

NEWS & LETTERS

"Human power is its own end"—Karl Marx

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LEAD-EDITORIAL

WORKSHOP TALKS

Man-made disasters

by Htun Lin

Everything that followed the natural disaster Katrina was a man-made disaster, a disaster rooted in ideology. The difference is between those for whom the essential tenet of labor-unionism—an injury to one is an injury to all—means something and those for whom it doesn't.

The success of any society is not measured by the most powerful among us, but by the weakest in the worst of conditions. U.S. and UN statistics on infant mortality put our collective health index near the shameful level, somewhere below China and India—killing roughly 19,000 babies a year.

Conservatives like to claim the problem is a breakdown in social order and discipline, as if only the direct parents and caregivers are responsible. The Speaker of the House and the mother of the President tried to blame the people trapped in New Orleans for not getting out. Bush and the movement that supports him hold fast to an ideology which does not believe in the public good and shared social responsibilities.

At the hospital where I work, we are tested annually on our knowledge of evacuation plans in the event of any disasters. One thing stressed to us employees is to move patients to a safe location, away from hazards, and to call for rescue, such as firefighters and police.

It made me wince to hear that so many patients were left behind in New Orleans hospitals and nursing homes. It goes without saying that we don't leave our patients behind.

It's that kind of decency that is expected when patients get sick and come to a hospital to get well, but is absent from management's ideology now. It's what healthcare workers expect to do. We were all trained to be promoters of the safety and welfare of the patients in our charge—not as objects of budgetary designs, but

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BLACK/RED VIEW

A new imperialism?

by John Alan

Probably one of the most ironic moments in history was when Britain's Prime Minister Tony Blair and other leaders of the G-8 Nations met in Scotland on July 7, 2005 to talk about the poverty-stricken and terrorized Africa. Before the London bombings drew the world's attention away from Africa, Blair energetically raised at the G-8 meeting the question of giving Africa a second chance. He pointed out that "Africa emerged from colonialism almost a half-century ago with a bright political promise. Independence would drop fruits of nationhood into the laps of a people by giving them control over their destinies, it was broadly assumed and promised." However, Blair didn't go on to show why that "bright political promise" never happened for the politically free African nations, nor why the economy of African nations failed to grow and why they are now totally without accumulated capital.

The truth is African poverty is the result of decades of neocolonial neglect. For example, Africans living in the shadow of an extensive oil extracting infrastructure in Nigeria are subjected to the same poverty as other regions of Africa, but with the added insult of a much more toxic environment. Global capitalism oversaw the marked decline in per capita income and life expectancy, and a rise in the most dire poverty, in the last two decades in Africa. Along with this came the wanton waste of human life through the unchecked spread of great neglected diseases (like malaria), not to mention the new scourge of AIDS. Blair claims to want to give Africa "a second chance" at overcoming its pervasive hopelessness and despair. Many people in the

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New Orleans: The human cost of capitalism's brutality



Trapped in the New Orleans Superdome.

by Kevin Michaels and Jim Mills

Hurricane Katrina did far more than wreak an enormous amount of human, material, and environmental devastation to New Orleans and the Gulf Coast. The giant storm violently lifted the curtain that obscures the racial and class divides that constitute American civilization and made plain for the world to see that anti-Black racism continues to shape the reality for millions. The fatally chaotic and incompetent response of the local, state and federal governments to the disaster called into question their claim to be the organizers of society and will have huge political implications for the remainder of George W. Bush's administration and for years to come.

The gross and malicious negligence exhibited by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, organizationally under the control of Bush's Homeland Security Agency, as well as the depletion of the National Guard forces of the Gulf Coast states due to the demands of the war in Iraq, places the lion's share of responsibility for this disaster squarely at the doorstep of the White House.

HURRICANE OF CRISES

New Orleans is one of the most remarkable of American cities. Its long and complicated history stretches back to the periods of French and Spanish power in North America. This heritage was integrated into the American nation state during the presidency of Thomas Jefferson and played a huge role in the development of Louisiana through the periods of chattel slavery, the Civil War, Reconstruction and the Civil Rights era.

The precarious nature of the physical environment of New Orleans, surrounded by lake, river and swamps and protected from inundation by a complex system of levees and spillways, seemed to contribute to a cultur-

al atmosphere in which music, literature, cuisine and storytelling flourished and enriched the country and the world at large.

Many in New Orleans hoped Hurricane Katrina would proceed like other storms that had threatened the city in the past, only to change course and spare the city their full impact. Those with the means to evacuate poured out of the city onto interstate highways and filled shelters and hotels in Mississippi, Texas and Tennessee. Those without transportation and cash on hand—as well as those too old or too sick to leave—remained behind and hoped for the best.

It initially appeared that New Orleans had been spared once again, as the eye of the hurricane passed to the east of the city and furiously bore down on the Mississippi cities of Gulfport and Biloxi, all but totally destroying the coastal communities as far east as Mobile, Ala. As flood waters began to appear in the streets of New Orleans on Monday, Aug. 29, however, it became clear that something had gone horribly wrong.

The huge volume of water forced into Lake Pontchartrain by Hurricane Katrina's storm surge had found weak points in several of the levees protecting the city and had made a horrible reality out of the greatest fear of its residents: that the city, almost the entirety of which is below sea level, would be buried under water. The levees of New Orleans failed in places that suddenly forced enormous numbers of poor and Black New Orleans residents into dire danger.

The city's predominantly Black Ninth Ward flooded, as well as New Orleans East, home to the city's large Vietnamese immigrant community. The Bywater neighborhood, large parts of the Uptown area and almost every other part of the city with the exception of the French Quarter was submerged. Thousands were

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Whether we look at the human destruction wrought by the brutality of capitalism in the wake of Hurricane Katrina; or whether we are forced to confront the ever-increasing body count of Iraqi victims and U.S. GIs alike in Bush's reach to achieve single superpower rule—the need for a philosophically grounded alternative to capitalism grows more urgent every day.

Never was there a greater need for a publication like News & Letters.

Born 50 years ago, at the height of McCarthyism, *N&L* has remained the only Marxist-Humanist journal published in the U.S. Just as McCarthyism failed then to divert us from our goal of establishing News and Letters Committees as a new kind of organization, and its paper, *News & Letters*, as a unique combination of theory and practice, so today the ever deeper retrogression of Bushism will not divert us from our goal of unfurling an ever fuller and more expansive banner of liberation.

From our beginning, our principle has been never to separate the voices of revolt from the articulation of the philosophy of revolution Raya Dunayevskaya created as Marxist-Humanism. The "voices from below"—from women's liberationists to rank-and-file working people, the Black dimension and youth—can be seen abundantly in the pages of this issue of *N&L*. At the same time, in the face of the deepening retrogression we confront today, we have been attempting to close the gap between philosophy and organization that has

characterized the entire radical movement. It was to that end that we began issuing *News & Letters* on a bimonthly basis this year to increase our political-philosophic analyses of critical ongoing events at the same time as expanding our organizational activism into new areas.

In the year ahead we are undertaking a collective organizational effort to compile a new collection of Raya Dunayevskaya's writings on Marx, unseparated from working out the totality of Marx's Marxism for today in every facet of our work.

The continued publication of *News & Letters* and the expansion of our activities confronts us with ever-increasing expenses, despite the fact that we have no paid staff. The bills for printing, office rent, and postage alone come to over \$6,000 a month. Every year since our founding, 50 years ago, we have turned to you, our readers, to help us keep going. **Just as there has never been a greater need for News & Letters, so has there never been a greater need for your support!**

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WOMAN AS REASON

By Urszula Wislanka

Solidarity's Secret, The Women Who Defeated Communism in Poland, by Shana Penn, University of Michigan Press, 2005

This is the 25th anniversary of Poland's Solidarity movement, in which the self-activity of workers, women, and peasants during its 16-month life reached an unprecedented level of organization before being crushed by martial law. It electrified the world and led to the fall of the Russian-centered Communist empire a decade later. It's important to recollect the high points and barriers it faced so as to understand history without the prejudice of what is accepted today as "settled." A good example is Shana Penn's recently published study of women in Solidarity.

Penn's book tells the untold stories of Helena Luczywo, Ewa Kulik, Anna Bikont, Zofia Bydlinska, Malgorzata Pawlicka and other women participants. Anna Walentynowicz is best known as the spark who organized Polish workers and peasants to form Solidarity, a trade union that challenged 35 years of Polish totalitarianism. Barbara Labuda created the workers' "flying university," the engine of how Solidarity spread. After the declaration of martial law in December 1981 and the arrest of most of legal Solidarity's mostly male leadership, these 3

seven women formed a "Ladies' Operations Unit" and published *Tygodnik Mazowsze (Mazowsze Weekly)*, Solidarity's Warsaw-based newspaper. When Communism fell in 1989, they founded *Gazeta Wyborcza (Election Gazette)*, Poland's most prestigious daily.

Penn says "Anna [Dodziuk] and her circle of friends...were inspired by the fearless actions of [Kuron and Modzelewski's 1964 "Open Letter to the Party," which analyzed Poland as a state-capitalist society].... We thought in terms of socialism, and we came to realize that, according to Marxist analysis, the working class was oppressed, just as Marx had written.... We decided the best solution would be to increase participation of the workers... We thought...with the workers' involvement, the system would automatically change" (118).

MECHANICAL FEMINISM VS. REASON

It is exhilarating to read, in the women's own words, of Solidarity's existence after martial law, especially since it is centered on women's decisive, organizing role. The way Penn tells the story, however, Solidarity as a workers'—and therefore, according to her, a one-issue, male-oriented—movement failed with the declaration of martial law.

Penn's is a mechanical feminism that reduces the revolutionary moment of the 1980 historic strike and the 16-month-long experience of trying to build freedom, to a "single-issue movement that is bigger and more urgent than gender equality" (64). Although the women she interviewed kept repeating that Solidarity was about freedom, Penn made a distinction between freedom and her singular framework for feminism, "gender equality." But feminism is not reducible to "gender equality."

What might have been most troubling to Penn is that the women she wrote about said publicly that they

Stop rape in Pakistan

NEW YORK—The "Rally for Women's Rights, Lives and Voices" here Sept. 17, called by the Asian-American Network Against Abuse of Women and Amnesty International, protested visiting Pakistani President Musharraf, who defends Pakistan's woman-hating laws and policies. Feminists and Pakistani-American women and men came from the U.S. and Canada to protest at his hotel and demand justice for women.

We chanted "shame on you" in Urdu and "women's rights are human rights." We heard stories of rape, "honor" killings, acid attacks, domestic violence, and jailings and torture meted out to those who pursue justice. Mukhtar Mai, or Bibi, who pursued those who gang-raped her on orders of her village council (see July-August *N&L*), sent a written statement: "When the head of state makes a derogatory statement about rape, it really hurts us.... A poor woman has just her honor, and why would she want to auction off her honor?... General Musharraf gave a statement that he is looking for evidence for my case. What more evidence do they want? It has been three years and I have not gotten justice. Those women who kill themselves after rape, do they get justice? ... Women of the world have to unite and fight against violence. We have to unite regardless of race, religion and country. We must raise our voices!"

Sunita Mehta of Women for Afghan Women said: "We insist on the unity of women across and within borders, regardless of race or class. The young Black women raped in New Orleans after the hurricane, the Indian women in dowry deaths, the Pakistanis killed or with acid thrown in their faces, the Afghan women who are so tortured in their family lives that they choose suicide—the manner is different, but the violence is the same."

Prof. Sadia Toor of Pakistani Activists for Gender Equality said: "Musharraf says women who complain of violence in Pakistan are after money or travel.... Pakistan is dishonored, that's because misogyny operates not only in society, but on all levels of the state."

—Anne Jaclard

On the 25th anniversary of Solidarity

did not recognize themselves in her telling of their story. In an article reprinted from *Gazeta Wyborcza* by Penn, Joanna Szczesna said Penn's characterization of her "perfectly reflects what happens to reality when predetermined viewpoints are applied to it. Shana Penn came to Poland with a ready thesis... the women involved in [the anticommunist] conspiracy failed to notice gender discrimination within the resistance movement (for they lacked feminist consciousness), discrimination which, for Shana Penn as an American woman, was visible at first glance" (331).

In distinction to Penn's feminism, Ms. Szczesna says: "I'd rather get involved in activities protesting the use of physical violence by the police than in a struggle for the equal distribution of a policeman's blows" (332-33). (See Terry Moon's "Solidarity with Polish women!" January-February 1982 *N&L*, and Urszula Wislanka's "The revolutionary activity of Polish women," March 1982 *N&L*.)

THEORETICIANS MIS-LEAD

The tragedy of Solidarity is that Dodziuk was only half right. As long as a massive movement of workers was thriving, it did not seem to matter what theoreticians thought. Kuron, given the history of Russia's bloody invasions of East European countries which pushed ~~too~~ far, and the lack of real support from the

'Comfort women's' demands



SAN FRANCISCO—On Aug. 11 demonstrations around the world showed solidarity with Korean women who, for 669 consecutive Wednesdays, protested in front of the Japanese embassy in Seoul seeking justice for the "comfort women." In San Francisco about 100, mostly young, Asian women, came in support.

Since Kim Hak Soon told her story in 1991, the support movement has been growing. During WWII, 200,000 women were kidnapped from Korea and forced into prostitution for the occupying Japanese army. Japan refuses to mention this in their history texts, claiming that they were "willing prostitutes." The average comfort woman was raped by as many as 30 military officers a day, many were beaten and mutilated and still suffer from sexually transmitted diseases, psychological trauma and societal discrimination.

Yuri Kochiyama, who spent WWII in a U.S. internment camp and is famous for her participation in the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, called on the Japanese government to acknowledge the atrocities, apologize, pay reparations, and change the history books.

—March participant

Roberts wins one

Bush's nomination of right-wing Judge John Roberts to be Chief Justice of the U.S. was voted out of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Sept. 22, by a vote of 13-5. It will now be voted on by the full Senate.

Given Roberts' negative views about the environment, and women's and Blacks' civil rights, the lack of opposition to him is shocking. Women's groups have protested, along with the NAACP, People for the American Way, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, and Mexican-American Legal Defense and Education Fund. But four neo-conservative African-American organizations, as well as some members of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, support him based on his support of faith-based initiatives.

Roberts' work in Reagan's administration made clear his drive to weaken, if not gut, the Voting Rights Act and limit, if not eliminate, affirmative action. A brief signed by him in 1991 stated that "Roe v. Wade was wrongly decided and should be overruled."

"Liberal" senators went along with the Senate Judiciary Committee's agreement not to ask his views but focus on his "legal qualifications," despite the fact that his votes on issues that would come before the Supreme Court mean life or death for women, African-Americans, gays and lesbians, and the poor. Just consider that one Supreme Court vote crowned Bush the president in 2000, despite the voters.

The "plan" to confirm Roberts and then scrutinize the nominee for Sandra Day O'Connor's vacancy could give the Supreme Court decades to overturn every right we've won. That is Bush's plan, and we and our children will pay dearly for this capitulation.

