

NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

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25¢

Future uncertain at Oscar Mayer



by B. Ann Lastelle

Oscar Mayer workers protested the closing of the Chicago plant, scheduled for December, at the Labor Day parade downtown and again in front of the plant on Sept. 10. They meet to plot strategies to pressure the union, the company and the city, and they leaflet stores every Friday urging the people of Chicago not to buy Oscar Mayer products if the company won't keep their jobs in the city. Oscar Mayer says that the decision to close the plant is "irreversible."

What awaits these workers when they are laid off? A U.S. Department of Labor study of workers "displaced" from 1987 through 1991 showed that as of January 1992, 22% of those workers were still out of work and 11% had dropped out of the job market altogether. Nearly one in four factory workers "displaced" in 1987 were still out of work five years later.

WHAT TYPE OF WORK?

What type of work have those who are re-employed found? The *Chicago Tribune* report on the study didn't say. Are some of these "displaced" workers among the one million people who every day work for temporary agencies? The number of workers hired through temporary help firms has grown 413% in the last 20 years. Temporary workers in manufacturing earn anywhere from minimum wage to \$5.25 an hour compared with an average of \$8.54 for permanent, full-time workers. Oscar Mayer workers in Chicago average \$11 an hour.

A Black woman who works with me at Helene Curtis began her "career" as a day laborer when her job as a clerk at Spiegel was computerized and moved out of Chicago to a location she couldn't reach on public transportation. Other employers refused to hire her—despite her protests that she needed a job, any job—because she

(continued on page 3)

Black World

Somalia— Cold War harvest



by Lou Turner

Africa is perishing; Somalia already has. In recent months 350,000 human beings have perished in Somalia's man-made famine. Think of it! The world looked on while hundreds of thousands of Africans perished; looks on while more than 2,000 Somalis perish daily from thirst, starvation, disease and clan violence; looks on while four million more teeter on the brink of the greatest holocaust since World War II.

There is no genocidal war of "ethnic cleansing," no Hitlerian juggernaut, no Pol Pot "killing fields." It is rather the apocalyptic harvest of the Cold War rivalry of superpowers, former colonial powers, the irredentist ambitions of feudal-cum-militarist rulers, and the contradictory development of national liberation movements. The shameless jockeying for geostrategic position by the U.S. and Russia over the last three decades saw the two superpowers embark on an arms buildup of the Siad Barre regime in Somalia, and then the Mengistu regime in Ethiopia.

Two of the poorest countries in Africa, Somalia and Ethiopia, were the recipients of more military aid than any two countries in Africa, fueling their ancient rivalry over the Ogaden, in perverse contrast to the widespread hunger of both their populations.

TRAGEDY FORGED IN COLD WAR PAST

Somalia is the egregious symbol of the West's indifference towards Africa. It is an indifference which comes out of one of the most intense superpower rivalries in the Third World. The vast arsenals that are the immediate instruments by which Somali society imploded into civil war should not divert our attention from the hid-

(continued on page 9)

Protesting the 500th anniversary of Columbus' journey

Deep poverty and continuing revolt mark Latin America



Quechua women and children march in Ecuador to occupy the lands of an absentee landlord.

by Eugene Walker

Against all the hoopla and pompous statements about Columbus' "encounter" with the New World that are taking place today in Latin America, Spain and the United States, we are in solidarity with the indigenous peoples of the Americas who are asking what there is to celebrate. This is particularly true when we examine that journey not only as history, but in the context of the reality of Latin America in 1992.

Whether we look immediately south to Mexico at the moment of a Free Trade Agreement with the U.S. and Canada, to Central America's Guatemala after more than a decade of military terror upon its indigenous people, or South America's Peru under the twin oppression of President Fujimori's dictatorship backed by a military who terrorize the indigenous population and the Maoist-terrorist guerrilla group, Shining Path—what we see is a Latin American landscape of deep poverty and continuous revolt.

BETRAYING MEXICO'S LEGACY

- From the point of view of Mexico, the Free Trade

Agreement is the final step in giving up Mexico's sovereignty to the dictates of international capital and the world market. It puts a last nail in the coffin of the heritage from the 1910 Mexican Revolution, the first great 20th century revolution in Latin America, as well as the legacy of the pre-World War II administration of Lázaro Cárdenas, which strove to assert Mexico's national autonomy by expropriating U.S. oil interests.

The new Free Trade Agreement not only opens Mexico to products of U.S. companies, a process which was already well under way, but now gives foreigners the right to own majority control of companies in Mexico. The U.S. border assembly plants (*maquiladoras*) are certain to increase in number and spread to other parts of the country. The Third Worldization of wages on both sides of the border is capital's vision of the future.

A factory worker we spoke to in Mexico City earlier this year caught the spirit of this coming Free Trade Agreement: "Tell your comrades what it's like to live like us. This is why the U.S. and Canada want

(continued on page 10)

Election discloses new authoritarianism

Regardless of whether it is George Bush or Bill Clinton who becomes the next President of the most powerful country in the world on Nov. 3, the election campaign we have suffered through since early Spring has already made clear how far to the Right this country has been moved by both political parties in 1992.

The danger confronting us was seen starkly at the Republican Convention, where Pat Buchanan's opening night address was far more than a question of "setting the tone" for that whole Convention. His neo-fascist forces did nothing less than dictate the terms for the actual Republican Party platform. Buchanan's sister and campaign manager put it bluntly and succinctly when she exulted: "We got our platform four years early!"

RELIGIOUS FANATICISM

Flanked by Pat Robertson's extremist religious fanaticism (how else could one describe an ideology that considered the term "religious pluralism" so offensive they had it removed from the platform!), George Bush thus set off under the banner of "family values" to wage what Buchanan had defined as a "religious and cultural war" against gays, women's liberationists and any forces that might upset the status quo of this degenerate society.

What, however, most sharply laid bare the face of the dangerous new stage of authoritarianism now confronting us was the vitriolic attack on the Black and Latino masses who exploded in Los Angeles this year and were

collectively characterized as "the barbarians" at the Republican Convention. While what was spewed out loudly there was that the enemy was no longer seen "as through a glass darkly, but face to face," and that the answer to the crisis of the inner cities was more M-16s—it was the total silence about the state of Black America that was glaring at the Democratic Convention. The defining truth is that Black America has been written off by both. (See "Black-Red View" column, p.9)

Thus, far from exposing George Bush's chilling embrace of Buchanan's neo-fascism, all of Clinton's appeals have been directed toward "winning back" the

"Reagan Democrats" by letting them know that the traditional forces the Democratic Party used to appeal to—the poor, the minorities, labor—are no longer in the driver's seat (as if they ever were). The coded messages being sent to the middle class he is wooing extend from a promise to "end welfare as we know it" to putting "100,000 more police on your streets."

Indeed, the way both Bush and Clinton have gone out of their way to minimize their differences with that "man on a white horse," Ross Perot, shows how deep-rooted the new authoritarianism has proved to be.

There is no question that we stand at a critical historic point. Nor is this the first time that the native face of American fascism has shown itself so blatantly in an

(continued on page 3)

Editorial

Woman as Reason

by Terry Moon

Editor's note: The following are excerpts from a report given to the National Convention of News and Letters Committees on Labor Day weekend. The full report is available in Post-Convention Bulletin #1 (see ad, p.3).

Women's freedom is always a matter of life and death. That is really the truth of our lives; it is also why we are here now, why News and Letters Committees and the philosophy of Marxist-Humanism are vital, and why we are striving to close the gap between the ideas we have in hand and the reality around us.

The new realities we face today present us with new opportunities—opportunities that exist at the same time as the unprecedented attacks against us. And those attacks have never been more vicious.

Listen to that maniac Pat Robertson who raged that an Iowa equal rights constitutional amendment "is about a socialist, anti-family political movement that encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism and become lesbians." And while this sounds ludicrous, it's deadly serious when you consider the legitimacy that Bush gave these ideas and when you face the fact that the Republican Party is supposedly a "choice" we have in this lie that is U.S. democracy.

But whereas before we have concentrated on the retrogression women face—this year is different. This year Women's Liberation is on everyone's mind. We see the new reality in the tremendous response that Anita Hill always receives and in the fact that the Clarence Thomas nomination so enraged Black women that they formed African American Women in Defense of Ourselves. They formed as well Revolutionary Sisters of Color whose aim is "to link the issues of many different movements...to play a decisive leadership role in the movement for revolutionary social change." (See the next issue of News & Letters for a report of their founding conference.)

What especially reveals the new situation confronting us is a new generation of young feminists who have become active in defending clinics from anti-woman fanatics. These developments have serious contradictions, (see August-September issue of News & Letters) yet it is just those contradictions that are an opening for us. What can we do to transform reality at a time when all this rethinking is going on?

What I think can help us is to look with new eyes at

Free Norma Jean Croy!

San Francisco, Cal.—On Sept. 19, Gay American Indians and other lesbian and gay organizations sponsored a benefit to support Norma Jean Croy, a Native American Lesbian imprisoned since 1978 for a killing she did not commit. Both she and her brother, Patrick Hooty Croy, were shot in the back by police. In self-defense Hooty shot back and an off-duty, drunken officer was killed. Hooty was given the death penalty and Norma Jean, who never even touched the weapon, was given a life sentence. Both are still living with bullets lodged near their spinal cords.

Due to public pressure, Hooty Croy was retried. The jury recognized the history of racism and Indian-killing for sport in Northern California. Hooty was acquitted on grounds of self-defense in May, 1990. Despite Hooty's acquittal, the government has refused to release Norma Jean.

At her fourth parole hearing on July 16, 1992, attorneys submitted over 175 letters of support, including several job offers and places of residence in the Bay Area. The three-member board paid little, if any, attention to these letters. Norma was denied parole for another two years.

You can write to Norma Jean Croy at: Norma Jean Croy, #14293, BOB-02-014, Central California Women's Facility, P.O. Box 1508, Chowchilla, Cal. 93610.

To keep informed of future developments in Norma's case, send your name and address to the Norma Jean Croy Defense Committee, 473 Jackson Street, 3rd floor, San Francisco, Cal. 94111.

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Lost moment or new beginning?

the body of ideas of Raya Dunayevskaya's Marxist-Humanism. Dunayevskaya was confronting an age where the revolutionary movements did succeed in overthrowing tyrants—from Russia to Vietnam, from Iran to Mozambique—and yet again and again were transformed into their opposite, into totalitarian state-capitalism, dictatorships, neo-colonialism.

When the counter-revolution is within the revolution itself, then the need to work out what happens after the first act of revolution is imperative. Dunayevskaya was preoccupied with this question from as early as 1953 till the end of her life. It was one of the things that impelled her to reach for a new philosophy—a whole new philosophy of dialectics with which to answer the question: "What happens after the revolution?" And to begin to answer that question today—before the revolution.

The urgency of working out this question was organic to the Women's Liberation Movement which critiqued the Left from a revolutionary perspective. Women said

Abortion services restored

Chicago, Ill.—More than 100 vocal, determined women and men rallied outside of Cook County Hospital in Chicago, Sept. 17, in an ongoing show of support for the right of women to obtain abortions at that facility. Abortion services had been banned for the past 12 years at Cook County Hospital, where the majority of patients are poor people on public aid.

After lengthy court battles to keep them banned, abortions have just been restored on a limited basis by the order of Cook County Board President Richard Phelan who was elected last year on a pro-choice platform. Already there have been more than 1,000 requests, yet the hospital is only performing 30 per week, requiring a 24-hour waiting period, "counseling," etc.

Anti-life forces, led by the maniacal Joseph Schiedler, responded by "declaring war" on women who sought abortions here. Their battle plan has included verbal and physical threats and intimidation of women trying to enter the hospital; death threats to Phelan, and the stalking of both medical personnel involved in abortions and their families at their homes, their schools and their jobs.

Rally participants—from youth to grandmothers, many angry at having to defend this puny gain—vowed to be at the hospital every day from 5 to 7 p.m. as a visible reminder that "We will never go back to back alley abortions!" While acknowledging Phelan's reinstatement action, some rally speakers gave credit where it was really due—to the movement of women and men whose thoughts and actions, in the streets and at the clinics under attack by anti-life fanatics, have demanded that all women have equal access to abortions.

—Marxist-Humanist participants

Sexual harassment

Bay Area, Cal.—This spring, my friend got a job as a manual laborer and artist in a set production house. Though she had more skills than her male co-workers, they constantly told her how to do her job. Her foreman insisted on calling her "toots" and "honey" and treated her like a child when she was defiant. Though she knew how to drive a forklift, she was denied the opportunity to take the forklift test.

One day when she was up on a ladder painting, a crowd of male co-workers surrounded her, telling her to do this and do that. She turned around and said, "I never see any of you guys telling each other how to do your jobs. You're only telling me what to do because I'm a woman." Though they stopped harassing her after that, within two weeks she was fired and replaced by a woman who never complained.

My friend's experience was in the back of my mind when I started working in a corporation as a designer, and my co-worker, a young guy who considered himself "enlightened," began telling sexist jokes at work. When I told him how inappropriate it was, he argued with me and even said, "Women don't have a sense of humor." He also had a habit of touching me and other women in our department on the shoulder, neck and hair. He even kissed me on the cheek when I edited something for him.

I surprised myself when I was unable to tell him to stop touching me. I was afraid he would get angry, and I had to work with this guy every day. I started feeling like I was living in a dark cloud, and it was affecting my work. I eventually made the mistake of telling my boss, who said she would back me all the way. But she told her boss, who told Personnel, who called me in to tell my story, and within four days my job was eliminated and I was told I would no longer be working on the premises. They took me off all the projects I worked on with the guy and removed my chances for steady work.

I thought people would be more aware of sexual harassment because of the Anita Hill hearings, especially here. But the Bay Area is just like the rest of the U.S., and women will have to fight these ills of society until we tear the whole thing up root and branch!

—Julia Jones

in the late 1960s that we are not waiting until after the revolution for freedom, we are fighting for it here and now. We saw that revolution hadn't meant women's freedom, be that in Cuba, Nicaragua, Algeria, Zimbabwe, etc.

Yet though the Women's Liberation Movement posed the need to work out what happens after revolution before the day of revolution, by 1992 it is clear that it never got to a philosophy that would help to work this question out. When we say "Woman as Reason and as Revolutionary Force," it is not alone to give meaning to this new women's movement for freedom; it is also that the philosophy of Marxist-Humanism and the organization News and Letters Committees is the place where those voices, that passion for freedom and a totally new society, can develop.

