

# L.A. rebellion puts American civilization on trial

As we are going to press, has come the shocking news of the outrageous acquittal by a nearly all-white jury of four white policemen whose savage beating of Rodney King on March 3, 1991 was caught on videotape and televised for all the world to bear witness. It was not only those four brutal thugs who stood on trial, however. Once more, it was American civilization itself. And, once more, American civilization, whose very core is its racism, has been found GUILTY.

In the first hours since the verdict was known, the streets of South Central Los Angeles have been filled with fire and fury, while in downtown L.A. hundreds of Blacks, joined by whites and Latinos, have demonstrated together at the police headquarters. In these same first hours, Black communities all across the land have been heard comparing this spectacle of "justice" to the infamous trial of the murderers of the Black youth, Emmett Till, in Mississippi in 1955, where another all-white jury found them not guilty, though their guilt was also beyond question.

Despite the carefully orchestrated racist retrogressionism of the past dozen years under the Reagan and Bush administrations, which aims to push us back fully to the conditions of the pre-Civil Rights Movement years, there is no way the experiences of the past three decades can be wiped from the Mind of Black America, whose absolute opposition to this racism is revolutionary and ongoing.

Its voice was heard in a Black youth interviewed at the demonstration at the Parker Center Police Headquarters who said he had come down "for the beginning of the revolution, because this country has got to be completely changed!" And it was heard in the words of a Black worker who told us on the phone from L.A., "Voting hasn't made a damn bit of difference. We have to take things into our own hands. I have to think of where all this is going."

What has become clear in this election year is that the appalling April 29 acquittal is no aberration, any more

than the racism of David Duke and Pat Buchanan are aberrations. They are all manifestations of a society that has been put on trial, again and again, and found guilty. But already it is clear, as the rebellion is spreading across the entire land, on campuses and ghetto streets alike, that the response from Black, white and Latino is unlike anything ever seen here before.

The Bush Administration has acted with unprecedented speed to meet with Black leaders and get their approval for the immediate sending of 1,000 Federal Marshalls to L.A., while another 4,000 troops from Fort Ord are on standby, including the Third Infantry which was used in the invasion of Panama. The speed has been dictated by a deep fear of those—Black, white and Latino alike—who have rendered their verdict on racist America's alleged "civilization" and are out to uproot it.

It is long past time to carry out the sentence and begin anew. How that will be worked out in the thinking and doing of those forces of revolt in America is what will be revealed in the days and weeks ahead.

## NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

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### Black World

#### Cornel West vs. Marx's Humanism



by Lou Turner

The relationship of radical Black intellectuals to Marxism has, historically, been ambivalent, not only because of the anomalies of race and class, but also because of their relationship to non-Marxist Western thought. The Marxism of intellectuals as different as W.E.B. DuBois, Richard Wright and C.L.R. James was mediated by American pragmatism, Existentialism and the Western literary tradition, respectively.

That ambivalence toward Marx persists among today's radical Black intellectuals. Conspicuous among them is the "prophetic Christian socialist" Cornel West, whose whose specious amalgam of Marxism and American pragmatism has brought this philosophic ambivalence to a head.

#### 'END OF PHILOSOPHY'

His latest work, *The Ethical Dimensions of Marxist Thought*, on the early Marx, purports to show "that Marx's turn toward history resembles the anti-foundationalist arguments of the American pragmatists" (p. xxi). It is this claim that runs like the monochromatic formalism of a broken white line down the middle of a highway throughout West's 1991 book.

Unfortunately, the one element that had motivated the interests of earlier radical Black intellectuals in Marx, i.e., the relationship between social justice and human emancipation, is very nearly subsumed under West's anti-philosophical pragmatism. He christens his approach "radical historicism," wherein "the only plausible candidates for criteria, grounds, or foundations...would be the contingent, community-specific agreements people make in relation to particular norms, aims, goals, and objectives. These agreements, owing to their dynamic character, do not carry the weight of rational necessity or universal obligation" (p.1).

Within this framework the Abolitionist movement could not have invoked the "universal principles and obligations" of the idea of freedom to end slavery. Historically, early American pragmatists, such as West's hero Ralph Waldo Emerson, became equivocating supporters of the Abolitionist cause, especially when John Brown

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### On the Inside

## After the Caterpillar strike

by Bob McGuire

"In nearly 30 years at Caterpillar I have never seen more solidarity in this union or less reason to cross this line into the plant," said a Cat striker on April 20 as he returned to work at the East Peoria plant. This was after the United Auto Workers (UAW) had directed the more than 12,000 strikers there and at the Aurora and Decatur, Ill., plants back inside, on the company's terms and without an agreement, less than a month after chief negotiator Bill Casstevens had told a strike rally in Peoria that workers everywhere were saying, "We won't go back without an agreement."

The sudden end of the six-month-long strike, and the sense of betrayal which Cat workers have been expressing, shines a spotlight as much on the role of the union bureaucracy as on Caterpillar's vicious attack on conditions of life and labor. This May Day, 1992, at a moment when the economic crisis seems permanent, there is a special urgency in looking at this pivotal strike to see what is at stake for all of labor.

#### WHAT IS AT STAKE

All eyes were on the Cat strikers, especially after the company unilaterally imposed its own offer and ordered all strikers to return on April 6 or be permanently replaced. Union members at special meetings across the country not only raised funds for the strikers, but discussed additional solidarity, including a general strike, to support the workers whose jobs were on the line.

Caterpillar was the most powerful company yet to follow the lead of Reagan, who in 1981 replaced striking PATCO air traffic controllers with hastily hired



Caterpillar workers yell at scabs

trainees, thus risking air safety and the airline industry for years to come. That gave the green light for companies like Phelps-Dodge, the Tribune Company and Pittston Coal Co., to call in scabs and count one day of crossing the picket line ahead of strikers with 25 or more years in the plant. Militancy was not always enough to

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### From New York and D.C. to San Francisco

## Women demand the right to abortion

Buffalo, N.Y.—In the first week of Operation Rescue's (OR) terrorist attacks, not a single women's clinic here was forced to close its doors. Clinic defenders linked arms to keep OR from blocking doors and at times pushed back attackers physically. OR's only successes came with the help of police. This wasn't surprising considering that Buffalo's mayor, James Griffin, had welcomed OR to the city.

OR had geared up for Saturday, April 25. That day saw them far outnumbered by clinic defenders—both local activists and others from around the country. Buffalo United for Choice (BUC) organizers said 1,500 pro-choice demonstrators were at the clinic on Main Street where I was, and 600 more at a clinic on nearby High Street.

It was very inspiring to be part of this group of committed people with their great spirit of solidarity and defiance. One young woman I talked with who was a student at the University of Buffalo said, "We aren't here with any organization. We feel very strongly about this. Students are organizing themselves in their own groups to come out here." Her first political action had been attending the April 5 March for Women's Lives in Washington, D.C.

This was true of another student who said, "It was really empowering for me; to feel like, yes, here are 500,000 other people who all feel the same way I do." A young Black woman with two children said, "I'm here because I'm in favor of choice. My mother was pro-choice before there was a word for it. When you try to understand what it is that these 'pro-life' people stand for, all it amounts to is oppression."

One woman told me that she had come all the way from San Francisco on a bus, by herself, because she felt the Buffalo struggle was important for the world freedom movement. She had been an exchange student in Argentina and saw a connection between the struggle there and here, and knew that she wanted to take part in it.

Many of these young people, with little previous political experience, were magnificent in the way they transcended both the excessive caution of some of the BUC leaders, and the stogy antics of some of the Leftists (like shouting obscenities) and acted with both firmness and dignity in defense of wom-

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Off the Press for May Day!

The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism

Selected Writings by Raya Dunayevskaya

Excerpts p. 7

## Woman as Reason

# Women's studies attacked

by Terry Moon

Since their inception in the early 1970s, as a demand of the Women's Liberation Movement, Women's Studies programs and departments have been under attack. What is new is that the attack is coming from right-wing women within universities who see the retrogressive climate fostered by Reaganism/Bush as their opportunity for a full-scale siege.

Christina Hoff Sommers, associate professor of philosophy at Clark University, is today's darling of the academic right wing. Her credentials include helping end Clark University's policy of asking faculty to discuss how minority's and women's views and concerns will be explored in new courses and, in particular, bashing feminist theorists. She distorts her opponents' views; quotes them out of context and pompously proclaims she represents "most women" who "enjoy a male-female dynamic, certain ways of dress. Sure there are problems, but we don't want a revolution."\*

That is what one expects from reactionaries; but what does need to be gone into is how her targets have fought back. The response of Sandra Lee Bartky, associate professor of philosophy at the University of Illinois at Chicago, is to emphasize that Sommers' "aim was not to engage in good-faith philosophical disputation but to discredit the entire field..."

Sandra G. Harding, director of women's studies at the University of Delaware, says Sommers "is trying to demonize people," and by quoting her out of context, "is trying to make us look sexually scandalous..." Alison M. Jaggar, author of *Feminist Politics and Human Nature*, defended herself against the charge of being "anti-family" by saying, reluctantly, that she is married and has three children.

### REVOLUTION IS REAL TARGET

While all this is true, this kind of argument doesn't stop Sommers from firing her best shot at her real enemy—the revolutionary content of the Women's Liberation Movement. For example, after implying that Bartky supported the Soviet Union (she never has), Sommers writes: "But in all of [Bartky's] work to date, the agenda of social revolution that will bring with it the desired transformation of consciousness, including changed patterns of sexual desire, is basic."

Key is that Sommers' targets (and Bartky, Harding and Jaggar are only a few examples) don't defend their own ground. Even Sommers sees it—and uses it—when she says, "If they have these [revolutionary] positions, they should have the intellectual integrity to take responsibility for them."

Why don't they make what they did write the basis of their stand against Sommers: That we do need revolution, that Marxism is important, and that the relationships between men and women show clearly the need for a total transformation of society? This failure to stand up for the feminist theory they created—to make that their ground—is what allows Sommers to get away with her attacks on the revolutionary content of Women's Liberation.

None of Sommers' targets mentions the global Women's Liberation Movement—a Movement that challenged the Left's narrow concept of revolution. While Sommers says women don't want revolution, those she attacks ignore the fact that we do. Once your theory has no Subject of revolution, no live human beings who are fighting for a new society where all can experience freedom, there is no real ground to fight the right wing. Bartky, for example, is left complaining that "Sommers provokes because she doesn't play the game by the rules."

### A SINGLE DIALECTIC

The feminist theorists seem unable to project a revolutionary vision of the future. Is that because they divide feminist theory from Subject—masses in motion who are a living, feeling, thinking, acting whole? To Marx, what moved history forward was masses in motion. Without recognizing that base, there is nothing for theory to stand on. Marx's Marxism cannot be ignored or reduced to a single discipline because that would mean that the total philosophy of liberation, that single dialectic that emerges from reality and from thought, that characterizes Marx's Marxism, will not have been grasped.

It is precisely that methodology that works out the relationship of what emerges in thought with what emerges in activity, that allows one to see the Reason, the thought, in women's fight for freedom. It is that grounding that we need if we are to win today's battle of ideas against not only small-time right-wingers like Sommers, but against reactionary monsters like Bush, hungry for world power.

\* "Philosophy Professor Portrays Her Feminist Colleagues as Out of Touch and 'Relentlessly Hostile to the Family,'" by Scott Jaschik, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Jan. 15, 1992. The debate can be followed in *The Chronicle*: Oct. 11, 1989; Jan. 15, 1992; Feb. 19, 1992.

# Demand for abortion rights

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en's rights.

Participating in this was a great experience, but it is true, as many have been saying, that this victory can only be a partial one as long as women are threatened by OR and all the other forces which attack every aspect of their lives.

—Gerard Emmett

## Washington, D.C.

No effort on the part of the bourgeois media or politicians to bury the significance of the April 5 March for Women's Lives can erase the fact that well over half a million poured into the capital that day in perhaps the largest protest march ever seen in Washington. Nor will the participants, women and men from nearly every state in the nation, easily forget the militancy of the



News & Letters photo

enormous crowd that gathered—the anger in the chanting and drumbeats, and the daring in the handmade signs.

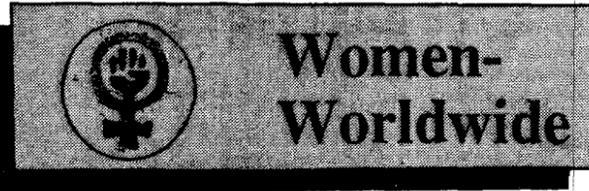
Students from hundreds of colleges and high schools, members of old and new feminist organizations across the country, girls with their mothers and grandmothers, and thousands of others declared outrage at the possible overturning or further narrowing of legal abortion rights by the Supreme Court this spring.

Women carried signs with slogans like "U.S. out of my uterus," "Government enforced child bearing is state rape," "How dare you take away my freedom," and "Bag the gag rule." Humorous, defiant signs attacked George Bush's cynical animosity to women's rights. Dozens of youth held a spontaneous "die-in." Women's Action Committee members from New York pounded drums, and scores of activists distributed leaflets demanding massive civil disobedience and providing instructions for self-administered abortions.

The mainstream papers, however, in their myopic analysis of this mammoth outpouring, emphasized the white middle-class character of the crowd and the electoral "power of women's vote" thrust of the major sponsors. Photographs showed only the National Abortion Rights Action League's mass-produced "We will decide November 3" and Planned Parenthood's "I am the face of pro-choice America" signs.

It is true that most march participants were white. However, a young Black woman told me the media coverage made her feel invisible. She also critiqued feminist groups which failed to fight the loss of reproductive freedom back in 1977 when the Hyde Amendment cut federal funded abortions for poor women.

Several white students were also disturbed at the



by Mary Jo Grey

Women workers in two Phillips-Van Heusen (PVH) plants in Guatemala are risking their lives in a drive to organize a union, PVH—the U.S.'s leading marketer of men's shirts—has refused to recognize the union and is threatening to pull out of Guatemala. One union leader has already been shot in this struggle to eliminate conditions of sexual harassment, lock-ins, denial of bathroom use and wages as low as \$1 a day. To support our Guatemalan sisters and urge PVH to recognize the union and negotiate contact: Larry Phillips, PVH, 1290 Avenue of the Americas, NY, NY 10104.

—Information from Justice Speaks

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Five hundred women, children and men—carrying candles, signs and banners opposing violence against women—participated in a spirited Take Back the Night rally and two mile march through downtown Blacksburg, Va. and the campus of Virginia Tech.

