

## WORKSHOP TALKS

### Our McFactories

by Htun Lin

When Reagan became President in 1981, I had just graduated from high school. As an immigrant school kid from Southeast Asia, I had been raised on federally-funded school lunches. In one effort to cut the federal budget, Reagan classified ketchup as a "vegetable" for those school lunches. That was one of the first salvos from the godfather of the right-wing corporate crusade against workers in America.

That crusade is continuing in 2004 with Bush's Chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisers creatively attempting to re-classify extremely low-wage fast-food restaurant workers as part of the "manufacturing" sector. Now workers "manufacture" French fries to go with Reagan's "vegetable."

**One can laugh, but this is not a laughing matter. This bald-headed attempt at reclassifying the American economy comes on the heels of the very same Bush administration economic adviser arrogantly telling reporters a month ago that American manufacturing jobs going overseas is "a good thing" for the economy.**

Apparently, the same out-of-touch bureaucrat now feels compelled to re-classify a whole segment of the American working population in order to boost the jobs domestically, which he said he favored going overseas.

Free-trade fundamentalists like George W. Bush and Thomas Friedman continue to intone that wholesale disappearance of categories of jobs is a good thing because it's a trading up to higher-skilled jobs. Higher end jobs require higher school budgets, not less, just when Bush's policies have resulted in slashed school budgets all across America.

The jobs which now remain in America, jobs which have become highly prized, the ones industry observers note are jobs which are difficult to export, are such hands on jobs as cleaning toilets, cooking food, serving food, caring for children, caring for the sick and perhaps even giving birth. This reality is confirmed by Bush's latest attempt at manipulating these numbers

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## BLACK/REDVIEW

### Bush's Black rightists

by John Alan

Secretary of State Colin Powell and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, are well-known African American members of President Bush's administration. Neither has a constituency in the African-American world. They provide Bush with political cover against those who accuse his administration of acts of racism.

This happened when Colin Powell went to Germany recently to attend a conference on Afghanistan. He decided to answer questions from a group of high school students live on German TV. One of the questions was: "Do you still experience racial discrimination in America?" Powell said that he had faced racial discrimination growing up in America as a child of Jamaican immigrants. He said, "I knew as a young man what I could do or not do in certain parts of the country... You had to behave a certain way if you didn't want to get in trouble."

#### POWELL BLANKS OUT HISTORY

Powell gave those German students a bland description of racism in America. He never said anything about the terror and the dehumanizing nature of racism, or the struggles of the Civil Rights Movement. Instead, Powell told the students that one day in July 1964, a Civil Rights Act was signed into law and: "The next day I went back downtown and went to a restaurant and got a hamburger. I thought it was a great achievement. If I had done that a week earlier, they would have arrested me."

Many of those students had read Michael Moore's book, *Stupid White Men*, one of three books by Moore on Germany's bestseller list. Moore recounts how Bush won the presidential election when his supporters in Florida removed thousands of innocent African-Americans from the voting rolls by falsely claiming they were felons.

Powell didn't want a serious dialogue about racism. According to the press: "With a wry smile, Powell said

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## Siege of Falluja underscores bloody cost of Iraq occupation

by Kevin Michaels

The fierce fighting that erupted in Baghdad, Falluja, and cities of the Shia south of Iraq in early April and the seizing of dozens of foreign civilian personnel has provided solid evidence that events in Iraq are not under the control of the U.S. government. Far from exercising its will militarily, after insisting for months it would never negotiate with its adversaries in Iraq, the U.S. was willing to do so in Falluja.

In the occupation and in the Marine siege of Falluja, the tactics of the Americans and the heavy civilian casualties resulting from the fighting have further alienated a population growing impatient with an occupation that has relieved them with little other than relief from Saddam Hussein's oppressive rule.

Neither do the insurgents speak for Iraq. "The track record of these groups, especially after the collapse of the fascist Baath regime, is clear: they have created a nightmare for Iraqi women, youth and freedom lovers," declared an Iraqi leftist.

Facing George W. Bush and his advisors now, as a nominal hand-over is looming June 30, is an ongoing, armed resistance, a Governing Council with hand-picked members reluctant to stand too close to an increasingly hated occupier, and a growing list of coalition members and other international entities backing away from the administration.

This situation, taken together with revelations produced by the testimonies before the commission investigating the September 11, 2001 attacks on New York and Washington and the rising level of war fatigue among the American people, is producing great anxiety for the Bush administration and its hopes for winning a second term to extend and deepen its socially conservative and pro-business agenda.

#### FIGHTING BREAKS OUT

The rebellions took place on two separate fronts. Residents of the city of Falluja ambushed and brutally killed four American private security professionals, mutilating their bodies in front of cameras. This action provoked an intense reprisal operation by U.S. Marines. Their efforts to take back the city included aerial bombardment and helicopter gunship attacks. Hundreds of civilians, including women and children, were killed in the fighting that effectively and harshly

punished all the city's residents for the actions of the mob that killed the Americans. The intensity of the combat forced at least 60,000 men, women and children to flee the area and seek shelter wherever they could find it.

At the same time, in the Shia areas south of Bagh-



U.S. soldiers rough up resident of Falluja.

dad, followers of the young cleric Moktada al-Sadr, organized into a militia called the Mahdi Army, initiated a well-planned regional insurrection April 4. This action, a response to the earlier heavy-handed closing of al-Sadr's newspaper by the occupation authorities resulted in several of the Shia cities completely escaping U.S. control.

The U.S. authorities reacted strongly, disclosing that an arrest warrant for al-Sadr had been issued long before for responsibility for the murder of Ayatollah Abdul Majid al-Khoei only days after his return from exile and just after the collapse of Hussein's government.

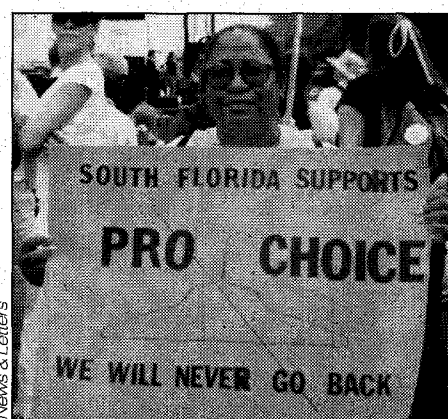
Al-Sadr appears to have massively overplayed his hand and is now in seclusion in the Shia holy city of Najaf. The fighting, however, was an inkling of the worst fear of the Americans, whose precarious arrangement in Iraq absolutely depends on a lack of active opposition

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#### BUSH CHAMPIONS SHARON'S WEST BANK ANNEXATION • PAGE 12

## Women make history in massive rally

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**—The massive turnout for the April 25 March for Women's Lives even stunned the sponsors as busloads of women—students, Latinas, Asians, grandmothers with their daughters and their daughters' daughters—poured out of buses, cars, and subways, so many that the mall in front of the Capitol



could not contain them. It was probably the largest march in U.S. history, happening in one of America's most retrogressive times. Organizers estimated that 1.2 million people—most of

women—were present. Even a mainstream media conservative estimate was 800,000.

This demonstration was much more diverse than the one in 1992. Besides a large showing of women from Central and Latin America and Asia, the NAACP marched with reproductive rights activists for the first time. Women from at least 60 countries, many where abortion is illegal and who know that means women die, came to say that we in the U.S. cannot go back.

Many connections were made by speakers and participants: between poor women who die due to lack of Medicaid funding for abortion and poor women who die due to lack of health insurance; that Bush's global gag rule is responsible for the deaths of thousands of women in other countries; Queer rights activists held signs saying "Queer Rights are Reproductive Rights." Many who demonstrated against the International Monetary Fund the day before came to the march, and Planned Parenthood estimated that one third there were under the age of 35, a statistic that bodes well for the continuation of the movement.

Signs were everywhere. Popular were Planned Parenthood's demanding sex education and over-the-counter emergency contraception. The National Federation of Abortion Providers' demanded funding for abortion for poor women.

But it is the homemade signs that tell the tale. Marchers held signs identifying themselves as Muslims, Catholics (including nuns), Episcopalians, and Pagans. Thousands of signs were critical of George

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## Feminist anti-war message

by Terry Moon

Below is Terry Moon's talk given on the national day of protest against the war in Iraq, March 20, in Memphis.

We all know Bush is a liar. He lied about weapons of mass destruction; he lied about the link between Al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein; and he lied about women. While Bush appropriates the language of feminism as a way to give a moral justification for his immoral wars, he, at the same time, wages war on women worldwide.

Bush used International Women's Day as an excuse to say that his bloody wars that have killed thousands, have given women "new rights and new hopes," and now Iraqi women are no longer the targets of "systematic rape." The exact opposite is true.

Saddam Hussein had women raped and murdered, killing thousands when he practiced genocide against the Kurds and Marsh Arabs, and again when he joined with fundamentalists; but it is the U.S. occupation that has destroyed security within Iraq; that has thrown so many out of work that the population has become impoverished. It is now that rape is systematic within Iraq, and the selling of girls, something not experienced there before, is becoming an epidemic.

The founder of the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq, Yanar Mohammed, said recently: "The saddest part of the occupation is that it permits the imposition of political Islam. Every woman has to be under veil, covered from head to toe, even Christian women. In the mosques, they tell the men that they are responsible for covering the women, and that women are not to work nor go to school beyond the sixth grade.... If people want to practice religion, they should do so personally inside mosques, not through law and government. Nobody deserves to be ruled by a misogynist mentality...."

Middle Eastern women challenge a narrow concept of what peace means, what revolution means. They do it like the Women's Liberation Movement did it here: they challenge the sexism within their own culture. They demand freedom, not only against an outside force, U.S. imperialism, but from their own governments, their own religious fanatics, and often their own families. Peace is more than the absence of war, or the defeat of U.S. imperialism. Freedom is more than a right to vote. Women in the Middle East show this, even though many live under a unique form of personal as well as societal fascism.

In Afghanistan, the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) is the most public face of women's resistance. Recently, a RAWA member spoke in Kabul. She said: "The 'war on terror' toppled the Taliban regime, but it has not removed religious fundamentalism, which is the main cause of misery for Afghan women. In fact, by bringing the warlords back to power, the U.S. has replaced one misogynist fundamentalist regime with another. But then the U.S. never did fight the Taliban to save Afghan women."

As for those who think feminism came from the West, she said: "Feminism does not need to be imported; it has already taken root in Afghanistan. Long before the U.S. bombing, organizations were trying to establish freedom, democracy, secularism and women's rights."

The present moment calls for more than a condemnation of George W. Bush, as evil as he is. It calls for a total view, in which opposition to U.S. imperialism is made inseparable from a critique of reactionary political fundamentalism and a projection of the new human society we are for. Implicit in the struggle of women in the Middle East is that change has to be so deep that all human relationships are transformed into some-

thing new, something truly human.

That tells us that to say no to war, we have to oppose the occupation, and that one of the best ways of opposing the occupation is to give solidarity to the forces fighting for liberation within Iraq, above all women's liberationists.

# WOMAN AS REASON

## Unmask phony clinics

MEMPHIS, TENN.—At last we took the battle to the anti-abortion fanatics instead of always reacting to their latest outrage. On a sunny Saturday, about a dozen members of the Women's Action Coalition (WAC) and News and Letters Committees protested in front of one of the phony abortion clinics here called "Life Choices."

We picked the Saturday before the big March for Women's Lives in Washington to bring attention to the



News & Letters/Terry Moon

vital importance of that action. (See article page 1.) Our signs read: "They Lie Here," "When abortion is illegal, women die," "Lies about abortion offered here," "Life Choices is neither," "No doctors or nurses work here."

As our leaflet said: "anti-abortionists, like those who staff and fund 'Life Choices,' use lies and corrupt methods to try to stop women from controlling our own bodies, including our right to terminate a pregnancy by legal abortion."

"These so-called 'crisis pregnancy centers' (CPC) are now often funded by state and federal funds, yet they exist only by bending the truth and outright lying. They begin the lies by appearing to be a clinic. While 'Life Choices' has an ultrasound machine to boost its image as a medical clinic, no doctors or nurses work there." Our leaflet went on to tell four truths about abortion that CPCs habitually lie about, for example, that abortion causes breast cancer.

While all of us at the demonstration felt great about being there, we were disappointed that more of the Memphis feminist community didn't join us. Perhaps they felt good knowing that we were doing the action and felt they didn't have to be there. That was wrong two ways: First, it would have meant more to everyone driving past had our demonstration been bigger; and second, it would have given us a tremendous lift to see more of our sisters and brothers out there with us.

Our other disappointment was that no press showed up. This was a huge surprise since anything in Memphis having to do with abortion always gets press. It had to be a deliberate decision from our anti-abortion tainted press to ignore this action when they cover all anti-abortion actions, no matter how small.

Despite these setbacks, all of us who did participate are looking forward to doing it again. We just hope that next time, more of our sisters will join the fight.

—Participants

## No rights for prisoners

I am an active Native American woman at Central California Women's Facility (CCWF). I am saddened by the lack of religious rights of Native Americans. The lack of understanding by staff and our warden is unbelievable.

This is weighing heavily on our hearts. The warden denied everything, denies us any creativity in a positive way that is a part of our Native American Heritage: beads, leather, healing supplies, medicine, such as sage, sweetgrass and so on.

We are not allowed to have any sacred items in our cells or even on the property. All are listed as contraband and destroyed. As state prisoners we are supposed to be allowed articles of ceremonial religious significance.

The ability to practice our religion makes a big difference. Attending sweat lodge ceremonies helped me become a person I want to be, one that cares about others. That is why I want to fight for our rights. There are 150 women here who might benefit from a Lodge.

We are trying to organize on our own. We established a prayer circle that meets once a week. We also started a recovery program for ourselves. We talk about our drug uses and try to get our self-esteem up. We need to keep doing what we can for ourselves.

—T. "Sammy" Pierce

## Afghan letter to the Left

by Sonali Kolhatkar

Sonali Kolhatkar is the Co-Director of Afghan Women's Mission. (sonali@afghanwomensmission.org) Below we print excerpts of Kolhatkar's letter. The full text was published April 8, 2004 at: www.common-dreams.org.

Afghanistan has been devastated by the U.S. military as well as neglected by the anti-war movement... Afghan women in particular are paying the greatest price for U.S. policies. Their emancipation was upheld as one reason for going to war, but two years later they are as shackled by the same warlords and the same hunger and insecurity as they were before and during the Taliban's reign. For some women, particularly in cities and villages outside the relatively safer Kabul, things are worse. For example, tens of women in the Western Afghan province of Herat have been committing suicide by self-immolation.

So what can anti-war activists do? Firstly, stay as informed about the U.S.'s role in Afghanistan as you can and demand the media cover Afghanistan. I have noticed more coverage in the mainstream media of Afghanistan than in the alternative media: this is shameful....

Secondly, look to Afghans themselves for what they want for their country. The Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan... who are on the forefront of anti-fundamentalist and anti-imperialist work, have been calling for a UN intervention and peace keeping forces for years. They have asked, sensibly, for the disarmament of warlords who rule the countryside with impunity and foreign backing....

Thirdly, demand that the U.S. spend proportionately as much on humanitarian aid in Afghanistan as it does in other conflict situations....

Fourthly, no matter who is in power, remind them that you are watching their policies in Afghanistan. Demand that anti-war groups include Afghanistan in their literature and signs, that every time an anti-war rally is held, there are prominent speakers who address Afghanistan.