—Mary Jo Grey

West, proposed setting a limit beyond which he claimed the movement should not press for fear of an invasion and terrific loss of life. Repeatedly the movement went beyond his "limit," altering the geopolitical situation in the process. But Kuron did not rethink the theory. He only set another limit.

The movement certainly recognized Marx. The slogan of a huge 1981 demonstration in Lodz over food shortages was "Hungry of the world, unite!" Unfortunately, Kuron saw Marxism only as a tool to analyze the objective situation, not as providing the theoretical posture needed to give a movement a direction—a philosophic rudder. While his activities were in support of the workers, his theory was based not on the development of the movement he loved, but on the situation outside of it.

The Solidarity movement wanted to transform the mode of production in many ways, including through active strikes. But their leaders missed the significance of the new human relations—the key to Marx's concept of freedom—in both women's participation and the crucial new human relations in workers' activity that could determine a different future, the direct dispersal between workers themselves of the products of their own labor. Active strikes were in embryo a new form of directly social labor in production.

NEEDED PHILOSOPHIC RUDDER

Change is not automatic. By the time Solidarity arose, Marxism was no longer accepted as the basis for how to achieve freedom in a new society. Kuron's theoretical response to the vitality of the movement was a theory of "self-limiting revolution." Jaruzelski's "Military Council for National Salvation" also used as its rationale for imposing martial law, the desire to save Polish lives from a Russian invasion. With martial law, the women carried on the activity of Solidarity. However, without workers' massive participation, the 1989 fall of Communism was not the change the society fought for, but merely a swap of one form of capitalism for another.

Shana Penn's book contributes to the recovery of women's important legacy. But since history is a battleground for how to move forward, it's crucial to capture the Reason of women as they reach to freedom by overcoming the concrete barriers they face. The discussion worth having is what is freedom, including the liberation of women in overcoming capitalism.

Victory over Shari'a

Over 400 protesters rallied in Toronto's Queen's Park, Sept. 8, to demand that the Ontario government not allow family legal matters, such as divorce and child custody, be settled in private (Shari'a) courts based on religious laws. Marches were held in six European and five Canadian cities by the International Campaign Against Shari'a Court in Canada (ICASCC).

Minutes after the demonstration, Ontario Attorney General Michael Bryant stated: "We have heard loud and clear from those who are seeking greater protections for women.... We will ensure that the law of the land in Ontario is not compromised, that there will be no binding family arbitration in Ontario that uses a set of rules or laws that discriminate against women."

By Sept. 11, Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty stated that religious arbitrations "threaten our common ground," and promised his Liberal government would introduce legislation "as soon as possible" to outlaw them in Ontario. "The government is definitely heading in the right direction" said Ms. Homa Arjomand, Coordinator of the ICASCC. She started the Campaign in Toronto in 2003. Today it is a coalition of 87 organizations from 14 countries opposing the global spread of the deadly Shari'a Courts, which in the Middle East and Nigeria even sentence women to death.

Arjomand asserted: "Together we have defeated the forces of Political Islam in Ontario, but this is just the first step. We must not stop here. We need to continue the fight and assist people in other countries who live under the burdens of Shari'a and Political Islam."

—Information from International Campaign Against Shari'a Court in Canada

WOMEN WORLDWIDE

by Mary Jo Grey

A protest in northwest Cameroon could reverse the eviction of 600 women from land they were using to grow food. At least 6,000 women staged a sit-in at the royal palace for more than two months, took seven local chiefs hostage and halted traditional celebrations before authorities agreed to negotiate a settlement.

—Information from off our backs

Kosova has become a major source of women and girls being trafficked into forced prostitution since the 1999 deployment there of NATO peacekeepers and UN administrators, according to Amnesty International (AI). Authorities have failed (or refused) to protect the women—20% under the age of 14—who are abducted or lured by the promise of jobs. Most are raped and beaten, locked in rooms, their travel documents stolen, and denied basic rights. AI is demanding an end to this widespread and pervasive form of violence.

—Information from Women's Human Rights Online Bulletin

Northwest mechanics walk out shadowed by scabs

MEMPHIS, TENN.—We're with the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA), on strike against Northwest Airlines (NWA). We entered negotiations in May. About a month ago our contract negotiations with them went all to pot. About 11 hours before the strike deadline on the Aug. 19, Northwest processed us all out, called our other shifts and told them not to come in. They had their "conflict replacements" on the property almost two hours before the strike deadline.

The main issue is job security. The company wants to lay off 81% of our membership and cut 50% of our benefits. We could see that there were tough times, especially after September 11, 2001. They approached us with a pay cut we thought was excessive. They wanted 25.7%. United Airlines was already in bankruptcy, yet they was taking back "only" a little over 18%.

in the pit. They are begging for people that have qualifications. I went down there and looked at all the problems they were having with the airplanes.

The mechanics would go up on the airplane and not know what to do. Then they would have to get a manager, and we have managers that have no clue what needs to be done. You have airplanes going out with the oil cap open or service doors up and somebody catching them at the last minute. Personally, I would not put my family on one of those airplanes.

If an airplane is delayed maintenance-wise, it's a "schedule change." If they have to cancel a flight, they say it was due to something else, not the maintenance.

They thought that when we walked off the property they would get 30% of the people to cross the picket line the first day, and 50% the second day. We have only got seven who have crossed the line. We picket schools' houses. To me a scab is the lowest thing in the world. Look at us here on the picket line, none of us have jobs, some of us are running low on money.

When we walked out that door, it was like a big weight was lifted, because they lied to us over and over. Finally now we know what is going on. My daddy said that if you can sleep at night because you are not worried about what you did during the day, then you are a good man. Well, I can sleep at night. I hope and pray that nothing bad will happen to those who get on those airplanes and don't know what is going on.

—Striking mechanics

WORKSHOP TALKS

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as our fellow human beings.

It was the absence of this basic human value, especially from government officials charged with this responsibility, that was painfully obvious in New Orleans in the aftermath of a natural storm. But the horror of floating bodies of patients was caused by another storm, a man-made one. The chaos and disorder caused by the destructive force of capitalist value expansion sweeps away naturally existing cooperation between human beings.

No doubt the ignorant in powerful positions of authority will try to blame these deaths on individual caregivers (as I have seen so often in my shop)—caregivers who could no longer give the care they desperately struggle to give, with no electricity, no supplies, and without the help and support that were promised but never delivered. It is especially clear for those in the Superdome, who are Black or poor.

The Superdome, whose floor apart, leaving its occupants unprotected, is an apt metaphor for the 40 million who are denied healthcare through lack of access to health insurance. No less harrowing are the 200,000 annual casualties of HMO business practices.

We don't have to look to spectacular natural disasters to witness the monumental breakdown in our civil society. Police outside New Orleans turned away refugees from Katrina at gunpoint. But even in our daily lives, under business-as-usual conditions, we turn away so many patients due to a deliberate withholding of healthcare resources. Many homeless are turned away due to a deliberate scarcity of shelters.

Those who work inside our "managed care" system (what we workers call mangled care) have concretely experienced the transformation of our jobs from one that provides care to one that denies care. We cannot afford to wait one more day than we have to, once we see the opportunity for a new society, to re-create healthcare based on human needs, as soon as we have destroyed the idolatry of things and commodities as having more real significance than real human beings.

We have concretely experienced the stress and trauma, the awesome toll of deliberate neglect in healthcare, long before something like Katrina came along. It's no accident that the bulk of those denied access to healthcare are minorities and the working poor—just like those trapped inside the Superdome.

The only way out of this man-made disaster is to begin by fundamentally changing the way we think about the nature of society. Only true individualism that recognizes its socially interdependent nature can change cognition from just reflecting on a disastrous reality, to creating a human-centered one where we live by the principle that an injury to one is an injury to all.

NWA said that is what we need, and that is what we are going to get. We told them that we could figure 16.1%. About a month later, we came up with \$176 million, exactly what they told us they needed, but by then it wasn't enough. At that point we had in our minds NWA had no intention of dealing with us.

When they came back to the table, they told us things had changed because of the fuel crisis and Hurricane Katrina. They wanted over 28%, \$203 million. And instead of laying off 53%, they wanted to lay off almost 75% of the membership.

Our basic thing was not over money, but over having jobs on the property. We started out with 9,200 people. We are down to 5,500, and they want to go to 1,080, basically in Minneapolis, Detroit and Duluth. They want to give all the scabs seniority over us. Now they are in bankruptcy.

Other employee groups realize that when NWA finishes negotiating with us, they are going to come after them. Quite a few walked around the upper level of the airport in a solidarity picket. They gave us food, water, ice. The UAWs donated \$880,000 to AMFA members. IBEW and UAW have walked with us, the Coalition of Black Workers have supported us. Flight attendants have supported us in their press statements.

There is nobody that has any kind of training down

Sutter Health strike



SAN FRANCISCO—On Sept. 13, 800 SEIU Local 250 employees at three facilities of California Pacific Medical Center in San Francisco went on strike. Unlike most of the recent one-day strikes, this one is of indeterminate length. Before striking, the union agreed to a federal mediator's proposal, but Sutter Health refused. One picketer had this to say:

I want to emphasize that I am not a disgruntled employee. I have worked here for over 29 years. I like to work here and I like my co-workers. What we are asking is not outrageous—80 other hospitals have agreed to this contract. The quality care provision only requires a third party arbitrator in any staffing dispute, acceptable to both parties. We are also asking to upgrade the re-training fund, for health coverage for retirees and for the same expiration date on our contract as other hospitals.

They claim that because we are mostly custodial staff and LVNs that we don't affect patient care. But we do. Too much stress created by too much work affects everybody in the hospital.

—Striker

Who pays for deaths

SHREVEPORT, LA.—Refugees from New Orleans have made it to Shreveport in northern Louisiana. These were people who were able to get out. Hurricane Katrina affected just a small part of south Louisiana, but we don't even know the final death toll of poor people, mostly Blacks, who did not have cars or the means to evacuate New Orleans.

So many officials acted surprised by the flooding in New Orleans. They knew a hurricane heading west of New Orleans would probably have to cross 100 miles of marshland, which weakens it. But they have known for years that a hurricane like Katrina crossing from Mississippi is a threat to Lake Pontchartrain.

FEMA issued orders keeping emergency volunteers from around the country from getting to New Orleans. Without FEMA's rules, since two-thirds of south Louisiana has boats, people would have rescued thousands of people from rooftops.

Days ago I told friends that George W. Bush would be saying what every president says when a tragedy involves Blacks: that they would make sure it never happens again. That's pretty much what he did say, like Clinton did after genocide in Rwanda or Nixon after the Biafra massacre.

Government grants aren't necessarily on time. My uncle, a uranium miner, died with cancer all over his body before he could get a second settlement of \$150,000 for his time in the radioactive mines. Only his heirs, if anybody, will get it now.

My mother has applied for a grant on behalf of my father, but does not know the outcome—he was called a vanadium miner during World II, when it was used for steel production, but uranium was mixed in with the vanadium. Uranium from that mine went into the first atomic bombs of the war.

—Retired GM worker

ESSAY

Call of the Siren: A proletarian critique of Starbucks

by T. C. Autumn

Their work is useless to them; it is their wage that they get (in exchange for selling their labor power as a commodity) to survive every day that is useful. They produce nothing. They work at a Starbucks coffee shop, but they could work at any retail location and perform the same function for the enterprise. They work at the level of circulation in capitalist production. The value of the things waiting to be sold is simply waiting to be exchanged for money of the same value.

The required content of the labor in the coffee shop is customer service and relations, cleaning the shop, making drinks and taking money. Physical abilities are required and are limited to specific functions. The longer the person is performing the functions, the more they become routine, wearing down the worker's faculties by performing inherently mechanical functions.

Starbucks sells the activity of its workers. The "legendary customer service" commanded of its employees is a means to decrease product circulation time in order to increase surplus value. The workers' function is direct interaction with consumers as individuals and, more importantly, with the money they pay.

The enterprise demands the content of the store workers' labor to be immaterial. Customers enter the relationship with the retail worker in a bubble of time, where the customer is just that, an alienated being by intent, as a buyer. This enterprise thrives in part by utilizing the commercial end of consumption hierarchies, in which McDonalds, for example, thrives on the lower strata of this hierarchy.

The existence, the whole life of the worker, her subjectivity, is atomized in time and in the perception of the relationship of the customer and also among each

of the other workers and management (who tend to atomize and terrorize his life even more). In the presence of upper management workers are seen in their most sheepish servitude and conversely, though not frequently enough, in their most virulent anger. We get easily caught up in the false totality of work in the time we are in it. It is a totality because of its demand of our subjectivity do to it; but it is fragmented and thus alienated from each of our total lived existence.

Starbucks is similar to any other company in its operational function. It operates on the division of labor, on buying the raw materials from agricultural enterprises, and on material and immaterial labor that makes up the work of coffee processors in its factories and of customer service employees in its coffee shops.

The *Wall Street Journal* (4/12/05) ran an article about efficiency (increased amount of labor worked) in Starbucks stores. It said Starbucks engineers are constantly visiting and studying its stores around the country to find ways to get customers through the line faster. This means cutting out the time it takes a wage laborer to do certain tasks, thus constantly increasing the rate of circulation and thus surplus value. These engineers are having a good time designing sped up labor processes that wear down workers.

Workers are reduced to the specific function in selling their behavior and attitudes to Starbucks' requirements—working the cash register, espresso bar and other stations. The *Wall Street Journal* article mentioned a position, created in 2003, called the floater, in which a worker does several stations at once—getting customers' orders, pouring coffee, getting desserts, etc. It allows for increased rates of exploitation.

All retail laborers anywhere are a cost, as they do not produce value. They are just the exchange medi-

ums, the transformers of values. They perform mechanized functions as is expected in the division of labor. The capitalists know that workers' wage labor power—even if the Starbucks store is to "Provide a great work environment and treat each other with respect and dignity"—is still an impediment to its other principle: "Recognize that profitability is essential to our future success." But retail labor is merely a cost of circulation that is a productive investment.

Starbucks prides itself as being unique in its methods of customer service relations, in the benefits and perks it gives its employees, and in its relationship to the communities where the coffee is produced and where its coffee shops are located. The real effects of its supposed unique activity is primarily to affect its spectacular relation to its commodity both inside the company and as an attraction to its customers.

No one would go to Starbucks if it were not selling coffee, lattes, pastries, and more. It would not exist if it did not have a commodity to sell. It does not sell the store workers' attitudes alone; this is merely part of its method of selling. It has to buy the coffee to sell it, to buy from other enterprises who buy the labor of coffee farmers who grow and pick the coffee beans. Then the coffee must be transported to the factories to be processed and packaged to the point of selling these materials.