Information from New River Free-Press

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Amerasian children in the Philippines, abandoned by their U.S. serviceman fathers, rallied outside of the U.S. embassy in Manila, March 31, seeking help in getting food, clothing and medicine. The demonstration was organized by the woman's organization, Gabriela.

coverage's implication that our message was one-dimensional and benign. Their questions transcended who to vote for in November. Some debated how they felt about the leaflets describing illegal, self-administered abortions. While many women feel such strategies offer a certain kind of power, others argue they may lead to accepting serious limitations to a deeper movement for total reproductive and other dimensions of women's freedom.

Such critiques show more than anything else that the march did not materialize from thin air. Women's anger and disgust at the political process has grown since the Clarence Thomas hearings. New feminist organizations, study groups and conferences have been organized on and off college campuses where women are discussing the political, social and economic retrogression we are experiencing.

It is too early to draw conclusions about whether the march will become an important marker in the working out of a new movement for a much deeper liberation than we won with *Roe vs. Wade* in 1973. However, it is crucial not to let either the electoral framework of the sponsors or continuing media coverage become fetters on our minds, just as we are reaching for new vision and new pathways.

—Laurie Cashdan

## San Francisco, Cal.

—On March 29, over 75,000 people crowded streets here in the largest pro-choice march in Bay Area's history. This march, sponsored by the Bay area Pro-Choice Coalition, was held a week before the March on Washington, D.C., for those in the West Coast who couldn't make it across the country. Thousands of people marched up Market Street to the Civic Center where a stage was set up for speakers and entertainers, beginning with Norma McCorvey, the real Jane Roe.

We saw two women holding signs reading, "Grandmothers who fought for women's rights 20 years ago who are fighting for granddaughter's rights today." They pinpointed the universality of the issue of reproductive rights. One said, "This march isn't about one issue, it's about women's freedom. We can't forget that."

Many youth filed in from across the Bay area carrying creative hand painted signs like, "U.S. out of my uterus," and "George Bush, say out of mine!" Some high school students stopped to talk to us about their concern over youth's access to birth control. As the march proceeded down the center of the city, supporters came out to the street to cheer us on.

Everyone had their own story which had brought them out to join the march and rally. One young Chicana mother said, "I had to join the navy when I was younger because I was poor. I got pregnant there and had so much difficulty getting an abortion, even though it was legal. I don't want anyone to have to go through the kind of struggle that I did." —Julia Jones

## Mujeres en Movimiento

Los Angeles, Cal.—Close to 100 braved a rainy Friday evening to join a celebration called Mujeres en Movimiento (Women in Motion). It was hosted by PODER, the Pro-Active Organization Dedicated to the Empowerment of Raza. Work by local Chicana artists was on display and Latina musicians, poets and dancers performed. Two amazing women activists spoke.

Juana Gutierrez of Madres de E.L.A. (Mothers of East Los Angeles), spoke about how her organization had kept an incinerator and a new jail from being built in the middle of Los Angeles' biggest Latino neighborhood. She said these and other successes would have been easier with the participation of more of their friends:

"Some of us have husbands who let us leave home and organize. But some men are macho and think they have to control their wives. You men, if you really care to better our lives and the lives of our children, respect the women! Don't keep them from doing what they have to do!"

Another speaker was Dora Alicia Alarcon, a Salvadoran woman who is president of Vendedores Ambulantes (Association of Street Vendors). She told of how the group was formed in 1986 after a series of arrests of street vendors was instigated by local merchants who looked upon the vendors as garbage littering the sidewalks in front of their shops.

Most of the vendors are immigrants from Mexico and El Salvador, most are women. Dora said that such racism and arrogance is simply unfair and should not be tolerated; that it makes no sense to put such pressure on people who often have no other recourse to make a living other than stealing, pushing drugs or prostitution.

She stated that she had never resorted to these alternatives but had ended up being treated like a criminal anyway: "I was handcuffed and had a big policeman on each side. Why handcuffs? For selling cloths and toys? As if I'd put up a fight if my hands were free!"

In a legal hearing one of the merchants complemented her on how bright and articulate she was and asked why she didn't simply look for a "decent" job. She told him: "I don't have a problem with this job. What I have a problem with is being told I have no right to work the way I want to. I don't want the merchants and police to get away with this kind of discrimination. I don't want people like me to keep experiencing police leaving our children on the sidewalk once they've arrested us and confiscating our products which we paid for with money we had scraped together for months!" —Anna Maillon



## "Free Trade" agreement is challenge to workers

by John Marcotte

"No matter how much you do, it's never enough." This is how workers daily express their knowledge of capital. "It's no use killing yourself; they never appreciate it." It's the same on every job. All bosses are the same. That is an objective fact of capitalism. It is capital speaking through the boss, that "werewolf hunger" for ever more unpaid hours of labor, the same "hunger" that expresses itself in Caterpillar's demand for half-pay workers.

Now the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) is coming down a fast track aimed at North American workers. I understand "free trade" has already hurt hundreds of thousands of Canadian workers, now unemployed due to U.S. "competition." Capital wants to pit U.S., Canadian and Mexican workers against each other.

### BEYOND OUR CONTROL?

What do we do? It seems completely beyond our control. Our union leaders are putting their hopes in Democratic politicians. Well, Bill Clinton, for one, is for Bush's "fast track" FTA.

The United Auto Workers (UAW) sent striking Mexican workers at General Motors-owned parts plants a \$15,000 contribution this year. The UAW, at best, sees Mexican workers as suffering, as needing our help, as objects of our help.

The UAW doesn't tell us about Mexican Ford workers' own radical union, the Ford Workers Democratic Movement, about plant occupations, about how Ford and the Mexican government and its union federation fear this so much they sent gun thugs to shoot up the workers inside the plant, and that Ford's number one demand was that the workers end all contact with workers in the U.S. and Canada. Mexican workers are not suffering objects. They are subjects, creators, source of new ideas for labor, new forms of organization, seeking to speak and act for themselves.

We may not be able to stop the FTA, but we can turn it into its opposite. The capitalists think the economy has to do with things, commodities. They see labor as a commodity, or "human capital," as they call us, but we are human beings. Only we can prove that. We must replace free trade in commodities with free trade in relations between human beings.

Capital wins in the short term if they pass the FTA, but they only win big if we let them convince us that Mexican workers are things, those that compete with us, take away our jobs. The challenge is for free trade in capital to be a spur to us to create a free association among Canadian, U.S. and Mexican workers.

### TIMES CALL FOR VISION

During the Civil War in the U.S., British workers, through their organization of mass meetings, prevented their government from aiding the slave South to ensure the source of cotton. British workers preferred to starve on one side of the Atlantic from lack of work than to

perpetuate slavery on the other side of the Atlantic.

These times we live in call for such action and a vision, such as had the First Workingmen's International Association, which makes that action possible. But even in an organization as historically great as the First International, when faced with the greatest revolution in its time, the Paris Commune, which moved to abolish wage labor, many members who were trade unionists did not measure up and refused to support it. It isn't a question of copying any model. We have to create our new new beginning, in solidarity and in thought.

When management on my job says to us, "Work harder, don't you want to save your jobs?" meaning, make the company more competitive, the workers say, "If we do more work, we are just putting a man out of a job." The conflict between capital and labor is irreconcilable. There is more wisdom in these workers' simple refusal to work harder than in all the reformers would have us demand from capitalism—stop the FTA, give us a 35-hour week for 40 hours pay to spread the work—reforms that capitalism in global crisis cannot give and survive. Much more "realistic" is the dialectic Marx discovered of capital and its opposite, "freely associated labor."

The wisdom of U.S., Mexican and Canadian workers is in need of developing itself, recognizing itself, in the dialectic of freedom of Marx's Humanism. Only that basis can solidarity explode into new beginnings for all of humanity.



Seven thousand workers at Kroger stores in the Detroit area are on strike against the company's proposals to hire more part-time workers at lower pay with no benefits, increase the vendors who stock their own shelves and reduce health care benefits. Even before the strike began, Kroger was taking applications for scabs.

## A worker dies, but work continues

Chicago, Ill.—Rene Avalos died on March 15 after falling 50 feet from a Chicago Transit Authority elevated track. He was a 36-year-old father of three and husband to the woman he brought over from his small town in Mexico more than ten years ago. No person who knew Rene will argue that he wasn't a nice guy.

Nice guy or not, to the company he worked for Rene was simply labor, a pair of arms which built railroads as fast as they could. Now those arms have been replaced, and Rene has been buried in his native land where only a handful of people will remember him.

**RENE ARRIVED TO WORK** at 11:00 p.m. on Saturday, March 14, expecting to put in his 12 hours and go home. At 1:15 a.m. Rene and another worker were removing catwalks in order to make way for new catwalks which were to be installed that night. Rene must have taken a wrong step and fell 50 feet to the ground taking another co-worker, Alejandro Amezola, with him. From the top of the bridge you could see blood running from Rene's head as this 36-year-old man laid there lifeless.

Several workers gathered around both men trying to comfort them until the ambulance arrived. One of the first workers on the scene had to ask another man who this was, even though they had worked together for several months, for Rene's face was splitting open from all the swelling.

The other man, Alejandro, looked around in shock while people kept telling him to lie still. After the ambulance was called and the CB waves were clear, a foreman working with his crew less than 200 feet away began to order up more ties. How could work stop for the sake of a dead man.

**AFTER THE AMBULANCE** took Rene and Alejandro, work resumed as normal. It seemed almost foreign to Rene's co-workers that someone had died in the hospital with the ambulance. We had to keep working without thinking about the fact that a friend had died in front of our eyes. The project engineer was understanding about the fact that one man couldn't bring himself to return to work, but no other person was asked how shaken the accident had left them. It was assumed they would "Take it like men."

Jokes were constantly being told about dying on the job and leaving a rich wife who would spend all the

money on boyfriends, but no one ever took them seriously. Well, those jokes are no longer told by members of that crew. The possibility that more people may die for the sake of \$18 an hour has been tattooed into Rene's former co-workers' minds. They are no longer thinking "Wow, \$18 an hour"; they are finally asking themselves "if it is worth it. Who reaps the benefits when they are the ones putting their asses on the line like trapeze artists? Before installing new railroad, you must first take the old one apart, and that makes stepping spaces scarce.

The morning of the accident, a worker asked the project engineer what was going to be done as far as safety was concerned. He promised to look into it. Nothing has been done, and on April 4 a worker from that same contracting company received a shock from the live third rail laborers must work around.

—20-year-old Latino worker

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## Callous coal companies

Morgantown, W. Va.—An explosion ripped the outside preparation plant of Consolidation Coal Company's Blacksville No. 1 mine on March 19, killing four men and injuring several others. This mine was closed last year, and outside contract crews were in the process of sealing the mine.

The cause of the blast was thought to be an accumulation of methane gas behind a shaft cap that was being welded in place; the explosion was set off by an acetylene torch. This mine was known to be one of the gassiest in West Virginia. It is incredible to think that a crew would be working in such a potentially deadly situation without monitoring for the presence of gas.

State mine inspectors recorded 67 safety violations at this mine in 1991; federal inspectors, 17 violations since Oct. 1 of last year. Mine deaths in West Virginia have been increasing steadily in the past three years. This year there already have been seven mine deaths.

Massive coal company fraud was recently disclosed, which involved tampering with devices that measure the amount of coal dust in the mines. Hundreds of coal companies either cleaned the devices before sending them to testing laboratories or sent in fake samples. The companies were heavily fined by federal enforcement agencies, but are fighting against the fines, claiming they are too excessive.

Black lung, caused by inhaling large amounts of coal dust, does not kill as quickly as an explosion, but the effects are just as deadly and often horribly painful. The debilitating effects are not unlike those suffered by AIDS victims, with those affected withering away, unable to breathe or to ward off respiratory ailments.

Rank-and-file coal miners have always demanded the right to enforce safety regulations and have always been denied. They know that is the only way to make the mines safe. As long as the responsibility for mine safety remains in the hand of coal operators, so long will the carnage measured in the lives and limbs of miners continue.

—Andy Phillips

## 'American Dream'

by Felix Martin, Labor Editor

I recently saw a movie documentary, called "American Dream," made by Barbara Kopple, about the strike against Hormel in Austin, Minn. in 1986-87. Kopple was filming the workers in Austin even before the strike began and continued on through the strike and as the union, Local P-9, had to separate from the International leadership of the United Food and Commercial Workers union, which wanted P-9 to cave in to the company's demands for cutbacks.

The difference between the thinking of the rank and file and the thinking of the union leadership has perhaps never been shown more clearly in the last decade than during that strike. Yet although Kopple does show the contrast between the International and the Local, I still felt that she had missed the boat.

Most of the movie was based on the contrast between different leaders, the leaders of the International and the leadership of Local P-9. Yet there was so much creative thinking and acting by the Hormel workers during their strike, as they spread out all across the country to gather support from other rank-and-file workers everywhere. The movie shows nothing of that. There is a view of the workers only as fear, not as Reason, and the movie leaves nothing for workers to build on from out of the defeat of the Hormel strike.

I thought of what Marx wrote about the greatest revolution in his lifetime, the Paris Commune, when for a brief six weeks the working people of Paris took over the city and ran it themselves. The revolution was defeated by the capitalists, who slaughtered men, women and children in one of the worst massacres in history.

This struggle lives on today, because Marx wrote about how the workers took power, how they abolished the old forms of government, the army, the factory, and ran things themselves, and in each factory at the end of each day the workers met and decided the next day's work. Workers need to know this history. We need to know what we are capable of, at the same time as we work through why we have not yet been able to win.

The workers could bring this government to a standstill if we really meant to do that. Right now I believe we haven't worked out how to begin and what is needed for the 1990s. We need more than slogans, like "Organize!" We need to do a lot of deep digging into history and into Marx's philosophy of freedom.

Read more about the Paris Commune in

## Marxism and Freedom by Raya Dunayevskaya

"What was new was that the Commune, by releasing labor from the confines of value production, showed how people associated freely without the despotism of capital or the mediation of things. Contrast the expansiveness of that movement with the mutilation of labor under capitalism, which robs the workers of all individuality and reduces them merely to a component of labor in general." —from Chapter Six: "The Paris Commune Illuminates and Deepens the Content of Capital"

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## CONDITIONS OF LIFE AND LABOR ON MAY DAY, 1992

May Day is the one true holiday where workers of the world did unite over 100 years ago. The fact that this holiday was American-born has been wiped from the minds of labor here in America. It was made to seem something foreign. This country alienates labor from its roots by not allowing us to know our own history. But May Day does not seem foreign to me. As a child, going to a segregated school in Alabama in the 1960s, during my first, second and third grade years, I remember celebrating May 1 at school with fun and games, a picnic, baseball and ring around the Maypole. I wonder how, as Blacks in a segregated and reactionary South, we could hold onto our roots in such a beautiful celebration of Spring and life/labor. But by 1965-66 we were told by the state to stop celebrating this "Communist" holiday. Today, I wonder how May Day can again relate to the historic Reason of labor.

