

# NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

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## Too much work or none at all



by Gene Ford

I work at a laundry which is in the process of putting in new and used machinery—washers (800-pound capacity), dryers (400-pound capacity) and ironers—to increase productivity. The maintenance department in which I work is responsible for hooking up and repairing this equipment to keep it on line and productive.

Some in the crew put in close to 40 hours of overtime some weeks, with ten-hour days, five days a week and 12 hours on Saturday and Sunday. There is no such thing as leisure time, just survival, and none of us are getting rich. Now the company can't afford any new parts for this retooling process, because they need to extract more production from these \$80,000 washers to see a profit.

### EXHAUSTED OR HOMELESS

The company has about ten washers, six dryers and eight ironers which employ about 200 workers. All workers are under the whip of speedup while the foreman and production manager scream out "rapid, rapid" in Spanish to the 95% Latino work force.

The wealth of the United States, the so-called richest country in the world, is reflected in the overworked and exhausted working class or the starving and homeless unemployed. While the nation claims "economic growth," unemployment increases. There are officially 9.2 million Americans who want to work and can't find work at the bottom of the economic ladder.

While in the aerospace industry Boeing has plans to lay off 28,000, IBM projects the cutting of 100,000 jobs, closing plants and breaking the company into 13 semi-autonomous units. Sears, a "national institution" for 100 years, plans to close 2,000 stores. Some have called these recent developments "the end of an era" for America.

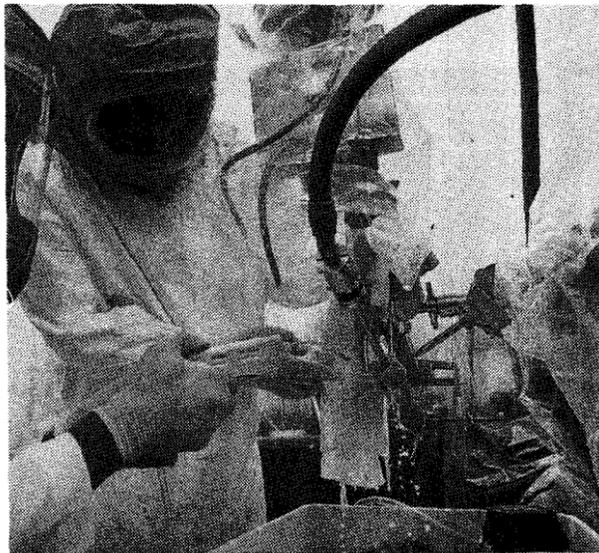
### WHAT IS 'ECONOMIC RECOVERY'?

What does the Clinton administration mean by economic recovery? Is it the success story of a Sioux Falls, S.D.? There the city government prides itself on full employment. In a family of seven characterized as working poor, mother and father work, putting in 100 hours between the two of them per week. They make \$18,000 a year. The mother gets paid \$4.50 per hour; the father, as a skilled worker, makes \$7 per hour. Neither worker has health insurance. This working family has to supplement its income with welfare and food stamps to survive. Overtime becomes a necessary evil.

Newly-elected President Bill Clinton's intention to "center in on the economy like a laser beam" reflects capitalism's analytical attitude, as if change can come from above, from a distance. What this economy needs is an upheaval of tremendous proportions, an earthquake that will shake up and uproot the institutions and structures of this system, a true act of human beings connecting to their nature to be free.

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## The crisis in health care: the mirror of a dehumanized society



U.S. health care: Hi-tech medicine coexists with diseases of extreme poverty  
*A robot reams out a bone*

by Michelle Landau

"Goddamn, give me something for my pain! Can't you give me something for my pain?!" That was the cry of Damacio Ybarra Torres soon after noon on Monday, Feb. 8, in the emergency room of Los Angeles County-USC Medical Center. It was a typical day in the hot, poorly ventilated room, with patients packed in tight rows of plastic chairs, feverish or in pain, waiting six, eight, ten, twelve hours for even minimal care—hasty, inadequate, impersonal.

At the front of the room sat the three "triage" doctors, processing incoming patients, deciding who was in critical enough condition to receive immediate attention, and who must take a number and wait ... and wait ... and wait. The only thing that made this day different was that Torres took out a gun, walked up to the triage doctors, and opened fire.

No one, fundamentally, was surprised. "I'm amazed people haven't just blown the hell out of the whole place," one doctor later commented. Similar conditions prevail in emergency rooms across this wealthy land, the only locales, often, where Americans without health insurance can go for care.

As one emergency room nurse told the *Los Angeles Times* after the Torres shooting: "It's like an assembly line."

### THE POLITICAL "SOLUTION"

Everyone recognizes the chaos that reigns in health care in the United States, the only major industrial nation outside of South Africa without a semblance of universal health coverage. The demand for a sane, humane health care system reached a crescendo when the Amer-



*A child in "failure to thrive clinic"*

ican people in the 1990s compelled the politicians to action. But the solutions proposed hardly touch upon the human suffering and tragedy. Rather, it is on the economic costs that the politicians focus their attention.

President Clinton very clearly stated this motivation in his Feb. 17 State of the Union address: the health care system needs to be reformed because its current spiraling costs add to the budget deficit and weaken the overall business climate. "Bringing health costs in line with inflation would do more for the private sector than any tax cut we could give," he said.

But calculating a health policy according to its impact on deficit reduction gears results to goals far removed from the health care needs of human beings. That Clinton can appear "liberal" with the two specific health care items cited in his address, childhood vaccinations and the WIC program (nutritional supplements for needy pregnant and postpartum women), is testament only to how the policies of the Reagan-Bush years have become the measure for current action. The WIC program was slashed under Reagan-Bush; and, by 1992, a two-year-old child in Mexico City was more likely to be fully immunized against childhood diseases than a two-year-old in the U.S.

Similarly, whatever health care plan Clinton ultimately proposes to Congress will be presented as "progress," with its measure being the current degrading backwardness of no plan at all for the uninsured.

### THE STATE OF HEALTH CARE 1993

There remain fundamental questions that the political class must answer (continued on page 9)

## Russia distances itself from the U.S.

by Kevin A. Barry

In a stunning Jan. 25 interview on the eve of a trip to India, Russian President Boris Yeltsin suddenly distanced himself publicly from Bush's military attacks on Iraq, while also indicating his support for Serbia in the war in Bosnia: "Definitely there was a tendency on the part of the United States to dictate terms. One country should not dictate to another what to do in one region of the world or another. We have had a difference of opinion with the U.S. We think there needs to be a political dialogue with Iraq and its government." Vice-President Aleksandr Rutskoi, who has a more nationalist reputation than Yeltsin, went even further, saying that Russia should "certainly use" its veto at the UN Security Council to block further attacks on Iraq. As to his trips to India and his earlier one to China, Yeltsin also said: "It seems to me that our policy is more or less balanced. After all, we are a Euro-Asian state." At the same time, he said he hoped for better relations with Clinton.

While its shift on Iraq was mere words, on Bosnia, the new tilt toward the genocidal Serbian militias had real and immediate effect on the ground. Russia let it be known that it would use its power at the UN to prevent any use of force against the Serbian aggressors. Relief should continue to be limited to

food supplies delivered with the leave of those besieging the towns and cities of Bosnia.

Russia's pressure was probably the decisive factor in Clinton's near-180 degree turn on Bosnia. Suddenly, he reversed his campaign pledges to do something forceful to lift the siege of Sarajevo, to close the concentration camps, especially the rape camps, to end the horrific "ethnic cleansing." In early February Secretary of State Warren Christopher announced a Bosnia policy essentially the same as that of Bush, the very policy Clinton had lambasted earlier. The UN "peace" plan would give the Serbian conquerors most of what they had taken by force. By mid-February, a non-binding resolution of the Russian parliament called for a lifting of sanctions against Serbia, unless they were also imposed on Croatia.

The contradictory nature of Russia's recent actions (continued on page 12)

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On the Inside

In celebration of International Women's Day and Women's History Month



Page 8: Essay: The contentious relationship—Marxism and Feminism.

Page 2: Two reviews of Margaret Randall's Gathering Rage: On the failure of 20th century revolutions to develop a feminist agenda.

## Two reviews: Margaret Randall's 'Gathering Rage'

# Rethinking revolution and women's liberation

**Gathering Rage: The Failure of 20th Century Revolutions to Develop a Feminist Agenda**, by Margaret Randall (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1992).

When poet, essayist and oral historian Margaret Randall gave her essay in progress, *Gathering Rage*, to friends to read and discuss, she "quickly realized how separate, how separatist, most of us still are." Many feminists don't know or care about revolution, while many revolutionaries, if they pay any attention to feminism, consider it "one component in the struggle for a more just society...."

By contrast, *Gathering Rage* is a feminist book which doesn't think revolution is synonymous with violence and male-identification, yet which is also critical of revolutions' unwillingness to be transformed by feminism. Incorporating her own experiences living in Cuba and Nicaragua, as well as the voices of Nicaraguan women and women thinkers such as Raya Dunayevskaya, Margaret Randall's book calls for a full transformation of society: "From each according to their ability, to each according to their need—meaning not just shelter, food, health, education, but also the need for creativity, spontaneity, and joy."

Randall discusses the situation in Nicaragua, where she lived during the early and mid-1980s, and reports that Nicaraguan women are now questioning why a feminist agenda was not developed while the Sandinistas were in power: "the pressures exerted...by U.S. 'low intensity warfare,' on the one hand, and counterrevolution and economic crisis inside the country, on the other, made it easier for the men in control to surrender to inertia or to what they so frequently refer to as their 'natural impulses.' And so they easily relegated feminism to a place of lesser importance." As Randall later says of the Sandinistas' electoral defeat, "Had women truly been empowered, would they have abandoned the revolution?"

## WAC fights violence

**Los Angeles, Cal.**—In the weeks prior to the Super Bowl football game, the Women's Action Coalition (WAC), in conjunction with FAIR (Fairness and Accuracy in Media), launched a high-visibility campaign to draw attention to the issue of domestic violence. There is "anecdotal" evidence from women's clinics that Super Bowl Sunday is a day on which incidents of domestic violence rise. Some statistics were cited which placed this increase at up to 40%.

WAC-LA took an awareness campaign to the Super Bowl sites in and around Pasadena during the week before the game, culminating in a march through Pasadena to the Rose Bowl in the hours immediately prior to the game. We participated in the effort to get NBC to play public service announcements condemning domestic violence (they played one during the pre-game). WACtivists showed up at press day, holding a dramatic banner that read, "STOP Violence Against Women" in full view of arriving journalists and players.

The parade was inspiring—about 30 women and men, with two banners and a loud drum corps, marched through the "Old Town" area where there were numerous pre-game parties. While there were some isolated verbal attacks against our group, the support was quite visible, and was especially strong coming from women. We hung our banner over a busy freeway interchange and received many smiles and honks of approval. Just as the game started, two airplanes flew overhead at the Rose Bowl with the "STOP Violence Against Women" message trailing proudly in seven-foot tall letters.

—Feminist activist

## Chicago blues musicians exploited

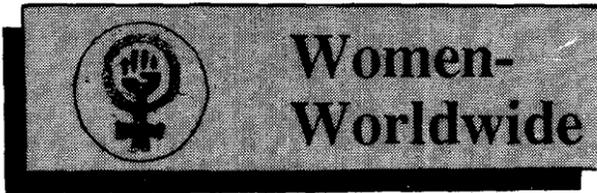
**Chicago, Ill.**—Money is being made off the Black musicians that work in blues clubs here and they are not treated with respect. We are like a non-supported product because club owners know that most musicians need a regular job.

The club owners work in groups—if you speak your mind, then all the other clubs will know and that means no work nowhere. If you're late they dock you a certain amount, even though you still do the same amount of work. They've organized it as a corporate business, but there's no benefits or health insurance. It's almost like a slave market situation. They come together as a club owners group and organize who's to work, who's not to work; how much each one is to be paid and when and where they can and can't work.

Some blues clubs will not hire a white band or a white singer. But most don't ever want a Black person messing with the money. So they don't hire Black waitresses, Black bartenders or barmaids. They only see the Black man as somebody coming in to sing blues in their bar to generate some business. We're like a commodity. It goes right back to where it started out—the master, the slave. We're talented. We were able to chop cotton in the field. But who made all the money off that? It's still the same way, it's just a different title. Now you're not carrying a hoe, you're carrying the mike and the mike makes them money.

Another owner will tell a singer how many band

Randall speaks warmly of her years in Cuba raising four children—of the accessibility for all of the material necessities of life, food, medical care, education, work (though, significantly, not necessarily the work one would love to do). Yet, in 1974, a pilot electoral project, in Matanzas, revealed only 7% of the delegates nominated, and only 3% of those elected to provincial assemblies, were women. Research determined this was due to



by Mary Jo Grey



Former South Korean "comfort women" confronted police in Seoul, Feb. 9, as they tried to march on the Japanese embassy during a funeral procession for one of the women. "Comfort women" were forced into sexual slavery in military brothels by the Japanese government during World War II. Thousands died.

Women's liberation, Gay and Lesbian activists applauded the first degree murder conviction of James Brooks, a Michigan man who gunned down his two next door neighbors after repeatedly harassing them because they were Lesbians (see July, 1992 N&L). Said the daughter of one of the victims, "Nothing will bring mom back, but a message has been sent that discrimination and hatred of any group of people, regardless of their sexual orientation, their sex or their race, will not be tolerated."

—Information from Outlines

Support for Bosnian women raped by soldiers in their war-ravaged homeland is growing rapidly among women's groups throughout the U.S., with rallies, demonstrations and vigils taking place in New York, Washington, D.C., and Chicago. At home, the rape victims are now facing the ultimate degradation—being murdered by their own Muslim male relatives because they "disgrace" the family.

"Freedom fighter" turned reactionary, Polish President Lech Walesa has signed a law which will mean death and mutilation to thousands of Polish women, by taking away their right to control their own bodies. The deadly legislation reverses the country's liberal abortion laws, allowing abortions only in cases of: rape or incest (as "certified" by the prosecutor), an irreparably damaged fetus, or to save a woman's life. The law would send doctors to prison for two years for violating it.

members they can have so he can pay them less. He tells them how to play their music; he will tell you what ain't blues—like we don't know our own music! Some of the musicians have been so messed up because they sign over their rights. They don't have money to have lawyers so they sign a paper because of what they think it says and the paper is actually saying something different. When you do have money and get Black lawyers, you hope they don't get slick and work against you too.