Starbucks cannot escape the base imperialism of capital (which goes into all spheres of global and human existence, not just regional-based exploitation), in its reliance on coffee production in regions of the world affected by the centuries of European and U.S. exploitation (that was and continues to be a cornerstone of such nations' general material development

Continued on page 11

FROM THE WRITINGS OF RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

EDITOR'S NOTE

One of Karl Marx's most important works is the *Grundrisse* (or rough draft), his initial draft of his greatest theoretical work, *Capital*. It was written in 1857-58. The work remained virtually unknown until it was first published in German in 1932. It was not until 1973 that the first English-language edition appeared, translated by Martin Nicolaus and published by Vintage Press. In light of our year-long focus on re-examining Marx's critique of capital as part of developing a philosophically grounded alternative to capitalism, we publish excerpts of Dunayevskaya's critique of Nicolaus' lengthy introduction to the first English translation. Written in 1973, the full text can be found in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, no. 12435. It is edited for publication. All excerpted material is indicated by ellipses (...); material added by the editors is in brackets. All headlines are the editor's. Pages references are to Karl Marx's *Grundrisse* (New York: Vintage, 1973).

[Although Marx's *Grundrisse* has finally been translated into English, the edition is burdened by so fantastic a foreword by its translator, Martin Nicolaus, that we must all over again divert from Marx to his interpreters....

By stating that his foreword is "fantastic" I do not mean it departs in any fundamental way from established Marxism, which, with reformism, began by demanding the removal of the "Hegelian dialectic scaffolding" of Marx's works. And I certainly do not mean that "orthodoxy" rested with Stalin who threw out "the negation of the negation" from the "dialectic laws," much less with Mao who perverted contradiction from the elemental class struggle to "principal" and "subordinate" [contradictions] forever changing places in a "bloc of four classes"...

I mean that the pull of pragmatism, state-capitalism, and the administrative mentality that characterize our age are so overwhelming that all the years put into the translation, the recognition that "the *Grundrisse* challenges and puts to the test every serious interpretation of Marx yet conceived" (p. 7), and the subjective wish to be revolutionary, are still no shield from the **objective** pull of a state-capitalist age once your ears are not close to the ground so that you see all the elemental forces from **practice uniting** with the self-determination of the philosophy of liberation.

THE HEGELIANISM OF THE GRUNDRISSE

From the very first page, first paragraph, Nicolaus announces that these 1857-58 Notebooks ... "display the key elements in Marx's development and **overthrow**" of the Hegelian philosophy" (p. 7, my emphasis). With this as his ground, how could the translator possibly learn anything from its 893 pages?...

The next 15 pages of the Foreword are devoted to background plus a few pages that try to summarize the first chapter on Money and the first section on *Capital*. All are devoted to the translator's view of "the structure of the argument" (p. 23) only to conclude: "All that follows in the remaining 400 pages of the *Grundrisse* is built on the basic elements here outlined."

Having thus cavalierly virtually dismissed half of the book (he will later return to it in bits and pieces) he is off on his own. It is here, then, that we have to search for his method and aim and originality of contribution.

Quoting Marx on the difference between a method of presentation and a method of inquiry, which Nicolaus translates as "method of working," he concludes that this is the unique feature of the *Grundrisse*. Directly after this he once again quotes Marx, this time from his letter to Engels of January 16, 1858 on the fact that Marx did indeed find Hegel's *Logic* of great service "in the method of working."

Unfortunately, Nicolaus has no comprehension whatever, either of this sentence or the one he quotes from Lenin that it is "impossible completely to understand Marx's *Capital*, especially chapter one, without having thoroughly studied the whole of Hegel's *Logic*."

Far from basing himself on either, Nicolaus is on his way to construct something altogether different. First, he brings in a character from Brecht's dramas who states that, though Hegel could have been "one of the greatest humorists among philosophers, like Socrates...he sold himself to the state." He concludes: "That is to say, Hegel's philosophy was at once dialectical, subversive, as was Socrates', and idealist, mystical like a priest's" (p. 27). So satisfied is he with that red herring of old that he reiterates: "It left Hegel towards the end a philosopher-pope bestowing benedictions, as popes must, on the temporal emperor." As for the dialectic, he returns us to the origin of the words in "Greek, *dia*, meaning split in two, opposed, clashing; and 'logos,' reason; hence 'to reason by splitting in two.'"

But just as we are about to think he is finally, more or less, on the right track (though it is in Greece at the time of Socrates rather than in Germany at the time of the French Revolution and Napoleon), he develops neither contradiction nor self-motion but jumps at once to *Begriff* (concept)... [He argues that] Hegel's very unique [category of] "moment" is taken from Newton, from mechanics, and not from history's self-movement.

While this flies in the face of Marx's critique of the

The dialectic of Marx's *Grundrisse*

dialectic as rooted in history, self-development, and the self-making of labor, Nicolaus stresses how "profoundly contrary to Hegel's method" is Marx's. (Nicolaus here limits himself to the concreteness of Marx's concept of time especially on the question of production, which is, of course, crucial, but we will see later that what he leaves out, in turn, is **the whole of Marxism: subject, self-development, masses as reason and not just as labor time.**)

UNITY OF IDEALISM AND MATERIALISM

Nicolaus is altogether too busy denying the "idealist side of [Hegel's] philosophy" that [supposedly] "denied the reality of what the senses perceive." (p. 27) Not a word about Marx's...discovery [of] second negativity, the creativity. So rooted in the revolutionary period [was second negativity] that Hegel had to "throw a mystical veil" over that reality. It is at reality where Marx did transcend Hegel—and so did the historic period of 1848 as against 1789—but, again, it was the Subject, the proletariat, that made the Great Divide between Hegel the bourgeois philosopher and Marx who had discovered a new continent of thought.

That was not merely materialism versus idealism but the **unity** of the two in "the new Humanism," and that carried through into Vol. III of *Capital* as "Human power is its own end."

So preoccupied is Nicolaus with contrasting materialism to idealism (though he himself will later—p. 34—need to admit that if it were only a question of "standing Hegel right side up" then that "was accomplished in the early 1840's by both Feuerbach and Marx") that he forgets the true uniqueness of Marx and repeats outworn revisionisms about "Hegelian language." He tells us that "before *Capital* found its way into print Marx discarded most of this lexicon as baggage which had served for its journey but outlasted its day" (pp. 32-33).

Then what "service" did Hegel render Marx? Nicolaus's answer is indeed the most petty-bourgeois intellectualistic idealism yet heard: "The usefulness of Hegel lay in providing guidelines for what to do in order to grasp a moving, developing totality with the mind" (p. 33).

Now if it is nothing less than "guidelines" that Hegel provided and if he also provided "a grip on the entire realm of the 'independent objective Mind' which Hegel had sent floating into the heavens," what exactly was **new** in Marx's discovery? Where was that proletariat Marx held on to as the Subject for the transformation of society, the shaper of history, the mass that is a product of history but also "makes" it? Nicolaus can't seem to get further than "standing [Hegel] right side up" and "removing the mystical shell from the rational core"...

The result is self-paralysis, blindness to that crucial chapter one of *Capital* which Lenin called attention to as requiring the **whole of Logic** but which Nicolaus reduces to zero, stating: "it would be a misreading of Lenin's intent to argue that...This is a project for a long term in prison" (pp. 60-61)...

THE CENTRALITY OF THE HUMAN SUBJECT

Moreover, and above all, **what** exactly is chapter one and its 1873-75 rewriting by Marx of its section "The Fetishism of Commodities"? Why did Marx ask readers of the German edition to read the French edition **following the Paris Commune**? Nothing, **nothing whatever**, is greater proof of the re-creation of the dialectic on the basis of this elemental outpouring and the self-development of Marx's *Begriff* of the Commodity.

In "nothing whatever" I include all the great dialectical development in the *Grundrisse*, even its Hegelian-Marxian "absolute movement of becoming." For the most mature, most creative genius learned from the Parisian masses that that perverse form, a commodity, the value-form of a product of labor, can never be stripped of its fetishism except by "freely

associated labor."

So Marx's beginning, as against Hegel's in the *Science of Logic*, was not only concrete, tangible as against the abstract universal of Being, but it was also the not-concrete, not-tangible bourgeois fetish which reduced labor itself to the commodity, labor-power.

And this was not only production exploitation vs. market equality, but that Absolute, the specifically capitalistic stage of production, whose Notion had to be split into two: bourgeois reification vs. freely associated labor showing it is all relations of production that must be uprooted and recreated on altogether other foundations....

No, dear Nicolaus, all your praise of Lenin's *Philosophic Notebooks* means nothing, nothing at all, once you consign anyone who wishes to study Hegel's *Logic* to fully comprehend *Capital* to "a long term in prison"...

Nicolaus stops before he reaches the crucial section (pp. 471-514) of the *Grundrisse* on "Pre-Capitalist Formations." Clearly, the section was neither merely economics nor even "merely" historic, that is to say, history as past instead of as present and future. The dialectic in that historic period had all the elements of a new role for the peasantry, a new role for so-called "Oriental despotism," a more comprehensive view of becoming.

It is only when an actual revolution occurred in China [in 1949] and that country became the first to translate the section on Pre-Capitalist Formations that all established Communist regimes were compelled to grapple with what Marx had written in 1857-58.

Insofar as the question of "backwardness" is concerned, Marx reiterated that in an altogether new form in the very last year of his life, 1882-83. Put in a different way, he now said that "backward" Russia might, ahead of the "advanced" countries, have a social revolution. He showed the same type of attitude in his relationship to the "Automaton."

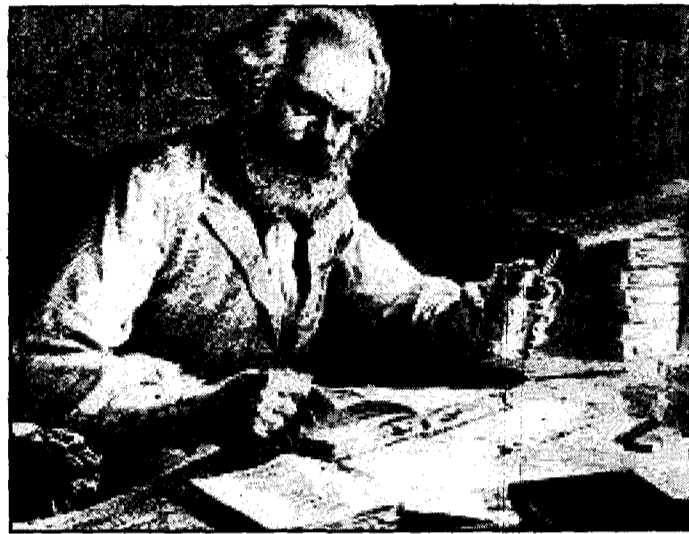
Nicolaus does mention that section more often than the one on Oriental society. But again, his hostility to Hegel—and being stuck in the mud of our age's administrative mentality—limited his perception of that section as if it were only against the "New Left's" view that engineers will, with automation, invent machines that will replace the proletariat, etc.

In actuality it is the multidimensionality that Marx was analyzing. He saw the limitations of both the Hegelian dialectic sans Subject and his own economics, great as it was, sans the masses in motion. In the 1850s this is what made him discard all, start anew, and include both the U.S. Civil War and the Paris Commune [in *Capital*]. Both the struggle for shortening the working day and the new Black dimension releasing labor led to his restructuring of *Grundrisse* as *Capital*.

The **new** in the *Grundrisse* even now, is not merely "method of working," great as that is. It is the **continuity** of the affinity of the Marxian and Hegelian dialectic. From the **moment of Marx's break** with bourgeois society, 1843, all the way through the *Grundrisse* and his total break with vulgar materialists (not merely as utopians or Proudhonists but as Lassalleans) to *Capital* and the First International, Marx's self-development is in no sense a break from the young Marx that discovered a new continent of thought.

Any who question, as Nicolaus does, whether "it is any longer necessary to read Hegel's *Logic* in order to completely understand *Capital*" when the *Grundrisse* is finally available and then claim that the *Grundrisse* is just to see a mind at work, are indeed the worst kind of petty-bourgeois "idealists."

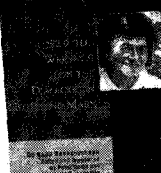
They are completely dead to the whole of the past two decades when **from below**, from the East German Revolt in 1953 on to Paris and Beijing, 1968, as well as from "above" (the self-determination of the Idea finally catching up with self-determination of nations) "new passions and new forces" have arisen. This movement surely has passed by the progeny of the Stalins, Maos, not to mention the Trotskyists and all who thought they can catch theory "en route." The task for us, however, has just begun.



Karl Marx at work—a thought diver in action

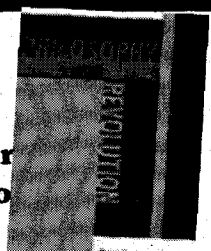
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In-person report:

With the Zapatistas: the Sixth Declaration from Lacondona

CHIAPAS, MEXICO—Far to the south of San Miguel Allende lies another San Miguel, the tzeltal Comunidad Autónoma Zapatista. It was to this *poblado* in Chiapas that hundreds of members of collectives, networks, brigades, anti-groups, non-governmental organizations, and more, came to participate with ideas, activities, songs, poems, photographs and presentations as part of the preparatory dialogue to *La Otra Campana*, (The Other Campaign) proposed by the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, in their sixth declaration from the Selva Lacondona.

This was the fourth of six meetings taking place in different autonomous Zapatista communities as preparatory to The Other Campaign. Meetings have been held with political organizations of the Left, indigenous organizations, and non-governmental organizations and collectives.

Why the name *La Otra Campana*? First, to distinguish it sharply from the presidential electoral campaign which occurs every six years, and which is just being launched in Mexico—complete with political maneuvering, empty promises and demagoguery.

The fact that the Zapatistas have begun this campaign in a completely different direction than the "progressive" PRD (Party of the Democratic Revolution) has upset many on the Left who believe that in 2006, with Lopez Obrador, the former mayor of Mexico City and presumed candidate of the PRD, a real change in the ruling Mexican society can take place.

It is true that when President Fox, with the support of PANists (National Action Party) and PRIists (Party of the Institutional Revolution, the long-time rulers of autocratic, authoritarian, dictatorial Mexico) tried to frame Obrador with politically-motivated legal charges that would have made him ineligible to run for President, Mexico City residents by the hundreds of thousands marched earlier this year in a huge protest which forced the dropping of the charges.

But this does not take away from the fact that the PRD is far from representing an authentic left alternative. As Subcomandante Marcos, spokesperson for the Zapatistas, pointed out: 1) PRD members in Congress cooperated with PRI and PAN members to scuttle the San Andres accord that the Zapatistas and indigenous groups negotiated with the Zedillo government—a complete betrayal of indigenous rights. 2) In the years since 1994, sections of the PRD in Chiapas have assisted the government and private paramilitaries in terrorizing and murdering Zapatista supporters. 3) Many PRD leaders had their origins in the authoritarian PRI.

To those who cry that to oppose the PRD means to pave the way for the return of the PRI, the answer the Zapatistas give is first, since when has the PRI really left power, and second, that they are opposed to all the political parties—PRD, PAN, PRI and others—but are not telling people who to vote for or who not to vote for.

Thus *La Otra Campana* is truly a campaign of the Other—of those without voice, the marginalized, the despised, the rejected, the invisible in the countryside, and those among indigenous communities, especially the behemoth that is Mexico City, with its hundreds of thousands in factories and small workshops and neighborhoods struggling in the informal economy.

