of the workers?

—Basho

(More on California grocery labor struggles on page 3)



Striking grocery workers march from Century City to Beverly Hills, Cal. on Dec. 16.

Marcus / Los Angeles Independent Media Center

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# The Afghan constitution and women

by Terry Moon

The new Afghan Constitution, ratified by the *loya jirga* on Jan. 4, is being touted by the U.S. government and press as a breakthrough for human rights—particularly women's rights. Nothing could be further from the truth. While it's true that a constitution can't make women free, and that even in places where there are great constitutions, women are not free, this constitution is so flawed that, rather than laying out a path to a freer Afghanistan, it has created a framework for the strengthening of warlords and the further Islamicization of the state.

The constitution created a strong presidency, expected to be won by Hamid Karzai, a bicameral legislature and an independent judiciary. Yet the process of its creation reveals its flaws. The intimidation, silencing of differing views, undemocratic and sexist nature of the proceedings were made public by a 25-year-old social worker. Malalai Joya took the floor and demanded to know: "Why have you again selected as committee chairmen those criminals who have brought disasters for the Afghan people? In my opinion they should be taken to the World Court."

The assembly chairman, Sebaghatullah Mojeddidi, a former mujahedeen leader, tried to have her thrown out. Abdur Rasul Sayyaf, the Northern Alliance deputy prime minister, gave a 15-minute tirade against Joya, slandering her as a communist and "criminal."

Furthermore, Mojeddidi refused to allow a vote on a petition with over 151 signatures from *loya jirga* members who wanted the country's name changed from the "Islamic Republic of Afghanistan" to the "Republic of Afghanistan." He publicly called them "infidels," thus placing them in danger of assassination.

Preeta D. Bansal and Felice D. Gaer, of the bipartisan U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, wrote: "We met many Muslims who recognize the compatibility of Islam with human rights. Yet these Muslims are being intimidated into silence by vocal and well-armed extremists."

What concerns many is language in the constitution saying that "no law can be contrary to the beliefs and provisions of the sacred religion of Islam." Furthermore, a qualification for the judiciary is to "have higher education in law or in Islamic jurisprudence." This lays open the judiciary to people like the current chief justice, Fazl Hadi Shinwari, who told Bansal and Gaer that he accepted the Universal Declaration on Human Rights "with three exceptions: freedom of expression, freedom of religion and equality of the sexes. This is the only law," the chief justice told us, pointing to the Koran on his desk."

This Supreme Court has the mandate to ensure legislation fully complies with Afghanistan's international treaty obligations and protects human rights. But Shinwari packed the Supreme Court with Islamic extremists; and he reinstated the Taliban's Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue—the thugs who beat women in the streets with metal bars for showing a strand of hair or an ankle.

Women are also supposed to have the right to education, but in November a 1970 law prohibiting married women from attending high school was upheld. Over 3,000 women were thrown out of school. Even literacy classes set up by NGOs for girls who could not attend schools have been banned by religious leaders.

The U.S. and their minions did nothing to democratize the Afghan constitution. Rather it was women, ethnic Hazaras, ethnic Uzbeks and others who put

## WOMAN AS REASON

their lives in jeopardy as they tried to make the constitution a document that represents their aspirations. If Afghanistan has shown us anything, it is that women will continue their struggle against the greatest of intimidations.

Women's vision of a new Afghanistan was revealed in the Afghan Women's Bill of Rights, drafted by 45 ethnically diverse women from every region of Afghanistan, Sept. 2-5 in Kandahar. Each article was debated by all and unanimously agreed upon.

Here we can only list a few of its 16 demands: Mandatory education for women through secondary school and opportunities for all women for higher education; provision of up-to-date health services for women with special attention to reproductive rights; protection and security for women; the prevention and criminalization of sexual harassment against women publicly and in the home; freedom of speech; freedom to vote and run for election to office; full inclusion of women in the judiciary system; and minimum marriageable age set at 18 years.

Any movement forward for Afghanistan will come only from women and others who are fighting the U.S. and their own internal rulers with their hearts and minds determined to create freedom.

## Cross-border march



The International Human Rights March of Women spent three weeks (Dec. 20 to Jan. 10) walking through Israel and Palestine. Between 100 and 150 women came from overseas to participate, in addition to Palestinians and Israelis, some who joined intermittently. Along the way, the women witnessed and often experienced the brutal heart of the occupation—checkpoints, curfews, closures, demolished homes, the 'security' wall, refugee camps, and—on the Israeli side—sites of terrible suicide bombings. The women marched by candlelight in Jenin, above. In Nablus and Erez, they managed to send infant food into those isolated areas. Get the entire report from the Coalition of Women for Peace ([www.coalitionofwomen4peace.org](http://www.coalitionofwomen4peace.org)). —Thanks to Gila Svirsky

## 'Killing for Life'

In *Killing for Life*, Carol Mason explains why some right-wingers engage in violence, even murder, to oppose reproductive rights and why the mainstream "pro-life" movement tolerates such violence. As well as exposing actual ties between extremist groups that promote and commit violent acts and mainstream groups that condemn them, she exposes philosophical ties.

The Christian religious Right arose from the theology of "Reconstructionism"—the belief that the U.S., and ultimately the world, should be a decentralized but totalitarian theocracy run according to the laws of the Old Testament. Reconstructionists believe that a corrupt federal government and American public are drifting away from the natural order of "God's law," which will result in an apocalypse.

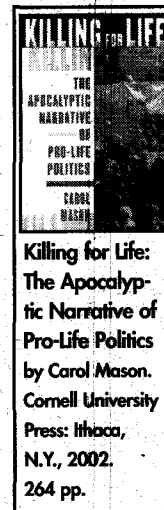
Abortion became such an important issue to the religious Right when it mostly abandoned extending to fetuses the civil rights approach, that all human life is valuable, in favor of the view that all life is under God's control. This view motivated Christian conservatives to vote when they had formerly seen politics as secular and unworthy of their attention. Reconstructionist Paul Vigurie used this issue to create the Moral Majority and the American Life League (which have since multiplied into many religious rightwing groups) in order to influence the Republican Party.

Mason also describes the concept of the "New Warrior," which began with the defeat of the U.S. in Vietnam. Some veterans were embittered because they believed that the federal government's restraints on the action of the military had caused them to lose. Since then, conservative men have believed that feminism, the peace movement, and other social justice movements have "feminized" men and caused a "crisis of masculinity" by redefining men's roles as non-violent and egalitarian.

Whether traumatized by war or "emasculated" by culture, anti-abortionists began to identify with the aborted fetus. Anti-abortion terrorists believe themselves to be fighting the restraints of the federal government (laws that allow abortion and prohibit violence against abortion providers) in order to restore masculinity and "God's law."

Both anti-abortion terrorists and mainstream groups also have organizational and philosophical ties to white supremacist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan and Christian Identity. These groups believe that abortion is causing an "apocalypse" for the white, Christian "race." This is why rhetoric comparing abortion to genocide, the Holocaust, and slavery can ignore the real causes of oppression.

*Killing for Life* has more details about the way the religious Right thinks. It's a good book to read to learn how these people think and understand their motivations and a little of their history. —Adele



## WOMEN WORLDWIDE

by Mary Jo Grey

Women in two different states have won victories over anti-woman forces trying to whittle away our right to control our own bodies. On Dec. 29, a federal judge in New Hampshire declared unconstitutional a state law requiring that parents be notified before a minor can get an abortion. A short time later in Florida, a state appeals court panel, on Jan. 9, ruled against Gov. Jeb Bush's demand that the state appoint a guardian for the fetus of a retarded rape victim, because he feared the mother's guardian might consider an abortion. The American Civil Liberties Union said it was an attempt to create a situation with the mother and fetus having competing legal rights. They called it "a crusade to change the law, limit the rights of women and bring the Supreme Court something that would overturn or alter *Roe v. Wade*."

♦♦♦

Despite a recent peace agreement in the Democratic Republic of Congo, massacres, mutilation and mass rape continue. Within a ten-week period, more than 100 cases of rape, sexual abuse and torture were reported—often committed in front of the victims' family members. Public gang rapes are used to terrorize women and girls suspected of "collaborating with the enemy." High instances of HIV/AIDS compound the horror. Many girl children forced to serve as soldiers are used as sexual slaves by adult commanders. Worldwide support is being sought by Amnesty International to stop this violence.

—Information from Women's Human Rights Online Bulletin

## Thoughts on victory for gay marriage

**NEW YORK**—The recent Massachusetts Supreme Court decision to legalize gay marriage unleashed and exacerbated a myriad of opinions in numerous realms—political, religious, homosexual, heterosexual and others. Adrienne Rich reminds us that leaving lesbians out repeats the historic subsuming and neglect of women. We should also extend this to the whole GLBTQ spectrum.

To those who say that this victory is only a "transitory, capitalistic salve" and that "marriage is bourgeois," I say that there is a difference between repudiating an entitlement and having no right at all. According to *The Village Voice*, there has been a "curious silence" from much of the "radical, progressive cadres."

But the decision, along with Vermont's legalization of gay and lesbian "civil unions," has sparked a conservative backlash in legislatures propelled by the Christian Right, which declared a new "culture war." On the other hand, a minister active in the fight for gay marriage, two dozen clergy in Massachusetts and individual ones in Colorado, New Hampshire and Georgia stated they won't perform legal aspects of weddings until legal marriage is open to gays. "Straight" couples are also refusing to marry because gays can't.

Such personal acts of protest, called "Hetero-Hold-outs," have taken several other forms, different kinds of commitment ceremonies and signing civil papers.

Vermont's Freedom to Marry Task Force pronounced civil unions a "bitter compromise." Others are excited that civil unions are stripped of religion. Judith Levine of *The Village Voice* adds that gay marriage "subverts religious hegemony over the institution."

A crucial aspect of immediate victory is bestowing rights to inheritance, child custody, health insurance benefits, and allowance of hospital rights. In New York, partners have been denied access to intensive care patients. It is reported that gay couples can lose more than \$10,000 per year in social security benefits they've paid for because such benefits are calculated based on family units.

Poor Queer families also stand to gain from marriage rights. In addition to everything above, there would be qualification for public housing, family courts

more likely to accept claims of domestic abuse, and the right to sue for a partner's wrongful death.

Child custody, always a perilous pursuit for gay and lesbian couples, is particularly threatened in southern and midwestern states. According to *The Village Voice*, 34% of lesbian and gay couples in the South are raising children, and that lesbians of color are more likely to raise children at home. Same sex marriage is a black, working-class, women's issue! —Shella G.

**LOS ANGELES**—Having worked for many years as a case manager at agencies assisting people with HIV, I saw how gay men were denied benefits, such as health-care, immigration options, inheritance and life-support decisions, which heterosexual married partners can share in this bourgeois democracy.

I heard G.W. Bush protest the Massachusetts ruling by stating that marriage is a sacred bond between a man and a woman. In my experience, while many marriages are based on a promise to share and support, many more are like traps—for both men and women.

**Worldwide, women's economic dependency on men, their limited legal rights regarding family matters, and the social pressures on women to obey their fathers, brothers and husbands (reinforced by domestic violence, honor killings and other things) keep women of all classes trapped and repressed in many ways. I don't see anything sacred about that.**

The imposition on women to carry through their pregnancies by Christian fundamentalists and their allies in the U.S. government is another reduction of women's options, in other words, another lock on the trap. When I worked with pregnant teens at an agency partly funded by the state government, I wasn't allowed to speak about abortion, and in my work with abused women, I saw that some were forced by their partners to get abortions.

**The option to marry or not, the option to reproduce or not, are important aspects of the dialogue on the meaning of freedom.** In this dehumanized world, marriage and birth control are not separate from the various forms of alienated relationships.

—Anna Maillon

# Ongoing L.A. grocery strike

**LOS ANGELES**—While Steve Burd, Von's (Safeway) CEO, is under investigation for cashing in his \$30 million in stock options before the strike began last October, the strikers at Von's, Albertsons and Safeway are uncertain about the state of current talks between management and the union.

The main concern of the workers is health care, but the underlying issue is the company demand for two-tier pay. "I am sure they will find a way to get rid of the workers making \$17.90 an hour, if they can replace them with workers making \$14.90," explained one worker. "Management wants to hire box boys without health benefits for the first two years, with the excuse that these employees live with their parents. That is not even true—some have to support a family." **Another management scheme to get rid of old employees is to grade newcomers higher on a written exam at the annual review procedure.**

Management is trying to cut the time-and-a-half pay for Sunday work. They also want to take away two holidays. They want to do away with the 85 formula for retirement—combined age and length of service equaling 85—and replace it with retirement no earlier than age 60 no matter how long someone has worked. The management proposal would sharply cut retirement benefits by freezing future benefits earned.

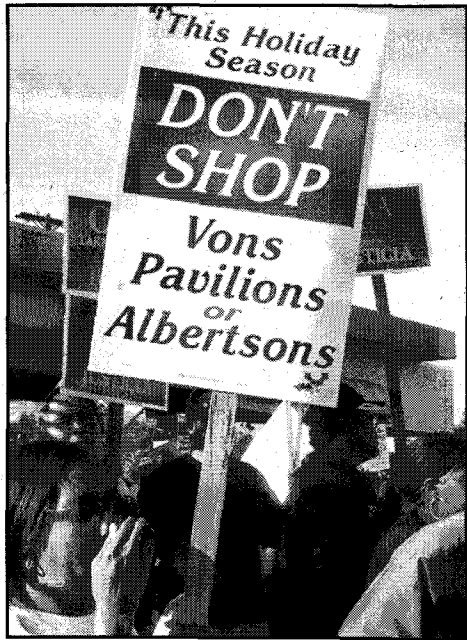
The proposal that strikers are rejecting would increase the employee's contribution to health premi-

ums to \$30, then \$45 and \$90 per week within three years, with an increase in prescription co-payment to \$10, \$20 and finally \$30 over the three-year contract for each prescription. **A worker hospitalized with a \$20,000 hospital bill would be responsible for up to \$10,000—half of the entire bill. They also want a cap on chemotherapy treatment!**

At the same time, some employees of Ralphs were resentful that they were asked to stop picketing at Ralphs and picket at other stores. A striker complained, "I'm bitter about picketing against Ralphs. We don't see our union representative at all. They come from the East Coast with paid hotels and rental cars to cover our signs with a plastic bag. I can do that myself. We never see them and they don't talk to us. They are not going to get my sign that says Boycott Ralphs."