And finally, show sensitivity and respect to the people of Afghanistan by not exploiting their victimhood. There are far too many books and movies depicting Afghans and particularly Afghan women as mute, blue burka-clad figures who are helpless.

Empire is being built on the backs of Afghans and it is up to us to recognize it and address it.

## Women make history

Continued from page 1

Bush: "Republicans Demonize, Oppress, and Kill Women," "Bush Out of Iraq," "Bush out of the White House," and "Bush and Osama Are Anti-Choice." Youth held signs reading: "For Our Future, For Our Freedom, For Our Movement YOUTH ARE PRO-CHOICE." One sign read "No Forced Sterilization," and the graphic of a coat hanger with a slash through it was seen everywhere.

That graphic caught the mood of the crowd, a fierce determination not to go back to the days of back-alley butcher abortions, as well as outrage over the ground that has already been lost. We denounced the loss of abortion rights for poor women, mourned together those teenagers who died because of parental control laws.

Signs displayed a comfort with sexuality that horrifies the religious right: "The Only Bush I Trust is My Own" and "Vagina is Not a Dirty Word," in response to those who tried to censor "The Vagina Monologues." "No Trespassing" signs had pictures of uteruses or silhouettes of a woman, and one woman dressed as a giant vagina.

About 50 religious right adherents—all white—showed up. They stood on the sidewalk along a small part of the parade. We often stood next to, or in front of them, covering their signs with ours and drowning out their chants with our own. Some had written with chalk on the asphalt bizarre lies such as: women who have abortions are more likely to suffer mental and eating disorders, stay in abusive relationships, and "become a burden to society." A fanatic in military fatigues gave the lie to the anti-abortionists' claim that they are "pro-life." His very large sign praised Jim Kopp, the man who murdered abortion provider Dr. Bernard Slepian.

Some women fanatics' signs said, "I Regret My Abortion." A pro-choice marcher spoke for many of us by yelling back, "That doesn't mean that other women regret theirs!"

One critique of this magnificent march is of the many politicians there, especially John Kerry supporters, who want to ride this huge wave of energy and try to channel it into a narrow definition of politics, that is, all we need is to elect Kerry. One can always vote for Kerry, or rather vote against Bush, but to reduce this historic demonstration to electoral politics is a crime. The depth and breadth, the size and militancy of this demonstration reveal a revitalized, youthful, vibrant, multi-ethnic, multi-racial women's movement, determined to transform our present oppressive reality.

—Adele and Brown

# WOMEN WORLDWIDE

by Mary Jo Grey

Three teenage girls from the Black and immigrant Dorchester neighborhood of Boston, fed up with rap and hip-hop's bad-mouthing of women and girls, launched Radio LOG 540 AM, an all-girl station broadcasting to a square-mile area of their neighborhood. It quickly expanded to 12 girls, from 13 to 18, who for three hours after school write and read news, public service announcements, conduct interviews and chat sessions, as well as play music—all sending a positive message to girls and young women. They insist their goal is not to knock rap, but to offer alternatives. They emphasize the power of words and how they "seep into your spirit."

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Mothers of the New York Disappeared plan a protest meeting in Buenos Aires with the Argentina Mothers/Grandmothers of the Disappeared against human rights violations in the U.S., including New York's rigid and racist drug laws. The New York organization was inspired by the Argentinean women whose years of protest were instrumental in toppling their brutal military government. The New York group is working to end laws that penalize first offenders with mandatory 15 years to life prison sentences and deportation of all non-citizens.



# Historic Kosova miners' strike, 15 years after

**MITROVICA, KOSOVA**—Liz Leicester, from Camden UNISON, and myself were invited by the Kosova miners' union to attend a meeting commemorating the 15th anniversary of the Kosova miners' underground strike. The meeting was later cancelled. Several thousand non-working miners were threatening to protest, and the meeting organizers were scared that any commemoration of 1989 could ignite mass protests.

I was very surprised that I was invited to do an interview on Belgrade radio. In a half hour interview I talked about Milosevic's role in the war in Bosnia, about Tuzla's struggle against ethnic division and about my visit to Kosova in 1996. The journalist asked me about the 1989 Kosova miners' strike. He was clearly surprised that the main demand of the Albanian miners had been the defense of the Yugoslav constitution against Milosevic's nationalism.

In 1974 Tito had given Kosova the same status as the other Federal Republics. The miners went on hunger strike when Milosevic tore up this constitution and re-incorporated Kosova into Serbia. I told the journalist that the Kosova Albanian miners were the last workers to try to defend Yugoslavia.

The Kosova miners who visited Durham miners in 1990 warned that if Milosevic were not stopped, Yugoslavia would explode. Leaders of all the other Republics supported Milosevic's attack on Kosova. They hoped that his nationalist appetite would be satisfied. As one Kosova miner told me, Yugoslavia died with Tito—proof of it was when no other Yugoslav workers supported the Kosova miners' strike.

## DIVIDED MITROVICA

The bus to North Mitrovica stops a few meters from a bridge in the middle of town. I get off and head for the bridge for South Mitrovica. Anyone can cross this bridge, but apart from UN personnel virtually no one crosses on foot. This is the dividing line between the Serb and Albanian populations. All the land north of the river, all the way to Serbia proper, is inhabited by Serbs—no Albanians. This was not the way it used to be, but the way it has ended up after the war with peo-

ple driven from their homes.

**Trepca was one of the biggest Yugoslav industrial concerns, and it dominates Mitrovica. Rather, the spirit of the miners dominates it, very much like Tuzla in Bosnia. It is a workers' town.**

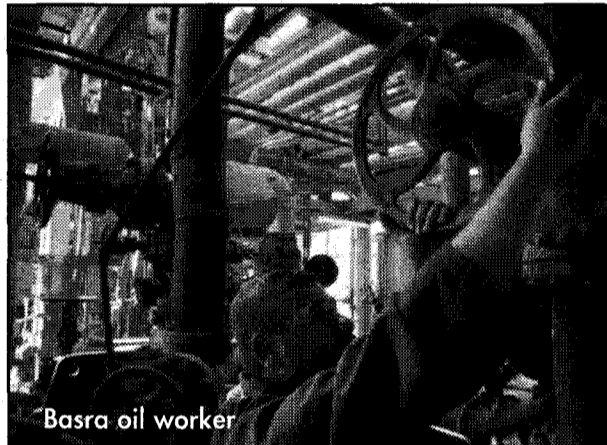
The Trepca company mineral mines are dotted across Kosova and Serbia. Mining has gone on from pre-Roman times, but industrialized mining was begun by a British company in the 1930s at the Stari Turg (Old Star) mine just outside Mitrovica. When I first visited Stari Turg in 1996, I had to do so under cover of darkness. All Albanian miners had been sacked after the protests in 1989 and 1990. On my second visit in 1999 the miners were still locked out.

Four years after the NATO intervention, no production has taken place. About 1,150 people have returned to work in the south of Kosova and a similar number in the north—about 30% of the old workforce. In the south, 2,750 people have accepted early retirement (on a pension of 35 Euros a month, while the union is pushing for 79 Euro), and 3,000 are waiting to return to work. The average pay of those working is 200 Euros a month.

The celebrations we had been invited to were cancelled, but the miners commemorated their history in

## Iraqi labor defense

**NEW YORK**—On March 30, Issam Shukri, an Iraqi labor organizer and a founder of the Union of Unemployed in Iraq (UII)—whose members number over



Basra oil worker

150,000—spoke on U.S. repression and the struggle of Iraqi workers under occupation at AFSCME Local 1707. He related the history of the Iraqi workers' movement from its beginnings at the end of the 19th century to the problems facing it today.

Shukri recounted some of the strikes organized since last summer demanding jobs and unemployment benefits, including the now famous 45-day sit-in strike held across from Paul Bremer's headquarters. With broken infrastructure in Iraq and an unemployment rate near 75% of the adult workforce, there are many aspects of life under the occupation that are far worse than the 12 years under UN sanctions.

Shukri also spoke about recent activities of the UII to call attention to workers' struggles in Iraq and to galvanize international support. These have included meeting with the International Labor Organization in Geneva to expose the violations of workers' rights committed by the Governing Council and solidarizing with U.S. Labor Against the War (USLAW) and several European worker organizations.

Shukri took this opportunity to describe the new Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions in Iraq (FWCUI) made up of dozens of local unions. This organization is meant to counter Baath Party-dominated organizations, yellow unions, and official labor organizations, such as the one empowered by the Governing Council's Resolution 3, which passed in January.

**The FWCUI, which works closely with the UII opposes any actions that abrogate the workers' right to represent themselves and any efforts of those in power to split workers along religious, ethnic and tribal lines, Shukri explained. The FWCUI also drafted a list of immediate labor demands. More information about their activities and positions can be found online at <http://www.uuiiraq.org/>.**

While the event was endorsed by several organizations, including News and Letters Committees, and attended by several interested workers and activists, the turnout was meager in light of the importance today of solidarity with the other Iraqis. Noticeably absent were representatives or participants from the broader anti-war movement, which seemed not to see this event as an opportunity to maintain the momentum gained by the large March 20 demonstration.

The discussion session unfortunately came to be dominated by politicos from a couple of Trotskyist organizations, who challenged the views of the speaker by telling the audience that whoever was pointing guns at the occupying forces was on the side of the workers, for the time being. Pointing out the insufficiency of such a viewpoint has become crucial with the recent intensification of fighting in Iraq subsequent to this meeting.

What remains clear is the importance of solidarity with workers and women in Iraq in their struggle to forge a new human society. This must be concretized in the coming months as the uncertain future of Iraq looms on the horizon.

—Supporter

their own way by having a mass meeting to discuss the problems of the non-working people. There had been a strike last September. The working people had gone on strike in support of the non-workers. Now a resolution to do the same again was being discussed.

## WORKING VERSUS NON-WORKING

There is great solidarity but also friction between the working and non-working men. Those working fear strike action will jeopardize the planned resumption of production but they stick by their fellow miners.

In the end a strike is averted by a management promise to try to do something by the end of March. They hope health checks will ease the situation. In the main processing factory a new health centre for Trepca workers is examining all workers to see who is fit to work, as well as treating all ailments. After this process it will examine all non-working people. So far, 110 of 380 workers have been found unfit to work and will be pensioned off (35 Euros a month).

The union was formed after the strike—in 1990. The president of Trepca miners, Ismet Behrami, explains that there are now two Trepca companies: One has its HQ in Belgrade (Milosevic took state control of Trepca in preparation for privatization) and one headed by a German.

The miners are in favor of privatization, as all around them they see that the only firms that operate are the ones that have been privatized. But no one will buy or invest in Trepca as long as the ownership is disputed. The mineral reserves are large and there are good markets for the ores. But while all the arguments go on, most of the miners live in destitution.

We met with the Bahri Shabani, president of the Union of Independent Unions of Kosova (UIUK). Himself a former Trepca employee, Shabani is currently involved in big battles over privatization. As he explained, over the last 15 years many people in Kosova were unemployed. Those who actually have had jobs are middle aged and unlikely to get new jobs.

The UIUK is fighting for compulsory collective agreements with the private sector and an agreed pension for all those over 50 who have been employed by publicly owned companies. With unemployment at between 60% and 70% in Kosova and an average age of 28 years old, there are few jobs for this young population, a major challenge for the trade unions.

## GOAL OF MULTI-ETHNIC KOSOVA

The vague hope for better things centers around this perspective of an independent Kosova—and always expressed as a multi-ethnic Kosova.

But this hope has great obstacles: Great Power opposition to an independent Kosova, and the fact that in Serbia the ultra-nationalists are gaining power. No politician in Serbia would dare express support for independence. Indeed, just after my visit the new Serbian PM, Kosturnica, called for the division of Kosova and incorporation of the Serbian areas into Serbia. The Serbian population in Kosova is the most ultra-nationalist of all, but those who aren't would open their mouths at their peril.

Over and over we are told that all are welcome to return, to live freely, except those who were committed crimes. The Roma, those tragic people, were used by the Serbian authorities to do their dirty work. But I saw Roma women and children in Mitrovica not getting a second glance. Serb villages to the south of Mitrovica were guarded and protected by UN troops last time I was here. Now the troops are gone. No one bothers the inhabitants.

—Bob Myers

## UK postal workers on wildcat strike

**OXFORD, ENGLAND**—Postal workers have been on wildcat strike in Oxford. The strike, which as of the beginning of April is now into its third week, is a protest against bullying and intimidation by one manager and a small group of workers allied with him. This group is made up of Asians, but other Asian workers who are not part of this clique are supporting the strike.

One postal worker reported she had witnessed a colleague, who is a Rastafarian, assaulted by one of the group. She has heard them threaten support for Al Qaeda. Strikers have been threatened, including being asked which schools their children go to.

The strike has had a significant impact on the local economy, with millions of items of mail held up.

According to the local press, management has now agreed to disperse the group, but is insisting that they will impose an overtime ban as a penalty on the strikers. As I know from my own days at the Post Office, many postal workers rely on overtime to boost their earnings, and of course now they are suffering from lost wages during the strike.

—Richard Bunting

## WORKSHOP TALKS

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in his version of reality.

As Bush substitutes an idea in his head for reality, workers, whose laboring activity does indeed transform reality and create everything out of the natural environment, crises multiply.

## WAR ON WORKERS

That is so in Iraq, where worker-soldiers were sent to war on the false pretext of weapons of mass destruction being there. These soldiers now are basically drafted beyond their commitment and continue to die in an occupation from which they see no exit.

That is so among us health care workers who are struggling to provide health care when we are accountable to bean counters. That is so among the legions of manufacturers of hamburgers and pizzas who have to survive on poverty wages. Many of the new "manufacturing workers" come from the ranks of the old well-paid manufacturing workers.

Whether the boss is Bush or our immediate boss, what is behind the struggle to reclassify jobs is their ongoing war against workers. In my own shop, for the last two years, when a new mandate to collect health-care co-pays from patient admissions came into effect, we were promised that they would consider re-classifying our jobs. That hasn't happened.

Every time we raise it again with our boss, he promptly dismisses us to inquire with the union. That strategy works for them because our shop is part of a labor-management "partnership."

Naturally many economists and business reporters, who have seen the loss of about 3 million manufacturing jobs since August 2000, are up in arms over such a blasphemous interpretation of the dichotomy between manufacturing and service sectors of the economy. They know that one has to have a yardstick to measure economic performance. However, whether they are pure ideologues for capitalism, or interested in reliable statistics, some economists miss the essence of the present proliferation of crises.

## SQUEEZING WORKERS

The ongoing assault on workers' lives, whether in war, diminishing health care benefits, or a collapsing standard of living, are all part of an ongoing effort to extract more and more unpaid hours out of living labor. That means increasing that unpaid portion of the work day, all the value that is created beyond what the worker gets for his own sustenance. It has become increasingly apparent that what is subtracted from our personal income and well-being is being turned over to the corporate elites' coffers and Bush's permanent war.

As we continue to suffer, Bush continues to lie to the nation with his version of reality—that his war and his tax cuts are for our benefit. His version of reality is believable in the same way that hamburger-making is manufacturing or that ketchup is a vegetable. It is from this perspective that we have to rethink what constitutes a viable alternative to the present cycle of war and terror.