Gene Ford  
California

In Los Angeles, what Marx called "lower and deeper" means the Spanish-speaking workers here who are very militant. The recent rally organized jointly by SEIU Local 399/Justice for Janitors and the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union Local 11 drew several hundred mainly Latino/a workers. It was very high-spirited—right in the midst of trimmed and proper Beverly Hills. I spoke to several women who work as maids and kitchen staff at the Beverly Hilton. They were fighting management's attempt to take away health care benefits for dependents and want a clause guaranteeing that if a hotel is sold the new management has to accept the current unionized work force. The general feeling was expressed by one woman who told me: "They are trying to make us afraid we'll lose our jobs when it's so hard to get another one. If we're afraid of that, we'll get nothing.

We are not afraid.

Supporter  
Los Angeles

All the issues of why we are striking Kroger grocery stores have not come out. It isn't only over pay, although we haven't had a raise in ten years and what Kroger is offering is pitiful (\$1.50 over four years). I have 28 years in, and now Kroger is threatening to tamper with our pensions. They want to get rid of every full-time worker down the road. But does everyone understand that you can't support yourself or your family on \$4 and \$5 an hour with no benefits? They want us to give up everything we worked to get, and they are threatening our jobs with scabs. Everyone who says they need a job should know this could happen to them one day, and they could be out here. We have gotten a lot of support with people not shopping here.

Striking grocery worker  
Detroit

Editor's note: See picture, p. 3

The story of a young Black man I met at the unemployment office in Oakland sums up the whole economy. He used to work for a bank as a computer programmer. He had gone to computer trade school "to get set" for what he thought would be a safe thing, the wave of the future. After being on the job three years, new automation hit the banking industry and his job (along with tens of thousands in California alone) disappeared. That's not when I met him at the unemployment office. He had managed to find a junky job at a place that rents heavy equipment. I met him when the construction industry stopped dead, and he lost that job, too.

J. Mills  
Oakland, Cal.

It is no secret that the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer but recently analyzed statistics show that the extent of this polarization is far greater than had been realized before. From 1977 to 1989, the real (inflation-adjusted) incomes of the richest 1% of the U.S. population rose 77%, and those of the richest fifth rose 29%, while the average incomes of the poorest 40% of the population were actually falling. A full 60% of the increase in the income

"pie" during this period went to the richest 1% of families, and almost all the extra income—94%—was reaped by the richest 20% of families. I recently heard Leszek Kolakowski, the ex-Marxist humanist turned Reaganite, say that Marx's prediction of increasing polarization has been proven wrong. I wonder what planet Kolakowski lives on?

A. Anielewicz  
New York

While the Caterpillar strike was going on, the GM Van Nuys UAW local sponsored a march and rally for jobs and health care which was really just a political gathering to get out the vote next November and defeat George Bush. Sure, the International President, Bieber, told us the Caterpillar strike needed our backing—but all he was talking about was our dollars (which workers have so little of after each week's payroll mugging by the capitalists). To the bureaucrats the workers were just there to be used, an audience to make speeches to. But the workers were saying the opposite of what the leaders were saying. The rank and filers were talking about a general strike. The leaders should have been the audience to hear what the workers were saying.

Retiree  
La Habre, Cal.

The membership of AFSCME, Detroit's largest union of city workers, seems to support their union's rejection of the massive concessions asked for in Mayor Coleman A. Young's April 14 budget message. One clerical worker said she didn't trust the administration and a chief steward told me, "We are not going to give up without a fight." While most workers acknowledge that Detroit's economic problems are largely caused by the Bush administration and the economy, most reject Mayor Young's projects for curing the city's ills. Though he has proposed cutting his own salary (\$130,000) by 20%, workers remain unimpressed. Perhaps the trial of former Police Chief William Hart on charges of embezzling \$2.6 million in anti-drug funds; a Public Housing Department with a vacancy rate of 46%, now threatened by HUD that funds will be withheld; and a Law Department that regularly loses millions of dollars in settlements simply by failing to show up in court, have something to do with it.

S.V.G.  
Detroit

Marx said that capitalism would crumble piece by piece. Today that crumbling seems absolute. State-capitalism in East Europe has collapsed. The U.S. is in a state of corruption. It is spewing out of the White House like a volcano. Congress is leaving the government like rats leaving a dangerous mine. If this corrupt monster isn't destroyed I think it could take the world down with it.

Ex-miner  
California

The economic crisis is about the unfreedom we have as workers. To be laid off, deprived of our livelihood, bumped to another shift, to have to travel long distances to keep a job—none of this is "free choice." We are in the realm of necessity not freedom. What is so exciting about the classes News and Letters has been holding is that I am seeing that how we finally leave the realm of necessity and enter the realm of freedom is what Hegel and Marx and dialectics is all about.

Marcotte  
New York

### THE BRITISH SCENE

Early in April the sea loch on which our house stands was lit up by the huge dry dock travelling up to take its place in preparation for the Trident submarine coming to Coveport. It is within this dry dock that the nuclear missiles are loaded. It's hard to describe the special pain of seeing these life-destroying activities. It is made more acute by the glorious natural setting of mountains and lochs in which they take place. When Trident was launched on March 4, the Scottish Peace Camp organized bonfires all over the United Kingdom—an ancient system of warning of danger. In Glasgow my peace group or-

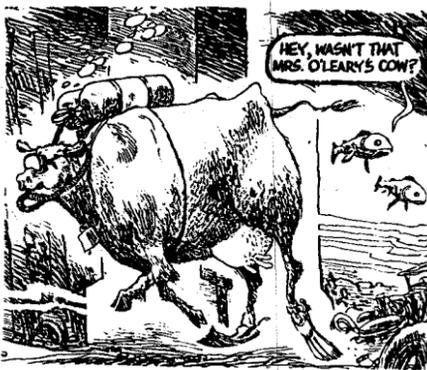
## Readers' Views

ganized a meeting after which we led a candlelight procession to the ministry of defense building where we lit a small bonfire and made personal statements of opposition to Trident and to war.

Peace activist  
Scotland

Regardless of the opportunity for disarmament afforded by the end of the Cold War, all the established parties want Britain to have a fleet of Trident nuclear missile-bearing submarines, which will carry a greater number of warheads and more accurate ones, than the existing Polaris. The debate has been narrowed down to whether there should be four vessels (Tories and Liberal Democrats) or three (Labour).

Richard Bunting  
Oxford



### GREAT CHICAGO FLOOD

The morning after the disastrous flood in the Chicago Loop, I got a snootful of our "free enterprise" system. The top management in my office decided to charge our workers vacation time for getting in late that day, and then had the gall to call this a "liberal leave policy." As if that weren't enough, our cleaning contractor doesn't want to pay its staff for the time they spent standing outside, unable to get into the damn building!

Loop worker  
Chicago

What happened with the Chicago flood made me think of the "fetishism of science" that Franklin Dmitryev wrote of in the April N&L in his review of *The Truth About Chernobyl*. Dmitryev wrote about how "the ideology of nuclear safety flew in the face of all evidence of the catastrophic reality..." It must have been that same fetishism of science at work in Chicago when so many people knew months in advance that the tunnels underneath the Chicago River were likely to collapse and yet not a damn thing was done.

Women's Liberationist  
Chicago

The collapse of the economy, worldwide, and the collapse of the tunnel under Chicago are not separate questions. Our cities are crumbling because at this degenerate stage capitalism sees no profit in investing in the infrastructure. It is sure to get worse—everywhere.

Professor  
Indiana

### LATIN AMERICAN 'DEMOCRACY'

The article by Eugene Walker and Erica Rae on Mexico in the April issue of *News & Letters* is a reflection of what is happening all over Latin America.

Labor conditions and popular organizations vary from one country to the other but the ideological void in the so called "Left" is similar in the whole region. The description of the conference which took place at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) is significant. The "leftists" intellectuals talk in the name of the oppressed and, at the same time, are embracing the comforts of the free-market, comfort that only a few can enjoy. Their anti-imperialism is only rhetoric. The question raised in the article—"how to unfurl a truly revolutionary banner, a philosophical rudder that could provide direction for a revolutionary opposition—is consciously ignored. Any attempt to put on the table the question of the oppression of women, Blacks, the native people of

the Americas, lesbian and gays, youth, etc. is rejected. Thus, the "Interminable Conquest" is maintained, institutionalized not only by the rulers, but also by the traditional Left.

The coups in Haiti and Peru and the systematic repression in Venezuela are the response to the uprising of the people from the bottom, through community based organizations. They are not a response to leftist or "communist" parties (as it is marvelously described in Lou Turner's article on Haiti in the same issue). The oppressive conditions imposed on the masses in Latin America are a response to the struggle on the part of the people against the new world order (which is really pretty old).

Carlos  
Argentina

No doubt Fujimoro and the military in Peru knew the U.S. would not seriously impede them, in spite of its rhetoric about "democracy." It shows what a sham electoral politics are when nothing in the country has really changed. The military, unaltered since the days of dictatorship, can come back into power any time it feels the need as it has in Chile and many other countries of Latin America.

Revolutionary lawyer  
New York

### RUSSIA'S 'NEW REALITY'

I was away from my home city from last August to January, and am trying to adapt to the new reality here. The first thing that shocks you are the beggars on the streets, especially the central streets—something you never saw before. Then, of course, the prices are a shock. I cannot comprehend how people will survive.

When I came back I learned that several opposition organizations were planning a "hunger march" to the city council building. But they had poor support because the organizers were mostly former Communist Party bureaucrats. More influential are those who are active in labor unions and were members of the movement against Nomenklatura before the Aug. 19 attempted coup. The process is similar to Polish Solidarity, which had been split into many factions from left to right. A dangerous thing in our political life now is the recent Congress of the so-called "Patriotic Forces" united into something like a front under chauvinist and nationalist slogans.

I have the impression that everybody is waiting for something to happen.

Intellectual  
Russia



ARAB  
AND  
ISRAELI

The situation in Israel, socially and economically, is quite bad. Poor people are getting poorer and rich people are getting richer. That's the policy of a right wing party like the one in power here. Maybe the other big party will win in the next elections. It is not that there is much difference between them—but at least the Labor Party will talk about giving back the occupied Arab territories for Peace. Likud says they will never be given back, and keeps setting up Jewish settlements to make it difficult. They spend a lot of money on them and sell the flats cheap to make people want to buy them. It is money taken away from the great social needs of our country: education is in a bad way; unemployment gets worse and worse. After the June election there is going to be a terrible economic crisis.

Peace activist  
Israel

Editor's note: The button used as our logo above, depicting a child shouting at Israeli and Arab leaders to talk and listen to each other, is available for \$2 from Artists for Middle East Peace, 144 Moody St., Waltham, MA 02154.

**'KARL KORSCH: RE-CREATION OR DILUTION OF MARXISM?'**

So many Marxists have tried to act as if "Western Marxism" was the "genuine" development of Marxism as against Lenin and the Bolsheviks who were accused of ossifying and statifying Marxism. What Dunayevskaya's piece on Karl Korsch reveals, is that far from being a re-creation of the Marxian dialectic for the 20th century, Korsch's attempt to project the Marxian dialectic did not reach as far as Lenin's dialectic noted books as Lenin's dialectic did not provide a revolutionary pole of attraction when Stalinism transformed the Russian Revolution. Today's crisis in Marxism cannot be laid only at the doorstep of the collapsed state-capitalist regimes of the East. The failure of Western Marxism to provide a revolutionary alternative not only to private capitalism, but to state-capitalism calling itself Marxism, bears responsibility as well.

Revolutionary journalist  
Illinois

\* \* \*

Reading Dunayevskaya's letter on Karl Korsch in the April issue, after reading Neda Azad's "The Origins of Karl Marx's Concept of Praxis" (March N&L) brought to mind the way that Karl Korsch had cited Marx's 1841 Dissertation in his classic 1923 work, *Marxism and Philosophy*, contrasts to how Dunayevskaya has taken it up. Korsch referred to, "Marx's doctoral thesis which is a general critique of attempts to explain a philosopher's mistakes[sic] by 'questioning his individual consciousness' instead of objectively 're-constructing his essential forms of consciousness, erecting them into a definite structure and meaning and thereby surpassing them.'"

Korsch substitutes 'mistakes' for 'accommodation to reality,' which was the specific aspect to which Marx was pointing as the problematic. Remarkable here is that substitution of a mere single word anticipates Korsch's conclusion to his argument several pages later that, "The emergence of Marxist theory

is...only the 'other side' of the emergence of the real proletarian movement..."

Graduate student  
New York

The opposition that Dunayevskaya discussed in the April N&L between "facticity" and dialectic reminded me of post-Marx Marxists who want to "ecologize" Marxism by equating exploitation of nature with exploitation of labor. Such an equation depends on the well established post-Marx Marxist disregard of labor as not just object of exploitation but subject of revolution. Just as importantly, it reflects the way Korsch narrowed Marx's Marxism to the "other side" of the proletarian movement, since "ecological" and other post-Marx Marxists take for granted the fact that, chronologically, Marx did not live in the 20th century; "therefore," we must update his theory by introducing some fundamental revisions (e.g., a "second contradiction of capitalism" between relations of production and conditions of production), which omit revolutionary subjectivity!

Raya was right on target on what that misses: "The core of the dialectic—the transformation of reality—doesn't stop at any one period. Marx's Marxism, his Promethean vision, produced ever new moments which the 'western Marxists' failed to work out for their epoch."

Anti-nuke activist  
Illinois

**"WHAT IS SOCIALISM?"**

Last month I participated in a panel on "What is Socialism? A Vision for the 1990s" organized by the Haymarket Alliance at the University of Illinois at Champaign. It was attended by 25 people and we had a very lively discussion. During the discussion, a speaker from the Revolutionary Communist Party claimed that Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution and the Shining Path Guerrilla group in Peru, are an expression of Marx's idea of ending the division between mental and manual labor! It was

shocking that anyone could think Marx's vision meant putting people in forced labor camps for 18 hours a day and then drilling "Marxism-Leninism" into their heads in "socialist education classes" at night. For Marx, ending the division between mental and manual labor meant making the idea of human liberation the determinant for your life.

Sheila Fuller  
Chicago

\* \* \*

While Raya Dunayevskaya raises many good points in her criticisms of socialism or "state-capitalism," as it has been practiced in the USSR and elsewhere, she seems to be "sitting on the fence," criticizing from an abstract Hegelian/idealist perspective, and like Rosa Luxemburg, whom she admires, worshipping the "spontaneity" of the masses. This negates the vital need for a Leninist-type vanguard Party of "professional revolutionaries" to lead the struggle to overthrow capitalism. The masses can't completely, of their own accord, transform all human social/property relations and ideas without good leadership armed with the science of Marxism. As you may note, I'm still sympathetic to the Revolutionary Communist Party, the leading Maoist organization in the U.S. which has endured since its Founding Congress in 1975, while other Maoist groups have failed and fallen apart. The RCP in their weekly *Revolutionary Worker* recently did an article on the ideological basis of homosexuality; for them both feminism and humanism are expressions of bourgeois ideology—no matter how "left" sounding they appear.