We want to show that what this organization works out in its day-to-day functioning, in its projection and inwardization of the philosophy and in its breaking down the division between mental and manual labor, is part of answering before the revolution what will happen after. We are trying to break down the division between organization and the future.

We have been working this out since the very beginning. Our organization and paper tries to break down the division between mental and manual, between worker and intellectual, to be a place where people involved in freedom movements speak for themselves and where we measure the success of our philosophy in the self-development of each individual, as well as of the Idea of freedom. Yet I don't think we have projected this in the way the situation demands, that is, as unseparated from the philosophy and thus unseparated from the vision of the future.

When we look at this moment we are living in now with this rethinking going on in the face of escalating degeneracy, wouldn't many want to be part of an organization whose philosophy demanded the working out of what happens after revolution right now? If we project this I think we will find that Raya was right in the "Power of Abstraction" (see August-September N&L) when she wrote: "The interpenetration of philosophy, organization, self-development would result in humanity itself developing its full potential. The development of all human faculties assures the birth of a new man, a new woman, new youth, and of the classless, non-racist, non-sexist society."



Women-Worldwide

by Mary Jo Grey

In China, where women are still sold into bondage while officials look the other way, and even the women's foundation says it isn't a crime if the woman doesn't disagree, some women are fighting back against the sexual bondage they were forced to endure more than 40 years ago. Four women and the survivors of three others are demanding compensation from the Japanese government for being held captive and forced to be prostitutes for Japanese soldiers when Japan occupied the country from 1937 to 1945. Thousands of women died in those government brothels.

* * * * *

Fourteen women's health clinics throughout Michigan were vandalized with illness-causing stink bombs at the end of September, in the escalating war against women's lives. While at the same time, on Sept. 22, Rhode Island joined Connecticut as the only two states refusing to comply with the federal gag rule prohibiting discussion of abortions at federally-funded clinics, and in Louisiana, a federal appeals Court upheld a judge's ruling striking down that state's restrictive law banning most abortions.

* * * * *

The fight for gay and lesbian rights is growing worldwide. In Nicaragua, activists are opposing a recently passed law threatening up to three years in prison for anyone who "induces, promotes, propagandizes or practices scandalous" sex between persons of the same sex. While in Paris, 2,000 demonstrators picketed locations throughout the city, including Notre Dame Cathedral, and staged a die-in chanting "Mitterrand you are doing nothing. You have blood on your hands." They demanded an emergency plan for hospitals which they charge no longer provide decent care for people with AIDS.

—Information from Outlines

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Asbestos: disaster of vast proportions

Editor's note: This article is excerpted from two letters written by those working in the office of Clydeside Action on Asbestos. For more discussion or to offer financial support, write: Clydeside Action on Asbestos, 15 St. Margaret's Place, Glasgow G1, Scotland.

Glasgow, Scotland—Clydeside Action on Asbestos is a group based in Glasgow. The office exists to help those seeking just compensation from employers and the various allowances rightfully due to victims, in particular, disability benefits. Last year we logged over 3,000 new cases. We reckon that for every case that comes through our door, five do not. Our activities also include campaigning against the continued use of asbestos, not only in the work place, but in the community.

For 150 years the City of Glasgow was the centre of all forms of heavy engineering. Shipbuilding, and steel and iron production made Glasgow and the phrase "Clyde Built" famous throughout the world. There was a heavy price to be paid for such a reputation. Where there is heavy engineering, there is always asbestos. We reckon that over 400,000 people—men, women and children—have died in the Glasgow region in the last 70 years because of asbestos.

Asbestos has peculiar qualities. It is a fibrous mineral. It can be spun and woven into fabric. It is ideal as an insulating material against heat, cold and sound. Except at extremely high temperatures, asbestos is indestructible. It cannot be burned, frozen or pulverized.

NO APPLICATION IS SAFE

On abrasion, it fragments into billions of microscopically tiny, diamond sharp fibres. Any single fibre can precipitate a cancer. It is our opinion that at least half of all incidences of cancer are caused by asbestos. There is no "safe" level of exposure to asbestos. None whatsoever. It is everywhere: in earth, air and water, in all buildings, civil engineering projects, transport, food, paper, cigarettes and talcum powder.

In the 1880s in Calvados in France, mill owners who once produced silk yarn and fabric converted their machinery to process asbestos. Five years after commencement of production, every mill worker died. In a U. S. factory producing filter tips for cigarettes, out of a staff of 33 operatives, 29 contracted mesothelioma, a deadly carcinoma caused only by asbestos. The filter tips contained an admixture of glass fibre and asbestos.

Why, if this material is so lethal, was it not banned years ago? Why do the huge asbestos companies continue to produce this poison, knowing full well that their

continued action makes them fully liable for any injury incurred? The asbestos companies are chained to a treadmill. In order to pay any eventual compensation, they must continue producing the killer asbestos.

FIGHT ESSENTIALLY POLITICAL

To maintain this cruel cycle the companies will bribe, corrupt, undermine and silence any opposition. In the United Kingdom, for example, there is clear evidence of collusion between the asbestos producers and governmental bodies, all political parties, the legal and medical professions and, most shameful of all, the trades union movement. Because of the massive debt burden of Third World countries, asbestos companies are now exploiting this vulnerability by exerting pressure on those countries to produce more asbestos.

There can be no compromise in this fight. To be effective it is vital that we know as much and more than the "experts." A program of education and enlightenment must be launched describing the dangers of asbestos to the worker and the consumer. Politicians and health authorities must be made aware of their responsibility.

This argument must be taken into the public arena where it should be, and should have been decades ago, until it is resolved and asbestos is banned and every possible trace cleansed from our environment and put back where it belongs, deep in the bowels of the earth.

More work, no overtime

Chicago, Ill.—Last July the Canteen Corporation took over Tri-R Vending, once the largest independent food service in Chicago-area factories. Even before the sale, no one felt secure in their jobs. Tri-R had only half as many truck routes as three years ago, and the company had fired the entire commissary and its 40 or so mostly Latina workers. Instead they bought sandwiches trucked in all the way from Michigan.

At a meeting of Teamster employees Canteen hinted at more changes in store. Canteen is \$2.3 billion in debt from the junk bonds used to buy the parent company, and the bankers want to see cash flow. Canteen is using the debt load as a hammer to discipline the work force.

To increase cash flow, they want service on vending machines increased to collect money daily and they removed locks from the money bags. That access to the coins and bills means that the drivers, who were responsible for returning all money collected inside a machine's locked container, now are liable for all money not collected as well.

The product that is smashed or stale, or that is dislodged by a customer's swift kick, is a "sale" as far as Canteen is concerned. If they get their way, the route people would owe for all these phantom "sales" that they couldn't explain on a fistful of forms.

One driver predicted that the extra paper work alone would add to the overtime he already had to put in on his route. But he was told that Canteen would accept no overtime unless his route brought in way above average money—as if filling machines for a factory which kept lower prices took less time and effort.

It looks like a battle will be fought over the length of the working day. Nobody wants to be pressured into adding these extra services and reports, the extra driving on most routes, which now start from Canteen's Elmhurst yard, 20 miles from the Loop, and pretending it can be done in eight hours just to hold onto a job. If Canteen is adding duties to keep track of every nickel, let them add enough workers to cover the jobs.

—Canteen worker

Editorial

(continued from page 1)

election year. We saw that visage in 1964 when Barry Goldwater won the Republican nomination with the help of another far-Right organization—the Birchites, and was ultimately defeated, thanks primarily to his rabid anti-labor stance. The situation we confront in 1992 is far more serious—not only because George Bush is already in the White House, but because, where American capitalism in 1964 still considered itself to be thriving and profits were never higher, today the economy has never been sicker and the crisis is irreversible. Hitler rose to power in just such a depressed Germany.

What we are confronting today in the U.S. is that there are no options left within the parameters of capitalism, whether "private" or "state." The picture gets worse in every day's headlines: whether it is that the number of Americans living in poverty has soared to the highest levels in a decade; or that the estimate of three million homeless is far lower than the reality; or that the prison population is now over one million, the overwhelming number of them poor and uneducated in this "richest land of the world." What permeates the land is the ever-growing awareness that neither Bush nor Clinton has the slightest inkling of how to end the crisis.

It is not simply that the entire American electorate is more disgusted than ever before in our history with the non-choices offered them this year. It is that literally millions are searching for an alternative to this racist, sexist, exploitative society. The crisis facing the forces for freedom is not so much that Clinton has accommodated to Bush's pull to the far Right, but that the Left has accommodated to the rulers' insistence that "Marxism is dead" and is allowing the counter-revolution today to go unchallenged.

The voices of revolt were heard loud and clear this year—from the women who, determined as they are to break the stranglehold of white male supremacy in Congress this November, were seeking far more than an electoral victory in their most massive march ever in Washington, D.C. last Spring. But they were heard most profoundly in the Los Angeles rebellion that put the rulers on notice that there are live forces ready and waiting to leap far beyond the politics of "reform" and tear this degenerate system up by its roots. It was why we called Los Angeles "not so much a place as a condition of the mind," and a defining moment for all.

It is not a question of "whether" the forces of revolt will erupt again. It is a question of our need to stand so firmly on the high ground of that freedom struggle, and hold so tightly to its highest point, both in theory and in practice, that when those forces move again, they will not be left without the rudder that only a philosophy of revolution can provide.

That is what is urgently needed if we are ever to move beyond a first negation and toward a new day of new human relations, instead of a Buchananized night.

Detroit teachers strike

Detroit, Mich.—"Oh no, we won't go!" roared thousands of Detroit public school teachers in defiance of a back-to-work order Sept. 23, 18 school days into their strike. Detroit Federation of Teachers (DFT) President John Elliott was moved to tears as the teachers vowed that, indeed, they would go back to their schools—back on the picket line out front.

DFT picket signs told the story: "Erase the Board," "Salary: Deb #1; DFT #72," and "the HOPE team is GONE." While Superintendent Dr. Deborah McGriff is the highest paid in the state, Detroit teachers ranked 72 in salary. They asked for an 8% increase, but the Board initially offered 3%.

The "HOPE Team" refers to a recently elected reform slate which brought in Superintendent McGriff and which is pushing for local school empowerment,



schools of choice and an "Afrocentric" curriculum. The teachers and a number of parents have raised serious questions about empowerment. A majority of teachers see the proposals for local school empowerment as just a code word for breaking the DFT.

One parent carried a handmade sign: "The Board's empowerment means private schools." Another sign said: "Schools of choice, not for the chosen few." Yet, although they support the strike in general, a large number of parents and students see it as just one more setback for the pitiful excuse for education that Detroit students receive from the system. "Empowerment" clearly does not include them.

School began four weeks late on Sept. 30 after the teachers approved a tentative contract with a 4% wage increase the first year, but also with gains for the board's empowerment program. The DFT has vowed not to support the "HOPE Team" board members in the upcoming November election. —Susan Van Gelder

Workshop Talks

(continued from page 1)

had made more money at Spiegel and they were sure she wouldn't be happy with a lower pay scale.

Then she saw a sign, "Women Wanted," in a storefront window, and she's been working at minimum-wage, temporary jobs ever since. Work is slow at Helene Curtis now, and she worked only one day last week. Is this woman "employed" or "unemployed"? In today's economy the difference is not always easily defined.

Oscar Mayer workers have received little assistance from the union, but why would the union help them? These workers are, or soon will be, unemployed, and the official "labor movement" in the U.S. bases itself exclusively on the employed. In fact, the labor bureaucracy fears the unemployed as strikebreakers; it does not attempt to reach out to them, or organize them.

A NEW LABOR MOVEMENT

This wasn't always true. Out of the Depression of the 1930s, arose an entirely new labor movement:

"Everything was new about the CIO...white and Black labor had united to gain union recognition...organized labor struck where it hurt capital most, in all the basic industries...employed and unemployed did not work at cross purposes. On the contrary, the unemployed would often along with another new phenomenon—women's auxiliaries—man the picket lines while the workers sat down inside" (American Civilization on Trial, p. 23).

The CIO long ago became the opposite of what it was at its birth. While some economists have called today's deteriorating situation a "contained depression," Oscar Mayer workers have spoken of the need for a new movement of labor. One long-time union activist said: "There's got to be a better way, because I just don't think you can revitalize these old people that are running these unions." Another told us: "The unions in Chicago are useless. The only place I know where they have a good union movement today is in Mississippi."

Can the struggles of Black workers in the largely unorganized South be an impetus for a new labor movement in the North? What perspective can the Black and Latino youth of Los Angeles and other inner cities, who face a future with little chance of steady employment, offer those who are employed? Must we not stop clinging to old ideas, old definitions, old institutions and begin to search everywhere for new ways of thinking and new forces to change our conditions of life and labor?

Convention Bulletin

Join in the discussion of the reports given to the Labor Day Convention of News and Letters Committees, as part of concretizing Marxist-Humanist Perspectives for 1992-93.

● **Marxist-Humanism's Body of Ideas in the Context of the Present Historic Moment** by Olga Domanski

● **The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism and the Problem of Dialectics of Organization** by Peter Wermuth

● **The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism on the 125th Anniversary of the First Edition of Marx's Capital** by Kevin A. Barry

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● **The Black Dimension and the Dialectics of Philosophy, or the Objectivity of Cognition** by Lou Turner

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In person report: Russia at the crossroads

by Nikolai Zeltinski

Central Russia—The first illusions connected with the joy of crashing the Stalinist bureaucracy last August passed long ago. It is time to rethink the experience and to depict a few landmarks for future development. Every normal person is trying to find some way out of the swamps of the market utopia.

STATE-CAPITALIST ECONOMIC REALITY

Nowadays, we more clearly see the true nature of the economic system in Russia. Earlier, the state capitalist nature of the Soviet Union was hidden under the covers of "advanced socialism" and "communism," which allowed us to divide the world. The most serious mistake of the old Left was the dispute over how much socialism was still left in the Soviet Union. They talked about the "crippled nature" of Russian socialism.

The process of understanding and awareness goes on slowly. But the best medicine is the capitalist market itself which has already uprooted 80% of society. Russians do not hurry to exclaim "long live capitalism." According to recent polls, only 10% of the population is ready to give Boris Yeltsin its strong support.

The present struggle between two forces—liberal-

democrats who formally control power and "red-brown" circles comprised of former communists and present nationalists—pushes the population to the edge. I have a very grim view of the Russian prospects for surviving this winter. The dispute between "democrats" and Stalinists on the future of collective farms has paralyzed Russian agriculture. They simply do not function either in the old "advanced socialist" form, nor according to Yeltsin's plans for the new private form.