**MARX'S CONCEPT OF INTRINSIC VALUE**  
On the unity of value, fetishism, and the analysis of capitalist production in Capital

To order, see Page 7

## FROM THE WRITINGS OF RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

### EDITORS NOTE

The following essay by Raya Dunayevskaya was first published in 1965 in *Socialist Humanism*, edited by Erich Fromm (New York: Doubleday), which contained a number of studies on Marx's humanism by scholars and activists worldwide. We will continue publishing this crucial study of Marx's new continent of thought in the next two issues of *News & Letters* as part of our ongoing discussions of Marx's critique of capital in our classes on "Alternatives to Capitalism" (See announcement).

Footnotes by the author are indicated by "RD"; all others are by the editors. The editors have provided references to all quotes from Marx's *Capital* in the text. "MCIK" refers to Marx's *Capital*, Vol. I, translated by Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (Chicago: Charles Kerr & Co, 1906). "MCIF" refers to the more recent edition of *Capital*, Vol. I, translated by Ben Fowkes (New York: Vintage Books, 1975).

### PART I

It was during the decade of the First International (1864-74)—a decade that saw both the Civil War in America and the Paris Commune—that Marx restructured(1) the many drafts of *Capital* and published the first two editions of Volume I.

*Capital* sets forth a new concept of theory, a new dialectical relationship between theory and practice, and a shift of emphasis from the idea of history as the history of theory to the idea of history as the history of production. It signifies Marx's "return" to his own philosophic humanism after more than a decade of concentration on economics and empiric studies of the class struggles of his day. Not surprisingly, this return is on a more concrete level, which, rather than diminishing Marx's original humanist concepts, deepens them.

This is obvious in the section "The Working Day," which Marx first decided to write in 1866 under the impact of the mass movement for the shortening of the working day following the conclusion of the Civil War in the United States. It is obvious in "The Fetishism of Commodities," which Marx informs us he changed "in a significant manner"(2) after the Paris Commune. It is obvious in the original categories he created for his economic analysis and the creative practice of the Hegelian dialectic.

Humanism gives Marx's magnum opus its force and direction. Yet most Western scholars of Marxism are content either to leave the relationship between the now famous *Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*(3) and *Capital* implicit, or to make the continuity explicit only insofar as the ethical foundations of Marxism are concerned.(4)

This leaves the door wide open for those who wish to transform Marx's humanism, both as philosophy and as historic fact, into an abstract which would cover up concrete economic exploitation, actual lack of political freedom, and the need to abolish the conditions preventing "realization" of Marx's philosophy, i.e., the reunification of mental and manual abilities in the individual himself, the "all-rounded" individual who is the body and soul of Marx's humanism.

The 1844 *Manuscripts* didn't just "pave the way" for "scientific socialism." Humanism wasn't just a stage

1. In his Preface to Volume II of Marx's *Capital* (Kerr edition), Friedrich Engels lists the original manuscripts in such a way that the pagination tells the story of the restructuring. For my analysis of this, see pages 87-91 of *Marxism and Freedom* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1958, 1964).—RD

2. See Marx's Afterword to the French edition of *Capital*, in *Capital*, Vol. I (New York: Vintage Books, 1975).

3. Marx's 1844 *Manuscripts* are now available in several English translations, including one issued in Moscow, but the one more readily available here is by T. B. Bottomore, and is included in *Marx's Concept of Man* by Erich Fromm. (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1961) Outside of the essay on "Alienated Labor," I am, however, using my own translation and therefore not paginating the references.—RD

4. See *The Ethical Foundations of Marxism* by Eugene Kamenka. (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962).—RD

# 'Marx's Humanism Today'

Marx "passed through" on his voyage of discovery to "scientific economics" or "real revolutionary politics." Humanist philosophy is the very foundation of the integral unity of Marxian theory, which cannot be fragmented into "economics," "politics," "sociology," much less identified with the Stalinist monolithic creation, held onto so firmly by Khrushchev and Mao Zedong.

Of all the editions of *Capital*, from its first publication in 1867 until the last before Marx died in 1883, the French edition (1872-75) alone contained the changes that had, as Marx put it in the Afterword, "scientific value independent of the original."

The revolutionary action of the Parisian masses in "storming the heavens"(5) and taking destiny into their own hands clarified for Marx the two most fundamental theoretical problems: the accumulation of capital, and the fetishism of commodities. Just as his analysis of the struggles to shorten the working day became pivotal to the structure of *Capital*, so these additions became crucial for its spirit, i.e., for the future inherent in the present.

The changes were of two kinds. One was tantamount to a prediction of what we today call state capitalism—the ultimate development of the law of concentration and centralization of capital "in the hands of one single capitalist, or those of one single corporation" [MCIK, p. 688, MCIF, p. 779]. The second was the illumination of the fetishism of commodities inherent in the value-form as emanating from "the form itself" [MCIK p. 82, MCIF, p. 164]. Marx concluded that only freely associated labor can abrogate the law of value; only "freely associated men" [MCIK p. 92, MCIF, p. 173] can strip the fetishism from commodities.

At this moment in history, when established state powers claim "to practice" or to base themselves on Marxism, it is essential to re-establish what Marx himself meant by practice. It was freedom. The notion of freedom, always Marx's point of departure and of return, is concretized through a most painstaking and original analysis of the "inexorable laws" of capitalist development. This discloses how the proletariat, as "substance" (or mere object of an exploitative society) becomes "subject," i.e., revolts against the conditions of alienated labor, thereby achieving "the negation of the negation," or self-emancipation.

In a word, *Capital* is the culmination of the 25 years of labor that began when Marx, in 1843, first broke with bourgeois society and melded what he considered its highest achievements in thought—English political economy, French revolutionary doctrine, Hegelian philosophy—into a theory of liberation, a new philosophy of human activity which he called "a thoroughgoing Naturalism or Humanism."

The Hungarian Revolution of 1956(6) transformed Marx's humanism from an academic debate to a question of life and death. Interest in it intensified the following year when the "100 Flowers" blossomed briefly in China before the totalitarian state caused them to wither abruptly.(7) From 1958 to 1961 the African revolutions gave proof of a new, third world whose underlying philosophy, again, was humanism.(8)

The Cold War and McCarthyism helped keep the United States isolated from the West European redis-

5. *The Civil War in France*, by Karl Marx, is widely available in many languages both as a separate pamphlet and in Marx's *Selected Works* and *Collected Works*.—RD

6. For Dunayevskaya's writings on the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, see "Spontaneity of Action and Organization of Thought: In Memoriam to the Hungarian Revolution," Political Letter of Sept. 17, 1961, in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, 2954-2956. See also chapter 18 of *Marxism and Freedom*, "Two Kinds of Subjectivity."

7. The indispensable book for the English reader is *The Hundred Flowers Campaign and the Chinese Intellectuals* by Roderick MacFarquhar (New York: Frederick A. Praeger,

1960). The voices of revolt in China should then be compared with those in Eastern Europe. By now the books, not to mention pamphlets and articles, on the Hungarian Revolution are legion. A few which I consider important for tracing the role that Marx's humanism played are the following: *Imre Nagy on Communism* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1957); François Fejtö, *Behind the Rape of Hungary* (New York: David McKay Company, 1957); *The Hungarian Revolution*, A White Book edited by Melvin J. Lasky (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1957); *Bitter Harvest*, edited by Edmund O. Stillman with Introduction by François Bondy (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1959). For eyewitness reports, and especially those relating to the Workers' Councils, the issues of *The Review* (periodical published by the Imre Nagy Institute, Brussels) is quintessential. Some reports also appeared in the magazine *East Europe*, which did a competent job on Poland, especially in the publication of the debate on Marx's humanism between the leading philosophers in Poland, Adam Schaff and Leszek Kolakowski. Both of these philosophers are also translated in the collection entitled *Revisionism*, edited by Leopold Labedz (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962).—RD

8. *African Socialism* by Léopold Sédar Senghor (New York: American Society of African Culture, 1959); Sekou Toure's "Africa's Path in History" was excerpted for the English reader in *Africa South*, April-June 1960, Capetown; now available only abroad. See also my *Nationalism, Communism, Marxist-Humanism and the Afro-Asian Revolutions* (American, 1958, and English, 1961, [1984,] editions available at *News & Letters*, Detroit, Michigan [Chicago, Illinois].—RD

9. I do not mean to say that I accept the West European intellectual's attitude on either the question of the degree of belatedness, or the low level of discussion in the United States. Four or five years before Europe's first rediscovery of Marx's early essays, when Europe was under the heel of fascism, Herbert Marcuse dealt with them in his *Reason and Revolution*. It is true that this was based on the German text of the essays, that no English translation was available, and that the discussion of Professor Marcuse's seminal work was limited to small groups. It is also true that I had great difficulty in convincing either commercial publishers or university presses that they ought to publish Marx's humanist essays or Lenin's *Philosophic Notebooks*. I succeeded in getting both these writings published only by including them as appendices to my *Marxism and Freedom* (1958). Even then they did not become available to a mass audience. It was not until 1961, when Erich Fromm included a translation of the 1844 *Manuscripts* in *Marx's Concept of Man*, that Marx's humanism reached a mass audience in the United States, and received widespread attention in American journals. Nevertheless, I see no substantive reason for the intellectual arrogance of the European Marxologists since, in Europe as in the United States, it was only after the Hungarian Revolution that the discussion of humanism reached the level of either concreteness or urgency. When I refer to the belatedness of the discussion, I have in mind the long period between the time the 1844 *Manuscripts* were first published by the Marx-Engels Institute in Russia, in 1927, under the editorship of Ryazanov, and the time they received general attention.—RD

10. *A History of Economic Analysis* by Joseph Schumpeter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954).—RD



as "the idea of theory," the transformation of "historic narrative into historic raisonné."(10)

(Continued next month)

## Alternatives to Capitalism

How Marx's critique of capital illuminates the path to overcoming the dominance of capitalism today — a series of discussions

Today's crises of imperialist war and terrorism call on us not only to oppose both sides of the conflict but also to take responsibility for developing a liberating alternative to this racist, sexist, class-ridden society. If we fail to do so, we will forever be confronted with having to choose between "the lesser evil" or some false alternative. Developing a vision of a new society does not simply mean being for practical struggles for a new society once they arise. It also means theoretically discerning the elements for creating a new society before such struggles arise. This series of open discussions aims to achieve this by exploring how Marx's critique of capital illuminates the path to overcoming today's dominance of capitalism. Marx's critique of capital has two dimensions. One is his critique of capital as a social relation. The second is his critique of leftist alternatives that fall short of a total uprooting of capitalism. Both dimensions of Marx's critique constitute the focus of these meetings:

- 1: Alienation and Humanism: Marx's Critique of the Radical Alternatives of His Time
- 2: Value, Exchange Value, and Freely Associated Labor
- 3: Marx's Critique of Those Who Oppose Capitalism Without Opposing Socially Necessary Labor Time
- 4: Abstract and Concrete: The Dual Character of Labor
- 5: The Fetishism of Commodities and Its Transcendence
- 6: Money, Exchange, and Reification
- 7: How Deep Must Be the Uprooting of Capitalism? Marx's Writings of His Last Decade on Gender and the Non-Western World

For schedules and readings, contact your nearest News and Letters Committee... See page 10.



# ESSAY The two-fold legacy of Rosa Luxemburg

by Peter Hudis

*Editor's note: The following is a talk delivered at a panel on Rosa Luxemburg sponsored by Monthly Review Press at the Socialist Scholars Conference in New York City in March 2004, on the occasion of the recently published Rosa Luxemburg Reader, edited by Peter Hudis and Kevin B. Anderson.*

Far from being any distant memory, the legacy of Rosa Luxemburg continues to impact the major ideological and social struggles of our time. One reflection of this was the debate which broke out a year ago, in April 2003, over the Cuban government's decision to impose jail sentences (ranging from six to 28 years) on 75 dissidents and to summarily execute three Black Cubans who tried to commandeer a boat to Florida.

In response to these actions, Eduardo Galeano, the longtime anti-imperialist activist and theorist who has long supported the Cuban Revolution, wrote:

The Cuban government is now committing acts that, as Uruguayan writer Carlos Quijano would say, "sin against hope." Rosa Luxemburg, who gave her life for the socialist revolution, disagreed with Lenin over the project of a new society. Her words of warning proved prophetic, and 85 years after she was assassinated in Germany she is still right: "Freedoms for only the supporters of the government, however many there may be, is not real freedom. Real freedom is freedom for those who think differently."

Galeano also quoted Luxemburg's statement from the same work, *The Russian Revolution*, that "Without general elections, without freedom of the press and unlimited freedom of assembly, without a contest of free opinions, life stagnates and withers in all public institutions, and the bureaucracy becomes the only active element."<sup>(1)</sup>

Galeano's comments helped ignite a firestorm of controversy inside and outside of Cuba. Responding to Galeano in *Granma*, Heinz Dietrich Steffan wrote:

Whether Rosa Luxemburg or Lenin was right is a lengthy debate. What does not require debate is the logical status of her famous affirmation of the freedom of others. Just like Voltaire's congenial aphorism on liberty 150 years previously, and Immanuel Kant's categorical imperative, these are abstract and general pronouncements that do not serve to resolve concrete difficulties....if one affirms that "freedom is always the freedom of others," it has to be said that this axiom is valid when the others are called Adolf Hitler or Ariel Sharon or George Bush and his subalterns.<sup>(2)</sup>

## DEMOCRACY AND SOCIALISM

Rosa Luxemburg would no doubt be puzzled to hear her name coupled with that of Kant or Voltaire, since they were not figures that she held in especially high regard. Even more important, she would no doubt be disturbed to hear that 85 years after her death the Left is still debating whether or not democracy and freedom are integral dimensions of social transformation.

The two were never separate in her mind, and it is precisely this dimension of Rosa Luxemburg's legacy which takes on renewed importance in light of the crisis the radical movement is now facing in articulating and developing a positive alternative to the global dominance of capitalism.

It goes without saying that Luxemburg lived in an era that was dramatically different from our own. Yet her approach to political crises speaks powerfully to our changed world, in that she refused to separate fervent opposition to capitalism-imperialism from a critique of radical tendencies and ideas which fall short of projecting the idea of human freedom as the essence of socialism.

The fact that we live at a moment when the power of U.S. imperialism seems virtually unchallenged and unchallengeable, which has led many on the Left to accommodate themselves (openly or implicitly) with any force opposing it, no matter how restrictive or even reactionary it may be, shows that we still have much to learn from Rosa Luxemburg's legacy.

Luxemburg was one of the most principled opponents of imperialism in the history of Marxism. Whatever one thinks of her theory of expanded reproduction in *The Accumulation of Capital* or her opposition to demands for national self-determination (and I have strong criticisms about her views on both of these struggles), it is simply not true that she ignored the struggles of colonized peoples or that she was only concerned with the oppression faced by European workers.

Her *Accumulation of Capital* is replete with descriptions of the horrors of imperialist expansion in Algeria, India, South America, Africa, and East Asia. She attacked the way British imperialism "was fought on the backs of the Negroes" and she sharply opposed the destruction of indigenous and noncapitalist social relations in what we now call the Third World. The whole point of her greatest theoretical work, *The Accumula-*

*tion of Capital*, were to show that the ravages of imperialism was not driven by political policies or corrupt personalities but by the very nature of capitalism.

