

NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

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A worker remembers Pearl Harbor



by Felix Martin, Labor Editor

Fifty years ago I was a sailor in the U.S. Navy on the ship, the USS Vestal, at Pearl Harbor. The American capitalist news media has made such a big deal about the 50th anniversary of the Japanese attack that I want to state what it means to me—as a worker and as someone who almost lost his life that December day.

Since Dec. 7, 1941 we've been told to "Remember Pearl Harbor," the same as our grandparents before us remembered the Maine, remembered the Alamo. It is a rallying cry for American workers and the poor to arm themselves to protect American capitalism and to help expand capitalism throughout the world.

When I try to remember my part in Pearl Harbor, it seems a really bad dream. On Saturday, the day before, we had had the Admiral's inspection of the entire fleet, and that left all of us sailors pleased and tired. Dec. 7, 1941 began by having an extra 30 minutes to sleep, like we did every Sunday.

"THIS IS NOT A DRILL"

After breakfast I went down to the deck below to the mess hall to read. I had been there just a few minutes when the boatswain's mate sounded General Quarters alarm: "This is not a drill. Man your battle stations." The first bomb hit our ship. It came through the mess hall, killing the chief master-at-arms.

I ran out, and as I crossed the well deck, a plane strafed us. The red tracers hit and jumped back into the air, spinning and dancing before my eyes. Then I entered a long passageway leading to the aft part of the ship and to my gun station. As I came out of the passageway, another bomb hit the ship and exploded in the carpenter's shop below.

The next thing I remember was when the fighting was ending. I remember seeing blood on the shells, and we were trying to find out where the blood was coming from. Our third shell man had lost his fingers. He was only 17 years old. We were issued rifles, and we went into the cane fields, dug fox holes and waited for the invasion that never came.

Forty-four months later the war ended, but the big change in my attitude didn't come until the Korean War. I was sent to a ship moored in Japan. I went there to get it back into commission, and I was in charge of a

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A Chinese feminist speaks

Thoughts on collapse of Russian Communism

Editor's note: The dissident whose writing we present below has previously written critiques of the ruling regime in China (See News & Letters, Aug.-Sept. 1989.)

The recent developments in the Soviet Union are rather disturbing, mainly because of the desperation shown by the "reformists" to negate the nation's history (particularly the October Revolution) and to embrace the U.S. as a savior.

It was disturbing to see the "radical" population in Leningrad welcome back a past autocracy, as if the Czar had ever granted happiness to the majority of the populace. It was also disturbing to hear the foreign minister of the Russian Republic praising the White House for being the "heart of the democracy," whereas this "heart of democracy" at the beginning of this year directed a massive slaughter in the Middle East for North American interests. This "heart of democracy" has not ceased in issuing commands toward the promotion of its hegemony over the world.

WHETHER THE RUSSIAN'S tribute to the autocracy and the Bush administration was a genuine or strategic move, it is clear that neither will bring the country out of crisis. The crisis is not merely economic. It is more a crisis of identity, which is closely related to ideology; the revolutionary, socialist consciousness that had emerged around the turn of the century has gone.

Many have announced that the collapse of the totalitarian regimes in Eastern Europe and the crisis of the Soviet Union marked the defeat of socialism and Marxism. Indeed, Western governments and major political parties could not wait to celebrate the triumph of capitalism, although what the above events provided was no more than justifications for the systems at home. The breakdown of Eastern European totalitarian regimes can serve as propaganda materials and a temporary rescue for systems that are struggling to survive themselves, but it certainly cannot save the crumbling West from its own deep trouble.

The danger that emerged from the fall of the East-

Crises in labor and Black movements compel new philosophic beginnings

by Michael Connolly

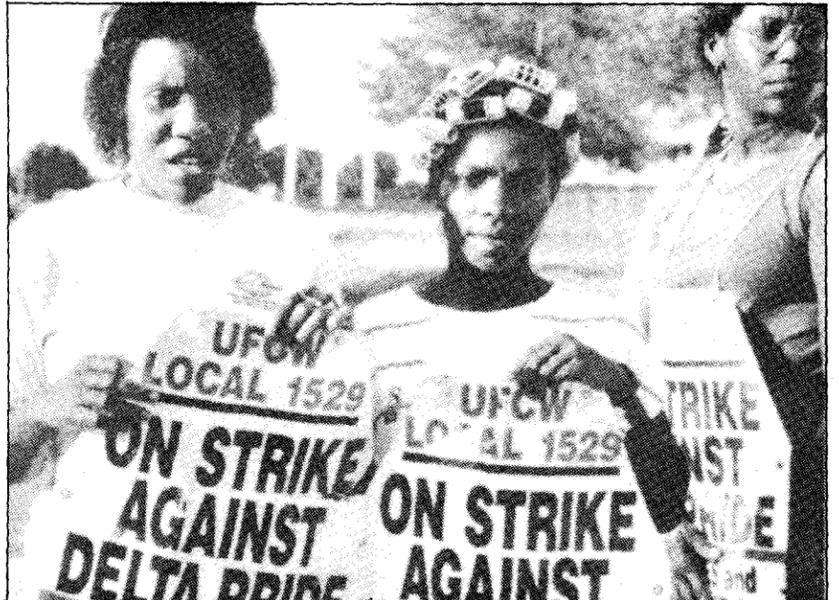
Throughout the month of November, news of the ever-deepening economic crisis in the U.S. and its impact on workers' lives vied with news of the latest outbursts of racism against Black Americans for the headlines in the daily newspapers. Whether one looks at the soaring number of jobless workers or the continuing decline in the standard of living of those fortunate enough to still be working, whether one focuses on the David Duke campaign in Louisiana or the racism stage-managed from the White House, whether one considers the eroding power of the unions or the appointment of Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court, it is clear that the retrogression in this country has reached new depths as we enter this presidential election year.

At the same time, the sudden precipitous drop in George Bush's standing in the polls has nothing to do with any challenge offered by the Democrats and everything to do with the fact that millions of workers, Blacks, women and youth are refusing to accept the Administration's vision of this retrogressionist present as their permanent future. For all of us the urgent question is: how do we develop this refusal into a movement for a human society? How do we alter the terms of the struggle at a moment when Bush is seeking to impose his "new world order," not only abroad, but at home?

AN ECONOMY IN DISARRAY

The need for such a movement has never been clearer. In November the official number of jobless jumped to 8.6 million, with nearly 500,000 new unemployment claims filed each week. Even conservative economists admitted that this is understated. The real jobless total, with so-called "discouraged" workers and "involuntary part timers" added in, has now reached over 15 million.

Nor is the crisis confined to any one region. In rural



Workers at Delta Pride walked the picket line for three months until company agreed to raise wages and improve safety.

Maine so many are out of work that a barter economy not seen there since the 1930s has now sprung up—firewood for auto repairs. In inner city Detroit welfare recipients thrown out on the street when the state cut all General Assistance have created a tent city called "Engler." In Monterey County, Cal., migrant workers are living in hand-dug caves just ten miles from the ritzy Pebble Beach golf course.

The press may have just discovered the economic crisis; workers have seen it coming all through the giddy whirl of 1980s Reaganomics. The hard fact is that ever since the economic crisis of 1974-75 the standard of living of American workers has been in decline. The average manufacturing worker's real wages in 1991 are nearly 30% less than they were at the start of the 1970s.

The numbers are staggering. No less than 24 million Americans now depend on food stamps to eat. At least 37 million have no health insurance whatsoever. Welfare benefits nationally have fallen 40% in real dollars since 1970.

In short, it was not only the Russian economy that was bankrupted by the Reagan-led nuclear arms race of the 1980s. That arms race is being paid for, again and again, by the working class.

Yet, at such a moment of crisis and in the face of the continuing corporate-government assault on the working class, what we are witnessing now is organized labor in disarray. Barely 14% of U.S. non-supervisory workers today belong to unions; AFL-CIO campaigns to "organize the unorganized" are barely managing to keep that figure from dropping still further. Where in the 1980s private sector unions signed "concessions" contracts, reducing wages and benefits and endangering health and safety, the 1990s have already seen the "concessions" offensive hit home against public sector workers—the one segment of the union movement that grew in the 1980s.

The source of the disarray in the union movement isn't workers' "backwardness" or their alleged unwillingness to fight. The long strikes at Rainfair in Wisconsin and Caterpillar in Illinois underline workers' creativity and determination.

So deep, however, is the present structural crisis of capitalism and so disoriented are all the would-be leaders of the workers—whether "business unionists" or "radicals"—that much more than a willingness to fight is needed. There is no way to create a new movement that includes both workers now in unions and those left out, and thereby challenge Bush's "new world order," so long as we remain within its mental confines.

THE HISTORIC-PHILOSOPHIC CONTEXT

A new beginning—whether for the labor movement or (continued on page 10)

On the Inside

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Woman as Reason

by Laurie Cashdan

Patricia Hill Collins' *Black Feminist Thought* (Boston, 1990) especially appealed to me when I saw its subtitle, "Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment," because it projects the need to unite Black feminist thought with activism. Likewise, I was impressed with the book's emphasis on reclaiming the "subjugated knowledge" of ordinary Black women.

Indeed, Collins begins by invoking Maria Stewart's 1831 question, "How long shall the fair daughters of Africa be compelled to bury their minds and talents beneath a load of iron pots and kettles?" The goal of Black feminist thought, Collins says, is not to raise consciousness, but to stimulate resistance by rearticulating women's thinking about everyday experiences. Her unique contribution to that project is developing an Afrocentric feminist epistemology.

'SUBJUGATED KNOWLEDGE'

Part I, "The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought," outlines "the dialectic of oppression and resistance." Key to Black women's survival and resistance, Collins says, is self-consciousness which combats the suppression of knowledge by dominant groups. The "peculiar angle of vision" Black women have as "outsiders-within" white American society constitutes a "subjugated knowledge," which needs rearticulation by Black feminist intellectuals.

Part II, "Core Themes in Black Feminist Thought," explores work, motherhood, sexuality, activism, self-definition, and "controlling images." Here Collins interweaves women workers' reflections on their experiences with the writings of intellectuals—including blues singers' lyrics and wonderful quotes from domestic workers and community activists who sharply critique not only racist employers but also narrow-minded white feminists and Black male activists.

However, when Collins develops her original ideas about Afrocentric feminist epistemology in Part III, a disturbing duality emerges between her theory and the women she has been quoting. She argues that her epistemology challenges the "Eurocentric masculinist knowledge validation process." Positivist Western thought, in which she unfortunately includes Marxism, creates supposedly "scientific," "objective" generalizations about reality. This process distances the (white, male) academic from his (Black, female) subject, devalues ethics and values important to Black women, and prefers debate to dialogue.

To this "either/or dichotomous thinking" she counter-poses the "both/and" knowledge of Black feminist thought, which she says is found in Afrocentric and women's communities. This thought values experience as a basis for knowledge, dialogue over debate, an ethic of caring in the community, and personal accountability of writers.

But what, I was left asking, happened to all the tremendously prescient critiques Collins has been quoting for 200 pages? The most unique aspect of those voices was the challenge they posed to contradictions within women's and Black organizations.

Now we are confronted with an uncritical discussion of the institutions—community, family, and church—we just heard critiqued by Maria Stewart chiding her sisters for "bury [ing] their minds and talents"; by Aretha Franklin demanding of her man "a little respect when you come home"; by Septima Clark challenging the male leaders of the Southern Christian Leadership Con-

Nurses: 'universal energy'

New York, N.Y.—On Nov. 15 more than 100 nurses attended a conference in Pennsylvania organized by Local 1199, the health care workers' union. The purpose was to prepare in advance for a hard struggle next year in negotiating a new contract.

I was appointed to be the reporter for two workshops, each lasting about 90 minutes. They included 20 health care workers, mostly nurses. We spoke about our daily working lives—what we do and what we think of it.

Despite all the particulars in our various situations, we came to similar conclusions. Nurses do everything. And by doing so, we become the "fall guys" for doctors and administrators. We bridge gaps between patients and the other health workers, and between patients and their families. It's like everybody's problems are our problems. We are decision-makers, constant teachers, surrogate family, law-enforcers, dieticians, and in the forefront of identifying and tracking communicable diseases.

One nurse, who came from India, said, "We share with individuals and families birth, in between, and death, all stages of life. We are the universal energy."

As in our nursing education, we all found it hard to define ourselves in one way. Despite all the technology, we are the ones who give the human touch. We find it hard to quantify working time, because when you go home, you are still thinking about your work.

There was a general feeling among the nurses that only we recognize what we are doing, and wonder is it good or bad that we do all we do? Dennis Rivera, head of 1199, on hearing our reports, said the reports were good, but the nurses were missing the "idea of labor"—that there wasn't much in our reports about "the labor movement." I didn't understand why he said that, and we didn't have the chance to discuss it.

—New York nurse

Discussion—review:

"Black Feminist Thought"

ference for keeping women behind the scenes. That meaning is reburied beneath Collins "rearticulation."

'WOMAN AS REASON'

This duality brings front and center the question of how to comprehend as "Reason of revolution," in Raya Dunayevskaya's words, the consciousness of Black women. In trying to move beyond this duality, it is helpful to look at Dunayevskaya's *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, especially Part Two, "The Women's Liberation Movement as Revolutionary Force and Reason."

Dunayevskaya also begins with Maria Stewart. Here when we hear Stewart it is to show the emergence of Women's Liberation as a live presence, in the same year as Nat Turner's slave revolt. Sojourner Truth's term "short-minded," Dunayevskaya tells us, is not just an epithet but "a new language—the language of thought—against those who would put any limitations to freedom."

Dunayevskaya shows us that in today's movement, these Black voices involve revolutionary Reason because they speak to both the depth of the needed uprooting of society and the "dual rhythm of revolution," which includes the release of "personal freedom, creativity and talents." "In a word," she writes, "there must be such appreciation of the movement from below, from practice, that we never again let theory and practice get separated."

Collins' epistemology takes her far from the revolutionary Reason in the voices she quoted. Her questions are important; it is crucial to work out the relationship between "knowledge, consciousness and the politics of empowerment." However, a methodology that grasps the historic legacy of Black women in ongoing struggles cannot remain external to its Subject without resurrecting a barrier between theory and practice.



Women-
Worldwide



—News & Letters photo

by Mary Jo Grey

In downtown Chicago, Ill. on Nov. 16, more than 600 angry, determined and very spirited demonstrators marched for abortion rights. Chanting "We will not go back!" we demanded safe, legal, funded abortions; no gag rule; no parental consent laws; and stop the attacks on clinics. The action was planned by a wide ranging coalition that formed after bourgeois women's groups cancelled a planned demonstration for fear of alienating legislators.

* * *

The 800 workers at Comtrade Apparels, Ltd. in Bangladesh, most of whom are women and children, are in the streets again fighting a factory lockout—another in a long history of company attempts to break their Garment Workers and Employees Unity Council. The workers are demonstrating regularly to demand: 1) investigation and punishment of bosses who beat two women workers in October, as well as withdrawal of charges against the workers, and 2) reopening the factory immediately and reinstating all of the workers.

Information from Committee for Asian Women

* * *

The Brigham Young University Committee to Promote the Status of Women is calling for a male curfew on that Utah campus after an attack on a young woman last month. The women are demanding at least "one night a week to walk across our own campus unaccompanied and unafraid."