**Talks between the grocers and the union have begun, but what remains is a system which only has one objective—to increase profit by extracting the maximum pro-**

**duction at minimum cost from the workers.** The workers are walking on the sidewalks eight hours a day, six days per week, uncertain about their future but determined to win. —Manel



Marcus / Los Angeles Independent Media Center

# Misery of health cuts

**LOS ANGELES**—The way some people talk, budget cuts are supposed to provide relief and "tax relief" is the holy grail. In reality, budget cuts are causing people to suffer. I work with special needs kids. Their care is supposed to be paid by the state. But if there is an emergency and the mom and dad are not in the home, the nurse ends up staying 24 hours—though now we only get paid for eight hours.

Many people, especially disabled people on fixed incomes, cannot afford the co-pays for the clinic or their medicine. They die from lack of care. In Los Angeles, there are people practicing medicine without a license. Three people died from going to them.

People are going to Mexico or Canada to get cheaper medicine. That started pharmacists complaining that medicine from Mexico and Canada is no good. Is the choice risky medicine or no medicine at all?

A lot of people with chronic illness just suffer. The prices are going up, but salaries of patients and nurses are not.

A lot of doctors are getting out of private practice because malpractice insurance is too high. Yet Los Angeles County Hospital and USC General Hospital don't have enough doctors in the emergency room. People are dying because of budget cuts in hospitals.

—Georgiana

# Black challenge to IBEW leadership

**NEWARK, N.J.**—This March, Black telephone workers at Verizon in New Jersey will attempt to make history. For the first time ever, a Black telephone worker will attempt to get elected to the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 827 Executive Board. In 2004, a Black worker running for union office hardly sounds groundbreaking. What makes this situation different?

The vast majority of telecommunications workers across the country belong to the Communications Workers of America (CWA), a primarily telephone industry union. But in New Jersey, the telephone craftsmen belong to the IBEW. While some clerical workers are in the union, it is dominated by "outside" installation and maintenance technicians, linemen, and the construction departments. White male workers in the conservative and craft-oriented IBEW have historically dominated these craft positions.

## BIRTH OF UNION BLACK CAUCUS

IBEW Local 827 is a statewide local divided into six geographic regions. Each region or unit elects one member to the statewide executive board. The telephone garages in Unit 4 serving the Essex County area contain the largest concentration of Black workers in the state. Three years ago, Black telephone workers in that area formed an organization called the Black Telephone Workers for Justice (BTWFJ).

One key objective of the BTWFJ was to get Black workers more involved in the life of the union. They persuaded Black workers to start going to union meetings and eventually got some Black workers elected to lower level shop steward positions. The participation of Black workers in the life of the union changed union dynamics in Unit 4 as they began to demand that the union leadership take up the struggle to win Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday as a paid holiday.

They got a resolution passed making the IBEW Local 827 Executive Board give \$1,500 to the "Charleston Five," longshoremen fired and charged with rioting during a protest to defend their jobs. The Black workers' participation was instrumental in getting Unit 4 to pass a resolution opposing the war in Iraq. The progressive positions coming out of Unit 4 due to the influence of the Black workers led to them calling Unit 4 the "conscience of the local."

Ron Washington, president of the BTWFJ, said, "Before we began organizing, most Black workers did not go to union meetings because they considered the union a 'white' thing." He continued, "Not only have we raised issues and demands that are of particular interest to Black workers, but we have proven that we have been fighters in the interests of all workers."

## INDIVISIBLE STRUGGLE

Washington pointed to the fact that two years ago they led a walkout of Black and white workers that shut down two garages, after a Black worker was mistreated. They have also led protests when white workers were mistreated by management, which is in keeping with the mission statement of the BTWFJ, calling for Black workers to fight for unity with all workers, at home and abroad.

The BTWFJ has organized Black telephone workers to be more active off the job as well. They have supported community struggles against police brutality and racial profiling, and formed a sister relationship with the Newark-based, "Peoples Organization for Progress." They have been active in the fight for reparations and in support for the struggles of Black students at Seton Hall and Rutgers University.

The BTWFJ is running not only Washington for executive board, but a slate of the other five local positions. The Black workers feel that militant, fight-back, socially active trade unionism is a program that the current leadership does not possess. Email the BTWFJ at Blacktel4justice@aol.com.

# Protest Fred's at zoo

**MEMPHIS, TENN.**—In November the National Labor Relations Board in Washington certified the union election of May 2002, where we voted in UNITE at Fred's. Now Fred's has to recognize us. Even though the union has been certified, the company is still up to some of its tricks, threatening people about production, moving people around, cutting their pay.

**When we started organizing, Mike Hayes, the CEO, had a meeting with the workers and told us the company was broke. He pretended he was crying, covered his face, and ran out of the room. That was to make people think that if you voted the union in the company would shut down. If I had a tape of that, I would've played it when he started bragging of record profits.**

One of the executives at Fred's is on the Memphis Zoo board, so we had a protest at a \$200-a-ticket fundraiser called the Zoo Rendezvous, showing off pandas recently brought from China. We stood out front protesting while people were going in. A couple of people in panda suits held signs that said, You're taking food out of Fred's workers' mouths.

In the first contract, we want set hours, with voluntary overtime. Order people in at 4:30 don't know what time they're getting off. You just have to finish.

**A lot of people had only been getting three or four hours a day. All of a sudden, it's 12-14 hours a day. You can't go home. You know your child is coming home from school looking for you, because you've been there all these weeks. They tell you to find somebody else to take care of your child.**

The breaks should be set too. Once, people came in at 5:00 a.m. and didn't get a break until 11:30. When it's hot, or when it's cold, they just work people like horses. When people are passing out, they just want to give you a popsicle.

A lot of warehouses are like Fred's. I was hoping that once things get settled here at Fred's, it'll make the other companies wake up and realize that they'll be made to do their people better. —Black woman worker

# No to job abuses

**MEMPHIS, TENN.**—On Dec. 10, International Human Rights Day, 250 to 300 labor union activists and their supporters rallied outside the federal building, and then in the First United Methodist Church. We were one of more than 90 events in 38 states. Our cry was "Worker Rights are Human Rights." The need to turn the slogan into reality became clear when warehouse workers from Fred's, nurses at the Med, and printing workers from Quebec World talked about their conditions of life and labor.

There were union leaders there from Brazil and Britain to show international solidarity. The uniquely backwards and racist conditions that workers in the South endure was brought home by Vernon Robson, a South African Paper and Media Union member from Britain who stayed with local Quebecor workers. He referred to how Quebecor management had set up a coffin in the factory and threatened workers they would put their relatives in it, if workers didn't stop agitating for safe working conditions.

One of the sanitation workers from the 1968 strike in Memphis spoke about what conditions were like when Martin Luther King, Jr., came to help them in their organizing drive. His moving words gave a tremendous lift to the ongoing drive in the Mid-South to transform the so-called "right to work" states into places where workers are treated with human dignity and earn a living wage. —Terry Moon

# WORKSHOPTALKS

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perishables such as vegetables.

But then the Teamsters union said its members would return to work at the grocery chains' warehouses. No doubt, this move emboldened the company executives in their effort to break the spirit and determination of the striking workers.

## COST OF RETREAT

The Teamsters withdrawal of picket support couldn't have come at a worse moment. If we lose this crucial battle, many workers would begin to ask what is the point of having a union, if it can't protect the Health and Welfare Funds that have come about as a result of years of struggle and sacrifice by previous labor activists.

Nearly 20 years ago, in 1986, a SEIU Local 250 strike against two-tier wage demands at Kaiser Permanente, the nation's oldest and largest HMO, lasted eight weeks with the support and solidarity from our colleagues in the California Nurses' Association. But Kaiser won a 15% two-tier wage reduction, because our own union leaders decided to end the strike. They announced that strike behavior would cease, and that the International was threatening receivership.

Later on, none other than the president of the AFL-CIO, John Sweeney, cut a deal with the CEO of Kaiser and pulled the rug out from under nurses strikes which many of us non-RN healthcare workers had joined. Since then, SEIU and CNA have been rival unions as both union bureaucracies have been competing over who should organize which shop.

SEIU and CNA leaders have seldom been seen on congress floors, as both unions emphasize lobbying Congress and State Assembly politicians. Both unions have been instrumental in passing legislation mandating minimum nurse to patient ratios, recommending safety-needles with self-locking devices, and other regulatory agency related measures. However these laws are mere band-aid approaches to remedy a healthcare system which has been systematically dismembered from head to toe.

## HMO CHIEFS WRITE THE LAWS

Anyone with faith in the power of legislation only has to look at the current Medicare Prescription bill sponsored by Bush, practically written by the HMO industry to destroy Medicare as we know it. Laws they can't sabotage, overturn. Spend huge amounts of corporate capital to overturn. The recent law in California which requires employers with more than 50 employees to provide health insurance is an example.

There are laws mandating safe work conditions. But it's an open secret that many employers willfully violate those laws. The jobs of politicians who act as industry watchdogs are dependent on the very same capital which they are supposed to regulate.

By carrot or by stick, employers know it takes the cooperation of us workers to restructure so they can boost their profits. The "teamwork" concept is particularly effective in a union shop when it is the union itself which encourages workers to sacrifice to keep the company "healthy." That's why the labor-management partnership exists—to discipline us.

It's a positive development that two rival unions are now uniting with each other. But it's high time that unions begin to unite with us—the workers. The union must remember that it takes us workers to make anything work.

**FROM THE WRITINGS OF  
RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA  
MARXIST-HUMANIST ARCHIVES**

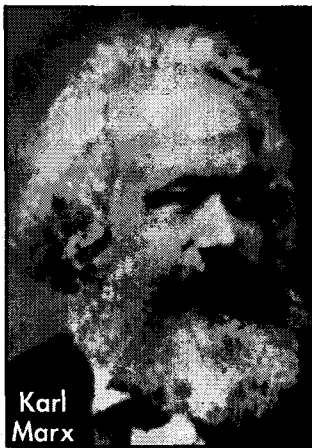
**EDITOR'S NOTE**

As part of our commemoration of Black History Month we reprint here excerpts one of Raya Dunayevskaya's most important writings on Black America—her 1944 essay "Marxism and the Negro Question," written when she was a co-leader (along with C.L.R. James) of the Johnson-Forest Tendency, a dissident grouping in the U.S. Trotskyist movement of the 1940s which argued in favor of the independent self-activity of the African-American masses. All footnotes are provided by editors. The full text of the document can be found in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, microfilm no. 259-270. For a discussion of the historical significance this document, see *Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles: Race, Philosophy, and the Needed American Revolution*, by John Alan (Chicago: News and Letters, 2003).

**June 1944**

Historians who state that the Negro problem is rooted in slavery and stop there fail to see the crux of the question. The "stigma" of slavery could not have persisted so long if the economic remains of slavery had not persisted. The Civil War abolished the institution of slavery, but did not give the land to him who tilled it. Not having got the land, the peasant's fate was inevitable, whether he be white or Negro.

Even in Russia, where there was some fraudulent attempt to give the serf the land, it was impossible for the Russian serf to rise above the needs of the backward economy. All the more so in the South where the Negro did not get his "40 acres arid a mule." Cotton remaining dominant, semi-feudal relationships were inevitable. The division of labor set up by the cotton economy may not be disturbed. The social relations arising on the basis of the cotton economy remain "less changed than the soil itself on which the cotton is grown."(1) Within the economic remains of slavery lie the economic roots of the Negro Question.



Karl Marx

Unfortunately, America is so barren of Marxist economists that here, too, a Russian has produced the most profound study. Lenin, seeking to clarify the situation and evolution of Russian agriculture, embarked on a study of *New Data on the Laws of Development of Capitalism in Agriculture*, which comprised an analysis of *Capitalism and Agriculture in the United States*.

Previous to the writing of this work in [1915], Lenin, in his theses on the agrarian problem, demonstrated that "the contradiction between the whole social development and serfdom... retards economic development and is a source of oppression, barbarity and of innumerable forms of Oriental despotism in Russian life."(2) And in his study of the American development of capitalism in agriculture Lenin found a "striking similarity between the economic position of the American Negro and that of the former serf of the central agricultural provinces in Russia."(3)

The Narodniki, on the other hand, (even as our contemporary analysts) glossed over the feudal survivals. America, they said, was a country that had never known feudalism. It is this statement which served as the basis of Lenin's counter-thesis: "This statement is directly contrary to the facts, for the economic survivals of slavery are not distinguishable in any respect from those of feudalism."(4)

It is true, of course, that America started its course of independence with no feudal vestiges. But it should not be forgotten that with the development of the plantation economy of the South, with the invention of the cotton gin, there was a development and extension of the slave economy. A civil war was as necessary to overcome that economy in America as a bourgeois revolution was necessary to overcome feudalism in Europe.

It seems, in fact, that the later the bourgeois revolution against feudalism or slavery takes place the less complete it is due to the higher class differentiation in developed bourgeois society. At a certain stage it becomes impossible for the bourgeoisie to carry out this revolution at all. That is the historic foundation of the permanent revolution. It is the lateness of this development in the United States which accounts for the tenacious economic survivals of slavery which still exist in the country and dominate the life of the Negroes....

**BOSS AND BLACK RELATIONSHIP**

The economic survivals of slavery manifested themselves in the crop lien system instituted at the end of the Civil War and which still exists to this day. The crop

# Marxism and Black liberation

lien system turned the South into an immense shop and still hold the tenant and cropper in a vice. The cropper has neither control or the nature of his crop nor of marketing it. The cropper owns nothing but his labor power, and must part with half of the crop for "furnishings."

Although the agrarian question was and still is the basis of the Negro Question, the proletarianization and urbanization of the Negroes have produced other factors, which we shall now consider....

The Negro has been an integral part of labor in heavy industry since the earliest days of Southern industrialization. He was a militant member of whatever unions took root there. At the height of its power, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) claimed one million members, 100,000 of whom were Negroes. The most important of the IWW unions among Negroes were precisely in [the] prejudice-ridden South....

The proletarian Negro is not the cowed plantation hand. He is literate and has been disciplined by the factory. He knows the might of a cohesive group, organized by the very process of production. He is and feels himself a potent factor. He is no small minority to his white brethren in industry. The relationship in the most concentrated industrial districts of the South is 55% white to 45% Negro, and in some he forms the majority. For example, of the 23,000 UMW members in Alabama mine fields, the Negroes number 14,000 or 60%....