DISSIDENT DISILLUSIONMENT

Valeria Novodvorskaya, who went through the Brezhnev gulag and was "treated" in Soviet mental institutions, writes with sorrow and disillusionment in the July issue of *20th Century and Peace* on the crashing of her hopes in the new "democratic society." Many sincere and honest former dissidents cannot live in this "devil's circus," when they see the people for whose liberation they struggled in new, tight chains. When the present "democrats," who rule present-day Russia, waited to see in what way the situation in Russia went in 1988-89, Valeria, Valerii Behkchanov and other leaders of the Democratic Union were being beaten and harassed by the police. It is they who were the first to lead the people to the utopian constitutional democracy, and

who must rethink their experience and be side-by-side with the people.

It is indisputable that this country is in deep political and economic crisis. I am afraid that certain Russian traditions can play, in this case, a negative role. In the West, newspapers write a lot about the fascist Pamyat (Memory) movement. As an organization, it is hardly noticeable on the political scene in Russia. But the very political situation which plows the soil for these groups is a more serious danger.

Striking similarities with the final years of Weimar Germany come to mind. We cannot avoid these similarities because I see on the Russian streets crowds of beggars who were not long ago professionals. I see fired or retired military personnel who only yesterday were proclaimed the defenders of the fatherland and are now unsuccessfully looking for a job. I see young people fresh from high school and college who cannot use their minds and hands. I see people who still work, but whose salaries and savings were eaten up by horrible inflation.

WHAT OF THE RUSSIAN LEFT?

My friends in Germany and the U.S. often ask: What about the Left? For the Left, many of whom hardly attempt to free their heritage from its withered clothing, there is practically no place to go. Recently, the green Left, anarchists and former socialists united their forces. But they are only intellectuals and marginals without strong support among the working class and professionals.

Earlier in the struggle against the Stalinist regime, workers created their own ruling committees and strike bodies which took into their own hands the distribution of food, and often law and order, when the authorities could not or did not want to. The general political trend in the present world for more self-government and self-control has something in common with this situation in Russia. In cities and towns there exist worker committees that often challenge the newly-nominated or elected "democratic" bodies. The current lack of authoritative political power may be the limbo from which appear the roots of people's power that will be more humanistic because it will be closer to the people.

The old Left cannot take off the old clothes of party life and system. They try to set up coalitions with some of the former Stalinists and old communist unions, often explaining this by citing the necessity to create broad support at the grass roots. This is the wrong direction. They forget to leave behind their paternalistic approach to workers. They attempt to put their movement into artificial schemes that were already tried by their forefathers from the Second International and from the Stalinist Comintern, rather than accept the grass roots movement on its own terms.

This is my vision, and I am ready to convince anyone today that people educated enough to act on their own spontaneously are ready to broaden their philosophical knowledge.

Protesters bash Bush

Chicago, Ill.—Over 500 angry protesters greeted President Bush when he arrived at the Hilton Hotel for a fundraiser, Sept. 25. Similar demonstrations have haunted Bush on previous visits to Chicago, but this one stood out for its militancy and multidimensionality. Black and white workers from an array of unions were joined by homeless Black women and children, women from the new Chicago branch of WAC (Women's Action Coalition), and high school and college students.

At first distinct groups formed at different points along the block, with union members picketing at one end and WAC drum corps rallying an equally spirited, vocal crowd at the other end. Organizers of the protest urged everyone to merge together, however, and soon we were marching and shouting in one giant picket line that ran along the whole block.

A number of Clinton campaign staff and supporters attended the rally, but when we got a chance to talk to individual workers, women and youth we found few solid supporters of the Democratic nominee. Instead, they were talking about issues far deeper than either candidate's shallow campaigning. "We've got 1,400 members out of jobs," a Black plumber told me. "Oscar Mayer's closing up and Spiegel's moving out of the city. What are they going to do about that?"

Similarly, a woman who works with WES (Women for Economic Security) talked about the fight she and other welfare mothers are waging against Governor Edgar's cuts in General Assistance—after six months you get cut off whether or not you've found a job.

Most important were the Black women who had come with their kids on a bus organized by the Coalition for the Homeless from the south side shelters where they stay. "You've got people donating money to these shelters, but we never see any of it," one woman told us. "All we get to eat is soup and bread, every day. And we were told we couldn't keep our sons with us, because they won't allow teen-aged boys. Why do they want to break up our families?"

"Why do they blame problems on us?" her friend asked. "We didn't ask to be homeless. This is the most painful period I've ever gone through, and I hope to get a place next week through the CHA (Chicago Housing Authority). It seems like every time you turn around Bush is making another cut that hurts us."

"I came today to be with people not just because of what we're against but what we're for," she continued. "We have a lot of ideas. We need someone to listen."

—Laurie Cashdan

Inside view of battle against British poll tax

Poll Tax Rebellion by Danny Burns. (AK Press, Stirling Scotland, 1992), 202 pages.

This book provides an inside view of the unfoldment of one of the most important mass movements of the past decade—the struggle against the hated "Poll Tax" in Scotland, England and Wales from 1987 to 1991. Written by an active participant, it documents the development of the anti-Poll Tax campaign through the voices of the independent rank-and-file activists who were its backbone.

The story begins with 1987, when Thatcher's government, overly-confident from three straight election victories, presented the so-called "Community Charge," a flat tax everyone over 18 was liable to pay, regardless of income. This move to cut the taxes of the rich by shifting the tax burden even further onto the backs of working people and the unemployed was met with a mass opposition which put every political tendency to the test.

The parliamentary opposition, such as the Labour Party, opposed the tax in words but called on the masses to pay it "out of respect for the law." A very different kind of opposition arose from below, beginning in Scotland, where the tax was first introduced. Independent anti-Poll Tax unions calling for non-payment arose there in 1987. This was followed, within two years, by the emergence of hundreds of community and labour-based anti-Poll Tax groups throughout England and Wales. After an endless series of meetings, marches, and publicity drives, by 1991 this non-payment campaign, which involved 17 million people, forced the government to repeal the tax.

One of the most fascinating aspects of the book is its discussion of the role played within the movement by various radical tendencies. We encounter such groups as "Community Resistance" in Scotland, composed of revolutionaries opposed to the elitist "party to lead" concept who stressed the need for community-based action independent of political parties and the bureaucratic trade union apparatus. The group first arose as part of solidarity work with the South African freedom struggle. Though such groups were small, Burns shows they helped foster the focus on decentralized, community-based organizations that came to define so much of the non-payment campaign.

Burns also documents the impact of such elitist groups as the Militant tendency and the Socialist Workers Party (both Trotskyist groupings), who argued against grassroots initiatives in favor of reliance on the Labour Party or Trade Union leadership. The manipulative behavior of the Militant tendency proved especially damaging to the effort to form a national anti-Poll Tax federation; activists preferred their local initiatives to being subsumed under a national "coalition" controlled



by one political party.

Indeed, Burns shows the movement's strength was that it grew too large to be controlled by any one organization: "This diversity reinforced the image that local people had of a deep-rooted movement in which many 'ordinary people' had become active...In this campaign the local groups were not the passive arms of a centralized campaign but centres of energy and imagination." Though Burns does quote some of the views of these "ordinary people," one is left wanting to hear how the movement helped generate discussion of ideas that went beyond the single issue of the Poll Tax. For this "intellectual sediment" (as Rosa Luxemburg once put it) can become a beacon for future freedom struggles.

Though Burns views the anti-Poll Tax struggle as "one of the greatest demonstrations of 'people power' in modern political history," he admits British capitalism has "carried on pretty much as usual" in spite of it. That hardly detracts from this book's importance, however. As one commentator wrote in 1991, "extra-parliamentary action proved itself and in the process exposed the hollowness of our claim to democracy." Moreover, the movement helped give people greater confidence that they can change the present conditions.

Burns sees this as the movement's most important contribution. "Unless people have a vision of what might be, and how they might achieve it, it is too painful for them to acknowledge the daily oppression they face...People aren't motivated by 'sensibleness' or spurred into action by 'realism.' They need to know that their imaginative visions might actually become reality. Traditional Left-wing politics...fails to understand just how close imagination, confidence, and visions are to the process of effecting political change."

This may well lead the reader to ask, what role can revolutionaries opposed to the elitist "party to lead" play in fostering such a vision of the future? What must a vision of the future be rooted in historically and philosophically, and how does that define the role of anti-vanguardist revolutionary organizations which maintain themselves after the passing of a spontaneous upsurge? Instead of discussing the objectivity of the independent role such anti-elitist revolutionary organizations can play vis-a-vis the mass movement, however, Burns ends by returning to the importance of community-based rank-and-file initiatives.

Though this may leave the reader asking for more, this book's "inside view" of the anti-Poll Tax movement represents an important contribution in raising questions about the relation between spontaneity, consciousness, and organization that have yet to be answered. The book can be obtained from AK distributors, 3 Balmoral Place, Stirling FK82RD, Scotland, for \$10.

—Peter Wermuth

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Special supplement

On the 125th anniversary of Marx's *Capital*

never before in print

Raya Dunayevskaya's first essay on the theory of state-capitalism

We are proud to share with our readers a truly historic discovery—the very first essay written by Raya Dunayevskaya on the theory of state-capitalism. Though the document was missing for almost five decades, Dunayevskaya considered it of such importance that she listed it as the first entry in her *Archives*, The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection—Marxist-Humanism: A Half-Century of its World Development. We are thrilled to announce that the document was recently found. It appears here in printed form for the first time.

Dunayevskaya's essay, which carried the title "The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is a Capitalist Society," was written in February, 1941, under the pseudonym "Freddie James." It was published by the Workers' Party in mimeographed form in an internal discussion bulletin of March, 1941. The essay was written before Dunayevskaya began her collaboration with C.L.R. James, who unknown to her at the time had also come to a state-capitalist position. Not long after writing the piece, Dunayevskaya and James began a theoretic-political collabora-

tion in what became known as the "Johnson-Forest Tendency." For an account of what led to the breakup of the Johnson-Forest Tendency and Dunayevskaya's subsequent founding and development of the philosophy of Marxist-Humanism, see *The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism* (Chicago, 1992), *The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism* (Chicago, 1989), and *A History of Worldwide Revolutionary Developments: Twenty-Five Years of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S.* (Detroit, 1980) by Raya Dunayevskaya.

What follows is the full text of the 1941 essay. It has not been edited, except to correct obvious typographical and grammatical errors. Footnotes with asterisks are by the author; numbered footnotes have been added by the editors. Because the discovery of this essay so illuminates the importance of restating Marx's Marxism at momentous historic turning points, this special supplement also includes Kevin Anderson's essay on the enduring relevance of Marx's *Capital*.

—The Resident Editorial Board

"And even when society has got upon the right track for the discovery of the natural laws of its movement—and it is the ultimate aim of this work, to lay bare the economic law of motion of modern society—it can neither clear by bold leaps, nor remove by legal enactments, the obstacles offered by the successive phases of its normal development. But it can shorten and lessen the birth pangs."

Karl Marx, Preface to *Capital*, Vol. I¹

I. POLITICAL AND SOCIAL RULE

It was the contention of Comrade [Leon] Trotsky that the existence of statified property in Russia was sufficient to characterize it as a workers' state, regardless of the political regime in power. The counter-revolutionary Stalinist bureaucracy, therefore, could and did (though badly) defend the social rule of the proletariat. To thus epitomize the constituent elements of a workers' state is at wide variance with the views held by Marx and Lenin. Let us look at the birth of the Soviet Republic for a verification of their views.

In establishing itself as the ruling class, the Russian proletariat not only expropriated the capitalist and landlord but also guaranteed power to the poor; political power (a state controlled by them through their own organs—the trade unions, the Soviets, the Bolshevik Party), and social power, which Lenin defined as the "practical participation in the management" of the state. Lenin emphasized that it was the aim of the Soviet state "to attract every member of the poor class to practical participation in the management."² In the same pamphlet, *Soviets at Work*, he further elaborated this view: "The proximity of the Soviets to the toiling masses creates special forms of recall and other methods of control by the masses."³ He called for the development "with specific diligence" of these special forms of recall and diverse methods of mass control. By means of "practical participation in the management" of the state the political and social rule of the proletariat are merged and that guaranteed power in the hands of the proletariat. The diverse forms of mass control would paralyze "every possibility of distorting the Soviet rule," remove "the wild grass of bureaucratism." That was his practical interpretation of his theoretical elaboration of the state in his *State and Revolution*, to wit: 1) Control by the workers cannot be carried out by a state of bureaucrats but must be carried out by a state of armed workers, 2) In a proletarian state all must be "bureaucrats" so that no one could be a bureaucrat. 3) The state should be so constituted that it begins to wither away and cannot but wither away.

In 1918, Lenin stressed the fact that the expropriation of the capitalists was a comparatively simple problem when contrasted to the more complex one of "creating conditions under which the bourgeoisie could neither exist nor come anew into existence."⁴ In the further development of the Soviet state, Lenin once again realized the practical meaning of the dictum of Marx that a society could "neither clear by bold leaps, nor remove by legal enactments, the obstacles offered by the successive phases of its normal development." But he knew that so long as the Soviet state "guaranteed powers to the workers and the poor" that it need not be fatal to it to "implant" state capitalism.

Not even the most pious worker-statist would contend that the workers had any power in the present Soviet state. He would merely reiterate that so long as there was statified property, etc., etc. But I deny that the social conquests of October [1917]—the conscious and active political and practical participation of the masses in liberating themselves from the yoke of Tsarism, capi-



talism and landlordism—are to be narrowly translated into mere statified property, that is to say, the ownership of the means of production by a state which in no way resembles the Marxian concept of a workers' state, i.e., "the proletariat organized as the ruling class."⁵

II. STATE CAPITALISM OR BUREAUCRATIC STATE SOCIALISM?

Comrade Shachtman⁶ asks: "If the workers are no longer the ruling class and the Soviet Union no longer a workers' state and if there is no private property owning capitalist class ruling Russia, what is the class nature of the state, and what exactly is the bureaucracy that dominates it?" And he answers: bureaucratic state socialism, because, among other things, the new term elucidates the "distinction from capitalism" characteristic of the class nature of the Soviet state.

But how does the mode of production differ under bureaucratic state socialist rule from that under capitalist rule? What is the economic law of motion of this presumably new exploitative society? These crucial points Comrade Shachtman fails to discuss. Let me examine the alleged "distinction from capitalism" characteristic of the Soviet Union and see whether it isn't a distinction from a certain stage of capitalism rather than from capitalism as a whole.