Most places always use a female singer with a band. But she doesn't know who she's going to work with. You might walk in there one night and be with this band, and the next night with that band. That means you're not going to get a very professional show. Even when you're the band leader, owners feel it's better to let another man in the band take care of the business and pay them instead of you. So the man knows more about your business than you do.

Everybody gets paid according to how much the owners want to pay. Most of the time the men get paid the most. And most only let the band leaders be men.

Women are not respected in this business. It's always been like this. In order for a woman to really make a go of herself, she's always had to team up with some male band or some big act. We're right now in a very bad situation because we don't have control over our music—not at all. You know, the suffering is worse than in any other music—the consequences and the things you have to go through in the blues.

—Blues singer

the "second shift"—women were still responsible for all the housework and child rearing as well as outside jobs. Eventually a new family code was drafted. But it was heterosexist in its sole emphasis upon man-woman relationships, and "the mechanism by which people might question their reality continued to be lacking" because this struggle was not led by the women themselves.

At times reading *Gathering Rage* I felt a tension between Randall's understandable wish to defend societies which have concretely changed people's lives for the better and the need to build a new society which would fully embody freedom. She quotes Raya Dunayevskaya on Marx's last writings: "The question was how total must be the uprooting of existing society and how new the relationship of theory to practice. [He saw] the possibility of new human relations, not as they might come through a mere 'updating' of primitive communism's equality of the sexes, as among the Iroquois, but as [he] sensed they would burst forth from a new type of revolution." Yet elsewhere Randall says, "If revolution incorporates feminism it will transform itself...And I believe it is only through such a transformation that those affected will truly defend the revolution."

This last sentence seems to me to miss the point—the point being, in such a transformed revolution, the people would not only defend the revolution, they themselves would be the revolution. Nonetheless *Gathering Rage* is a valuable contribution to what I hope will be an increasingly widespread discussion of women's liberation and revolution.

—Gwynne Garfinkle

**MARGARET RANDALL SETS** the context for her book-length essay on "the failure of 20th century revolutions to develop a feminist agenda" in her opening paragraph. That context is the shock she experienced when "those of us who engage in the ongoing struggle for justice" found "our world disintegrating as we watched." It was a double shock: first, the retrogression that had pushed back all the hard-won gains of the labor, Black and women's struggles of decades; and then, at the very time capitalist misery had reached an all-time high, the collapse of Communism. It had, indeed, become a changed world—or, as Randall puts it, "a qualitatively different period."

What makes *Gathering Rage* an important contribution to the search for a way out of the crises confronting the movement for freedom today is not only that Randall refuses to accept the "death of Marxism," but that she recognizes it demands some serious rethinking. Throughout its 192 pages she keeps asking for discussion of what she suddenly sees is critical—that "feminism" is not just a component to be added to the struggle for a new society (much less a component to be taken care of only after victory) but that it is a dimension that is an integral part of the vision of a new world.

What is truly a manifestation of how broad and how deep is the reach we are seeing today for a philosophy that can point the way out of today's contradictions is that Margaret Randall's search brought her to discover Raya Dunayevskaya's Marxist-Humanism. Randall has never characterized herself as a "theoretician" but as an "activist," though she is an author of many volumes of poetry and essays and her oral history of Sandino's Daughters is used in women's studies courses across the country, but she is best known for her award-winning

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## Bombed clinic reopens

**Hayward, Cal.**—A half dozen cars full of people drove five hours north to the town of Redding Jan. 30 to join local pro-choice activists for the reopening of the Women's Feminist Health Clinic. It had been firebombed, triggering rage among reproductive rights groups. The Bay Area cars joined another 30 in Redding, driving around for 45 minutes, decorated with crepe paper and signs like "Honk if you're pro-choice." We saw a good number of people supporting the message. But others were calling us lots of names.

Later, 200 activists rallied at Shasta College. The speakers, from Bay Area reproductive rights groups and local organizations, emphasized maintaining interest in the cause. Now that it seems like Clinton is "politically correct" and there's no enemy in the White House, people can take a break. But we need to be concerned with access to abortion.

Fully 83% of counties in the U.S. do not have clinics which perform abortions. Other clinics are being harassed. The percentage of medical schools teaching abortion procedures is going down as well and doctors who know how to give abortions are retiring.

The speakers urged the local people to come out of the closet and to say what's on their minds—that terrorizing women is unfair. The Redding clinic was firebombed for the second time, June 5. Poison gas had closed it once before.

The nearest clinic available to women from the area is 100 miles away in Chico, another rural community. It was closed when fanatics injected acid into the walls. The women's clinic in Sacramento was also firebombed, and the one in Concord has been threatened.

Speaking out is the first action, then rebuilding, then protesting the police indifference in investigating the arson attacks.

—NOW pro-choice activists

# Miners strike largest coal company

**Morgantown, W. Va.**—The outcome of the strike called on Feb. 1 by the United Mine Workers union (UMWA) against the Peabody Holding Co., the nation's largest coal company employing some 7,000 miners, will have a vital impact on the future of both the union and the mine workers in the U.S. Following futile negotiations between the union and coal operators, UMWA President Rich Trumka selected the Peabody Holding Co. as the target because it refused to disclose all of the other mines it operates.

This disclosure is crucial because of the recent trend of coal companies to close union mines and open new ones to hire non-union workers at lower wages and benefits. The strike in 1985 against the Massey Coal Co. in W. Va. centered on this issue and resulted in a 1989 contract provision requiring every mine owner who closed a union mine and opened a new one to hire at least three of every five miners from those laid off in the union mine.

**AT THE HEART** of the present strike is the fact that the Peabody Coal Co. and Eastern Associated Coal are subsidiaries of Peabody Holding Co. of St. Louis.

## Clinton's economic plan

**New York, N.Y.**—Going on television Feb. 15 to sell his economic plan, President Clinton emphasized the need for more jobs and his promise to "put people first." Yet, his plan will do precious little to create jobs or reverse the retrogression of Reaganomics.

The President faces an unprecedented situation: whereas, in the past, employment increased by an average of 6% in the first 21 months following a recession, during the latest "recovery" it has risen only a fraction of 1%. Fewer Americans have jobs today than when the recession began. Rather than hiring, companies are raising output through automation, and by working existing employees longer and harder.

These structural changes have, in the words of *Business Week* (Feb. 22), "fractured the historic link between output growth and job growth." Clinton's \$30 billion, Keynesian-style stimulus package aims to produce "a rising tide to lift all boats," but the structural changes make this strategy impotent as a job creation measure. It is questionable whether such state-capitalist intervention can alleviate the economic stagnation of the last two decades any more than Reaganomics did.

**CLINTON HIMSELF** claims that the package will create only 500,000 jobs; independent experts put the number closer to 300,000. If the plan's tax credits for investment in machinery do their job, actual job creation could be even lower, as companies accelerate their substitution of machines for workers.

Clinton had promised to lower taxes for the "middle class." Many working people thus feel betrayed over the tax increases. They will be hit especially by the proposed energy tax, a particularly "regressive tax" that takes a bigger share of the incomes of the poor than of the rich. Greater taxation of Social Security benefits, too, will affect even individuals with only \$25,000 in income, or couples with \$32,000.

It is nonetheless the case that, due to a proposed broadening of the earned income tax credit, the 50% of households making less than \$30,000 will actually see its total tax burden fall. The 4% with incomes over \$100,000 will bear 70% of the burden of the new taxes.

**THESE MEASURES** are far from "populist" ones, however. They seem that way only in comparison with the policies of Reagan and Bush. While Clinton proposes a top tax rate of 39.6%, it used to be 70%. And Clinton's proposed hike of the corporate income tax by two percentage points can scarcely be said to restore it to the levels of the 1960s and 1970s.

The more elemental question, however, is: why should working people and the poor have to sacrifice at all for the purpose of deficit reduction, especially since the deficit was created at their expense? As Reagan's budget director, David Stockman, later admitted, the Reaganites' tax cuts and massive increases in military spending were purposely designed to create a deficit problem so great that the Democrats, too, would have to agree to dismantle 50 years of social welfare legislation. The quadrupling of the federal debt in just 12 years has constrained the Democrat, Bill Clinton, to preside over still further dismantling.

—A. Anielewicz

## Workshop Talks

(continued from page 1)

Real change can only come from below. As Marx stated in the *Communist Manifesto*, what is needed is for "the whole superincumbent strata of official society being sprung into the air." "The development of Modern Industry, therefore, cuts from under its feet the very foundation on which the bourgeoisie produces and appropriates products. What the bourgeoisie therefore produces, above all, are its own grave-diggers."

The capitalist production process forces an abstracted unity between human labor and the machine, forced abstract congealed labor. This forced unity is used to produce the commodity. It alienates labor, but creates its own opposite, the socialization of labor and the need to reach out for freely associated labor in a new society.

Both Peabody and Eastern Associated are members of the Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA). Trumka, however, refuses to negotiate with the subsidiaries, noting that the real power is the holding company that can have many mines, union and non-union, under any number of names. Without this information negotiations with the subsidiaries can be meaningless.

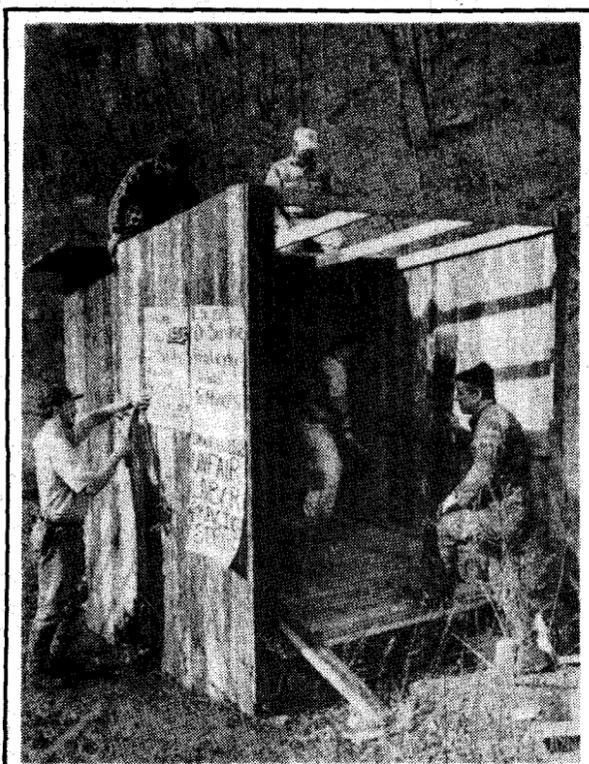
As Trumka further notes, the average age of coal miners is 40 to 44 years, while the life of the average coal mine represented by the BCOA is seven years. Without firm job security protections, the miners face grim futures. Wages and other benefits did not even get onto the negotiating table since this question was never resolved.

**WHAT SEEMS CLEAR** is that the coal operators' strategy is a continuation of the plans set in motion by the coal operators in the Massey strike: to challenge the UMWA on a vital issue. With Massey it was the question of non-union mines; in 1989, it was Pittston Coal Co. challenging on health and retirement benefits; and now it is Peabody. The overall objective of these moves is the destruction of the UMWA.

There is a serious possibility that the union may not be able to withstand this most recent challenge. It is a sign of the continuously eroding strength of the UMWA that it is forced to meet such confrontations on a selective basis, rather than with a general strike. The simple fact is that most of the coal produced in the U.S. comes from non-union mines, and the ranks of union miners dwindle each year.

There is speculation that the strike may spread to other mines, but whatever happens, it is clear that the miners will need the assistance of all of organized labor to win this one.

—Andy Phillips



Union miners in Madison, W. Va. build a shack outside a mine entrance in anticipation of a long strike against the Peabody Holding Co.

## Haitians seek dignity

**Brooklyn, N.Y.**—The battle against inhuman working conditions at Domsey Trading Corp. is not over. Three years ago the mostly Haitian workers began to unionize the plant, which sorts used clothing and ships it overseas for resale. The 200 to 300 workers organized in part because the bosses constantly offended their dignity. They were called by their badge numbers instead of their names, and only one woman worker was allowed to go to the bathroom at a time.

Workers involved in the union were reassigned jobs, harassed and fired. They voted to strike, and the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union conducted a six-month strike in 1990. The bosses injured a union organizer by throwing a brick at her head, ran a truck into a worker's car, put a table of bananas by the picket line and called the workers monkeys, and continuously made obscene remarks and gestures to the women, accusing them of being prostitutes and having AIDS.

When the strike was lost, the company refused to reinstate many strikers, and harassed and fired those it did take back. One woman was beaten up by the bosses' goon. The NLRB (Labor Board) judge who heard the union's unfair labor practice complaints found that the chief manager "fired people without cause, he badgered them without cause, he treated them like animals or even, perhaps, like ciphers.... [After the strike the] pattern of degradation and humiliation continued."

In spite of the legal victory last year when the judge found Domsey guilty and ordered the scores of fired workers reinstated, they have yet to get the union. An election was lost due to the firings, intimidation and a divide-and-conquer strategy among ethnic groups. There may be another election in Domsey's future.

—Anne Jaclard

## Eliminating full-time

**Chicago, Ill.**—The new situation that has emerged at Toys-R-Us is that we're all in the process of being reduced to part-time workers. That is because of a conscious decision of management to get rid of as many full-time workers as they can at the same time as all new hires are temporary employees.

As a full-time worker in retail now for over ten years, I am considered a dinosaur insofar as my boss is concerned. Toys-R-Us would rather bring in someone to do the same work for fewer hours, less pay and no benefits. Out of 50 employees at this store, almost 90% are part-timers. They have created a situation where almost no one can last more than nine months here anymore.

As if that isn't bad enough, the few of us left who are full-time are having our hours slashed. At this time of year I used to get about ten hours a week overtime, which added up to about \$100 extra. It was a cushion I would use to get me through the difficult periods.

Right now, not only am I getting no overtime, but they're keeping me to 32 or 33 hours a week. It's getting so that I can't pay the rent or my bills. The company posted its profit figures the other day, which show that, at the same time this is happening, profits are shooting through the roof.

The worst thing about all of this is that they are using it to generate hostility between fellow workers. The new hires look at those of us who've been here for a while as the ones who have it good, as we at least get to work close to a full week. The resentment builds up between workers, which suits the boss just fine.

Management is trying to get rid of all of us who are full-time by saying whenever you have any kind of complaint, if we don't like it here we can just leave. One friend of mine came in two minutes late, and they raised it with him two weeks later. They knew it would get him so mad that he'd quit. That's the kind of harassment we're under.

What all this shows me is that the talk about the service sector being the thing that will pull us out of the economic morass we're in is false.