Nevertheless, the "boss and black" relationship—that is, the racial relation having its roots in the plantation economy—still pursues him in the city as well as in the country. Wage differentials exist in the factory as in the field. Segregation, Jim Crowism, social discriminations persist. The contradiction between the potency in the process of production and his seeming impotence outside cannot but find a manner of expression.

The explosive power in the struggle of the Southern Negro proletarian in the Southern metropolis will have significance in repercussions for the contiguous rural Black Belt. It will strike directly at the heart of the Southern economy and Southern politics and upset as well Northern capitalist interests which have so readily accepted the South's segregation pattern in order to coin surplus value from it.

But among the millions suffering on the plantations and among the hundreds of thousands who have won themselves a place in industry, the problem before them is and must continue for a long time to be the emancipation from the national oppression which they feel at every turn.

The bourgeoisie has posed the question in this form to draw the most reactionary conclusions. To the problem as posed by the bourgeoisie the proletarian vanguard must beware of merely giving a direct negative or simple negative. Outside the unions and inside, it must pose the emancipation of the Negroes themselves, but as an important contributory factor to the whole struggle against bourgeois society.

**URBANIZATION, PROLETARIANIZATION**

...In the North too, the proletarianization and trade unionization of the Negro did not raise him to the status of the white proletarian and did not dissolve his struggle for elementary democratic rights into the general class struggle.

First, in the trade unions he must fight as a Negro for his place as a worker. Wage differentials, seniority, upgrading have by no means been abolished. Then, outside of the trade union, lie is ghettoized....

It is precisely in the Northern urban centers that the political results inherent in the situation in the South receive their sharpest political expression. Capitalism, in dragging the Negroes from the South, cannot prevent the explosion and revolt of the national oppression which the semi-feudal economic relations in the South not only generate but are able to keep in subjugation.

The ghetto-like existence, the social humiliation not only spring historically from the cotton plantation. The cotton plantation exports to the North its workers imbued with the ideology of the South along with the Klan, the Knights of the Camelia, etc. to stimulate, encourage and organize the anti-Negro prejudices of the people of the North, fortified among the working class by competition in industry

We can sum up our study as follows:

1) Neither Lenin nor Trotsky believed the Negro was a nation, and yet they unhesitatingly placed the Negro Question as part of the national question.

2) American Marxists have failed to understand that neither the Negro struggle for assimilation into the national culture nor the European national struggle for independence from the national culture of the oppressing nation invalidate the application of the principle of

the Marxist approach to the National Question.

3) Marxists must meet the danger of petty bourgeois misleadership of the Negro movement against national oppression by recognizing not only its validity but its revolutionary character.[and] leading the movement.

4) The roots of the Negro question lie not in the "plots" of the capitalists but in the economic remains of slavery, that is to say, share-cropping.

5) The maintenance of this system by reactionary capitalism not only governs the social and political structure of the South, but spreads its influence throughout the whole country.

6) The urbanization and proletarianization of the Negroes have not basically affected the economic roots of the Negro Question. They give the Negroes not only a better basis for joining in the general political struggle. They also sharpen his sense of oppression as a national minority and give him the opportunity to organize and struggle as such a minority with, however, the purpose of integrating himself into the society which still excludes him. This is the dual movement which is basic to an understanding of the Negro Question in the United States.

7) To free himself from his oppression, the Negroes will be compelled to struggle against capitalist society which cannot release him. His very oppression makes him potentially one of the bitterest enemies of the existing society, as is evident by his attitude toward the war. However, the unemployment inherent in the social crisis and the past history of the country make the proletariat most vulnerable on the very question of the assimilation of the Negro into its ranks. This will probably be the focal point of the fascist attempts to disrupt the proletariat. The proletariat must respond by recognizing not only the validity but the inevitability of mass Negro movements against Negro oppression and strive to lead this movement and harness its revolutionary potentialities for the struggle against capitalist society. This can only be done along the lines laid down in the Marxist thesis on the National Question.

We have emphasized the powerful national aspects of the Negro Question and its roots and ramifications in the economic and social relations of the country as a whole. That is what makes it a National Question.

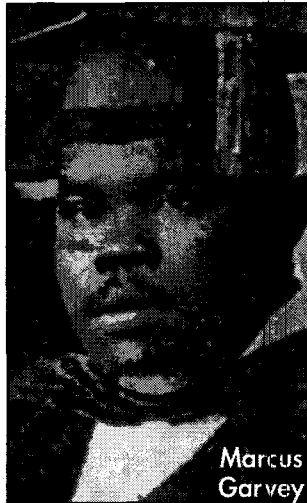
As the social crisis develops and the proletariat becomes more and more conscious of its role as the regenerating force in American capitalist society, it will not only of necessity be compelled to shoulder the solution of the Negro Question. It cannot at the same time avoid unleashing the aspirations of the Negroes to free themselves from the special oppression to which they are subject.

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**NOTES**

- Allison Davis, Burleigh G. Gardner, and Mary Gardner, directed by W. Lloyd Warner, *Deep South; A Social Anthropological Study of Caste and Class* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941), p. 266. This important sociological work was republished in 1988 by the Afro-American Studies Dept. at the University of California at Los Angeles, with a foreword by its director, Prof. Claudia Mitchell-Kernan.
- V.I. Lenin, "The Agrarian Question in Russia Towards the Close of the Century," *Collected Works*, Vol. 15 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977), p. 92.
- This work, in a somewhat different translation than quoted above, is included in Lenin's *Lenin's Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 27.
- Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 24.



Marcus Garvey



Claude McKay

**NEWS & LETTERS**  
Vol. 49, No. 1 JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2004

News & Letters (ISSN 0028-8969) is published 10 times a year, monthly, except bi-monthly January-February and August-September for \$5.00 a year (bulk order or 5 or more, 25¢ each) by News & Letters, 36 S. Wabash, Room 1440, Chicago, IL 60603. Telephone (312) 236-0799. Fax (312) 236-0725. Periodical Class postage paid at Chicago, Illinois. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to News & Letters, 36 S. Wabash, Room 1440, Chicago, IL 60603. Articles may be reprinted verbatim if credited to "News & Letters."

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Olga Domanski, Peter Wermuth, Co-National Organizers, News and Letters Committees. Jim Mills, Managing Editor. Felix Martin, Labor Editor (1983-1999).

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

**ESSAY**

**The fate of totalitarianism: Marxist-Humanism in conversation with Orwell, Sartre, and Adorno**

By Tom More

In 1984, George Orwell projected the future of totalitarian society. As everyone knows, the author of *Animal Farm* had the Soviet Union in mind. Projecting the logic of totalization to the end, he foresaw Winston's reintegration into the totality. In this context, reintegration is code for Winston's difference is the restoration of the pure positivity of Big Brother. The gesture of protest, Winston's momentary refusal, is crushed with clinical, surgical, machine-tool precision.

With the ingenious novelistic device of newspeak, Orwell shows that the effect of a false totality is annihilation; the diminishment of language to the vanishing point. With newspeak and the ensemble of measures of techno-bureaucratic manipulation and domination, what is annihilated is the consciousness of freedom, rendering the appearance of a Winston, a Spartacus, or a Nat Turner socially impossible. Likewise, in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (1960), Jean Paul Sartre demonstrates the dialectics of the annihilation of freedom as "serialization." And Theodor Adorno, whose centenary was marked in November 2003, shows it in *Negative Dialectics* (1966).

Like Orwell's, Adorno's critique of the totally administered society was directed to the Soviet Union. But before World War II, the first-generation Frankfurt School theorists originally targeted capitalist society after World War I, when a totalitarian economism threatened to fashion that things in the bourgeois mirror of the fulfilled fashion all Adorno eventually criticized (together with Max Horkheimer) as a dialectic of Enlightenment extending back to the *Odyssey*.

But in precisely just this historical extension, Adorno also abandoned the specific, historically determinate mode of the capitalist mode of production. Or in other words, his extension of Marx's categories—such as commodity fetishism—to the level of a trans-epochal dialectic of Enlightenment, executed in the cultural remains of Europe at the onset of a new age of barbarism, as ingenious and insightful as it was, also pays a stiff penalty for its displacement of categories from the critique of political economy to a universalizing, totalizing cultural criticism.

Why this is a mistake becomes apparent only with the comparison of Winston's defeat with historical facts that disclose a different reality. 1984 can come to pass only if freedom can be abolished—the possibility Orwell foresees in common with Adorno. But so chilling a specter is belied by events that call for a different philosophy.

Sartre comes closer because he identifies freedom with consciousness and consciousness with negativity, in order to demonstrate that a totalized totality that destroyed freedom would also destroy itself (in Sartre's ontology, there can be no Totalizer). Still, Sartre too falls short, for reasons that have to do with a similarity between Sartre and Adorno in their respective conversations with Hegel. For Adorno, the critique of Enlightenment ripens into *Negative Dialectics* after Auschwitz, and Auschwitz emblemizes the actual history of the Hegelian Absolute. Adorno and Sartre alike presuppose in the heart of their thought that the Absolute Idea is the sham that unmasks Hegel—their anti-Hegelianism—though each also recognizes that his thought is negative Hegel.

**ADORNO'S NEGATIVE DIALECTICS**

That Nietzsche and not Hegel is the figure for Adorno in the end, also shows why Adorno's centenary holds an undeniable significance, inasmuch as Adorno is so widely taken as a precursor of postmodernism. But outside the court of the mandarins, history happens, and historically, the noteworthy fact is not 1984 but the collapse of the Soviet Union, the intensification of the pace of both the formal and the real subsumption of global political economy under the commodity form, the global reality that Peter Hudis outlines in his essay, "What is new in today's imperialism?" (*N&L*, November 2003), and the emergence of new passions and forces of resistance from below.

A fourth voice needs to enter the philosophical conversation with Orwell, Sartre, and Adorno. Is 1984 the last word, the endgame? Is the Absolute Idea totalitarianism? Can freedom be destroyed? What if the Absolute Idea is the idea of freedom itself? What if the pure positivity of Big Brother cannot vanquish the power of negativity without also destroying itself?

If the point of negative dialectics is to defy the false totalitarianism of the megatomb, epitomized by Adorno's maxim *contra* Hegel that "the whole is the untrue," and elaborated within the framework of a philosophy of non-identity, then we can also observe how this negation is incomplete and as one-sided as the positivity it opposes and in whose shadow it stands.

Adorno's failure of political engagement is hand in glove with his mandarinitism and voluntary confinement to the German academy. By contrast, Sartre, who struggled to break the bourgeois chains that bound him, not only took up but made himself a prime exemplar of the engaged, public intellectual.

Yet as Raya Dunayevskaya shows in her treatment of Sartre in the chapter of *Philosophy and Revolution*

subtitled, "Outsider Looking In," he had to struggle with the question of his relevance, which one could not quite say brought him into the revolution from below, or even within the fold of Gramsci's organic intellectual. He was too much the prisoner of his isolation and alienation (too much the prisoner in the autobiography, *The Words*), despite his unprecedented impact on radical thought in France from the resistance to May 1968.

Sartre was an optimist, if the term can be used non-trivially at all, because he was a humanist. But Adorno was not a humanist but a pessimist. However Sartre the humanist was for a significant number of years in the 1950s a fellow traveler with Stalinism, and it has become impossible in retrospect to deem this ambivalent capitulation to be anything other than a



Workers in the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 burning Stalin's portrait

telling mistake. Optimism and pessimism, well keep bland in the present context, have more profoundly to do with our final assessments of Hegelianism, as humanism, and Nietzsche as the emblematic anti-humanist.

**THE FAILURE OF TOTALITARIANISM**

Marxist-Humanism, on the other hand, is not pessimistic. As the systematic recreation of Marx's Marxism for our time, its starting point, expressed by Dunayevskaya in *Marxism and Freedom*, is that if Marxism is not a philosophy of freedom, it is nothing. Dunayevskaya's is the fourth voice to challenge Orwell, Sartre, and Adorno from another point of view—unsurprisingly, the philosophical, theoretical, and practical achievement of a woman revolution, and a major figure in the development of American feminist theory.

It is not that we are not threatened by the totally administered society (best understood within the conceptual framework of state-capitalism) and by what Sartre seems to think of as the inevitability of serialization. From its inception, capital has aimed to transform humankind into mere appendages to the machine. But the founder of Marxist-Humanism saw very early that the forms of state-capitalism had their work cut out for them and in all likelihood would not succeed in their totalizing objectives.

In "What is new in today's imperialism?" Hudis quotes Dunayevskaya from an essay on "War and Peace" in 1960: "The reason that the capitalistic world, in its division into the five power blocs in World War I, came out of World War II with two and only two, power blocs, nuclearly armed, is that there is just no room for more if this madhouse of 'production for production's sake,' where the dead labor of machines and not the living labor of humans has the decisive voice, is to continue. In fact, there is no room for two."

At first blush, these lines might seem to concede the force and the logical progress of capital as totality. With "no room for two," we seem now to have entered the world of "the One." Capital appears as the Absolute Subject (Marx's *Capital* Vol. 1, chapter 4).

This very integration and concentration of many capitals into a single world capital—institutionally organized by U.S.-led capitalism, militarism, and imperialism, internationalized and globalized through such club-members' only bodies as the G8 nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, and the relevant treaties, like NAFTA, GATT, the failed MAI, and the FTAA—is the

fulfillment of the logic of totalization and the reason behind Adorno's pessimism. Only because this is the appearance (*schein*, not *erscheinung* or showing forth), a phenomenological moment drenched and swept within an absolute movement of becoming, it is also fraught with contradiction, harboring within itself an absolute source of resistance—the movement from practice and the movement from below of new passions and forces—the absolute character of which is assured by the logic of totalization itself.

**SARTRE'S CRITIQUE OF TOTALIZATION**

In the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, Sartre comes close to recognizing the dialectical necessity of this circumstance, that an appearance appearing absolute must be self-defeating, inasmuch as since we are "condemned to be free," absolute serialization and pyramidalization cannot overtake freedom without also overtaking itself. This is the hope he still finds in the transformations of the Soviet Union of the 1950s. But that he has to look to the Soviet Union at all as an apologetic French outsider, if only momentarily, shows how his thought, even in the *Critique*, still finds itself thinking in the shadow of Stalinism—in other words, the totalized totality, the degenerate form of second negation that is really nihilism.

To be clear, Sartre's thought is not Stalinism, because his project of a critique of dialectical reason will not permit a totalizer. But in that case, the correct inference to draw, but which Sartre not allow himself to make, owing to his own interpretation of the Hegelian Absolute, is that the absolute opposite of a totality that cannot be totalized is the absolute negation of pure positivity; or in other words, that the absolute opposite of totalitarianism is freedom.