A NEW STEP FORWARD

The sixth Selva Lacondona is perhaps the most significant document issued by the Zapatistas since 1994. Its six parts—1) What We Are; 2) Who We Are Now; 3) How We See the World; 4) How We See Our Country Which Is Mexico; 5) What We Want To Do; 6) How We Are Going To Do It—are being read, discussed and debated throughout the country, in small meetings and large gatherings, in newspapers and magazines, in informal discussions and round table discussions. I have attended a dozen or more such discussions in Mexico City in the last four weeks. Even meetings that do not have the "sixth" as the main topic inevitably turn toward its contents in one manner or another.

"What We Are" is a history of the Zapatistas since 1994, expressed in a straightforward, unadorned language. "Where We Are Now" speaks of what has happened since the breakdown of negotiations over the San Andres agreements. They write of indigenous communities: "We began encouraging the autonomous rebel Zapatista municipalities—which is how the peoples are organized to govern and govern themselves—to make themselves stronger. This method of autonomous government was not simply invented by the EZLN, but rather it comes from several centuries of indigenous resistance and from the Zapatistas' own experience. It is the self-governance of the communities. In other words, no one from the outside comes to govern, but the peoples themselves decide, among themselves, who governs and how, and if they do not obey, they are removed. If the one who governs does not obey the people, they pursue them, they are removed from authority, and another comes in."

With this comes a self-critique. They recognize that the political-military of the Zapatista soldiers is not democratic and cannot be the way of the autonomous municipalities. They have moved to separate the political-military from the autonomous and democratic aspects of organization of the Zapatista communities:

"Actions and decisions which had previously been made and taken by the EZLN were being passed, little by little, to the democratically elected authorities in the villages... it is our way to do what we say, because, if not, why should we go around saying things if we do not

then do them."

In Chiapas today more than 1,100 autonomous communities in support of the Zapatistas exist. They are grouped into 30 autonomous municipalities by region. These comprise five *juntas* of good government or *caracoles* (literally shells of the sea or snails). The *juntas* of government are made up of representatives from the municipalities, who are in turn drawn from members of the indigenous autonomous communities.

Perhaps this experience of governance of the autonomous communities, municipalities, and *juntas* of good government will bring to *La Otra Campana*, not an "answer" for other parts of the country, but a methodology, an experience, a form of organization that others can re-create in their own ways in other parts of



Meeting in Chiapas on the Sixth Declaration, August 2005

the country in their own concrete circumstances.

They speak of the villages as making good progress with women and men learning to govern: "Even though little by little—there are more women going into this work, but there is still a lack of respect for the *compañeras*, and they need to participate more in the work of the struggle."

They speak as well of the youth who have participated over these dozen years: "New generations have renewed our entire organization," including holding leadership positions.

The Zapatistas end in a sober fashion: "To our way of thinking, and what we see in our heart, we have reached a point where we cannot go any further, and, in addition, it is possible that we could lose everything we have if we remain as we are and do nothing more in order to move forward. The hour has come to take a risk once again and to take a step which is dangerous but which is worthwhile. Because perhaps united with other social sectors who suffer from the same wants as we do, it will be possible to achieve what we need and what we deserve. A new step forward in the indigenous struggle is only possible if the indigenous join together with workers, campesinos, students, teachers, employees...the workers of the city and the countryside."

In "How We See the World," the Zapatistas provide an analysis of capitalism as a social system. They see production of commodities as the center of capitalism, which makes "commodities of people, of nature, of culture, of history, of conscience." Against the globalization of capitalism, "a neoliberal globalization," the Zapatistas pose "a globalization of rebellion":

"It is not just the workers of the countryside and of the city who appear in this globalization of rebellion, but others also appear who are much persecuted and despised for the same reason, for not letting themselves be dominated, like women, young people, the indigenous, homosexuals, lesbians, transsexual persons, migrants and many other groups who exist all over the world but who we do not see until they shout *ya basta* of being despised, and they rise up, and then we see them, we hear them, and we learn from them."

In "How We See Our Country Which Is Mexico," the Zapatistas take up how the neo-liberals who govern Mexico "are destroying our nation, our Mexican *Patria*." They see the need to do something about the "warped" constitution.

They find workers in the countryside mobilizing and organizing; workers in the city fighting against their rights being taken away or their jobs privatized; students fighting on the question of education; and "women who do not let themselves be treated as an ornament or be humiliated and despised just for being women." This is the Mexico the Zapatistas see, "and we think that perhaps our 'we' will include all these rebellions."

In "What We Want To Do," they speak to the whole world: "We are going to look at how to help you in your struggles and to speak to you in order to learn, because

what we have, in fact, learned is to learn." For Mexico the Zapatistas want to make "an agreement with persons and organizations just of the Left, because we believe that it is in the political Left where the ideas of resisting neo-liberal globalization is."

They sharply separate themselves from electoral politics. The illusion of electoral change remains great in Mexico. Perhaps there is a need to explore more deeply the situation in Brazil where Lula, an authentic man of the Left came to power, only to find himself in the whirlpool of neo-liberalism and willing to play that kind of politics. If an authentic left movement can come crashing down in that manner, what can be said of the situation in Mexico, where the PRD is hardly a Left?

The final part of the Declaration, "How We Are Going To Do It," provides modest proposals to rebuild another way of doing politics. To these ends the Zapatistas propose to do their work together with others throughout Mexico and to do so for an indefinite period of time. They do so not with any "answer" but to build from below and for below an alternative of the Left for Mexico.

One weakness, or better said a challenge, is the question of the Mexican working class. In this meeting, and I believe in the others before, there was little participation from unionized Mexican workers. In their unions they face a huge brake upon their activities. The unions, corrupt and tied to the party politics of the PRI, have long been the enforcers of labor discipline for the Mexican state and capitalists.

Yet it is precisely the Mexican working class that *La Otra Campana* needs in fusion with all the other forces that the Zapatistas name. The Zapatistas are more than aware of this. It remains to be seen how this can be worked out in the period ahead. But there is no doubt from many spontaneous actions that the Mexican working class is restless. For three decades the division between rich and poor has grown in Mexican society, and it is the employed, unemployed, struggling in the informal economy who have felt the brunt of it.

Finally a few words on the indigenous peoples. One thing I noticed that seemed different to me from the time of "Intergalactic Encuentro" I attended in the mid-1990s is that at that time at least in the community of La Realidad, there seemed a sharp separation between an indigenous community which labored mightily to put us up, feed us, and more and the participants, nationally and internationally. The meetings found very, very few indigenous people listening, and then only on the sidelines. But here in San Miguel, in the aftermath of the development of autonomous communities and *juntas* of good government, the indigenous community were very much participants in the dialogue. Perhaps a small indication of journeys in the days of Zapatismo

—Participant
August 30, 2005

Chile's privatization

SANTIAGO, CHILE—Your President Bush talks about Chile's privatized social security system as a "model." In fact, privatization has been disastrous for us. At the time the change was put through by the Pinochet dictatorship, most people didn't understand how they could be affected, but now that those people are retiring, many workers have been reduced to poverty. In some cases, the private companies holding the money went bankrupt and there is nothing to withdraw. In other cases, there is some money but less than was put in. Privatization has decimated our health insurance as well.

Everything has been privatized since Pinochet welcomed in the economics of the "Chicago Boys"—water, electricity, higher education, etc. The working and middle classes keep getting poorer. Chile now has one of the biggest divisions between rich and poor in the world. Our natural resources are being destroyed by private capital. Fish have been nearly depleted by the fish meal industry, which sweeps up all sea life to grind up.

The current Socialist Party president continues the neo-liberal process, but he is smart enough to bring former Left parties into the government and to employ a lot of former radicals. As a result, young people are completely turned off by political activity. Two million youth have refused to register to vote, in defiance of the law. Since voting is mandatory, in the last election many people, instead of casting their vote for a candidate for president, wrote in "more jobs" or "rights for women."

Unions are getting weaker. They have to organize underground or else the workplace will close and reopen under another name. The major union is tied to the government. To establish an independent union, you have first to start a cultural organization just to get a discussion going—so afraid are people to "talk politics."

People are forming groups in order to combat the official culture of individualism, but only small collectives of young people. Mostly they come out for a demonstration and then go home. Some collectives are working on local projects such as creating libraries, adult education, tutoring poor children, and helping youth to find their roots. Some are helping the indigenous Mapuches to resist government attempts to kick them off their land.

—R. & J.

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OUR MARXIST-HUMANIST PERSPECTIVES FOR 2005-2006: A PHILOSOPHIC DIRECTION

It was important to see you stress in the Draft Perspectives (see July-August 2005 *N&L*) that today's freedom movements have to oppose all forms of terrorism and religious fundamentalism in the course of projecting a comprehensive alternative to the capitalist system. It is completely right to stress the philosophical void that paved the way to religious fundamentalism, which targets the rights of women, gays and youth to control their bodies and minds because it wrongly views such rights as causing the dissolution of family, community, and other social bonds when it is the logic of capital that promotes their dissolution. What needs stressing more is the deadly logic of capital as it was described in what I consider the brilliant column by Htun Lin on "Planned deaths from medical cutbacks" in the May-June issue of *N&L*. It illustrates the horrific nature of a society in which value-production, surplus value-production and profit dominate at the expense of human beings. That column could be a starting point for a pamphlet by *N&L* on what value-production means for humanity in this age.

Worker-Scholar
Amsterdam

I would love to see some pamphlets written by those emerging opposition groups you mention. It's tough to support something that isn't known about, like the budding independent labor movement in Iraq. I consider myself very "with it" but find it impossible to keep up with all the political developments around the world. Please consider making information about these global groups more readily available. I think you should do the same with the theory and practice of Marxist-Humanism. As a serious anarchist prison abolition propagandist, I try to make material readily available and explained in an understandable manner. Those looking for intense intellectualization can plod through the heavy theory and analyses somewhere else. A huge task of revolutionary teachers is supporting emerging groups of resisters. Helping them articulate and organize their initiatives gives credence to our politics and is an integral part of developing solidarity.

Anthony Rayson
Indiana

I fear for "Iraq's small but growing labor movement." Their task would be tough enough in that part of the world, dealing with the reactionary Ba'athist and fundamentalist "resistance." In addition, they have the U.S. presence hampering reconstruction efforts and its military functioning as anti-labor goon squads if Iraqi workers get too militant.

Working Stiff
North Carolina

I totally agree with the Perspectives concerning the bankruptcy of liberalism. The structure of U.S. capitalism since the 1970s makes it impossible to implement a liberal agenda of any sort. They have no power and can have none, given the nature of restructured capitalism. Katrina proves it. It wasn't just Bush

that fell down but also the Democrats in Congress who didn't push for greater infrastructure investment. Even if a Democrat ends up as president in 2008 he will implement a Republican/Conservative agenda, just like Clinton did.

Teacher
Illinois

I am not so sure that it can be said leftists and rightists ended up on the same side in the rejection of the EU Constitution in the Netherlands and France. I see the "No" in both countries more as a reaction to the regime of the respective administrations, which are cutting wages, social benefits and medical care and are worsening the conditions of housing, labouring and environment. It is a signal of people feeling themselves socially insecure. It is clear that a simple no-saying will not be a step forward to liberation, for people have to learn that their respective administrations are connected with the development of world capitalism, the way in which they are alienated as human beings in capitalist society.

Supporter
Netherlands

The last three issues of *N&L* have been exceptional, from March/April to July/August that included the phenomenal "Draft for Marxist-Humanist Perspectives." Perhaps because of the increased amount of attention paid to Marx's labor theory of value in the various articles, or maybe the change to a bimonthly, there seems to be a greater sense of purpose to *N&L*. Josh Skolnik made a profound statement in "Is Marx's view of socialism relevant": "What Marxists of both the soviet and Western varieties have dogmatically done to Hegel, they have, by extension, also done to Marx, thereby failing to understand his method by pushing off into the distance the very standpoint of the future society that necessarily grounds his specific critique of the present." Is being grounded in the future society what I'm sensing in Marxist-Humanism?

D.H.
North Carolina

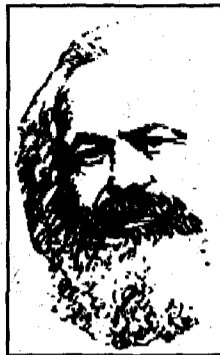
Your "Draft for Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, 2005-2006" presents a most formidable challenge, if not an utterly daunting task, even to an accomplished theoretical-political economist. It is too bad a Nobel Prize was not established in this crucial area of human endeavor.

With the exception of the refusal of the vanguard party to commit suicide or wither away, it has been emphatically demonstrated that historical and dialectical materialism are absolutely valid revolutionary tools. Perhaps the greatest hindrance in transitioning from one set of social relations to another resides in the specialization in social, political and economic spheres. To monopolize the ownership of the means of production is qualitatively different from monopolizing or oligopolizing the political apparatus, the military-industrial-technological complex, the labor aristocracy, or the educational curriculum. But they all

READERS' VIEWS

tend toward the concentration of power in the hands of a few to the detriment of the many.

C. Thomas
Arizona



PRODUCTION AND ECOLOGY

At the end of Susan Van Gelder's "Reader's View" in the July-August issue on Peter Hudis' essay, "Marx's Humanism and the Fight for a New Ecology," she challenges us to respond to environmental issues on this 50th anniversary of *N&L*. I thought I was moderately clever concerning the environment about ten years ago. As Marx teaches us, everything in capitalist society relates back to the point of production. So I surmised that if the environment at the point of capitalist production was destructive, that would manifest itself in the environment of our planet. I came to realize I wasn't all that clever when I read the Marxist-Humanist pamphlet, *The Revolutionary Journalism of Felix Martin*, and found what had been an article by that auto worker in the April 1976 issue of *N&L*, called "Kentucky Coal Disasters Throw Light on Deadly Working Conditions Everywhere." Here is what he wrote on the environment: "The workplace, whether in the mines, in auto, or in many other places where we labor, is unhealthy. New reports keep coming out relating different cancers to where people have worked. I believe that there is a link between the callous disregard of the environment in which women and men spend a third or more of their day, and the pollution of everything around us."

Felix Martin Fan
Colorado

TOP-DOWN LABOR SPLIT?

The top-down engineered "dispute" inside the AFL-CIO top structure, which resulted in a splintering off of a new coalition called "change to win" amount to much-ado about nothing. It maintains the status-quo as much as their top-down "Partnerships with management" maintain their collaboration with capital, while maintaining their bi-lateral opposition to the rank and file. The "earthshaking" news of the split is barely registering a big zero on the Richter scale of the rank and file in my shop. Workers are more concerned about their health and welfare on and off the job. The nurses' and teachers' grassroots campaign against Schwarzenegger's war-plans is making more of a difference than any high-minded unity of purpose engineered by the high and mighty labor leaders. That's true whether it's about worker's comp, or social-security, or pension funds, or nurse to patient and teacher to pupil ratios. In the end, it's not necessarily which issues concern us; it's how the rank and file confront the issues very differently than those at the top, who at best only "manage" instead of confronting them.