—David Anderson

## Poisonous profits

**Chicago, Ill.**—Late last January in the Pacific Northwest there was an outbreak of food poisoning that claimed the life of a two-year-old boy and brought illness to several hundred people. The poisoning has been linked to contaminated hamburger meat that a fast food chain, Jack-in-the-Box, had been serving.

Some officials claimed that the meat had not been inspected properly at the packinghouse. Most meatpacking workers that were in the work place before the cutbacks in the 1980s could tell you that there are not enough food inspectors at the U.S.D.A.

When I began working at Oscar Mayer in the late '70s, the U.S.D.A. would go through my department several times during the shift. They would tag the department up (stop production) for reasons such as meat or water on the floor, condensation on pipes above the work area, bad meat, etc. The inspector would not remove the tag until the problem was taken care of no matter how much management complained.

**WHEN I WENT** to work for Eckrich in 1983, one of the first things I noticed was that I would only see the U.S.D.A. inspector once during the shift. I can remember production being held up only two or three times in the seven years I worked there.

When one of these incidents occurred, I was told by the supervisor to run downstairs and make sure the U.S.D.A. inspector did not leave the building while the area was being cleaned up. I asked the supervisor why he was so worried about the inspector leaving. He told me that because of cutbacks the U.S.D.A. inspector had to inspect all meatpacking plants on Chicago's North Side and in the northwest suburbs. If the inspector had left the plant without releasing the tag, it might have taken him hours to return.

I can only speculate about what would have happened if the inspector had left. Would Eckrich have waited and lost production and profit until his return, or would it have resumed production? Do smaller companies or companies that sell bulk products to fast food chains and restaurants take advantage of this situation of too few U.S.D.A. inspectors?

**ALTHOUGH THE** meatpacking companies that I worked for had their own quality control people, they were under control of management, so were still subject to the production/profit vs. health and safety factors of meatpacking. The vast majority of packinghouse workers are conscious of sanitation and contamination, but you will still have mistakes and production shortcuts when you have management yelling at you to produce more.

Even though President Clinton has "ordered" the hiring of 100 new inspectors, that will not fill the 550 positions that are currently open at the U.S.D.A. One of the bourgeois news stories about Jack-in-the-Box stated how much the price of the parent company's stock had dropped. Now this may worry the capitalist stockholder, but what worries me is that because of capitalism there are hundreds of ill people and now three dead children.

—Martin Almora

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From the writings of Raya Dunayevskaya  
Marxist-Humanist Archives

by Raya Dunayevskaya  
Founder of Marxist-Humanism

*Editor's note: We print part two of Raya Dunayevskaya's Introduction to the Fourth Expanded Edition of the pamphlet, American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard. This introduction, "A 1980s View of the Two-Way Road Between the U.S. and Africa," was written in August, 1983 after Dunayevskaya's Marx centenary tour. Part one was printed in the January-February, 1993 issue of News & Letters.*

### REVOLUTIONS IN PHILOSOPHY AND IN FACT

Marx's projection of the possibility of a revolution coming first in technologically underdeveloped lands achieved a new meaning for our age with the emergence of a whole new Third World, as well as new mass struggles and the birth of new revolutionary forces as reason. The Black dimension in the U.S. as well as in Africa showed that we had, indeed, reached a totally new movement from practice to theory that was itself a new form of theory. It was this new movement from practice—those new voices from below—which we heard, recorded, and dialectically developed. Those voices demanded that a new movement from theory be rooted in that movement from practice and become developed to the point of philosophy—a philosophy of world revolution.

Our very first major theoretical work, *Marxism and Freedom*, cast in the context of that movement from practice, was followed by a series of pamphlets in which the voices of all the revolutionary forces—workers, Blacks, women and youth—could be heard: from *Workers Battle Automation to Freedom Riders Speak for Themselves*, and from *The Free Speech Movement and the Negro Revolution to Working Women for Freedom*.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, it was not only the voices of the Freedom Riders we heard in 1961, but the story of the magnificent Black women in Mississippi who called themselves "Woman Power Unlimited" and came to the aid of the jailed Freedom Riders.

*American Civilization on Trial* cast a new illumination on the two-way road between Africa and the U.S. via the West Indies by showing that what, to the capitalists, was the triangular trade of rum, molasses and slaves, was, to the Blacks, the ever-live triangular development of internationalism, masses in motion and ideas. This triangular development remains the dominant force to this day.

In our epoch, the dynamism of ideas in Africa comes out in sharp focus as we contrast it to the weary American bourgeois ideologues who declared the 1950s to be "the end of ideology" just when a whole new Third World emerged. As against what the capitalist ideologues wrote then, consider the 1959 speech by Leopold Sedar Senghor to the Constitutive Congress which united Mali and Senegal:

*"A nation that refuses to keep its rendezvous with history, that does not believe itself to be the bearer of a unique message—that nation is finished, ready to be placed in a museum. The Negro African is not finished even before he gets started. Let him speak; above all, let him act. Let him bring like a leaven, his message to the world in order to help build a universal civilization... Let us recapitulate Marx's positive contributions. They are: the philosophy of humanism, economic theory, dialectical method."*

It is true that Africa, too, has since undergone many retreats, as the Union of Mali and Senegal has broken up and Senghor has retrogressed in thought, as well. It is not true that the mass freedom struggles have abated.

<sup>1</sup> The full development of Marxist-Humanist philosophy in the U.S., under the title, *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection—Marxist-Humanism: A Half-Century of Its World Development*, is on file and available on microfilm at the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Walter Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI 48202.

## News & Letters

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# The two-way road between the U.S. and Africa

Nor is it true that Senghor represents all of African thought. Frantz Fanon was the opposite both in thought and in act, and it is his philosophy that is alive as far as South Africa is concerned and, indeed, can become a foundation for today's freedom struggles worldwide. It was this new stage in the two-way road that we presented in our 1978 pamphlet *Frantz Fanon, Soweto and American Black Thought*.

If we return to the year 1959, when Senghor made the Address to his Congress, we find that to be the same year that Frantz Fanon addressed the Second Congress of Black Artists and Writers meeting in Rome, where he said: "The consciousness of self is not the closing of a door to communication. Philosophic thought teaches us, on the contrary, that it is its guarantee. National consciousness, which is not nationalism, is the only thing that will give us an international dimension."

Furthermore, this was not philosophy for its own sake or history as past, because Fanon was contrasting the Black worker to the Black intellectual in that battle against colonialism:

*"History teaches us clearly that the battle against colonialism does not run straight away*



In the late 1960s, Black welfare mothers opposed the Vietnam War and its devastating effect on the Black community.

*along the lines of nationalism . . . It so happens that the unpreparedness of the educated classes, the lack of practical links between them and the mass of the people, their laziness, and let it be said, their cowardice at the decisive moment of the struggle will give rise to tragic mishaps."* (*Wretched of the Earth*, p. 121, Grove Press edition)

In this, too, Fanon's vision saw far. Which is why the final chapter of the 1973 work *Philosophy and Revolution—New Passions and New Forces: The Black Dimension, the Anti-Vietnam War Youth, Rank-and-File Labor, Women's Liberation*—quoted the American Black auto worker who gave the philosophy of Humanism its sharpest edge: "There is no middle road anymore. The days we accepted 'we have to take the lesser of two evils' are gone. You have to go to the extreme now. Racism is the issue here, and to rid ourselves of that, to be Humanist, we need a revolution."

The Black Consciousness Movement today recognizes Fanon as a great Third World theorist, at the same time that they recognize Steve Biko's unique creativity in the Soweto uprising in 1976 and in founding their great new movement. This is precisely why South Africa's barbaric apartheid system murdered Biko in September, 1977.

It was no accident that Charles Denby, the Black production worker-editor of *News & Letters* since its birth, felt impelled in 1978 to add a new Part II to the story of his life which had been published in 1952 as *Indignant Heart*. Thus, Part II of *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal begins* with the Montgomery Bus Boycott in the very year *News and Letters* Committees were born and ends with a chapter on "The Worldwide Struggle for Freedom" which discusses "the American Black identification with Soweto and Biko, with Fanon and Caribbean thought." It becomes clear why this story of Denby's life, North and South, which sums up a half century of freedom struggles, from the struggles of rural Blacks in the South to the wildcat strikes of Black workers in the North, concludes with this Black worker's declaration: "I consider my story as part of the worldwide struggles for freedom."

It is in Azania (South Africa) that the most exciting events are now unfolding, revealing how the mine workers there are both organizing and thinking their own thoughts. A simple word—"Amandla!" (Power)—tells how new a stage they have reached. It is this word which Teboho Noka, an organizer for the National Union of Mine Workers, used in order to stress that not only are they fighting for different conditions of labor and higher wages, but for "Amandla"—adding: "It shall be ours." It is that feeling of fighting for nothing less than freedom which transforms the struggle from a mere trade union battle to one for a whole new society.

Like Marx in his day, Frantz Fanon, in our age, declared his philosophy to be a "new humanism," as he developed it most originally in his *Wretched of the Earth*:

"Comrades, let us flee from this motionless movement where gradually dialectic is changing into the logic

of equilibrium. Let us consider the question of mankind." (p. 254)

"For Europe, for ourselves and for humanity, comrades, we must turn over a new leaf, we must work out new concepts, and try to set afoot a new man." (p. 255)

"This new humanity cannot do otherwise than define a new humanism both for itself and for others." (p. 197)

### MASS UNREST TODAY AND THE NEED FOR TRULY HUMAN FOUNDATIONS

Just as it was the Black dimension which sounded the alarm against U.S. imperialism's first adventure in the Philippines and the Caribbean at the turn of the century, so today it is the Latino dimension which is opposing Reagan's imperialist actions in Central America and the Caribbean. The gunboat diplomacy which saw the United States invade again and again—from Cuba and Nicaragua to Panama and Honduras in the period from the turn of the century into the 1930s—has returned in a vicious new form under Reagan. His policies of installing right-wing dictatorships and attacking the nascent Nicaraguan revolution seemed aimed at engulfing all of Central America in a "regional" war—that is, getting the Latin American countries to fight each other for the benefit of U.S. imperialism. The revolutionary opposition arising from within Central America—indeed, all of Latin America—extends to the Latino dimension right here within the U.S. At one and the same time, all are united in working to stay Reagan's counter-revolutionary hand, and by seeking out and expressing the dimensions of national minorities, sex and class are creating new pathways toward social revolution, in Latin America and in the U.S. itself.

The mass unrest today throughout the world, the deep recession we are in, and the many political crises we face compel intense new activities—whether on the production line or in the massive anti-nuke campaign or in the Black revolutionary movements—unseparated from a new passion for philosophy and revolutionary direction. That revolutionary direction can be seen as we sum up how Marx worked it out concretely for his philosophy of "revolution in permanence" in relation to the Black world.

Marx's reference in the *Ethnological Notebooks* to the Australian aborigine as "the intelligent Black" brought to a conclusion the dialectic he had unchained when he first broke from bourgeois society in the 1840s and objected to the use of the word, "Negro," as if it were synonymous with the word, "slave." By the 1850s, in the *Grundrisse*, he extended that sensitivity to the whole pre-capitalist world. By the 1860s, the Black dimension became, at one and the same time, not only pivotal to the abolition of slavery and victory of the North in the Civil War, but also to the restructuring of Capital itself. In a word, the often-quoted sentence: "Labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the Black skin it is branded," far from being rhetoric, was the actual reality and the perspective for overcoming that reality. Marx reached, at every historic turning point, for a concluding point, not as an end but as a new jumping-off point, a new beginning, a new vision.

In the specific case of the Civil War in the U.S., it was not only a question of theory or of national action, but one of international organization as Marx established the International Workingmen's Association to come to the aid both of the North, especially the Abolitionists, in that Civil War, and of the European working class struggles, especially the Polish revolt against Russian Tsarism. As Poland shows us all over again today, freedom fighters do not give up their struggle even when compelled to work under the whip of the counter-revolution.

There is no doubt that we are on the threshold of new revolutionary beginnings in the Black world in this Marx centenary year. The 20-year history of *American Civilization on Trial* and world development has seen not only capitalism's drive to war threaten the very existence of civilization as we have known it, but also its absolute opposite: revolutionary masses in motion. The Reagan retrogression—and the ceaseless struggles against the attempts to push back all the gains of the past two decades—gives urgency to this new fourth, expanded edition (and fifth printing) of *American Civilization on Trial*.

The absolute challenge to our age is the concretization of Marx's concept of "revolution in permanence." The Black dimension is crucial to the total uprooting of existing, exploitative, racist, sexist society and the creation of new, truly human foundations.

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## Editorial

## "Democracy" and counter-revolution in Angola

"Democracy" has gone on many misadventures in the "New World Order" since the end of the Cold War, but nowhere has it had more fatal consequences than in Africa. And nowhere has it provided a more imperialist screen for counter-revolution than in Angola.

The resumption of the 16-year-old civil war after the September elections, in which neither the MPLA's dos Santos nor Unita's Savimbi got a majority of the vote, is as much a result of the UN policy of disarming government forces more effectively than Unita forces as it is a consequence of the indecisive outcome of the election.

## UNITA REMAINS ARMED

Even before the elections, which saw dos Santos get 49.57% of the vote to Savimbi's 40.07%, Savimbi told reporters that if he and Unita lost, he would claim that the elections were rigged and resume the war. That's precisely what happened. Since fighting broke out the first week of November, 2,000 people have been left dead. Now Unita controls more territory than it had before the peace accords, and has succeeded in turning the capital of Luanda into a militarized zone, surrounded by its forces. Although the government was finally compelled to arm the people, Unita's offensive on Luanda still left 1,000 people dead.

However, the question is not that Savimbi lost the election, but rather what does it mean that he got 40% of the vote. In a country wracked by 16 years of civil war, together with government and international condemnation of Savimbi's atrocities against the Angolan people, why did 40% of Angola's 4.5 million electorate vote for such a neo-fascist?

The explanation lies in the fact that not only have the

## Cynical manipulation of hunger in Somalia

*Editor's note: We print below excerpts of "Somalia, and the Cynical Manipulation of Hunger," by Mitchel Cohen of the Red Balloon Collective, as a contribution to our ongoing discussion of Somalia and the challenge of U.S. "benign imperialism" in the "New World Order." See the Oct., 1992 and Jan.-Feb., 1993 issues of News & Letters for further analysis of Somalia.*

As images of U.S. troops in foreign lands fill our t.v. screens, we in the U.S. are being primed for the latest round of imperialist colonization under the pretext of "feeding starving people" at the point of a bayonet. From the start we were inundated with breathless propaganda about "evil Somali warlords," soon to be exposed, no doubt, as "worse than Hitler," just in case Somali resistance forces put up a fight against the uninvited machine-gun toting "guests."