The determining factor in analyzing the class nature of a society is not whether the means of production are the private property of the capitalist class or are state-owned, but whether the means of production are capital i.e. whether they are monopolized & alienated from the direct producers. The Soviet Government occupies in relation to the whole economic system the position

(continued on page 6)

5. This expression of Marx is from *The Communist Manifesto*.

6. Max Shachtman (1903-72) was a leader of the Workers' Party who argued that Stalinist Russia was a form of "bureaucratic collectivism."

On the relevance of *Capital*: why is the full text as Marx wrote it still unavailable?

by Kevin Anderson

I. THE 'DEATH' AND LIFE OF MARXISM

The 125th anniversary of *Das Kapital*, first published in 1867, falls at a time when so-called "free-market" capitalism is undergoing its deepest crisis since the Great Depression. Yet it is Marxist, not capitalist ideologists, who are on the defensive in today's political and philosophical debates. This is in large part because of the spurious identity which has been created between Marx's Marxism and totalitarian Communism, a moribund system which has finally collapsed in Russia. This identity is maintained not only by the Right, but also by much of the Left.¹

Take the pragmatist Richard Rorty, a self-proclaimed "leftist" who has been termed "the most influential contemporary American philosopher."² He sums up the views of a whole group of radicals and ex-radicals when he writes:

"I hope we have reached a time when we can finally get rid of the conviction common to Plato and Marx, the conviction that there must be large theoretical ways of finding out how to end injustice, as opposed to small experimental ways. I hope we can learn to get along without the conviction that there is something deep—such as the human soul, or human nature, or the will of God, or the shape of history—which provides a subject matter for grand, politically useful theory."³

Rorty wants to root out not only Marx's dialectic, but the whole tradition of critical, dialectical thinking, going back to Plato. He concludes that no "alternative to capitalism" exists and that therefore: "the only hope for getting the money necessary to eliminate intolerable inequities is to facilitate the activities of people like Henry Ford...and even Donald Trump!"

Such premature announcements of the "death" of Marxism are nearly as old as Marxism itself. Recently, I ran across one such claim as early as 1897 in a major French philosophy journal, where a leading "specialist" on Hegel and Marx, largely forgotten since, wrote that he was "compelled to proclaim Marxism obsolete."⁴

The existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, whose own work was indebted to one of Rorty's mentors, Martin Heidegger, presented a markedly different view when he wrote in the 1960s that he saw only "three" real periods of "philosophical creation" since the 16th century. These were the "moments" of Descartes and Locke, that of Kant and Hegel, and finally, that of Marx, in which we still live.

One cannot go beyond Marx, Sartre maintained, without also going beyond the historical epoch out of which his thought emerged, i.e. capitalism. Therefore, he concluded: "A so-called 'going beyond Marxism' will be at worst only a return to pre-Marxism."⁵ Which is why its opponents so often have recourse to pre-Marxist notions such as 18th century "free-market" liberalism.

In sharp opposition to contemporary anti-Marxists such as Rorty, Raya Dunayevskaya, founder of Marxist-

(continued on page 6)

1. Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I (New York: Vintage, 1977), p. 92; see also *Capital*, Vol. I (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1906), pp. 14-15.

2. See V.I. Lenin, "The International Position of the Russian Soviet Republic and the Fundamental Tasks of the Socialist Revolution," in *Collected Works*, Vol. 27 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965), p. 273.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 274-75.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 245.

1. For a critique, see Raya Dunayevskaya, *The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism* (Chicago: News & Letters, 1992).

2. See L.S. Klepp, "Every Man a Philosopher-King," *New York Times Magazine*, Dec. 2, 1990.

3. Richard Rorty, "The Intellectuals and the End of Socialism," *The Yale Review*, Vol. 80:1/2, April 1992.

4. See Charles Adler, "La conception matérialiste de l'histoire," *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*, Vol. 5, 1897, pp. 644-58.

5. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Search for a Method* (New York: Knopf, 1963), p. 7.

**The
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Raya Dunayevskaya's first essay

(continued from page 5)

which a capitalist occupies in relation to a single enterprise. Shachtman's designation of the class nature of the Soviet Union as "bureaucratic state socialism" is an irrational expression behind which there exists the real economic relation of state-capitalist-exploiter to the propertyless exploited.

Shachtman correctly emphasizes that: "The conquest of state power by the bureaucracy spelled the destruction of the property relations established by the Bolshevik revolution." Yet he does not see that the "new" production relations are none other than the relations under capitalism. He does not even consider the possibility that the "new" exploitative society is state capitalism. Comrade Trotsky did consider that variant interpretation but violently opposes defining the Stalinist bureaucracy as a class of state capitalists. Let us see whether he was justified in his opposition.

State capitalism, Trotsky contended, does not exist in Russia since the ownership of the means of production by the state occurred in history by the proletariat with the method of social revolution and not by the capitalist with the method of state trustification.⁷ But does the manner in which a thing is accomplished determine the use to which it is put by its usurpers any more than each test to be accomplished determines the group to execute it. "The bourgeois character of a revolution," wrote Trotsky in polemicizing against the Menshevik thesis that since the Russian Revolution was a bourgeois revolution the proletariat ought to renounce power in favor of the bourgeoisie, "could not answer in advance the question as to which class would solve the tasks of the democratic revolution."⁸ In further expounding his theory of the permanent revolution, Trotsky wrote: "Socialization of the means of production had become a necessary condition for bringing the country out of barbarism. That is the law of combined development for backward countries." Precisely! But is it necessary among Marxists to stress the fact that socialization of the means of production is not socialism but as such an economic law of capitalist development as is monopoly. The weak Russian bourgeoisie was incapable of accomplishing either the democratic tasks of the revolution or the further development of the productive forces. "Its" task was accomplished by the masses with the method of social revolution. However, the task of the young proletarian rulers was greatly complicated by the backwardness of Russia; and the treachery

of the Social-Democracy left them unaided by the world proletariat. Finally, the Stalinist counter-revolution identified itself with the state. The manner in which the means of production were converted into state property did not deprive them of their becoming capital.

To prove that the particular state-monopoly capitalism existing in Russia did not come about through state trustification but by methods of social revolution explains its historic origin but does not prove that its economic law of motion differs from that analyzed by Karl Marx, Engels and Lenin. It is high time to evaluate "the economic law of motion of modern society" as it applies to the Soviet Union and not merely to retain for statified property the same "superstitious reverence" the opportunists entertained for the bourgeois state.

III. NO DEFENSE OF THE CAPITALIST SOCIETY EXISTING IN RUSSIA

Because we did not clearly understand the class nature of the present Soviet state, the Soviet Union's integral participation in the Second Imperialist World War came as a monstrous surprise.⁹ The Red Army march on Poland, the bloody conquest of part of Finland and the peaceful conquest of the Baltic states proved that the Stalinized Red Army had no more connection with the spirit, purpose and content of October than has the Stalinist state, whose armed might it is. What an abhorrent relapse from the conquests of October are the Stalinist conquests!

Long before the outbreak of World War II the Russian masses bore the brunt of this "abhorrent relapse." The worker had a first premonition of it when as a Left Oppositionist he fought the Thermidorians¹⁰ who deprived him of his job along with his Communist Party membership card. The glimmer of hope that he had when the Stalinist bureaucracy nevertheless adopted the Opposition plank for industrialization and collectivization, faded as soon as he realized that the development of the productive forces did not raise his standard of living. He learned quickly enough that the "socialist fatherland" knew how to accumulate for other purposes. He would have felt the grind of Stakhanovism¹¹ if the name had not been Russified for him but had the original Ford-Taylor speed-up insignia. To call the piece work system

9. This refers to the signing of the Hitler-Stalin Pact of August 1939, which was followed within a month by the joint Russian and German carving up of East Europe.

10. The "Left Opposition" refers to the political opposition against Stalin grouped around Trotsky from 1923. "Thermidor" was the month in the calendar adopted by the French Revolution, in which Robespierre was overthrown by a reactionary wing of the revolution. Trotsky often used the term to describe those grouped around Stalin after 1923.

The relevance of *Capital* continues: but why i

(continued from page 5)

Humanism in the U.S., urges us to think globally rather than pragmatically. She writes that "full liberation takes precedence over economics, politics, philosophy, or rather refuses to be rent asunder into three and wants to be one, the knowledge that you can be free."⁶ The virulent attacks on Marx's dialectic today are really attacks on the concept of new human relations which would go beyond those under capitalism. That is why Rorty wants us to stick only to "small" changes.

II. VIEWING CAPITAL AS A PROCESS OF THE SELF-DEVELOPMENT OF THE IDEA OF FREEDOM

A glance at two key arguments in *Capital* may help us grasp its relevance for today, for the needed global critique of our capitalist civilization. (1) Marx develops the whole notion of commodity fetishism in the first chapter. This fetishism is a unique and characteristic feature of capitalism, he maintains, one which poisons all social relations and which makes it hard even to grasp their oppressive nature. He writes that under capitalism social relations between human beings take on "the fantastic form of a relation between things."⁷ So deep is this fetishism that rather than "direct social relations between persons in their work," we have "material relations between persons and social relations between things" (p. 166).

This fetishization of human relations is not a mere appearance, but reflects "what they really are" (p. 166), the actuality of life under capitalism. Marx writes further that all of this is rooted in "the peculiar social character of the labor" (p. 165) which produces commodities in capitalist society. This peculiar form of labor is of course alienated labor.

In the first chapter, Marx also presents a vision of different human relations—and there's no notion here of planning by a state bureaucracy: "Let us finally imagine, for a change, an association of free human beings, working with the means of production held in common" (p. 171, trans. slightly altered). Only such a "free association" can strip away commodity fetishism.

(2) In the book's concluding section on "The So-Called Primitive Accumulation of Capital," Marx describes how from its beginnings capitalism had gone from Europe into what is today termed the Third World in search of booty and cheap labor: "The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement, and entombment

in mines of the indigenous population of that continent, the beginnings of the conquest and plunder of India, and the conversion of Africa into a preserve for the commercial hunting of blackskins, are all things which characterize the dawn of the era of capitalism" (p. 915). In this passage, he certainly anticipates the 1992 critiques of Columbus.

From her first book, *Marxism and Freedom* (1958), to her *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* (1982), Dunayevskaya shows us Marx's *oeuvres* not as a frozen, fixed totality where all questions for today are answered definitely, but as a rich body of ideas in need of development and concretization. She describes how in moving from his rough draft of *Grundrisse* (1857-58) to the first German edition of *Capital* in 1867, Marx studied not only economic data, but also the Black revolt in America which had helped to bring about and accompanied the Civil War.

After its first edition in 1867, *Capital* went through two other editions, the second German edition of 1872, and the French edition of 1872-75, editions in which Marx made literally thousands of small and large changes.⁸ The Paris Commune of 1871, Dunayevskaya writes, had an important effect on the structure of the 1872-75 French edition of *Capital*, the last one on which Marx worked.

Unfortunately, most existing editions of *Capital* don't show it as a work in progress, but give us a finished product tied up a bit too neatly. For example, most of the language on commodity fetishism which I quoted earlier was added after 1867. In fact, the whole concept of fetishism is not yet fully developed in the 1867 edition.

While the germ of the concept is certainly there, as is its dialectical opposite, freely associated labor, there is no special section on commodity fetishism within chapter one in 1867. In addition, after 1867, the discussions of machinery, of capitalist accumulation and of non-Western society in later chapters are expanded or changed greatly. These changes were made as Marx rethought his work.⁹

As Dunayevskaya wrote in *Marxism and Freedom*, the biggest changes in the book as a whole were those for the French edition. This fact is confirmed in the new

comprehensive MEGA editions of *Capital*, where the editors write: "The changes which Marx introduced in the French edition, in comparison with those for the two previous German editions, were of greater import" (MEGA II/7, p. 723). Thus these latest editions refute claims by the Communist philosopher Louis Althusser and others that the French edition was somehow inferior to or less rigorous than the German ones.¹⁰

For Marx, this process of developing and changing his "economics" continued even after the French edition was completed, when, in the late 1870s and 1880s, he turned increasingly toward the examination not only of non-Western societies, but also of gender relations. See especially his 1880-81 *Ethnological Notebooks*, where he took up clan and communal societies in India, the Americas and Australia, and mocked the sexist biases of establishment scholars such as Henry Sumner Maine.

III. THE LACK OF AN ADEQUATE EDITION OF CAPITAL, VOL. I, 125 YEARS LATER

Not only does our English edition present *Capital* as the finished work that it was not, but it also cheats us of over fifty pages of material written by Marx for the French edition, material scattered throughout the text. This is because the English edition follows the 1890 fourth German edition, established by Engels seven years after Marx's death. Engels combined the two German editions and the French edition into an "official" text. I would like now to illustrate a few key omissions by Engels and subsequent editors of *Capital*.¹¹

(1) In a passage on ecological issues, the text in the English edition reads: "Through this movement [the human being] acts upon external nature and changes it, and in this way he¹² simultaneously changes his own nature. He develops the potentialities slumbering within nature, and subjects the play of its forces to his own sovereign power. We are not dealing here with those instinctive forms of labor which remain on an animal level" (p. 283, emphasis added).

From the French edition this same passage reads: "At the same time that through this movement he acts upon

10. See Althusser's preface to Marx, *Le Capital* (Paris: Flammarion, 1969), published in English in his *Lenin and Philosophy* (New York: Monthly Review, 1971). Althusser is so anti-Hegelian that he urges the reader to skip chapter one, with its discussion of fetishism. See also the letters from 1870-73 in Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 44 (New York: International Publishers, 1975), which show Marx's preference for the French edition, and Engels' for the German.

11. For a different group of examples of textual differences, see my earlier "The 'Unknown' Marx's *Capital*: The French Edition of 1872-75, 100 Years Later," *Review of Radical Political Economics*, Vol. 15:4 (1983).

12. In this passage, Marx uses the German word "Mensch," better translated as "human being" than "he" or "man."

6. Dunayevskaya, *The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism* (Chicago: News and Letters, 1989), p. 40.

7. I quote from the most recent English edition, Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, trans. by Ben Fowkes (New York: Vintage, 1976) p. 165. Further page references are directly in the text.

8. For reprints of the various editions, see Marx and Engels, *Gesamtausgabe* [hereafter MEGA] (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1975). Vols. 5 through 10 of Part II of this edition reproduce each of the editions of *Capital*, Vol. I, as prepared for publication by Marx (1867 German, 1872 German, 1872-75 French) or as edited subsequently by Engels (1883 German, 1886 English, 1890 German). The last of these volumes did not appear until 1991.