However, this is not Winston's failed, reintegrated, annihilated freedom. This is the freedom that cannot be annihilated because the very power of the auto-totality, capital as Absolute Subject, requires the voluntary complicity of the subjects it would seek to annihilate.

This is the point where Marxist-Humanism posits revolution—specifically, the revolution in permanence—as the absolute opposite of the absolute it opposes. In this way, the Absolute Idea, as it stands in Hegelian dialectical logic, is the idea of freedom itself, the self-bringing-forth of liberty (as Hegel puts it in the *Philosophy of Mind*), the irrepressible aspiration to be free by the social subjects of history, also drenched and swept up in the absolute movement of becoming.

Hence almost 40 years before the implosion of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, Dunayevskaya was confident—on the dual grounds of a philosophy of freedom profoundly different from Orwell's, Sartre's, or Adorno's, and of the unceasing movements from below—that humans would resist, in movementably large numbers, and could not fail to affirm the very freedom that explodes as the power of the negative.

Moreover Marxist-Humanism holds that this absolutely new beginning is not postponed to a future beyond our present grasp. The new beginning is already underway, as when for example the Iraqi feminist Yanar Mohammed writes to *News & Letters* (November 2003) to say that neither Bush and Haliburton, nor Ba'athism, nor Islamism and the theocratic state is the answer that Iraqi women want: what they want instead, in the second Iraq, is what we want in the second America—to be the free and responsible authors of our own lifeplan, to determine for ourselves, and not to be determined by capital.

The signs of the new society are all around us. But Sartre, staring through his hotel window at working people working on the ground below, might have a skewed vision of what was new. If only he had gone down to talk to them! If only Adorno had listened to the students instead of calling the police. If only Orwell hadn't become the project of Christopher Hitchens and a strange darling among neoconservatives.

The negation of the negation is not the return to the same. Rather, it presses to the higher viewpoint of something new, beyond the horizons of the Bush administration, Blair, Islamic fundamentalism, Ariel Sharon, and the tightening noose of bad ideas that have little or nothing to do with people being free.

If Dunayevskaya criticizes philosophers as great as Sartre and dialecticians as profound as Adorno, it is only because their misreading of Hegel (not without warrant by its widespread acceptance), correlates directly with the understanding they propose of the times we live in.

In Dunayevskaya's philosophy, Marxism is Hegelianism: only, it is a Hegelianism critically transformed and rendered coherent with its own deepest philosophical intention, that is, the intention to present the Absolute Idea as the idea of freedom itself.

The revolutionary Marxist-Humanist philosophy of freedom, once granted the necessity of a philosophy in the first place, furnishes us with the reason why the future is not 1984, the standing possibility of retrogression notwithstanding. The inheritance is first of philosophical in nature, because it takes a philosophy of freedom to hear the voices from below in the movement from practice, and it also takes a philosophy of freedom to achieve the most penetrating explanation of

(Continued on page 9)

## IRAQ, GRENADA & QUESTIONS FOR THE LEFT TODAY

The unique discussion, in the December issue of *N&L*, of the struggle for women's freedom and workers' rights in Iraq—juxtaposed in the same issue with Dunayevskaya's analysis of the U.S. invasion of Grenada—raises some serious questions for the anti-war movement today. Just as opposition to the lies, invasion and occupation of Grenada in 1983 had to include rejection of both the American and Soviet regimes as two sides of the same state-capitalist coin, opposition today has to confront both an unrestrained U.S. permanent war as well as the permanent terrorism and religious repression which are its flip-side. Now as then, the need for a total uprooting of society compels us to ask, "Are you with the people struggling for a totally new way of life?"

Theory must be an integral part of the world it critiques—not isolated from the forces of revolution, but a force in itself, inseparable from revolutionary activity. A relentless critique of everything existing must simultaneously take the form of revolutionary activity and a philosophy of revolution for it to be absolute negativity.

As difficult as it is to demonstrate to the Left today the need to oppose both the occupation and other reactionary forces in Iraq, the Grenadian revolution shows the necessity of making even finer distinctions. Unlike today, there was then more solidarity with an ongoing revolution—but not enough attention was paid to the counter-revolution within the revolution. Twenty years later, what shows the further depths of

the retrogression we face is how few efforts the Left has made to solidarize with progressive groups in Iraq, so that we don't even have the opportunity to address the kind of complex questions that arose in Grenada.

It makes it all the more necessary for Marxist-Humanism to distinguish its critique from the insufficient, unfinished critiques of others on the Left who fall so easily into tail-ending reactionary forces. Today there are many against the war and occupation, for the most diverse reasons. A simple unity, no matter how large the numbers, will not bring about a total negation of this society and the movement towards a new one. The juxtaposed articles in the December issue show the need for a philosophy of revolution, now not later.

Supporter  
New York

The essay on Grenada that was excerpted for the Marxist-Humanist Archives column in the December *N&L* was a tremendously important piece in Dunayevskaya's development of the dialectics of organization and philosophy. She made it clear in that essay that the need for dialogue is not just people talking to each other, but the relationship between theory and practice and the refusal to allow debates to be limited to leadership only. I am glad to see that this important essay has been made available in its entirety in the new book *Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles*.

Computer programmer  
Memphis

The article on abortion was excellent in how it argued the question. Most arguments on the issue that I've read have been written for a pro-choice audience and take that position for granted without ever trying to really argue the issue. This "Woman as Reason" column presented the issues involved clearly.

Steve  
Illinois

### FIGHT SCHWARZENEGGER!

The evening that Arnold Schwarzenegger was inaugurated as governor in Sacramento, over 250 spirited young people—both immigrants and U.S. born—demonstrated at the California State Building for undocumented immigrants' rights to driver's licenses. Korean drummers accompanied the shouts and signs that declared: "Stop state violence against immigrants," "Terminate racism," and "Aquí estamos y no nos vamos." Supporters, who made it clear that they "were here and were not going away," included garment workers organizers, Korean immigrant workers advocates, the multiethnic immigrant workers organization network, ACORN, and many Latino workers.

They were making loud and clear their opposition to the way, in his campaign to recall Gov. Davis, Schwarzenegger was appealing to right-wing conservative Republicans and their fear of immigrants, mostly of color and different cultures, who do the hard labor at poverty rates that they themselves would never do.

Basho  
California

I see an uncanny resemblance between the right-wing populism of Schwarzenegger and what I have seen in many Latin American countries over the years that I have lived there. Massive amounts of money are invested in creating a celebrity image of a "man of the people" who will step in and clean up the mess made by career politicians. Under this smoke screen of propaganda, the neo-liberal corporate agenda is pushed forward with a vengeance. Schwarzenegger has just unveiled his budget, which doesn't begin to touch the outrageous tax advantages of the wealthy and instead proposes Draconian cuts in health, education, municipal services and recreation that will impact drastically on the most vulnerable in California. Add to this his playing of the racist card in repealing the legislation that would have allowed undocumented immigrants the right to driver's licenses. The Democratic leadership has been pathetic in tail-ending and

# READERS' VIEWS

allowing themselves to be google-eyed with his celebrity and snookered at every turn.

Current Californian  
Los Angeles

### NEW LABOR STRUGGLES

The fact that management was finally willing to negotiate a contract to end the seven-week strike against Borders Book and Music store in Ann Arbor, Mich., that began on Nov. 8 was due not only to the perseverance of the strikers, but also to the

tremendous support from local community members and supporters nationwide. Borders has 436 stores nationwide and only one other store in the chain is unionized, but has not yet negotiated a contract.

Under the contract workers will get a 25¢ hourly raise in April—from \$6.50 to \$6.75 for cashiers and from \$7 to \$7.25 for booksellers. While a number of workers said the contract was a sell-out by the union leadership, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 675—inasmuch as the strikers had demanded \$7.95 for entry starting pay, and there is a question about whether the present health benefits will be continued—most of the workers at the store feel it is a victory. The gains barely put the workers above the minimum wage scale, but to have any union contract at all is better than being at the complete mercy of management.

Strike Supporter  
Detroit

The Union of Radical Workers and Writers (URWW) has called for a conference to be held in Minneapolis dedicated to organizing bookstore workers across the country. They want it to coincide with the World Social Forum gathering in Mumbai, India. Called to "Resist Retail Nihilism: A Bookstore Workers Organizing Forum," it will gather bookstore workers from across the continent, including those on strike at the Borders store in Ann Arbor, Mich., as well as workers from Minneapolis, Chicago, and Milwaukee.

Local and regional bookstore workers, retail workers, and the general public are invited to attend any or all of the proposed day-long event. The agenda includes roundtable discussions on the history of bookstore organizing, how to organize and how to build community coalitions. More information is available from their website at <http://www.urww.org> or by contacting URWW via email at [manowak@stkatte.edu](mailto:manowak@stkatte.edu).

Union supporter  
Chicago

### ISSUES OF WAR & PEACE

I appreciated the discussion about the mistaken analogy between the wars in Vietnam and Iraq that some are making today. All they see is a Third World country, the killing of civilians, imperial legacy—so they think Iraq must be like Vietnam. The Editorial in the December issue shows the Left is fooling itself with that dead-end comparison. Now the capture of Hussein is catching some in the Left off guard. They never discuss how he oppressed the Iraqi masses. At the same time, they don't see that this supposed victory over Hussein is not going to let imperialism off the hook.

Brown  
Tennessee

Bush has condemned Saddam Hussein for using chemical weapons on his

own people. That the chemicals were obtained from the U.S. is omitted from the rhetoric. At the same time, using chemical weapons on its citizens is a common occurrence here in the U.S. The police use them all the time in arrests and in their jails. So do State and Federal prisons. I'd like to see more people call this use of pepper spray, mace and tear gas exactly what it is—the use of dangerous chemical weapons on the people.

M.C.  
Nebraska

President Bush is projecting a new American empire similar to the Roman. The Republicans and Democrats both agree on this basic point. Although they now complain that the U.S. is bogged down in Iraq, the Democrats almost all supported the war. And to this day, Republicans and Democrats alike express no difference over the basic idea of an American empire.

It is why I so much appreciate John Alan's point in the new book on *Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles* about Powell and Rice as the Black faces that were placed over U.S. imperialism. Alan proves in that book that it was the Black masses who first opposed U.S. imperialism in 1898 and who remain the most consistent opposition to it today.

Revolutionary lawyer  
Michigan

Your readers might be interested in knowing that the Housmans Peace Diary and World Peace Directory is now off the press and can be ordered (and paid for) on the War Resisters International webshop at <http://wri-irg.org/shop/shop-uk.htm>. It lists close to 2,000 peace and human rights related addresses worldwide and is a useful tool for international networking.

War Resisters' International  
London

### DISPELLING THE DARK

I always knew something wasn't right, but never took the time to find out what it was until I came to prison. For the last 23 months I've been on lockdown in a cell for 23 hours a day. During this time I've had the opportunity to clear my mind of all the consumerism b.s. that was polluting my mind in society. Reading *N&L* has opened my eyes to how the system works and why things are the way they are. I know it's not all I need to know, but it's enough to see that something needs to change. Thank you for helping me gain a better understanding of the world around me. It's surprising how big a difference one newspaper can make.

Voice from the Inside  
Iowa

Many times the stories in *N&L* cover people and events I don't see published anywhere else. It reminds me of a quote from Bertolt Brecht. Translated from the German, it reads: Some there are who live in darkness/ While the others live in light/ We see those who live in daylight/ Those in darkness, out of sight.

I feel that *N&L* brings those in darkness into the daylight.

Ex-postal worker  
Battle Creek, Mich.

Here is a poem I wrote that I call: "You don't Hear Me Though!"

A mind is a terrible thing to waste/ a foul and genocidal hand points the way/ very few are aware of the contradiction there/ the mass of the people don't even care/ dog eat dog is the mentality of today/ we go to war if you stand in my way/ friend or foe, ally or terrorist is the choice that you face/ You choose the path that governs your fate/ beneficiary intellectuals will guide the way/ fabricated intelligence is just a mistake/ propaganda and lies are the American way.

Greg Brown  
California



### WOMEN'S LIBERATION

The article in the December issue by Yanar Muhammed, the founder of the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq, was very

important for understanding what's wrong with much of the Left. It was especially important to have a critique of postmodernism from someone like this. At the National Women's Studies Association conference I attended last year, one woman said she couldn't talk about women's oppression in Iraq because she was a postmodernist. It made me appreciate the way Yanar critiques leftist cultural relativism. She says non-state and state terrorism are equally bad, and comes out strongly against political Islam, which many in the Left here are reluctant to do.

Women's Liberationist  
Memphis

Yanar's description of the situation for women in Iraq demonstrates that nothing can compare to someone speaking for herself and proves the value of *N&L* to provide the space for this.

Longtime *N&L* supporter  
Detroit

The meddling that the U.S. has been doing for a long time has certainly been the proximate cause of a lot of human suffering, as evidenced by the stories in *N&L* about and by the women in Afghanistan and more recently Iraq. I grew up being proud of being an American, but Bush's arrogant attacks on the world have taken away my bragging rights.

Correspondent  
Nebraska

### ABORTION RIGHTS?

I liked the way Terry Moon's article on "What late term abortion ban means" (December *N&L*) pointed out that the right to abortion was not won in the Supreme Court and that we didn't win it on the right to control our own bodies but the narrow right of privacy. That makes it easy to get around it and the anti-abortion people are trying hard, with the Religious Right saying there's no right to privacy in the constitution.

Artemis  
Tennessee

## RACE, PHILOSOPHY AND THE NEEDED AMERICAN REVOLUTION

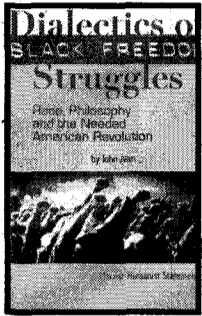
This message is for John Alan: I am a Marxist-Humanist and a long-time fighter for freedom. I want to congratulate you for your book on *Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles*, which is not for the Black people, but for all the people who are fighting for freedom.

It is a powerful book. I do not know how you have been able to cover so much history in so few pages. It shows that it is not the quantity of one's ideas that is valuable. It is their quality. When I was reading your book, I read some of your sentences to my wife to share the power of the dialectic in the way you were able to express in one sentence what another historian might express in more than 300 pages. You were able to do that because you chose to bring out the ideas that have been hidden by the rulers with the sole purpose of covering up the contributions made by Black people to history.