Former union steward
San Francisco

Buried beneath the mountain of stories about the thousands trapped inside the superdome was the story of how 13,000 Oakland East Bay hopefuls—mostly women and minorities—lined up for days to have a chance, any chance, at the thousand or so jobs being offered by a brand new Wal-Mart being built there. It was not as spectacular as the scene of 20,000 trapped by Katrina, but it nevertheless represents just as much a casualty-toll of economic refugees caused by

capital's everyday "business as usual" devastation.

Worker
East Bay

It seems to me that if this country is to have any sort of future worth elating it is bound up with specific, on point struggles, such as the big win by the Florida Farm Workers over Yum! Brands/Taco Bell, as reported in *N&L*. The only place a dedicated capitalist feels any pain is in his/her wallet. Twenty-first century politicians and too-long-lived political parties are not going to do anything for the American people, just for themselves and big corporations. We have to do for ourselves or it will not get done.

The Florida farmworkers showed what could be accomplished with liberation theology/Marxist-Humanist/independent workers, all together in a unified concert. It was and is a specific scenario that bears repeating and repeating. Who should be next? Caterpillar? Wal-Mart is watching.

Robert Zani
Texas

THE ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT

It's a sad day when a section of the U.S. anti-war movement sponsors a tour by George Galloway, the British MP who denounced the U.S. Senate over the Iraq war. Galloway repeatedly applauded Saddam Hussein's brutal regime, despite its genocidal policies, and earned over one million dollars by raising funds for Iraqi children that ended up in his family's pocket. He's also a sexist who denounces abortion rights and ridicules the feminist movement. This is the person that the ISO is now touring around the country to enlighten us to what's wrong with Bush? No wonder the anti-war movement is having so much trouble connecting with the anti-war sentiment of the U.S. public.

Anti-war activist
Chicago

I continue to closely watch the shortcomings of the "anti-war" movement which continues with all the stupidities that it revealed over Yugoslavia. One can only describe this movement as anti-American. It really doesn't have much other perspective.

Activist
London

Cindy Sheehan clearly acted as a lightning rod for deep anti-war feelings that had been growing below the surface for some time. Now for the first time the polls show that the majority of Americans are not only opposed to the war but to what they see as Bushism at home, as Katrina exposed it. What is significant to me is that the sharp repudiation of the Republican agenda has not meant an increase in approval of the Democrats. The question is what it could mean in the search for a completely different alternative to capitalism.

Observer
Illinois

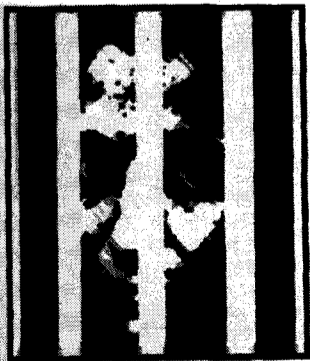
A CORRECTION

In "Environmental Day Solidarity" (July-August *N&L*), I referred to Miho Kim as a "Japanese woman of Korean descent." She is not a Japanese woman. She is a third-generation Korean woman born and raised in Japan. Koreans are not allowed to be citizens of Japan, no matter how many generations preceded them. Because she failed to obtain an exit permit after a trip to Japan to visit her family, she has lost her status as a resident of Japan. Now she is eligible only for a visitor's visa which entitles her to a maximum of 90 days, and prohibits her from getting a job. The prohibition is especially troubling because, as the eldest child, she is responsible for the family's well-being.

David Mizuno 'Oto
California

AN APPEAL FOR JUSTICE

I would like to ask your help for my older son, Rodney Brown (prison ID# 32279) who was to be up for parole in late July 2005. A few weeks prior to this date while he was at work in the prison a guard went to his work site and pushed him. Rodney hugged him to prevent the guard from hitting him. Another guard assumed Rodney was attacking the first guard, called for help,



peppersprayed him in the face and handcuffed him. Rodney was then placed in the SHU. I have received many letters from other inmates who saw everything that happened. They told me the guard who pushed Rodney is known for harassing other inmates.

Rodney has kept a clean record for five years and is a counselor for new inmates. He was being highly recom-

mended for parole by the supervisors of that program, but the parole hearing has now been put off for a year and his record is no longer clean. No supervisors or other inmates were allowed to testify at Rodney's hearing on this incident. The guard involved has now been transferred out. Rodney, who is still in the SHU, is appealing this decision.

We are asking you to write to the Warden, asking why Rodney is still in the SHU and appealing to him to hear other witnesses and speak to the supervisors who worked with Rodney for a long time. The warden's name is Robert Hernandez, 480 Alta Road, San Diego, CA 92179. Thank you for helping my son.

Georgiana Williams
Los Angeles



**MAKE
LEVEES,
NOT
WAR**

The Sept. 24 Washington, D.C. march against the war was an encouraging sign of a peace movement finding its legs again. The mass movement that existed before the U.S. invaded Iraq had been weakened by its disappointment at not stopping the war and then desiccated by letting itself be heavily involved in the "Anybody but Bush" campaign. In recent months, however, the movement has been changing, together with the multi-class, multiracial, counter-recruitment movement that aims to reduce military recruitment and to build resistance to recruiters in the schools. Iraq Veterans Against the War, Military Families Against the War, and the Camp Casey Movement sparked by Cindy Sheehan have transformed the movement into one composed of all ages and based in the broadly-defined working class.

Sept. 24 made this visible. Between 150,000 and 300,000 people came to Washington, D.C., to march. The marchers contained many young people, union members, Vietnam Vets, and members of soldiers' families (as well as scattered Iraq War vets). Although the crowd in the areas I saw was heavily white, there were many Blacks and Latinos present. For example, I saw large and spirited primarily-minority contingents from Transport Workers Union Local 100 (New York City) and from the Service Employees International Union.

There was at least one terrifying but eerie symbol—a line of marchers walking one by one along the side of the main march carrying a clothesline that must have been a significant part of a mile long, with a picture of a dead U.S. soldier every foot or two. Unlike my local peace group, people at the march generally did not carry signs memorializing the Iraqi dead by name, date, and age.

The signs were mainly anti-war and anti-Bush, with a smattering of references to New Orleans. Socialist group members were present, and one or two had organized sound speakers, but were mainly carrying signs that were anti-war or displayed connections between the war and the Katrina disaster. One

group called for a Dec. 1 day to stay at home. Its members seemed young, and seemed to get some interest from marchers—but the crowd did not seem (yet?) to be taking the suggestion for even a one-day general strike seriously. The mood was angry, determined, and in some ways hopeful. This movement still lacks any philosophy of revolution, but discussions and thoughts are beginning the process that might head in that direction.

**Sam Friedman
New York**

IN KATRINA'S WAKE

When Jesse Jackson reported on the non-response of FEMA, the National Guard, and the Red Cross, I felt this was "ethnic cleansing" on the part of the Bush administration, which inherited Nixon's "Benign Neglect" policy of racism, since presented as a "Color Blind" society. The so-called relief effort that eventually got underway looked more like a national experiment in martial law management, combined with total media management by the unofficial Ministry of Propaganda.

**Subscriber
Wisconsin**

Among the scores turned away by government officials from helping the victims of Hurricane Katrina were hundreds of volunteers from animal welfare organizations across the country. For many of the poor and elderly in New Orleans their pets were the only "family" they had, and they refused to evacuate, fearing the worst for their beloved companions. One of the most moving scenes of rescue I saw was a national guardsmen driving a tank looking for abandoned animals and a dog leaping from a second story window to swim for its life in the toxic stew below toward its rescuer. Pets don't care how much money you have in your bank account. They give so much love and ask for such little in return. I think the profound question they have also asked the Bush adminis-

tration in this disaster is "What does it mean to be human?"

**Dog Lover
Illinois**

Danielle Metz of New Orleans is serving two life sentences in Dublin, California, because her husband was accused of conspiracy to distribute five kilos of cocaine and she didn't know enough to tell the DEA. Just before Katrina hit, Danielle's sister went to New Orleans to get her children to safety. She found such a need that she got her church to send three buses and convinced 131 people to come with her to the Bay Area.

California Coalition for Women Prisoners' Director, Yvonne Cooks, appealed for help for these people. There was a tremendous response. I put up a sign in our apartment building and neighbors responded magnificently. When the two women who were driving a van with the donations came by, one of them commented, "I feel like we're conducting on the underground railroad."

**Urszula Wislanka
Oakland**

The South is the poorest region of the country and the economic impact will be hardest there. Hundreds of thousands of refugees were fleeing for their lives to neighboring states of Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas, Texas, Alabama and Georgia. Memphis alone within the first week had thousands upon thousands of refugees. Healthcare for Tennessee citizens is in the process of being gutted. What does it mean for people who come with almost nothing, not even knowing when they'll be allowed back to their homes? The overcrowded emergency rooms are overwhelmed even under normal circumstances. With many local economies in deep economic crises, this may show any state its future should something unexpected befall it.

**Brown Douglas
Memphis**

**STEALING FOR
'DEMOCRACY?'**

Charges have been made in the *New Yorker Magazine* by Seymour Hersh that

the Bush administration initiated a top-secret covert program to funnel funds and other aid to candidates in the Jan. 30 Iraqi elections who were favored by the White House. This included, allegedly, possible ballot-stuffing and other means of controlling vote totals. As I see it, the Right has stolen two elections here and is now shown to have attempted the same in Iraq.

The Right evidently supports democracy only as long as the outcome is predetermined. This explains why they hate it so much when they cannot control the direction it takes. We should recall that these are many of the same people who waged an illegal war against Nicaragua's democratically-elected government back in the '80s, and stood by while forces the first George Bush set in motion to topple the Hussein regime in 1991 were slaughtered by Hussein's forces. Any democratic force beyond the control of corporate America will be crushed. The past is full of examples of this history.

**Anti-war activist
Louisiana**

**CLOSE
THE
SCHOOL
OF THE
AMERICAS!**



This Nov. 18-20 you are needed at the gates of Fort Benning, Georgia. As soon as the early summer of 2006, Congress will vote on whether or not they should close the School of the Americas, now called the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation or WHINSEC.

This is the moment to make our stand to say NO to torture, NO to violence, and YES to a different world we are building. For information visit www.soaw.org or call 202-234-3440. BE AT FORT BENNING NOV. 18-20.

**SOA Watch
Washington, D.C.**

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by Robert Tallafiero

In late December 2004, *The New York Times* printed an article on why some political figures need prisons to stay full in their districts despite evidence of how destructive they are to communities of color and the culture as a whole. The article dealt with several reshaped concepts that have been discussed for the last decade and revisited with a vengeance during the 2000 presidential campaign, when disenfranchisement became one of the hottest topics around.

GROWING INCARCERATION RATES

One could hardly pick up a newspaper or magazine without seeing the documentation of the debate, especially as it related to the growing incarceration rates as opposed to the rest of the world, and how they were disproportionately affecting the economic development and social growth of the Black community.

In the 2004 election the exacerbated war on terror and the lies told by the Bush administration to instigate that war, created an environment that prodded the Democratic candidate to argue points that were off-center of the message that he needed to get across to win. That lack of focus allowed such issues as disproportionality to nearly disappear from political agendas. Even Black candidates did not viably discuss disproportionality in such things as Black to white ratios of incarceration and the related social impact.

One of the interesting aspects of *The New York Times* article was its discussion of a "felon class" of people that is now 13 million strong and currently locked

A prisoner looks at caste vs. class

out of the mainstream of society due to incarceration or some other form of judicial sanction that effectively disenfranchises an individual. Is such a class the opening salvo of our country revisiting a more prevalent, open and definitive caste system?

When we discuss caste systems, we are automatically drawn to countries like India or Madagascar which have definitive endogamous classes that are separated by religion, heredity or rank.

When we think of class, we generally look at the western concepts of poor, middle class and rich, with the various subclasses that are defined within the general structure of the class system. So, in discussing the "felon social class," we have a general presumption that it is defined as a sub-class of the poor, that ambiguous phraseology that fits very well within the traditional caste system, for it is **those** people who commit crime; and it is **those** people who want to move into middle-class neighborhoods and destroy the fabric of that neighborhood's values and traditions; and it is **those** people who tear down the structure and sanctity of good moral Christian American values.

Marx wrote that everything depends on the historical environment in which it occurs, as he studied the differences in rank within exogamous groups and how they dealt with conflicting concepts, and how those concepts eventually transformed into a caste system.

In the U. S. the war on terror is allowing historical precedents to be set relating to law enforcement, civil rights and liberties, and other general formally accepted freedoms. That war is allowing a specific class of people to redefine the concept of freedom—at least in this country as defined by its presumed moral superiority—in a way that does not inspire a fecund sense of moral rightness when viewed by the rest of the world.

That historical precedent is, in fact, creating an opposite effect on those peoples who know very well the trials of a colonial-oriented "superpower" attempting to assert its will, which in turn creates the caste system that Marx so aptly noted would occur under the same attendant circumstances which exist in today's U.S.-led democratized world.

Marx noted that before primitive communities were

eventually dissolved, the question of ranks within the egalitarian commune had to be decided, which in turn created the polar opposite of what that egalitarian community was initially created to combat against, and which in turn created a system that became co-extensive with the concept of community and the cultural advances (or deculturalization processes) within that community.

We live in a world quickly creating a dominant caste system with inferential value structures that are implicitly xenophobic (defined by western religions predominantly); political affiliation; sexual orientation, gender, culture, race and color.

The enormous impact of creating a sub-class of people defined as felons creates the most obtuse aspects of social deconstruction for felon class in the minds of some, automatically associated with people of color, lessening the impact of Black empowerment—in particular—within the socioeconomic-political processes. All the while it revitalizes small, predominantly-white, rural communities where the majority of prisons (and many conservative individuals) live.

A DANGEROUS WORLD

We live in a very dangerous world for free thinking and acting individuals, and it is only a matter of time before other "classes" of people are redefined and openly targeted as subservient to the re-emerging conservative caste structure, thus subjecting those subclasses for the processes that would eventually remove their voices through the methods of deculturalization.

There is a growing lobby of conservative elements who feel that it is time to classify into defined enemy social classes—feminists and women of substance who fight for true social equality; people of color; the gay and lesbian community; and other traditionally non-American-valued constructs: Muslims, Asians, Africans, Marxist-Humanists and other believers that freedom, equality, and fraternity is an absolute value that cannot be governed by the leaders of one country, or one set of values and ideas.



Independent Media Center

BLACK/RED

Continued from page 1

world will sympathize with Blair's stated goal.

How could this grand offer of Blair's "second chance" be a success if the needs of global capitalism and the world market remain in control of Africa's natural resources through bribing many African leaders? Moreover, even before Blair's Africa initiative got pushed aside by the terrorist bombing, Blair's partners were not buying in on his proposal.

As Raya Dunayevskaya pointed out in her *Philosophy and Revolution*, "The state of technological development and the accumulated capital are the determinants, the only determinants, when the masses are not allowed their self-activity, which threatens to undermine the stability of the whole globe, and which did gain the Africans freedom." She wrote in the 1960s, during the African revolutions: "Any traveler in Black Africa who was at all sensitive to freedom's call was under a compulsion from the surge of the liberation movement to become a participant."