9. I hope to discuss more of the development of *Capital* after 1867 in a future essay.

the theory of state-capitalism

which is best suited to capitalist exploitation "socialist working norms" does not lighten the degree of exploitation of the bricklayer who has to lay 16,000 bricks per day, or for a typist (if I may be permitted a petty-bourgeois interest in my own trade) to type 45 pages of 30 lines each and 60 strokes in each line per day.* Deceeing "universal, free and equal suffrage" does not make it possible for the 14-year-old to vote "no" to being conscripted in the labor reserves, "educated" (read: taught a trade), and at the end of the two year training program, being put to work on state enterprises for four consecutive years—even if this newly educated 16-year-old is guaranteed "the established wage rate." It is not only that the

* The norms must be higher now. The above norms were effective up to June 26, 1940, at which time the working day was changed from 7 to 8 hours. This decree was supplemented by a law interpreting this lengthening of the work day by instructing the various institutions "to raise the norms of production and lower piece prices in proportion to the lengthening of the working day."

11. "Stakhanovism" was a system of speedup of production introduced in Russia in 1935, which led to a rise in income differentiation. It encountered much resistance by the workers. For Dunayevskaya's analysis of this phenomenon, see *The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism* (Chicago: News and Letters, 1992), pp. 61-62 especially.

income of the factory worker is 110 rubles a month, and that of the director 1,200 a month, but that the whole mode of production produces and reproduces the capitalist production relations. State capitalism, it is true, but capitalism nevertheless. Could we have forgotten that state property forms (and it is only form, not relation, for it is without control by the masses) are the aim of proletarian revolution only as a means to achieve the quicker the fullest development of the productive forces the better to satisfy the needs of man?

No, the existence of statified property in Russia does not make its defense imperative even were the Soviet Union attacked by other imperialist nations for purposes of abolishing statified property (which is less likely just now than the Stalinist state joining the "new order" of Hitler)—unless we are to change our policy and call for the defense of, say, France because the work of the German fascists in dividing the country is of a decidedly retrogressive character.

It is the irrationality of Shachtman's characterization of the class nature of the Soviet Union as "bureaucratic state socialism" that leads him to expound conditional defense of the present Soviet state. It is the real economic relations behind that irrational expression that leads to: no defense of the capitalist society existing in Russia.



Russian masses confront tank during August 1991 coup.

full text as Marx wrote it still unavailable?

external nature and modifies it, he modifies his own nature, and develops the potentialities slumbering within it" (emphasis added). Here I would argue that Marx has removed from the later French edition some language asserting human domination over nature, and replaced it with language stressing a more interactive relationship with nature.¹³

(2) In a well-known passage on the relationship of industrial to non-industrial societies, the English edition reads: "The country that is more developed industrially only shows, to the less developed, the image of its own future" (p. 91, emphasis added). Those who attack *Capital* as a deterministic book have interpreted this passage to suggest that Marx thought all human societies would be forced to follow a single pathway of development, that of nineteenth century capitalist England.¹⁴

But note how this same passage reads in the French edition, where Marx clarifies his argument: "The country that is more developed industrially only shows, to those which follow it onto the industrial stage (*échelle*), the image of its own future" (emphasis added). Here the notion of one country following the pathway of another is explicitly limited to countries which are moving toward industrialization. Non-industrial societies of Marx's time such as Russia and India are now seemingly bracketed out, leaving open the notion of alternative roads for them.

(3) In a fairly lengthy discussion of the world market, the English edition discusses the attempt by capital to lower British wages to the then lower French ones, an argument centering around the notion of competitiveness, one still familiar to us today:

"An eighteenth century writer we have often quoted already the [anonymous] author of the 'Essay on Trade and Commerce,' actually reveals the innermost secret of English capital when he declares that England's historical mission is to force down English wages to the French and Dutch level. He says, naively, 'But if our poor' (a technical term for the workers) 'must live luxuriously...then labor must, of course, be dear...' [...] 'To which may be added, our essayist continues [on the French workers], that their drink is either water or other small liquors, so that they spend very little money...These things are very difficult to be brought about; but they are not impracticable, since they have been effected both in France and in Holland.' [Added paragraph here] Twenty years later, an American humbug, the ennobled Yankee Benjamin Thompson (alias Count Rumford), pursued

the same line in philanthropy, to the great satisfaction of God and man" (pp. 748-49).

In the French edition, Marx does not rewrite the above, but he adds an entire paragraph within the passage, connecting these issues to China as well as Europe: "Today we have to a large extent gone beyond these aspirations, thanks to the multi-faceted (*cosmopolite*) competition into which the development of capitalist production has thrown the workers of the whole world. It is no longer only a question of reducing English wages to those of the continental Europe, but of lowering, in the near or more distant term, the European level to the Chinese. Here is the perspective which Mr. Stapleton, Member of the English Parliament, has just put forth to his constituents in an [1873] address on *The Price of Labor in the Future*: 'If China, he says, becomes a big manufacturing country, I do not see how the industrial population of Europe will know how to sustain the struggle without descending to the level of its competitors.'" These are just a few of the textual differences.

It is a scandal that, 125 years after its first edition, we still do not have a full text for Marx's most important work, Vol. I of *Capital*. This problem goes back to Engels, but was covered up for decades by the official Stalinist editions of Marx, even though Dunayevskaya and other independent Marxist scholars such as Maximilien Rubel have pointed to it for years.¹⁵ Finally, in 1991, no doubt under the impact of the collapse of the Communist regime in East Germany, the new MEGA editors issued a volume which lists 50 pages of material left out by Engels from Vol. I.¹⁶ These materials listed by the MEGA editors include the third example quoted above, but they still do not mention the first two examples.

Getting a full text of *Capital* is part of a far larger problem: separating Marx's work from that of the post-Marx Marxists, beginning with Engels. Not only separating it, but untangling all of the distortions and truncations of his work, up through the point where Marxism, a philosophy of liberation, could be transformed into its opposite, a totalitarian ideology such as Stalinism.

15. See Dunayevskaya, *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), especially Ch. 10, section 2, "Capital: Significance of the 1875 French edition of Volume I," and Rubel, ed., *Marx, Oeuvres, Economie*, Vol. I (Paris: Gallimard, 1963).

16. See the "List of Places in the Text of the French Edition That Were Not Included in the Third and Fourth German Editions," published as an appendix to Marx, *Das Kapital* [1890], in MEGA II/10, pp. 732-83. Despite the changes since the fall of Communism which have supposedly created a more independent editorial board for the MEGA than the previous Stalinist one, even today its editors cannot bring themselves to name Engels as the one who left this substantial body of material out of the Third and Fourth German editions.

Marx's Capital in the Archives of Marxist-Humanism

The following is a sample of the vast body of material on Marx's *Capital* that can be found in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection — Marxist-Humanism: A Half-Century of its World Development*.

The 1940s

- **The Law of Value and Capitalist Society** (1943). On the central categories of *Capital*. (microfilm #8895)
- **Outline of Marx's 'Capital,' Vol. I** (1945). A series of 14 lectures covering all eight parts of *Capital*; available from N&L as a printed pamphlet. (#324)
- **Significance of Marx's Vol. II of 'Capital' for Our Day** (1946). (#9084)
- **State-Capitalism and Marxism** (1947). On the three volumes of *Capital* and *Theories of Surplus Value* as a critique of the foundations of political economy. (#472)
- **Philosophic Correspondence between Dunayevskaya, C.L.R. James, and Grace Lee** (1949-51). Includes a series of letters on the impact of Hegel's *Logic* on *Capital*. (#1595)

The 1950s

- **The Revolt of the Workers and the Plan of the Intellectuals** (1951). On the despotic plan of capital vs. the plan of "freely associated labor" as the theoretical axis of *Capital*. (#1424)
- "Marxism: The Unity of Theory and Practice," Part III of *Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today*, containing four chapters on the humanism and dialectic of *Capital* (1958).

The 1960s

- Letter to James A. Gregor of June 25, 1963. On the relation of Marx's 1844 *Humanist Essays* to *Capital*. (#13872)
- **Marx's Humanism Today** (1965). Essay published in Erich Fromm's international symposium *Socialist Humanism*. (#3565)
- **State-Capitalism and Marx's Humanism, or Philosophy and Revolution** (1967). Written in response to Japanese theorist Tadayuki Tsushima; available from N&L as a printed pamphlet.

The 1970s

- "True Rebirth" or Wholesale Revision of Marxism? (1970). Critique of Ernest Mandel's *Marxist Economic Theory*. (May/June-July, 1970 N&L)
- Letter of July 1, 1973. On the first English translation of Marx's *Grundrisse*. (#12435)
- "The Adventures of the Commodity as Fetish," chapter 2, section C of *Philosophy and Revolution, from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao* (1973).
- **Rosdolsky's Methodology and Lange's Revisionism** (1977). Critique of Roman Rosdolsky's *The Making of Marx's 'Capital.'* (N&L Jan.-Feb. 1978)

The 1980s

- Letter of February 20, 1981. On the changes Marx introduced into the French edition of *Capital*, 1872-75. (#15266)
- "A Decade of Historic Transformation: from the *Grundrisse* to *Capital*," chapter 10 of *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* (1982).
- "Alienated Labor and the Present State of Chaos in World Production," section of *Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, 1986-87* (September, 1986). On Engels' editing of Marx's *Capital*. (#11035)
- Presentation for "Humanism and Marxism" section of Midwest Sociological Society (1987). On how Marxist-Humanism developed out of the theory of state-capitalism. (#11582)

These and other documents in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection* are available in a 15,000-page microfilm collection, and can be found at many libraries as well as at the national office of *News and Letters Committees* in Chicago. For a *Guide to the Archives and information on how your library can obtain the Collection*, write to *News & Letters*, 59 E. Van Buren, Chicago, IL 60605.

13. Chris Arthur, who makes a different interpretation of this passage in his "Capital: A Note on Translation," *Science & Society*, Vol. 54:2 (1990), first called it to my attention.

14. See for example British sociologist Teodor Shanin's edited collection, *Marx and the Russian Road* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983).

NATIONALISM/SOCIALISM

I found your August-September, 1992 editorial, "Genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina," very informative. However, your apparent endorsement of "national self-determination as a pathway for all of (Bosnia-Herzegovina's) ethnic groups to live together peacefully" seems to deny the need for socialism and the end of class rule to ensure peace.

Jeff Miller
Editor, New Unionist
Minneapolis

Editor's Note: The history of Marxism provides ample proof that support for national self-determination in no way vitiates the struggle for socialism. It can be seen from the work of Marx, who supported the national struggles of the Irish, Poles, Chinese and many others; to Lenin, who embraced national self-determination as a "bacillus of social revolution"; to Frantz Fanon, who spoke of how "national consciousness that is not nationalism is the only thing that will give us an international dimension."

LABOR DAY 1992



When I was in Chicago over Labor Day weekend, I participated in the Labor Day parade there. I marched with the displaced workers from Oscar Mayer because theirs was a grassroots freedom struggle separated from the policies of both the union bureaucrats and the company.

Working woman
Oklahoma

Jobs in the garment industry are hard work. Many workers come from countries where there are no jobs, so they take whatever they can get. In my shop there are only six people and we operate the machines by foot, but if we get a rush job we have to turn out 2-3,000 pieces in two to three days.

Garment Worker
New York City

On Labor Day ADAPT protesters picketed the Austin Hilton Hotel, site of the local segments of the Jerry Lewis Muscular Dystrophy Telethon, from about noon to 3 p.m. We did some chanting and we had some posters and fliers. "Jerry's Not Our Father - We're Not Kids!" was one of the chants.

ADAPT members
Austin, Texas

Editor's Note: ADAPT is the acronym for Americans Disabled for Attendant Programs Today.

Readers' Views

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE IDEA OF FREEDOM

In the News and Letters Draft for Perspectives (July N&L) I especially responded to what it said about Los Angeles as a condition, instead of as a specific happening. People take the violence and anger as an isolated incident, out of historical context. But the Draft Perspectives takes it as representative of a whole group of people. Other views of L.A. look at it from the outside. This takes it from the inside.

Black woman student
Oxford, Ohio

In her writing on "the Power of Abstraction" (Aug.-Sept. N&L), Raya Dunayevskaya wanted to show what it means to follow out an idea to its logical conclusion. If it is the wrong idea, she said, it will show you are an idiot; if it is the right one, that you are a genius. Well, the logic of capitalism is that the rich keep getting richer and the poor keep getting poorer.

Mark Jones
Chicago

The presentation Raya Dunayevskaya made to the 1985 Convention, which N&L printed under the title "The Power of Abstraction," is about dialectic methodology, not in general, but as in the original title she had given it: "The Self-Thinking Idea in a New Concept of and Relationship to the Dialectics of Leadership, as Well as the Self-Bringing Forth of Liberty."

M. Holmes
Detroit

The question of the inseparability of organization from the responsibility for the development of Marxism, which was raised in the Marxist-Humanist Draft for Perspectives, needs more explanation. In the Iranian Left we thought the responsibility of a revolutionary organization was to raise the consciousness of the masses and prepare them for the day of revolution.

Ali R.
Chicago

I am elated to have read in the Draft Perspectives that a Slovak edition of Dunayevskaya's Philosophy and Revolution is in the making. I am utterly sick of the way the Slovaks have been slandered right and left. The bourgeois press blames them for the breakup of Czechoslovakia, when it is the Prague elite that wants to get rid of the Slovaks.

Malcolm
Berkeley, Calif.

Raya writes in "The Power of Abstraction" about following out an Idea. To me, this means the need to philo-

sophically work out Marxist-Humanist concepts, like Masses as Reason. "The power of abstraction" is to me like Marx's Promethean vision—what it means when philosophy becomes a whole way of life, taking that ground of Freedom.

Maurice Miller
Los Angeles

John Marcotte's review of The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism which appeared as "Philosophic Dialogue" in the August-September issue was one any worker will understand. We want to make it into a flier to help sell this powerful book.

Marxist-Humanists
Detroit

Attending the News and Letters Convention was an incredible experience for me. Meeting so many who are involved in the struggle from so many parts of the world made me recognize Marxist-Humanism as a world concept and Raya Dunayevskaya's work as ground-breaking. That is why it is so difficult sometimes to discuss her writings, including "The Power of Abstraction," because there she is proposing that our task is to be continuators.