* * *

Women in Britain are campaigning to reopen the case of Kiranjit Ahlawali, a 33-year-old Asian woman convicted by an all-white, predominantly male jury of killing her abusive husband after suffering 10 years of violence in an arranged marriage. Sara Thornton, a battered woman convicted of killing her husband and supported by Southall Black Sisters, after a three-week hunger strike and a 5,000-signature petition, was unable to overturn the ruling of the court that sentenced her to prison when two days later it acquitted a man who killed his wife. A London demonstration was held Nov. 23 on International Day to End Violence Against Women.

The Era of Glasnost Has Just Begun

by Tatyana Mamonova

Editor's note: Following are brief excerpts from an extensive report sent to us by one of the founders of the Russian Women's Movement, the author of *Women and Russia*. Following its publication in 1980, Tatyana Mamonova was arrested and sent into exile where she has continued her work for women's liberation.

In March 1991, Dubna, a beautiful town near Moscow, welcomed about 200 women from 48 different groups, associations and parties, as well as individuals from 25 localities. The motto of this Independent Women's Forum was "Democracy minus women is no democracy."

Four main themes appeared on its agenda: Women and politics; Women and the transition to the market economy; Feminist critics of the totalitarian culture; and, for the first time in the U.S.S.R., women felt confident enough to have a session on Women and violence.

Women in the Russia of the 1990s see that socioeconomic, political and cultural discrimination against them existed in spite of a wonderful constitution. During perestroika thousands of women's organizations sprung up around the country.

Assessing perspectives for a worsening of the economic crises and its consequences for women, the Forum in Dubna accepted the idea of social leadership in politics and in business.... They are forming a system for teaching necessary skills to women and developing new jobs for them. They are opposing the stereotypical view of women as sexual objects that escalated with glasnost. Gender studies are including, finally, the implementation of the UN convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

In this outburst of independence, women's organizations pose such questions as, "Why is this country, which was the first to master the cosmos, unable to provide women with sanitary napkins or drugs for labor pain? Why, except for Alexandra Kollontai, in the 1920s, have there been no women diplomats and, with the exception of Ekaterina Furtseva in the 1960s, no women ministers?"

Women scientists and politicians are warning that Soviet women may lose the social guarantees (free medical care and education) which were some of the few positive aspects of the falling regime.

Boris Yeltsin said he might bring back an old symbol of Imperial Russian power—the two-headed eagle which used to appear on the czarist flag. The Russian president did say that he would leave off the crown that once adorned it. People joke: "He only meant to place it on his own head."

To the participants of the Independent Forum it is clear that women are more than mothers and hence they are pro-choice. They believe that women themselves ought to be able to decide how they wish to organize their lives on a basis of equality.... The main concern of the participants during this transition period is whether women will be able to raise their own voices or whether they will remain a silent and manipulated social majority.

County workers revolt

Los Angeles, Cal.—In October and November, Los Angeles County workers—nurses, librarians, court clerks, custodians, social workers, parks maintenance personnel—staged a series of walkouts, some organized by their union, the Service Employees International Union Local 660, and some spontaneous.

They were protesting County foot-dragging on a new, decent contract: the County's initial offer entailed no pay raise, except for the nurses, and increased pay deductions for parking fees (formerly free) and the contract health plan.

After threatening to call all County workers out on a one-day "general strike," the union claimed a victory "in principle," when the County agreed to continue to pay workers' health benefits. Below are voices from the picket lines:

From a nurse, a woman from India: "People say we're greedy for asking for more money, but only if we earn higher salaries will more nurses be attracted to work for the County. We earn less than nurses anywhere. There are 1,000 vacancies here, which means more work for us and poorer care for the patients. We don't want promises. We want dignity and respect and security."

From a hospital clerk, a Black woman: "You see our signs? They say, 'Fire the \$6 Million Man.' We're talking about County Administrator Richard Dixon. He spent six million dollars to redecorate his offices. He has a gold-plated doorknob. The County's attitude to us is real arrogant. They don't seem to realize a person just can't even live anymore on what they pay."

From a Social Services worker, a Black man: "It's Depression that people are feeling—not what the administration is saying, a recession that is 'bottoming out.'"

"We're seeing people laid off from auto, from aircraft. These are people who have contributed to unemployment insurance, but are not used to asking for aid. When they find out how little is available to them, that's like another kick in the butt."

"There's a high level of frustration on both sides. The system pits people who are trying to help against those who need help. We need a reduced case load, but each worker just keeps getting more clients. We can't stand any longer to work under these conditions."

Teamster: can reform make a difference?

New York, N.Y.—As we go to press, ballots are being counted in the first direct rank-and-file vote for Teamsters Union International officers for the U.S. and Canada. I want to explain why, as a freight Teamster, I voted for the Ron Carey opposition slate.

All around us our jobs are being done for half pay by non-union carriers. Drivers and dock workers with years of seniority start all over again as casuals (shape-up) with no rights, no steady work, at 85% pay as their unionized terminals shut down or go non-union. Meanwhile our union officials collect multiple salaries out of the hard-earned dues of 1.6 million Teamsters, leaving the International money for only six organizers.

The 1980s saw this union lose many thousands of members as trucking was deregulated and union-busting became the law of the land. Teamsters leaders responded with sweetheart contracts and concessions. Contract after contract that a majority of members had voted down was rammed down our throats with the two-thirds majority rule. This led to the rank and file overturning that rule and, at the Teamsters convention this summer, winning other victories such as a \$200 per week strike benefit and getting rid of the leaders' fleet of private jets.

RANK-AND-FILE REBELLION

It was this rank-and-file opposition that made the corruption of former Teamsters president Jackie Presser so blatant that the federal government felt it had to get involved. Maybe they feared this growing rank-and-file rebellion would lead to national transportation strikes out of the control of the union.

The feds set up this direct election, something the rank and file, and in particular the opposition group,

Workshop Talks

(continued from page 1)

crew of Japanese workers.

One young fellow was wearing a jacket which had some Japanese lettering on it. I asked him what the words were, and he told me it said "the Kamikaze." He had worn the jacket as a suicide pilot in World War II, though he never did have to fly. The war ended and that saved him. I told him how stupid I thought that was, to fly a plane into a ship and blow himself up along with it. He asked me, if it was the Japanese navy off the coast of California bombing the cities of the West Coast, what would I do?

I began to think for myself for the first time. I asked him, did he come from a poor family or was his family well off? He said his dad was a worker and poor. For the first time I began to see the war as a capitalist war, and working people and the poor on both sides killing each other and doing the dying while the capitalists and their children were protected and got rich.

CAPITALIST RALLYING CALL

Fifty years later we see the capitalists on the losing side, Japan, winning out economically over the capitalists on the American winning side. It's not just that the American capitalists don't like this, but also that the rulers are looking for all kinds of ways to turn workers' attention away from blaming our own rulers and the capitalist system for the misery right now in our lives—no jobs, no health care, no toys for our kids for Christmas.

I see these big doings over remembering Pearl Harbor as a rallying call by the American capitalists to the American workers to save them from the capitalists of Japan—that is, work harder, don't complain, and when you do complain, make sure you blame the Japanese. And when this country decides to go to war, as it did against Iraq, and bomb cities and bury soldiers alive with bulldozers, shovelling them into the sand—don't even think that there might be something wrong or inhuman about that.

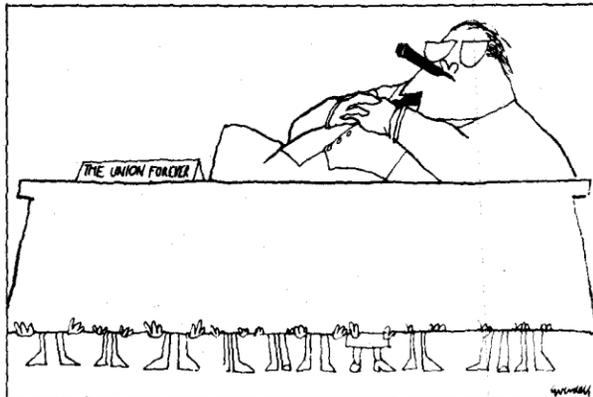
I am not saying that one capitalist is better than the other capitalist, because the capitalists in each country are the enemy of their own people. This whole system is inhuman. We're still living in what Marx called the "pre-history of humanity."

Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU), had long fought for. If it was just the federal government running an election, it would mean nothing, but it was the rank-and-file opposition, the rejected contracts, that pushed it to this.

What R.V. Durham, who is the candidate of the old guard, has tried to do is to throw enough mud that we'll say: they're all crooks so why vote, they're all the same—which is a lot of the response I have heard on the job. It is not a question of liking his opponent, Ron Carey. Carey has been practicing business unionism for 24 years as president of Local 804. I have found enough drivers who don't have a good word to say for him. I voted for the Carey slate, which has several genuine reformers from TDU on it.

NO ILLUSIONS

I know workers have experienced many reform slates which have won office in many unions over the years, only to turn out to be just like those they replaced. There are no illusions among most Teamsters that voting in Carey will really bring about change. I don't think that illusion is the danger. The same rank-and-file rebellion that elects his slate will push and kick them to



carry out their campaign pledges—and vote them out if they have to.

The point is not in electing Carey, but in trying to get a foothold to start taking back our union. I think of the coal miners and their experience with Tony Boyle. Wouldn't they tell us it's important to at least get a leadership that you can disagree with and your whole family doesn't get murdered in their beds?

The greater danger is in saying it's no use. Durham, just like the Republicans, wants ordinary people to believe there is nothing we can do to oppose them, that it's no use to fight or think our own thoughts. That's why I see a victory for Carey as a protest, a rebellion, and only a beginning—and maybe a turning point for the biggest union in the United States, IF the rank and file doesn't stop pushing, questioning and rebelling.

—John Marcotte

Refinery police state

Editor's note: The following article is a leaflet distributed by workers at Union Oil of California (Unocal) while picketing their plant in November.

Over the past year there have been some changes at Unocal's Los Angeles Refinery (LAR). Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm were considered to be valid reasons to allow the company to inspect our belongings when entering or leaving the refinery. Desert Storm ended last winter and still the inspections continue. So, the threat of terrorism is not the reason for the searches, it is to intimidate us and throw suspicion on us.

Last spring, the company hired Ronald H. Phelps, a retired LAPD (Los Angeles Police Department) officer as director of security. He has definitely made some changes. Now the guards sport jump suits, their pants tucked into their combat boots, carrying handcuffs and those big four-cell metal flashlights. Are these flashlights or weapons?

Phelps has created his own little SWAT team here at LAR. Now ask yourself, at whom or what is this paramilitary force aimed? It's not aimed at intruders on the refinery grounds. We rarely get any. This is an attempt to create a police state atmosphere inside LAR by Unocal management through Gestapo tactics.

To justify the highest security budget in Unocal history, they have to get something on someone. Last Friday (Nov. 1), he had drug sniffing dogs and special search teams sweep through the contractors' and employees' parking lots and the refinery lab. And, yes, they got results.

Three Unocal employees, OCAW [Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union] members, were taken by the shift foreman, off of their jobs, down to the parking lot, forced to agree to let these special teams go through their cars (upon threat of termination), and then (again, upon threat of termination) forced to give urine samples.

These workers had done nothing wrong, created no dangerous situation on the job. The special search teams had simply found something they felt was suspicious in the cars of these workers. In one case rolling papers for handrolled tobacco cigarettes. [Since this was written, management has continued to harass this man saying they will drug test him every time they see he has rolling papers.]

What will be next? Why don't they spend money on maintenance, where there is a real problem instead of on suspicion and harassment?

Rockwell layoffs, cuts

Los Angeles, Cal.—I work at Rockwell in Anaheim, where in the last two years they've probably laid off 6,500 workers. This never has been reported in the papers, except when 500 were laid off when the government cancelled one project. There are about 900 union workers left at Rockwell, down from over 3,000.

Recently the guards were threatened with wage cuts to force them to sign a contract that would allow 25% part-time workers. The guards have a no-strike clause, and they know that one of these days the company is going to lock them out and they won't have a job. We told the committeeman, they are screwing the guards. If we don't get together and start complaining and put up the picket signs, they are going to shaft us next.

Rockwell has a rule now that you have to work 40 hours before you get any overtime pay. If you work 16 hours one day, but miss a day, that overtime is considered straight time. In one department the company is allowed to replace an employee who quits with a part-time employee for up to 54 days. The part-time workers were supposed to be there only to do overtime work. Now they are replacing full timers with part timers and telling us if we don't like it to file a grievance.

Rockwell knows the union will not do anything. You can see it at McDonnell Douglas. Owen Bieber (president of the United Auto Workers) came out and jumped the chairman of the shop committee, slapped him on the wrist, and the contract was passed. The company got exactly what it wanted, and the International union helped. Rockwell knows the International can whip the workers into shape.

Look at the auto jobs we have lost, all the aerospace jobs we have lost. The union here worked with the company to lobby for a government project which is now being done at a non-union plant. These union guys don't give a damn. Their salaries aren't cut. They get golden parachutes! And here is the worker living in poverty. Work all your life on the job and retire into poverty. I don't know how people can live on social security.

—Rockwell worker

Retail nightmare

Chicago, Ill.—People are having bad times this Christmas season and are cutting back on their shopping. That is really bad for those of us who work in retail jobs. When I first started in retail over ten years ago, one could live on the pay, if you got the extra hours during the holiday season. This year I am working on the night shift at Toys R Us, because it is the only shift where one may make more money. I am working over six days a week and making the most money I ever have.

One problem with working this shift is that it is so cold on the truck and so hot on the sales floor that it makes you sick. Another problem is that when all of your friends are out and about during the day, you are asleep, and when you start to wake up, they are asleep.

I am always sleepy, because eight hours of work is forced out of us in less than half the time. If I am not at work, then I am asleep. I feel like I am losing days and weeks of my life. A statement by Marx in Capital sums up my alienation. He said that even if your payment rises, as a worker your lot in life will always worsen.

On the night crew the so-called private deals the boss uses to try to divide us are told to all, so all things are done in the light of day. We are so united that if one person has a problem with the boss, then we all have the problem and are mad with the boss. That cannot answer the problem in a total way, but it is something good coming out of all this alienation.

—David L. Anderson

Low wage workers' forum

New York, N.Y.—A second conference entitled "We Came to Work. Not to Die," publicized as a forum on health and safety issues for "low wage workers and people of color," took place Nov. 23 at Martin Luther King High School. A majority of the participants were Black women, and translations were made into Spanish, Chinese, Creole and American Sign Language.

The keynote speaker was Joan Sharp of North Carolina, who is active with former Imperial Foods workers in Hamlet, where 25 people were killed in a fire in September. Workers at Imperial Foods had made complaints about conditions, "but the complaints didn't get past the door." U.S.D.A. inspectors were there frequently, but when workers tried to tell them about the many safety violations, they said they were there to inspect the meat, not the plant. Sharp called for help from Northern workers for growing unionization struggles in the South.

A group called Fuerza Unida from San Antonio, Texas, asked people to boycott Levi's and Docker's because Levi Strauss has closed one plant and threatens to close more. Fuerza Unida says the Free Trade Agreement will mean unemployment, lower wages and deteriorating working conditions. They are calling on workers in the U.S., Mexico and Canada to unite against it.