Thus, already in place are the quick rationalizations required to rally American liberals around U.S. policy despite their occasional squeamishness over the bloodier aspects of imperialism. And "progressives" in the U.S. (like Aryeh Neier of Human Rights Watch, and organizations like SANE/FREEZE) are leaping to the bait; they are already rushing to line up alongside the government, calling on it to "insure the safety of aid shipments and relief workers," parroting the government's line, as though the threat to relief workers or food shipments in Somalia is real (in actuality, it's no worse than anywhere else in the world), and applauding the use of troops (but "only" for "protection").

Randall Robinson, executive director of TransAfrica, has called for U.S. troops to remain in Somalia beyond the time publicly projected by Bush. Jesse Jackson "brushed aside suggestions that it would amount to neo-colonialism for the United States or the United Nations to oversee Somalia until a new government can be formed. 'If this were a unilateral U.S. presence, searching for some material, some oil or some minerals or for some geopolitical positioning, one could justify those fears,' Jackson said. 'This simply is not the case.'"

The American Friends Service Committee, which opposes U.S. troops in Somalia, nevertheless sees the U.S. military mission as well-intentioned but mistaken. Instead of developing an analysis of the United Nations, the IMF, the World Bank and the role of imperialism, it calls for an "increased...multinational force under UN command, to give better protection to relief efforts...."

These are the same groups and individuals that helped define the politics of the Campaign for Peace in the Middle East during the Gulf War, which supported U.S. sanctions against Iraq and participated in the reprehensible "Support Our Troops" yellow-ribboning of every doorway, tree and vestibule; clearly, the liberal anti-war establishment has learned nothing from that war about the way imperialism operates, nor from the



Lul Mohammed whose son was shot and killed by U.S. marines in Somalia.

Angolan people had to endure a costly civil war in which some 350,000 lives were lost, but in the fact that the MPLA shed its socialist orientation and embarked squarely on the road of capitalist development, complete with privatization and IMF austerity. The dos Santos government had the unenviable task of implementing IMF structural adjustment policy in the midst of the electoral campaign.

Which is why with all the rhetoric about bourgeois electoral democracy touted by the West and the UN bureaucracy, the economic foundations for even the barest bourgeois democracy are undermined by Western financial institutions, such as the IMF/World Bank, Western banks and government aid programs.

The human terms of the deep economic crisis in Angola, whether it is peasants unable to return to their land saturated with unexploded mines, or workers who are forced to go on strike because their wages are so far below the subsistence level, virtually laid the ground for Savimbi's resumption of the civil war. Now with 70% of the country under his control, in one of the most surprising turn-arounds imaginable, there is no reason to believe that Savimbi couldn't win the war.

In fact, with 10% of the vote still outstanding from the first round of elections in September and the second round of elections to determine a clear majority now held hostage by Savimbi, there is no reason for Savimbi to think that he could not, with UN brokerage, win the "peace," even if he gets stalemated in the war.

## UN'S PEACE MISSION

In the meantime, Savimbi retains his clientage with

invasion of Panama before that, and the propaganda barrage around both.

Unfortunately, many "progressive" people living in the U.S. and in Europe still cling to notions of progress that entail destroying other people's "antiquated" ways of living in order to "make things better for them" and to "save them from themselves." This 20th century version of the "white man's burden" is capitalism's ideologically liberal complement; it seeks a cleaner imperialism—one hopefully without death squads—and it launches its crusades against militant resistance by demonizing those who "just can't see the light."

Clearly, whatever hunger exists in Somalia is a direct result of U.S./IMF/World Bank policies over the years, policies that have spawned a strong resistance movement in Somalia, like everywhere else—though we hear nothing of it in the press. None of capital's goals can be accomplished without first disarming and crushing (or co-opting) those movements. Consequently, there's more to the U.S. invasion of Somalia than meets the stomach.

Progressive people in the U.S. cannot allow ourselves to be seduced into endorsing the schemes of capital, which has learned to conjure up morally-appealing pretexts precisely for the purpose.

What are capital's real goals in Somalia? In a phrase, establishing a foothold for the re-colonization of Africa, which includes: 1) establishment and strengthening of military bases; 2) dumping of toxic wastes; 3) rolling back the successful liberation struggle in Eritrea and the growing movement in northern Somalia; 4) guarding the oil-shipping lanes; 5) deepening the "proletarianization" of the African working class in order to generate cheap, dependable labor; and, 6) the extraction of precious natural resources.

Thus far, the meaningful ways in which daily life is organized in Somalia's supposedly "chaotic," decentralized traditional villages and clans have circumvented most prior attempts by international capital and colonial powers...to impose capital's wholly unnatural rhythms on African life.

**THE DEATH OF STALIN**, forty years ago this month, removed such an incubus from the East European and Russian masses, that it was followed by a whole new stage of revolt, both in East Germany and within the forced-labor camps of Russia. These new pages of freedom struggle created an impetus for the completion of the first book-length treatment of the Humanism of Marx—Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today.

## Marxism and Freedom

### by Raya Dunayevskaya

"The slightest slip off the dialectic of revolution...and the Marxist theoretician ends by anticipating the next stage of bourgeois development. What Bukharin only theorized about, Stalin was ruthless enough to put into effect." (p. 175)

"The two features which characterize great periods of upheaval are, one, that a new subject is born to respond to the objective pull of history by making freedom and reason the reality of the day. And, two, a new relationship between theory and practice is forged." (p. 17)

To order, see literature ad, p. 7

South Africa, Zaire and indirectly with the U.S. both through "humanitarian" aid from the Congress and materiel resupplied through the large U.S. military base at Kamina in southwestern Zaire. He is now in position to dictate terms under the cloak of UN "peace negotiations" underway in Addis Ababa, without alienating the West, so long as he repeats the mantra "democracy" until everyone who wants to be convinced is.

The West's willingness to engage in such self-deception about democracy with counter-revolution, even in the face of its fatal consequences, is what leads it to believe that a shaky UN peace-keeping force can assure that counter-revolutionary mercenaries like Mozambique's Renamo and Angola's Unita won't seize the opportunity to crush the last vestiges of the national revolution.

The demobilization of the government militarily, and more importantly the disarming of the people, as a condition for coming to terms with the counter-revolution, as a condition for holding elections and as a condition for the "transition to democracy" represents the kind of violent abstraction that breathes new imperialist life into the counter-revolution.

## Philosophic Dialogue

## On Hegel's categories

Raya Dunayevskaya's 1969 Perspectives Thesis (December 1992 N&L) gave me a new way to view the dialectic of history in the way she shows Hegel's Science of Logic, "neither as only philosophic categories, nor even as Marxian economic categories, but as stages of revolution." Listen to this next paragraph!

"Since absolute negativity or second negation, has the positive in it, the continuous revolution, and since this is a movement from abstract to concrete—from Universal to Individual, through Particular—all stages of revolution can be seen at nodal points where 'Individual' overcomes 'Particular,' or, we know it more precisely, the fixed particular of Trotskyism or nationalized property=workers' state."

I think this paragraph is important to focus on. As Marxist-Humanists we often state that what is important is to be able to discern when the Universal particularizes itself and when it doesn't. To say "Where 'Individual' overcomes 'Particular,'" I think goes beyond that and stresses the importance of philosophy and not just where fixed particulars are concerned.

The "Particular" becomes a bacillus—to use Lenin's term—for other revolutionary forces. Again, philosophic cognition is needed, e.g., Frantz Fanon's philosophic articulation, "the consciousness of self is not the closing of a door to communication...National consciousness which is not nationalism is the only thing that will give us an international dimension."

There is the necessity of the "Individual" (whether we take the "Individual" to mean groups or forces of revolution or as an individual person) to overcome the "Particular" if the "Individual" is to "Universalize" itself, to experience "Absolute Freedom."

Raya's tracing through Hegel's Science of Logic to show the movement of thought and the movement in revolution is the clearest explanation of Universal, Particular, Individual, I have ever seen. This led me to a new appreciation of recollection as not just the high points of revolution.

Raya often said it isn't because we are so smart that we have gone beyond the post-Marx Marxists, but because of the maturity of the age. In other words, it was the forces of revolution, Blacks, women, labor and youth, pursuing the "Particular" of their interests in action as well as thought, as reason, that led in our age to their arriving at second negativity.

Has not the "recollection" of our age taught us another lesson as well, i.e., that none of the forces of revolution can go beyond the threshold of absolute freedom on their own? Have we not witnessed each of the forces of revolution arriving at the threshold only to be bought off or assimilated by the particular which dominates our historic period, capitalism? A particular which does not contain the self-movement to the "Individual," as concrete and total, a RELEASE of mass creativity, but only the movement to individual in the limited capitalist sense as Ego, is what Raya warns us, is at the root of all totalitarianism.

Raya sums up by saying, "we need to make Lenin's Universal 'to a man' be all that Lenin meant it to be—the abolition of any division between mental and manual labor. This is what Philosophy and Revolution tries to answer."

This Perspectives Thesis was written over 23 years ago. What does it say about the "Particular" of organization? Does not the overcoming of the Particular of organization mean making it so integral to the dialectics of philosophy that it becomes "Universalized," so as to make "the dialectic...single, concrete, totally philosophic and totally revolutionary"? Isn't the development of cognition as a "creative force" needed now for that? Isn't that what is needed for the forces of revolution—to each develop the "Particular" of their interests by allying with all the forces of revolution? Isn't that what is needed for the "Individual" to be free of all that interferes with it's "Universalism"? —Dale Parsons

## 'BENIGN IMPERIALISM' VS. HUMAN FREEDOM

Peter Wermuth's discussion of the image of "benign" imperialism (January-February N&L) is much needed at this moment. Even if you see through the "benign" veneer, there's still a danger of getting stuck on the same ground, which N&L pointed to during the war against Iraq: the rulers' ideological offensive against the idea that there is any alternative to capitalism.

I recently attended a meeting an environmental group put on about the North American Free Trade Agreement. Even though that is basically a codification of global trends that both speakers acknowledged are already occurring anyway, their despair about the possibility of human liberation hemmed one into pointing to the presumably benign nation-states as the opposite of the piratical multinational corporations.

But the truth is that not only are the corporations using nation-states to restructure the global economy, but the multinationals, by eroding the independence of national economies, are themselves vehicles of the U.S. drive for single world mastery.

Systems engineer  
Chicago

\* \* \*

I was very struck in the Lead by the point of how the Serbian "ethnic cleansing" is designed to engender hatred. It seems to me that this is part of what you have called the "changed world," this use and manipulation of mass death by the powers-that-be. They are trying to acclimatize people to mass death, and slow death, and they are attempting to make sure that no opposition can arise. The Lead makes clear that the opposition to war cannot come from any of the rulers, but must come from the masses within each country who insist on their own humanity.

Philosopher and activist  
California

\* \* \*

The January-February N&L lead-editorial concentrated on the role of "benign imperialism" the U.S. has constructed for itself, rather than, for instance, piling up facts ad nauseum about the ways neo-colonialism is profiting off Somalia, like some Left analyses. Wermuth's theoretical points and arguments do not need a lot of facts to prop them up or serve as window dressing. All the facts in the world aren't going to save an expose that doesn't have a theoretical grounding.

Reader  
New York

\* \* \*

Your articles on foreign situations—like Somalia and Cuba in recent issues—are interesting and informative. I could take a little less ideology and rhetoric elsewhere in the paper. Here's my renewal and an extra donation.

Retired teacher  
Florida

\* \* \*

What the Lead calls "benign imperialism" shows how U.S. imperialism has been able to get away with murder. It is a much more intensified stage of the "militarization of the mind" that N&L discussed during the Persian Gulf War. Of the many important points made in the Lead, the two most striking to me were: on the one hand, the connection made between the U.S. role today and Stalin's army staying outside the gates of Warsaw during the 1944 Uprising until it was crushed; and on the other, the deep ideological pollution within the Kurdish movement which saw Barzani and Talabani waging war on the Turkish Kurds.

Iranian revolutionary  
California

\* \* \*

Despite his desperate need to make Argentina part of the so-called first world, its president, Carlos Menem, with his inhuman neo-liberal policies continues submerging this country into eternal dependency. On Feb. 12, the U.S. government signed an agreement with Argentina to transfer to the latter missile and nuclear technology as well as, according to *The New York Times*, "technology that could lead to the manufacturing of chemical and biological weapons, to potentially hostile countries." With the sending of warships to the Persian Gulf to participate in the U.S.-UN coordinated invasion of Iraq,

there is no doubt that the Argentinian president, representing the local bourgeois interests, obeyed all the necessary rules to become one more "spear" for imperialism.

Is it possible to call "benign imperialism" what it is, simply imperialism? The making of weapons of mass destruction (by a third world country) to be used toward "hostile" countries (other third world countries) to the survival of capitalism is, certainly, neither benign or humanitarian, but simply another example of human alienation. Imperialism is not a concrete characteristic of capitalism only, but for sure, is not its opposite.

Carlos  
New York

\* \* \*

Somalia may be an attempt to put a "human face" on U.S. imperialism, but more important in a global economy with one superpower is the preservation of its right to intervene anywhere to preserve capitalist relations. The rulers have to find ways to prevent people from thinking that anything else is possible but capitalism's ideology.

R. B.  
Bay Area

\* \* \*

U.S. imperialism may want to rule the world and define the seas, but it also has to ask if poor Bosnia is worth the price of seeing even greater strains open up between the U.S. and Russia. That relationship is what Clinton sees as the "hinge" of everything. It's why, after attacking the Vance-Owen plan earlier, he decided to basically agree to it. It was coordinated with Russia.

Observer  
Bronx

\* \* \*

Your January-February Lead on the "national and international specters" haunting Clinton hit it on the head. Christopher's dissension over Bosnia doesn't represent any break with the past. It is another construct of "benign imperialism."

At the same time, at home one in four U.S. companies plan serious cutbacks next year. The Bank of America has just announced that it is going to demote its work force to cut out benefits. State-managed global capitalism is really a sign of the limits of capitalism. The real need is to break through on the limits of thought.

Labor journalist  
Bay Area

\* \* \*

The Lead showed how inhuman this whole world is. That is the repercussion of capitalism, the inhuman process of capitalist production that demands the extermination of thousands to exist. It is in contradiction to what it means to be a human being, and it is the human spirit of freedom that is within all of us that is needed to counteract such inhumanity.