Luxemburg's attentiveness and sensitivity to conditions in the non-European world becomes even more evident from material that now appears in *The Rosa Luxemburg Reader*, some of it published in English for the first time.

## ATTENTIVENESS TO NON-WESTERN WORLD

*The Reader* contains the first English-language translation of parts of her *Introduction to Political Economy* which deal with the destruction of indigenous communal formations in precapitalist societies. Instead of emphasizing the "backwardness" of such formations, she singled out their "extraordinary tenacity and stability...[their] elasticity and adaptability." "Communist ownership of the means of production," she wrote, "afforded, as the basis of a rigorously organized econo-



my, the most productive social labor process and the best assurance of its continuity and development for many epochs."<sup>(3)</sup>

In the same period in which Luxemburg wrote her *Introduction to Political Economy*, she also wrote a manuscript on Greek and Roman slavery, in which she took issue with Engels for tying the emergence of slavery to the rise of private property. This piece is also included in *The Reader* in English for the first time.

Her studies on precapitalism included not only early European societies like ancient Greece or the Germanic tribes, but also a wide variety of non-Western societies, some of them still functioning, albeit in decline, in her lifetime: the Russian *mir*, the traditional villages of India, the Bororo of the Amazon, the Inca Empire, the Lunda Empire of South Central Africa, the Kabyles of North Africa, and Australian aborigines.

All this was written in a period when European Marxists—including the most radical and anti-imperialist among them—paid little or no attention to developments in large parts of the non-Western world.

There is hardly a single mention of the Mexican Revolution of 1910-11 in any European Marxist of the period, including Lenin, Trotsky, and Pannekoek. And even when Africa was mentioned (which was rare), such figures said virtually nothing about sub-Saharan Africa.

Not so with Luxemburg. Her discussion of the Empire of Mwata Kazembe in South Central Africa and how "the intrusion of European civilization was a disaster in every sense for primitive social relations" is unique among European Marxists of the period. In opposing German imperialism's effort to exterminate the Nama and Herero peoples in modern-day Namibia, she wrote, "the Negroes in Africa, with whose bodies the Europeans play a game of catch, are just as near to me" as the "suffering of the [European] Jews."<sup>(4)</sup>

No, Luxemburg was not just concerned with European workers. Nor was "imperialism" a swear word for her, as if it were the mere result of a "conspiracy" engineered by a "cabal" of reactionaries.

As she put it in her famous Junius pamphlet, "Imperialism is not the creation of any one or of any group of states. It is a product of a particular stage of ripeness in the world development of capital, an innately international condition, an indivisible whole, that is recognizable only in all its relations, and from which no nation can hold aloof at will."<sup>(5)</sup>

## CRITIQUE OF LENINISM

And yet, and yet, and yet....did Luxemburg's fervent opposition to imperialism, which repeatedly brought her into direct conflict with the reformist leaders of the Second International, mean that she remained silent about the authoritarian tendencies of revolutionaries who opposed imperialism? Hardly.

She never adopted a one-sided critique of imperialism by ignoring the limitations of those opposed to capitalism who fail to pose socialism and human liberation as inseparable. This is most powerfully seen, of course, in her critique of the Bolsheviks in 1918—in the very period when they were facing an array of internal and external attacks by counter-revolutionary forces. Luxemburg's support for the Bolshevik Revolution and her opposition to the compromises and betrayals of the Cadets, the Mensheviks, and many other tendencies did not stop her from sharply critiquing Lenin and his associates for "making a virtue out of necessity" by sti-

fling democratic deliberation and debate after the seizure of power.

As she wrote in *The Russian Revolution*, "It is the historic task of the proletariat, once it has attained power, to create socialist democracy in place of bourgeois democracy, not to do away with democracy altogether." She would settle for nothing less because, she insisted, "socialist practice means a total spiritual transformation in the masses degraded by centuries of bourgeois class rule."<sup>(6)</sup>

Though many have argued that Luxemburg dropped many of her criticisms of the Bolsheviks after being released from prison in November 1918 and therefore chose not to publish her pamphlet on *The Russian Revolution* (it was first published after her death in 1922, by Paul Levi) we now know from letters that have recently come to light that this was not the case.<sup>(7)</sup> She fully intended to publish her critique of the Revolution, though her plans were cut short by her murder in January 1919 by counter-revolutionaries who were spurred on by leaders of German Social Democracy.

More recently, an even more unfounded myth has surfaced regarding Luxemburg's critique of the Russian Revolution—namely, that her critique of Lenin was based on a reticence on her part about the need to seize power and take the "historic initiative" in the battle against capitalism.

Contrary to claims made by Slavoj Žižek, Luxemburg's critique of Lenin, whom she overall supported, had nothing to do with reticence about endorsing the means needed to defeat counter-revolution.

Žižek writes, "We should reject this blackmail (as Lukács does *à propos* of

Luxemburg): there are no 'democratic (procedural) rules' prior to a priori prohibited of proletarian politics is not a matter of 'opinions,' but of the truth on behalf of which one often is compelled to disregard the 'opinion of the majority' and to impose the revolutionary will against it....Lenin was right: after the revolution, the anarchic disruptions of the disciplinary constraints of production should be replaced by an even stronger discipline."<sup>(8)</sup>

What is completely missing in Žižek's account is any confrontation with the problem of how to ensure that a new ruling class does not emerge once a revolution stifles the self-development and freedom of the masses. All that is of concern to Žižek is how to "make" the revolution and maintain power in the face of counter-revolutionary attacks from outside. But the problem of our era is not how to "make" the revolution.

The problem of our era is how to ensure that revolutions do not transform into their opposite and become the basis for a new kind of tyranny. It has happened again and again and again over the past 100 years. And it is this reality—the fact that counter-revolution has repeatedly emerged from within revolution—that helps explain the present global dominance of U.S. imperialism. The disastrous legacy of Stalinism as well as other authoritarian tendencies which subverted democracy and freedom after "seizing state power" has done far more damage to the idea of socialism than any amount of propaganda cooked up by bourgeois forces.

## AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND NARROW ANTI-IMPERIALISM

Unless we speak to how to overcome this tendency of revolutions and radical movements to transform into their opposite once democracy, individual freedom, and self-expression is repressed, it is impossible to break through the ideological armor of existing capitalism which declares that "there is no alternative."

It is precisely this issue which makes Rosa Luxemburg so alive to us today. Rosa left a dual or two-fold legacy, in that she projected fervent opposition to all forms of capitalism-imperialism while never wavering from criticizing those tendencies within the anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist movements which failed to grasp the importance of spontaneous initiative, freedom of thought, and democratic deliberation.

The fact that she was one of the most important women in the history of European socialism (*The Rosa Luxemburg Reader* also contains several writings by her on women that have never appeared before in English) may have much to do with her refusal to put aside a critique of revolutionaries for the sake of maintaining a "united front" against the "common enemy."<sup>(9)</sup> Whether or not her two-fold legacy can be explained by an unspoken feminist dimension on her part (an issue that is still a matter of much debate, although the writings on women contained in *The Rosa Luxemburg Reader* show that she had far more interest in women's struggles than has generally been attributed to her), Luxemburg's overall approach speaks powerfully to us today, faced as we are with a U.S. drive for single world mastery on the one hand, and reactionary forces like Islamic fundamentalism contending for the mantle of "anti-imperialism," on the other.

We have surely reached a critical point when Tariq Ali, the editor of *New Left Review* uncritically hails the

Continued on page 11

## U.S. DEMOCRACY AND THE WAR ON IRAQ

In her public testimony, Condoleezza Rice said that the Iraqi people are not ready for democracy and that the process of learning it will be slow, since that region of the world has nothing like a democracy in their history. This is arrogance and ignorance. She imagines there is only one kind of "democracy," the kind practiced in the U.S.

If she reads Janet Afary's book on *The Iranian Constitutional Revolution of 1906-1911* she will find described at least five different kinds of democracies during the Iranian Revolution alone, all of them more democratic than the U.S. had at the time, when it was overrun by robber barons and lynchings were common occurrence.

Iranian exile  
California

Like many others, I have been wondering why George Bush is pressing ahead with the June 30 handover of sovereignty in Iraq. One suggestion I heard that sounds plausible is that it's because the U.S. corporations have billions at stake. As I understand it, international contract law prevents their contracts for oil production, public utilities, telecommunications and the like from being signed by anyone except a "sovereign" government. It's why I think Bush wants to have a puppet government in place before the U.S. elections. I'm willing to bet that the contracts will be signed in the first 14 days if he wins in November.

Any takers?  
Chicago

I just learned that the U.S. Department of Commerce is offering a series of "Doing Business in Iraq" seminars to U.S. companies in 12 U.S. cities to teach companies how they can get in on the profit-making in Iraq. At the same time that Halliburton, Bechtel, and other U.S. companies with close ties to the Bush administration are taking in billions in reconstruction contracts, the Iraqi schools are in disrepair, the phones don't work, electricity is intermittent, and the water isn't safe to drink. Meanwhile, qualified Iraqi businesses say they are shut out of the reconstruction of their own country, some 70% of Iraqi workers are unemployed, and workers in state-owned enterprises, where the majority of Iraqis work, are forbidden from forming unions.

Correspondent  
Illinois

Why is Bush not demanding OPEC cut oil prices? The Bush family has huge investments in oil in Bahrain and high

prices mean high bonuses for the Bush family. Cheney and Halliburton got their piece of our flesh. Now Bush will get his.

Harold  
Illinois

The deep crises developing in Iraq are a signal that this is the time to recall not only Parliament but the troops that Prime Minister Blair has sent over there. The anti-war demonstrations are limited in what they can achieve. Other means of civic courage and resistance are now called for.

Patrick  
Britain

After the grizzly murder of the four Americans in Falluja we were told that we were going to punish the people who killed them and the whole town was bombed. Haven't the Iraqi people been punished enough? Not just by the U.S. but by the 35 years of Saddam's reign? The U.S. people know what it is to be punished. We have all been punished by the Bush administration in dozens of ways since 9/11.

One of the punished  
California



John Alan

### BLACK FREEDOM STRUGGLES

I have just read John Alan's book on *Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles* and there is only one word to describe it: masterpiece. Those who have not read it are missing out on a brilliant dialectical work that itself is part of the Black struggle.

Voice from Within  
California

John Alan's column on Haiti in the March 2004 *N&L* showed how the Black man "reconciled" with the white man on the Island but how the master came back and killed him. In my study of American history, I saw a similar thing happened in the U.S. after the Civil War when Blacks forgave the masters, who then came back to take over again.

Exile from Middle East  
California

In his book on Black freedom struggles, John Alan quotes Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech to show that while political struggle is important

## ADRIENNE RICH: A JEWISH VOICE FOR PEACE

I've been asked to say a few words about the importance of Jewish activism against the occupation. Whether in the U.S., Israel or elsewhere, I think every shred of it matters. It's the embodiment of an ethical Judaism, of "that which is hateful to you, do not to others." It is the rejection of an idolatrous version of Israel and of the soil. It is a recognition that history is not Jewish alone. It is a critical, educative response to what has been claimed as "Israel's right to exist"—at any cost and on any terms, including a blindered self-destructiveness.

This is how I see opposition to the occupation in philosophical terms. I have to say that when I read in the *Jewish Peace News*, or in reports from Bat Shalom, or Gush Shalom or elsewhere, of Israeli activists non-violently protesting the Wall alongside Palestinians, or monitoring checkpoints, of Israeli refuseniks, or going much further back, of Women in Black standing vigil for years, of American Jews demonstrating against the occupation in city after city, when I watched the video of the Jewish Voice for Peace's recent dignified and well-choreographed demonstration at Caterpillar, I feel emotionally strengthened in hope and resolve.

I think this kind of activity-demonstrating, publishing a newsletter, writing, speaking, crossing lines to meet and

stand with others in resistance—carries its message further out than we can know, including to other Jews who have been looking away or afraid to speak out. At this time, when so much hope seems to have disappeared down a political suckhole in the demonic collusion of our own right-wing government with that of Israel, we need to remember that.

Tomorrow evening, Jews around the world gather to retell and celebrate the Exodus. At some seder tables, undoubtedly, there will be some allusion to the sufferings inflicted on the Palestinian people, in our name. But I don't think that can suffice. Our hopes and efforts really imply a new Exodus, out from the occupation mentality, the Mitzrayim, that justifies such cruelty and the doing to others what we ourselves have found so hateful that we have retold its story for thousands of years. I spoke of Jewish activism as "educative"—from the Latin to lead out. I see Jewish activism here and in Israel as leading out from the idea of tikkun olam toward a new evolution of Jewish consciousness—not only against the Occupation but in solidarity with all who are trying to liberate themselves. Let's not deceive ourselves: this is not a simple or straightforward movement. It's a long sojourn in a different kind of desert, a sojourn to be shared with others, and I believe the people of Jewish Voice for Peace are part of its reality.

Adrienne Rich, April 4, 2004

From a talk presented in San Francisco for Jewish Voice for Peace ([www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org](http://www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org))

# READERS' VIEWS

it does not bring true human emancipation. You see the difference in the way Marx wanted the Civil War to be transformed into a war to end slavery and proposed that a Black regiment, motivated by the desire for freedom, could change the whole course of that war. But the Civil War didn't even provide political emancipation for Black people. That required the ongoing freedom struggles of the '60s. What is clear is that more freedom struggles are needed as a basis for overthrowing capitalism and achieving true emancipation.

Radical lawyer  
Michigan

### CRITICAL SUPPORT

As Peter Hudis implies in his Reader's View (*N&L*, April 2004), I should have mentioned Dunayevskaya's call for support of Bani-Sadr along with her critical judgment of Bani-Sadr. As for the phrase to which he takes exception, however, my saying that Dunayevskaya "takes the measure of bourgeois democratic intellectuals like Bani-Sadr" hardly implies an "ultra-leftist" position of not critically supporting him when he came under attack from Khomeini's murderous IRP. Marx repeated exactly that phrase "taken his measure" in his quote from the Abolitionist Wendell Phillips, in relation to another bourgeois democratic politician, Lincoln, as a "first-rate second-rate man" for his legalistic approach to the Civil War. Lincoln tried to encase that struggle within the question of saving the Union instead of seeing its deeper reality as an unfolding war of liberation. At the same time, Marx aggressively supported the North and Lincoln against the Southern Slavocracy.

Ron Brokmeyer  
Oakland

### CRITIQUING BEN WATSON'S CRITIQUE

Thanks to Dave Black for casting a critical light on Ben Watson's review of *The Power of Negativity* (*N&L* April 2004). Aside from factual, interpretive and philosophic mistakes, Watson's review is unsuccessful because it amounts to little more than a smartly written shopping list of his favorite reading. He makes it plain that his tastes run in the general direction of a psychoanalytic, rhapsodic-poetic, Sadean-sexual-fantasia "Marxism." That Dunayevskaya would not have allied herself with a "surrealist Hegel" hardly amounts to a criticism, unless you make it do some heavy lifting.

Watson's taste for psychoanalytic cultural criticism is at best tangential to the themes of *The Power of Negativity*. Ironically, he applauds Marx for "uncovering surplus value," thereby introducing "the measure of truth and consciousness into politics and economics" at the same time that he displaces the critique of political economy "into a revolutionary interpretation of dreams, fantasy and the unconscious."