Although the conference was undoubtedly helpful to some of the participants, the speakers offered no solutions besides grieve-and-struggle unionism. A high point was the speak-out in which women and men talked about conditions on their jobs and what they are doing to change them. It would have been interesting to hear more of the thoughts of the rank-and-file workers in attendance about how to fight in a period of deteriorating economic conditions and stultified and dying unions.

—N.Y. N&L participants

Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution

a 35-year collection of essays

by Raya Dunayevskaya

"The deep internationalism of the Japanese youth can be seen in the peace rally held in Hiroshima on Dec. 8 [1965] It seemed inconceivable that the very city that American imperialism atom-bombed would hold a rally in commemoration of all who died the night when Japanese imperialism attacked Pearl Harbor. Yet that is exactly what took place...."

—excerpts from report on 1965-66 trip to Japan

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From the writings of Raya Dunayevskaya Marxist-Humanist Archives

by Raya Dunayevskaya
Founder of Marxist-Humanism

Editor's note: In face of today's economic crises we are publishing one of Raya Dunayevskaya's last writings on the world economy, "Capitalist production/alienated labor: this nuclear world and its political crises." This analysis formed the second part of the 1986 Draft for Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, published in News & Letters, July 1986. It can also be found in the Supplement to the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection, microfilm #11026.

The basis of the economy of the most powerful imperialist land, the U.S., is that it is now a debtor nation. The global ramifications of that fact, as well as its implications at home, have not been seriously dealt with. Paul Volcker, head of the Federal Reserve Board, and considered by economists to be the "second most powerful man" in the land, did not bother to attend the Economic Summit. He refused to be deluded by all the hoopla about the great state of the world economy, especially that of the U.S. Volcker claimed the U.S. "put all the necessary solutions off on other countries...The action taken so far is not enough to put the deficit on a declining trend." The strength of the economy, Volcker concluded, "is not an unalloyed joy."

The Grand Illusion, however, that all capitalist ideologues, including Volcker, have created about this nuclear world with its robotized production was achieved by them through forgetting that Alienated Labor is the irreplaceable foundation, essence and universal form—the creator of all values and surplus-values. That is exactly what produces both capitalist profits and what Marx called the "general absolute law of capitalist accumulation"—its unemployed army.

What the industrial giants cannot hear is the death-knell that labor, employed and unemployed, as well as the homeless, are ringing out. The industrialists are under the illusion—never more so than in this robotized stage of production—that the unemployed army can be made to rampage against the employed.

Their ideologues are busy "proving" that Marx was wrong. They have never understood that other fundamental Marx prediction, that the failure to re-produce labor means the death of their whole system. Political crises reflect the general absolute law of capitalist production differently in different historic periods. Thus, the Great Depression produced a John Maynard Keynes with his General Theory of Employment and Money which proved to the capitalists that they cannot get out of economic crisis unless they couple production with employment. All kinds of "New Deals" were thereby contrived to save capitalism from revolution.

TODAY, MODERN PROFIT-HUNGRY capitalists, both state and private, think they can do the exact opposite—that is, "uncouple" employment from production. They think they can still go merrily on with their computerized stock market, false super-profiteering through mergers, playing the margins, and alternating ownerships from corporations to "private entrepreneurs." They now talk of factory "incubators," where former large plants are leased out to small producers who employ far fewer workers at far lower wages. They act as if higher labor productivity can come from some-

where other than sweated, living labor; as if it can come out of computers.

The favorite word of today's economists is "uncoupling." Peter F. Drucker has written for Foreign Affairs (Spring, 1986) on "The Changed World Economy."¹ There, he arrogantly, and yet in an off-hand manner (as if the changes he is talking about are the true status of the world economy), insists that it is necessary to recognize the three truths of the uncoupling that he elaborates:

- 1) "uncoupling" employment from production.
- 2) "uncoupling" capital from capital investment, reducing capital to money by calling it "capital movement": "Capital movements rather than trade (in both goods and services) have become the driving force of the world economy. The two have not quite come uncoupled, but the link has become loose and, worse, unpredictable."
- 3) "uncoupling" industrial production from the whole economy, by which he tries to explain that he means uncoupling it from the "weak" sectors like the farm economy and raw materials. It is as if digging out the raw materials is done without labor. Or, for that matter, as if our so-called post-industrial world is so "advanced" with its computer, its plastics, its synthetics, its "high technology," that labor which is not on a production line is not labor.

What they choose to disregard is that even those robotized, unimated production processes are built on sweated labor. A recent NBC television special on that most high-tech land, Japan, which has completely shaken up the global market, revealed how fully its production is rooted in the most wretched, low-paying, non-union, piecework labor, done by subcontractors for its high-tech corporations.²

Indeed, all the ideologues are rightly screaming against the astronomical indebtedness of the capitalist economy since Ronald Reagan has been in power. There is no way that even Reagan can deny that we have become a debtor nation. What the ideologues (who supposedly differ from the supply-siders and monetarists) have to recognize is this: once they have "uncoupled" industrial production from their whole economy, and capital from investment in production, reducing capital investment to money alone, they are left with what they supposedly rejected—monetarism.

THESE ARE NOT mere stock market fantasies; the monstrous reality they have created is a land in which, at one pole we see a thousand new millionaires, while at the other we see the pauperization of millions of the unemployed, of the homeless, of the masses of Blacks and women living so far below the poverty line that Hunger stalks the richest land in the world.

Once capital is not tied to investments in production, once even trade has been "uncoupled" from

1. See also the Special Report on "The Hollow Corporation" in Business Week, March 3, 1986.

2. Back in the early 1940s when Plan, with a capital "P," was the rage among the Left, the first study of the Five-Year Plans of Russia, by those working out a State-Capitalist Theory, debunked the Plan as any kind of socialism, showing that "feudal" Japan, in the very same 1932-37 period, was out-producing "socialist" Russia. (See Raya Dunayevskaya's original 1942 study of the Russian economy, included in Marxism and Freedom, p. 233, and p. 358, footnote 220.)

Capitalist production/ alienated labor

trade of products and reduced to mere exchange of services, there is nothing left but an exchange of monies and investment for more monies. The reason that the U.S., though itself a debtor nation, is nevertheless still at the top of the heap is because the international capitalists feel safe in only one country—the counter-revolutionary Reagan's U.S.A. It is not only "flight capital" leaving "unstable" lands that gets to the U.S.; Japan and West Germany have "invested" heavily here as well.

Let's take another look, then, at the "safe" U.S. and all of Reagan's victories in his ongoing counter-revolution at home against unions, against Blacks, against women, against the youth.

● It is true that the union bureaucracy has given too many concessions. But one look at Hormel's ongoing strike shows that militants know how to fight their own leaders, as well as the capitalists.

● It is true there is no ongoing General Strike. But if we count up all the "little" strikes from Minnesota to Chicago, from New York's sweatshops, to California farmworkers, and every place in between, we will see that U.S. labor is in daily, unrecorded revolt.

● It is true that the Women's Liberation Movement has seen a retrogression of all its hard-won gains of the 1960s and 1970s. But anyone who thinks that the sudden mass demonstration of 100,000 in Washington, D.C. on March 9 was "just" against Reagan's stand on abortion has not heard the voices of the Black and white women who have made their rejection of Reaganism known on every front from housing to child care and from affirmative action to freedom of choice—and that is not the question of abortion alone, but the passion for human relations.

● It is true that the youth today are not the youth of the '60s. But, as we have seen, the internationalism that was present in the anti-Vietnam War movement has reached a new dimension. Nor can one re-write the history which has proved that the two-way road of the Black dimension between Africa and America has never separated its struggles from its ideas of freedom, its search for a philosophy of revolution.

THE BLACK MASSES see right through Reagan-Weinberger's "conceptual arsenal," as the ceaseless nuclear arming and genocidal imperialism that it is. The utter barbarism of the Holocaust is what shows us where this post-World War II world of capitalism-imperialism is heading.

The significance of the new, the concrete, is not only the general fact that these struggles and crises point to the need to uproot the system. The significance is that this new form of production, which Drucker and others tout, is hiding the essence, by creating the illusion that this Particular, this specific appearance, is the new Universal. It is necessary to work out the new and concrete forms as they appear. That does not mean merely saying that it is only form rather than essence. Rather, it is to see that only revolution can abolish these forms; that only revolution can abolish the illusion some Marxists have that these forms are the new Universal. This kind of transformation can be achieved only by the dialectic of Absolute Method.

As Hegel articulated it:

"To hold fast the positive in its negative, and the content of the presupposition in the result, is the most important part of rational cognition; also only the simplest reflection is needed to furnish conviction of the absolute truth and necessity of this requirement, while with regard to the examples of proofs, the whole of the Logic consists of these." (Science of Logic, Vol. II, p. 476)

Karl Marx projected his concept of the positive that would follow only after the old capitalist society was thoroughly uprooted:

"In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of individuals under the division of labor, and therewith also the antithesis between mental and physical labor, has

(continued on page 10)

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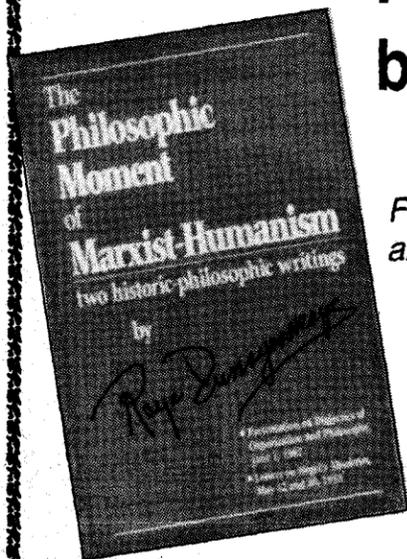
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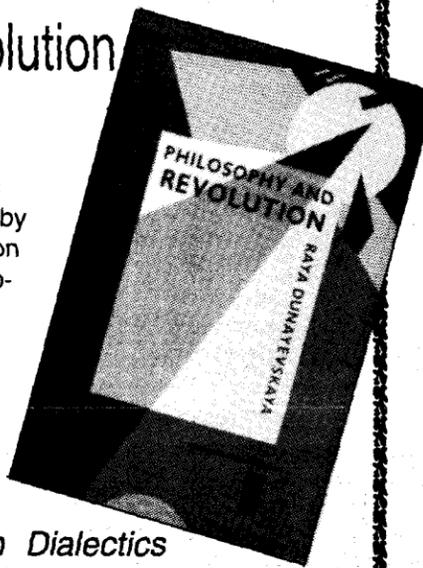
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Editorial

Bush supports China's despotic rule

If George Bush expected to be rewarded for his steadfast support of the Deng Xiaoping regime with China accepting its proper place in his "New World Order," then Secretary of State Baker's November trip to Beijing was an eye-opener. Within weeks of the bloody massacres of June 4, 1989, at Tiananmen Square and Chengdu, the secret Scowcroft mission had delivered the first of many assurances of continued U.S. backing to the executioners in Beijing.

Since then, neither a new round of public show trials early this year nor exposes of imports made in Chinese labor camps, kept Bush from using his veto power to retain most-favored-nation status for China. No wonder that Baker's requests on human rights and political prisoners were ignored, not treated seriously. Baker in turn ignored reports of a hunger strike by political prisoners and police detention of two dissidents who were to meet with U.S. officials.

Baker's key goal was reining in China as a major supplier of arms, missiles and nuclear technology. The U.S., as the great arms supplier worldwide since World War II, expected to exercise control over the flow of arms, especially while its nuclear antagonist in Moscow has been distracted. While China finally agreed to trim back a missile deal to Pakistan, it remains an aggressive source of high-tech weaponry to Asia and the Third World.

THE ARMY'S POLITICAL ASCENDANCY

This tough defense of arms sales reflects not only pressure for export earnings, of any kind, but also the enhanced position of the army within China. Mao Zedong had taken the unprecedented step of putting the army theoretically on the same level as his Communist Party. Deng Xiaoping, while holding no official position other than a senior military role, gave the army political ascendancy by ordering it to suppress the mass opposition in 1989.

Since the June 4 massacre the corrupt Party and

state bureaucracy has had no ideological legitimacy, despite renewed attempts to cloak itself in Marxist phraseology, and the undisguised final authority is military power. The army is also at the front line of confrontation with movements for national self-determination within China, beginning with Tibet, where demonstrations were bloodily suppressed in 1988, even as movements for autonomy and independence within the old Russian-ruled empire have echoed in China.

Still, today's China may be seen as a model by some Third World leaders, as a player on the world's stage with its nuclear arsenal and a rapidly developing export economy. But for the Chinese people, this decade of restructured economy has meant not prosperity, but impoverishment—paralleling the restructured U.S. economy under Reagan-Bush.

Conditions of life and labor have become more precarious for those in both state enterprises and in the "free market" alike. As many as 100 million displaced peasants and jobless workers have created a vast army of unemployed. Workers with jobs have had to meet inflation of up to 30%, fueled by food price increases, by working a second job or sideline. The planned privatizing of housing to substitute for the current cheap, but meager company-town housing, may exacerbate the gap between wages and the cost of living.

FORCED LABOR

Above all is the critical role in China's economy played by coerced labor. The most recent exports to the U.S., exposed as produced by prisoners in a labor camp, were not license plates, but products as sophisticated as diesel engines.

How free is a free market that now includes the widespread enslavement of women, facing torture and even murder, to be sold as wives and therefore as lifetime forced laborers? Even the astounding figure of 19,000 women sold in 1990 must be wildly understated, given the involvement of some cadres in

the traffic of women.

What seems of no political interest is that Chinese rulers are preparing to bid for the Olympic Games for the year 2000. This is one sign that the regime expects to survive into the 21st century and boost its prestige with the self-glorification of the Olympic spectacle. This is a challenge to any notion that the ruling clique will simply collapse with old age.

We have seen with disgust the affinity that Bush has for Deng and his fellow rulers. Let us display equal international solidarity with the millions of Chinese whose demands for freedom and for control of their own labor have not been silenced.

Dismantling the USSR

As we go to press comes the news that immediately on the heels of the Ukrainian people's overwhelming vote for independence, Russian president Boris Yeltsin, new Ukrainian president Leonid Kravchuk, and leader of the Byelorussian Parliament Stanislav Shushkevich have declared the Soviet Union dead and proclaimed a new commonwealth the other republics are told they are welcome to join. While Minsk has been chosen as the coordinating center of the new commonwealth, it is Moscow that is sure to remain the focus.

What is far from clear is how the Muslim Republics and other non-Slavic lands will respond to the invitation of the three Slavic republics. It is also yet to be seen what will be the activity of the many ethnic nationalities within the Slavic republics, and what will be the role of the Soviet Army in the days ahead.

What is clear is not only the turbulent nature of what lies ahead, when all eyes within its borders and internationally will be on a former USSR that is now up for grabs, but how far the peoples of that former empire have yet to travel to get to freedom. The speed with which the rabid Communist Leonid Kravchuk transformed himself into a supposed nationalist and democrat is only the latest proof that, despite all the dramatic ideological changes in what used to be a USSR, the old apparatus remains in place in all the republics with only a change of clothes, as every institution of state power and repression remains untouched.

As others see us: Hegel Studien

"Raya Dunayevskaya: A Humanist Tradition of Marxism in America"

Editor's note: The following is a translation from German of an article which has just appeared in Volume 25 (1991) of Hegel-Studien, the world's foremost journal in the field of Hegel studies.