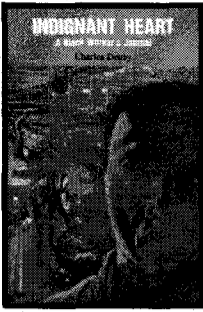
By reading your book we can also see the beauty of Marx and Marxist-Humanism and how different that is from the mockery made by the post-Marx Marxists. It was like beginning to study Marx all over again. We used to study Marx with the passion of youth, but as soon as we joined one or another of the old organizations we learned the pre-fabricated concepts of the vanguard parties. It didn't leave room in our brains to develop our own ideas. It took a continuator of Marx like Raya Dunayevskaya to dig deeply enough into philosophy to remove all that dust and bring us back to Marx's Marxism.

John Alan, you have now removed the dust from the distorted concepts of Black history and brought its beauty back to us.

Longtime radical writer  
California



What made Susan Van Gelder's essay in the December issue of *N&L* about Charles Denby so powerful for me was that she rooted it in his book, *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal* and in



Dunayevskaya's "In Memoriam" to him, as well as in what John Alan wrote in the new book on *Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles*. It was so different from the way some have made it seem as though his relationship to the philosophy of Marxist-

Humanism was only through reading Dunayevskaya's books. That totally misses their day to day working relationship that gave meaning to what Marxist-Humanism calls having a "new relationship between workers and intellectuals."

Longtime reader  
Memphis

### THE IMPORTANCE OF HAITI

The short piece in "Our Life and Times" (December *N&L*) reminding us of the 200th anniversary of the world's first Black republic, born out of an anti-slavery revolution, was very important to have in *N&L*. Even today, it is rare to learn in school that the first revolution to achieve independence was a Black nation. It inspired Hegel to articulate the abstract impetus to freedom. It was important to have it in that issue because the whole issue showed masses striving for something new.

Retired worker  
Detroit

What's in a name? Shakespeare wrote that a rose called by any other name will still smell as sweet, but what does it mean that the Chicago Public School system, under Mayor Richard M. Daley decided to name a high school

after one of the main persons responsible for bringing the enslavement of Africans to this hemisphere? The school I'm talking about is called Las Casas Occupational High School, for the Spanish priest, Barthelemy de Las Casas. It is true that this priest worked to free the indigenous people in the Americas from slave conditions, but what he was advocating was bringing the Africans here for that role instead.

If the Chicago Public School system wanted to name a school after an Adolph Hitler, there would not be a Chicago Public School system. But this is a city ruled by the son of the mayor who had no trouble giving orders to "shoot to maim, shoot to kill." The question I'm asking isn't why the high school in question has the name it was given. The question is can it be changed?

George Wilfrid Smith Jr.  
Chicago

### MARX'S CONCEPT OF INTRINSIC VALUE

It is a challenge to follow Andrew Kliman's arguments in his pamphlet on *Marx's Concept of Intrinsic Value*—especially the third section that stresses that Marx's object is not value or exchange-value but the question of what is a commodity. The pamphlet draws the reader away from all the misconceptions about Marx that exist today.

Reader  
San Francisco

Andrew Kliman's important pamphlet ended before it should have. He left it as "the point of it is subject-object relation between labor and product." I assumed he was going somewhere else with that, like how the workers would go on. Work experience does not prove or disprove Marx's theory. The theoretical part cannot be deduced from personal experience. That's what makes the story of how former *N&L* Labor Editor Felix Martin read *Philosophy and Revolution* while on the line in his factory so important. That's how he became a revolutionary. It wasn't just his experience on the line, but exposure to ideas. I hope

Andrew will produce another edition of his pamphlet in a different form.

David  
California

Studying the pamphlet on Marx's Concept of Intrinsic Value made me want to see it come alive. I'd like to see *News & Letters* conduct some classes on the subject along with the theory of state-capitalism and Chapter I of Capital.

Marxist-Humanist  
Flint, Mich.

### BRINGING DOWN THE WALL

There was an emotional gathering here in Los Angeles to protest against the building of the wall between Israel and Palestine that annexes nearly half of the West Bank and makes the Palestinians live on 12% of what was historic Palestine. The wall is one more proof that the "road map" policy of Bush's government is a faulty peace plan. The event was sponsored by Women in Black and Palestine Aid Society while another group with loudspeakers and flags of U.S. and Israel in hand harassed people coming to the event. One woman speaker said that both of her Jewish parents disappeared in the Warsaw ghetto during World War II, and that we should come together, Jews and Palestinians, to oppose this wall and establish peace between these two war-torn states.

The demonstration ended with one speaker saying "another wall is the virtual wall that is being built in Washington where our freedom is constrained in a land which came about by freedom." She was confronted by another woman in the audience who pointed out that the U.S. was not built on the foundation of freedom but slavery. That contradiction is what grips the Palestinian and Israeli people as well, who oppose the wall but do not see the contradiction within their own thinking. They do not see that war is the natural outcome of capitalism, with its bag full of racism, exploitation and inhumanity whether they're in the Middle East or here at home.

Manel  
California

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### BOOKS

By RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

- The Power of Negativity: Selected Writings on the Dialectic in Hegel and Marx** by Raya Dunayevskaya.....\$24.95
- Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today** 2000 edition. Foreword by Joel Kovel.....\$24.95
- NEW! Philosophy and Revolution: from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao** 30th Anniversary issue, 2003.....\$20 until April (\$24.95 after)
- Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution** 1991 edition. New author's introduction. Foreword by Adrienne Rich.....\$12.95
- Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future** (1996 edition).....\$15.95
- The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism: Selected Writings by Raya Dunayevskaya**.....\$8.50
- The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism: Two Historic-Philosophic Writings by Raya Dunayevskaya** Contains "Presentation on Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy of June 1, 1987," and 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes".....\$3 paperback, \$10 hardcover

By CHARLES DENBY

- Indignant Heart. A Black Worker's Journal** 1989 edition includes Afterword by Raya Dunayevskaya.....\$14.95

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### PAMPHLETS

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- Working Women for Freedom** by Angela Terrano, Marie Dignan, and Mary Holmes.....\$2
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- News and Letters Committees Constitution**.....37¢ postage

- Marxist-Humanist Literature Catalog for 2000-01** A full list of publications (includes many not listed here) available from News and Letters Committees.....60¢ postage

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# Diego Garcia: island at intersection of many struggles

**PORT LOUIS, REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS**—On Diego Garcia is one of the biggest military bases in the world. Maybe the biggest outside the U.S. Tarmac and bombs where coconut palms were. Nuclear warheads and submarines where coral and fish were. Clubhouses for different grades and ranks of military men, where people's tiny homes used to nestle in the trees. Civilian companies raking in money from defense contracts, where people used to de-husk coconuts, dry their fish, cook their turtle eggs.

So that's the first struggle involved: against militarism, to close down the military base on Diego Garcia. Diego Garcia is a key base to the U.S. Armed Forces, when it attacks Iraq and Afghanistan. B-52s take off from there. In order for the Pelindaba Treaty for a Nuclear Arms Free Africa to be signed, the treaty had to contain the infamous "dotted lines" around Diego Garcia. The struggle for a nuclear arms-free Africa goes through the struggle to close down the U.S. base on Diego Garcia.

The people of Diego Garcia, the Chagossians, were forcibly removed from their beloved land. They were tricked off the Islands first, then those who were not tricked, were frightened off (their 1,600 dogs were gassed in front of them), and the rest of them were starved off Diego Garcia and the other islands.

## THE RIGHT TO RETURN

Two thousand Chagossians, who had lived there for generations were forcibly removed over the period 1965-1973, and dumped on the dockside in Port Louis, Mauritius. Just like that. Homeless. Workless. Disoriented. Never to return to their houses, their bedside cupboards, their hearths, their vegetable gardens, their society. Never to return to put flowers on the graves of their relatives and ancestors.

The torture that the Chagossians suffered was inflicted on them by the United Kingdom, the colonizer, and the United States of America, the military base owner. They de-populated the Islands behind the backs of the UN in order to build their base. And they are, with the Bush-Blair axis in power, the most belligerent states on the planet.

For 30 years, the forcible removal of the Chagossians was kept "secret," mainly through the "Official Secrets Act" in the UK, thus hiding the formal proof necessary

for legal actions. Only in the year 2000 could the Chagossians finally win their landmark court case in the UK for the right to return.

What does this kind of secrecy make of the people of Britain? The legal victory of the Chagossians was thanks to the oldest of all human rights documents, the Magna Carta of 1215, which shows the surprising longevity of the landmarks in the struggle for human rights and democracy.

The Chagossians have lost a more recent court case (2003) in the British courts. Now, they are going to appeal against the very bad judgement handed down. The Chagossians also have a reparations case in the U.S. courts for damages involving human rights abuses and genocide. They will not give up. They want to go back to Diego Garcia.

## STRUGGLE FOR FULL DECOLONIZATION

This continued occupation of Diego Garcia means that 20th century decolonization is not yet complete. So, Diego Garcia is the centre of the struggle for the reunification of Mauritius, something important to Mauritians, Chagossians, Rodriguans, Agalegans. Just like all decolonization, it is the concern of everyone that no one be colonized.

In their struggles for their rights, amongst the Chagossians, it has always been the women who have been in the vanguard. On Diego Garcia there was a matrilineal society. The company that ran the islands treated men and women equally at work, for its own reasons, and organized for the older people to look after the children. The women of Diego Garcia have powers that other people brought up in patriarchy do not have, and have transmitted this experience of strength to the women's movement in Mauritius. The struggle of the women of Chagos is a beacon for the worldwide women's movement.

Successive Mauritian governments have used the Diego Garcia issue, and U.S. and British shame about their past actions there, in order to extricate "trade advantages," either for sugar or textiles, either quotas or price guarantees. This is how trade-related issues, so important today with the World Trade Organization and free trade agreements, intersect with the Diego Garcia struggle.

We intend to go to Diego Garcia to confront the U.S.

armed forces at their base. We intend to get the U.S. to close the base, the UK to return its stolen islands, the U.S. to stop receiving stolen goods. We stand by the people of Chagos to be granted the unconditional right to return to the whole of Chagos, including Diego Garcia, and we stand by their right to lifetime compensation and full reparations for the damage they have suffered. We want to see the lagoons, the coral and the land itself back in the hands of nature and caring human beings.

## 'NO U.S. BASES' NETWORK FORMING

We are joining hands with other organizations world-wide in a network called "No U.S. Bases" and calling a meeting to be held at the World Social Forum in Mumbai. Please signify your support (as an organization or an individual) by a short e-mail, letter, telephone call or fax to us. We want a list of well-wishers who can follow our confrontation with the U.S. armed forces when we go to Diego Garcia.

Please let everyone know about what we plan to do. Meanwhile, please raise the issues in this letter with your elected members of parliament, congress, national assembly. Write articles. Put the issue on agendas of trade unions and associations. Link your struggles with ours. We want your moral support, social support, political support, so that we can bring together all these different lines of struggle, and strengthen them all, here and world-wide.

—Lindsey Colleen, for LALIT  
153 Main Road, Grand River North West  
Port Louis, Republic of Mauritius,  
Tel: 230 208 2132 / e-mail: lalitmail@intnet.mu

## BLACK/REDVIEW

(Continued from page 1)

form of chauvinism and was not unreasonable considering the nature of race relations in the early 1900s. There were race riots against African Americans in major cities like Chicago, St. Louis, and Tulsa. There was massive segregation and the return of the KKK with pervasive lynchings in the South.

All political parties, including the Socialists, failed to challenge racism. This was a "crucial test" for Harrison and he left the Socialists while never forgetting the importance of the struggle of labor.

In 1917 he founded the Liberty League with a paper called *The Voice* as part of the whole New Negro movement of the Harlem Renaissance. The Harlem Renaissance that is remembered today is primarily cultural, but what Perry is highlighting through Harrison is that it was a massive social movement. Eventually African Americans organized themselves by the millions in the Garvey Movement. Harrison became an editor of Garvey's paper *The Negro World*.

The two poles usually cited as models for African-American leadership at the time were: either the accommodationism of Booker T. Washington or W.E.B. Du Bois's idea that African Americans should be led by an elite "Talented Tenth." Harrison's support of the Garvey movement reflected a different view of the African-American masses. He called for a "leadership...based not upon the ignorance of the masses but upon their intelligence" (p. 119). He also opposed Du Bois for his support of the U.S. in World War I.

He published in his paper *The Voice* on July 25, 1918, "The Descent of Dr. Du Bois," a critical answer to Du Bois's "Close Ranks" editorial in his magazine *Crisis*. Did Du Bois write this editorial to get a desk captaincy in military intelligence, as some have claimed? Whatever the reason, it caused an intensive debate in the African-American community, and it raised the question of whether Du Bois could be the great leader of African Americans.

## 'SPECIAL GRIEVANCES' SPELLED OUT

What galled Harrison in Du Bois's editorial was the statement "Let us, while this war lasts, forget our special grievances [Harrison's emphasis] and close our ranks, shoulder to shoulder, with our white fellow-citizens..." Harrison responded that "our 'special grievances' [...] consist of lynching, segregation and disfranchisement." Thus, "Negroes of America cannot perceive either their lives, their manhood or their right to vote (which is their political life and liberties) with these things in existence... Instead of the war for democracy making [our special grievances] less necessary, it makes them more so" (p. 171).

In spite of all the gains made since the 1920s, today's calls for a "war for democracy" abroad still sound hollow in the African-American communities, which every day experience the terrorism of police brutality, economic deprivation, and other forms of racism.

Perry stresses that Hubert Harrison always put his faith in the masses. For Harrison, everything comes back to the masses as the source of vitality in culture and art, giving them a real direction, a "backbone of every good cause" (p. 405).

This is an absolutely necessary beginning for comprehension of American history and the self-development of the Idea of freedom. The full articulation of that Idea is a philosophy of liberation, which will not only guarantee that that history is not forgotten, but will point a way to a different future.

## Haiti's struggle for freedom continues

Haiti is Latin America's first Black republic, established 200 years ago in a revolutionary struggle against France. The struggles of its "Black Jacobins" brought the ideas of the French Revolution of 1789-93 to the Americas. The Haitian Revolution inspired liberators throughout Latin America, such as Simon Bolivar, José de San Martín, and Bernardo O'Higgins.

Today the Haitian masses continue to try to free themselves from their masters—both internal enemies and the external power of U.S. imperialism.