Blair and the members of G-8 nations are not interested in any problems or concepts of freedom in Africa. What they want is a state of stability in a neocolonial Africa that is not hostile to the world market.

Blair's statement about "Africa's bright political promise" could be an attempt to hide the many ongoing conflicts in Africa that could become large conflicts. Or, more likely, Blair is saying that there are now strong capitalists in Africa who have attained enough power that G-8 nations can do business with them. For example, in Angola a 26-year-old civil war, caused in part by outside powers subsidizing various factions after the Portuguese were defeated, ended in 2002. Angola is Africa's second largest oil producer with impending elections amid widespread corruption, while 70% of the people live in abject poverty. Blair's "second chance" looks similar to the "first" chance when European powers were looting Africa's resources. Against Blair's illusion of a global capitalism with a human face we face Africa's bleak economic reality inseparable from the dialectics of liberation in the manner of Frantz Fanon.

The new humanism Fanon saw in the struggle of the African masses got buried and Dunayevskaya said we must soberly face that bleak reality in our projection of an alternative to capitalism. She warned that the African revolutions had a tragic end because their leaders' thinking got bogged down by the idea of technological backwardness. This should also be a lesson to us in our approach to working out an alternative to capitalism. Fanon was in the middle of the African revolutions opposing the counterrevolution as it emerged from within. That is what makes taking off from his new humanism so important for today.

We find the defendants.....

Juries: Conscience of the Community, by Mara Taub, CPR Books, Santa Fe, NM, 177 pages.

Here's an extraordinary book by an ordinary citizen who served on the jury of one of the longest criminal trials in the history of New Mexico. From voir dire through verdicts, Mara Taub tells the story of a federal district court drug trial from the inside looking out.

The author, a school teacher and community activist of more than 35 years, sat on the jury of United States of America vs Gabriel Rodriguez-Aguirre, et al. At the outset, jurors were told to expect an eight to ten-week trial; the trial actually ran four months and jury deliberations continued for an additional two months.

There were 300 witnesses, 4,000 exhibits, nine defendants, 17 counts, and 31 charges against the various defendants. The single charge common to all defendants was that each had engaged in "the unlawful, knowing, and intentional distribution of 100 kilograms of marijuana." If found guilty, the defendants faced prison terms of from ten years to life.

A FLAWED PROSECUTION

In her well documented and insightful analysis of the government's case, Taub found flaw after flaw. As a sitting juror, she observed that while the prosecutors alleged "vast amounts" of marijuana had been bought and sold by the defendants—10,000 to 12,000 kilos—no marijuana was ever admitted into evidence at trial. The government did introduce photographs of marijuana, but those photographs didn't show any of the defendants or arresting officers.

Prosecutors also alleged that one of the defendants buried \$1.7 million in his back yard but it was unclear how much money had actually been dug up or who buried it. Because local prosecutors lacked the staff to manually count the cash, the recovered money had been sent to Dallas where there was a money-counting machine. Jurors were shown a video of the machine but there was no way to tell if the money being counted was connected to the Aguirre case. Only two worn \$50 bills were introduced at trial as evidence.

The jurors were also invited to believe that the two large empty holes in the ground shown in the government's photographs were actually storage vaults used by defendants to store marijuana. None of the horses, more than 200 of them, whose purchase was purported to have been part of the money laundering operation, were trotted into court.

As the trial lurched from weeks to months, Taub noted that the deputy marshals in the courtroom behaved as if they were guards to restrain the jury from doing anything wrong; they acted as if the defendants were guilty and deserved any punishment they got. Nor, she wrote, did the judge appear to have any doubt about the guilt of the defendants.

Of more than 300 witnesses, those who testified the longest were the informants or "snitches" who cut a deal with the prosecutors. Some had originally been

defendants but, with a goal of self-preservation, realigned their allegiances.

The defendants, five men and four women, were all Hispanic and related to one southern New Mexico family. Although the defendants supposedly made millions of dollars in their marijuana operation, eight were indigent and qualified for court-appointed lawyers at trial.

After four months of trial, the judge read to the jury (as rapidly as possible) the 69 pages of instructions and the case went to the jury. Deliberations began on May 5 and the verdicts were returned on July 12.

About half of the jury of 11 women and one man were over 50 years of age: seven Hispanics, two Navajos, and three Anglos. Ten of the 12 were, in some capacity, employed outside the home. All jurors resided in Albuquerque or in the northern part of New Mexico.

During deliberations, one juror said that people should be considered guilty until proven innocent. Another woman opined that jurors were suffering stress because of witchcraft that might be coming from Mexico. Two jurors were frightened by the reputations of the defendants. There was also a woman who felt God was displeased by what the defendants had done and she saw to it that the jurors began deliberations every morning with a silent prayer while holding hands around the table.

The jurors agreed that the prosecutors' case was lengthy, detailed, and unclear. After two months of deliberations, Taub's jury did not convict any defendants. Three were acquitted while the jury hung on the other six. The judge was furious with the verdicts and said he would have thrown the book at all defendants.

When there is a hung jury, the prosecution decides whether to try the defendants again. In the Aguirre case, the government decided to do so and the second trial began with six defendants and a different jury.

During the second trial, one defendant became ill and accepted a plea bargain deal. The other five defendants were convicted and sentenced to prison. Taub was present for the sentencing phase, the only juror from either trial to attend.

WRONGFUL CONVICTIONS

In her book, Taub interweaves her chronology of the Aguirre trial with instructive excerpts from scholarly works, news reports, and appellate court opinions. She presents learned commentary on wrongful convictions, mandatory minimum sentences, jury nullification, reasonable doubt, and the death penalty.

Toney Anaya, former Governor and Attorney General of New Mexico, said of Taub's *Juries*: "A unique glimpse into the mind of a juror with values she would not compromise who voted her conscience and dared to judge a criminal justice system that discriminates against people of color and the poor. Must reading for potential jurors and anyone truly interested in doing what is right."

—Roger Hummel

NEWS & LETTERS

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Historic agreement may end fighting in Aceh

Scores of armed Achenese rebels began to emerge from the mountains on Sept. 15 to hand over their weapons to an international monitoring team. This was the first stage of a peace accord signed by the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the Indonesian government Aug. 15 in Helsinki, Finland, to the cheers of the beleaguered people of Aceh.

The Indonesian armed forces have killed tens of thousands of Achenese over the past 29 years during the struggle for self-determination by the GAM guerrilla movement and by massive civil society movements, which were brutally suppressed. Then last Dec. 26, the tsunami killed hundreds of thousands of people in Aceh and left still more homeless, jobless, destitute and often broken—and most remain in that condition today. The peace accord, brokered by the European Union, is the result of Achenese exhaustion and pressure put on Indonesia by nations and institutions who are reluctant to turn over billion of dollars in promised aid while martial law and killing continue.

Riding into the center of the capital city, Banda Aceh, on Sept. 15, the GAM fighters surrendered rocket launchers, M-16 rifles, shotguns and homemade grenade launchers to international monitors, who cut the weapons into pieces on the spot. "This is a monumental day for the better future of Aceh and the better future of Indonesia," said Irwandi Yusuf, a senior Free Aceh Movement representative, on the first day of the hand-over. Implementation of the peace agreement is being supervised by 240 monitors from the European Union and neighboring Asian countries.

Under the accord, known as the Memorandum of Understanding, GAM had until Sept. 17 to turn in the first 247 of its weapons. The Indonesian army pledged to withdraw two battalions with 1,200 soldiers if GAM met the deadline. Weapons transfers and troop withdrawals will continue over the next four months, until GAM is disarmed and the government has about 25,000 soldiers and police in the province.

So far, the government has lived up to provisions that it grant GAM members amnesty and free political

prisoners, freeing more than 1,400 people and withdrawing 1,300 police troops. The Memorandum of Understanding also provides for Aceh to retain 70% of the income received for its natural resources, for outside auditors to guarantee transparency in its economic relations with Jakarta, and for certain limited areas of sovereignty.

During the peace negotiations, GAM consulted with representatives of civil society groups, who came to-

gether to meet openly inside Aceh.

Some Achenese are unhappy with the agreement because there is no way to enforce it. One Banda Aceh civilian reports that two of his friends have been murdered by the military since the Memorandum of Understanding was signed. Indonesia has all the power, and the monitoring group is too small to stop it from resuming mass killing.

Moreover, reactionary forces in the Jakarta government want to repudiate the Memorandum of Understanding on the grounds that a country cannot legally make a treaty with one of its parts. The decisive factor in whether the peace lasts will most likely be the military, which is heavily invested in keeping hold of Aceh to maintain its opportunities for financial gain there as well its power in Indonesia's political structure.

Other Achenese are unhappy with the agreement because it appears to give up the struggle for independence. Others say the struggle will continue politically. One former fighter explained, "We changed the definition of 'independence' to a new terminology. Independence within any country or independence without borders—no matter. When we have dignity, when we have prosperity, when we have our own right to do this and that, that's independence." Others believe it impossible to obtain these goals within Indonesia.

Meanwhile, as *News & Letters* has chronicled since last year's tsunami, Indonesia continues to drag its feet in the reconstruction of Aceh. To date, there has been almost no rebuilding of homes for the hundreds of thousands who lost them. People have been forced to move into military barracks or remain in tents. The only rebuilding visible is by foreign non-governmental organizations. According to the UN, out of 40,000 job seekers registered at the International Labor Organization employment service center database in Banda Aceh, only 1,600 have found employment.

—Anne Jaclard with Achenese civil society activists



A meeting between civil society activists and the Free Aceh Movement in Malaysia in August.

ther from exile around the world. This resulted in provisions in the Memorandum of Understanding that guarantee UN-established principles of human rights and an "independent and impartial" judicial system, and provide for the formation of independent political parties to run candidates for local elections.

Among those just released from prison was Muhammad Nazar, the head of the non-violent, pro-referendum mass organization SIRA. For the first time since before martial law was imposed in May 2003, SIRA

Health care under attack in Tennessee

MEMPHIS, TENN.—The struggle to save TennCare continues. TennCare is Tennessee's state program for access to health care for the poor, uninsured and underinsured, and Gov. Phil Bredesen is gutting it. Over 200,000 people are in the process of having their health coverage taken from them, with more likely to follow, and severe restrictions have been placed on the prescriptions anyone can get. Hundreds, maybe thousands, have been sentenced to death by our Democratic governor.

Disability and civil rights activists, HIV patients and health care advocates have spearheaded a campaign to stop this, including organizing speakouts for people on TennCare. There's massive outrage about balancing the state's budget on the backs of the sick and the poor.

In Nashville, a sit-in is still going on at Gov. Bredesen's office demanding an end to the cuts. The protesters have received messages of support from all over the country, in part because people in every state recognize that the poor and the sick are on the chopping block everywhere. Health care in this country is in crisis.

This system is decaying and is taking humanity with it, unless we succeed in abolishing it and creating a new human society.

—Franklin Dmitryev

TWO STORIES FROM THE TENNCARE SPEAKOUTS...

My daughter is 34. She couldn't come because she's in bed with kidney failure. She has congestive heart failure. She's blind in one eye and she's a Type 1 diabetic. She was cut from TennCare and never got a notice. She went Aug. 1 to pick up her prescriptions. They told her they wouldn't pay for it. This is her medicine to stay alive.

I called our State Rep. Barbara Cooper, who called the head of TennCare. He said there was nothing he could do. I called numbers Ms. Cooper gave me. On TennCare, nothing's easy. You can't get an appointment today. You have to wait until Aug. 23. Her medicine stopped Aug. 1. She can't see her doctors anymore.

What is she going to do? I want to know if the governor of Tennessee is going to sign her death certificate! I want to know why she doesn't have a right to live! Take care of your own people! She tried to get Social Security. They told her she was able-bodied. I went to the doctor with her. He stayed 10 minutes, didn't even weigh her.

Where is she going to go? Because she's not able to work, she doesn't get any assistance. So my husband and I have to take care of her. But where is she going to get these two shots for \$200? And this bottle of medicine is \$600. Her latest prescriptions she got today, I don't have any way to get them. One is to keep the fluid out of her lungs from the heart failure. Somebody's got to care. She's my daughter.

—White mother

I'm here on behalf of my daughter, a young engineer. She did all the right things for 10 years, paying the maximum every year. However, she was struck down by multiple sclerosis and her coverage was withdrawn by a Fortune 500 company—not much empathy from that source.

My heart is torn by all these people here, not only my child. I care for every human being in Tennessee. A nation as strong as this nation, why couldn't we divert our resources into health care rather than destructive ventures? We have had numerous hospital visits, and for the first time in my life, we have been unable to pay the bills. I have negotiated with the hospitals and they were kind enough to reduce the bills so that I could pay. But I've been dehumanized for the first time.

She's on 13 medications, she has multiple sclerosis, she has phlebitis and some other problems. She's totally disabled and requires 24-hour care, for which we pay. She has an income of \$1,400 a month on Social Security disability. Not only is she physically totally disabled, there is severe cognitive degeneration. I appeal to the legislators and the governor to rethink the fact that human beings' lives are being destroyed.

—Black father

Protest targets park honoring Klan founder

MEMPHIS, TENN.—Over 250 people—most of them Black, but many whites too—gathered in Nathan Bedford Forrest Park on Aug. 13 to demand this piece of land be renamed. A horseback statue of N.B. Forrest, a founder of the Ku Klux Klan, Confederate general and slave trader, sits in the middle of this park that is adjacent to the downtown campus of the University of Tennessee. Forrest was originally buried in a cemetery, but his body was moved to the park 100 years ago as a symbol of Jim Crow racism. The statue was also installed then and the park was named after Forrest.

We also demanded the renaming of two other downtown parks: Confederate Park and Jefferson Davis Park, named after the Confederacy's president. For decades African Americans have had to live with these paeans to racism, to lynching, to degradation in the heart of the city. Several protesters compared it to having statues of Hitler in Germany.

Many local Black politicians, like Mayor Willie Herenton, refused to support the protest, claiming that there are more important issues to deal with, such as poverty and the crisis in TennCare. But protesters countered that, not only is it possible to work on many issues at once, these self-serving politicians haven't done anything on the other issues either. There was a lot of passion in the crowd, showing that fighting against these symbols of oppression can be an important moment in the struggle for a new, free society.

Neo-Confederates have rallied under the banner of "Southern Heritage" to save these symbols of the slaveholders and their rebellion, but we protesters see a dual heritage in the South. We refuse to glorify the heritage of racism and oppression and demand recognition of the history of the struggles for freedom—the slave revolts, the civil rights movement, and so on—as not only "heritage" but as history that is ongoing and is the only history that can move us forward to true freedom.

—Participants

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New Orleans: The human cost of capitalism's brutality

Continued from page 1

forced by the rising waters onto the roofs of their or their neighbor's homes. Many were trapped in their attics after being surprised by the speed of the water's rise and were forced to endure days of intense heat.

While areas of predominantly white Jefferson Parish, west of New Orleans, escaped the flooding, the largely white working class St. Bernard Parish was devastated. One of the earliest confirmations of the extent of the tragedy was the discovery of the bodies of 34 nursing home residents in Chalmette, a center of the oil and sugar refining industries. They had not been evacuated and had perished inside the residence.