On the occasion of the fourth edition of *Marxism and Freedom* (1958) and the second edition of *Philosophy and Revolution* (1973), the Raya Dunayevskaya Memorial Fund of Chicago has edited for publication two additional essays of the author, where she takes up the dialectic (1987) and Hegel's concept of Absolutes (1953), under the title *The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism* (Chicago, 1989).

Raya Dunayevskaya, who was Leon Trotsky's Russian secretary in 1937-38 during his Mexican exile, is known in the United States as the founder of a "humanist" Marxism, and had already in the 1950s developed a theoretical argument against the orthodox, bureaucratic Marxism of Stalinism.

After the delayed publication of Marx's early writings, of which appeared *A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* (1927), the *Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts* and *The German Ideology* (1932) and lastly the *Grundrisse* (1939), there began from within the different Marxist positions a "new discovery" of Hegel's philosophy, especially the *Phenomenology of Mind*, which contained for the young Marx "the birthplace and secret of the Hegelian philosophy." In opposition to the Stalinist version of the Soviet encyclopedia, which reduced Hegel's thought to a mere "aristocratic reaction against the bourgeois French Revolution and French materialism," a philosophical attempt was developed to interpret the work of Karl Marx in a new way, in close relation to the relevant aspects of Hegelian philosophy—around the dialectical method, or the problem of the essence of labor, or alienation, etc. To this tradition belong books such as Georg Lukacs' *The Young Hegel* (1948) and Ernst Bloch's *Subjekt-Objekt* (1952), which in the immediate postwar period had given fresh impetus to the discussion of Hegel within European Marxism.

In 1958 Dunayevskaya's *Marxism and Freedom* was published in New York. This book, with a Preface by Herbert Marcuse, who in 1941 had also published a work on Hegel entitled *Reason and Revolution*, has the intention of setting out the background and presuppositions of an interpretation of Marxism as a "humanistic" concept. It is in the first part of the book, "From Theory to Practice," where Dunayevskaya endeavors to clarify the concept of freedom in the Hegelian philosophy, which is to be understood above all as a dialectic and a philosophy of the Absolutes, with a view towards the revolution, or rather the revolutions (industrial, social-political, and intellectual). Of special importance in this connection is paragraph 482 of

the *Encyclopedia* in which Hegel, as Marx did later, interpreted freedom as the essence of humanity.

Likewise the entire first part of *Philosophy and Revolution* is dedicated to the philosophy of Hegel. Here it revolves around the question of the actuality ("Why Hegel, Why Now?" asks the title) of this philosophy. If one wants to solve the existential and social problems, the problems that moved the "new generation of revolutionaries" in the United States (she means here the generation of the 1960's), then one should overcome the division formulated by Communist orthodoxy between Marx's "scientific materialism" and Hegel's "mystical Absolutes" so that today "Hegel's Absolute Method becomes irresistible."

The young Marx himself had nevertheless already pointed out that "the dialectic of negativity is the moving and creating principle." Moving from this Raya Dunayevskaya took on the task of developing the actuality and the validity of the Hegelian philosophy.

First, the *Phenomenology of Mind* or the "experiences of consciousness" is interpreted in its present-day significance. Although the young Marx had repeatedly characterized the *Phenomenology* correctly as an unclear and mystifying critique (insofar as consciousness is handled like a disembodied spirit or finds only an abstract, logical-speculative expression in the movement of history), it is, according to R. Dunayevskaya, undeniable today that "its content" is deeply rooted in history. Therefore also for her, the *Phenomenology* develops a conception of the dialectic which Hegel created "from a most painstaking and rigorous examination of the movement of no less than 2,500 years of history."

Secondly, the actuality of the *Science of Logic* as "Attitudes Toward Objectivity" is explained as one where [Hegel's] concept of reality should be understood as principally a result of a discussion of the philosophy of reflection, above all with Jacobi. The *Logic* is likewise, despite its abstract philosophical categories, a book in which the "principle of freedom" plays a central role. Thus, the *Doctrine of the Notion in the Science of Logic* develops the categories of freedom, of subjectivity, of Reason, and of Logic as a movement "by which man makes himself free."

Lastly, the *Philosophy of Mind* of the *Encyclopedia* becomes actual, insofar as it can be read as "a movement from practice." The following chapters of this book show how the author is interested above all in maintaining the inseparability of Marx's historical materialism and the Hegelian dialectic. To this end she attempts to achieve from dialectical thought a "philosophy of freedom" which represents a humanistic Marxism opposed to a bureaucratic orthodoxy of action and thought.

—Gonzalo Portales, Valparaiso, Chile

Protest, poverty in Slovakia



Homeless in railroad station

Prague, Czechoslovakia—Workers' anger is growing. Last week there were meetings in five Slovak cities organized by the unions. There is a far higher unemployment rate in Slovakia—now roughly 10%, but expected to rise to about 13% at the end of the year—than in the Czech parts, where it is about 6%. Women are more affected than men. The relation between men and women in the Czech republic is 41% as against 59%, in Slovakia it is 48% against 52%.

The workers also expressed their dissatisfaction with unfulfilled government promises. A "tripartite council" consisting of representatives of government, employers and workers had been set up last year both on the level of the federation and in both of the republics. However, it is especially on the federal level, that is the highest level, that much of what the government promises is not being executed.

In one city 5,000 unionists took part in the meeting; in another 7,000. They concluded that if the government will not propose concrete guarantees for fulfilling what had been promised, the unions would "use every instrument of union struggle."

The president of the Confederation of Czechoslovak Trade Unions said, "I hope the government will understand these meetings not as a simple momentary finger, but as a reflection of the mood of the factory people." As one participant put it: "It is the uncertainty of existence, falling living standards, low wages and rising costs of living—that are the reasons for our coming here."

Another phenomenon not known before in its present dimensions is the growing number of homeless. A paper published a vivid description of what a railway station in the big, Northern Bohemian city of Usti (population about 100,000) is like around midnight: "At eleven in the evening there are four of them. There are fifteen at midnight, and at one o'clock the waiting room is bursting at the seams. A sports bag with a bottle opener, a few handkerchiefs and similar items—that's all their possessions with which they fill waiting rooms, underground collectors, the basements of big tower-blocks, and in summer, derelict houses. The head of the city welfare department estimates their number at 2,000."

THE HUMAN FACE OF OUR LIFE AND TIMES

Martin Almora's article in the Nov. N&L, "U.S. worker to Russians: This is not paradise either," spoke directly to me. Almora writes so clearly that neither "Communism" nor capitalism means anything human for workers. My brother is a machinist, which used to mean that he could be assured of getting a job at a good wage. He absorbed a lot of the "anti-Communism" of the American rulers, as if U.S. capitalism was fundamentally different. But with this recession, he has been laid off from six jobs in seven years. He has been lied to by prospective employers, who promise him a permanent position, then very quickly break their promise. Then he got a job working in a plastics factory, where plastic dust gets all over you. I got a rash just from using the same towel that he had handled!

Working-class mother
California

* * *

Bush is trying to keep the mess in the banking industry out of the headlines until after the 1992 elections. One out of seven banks lost money last year; 1,000 banks failed during the last two years. In theory, the FDIC is there to refund the losses of depositors in failed banks, but the past decade's failures have drained the insurance fund. Congress is about to give it \$70 billion in a taxpayer-financed "loan."

The purpose of deposit insurance is not to protect "small savers." Instead, deposit insurance serves to protect capitalism from a collapse triggered by a run on the banks. The recent scandals are severely testing the system's ability to use this psychological prop as a way of staying afloat.

A. Anielewicz
New York

* * *

I work at a homeless drop-in center. It's the only place people have to go during the day and it helps bring up their self-esteem. The conservative Macomb, Mich. Daily had created a lot of hostility to us (they printed a photo of clients they had posed at a pool table) and failed to print my comments which compared Michigan Governor Engler throwing 90,000 people off General Assistance to Hitler's genocide. So we held a Town Meeting to try to turn things around. However, the local cable channel left out a lot of what we said. But there are tents in "affluent" Mt. Clemens—we call it the "condo on the river."

Subscriber
Michigan

* * *

I have just returned from Jamaica, where strikes such as Nestles have been ended by the Courts. While the political leaders trade insults, their supporters are killing each other off in gun battles.

The "economy mash up" is the usual refrain. Jamaicans young and old start the day not knowing if they will be able to afford to buy their midday meal. Those in good jobs, such as those working in the banks, fill up on subsidized meals and don't eat in the evening. The poorest people can hardly afford to buy chicken claw or backbone. It is expected that riots and violence will be Santa Claus's gifts to Jamaica.

Pat Duffy
England

* * *

It would take pages and pages to describe the amount of time people are forced to waste trying to get Public Aid only to be rejected in the end. It just seems like a way for government to dehumanize you. And they are so rude. So is the unemployment office. They tried to make me feel bad by saying I was taking taxpayers' money. I told them I was just reappropriating what was stolen from me when I was working and that I should be given back all the money that went to the government to kill hundreds of thousands of people in the Persian Gulf War! Luckily I had some friends who were able to lend me enough to keep my apartment and pay for transportation until I got another job.

Finally working again
Chicago

* * *

A Black woman I met on the "L" insisted on giving me \$5 when she heard I had no more cash. She was poor, with four children, a minimum wage job and a husband who just got out of 17

months in prison but she said people had helped her when she was down and she wanted to help me. What a contrast to the disgusting statement I heard when I asked someone in the Illinois Building if there are any places to sit down there without buying anything, and was told No, because "they don't want 'scuzzes' to hang around—you know, the homeless."

Not yet homeless
Chicago

* * *

As one who was never attracted to the study of economics, which gives more life to manipulative abstract constructs vs. the creativity of people, I'm beginning to have an understanding of what "economics" means in Marxist-Humanism, an appreciation of the density and complexity of your concept of the inseparability of philosophy and economics. You are discussing how Raya Dunayevskaya's original theory of state-capitalism made production relations rather than property forms the conceptual determinant, how what "economics" involves is human relationships.

Radical feminist
California

THE CRISIS IN EDUCATION



Recently I have had discussions with friends and co-workers about the current educational mess we have here in the U.S. Many feel that our youth are deliberately under-educated in the inner cities and certain other areas where there are larger numbers of minority working class people. This is so the ruling class ensures itself that it will always have the power to rule without worrying about the underclass behavior because it is too uneducated and uninformed to be able to seize power.

I happen to believe this because I went through the schools of Chicago and found that except for a few outstanding teachers, I, myself and other workers have given me my education.

Martin Almora
Chicago, Illinois

* * *

At New York University, they fixed the Martin Luther King scholarships at \$12,000, no matter how much tuition rises. And they require us to do community service hours every week. This means working for the university free of charge, in jobs people usually get paid for. I refused, and got a job off campus. But then they didn't have a record of my hours when I was reviewed, so I was worried I wouldn't get my scholarship again this year even though I have a 4.0 grade point average.

Student
New York

* * *

You never get the real history of labor in school. It is very exciting to learn, in **Marxism and Freedom**, that textile workers in England acted to keep the British government from entering the Civil War in the U.S. on the side of the South to protect their textile industry that depended on the cotton from the South USA. The British workers really helped the American workers, and that was an important expression of international labor solidarity.

Environmentalist
Michigan

ILLUSIONS OF DEMOCRACY

It is frustrating to be an outsider in one's own culture, recognizing how sick this society is and looking for the reasons for it. In some countries the outsider who expresses his opinions about the injustice of some having excessive privileges while others starve is tortured to death. In this country, as long as the workers are no threat to the privileged class a limited amount of free speech and a free press is tolerated.

We live by many unhealthy myths. One is that we can convince people by words alone. Another is that within this system we can get good representatives elected to political office. What this so-called democracy demands is that if you want to play in the ruling class political ball park you tie one hand behind as

Readers' Views

you bat, are allowed one strike while they get three and use both hands. And, of course, the umpire is a hired flunky who will favor the ruling class.

Marv Thomas
Florida

* * *

Why should we have a constitution in which the President chooses the Supreme Court judges who remain in office for a lifetime? Our system resembles a monarchy, not a democracy!

Subscriber
Los Angeles

PROTESTS IN BRITAIN

Oliver North came to Oxford, England on 25 November. The renowned arms trafficker, document shredder and all-round counter-revolutionary had been invited by the publishing house, Blackwell's, and the local newspaper, the Oxford Times, to a special dinner at the Randolph Hotel to promote his book, *Under Fire*. Outside in the rain, some 250 people gathered to protest against North's visit. A typical cross-section of the local Left was present, with speakers from the Labour Party, the Green Party, the Socialist Workers' Party and the Trades Council. The rally also heard speeches from a Liberal Democrat councillor, whose son had been taken hostage (and escaped) in Lebanon, who denounced North's arms deal with the Iranian rulers, and a member of the Blackwell family, who criticised the firm for "giving hospitality to a man who is an international law-breaker."

Most of all, the demonstration expressed anger against North as the enemy of the Nicaraguan revolution, the man who provided the Contras with guns and bombs for their campaign of terror and destruction. Oxford has civic links with the city of Leon, Nicaragua, and individuals and organisations have been raising funds for a water purification project there.

Richard Bunting
England



NEW CHALLENGES FOR FEMINISM

My definition of feminism is being against anything that oppresses anyone. Unless everyone has freedom, women can't be free. Feminism is different from "women's rights." The idea of equality can be corporate—to have equality with Western white men to oppress Third World women and men for cheap labor. Either you are for oppression or you're against it.

Woman student
Chicago

* * *

When I was 12 years old, I was molested by a friend of the family. He warned me not to tell anyone, but I told my mom. She confronted him, and he said it was "just being friendly!" When my dad found out, he said I had an overactive imagination. It was never mentioned after that day by my parents and they stayed friends with him. Four years later, I was raped in a bathroom at a party. When I told my friend why I was crying, I was told not to make a big deal about it. When I was in a long mentally and physically abusive relationship, I couldn't tell anyone what he did to me. They would have said it was my fault for putting up with it.

I believe every word Anita Hill said about Judge Thomas. And I was not at all surprised when she was attacked by the senators and blamed for not speaking out sooner. It makes me hate this sexist society so much! I can hardly wait for this blood-and-tears-soaked wretched system to come crashing down!

Student
Illinois

* * *

John Alan's article on Clarence Thomas raised a lot of questions for me

about affirmative action. I'm at school on an affirmative action scholarship, and all the scholarships I've ever been awarded are minority scholarships. I'm for affirmative action, but when I hear people talking about quotas, it's as if affirmative action is a defining factor in our selfhood, as if it makes us lesser. It's as if I can't compete for anything else, which I can.

Affirmative Action student
New York City

* * *

Raya Dunayevskaya talks in *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* about revolution-in-permanence. I think it's a wonderful point, to actually reconstruct one's society, to get at the root of the problem. Yet the routes we talk about in the women's movement are usually about taking alternatives within society. It's like playing with the putty and never throwing it away.

I am also wondering whether when you work out theory, is there is a way to leave it open? Can theory be open to the new and further developed when spontaneous movements occur?