In December thousands of Haitians took to the streets in some of the largest political protests in the nation's history. In various parts of the country the protesters confronted the police and military forces, and several were killed. The protests have been directed against the policies of President Jean Bertrand Aristide, who once enjoyed mass support, especially from the working class and the poor.

Large-scale demonstrations have also been held in support of Aristide. Armed attacks have been directed against two independent radio stations and one of them, Radio Metropole, was forced to shut down due to ongoing threats. Haiti is increasingly becoming a nation divided into two.

The U.S. has closed its embassy in Port-au-Prince as a security measure and the Bush administration has advised U.S. citizens not to travel to Haiti. President Hipolito Mejia of the Dominican Republic, Haiti's

neighbor, has ordered that the Dominican-Haitian border be closed and that no Haitian citizen be allowed to cross into the Dominican Republic.

## ARISTIDE IN TROUBLE

Many protesters have called for the resignation of Aristide, blaming him for violence that took place against earlier protesters; many of them were students and businessmen. In addition, many unemployed say the government has mismanaged the economy. Most of Haiti's eight million citizens are unemployed and it is the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere.

Some also accuse the government of using violence to silence newspapers and the media. One well known journalist, Jean Dominique, was killed in April 2002 in front of his radio station. Since then, a number of journalists have been assassinated and others have left the country, claiming that the government wants to end freedom of the press.

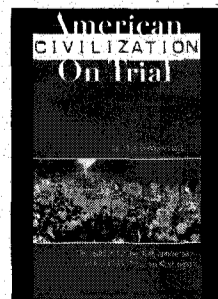
In 1994 Aristide came to power as a popularly elected candidate, supported by a group of left-wing and mass organizations. He fiercely supported liberation theology and worked with poor peasants in the countryside. A priest, he was expelled from his order because of his revolutionary stands.

Aristide was considered to be the country's hope to end years of poverty, corruption and political repression. Since 1803 Haiti has had 58 governments and has

(Continued on page 11)

## American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses As Vanguard

by Raya Dunayevskaya, with appendix by Charles Denby, and "To the People of the United States of America" by Karl Marx



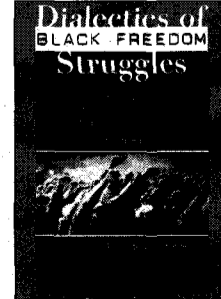
The classic *American Civilization on Trial*, first published in 1963, presents the Black masses in motion as the touchstone of the development of all of American history—from the unfinished revolutions of both 1776 and the Civil War where the slave revolts and Abolitionism wrote

the most glorious pages; through the rise of Populism; through the turning point reached with the coming together of Black and labor movements in the birth of the CIO; to the unfinished revolutions confronting us today.

To order, see page 7

## Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles: Race, Philosophy, and the Needed American Revolution

by John Alan, with an appendix by Raya Dunayevskaya on "Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Grenada"



We know from American history that the Black revolt is ongoing. The Idea of freedom has to be worked out and deepened from within this racist, alienating society. That means taking on all political-theoretic-philosophic tendencies that truncate aspirations for full freedom and self-determination. We can't stop with opposition to this racist society, but must

work out what we are for in terms of the power of the idea of freedom. *Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles* includes chapters on Black opposition to imperialist war, today's Black labor struggles, and the role of the prison-industrial complex, as well as Marxist-Humanist discussions of major historical figures like Frantz Fanon, C.L.R. James, and Maurice Bishop.



**EDITORIAL**

**Free trade, capitalism and catastrophe**

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) went into effect on Jan. 1, 1994, uniting Mexico, the U.S. and Canada into one common market. Indigenous communities in Chiapas rose in revolt, knowing immediately that it would threaten their lives. In the process they heralded a new movement against global capital. In the U.S., however, much of the debate over NAFTA then turned on whether it would result in more or fewer jobs.

Now, on NAFTA's tenth anniversary, it is certain that one impact NAFTA has had on jobs is a qualitative one: relatively good-paying manufacturing jobs moved in great numbers to Mexico where workers were then paid 14.5% of what U.S. workers were getting. NAFTA was at least supposed to help close the gap between U.S. and Mexican workers. Instead, Mexican labor costs have fallen to 11.5% of U.S. costs. The U.S. has lost one in six jobs in its manufacturing sector which continues to shrink.

**BILLS OF GOODS**

The threat of relocation hangs over workers remaining in manufacturing in the U.S. and serves to keep wages and benefits down as well as to stop unionization drives. Many laid-off manufacturing workers have drifted into service sector jobs paying a fraction of previous wages and lacking benefits. The daily news is peppered with stories of workers losing a \$22 an hour job and feeling lucky to land a minimum wage job with no benefits.

NAFTA was just the first of a series of new world trade regimens that include the World Trade Organization and now a proposed extension of NAFTA called the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). Each of these has engendered massive demonstrations all over the world from people asking where is their say in decisions affecting every aspect of their lives from the workplace to the environment. Global integration of capitalist production has made that single party totalitarian state, China, the world's sweatshop. It matches

**Fate of totalitarianism**

(Continued from page 5)

our current world-historical situation and dilemma.

Recasting empirical episodes or historical occurrences as the signs of our times, Dunayevskaya already projected the collapse of the Soviet Union with the workers' uprising in East Berlin in 1953. She tested her theory repeatedly against the onrushing events of the second half of the 20th century in virtually every world-historically significant form. And she was able to achieve this not merely because she was in possession of a revolutionary philosophy of freedom, but because she never lost sight in her indebtedness to Marx of the unequivocal theoretical necessity of holding fast to the capitalist mode of production, as the basis of the bourgeois form of life, the class and other divisions that ravage and destroy the social landscape of human life, the totalizing, totalitarian finality of capital itself, in its false appearance of being the Absolute.

Against this backdrop, Adorno's attenuation of political economy and his abdication of a Marxist outlook on history, his failure to stay close to the point of production of the mode of production that shapes the bourgeois form of life, jointly explain his withdrawal and possibly even his surrender to the impossibility of the absolute idea of freedom, seeing the only possibility of the absolute in the totality that must be totalitarianism.

Orwell's 1984, Sartre's serialization and pyramidization, and Adorno's Auschwitz and megaton bomb can alike be faulted for their one-dimensionality, the truncated dialectics of a one-sidedness that proves to be only the negative mirror of the one-sided positivity it opposes, giving rise to the thought that the counter-revolution could really triumph in unmitigated, unrelenting totalitarianism. This is what the Absolute signifies in one system of signification.

Dunayevskaya's correction repudiates what can only be called this theological redundancy of the Absolute, and then she reposit the absolute idea of freedom in the historical being, the human being, whose being is truly human only as free. The iron cage of capitalism seeks to cage a power that is beyond its iron grip to cage, the unceasing dialectics of freedom.

the horrors, but this time on an unprecedented scale, of the Dickensian conditions of labor, that prompted the first reforms within 19th century capitalism. The *New York Times* dubbed one manufacturing center in China, Yongkang, the "dismemberment capital of the world" because of all the limbs workers there lose to machines.

Now China is the U.S.'s number one manufacturing center as companies continue to abandon Mexico and other low-cost producers in Asia. In the U.S. service work and even professional high-tech jobs are moving to low-waged educated workers in India. In this brave new world economy, workers are being forced to take all the risks whether that means losing their livelihood, their pension, their healthcare or even their lives. Wal-Mart, with its pervasive use of Chinese manufactured goods and a non-union minimum wage work-

force in the U.S., is now expanding into groceries, setting a new standard of exploitation in that area. On the west coast 70,000 unionized grocery workers have been on strike since Oct. 11 because grocery chains seem hell-bent on making workers pay huge co-payments for their health benefits.

**JOBLESS RECOVERY**

The facts on the ground for workers are so dismal that nearly all the Democratic Party candidates running for President have had to disavow their previous support of NAFTA and come out against the FTAA. Nothing, however, stops the ideologues from promoting trade as a panacea. That is so even though December 2003 marked the 41st straight month of decline in manufacturing jobs. Every year under Bush has seen a decline in all jobs, including the past two years of "recovery." The Bush political team began to celebrate a more vigorous economic "recovery" with an 8.2% annual GDP growth rate in December 2003. Then the news came that the U.S. produced virtually no new jobs that month.

This economic growth with little or no job gains is unprecedented and signals intense speed-up as well as the introduction of technology to replace and more thoroughly control workers in production. Trade agreements are really investment agreements to give capital a huge weapon, maximum mobility, against workers, forcing them to work harder to try to save their jobs in the new global context.

An ominous consequence of the new trade agreements is the rolling up of unprecedented and unsustainable U.S. trade deficits of nearly half a trillion dollars a year. Ideologues promoted trade agreements like NAFTA as a way to expand exports and bring down deficits, but instead deficits have expanded many-fold with each new agreement. Bush may be hoping that the bubble caused by a world awash in dollars and easy credit from this trade imbalance will not cause a collapse before the election, but a growing number of experts on global finance are predicting a huge global economic catastrophe, the consequences of which will fall mostly on workers.

**UNCONTROLLABLE CAPITAL**

In his *Communist Manifesto*, written over a century and a half ago, Marx caught the ethos of the ideological prize-fighters for today's trade agreements. "In place of the countless inalienable chartered freedoms," wrote Marx, "the bourgeoisie has set up that single, unconscionable freedom—Free Trade." The integration of the three North American economies and subsequent trade agreements were put in place for the needs of capital against workers, that is, for capital to move freely to avoid meaningful unions, occupational health and safety laws, or environmental controls.

The answer is not just a more representative political democracy as a way to gain control over corporations and global capital. The dictates of a free trade bureaucracy are just another layer built on the undemocratic nature of everyday life in the workplace under capitalism. Capital is uncontrollable because its very nature is to have social power over humans. Things, commodities and capital, are granted freedom of movement in the world because in the workplace capital, machines, dominate living labor. Capital cannot be controlled. It is a social relation that has to be abolished through new human relations—democratic associations built through worker-to-worker solidarity across all boundaries.

**Mountain of U.S. debt**

Two striking developments regarding the economy were reported this month. One was that despite the proclaimed economic "recovery," which has seen some stock market indexes increase by 40% over the past year, almost no new jobs were created in the U.S. in December. The second was the report issued by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Jan. 7 that the U.S.'s massive foreign indebtedness threatens the stability of the entire world economy.

These two developments are closely related. The U.S., which for two decades has been the world's largest debtor nation, continues to suck in massive amounts of foreign capital to fund its trade deficit and federal budget deficit. This continues even as the value of the dollar continues to decline (the dollar has fallen in value against the euro by 25% in the past 18 months). The weaker dollar has the short-term impact of lowering the cost of U.S. exports, which helps explain the modest recovery in the manufacturing sector over the past several months.

Yet while output and profits are up, U.S. manufacturers and other businesses are not hiring new workers because of widespread fears about underlying economic instability.

These fears are well justified. As the IMF noted in its report, the amount of money owed by the U.S. to the rest of the world could total 40% of its economy in a few years. That unprecedented level of indebtedness would drive up the cost of capital worldwide and choke off investment and economic growth around the world.

The IMF is not alone in worrying about the threats to global economic stability engendered by U.S. indebtedness. Some economists warn that if present trends continue, shortages in funding in the Social Security and Medicare system may amount to \$40 trillion by the middle of the century.

—Peter Hudis

**Prison human rights**



Ursula Wislanka / News & Letters

**OAKLAND, CAL.—**On Dec. 10, Human Rights Day, several dozen people appealed to new Governor Schwarzenegger to break with the past. We presented petitions containing thousands of signatures demanding that he abolish the "three strikes" law, stop discrimination against former prisoners, implement real compassionate release, and focus on treatment, not incarceration. Former prisoners, families of prisoners and other prison activists spoke.

**Women in prison write**

I had a pick-me-up as I watched the public television program, POV. It highlighted the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility for women in New York and the Writing Workshop that has been going on since 1998. I'd heard of it before, but this was the first time I got to see it in action. Every women's writing program (and men's) in the U.S. should run that film.

This show was one of the rare television blessings and is so great for a women's prison because they so rarely have any viable programs. **What the women in New Bedford did was write about their lives. Then women like Glenn Close and Rosie Perez performed these writings. There was so much honesty by the women, and they expressed candid and emotional thoughts.**

If more programs in prison around the country were run like that, something could actually be accomplished with them. The most powerful aspect of the program was when the actors performed those writings. It was hard to tell where the actors ended and the women who wrote the pieces began. Powerful images of sadness, love, pain, suffering, and hope. Hope, most of all, even if the women did not realize that.

**The sad thing was to hear the fools in the hallway of my prison talking about this woman or that, not listening to the message—not listening that every one of those writers, those women, were in prison because of someone just like them who looked at them as things, not people.**

It's sad that they can't bring themselves to be as honest as these women—to talk honestly about who they are. I am proud of being a "brother in the struggle" to those writers—not prisoners, but women writers!

—Robert Tallafiero

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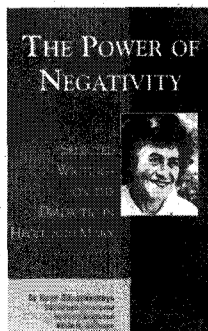
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# Capture of Hussein fails to secure a frayed occupation

(Continued from page 1)

recently appointed by George W. Bush to lobby European governments to forgive the large debts Iraq owes them, once urged those same governments to extend the credits in the first place.

The Bush government may be comfortable with the limited national scope of the proceedings to come. Indeed, the U.S. has become virulently hostile to international criminal tribunals and is pressuring the UN court trying war crimes of the Balkan conflicts to wrap up its work despite the fact that at least two leading perpetrators of Serbian chauvinist violence remain free. That makes it imperative to press for a full accounting of the crimes of both the Ba'ath regime and its supporters abroad.

## U.S. GROPING FOR CONTROL

Iraq is an occupied country. The highest civilian political authority in the land is a U.S.-led political body, the Coalition Provisional Authority. The Authority, headed by L. Paul Bremer, is responsible for economic and security matters, physical reconstruction and the reconstitution of the country's political structure. The Authority has appointed a body called the Iraqi Governing Council that is composed of political and religious figures willing to work with the U.S. and is supposed to represent the foundations of a post-occupation government.

The members of the Governing Council have degrees of support among the population ranging from substantial to little or none at all. Almost all the members are male, and many of them are conservative religious leaders. The only thing that unites them is each one's belief that he or she deserves to be running the country.