Black worker  
Los Angeles

## CLINTON'S 'CLASS WAR'?

For your "How Ridiculous Can You Get?" column: All of the media are saying that Clinton has declared "class war" on the rich with his taxation program. They just can't seem to understand that his program is capitalist reform to give a few crumbs to those who have little or nothing to keep them from revolting. Clinton is doing this to prevent class warfare, because insofar as the working class is concerned, this system broke down several years ago when all the layoffs hit and continue to this day.

Old radical  
Detroit

\* \* \*

President Clinton talks about job training, but what good is job training when most good jobs have been closed down and shipped overseas in the last 12 years? Last year I worked at many different jobs, but then I had to go on welfare to get medical coverage for my family. I got "job training" on each job I worked at. Most workers I know can do most any kind of a job, with just a day or two breaking in on the job. But there are no jobs left that you can make a living at! Why work and live in poverty,

## Readers' Views

and have no medical for your family? What is needed in this damn country is a real revolution!

Young white worker  
Whittier

\* \* \*

We hear people say you can't afford to get sick because of the high cost of medical care. But people do get sick, and they can't afford to go to a doctor or hospital. So they don't do anything until they become emergency cases—and many times that is too late. But they can afford to die, and they often do.

Hospital worker  
Detroit

\* \* \*

When you think of how bankruptcies and take-over fights generate billions of dollars in fees for lawyers, investment bankers, accountants and consultants while the rest of us go homeless and hungry, you get a feeling of how the capitalists and lawyers along with the Reagan-Bush government over 12 years have put a 16 trillion dollar debt on our backs just to pay the interests on this debt to the banks each year.

Retired worker  
California

\* \* \*

Clinton says he is going to tax the rich. The problem is that it takes Congress to pass the laws, and most of them are millionaires. We know they always vote big pay raises for themselves, but you can bet they won't vote to tax themselves more.

Health care worker  
Michigan

## SPOILED MEAT

The spoiled meat found in hamburgers from Jack-in-the-Box is no surprise, because they don't really inspect at most meatpacking plants. Our plant had a full-time U.S.D.A. inspector, but he just walked around. It was like he had an understanding with the company. It wasn't always this way. When I started they had good inspectors.

At Oscar Mayer you could tell them the meat was bad, and they would still send it out. Quality and health consciousness do not matter to these big companies. What matters is the quantity of meat put out.

Laid-off Oscar Mayer worker  
Chicago

## WOMEN'S LIBERATION



The fact that the Chicago Women's Action Coalition (WAC) created a space to discuss ideas and not just actions (January-February N&L) is a move forward. History has shown that demonstrations alone cannot overthrow patriarchy, materially, physically, emotionally—totally. Our ideas are needed to work out the meaning of our activity and what our freedom as women in a world in deep crisis can be.

Women's Liberationist  
Chicago

\* \* \*

"Women's Liberationist," last issue, commenting on Narahiko Ito's review of the new edition of *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* (December, 1992 N&L) felt the important Foreword by Adrienne Rich as well as a new insight into feminism is what had an impact on his new understanding. What I think would be more important than telling him the original edition contained what he says is now clarified for him by the new material would be for all of us, as Women's Liberationists, to first understand what Ito is discovering in that new material. Why did Dunayevskaya continue to expand her book after its first publication? Both the new paragraphs in her "New Thoughts" and the reasons she gives for developing them are in need of our study.

Working woman  
New York

Narahiko Ito is a known authority on Rosa Luxemburg. In his commentary on *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* published in N&L a year ago, he disagreed with Raya Dunayevskaya on her critique of Luxemburg's *Accumulation of Capital* and on the national question, saying that she took a Leninist position on Luxemburg. So it is not only that he now sees Luxemburg's feminist dimension but that he saw the whole of Marxist-Humanism in a new way through Dunayevskaya's 1980s writings and Adrienne Rich's Foreword. It underlines the importance of the new edition.

Professor  
Indiana



## LABOR IN LATIN AMERICA

One phenomenon that makes it difficult to grasp the character of the present moment is that opposite trends co-exist in our crisis-ridden economy. Witness the flight of industrialization to Mexico. It has not been accompanied by technological investment. On the contrary, when Zenith eliminates 1,000 jobs in Springfield, Ill. it replaces them with 8,000 jobs in Mexico. Because wages there are so low—only \$5 to \$7 per day—an eightfold increase in workers still results in an actual reduction in total payroll. This seemingly-backward movement to a labor intensive operation greatly shifts the ratio of constant capital (machines) to variable capital (workers) by increasing the variable side, where all of the surplus value is created. Isn't Zenith thus "re-inventing" an increase in the rate of profit?

Jan Kollwitz  
Chicago

\* \* \*

Yesterday, the native bourgeoisie, the national bourgeoisie in Latin America were the defenders of protectionism in the economy, today, they are the defenders of a free-market economy. However, the state, their more precious weapon of domination, is still the supreme god that increases the economic distance between them and the masses. Brazil, for example, an economic power in Latin America, has the world's widest gap between rich and poor. In Sao Paulo alone, 1.2 million people are unemployed. Brazil along with Mexico and Argentina (the most industrialized countries in Latin America) are the most extreme examples of International Monetary Fund-dictated neo-liberal economic policies which mandate curbing inflation, firing workers and privatizing state-owned industry. They are suffering today one of the most profound recessions in their histories.

Student  
from Latin America

## A THANK YOU FROM THE PHILIPPINES

Thank you for the contributions you received from your readers to the Appeal you published last summer for us to help sustain our case to bring the murderer of Fernando Baldomar to justice. The contributions from your readers enabled his widow to pay back some of the money she had borrowed to pursue the case. She wanted you to know she was even able to buy a sack of rice for her family. Life is very hard here when there is no means of livelihood and the prices of all basic commodities have risen so high. Please give our heartfelt thanks to all those who contributed to help us.

Lolita de los Santos  
Philippines

\* \* \*

*Editor's note: Fernando Baldomar was a N&L subscriber until his assassination. He was the leader of an urban poor organization in the Philippines. The primary suspects remain the police. Any additional contributions to this case can be sent to N&L and will be promptly forwarded to his family.*

DISCOVERING MARXIST-HUMANISM

You seem to be insisting that Raya Dunayevskaya discovered Marxist Humanism; that she discovered the nature of the Soviet Union. But for us Marxist Humanism is implicit in all of Marx's writings. We do not understand why you give so much importance to the discovery of something which needed not to be discovered. As for the capitalistic nature of the Soviet Union, Ciliga, Serge, as well as some American anarchist writers early showed the condition of the Russian proletariat as an exploited class. I consider it important to tell you the reaction of the Marxist movement here to your efforts so we can establish a continuous correspondence.

Marxist Naples, Italy

In The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism, Dunayevskaya writes of her 1953 Letters on Hegel's Absolutes that "The Idea is in demystifying the Absolute as either God or the closed ontology." Is she saying that the philosophy is an open ontology, that its essence is its open, spontaneous potential within each person? What I've seen and experienced in all organizations based on hierarchical leadership is that certain creative people get pushed forward into leadership, but then that leadership becomes entrenched, rather than everyone realizing their potential for creativity. Is philosophy what can enable all of us to realize that potential?

New student of Marxist-Humanism Los Angeles

One tendency that especially bothers me with postmodernism and the supposed alternative of Habermas is the elimination of the Subject, subjectivity, and "consciousness." Richard Rorty, for instance, presents us with subjectivity without a subject—endless "redescription" without concern for objective conditions or objective possibility. This is the problem Sartre worked on—the relation of subjectivity, particularity and freedom to the socio-economic forces that situate that freedom. Sartre's solutions are not entirely satisfactory, but

he was at least aware of the problem and suggests the possibility of development much more than what is being written today. The alternative is the Marxist-Hegelian tradition. The task is to dialectically work out the relation of ideas and freedom without the one-sidedness of Habermasian rationality or Rorty's "redescription."

Philosophy student Munich, Germany

Raya Dunayevskaya's writing on the internal cause of capitalist crisis shows how flexible was Marx's view of how revolution takes place. Dunayevskaya says that it wasn't only the subject that dared and dared and dared. But Marx wasn't just hearing the voice of his own mind thinking. He was constantly rethinking human subjectivity, based on his willingness to listen to voices from below. It is not that Marx had the final answer on how revolutionary movements and organizations had to develop but that this process must be learned.

Revolutionary California

The emphasis your organization places on philosophy is unique among Left groups, but I'd like to see you spell out your views of the various thinkers who integrated a philosophic perspective into Marxism—Lukacs, Gramsci, Adorno, and Merleau-Ponty. Your readers would gain a lot by hearing what you have to say of these efforts to work out a philosophy of liberation.

Earlem College student Indiana

I've been interested in Marxist-Humanism because of the new ideas and new ways of looking at things that gave me, as a worker, a fresh outlook. Then I realized that this was the same way I've been looking at things all the time. I suddenly saw I'm not so alone, that others see things the same way.

Railroad laborer Illinois



WORKERS' STRUGGLES

I've been listening to Radio Canada International shortwave broadcasts to keep abreast of current events there and recently heard about negotiations between the two sides in a strike in British Columbia at the Yellow Knights of Giant gold mine. The mine union has been locked out since May and in December nine miners died in an explosion police say was deliberately set. Is there anyone in N&L who could pursue these kinds of reports and tell us what is happening up there?

Contributor Quincy, Ill.

The vaunted re-organization of management in the Postal Service has left most of the same old supervisors right back where they started. This isn't entirely unwelcome since we prefer dealing with the devil we know rather than the alternative. Beyond that, we could care less what those clowns are up to. And with a racist, union-busting Postmaster General like Marvin Runyon, we're always braced for the worst. That's why our underground paper of the rank-and-file postal workers calls for workers' self-management in every issue.

Postal Hard Hitter Box 580440 Minneapolis, MN 55458

More than 40 members of the International Painters and Allied Trades, Local 396 are on strike against Steward Dean, a metal refinishing company. The workers refinish metal on elevators, bannisters and so forth in office buildings, mostly from 6 p.m. to 2:30 a.m. Steward Dean wants to eliminate the 10% premium on night work, which means most workers will face a 10% wage cut before any raise, which will be considerably less than 10%. Solidarity is good on the picket line, with the workers turning back chemical suppliers and

other deliveries to the company.

Supporter Chicago

You might want to call your readers' attention to a U.S.-Soviet Workers Information Bulletin, that can be obtained from PO Box 1890 NY, NY 10009 (718-636-5446). It publishes workers' letters from Russia, and is a great source, despite a slightly Trotskyist "line."

Professor Connecticut

FELONY OF BEING BLACK

When I received the January-February issue of News & Letters, I read it just about cover to cover. The article on "Felony" of being Black brought me to tears. It's so true. Here in L.A., the leader of L.A. 4+ Defense Committee has been receiving the most vicious racist death threats. The essay on "Black Masses as Vanguard" had a lot that was new to me. I knew nothing, before, about the Marxist-Humanist theory. The quote from Marx—"Labor in the white skin can never be free where in the Black it is branded"—is totally true still today. Nobody's free till everybody's free.

Activist Los Angeles

The GM plants being closed show how white and male the work force had become. They will join the millions of white workers already unemployed, who had joined their long unemployed Black brothers and sisters. "Last hired, first fired" is alive and functioning in these United States, and Lou Turner's contention that U.S. capital no longer has any use for U.S. Black labor appears true. With this massive reduction of jobs, Black workers are not needed or wanted as part of the "reserve" army of unemployed. If this has been unclear to some, certainly participants in the LA rebellion had a sense of it.

Angela Terrano New York

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS FROM NEWS & LETTERS

—BOOKS—

- Marxism and Freedom ...from 1776 until today 1989 edition. New introduction by author 381 pp. by Raya Dunayevskaya .....\$17.50 per copy
Philosophy and Revolution: from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao 1989 edition. New introduction by author.....372 pp. by Raya Dunayevskaya.....\$14.95 per copy
Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution 1991 edition. New introduction by author. Forward by Adrienne Rich. 240 pp. by Raya Dunayevskaya.....\$12.95 per copy
Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future 294 pp. by Raya Dunayevskaya .....\$15.95
The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism: Two Historic-Philosophic Writings by Raya Dunayevskaya. Contains "Presentation on Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy of June 1, 1987," and 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes." 52 pp. \$3.00 paperback, \$10.00 hardcover
The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism: selected writings 168 pp. by Raya Dunayevskaya \$8.50 per copy
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## Essay

## The contentious relationship: Marxism and feminism

by Julia Jones

Just three years ago the word "feminist" was being rejected by many women who were claiming we had reached a "post-feminist era," but the past year and a half (marked by the Clarence Thomas/Anita Hill hearings) have shown a new generation of feminism to be on the rise. Women refusing to relegate their drive for women's freedom to the closet have been forming groups like Revolutionary Sisters of Color, packing the meeting halls of the Women's Action Coalition (WAC) all over the country and even in Europe, driving back fundamentalist anti-abortion fanatics, and bringing feminism and women's rights to the forefront of the U.S. political scene.

Women frustrated and tired of the continued violence and abuse directed at them by a society which has far from outgrown a deeply rooted misogyny, are looking for something beyond the solutions offered by our mainstream feminist organizations like the National Abortion Rights Action League and the National Organization for Women, who have traditionally sided with the status quo. This search comes at a time of turmoil in the Left, where the collapse of Communism has found many questioning the validity of Marx's thought for today, often moving away from the concept of revolution altogether.

The question I'm asking is can the Women's Liberation Movement of today rise to the challenge of the necessary total uprooting of this sexist, exploitative system while still holding on to the view that Marxism offers nothing to our struggle?

## THE CLAIMS OF MACKINNON

Catharine MacKinnon is a feminist legal theorist who is best known for writing anti-pornography laws with feminist writer and theorist Andrea Dworkin, as well as for her work on sexual harassment laws. Her book, *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State*<sup>1</sup>, which has been very widely discussed and cited by feminist theorists, is not focused directly on Marx, but it separates her from many of her fellow radical feminists in that, rather than ignoring Marx outright or criticizing him in passing, MacKinnon takes up Marx in a scholarly way in every single chapter.

In her book, MacKinnon sets out to show that no presently documented theory of the state is sufficient for the needs of feminism, and that a new theory must be developed which focuses on the perspectives of women. She critiques a variety of expressions of Marxism as well as other social theories of the age and asserts that the only true feminist theory derives from the consciousness raising movement of the 1960s and '70s, and that any new feminist theory must reflect this.

MacKinnon opens her book stating, "Sexuality is to feminism what work is to Marxism" (p. 3). However, MacKinnon isn't looking for a union between Marxism and feminism, which she believes require a separate effort.