Whatever else it is, a cultural criticism ungrounded in the critique of political economy is not Marxist. Although psychoanalysis is fascinating and important, simply laying one's preference for it alongside the text of *The Power of Negativity* cannot count as a criticism worth taking seriously.

Tom More  
Washington

In Watson's review, his use of words like "bitterness," "crackpot," and "cult," is an unfair attack. A cult is usually based on uncritical (and therefore blind) faith. What he calls "condemnation" by "harsh words" I see as critique in the interest of helping to transcend today's many alienation-creating governments towards a new humanistic social order. Without dialogue, valid criticisms are lost. Totalitarian organizations allow no criticisms or dialogue.

I completely agree with Dave Black's response: "But to choose between the prac-

tical and theoretical fails to realize that both tend to fall apart in separation."

Basho  
Los Angeles

While I welcome discussion of *The Power of Negativity*, Ben Watson's review contained numerous errors of fact. That New and Letters Committees is opposed to the vanguard party does not mean that Dunayevskaya worked "without the usual Marxist mediations of party, votes, leadership, theoretical journal, internal bulletins, newspaper and propaganda." Nor is it meaningful to draw theoretical conclusions based on impressions of a few meetings attended in one locality. One would be more impressed if it were more of a review and less a springboard for pushing his home-cooked Freudian agenda.

Dmitryev  
Memphis

### WOMEN'S LIVES AT STAKE

Complaining about a watering down of the April 25 women's march from a march for choice to a march for women's lives (see Lead, April *N&L*) misses the point. The numerous liberal and left groups that make up the women's movement include one that complains it is too focused on abortion rights. Whereas I take it as both a plus and a minus that we on the Left are multi-issued, multi-ethnic, and multi-religions, I am also frustrated by the lack of support we give to each other's causes and by the continuous arguments about which group is purer than the others. We don't find such bickering from the Right. While questioning actions is necessary I think it is time for us to unite to defeat the right wing in this country.



Sue  
Chicago

March for Women's Lives is a fine name that conveys the seriousness of the attack women face. Yet the authors of "Fight the Christian Right's attacks on women's lives" have a point that deleting the words "abortion" and now even "choice" is a sign of retreat. It's seen not only in the women's movement but across the board from labor to environmentalism that movements are afraid to articulate what they are for beyond the immediate defensive battles. We may face our "own ideological roadblocks" as the article so aptly puts it.

Another man for choice  
Tennessee

Three things stood out for me in the April front page Lead. First, that "sanctity of marriage" as only "man and woman" denies the existence of a whole class of people as human beings. Second, it's not just the Christian Right but liberals like Clinton and Kerry who insist on recognizing only "man" and "woman." The scapegoating of gays is out of fear, ignorance and political expediency. Finally, what is at stake is not merely an issue of "marriage" but the fundamental question of the right to freely associate with anyone in truly human relations.

Health worker  
California

### AMINA LAWAL

Thanks to millions of emails, letters, faxes, and actions from people all over the world, Amina Lawal, the Nigerian woman who had been sentenced in March 2002 to death by stoning, saw her sentence overturned. Amnesty International had carried out an especially intensive campaign and is glad to tell you that Amina's daughter, Wasila, is now two and a half years old and a healthy little girl. Amina has asked that everyone be thanked who participated in the campaign to save them.

Amnesty International  
USA





**VOICES FROM THE INSIDE**

I am not surprised that our hunger strike did not receive the media attention it should. I agree with the prisoner who wrote to you that he regards his cell as a classroom. But I also view prison as Plato's cave, where we are asked to imagine a group chained inside a cave since birth, who can see only shadows cast on the wall in front of them, which they take as reality. The prison world is like that cave where we are shackled by our ignorance of the nature of true reality. To see it as it really is we must struggle out of the cave and into the sunlight. I was once lost in illusions. I was always rebellious but it was blind rage when I didn't know what I should be fighting against. I now know it's the whole capitalist system, and that I have to fight to end all oppression. I don't believe in half-way liberation. As a man, I see that it has to start with the liberation of women. In today's traditional marriage, which is propagated by the system as so sacred it should not be broken, the woman loses her identity while papers are signed to establish the ownership relationship. It's time to break the chains of tradition and all walk out of Plato's cave.

**Prisoner Pontiac, Illinois**

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My nephew just came back from the war in Iraq after four years of duty in the Marines. I'm thankful we were able to persuade him not to re-enlist. Before he joined he was the gentlest child imaginable. Now he wants to be a policeman. There is not much difference between a policeman and a prison guard. How could my nephew want to be on the other side? I blame Bush's lies for changing him so. Bush's lies have destroyed thousands of families, lives that cannot be put back together again.

**Woman prisoner California**

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When the news carried a story announcing compulsory drug testing of children in school, most of my cell mates were for it, but I am opposed. Drugs in school is a single parent, but even if you are a single parent, you have responsibility for your kids. Society should put the resources into helping parents do a better job, rather than having the state take over the responsibility for raising our children. The schools should spend more time on educating kids about drugs. If kids are shown what drug abuse looks like, what smoking does to you, what VD do to your body, they will be able to decide on their own to stay away.

**Woman prisoner Chowchilla, Cal.**

**TODAY'S LABOR STRUGGLES**

While Bush and his Secretary of Labor are working to take away overtime pay from millions of America's workers, more than 10 million people are out of work. Meanwhile, Bush's economic report to Congress calls the avalanche of U.S. jobs being sent overseas a "good thing"! How out of touch are the people who applaud that? You can bet they're not among the unemployed!

**Alarmed Detroit**

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Since April 4, workers at Casino Windsor have been on strike for better working conditions. The owners promptly closed the casino, to the delight of the owners of Detroit's three casinos located just across the river from the Canadian establishment. Unlike Detroit casino employees, Casino Windsor staff are members of the Canadian Autoworkers Union and state that the owners are refusing to bargain. They plan to ask the Ontario government to intervene. Hopefully, a spirit of union organizing will cross the Detroit River to influence the casino workers here.

**Pro-union Detroit**

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I have noticed that even the language of the capitalists is creeping into everyday speech. People now talk about

"downsizing" their family budgets! We really need a total uprooting of capitalism—and soon.

**Anti-capitalist activist Michigan**

**50 YEARS AFTER BROWN VS. BOARD OF EDUCATION**

The Supreme Court decision known as Brown vs. Board of Education was a significant breakthrough 50 years ago. It sparked the movement for civil rights and for the liberation of people of African descent. It also opened up the opportunity for some people of color to enter the predominantly white better schools.

Many schools, however, still remain segregated—some through the white flight from public schools and integrated neighborhoods. The quality of education in public schools dwindled after the 1960s, because of a lack of resources, of new books, of facilities, and because of a decline in the decent maintenance of the buildings themselves. The powers that be no longer feel it necessary to educate poor youth into the workplace because of what an advanced technology has brought about. The schools today place far more emphasis on discipline and security than on expanding the minds of our youth.

Brown vs. Board of Education was an important milestone in the struggle against Jim Crow—but what is urgently needed today is a fight for a competent education for all people.

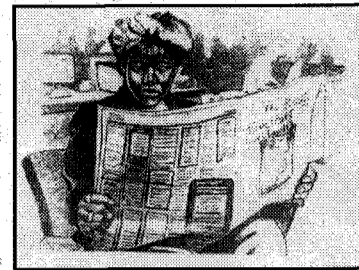
**Darrell Gordon African-American Queer activist Chicago**

**CANADA'S PATRIOT ACT**

We have a pending bill here similar to the US PATRIOT ACT, which is not quite as heinous as the U.S.'s but comes close. Bill C7 is a frightening prospect, which could essentially strip away civil liberties to a shockingly degree. The media seems to have ignored it completely, which leads one to believe that the powers that be want to pass it through by stealth. For three years the Canadian government has tried and failed to pass legislation to abridge political rights and institute the appa-

ratus of a police state. The current pending C7 bill would succeed, including authorizing the seating of military judges to prepare for a declaration of martial law. We still have a chance to stop this horrific legislation and are trying to alert as many as possible to its dangers.

**Worried Canadian British Columbia**



**WHY N&L? WHY NOW?**

I used to get N&L and would like to start receiving it again. In this age of media mediocrity, it will be refreshing to re-acquaint myself with a voice of reason. Historically, working people have struggled with rampant job loss. Now, with the off-shore outsourcing of high-tech jobs, the demonic face of capitalism has taken another inhuman turn. I'd like to read anything you suggest that grapples with this trend.

**N&L reader again Philadelphia**

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N&L is a wonderful example of free speech. I also listen extensively to KPFFK, a listener sponsored radio station. But N&L lets me hear the comments of people from anywhere in the world, including from inside prison, that would be impossible for me to hear without such a forum. It gives me a first-hand perspective from people who are living the issues, and whose lives are significantly different from mine. N&L is a treasure. I'm enclosing an extra donation with my sub renewal to help you continue your work.

**Long time reader Los Angeles**



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# African-American gays on marriage, assimilation

**MEMPHIS, TENN.**—I've never been a fan of *The Advocate*. It perpetuates the stereotype that all homosexuals are shallow, pro-corporate, bubble-gum, upper middle class, and white. The first article I read in *The Advocate* was about gay marriage. In true *Advocate* style, the article said nothing, but the accompanying picture said it all. The picture featured a gay male couple, obviously well off, well groomed, color coordinated, and, of course, white; matching Gaybies strapped to their tummies, kissing after engaging in the Bonds of Matrimony. The All-American couple.

This picture exemplifies a growing schism in the gay community between the assimilationists, who want to integrate into "mainstream" (read: white middle-class heterosexual) American society at all costs, and the liberationists, who want to facilitate and maintain a distinct gay cultural identity.

How can our self-appointed gay leaders tout same sex marriage and ignore issues that are far more pressing? While gay marriage will benefit gay couples, it will not help the single gay who is about to be thrown out of his home because he is too sick to work. It will not help the single lesbian who is suffering from breast cancer and cannot undergo chemotherapy or buy med-



ication because she has no insurance. It won't help the homeless gay youth who was thrown out on the streets because his father found out that she was gay.

As a member of two minority groups, it is difficult for me to support an individual or group that supports one part of my being and castigates the other. I cannot support a Black group that discriminates against homosexuals, nor could I support a homosexual organization that discriminates against persons of color. It bothers me that gay activists can beatify Gavin Newsom, the mayor of San Francisco, and ignore the havoc he's wreaked on the poor and persons of color.

Newsom came to power last year by appealing to the racism, self-hatred, and classism of San Francisco's gay elite. He spewed the piss-poor philosophy that gay marriage will be the great equalizer and many in the gay community fell for it. Under his watch, poverty has been criminalized; gay teens and homeless AIDS sufferers have been thrown in jail. Persons of color are being thrown in the streets due to rising rents because of gentrification. The members of the gay elite said and did nothing; if anything, they applauded his efforts. Newsom pushed the gay marriage issue to reward his rich supporters (most poor gays and persons of color had the good sense to vote for Matt Gonzalez, his Green opponent) and build a name for himself.

I'm not against gay marriage; I question the motives of the persons who are pushing the issue in this harsh political climate. If it is unsuccessful, the backlash will be severe and the gains made by the gay community these past 30 years could be overturned. People like you and me will suffer the most. If that couple in the picture in *The Advocate* can take off work on short notice, pay \$1,500 to fly to San Francisco and pay \$82 for a worthless piece of paper, I'm sure they have enough money to withstand the conservative backlash against the gay community.

A campaign for gay marriage will not be successful until this community gets rid of the racist, classist, and elitist leadership that organize agendas without the input of the grassroots. Secondly, we must learn to pick our battles; there is a time to strike and a time to parry. Thirdly, and most importantly, why don't we fight for policies that will not only help the gay community but society at large? A single payer health care system would benefit gays and straights, as would subsidized housing or a free undergraduate education. At this point, gay marriage is little more than a wedge issue to rev up the right-wing base to demolish Kerry in 2004.

—T.D. Coleman

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**CHICAGO**—I disagree with certain parts of the article "Fight Christian Right's attacks on women's lives" (*April News & Letters*). First of all, it's an element within the African-American Queer community that is debating the comparison of the Queer struggle with African Americans.

The Stonewall Rebellion of 1969 and the early '70s Gay Liberation Movement fought heterosexism and tried to build a counterculture. The struggle of Queers and womyn are similar in that the right to control one's

## BLACK/RED VIEW

Continued from page 1

he didn't face such discrimination as the Secretary of State." In this answer, Powell divided himself into two separate individuals, one as an African American and the other as the Secretary of State of the most powerful capitalist nation in the world.

He did not see the deep antagonism between those two parts. Thus, he told the German students that "the civil rights advances in the United States are proof that democracy works," without mentioning that "democracy works" because the masses of African Americans had organized and struggled constantly to make it work for them.

### COMPROMISING WITH RACISM

Neither Colin Powell nor Condoleezza Rice had ever been active in mass struggle against racism. The African American middle class leadership has, at various periods in American history, attempted to work out a compromise with racism. Booker T. Washington did so in 1895 and he created a storm of protest in African-American communities across the nation.

W. E. B. DuBois wrote: "Mr. Washington represents in Negro thought the old attitude of adjustment and submission; but adjustment at such a peculiar time as to make his programme unique. This is an age of unusual economic development and Mr. Washington's programme naturally takes an economic cast, becoming a gospel of Work and Money to such an extent as apparently almost completely to overshadow the higher aims of life. Moreover, this is an age when the more advanced races are coming in contact with the less developed races, and the race-feeling is therefore intensified; and Mr. Washington's programme practically accepts the alleged inferiority of Negro races."

sexuality and define "family" are challenges shared by both.

ACT UP didn't just fight for access to treatment, funding, research and education during the late 1980s and beyond. They also attacked the right-wing legislation that was used to punish or discriminate against—and even proposed to quarantine—people with AIDS during the Reagan/Bush years.

It's safe to say that all Queers are opposed to constitutional amendments to outlaw same-sex marriages. However there are Queers who are against the institution of marriage itself because of its inherent bias against womyn when it comes to property, inheritance, family rights, despite the reforms of marriage that came later thanks to the womyn's movement.

The institution of marriage may reinforce power dynamics within couples similar to heterosexual relationships. It also reinvents the illusion and myths of monogamous relationships which is bound by the state. The institution of marriage discriminates against single people in terms of health benefits. Only the spouse of a married person is entitled to health benefits. The Queer movement is not monolithic and doesn't share the same view of marriage. We all do share the view that Queer relationships, however they manifest themselves, should be celebrated.

—Darrell Gordon

## QUEERNOTES

by Suzanne Rose

**VENEZUELA**—It is suspected that uniformed police are behind the shootings of two transgender women. Dayana Nieves was murdered in 2000; Michelle Paz's body was found in January. Another woman, Paola Sanchez, was shot at but not injured. Police officers later broke into her house without a warrant and arrested her. No charges were filed and she has since been released. However, two transgender activists who were arrested on Jan. 16 are still being held at a local prison in incommunicado detention.

**ZANZIBAR**—Despite international condemnation, Zanzibar's parliament has passed a bill making homosexuality illegal. The bill was passed partly to keep the island out of the same-sex marriage debate. Gay men found guilty of "homosexual relations" can get up to 25 years in jail. Lesbians get seven years. The move follows the growth of conservative Islam on the island.