Philosophy student
New York City



REMEMBER IRAQ'S CHILDREN

A new Harvard study on the effects of the war revealed that 55,000 Iraqi children have already died as a result of "delayed effects of U.S. bombing." This same Harvard study also estimates that at least 170,000 more children under five will die from epidemics and malnutrition directly linked to the bombing campaign. The Bush Administration will not release its own secret estimates of the death toll. *Out Now's* High Visibility Media Campaign is launching a campaign to place our "Nothing to Celebrate" ad in *The New York Times* and other leading newspapers to reach more than 10 million readers. Please ask your readers to help us print this ad.

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PRISONERS SPEAK OUT

My study of revolutionary movements tells me that the basic flaw has been lack of a plan that would embrace all of the people. Any real revolutionary struggle must also be international to prevent imperialist powers from helping each other. When I speak of a plan, I am referring to a philosophy that the people on a worldwide basis will accept as being the "way of life" after the old, oppressive regimes have been defeated.

Prisoner
Illinois

* * *

I like the articles analyzing the role of Marxism in a modern, changing world. It puts current problems in an historical context.

Prisoner
Washington State

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THE TODAYNESS OF STATE-CAPITALIST THEORY

I had never heard the analysis of Russia being a state-capitalist society. With that idea as part of your thinking, the collapse of the Russian economy is seen as a failure of capitalism and a confirmation of Marxism, rather than the end of Marxism or socialism. You see everything in an entirely different light.

**Student
Grand Rapids, Michigan**
* * *

The events of the past several months have caused me to re-think many things. I've become especially critical of the concept of a "vanguard party to lead" and am now convinced of the need for decentralized organizations and community-based activism. Though some of your criticisms of established Leftist practice have helped me re-think a number of things, I'm not convinced an Hegelian or Humanist approach provides the answer. Still, your tendency should experience a lot of growth in this period, since so many of your criticisms have been borne out.

**D.T.
Madison, Wisconsin**
* * *

One of the central features of the post-World War II world was the rivalry between the U.S.-USSR. Now that the USSR is finished, doesn't it mean this is a new era qualitatively different from the one we have lived in for the past four decades? It seems to me we are venturing into the unknown.

**Women's Liberationist
Oakland**
* * *

I have never seen a period when the state in this country has intervened so dramatically and without end to eliminate workers' rights, women's rights, Black rights—all to make it possible for capital to exploit, exploit, exploit. How could anyone think that state-capitalism has disappeared?

**Federal employee
Illinois**
* * *

What amazes me is how much the world changes and yet the Left just sits back and says "I told you so." It espe-

cially bothers me that the Trotskyists are saying Trotsky's analyses have been confirmed by the events in Russia. Just the other day I was thumbing through a book by one of their main theoreticians, George Novack, in which he says Russia must be "critically defended" because the so-called "degenerated workers' states" represent "transitional societies to socialism." That's what you call foresight?

**Old Radical
New York**
* * *

It pains me to see the statues of Lenin being torn down throughout Russia, not because I favored the cult of Lenin, but because it is creating a false identity between Lenin and Stalin in the minds of many people. I fear that what underlies the latest efforts to equate Lenin to Stalin is an effort to erase the memory of proletarian revolution from the mind of humanity. Can you address this problem in your newspaper?

**Subscriber
California**



**RE-DISCOVERING
MARXIST—
HUMANISM**

I have been out of touch with Marxist-Humanism for a while, but am very glad to be back in these friendly waters. These are hard times in the world, and sometimes the problems are so great, and Raya Dunayevskaya's body of ideas is so immense, that it can all feel overwhelming. But my mind kept returning to the concept of "Absolute Negativity," the constant self-development that is the core of Marxist-Humanism. That is what brought me back: to confront "negation of the negation"—and not as some high-falutin' abstraction, but as the only way to break through the dis-

array that is the legacy of all of post-Marx Marxism.

**Young Black revolutionary
Los Angeles**
* * *

I have not yet read the three books of Raya Dunayevskaya that constitute her "trilogy of revolution" in their entirety, but I am struck with her explication of Marx's ultimate passion for human freedom as opposed to the common assumption of his fixation on the transformation of ownership of the means of production. I feel that Marx's focus on human freedom, especially the rights of the worker to determine his own space and pace in which to enjoy freedom while planning and producing for the common good, should be worked into scholarly works.

**New reader
Notre Dame**
* * *

In studying Dunayevskaya's writings on how Marx worked to practice the inseparability of philosophy/organization, I am realizing that what was key for Marx was his vision of the totality of freedom. As he stated right in the *Communist Manifesto*: "The free development of all." This was a concretization of what he wrote in his 1844 *Humanist Essays*: "We should especially avoid establishing society as an abstraction opposed to the individual. The individual is the social entity."

Marx didn't limit the conception of either revolution or organization. The relationship of Individual to Universal, as well as immediate demands/ultimate goal, were central to his philosophy and his concept of organization. In the past Left movements, we never had such an understanding. In practice, the individual was not considered important, while the Universal was abstract, whatever the leadership said.

**Iranian revolutionary
California**
* * *

I come from an inner-city neighborhood of Chicago, and never knew who Marx was until last year. But I've had a lot of experiences in my life, growing up in a ghetto. Working as a janitor and feeling the exploitation of capitalism have made me feel that I have been

searching for Marxism, long before knowing who Karl Marx was. The more I read about Marxist-Humanism, the more I think if people have the idea of Marxism in their head they will not let capitalism dominate them. The problem we face today is that the rulers are trying to control our minds. But once you have the idea of freedom in your head, they can't co-opt you.

**Young student
Chicago**
* * *

Having read Raya Dunayevskaya's "Beginning of the End of Russian Totalitarianism" and your Editorial on the developments in Russia in the October issue of N&L I would like to know more about Marxist-Humanism. Can you send me back issues with articles on Russia and tell me where I can find Dunayevskaya's works?

**New reader
Nagpur, India**

DIMENSIONS OF N&L

As a labor resource institution we seek to develop workers' self-organizing skills. We find N&L very informative, especially about the struggle of people worldwide. That is important to us in the Philippines because our struggle for national democracy is part of the struggle of the whole working class against the present capitalist system. We would welcome your publishing more articles regarding the struggles of the people of Asia.

**St. Joseph Social Services
Manila, The Philippines**
* * *

I enjoyed listening to *News & Letters* on the tape I received, especially since I have not been able to read small print for some time. I also like the concept and contents of *Freedom Ideas International*. In Britain radical ideas are not available for the visually impaired. Please enter my subscription.

**Bob Dore
Wales**

Editor's note: Subs to N&L are available on audio tapes from Our Right to Know Braille Press, 640 Bayside, Detroit, MI 48217.

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Essay Article

On the 30th anniversary of his death

The Marxist Humanist legacy of Frantz Fanon

by Lou Turner

The unrecollected moments of the revolutionary democratic movement that re-drew the map of Africa and redefined the post-World War II global order are surely forgotten in the paroxysm of democracy propelling the present historic moment. Why now must Africa unlearn its revolutionary history in order to "learn" the democracy of a "new world order"? And with what primer is Africa made to "learn" democracy?

In its report on Africa under the new regime of the World Bank, *Africa Confidential* offered this synopsis: "The World Bank's contention in its Long Term Perspective Study published two years ago that '...underlying the litany of Africa's development problems is a crisis of governance,' is widely held to have helped, if not precipitated, the movements for political reform in Africa, as well as the continuing debate about political conditionality on aid" (AC, Oct. 11, 1991).

Arguably, the manner and means by which we distinguish what is living in the thought of Frantz Fanon, on the 30th anniversary of his death, is a task confounded by the seeming anomaly of the West making its authoritarian economism the *conditio sine qua non* of African democracy. However, if Frantz Fanon is not perceived as an ideological force in what Wole Soyinka calls the "propulsion of the present historic moment," it is less a question of rethinking Fanon's "relevance," than a fear of thinking the dialectics of revolution embedded in Africa's economic reality.

I

Among his biographers, Jean-Paul Sartre's most revolutionary writing is considered to be his preface to Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*. They attribute this to Sartre's intense meeting with Fanon in Rome, the summer of 1961, several months before Fanon's death on Dec. 6.

In 1961, revolution did not have to be made real. Its meaning did. In 1991, 30 years after the publication of Fanon's manifesto of Third World revolution, *The Wretched of the Earth* (WOTE), revolution does have to be made real. To be sure, Fanon's capacity to communicate the reality of the African revolution as an act of world history was a function of his grasp of its underlying dialectic which he called a "new humanism."

The African Revolution, in Fanon's view, "is a historical process: that is to say it cannot be understood, it cannot become intelligible nor clear to itself except in the exact measure that we can discern the movements which give it historical form and content."¹ This is the reason of revolution Fanon discovered in Marx's 18th Brumaire, which he made the frontis to the final chapter of his 1952 *Black Skins, White Masks*: "In order to find their own content, the revolutions of the nineteenth century have to let the dead bury the dead. Before, the expression exceeded the content; now the content exceeds the expression."

As "unheroic as bourgeois society is," wrote Marx in the 18th Brumaire, "it nevertheless took heroism, sacrifice, terror, civil war and battles of peoples to bring it into being."² The ideological trappings of "democracy" and liberal "universalism" are the self-deceptions necessary for the bourgeoisie to conceal "the bourgeois limitations of the content of their struggles" (p. 16).

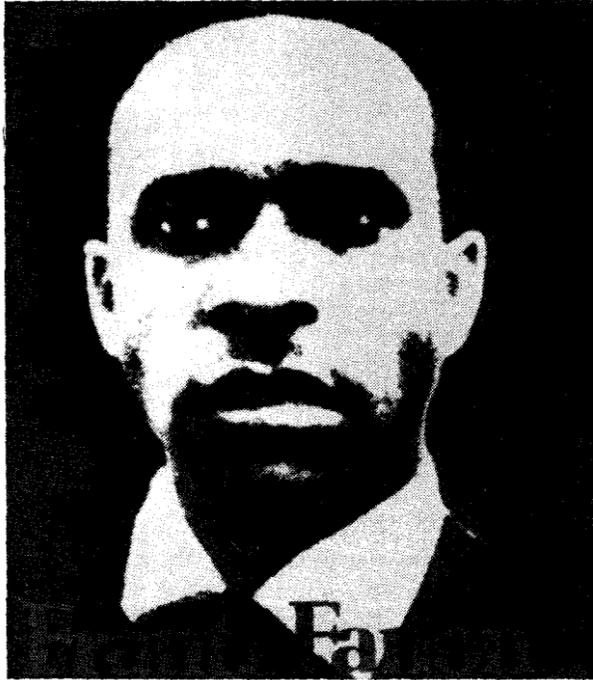
Fanon's reference to "the unpreparedness of the educated classes, the lack of practical links between them and the mass of the people, their laziness, and, let it be said, their cowardice at the decisive moment of the struggle" (WOTE, p. 121), recapitulated Marx's category. Moreover, Marx's notion that the revolution which brings the bourgeoisie into being suffers from the "bourgeois limitations of the content of the struggle" points to what Fanon called the "historical result of the incapacity of the national middle-class to rationalize popular action, that is to say their incapacity to see into the reasons for that action" (WOTE, p. 121).

Fanon's "rationalization" of mass action presupposed Marx's conceptualization of pre-capitalist formations. This is evident from Fanon's early reference in WOTE to the "originality of the colonial context" wherein "economic substructure is also a superstructure." In stating that this meant that the "Marxist analysis should always be slightly stretched every time we have to do with the colonial problem," Fanon acknowledged that "Everything up to and including the very nature of pre-capitalist society, so well explained by Marx, must be thought out again" (WOTE, pp. 32-33).

While Marx's 18th Brumaire served Fanon's conceptualization of the historical determination of modern colonial and neo-colonial class divisions and struggles, his explanation of pre-capitalist society met Fanon's need to conceptualize Africa's indigenous structures and cultural formations. The Manichean settler-native distinction, the town and country dichotomy, the petty-bourgeois and peasant division, as well as the European-African cultural conflict are all categories originating in Fanon's "thinking out again" of Marx's dialectic of modern and pre-capitalist societies.

II

The "order-mongering" powers of Western imperialism that Marx attacked also came under Fanon's scruti-



ny in the first chapter of WOTE. "The violence which has ruled over the ordering of the colonial world," Fanon wrote, "which has ceaselessly drummed the rhythm for the destruction of native social forms and broken up without reserve the systems of reference of the economy, the customs of dress and external life, that same violence will be claimed and taken over by the native at the moment when, deciding to embody history in his own person, he surges into the forbidden quarters" (WOTE, p. 33).

It so happens, however, that the "absolute praxis" that Renate Zahar contends is implicit in Fanon's theory of violence raises a question as to the meaning of his sudden reference to the "absolute." According to Fanon, "The natives' challenge to the colonial world is not a rational confrontation of points of view. It is not a treatise on the universal, but the untidy affirmation of an original idea propounded as an absolute" (WOTE, p. 33).

The sudden allusion to the absolute appears to be a reference to Hegel, and Zahar is certainly right to point to the relation of Fanon's theory of violence to Hegel's category of "Absolute Freedom and Terror" in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind*. However, the violence which "represents the absolute line of action" of the native also refers to Fanon's critique of Engels' theory of violence in history. Because of his one-sided reliance on military factors and the stage of productive forces as the determinant in historical conflicts in *Anti-Duhring*, Engels generalized into a theory of history the early failure of colonial revolts against the advanced industrial power of Western capitalism. Marx never held Engels' deterministic view that "violence depends upon the production of armaments, and this in its turn depends on production in general" (WOTE, p. 50).

Nor does Marx's conception of the "epochs of social revolution" imminent in pre-capitalist societies correspond to anything so unilinear as Samir Amin's Engelsian view, in his pamphlet *Eurocentrism*, that Marx "believed that capitalist expansion was irresistible and that it would rapidly suppress all vestiges of earlier modes of production, as well as the social, cultural, and political forms associated with them; in a word, that this expansion would homogenize global society on the basis of a generalized social polarization (bourgeois-proletariat), similar from one country to the next."³

As against Amin's unilinearism, the late Marxist-Humanist philosopher Raya Dunayevskaya found in her study of Marx's writings on pre-capitalist societies, especially his *Ethnological Notebooks*, a concept of multilinear pathways in humanity's development out of the primitive commune. Marx's *Ethnological Notebooks* occupy a central place in Dunayevskaya's critique of the "post-Marx Marxism" of Frederick Engels. In contrast to Engels, Marx concentrated on the dualism inherent in the transition out of the primitive commune to caste society, a transition disclosing sexual antagonisms in the family and hierarchical antagonisms in society.

These social structures and struggles were conceptualized by Fanon on the basis of Marx's dichotomy of town and country and, on the basis of such a dualism, Fanon critically examined the nationalist movement, its political parties and national leadership. The indigenous development of unequal exchange relations subserved the formation of an African elite and its nationalist parties, such that "The elite attach a fundamental importance to organization, so much so that the fetish of organization will often take precedence over a reasoned study of colonial society" (WOTE, p. 88). Fanon recognized further that while the "followers of the nationalist political parties are above all town-dwellers...the overwhelming majority of nationalist parties show a deep distrust towards the people of the rural areas".

The class structure of modern African society, its urban-rural dichotomy, was by no means merely the context of Fanon's conceptualization of the nationalist movement. They determined the ideological forces of an incipient social revolution in African society; an ongoing

transformation of nationalism into "a consciousness of social and political needs, in other words into humanism" (WOTE, pp. 162-63).