Maoist-sympathizer  
California

\* \* \*

When I finally read *Capital* about a decade ago, it was obvious to me that Marx was a humanist. I've always wondered why others don't see this, or say that he wasn't.

"Socialist scholar"  
New York

\* \* \*

I first met Marxist-Humanism last year during the anti-war movement, when I was trying to obtain conscientious objector status in the military be-

cause I refused to go to fight in the Persian Gulf. I want now to resume contact with you because the discussions we had then have stayed in my mind more than anything else I heard said during that time, when I was among lots of radicals and revolutionaries. Others seem to talk about revolution as a pinnacle that they are striving for, but if all you aim for is that high point, then what are you doing so that after the revolution it's not going to be just one more group of leaders taking over power for themselves?

War resister  
Texas



**WOMEN'S LIBERATION**

At the March for Women's Lives in Washington, D.C., I spoke to three high school women from Connecticut who took a big risk by sneaking out of their conservative boarding school with the help of their teacher because, as a Black woman said, "We just had to come." This kind of determination and spiritedness was felt throughout the march from the songs that were sung—"Which Side Are You On" and "Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around"—to people sitting on top of a stop light shaking their fists, and other people dancing in the street. The signs women had made clearly revealed the passion for new relationships between human beings. One of my favorites was "Keep Your Laws Off Of My Mind and Body."

Young Women's Liberationist  
Illinois

\* \* \*

Bush is smart. He may slightly modify some of his positions on abortion because he fears the women's vote after 700,000 marched on Washington. But he still knows he can divide and conquer, especially dividing by class and invoking racism. He recently announced federal support for Wisconsin's welfare reform, which is that women receiving welfare will lose money if they have another child. Will the organized women's movement take up that?

Anne Jaclard  
New York

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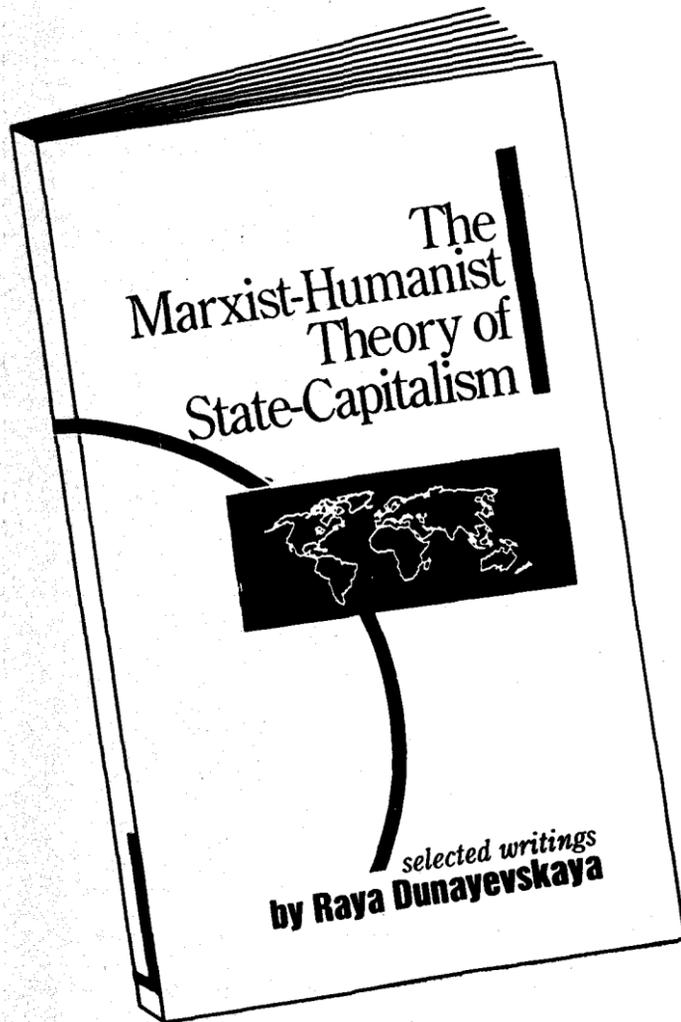
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# The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism



From our Introduction

## The 1990s vantage point

....In many respects it is hard to imagine a historic moment more different from our own than that of the 1940s, the period in which [Raya Dunayevskaya's] theory of state-capitalism was first elaborated. The 1940s, after all, marked the consolidation and growth of Communism, whereas the 1990s signify its collapse. And whereas in the 1940s Left and Right alike embraced the fetishism of the Plan as the solution for all social ills, in the 1990s it is the fetishism of the market that holds all in tow. Far from being an expression of a mere epiphenomenal change, this ideological shift reflects the fact (as Dunayevskaya put it in 1986) that "political crises reflect the general absolute law of capitalist production differently in different historic periods."

Despite the vast difference between these two historic moments, a reexamination of Dunayevskaya's theory of state-capitalism is called for, precisely because of the need to battle the illusion that the collapse of the planned economy and one-party state in East Europe and the Soviet Union signifies that "free market capitalism" defines the horizons of humanity's future. In the 1940s, Dunayevskaya broke through the prevailing illusion that the rise of the planned economy and one-party state defined the horizons of humanity's future by reestablishing the Marxian economic categories for the analysis of modern society. In jamming Marx's Marxism up against the new reality, she penetrated beneath the surface level of society, where the contrast of private vs. collective property appears decisive, and probed into the inner class contradictions. She thereby discerned new forces of revolt that heralded the dissolution of the "new" exploitative system.

**THIS METHODOLOGY** of discerning a path to the future by jamming together Marx's Marxism with new realities has taken on new importance in light of today's reality. What helps define the nature of this reality is the way the "Soviet" rulers, faced with an insurmountable economic morass, jettisoned their "Communist" ideology and embraced "free market" capitalism without, however, giving up their position as "masters" over the process of production. Whereas in the depression-ridden 1930s a new socio-economic expression of capitalism emerged, state-capitalism, no such radical transformation in social structures in evident today. We are instead witnessing the effort to restructure state-capitalism's existing institutions as part of extracting ever more unpaid hours of labor from the workers. Capitalism has found it increasingly necessary to utilize ideological as well as material means to achieve this restructuring, such as trying to convince humanity that the existing conditions of life and labor are our permanent future. This ideological pollution, which the Left has increasingly fallen victim to, has helped bring forth a whole retrogressive "changed world."

This situation demands confronting today's realities with a deeper comprehension of Marx's Marxism than was available to radicals in the 1940s. Whereas in the 1940s it was possible to chart a path to the future by bringing the power of the Marxian economic categories to bear on the analysis of the new realities, in the 1990s it becomes necessary to be rooted in our age's discovery of the totality of Marx's Marxism, which never separated economics and politics from philosophy, if we are to win the battle against the rulers' effort to kill off the

very Idea of Freedom.

For this reason, our reexamination of the theory of state-capitalism is with eyes of today, i.e., from the vantage point of Dunayevskaya's full development of Marxist-Humanism. The development of this body of ideas, which has its roots in the state-capitalist theory of the 1940s, led to the rediscovery of what Marxism was to Marx—a philosophy of "revolution in permanence." Rooting ourselves in our age's rediscovery of Marx's Marxism as a philosophy of revolution, as against the way post-Marx Marxists have progressively narrowed that heritage, can help us work out a path to a freedom-filled future in the 1990s....

## From Part I—Not by Practice Alone: The Movement from Theory

Heretofore we criticized the theory of state-capitalism by stressing that, without developing into the philosophy of Marxist-Humanism, it was incomplete. While that is true, it would have been impossible to get to the philosophy of Marxist-Humanism without the theory of state-capitalism. We would certainly have had to find the important missing link in our encounter with state-capitalist society, as is all too obvious from Herbert Marcuse and other Left intellectuals who, without the ground worked out by the state-capitalist theory, had no theory for criticizing "Soviet" regimes and, by no accident whatever, fell into the trap of apologists for these regimes. (See my critique of Marcuse's *Soviet Marxism* titled "Intellectuals in the Age of State-Capitalism," *News & Letters*, June-July 1961.)

Because state-capitalism is not just a Russian but a world phenomenon, it gave capitalism a new lease on life. While the first appearance of state-capitalism was via counter-revolution, transforming the workers' state into a state-capitalist society, the objective pull from world production and the world market imposed itself on the new national revolutions in the post-World War II era, as they remained in a statist framework. That absolute contradiction remains to plague us. Thus, with

took the genius of Marx to extract political economy from its fetishism of commodities. Has the revolutionary movement freed itself from the fetishism of a form of a product of labor (a commodity) only in order to create a new fetishism of a form of property (stified property)?

—Is Russia a Part of the Collectivist Epoch of Society?

The fundamental error of those who assume that a single capitalist society is not governed by the same laws as a society composed of individual capitalists lies in a failure to realize that what happens in the market is merely the consequences of the inherent contradictions in the process of production. A single capitalist society does not have an illimitable market. The market for consumption goods, as we showed, is strictly limited to the luxuries of the rulers and the necessities of the workers when paid at value. The innermost cause of crisis is that labor, in the process of production and not in the market, produces a greater value than it itself is.

The Nature of the Russian Economy

## From Part III—State-Capitalist Theory Within Marxist-Humanism

...What has happened to the world economy ever since the Depression caused the total collapse of private capitalism. The truth is that the only way capitalism could save itself, and then launch into World War II, was to bow to the State Plan. It isn't Plan, Plan, Plan, but State, State, State that marked the new, the ultimate stage of capitalism. By whatever name it went—whether Roosevelt's "New Deal," or Japan's "co-prosperity sphere," or, after World War II, DeGaulle's constitutional authoritarianism—state intervention was here to stay. It achieved total control in its Russian form—Stalinism—only because it was easier to do it there since the revolution had destroyed Tsarism.

—Andropov's Ascendancy Reflects Final Stage of State-Capitalism's Degeneracy

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the very first test which came in 1961 with the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba, we felt it imperative to declare that, although we had already shown that Cuba was being pulled into the state-capitalist orbit of Russia, we were under no circumstances going to let that keep us from fighting U.S. imperialism's invasion of that country and its revolution to free itself of the U.S. imperialist stranglehold....

## From Part II—Origin and Development of State-Capitalist Theory

"When one speaks of private property, one thinks of something outside man," wrote the young Marx in 1844. "When one speaks of labor, one has to do immediately with man himself. The new formulation of the question already involves its solution." But, as we saw, that new formulation of the question involved the solution not when the bourgeois economists tackled the problem, but when the revolutionist Marx did. The difference between the science of economics "as such," as a science of objective elements, wages, value, etc., and the Marxian science of economics is that for Marxism, all economic categories are social categories and thus in the science of economics it incorporates the subjective element, the receiver of wages, the source of value, in other words, the laborer. You cannot dissociate property forms from production relations.

—Labor and Society

to keep his fingers on the pulse of human relations, that is, social relations of production, and gets lost in the world of objective things. It keeps its eyes glued on the phenomena, property and politics, instead of keeping them focused on the essence: labor and production. It

...even if one didn't wish to accept our analysis of state-capitalism as the total contradiction, absolute antagonism in which is concentrated nothing short of revolution, and counter-revolution, one would have to admit that the totality of the contradictions compels a total philosophic outlook. Today's dialectics is not just philosophy, but dialectics of liberation, of self-emancipation by all forces of revolution—proletariat, Black, women, youth. The beginning and end of all revolves around labor. Therein is the genius of Marx, who, though he wrote during a "free enterprise, private property, competitive capitalistic era," saw that, instead of plan vs. market chaos being the absolute opposites, the chaos in the market was, in fact, the expression of the hierarchic, despotic plan of capital at the point of production. "Materialism" without dialectics is "idealism," bourgeois idealism of the state-capitalist age.

—Today's Epigones Who Try to Truncate Marx's *Capital*

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## From the writings of Raya Dunayevskaya Marxist-Humanist Archives

*Editor's note: The rising tide of racism throughout the world gives a 1968 letter Raya Dunayevskaya wrote to Harry McShane great relevancy today. It was in May of that year that white dockworkers and wholesale market workers in London and Liverpool walked off the job in protest against British immigration policies which had allowed Black and Asian workers entry into Britain. In so doing they supported the demagogic appeals of the right-wing Tory, Enoch Powell, whose racist speeches were having an impact among sections of the white working class. Upon reading the analysis of the situation in Harry McShane's newsletter, *The Marxist-Humanist*, Raya Dunayevskaya sent him the following letter, dated June 11, 1968. The original letter is held in *The Harry McShane Collection*, National Museum of Labour History, Manchester, England. It also appears in a special issue of *The Marxist-Humanist*, July 1968, and is included in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection #4000*.*

Dear Harry,

The June issue of *The Marxist-Humanist* just arrived and, if I may, I would like to explain why I consider the article on Powellism quite inadequate. Naturally, Marxist-Humanists "must spread the revolutionary message" and thereby win over the workers, including those who showed their own racist prejudices by coming out in support of the Tory Enoch Powell.

But that hardly packs the concrete punch that Marx taught us to deliver when trade unionists take a reactionary position as they took in his day, both on the Irish question and on the Paris Commune. Every British trade unionist who left the Working Men's International Association for its enthusiastic support of the Paris Commune, Marx excoriated and, in his place, put the name of a Communist. As far as the "Irish Question" is concerned—and this, as I shall show later, is not as far removed from the race question today as might appear on the surface—here is what Marx wrote:

*"The English working class...can never do anything decisive here in England until...it not only makes common cause with the Irish, but actually takes the initiative in dissolving the Union established in 1801, and replacing it by a free federal relationship. And, indeed, this must be done, not as a matter of sympathy with Ireland, but as a demand made in the interests of the English proletariat. If not, the English people will remain tied to the leading-strings of the ruling classes."*

I should like to approach the question of race at the present moment by (1) showing the historic background of the National Question in general and the Negro question in particular during World War I and during the Russian Revolution; (2) by comparing [Winston] Churchill's and Labor's stand during World War II; and (3) by raising the question of the African Revolutions as the only challenge to the decrepit "West" of the Suez War and the totalitarian Communism of the "East," which bloodily put down the Hungarian Freedom Fighters. It is time we faced the question that we are all products of the historic period in which we live, and that includes holding on to some of the ideas of the ruling class even when we fight exploitation.

**YOU ARE WELL ACQUAINTED**, I am sure, with the Marxist position on the National Question, that "in principle" most stood for the right of self-determination of nations, and yet once the Russian Revolution succeeded, some Bolsheviks opposed it as "a step backward." Lenin, on the other hand, even before the Russian Revolution, insisted that "the dialectic of history and the dialectic of revolution" was such that the Easter Rebellion of the Irish played the vanguard role of bringing the proletarian revolution forward front of the historic stage. That is when he was out of power, of course.