DANGEROUS REFUGE

Those who could not evacuate but left their homes to gather in the city's designated shelter sites faced a horror perhaps worse than being stranded on rooftops. The Superdome, the football stadium and home of the New Orleans Saints, initially became a refuge for 10,000 residents. Katrina's strong winds damaged the dome's roof and let water begin to accumulate on the floor. When the city lost electricity, the thousands inside had to sit in the dim light provided by a backup generator. Water and food ran out and the stadium's toilets soon stopped working.

The number of those inside increased to 20,000 as people made their way through the flooded streets to a place they mistakenly believed was a refuge. Once inside, they became trapped in what was essentially a dangerous and unhealthy dungeon with no one to provide any formal type of relief. A similar scenario unfolded at the city's Convention Center, another officially designated place of shelter that quickly became a living hell for the thousands who were abandoned there by representatives of all layers of government.

Those most vulnerable began dying. The elderly, infants, and the chronically ill fell victim to heat, dehydration and the lack of much-needed medicines and perished. With no place to store the bodies, they were simply moved out of the way by survivors who attempted to cover them with whatever was available.

Other vulnerable people were trapped by the flooding. The patients of the city's hospitals, most notably Charity Hospital, the public hospital of New Orleans, were stranded in their beds with no electricity or running water. The chronically ill were thrown into extreme danger by the lack of medicine and functioning medical equipment. Inside Memorial Medical Center sweltering conditions contributed to the deaths of 40 patients.

Those who had the energy to walk across the Greater New Orleans Bridge to what residents refer to as the West Bank of the Mississippi found that racism made them unwelcome. While the suburban West Bank cities of Jefferson Parish escaped from the storm relatively unscathed, the authorities not only refused to offer Black residents of New Orleans seeking shelter any aid, but forced them at gunpoint to turn around and walk back across the bridge.

Incredibly the situation only began to improve slightly by Thursday, Sept. 1. The evacuation of those crowded into the Superdome went slowly and painfully and the relief of those trapped in the dire conditions of the Convention Center took even longer. Anxiety persisted even as those who made it onto the buses for evacuation headed to conditions unknown to them in Houston, San Antonio and places even more distant.

INGRAINED RACISM

One revelation after another paints a picture of capitalism and bourgeois rule in the 21st century. The incompetence of the crony appointee heading the agency charged with preparing for disasters, Michael Brown, is only the face of a cynical restructuring of government which has no intention of serving or protecting the public. "A large population of Americans who serve no purpose to the agenda of this administration were allowed to die," is how an angry woman put it.

Those agencies charged with protecting people and keeping them informed have been eviscerated under Bush. FEMA itself has been greatly reduced. Inept cronies head the defunded Environmental Protection Agency. Pharmaceutical companies have a friend in the Food and Drug Administration, which shows hostility to women by blocking distribution of the Plan B contraceptive, the "morning after" pill. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting has been handed over to a rightwing propagandist. And Homeland Security has lost counterterrorism experts who see the administration focused not on protecting the country but with waging wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and possibly elsewhere (Paul Krugman, "All the President's Friends," *New York Times*, 09/12/05).

Covering the endangerment of the public is drumbeat of "states rights" amplified during Bush's two terms. States rights has been a rationale for cutting spending on social programs federally, throwing the burdens of health, housing and employment on state and local governments in the name of smaller government. What has not shrunk are the military and the apparatuses of domestic control, particularly prisons and Homeland Security.

The sordid history of states rights is rooted in slave states seceding from the union in the 19th century to preserve that peculiar institution. The same states asserted the "right" to continue segregation in the face of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. It continues today as religion-based policies, right-to-work laws,

and retrenchment against women's liberation. Of course, the Supreme Court dismissed states rights in 2000 when it discontinued the Florida election recount to put Bush into the White House.

LEFT IN HARM'S WAY

Notwithstanding the administration's spin, against reports of defunding the Army Corps of Engineers, the fact is that a well-known recipe for disaster persisted through many administrations. Locally whites who fled to Jefferson Parish in the 1950s and 1960s created a fairly reliable system of levees and drainage for themselves. And "generations of New Orleans residents have voluntarily climbed to higher ground as soon as they could afford to do so," explained Craig Colson author of *An Unnatural Metropolis: Wrestling New Orleans from Nature* (*New York Times*, 9/10/05).

Experts beseeched FEMA forewarning natural and social disasters. There were tragic exceptions to FEMA's torpor however. Officials blocked AMTRAK from carrying out residents, a flotilla of 500 boats of regional volunteers from rescuing residents, firefighters trained in rescue operations, trucks with food and supplies sent by Wal-Mart and the Red Cross, a Navy vessel equipped with a 600-bed hospital, Coast Guard deliveries of emergency diesel fuel, and teams of doctors from North Carolina and elsewhere.

Not deterred, however, was a deployment of 300 soldiers of the Arkansas National Guard recently stationed in Iraq. History will remember Governor Kathleen Blanco's directive, responding to unsubstantiated rumors of a crime spree: "These troops know how to shoot and kill, and they are more than willing to do so if necessary, and I expect they will."

Against the law-and-order response heaped upon inhuman disaster policies, the human response inside New Orleans reflected a different reality. Two paramedics, Larry Bradshaw and Lorrie Beth Slonsky, described the self-activity of workers: "The maintenance workers who used a fork lift to carry the sick and disabled. The engineers, who rigged, nurtured and kept the generators running. The electricians who improvised thick extension cords stretching over blocks... Nurses who took over for mechanical ventilators and spent many hours on end manually forcing air into the lungs of unconscious patients to keep them alive. Door-men who rescued folks stuck in elevators... the food service workers who scoured the commercial kitchens improvising communal meals for hundreds of those stranded" (EMSNetwork.com, 9/6/05).

Grassroots responses were quickly organized outside the befuddled relief bureaucracy. Cindy Sheehan moved to "Camp Casey III" in Covington, La., to spearhead delivery of 10 tons of supplies to New Orleans and Mississippi. Piedmont of North Carolina activists raised money to deliver three busloads of goods to the city and return with as many busloads of evacuees. The Louisiana Environmental Action Network air dropped food, water, and medical supplies to residents. And union coal miners drove four trailer trucks with supplies from Hazard, Ky. to the Gulf Coast. Among the expressions of solidarity internationally were those from Achenese victims of the tsunami last year followed by Indonesia's chocking off relief efforts.

A HISTORY OF DISASTERS, NEW THINKING

Capitalism's indifference to the lethal threats of flooding pervades U.S. history. In 1928 Lake Okeechobee in Florida overflowed due to a storm surge from a hurricane, drowning some 1,800 mostly Black field workers. The ecology had been altered by agricultural development and warnings had preceded that disaster. The year before, 1927, saw the Mississippi River overflow from record Midwestern snows. The earlier attempts to engineer controls on the river failed. Hundreds died, mostly Black farmers, sixteen and a half million acres in seven states were inundated, and some two thirds of a million people were dislocated. It also destroyed the chains of farm tenancy holding Black families in servitude for 50 years since Reconstruction. The event spurred a wave of migration to the north by Black families and was part of a new consciousness that continued in Black and labor struggles for decades hence.

What will come of this moment which has exposed the raw, racist, exploitative nature of U.S. capitalism? For the rulers, the preferred direction of recovery was intimidated by Condoleezza Rice. Fronting for a malfasant administration, she promised a war on poverty, capitalist-style, led by "non-governmental organizations" and "the private business sector." To seed this kind of redevelopment, Bush acted decisively in the week after Katrina. An executive order of Sept. 8

suspended a rule requiring federal contractors to pay wages no lower than locally prevailing wage, always higher than the minimum. Already no-bid contracts are being awarded to contractors like Haliburton who are poised to reap windfalls. Comparisons with the larded contracts for rebuilding Iraq are clear.

However in line with the self-activity seen during the flood, residents have a different vision, reflected in a statement by Community Labor United: "The people of New Orleans will not go quietly into the night, scattering across this country to become homeless in countless other cities while federal relief funds are funneled into rebuilding casinos, hotels, chemical plants and the wealthy white districts of New Orleans like the French Quarter and the Garden District. We will not stand idly

by while this disaster is used as an opportunity to replace our homes with newly built mansions and condos in a gentrified New Orleans."

A SHAKEN AGENDA

In the two and a half weeks since the floods hit New Orleans, it has become clear that large parts of the country reject the Bush agenda, now that its ramifications have become clear in New Orleans. The anti-war/anti-Bush protest in Wash-

ington, D.C. owes much of its success to that emerging sentiment (see page 7). Reporters passionately conveyed the conditions and their ramifications. In communities across the nation, people responded ahead of authorities, many opening homes.

The invitations extended by people have been a far cry from the cynical attitude of ex-First Lady Barbara Bush who uttered what most racist ideologues may not feel free to say openly, that the thousands relocated to the Houston Astrodome never had it so good. Against that attitude, even so conservative a cheerleader for the administration as David Brooks declared that "canning Michael Brown or appointing some tough response czar will not change the endemic failures at the heart of this institutional collapse" (*New York Times*, 9/11/05).

The Bush agenda is suddenly uncertain, a turnaround from the three years of opportunities provided his administration by the September 11, 2001 attacks, opportunities to start two wars and to exercise police powers at home. Staggering costs of recovery may have eroded plans to privatize Social Security and end the estate taxes for the rich. And the occupation of Iraq, already a massive dump of money and resources while the budget deficit balloons, looks different now, economically and politically. Nevertheless even a pullout from Iraq, partial or total, would not mean an end to the U.S.'s single superpower reach in Iraq or elsewhere.

We cannot be lulled into thinking that the crisis from Hurricane Katrina itself will reverse that agenda. Unlike in the aftermath of 9/11, milked even during the relief efforts to distract from the Gulf Coast crisis, Bush and company will do everything they can to make us forget his culpability. For us to allow New Orleans to be forgotten in six months or six years from now will allow the illusion to endure that capitalism is eternal.

Like the Los Angeles rebellion of 1992, New Orleans tore a scab open, exposing the achilles heel of American capitalism, its racism. The difference is that in 2005 the U.S. is at war in Iraq. The internal crisis is seriously threatening to undermine the continuation of an already most unpopular war.

With New Orleans, we have the type of crisis not seen since the 1960s, when urban insurrections by the Black masses gave pause to the Vietnam War. At no time since then have the issues of race, poverty, and war come together in such a threatening way to the rulers. Already nervous about Bush's reckless wars and economic policies, they are on the threshold of a split in the dominant classes that could create a true opening for thinkers and activists in movements against racism, war, and global capital.

Karl Marx, viewing the endemic economic crises that capitalist development spawned, remarked that the bourgeoisie "is unfit to rule because it is incompetent to assure an existence to its slave within his slavery." This is clear in New Orleans, but it is also true of the many "New Orleans" across the country, social crises ready to erupt. Look at persistent poverty in the 21st century. Although many among the working poor fall below the "poverty line," the truth is that the poor who are at or above the mark cannot make ends meet. Among the supposedly better off, some 45 million have no health insurance and are one health incident away from destitution. The floods tore the veneer of permanence off of this system, showing that crisis is in its heart and soul. Any illusions of stability have been blown away by Hurricane Katrina.



Relief in Cleveland, Miss. for Black farming families hurt by the 1927 Mississippi River flood. A wave of migration north followed.

Nation rallies against Bush's wars

NEW YORK—Thousands of anti-war activists cheered Cindy Sheehan at three talks she gave here Sept. 19 and 20. Sheehan gained sudden fame for spending the month of August, as she put it, "in a ditch" in Crawford, Texas, just outside Bush's ranch. She was demanding to meet with him to get an explanation of his statement that her son's death in Iraq had a "noble purpose."

She and other members of "gold star" families, military families and veterans who came to Crawford then spent September touring the country. Their campaign for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq sent three busloads of speakers to 250 events in 51 cities, and culminated at the national march on Washington, D.C. Sept. 24 (see p. 7).

Sheehan appeared before 2,000 people Sept. 20 at a United for Peace and Justice rally that was distinguished by several speakers, including Sheehan, calling for Bush to be impeached. Earlier in the day, she had been at a rally in Union Square that was broken up by the police for lack of a permit. Some New Yorkers had been camping in Union Square for weeks, in solidarity with the Crawford vigil.

At the UFPJ rally, Sheehan described her transformation into an anti-war activist several months after her son's death last year. She read a poem written by her daughter which she credited with moving her thoughts away from suicide to how to stop other people's sons from being killed. She began to give speeches with Military Families Speak Out. As she campaigned to stop the war, she said:

"I could see this country was ready for a change. Some people told me, 'get a job, you hippie.' I don't look like a hippie! I said, 'I have a job: to hold George Bush accountable and to end this war.' The job doesn't pay anything, but what better pay could there be than watching the last U.S. soldier in Iraq get off the plane that brings him home?"

This summer, Sheehan decided to attend the Veterans for Peace conference in Texas. Sitting at the conference on Aug. 3, she suddenly decided to camp outside Bush's ranch, and three days later, she began her vigil. As word spread, people from all over the country and world converged on "Camp Casey," named for her son. She estimated that 12,000 had been there, "putting their lives on hold" to fight against the war. People gave the camp everything it needed to continue, she said, because "it resonated with so many Americans who are ready to take our country back."

"Hurricane Katrina proved that Bush's reckless policies have made our country more vulnerable, not less. He cares nothing for our soldiers or the poor of New Orleans. Polls show 62% of Americans want the troops brought home. The only way we will make the world safe is to get George Bush out of office."

Several speakers at the rally—veterans of Iraq and Vietnam, wives and parents of soldiers—also called for Bush's impeachment. Some spoke of the tragic deaths of Iraqis as well as Americans, and of soldiers who survived the war but were hardened or broken men. The father of Sgt. Sherwood Baker, a National Guardsman who was killed in Baghdad, said that Guardsmen and

equipment deployed in Iraq could have saved lives on the Gulf Coast after the hurricane. "This shows what the government thinks of poor and working class people," he said. "We have to fight for social justice as well as peace—it's all connected."

—Anne Jaclard

MEMPHIS, TENN.—The anti-war movement is alive, well and growing. Every Wednesday morning from 7:30 to 8:00 a dozen activists of all ages stand with our anti-war, stop Bush, and "Honk if you're against the War" signs. At times the honks become deafening as diesel trucks weigh in along with school bus drivers, city workers, and just regular folks on their way to work. The response from Black Memphians, from the beginning has been by far the greatest.

When we started, we could only populate one corner of the busy intersection we stand on. But now we have spread to three. One thing that helped us was when Cindy Sheehan's camp disbanded and they came through Memphis. In a hastily pulled together action, over 60 came to support Sheehan and condemn the war at the National Civil Rights Museum.

What else made a difference was the government's racist response to hurricane Katrina. After Katrina struck, not only did our demonstration grow, the response from those driving by was intense, revealing the anger that exists here against a government that, when it isn't sending people to Iraq to be killed, is letting them die at home from racism and poverty.