New Marxist-Humanist
Illinois

HITLER'S VISAGE

"Family values" was precisely the political ploy used by Hitler to pave his way to power. It is chilling to see, in the 1992 Republican platform, a reincarnation of what Hitler called for when he addressed the German people after being appointed Chancellor in 1933 and posed "Christianity as the foundation of ...national morality and the family (Aryan, of course) as the basis of racial and political life."

Black writer
Oakland, Calif.

Why has the national bourgeois press nearly buried the spectre of 10,000 police officers rioting in New York City, Sept. 16? The cops swarmed over police barricades to the steps of City Hall, trampled on cars and blocked Brooklyn Bridge in reaction to Mayor Dinkins's proposal for an independent civilian agency to investigate police misconduct and his refusal to issue them semi-automatic weapons.

L.C.
New York City

At the "rally," the cops drank openly, carried disgusting macho and racist signs, and applauded speeches by police union leader Phil Caruso, Republican mayoral candidate Rudolph Giuliani and Michael O'Keefe. To me this rally reeked of fascism and was one of the most putrid and ominous events I have ever seen.

NEWS & LETTERS

WHY SUPPORT N&L?

So many readers here look forward to getting N&L each month that whenever its arrival is delayed they complain. Please make sure we stay on your mailing list! Your paper is an open window where we can see what other parts of the world are doing. It is wonderful literature for us, since we have just embarked on the people's struggle.

Makerere Institute
of Social Research
Kampala, Uganda

Please keep N&L coming. I am unfortunately unable to pay for any of the books you carry by Sister Dunayevskaya or Brother Marx as I only make 80 cents a day for my eight-hour shift, five days a week. The prison administrators pay me what they want, and then I have

to buy personal items at their store for whatever price they set. The situation is just like something out of Upton Sinclair's The Jungle. We have a lot of problems with ignorance and racism, and I feel unable to convey that it is a diversionary tactic to separate us from seeing our real enemy, the capitalist warpiqs that control the government. I will keep working on the struggle for freedom on my side of the wall, and you keep at it on yours.

Prisoner
Michigan

Editor's Note: We have been able to send N&L gift subscriptions to many readers who have requested them through our special Donors Fund. Can you help us continue those subs with a special contribution to that Fund?

POST-MARX MARXISM'S DEADEND

I was a member of the Communist Party and am now with the new interim organization "Committees of Correspondence." The former Communists in East Europe that you criticize for being the new "masters of production" in place of the old aren't the same as the old Stalinists. These were the Communists who had good intentions, the ones who weren't directly in power making so many mistakes. Shouldn't they have a chance to show they can run production without being undemocratic?

Ex-CPer
San Francisco

The dead end reached by post-Marx Marxism was never more painfully clear than at a Sept. 13 meeting here in Los Angeles on "The State of the Nation: Which Way the Progressive Movement?" Five speakers, including vaunted "radical" columnist Alexander Cockburn, spent their time in critiques and exposes and analyses that went absolutely nowhere. Although an underlying theme of the evening was the need for the Left to maintain relevance in the '90s, there was zero — ZERO!! — discussion of the meaning of the L.A. rebellion, and the challenges it posed to revolutionary thought and activity to prepare for the next spontaneous upsurge.

There was no sense of the depth of the discontent the rebellion manifested, nor that those seething angers only continue to deepen. Instead, all that these "socialists" wanted to talk about, for hours, was the extent to which Clinton would, or wouldn't, or would, make a difference in our lives vs. Bush. It was a shocking view of their degenerate isolation from present reality, and possibilities for the future.

Michelle Landau
Los Angeles

'JOY OF TEACHING'



I'm writing to let you know about the joy of teaching. I am a new teacher. I have my students read important texts in politics, both theoretical and practical, summarize the piece, and then give commentary for their journal. The following is an excerpt from one student's journal after reading the Manifesto of the Communist Party by Marx and Engels.

"...Before reading this I didn't think that capitalism was such a bad thing. I was ignorant about the conditions of the laborer and how they were exploited. I have a new perspective on the situation and have doubts about a capitalistic society. Any type of government will have advantages and disadvantages but capitalism's favoritism towards people with money is a disadvantage that may outweigh all the advantages. Capitalism encourages an 'us' and 'them' mentality which only serves to provoke conflict. Working together to achieve goals is much more satisfying than competing against one another."

Her journal entry made me proud to be an intellectual worker. My motto is: If you know, teach; if you don't know, learn.

Feminist Socialist
Student & Teacher
San Francisco

Black/Red View

by John Alan

From our side, the old world must be fully dragged into the daylight and the new positive one created.
—Karl Marx

As the 1992 presidential campaign reaches its conclusion, many African Americans are beginning to think about the kind of world they will confront in the post-election period when the fog of political rhetoric dissipates in the presence of reality.

What African Americans now know for certain is that George Bush and Bill Clinton have assiduously avoided specific Black problems such as affirmative action, police brutality and pervasive near Third World conditions of poverty which have become a permanent way of life for millions of African Americans.

What African Americans also know—after Bush and Clinton toured the site of the Los Angeles rebellion—is that both candidates for the presidency are opposed to any massive fiscal support toward relieving the chronic conditions of poverty and joblessness which have distorted the life of a whole generation of Black youth.

It is also clear now that we are bound to get a man in the White House who would like to eliminate the masses of African Americans from his political agenda, one way or the other. This is a political feat that many have been tempted to do, but none has accomplished. They have failed because politics, i.e., political power, is the expression of class and race antagonisms. In this country racial antagonism is inseparable from American politics. The two major capitalist parties are forced to define their politics within the context of the historic Black struggle for freedom. Bush and Clinton are aware of this and their reluctance to confront the conditions of Black reality has shown the depth of their political cowardice as they fashion political message to conform to provincial prejudices of so-called "middle America."

BUSH'S CAREER BUILT ON RACISM

However, what African Americans are clearly aware of is that Bush's political career is built upon race and racism. He began his climb to the White House in 1964 by opposing President Kennedy's mild Civil Rights Act in his U.S. Senate campaign for the seat of the liberal Democrat Ralph Yarborough. He contended at that time that the issue was "states' rights" and that "moral suasion" was the answer to the race problem.

In 1988, he entered the "oval office" on the back of a metaphorical image of a Black rapist. Once in power, he opposed the Civil Rights Restoration Acts of 1990 and 1991, and nominated the arch-conservative, anti-affirmative action bureaucrat, Clarence Thomas, to fill a vacancy on the U.S. Supreme Court.

This past August, Bush's political racism found its ultimate, ugly expression at the GOP Houston convention when Pat Buchanan was allowed to declare a cultural war against African Americans. In Buchanan's rhetoric, African Americans are the "Barbarians from time immemorial" on a rampage to burn and loot, "evil exul-

Challenge toxic racism

Richmond, Cal.—Community residents and their allies rallied here against the toxic racism of Chevron Chemical Co. The rally and march to the Chevron refinery gates, as well as a statewide conference here against toxic dumping in poor communities, were sponsored by the West County Toxics Coalition.

Following an "eco-rap" by AK Black, the 200 participants heard a woman representing an organization in the Phoenix area which successfully prevented the opening of a toxic waste facility. They had refused to be swayed by diversions like payments to community residents. Nothing short of shutting down would do.

Speaker after speaker, including a young girl from Richmond, mounted the platform to recount their fears and injuries from the string of chemical accidents at Chevron that have sent plumes of toxic gasses into the surrounding communities. Some, like Lucille Allen, a Black resident from south Richmond, succinctly declared their determination to stop Chevron from releasing poisons into the community.

At Chevron's gate, a community resident described nerve damage he had suffered from Chevron's accidental releases. He believed that police singled him out for harassment for bringing a suit against the company. The police recently arrested him for no reason, placing him in a choke hold and crushing his larynx. The demonstrators left barrels in front of the corporate headquarters, symbolically returning the toxic waste deposited on the community.

The direction of the movement to stop Chevron, though, was expressed by contradictory voices. The demands on the rally flyer seemed to say that Chevron could be run safely, by requiring maintenance of equipment and trained union personnel and full citizen involvement in accident prevention, modernization, and monitoring. And a speaker from nearby Point Richmond suggested that Chevron pay residents for their suffering, or that some other business should replace a polluter like Chevron, listing IBM among the alternatives.

Indeed, losing sight of the nature of capitalist production—whose nature is anti-human—was reflected in the silence surrounding two refinery workers seriously injured in a well-known accident and fire in nearby Martinez this summer.

—Jim Mills

Election ignores Black America

tant" that only force can turn back.

THE WHITENESS OF CLINTON'S AGENDA

Now what about the "moderate Democrat," the "right to work" Governor, Bill Clinton?

On every issue concerning Black and labor, Clinton has equivocated; while, at the same time, he has separated himself from any Black individual who evokes the slightest expression of a Black-oriented cause, whether that be Jesse Jackson or Sister Souljah. His political strategy is to submerge all class and race antagonism under the political umbrella of "us not them" unity—a unity he claims expresses middle-class values of "responsibility, work and reward." Thus, he aims to get welfare mothers (meaning Black mothers) off of the "welfare rolls on to the payrolls." This is pure political rhetoric directed toward white America, without ever addressing the enormity of Black unemployment.

There is a mass desire for change in the African American communities. This desire for change cannot be met with a placatory folklore about a harmonious capitalist society, because the economic and social crises in the African American communities are rooted in the nature of capitalist production itself, which over the last forty years has created a world of permanent unemployment and poverty for two generations of African Americans. There are more people living in poverty today than when President Johnson declared war on poverty in the mid-1960s.

When Black youth, like people around the world, go to the streets in righteous rage against injustice and poverty, they're carrying the unspoken idea that the realm of freedom is beyond capitalist production whether it appears in private or state form.

Black World

(continued from page 1)

den Cold War imbroglio that prepared the way.

Beginning in the early 1970s, "the Soviets obtained authorization to use the port of Berbera to counter American reinforcements at Diego Garcia [in the Indian Ocean]" (p. 42), writes Zaki Laidi in *The Super-Powers and Africa: The Constraints of a Rivalry, 1960-1990* (1990). Prof. Laidi observes that the Soviet Union's "geostrategic imperatives" in Somalia followed its "positive reevaluation of the role of the African militaries" (p. 43), a line dutifully followed by Cuba, who supported Barre until Soviet strategic interests shifted to Somalia's regional rival, Ethiopia, in the 1970s.

Against the protracted opposition to Barre's 21-

year reign, the Russians, and then the U.S., supplied the regime with sophisticated armaments. When a breakthrough occurred in the internal war in 1991, the arms began to fall into the hands of rebel groups.

The mostly Isaaq Somali National Movement succeeded in ousting Barre's forces from northern Somalia, leading to the establishment of the newest nation in Africa, the Republic of Somaliland. The newly formed republic declared its independence in May, 1992.

In Somalia, the United Somali Congress and the Somali Patriotic Front succeeded in overthrowing the Barre regime, only to fall out into the current fratricidal war. The forces of interim president Ali Mahdi Mohamed and his political rival Gen. Mohamed Farah Aidid have been fighting since November of last year. The conflict between Ali Mahdi and Aidid goes back to the hastily established interim government, following the ouster of Barre. Ali Mahdi belongs to the Abqal clan and Aidid to the Habar Gidu clan, both sub-clans of the predominant Hawize clan in the capital, Mogadishu.

However, what is new in the Somali crisis is the inept bureaucratic response of the UN. According to Mohammed Sahnoun, UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali's special envoy in Somalia and a sharp critic of the UN's response to the crisis, the absence of UN personnel in Mogadishu for most of 1991, supposedly on security grounds, was one of the reasons for the lack of information abroad concerning the escalating crisis.

RETURN TO IMPERIALIST ROOTS

The often cited danger to relief workers, as the reason for the slow response, obscures the fact that only one Western aid worker has been killed (last December), while dozens of journalists, relief workers and UN personnel have been killed in the Balkans. According to the

Latinos fight waste dump

Kern County, Cal.—Buttonwillow is a town of 1,500, near Bakersfield and Delano. There is a high concentration of Latino people, with Blacks and people of other races. It's here that the Laidlaw Co. has operated its Lokern toxic waste facility since 1983, taking materials from the petroleum industry and burying them in about 550 acres. People weren't aware of what a place like this can do to their health until Laidlaw wanted to open another 90 acres, 100 feet deep for more kinds of toxics. That's when people stood up.

At first it was the growers who tried to stop Laidlaw. But they realized their money couldn't stop it, and they didn't have the numbers. They opened the issue to our participation, but they didn't expect us to take over! Two hundred Latino people regularly show up for county meetings. This isn't surprising. We face all kinds of issues and problems, but we're not going to get anywhere until people decide to take control of their own lives.

We found out they were going ahead with the expansion without even an environmental impact statement. At first all the farmworkers were intimidated by these county and state commission meetings where we went to pressure them to stop poisoning us. We sat in the back of the meetings. Now we take over the meetings.

We're forcing local officials to meet in our toxic neighborhoods. It's not just that we don't want toxics in our community. We don't want them in any community. We don't want to be held hostage by being forced to trade jobs for health. Workers are on the front line.

Latino communities around the area have organized, one by one, around Buttonwillow, against Laidlaw. Now there are people organizing in towns like Shafter, Wasco, and McKittrick. The movement to stop the Buttonwillow toxic dump is going to continue growing like this until we stop Laidlaw.

—Members of Padres Hacia Una Vida Mejor
(Parents for a Better Life)

Somalia's cold war harvest



Photo by David Turnley

Somali refugees wait for food, weary from the long, hazardous hike to Baidoa relief center.

human rights group Africa Watch, "While these are legitimate security concerns, these appear to have been used to excuse a disgraceful history of inaction." In the meantime, tens of thousands of tons of food relief sit in storehouses in Mogadishu and other centers, hostage to the fratricidal war and the UN's bureaucratic inertia.

Perhaps most conspicuous in all of this is the U.S. policy of providing only a small percentage of direct aid to Somali famine victims, while selling the rest to merchants, supposedly as a means of reviving the economy. This represents, in the most appalling fashion, the usurious attitude of the Bush administration towards human suffering in Africa. With famine-ravaged Somalis caught between the bureaucratic inertia of international aid agencies, warring feudal factions and the mercenary price-gouging of local merchants, the U.S. policy of selling aid to merchants for resale is representative of the state-capitalist mentality of the Bush administration: with nearly every vestige of the social order in ruin, it seeks first to revive the private capitalist sector.

The unconscionable policy of the Bush administration in Somalia demonstrates the limits of the prevailing view that the logic of the post-Cold War order will see a new U.S. foreign policy towards Africa and the Third World, one no longer determined by a superpower, bipolar world. The so-called new post-Cold War reordering of the Third World is instead a return to the most primitive roots of Western imperialism.