He did not change when he was in power and [Nikolai] Bukharin then opposed giving some of the national minorities in Russia their freedom. On the contrary, he took issue with Bukharin both in content and even in the matter of language. Thus, when his co-leader dared bring in the question of the Hottentots [Khoi-Khoi], Lenin replied:

*"When Comrade Bukharin said, 'We can recognize this right in some cases,' I even wrote down that he had included in the list the Hottentots, the Bushmen and the Indians. Hearing this enumeration, I thought, how is it that Comrade Bukharin has forgotten a small trifle, the Bashkirs? There are no Bushmen in Russia, nor have I heard that the Hottentots have laid claim to an autonomous republic, but we have Bashkirs, Kirghiz and a number of other peoples, and to these we cannot deny recognition. We cannot deny it to a single one of the peoples living within the boundaries of the former Russian Empire...."*

*"Scratch some Communists and you will find Great-Russian chauvinists...."*

*"The Bashkirs distrust the Great Russians because the Great Russians are more cultured and have utilized their culture to rob the Bashkirs. That is why the term Great Russian is synonymous with the terms 'oppressor,' 'rogue' to Bashkirs in those remote places...."*

*The past keeps fast hold of us, grasps us with a thousand tentacles, and does not allow us to take a single forward step, or compels us to take these steps badly in the way we are taking them."*

Now, in contrast to Churchill who had answered India's demands for independence by the arrogant "I

didn't become the King's Prime Minister to preside over the dismemberment of the Empire," British labor correctly branded him for the imperialist and their own oppressor that he was. India gained its independence, as did the African colonies, during Labor's reign. What has happened since then?

You, of course, know the answer better than I do: the Labor Government has made such a mess of the situation since they returned to power—the unemployment, the wage freeze, the traveling in company with American imperialism on the barbarous Vietnam war, all this and more has brought out the very worst features of racism, not only in the ruling class but also in parts of the working class—as if the West Indian immigrant, the British citizen of Indian or Pakistani descent, or the African student had brought these misfortunes on the British working class.

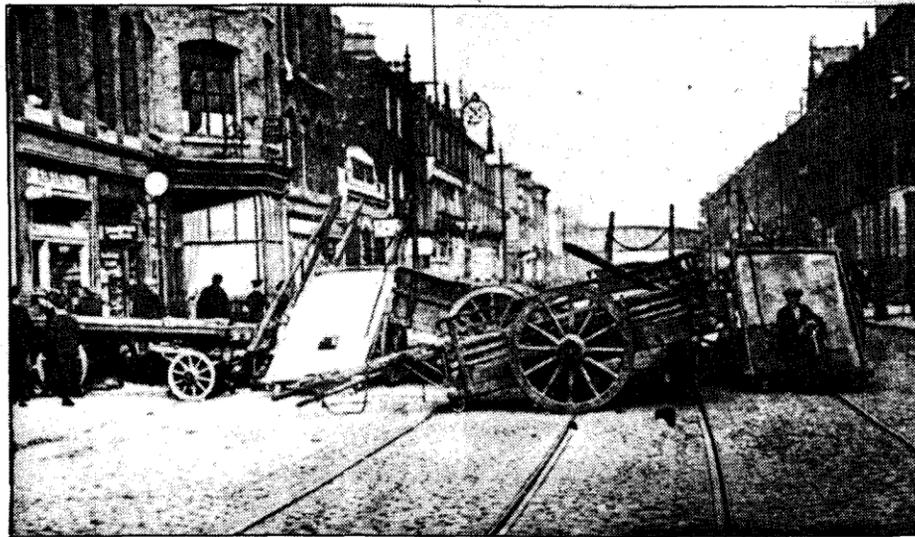
It goes without saying that the exploitative classes love it when the working people of the world fight among themselves and so make the rule of their tormenters easier. My point, however, is that it is not enough to show that the capitalists have always lived by the principle "divide and rule." We must tell the proletariat of the technologically developed world they lived largely on the crumbs from the imperialist table which was so well set because imperialism lived off the fat of the land from the technologically under-developed countries. Marx showed the relationship between labor's struggle for freedom and the fact that slavery was still in existence in Africa, in Asia, and the oppressed minorities within the developed country.

**THIS IS WHY MARX** hailed the British proletariat when they said that they would rather starve than perpetuate slavery on the other side of the Atlantic, i.e., in South USA. And this is why he called them a "bourgeoisified proletariat" when they moved away from that principle when it came to the establishment of a totally new form of society: the Paris Commune. He then moved away from the skilled workers to the unskilled, from the institutionalized workers to the unorganized, from what Lenin was to call "aristocracy of labor" to what Marx had called "deeper and lower into

# When racism and narrow nationalism grip the proletariat

the masses," to find the true revolutionary core who would stand not just for reforms but for revolution.

What has happened since the end of the 1950s when Great Britain embarked on its imperialist adventure in Suez, and Russia (with the help of China) on its destruction of the Hungarian Revolution, is the defeatism that always follows lost revolutions. Instead of looking down upon the "immigrants," the British, the American, and the east European, ought to hail the birth of the new Third World, especially the African Revolutions. We should hail them for once again showing us



A street barricade in Dublin during the 1916 Irish Easter week uprising.

the power of the ideas of freedom, and that the will to freedom, even when unarmed and facing the mightiest empires, can win.

The struggle for the minds of men is still the mightiest weapon of all. And now that the French proletariat and the French students have shown that these forces of freedom have not been destroyed in technologically advanced lands, it is all the more quintessential that the British proletariat rise up to its full height and, as their ancestors showed the way to the first Working Men's International, so they should now pave a new road of world solidarity between themselves and all the "immigrants" of the world. The first step in that direction is the recognition of the fact that many of them have been repeating the reactionary ideas of their own exploiters.

Comradely yours,  
Raya

\* Letter From Karl Marx to Ludwig Kugelmann, November 29, 1869.  
\*\* V.I. Lenin, Speeches to the Eighth Congress of the Russian Communist Party, March 19, 1919.

## Editorial

# De Klerk's 'mandate' in the shadow of massacres

South African President F.W. de Klerk's declaration that his March 17, whites-only referendum "closed the book on apartheid" has once again taken the political initiative away from the ANC (African National Congress) and signaled a new intensification of the undeclared civil war against the Black liberation movement.

Just as the white minority determined the fate of the Black majority in instituting the racist apartheid social structures at the end of World War II when the Afrikaner National Party came to power, so de Klerk, the inheritor of that fascist legacy, believes the white minority can determine the political physiognomy of a "democratic" South Africa.

### 'INVISIBLE HAND' BEHIND DE KLERK MANDATE

The birth of de Klerk's "democracy" comes dripping with more blood than that attending the inception of apartheid. In the three weeks between his announcement of the all-white referendum to mandate his negotiations with the rival ANC and election day, some 300 Black South Africans were killed in government orchestrated violence. Clearly, white South Africa's historical fear of the "Black Peril" was being whipped up by the "invisible hand" of the South African Defense Forces and their Black surrogates, such that the majority of the rival Conservative Party constituency was frightened into going against the Conservative position and voted "yes."

On the eve of the March 17 referendum a new round of political violence erupted, this time in the poor Black working-class enclave of Alexandra. The calculated unleashing of state-sponsored terrorism in Alex exposes the illicit liaison between the government and Gatsha Buthelezi's Inkatha warlords. In the month of March alone 341 victims of Inkatha violence were admitted to the Alexandra Health Clinic. Some 200 Alex residents have been killed since last year when Inkatha moved into the migrant workers' hostels.

Inkatha practices at the level of common thuggery what it sees its benefactor, the National Party, practice at the state level. Both sit at the negotiating table espousing the rhetoric of "peace" while launching terror-

ism in the townships. And, of course, it buys time for de Klerk, the architect of this carrot and truncheon policy, to form political alliances to outflank his ANC rival or to co-opt it. Such time is bought with Black blood. The result? "It is clear that it would not be possible to hold, free and fair elections on a one-person-one-vote basis today in South Africa," according to a statement by a delegation from the International Commission of Jurists.

The attempt to create a center-right Christian Democratic Alliance with conservative political and religious organizations, such as the four-million-strong Black fundamentalist Zion Christian Church, has been the undisclosed aim of de Klerk since coming to power two and a half years ago. Just as apartheid South Africa was built on the backs of Black South Africa, so de Klerk's so-called "transition to democracy" comes dripping with Black South Africa's blood, even as he co-opts reformist elements in the Black community.

Toward that end he has unbanned anti-apartheid groups, including the South African Communist Party (SACP), released political prisoners, repealed apartheid laws and initiated the process of a "negotiated settlement" of "power sharing" with the Black majority. His March 17 referendum climaxed his seizing the initiative from the ANC.

### BLACK FUTURE IN PRESENT CRISIS

Nelson Mandela's warning before the election of civil war and "unprecedented turmoil" if whites didn't vote for de Klerk's referendum followed de Klerk's own warning to whites. De Klerk's skillful outmaneuvering of the ANC with his de Gaulle-like plebiscite effectively enlisted the ANC, once again, in his strategy to preserve white minority power. At every turn he has gotten Mandela and the ANC to fight him on his ground.

There could be no other outcome once the ANC turned its back on the high points reached by the mass struggle. Once the ANC sought what Kwame Nkrumah called the "political kingdom" of a "negotiated settlement" outside of the mass struggle; once it thought it could "negotiate" Black liberation; once the ANC effectively reduced the struggle for full human liberation to

(continued on page 10)

## Philosophic Dialogue

by F. Shelly

In Nadine Gordimer's latest novel *My Son's Story*, a key line repeated a number of times is "happy for battle," a line we find out later in the novel is from a letter from Rosa Luxemburg. Gordimer has used Luxemburg before in her work, especially in her novel *Burger's Daughter*, a point that Adrienne Rich makes in her foreword to Dunayevskaya's *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*. Rich notes that Gordimer credits Luxemburg with the view that "the people know what to do before the leaders<sup>1</sup> and Rich sees this as an integral element of Dunayevskaya's book.

In Rich's view, Gordimer has sensed something that speaks also to Dunayevskaya's appreciation of Luxemburg. Rich quotes and italicizes the penultimate paragraph of this book: "only live human beings can re-create the revolutionary dialectic forever anew" (xix). She adds that this work is ongoing. It is this sense of life, of aliveness, that Dunayevskaya brings out in her chapters on Luxemburg, as her frontispiece quote from Luxemburg attests:

*See to it that you stay human ... Being human means joyfully throwing your whole life "on the scales of destiny" when need be, but all the while rejoicing in every sunny day and every beautiful cloud. Ach, I know of no formula to write you for being human.*

All that Rich singles out and illuminates about Dunayevskaya's insight into Rosa Luxemburg resonates in Rich's own appreciation of Dunayevskaya. When Rich argues that the first part of this book on Rosa Luxemburg is not a conventional biography, but rather the history and critique of a thinking woman's mind, she is also giving us a way to think about Dunayevskaya, for whom the most crucial biography was "the biography of an idea." We see this in Rich's answer to her own rhetorical question, who is Dunayevskaya:

*Raya Dunayevskaya was a major thinker in the history of Marxism and of women's liberation—one of the longest continuously active woman revolutionaries of the twentieth century.*

Quoting Dunayevskaya, Rich adds:  
*How does it happen that an illiterate person... had begun to develop all the revolutionary ideas to be called Marxist-Humanism in the 1950s. It isn't personal whatsoever! If you live when an idea is born, and a great revolution in the world is born—it doesn't make any difference where you are; that becomes the next stage of development of humanity (xi).*

That Gordimer has "sensed" something in Luxemburg is a very helpful way of understanding Dunayevskaya's view of Luxemburg as an "original character." Dunayevskaya quotes from Melville's *Confidence Man* at the beginning of her chapter 7, entitled "Luxemburg as Feminist; Break with Jogiches," that original characters in literature "imply original instincts... [and are] almost as much of a prodigy there [i.e., in literature] as in real history is a law-giver, a revolutionizing philosopher, or the founder of a new religion" (89).

This idea of Luxemburg as "an original character," I believe, is key to understanding Luxemburg as feminist, something that some critics of this book have failed to do. Certainly Dunayevskaya does not see this notion of "original character" outside of history and one is reminded here that Melville is writing in 1851, and that Charlotte and Emily Bronte are creating original characters just before the 1848 revolutions. Dunayevskaya begins her narrative of the women's liberation movement with 1831: the year of the great slave revolt led by Nat Turner and the year a Black woman, Maria Stewart, became the first American-born woman to speak out publicly.

However it was in 1848, Dunayevskaya contends, that a revolution in women's liberation did occur (80). Moreover Dunayevskaya situates originality not only within the historic context but within the context of "masses making history" and the philosophic idea of the relation of individualism to universalism; thus the positing of one Black woman, Maria Stewart in the context of a slave revolt, and the birth of a movement in that year of revolutions 1848. Indeed, Dunayevskaya appears to refuse a separation between philosophy and history.

One central element of Dunayevskaya's uncovering of Luxemburg's feminism is seen through her sensitivity to Luxemburg's break with her lover Leo Jogiches. Whereas Luxemburg's biographer Peter Nettl calls the years after her break with Jogiches, "lost years,"

## Rosa Luxemburg as an 'original character'

Dunayevskaya argues that her greatest intellectual achievements occurred afterwards. "To say that her whole life changed because of the breakup," Dunayevskaya argues, "is a typical male attitude, i.e., thinking that a woman's life stops when the break in a love relationship occurs" (93-4). Thus Dunayevskaya views Luxemburg's exclamation, "I have become a feminist," both in this context and in terms of Luxemburg as original character who grounded everything in the



Rosa Luxemburg, self-portrait

need for a revolution in all areas of human life. It is this, I believe, that Dunayevskaya finds in Luxemburg's "throwing herself on the scales of destiny," and also rejoicing in every sunny day. Here is what Dunayevskaya writes:

*...we are, at one and the same time confronted with two seemingly opposite facts—that the individuality of each woman's liberationist is a microcosm of the whole, and yet that the movement is not a sum of so many individuals but masses in motion (83).*

It is at this point that Dunayevskaya adds to the notion of original character. She argues that though Lux-

emburg was an original, she was not merely "one in a million." For Dunayevskaya it is not Luxemburg's "multi-dimensionality, or even her great revolutionary achievements" that makes her original, but the relationship between past, present, and future. In other words Luxemburg, for Dunayevskaya, is an historic figure whose presence comes alive and "shocks" the present. In the background is Dunayevskaya's own authorship—the biography of an idea—which she said, as I quoted earlier "isn't personal whatsoever" but situated in the time of revolution "becomes the next stage of development of humanity."