**DETROIT**—The constitutionality of undercover sting operations in Rouge Park has been challenged in the U.S. District Court. Stings are conducted by the Police Department's Sixth Precinct. Gay men, or those perceived to be gay, have been targeted for arrest under Detroit's "Annoying Persons" and "Solicitation and Acosting" ordinances. To entrap men in the park, undercover officers would follow or approach men they perceived to be gay, make eye contact and encourage the men to respond in a sexual manner. If a man merely responded with a look, gesture or conversation perceived by officers to have sexual connotations, he was arrested and his vehicle impounded. He was then required to pay \$900 plus storage and towing costs for the return of his vehicle.

## Bush's Black rightists

Powell and Rice don't have the status among African Americans that Booker T. Washington had in 1895. However, speaking and acting in the interest of imperialism and its inherent racism, they play a similar role. Bush needs them as a façade for his imperialist and racist agenda.

### BLACK MASSES VS. STATUS SEEKERS

African-American masses in action have been revolutionary in their reasoning. This attribute doesn't automatically appear in individual African Americans who seek their own personal advancement in capitalist society. Therefore, today there is a whole pool of conservative African-American legal professionals that the Bush administration would like to appoint as judges in the federal court system. This has placed the NAACP in an awkward position of opposing Bush's appointments of conservative African-American judges to the federal courts.

A recent case was the NAACP's opposition to Bush's nomination of Janice Rogers Brown for the powerful U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. Janice Rogers Brown is a California Supreme Court Justice with a long conservative record on issues regarding free speech and a women's right to have an abortion. She opposes affirmative action in the name of individual rights.

The African-American struggle is a permanent one and takes a new form each time it achieves a new level of political freedom. New beginnings will emerge from African-American masses struggling for full freedom in their everyday lives and not from the unprecedented number of individual African Americans achieving a place for themselves in the political arena.

## Stop cop torture!

*Editor's Note: Kilroy Watkins was sentenced to 30 years for a crime that he didn't commit. He was forced to sign a confession after being beat by an officer with a history of abuse complaints, at Chicago's notorious Area 3 Division. Commander Jon Burge was forced out in 1993 after being investigated for torture, but many of his victims remain in prison, and some of his accomplices remain on the force.*

**CHICAGO**—In this city you have cops that were trained by commander Jon Burge, and part of his systematic torture ring that he used to get over a hundred confessions out of Black men and Latinos for murders that they didn't commit.

My son Kilroy Watkins was one of these men, beaten by Burge hit man Kenneth Boudreau and others working out of the 39th and California, Area 3 Violent Crime Division. From the '70s to '90s they used electroshocks, suffocation, burns, Russian roulette, and even killed one person, yet no one has held them accountable for their actions. Burge was fired in 1993, and lives in Florida on a full pension from the City of Chicago. Boudreau is doing paperwork for the FBI.

As you might recall, the State's Attorney was Richard Daley, now mayor. The assistant State's Attorney was Dick Devine. These men can't come forward while young men sit in jail with no hope of a future?

Those that handled the cases knew these people were innocent, knew that these officers were on the stand perjuring themselves, and yet the prosecutors stood by and sent innocent people to prison from coerced confessions for from 10 to 50 years. All for what? Money, power and promotions.

Some families paid their lawyers thousands of dollars and still had to see their loved ones off to prison. Where now both parties' lives are destroyed forever.

Mr. Mayor, unlike you and your political friends, I don't know why it is you politicians take the taxpayers' hard earned dollars to house these prisoners when you could spend money in our neighborhoods. You have taken away all that we had. Now our children are just like rats in a maze—nowhere to go.

I am a person of God, and I know that no matter how high you go you must come down, and no matter how much money or power you have, it won't buy you into heaven. As a member of the Enough Is Enough! campaign, I say that something has to be done. Stop the brutality, stop the racism, and mostly stop the torture and beatings! It's wrong, it's unjust, and it is unconstitutional to all the human race. I write this on behalf of my son Kilroy and all the men who are wrongfully convicted in the State of Illinois.

—Mildred Henry

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**SUMNER, ILL.**—My name is Kilroy Watkins. I'm now 33 years of age and have been incarcerated for 12 years. During my time, I have rode on a roller coaster that could never be compared to those at amusement parks or carnivals. The mental, physical, emotional and spiritual ride that prison life creates no alcohol/drug substance could ever reach. I seriously doubt if any psychiatrist could properly define the personality disorder that reflects the lows one reaches.

Everyone you loved becomes distant and everything you thought you knew, which defines who you were and what you are, becomes questionable. However, for some of us, approaching this crossroad is an awakening; realizing that you are created from a source that's way more powerful than ourselves.

To thoroughly focus on the condition of not just myself but the condition of my race and its history of suffering and struggling in this world, could only leave one with the mathematical conclusion that the movie called *The Passion of the Christ* is not simply a reminder about some divine being dying for my sin, but more of a warning of what we as Black males must experience for being born in Amerikkka.

—Kilroy Watkins



# EDITORIAL

## The Rwanda genocide, ten years later

Genocide. The deliberate murder of an entire people. That is what took place in Rwanda in 1994, ten years ago this spring. During 100 days of carefully orchestrated attacks by the *interahamwe*, over 800,000 people, mainly members of the Tutsi minority, met their deaths. All too often, death came slowly, after rape, dismemberment, and torture. The main perpetrators were the *interahamwe*, a government militia set up years before from among the Hutu majority.

The Tutsi, a formerly privileged group that comprised at most 15% of the population, had long suffered oppression by the regime. Under the military ruler Juvenal Habyarimana, the Hutu majority was encouraged to blame all of the country's problems on the Tutsi. The regime pointed to the fact that the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF), which had launched an anti-government insurgency from bases in neighboring Uganda, was led by Tutsis. After Habyarimana was assassinated, Colonel Theoneste Bagosora took command, activating the *interahamwe*.

From the beginning, the *interahamwe* targeted moderate Hutu as well, such as Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyama, killed on the first day. As the *interahamwe* spread out, some pockets of resistance emerged. There was quiet resistance in working class districts of the cities, where some Tutsi were able to find shelter.

In Butare, a large university town that was 50% Tutsi, with many mixed marriages, local officials at first refused to cooperate. Many refugees fled to Butare from other areas of the country. Health Minister Pauline Nyiramasuhuko was sent in. She told the *interahamwe* that they could rape freely before killing Tutsi women. Through these and other tactics, the hunt for local Tutsis got going, with even professors eventually joining in.

### BEHIND THE GENOCIDE

How could 800,000 people have been murdered in 100 days? First, it was because the regime had produced a compelling genocidal ideology, "Hutu power," and an organization, the *interahamwe*. In demonizing the Tutsis, the regime deflected the masses' anger over severe rural poverty and other oppressive conditions of life and labor.

## Prison poison pills

by G. C. Simmons

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), the bloated state agency that operates a state prison system with 150,000 convicts, recently implemented a scheme that threatens the health and safety of the prisoners. Prison officials now reclaim unused medications from sick, lame, dead, and dying prisoners. The reclaimed meds are returned to the prison system's central pharmacy in Huntsville where they are repackaged, relabeled, and then reissued to other prisoners.

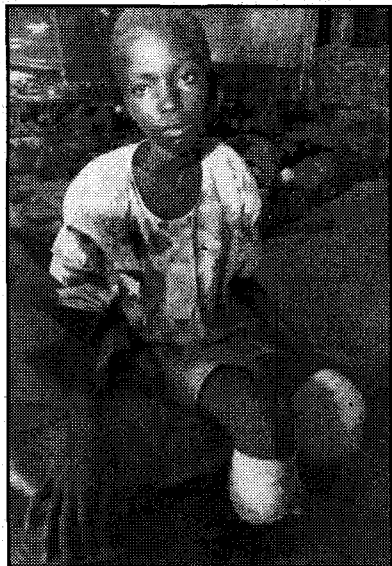
In the fall of 1982 in Illinois, a deranged psychopath (who was neither identified nor apprehended) added cyanide to some Tylenol capsules on retail store shelves. As a consequence, seven people—three in one family—died, 31 million Tylenol capsules were recalled and destroyed, and state and federal laws were enacted to forbid the reissue of over-the-counter and prescription medications.

There is sound rationale for these laws. After a medication has been dispensed, the issuing pharmacy loses control of the care and custody of the item. The issuer cannot, for example, guarantee that the medication has been stored within the allowable temperature and humidity ranges, nor offer assurances that the medication has been free from handling by persons who are infected with communicable diseases, nor ensure that the item was not subject to tampering or contamination.

Self-righteous prison officials who regularly see themselves as above the law blatantly violate the state and federal food and drug statutes. With deliberate indifference and callous disregard for the well-being of the prisoners, TDCJ officials attempt to justify their unlawful reclaim-reissue practice as a cost saving measure. Many unsuspecting Texas prisoners now receive medications that were previously issued to and handled by someone with a contagious disease, or meds that have been stored or transported under environmental conditions outside of the recommended ranges for the particular medication, or even medications that might have been contaminated by a Tylenol-copy-cat psychopath.

Recognizing the seriousness of TDCJ's unlawful practice, the Texas State Board of Pharmacy has opened an investigation. Complaints and requests for information should be directed to:

Texas State Board of Pharmacy  
Enforcement Division 2004-0576  
333 Guadalupe St. - Suite 3-600  
Austin, TX 78701  
Tel: 512 305 8000



Rwandan genocide survivor, 1994

Second, it was due to imperialist politics. To maintain its influence in the region, the French government had for years aided and trained the Rwandan military. In spring 1994, French troops eventually intervened, but not to protect the victims. Instead, they covered the retreat of the *interahamwe*, who were fleeing into Congo (then Zaire) as the RPF closed in. It was the RPF victory that actually stopped the genocide.

Third, there was imperial indifference. When peacekeepers gave the UN detailed reports on plans for genocide in January 1994, Kofi Annan, then head of peacekeeping operations, decided to use quiet diplomacy rather than publicity. As the genocide began, the U.S. and other powers denied or minimized it, since admitting that genocide was taking place might have caused public opinion to force them to intervene.

Even since 1994, the Rwanda genocide has not received much attention. Nor has the International Criminal Court in Arusha, Tanzania, which has obtained convictions for genocide, for mass rape, and for genocidal propaganda. While we would be the last to begrudge the media coverage the Hague Tribunal has received as it has prosecuted Slobodan Milosevic and other Balkan war criminals, we nonetheless ask why Arusha is covered so little and why to this day the names and faces of leading criminals like Col. Bagosora and Health Minister Nyiramasuhuko are so little known.

### LESSONS FOR TODAY

Nothing said here is meant to excuse all of the actions of the RPF government in Rwanda since 1994. It has set up an authoritarian state in which President Paul Kagame won the last election with a supposed 95% majority. Additionally, in carrying out utterly justifiable interventions in neighboring Rwanda to root out remnants of the *interahamwe*, the Rwandan government took advantage of the situation to loot the mineral resources of its neighbor. It also massacred civilians.

This year, tens of thousands of Rwandans attended the April 7 ceremony marking the tenth anniversary of the genocide. A memorial torch was lit that will burn for 100 days. But as the BBC reported that day: "Leaders from South Africa, Kenya, Burundi, Belgium, Tanzania and Congo have flown into Rwanda for the commemoration, but western heads of state were conspicuous by their absence. That is likely to reinforce the bitterness felt by many Rwandans over the failure of the international community to intervene in the genocide." Unfortunately, such indifference is not confined to

## Revolving door for the incarcerated

**CHICAGO**—A conference on "Incarceration and Detention: Race and Human Rights" was held in early April at the University of Chicago. It dealt with these issues through sociological studies, keynote speeches, and two excellent panels explored the issues.

### NEIGHBORHOOD, FAMILY, JAIL

Neighborhood, family and prison constitute a revolving door for many prisoners, who come from communities with poor schools, no mental health resources, and no drug treatment. Abuse and neglect may be common.

Eight million Americans have been in prison, so re-entry into the community is a major urban issue. Some Chicago neighborhoods have more ex-offenders than some entire states. But released prisoners need a stable environment where social workers and job development programs can find them.

Prisoners should be educated, even if they are lifers. Although affirmative action for minority students is often challenged, the "affirmative action" that jails them in disproportionate numbers continues to thrive. Predictions based on the number of school dropouts help determine the number of future prisoners.

In Chicago, the number of African Americans in the police force, the state's attorneys' office, and on the bench is low. Illinois has gone from two prisons to 15, largely staffed by whites looking for jobs.

### JUVENILES AND WOMEN AT RISK

Generations of African-American youth have been criminalized. Police finding drugs on a high school student can take him to jail against the wishes of principals and teachers who wish to keep him in school. It marks the student with a record and makes it more difficult for him to be accepted into school once he is released.

In 19 states the death penalty can be applied to juvenile offenders. Since the 1970s, 22 have been killed, mostly in Texas. Presently 82 are slated to die. Youth often have inadequate counsel in this regard; for example, one lawyer persuaded an indigent juvenile to plead for a life sentence to avoid the death penalty, without realizing that the boy was too young to be executed. He was given life without parole.

Juveniles almost always have mitigating back-

Western leaders. Since 1994, Western leftist and peace movements have also avoided the issue of the Rwandan genocide. This may be because it does not fit into the anti-interventionist politics that so dominates today's leftist and peace movements. Such a politics cannot explain the rise of Milosevic, let alone the Rwanda genocide. This has left human rights groups as virtually the only ones consistently discussing the lessons of Rwanda.

Those lessons have yet to be learned. Otherwise, the "ethnic cleansing" taking place right now in Sudan's Darfur region would be making headlines, with leftist and peace movements holding mass demonstrations denouncing the Islamist Sudanese government and the failure of the Western powers and the UN to act.

Arab militias armed by the state have massacred 3,000 of Darfur's people, uprooted 800,000 from their homes, and burned hundreds of villages. 110,000 have been forced to flee across the border into Chad, where they face starvation and disease. The result? As Black Muslim Africans in a country ruled by other Africans who consider themselves to be Arabs, they have been targeted for their ethnicity, for their land, and for having dared to rise up and defend themselves against decades of oppression.

As we mark the anniversary of the Rwanda genocide, we call on the Left and the peace movement to use the occasion of the anniversary to rethink a narrow form of anti-imperialism that has led to a failure to develop an adequate critique of narrow nationalism and religious fundamentalism. We also call for the deepest solidarity with the people of Darfur.

## West Coast march



Berkeley High School students joined the March for Women's Lives in San Francisco, April 24. See page 1 for the mass rally in Washington, D.C. the next day.

grounds, but poorly trained lawyers don't help juries to see this. The U.S. Supreme Court will soon deliver a decision whether "evolving standards of decency" allow for juvenile executions. Twenty-eight states have outlawed the juvenile death penalty. The mercy shown to Lee Boyd Malvo in the D.C. sniper case was important.

Harsh criminalization of women is another example of the revolving door. Physical and sexual violence is a chronic problem for two thirds of them before, during and after imprisonment.

A pregnant woman can be forced to undergo testing and may be imprisoned for delivering drugs to her fetus. If she is abused, she can be charged with endangerment for failing to turn in her abuser. If a woman calls police on a child abuser, she can be arraigned for failing to protect the child sooner. If someone in her family uses drugs she can be arrested for conspiracy. The threat of seeing her children placed in foster care, never to be returned, haunts the lives of abused and poor women.