Let's not forget, it is important to recall the words of Rosa Luxemburg in response to the African holocaust of her day: "this 'civilized world' has only today become aware that the bite of the imperialist beast is fatal, that its breath is infamy" (Rosa Luxemburg, *Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, p.55).

Deep poverty and continuing revolt mark Latin America

(continued from page 1)

to come here—because it's so cheap. We have so many houses without water, without light, without plumbing. We are told in the papers, the TV and the radios that we're going to rise to the level of the U.S., but we know this is a big lie."

What the Mexican bourgeoisie has always wanted—an alliance with U.S. capital—is now coming true. The forces within Mexico who aligned themselves with Mexico's revolutionary history have always worked to oppose such capitulation. But today there is so much disorientation and retreat among these groups that the Salinas government has had a free hand in carrying out its vision of Mexico's capital-dependent future.

● Guatemala in 1992 is a land whose indigenous population is suffering greatly. The gap between rich and poor is huge, with close to a million people earning an average of only four dollars a month. The civilian government only covers over a military which for more than a decade has forced much of the rural population into "civilian patrols" to fight guerrilla forces, while destroying native cultures.

● In Peru the majority of the population is malnourished. In this poorest country in South America, millions are spent to enforce a state of emergency throughout much of the country, while cholera runs rampant in the population and thousands flee to the slums of Lima every month because they cannot survive in the countryside. The arrest of Shining Path leader Abimael Guzman only further underlines the non-viability of this form of Maoist-inspired terrorism.

LATIN AMERICA'S LOST DECADE

Latin America's stark reality is the culmination of what has been occurring for more than a decade. According to United Nations estimates, poverty defines the lives of over 180 million Latin Americans, more than 40% of its population. The spread of cholera points as much to the horrendous state of sanitation facilities and health care systems in Latin America as to the virulence of the disease. The mass migration of Mexicans and Central Americans north in spite of more border patrol agents, new fences, increased surveillance, tells us not so much about the attraction of the U.S. as it does of the impossible conditions of life that Latin American masses have to endure in the south.

This is not to say that the U.S. does not bear much responsibility for those conditions of underdevelopment of Latin America throughout this century. So difficult have the economic and social conditions become, that many have referred to the 1980s as Latin America's "lost decade": a decade in which gross domestic production per capita fell by 10% for Latin America as a whole; Central America's by 17%.

It is a condition Latin America's masses refuse to accept.

● The most recent manifestation of this is what is happening in Brazil, where millions have taken to the streets to demand the ouster of President Collor from office after his multi-million dollar schemes to line his pockets and those of his cohorts had been exposed.

● In Haiti, the masses defied the legacy of the Duvalier dictatorship by electing a theology of liberation Catholic priest, Father Aristide, as president. Aristide's overthrow by the military, while the U.S. has benignly looked on, is not the end of the mass movement.

● In Peru, while all have concentrated on the struggle between the Fujimori dictatorship and the terrorist Shining Path, a movement has been emerging in the poverty stricken barrios of Lima where the masses oppose both the government and Shining Path.

● At a protest against the planned "celebration" of Columbus' landing on the island of Hispaniola 300 people were fired upon in Santo Domingo, the capital of the Dominican Republic, by plainclothes policemen. The head of the Dominican Committee on Human Rights was shot to death. The government has been forced to cancel many of its planned 500 year "celebrations."

WHOSE 500 YEARS? WHOSE CELEBRATION?

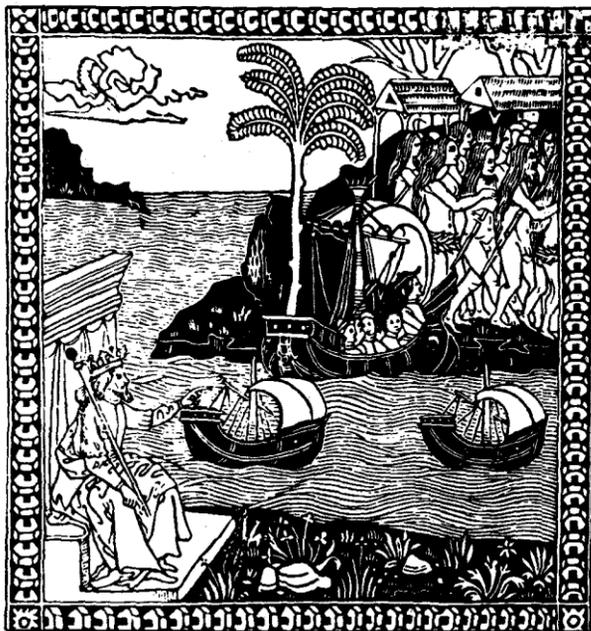
The celebrations of the 500th anniversary of Columbus' journey have ignited a debate within Latin America. One of the discussions revolves around seeing the Conquest that followed Columbus not as a single act, but as a continuing process lasting through today. It has been called the interminable Conquest, 1492-1992, with many speaking and writing not only about the original conquest, but the continuing violation of the rights of indigenous peoples today.

A second area of discussion has been the resistance to this interminable Conquest. For too long we have seen only conquerors and victims. But many refuse to be victims and, indeed, documenting the resistance both historically and today has become an important field of work in Latin America.

It is important to grasp the enormity of that original invasion of America by Europe. In the aftermath, the indigenous populations of three continents—South America, Africa, North America—were profoundly transformed, indeed decimated. Tens of millions of Native Americans died in the first decades after the Conquest from war, overwork and diseases introduced from Europe. It was not alone the Inca and Aztec civilizations that were destroyed, but scores of other peoples who lived throughout the Americas. Despite the decimation, the resistance of Native Americans has been continuous. It is they, more than anyone, who have opposed the base carnard of Columbus' discovery that is being promulgated by the ruling powers in the New World and

the Old. Today in a country like Guatemala the attempt to keep cultures alive is, in fact, a matter of life and death.

Millions of Africans were brought in chains to toil on the plantations and in the mines of the New World. Millions more never survived the middle passage. Nor can we forget the effect this robbing of humanity had upon African societies. Almost synonymous with the first slave in the New World was the first escapee. Revolts



Woodcut published in Giuliano Dati's edition of Columbus' 1493 letter.

and maroon societies of runaway slaves abounded. The many two-way roads that have arisen among the forced African Diaspora—in the Caribbean, Brazil and South America, the U.S. and many parts of Africa—have been a crucial dimension of freedom struggles. Today, movements for Black consciousness are important dimensions of the freedom struggle.

The Conquest was not only of peoples, but a conquest of nature. The introduction of European flora and fauna was no accident, but part and parcel of the Conquest. Foods and beasts of burden were brought to the Americas to support the making of the New World into a linchpin of Europe's drive for the primitive accumulation of capital. This too often meant the destruction of the native ecology. The plantation was the most organized form of this process—land was cleared, native species were often excluded and a monocrop economy introduced. To grow sugar in the Caribbean islands and Brazil has meant the devastation by deforestation and irrigation of elaborate coastal plain ecosystems.

The gold and silver mines of Mexico and the Andes were tombs where human laborers were exploited and worked to death, and moreover became open wounds upon the land. Soil and water were contaminated with mercury and other metals. Entire areas no longer supported vegetation.

The destruction of the environment continues at an even more rapid pace today, whether it is the rainforests of the Amazon, or the fact that air pollution is so poisonous in Mexico City that life in the most populous city in the world has become nearly intolerable.

Thus, the 500th anniversary is not a time for celebration. Rather, it is a time to comprehend what the Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano has called "a system lethal to the world and its inhabitants, that putrefies the water, annihilates the land and poisons the air and soil...in violent contradiction with the

cultures that hold the earth to be sacred because we, its children, are sacred."

It is that "system lethal to the world," capitalism in all its forms, that is still in need of uprooting, and nowhere more so than on the Latin American continent.

THE LATINO DIMENSION IS NOT ONLY SOUTH OF US

At the same time, we here in the United States need to be aware that the Latino dimension is not only south of us. This could be seen sharply in the recent Los Angeles rebellion, in which many Mexican immigrants were active. (See June, 1992 N&L.) This was followed by the revolt against police violence in the Washington Heights section of New York, where Dominicans were most active.

In the Central Valley of California the poverty among children, large numbers of whom are sons and daughters of farmworkers, is astronomical; while in Homestead, Fla. the farmworkers who lived in the labor camps were the most devastated and the last to be helped after Hurricane Andrew.

Those traveling north find the U.S. to be no promised land, but one in which the conditions of life and labor make them part of a second U.S. In thinking about the Latino dimension we need to be both in Latin America and in the U.S., and to see the two-way road of freedom activity and freedom ideas that occurs between them.

WHERE TO NOW?

North and south of the border there continues to be a great passion for freedom, a hunger to change the inhuman conditions of life in Latin America, a reaching for something new.

At the same time, the various models which laid claim to being alternatives to capitalism have been exhausted, whether in Castro's Cuba, the Central America of Nicaragua's Sandinistas and El Salvador's guerrilla fighters, or Peru's Maoist-terrorist Shining Path.

Cuba, which for so long tied itself to another state power, now finds itself having to build bicycles for transportation and ration almost everything as the collapse of the Soviet Union leaves it more isolated than ever. Its own future is in doubt—let alone any projection of a revolutionary vision for Latin America.

In Nicaragua, the Sandinistas are practicing class collaborationism with the Chamorro government and have long since abandoned the revolutionary alternative they posed in daring to overthrow the Somoza dictatorship. The guerrillas of El Salvador are turning in their arms and their leadership in striving to be "pragmatic," while the oppressive class structure, including the oligarchy, remains intact.

Peru's Shining Path can hardly be considered any kind of alternative. Their treating the peasantry in their own country as an enemy by assassinating those who have alternative views of revolutionary change is the antithesis of genuine revolution and can only lead to a dead end.

A Peruvian Marxist, Alberto Flores Galindo, posed the problematic that Latin American revolutionaries face today: "The Left has not managed to meet this challenge. In a country like Peru, the revolution calls not only for reforms, but the formation of a new type of society...The fact is that we intellectuals have been quite numerous, but we have not been very creative. We have not been able to offer our country the possibility of a new Marxism."

To work out a revolutionary alternative, to create such a new Marxism, we need to be rooted in Marx's own Marxism, his writings, including those on what we today call the Third World. The relationship of Marx's Marxism to Latin America cannot be taken for granted. It has to be re-created at each historic moment. The need for such a re-creation is more urgent than ever.

Chicanos debate 'Discovery of America'

Los Angeles, Cal.—On Sept. 18 Mexico's Independence Day was celebrated with an audience of young Chicanos who attended a slide presentation called "500 Years of Colonialization and Resistance in Indio America." The program was sponsored by PODER (Pro-Active Organization Dedicated to the Empowerment of Raza).

Daniel Osuna of El Partido Nacional de la Raza has been presenting the documentary around the country for the past year in response to "the 1992 jubilee celebrations of the so-called 'Discovery of America.'" He began by stating that since telling half the truth serves as a lie, the "accepted" versions of history amount to a lie. Osuna showed how an understanding of both history and language can help Chicano/Mexicano people come to terms with themselves as a mestizo and indigenous people, and with the nature of their oppression, to thereby regain dignity, unity and autonomy.

He also showed that the slavery of Africans in the Americas began where the slavery of the indigenous became increasingly less viable after millions and millions died as a result of abuses, overwork and exposure to new diseases. Yet Osuna insisted that it is time once again for "the indigenous people of the Western hemisphere to stand up, become assertive and stop using our victimization as an excuse for not assuming the responsibility that comes with taking our rightful place among humanity."

He said that the Latino-Mexican-indigenous movement should no longer fall into the traps of Left/Right

politics, as it has in the past, but must "transcend theory."

During the question/answer period, one young man challenged Osuna on his rejection of the Left, at which point Osuna recognized that indigenous peoples of America had practiced forms of socialism but that we should beware of European socialism. This reminds me of the words of the Peruvian Marxist Mariategui: "Our socialism then would not be Peruvian—it would not ever be socialism—if it did not first consolidate itself with the indigenous people." Which in turn takes me to the problem of the Sandinistas' initial disregard of Miskito culture and rights after the Nicaraguan revolution.

Another young Chicano worker spoke up, saying that if "pluralism" of Latinos in solidarity meant brotherhood with Cuban "contras" in Miami, for example, he wouldn't participate. He said the movement needs to be based on more than the fact of being Latino.

I went back to Raya Dunayevskaya's warning that there can be no shortcuts to freedom in which irreconcilable contradictions are simply leaped over. Nor can they simply co-exist peacefully. She pointed out that the closer we get to the crisis of capitalism, "all contradictions, grounds, conditions become more acute." And those contradictions must be pointed out and grappled with from within as an ongoing process in order to strengthen and propel any movement, or they will fester and weaken the movement.

—Anna Maillon

Youth

China's student movement and the idea of freedom

by Jim Guthrie

Shen Tong, the author of *Almost a Revolution*, and the first prominent student leader of the 1989 Tiananmen Square movement to return to China from exile was arrested in Beijing on Sept. 1. According to National Public Radio, he believed with the fall of Communism in Russia and Eastern Europe that democracy was the wave of the future and China would have to follow suit.

He had returned to China a month earlier and traveled the country meeting with underground pro-democracy groups and interviewing peasants, workers and intellectuals. The state allowed him to move freely until he got to Beijing, where he issued a press release calling a press conference to describe his travels and announce the founding of a Beijing chapter of his Boston-based organization, Democracy for China Fund.

That night security forces burst into his mother's house and arrested him and two other Chinese youth activists. Neither Shen nor his two comrades, Qi Dafeng and Quin Liyun, have been seen since.

In *Almost a Revolution*, Shen's description of his self-development gives us a view of the high points and the limitations of the mass revolt that emerged in 1989. Shen establishes his generation's rootedness in China's revolutionary history by describing his childhood as the son of loyal, but free thinking intellectuals, who following the 1949 national liberation were dedicated to building a new China. As a student in 1957, his father participated in the Hundred Flowers Movement by offering his sincere criticism of the government and narrowly missed being persecuted when the regime labeled all who spoke out as "rightists." Shen relates his vivid

前仆后继

memories of the brutal suppression of the anti-authoritarian demonstrations in 1976, when he was eight years old, and how the poets and artists of '78-'79 Democracy Wall Movement became his heroes.

Fed up with the thought control and censorship in his high school, he was drawn to the intellectual scene at Beijing University. He describes the late night discussion groups on politics, history and philosophy that kept emerging despite the 11 p.m. lights out policy.