In practice, the U.S. military's powers far exceed that of the civilian Authority. Bremer and his staff are isolated inside one of Hussein's old palaces in the capital, while most interactions between Iraqis and Americans involve soldiers.

The U.S. plans for the immediate political future of Iraq have been announced, but not in great detail. The original scheme called for the drafting of a national constitution before political power was handed over. This plan was revised, however, due to the influence of prominent Shia ayatollah Ali Hussein al-Sistani, who pressured for nationwide elections to put a government in place before the writing of a constitution takes place.

The extent of the cleric's influential opposition threatens to derail the entire U.S. plan to hand over formal political power to an Iraqi provisional government in July. The U.S. wants a government chosen by some form of caucuses to take place on a national scale later this year. Ayatollah al-Sistani continues to press

for direct elections and has mobilized large numbers of his followers to demonstrate in his support in Basra and elsewhere. As we go to press, the unrest has prompted the Bush administration to call Bremer to Washington for consultation.

Whatever comes of the U.S. political schemes, it is certain that military forces of the U.S. and its allies will remain in the country to buttress the new government once it is in place. British Foreign Secretary

Jack Straw announced after Tony Blair's brief visit with British forces stationed in the southern city of Basra that he expects his troops to be there for at least three years. The U.S. has been more circumspect in making such estimates, but it is clear that there will be a foreign military presence in Iraq for the foreseeable future.

Other substantial problems the U.S. faces include convincing the UN to give its blessing to the plan for the handover of power and keeping the two Kurdish nationalist parties committed to the project. The parties, rivals since the 1970s, are now acting as a powerful united political force to press for a federal structure for the new Iraq that would preserve the autonomy enjoyed in the Kurdish region since 1991.

Lastly the U.S. faces a serious and persistent effort to harass its forces with snipers, mortar shells and improvised bombs. While the number of fatalities of U.S. soldiers remains relatively low, the steady pace of wounded and demoralized troops may develop into a grievous political and logistical challenge.

A whopping 9,000 or more wounded have been evacuated, a statistic the Pentagon so far kept out of the headlines. And to staunch growing disaffection among soldiers and their families, upwards of 175,000 troops are to be relieved by fresh forces.

## WORKERS, WOMEN STILL IRREPRESSIBLE

The Iraqi people as a whole were relieved to see Hussein's grip over the country broken. From the day that the U.S. army reached Baghdad, however, the forces that had marketed themselves as liberators began to accumulate a growing store of antipathy and mistrust among all sectors of the population.

Despite the U.S. claim that its efforts were aimed at bringing democracy to Iraq, the occupation has in reality frozen into place authoritarian elements of Hussein's regime, as well as emboldened conservative religious forces that had been repressed by the strong anti-Shia bias of the old order.

Among the most flagrant of the occupation moves

was to decree that a 1987 law forbidding unions and collective bargaining in state enterprises was still in force. This restriction, meant to expedite plans to privatize as much as possible of Iraq's oil-driven, state-heavy economy, prevented those workers lucky enough to still be on a payroll from officially combining in their own interests.

Worker organizing is taking place regardless, and a number of unions and workplace committees exist throughout the country. Both managers and the occupation authorities refuse to recognize these organizations, and U.S. soldiers have arrested and otherwise harassed worker leaders. Large-scale organizing for relief and jobs has taken place among the ranks of the unemployed, but these efforts too have met with opposition from the U.S.

Many of these working class organizations were among the large crowds that demonstrated in Baghdad and other cities on Dec. 10, International Human Rights Day, in opposition to the suicide bombings and other forms of terror perpetrated by remnants of the deposed regime.

In addition to the anti-worker content of the occupation, the U.S. reliance on tribal chiefs and conservative religious leaders to provide support for and ensure order in the new political arrangement has legitimized anti-woman attitudes and practices. The post-1991 era of the Ba'ath regime was characterized by legalization of tribal traditions that permitted so-called honor killings of women. The indifference of the U.S. towards the rights of women has ensured that these practices persist in post-Hussein Iraq.

In response, large protests took place in Baghdad on Jan. 13 to protest the increasing degree to which Iraq's communal and religious schisms and the anti-woman prejudices within each community are being codified into law.

The deterioration of everyday security in the capital and elsewhere has further added to a situation in which pressure for the veil and other religious restrictions on women and girls have increased.

These concrete social forces—workers, women, and young people—are struggling to shape a society in which they are able to determine their own futures. Long stifled by the police state of Saddam, the people of Iraq are now finding themselves increasingly opposed to both the violent campaign of the sympathizers of the old regime and the occupation that is oppressing them in new ways.

The trial of the dictator responsible for countless crimes has the potential to open a new era of freedom for the Iraqi people. Those who opposed both the pretext for and execution of the U.S.'s war and who wish to express solidarity with the people of Iraq have a responsibility to do what they can to see that it doesn't simply mark the close of one repressive era and the dawning of a new one. At stake is ultimately the freedom of both the people of Iraq and the U.S.



**Then-Middle East envoy Donald Rumsfeld extends U.S. support to Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein in 1983, tilting toward Iraq during the Iraq-Iran War.**

## Earthquake exposes fault lines in Iranian society

A devastating earthquake Dec. 26 rocked Iran's Kerman province, 1,000 kilometers (600 miles) southeast of the capital, Tehran. It registered 6.3 on the Richter scale. The area most affected was the city of Bam. The quake left up to 85% of Bam's houses and buildings destroyed or beyond repair. The death toll, according to Iranian government figures, is over 35,000, almost half of the city population, with many buried in mass graves. But other sources put the death toll at between 40,000 and 50,000 people. This is the deadliest quake the world has seen since 1990, when 40,000 were killed in Rodbar in Gilan province, located in northern Iran. Bam's historic, 2,000-year-old historic citadel was reduced to rubble.

### TRAGEDY BEYOND NATURE

Who is responsible for the non-natural causes of such an extensive human tragedy? Many believe that if the houses had been built properly, the dead could number 100 or fewer. An earthquake of similar magnitude striking Japan or the U.S. would have many fewer casualties. Why did the Islamic regime neglect to create appropriate housing during its rule over the past 25 years? This shows the complete disregard by the regime toward people's lives and safety.

These people are the ones who executed or jailed revolutionaries or different thinkers and who falsely claimed that they were going to change the miserable conditions people experienced under the past regime of the Shah. We are in the 21st century, but the Islamic Republic remains unprepared for naturally caused catastrophes and acts very slowly to rescue people when they occur.

Many died after surviving for hours and days under the rubble. Some lucky ones were found after a week or two. One man was found after 13 days, and a 97-year-old woman was found after eight days. With these lucky occurrences, the Iranian regime was quick to manipulate people's religious beliefs by declaring that "a miracle had happened."

### EXPLOITING DISASTER

Both Iranian and U.S. rulers were quick to use this tragedy for political propaganda. Iranian conservatives accused Bush and the U.S. of interference in

Iran. The U.S. claimed that, to get help, the Iranian government must embrace democratic reforms and turn over its detainees from Al Qaeda, to which the Iranian government declared that these were internal matters.

Unlike all those manipulations, several humanitarian groups and thousands of ordinary people rushed from all over Iran and abroad to help the survivors. Apart from them, some 84 members of a U.S. relief team have been stationed inside of the devastated city of Bam. Since the 1979-1980 hostage situation, this is the first time that the U.S. officially has a presence in Iran. A U.S. offer to send a second, higher-powered delegation, which would have included Senator Elizabeth Dole and an unnamed Bush family member, was rejected by the Iranian government. It is obvious that no negotiations between the Iranian and U.S. government can compare to the direct action of grassroots people, which mirrors a genuine movement for freedom and independence.

### HELP FROM BELOW

There is a report that lots of supplies and food were sent to Bam, but survivors have not yet received them. Some survivors have tents, but many must share them. The relief effort is very disorganized on the one hand, but on the other hand, the government is trying to control everything including the non-governmental organizations, or NGOs, involved in relief.

Because of the lack of coordination, according to local authorities in Bam, 6,000 children remain missing or unaccounted for. The suspicion is that many of these children will be found with neighbors, friends or families, or extended families. Yet without coordination, the searchers cannot say how many may be found under the rubble or have been kidnapped by gangs to sell. Even so, an estimated 2,000 children have been orphaned by the earthquake. Iran has been flooded with people's offers to adopt Bam's orphans.

Support and solidarity shown by the people of Iran and the world has been unbelievable, a true example of internationalism. However those who want to send money should not to send donations to accounts provided by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Several independent organizations have assumed responsibility for collecting funds for Bam's survivors. Among them are the **Committee to Defend Political Prisoners and Other Thinkers in Iran** (adpoi@hotmail.com); Nobel laureate **Shirin Ebadi's Bam aid fund in Tehran** (Credit Mutuel / Ligue pour la Defense des Droits de l'Homme en Iran / 06045 00070522841 / C C M Paris 15 Montparnasse); and the **Bam Earthquake Emergency Coordinating Committee** (BM Box 8927 / London WC1N 3XX / England).

People are also being encouraged to send financial donations to the **Red Cross**, **UNICEF**, or the **UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs**. The **Canadian Red Cross** promises that donations it receives will not reach the Iranian government.

### LET THE PEOPLE DO RECONSTRUCTION

The Islamic Republic of Iran made the excuse that natural causes were responsible for the many casualties in the 1990 Rodbar earthquake. This time we should not let them get away with that excuse. We need to put pressure on the regime to review standards of construction, especially in earthquake-prone zones. Overcrowded Tehran, with chaotic traffic and pollution, is a quake-prone zone where a tremor of similar magnitude to that in Bam would kill over 700,000. After the Rodbar and Bam tragedies, the Supreme National Security Council is considering moving the capital from Tehran to elsewhere. This may be a good idea, but it does not resolve the main problem of inadequate housing for ordinary people.

While Feb. 20 parliamentary elections are just around the corner, the Islamic Republic of Iran is experiencing extreme pressures from inside and abroad. So-called reformers in the Islamic regime have lost all their reform cards while ordinary people hate the conservatives. It is true that Bam's earthquake brought much death, but at the same time people are reacting by extending solidarity and supporting genuine organizations for the survivors of Bam. While the Islamic republic is slowly crumbling, people are looking for a better future.

—Alireza

# Little done to stem mad cow disease

Mad cows are in the U.S. food supply. "The risk is extremely low," drone beef industry spokespersons and their captive regulators. Behind that bland reassurance lies a systematic effort to avoid bringing the truth to light. Motto: don't look, don't find. Consider:

- Only a small percentage of cattle are tested for mad cow disease, even those with symptoms. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) claims to test 20,000 cows a year but can't even document that measly number.

- Industry-funded and government "experts" constantly claim that pigs and chickens aren't susceptible to mad cow despite experiments that induced it in pigs.

- No studies have shown that people cannot catch the infectious mad cow agent from pigs and chickens. Some studies do suggest a link between CJD, a human brain-wasting disease, and consumption of pork and certain other meats or cheese.

- Claims that only 150 people have contracted mad cow disease rely on the assumption that it can be distinguished from CJD. Experiments cast doubt on that assumption.

- No one knows how many cases of CJD there are, and whether the number has risen. Paul Brown, medical director of the National Institutes of Health, declared: "No one has looked for CJD systematically in the U.S."

- Autopsy studies have shown that from 1% to 13% of people diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease have CJD. The incidence of Alzheimer's has exploded in the last 20 years, afflicting four million, to become the eighth leading cause of death in the U.S.

## DEATHS FROM MAD COW DISEASE

How many people have already died from mad cow disease? The only honest answer is: No one knows.

Don't hold your breath waiting for an honest answer. USDA has put together a committee "to review our investigation and make national recommendations." The first appointee named is William Hueston, who was paid to paragon Oprah Winfrey in the 1998 "food disparagement" lawsuit brought by the beef industry after Oprah swore off hamburgers on TV, having heard her guest Howard Lyman discuss the probability of a mad cow outbreak.

The paltry new regulations announced so far by USDA hardly inspire confidence, especially if they are as little enforced as existing ones. The real tale is told by the sickening practices of the modern factory farming system, such as feeding cow blood to calves instead of milk—a practice still allowed under the new rules.

## MORE PRODUCTION NO MATTER WHAT

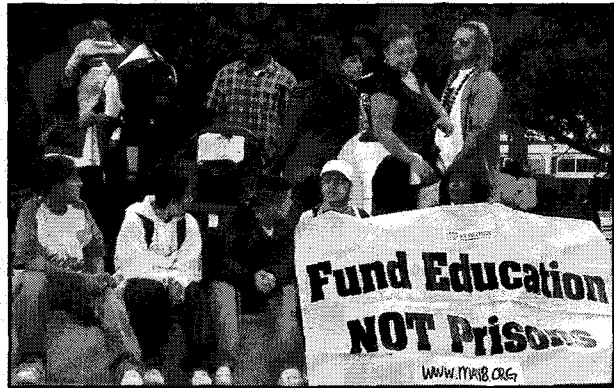
The factory farming system is shaped by capitalism's drive to produce more and more, with complete disregard for the consequences. Turned into machines for

producing meat, milk and eggs, factory-farm animals are crowded together in horrendous conditions, drugged, genetically engineered, and fed sawdust, manure (spreading E. Coli) and animal parts.

The crowded conditions are ideal for breeding diseases: 60% of chicken at supermarkets has salmonella bacteria. To keep the animals alive and producing, they are treated with antibiotics and pesticides. Humans eat the toxic residue, while drug-resistant bacteria breed in the animals. Almost half the antibiotics sold in the U.S. go to poultry, cattle, pigs and fish.

Meat industry spokespersons proclaim with a

## Save Our Schools!



Bay Area students in Schools Not Bombs coalition demonstrated for a better education system last year.

**OAKLAND, CAL.**—Hundreds of parents, students and teachers gathered in Oakland School Board meeting Jan. 8 to protest projected public school closures. Of 13 schools under consideration, five are to be selected for shutdown. The board had hoped to limit discussion to about four of the schools for this first meeting and take up the remainder at subsequent meetings. But outraged Oaklanders were in no mood to be broken up into small, "manageable" groups. Many not even associated with the 13 schools came to make their voices heard and plan to show up at the next meetings.

With the room overflowing, the doors to the school administration building were locked and guarded by a line of cops. The 200 locked-out protesters, mostly Black and Latino, carried on a vigorous rally denouncing Dr. Randolph Ward's "solution" to Oakland Unified School District's insolvency. Ward was appointed to his post by State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell, when the State took over OUSD in June 2003. He has all the authority the school board used to have.