However, because the historical determination is on the side of the forces of modern "Westernized nationalism," Fanon directs the weight of his critique at the modern, urban-based, political movement. For those forces constituted the neo-colonial political state alongside, rather than upon, the ruins of the colonial machinery. Just as, in Marx's analysis, rural isolation was the basis upon which Bonapartist usurpation entrenched itself, so the urban-rural dichotomy served colonialism's incubation of indigenous centralizing authority in the Third World. The national leadership, in the period of independence, perfects the state machinery of this centralizing authority and augments its division of labor through the growth of class and ethnic interests in society.

As Marx stated, recapitulating the *Communist Manifesto*, "All revolutions perfected this machine instead of smashing it. The parties that contended in turn for domination regarded the possession of this huge state edifice as the principal spoils of the victor" (p. 122). The process of urbanization and modernization under way in the colonial and neo-colonial period transposed the privileges of the traditional hierarchy into so many attributes of state power.

That the retrogressive elements of traditional society continued to occupy Fanon throughout WOTE suggests that the modern African state apparatus was constructed less upon than alongside their ruins. The originality of Fanon's conceptualization is that he saw the urban nationalist movement, because of its uncritical appropriation of Western political models, aiding the dissolution of those "living traditions" of the peasantry which had historically resisted colonial encroachment.

III

"Colonialism and its derivatives do not, as a matter of fact constitute the present enemies of Africa.... For my part, the deeper I enter into the cultures and the political circles the surer I am that the great danger that threatens Africa is the absence of ideology."

—Frantz Fanon

There seems to be little to distinguish the National Question as a revolutionary question in the propulsion of the present historic moment, as the ideology of bourgeois democracy supplants the revolutionary strivings of the masses in the Third World. Like Fanon, Raya Dunayevskaya argued that the organizational question has been instrumental to the national bourgeoisie's hegemony over the national liberation movement.

While it is at first quite compelling when Issa Shivji asserts that "The most important aspect of (the) struggle in Africa, in my opinion, is organizational," his notion of Africa's "New Democratic Revolution" rings very hollow. For the "organizational" in Shivji's new "democratic" perspectives is not only bereft of any philosophy of revolution, but Marxism is fantastically characterized by this post-Marx Marxist as a theory that "confronts the masses as an alien and dominating force the way 'dead labor' (capital) confronts 'living labor' (the worker) as a dominating and alien force!"⁴

The "organizational question" is dealt with in an absolutely different manner in Dunayevskaya's treatment of Rosa Luxemburg, the revolutionary Marxist whose concept of spontaneity is often compared to Fanon's, but whose view of the National Question could not be further from Fanon's. Still, Shivji's retrograde view of Marxism does go to an important aspect of Dunayevskaya's critique of Luxemburg.

At issue is the question of so-called Marxist "orthodoxy." While the present generation of post-Marx Marxist and non-Marxist theorists of the Third World, such as Amin and Shivji, imagine that they are "original" in dismissing Marx or asserting that he was allegedly Eurocentric, Fanon's creative attitude toward Marxist "orthodoxy" is so profound a departure from today's epigones that new pathways open up for the articulation of the new Third World Marxist Humanism. "Orthodoxy," Dunayevskaya argued, is "not a question of whether Marx could or could not be wrong.... It (is) a question of dialectics, of the methodology of approaching opposites."⁵

The search for new theories to answer new facts in a changed world has nowhere led post-Marx Marxists more astray from Marxian dialectics than on the National Question. When facing the National Question, why was dialectics judged to be "abstract" by Luxemburg, and concrete, indeed indispensable, by Fanon? It is not explained by Luxemburg being the first Marxist to smell the malodorous scent of imperialism at the turn of the century, while as the consummate theorist-insider Fanon chronicled the Third World's overturning imperialist colonialism in the post-World War II era.

New "facts," changed world circumstances, and new forces of revolution in the struggle against imperialism are no doubt key factors. However, Luxemburg and Fanon's attitudes toward them reflect more what is common to their approach than different. Both were highly responsive to revolutionary developments and counter-revolutionary challenges. And whereas Luxemburg was steeped in the Marxist tradition and recog-

(continued on page 9)

1. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1968), pp. 29-30; hereafter referred to as "WOTE" followed by page reference.

2. Karl Marx, *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (New York: International Publishers, 1975), p. 16; hereafter page references are given in text.

3. Samir Amin, *Eurocentrism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1989), p. 121.

4. Issa Shivji *Fight my Beloved Continent*: New Democracy in Africa, (Southern African Political Economy Series, 1988), p. 20.

5. Raya Dunayevskaya, *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), p. 53; hereafter page references are given in text.

Black/Red View

By John Alan

While we're rejoicing over the electoral defeat suffered by David Duke, the former Klansman and neo-Nazi, for the governorship of Louisiana by a massive turnout of Black voters, we should not forget that Duke got 55% of the white vote by conducting a blatant, racist political campaign against affirmative action and the myth of the Black welfare mother.

Thus, Duke's racist appeal was a success with the white voters and it could open a new era of racism as the coming presidential election becomes the focus of all political ideologies.

Clearly, it would be naive to think that Duke is a Louisiana phenomenon and that there is a fundamental ideological difference between President Bush and Duke. Both of these men are deeply rooted in the politics of American racism as an historical and ongoing force of retrogression in this country.

Bush's so-called opposition to Duke's "bigotry" is at best symbolic criticism, demanded by the political need to separate his own racist politics from Duke's unsavory history as a Klansman and a neo-Nazi. Indeed, it was Ronald Reagan, who promoted the mythological Black

Protest racist ruling

Los Angeles, Cal.—There have been ongoing protests in the Black community here against the injustice perpetrated by Judge Karlin, who gave the light sentence of a \$500 fine, five years probation and 400 hours of community service to the Korean merchant Soon Ja Du, who had shot in the back and killed 15-year-old Latasha Harlins, a Black woman, after a heated argument and fight over a \$1.79 bottle of orange juice.

This confrontation and murder was caught on the security camera of the Du's family business, located in majority Black South Central L.A. It is obvious from this film that there was no theft taking place and Latasha was shot by an angry Du while walking away.

I attended a rally of about 300 angry community members, held at a church in the heart of South Central L.A. not far from where the shooting took place. There were speakers from the Latasha Harlins Justice Committee as well as Denise Harlins, Ron Wilkins, Jim Brown, the Nation of Islam, and more.

Wilkins attempted to show the merchant class as the enemy and not just "all" Koreans, who abundantly own businesses in the Black community. He related this to his experience of being a participant in the 1965 Watts revolt as a struggle against the merchant class and the police.

Most of the energy of this rally was directed toward the removal of Judge Karlin from the bench as unfit and against her sentence of Du as being a criminal miscarriage of justice. The solution many speakers posed was a boycott of Korean-owned stores and the Black ownership of all stores in the Black community to help stop Korean merchants' racist attitudes towards mostly Black customers.

The Latasha Harlins Justice Committee is asking supporters to wear black ribbons, due to the fact that Black people are being held hostage in their own community—but the ribbon is a call for "Love, Unity, Respect, and Appreciation for Black Life."

A letter to the Los Angeles Times gives a feeling for the anger and frustration within the Black community, which has witnessed stiff sentences of Black youth as part of Police Chief Gates' war on crime, drugs and gangs:

"How dare we talk of a mighty America while our legal system belittles the Black community this much? From the days of slavery, to the emancipation from slavery, to the promise of 40 acres and a mule, to institutionalized racism, from those days until now, we have waited and hoped for healing. But we see not even a gesture in sight. With this background of such travesties of justice, the revolution that will take place in America will make the French Revolution look like a Sunday school picnic."
—Gene Ford

Frantz Fanon's Marxist Humanist legacy

(continued from page 8)

nized as one of its greatest practitioners, Fanon is held to be outside that tradition and a representative of a so-called non-Marxist Third Worldism. Yet, the Marxist Luxemburg and the "non-Marxist" Fanon displayed very different attitudes toward Marxian dialectics.

Their divergence is explained less by their respective historic moments than by the philosophic moment of what Hegel called a "birth-time of history." It wasn't until the outbreak of World War I and the collapse of established Marxism that a Marxist of Luxemburg's generation — Lenin — returned to the philosophic roots of the Marxian dialectic in Hegel. It was a return Luxemburg never made. The immediate post-World War II period found Fanon actively participating in the Left "Hegel renaissance" in France. His profound and original reading of Hegel's master-slave dialectic constituted the penultimate section of his 1952 *Black Skins, White Masks*. He developed his original comprehension of Hegelian and Marxian dialectics further in *WOTE*, a decade later.

As against Luxemburg, there is no counterposing of class struggles to national self-determination in Fanon. On the contrary, he followed the class divisions within the National Question in order to discover the revolu-

Duke's appeal sign of new era of racism

welfare mother driving a Cadillac. And it was Bush who invented Willie Horton and turned affirmative action into the "dreadful image" of a "quota system."

It was precisely the Reagan/Bush type racism, as a nationwide phenomenon, from which David Duke found his supporters. According to the financial report he filed, 47% of the million and a half dollars he received in campaign funds came from outside Louisiana. Interviews conducted by the local media revealed that his supporters were vehemently opposed to affirmative action programs because preferences were given to Blacks and other minorities. These people also wanted "welfare reform" to reduce the high cost of maintaining the recipients.

Now this latter opinion is not just coming from middle-class whites caught in the economic crunch of the depression, but from Pete Wilson, the conservative Governor of California. Wilson has loudly proclaimed that the crisis in his state budget is caused by what he calls "expensive social service" for poor people.

When we "decode" this, it means, in the language of today's political racism, that right-wing forces, including the Bush administration, have succeeded in deluding a considerable section of the white middle-class into believing that their economic strain, unemployment and social dissolution is caused by affirmative action and Black welfare recipients.

This absurdity, this perverse "rationality," is nothing less than the age-long practice of placing the crisis of capitalism's breakdown on the "social evils" of the poor and minorities. This subversion of reality gains the appearance of truth because it seems to "confirm" an ideology of racism that depicts Black Americans as a menace to middle-class morality. The pervasiveness of this racism has a strong impact on the politics and social thinking in this country. It provides a "ready made image" of Black Americans and is powerful enough to pollute the thinking of a considerable section of a new genera-

Detroit homeless

Detroit, Mich.—Ever since Michigan Governor John Engler cut 82,000 people off General Assistance welfare Oct. 1, homeless activist protesters have also battled Detroit police. The Michigan Up and Out of Poverty Now! Coalition erected "tent cities" and took over an empty building at the Jeffries Public Housing Project. Citing health and safety hazards, the police repeatedly tore them down. In late November, the Coalition was upheld in a court ruling and is building an additional tent city at the State Capitol in Lansing.

Governor Engler's response, when he isn't simply denying the problem, is to say that there are plenty of warming shelters and to announce a "new jobs program." It will produce "up to" 15,000 temporary jobs and rely on "private individuals to offer opportunities for household work." [sic]

The federal government has called Detroit's public housing, with a 40% vacancy rate, the worst in the nation. Mayor Young has pledged to ready 260 units for the homeless (with \$3.9 million in Federal Block Grant funds taken from community organizations who are supposed to control them). And one activist told me: "What is not being reported is the city's plan to tear down 1,000 units at the Parkside Projects, to be replaced by condos."

Many in Detroit have criticized the city's vigilant concern over conditions in the tents (which the Coalition has said are only a symbol of their drive for permanent housing, when thousands of houses are abandoned and stand vacant and unsafe for years).

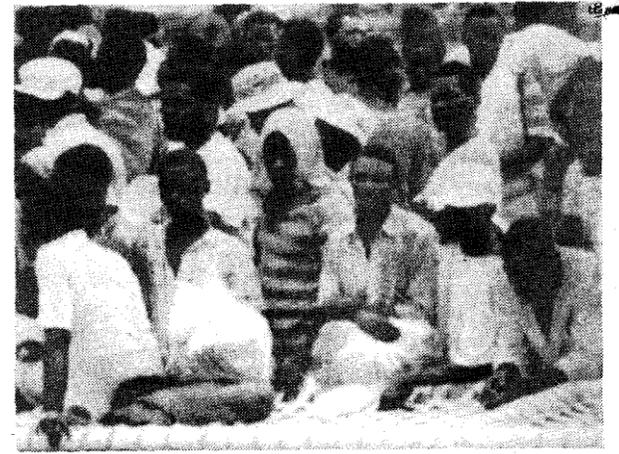
The tent cities directly challenge not only Engler-Bush's repressive ideology but the housing and development policies of Mayor Coleman Young. Neighborhood decline proceeds unabated, land value drops, and contractors come in with big gentrification projects that drain money and jobs from the people of Detroit. But the challenge from the Black community is so massive now that even some of the Black elite are saying "Time for a Change."
—Susan Van Gelder

tion of Black intellectuals.

When David Duke and other retrogressive elements project Black Americans as a "social evil," no matter the code words they use, they are challenging the right of a race of people to exist. History has shown in this century that racism contains the potential of genocide if it is not vigorously opposed.

This era of racism is emerging from the crisis in high-tech capitalism in the same way that an earlier era of racism was grounded in the industrialization of the "New South" after Reconstruction. It is high time to begin thinking how we can begin in a new way to prevent a tragic repeat of history.

Plight of Haitians



Haitian refugees interned at Guantanamo Naval Base.

The following letter was just received from our correspondent in Haiti:

Comrades—It has been many weeks since I have been able to communicate with you. After the military coup which overthrew the constitutionally-elected president of Haiti, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, I had to "disappear" because all journalists are being persecuted. Every day there are threats. My wife, who recently gave birth to a little girl, had to leave because of the fear of reprisals. Nevertheless, we are continuing the struggle for freedom and democracy in our country. Greetings to you and all your readers!

Editor's note: The barbarism of U.S. government policy toward Haitians escaping from the dictatorship imposed upon them by the military overthrow of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide is not a new policy of the U.S. vs Haiti. A decade ago during the mass exodus from the Duvalier regime the U.S. practiced this blatant racism. We print below excerpts from the "Worker's Journal" column that Charles Denby, editor of *News & Letters* from 1955 to 1983, and author of *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal* wrote in the January-February, 1982 issue.

"Haitians dehumanized at Krome"

I have just read a shocking article called "Inside Krome"—the detention camp which used to house Cuban refugees and now imprisons Haitians. As shocking as the content is the fact that the article was written, not by a spokesperson for the refugees, but by the chief spokesperson for the United States State Department at the Krome detention facility, Larry Mahoney.

"I worked for the State Department as the government's chief spokesman—more often apologist—for Krome. The job was difficult and not a little shameful. I saw women sleeping under blankets so soiled and threadbare I mistook them for the contents of vacuum-cleaner bags; guards so indifferent to suffering that they snickered at the helpless; sanitary facilities so squalid they turned your stomach. Above all, there was the crippling boredom. The people just slept and ate, ate and slept. . . . In the end, I found I could no longer cover for the indignities my government countenanced, and quit in frustration."

Mahoney admits that far from being "detainees," the Haitians were prisoners: ". . . like all prisoners, they thirsted for freedom." And he goes on to describe how 200 Haitians over a period of a week had fled the camp through a slit in the fence. . . .

It cannot be an accident that these refugees have been treated this way because they are Black. It is interesting what a strange capacity for outrage we "civilized peoples" can display when our special concepts of human decency and justice have been violated. We can denounce and talk of retaliation when justice is denied one place, but approve and support identical or worse injustice elsewhere. Look at how we apply labels like freedom fighters and martyrs some places and not others.