Though she is clearly frustrated with Marx's supposed ignorance of the "Woman Question," MacKinnon expresses an affinity with Marxism's call for the liberation of workers, an unusual venture for a radical feminist working from a tradition which separates the concepts of patriarchy and capitalism. She wants to develop a theory which does for women what she thinks Marxism does only for workers. This is necessary, MacKinnon asserts, because Marx placed women outside of his theory of class struggle, and even subordinated the question of sex to that of class. MacKinnon studies Marx with the aim of proving that he was a sexist. She writes, "To Marx, women were defined by nature, not by society" (p. 13).

Her assumption that Marx saw woman as Nature, is apparently derived from these sentences from Marx's *Capital* Chapter 1: "In this work of changing the form [man] is constantly helped by natural forces. We see, then, that labour is not the only source of material wealth, of use-values produced by labour. As William Petty puts it, labour is its father and the earth is its mother" (p. 15).

MacKinnon adds to this quote her interpretation, "Mother/woman is, is nature; father/man works, is social" (p. 15). It is upon this one reference to mother earth that MacKinnon builds her case that Marx saw women as more closely relating to nature than men, even though he never states this.<sup>2</sup>

MacKinnon goes on to critique Marx's description of capitalism's effect on the family from the section of *Capital* dedicated to the effects of machinery on the worker. Marx here distinguishes working women from working men by noting that the man sells not only himself into the factory, but also his wife and children, and he says of the father, "He has become a slave dealer." Yet MacKinnon earlier criticizes Marx for not distinguishing women and men workers.

## A DIFFERENT MARX

Although MacKinnon assumes that Marx was uncritical of women's subjugated role in the family, a closer examination of the text of *Capital* reveals a different

Marx. In referring to the "patriarchal rural industry of a peasant family," Marx discusses the spontaneously developed division of labor which arises through tradition, based on differences in sex, age, and the weather conditions. He doesn't hail this "natural form" as a model for today. Instead, he counterposes it to that of freely associated labor. He writes in the paragraph directly following his description of the peasant family, "Let us finally imagine, for a change, an association of free human beings [Menschen], working with the means of production held in common, and expending their many different forms of labour power in full self awareness as one single social labour force." Must we necessarily place women outside of this description because the present English translation reads men instead of human beings?<sup>3</sup>

The fact that MacKinnon doesn't even refer to Marx's



description of freely associated labor raises the question: Why can't she see woman as creative within this context?

Because she is so busy proving that Marx was a sexist, and that the class division concerns men only, MacKinnon misses Marx's characterization of the social division of labor as rooted in the separation of mental from manual labor. If we see the class division as flowing from this social division of labor, whereby there is a division between those who do the thinking, and those relegated to just doing, can't we see how women have been subjugated under this division all along, how women, whether working in the home or outside of it, have been forced to carry out men's orders?

And if we look at Marx's description of the fetishism of commodities, especially his characterization of human relationships under capitalism as "material relations between persons and social relations between things," and if we look at the domination of the machine over the human being, can't we see a relation to the objectification of women today? The ultimate dehumanization of our mode of production is that it makes humans into appendages to a machine, takes women's bodies and uses them to sell commodities, and values the life of a stolen TV in Los Angeles over the lives of the unemployed labor force that appropriated it.

## MARX'S CONCEPT OF WOMEN

Unlike MacKinnon, many feminists have written on the importance of Marxism for feminism, like Sheila Rowbotham and Heidi Hartmann. Several have focused on Clara Zetkin, who spearheaded the Marxist-feminist movement in the early part of this century, and her comrade Rosa Luxemburg, who gave much revolutionary inspiration and theoretical leadership to the socialist feminists of that time. Even today, as theorists rush to claim the death of Marxism, contemporary feminists like Frigga Haug, Margaret Randall (see reviews, page 2), and Jennifer Ring are making important contributions to the discussion of Marxism and feminism.<sup>4</sup>

However, Raya Dunayevskaya stands out to me as having truly shown the integrality of Marxism to feminism: how Marx's method is vital to the Women's Liberation Movement of today, and how Women's Liberation is vital to the creation of a new, truly human society. In contrast to the popular view held by MacKinnon and other feminists that, "Marxist theory has traditionally attempted to comprehend all meaningful social variance in class terms" (p. 8), to the extent that it "derives on analysis of sex from an analysis of class in order to subordinate sex to class..." (p. 60), Dunayevskaya sees Marx's "New Humanism" as a total philosophy of revolution, encompassing all human struggles for freedom.

Dunayevskaya was the first to translate into English and publish the 1844 *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* of Marx, where Marx criticizes "vulgar communism" for merely dividing property among the people without changing the alienated human relations, especially the man/woman relationship. Though MacKinnon

3. I would like to note that although our standard English translations here and elsewhere use "man" or "he," they could as easily use "human being," since the word Marx uses is "Menschen" or "der Mensch," human being, there being another word in German specifically for man, "der Mann."

4. See Sheila Rowbotham, *Women's Liberation and Revolution* (Bristol, England: Falling Wall Press, 1972, expanded in 1973). Frigga Haug, *Beyond Female Masculinity* (English trans: London, New York: Verso, 1992). Margaret Randall, *Gathering Rage: The Failure of 20th Century Revolutions to Develop a Feminist Agenda* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1992). Jennifer Ring, *Modern Political Theory and Contemporary Feminism: A Dialectical Analysis* (New York: SUNY Press, 1992).

cites these essays, she critiques Marx for supposedly not detailing how institutions like prostitution would be abolished (see pp. 17-18).

Here is what Dunayevskaya says about one of his essays from 1844, "Private Property and Communism," in her *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*:

"It took a revolution—the Russian Revolution of November 1917—to dig out these 1844 Manuscripts from the musty, closed Second International archives. Once they were published, the shock of recognition was not just that they were great writings, but writings that disclosed so profound an Idea of Freedom that it transcended both time and place, that is to say, the Germany of the 1840s. The genius Marx could articulate such a philosophy of revolution, not because he was a prophet, but because he dived so deeply into human relations that he came up with this concept of Man/Woman:

"The infinite degradation in which man exists for himself is expressed in this relation to the woman as the spoils and handmaiden of communal lust.... From the character of this [the Man/Woman] relation it follows to what degree man as a species has become human..." (pp. 80-81).

Despite the beauty of Marx's singling out of the Man/Woman relationship as the measure of how human the society has become, surprisingly few feminists cite the 1844 manuscripts as expressing Marx's concept of women. Dunayevskaya shows in *Rosa Luxemburg* that the Man/Woman relationship in the 1844 Manuscripts has also been skipped over by important Marxist philosophers such as Herbert Marcuse, or used to assert that Marx saw women as Nature, or in the case of Simone de Beauvoir, was used to show that it is the role of men to free women. Most Marxist feminists as well as their critics don't even take up the 1844 Manuscripts, and use Engels' *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* as Marx's last word on women. Even when they do distinguish Marx from Engels, as in the case of MacKinnon, they place Engels above Marx on the Woman Question.<sup>5</sup>

Many feminists reject Marx's Marxism as a philosophy for Women's Liberation because of a century of interpretation that twisted his thought to mean that the worker's struggle comes first—and that means men—and women must wait until after the revolution for their liberation. Instead of taking the claims of present day Marxists at face value, Dunayevskaya set out to clear away the confusion left by a full century of post-Marx Marxism, beginning with Engels. She reveals Marx to be a philosopher who never lost sight of the "new passions and new forces" or new subjects for liberation springing up at every historic turning point to challenge the exploitative old relations, to create a society where the human relationship "does not seek to remain something formed by the past, but is in the absolute movement of becoming." Among these revolutionary subjects is Women's Liberation.

Instead of seeing Marx's discovery of the proletariat as Subject of revolution as something static and all-encompassing, Dunayevskaya sees feminism not as something separate from the class struggle, per se, but as an integral aspect of the total uprooting of the system.

Catharine MacKinnon does not conclude with a call for the total transformation of society, although her descriptions of the conditions women face would clearly demand such a direction. Instead, she calls for a new "sex equality law" which would help women to fight for their rights under the system. Though I of course would support such a law, she does not explain how this law would succeed where other laws, like anti-rape and anti-sexual harassment laws, have failed. Her deconstruction of Marx leads her away from social revolution completely. But given the increased attacks on women, on our right to our bodies, our safety and our freedom, can we really afford to engage in struggle which leaves the system intact?

5. Dunayevskaya devotes a large part of *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* to a discussion of the differences between Marx and Engels on the question of women and dialectics. The 1991 edition from University of Illinois Press features a beautiful Foreword by feminist poet and theorist Adrienne Rich.

A Book Party for New York Readers

## The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism Selected Writings by Raya Dunayevskaya

Speaker: Peter Hudis,  
author of Introduction  
All Welcome

Saturday, March 27 at 4 p.m.  
Earl Hall, Columbia University  
116th St. & Broadway, Manhattan

1. Catharine A. MacKinnon, *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State* (Cambridge, Mass.; London, England: Harvard University Press, 1991). All references to her book are from this paperback edition.

2. Marx writes extensively on Nature and Humanism in his 1844 *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*. These writings reveal that Marx saw his philosophy as "a thoroughgoing Naturalism or Humanism." In so far as he saw all of humanity as part of Nature, and was especially concerned with human Nature, no conclusion can be drawn that Marx saw either men or women as being closer to nature, much less that he was a biological determinist.

Special offer for International Women's Day:

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

by Raya Dunayevskaya



In 1912, fur and leather workers struck in New York for six months, allowing no scabs to enter the workplaces, and won.

Ever since Clara Zetkin established International Women's Day (IWD) in 1910, in solidarity with striking working women in the U.S., women have celebrated it as a time to fight for their freedom. That was true in 1917 when Russian women textile workers started the Russian Revolution with a strike on IWD; or when thousands of Iranian women marched in the streets on IWD in 1979 protesting Ayatollah Khomeini's order for women to wear the veil; or in our struggles in the U.S. today.

In every one of these struggles, which Raya Dunayevskaya takes up in *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, she has revealed women's liberationists as "both revolutionary force and Reason." This special offer is part of our celebration of IWD because it is urgent to make sure that the revolutionary aspirations of women will not be cut short—that "the uprooting of the old is total from the start."

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## WAC and mom fight boss and state

**San Francisco, Cal.**—Lesbia Morones makes 15% less pay than her co-workers at the Oakland Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) because she is a mother. She has been charged with 99 late arrivals in 13 months for tardies averaging five to seven minutes because she can't leave her five kids at school before 8 a.m., but must be at work across town by 8:30. With no school bus or public transportation and her husband working the graveyard shift as a baker, the responsibility for seeing that her children make it to school is hers. The DMV docked her pay 18.8 hours, cut her salary 5% for three months, then an additional 10% for six months, and put her on "attendance probation" with a supervisor monitoring her lunch, break and bathroom time.

Morones and the California State Employees' Association, successfully fought back in court last September. But, one week later, the California State Personnel Board (SPB) rejected the decision and reinstated Morones' pay cut. On March 3, the SPB holds a final hearing to decide the "appropriate penalty."

Since October, WAC San Francisco has supported Morones by developing a statewide coalition of grassroots organizations that have inundated the SPB with letters and faxes arguing for Morones' appeal.

Most recently WAC drafted legislation that requires flextime, child care and the enforcement of family leave laws, and protects all state workers and their children including common law couples, foster parents, domestic partners, and extended families. It is being sponsored by Assemblywoman Jackie Speier and is evidence that women acting on a grassroots level can effect change.

Ms. Morones wants the opportunity to be a good employee and a good mother at the same time. But since she's been given no choice, WAC wants to help her win. We are in need of resources of all kinds in this effort. If you or your organization can support Ms. Morones at her Sacramento hearing on March 3, or can offer help on the "family care" legislation, please contact WAC SF c/o News & Letters at P.O. Box 3345, Oakland, CA 94609. —WAC member

## The crisis in health care: the mirror of this dehumanized society

(continued from page 1)

cians studiously avoid. Yet there are two questions that demand to be addressed together: What is the state of health care in the United States in the 1990s? Why is there such rampant and ever-increasing disease in this nation?

● Through the 1980s, millions of workers lost health coverage as they were laid off from their jobs, or their companies went bankrupt, or their health plans failed. After the Reagan-Bush era an estimated 37-50 million people in the U.S. have no health insurance whatsoever.

● For those working, conditions of health and safety often threaten their very lives: one in six workers dies of occupationally related diseases—asbestosis, black lung, silicosis, chemical poisoning. An additional ten thousand workers die in work place accidents every single year—asphyxiated in silos, blown up in refinery or mine explosions, chopped to pieces in grinding and cutting machines. The average American worker is more likely to be seriously injured or killed on the job than a two-pack-a-day smoker is to contract cancer.

And in all the public discussion about the nightmarish January outbreak of meat poisoning—contamination with fecal bacteria of hamburgers sold at Jack-in-the-Box restaurants—why did no one mention the ever-worsening, ever-speeded-up conditions on the line in meatpacking plants, where the workers themselves are the first to face dangerous and potentially fatal consequences? (See article, p. 3.)

● Black Americans are at special risk: The infant mortality rate among African Americans is over twice that of whites (a figure consistent since the end of slavery); life expectancy of Black men in Harlem is equivalent to that of people in Bangladesh.

Those living near chemical factories and toxic waste dumps have far higher cancer rates than the population as a whole. The impoverished African American communities in Louisiana's "Cancer Alley" are one example—towns in the 80-mile strip along the Mississippi River, home to 136 petrochemical factories and waste dumps that release over 900 million pounds of toxins into the air, ground, and water every year.

The fact that three out of five Blacks live in communities with one or more hazardous waste sites cannot but be a factor in the well-known statistic of the higher African American (compared to white American) cancer rate. Latinos likewise disproportionately live in highly toxic areas; and they are the racial/ethnic group with poorest access to health

ers who do not speak Spanish.

● The sexism of this society can be viewed through the prism of women's health and health care. The number one cause of serious injury to women is battery by a spouse or lover. Abortion is still legal, but unavailable in 83% of counties across this land. Breast cancer is an epidemic, but little money goes into studying its prevention as compared to detection. Can it be any accident that the two major surgeries in the U.S. most often performed unnecessarily are Caesarean sections and hysterectomies?

The health of Americans—women and men, Black, Latino, Asian and white, young and old—does not exist in isolation from all of social existence. Nor can it be fragmented into how medical science treats isolated body parts. It cannot be reduced to "lifestyle."