One element of this "next stage of development of humanity" was the women's liberation movement. Challenging the left and demanding new human relations, it helped Dunayevskaya unearth Luxemburg's heretofore "hidden feminist dimension," the centrality of which, I believe, was Luxemburg's revolutionary humanism. One can see something of Luxemburg as "original character" when Dunayevskaya writes of how in prison during the first world war Luxemburg was at her most creative (and also isolated<sup>2</sup>):

*Just as in 1911, when she was most isolated in the party because of her break with Kautsky and had at the same time painted a magnificent self-portrait and plunged into the writing of her greatest theoretical work, so now, in prison, Luxemburg studied her titmice and songbirds and achieved her highest theoretical writing (71).*

Yet one wonders whether the limitation of the creators of "original characters" is the fact that those characters escape them? Or in Luxemburg's case that her "character" as the revolutionary, transcended Luxemburg the theorist, however original that was—and she certainly was original in her theory of accumulation of capital. Additionally I wonder whether Dunayevskaya's situating of "original character" within the context of "two opposite facts"—individuality and the whole, which is not the sum of individuals but "masses in motion"—returns us to Rich's emphasis that "we, 'live human beings' are where it all must begin" (xx).

2. Which reminds one of Lenin calling "Junius" (Luxemburg): "a lone man who has no comrades in an illegal organization accustomed to thinking out revolutionary slogans to their conclusion and systematically educating the masses in their spirit" (quoted on p. 69).

## Book review: 'Empire and Emancipation'

Studies of imperialism, from the pre-First World War theorists of the Second International onwards, have attempted to elucidate the "logic of imperialism." But, asks Dutch cultural anthropologist Jan Nederveen Pieterse in his 400-page study *Empire and Emancipation* (London: Pluto Press, 1990): What about the "logic of liberation"? Accounts of labour, peasant and nationalist struggles in a Third World context have too often been "defined in terms of their opposition to initiatives taken from above, by elites: as critique, as negation..." Nederveen Pieterse has attempted a more dialectical approach. The first part of *Empire and Emancipation* is a commentary on dozens of post-Marx Marxist theories and theorists. Here mention of just a few will have to suffice.

Bill Warren, in opposition to the "dependence theory" of Western underdevelopment of the Third World, has argued that capitalism really is developing the Third World in such a way that will make imperialism untenable and develop the class struggle for socialism. Erroneously, Nederveen Pieterse contends that Warren "re-states in effect Marx's views on capitalism's 'civilising mission,'" and that "What is overlooked are dialectics in the process, the role of resistance of Third World nationalism in building the political and economic bases of 'autocentric development.' A return to Marx, it is also a return to the narrowest Europocentrism of Marx."

Certainly, in world system theory and in the work of Marxist historian Immanuel Wallerstein in particular, the world market predominates over all struggles as a "totalising principle." For Wallerstein this will only change when the class struggle matures sufficiently to pose a challenge to capitalism at the end of the next "long wave" economic boom (the Kondratieff theory of capitalist crisis) around the middle of the twenty-first century. As Nederveen Pieterse comments, "new social movements," such as feminism and Fourth World struggles, do not figure in world system theory because in it they are not "conceptualised in terms of conventional class struggles."

As an alternative, Nederveen Pieterse looks to the Dutch theorist W.F. Wertheim, who sees emancipation through "social evolution" rather than class struggle as the "motor of history." Wertheim replaces the concept of transition with that of "continuous revolution"—which owes nothing to Marx's concept of permanent revolution but quite a lot to Mao's "cultural revolution." Like Wertheim, Nederveen Pieterse opposes what he calls Marx's "truncated dialectic" with the dialectic of traditional pre-capitalist values drawn from mysticism, religion and folklore in interplay with "emancipatory" cultural and social forces in the West.

So keen is Nederveen Pieterse to go "beyond Marx" that at times he indulges in such a distortion of Marx's views that it amounts to the rewriting of history, the most blatant example being his claim that Marx (or rather "Marx and Engels") had "no sympathy" for the

1850 Taiping rebellion against the British opium barons. He doesn't quote any of Marx's or Engels' writings on the subject.

In contrast, Raya Dunayevskaya in *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* shows that not only was it the Taiping rebellion which inspired Marx to return to the study of pre-capitalist formations, but that it also was seen by Marx as an "encouragement" to the European workers' movement, which had become quiescent in the years following the 1848 Revolutions—a far cry from Marx's reference to China in the *Communist Manifesto* of 1847 as "vegetating in the teeth of barbarism."

In the "historical sketches" which follow the theoretical introduction of *Empire and Emancipation*, the author does at times manage to write about historical struggles in a way which will appeal to those who see history as dialectics of liberation, as he covers the Crusades, slavery, the Anglo-American "special relationship," imperialism, neo-colonialism in Latin America and Native American resistance. However, Nederveen Pieterse ignores Marx's *Ethnological Notebooks* on Native Americans, as well as virtually everything Marx wrote about what we now call the Third World.

Nederveen Pieterse's insistence that the proper object of study is "empire" rather than capital and "domination" rather than exploitation, could only come about through a failure to grasp Marx's breakthrough on commodity fetishism in *Capital* (which Nederveen Pieterse reduces to "crisis theory" and "economic determinism"—as contrasted to the "activism of the *Communist Manifesto*"). Contrary to the post-Marx Marxists who see fetishism merely as concealing the extraction of surplus value from the workers, as Dunayevskaya showed, the appearance of a world ruled by relationships between things is only possible because, essentially, human relations have been degraded into relations as between things: "With 'fetishism' Marx recreated 'Notion'—the sphere of the Hegelian Absolute that Marx broke in two, for the only way to transcend the Absolute of the fetishism was with its absolute opposite, 'freely associated labor.'"

This failure to grasp Marx's dialectic comes to conclusion in Nederveen Pieterse's final chapter of *Empire and Emancipation*, where he writes that "If we are to reintroduce dialectics, we must begin to strip it of its Marxist as well as Hegelian connotation." He then "re-traces" dialectic (through Mao and Nietzsche!) to the pre-Socratic "attunement of opposites" in Heraclitus and the yin-yang symbolism of T'ai chi and then lists endless "interpenetrations" of Western and non-Western cultures. His inconclusiveness (expressed in neo-Maoisms) flows from his reluctance to follow through the reformism and conciliationism in his "perspective on social evolution in which there is a place for both empire and emancipation."

—Dave Black

### Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution by Raya Dunayevskaya

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1. Nadine Gordimer, *Essential Gesture*, 277

## Black/Red View

by John Alan

Haiti has not been a top story in the news in recent weeks. According to Haitians living in the U.S. with contacts in Port-au-Prince, Haiti is still a fearful place to live. The army and the police continue to persecute people believed to be supporters of ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. And the OAS (Organization of American States) economic embargo is a cruel farce; it does nothing to hurt the army and the wealthy, but is creating a near famine among poor Haitians.

As for the negotiations between the National Assembly and Aristide for his return to power, there is no movement. The army leaders have veto power over the negotiations and are adamant in their opposition to Aristide's army "reform" proposal.

With last September's bloody coup in mind and the continuing arrogance of the army's leadership, it's time that we take a brief look at the history of the Haitian army. Why has it been a source of political power ever since the U.S. Marines left Haiti in 1934?

First, it is obvious that the Haitian army does not exist to defend Haiti against an external military force. And second, while the army can't be separated from the existing class relations in Haiti, it remains clear that its original role as the *Garde*, i.e., the U.S. Marine-trained predecessor to the current army, was for Haitians to fight other Haitians. During the U.S. occupation the *Garde* participated in joint action with the Marines against peasant nationalists, killing at least 6,000 peasants led by Charlemagne Peralte and Batraville. Another 5,500 peasants died in forced labor camps the *Garde* ran for the occupiers.

These figures are only the official estimates; no one knows the exact number of Haitians killed and executed by the Marines and the *Garde*. The record of the 1921 U.S. Senate hearings on the massacre of Haitians is filled with details of atrocities.

## Haiti's terrorist army

If one digs into the history of the development of the Haitian army only one conclusion emerges: it has played an objective role in establishing U.S. hegemony in Haiti.

There is nothing new in the U.S. practice of setting up puppet armies to terrorize indigenous peoples in the Caribbean and Central America. However, the Haitian army is unique; it is the oldest and largest puppet army in the Caribbean and has long been the pathway to power for a succession of dictatorial presidents, including Francois Duvalier. Duvalier played internal politics with generals to establish his personal hegemony over the army, but now neither he nor his son Jean-Claude Duvalier are around; only the army remains.

The present stalemate between the totalitarian army and the forces of liberal reform has brought Haiti to a crossroad in history that could go either way. The masses of Haitian people could impose their own solution by uprooting the army or "reform" could be imposed from the outside.

In the U.S. Senate, Bob Graham is recommending that Bush get the so-called democratic governments of this hemisphere to organize a multinational "peace keeping force to assure Haitian stability." The key word is "stability," meaning that they don't want the masses to engage in their own self-determination.

The trouble with outside "liberation" is that it is limited to the goals of the "liberators." It is hard to believe that Senator Graham's idea of "liberation" is the same as that of a worker getting low wages in an American-owned firm in Haiti.

The absolute opposition to the Haitian army comes from the Haitian masses who want to uproot the army, which is an outpost of American imperialism. If the Haitian masses did that, it would be a great historic leap; precisely the type of historic leap that their slave ancestors made when they translated "The Rights of Man" to mean self-emancipation and rose up in revolt against their French slave masters.

## Latina laundry workers

Los Angeles, Cal.—I work at a linen service rental company that serves restaurants and hotels in the L.A. area. The production process begins at one end of the plant where we collect used and soiled linen transported to the plant by company trucks.

After the soiled linen is separated by human hands and computer into different groups of items and colors, it is bagged in 200- to 250-lb. bags, swung by workers on ceiling rails and hooks going to the wash room. There are eight different types and sizes of washers, the largest being an 800-lb. load machine.

A worker, who told me he was not "Superman," has to load and unload these 200- to 250-lb. bags of soiled laundry by hand all day in a workday of eight, ten, sometimes 12 hours, five days a week. From the washer these heavy bags pick up weight from being soaking wet after the wash and are loaded into another machine, an extractor, which creates 500 lbs. of pressure to squeeze the water from the laundry.

After this process the items are dried in huge dryers which are loaded in the same way, by a worker guiding the now bulky 200-lb. bags by ceiling rail to 500-lb. load dryers. They are completely dried and moved from there to the ironing process.

The ironers take up about 60 yards and each is about eight yards long. These giant ironers are steam heated with eight to ten iron rollers each; gears, belts and motor pulleys, steam and smoke rising.

With two to six women workers inches apart at each ironer feeding the machine, one or two workers "catch" the ironed and folded product at the end of the ironing process. In the summer, temperatures reach to 120 degrees at these work stations where the women stand and feed the ironer for ten to 12 hours a day, five days a week. They are constantly under the suspicious and hateful eye of the production foreman who usually sits in a small office with a huge glass window to oversee and attempt to intimidate the laborers into getting out more and more production.

These women are victimized by the foreman. One woman was suspended for six days for talking on the line. This is a union job where the workers have no confidence in the union and the union does nothing.

About 95% of these women are Latina. They have to stand at these giant ironers from eight to 12 hours a day. The repetitive motion of feeding these giant ironers everything from cloth napkins to bed sheets is numbing to watch, much less to perform. But to deny these women the right to speak to a fellow worker only a few inches away is dehumanizing to the mind of the laborer.

This is how the attack waged by capital against labor, on this May Day, is directed against the eight-hour day where I work.

—Gene Ford

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## Haitian repatriation

New York, N.Y.—A federal appeals court in New York, on April 14, refused to stay a lower court order allowing 3,300 Haitian refugees, incarcerated at Guantanamo Naval Base in Cuba, to speak with lawyers before being forcibly returned home.

In granting the order, Eastern District Judge Sterling Johnson, Jr. said the refugees "are isolated from the world and treated in a manner worse...than a criminal defendant. They are defenseless against any abuse, exploitation or neglect to which the officials at Guantanamo may subject them."

The government lawyers argued for a stay on the grounds that granting the refugees even the most meager rights is dangerous because it encourages more Haitians to flee "in unseaworthy boats." The government admitted that if the stay were granted, the Haitians would be returned immediately, before any appeal could be heard, and asked the court to "send a message."

The government has already returned some 9,500 of about 16,464 refugees picked up by the Coast Guard since the Sept. 30 coup against President Aristide. The courts are unlikely to force the government to grant them asylum because the Supreme Court has already approved their general procedures.

## Genocide in the Sudan

Genocide is occurring in the Sudan, the massive, deliberate killing of thousands of southerners who hold to non-Islamic religions such as Christianity or traditional African beliefs. The regime of General Omar Hassan al-Bashir, heavily supported by the Muslim Brotherhood, is bent on a total Islamicization of the country. In the North, where Muslims predominate, 400,000 southerners living in shantytowns in the capital were offered an alternative: convert to Islam immediately or literally be driven into the desert. The result was that 400,000 people were driven from their homes, unable even to carry their belongings with them. This was a death sentence.

In the South, where the long-standing rebellion of the leftist Sudanese Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA) still simmers, al-Bashir's forces have launched new offensives. They have attacked not only SPLA forces, but, as with past attacks by the Sudanese military, have also aimed to cut off international food relief supplies to the people of the South as a whole, many of whom support the SPLA. Where, a few years ago the SPLA seemed to be gaining, this has changed since the fall of the Mengistu regime in Ethiopia last year. In part, this is because the new Ethiopian regime has stopped supporting the SPLA and is accused by them of even having allowed the Sudanese army to use Ethiopian territory.

## Black World

(continued from page 1)

sought the expeditious means of violent confrontation to bring on the Civil War.

However, it is West's encounter with Marx on the "road to radical historicism" and the abolition of philosophy that is the focus of his glosses of the early Marx.

Beginning with Marx's 1841 Dissertation, when he was still a "Prometheus" bound to academia, Marx took the "energizing principle" inherent in the Hegelian dialectic's negation of negation, as the "turn about of philosophy, its transubstantiation into flesh and blood." Somehow, for West, this signifies that Marx nullified philosophy. Indeed, in West's view the whole of the Dissertation signifies that philosophy is nothing more than the Epicurean void, i.e., a deep and abiding absence and concealment in which all reality disappears.

Supposedly, the purpose of Marx's alleged annulment of philosophy is in order to "shift to theory." This is the single monochrome voicing in West's text. For Raya Dunayevskaya, who spent nearly 50 years of scholarly work on the early Marx, especially the famous 1844 Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts, "not only is [Marx's] critique of philosophy 'philosophical,' but so is the analysis of political economy."