Shen began selling a collection of dissident poems which expressed the suffering during the Cultural Revolution. "I saw in them the power of ideas," he says. "No matter how hard the government tried to crush them they kept coming back." Before the outbreak of the mass movement his desire to work out a critique of the Communist Party from the left led him and others to study Sartre, DeBeauvoir, Gandhi, and Martin Luther King.

Following the crushing of the short-lived democracy movement in the fall of 1986, Shen describes how the youth were overcome with feelings of futility, and how they were pulled into different forms of escapism including mystical Eastern philosophy and "the money craze" that took over the country after the government relaxed restrictions on private enterprise.

Attracted to the money craze briefly, he quickly rejected it as a waste of time and dug deeper into history and thought and discovered the Civil Rights Movement in the U.S. Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott revived his optimism for a movement in China.

For me, the greatness of the youth in Tiananmen was that they posed for the whole world to see the power of

the Idea of freedom as a force that cannot be massacred. While describing the scene before the crackdown, Shen states his belief that youth idealism must be "based on a real philosophy." Yet, as great as this is, posing this problem is not the same as working it out.

Although Shen demonstrates a sensitivity to the voices of workers and peasants, his response to the self-organization of Chinese workers further reveals his separation of "democracy" from revolution. When he heard they were planning a general strike, he admits, "I still thought of myself as reformer, but I wasn't sure that any of us were ready to be revolutionaries."

L.A. students fight back!

Los Angeles, Cal.—"Walkout! Walkout!" That was the call at high schools and junior highs throughout the Los Angeles Unified School District in early September to protest pending budget cuts that will drain an already deteriorating school system.

From Manual Arts High School in South Los Angeles to Kennedy High School in suburban Granada Hills, students took to the streets. Two hundred Belmont High students walked out of school on Sept. 8 and marched to City Hall. Students from several San Fernando Valley high schools joined to form STAT (Students Taking Action Together), and rallied together on Sept. 12. Grant Junior High in Van Nuys and Burbank Junior High were among several that erupted.

At a day-long school-sponsored "Youth Congress" on Sept. 22, students from 18 schools in areas most impacted by the spring uprising following the Rodney King verdict were brought together to discuss conditions before and since the "riots."

In the morning, the 200 youths were divided into small discussion groups, and in the afternoon session they met together to report back on their group discussions, with their attention directed to an adult panel of city officials.

"We need adults to start taking us seriously," was one remark that elicited strong applause from the young crowd. "We're not animals. The police are supposed to be here to protect us, not kill us." Students demanded money for books and supplies. "We have 15 books for 45 students!" and for after-school programs, recreational halls, and for new "human relations" curriculums that "would teach us about our own and each others' cultures." "We all have stereotypes of each other—because we've lived through the system and it's made us this way."

While the hunger to reach across racial barriers was mainly the great desire of Blacks and Latinos for better relations with each other (they were the overwhelming makeup of the schools represented), one young white woman from Chadwick High, who had independently found out about the Congress and come on her own said: "It's awful that we're not exposed more to each other. The next time you do something like this, you should contact all schools, so we all can come out and talk."

A student said, "I don't consider myself a 'minority.' We are equal and not to be tossed aside. We need to be treated as people: stop playing around with us, we are not toys. We need our educational funding back!"

As they departed, following the "climax" of the city officials' responses and promises, many students voiced cynicism over the day's event. "Nothing will come out of this," one young Black woman from Lynwood High told *News & Letters*. "How many times do we have to keep telling them the same thing over and over? They're not listening and they don't care."

—M.L.

Within a month of Shen's arrest, the 14th Communist Party Congress called for the "Deng line" of stimulating the economy through private enterprise to be implemented "for the next 100 years." Clearly this "free market reform" does not signal any new openings for the Idea of freedom, but a new stage of repression. The rulers will not compromise with the historical legacy of Tiananmen Square.

Although Shen was prescient enough to attack the "money craze" as the waste of time that it is, his imprisonment drives home how total a philosophy of revolution must be. We can afford no more "almost revolutions." Free Shen Tong!

On Black/Latino unity

Los Angeles, Cal.—Five months after the rebellion, Blacks and Latinos are confronting a widening void in leadership from elected officials and community leaders at a time when there is a real battle for unity among neighbors and gangs here.

New forms of the counter-revolutionary direction of the "leadership" appeared within days of the rebellion. Danny Bakewell, head of the Brotherhood Crusade, declared that if Blacks are not part of the clean-up and reconstruction of the businesses destroyed in the uprising, then nobody will work. The problem here is his disinterest in the fact that South Central Los Angeles has an ever-increasing Central American population, which, just like we Blacks, has been harassed by the police and is in need of jobs.

What didn't come from Bakewell's comments was any awareness that Latino day laborers in Los Angeles are paid sometimes less than minimum wage, and sometimes paid in drugs!

Instead of using the opportunity to demonstrate the real situation in post-rebellion South Central L.A., Bakewell is content to leave Latinos and Blacks fighting over low-paying, temporary jobs.

On the Latino side, Xavier Hermsillo, chairman of the nationalistic NEWS for America Latino organization and the Latino liaison to Bush's re-election campaign, publicly used the racial slur "mayate" to refer to Blacks. When members of the Mexican-American Bar Association in turn asked for his resignation, saying, "This kind of racial slur cannot be tolerated. Racism is racism, no matter where you find it," Hermsillo responded that no slur was involved, it was just like the Black use of the word "honkie" to describe whites!

Since May, it has become clear that the direction of this nation's political leaders, of all races, is not the same as the oppressed. In an article for the *Los Angeles Times* (Sept. 13, 1992), jointly written by three former and present Latino and Black gang members, the point was clearly stated: "The stirrings of 'the bottom' of society aim toward certain goals: the end of scarcity in the midst of plenty; complete literacy; the ability to function competently at any chosen level of society; productive and livable employment; access to the most advanced health care in the world and a real voice in the policy decisions that affect their lives."

By the end of the summer, South L.A. community members had completed a mural to signify Black and Latino unity in the Jordan Downs Housing Project, and there have been several educational and multicultural arts projects designed to improve Black-Latino relations.

The L.A. rebellion issued the challenge to totally transform this degenerate racist, sexist, class society. Frantz Fanon's call for the need in the Third World revolutions to "work out new concepts and try to set afoot a new man" speaks to the challenge we still face today.

—Maurice Miller

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Our Life and Times

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

Beginning in late August, mobs of neo-Nazis and other racists began yet another series of attacks on immigrant and refugee hostels. Chanting "Germany for the Germans" and "Foreigners out," up to 1,000 rioters attacked a hostel in Lichtenhagen, a working-class suburb of the eastern German port city of Rostock. In obvious complicity with the racists, on Aug. 24, at the height of the violence, police retreated to a position several hundred yards from the hostel, allowing the racists to penetrate inside, throwing firebombs and beating people. In the streets local residents cheered as the immigrants had to be evacuated to a nearby military base.

Since August, dozens of similar attacks have occurred in both western and eastern Germany. Most shockingly, the main victims have been Romany (Gypsies) who have fled persecution in Romania. Romany, like Jews, were singled out for extermination by the Nazis, and over 50,000 died in the death camps.

The left paper *Die Tageszeitung* wrote: "There are pictures that capture scenes in a country's history. The burning refugee shelter in Rostock-Lichtenhagen is one...And right after the picture comes the memory...of a police force that held back and watched passively as people were put into a life-threatening situation...Do these gentlemen [officials] really want us to believe that in a country with the highest police density in the Western world, it's impossible to protect refugees?"

Today in Rostock, a city of 250,000, unemployment stands at 17% officially, with the true figure closer to 40%. Until 1989, the major employer in the area was the shipyards. Since unification the work force in the yards has been slashed from 7,000 to 900. With the es-



established political parties, especially the ruling Christian Democrats, offering nothing more than a future of austerity plus vague hopes of prosperity years from now, and the Left having been unable to pose a non-capitalist alternative vision, the neo-fascist Right has stepped into the breach. They say that the small amount of tax money going to the country's hundreds of thousands of refugees, most of them non-white or from Eastern Europe, is what creates unemployment for Germans.

An added factor is that a number of former members of the Stasi (East German Communist secret police) have been joining the neo-Nazi movement. Three of those arrested for rioting in Rostock were former Stasis.

Behind the European monetary crisis

Although French voters approved the Maastricht treaty on Sept. 20, the razor-thin 51% to 49% margin of support, as well as the currency crisis that erupted throughout Europe in the days preceding the referendum, have put the prospects for European economic and military unity in severe doubt. Maastricht would commit the European Community nations to a common security policy and to a monetary union culminating in the adoption of a single currency by 1999.

The profound instability of Europe's various currencies is due to the falling demand for many of them, the flip side of the buoyant demand for deutsche marks. Investors are flocking to deutsche marks in order to lend them and profit from today's high German interest rates, which Germany has maintained in order to obtain the capital needed to rebuild former East Germany.

Capital for development is in such short supply throughout the world that, in order to attract even \$100 billion per year to develop its Eastern sector, Germany's interest rates have had to soar to their highest levels in the post-World War II period. If such is the case in an ostensibly "safe" investment haven such as Germany, it is not surprising that elsewhere on the globe, development funds are not available at any price.

The high German interest rates are causing rates to rise throughout Western Europe, exacerbating its worst economic slump in at least a decade.

To conform to the European Monetary System's stipulation of rigid relations between the values of different currencies—the "exchange rate mechanism" (ERM) — Britain attempted on Sept. 16 to prop up the pound sterling by forcing up short-term interest rates from 10% to 15%. When this failed to reverse the plummeting value of the pound, Britain announced a "temporary suspension" of its participation in the ERM. Italy soon followed suit, and Spain devalued the peseta.

The French vote dampened temporarily the frenzied currency speculation that precipitated the fall of the pound and other currencies. The deeper sources of instability that gave rise to the crisis persist, and it is doubtful that the ERM can be patched back together.

Opposition to the Maastricht treaty is growing throughout Europe, and the closeness of the French vote makes it likely that the rulers of Britain and perhaps other nations will be forced to hold their own referenda. France itself was forced into calling its referendum after Danes rejected Maastricht earlier this year.

—A. Anielewicz

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 re-creation 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.

Germany's resurgent neo-fascism

Vera Wollenberger, a leftist member of parliament from eastern Germany, stated that the Stasi connection to the rise of the far Right "has been underestimated far too long. I am convinced that the Stasi are very active in a part of the structure of the rightist radicals."

From the first day of riots, the labor federation I.G. Metall organized small daily anti-racist demonstrations in Rostock. Then, on Aug. 29, Left and labor groups gathered, 20,000 strong, for an anti-racist demonstration in Lichtenhagen. Chanting "Foreigners say, Nazis go," they also pointed to police complicity with the fascists. One speaker stated: "Remember, in 1938 it was the same thing." Smaller vigils were also organized outside some immigrant hostels, where leftists and members of peace groups placed their bodies on the line between the immigrants and the neo-Nazis.

But, despite pressure from this important solidarity movement, and the one last November which drew 100,000 onto the streets, the political establishment has refused to move against the racists. Instead, the rulers have combined merely verbal condemnations of the violence with highly publicized efforts to expel most of the refugees from German soil. The Social Democrats as well as the conservatives are involved in these sordid maneuvers to appease racism.

The latest deal is to pay the Romanian government to accept deportation of all of the Romany (Gypsies). At the same time, a court has just given a sentence of only two to four years to four skinheads who beat an African man to death in 1990. The verdict touched off new protests by the Left.

Massacre of ANC in Ciskei

The South Africa's apartheid military staged a bloodbath, Sept. 7, in its puppet "homeland" of Ciskei, when soldiers began firing on unarmed protesters, killing at least 28 and wounding over 200. The African National Congress (ANC) had organized a mass march of over 70,000 against Ciskei's despised ruler, Brigadier Oupa Gqozo, with the aim of forcing him to resign.

As the marchers arrived at the Ciskei "border," most accounts concur that a group of youth ran ahead into a soccer stadium which was the agreed-upon rally site. Another group of about 100 ran through a fence surrounding the stadium and was ambushed. Troops then turned their weapons on fleeing marchers. Many of those shot were on the South African side of the "border" and were shot in the back.

The march on Ciskei was held as part of the ANC's campaign organized to bury the legitimacy of apartheid "homelands." Some "homeland" rulers sympathize with the ANC, while others like Ciskei are bases for the government's "third force."

Cyril Ramaphosa, ANC Secretary-General, condemned de Klerk for the massacre in no uncertain terms: "The Ciskei is the creation of the apartheid regime and they are responsible for the atrocities committed in its name."

Yet only three days later, Ramaphosa announced that the ANC had agreed "in principle" to hold a "summit" meeting with President de Klerk. The ANC formally had withdrawn from negotiations with the de Klerk government after the state-sponsored Boipatong slaughter in June. Non-officially, they soon resumed negotiations.

The pull of "transition" had evidently also reigned in the Pan-Africanist Congress which in August agreed to steps for its joining in negotiations. Increasingly, a distinction is being drawn in the South African freedom struggle between "negotiation" and "revolution" (see *News & Letters*, July, 1992). The consequences remain wide open.

Turkey, Iran attack Kurds

An escalation of war in the Kurdish regions of Turkey has been ongoing since mid-summer. In August, the town of Sirnak was hit by the army. "Barely a house was left undamaged" according to a report by a British observer. Many civilians were killed. Journalists from the Kurdish areas have also been under attack. Nine journalists were killed in the last year. The latest was Musa Anter, 74, a Kurdish commentator and author.

Meanwhile the sale of arms to Turkey continues unabated. Seventy-five Black Hawk Sikorski helicopters were just sold to Turkey, not to defend against Iraq, but to attack the Kurds. While Turkey and Iran compete for regional alliances, they have just signed another agreement to cooperate to suppress the Kurdish struggles.

In a related event, five Kurdish and Iranian opposition leaders were killed in a Berlin cafe by the bullets of the Islamic republic's assassination squads. During a meeting in the restaurant two assassins entered with masks and opened fire on them with machine guns.

German authorities said it was a political assassination. It also tried to float rumors that it might have been the work of the Kurdish Workers Party (KDP), due to rivalries. The KDP leaders were participating in the congress of the Socialist International when the attack occurred. The KDP lost one of its leaders, A. Ghassemlu, three years ago to the Islamic regime's death squads.

No doubt part of the success of the death squads is due to the all too many illusions within Iranian opposition political tendencies in exile about the regime of Rafsanjani.

—Cyrus Noveen