Ward based his closure choices on low enrollment and under-attendance. He dismissed a suggestion to transfer students from overcrowded schools to the small population schools on the grounds that parents would not tolerate sending their kids to other districts.

One Black man gave a possible reason for under-attendance. His children attend Emerson Elementary, a predominantly Black school located in a middle-class, white neighborhood. He told the crowd parents in the neighborhood won't let their kids go to Emerson. He explained that if it were shut down and converted to a charter school, the student body would change to reflect those who can afford such schools.

—David Mizuno'Oto

straight face that mad cow disease is negligible compared to other food-borne illnesses, since each year thousands of people in the U.S. are killed and millions sickened by bacteria in meat and other foods. This same industry has fought hard to slash inspections of meat for all these kinds of disease.

USDA considered a number of precautionary measures against mad cow as far back as 1991, but "the cost to the livestock and rendering industries would be substantial." Feeding cattle remains to farm animals can be 20% cheaper than plant sources of protein.

Disease is an unintended but inevitable consequence of a system that disrupts natural cycles, subordinating everything to the drive for ever-expanding production.

The human toll taken by an industry producing food is a reflection of the upside-down nature of capitalist society, where the process of production is the master of humanity, rather than the other way around. While we're fighting factory farms, let's recognize the need for a radical reorganization of society that makes production subordinate to ecological health and human development.

—Franklin Dmitryev

## On the limits of electoral politics

by Brown Douglas

The support that Howard Dean's presidential campaign is getting from many people in diverse sectors of American society is getting plenty of attention in the bourgeois media. The doctor and former governor of Vermont is known for opposing the war in Iraq, spearheading a successful civil union law for gays and lesbians in Vermont, being pro-choice, and campaigning for some form of a universal health care program, among other things. All of these issues grab the attention of many youth who are not exclusively, but largely involved in social justice movements.

## YOUTH

Here is not the place to argue the pluses and minuses of all of Dean's individual stances as a Democratic candidate for president, and whether or not they all add up to a true leftist running for the White House. A more interesting way of looking at it for those of us fighting for revolutionary social transformation, I think, is to talk about why many youth are so involved in electoral politics this time around and why Dean, by and large, is the one they're so involved with.

## YOUTH AND HOWARD DEAN

Tapping in to broad-based anger at Bush and his administration is something that Dean appears to be doing pretty well. The appeal of a fundamental change in America, its policies, and its society is something that Dean taps in to in order to gain support from many opposed to Bush and also those disenfranchised who don't vote for anyone because they think it's pointless. This appeal goes directly to the heart of many of us yearning for something, anything in the way of institutional change in the direction that the U.S. is going. No one has ever wanted change more than youth, because the nature of our alienation is that we live in a world not made by us.

Digging deeper into the subjectivity of youth can help see why it is these things that Dean is perceived to represent that are drawing many in to electoral politics. But we shouldn't forget that Dean owes his political existence, or at least much of his present popularity, to the social movements whose individuals compose his pool of supporters. For instance, one of the largest anti-war movements before and during the onset of the Iraq war made it possible for Dean's anti-war stance to be heard, not the other way around.

We can't forget that the movement's highpoint was not only its calling for stopping an imperialist attack on an oppressed people, but its implicit and sometimes explicit message that we need a society without Bushes, Saddams, and wars. We need to get back to that point and further develop it rather than risk taking the road towards being co-opted into a political campaign.

## ANYONE BUT BUSH?

The popular and admittedly tempting "anyone but Bush" slogan should make us ask, "Is that good enough for us?" I think that we're selling ourselves short if we answer yes to that question. "Anyone but Bush" is definitely a start. But if we develop the positive side of the repulsion we feel when we think of Bush, I think we'll find that Dean—or anyone else running for President—doesn't personify all of the multi-faceted and diverse wants and needs of youth to be more full human beings taking part in a truly free society.

It's not too idealistic to say that we really need youth to take control and build something opposed to, rather than participating in, the present system. All of the lessons of the 1960s movements would be lost if we accepted that view. The historical truth is that when youth move, leaders have to follow to catch up and ride the wave that we create. We had a new start in 1999 with the rise of the movement against global capital, but have been trying to get back on our feet since the terrorist attacks of September 11. When we talk of presidential candidates and what they can do for us, we should also be thinking of our power and ability to change this society from the bottom up.

## Haiti

(Continued from page 8)

suffered through a series of brutal dictatorships.

Aristide was overthrown by a military coup eight months into his presidency and was forced to live in Venezuela and then the U.S. In 1996 he was brought back to power by American troops. Not long afterward, he began to change his policies towards the poor. He defended globalization and justified the presence of U.S. troops in the region.

In early January a number of civic and political groups called on Haitians to stop paying taxes and engage in a one-day general strike. Schools, big and small business, and banks were closed. One of the leaders of the protest marches, Andre Apaid, said "We can not continue to be giving money to Aristide to pay thugs to attack us." The strike-call received the support of most sectors, except that of public employees, who fear losing their jobs.

Many university students are also opposing the government. One graduate student, Herve Julien, said "We expected justice, transparency and participation from this administration. Instead we got anarchy and corruption."

Despite the protests, Aristide has declared that the opposition is part of the future of the country and are not his enemies. He bases his promise for a better future for Haiti on his demand for \$21 billion in reparations payments from France. But few think that France will honor the demand for reparations.

## A DIVIDED LEGACY

Many leftists in the Caribbean have strongly supported Aristide because of his revolutionary past. But many activists in Haiti are divided in their attitude towards him and have mixed feeling about his presidency and his alliance with the U.S. Many contend that Aristide ceased to listen to the voice of the people from below, deciding instead to follow instructions from the imperialists to the north.

Raya Dunayevskaya addressed the kind of problems currently facing Haiti, when she wrote in regard to the revolution in Grenada in the early 1980s: "When revolutionary methodology is reduced to 'leadership methods,' individual or collective, the very basis not only of theory but of the revolution itself has been lost" ("Lessons of Grenada for Today," *News & Letters*, December 2003). There is no better statement about the problems that have faced even those leaders in Latin America with good intentions.

—Marcos

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## OUR LIFE & TIMES

by Kevin A. Barry

In a dramatic turnabout, India and Pakistan agreed to serious peace negotiations at a Jan. 6 meeting. Pakistan's military ruler, Pervez Musharraf, promised to end support for "terrorism in any manner," here including for the first time the "jihad" in Kashmir, where over 40,000 have died in a guerrilla campaign against Indian rule in this Muslim-majority state. For his part, Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee agreed to achieve a "peaceful settlement" in Kashmir—to actually negotiate on this issue with Pakistan.

Pushed by the U.S., China, and Europe, this rapprochement, if it is not derailed as has happened many times before, could mark a major turning point in global politics. Both countries, which were at the brink of war in 2001-2002, have fought wars in 1947 and 1965 and have had nuclear weapons since 1999.

India today is ruled by the Bharata Janata Party (BJP). Its Hindu revivalist ideology blames Muslims and other "foreigners" for India's problems. In 2002, BJP supporters massacred 2,000 Muslims in Gujarat. Afterwards, some of the ringleaders were slated as candidates by the BJP and went on to win Gujarat state elections by a landslide. The BJP may be looking to moderate its image, however, both at home and abroad; hence the peace diplomacy with Pakistan. Vajpayee hopes his peace diplomacy can help him to win a landslide in elections this spring. With the secular Congress Party in a shambles, the BJP hopes to win a two-thirds majority in parliament, which would allow it to rewrite India's secular constitution.

In contrast, General Musharraf is hardly riding a wave of popular support. Until September 11, 2001, he represented the most hard-line wing of Pakistan's military-intelligence apparatus, both in the "jihad" in Kashmir and in supporting the Taliban and elements of Al Qaeda. In 2001, Musharraf reversed his support of the Taliban under overwhelming U.S. pressure. Since

## Argentina factories

Two years after the economy collapsed, 170 factories employing 10,000 workers remain under worker occupation. These "recoveries" [*recuperadas*] are very popular, especially among the working class. Typically, workers have taken over all functions, including management, sometimes with the technical help of one or two more educated specialists, usually left intellectuals. In most cases, all earn the same salary, which is higher than it was under traditional management.

In other cases, as at the *Chilavert printing company*, which now sports a big poster of Che Guevara, police were sent to dislodge the workers. However, they successfully resisted, aided by people from the surrounding neighborhood. At the *Ghelco company*, workers kicked out 29 managers, whose salaries had accounted for 80% of the firm's payroll! At first, the workers had difficulty with accounting and commercial law, but today they have the plant up and running and have recovered 40% of its previous market.

"Our secret is solidarity," said *Ghelco workers' representative Norberto Morizon (Le Monde 12/9/03)*. At the beginning, they had received help from workers who had taken over the steel mill *Union y Fuerza*. Now *Ghelco* is aiding workers at *Chilavert printing*.

The liberal Peronist government of *Nestor Kirchner* has made a major concession to the working class: the creation of a fund that offers loans to help occupied factories get production going. Clearly, the government is also trying in this way to bring the occupations under its control, just as it and a rival Peronist faction are beginning to fragment and take over the leadership of the "piqueteros" movement of the unemployed.

then, he has arrested a number of Al Qaeda leaders, turning them over to the U.S. On Kashmir, however, he continued to support the jihadists, claiming that this was a totally separate issue.

The U.S. invasion of Iraq cut deeply into Musharraf's already shaky popularity. After he curtailed the activities of the two main secular parties, radical Islamist parties that support the Taliban jumped into the void. In 2002, they won power in local elections in the two provinces bordering Afghanistan. They have forced women behind the veil and closed down a women's shelter that had taken in victims of spousal abuse, forced marriage, and "exchange" of women in compensation for crimes. Many of the top leaders of the former Taliban regime live openly in these provinces.

Since 2001, a large section of the military and the sinister Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) has continued to support the Taliban and will not easily agree to cutting off support for the Kashmir "jihad." Such elements were undoubtedly involved in two assassination attempts against Musharraf in December, both within 200 yards of a military barracks and at a time when his route was supposedly secret. One of the suicide

## Mideast peace plan



Poster on the wall reflects anger of protesters Jan. 2 in Qalqiliya.

A group of unofficial Palestinian and Israeli negotiators unveiled a new peace plan in Geneva in December. Many governments and individuals—from Britain's Prime Minister Tony Blair to South Africa's Nelson Mandela—sent messages of support, but not the Bush administration.

The Geneva Accord, worked out primarily by Yossi Beilin and Yasir Abed Rabbo, agreed to: 1) Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders; 2) Palestinian renunciation of the right of return of the 1948 refugees and their descendants to Israel proper; 3) joint sovereignty of the religious sites in Jerusalem's old city, with international monitors; 4) the creation of a demilitarized but sovereign Palestinian state.

The rightist government in Israel, led by war criminal Ariel Sharon, rejected the plan before it was even announced, as did some elements in the Palestinian nationalist camp and all Islamist factions. It seems to enjoy a great deal of grassroots support, however.

Since 2000, some 2,200 Palestinians and 800 Israelis have been killed during the Second Intifada. The Israeli government has resorted to indiscriminate attacks on civilian areas with tanks and planes, also building a racist wall that cuts deeply into the West Bank. Palestinians have repeatedly targeted civilians with their suicide bombings. All of this has been condemned by international human rights groups.

The U.S. media trumpets reports of Palestinian violence, which has declined considerably in recent months, but it ignores or downplays the strangulation of Palestinian communities by the Israeli government.

bombers was Muhammad Jamil, an Islamist who had fought both in Kashmir and alongside the Taliban. Arrested and sent to Pakistan, he was interrogated and released as supposedly harmless by the ISI.

All this had an eerie resemblance to the assassination of Egypt's Anwar Sadat in 1981. This may not be a coincidence. Al Qaeda's number two leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, who was personally involved in Sadat's assassination, issued a call for Musharraf's overthrow last Sept. 11. In Egypt, al-Zawahiri liked to work through fundamentalist cells within the military.

The U.S. and other global powers have tied themselves closely to Musharraf, hoping he can moderate growing fundamentalist militancy in Pakistan and the region. In fact, his authoritarian and unpopular rule contributes to the growth of fundamentalism.

## Serbian elections

A rare NATO attempt to capture Radovan Karadzic in early January came up short once again, after troops searched Pale in the Bosnian Serb entity. Karadzic, along with General Ratko Mladic, was responsible for the massacre of 8,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys at Srebrenica in 1995.

The biggest Serbian war criminal, Slobodan Milosevic, instigator of genocidal wars that claimed 200,000 lives, is now on trial at The Hague. At home, Serbian neo-fascists placed Milosevic and another war criminal, Vojislav Seselj, on the ballot in the December parliamentary elections. They did even better than expected, with Seselj's Radical Party topping the vote with 27.5%. Milosevic's party did not do as well, but he too won a seat. Fortunately, however, the only seat those two will actually occupy in the near future is either in a jail cell or a courtroom at The Hague.

The democratic movement that ousted Milosevic in 2000 had some deep contradictions even then, with its more nationalist elements in open denial of Serbian war crimes in Bosnia and Kosova. Once in power, its "free market" economic policies did nothing to alleviate mass unemployment and poverty, while continuing corruption at the top also disillusioned supporters. The carefully planned assassination of Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic last April, which eliminated the least nationalist of the major politicians, played no small role in creating an opening for Milosevic and his ilk.

## Central Africa

As 2004 opened, several ethno-religious conflicts in Central Africa came closer to resolution.

- In Burundi, the Tutsi minority (15% of the population) controls the military and is opposed by guerrillas from the Hutu majority in a brutal ethnic war that has claimed 300,000 lives since 1994. Several years of peace negotiations, mediated by South Africa, seem on the verge of creating a coalition government that would represent all factions.

- In Rwanda, the Tutsi minority suffered genocide in 1994, as the world looked on while 800,000 died. Sporadic attacks have continued since then by remnants of the Hutu *genocidaires* based in Congo. A few weeks ago, a top Hutu militia leader laid down his arms. Also, three leaders of the 1994 genocide were convicted of incitement to genocide at the Arusha Tribunal, the first such conviction since the Nuremberg Tribunal of 1946.

- In Sudan, whose southern region borders Congo, Islamist northern military rulers have resorted to slavery and murder against efforts by the largely Christian and animist South to free itself from Islamic sharia law and to achieve other basic rights. This 20-year conflict, which has claimed the lives of two million Sudanese, is now drawing to an end.

## 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 in 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*.