### END OF PRAXIS

West's view, that Marx's critique of Hegelian philosophy represented an annulment of philosophy, founders in large part because West doesn't grasp that while Hegelian idealism developed the active, subjective side of objective reality, in opposition to materialism, it did so in so alienated a form that what Hegel thought was the actual transcendence of contradiction by philosophy represented, according to Marx, merely "forms of appearance."

Marx's concretization of Hegel's dialectic of activity and its principle of negation of negation in a revolutionary subject, the proletariat, far from constituting the relinquishment of philosophy, represented the birth of a whole new continent of thought and revolution. The crux of the question is that whereas Hegel disembodied or alienated the activity of cognition from its living subject in order to posit a dialectic of activity emptied into historical time, Marx held there need not be such dehumanization of the principal idea of the Hegelian dialectic. The activity of humanity and the productive activity of its labor represent dual aspects of Marx's concept of praxis, which, he held, were not only the subject matter of philosophy but constituted its realization.

In all of his extensive quoting of Marx, West does not produce one passage that confirms his view that Marx "requires the virtual disappearance of philosophy" (p.76). But lest it be thought that these questions are removed from the immediate concerns of the present historic moment, concealed in West's pragmatist critique of Marx's essentialism" is a certain bowing to statist Communism. In his analysis of the "essentialist" elements in Marx's treatment of alienated labor, e.g., West limits the material expression of alienated labor to private property.

Despite his citing Marx's notion of the process-alienation of the very activity of labor, West's main pre-occupation is with object-alienation of the product of labor as the basis of private property. This is due to the objective pull of West's own material context of private property "free market" capitalism, rather than the state-capitalist actuality of formerly-existing statist Communism. As West does not recognize the latter he ignores the state property form as a manifestation of alienated labor. Thus, he is not at all impelled to recognize the primacy of the alienation of the activity of labor as the source from which all forms of property arise. This, not a moral essentialism, is the philosophic humus of Marx's humanism.

# After the Caterpillar strike, what direction for U.S. labor?

(continued from page 1)

regain workers' jobs.

What caught the attention of rank-and-file workers in auto and in other industries were the stakes involved in strikers' defiance of Caterpillar and the possibility that this strike could become a turning point in more than a decade of takebacks, layoffs and plant closings. During this period union membership has fallen to one-tenth of the nation's private work force.

Caterpillar forced the strike last November when it refused to match the pattern agreement for the farm and heavy equipment industry that Deere & Co. had already agreed to. It demanded instead, as the world's dominant heavy equipment maker, as multinational producer and as exporter of over half of its U.S. output, a complete break with existing conditions in the name of remaining competitive.

Caterpillar's offer would have gutted medical benefits, among other takebacks. But the heart of the matter was the steepest permanent two-tier wage system in heavy industry, with new hires to start at \$7.50 per hour, less than half the current wage, and to never get closer to the full wage than half pay. Because half of the Cat workers who have survived layoffs are within six years of retirement, such a permanent two-tier system would rapidly become a permanent low-tier wage for a largely young work force.

Caterpillar offered a six-year job guarantee (but with loopholes) in hopes of selling this offer to older workers at the expense of workers not yet hired, who have no vote. If the company prevails, wages and conditions gained through 11 strikes since 1938 will vanish as current workers retire. Workers at Caterpillar plants in Belgium, France and Japan will be competing with, and probably be expected to match, Third World wages and conditions—in Illinois.

Caterpillar entered the strike in November, and even dared to widen it with a lockout, because it had a vast backlog of production—after the UAW bureaucrats had permitted overtime production in the weeks and months leading up to the contract expiration. When company inventory was depleted and Caterpillar, in April, ordered workers to return, they had survived for five months mostly on \$100 a week in strike benefits.

Despite that, the hundreds of strikers we saw lining the highway at the Aurora plant each morning militantly refused to return to work. We are told that 200 or so out of 12,000 union members gave in to Caterpillar's threat of being permanently replaced and crossed the line. If the company had counted on the no less than 2,400 laid-off workers to cross in large numbers, it did not happen.

## WHY DID UAW BACK DOWN?

Why, then, did the UAW, which had promised to lead defiance at Caterpillar, and was backed by most other AFL-CIO unions, turn around in just ten days and direct strikers back to work on the company's terms? They ended up acting no differently than the United Food and Commercial Workers Union in 1986, which was openly hostile to the insurgent Local P-9 in Austin, Minn., and ordered strikers back into the Hormel plant under a contract they had not agreed to.

One apparent reason for the UAW bureaucracy backing down was fear and mistrust of its own rank-and-file. It was the strikers, who had the most to lose, who nevertheless had demanded a fight against the company's ultimatum and who had to be pushed back into the plants. On the picket lines UAW officers used the same state police that were there to protect the scabs to stop "unauthorized" discussions and distributions of radical literature. When UAW members pushed for broadening strike support, even for a general strike as in one California retirees' meeting our Labor Editor Felix Martin attended, the union hierarchy immediately narrowed the question solely to "Support the strikers' soup kitchen."

Caterpillar strikers' experience parallels that of coal miners on wildcat against their own union in the historic 1949-50 Miners' General Strike. In the eyes of one miner, the union "wasn't much better

than the company nowadays." He charged that the rank-and-file had let "others" do their thinking and write their contracts for them: "The change the worker had brought through his activity had somehow turned into its opposite. Their representative became a labor bureaucrat who turned up not to fight with the workers against the company but to



order the workers to produce more" (*Marxism and Freedom*, p. 267).

Today, for the UAW and the entire AFL-CIO, mistrust of the rank-and-file has led them to lobby Congress for legislation to ban permanent replacements. But this "practical strategy" is a deliberate substitute for workers' own activity, which cannot be as easily controlled as a group of Congressmen.

## EMPLOYED AND UNEMPLOYED

Another reason for the backing down by the UAW bureaucrats in the Caterpillar strike, was fear of the unemployed. The UAW bureaucracy certainly has never tried to organize links to the growing numbers of unemployed in Illinois, and company spokesmen gloated over the 9% unemployment rate being in their favor. Because the union bureaucracy had given up the weapon of mass picketing and was honoring the injunction limiting pickets to six per gate, they were preventing the hundreds of strikers at the plant from educating scabs and persuading them to turn around.

In a different era but at the depth of Depression-level unemployment in 1934, scabs were already in the Toledo, Ohio Auto-Lite plant, protected by an injunction against more than 25 pickets at the gate (today's judges are even less generous), when 1,000 members of A.J. Muste's Lucas County Unemployed League joined in successful mass picketing that swelled to 6,000. Within a month, despite even the massacre by the Ohio National Guard, killing two pickets and wounding 25 more, the company recognized the union after Toledo unions voted a general strike. It was this strike, not laws intended to channel the labor revolt, that was preparation for the mass organizing of the CIO.

Workers organizing the CIO had made strengths of categories that had been used to divide them—Black and white workers, men and women, and none more central than the relationship between employed and unemployed workers. Over 100 years ago Marx had described the absolute general law of capitalist accumulation in *Capital*: "The relative mass of the industrial reserve-army increases with the potential energy of wealth. But the greater this reserve-army in proportion to the active labor-army, the greater is the mass of a consolidated surplus-population, whose misery is in inverse ratio to its torment of labor." For Marx the industrial reserve army were the "gravediggers" of capitalism.

Today we face even higher levels of "acceptable" unemployment than in Marx's day. As Raya Dunayevskaya put it: "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" (*The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism*, p. 149).

In face of the continuing drive for more and more production at lower and lower cost, it is the capitalists who are rampaging against the workers, employed and unemployed. Everywhere we can see the impermanence of labor's gains against capital:

● Growers in California's Salinas Valley have gutted the gains the United Farm Workers (UFW) had

achieved by using labor contractors who erode promised wages with tacked-on charges like \$8.50 for lunch or \$5 for a ride to the field, or who won't not hire anyone who asks what the wages are. Because of labor contractors, UFW membership has declined from 100,000 to 10,000 and even some farmworker gains that were carved into law have become unenforceable—both the back-breaking short-handed hoe and hovels with no drinking water that pass for places to live have reappeared.

● In Northern California, Safeway supermarket chain has built a new warehouse run by the managers of their two existing warehouses. By pretending it's a new company they tried to force long-term Teamster warehouse workers to apply as new hires with a probation period for non-union, no-benefit jobs. Workers were forced to begin a Safeway boycott to keep their jobs.

● Hand in hand with renewed attacks on working conditions is the dismantling of aid for the poor and jobless. Bush has demanded that the election-year extended unemployment benefits end abruptly after the election. Beyond that lies welfare—and half a million people have had general assistance cut or eliminated in the last year. Forty states will target children with slashes in ADC. Food, housing and medical care are becoming luxury items.

## MAY DAY 1886, 1992

Under these circumstances on this May Day 1992, it is vital to recollect the activity of American workers—not just to reclaim May Day from the rulers of Red Square, who for so long sullied the day with parades of military hardware and now are renting out Red Square to Pepsi and Reebok. The workers of Chicago who marched for the eight-hour day on May 1, 1886, in such numbers that they spontaneously shut the city down, rested on a 20-year tradition of agitation since the Civil War. When the newly-formed AFL proposed to the Second International that that day, May 1, be the beginning in 1890 of a renewed campaign for the eight-hour day, they laid out a plan for a general strike, industry by industry and across borders, supported by workers who remained on the job. May Day thus became the symbol not only of workers' power, but of workers' creativity, working out the forms to achieve freedom.

We can no more predict the forms that workers' struggles in the 1990s will take than the AFL could chart the actual course of struggle in the 1890s—including the pivotal Pullman strike that erupted in 1895. Whether strikes or opposition caucuses in existing unions, or organizing drives, or entirely new forms of self-organization within the vast section of the working class, employed and unemployed, that is non-union—the necessity to reorganize is there. This May Day it directs our attention to Hamlet, N.C., where the site of last year's atrocity against workers—the poultry factory fire which killed 25—will become a rallying point for a demonstration on May 2, particularly of Southern Black and women workers.

## Editorial

(continued from page 7)

the narrow confines of political rights; once, that is, the ANC deluded itself that there was some neutral "democratic" ground in the Manichean world of apartheid South Africa's ongoing civil war, it assumed the ground of de Klerk. And that architect of neo-apartheid South Africa has called the shots ever since.

In the absence of a clear political challenge to de Klerk's all-white referendum from the ANC, the outcome has elicited contradictory attitudes among the Black masses. On the one hand, there is the sheer human desire for social recognition from a white populace for whom Blacks have been invisible. "I'm so happy that the whites said yes, because for the first time they're including me, they're not just thinking about themselves," said a Black woman office cleaner. On the other hand, there is deep skepticism about the meaning of the white vote among Blacks who couldn't give a damn about being recognized by whites.

However, Mandela's threat to call a general strike in the face of a "no" vote reminds us there is another political force in South Africa. For in actuality, there were "two referenda" in South Africa: one, de Klerk's March 17 referendum involving 2.8 million whites; the other, the nationwide general strike of some 3.5 million Black workers, last Nov. 4, against the imposition of an onerous value added tax on consumer goods.

Despite nearly everything now being stacked in de Klerk's favor, the future of South Africa still lies in the hands of the Black working class.

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## Youth

## Dialogue on the anti-war movement and democracy

*Editor's note: In the March issue of N&L, we published excerpts from a letter by a young anti-war activist and philosophy student (see "The anti-war movement and democracy") in response to Sheila Fuller's column "Rosa Luxemburg's concept of socialist democracy." Below we print two responses and hope to continue the dialogue.*

It was good to know you also felt the lack of a dialogue on alternative visions of the future in the anti-war movement. I share your fear of a model or society in which everyone would have to agree. To me the battle of ideas on visions of the future is necessary because we are living in a world in which it seems the very thought of a total uprooting of this inhuman society, and the possibility of a new human society, is being killed. The rulers are claiming Marxism is dead, and so many within the Left are accepting that claim. There are however fundamental philosophic historic categories which Marx worked out, and if we don't fully grasp and develop them, I think humanity will not be able to transcend capitalism and create a new human society.

Today, commentators on the Right and the Left are arguing about a market economy versus a planned economy. Hardly anyone even mentions the fact that for Marx the key was not merely to abolish private property, but to create a society free of alienation. He was pinpointing the division between mental and manual labor as a class relation. To this degradation of the human being, he counterposed the concept of "human power which is its own end."

This is not meant to say that in an anti-war coalition everyone has to agree. What can bring us together can be our opposition to war, our willingness to hold activities and frequent educational on the issues at stake and their relationship to alternative visions.

Last year I became painfully aware of the lack of any genuine discussion of philosophies of human liberation in our coalition when I saw the response of many of its members to the massacre of the Kurds by the government of Saddam Hussein. Some of us who did help to raise money and organized a dem-

## Amazon as battleground

*Into the Amazon: The Struggle for the Rain Forest, by Augusta Dwyer (Key Porter Books Ltd.: Toronto, 1990; Sierra Club Books: San Francisco, 1990).*

North American environmentalists have long opposed the destruction of the Amazon rain forest. Even more attention will undoubtedly be drawn to that issue by the Earth Summit to be held in Rio de Janeiro in June. But the shock of the December 1988 assassination of Chico Mendes still lingers. It not only brought new attention to the issue, but made the North American public see it in an altogether different light. For the first time, it was the struggles of the people who live in the forest that took center stage. Soon after, a spate of books about the Amazon hit the market, and a film about Mendes is in the works.

What distinguishes this book from others is that the author, a Canadian journalist based in Brazil, actively sought out voices of revolt: indigenous peoples like the Maguta (Tikuna) reclaiming their history and demanding justice after a recent massacre; dwellers on the Tocantins River whose source of food and income was destroyed when the Tucuruí hydroelectric dam poisoned their river; farmworkers struggling for land reform, and their allies in the church.

More than many other writers, Dwyer records the voices of women speaking out against oppression. One condemns the sexism of Yanomami society, despite her sympathy to that society's resistance to the invasion and pollution of their land by prospectors. A woman intellectual tells of her study of labor in the "Free Zone" in her home city, Manaus: families pushed off their land in the forest end up in slums, and often break apart; women and girls (70% of the "Free" work force) are often forced to work overtime without pay or day care, in hellish conditions.

Dwyer knew Chico Mendes, a leader of the rubber tappers' union. She gives us a picture of Mendes as a socialist who saw that the Brazilian workers could not turn to either the U.S. or Russia, which he saw as state-capitalist.

Dwyer pays such close attention to the self-organization of working people in the face of rampant murder and repression that we see the growth of the Workers' Party (PT) in that light. Rubber tappers like Mendes saw the PT as a way to unite with other workers and Indians in opposition to the classes that profit from the appropriation and destruction of the forest. Maguta leaders saw it as a way to secure their ancestral land and join with the landless poor who were set against them by the rich bosses. Yet we also hear rank-and-file women critiquing the vanguardism of a priest and PT intellectuals who proclaimed that the workers were not capable of making their own decisions.