The "war on drugs" targets communities with the highest rates of HIV, asthma, and hypertension and the lowest paid teachers and healthcare workers. Not surprisingly, physical and mental illness afflict prisoners in many times the rate of the general population. If drugs were decriminalized and treated as a health issue, 50% of the prison population might be free.

### INTERNATIONAL SILENCE?

International law forbids treating prisoners in a way that compromises their humanity. The U.S. has refused to sign several conventions or covenants of the UN because they forbade the death penalty. Poignantly, one of these lists 39 principles for the treatment of prisoners including the right to housing, food, air.

The UN requires periodic reports and in-country visits to monitor prisoners' human rights. (Recently Cuba was forced to open its prisons to inspectors because of complaints by stateless Cubans.) Last year, when the U.S. submitted a report on its prisons to the UN Committee for Human Rights, no U.S. non-governmental organization submitted a shadow report or refutation of the government's claims. What kind of pressure was brought to bear on the ACLU, Southern Center for Human Rights, Equality Now and others to keep them from submitting a "second opinion"? —January

# Siege of Falluja underscores cost of Iraq occupation

Continued from page 1

from the Shia communities yet to be heard from and who make up an estimated 60% of the country's population. While intercommunal antipathies remain, Shia and Sunni united for a relief caravan into Falluja in defiance of coalition control over such movements.

To be sure, disdain for the occupation springs from other sources as well. Not insignificant among them is the U.S.'s refusal to allow free elections after the defeat of Hussein's dictatorship. Also hated is the drive to privatize Iraqi services and industry with a bonanza coming for corporations like Halliburton. The immiseration of a population promised better times after Hussein is feeding mass anger. Most of all the sweeps, harassment and detentions of large groups of Iraqis has engendered resentment.

The U.S.'s military offensive in Falluja was so severe that even some of the U.S.'s closest allies inside the country denounced the actions. Adnan Pachachi, groomed by the U.S. for the leadership of Iraq and with no ties to Hussein or al-Sadr loyalists in Falluja, denounced the assault on that city as alienating to all Iraqis. Moderate Islamic leaders like Ali Sistani, who favors a degree of separation between politics and religion, have likewise distanced themselves from the U.S., even as the occupiers seek their role in negotiations.

Furthermore April's assault on Falluja and escalation of attacks on occupying forces and non-military targets were, taken together, the last straw for some members of the coalition Bush cobbled together for the war and occupation. Military forces from Spain and Honduras, in response to dissent at home, are headed toward the door with the Polish and Ukrainian governments considering the same course.

## THE PAST YEAR IN IRAQ

A steady and effective campaign of paramilitary harassment of the American military forces occupying Iraq has persisted since shortly after the collapse of Hussein's government. These attacks were for the most part carried out by Iraqis from the social base of the overthrown regime and were most prevalent in the area of the country called the "Sunni Triangle," the old Baath Party's demographic heartland.

This campaign was supplemented with fierce suicide bombings directed at international institutions like the UN and the Red Cross, as well as the offices of the Kurdish nationalist parties of Iraq's north.

The sleeping giant is the Shia population of Iraq—the majority of the country's population—which suffered long and hard under Hussein's rule. Their worship was interfered with and their clerics were murdered from time to time, most notably Moktada al-Sadr's father, Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr. The Shia were also excluded from the social benefits made possible by Iraq's oil wealth.

Hussein's removal was welcomed, but the Shia adopted an attitude of caution toward the occupiers. The U.S. had betrayed them in 1991 by withholding support of their large scale uprising after the first Gulf War and those who remember the resulting bloodbath are not inclined to extend the Americans more faith and credit.

Violence directed at the Shias from new and unidentifiable quarters was an additional concern. Deadly recurring events such as the horrific multiple-bomb attack on the religious festival of Ashoura in March in which at least 140 were killed raised suspicions that agents or sympathizers of the old regime were actively trying to provoke wholesale intercommunal violence as a means of destabilizing the situation for the American occupiers. The killings of day workers shaping up for jobs at the U.S. compound in Baghdad and the blowing up of markets and school buses attest to the inhuman goals of the perpetrators.

## POLITICAL POWER

Crucial for the American position in Iraq after the demise of Hussein's regime was the fact that representatives of powerful elements of Iraqi society were willing to offer at least token cooperation with the provisional structure the U.S. put into place.

This arrangement gave rise to a strange situation in which American representatives were dependent on deeply conservative leaders of Islamic organizations like the Dawa party, a longstanding Shia fundamentalist organization, and the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, a group with strong ties to the conservative mullahs of the Iranian government. Many of the religious groups—not only al-Sadr's—are connected to militias that surreptitiously defy the American ban on private armies.

The U.S.-appointed Iraqi Governing Council was the forum in which these religious forces vied with secular representatives like the Kurdish nationalist parties; Adnan Pachachi, an old politician from pre-Baathist Iraq; newly returned exiles sponsored by competing wings of the U.S. government such as Ahmad Chalabi, and even an official of the old Communist Party. All sought to extend their influence and position themselves for maximum power in the new Iraq.

However the composition of the Governing Council reflects the hold, albeit tenuous, of the U.S. on the political direction of Iraq. The rise of fundamentalist forces to positions of power threatens to scuttle the participation of Kurdish parties in the new government. And if Pachachi is the best the U.S. can seat in a transition authority, there's little hope that the rest of the technocrats assembled for the job can galvanize support

from the populace.

Whatever cohesion the Council possessed, however, has been dissipated by the recent events, especially the fighting in Falluja. Council members who tried to negotiate periods of cease fire were sidelined by U.S. military officials. At least two Council members have resigned because of their treatment and, adding insult to injury, UN envoy Lakhdar Brahimi, invited to make recommendations for the process of the handover of political power, concluded that the Governing Council should be disbanded in favor of a larger body.

## THE HOMEFRONT

That hasn't stopped Bush from seeking, in an hour of need, the mediation and cover of the UN, the same body that resisted and was iced by a White House hell-bent on invasion. Notwithstanding the UN's role in the decade-long embargo which starved and killed thousands of Iraqis, especially children, Bush has welcomed Brahimi to arrange for very limited sovereignty by a caretaker government after June 30. Iraqis are sure to find objection to this veneer for U.S. occupation as they are to the credentials of Brahimi who, as undersecretary of the Arab League, argued against helping the Shia, Kurds and Marsh Arabs rising up in 1991.

Exactly what will happen on June 30 is unclear, but whatever it is, it will take place in an environment of massive unemployment and political and social insecurity.

This war has never enjoyed a great deal of popular support at home. The public attitude at the onset seemed to be that if George W. Bush was determined to have his war, at least it would be a short one. A long trail of setbacks since then has extinguished that hope and contributed to a significant and rising level of dissatisfaction, most notably among family members of service

## War comes home



Military Families Speak Out: Fran Johns of Chicago, speaking, and Nancy Lessin of Boston.

EVANSTON, ILL.—"The only reason my son could speak out is because people like us are watching his back."

The speaker is a military mom and her son is serving in Iraq and opposed to the U.S. occupation of that country. "People like us" includes all the mothers who share that sentiment and are speaking out against the occupation at home.

They are members of the growing organization of families with relatives deployed to Iraq. Military Families Speak Out attracted several parents, spouses, and their supporters to a meeting here April 18 at the Northminster Presbyterian Church.

The church was filled as founders Nancy Lessin and Charley Richardson from Boston described how, in November 2002, two families of soldiers headed for Iraq voiced their opposition to the looming invasion. "We opposed a war for oil markets and empire-building, and felt there must be others who felt the same way we did," recalled Lessin. A year and a half after MFSO's founding, some 1,500 families belong, with more joining after hearing about local meetings like this one.

Fran Jones of MFSO in Chicago spoke with anger about what the war and occupation has done to her son in the Marines and the generation of youth like him. "What will they have to do or witness?" she asked. "This war is up close and personal and it is killing our youth."

"It's a 'just war' when Bush and Congress are sending your kids to Iraq," Richardson quipped. He also told of hearing an Iraqi who declared that getting rid of Saddam Hussein was a good thing, like an exterminator getting rid of the rats. But once the rats are gone, why does the exterminator have to move into the home and beat up the family?

Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky reminded the meeting that the minority which voted not to invade Iraq was not a small one.

An aunt whose nephew was killed in action told how the teenager was recruited. "The recruiters pursued him since the age of 16 with calls to the home. He joined because he was told he would get an education. Is there anything being done to prevent the pursuit of minors who believe all the good things the recruiters say, who say you are their best buddy and then put your life in danger, against the wishes of the parents?"

Contact MFSO at 617 522 9323 or [www.mfso.org](http://www.mfso.org).

men and women in Iraq (See "War comes home").

The recent violence has prompted the Pentagon to freeze in place units scheduled for rotation home of 20,000 troops. The family members of reservists have been especially hard hit by this new reliance on their loved ones' units—a cornerstone of Defense Secretary Rumsfeld's reorganization of the American armed forces. And casualties are mounting and for each fatality there are approximately five seriously wounded.

Congress's check for the war and occupation, for \$87 billion, has already been cashed and spent, and Bush may well return with a request for \$73 billion more. The 20,000 hired guns from security firms alone cost upwards of \$1,500 per day, per person. Going deeper into deficit hole is the only way to come up with the money for increasing the occupation forces and replacing the armaments destroyed or seized.

As large a blow as the admission of inspector David Kay that Iraq's weapons of mass destruction had been decommissioned long before the war was to the Bush administration, the testimony coming out of the September 11, 2001 investigation may prove to be much more detrimental. Particularly damning is the recurring confirmation of the President's overriding insistence on using the terrorist attacks as a pretext to invade Iraq, a point driven home by former anti-terrorism chief Richard Clarke.

All this looks bad for the administration, but the Kerry campaign has been busy looking militarist, buffing his Vietnam War medals while lining up behind Bush's galling approval of Ariel Sharon's annexation of Jewish settlements on the West Bank (See page 12).

Iraq is ready for self-rule and democracy. It has a history of large-scale organizations of workers and women who supported freedom and secularism. On the scene are groups like the Organization of Women for Freedom in Iraq who are organizing independently amidst threats from indigenous elements hostile to women's liberation. This is a history covered over by both the long nightmare of the totalitarian Baath Party and the ideology of free-market liberalization that the Defense Department intellectuals around George W. Bush espouse.

The brutal and heavy-handed military tactics used by the U.S. military to suppress the recent uprisings have exacerbated the hostility felt by most Iraqis towards even the normal, everyday conduct of the occupation. This hostility is contributing towards a situation in which the most reactionary elements of the resistance to the Americans—the Saddam supporters, the Osama bin Laden sympathizers, and the fundamentalist clerics—are gaining confidence and support. These forces are already seeking to suppress the real forces of radical change in Iraqi society—the employed and unemployed wage workers seeking to organize in their interests, the women and girls striving to throw off both Baathist and religious constrictions, and the oppressed national minorities fighting to determine their own future.

Though some, still disoriented by a narrow anti-imperialist posture, haven't found their voices of solidarity with these revolutionary dimensions, others like U.S. Labor Against War, are making the connections between the other Iraq and the other America ("See Iraqi labor defense," page 3).

The recent events in Iraq have had repercussions far beyond the borders of that country. A sober look at them is necessary by those who oppose Bush and his wars, to help create the conditions for creating real alternatives to capitalist imperialism.

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|--|--|
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## Mel Gibson's anti-Semitic inferno

While Mel Gibson tries to pass his movie, "The Passion of the Christ," off as a loving Christ, there is no question that it is virulently anti-Semitic at the same time as it panders to the most vile, militaristic attitudes imaginable.

The Right insists the multicultural U.S. is a "Christian country," and Gibson's "Passion" wants the viewer to agree with Christian chauvinists who think their religion trumps Islam, Judaism, and other religions. And this, at the very moment that the U.S. is murdering hundreds of Iraqis, the majority of them civilians, and giving Israel's Sharon the green light to murder any Palestinian he chooses.

### PORTRAYAL OF JEWS AS THE ENEMY

The sado-masochistic spectacle of the flaying of Jesus, the literally not only to show that Jesus suffered, but also to give a stamp of approval to the notion that the business of religion is violent. While Jesus' message—a fraction of the film—was about love, and loving your enemies, "The Passion" makes crystal clear that the Jews were the enemy, calling, endlessly, for Christ's death.

Everything in a movie is deliberate—every shot, every costume, and in this film Jews are portrayed as animals. Katha Pollitt, in a review aptly titled "The Protocols of Mel Gibson," describes how "the high priest Caiaphas and his faction are not just bad, they fit neatly into ancient Christian stereotypes: They are rich, arrogant and gaudily dressed; they plot and scheme and bribe; they cleverly manipulate the brutal but straightforward Romans; they are gratuitously 'cruel' and 'hard-hearted'.... Physically, they are anti-Semitic cartoons: The priests have big noses and gnarly faces, lumpish bodies, yellow teeth; Herod Antipas, and his perverts. The 'good Jews' look like Italian movie stars..."

It gets worse: Jewish children turn into monsters and goblins; Barabbas is portrayed as an insane mani-

## 'Passion' for capital

Against my better judgment I went to see Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ." The licensing of official "Passion of the Christ" pewter nail pendants and companion guides shows Gibson's motives were neither devotional nor evangelical. Even when I purchased my ticket, I was handed an advertisement for the movie's soundtrack.

The movie had the same sado-masochistic elements found in other Gibson movies. The flashbacks to the works and teachings of Jesus took a back seat to the gore-fest, making it easy to forget or ignore Jesus' message of non-violence and love. This message was further undermined by the resurrection scene, in which war-drums could be heard in the background.

Those who tortured Jesus were vilified to the point of being dehumanized. In this portrayal, the Jewish leaders and Roman centurions were no longer fallible human beings but willing agents of Satan, a point further emphasized by the physical presence of Satan floating back and forth among the Pharisees and the Romans. Contrary to the Gospels (see Luke 23:47), Gibson portrayed no remorse on the part of anyone involved in Jesus' death.

He attempted to cover these and other historical and biblical inaccuracies by shooting the film in Aramaic, Latin, and Hebrew. This illusion of historical accuracy coupled with an Aryan portrayal of Jesus was frighteningly reminiscent of "Birth of a Nation," the "classic" propaganda film about the rise of the Ku Klux Klan.

I was appalled not only by "The Passion," but also by the sentiment among some conservative Catholics that anyone who objects to this movie is anti-Catholic. As a Catholic Christian, I embrace the Catholic theology and spirituality, not the dogmatic political agendas of conservatives.

Gibson's blatant commercialization of my faith called to mind Jesus' cleansing of the temple (see Matthew 21:12-13, Mark 11:15-17, Luke 19:45-46, John 2:13-17), a great act of non-violent direct action against those who would attempt to profit off of the spiritual devotion of others. (This spiritual profiteering is all too common among many of today's so-called Christian organizations, such as the Conservative Coalition, The 700 Club, EWTN). Not surprisingly, Gibson left this scene out of his movie.

—Stephen Weierman

ac, making faces and screaming. Yet the Jews prefer to free him and crucify the gorgeous Jesus—a cross between a young Mel Gibson and a youthful Charlton Heston. Jesus' followers were, of course, Jewish, but the only masses we see in the movie are the howling Jewish mob calling for Christ's death.

Not all of the anti-Semitism is so obvious. When Jesus is captured, we first meet Mary who, out of nowhere, asks the question from the Passover ritual: "Why is this night different from all other nights?" Mary Magdalene gives the answer in one muffled sentence: we escaped bondage and now are free.