As serious as is the question of the poor access to health care in this country, that cannot be separated from asking why we are sick and injured, and what is the nature of the care we receive. These questions show us that the crisis in health care is unseparated from the conditions of life and labor we face in this country, and these in turn stem from the very nature of capitalism. A system which reduces all, including the human being, to a commodity, a thing, cannot but reduce our health care to one more commodity.

This fragmentation of the whole human person is what the philosopher Karl Marx singled out over a hundred years ago as the essence of capitalism, where, in the basic production process, dead labor (machinery) perversely dominates the living, sentient human being. All human relationships to the world, "seeing, hearing, smell, taste, feeling, thought, perception, experience, wishing, activity, loving," are narrowed and perverted, he wrote. "In place of all the physical and spiritual senses, there is the sense of possession, which is the simple alienation of all these senses."

### AIDS "SOCIALY INVISIBLE"!

This fragmentation is manifested in the latest scandalously false report issued by the National Research Council which dared to declare that AIDS will "disappear," its effects "won't be long lasting," because those who continue to be affected by it will be the "socially invisible." This, when AIDS has devastated entire Gay communities across the country, leaving no one untouched by tragedy—and now when the disease is the

## Gathering Rage review

(continued from page 2)

ning photography. She is also well-known for the attempt of the INS to keep her from returning to the U.S. in the 1980s on the grounds that her writings were Communist.

One can gauge her shock at the collapse of Communism from the fact that she had lived in Cuba from 1969 to 1980, moving to Nicaragua the year after that new revolution and living there from 1980 to 1984. One chapter in *Gathering Rage* is devoted to each of these lands she saw as "experiments in socialism." Indeed, although she continues to insist in her final chapter that we must "challenge all the myths" to find out where the mistakes were made, it is clear that she has not fully broken from her own political past. Thus, although she cites Dunayevskaya's theory of state-capitalism, she continues to defend Castro's Cuba as "socialist." It is a serious gap in her rethinking.

At the same time, what is important in her chapters on Cuba and Nicaragua is that, while she does not discount the determination of the U.S. goliath to kill off every Latin American revolution, Randall's focus is not on that enemy, but on the contradictions within those revolutions. That is why I believe what is important to explore further here is the opening to a new beginning which her discovery of the philosophy of Marxist-Humanism makes possible.

Randall makes a remarkable five-page summary of her discovery, quoting key passages from Dunayevskaya's *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* and from Adrienne Rich's Foreword to the new edition. What is remarkable is what she has pinpointed, in those five short pages and several long and significant footnotes. She focuses on the relationship of Marx's early works to his final writings (specifically, the 1844 *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* to the *Ethnological Notebooks*), in terms of how it speaks to the question of Women's Liberation today. In the same way, she singles out the crucial category of "revolution in permanence." Most of all, Randall begins to explore the philosophic breakthrough Dunayevskaya achieved when she saw in Hegel's *Absolutes* a dual movement—what Dunayevskaya called "a movement from practice that is itself a form of theory, and a movement from theory reaching to philosophy."

Indeed she presents all this as a "point of departure for those of us who seek answers in the multiple intersections of class, race, gender and sexual orientation."

Because working out those questions demands an arduous philosophic journey, Randall's search for such a pathway makes *Gathering Rage* an important contribution to the serious rethinking going on today.

—Olga Domanski

number one cause of death among young adult Black women in New York City.

A further ironic reality of the U.S. "health care" system is that even those with access to the "best" care are often depersonalized, drugged and cut up, treated like a disjointed, faceless commodity on the medical assembly line.

On any random day, while a man in prison is dying of AIDS in a cold isolation cell, stigmatized and alone, someone else, with heart disease and health insurance, lies in the impersonal isolation of a modern hospital room kept at a very cool temperature for all the high-tech machines and monitors that buzz and whirl—while the patient, the human being, the one for whose benefit supposedly all these machines exist, shivers beneath one paltry blanket, unable to contact the floor nurse: she is overworked because the hospital "can't afford" to hire more human help.

This whole array of abuse and dehumanization of practice and perspective is being increasingly challenged by a clamor of human voices. The AIDS activist group ACT-UP launched loud, public confrontations on health-related issues, as have WHAM! (Women's Health Action and Mobilization) and disabled rights groups such as ADAPT. Nurses on strike have always included better patient care as central to their demands and vision.

Recently, Valerie Boyd of The National Black Women's Health Project co-founded *HealthQuest*, a new quarterly on Black health that aims to "redefine the parameters of health care [to] encompass mental, spiritual, physical and emotional well-being."

In all these, and many more, efforts and struggles and questions, a deep knowing is there, implicit, that the demand for physical and mental health calls for a far-reaching reorientation of priorities and relationships.

For without fundamental challenges which transform the very meaning of health care in this society, won't we face once again the specter of health care in the emergency room:

"You have to go tell the family that their loved one died," Washington D.C. emergency room physician Dr. Michael Bourland has said, "and you know that you only have about 120 seconds to do it—to get them to cry, to get them to yell and scream, to get them calm enough to give them all the facts so they won't wonder later what we did to try to save him. But I've only 120 seconds to do all that, because if I don't get out of there, then three other people are going to die while I'm sitting talking to a family."

## Black/Red View

by John Alan

The late U.S. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall will undoubtedly have a prominent place in the history of this country. He was the first African American to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court and, uniquely, the only Justice, during the two century existence of the Court, to focus his entire legal career, as a lawyer and as a jurist, on turning constitutional guarantees of civil rights into the actual practice of equality in American society regardless of race, sex and class.

### MARSHALL AND THE 14TH AMENDMENT

Marshall was engaged in many hard fought legal battles against the two tier system of justice in this country, one system for the whites and the wealthy and the other for Blacks and the poor. The weapon he used in these battles was the U.S. Constitution. He believed that if the intention of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution was correctly interpreted by the Supreme Court, all the practices of racial discrimination would end. The problem, however, in his opinion was "The Court's narrow, cautious, and often rigid interpretation of the amendment's thrust in the past gave constitutional sanction to practices of racial discrimination and prejudice. Thus, such practices have been permitted to become a part of the pattern of contemporary American society, in effective nullification of the constitutional mandate." (Thurgood Marshall, "The Supreme Court as Protector of Civil Rights.")

What Marshall wanted to do was to separate the Court from its past history of ignoring or rendering a narrow interpretation of Black American civil rights. He thought this would end the practice of racism in this country. However, he lived long enough to find out that the law does not make a revolution in a society.

Between 1930 and 1969, Marshall, as a NAACP lawyer and as the head of its Legal Defense and Education Fund, mounted a courageous, brilliant legal campaign which opened great holes in the Court's historic legal indifference to African American civil rights. He convinced the Supreme Court to strike down segregation in housing, public accommoda-

## Justice for Hall and Owens

Oakland, Cal.—"He began with the maximum amount of force—a car, dog, mace, knife, shotgun cocked. He told them to freeze and lay on the ground. John Henry Owens lay down. My son put his hand out and said 'What did I do?'"

Cornelius Hall led a somber gathering through the final moments of his son, Jerrold. The 19-year-old warehouse worker and his friend, John Henry Owens, 20, were confronted by Bay Area Rapid Transit officer Fred Crabtree, Nov. 15 as the two, both Black, sat at a bus stop outside the Hayward station. Crabtree is white.

"Fred Crabtree punched him in the chest with the gun. He smacked the butt of the gun on my son's head so hard, it broke the butt. He fired a warning shot into a tree, four and half feet off the ground (over John Henry Owens)."

The next blast struck young Jerrold in the back as he was walking away, fatally wounding him.

Hall and Owens had been accused of stealing a walkman-type radio at gun point from a passenger on a train. An anonymous call summoned Crabtree who minutes later killed Jerrold Hall.

John Henry Owens was taken to jail, charged with felony robbery and spent two months in a maximum security prison. He is awaiting trial.

The elder Hall told this shocking story to an audience at the University of California-Berkeley, Feb. 16. He was joined by John Henry Owen's father, Lionel Polk, and Tehan Jones, an African-American youth recently released from jail where he was serving time for resisting the Gulf War.

Hall and Polk have spent the three months following the incident attempting to expose a cover-up:

It wasn't until weeks later that the robbery victim was found. His description of Owens was wrong, and was unclear on the brand of the radio supposedly stolen.

All witnesses stated they didn't see either young man with a gun, and Crabtree found no gun.

Crabtree—and BART spokesman Mike Healy—at first reported there was an altercation with Hall, but witnesses, including two other BART cops, saw Hall walking away, arms outstretched.

The cover-up reached a harrowing level when on Jan. 22 the Alameda County District Attorney cleared Crabtree, supporting his fantastic contention that "if Hall escaped into darkness he would flank the officer and come back and shoot him." The FBI is now investigating the case.

When asked about the Black leadership of the BART police Polk snapped, "All their press releases say '(deputy police chief) Sharpe,' not (chief) Taylor. Sharpe runs things there. Most anyone will admit that Taylor's a puppet. When people ask him questions, he only knows two one-word sentences—'Absolutely' and 'No.' He's there for the white officials to show they have affirmative action."

"The hurt I feel, you can't know," Hall passionately concluded. "I can't save my son now, but I can save another child, whether Black, Brown, white."

Polk declared, "If there's some action, maybe they'll think twice next time about shooting someone."

**Drop the charges against John Henry Owens!  
Put Crabtree on trial for murder!**

—Jim Mills

## Marshall's legacy

tion, public schools and state universities. His most famous victory was *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, which struck down the "separate but equal" doctrine of the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, by ending legal segregation in elementary school.

Thurgood Marshall fought for African American civil rights not only in the great courtroom of the Supreme Court but, in the early days, he jeopardized his life by taking his legal confrontation with racism into the hostile segregated South of the 1930s. He, also, in 1943, went to Detroit when white armed mobs were attempting to prevent Blacks from moving into the Sojourner Truth housing project, and wrote a scathing report on police brutality called "The Gestapo in Detroit." This report concluded with the following statement:

"This record of the Detroit police department demonstrates once more what all Negroes know only too well: that nearly all police departments limit their conception of checking racial disorder to surrounding, arresting, maltreating, and shooting Negroes. Little attempt is made to check the activities of whites." Clearly, what was a truism regarding Black and police relationships in 1943, remains so today.

Thurgood Marshall made his long journey to the U.S. Supreme Court through legal battles fought to regain for African Americans the constitutional rights lost in the post-reconstruction period. He literally attempted to complete an unfinished revolution by legal methods. This seemed to have been Marshall's unique destiny in American history; a destiny which set him apart from all the other Supreme Court Justices.

### NAACP AND LIMITS OF LEGALISM

Marshall was born in Baltimore in 1908, the year of the Springfield, Illinois anti-Black riot. For several days white mobs mutilated and lynched African Americans, burned and looted Springfield's Black community. The violent atrocities caused William English Walling, the leading white publicist of the time, and Mary White Ovington, to put out a call for the organization of a powerful group of prominent citizens to assist African Americans in their efforts to achieve absolute political and social equality. The call eventually led to the founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the NAACP.

This would set the goal and the method by which African Americans would gain freedom for Marshall's generation of Black middle class youth who were fortunate enough to go to the Howard University Law School, the veritable training ground for African American civil rights lawyers.

Marshall never rejected the idea that the bourgeois courts and the Constitution were the instruments and the method to obtain Black freedom. The reasoning of a neutral court was all that was necessary to reach that goal. He held fast to this concept, even when he saw his legal victories being eroded away by the reactionary Justices appointed to the Supreme Court by Nixon, Reagan and Bush.

Absolute dependence upon the Court as the protector and the source of freedom, cut Marshall off from the reasoning of Black masses engaged in freedom struggles; he never understood the significance of Martin Luther King or Malcolm X, or why the Black masses in the Civil Rights Movement leaped far ahead of the law in changing race relations in this country.

Absolute dependence upon the Court bound Thurgood Marshall, even in death, to a reactionary Court. At his state funeral, all his reactionary opponents, from Justice William Rehnquist to Clarence Thomas, gave warm eulogies to a departed colleague, as if there were no bitter differences and no unreconcilable points of view.

### The Needed American Revolution: American Civilization On Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard

A Special News & Letters Bulletin of a series of Presentations and Discussions on American Civilization on Trial in response to the continuing challenge of the Los Angeles rebellion.



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## Haitian hunger strike

New York, N.Y.—"HIV is not a crime/ Why are Haitians doing time?" and "Close the camp/ Open the borders" chanted demonstrators at the Immigration and Naturalization Service office and jail in lower Manhattan, Feb. 19. We were demanding the release of the nearly 300 Haitians who have been held for a year at a U.S. military camp at Guantanamo. They are "boat people" who fled political repression since the coup, and who qualify to enter the U.S. as refugees except for the ban against visiting or immigration by HIV-positive people. The Haitians have been on a hunger strike since Jan. 29, a final act of protest against their long imprisonment under concentration-camp conditions.

The demonstrators, from ACT-UP (the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) and the Emergency Coalition for Haitian Refugees, carried pieces of fencing symbolizing the barbed wire and armed guard around the camp, and posters showing the crude shacks in which the Haitians, many of them ill, are living. About 20 protesters were arrested after they repeatedly sat down in the street, blocking rush-hour traffic.

The hunger strikers are refusing all food and medicine, and are sleeping outside their shacks in the hot sun, accelerating dehydration. Many have previously attempted suicide. When the Haitians learned that Jesse Jackson joined the hunger strike, they wept.

Clinton promised during his campaign to lift the HIV ban but failed to do so, and his delay paved the way for an anti-immigrant and AIDS-phobic preemption by Congress. Feb. 18 the Senate passed an amendment to another law that would keep HIV on the INS exclusion list.

Clinton has also broken his promise to end Bush's interdiction of the refugees on the high seas and their forced return to Haiti, where they face persecution and murder. A Haitian woman told me the anti-Aristide forces have become so powerful that, outside of Port-au-Prince, they can and do murder people at will. About 40,000 people fled Haiti since Aristide was overthrown in September 1991, and the U.S. has returned three-quarters of them.

Meanwhile, there were demonstrations all over Haiti and the U.S. marking Feb. 7, the date of Aristide's inauguration in 1991. Two thousand people met in a church in Port-au-Prince, and as of this writing, students and teachers are still demonstrating continuously for Aristide's return.

## Multiculturalism: a rejoinder

In recent months, *News & Letters* has problematized multiculturalism, notably Maya Jhansi's "Multiculturalism and revolution" (August-September, 1992) and John Alan's "Logic of Multiculturalism" (January-February, 1993). Though there is a need to critically engage multiculturalism, to essentialize it or assume a closed system or ontology evinces a lack.