A recurring theme in *Into the Amazon* is the question of what development means. Here we see it from the perspective, not so much of North American environmentalists, but of working and oppressed people fighting for land and freedom. In the book's dedication, Dwyer sums it up by quoting Mendes: "I am just one of many comrades who struggle against a political, economic and social system that sustains itself in the exploitation of the environment and our people."

—Franklin Dmitryev

onstrations in support of the Kurds and against Bush and Saddam Hussein, found it difficult to gain a turnout of more than 50 people. I believe that the type of insensitivity which we saw expressed toward the Kurds was the reflection of a very deep disorientation in thought in our society.

Your question about a concept of organization which is not elitist and vanguardist and is not only based on spontaneity, but in which every human being takes responsibility for developing the philosophic vision of the future, is very challenging. This is a concept which Raya Dunayevskaya was developing especially in a book she was working on in the last years of her life which she had called "Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy."

What has excited me about her views on philosophy and organization is that she interprets the "Absolute" not as an end or closure but as the highest stage of the struggle and philosophy of freedom which humanity has worked out, or as Hegel puts it, a concept of "freedom without transition." Humanity can take responsibility for developing the highest stage of human thought as the determinant for organization and life.

This is not only a philosophic task or an organizational task, but both at the same time. It is an idea that has never been fully realized before. It is so important to have a lot more dialogue on these questions.

—Sheila Fuller

To me, one of the most compelling things to appear on the youth page recently was the contribution from the Duke University student, writing in the March issue on the anti-war movement, Rosa Luxemburg, battle of ideas, philosophy, and organization. If we are serious about the importance of an open dialogue as a pathway, not to vanguardism but to a philosophic rudder and a new society, we can show it right in this paper.

Perhaps if we had more discussion before a movement, it could be a form of preparation for the next outburst of activity. If we go out of our way to ask new questions, we will avoid giving the false impression that a search for *meaning* leads to "one correct vision" as the Duke student put it. I'm sure he could relate to the way Maya Morrison characterized the very term "political correctness" as "revealing to what level we have allowed the struggle for freedom to sink. The term was originally used derogatorily by the Left itself against those who had no content or thought in their political beliefs." ("The Multiculturalism Debate" N&L April, 1992) And wasn't Rosa Luxemburg's emphasis on the needed battle of ideas her way of showing that "freedom is always for the one who thinks differently," as she put it?

Despite the fact that groups in the anti-war movement became "bogged down in arguments," as the Duke student put it, there were many who were aware of the need for open discussion and deeper thinking. It appeared most strikingly not in the squabbles themselves but through our dissatisfaction with the whiteness of our groups and rallies, the lack of women's liberation issues when it came to agreeing on principles, and virtually no contact

## 250 students busted for sitting in at Brown

Chicago, Ill.—In Providence, Rhode Island, 250 students were arrested on April 22 for taking over Brown University's administration building to protest the administration's refusal to change funding and admission policies that judge applicants on their ability to pay the \$20,000 a year tuition.

This action followed a week of activity on the university's Main Green, where students demanding "need-blind admissions" did performance art and built sculptures to make their point. Some students placed a large "green turf" sign at the main entrance with the word "WELCOME" spelled out in large white letters on a background of astroturf. Less noticeable were the words, "Remember those who are not," which were spelled out in raised letters that were the same shade as the background.

Demonstrators pointed out that there had been a decline in acceptance of minorities and students in need of financial aid, and that they had been protesting against this for the past four years. Of all the Ivy League schools, Brown has the lowest percentage of financial aid recipients in its student body. Brown has only 34% of its students receiving financial aid, compared to 51% at Columbia.

"Financial aid is not enough of a priority," one protester said, "Instead they're spending money on construction and the business end of the university—and not on hiring professors. The university is too exclusive and favors a homogeneous, wealthy student body."

with workers. We were mad about that because these forces of revolt show how deep is the human drive to be whole, and if we want to be whole as youth, and as women, we better learn to talk to one another.

The Duke student showed that this can't be just talk but "an active discussion and creation of an alternative," which is why he saw the uniquely Marxist-Humanist concept of an organization in which everyone takes responsibility for developing a philosophic vision of the future as "definitely an intriguing one." In a word, these historic mass movements, whether of women, labor, or Black, disclose a need to view the human being as a totality, and to organize around such a concept that allows for full self-development and full recognition of all particulars as the road to a new society.

I think when the Duke student agrees with the need to "develop a model of organization based on the present" and is interested in seeing how it might get "developed more fully" he is asking the crucial question of our age.

—Mitch Weerth

## Youth in Revolt

by Tom Parsons

Thousands of Australian students stormed the parliament building during a week long protest against the government's plan to shift the bulk of student aid funds from grants to loans. The students broke through police lines, rammed locked doors, and fought with police who blocked their way. At the height of the march police were forced to release students they had arrested after the van they were in was surrounded by angry students. The students say the new aid shift would place most students below the poverty line.

Two main organizers of the National Student Resistance Movement of East Timor and three other students are on trial on charges of subversion and "spreading hatred." The two organizers face the death penalty. They founded the organization in 1988 to seek independence from Indonesia. The two were arrested after they appeared at a rally protesting the massacre of pro-independence demonstrators by Indonesian soldiers.

Over 200 Black Northern Illinois University students in De Kalb, Ill. rallied in the Martin Luther King, Jr. Commons Mall to protest the constant racism of the student newspaper, *The Northern Star*. Students removed the daily paper from receptacles all over campus and destroyed them during the rally. Administrators called for a "unity" meeting the following week, which Black students and organizations boycotted.

Two weeks later Latino/a students gathered in the Martin Luther King, Jr. Mall to protest the conference there commemorating the Columbus Quincentennial.



Sign reads "Money should not keep anyone out of Brown"

On the morning of the sit-in, over 500 students gathered in the Green. At 10 a.m. protesters marched over to University Hall and took it over. Students escorted out administrators, deans, and vice-presidents. "Picture this ivy-covered building," said one participant describing the scene, "and hundreds of students coming in chanting and shouting. It was absolute craziness!"

At 10 p.m., six hours after the building was supposed to close, both Brown and Providence police entered the building and began arresting everyone inside. Protesters were loaded into a city bus, which took them to jail where they were booked and released.

—Jim Guthrie

## Our Life and Times

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

President Alberto Fujimori of Peru staged, on April 5, what has been dubbed a "self-coup" (autogolpe). Blaming the burgeoning problems in Peru on corrupt politicians, drug traffickers and Sendero Luminoso (SL) guerrillas, Fujimori dissolved the Congress, suspended the Constitution, instituted censorship and started to arrest politicians.

The coup, not surprisingly, was given the "most decided support" of the military. For its part, the Bush administration "condemned" Fujimori's action, temporarily suspending aid but ruling out any kind of sanctions. Yet, the U.S. continues to operate a Green Beret military base there—with all of its weapons of war—spending millions of dollars to "train" the Peruvian Army.

There is no mistaking the poverty, joblessness and disease stalking Peru. The free market austerity program begun by Fujimori in August 1990 pushed another 5 million Peruvians into conditions of extreme poverty, in which at least half of Peru's 22 million people now live. It is estimated that 500 people fall sick to cholera daily in a land where the state surplus wrung out by austerity has been used to pay off the foreign debt instead of building sanitary sewers.

Even before his "autogolpe," Fujimori was accused to ruling by fiat and confrontation. In November

## Afghan regime falls

The fall from power, April 16, of former Communist secret policeman Najibullah marked the end of the regime installed by Russia after its 1979 invasion of Afghanistan. However, it did not stop the brutal civil war which has so far claimed 1.5 million lives, while driving 5 million people into exile. Since 1979 the U.S. government admits to having sent \$9 billion through Pakistan for the Afghan resistance. As the respected French paper *Le Monde* put it last year, "the Pakistanis—that is to say *de facto* the CIA—continue to favor the fundamentalist parties," especially the Hezb-i-Islami of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

Today Hekmatyar, whose base is among the country's dominant ethnic group, the Pathans, is vying for power with a coalition based among northern Afghanistan's Uzbek and Tajik ethnic groups. The latter group is led by a former Communist general, Abdul Rashid Doestam, who defected to the rebels at the last moment, and by Ahmad Shah Massoud, an Islamic guerrilla leader who is suddenly being portrayed as the "moderate" alternative to Hekmatyar by the bourgeois press.

The prospects for the future are exceedingly bleak. The country has been devastated by 12 years of a war which has included everything short of nuclear weapons. The CIA-backed Islamic resistance groups are bent on establishing a society which in its own way will be as totalitarian as was the rule of the Russian-backed Najibullah regime. The combined effect of Russian and U.S. intervention, as well as grave mistakes by the independent Afghan Left, has been to snuff out any possibility of a secular, democratic, left-leaning regime as was exemplified by the government of Noor Mohammed Taraki in the first months after the King was overthrown in 1978.

## Peru terrorized by government, guerrillas

1991 he issued 126 decrees which allowed for the privatization of nearly all public services, and reinforced the military campaign against SL. When workers organized demonstrations, the police were unleashed against them with dogs, clubs and tear gas. In March, when 15,000 women marched in Lima against "hunger and terror," the Fujimori government refused to speak with their leaders.

The number of political killings has increased to 3,106 during Fujimori's first year, double the rate from the previous year. Half the population, mostly outside of Lima, was already living under a government-imposed state of siege when the coup was declared. Under these conditions, it is absurd to give credence to the opinion



Supporters remember Maria Elena Moyano who, shortly before her assassination, wrote: "The revolution is an affirmation of life, of individual and collective dignity, of a new ethic. The revolution is not death, not oppression, not submission, not fanaticism. The revolution is for a new life, is a struggle for a just society, worthy of and in solidarity with the organizations created by our people, respecting internal democracy and planting the seeds of power in the new Peru."

polls showing support for Fujimori.

There has been no lack of creative and persistent mass opposition, and not only to the state, but also against the Pol Potist ideology of Sendero Luminoso whose agenda for the conquest of power is to turn Peru back to a Cambodia-style "Year Zero" of forced labor, concentration camps and executions.

One of the more outspoken, "grassroots" critics of SL, Maria Elena Moyano, was assassinated in February in the Villa El Salvador shantytown. A Black woman who fought to better conditions of life in Villa, Moyano led a march against "those who want to impose themselves by force and brutality." The next day, SL operatives, waiting at a barbecue fundraiser, seized Moyano, shot her in the head and then blew up her body with dynamite in front of her two children.

While thousands marched at her funeral and openly denounced SL, there is no doubt that SL's campaign of assassination and intimidation has been effective. This does not mean there is any kind of mass support for the state's war against SL. The Peruvian military, which has one of the worst records for "disappearances" and outright murders, has been given the green light to act without restraint.

By itself, the initiative shown by the Peruvian masses in ongoing activities has not halted either the government or SL. Their voice and actions could have more power if the Left which opposes SL had not itself become silenced by its own inability to present a truly independent direction.

## Armenia, Azerbaijan horror

Fighting has escalated in recent weeks, ever since horrific massacres by Armenian nationalists of Azerbaijani villagers took place in late February in the town of Khojaly. Khojaly is part of the mainly Armenian enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, which is situated within the borders of Azerbaijan. Up to 1,000 children, women and men from Khojaly were set upon and shot, their bodies left unburied in the snow for the world to witness. Since the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict began in 1988, several thousand people have been killed, many of them Armenians massacred by Azerbaijanis.

The notion that the ethnically Armenian enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh should have cultural and political autonomy and be linked to Armenia was supported by Lenin, but Stalin later gave the region to Azerbaijan. When the Soviet Union began to crumble in the late 1980s, Armenians reasserted their demands on the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh, where even the Armenian language had been suppressed. The Azerbaijan leadership refused to concede anything. During Gorbachev's rule, the Russian authorities usually leaned toward Azerbaijan, although at one point in 1990 his troops launched a disastrous invasion of Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, killing hundreds of people.

Today, Russia's Yeltsin is leaning toward "Christian" Armenia. Well-armed Armenian forces have been killing or driving out the remaining Azerbaijani population in Nagorno-Karabakh, as Russian troops pull out of the region. Iran, whose territory includes a large Azerbaijani population, has moved quickly into this void, and actually managed to broker a verbal cease-fire at a meeting in Tehran, March 15, of representatives of both countries.

However, Iran's efforts to gain influence in the region will soon be overshadowed by those of U.S. dominated groups such as the UN and NATO, which have also offered their "services" for mediation and "peace" between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Turkey, which leans toward Azerbaijan, has so far stayed out in deference to its Western allies, and because of its own past genocide against Armenians, a past which it still refuses to acknowledge.

## Germany moves to the Right

In recent months the Right has been gaining ground in Germany. This is seen not only in the April elections where in two local areas neo-fascist parties scored large gains, but also in the policies of Helmut Kohl's governing Christian Democrats, and on the streets where neo-fascist hoodlums menace Third World immigrants, asylum seekers, minorities and leftists.

In state elections in industrial Baden-Wurtemberg, the neo-fascist Republican Party scored 10.9% of the vote, surpassing that of the leftist Greens, who received 9.5%. In similar elections held in agricultural Schleswig-Holstein, another neo-fascist party, the German Peoples Union, received 6.3% of the vote, while the Greens did not get the minimum 5% to enter the state parliament.

While both large traditional parties, the Social Democrats and the Christian Democrats, are losing ground, the Social Democrats are losing it faster. This is in part because Kohl has embraced rightist slogans and goals: he has refused to make any statements condemning the rampant rightist violence, has called for more deportations of asylum seekers and, on the eve of the elections, met publicly for the first time with ex-Nazi Kurt Waldheim of Austria. When the World Jewish Congress (WJC) stated that Kohl was guilty of "moral insensitivity," he responded that a WJC representative "traveled to East Berlin in 1989 and politicized against unification in a scandalous manner."

## British election debacle

The long-awaited parliamentary elections ended anticlimactically by maintaining the Tories in power, despite widespread predictions of a Labor victory. The economy was in deep crisis and Labor, under the leadership of Neil Kinnock, had supposedly made itself more attractive to the middle class by purging from its leadership Left, trade union and anti-nuclear constituencies. Pragmatism and "electability" were the order of the day.

Yet when all was done, Labor was still unable to displace the Tories. Many voters, seeing little difference between the two main parties, simply stayed away. The newly elected government of John Major has promised to "humanize" the "free market" austerity policies of Thatcherism, narrowing still further its differences with the Labor leaders. Kinnock has resigned, but there is as yet no sign that Labor will repudiate his right-leaning brand of pragmatism. This despite the fact that world capitalism faces today its deepest economic crisis since the 1930s.

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