But, in the movie, clearly and the reason "this night is different" is because Jesus has been captured. Thus in one sentence Gibson has wiped out the history of the Jewish escape from slavery because the real tragedy is not the 300 years of oppression that Jews experienced as slaves in Egypt, but the capture of Jesus.

It is not only Jews this movie demonizes. Satan is played by a woman, but when you see her ensconced in a shawl, you can't tell what sex Satan is. To most, Gibson's Satan would look like a gay man. Women are reduced to wiping up copious amounts of Jesus' blood, or smearing it on their faces. Laughably, it is Pontius Pilate's wife, who, besides Mary and Mary Magdalene, seems most horrified by what is going on. Aren't Roman imperial rulers wonderful?!

Given this deliberate anti-Semitic depiction no one should be surprised that "The Passion" is being used by rabid Christian fundamentalists and also neo-Nazis, both "religious" and "secular." What a boost Gibson has given them as well as those like the racist nationalist in Memphis whose car displays a placard proclaiming: "The Jews killed Christ."

### IRRESPONSIBLE REVIEWERS

Given the deliberate nature of Gibson's anti-Semitic, anti-queer, anti-feminist message, the irresponsibility of reviewers like Roger Ebert, who denied the film's anti-Semitism and gushed over this "work of genius," is criminal. It is not only many reviewers who are blind to the glaring anti-Semitism and right-wing nature of Gibson's creation. One small example is that here, in Memphis, the highly respected Rhodes College bought 100 tickets to give out to students. The damage this movie will make has just begun.

How is it that Gibson can get away with producing this filth? Politicized religion is in the driver's seat. The Right gets away with anti-Semitism by being pro-Israel/pro-Sharon. But just because the Bush administration gives Sharon its blessing on everything from Sharon's decree on settlements last month to the assassination of Hamas leaders, doesn't mean he cares about anti-Semitism.

Aiding Sharon makes it appear that Bush and the Christian Right are pro-Jewish, when they are only pro-Israel as a U.S. proxy power in the Middle East. But their anti-Semitism is clear from their insistence that the U.S. is a Christian nation coupled with their deliberate destruction of the separation between (the Christian) church and state.

The production and acclaim for Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ" shows that, as always, the biggest danger for Jews and for those of us fighting for a truly human world, is coming from the far right.

—Terry Moon

## ESSAY The two-fold legacy of Rosa Luxemburg

Continued from page 5

"armed resistance" in Iraq to the U.S. invasion and occupation of that country in the months following March 2003, even though this same "armed resistance" was responsible for murdering Kurdish activists, threatening to kill independent Iraqi feminists like Yanar Mohammed, and murdering 140 unarmed Shiite pilgrims in Iraq, in a suicide-bomb attack.(10)

Undifferentiated support for anyone opposing U.S. imperialism will not help us break through the reigning ideological notion that "there is no alternative" to capitalism. It will only reinforce it.

The reason that many on the Left have fallen into the trap of extending such undifferentiated support to anyone opposed to the U.S., no matter how reactionary they may be (a problem exhibited as well in the failure of much of the Left to come to the aid of the Bosnians and Kosovars who faced genocidal attacks from Milosevic's Serbia), does not of course result from any particular love on their part for fundamentalism. It flows from a failure to meet the challenge of projecting a positive alternative to all forms of capitalism, imperialism, racism, and sexism.

As Raya Dunayevskaya put it in her study of Luxemburg back in 1982:

Without a new vision of revolutions, a new individual, a new universal, a new society, new human relations, we would be forced to tail-end one or another form of reformism just when the age of nuclear Titans...threatens the very survival of civilization as we have known it. The myriad crises in our age have shown, over and over again, from Russia to China, from Cuba to Iran, from Africa to Pol Pot's Cambodia, that without a philosophy of revolution activism spends itself in mere anti-imperialism and anti-capitalism, without ever revealing what it is for.(11)

Let us return with new eyes to the work of Rosa Luxemburg, not just for her sake, but to work out unre-

## Protest Caterpillar sales to Israel

CHICAGO—About 35 activists, including people from Not In My Name, Palestinian-Americans, students and others demonstrated outside the LaSalle Bank here. The occasion was the annual Caterpillar shareholders meeting. Caterpillar supplies special armored bulldozers, science-fictional creations that are like huge metal buildings on wheels that are used to raze Palestinian homes in the occupied West Bank and Gaza.

There are conservative estimates that at least 10,000 Palestinian homes have been punished, as the Israeli military collectively punishes the population of the occupied territories. There was an outcry when a young American active in the International Solidarity Movement, Rachel Corrie, was killed a year ago by one of these Caterpillar creations.

One participant in the demonstration said, "I was holding up a sign that said 'Remember Rachel Corrie' and was surprised by how many people knew who she was. A lot of people walking by said that we were doing



Activists marched on Caterpillar's national headquarters in Peoria, Ill. on April 23, loudly voicing their opposition to the company's sale of bulldozers to the Israeli government.

the right thing. There was a lot of support, considering that not enough people know about this issue." Another activist noted that there were "lots of honks and flashed peace signs and raised fists."

A picket line throughout the lunch hour and into the afternoon supported a delegation that went into the shareholders' meeting and addressed those in attendance. Following their presentations, 4% of the shareholders voted in support of a resolution to cease providing these vehicles to the Israeli military.

This action was building toward a larger rally in Peoria on April 23.

—Participants

solved philosophic-theoretic problems of revolution which are central to our life and times. We owe no less to her and we owe no less to ourselves.

### NOTES

1. "Cuba Hurts," by Eduardo Galeano, *The Progressive*, June 2003.
2. "Saramago, Galeano, and Fidel Castro," by Heinz Dietrich Steffan, *Granma International*, April 24, 2003.
3. See "The Dissolution of Primitive Communism" in *The Rosa Luxemburg Reader*, edited by Peter Hudis and Kevin B. Anderson (New York: Monthly Review Books, 2004), pp. 110 ff.
4. See Luxemburg's letter to Mathilde Wurm of February 16, 1917, in *The Rosa Luxemburg Reader*, p. 390.
5. The Junius Pamphlet, in *The Rosa Luxemburg Reader*, p. 326.
6. The Russian Revolution, in *The Rosa Luxemburg Reader*, p. 306.
7. See Felix Tych, "Drei unbekannte Briefe Rosa Luxemburgs über die Oktoberrevolution," in *IWK Internationale wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz zur Geschichte der deutsche Arbeiterbewegung* 27:3 (1991), pp. 357-66.
8. See Slavoj Žižek, "George Lukács as the Philosopher of Lenin," in *A Defense of History and Class Consciousness: Tailism and the Dialectic*, by Georg Lukács (London: Verso, 2000). For a critique of Žižek's contention, see Peter Hudis, "Lukács's History and Class Consciousness Reconsidered," *News & Letters* (June 2001), pp. 5, 10.
9. See "Writings on Women, 1902-14" in *The Rosa Luxemburg Reader*, pp. 233-47.
10. See Tariq Ali's "Recolonizing Iraq," *New Left Review*, 21 May-June 2003. For the threats being made against Iraqi feminists by former supporters of Saddam Hussein's regime as well as by Islamic fundamentalists, see "Support Yanar Mohammed," *News & Letters*, March 2004, p. 2.
11. *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, by Raya Dunayevskaya (Champaign-Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), p. 194.

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## OUR LIFE AND TIMES

# Bush endorses Sharon's annexation plan

by Kevin A. Barry

On April 14, three weeks after the Israeli government's assassination of the Hamas leader, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, George Bush hosted Ariel Sharon at the White House and endorsed his plan to unilaterally withdraw from Gaza in exchange for keeping Israeli settlements in the West Bank.

Sharon's plan, the details of which have been released by the Israeli peace group, Gush Shalom, aims to remove 7,000 Jewish settlers from Gaza which has a population of 1.2 million Palestinians. In exchange, Sharon will annex Israel's "settlement blocs" in the West Bank in which 250,000 live among a population of 2.5 million Palestinians. The "settlement blocs" would amount to 55% of the territory of the West Bank. The other 45% which would constitute an archipelago surrounded by Israeli settlers and soldiers, would then be connected through roads built and controlled by Israel. Apparently, all of Jerusalem would remain under Israeli rule. The combination of a West Bank archipelago, and a Gaza which would only have an entrance through Israel, could then constitute a Palestinian state!

Three days after Bush's announcement of his support for this outrageous plan, Sharon's government assassinated yet another Hamas leader. This time, Abdel Aziz Rantisi, a Hamas founder and replacement for Sheikh Yassin, was killed by an Israeli missile strike on his car. His son, his bodyguard and several bystanders were also killed. His wife was severely injured.

Sharon's acts of state terror, and Bush's endorsement of them provoked strong responses from Palestinian leaders as well as Palestinian protesters in Gaza and the West Bank who were enraged by the openly arrogant way in which Bush and Sharon were deciding their future. The European Union has also announced that it will not recognize any change to the pre-1967 borders other than those arrived at by agreement between the parties. The Jordanian government has

postponed King Abdullah's scheduled talks with George Bush.

Sharon's policy of state terrorism and his announced plan, continue to take attention away from the fact that in November of 2003, a group of moderate Israeli and Palestinian leaders had worked out a very detailed peace proposal in which many difficult questions were addressed and concrete solutions were offered. The Geneva Accords proposed a two state solution on the basis of Israel's return to the pre-1967 borders with some modifications involving land swaps based on a 1:1 exchange. The issue of the status of Palestinian refugees was addressed through an offer of monetary compensation and a very limited resettlement program in Israel. Jerusalem would be administered through Israeli rule over the Jewish neighborhoods and Palestinian rule over the Arab neighborhoods, with each state establishing its capital in the part of Jerusalem under its control. The Old City would be managed jointly, along with the help of multinational forces. The West Bank and Gaza would be connected through a road that would be "under Israeli sovereignty" but "under Palestinian administration."

In fact, any step toward peace negotiations by Palestinian moderates has been squashed by Sharon. In March of 2002 his siege of Ramallah destroyed the resources of Palestinian organizations and individuals who promoted the two state solution. He then rejected

the Arab Summit's peace offer of recognition of Israel in exchange for a return to the pre-1967 borders and monetary compensation for Palestinian refugees. In August of 2003, he ordered the assassination of Ismael Abu Shanab, the only Hamas leader who had supported a two state solution. Now, his announced plan and his assassination of Yassin and Rantisi, have further suffocated those Palestinians who had hoped for a peaceful two state solution.

Furthermore, Sharon's dehumanization of Palestinian refugees and Bush's dismissal of their right to compensation for the land/homes they have lost, have strengthened those who have always rejected the two state solution in the name of the right of return. The latter once again pose the right of all refugees to return to and settle inside what is now Israel, as an absolute condition for any peace agreement.

—Sheila Sahar

## Battles in Uzbekistan

A series of violent confrontations between Islamic fundamentalists and government forces took place over four days in late March and early April. These included suicide bombings against police and other officials of the Islam Karimov regime, in power since the collapse of the Soviet Union. In some cases, Islamists blew themselves up rather than face capture by a regime known to torture its opponents. In all, the government reported 47 deaths, 33 of them fundamentalists.

These attacks, often carried out by women, had a military precision and seemed to have been planned well in advance. This suggested links to Al Qaeda. So did the history of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, which had fought alongside the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan after fleeing Uzbekistan. In 2001, the Islamic Movement's leadership was reported killed by U.S. forces. However, some elements may have regrouped.

The fact that these new attacks did not target civilians suggested that whoever carried them out was bidding for public sympathy against the widely hated Karimov regime, which holds 6,000 political prisoners. Since September 11, 2001, Karimov has become a close ally of the Bush administration, allowing at least 1,000 U.S. troops to base themselves there. Karimov's repression of all secular opposition and the country's moribund economy have created space for fundamentalists to project themselves as an alternative.

## Unrest in Slovakia

In April elections for the largely symbolic presidency, voters in Slovakia registered a protest against harsh "free market" economic policies by giving right-



Demonstrators in Finland opposed deportation of Roma to Slovakia where they face police brutality.

wing populist Vladimir Meciar a plurality in the first round, on April 3. In the 1990s, Meciar had ruled in an authoritarian fashion, putting forward a chauvinistic nationalism that targeted the West and the ethnic Hungarian minority. In the second round of voting on April 17, voters evidently had second thoughts about Meciar and they elected Ivan Gasparovic, a less demagogic critic of current economic policies.

Voters are clearly worried about their economic future at a time when unemployment stands at 16%. One sign of this dissension came in February, when a revolt broke out in the East where most of the country's 400,000-strong Roma minority lives. Overall, Roma constitute about 7% of the population.

The revolt was a response to harsh cutbacks that reduced social welfare allotments by as much as 50%. This was done at the behest of international capital. With unemployment rates over 50% in some Roma communities, which face not only poverty but also racist barriers to the few available jobs, people reacted by looting food shops. Non-Roma working people also joined in. The government sent in 2,000 police and 1,000 soldiers to quell the revolt, but this has done nothing to alleviate its causes.

## French elections

In March regional elections, French voters dealt a strong blow to the conservative government of Jacques Chirac and Jean-Pierre Raffarin. In the final round, their alliance received only 37% of the vote, while the leftist alliance of the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, and the Greens won 50%. Voters were reacting against government arrogance, especially in the wake of the labor mobilizations last spring. For despite protest marches and strikes that involved more than a million workers, the government had used its parliamentary majority to ram through a major rollback of pension benefits.

In the first round of this year's regionals, the two main Trotskyist parties were also able to test their strength. Their share of the vote declined from 10% in the first round of the 2002 presidential elections, to 5% this year. While this still represents a million votes for parties advocating a revolutionary transformation of the capitalist order, it was nonetheless a setback.

In part, this was due to the fact that in 2002, a large pro-Trotskyist vote had helped pave the way for a Chirac victory, since it kept the Socialist Party off the ballot in the final round, as Chirac then faced the neo-fascist Jean-Marie Le Pen. The Trotskyists also lost ground this year due to their stance during that final round in 2002 when, unlike the anti-globalization movement, they refused to support the bourgeois democrat Chirac against the fascist Le Pen. Ominously, neo-fascist parties have persisted as the third force in French politics, with around 17% of the vote in the first round of this year's regionals.

## Ouster in South Korea

Taking a page from the book of America's Republican Party, South Korea's conservative-dominated National Assembly voted to impeach President Roh Moo Hyun on flimsy charges. Outraged, some 50,000 took to the streets to protest what *Hankyoreh*, a left-leaning newspaper, called "a coup d'etat by old politicians trying to seize power before their terms end."

That was in March. In April's legislative elections, voters punished the conservatives. The relatively new left-of-center Uri Party won a majority in the National Assembly. This was the first time since 1960 that conservatives had failed to win control of the Assembly. The third spot was taken by the newly formed and leftist Democratic Labor Party, which received 13% of the overall vote. The April vote will surely encourage labor, as well as women's rights and civil liberties groups. Additionally, the Constitutional Court will now be under severe pressure to overturn the impeachment of President Roh. Finally, the government will be more reluctant than ever to support confrontational policies toward North Korea or to send troops to Iraq, as has been promised to the Bush administration.

## NEWS AND LETTERS COMMITTEES

### Who We Are And What We Stand For

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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