If your name is Steve Biko and you are the educated, eloquent spokesman against oppression of your people in South Africa, you are a subversive. But if your name is Lech Walesa you are a freedom fighter.

The point is that it is right here and now—in the United States today—that Haitian refugees are being treated like this. We cannot remain silent, we need to speak out, to act to put an end to these atrocities.

We still need to speak out. Though political the situation today is different, the racism of U.S. policy is most open and vulgar. "Rescuing" escaping Haitians on the high seas, the U.S. has sent them to an internment camp at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba — anything but allow them into the United States.

Crises in labor, Black movements compel new beginnings

(continued from page 1)

for the Black Dimension—requires both a recognition of the new type of problems that all freedom movements are facing today and a return to the historic-philosophic context in which freedom ideas have developed in this country.

Consider the events of the past two months in these racist United States. Far from the defeat of Nazi-KKK'er David Duke in the race for Governor of Louisiana being any great "victory," the fact is that only the massive turnout of Blacks there stemmed the tide. Some 55% of Louisiana whites voted for Duke, who has now announced that he will run in presidential primaries in both North and South next March.

Whatever Bush and his allies may say now about Duke, it was Bush who tilled the soil for him with his cynical rhetoric about the 1991 Civil Rights Bill as a "quota bill" which would deprive white workers of jobs. It isn't that Bush, who labored day and night for two years to assure that the Civil Rights Bill finally passed in November would be so watered down as to be nearly useless, doesn't know the facts about racism in employment.

It is that the soul of American capitalism in time



Protesting against Duke in Louisiana

of crisis has always been racism, from the breakup of the Populist movement when the new stage of imperialism appeared at the end of the 1890s, through "Red Summer," 1919, when attacks on Blacks returning from World War I went hand in hand with attacks on radicals supporting the Russian Revolution, to the Nixon and Wallace racist campaigns of 1968 after the ghetto rebellions.

October, 1991, however, revealed a new type of attack. Despite persistent Black opposition to a decade of Reagan-Bush assaults on the gains of the Civil Rights Movement, Bush was able to get his Black conservative, anti-affirmative action, anti-woman nominee, Clarence Thomas, confirmed for a seat on the Supreme Court. It is bad enough that Bush was able to take advantage both of the atmosphere of racism that he had helped create and of the sex and class divisions in the Black community. The successful appropriation of history by Clarence Thomas, when he falsely pictured himself as a victim of a "high-tech lynching," warns us both about the present erosion of historical consciousness even within Black America and about the ideological pollution afflicting freedom movements everywhere today. Such ideological pollution cripples Black America's liberation struggle by shackling minds.

It was against this type of mind shackling that the "Father of Black History," Carter G. Woodson, warned in his 1933 book, *The Miseducation of the Negro*: "When you control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his actions. You do not have to tell him not to stand there or go yonder. He will find his 'proper place' and will stay in it. You do not need to send him to the back door. He will go there without being told."

How do we find pathways out of this kind of mind control in a period when it has assumed such new forms? It was this problem that Raya Dunayevskaya was grappling with when she wrote in *Black History Month*, 1987: "the current outburst of ever-present racism, brought to a new virulence by six years of Reagan retrogressionism...makes it imperative to look at the

Capitalist production

(continued from page 4)

vanished; after labor, from a mere means of life, has itself become the prime necessity of life; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-round development of the individual, and all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly—only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be fully left behind and society inscribe on its banners: from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!" (*Critique of the Gotha Program*)

The positive in the negative was not—was not—that Alienated Labor under capitalism is the human activity, much less that science is the human activity. Rather, it was the struggles of the Alienated Laborers against capitalism, and the laborers' passion for an actual unity of mental and manual labor, that spells out the urgency of revolution.

What the revolutionary theoreticians need to do is listen to the voices from below, and concretize that new unity by practicing it in their own publications, activities, relations, as they prepare for revolution, anticipate it, labor for it. The absolute opposite of that is what oozes out from the ideologues under capitalism—which is why Marx called them the "prize-fighters" for capitalism.

whole history of how American civilization continues to be on trial. This history is not just a matter of a book or a single period. It demands the whole of the Marxist-Humanist Archives before you can see the other, absolute opposite of this racism, the revolutionary Black Dimension as ONGOING."

Take the fiery murder of 25 poultry processing plant workers in Hamlet, N.C. on Sept. 3. The workers, 85% of them Black, labored under diseased, crippling, health and safety conditions for an average \$5.40 per hour before they died in a building where the doors were chained shut. The truth is that those workers, both Black and white, suffered and died because the South remains to this day a largely non-union preserve in which corporations are free to exploit labor under conditions that, at least until recently, were not permitted in the rest of the country. The tragedy in Hamlet poses, therefore, if only by the consequences of its absence, the pivotal relationship that has impacted all of American history—the revolutionary relationship between the Black masses and white labor.

BLACK MASSES AND WHITE LABOR

That relationship was first posed by Karl Marx at the end of the Civil War in his greatest work, *Capital*. He insisted that "labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded." Scarcely ten years later the withdrawal of federal troops from the South proved Marx's point. Not only did it betray Black hopes and put an end to Reconstruction, but the troops withdrawn from the South were used to suppress the 1877 wave of strikes that swept across the North.

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s posed a challenge to the AFL-CIO to "organize the unorganized" poverty-wage, non-union workers—Black, Latino and white, North and South. All labor is paying for the AFL-CIO's failure to meet that challenge. "Southern" wages and working conditions, far from remaining confined to the South, are today becoming the rule in the North.

American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard, the 1963 News and Letters statement written at the height of the Civil Rights Movement, summed up this relationship: "The first appearance of trade unions and workingmen's parties in the U.S. paralleled the greatest of the slave revolts and the emergence of the Abolitionist movement. This parallelism is the characteristic feature of American class struggle. Only when these two great movements coalesce do we reach decisive turning points in U.S. development."

Dunayevskaya considered this needed coalescence to be so crucial that she followed closely every new struggle. In April, 1987 she singled out the organizing struggle by Black women workers at Delta Pride, a Mississippi catfish processing company. She insisted that the "reality of the South" included "the human factor and its ever-developing creativity" and related the potential impact of such new human dimensions to Marx's view that "a single Negro regiment" could change the course of the Civil War.¹

Today we are not facing any decisive turning point like that reached when the end of the Civil War brought forth both Black Reconstruction and the struggle for the eight-hour day. The problem of how to develop those new human dimensions into a new movement to transform society looms larger than ever. Everyone, whether in the labor movement or in the Black community, is speaking of the need for "organization."

The problem of how to create new organization remains posed as though it could be separated from the need to work out new ways of thinking. The truth is that the present organizational crisis is so deep that it is impossible to begin to create a new movement that would coalesce the freedom struggles of the Black masses and the labor movement without new philosophic determinants.

Even in the 1960s, when the Civil Rights Movement was at its highest point, *American Civilization on Trial* made clear that the magnificent new forms of self-organization created by the Black masses—forms which challenged the old constraints imposed by the Left vanguard parties and by middle-class Black reformism—were nevertheless incomplete. In the Introduction to the 1983 edition of *American Civilization on Trial*, written two months before the counter-revolution from within the revolution opened the door for Reagan's imperialist invasion in the Black Caribbean island of Grenada, Dunayevskaya added: "It has become clear since the 1960s that even the greatest actions need the direction that comes from a total philosophy of freedom. What is needed now is to concretize such a philosophy of freedom as the reality for our age."

To "concretize such a philosophy of freedom," at a moment when unprecedented ideological disarray has entered even the Black Dimension, demands that we reconsider, from a different vantage point, the central category of *American Civilization on Trial*—that "at each turning point of development in the U.S., it was the Black masses in motion who proved to be the vanguard."

The focus on the Black masses, as opposed to those Black intellectuals who called themselves a "talented tenth" and sought to lead the Black freedom movement, was never a class divide alone. So thorough is the evasion of working out a philosophy of revolution on the part of so many Black leaders, it has produced a new

situation that has left the movement as a whole open to ideological pollution. We need to see that the divisions also embrace a different kind of subjectivity, one that some elements within the Black Dimension continue to express, women and youth especially.

MALCOLM X AND THE BATTLE FOR MINDS

Seeking, for example, to explain the soaring popularity of Malcolm X among Black youth, they either tell the press that it is a "fad" promoted by movie director Spike Lee or set it in the context of their own agendas, whether those be the revival of Booker T. Washington's views or the development of the "Afrocentric Idea." Just as few white radicals or Black intellectuals really listened to the Black masses rallying to Marcus Garvey in the 1920s, confining themselves to exposing his "schemes" and thus never understanding why six million joined Garvey's UNIA, so few of today's analysts are listening to inner city Black youth.

One young Black man told N&L: "Why Malcolm? Because he's my 'role model.' Bill Cosby is not my role model. Colored lawyers and accountants and doctors are not my role models. They only know how to get theirs and abandon our people while we are being gunned down in the street. We need to be about the total liberation of our people, like Malcolm said, 'by any means necessary.'"

A. Peter Bailey, a colleague of Malcolm X's in the short-lived Organization of African-American Unity, did put his finger on a crucial point when he argued that Malcolm "left a lot of minds changed, like mine. And that's why his message has been sustained. Because he dealt with minds."

The demand for "total liberation" coming from an inner city high school student may seem out of touch with prevailing wisdom in a world where the sages have informed us that "absolutes" are dangerous notions which can only lead to dictatorships. The high school student turns this whole argument upside down, because he is determined to destroy the status quo, not find arguments for its preservation with "role models." "Total liberation," he suggests, is bound up with the liberation of the mind.

In 1953 Raya Dunayevskaya traced the German philosopher G.W.F. Hegel's Absolute Idea "beyond transition" to an "absolute liberation...in which the Idea freely releases itself." She pointed to Stalin's "totalitarian one-party state" and said that "that is the new that must be overcome by a totally new revolt in which everyone experiences 'absolute liberation.'" Hegel's Absolutes may have been rejected by today's ideologues, but they are alive wherever human beings seek freedom.

Today's inner city youth and workers, both employed and jobless, faced with the most desperate of conditions and confronting the most formidable of totalitarian enemies—George Bush's "new world order"—are refusing to relinquish control over their own minds. From sweat shops North and South and from the inner cities come voices calling for "total liberation." In making such a demand, if only in a first, tentative expression, they compel us to focus on what makes a revolutionary Subject revolutionary—that the Idea of Freedom has become his, or her, essence, aim and object.

The further development of this expression, this "dealing with Minds," in working out one's relation to a total philosophy of freedom, is the necessary path for both Black masses and rank-and-file workers to travel as they seek to alter the present unequal terms of the struggle. Indeed, there is no way for any of us to work out how to develop a new movement for a human society without a much richer grounding in the philosophic-historic context in which it can truly come to be.

2. *The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism*, p.37.



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1. Raya Dunayevskaya letter to Lou Turner, April 24, 1987, in Supplement to the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection, #11213. Delta Pride workers are continuing their struggles; their voices are heard in an excellent special report on the catfish industry in Southern Exposure, Fall 1991.

Youth

Rosa Luxemburg's concept of socialist democracy

by Sheila Fuller

The idea of exploring the contributions of Rosa Luxemburg, a leader of the German Revolution of 1919, on the subject of democracy became urgent for me last year during my participation in the activities against the Persian Gulf War. Very often at anti-war coalition meetings, questions and debates came up about the meaning of genuine democracy. These questions were mainly left unanswered. And I believe that our failure to really discuss the meaning of radical democracy had a lot to do with why most of our anti-war coalitions fell through soon after the war ended. However, the point is to learn from the experiences of the anti-war movement and search for new beginnings.

Raya Dunayevskaya, in her *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, (RLWLKM) writes that one of the reasons she embarked on writing this book was that Luxemburg "was the first to raise the problematic of our day—the question of socialist democracy after the revolutionary conquest of power." Dunayevskaya argues that Luxemburg's emphasis on the need for mass spontaneity after the revolution illuminates Marx's concept of revolution as the free development of every man, woman and child.

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

In her analysis of the 1917 Russian Revolution, written in 1918 from prison, Luxemburg most explicitly expressed her concept of socialist democracy after a revolution. She expressed her excitement about the world-historic nature of the Russian Revolution, "its unexampled radicalism," and its "enduring consequences." But she wrote also of the insufficient democracy: "Freedom only for the supporters of the government, only for the members of one party—however numerous they may be—is no freedom at all. Freedom is always and exclusively freedom for the one who thinks differently."

She distinguished her concept of socialist democracy from bourgeois democracy which hides social inequality and lack of freedom under the shell of formal equality: "Socialist democracy begins simultaneously with the beginnings of the destruction of class rule and of the construction of socialism. It begins at the very moment of the seizure of power."

There is so much that we can learn from her writings on democracy. Her sensitivity to spontaneous mass movements and the questions they raise about the direction of revolution speaks to the need to be able to hear the thoughts and ideas which come from within a spontaneous movement for freedom.

What stands out so strikingly in Luxemburg's discussion of socialist democracy is her emphasis on the continuation of the battle of ideas about the vision of the future, before, during and after a revolution. She shows that it is precisely when the battle of ideas and dialogue in thought is encouraged and intensified that we can have a genuine "public" life that involves the masses of people as thinkers and decision-makers in a new society.

This concept of democracy speaks directly to the problems which we experienced in the anti-war movement last year. Often a healthy battle about the meanings of ideas which had brought a lot of us to the anti-war coalitions was missing. I am referring to ideas of anti-militarism, freedom, human liberation, Marxism, socialism. We were so busy talking about the nuts and bolts of demonstrations that hardly any room was left for dialogue and discussion on visions of the future for the continuation of the movement. The anti-war movement was not able to promote the dialogue on alternative visions of the future.

For those who are searching for new beginnings, Rosa Luxemburg's writings on socialist democracy can open new doors. At the same time we cannot act as if Luxem-

burg's writings on spontaneity and democracy contain "the answer" for today.

Dunayevskaya praises Luxemburg's sensitivity to mass spontaneity and her emphasis on the continuing self-development of human beings after a revolution. However, Dunayevskaya questions why Luxemburg did not break with the Social Democratic Party of Germany until the last days of her life and why she did not work out an alternative to the concept of the "party-to-lead."

LUXEMBURG'S DUALISM



Dunayevskaya held that the dualism between Luxemburg's appreciation of spontaneity and yet adherence to the German Social Democracy resided in her failure to work out the relationship between the mass movement and a philosophy of revolution: "Luxemburg was absolutely right in her emphasis that the Marxist movement was the 'first in the history of class societies which, in all its moments, in its entire course, reckons on the organization and the independent, direct action of the masses.' However, she is not right in holding that, very nearly automatically, it means so total a conception of socialism that a philosophy of Marx's concept of revolution could likewise be left to spontaneous action."

Dunayevskaya's critique raises serious questions for us today. Is it sufficient to stop at a concept of organization based on mass spontaneity? Is it even possible to break with elitism and vanguardism without working out a concept of organization in which everyone takes responsibility for developing the philosophic vision of the future?