—Anti-war protester

'Ex-Gay' movement challenged

MEMPHIS, TENN.—The Queer Action Coalition (QAC) started when 16-year-old Zach wrote in his blog that his parents were sending him to "Love in Action" (LIA), a fundamentalist Christian program, that claimed to "heal" homosexuality.

In June, a few Memphis youth activists began to hold twice-weekly demonstrations outside LIA, and soon, the number of demonstrators of all ages and sexual orientations swelled to about fifty. Our goals were to educate the public that these programs exist.

People who experienced them and the American Psychological Association agree that homosexuality cannot and does not need to be "cured," and that the programs are harmful.

QAC also pointed out that the religious right is targeting teenagers, who can be forced to attend these programs. QAC has had respectful dialogue with the people who run LIA and with its clients and has maintained that it is possible to be both gay and Christian.

Signs said, "Homosexuality is not a disease. It can't be 'cured,'" "Give these kids their rights," "Fear gay people, they might spread happiness," and "We love you just the way you are." The response from people driving by was overwhelmingly positive, and so was the response from the police.

QAC's demonstrations provoked national and international media interest. LIA has been investigated on a child abuse complaint. It was dismissed but, at the time of this writing, LIA has received a cease and desist order from the Tenn. Dept. of Health and Developmental Disabilities because it claimed to have

licensed mental health-care professionals on its staff.

In fact, the "ex-gay" movement has started to give up its claims of changing gay people into heterosexuals and now states its focus is on encouraging them to be celibate and to exhibit so-called "gender appropriate" behavior.

QAC has received training from national LGBT organizations and is prepared for future queer rights demonstrations. We also have a speaker's bureau and have given talks for church groups. Our websites are www.qaconline.org and fightinghomophobia.blogspot.com.

—Adele

West Bank solidarity rally



Israeli and international Palestinian solidarity activists protested the incursion of Israel's separation wall onto the lands of the West Bank village of Bilin in August. A participant from Memphis, Tenn. reports that the 100 demonstrators were fired upon by the Israeli army with tear gas and rubber bullets.

ESSAY

Call of the Siren: A proletarian critique of Starbucks

Continued from page 3

and capital accumulation) for distribution to consumption production receptacles, that is, the coffee shop.

For example, the value of the labor of the Starbucks employee in the U.S. is higher than that of the coffee bean picker in Latin America, Africa or the Arabian coast, because of the way global society has developed, in which the division of labor is internationally based and exploited in different ways in different regions. Of course, this is one of the things that makes Starbucks just like other enterprises, not what makes it unique.

Starbucks' "Chief Coffee Master" wrote for its newspaper to store workers: "We need to treat Starbucks as we would a cherished personal gift. We need to treat it with the proper respect and continue to work hard each day, in everything we do—building on the theme of human connection." It's obvious this means understaffing and cutting cost.

This is one essence of class struggle, directors affecting our lives for profitability. But the bosses must face many an uncertainty of worker availability, no-shows, quitings, ambitious worker-group scandals to appropriate more value for their labor, different kinds of on-the-job resistance, bad attitudes, sickness from overwork, and more. A few months ago some workers were discovered to have been voiding customers' transactions to put that money into the tip jars instead of the till, since the tips go solely to employees. (Due to an array of surveillance technology, the workers got caught and were fired.)

The security setup at the Starbucks is notable in the use of technology to secure the company's hand in the class struggle by keeping workers in check with surveillance cameras, computerized tills (cash registers) and timeclocks connected to a Starbucks intranet. All of this can be monitored from sources outside the store, for example by upper management specialists.

Starbucks perks are nice in comparison to other jobs in other places. But if the perks were sufficient there wouldn't be the constant employee turnover rate, as is the case in Starbucks coffee shops here in Chicago.

Employees sometime work at two different stores and for seven to nine days without a day off.

Conditions are the same every day. The time passed away remains the same, so the time seems absent, like a sort of anxious torture. The same aspects appear daily; the same acts and behaviors, the same words and waiting people, in dead time, in bought space.

I watched the workers today. The man at the espresso bar did a million variations of the same work process all day, and thanked each and every customer in his weary eyes and flushed face. It's his duty as a commodity. He repeats it to every customer, a "thank you" from Starbucks, through the hollowed out subjectivity of the worker, no matter how sincere or not.

Just like a McDonalds or a car factory, the Starbucks shop is set up in work stations and production processes that are more or less uniform for every Starbucks the world over. Its uniform product protocol is always pushed by management. The tragedy is that the workers antagonize each other over implementing these stupid policies.

Here is an alienation, internalized by many workers, evident in their attitude and behavior on the job. Many illusions are accepted by many workers. It is easy to talk of Starbucks as if it is an autonomous entity rather than a constructed and maintained social relation of exploitation with a hierarchic ideology, secrecy and bureaucracy, a commercial enterprise which allows for the maintenance of the protracted goal of capital accumulation (as in any company anywhere for that matter). Upper management, the company's directors, acts as priest figures, full of professional and paranoid artifice to protect their position as directors of stealing our labor power through the law of value, which makes them not at all unique, of course.

Meanwhile the workers associate themselves as one with Starbucks when talking to customers. "We" do this or "We" do that, and true, on the material and to-customer relation level the workers at the store perform various functions with their own activity, at the level of prostitution, that is, wage labor. They associate themselves in an alienated way to the products they

sell for the company's profits, as if it were their goods being sold for themselves, as if those workers were in direct control of the quantity and kind of products being distributed to the store.

As in many capitalist enterprises, Starbucks has the Keep Busy policy. It can become an internalized compulsion of the workers forced to act on this enforced policy. While most shift supervisors are paid little more than lowest tier employees, they often act as watchdogs of the store and its regulations. So far this method of labor enforcement has succeeded, along with the global alienation that makes for successful social pacification. Not all supervisors act like this regularly and none of them all the time, but workers remain in servitude and continue to create the profits of the enterprise.

Often the store manager acts as a coach, a pep-talker, a cheerleader for the company, to be friendly while also acting as a punisher, lecturer, threatener. But push they must, as the managers above them do, and other factors—particularly rule by the market and whatever crisis seemingly affects it—compels them to push all the more.

You can be proud of your work and have a meaningfully positive attitude and believe in (internalize) the required ideals that Starbucks considers its measure of a model worker. But if you don't express this to some extent you'll be fired. The same goes for any company. The store manager may take you in back and drill you, say maybe you need an attitude adjustment or you should find another job because you obviously aren't happy with your job, and they threaten to fire you—which is a common managerial scare tactic in many enterprises.

In "A Community of Laborers or a Human Community?" (*Communicating Vessels*, No. 14) the author states: "Rest assured, the petty tyrant who owns the café across the street from Starbucks is probably little different from the manager of your local Starbucks." We can also see that the worker at that café across the street is not subject to the rules and regimentation that come from the maze of bureaucratic management departments of Starbucks, but this does not change the fundamentals of wage labor in any enterprise.

OUR LIFE AND TIMES

by Kevin A. Barry

In October, Iraqis will vote on a draft constitution that, in the words of *The Economist*, fulfills "the wish-list of international investors." It would allow multinationals to repatriate their profits, would establish a flat tax system, and would privatize social services such as education and healthcare. Most importantly to the multinationals, it would allow oil and other natural resources to be exploited by international capital.

The social features of the draft constitution are even more reactionary, the product of a rotten compromise between Shiite Arab Islamist parties under the influence of Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, and secular

Gaza withdrawal

Israel's evacuation of the Gaza Strip went very smoothly, as the settler fanatics were unable to organize serious resistance. For the first time since the 1993 Oslo Accords promised a Palestinian state, an entire swath of territory is now under Palestinian rule.

This withdrawal is in some ways a poisoned gift, however, for Gaza is a stronghold of Hamas and other fundamentalist groups that the more secular Palestinian leadership will find hard to control. Gaza will remain an empty gesture if serious steps to evacuate the West Bank and East Jerusalem do not follow soon.

But it is these very steps that Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has forewarned. According to Dror Ekkes of the Israeli group Peace Now, "International opinion demands a Palestinian state. His stance is one of appearing to respond to this demand while at the same time emptying this state of its substance" (*Le Monde*, 8/12/05). This is shown in the fact that, while 8,500 settlers have now left Gaza, in the past year 12,000 new settlers have poured into the West Bank. There, and in East Jerusalem, is where the true question of a Palestinian state will be decided.

Surprise German vote

Germany's elections shocked those who had expected a clear victory for the candidate of the conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU), Angela Merkel, whom *The New York Times* characterized as "a genuine Anglo-American free-market figure" (9/18/05). In the end, Merkel's CDU received only 35% of the vote, a single percentage point higher than Gerhard Schröder's governing Social Democrats (SPD). More to the point, Merkel and her neo-liberal Free Democrat allies fell short of a parliamentary majority.

With the German economy plagued by an unemployment rate of 11.5% and an economic growth rate of 1%, it was Merkel's election to lose. But doubts about her "free market" policies, with her chief economic advisor advocating a flat tax, undermined her support among working people. This happened even though Volkswagen sought to hurt Schröder by announcing 10,000 more layoffs a week before the election.

Schröder deftly played on fears that Merkel would dismantle the welfare state. He also pledged not to support a U.S. attack on Iran, in this way calling attention to Merkel's failure to denounce the militaristic policies of the Bush administration.

Schröder's compromises with capital and his own whittling away of the welfare state had led to the birth earlier this year of the Left Party, formed by leftists exiting the SPD and the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), the former Communist Party of East Germany. This party, which strongly backed German workers' rights, but took some demagogic stands on immigrant labor, scored nearly 9%. Schröder's coalition partners, the Greens, received 8% of the vote. This meant that leftist parties actually won a majority, but Schröder refuses to consider an alliance with the Left Party.

Iraq's reactionary draft constitution

Kurdish parties. Pressured by the U.S. to come up with a draft without further delay, a deal mediated by U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalizad includes retrogressive measures on religion and law, and especially on women's rights. This came as a bitter pill to those who assumed the U.S. would support secular democracy.

While the draft constitution would not install an Iranian-style "rule of the clerics," Islam would become "a principal source of legislation," with clerics empowered to veto legislation they judged to be in conflict with Islam. Clerics would also have vast power over gender and family law.

These provisions have led to protests by Iraqi



Women's protest in Iraq against draft constitution.

women's groups and secular parties, but their voices have been brushed aside by the larger political forces. More shockingly, their voices have been ignored, not only by the mainstream liberal media, but also by much leftist and progressive media in the U.S. and internationally. (A notable exception is the writings of gay journalist Doug Ireland's articles for ZNet.)

The Kurdish parties accepted this rotten compromise because the draft would also grant Iraqi Kurdistan near-total autonomy. Autonomy would also be given to predominantly Shiite Arab southern Iraq, where clerics already exercise much de facto power. These two regions include most of Iraq's oil deposits.

It is this in particular that has enraged even those Sunni Arab parties that had participated in the constitutional negotiations. For the Sunni Arabs, the base of the former Ba'athist regime but only about 20% of the

Death of John Garang

We mourn the death of John Garang, founder of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), which fought for two decades against the genocidal Islamist regime, led in recent years by General Omar al-Bashir. Before Garang's accidental death in a plane crash in August, the SPLM had won a measure of autonomy for southern Sudan, where two million African people have died from war, famine, and disease during repeated military assaults from northern forces seeking to impose Islamic Shari'a law on a region where most people adhere to forms of Christianity or indigenous African religions. Garang's successor, Salva Kiir, will be no pushover for the northern generals, since he has been even more suspicious of their intentions.

The greatest tragedy facing Sudan today is not Garang's death, however, but the situation in the western Darfur region, where Muslim but non-Arab African peoples have come under attack by government-backed janjaweed militia forces. Some 180,000 people have died and a million have been driven from their homes. According to a July report by UN Commissioner for Human Rights Louis Arbour, "Rape and gang rape continue to be perpetrated by armed elements in Darfur, some of whom are members of law enforcement agencies and the armed forces." This situation recalls the worst days of the Bosnian war.

population, are concentrated in central Iraq.

On Sept. 14, in a stark reminder of the continuing strength of the Sunni Arab-backed armed resistance, Abu Musab Al Zarqawi's Al Qaeda of Mesopotamia claimed responsibility for a series of suicide bombings that killed over 150 people in a single day in Baghdad. In one attack, which killed over 100 people, a minivan exploded after its driver lured Shiite day laborers to approach by offering them work. Timed to coincide with the opening of the UN General Assembly, the death toll was the largest for a single day in Baghdad since the U.S. invasion of 2003.

In this and other attacks—and in inflammatory statements by Zarqawi calling for "full-scale war without mercy" on Iraqi Shiites—the armed resistance has tried to touch off an ethno-religious war, hoping to provoke the Shiite Arab majority to launch wholesale attacks on Sunni Arab civilians. So far, this has not transpired, but it remains a possibility, one that could result in the Lebanonization of Iraq.

Brazil's political crisis

In the past several months Brazil's President Lula and his Workers Party (PT) have been plunged into the worst crisis of the party's 25-year history. In June the congressman Roberto Jefferson revealed details of a scheme in which the PT has been paying legislators about \$12,000 a month for their votes on key legislation, apparently since 2003. A related scandal involves the disclosure of the PT's illegal campaign financing.

Two days after the vote-for-cash scandal (called the *mensalao*) was revealed, Jose Dirceu, Lula's chief of staff and the main leader of the majority faction in the PT (the Campo Mayoritario) that steered the party away from its working class roots, resigned. Jefferson accused him (with specific details) of being the main architect of the scheme. The president of the PT, Jose Genoino, also quit in July after he and his brother (also a politician) were caught trying to board an airplane with about \$200,000 stuffed in their underwear.

The congressional inquiries in the scandals, which the PT is also accused of having tried to obstruct, are ongoing. Lula himself has not been directly implicated, though it is clear that the future of his party is in doubt, as is his re-election next year. The crisis has been a huge blow to leftists throughout Latin America (and beyond) who had high hopes for Brazil's first working class president. The trend of Latin America's radical workers and ex-guerrilla fighters from the '60s and '70s coming to power after scuttling their hatred of capitalism has clearly hit a major roadblock.

The bigger tragedy however is that the response so far from the critics of the Campo Mayoritario (CM) has been very weak. In late June a two-page "letter to the Brazilian people," signed by some 40 left organizations, including the Landless Workers Movement, claimed that the crisis was initiated by the "elites" in order to destabilize the government, even though the specifics of the scandals have now made clear to all that the country's traditional elites are mostly indistinguishable from the PTs. Much of the movement in Brazil has put its faith into fighting for this government, so that now there's not much of a "movement" out there that could induce Lula to return to his roots.

There might be a resurgence of opposition within the PT, but the efforts of the CM to suppress leftists within the party within the past several years (including purges) have been so successful that one has to be skeptical of the possibility. Another possibility is that the new Socialism and Freedom Party, formed in 2004 by legislators booted from the PT for their constant criticisms of Lula's economic policy, will benefit and may even put up a viable fight for the presidency.

—Mitch Weerth

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 nuclear 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.