There is no doubt that Luxemburg's discussion of the need for socialist democracy after a revolution has raised urgent questions which our age of unfinished and aborted revolutions can truly appreciate in a new way. When the original views of Luxemburg on socialist democracy are examined from the vantage point of the problems of our age, specifically the problem of how to overcome the philosophic void within the Left, then we can move toward working out her beautiful vision of socialist democracy.

Protest school conditions

Los Angeles, Cal.—A small but very lively and diverse group of students, from several different area high schools and junior highs, demonstrated outside Governor Pete Wilson's L.A. office on Nov. 30. They were protesting the over two billion dollars cut from school budgets, which has resulted in a 33% average increase in class size, the firing of 2,300 teachers, nurses, and other school staff, and the frequent absence of such basic materials as textbooks from the school classrooms.

Many of the students talked about the relationship between the budget cutbacks and the overall dismal school environment, including the prevalent racial tensions. Just one week earlier, some 400 Black and Latino students had fought a battle against each other at Gardena High School. This was but the latest in a series of such incidents around the city.

One young Black woman, who works with a multi-racial Rainbow League group at her school in a working-class suburb, spoke of a recent drive-by shooting there, and racial slurs, that undercut so much of the work her group had been doing. "Everyone starts getting confused," she said. "They think, am I letting my race down if I don't get involved here?"

"In history and literature: it's still the white Anglo-Saxon male that we study. Even when we do have newer textbooks, with discussions of the contributions of minorities and women—the teachers go on teaching the way they've always done it! And the newer, younger teachers have all been laid off, with the cuts! When a racial incident happens, the administrators just try to hush it up; their attitude is, if we're quiet about this, everyone will forget it."

A Latina from a junior high in East Los Angeles echoed these perceptions: "There's a lot of tension at my school between Latinos and Blacks. The Latinos feel the Blacks are trying to take over, but that's not true. I think the problem is that we know so little about each other; we're never taught history of all the different races and groups—including ourselves."

"That results in no one feeling involved in school because we're not being taught anything that relates to ourselves, to our lives. We don't understand who we are ourselves, we don't understand who other groups are and what they've been through and where they're coming from—and so we get into these fights."

"And just in general: with the huge class sizes, it's so hard to concentrate or get anything positive out of school. The government should stop spending so much money on bombs. Bombs won't help us. They won't do anything about this chaos in our lives." —M.L.

Youth in Revolt

by Tom Parsons

Marching and singing Haitian Creole songs, 100 Cornell University students participated in a tribute to those killed in the right-wing coup in Haiti. A spokesperson for the Haitian students organization said the vigil was for "the people of color who have died in the struggle for freedom." * * *

There is widespread opposition by Chinese students to that government's attempt to stifle dissent by forcing students from Beijing University to serve a year in the military. Many participants in the Tiananmen Square movement were students at Beijing University. In interviews on the campus, students said that after the military training many students returned more "radical" and determined in their opposition to the military. * * *

Members of the Progressive Student Organization and Anti-Racist Action at the University of Minnesota were viciously attacked by supporters of the "White Student Union" with clubs and chains on Oct. 17. They were attacked while picketing outside the campus radio station, where the leader of the white supremacist "union" was being interviewed.

Ramifications of Middle East "peace" process

Israel

Ramat-Gan, Israel—Something new happens here all the time and usually it's bad news. It's a violent part of the world. In a country of four million Israelis and one and a half million Palestinians there is someone killed or hurt everyday—usually a Palestinian, sometimes (rarely) a Jew.

When it's an Israeli that is hurt there's a big outcry. When it's a Palestinian it's not always mentioned and if mentioned, not always with the person's name. It's understood by the public that if a Palestinian gets hurt it must be his/her fault. I think a victim of violence is so, no matter what his/her nationality is, especially when it's a battle between an armed and an unarmed person.

Now there's this Peace Conference. I don't know anyone that believes that peace will come out of it. It looks more like George Bush's attempt to gain more votes for the coming elections. I wish for peace, but it looks more like the last show before the big, terrible war. My one hope is that things will happen without planning and attitudes will gradually change.

Your President Bush is too strong now. He's got no USSR against him and he's got no obligations to anyone. Just remember how he promised the Kurds to help them in their war against Saddam Hussein and then went to Syria and let Saddam slaughter the Kurds. I wonder if the U.S. people understand that in politics there's no love or honesty—only self-interest. And a politician—any politician—is an actor, never the good father you can trust. —Israeli woman peace activist

Iran

Los Angeles, Cal.—Iran's criticism of the Middle East peace conference should be seen in the context of Rafsanjani's attempts to reconstitute his base of support. It is Rafsanjani's policy to ensure that no indigenous revolutionary or democratic power can arise in the "Islamic world." He does not oppose a "peace" imposed on the Middle East by the U.S., so long as the "faithful" can be maintained sufficiently zealous.

From its first appearance, the "Islamic Republic" has been rallying around "the faithful" against the "Great Satan," while at the same time directly or indirectly strengthening U.S. imperialism's hand. This is because the resistance of masses against imperialism was used by the Islamic tendencies to advance their own chauvinistic imperialism.

Thus while Khamenei was announcing the death sentence against Madrid conference participants, Syria's top military brass were visiting Iran, touring military production facilities and discussing coordination. A Lebanese top Shiite clergy was quoted as saying that the relations between Iran and Syria are "strategic" and will not be affected by the disagreements on the Middle East peace conference.

Iran and Syria's relations have never constituted a full-fledged "alliance." Assad's support for Iran in the Iran-Iraq war was based on his determination to bring the Iraqi military power down to size. Similarly Syria and Iranian Hezbollah forces in Lebanon cooperated on the basis of a military balance of forces. At present, too, they cooperate to the extent that the "new world order" means an even higher level of balance of terror.

There was a conference called by Iran at the same time that the Madrid conference was being held. It revealed the conflicts within the various forces in Lebanon, when Jumblatt walked out of a press conference in protest. —Cyrus Noveen

'I hate school'

Glenview, Ill.—My best friend and I were discussing our four-year High School Plan when I shouted out, "I hate school, it's so dumb!" My friend said, "I think school is the best thing that ever happened to us." That's when the arguing began.

I said, "How could you like school when we learn nothing? Who cares about 2000 B.C. and $x=6$, don't you want to learn about what's happening now and ways to solve the problems? How could you possibly like a place that's like a prison—a place where the teachers control you and tell you where you can go, when you can leave, what you can say, and how you're going to say it? Are you telling me you like other people to control you? Do you like when the teachers call us stupid, dumb, that they're embarrassed to have us and that we should be embarrassed about how bad we do on tests—and you can't say anything back because if you do you'll be sent to the dean?"

Her reply was, "No, but after high school, we'll be able to control other people." In shock and anger I yelled, "Why do you want to control others?" She said, "Well, I don't, but...." Then something came to my mind. "Oh, yeah, I forgot, I should have known that you like to control others, because you're also anti-choice." She screamed, "That's a totally different subject!" I simply said, "No, it is not." And that was the end of our argument. I was so mad I had to get off the phone.

—14-year-old woman

For further reading order

**Selections from
Raya Dunayevskaya's
Writings on the Middle East**

See literature ad, p. 7

Our Life and Times

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

The Middle East talks that began in Madrid last month, and reconvene in Washington as we go to press, were described by one Arab journalist as an American "peace cage." There is no doubt that the Bush administration is attempting to impose another chapter of "New World Order" on the region, particularly on the Arab-Israeli conflict. The more Bush tried to dilute the appearance of U.S. dominance, the more obvious it has become.

First, the U.S. made sure to exclude the UN and the European Community from involvement in the talks. And while the decision to have Gorbachev as a co-convenor was intended to give the talks an international cast, it only served to emphasize the post-coup Russian empire's greatly diminished superpower status.

In his opening remarks, Gorbachev barely addressed

Cambodian 'peace' accord

The four Cambodian factions who in October signed a peace accord brokered by the U.S., Russia and China to end two decades of civil war are dissolving into two sides. On the one hand are forces who have aligned with Prince Norodom Sihanouk who recently had himself "installed" as president, effectively undercutting any possible coalition government. The Vietnamese-backed faction of Prime Minister Hun Sen has thrown its support to Sihanouk.

On the other side are the Khmer Rouge (KR), under whose rule in 1975-79 one million people were killed or perished by forced labor, starvation and disease in the Cambodian "killing fields." The former KR head of the army and secret police, Son Sen, returned to Phnom Penh in early November to be a representative on the interim national council.

When Khieu Samphan, widely held to be the architect of the mass emptying of the cities which led to hundreds of thousands of deaths, returned to Phnom Penh, he was nearly killed by thousands of angry people who cornered him in his villa. Security forces saved him from death and he was escorted out of the country. The KR leaders say they will return, and they have been promised a fortified headquarters by Sihanouk.

From before the ink dried, it is clear this settlement will not bring peace to Cambodia. It isn't even clear how long it will last. There are no provisions for completely disarming the various armed forces. Nor are there any provisions for bringing Pol Pot to justice, although Sihanouk is now saying he favors a tribunal to try the KR.

Sihanouk, the once and future ruler and full-time opportunist who once called Hun Sen a "one-eyed traitor," now calls him "my son." While Phnom Penh spent hundreds of thousands on Sihanouk's return, hundreds of thousands of refugees are languishing in camps along the Thai border, or are being prepared by the KR to go to rural areas under their control.

The U.S. hand in all this was evident in Secretary of State Baker's trip to Asia, which began with talks with Vietnam in Paris, as well as his stop in Beijing. The U.S. is attempting to impose Bush's "world order" on Cambodia and it should be no surprise that the U.S. did not object to the plan for the KR to join an interim coalition.

Middle East talks: 'American peace cage'

the Middle East, speaking instead about his own economic and political crises at home. Russia's former "client states" in the Middle East, especially Syria, had already solidified their shift by supporting the U.S. against Iraq during the Persian Gulf war.

Since the end of that war, Bush has not wasted any chance to cash in on the U.S. victory. The U.S. has exerted pressure on all the parties involved in the current negotiations—Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel and the Palestinians—as well as those not directly participating, including Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Iran. But in these

talks attention has focused most sharply on Israel and the Palestinians.

When Bush held up \$10 billion in housing loan guarantees, which would have underwritten new Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, it was to send a message. However, it did not move Israel from its positions of no freeze on settlements, and no talk of trading land for peace. To emphasize its reactionary hard line, Israel did not head its delegation with the foreign minister, but instead sent Yitzhak Shamir, the prime minister.

Israel underlined its position by shelling southern Lebanon during the conference, and by dedicating a new settlement on the Golan Heights several weeks later. It has challenged the U.S. even on such a matter as not showing up on Dec. 4 in Washington, for the U.S.-arranged opening of the second round of talks. The Israeli delegation chose instead to arrive on Dec. 9, which happens to be the fourth anniversary of the beginning of the intifada. Where the U.S. and Israel agree is that neither will entertain any possibility of an independent Palestinian state on the West Bank.

For its part, the Palestinian delegation said outright for the first time that they would accept a form of limited self-rule in the occupied territories, seeing that as a step on the way to statehood. The delegation, composed primarily of professors, doctors and engineers, is said to represent a "new pragmatism" among a "new set of leaders" who, unlike the current PLO leaders, live directly under Israeli rule. However, the head of the Palestinian delegation went to great lengths to affirm that the PLO was their "acknowledged leadership." The shift in position by the Palestinians is due more to its isolation from backing Iraq during the Gulf war.

The gulf between "self-rule" and "self-determination" was summed up by a member of the Palestinian delegation: "Israel's idea is that we may be allowed to supervise garbage collection and the distribution of mail, but nothing that resembles control over our destiny, our land, our water and our lives."

"Self-rule" for Palestinians may be resuscitated in some form from the moribund Camp David accords, under which it was never implemented as agreed. But there is no doubt that the current talks revolve more around establishing the U.S. as the dominant force, rather than any genuine peace in the region.

German anti-Nazi rally



Over 50,000 people rallied in Berlin against neo-Nazi racist violence, and to show solidarity with "foreigners" in Germany. Demonstrations involving 100,000 people were held across the country on the 53rd anniversary of the infamous Kristallnacht, when Hitler unleashed anti-Semitic mobs to attack and kill Jews and destroy their community.

Truce in El Salvador

The FMLN declared a unilateral truce on Nov. 14, in effect calling a halt to the civil war in El Salvador which has endured for 12 years. The truce came out of meetings which have been underway since September, when the FMLN and the ultra-right wing government of Alfredo Cristiani reached agreement on a number of points.

These include: 1) Appointment of a commission to oversee and execute the peace accords; 2) "purification" of the Salvadoran armed forces of elements implicated in human rights abuses, and reduction of its size, and 3) protection of families affiliated with the FMLN and recognition of their right to lands occupied during the civil war.

There is no guarantee that the truce will not collapse, or that the negotiations will produce a genuine end to the civil war. The decision by the FMLN to seek an end to armed conflict by political means does not signify their military weakness, so much as it reflects a loss of support among workers and peasants to continue with armed struggle as the sole pathway for transforming El Salvador.

Massacre in East Timor

Indonesian soldiers opened fire, Nov. 12, on a gathering of 2,000 East Timorese attending a funeral procession in Dili. The marchers, primarily youth, were marking the death of a pro-independence supporter who had been killed by Indonesian security forces.

According to human rights groups and Catholic church officials, as many as 180 people were killed. In one report, troops hurriedly dug mass graves outside Dili and buried four truck loads of corpses.

If not for videotapes broadcast around the world which show soldiers shooting in the back those people trying to flee and viciously beating those who had fallen wounded, the government would likely be minimizing this atrocity. The Armed Forces commander commented on what had happened: "Delinquents like these agitators have to be shot and we will shoot them." Facing international outrage, the Indonesian government has appointed a commission to "investigate" the army massacre.

Whether government authorities take a hard-line or conciliatory stance towards East Timor, they all claim that its forcible annexation 15 years ago—after East Timor began its own revolution and declared independence from Portugal—is now a "fact of life." Since then, well over 200,000 East Timorese have died in the struggle to negate that "fact" and to keep the flame of freedom alive.

Who We Are and What We Stand For

News and Letters Committees is an organization of Marxist-Humanists that stands for the abolition of capitalism, whether in its private property form as in the U.S., or its state property form, as in Russia or 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. We have organized ourselves into a committee form of organization rather than any elitist party "to lead."

Raya Dunayevskaya (1910-87), founder of the body of ideas of Marxist-Humanism, became Chairwoman of the National Editorial Board and National Chairwoman of the Committees from its founding in 1987. Charles Denby (1907-83), a Black production worker, author of *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*, became editor of the paper from 1955 to 1983. Dunayevskaya's works *Marxism and Freedom...from 1776 until Today* (1958); *Philosophy and Revolution: from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao* (1973); and *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* (1982) spell out the philosophic ground of Marx's Humanism internationally, as *American Civilization on Trial* concretizes it on the American scene and shows the two-way road between the U.S. and Africa. These works challenge post-Marx Marxists to return to Marx's Marxism.

The new visions of the future that Dunayevskaya left us in her work from the 1940s to the 1980s are

rooted in her rediscovery of Marx's Marxism in its original form as a "new Humanism" and in her recreation of that philosophy for our age as "Marxist-Humanism." The development of the Marxist-Humanism of Dunayevskaya 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*, on deposit at the Wayne State University Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs in Detroit, Michigan.

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 have 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, exploitative society, 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.

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