Multiculturalism should not be confused with pluralism (postmodern "eclecticism"). Pluralism, at times linked with "political correctness," is not "the process of revolutionary transition," to borrow from Alan, "but cultural equality within the existing realities of ('mythologized') capitalism."

What does culture signify? Is there one "culture" with "equal" access, cultural equivalence? If so, under what system? Human beings create culture and history, Jhansi notes. However, which significations of culture and history are to be privileged? "Culture" and "history" mythologized (e.g., "American" culture, "official" Black history) negate differences, history, revolution.

A proposal of revolutionary philosophy or the "theory of the 'end of history'" (Alan), which I "localize" here in "radical" theoretical contexts, does not so much assert "equality" and "freedom" within existing structures, as problematize their, at times, unquestioned suppositions. Do those "outside" the status quo share uniform ideas (or Idea) of freedom, "American dream," socialism, "revolution-in-permanence," etc.?

When Audre Lorde describes herself as a "Black lesbian feminist warrior poet mother, still making trouble," is not total freedom already stressed; but "freedom" problematized at various "sites of resistance"? (bell hooks)

Multiculturalism problematizes a hegemonic context (capitalism, patriarchy, racism, etc., and their combinations), and in turn, a multivalent, dialectical relationship is evinced, though a "revolutionary subject" is not readily advocated. To sweepingly dismiss multiculturalism based on Henry Louis Gates' "description of the logic of 'multiculturalism'" is foreclosed.

Should all multicultural intellectuals only record revolution? Should all theory, all art and literature, be "revolutionary"? (Gates, *Signifying Monkey*) A certain "political correctness" returns as "objective" truth, closure, and absolute. Intellectuals and mass movements can dialectically inform and move one another.

Multicultural differences/identities are not fixed, but their intricacies cannot be idealistically dismissed. This assumes that the Idea of freedom can neatly side-step (or iron-out) difference(s) once everyone is philosophically "ready," to imagine revolution, and re-create "history." Are "Black masses in motion" a uniform "representation," without internal differences? What are the differences among and within Blacks, Latinos, or Koreans, etc. in L.A.?

To dismiss multicultural intellectualism is also to declare the "end of history," to deny history. The vital question "What makes a revolutionary subject revolutionary?" becomes then only rhetorical.

—Steven, Chicago

## Youth

## Student protest demands liberated education

**Claremont, Cal.**—A student group calling itself "Liberation through Education" occupied the Pomona College Administration Building from 5:15 a.m., Monday, Feb. 1 until 2:00 a.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 3. Their action was prompted by reports that a hiring decision in Black Studies and English had been delayed, and a popular, brilliant Black Lesbian professor had been turned down for the position. The students were also angered by delays in funding for Chicano Studies positions, and by a lack of institutional commitment to Asian American Studies.

They maintained an extraordinary coalition, with Black, Chicano/a, Latino/a, Asian American, Native American, European, European American, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and feminist members. Students, faculty and staff ringed the building for the entire span of the event.

In three long negotiating sessions, the students won major concessions from the administrations of the Claremont College consortium, including that: 1) the Black Studies/English search remain open and be filled this year, 2) Asian American Studies be officially established among three of the five colleges, 3) more scholarship money be targeted for low-income students from historically marginalized groups, 4) student/faculty committees re-examine student participation in hiring, promotion and tenure decisions, and 5) students be kept informed about pending faculty openings. Below are statements from two student participants.

—Faculty supporter

For the first time in my life I have witnessed—I have participated in—what I hope will someday be the beginning of a new society. I was one of the students who took over the Alexander Administration Building. Our multi-ethnic group came from various class backgrounds, sexual orientations and political experiences. But we found common ground and respect for one another from which to build. At times, we disagreed with each other, but we managed to occupy the building until all but one of our demands was met. (Scripps College refused to reinstate the tenure-track search for a Chicano Literature position.)

Many were taken by surprise when our diverse

group of forty-plus students pulled off such a feat. We took our outrageously expensive, Eurocentric education and turned it on the gatekeepers of these isolated institutions. Using the precious resources here, such as fax machines, library archives, census data and photocopy machines, we plotted a coup d'etat of sorts.

Much work awaits us. Mainly, how to keep this coalition together? A dear friend commented, "Keeping together is going to be harder than taking ten buildings."



On Feb. 13 over 200 people gathered at Morris Brown College in Atlanta and marched on the state Capitol demanding that the Confederate battle emblem be removed from the Georgia state flag. This symbol was added to the flag in the 1950s in response to the Civil Rights Movement.

She is right that it will be difficult, but it must be done! We must remain steadfast in our opposition to racism, sexism, homophobia, classism and the like. We must also look beyond our immediate struggles and assist the community outside these marble gates.

—Karl H.

My adrenaline had been running high since the Friday before the sit-in, when we made the decision to let the administration know that we were tired of playing games. We wanted faculty and student diversity and we wanted it NOW. Those 44 hours, locked in Alexander, were the best and worst 44 hours of my life.

On the one hand, I felt really good to be part of a group that was actively fighting for the rights of marginalized peoples. On the other hand, I felt very disheartened as the hours ticked on and it became very apparent that there was oppression within our own group. Somehow, the Black, heterosexual males took charge.

Several things went wrong. 1) In certain meetings, some women were not allowed to speak. 2) During the process of electing people to do certain tasks, the issue was raised that the media team was not representative because there were no women in the group. It was quickly argued that we had a chance to elect a female and we didn't, therefore it was not an issue. 3) In determining our demands, the issue was raised that certain homophobic remarks were made during faculty search interviews, but this was dismissed as irrelevant. 4) The focus was so exclusively on race that issues of sex, gender, race and class were artificially separated.

I am still filled with elation that we successfully seized Alexander Hall and got all five presidents to negotiate with us. Yet, tears filled my eyes as I realized that I had been marginalized by the very people who were fighting with me against oppression of marginalized groups. As a Gay woman, I am equally, if not more, saddened and angered that, once again, I have been left in the dust.

—Michelle J.

As we go to press we have learned that the administrations of the Claremont Colleges have reneged on the spirit of their agreement concerning hiring. Liberation through Education plans further action.

## Speaking out on the military's homophobia

## -A Gay youth-

**Chicago, Ill.**—Bill Clinton's promise to lift the ban on Gays in the military is a very complex situation for a Gay person today. This ban, which was imposed during World War II, always meant to me that homosexuals would not be tolerated, and it represented blatant homophobia on the part of the federal government.

When I was a student at Northern Illinois University we mobilized to have the ROTC program uprooted from the campus. The complexity of today's situation is reminiscent of our debates back then about whether fighting the military's ban on Gays meant reforming the military or opposing the military.

It's difficult for me to express the excitement that the Gay community is feeling right now. For the first time the President of the U.S. is validating our existence and talking about Gays having equal rights. With the exception of the 1969 Stonewall Rebellion that initiated the Gay and Lesbian movement, this is the most monumental event that we have brought about. The March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay and Bi Liberation this coming April 25 will be seen by many as a celebration more than a protest.

However, what worries me is that Gays are being put into a catch-22 situation. I'm really proud that Gays have the power to force Clinton to recognize us, but if more Gays now join the military, the result will be a conservative move toward patriotism. Furthermore, I am worried that as we enjoy our success, many Gay activists will lose our passion to fight the oppressive government under which we live.

Without that passion, we become vulnerable to the agenda of the Gay Right. Andrew Sullivan, a Gay Republican, presents this agenda in the New York Times of Feb. 9, 1993. Sullivan wants to show conservatives that lifting the ban on Gays in the military is good for them. The ultimate conservatism is to serve your country, so if someone wants to, why stop them?

He then argues that a defeat of Clinton's proposal "would send a signal to a gay community at a crossroads between hopeful integration and a new relapse into the victimology of the ghetto." He feels that the signal to Gays would be that conservatives wouldn't want them to serve their country, which Sullivan claims would be anti-patriotic. By using the words "victimology of the ghetto" he is labelling Gays who organize against the government's lack of policies on AIDS and Gay bashing as hysterical radicals. At the same time he is attempting to divide the movement into good Gays and bad Gays. The bad Gays are the threat to conservative values.

He distorts a view of the Gay movement by writing that the generation that came out after the AIDS crisis is "more realistic" about overcoming the brutalization of homophobia. "Unlike many of their elders, they did not want to rebel against mainstream society, but to join it as full equals." This concept of Gay integration should not be threatening to conservatives. It is not trying to undermine society, but uphold it.

This is a lie. The AIDS crisis made me more radical as a Gay activist because it showed us how little the government cares about Gay lives. I don't want to join this militaristic society. I don't want to be assimilated. I know too well the costs of assimilating into this homophobic society. Sullivan is perverting my whole history as a Gay activist. He is saying we should stop rocking the boat. But I can't stop rocking the boat when my loved ones are being destroyed by AIDS and Gay bashing.

The Gay movement may be thrown off the rails by this kind of assimilationist thinking. We're left with the question of what do we do now, especially as AIDS and Gay bashing are on the rise and the military is still the most oppressive force in the world today. We have every right to celebrate, but this March on Washington could be a chance to present some serious ideas. This is a great moment in time with the victory of lifting the ban, but the lethality lies within if we let go of our own self-determination.

—Tom Williamson

## -A Lesbian professor-

**Los Angeles, Cal.**—The ongoing discussions around Lesbians and Gays in the military call into question our decency (the fear that we'd be constantly sex-crazed under single-sex conditions), our abilities (we might threaten—or be insusceptible to—military discipline), and our citizenship (ability to serve in the military has traditionally been a mark of citizenship). Of course, it is ludicrous to have a ban in the first place when in fact we are and always have been in the mili-

tary in large numbers, and it is even more ridiculous that our tax dollars are going towards witchhunts against our own Queer people in the military. Obviously, it is clear that opposition to the lifting of the ban is merely organized, virulent homophobia.

In the face of these attacks and struggles, though, I have to ask myself: are we simply grovelling for civil rights, for acceptance from those who have arrogated to themselves the ability to decide if we are human or not? Why are we participating in this system in which we have to ask permission to live, to fight, to work, to love? Why don't we take our difference(s) and create/transform the world into a world without these noxious nation-states regulating civil rights and international wars? Why do we wish to base our humanness on participation in a military which is currently enforcing U.S. imperialism?

One guess I have is that we have been seduced by their right/wrong logic, and wish to simply turn it on its head. They say we are "wrong"—we reply that they are wrong. The debate then winds down into rather staid values, such as tolerance, or the claim by many Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual people that "we are like everyone else."

Recently, I attended a meeting of a new Lesbian/Bi women-only political action group, with the inimitable name of "Puss in Boots." I was delighted to find that the women there were tired of the yes/no debates in our community: are we born Lesbian, or do we choose it? Do we separate ourselves from society, or do we work within society? These strong women had no time for the parameters of the discussion that have been decreed by church, media, and state. As Monique Wittig says in *Les Guerilleres*: "mechanistic reasoning...deploys a series of terms which are systematically related to opposite terms. Its theses are so crass that the thought of them makes the women start laughing violently." (p.80)

The activist communities seem to have understood, as have many young Queers and Grrills, that the possibilities of who we can be and what the world can be are infinite, and that there is no need for conformity among those who have been cast outside the system—such as Lesbians. The oppressor's "no" to our people is best read by us as the opening to human creativity. We will be what they cannot imagine, we will be their worst fear, we will know our own power, we will not construct abstractions but instead we do and we will live.

I do not participate in protests, letter-writing, agitation, so that I can live comfortably, or be indistinguishable from those who oppose my life. Nothing less than the transformation of this society will be sufficient, to a world where the supreme court, the president, the congress, the churches, the right-wing coalitions no longer attempt to dictate the constraints and terms of our lives.

What gives me hope in the battle against limitations such as homophobia, misogyny, racism, is that we can be vital, vibrant, alive, inventive—that we can be more than they imagine us to be, that we can be more than they want to be. And we don't need the legislature, president, or the army to validate our lives.

—Jennifer R.

## HOW TO CONTACT NEWS &amp; LETTERS

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## Our Life and Times

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

Since late 1992, millions have taken to the streets in Germany and Austria to protest racist attacks against immigrants. In December, 400,000 demonstrated in Munich, birthplace of Nazism, and 500,000 came out in Hamburg, with hundreds of thousands more in other German cities. In early January, 250,000 rallied in Essen, while hundreds of thousands more demonstrated across Germany on Jan. 30, the 60th anniversary of Hitler's coming to power. In Vienna, 200,000 also ral-

## Canada grants asylum

A Saudi woman requesting asylum in Canada because she feared persecution at home for her feminist ideas was allowed by the Canadian government to stay. The woman known as Nada had hidden in Montreal for 21 months ever since her first asylum request was denied.

Nada left Saudi Arabia after being attacked for refusing to cover herself with a veil. She reported that Saudi men spat at her and threw sticks and stones, and that the religious police tried to arrest her. Nada said she feared being beaten or arrested if she returned to Saudi Arabia. She sought asylum from Saudi Arabia where, she said, men "treat women as mindless all the time," attributing the worsening conditions of women to the rise in religious fundamentalism.

Neither Europe nor the U.S. yet recognize the persecution of women as a category for asylum. Only last year, a woman from Mali who fled her country to France rather than be forced to submit to female genital mutilation was denied asylum on the basis of sex, although she was finally given a resident permit in France.

## The Left and fundamentalism

In an interview published in *Middle East Report*, recently released Moroccan political prisoner Abraham Serfaty critiqued not only the repressive regime of King Hassan II which had jailed him for 15 years, but also the Left. We reprint below brief excerpts from his remarks because they show a serious rethinking by a long time Marxist and revolutionary in response to the rise of Islamic fundamentalism:

"The communist parties of the Arab world had adopted the Soviet theory that it was necessary to let the bourgeoisie dominate the stage of a bourgeois democratic revolution before thinking about the socialist stage—a theory that proved catastrophic everywhere in the Third World, especially in the Arab world. The result is that those who bring a mythical response to the question of identity—the fundamentalists—have taken the space left by the progressive movements.

"One of the factors that's starting to change civil society deeply is the emergence of the movement for the liberation of women within the democratic forces in Morocco but also as an independent women's movement.

"Islamism in Morocco feeds on Hassan II's tyranny, quite apart from the concrete evidence that the Moroccan police work with the fundamentalist movements. The more despair there is among the Moroccan population, the longer there is no democratic alternative, the more that despair is going to give rise to fundamentalism."

## Anti-racism in Europe

lied against racism in January, the largest public demonstration in that city since 1945, while tens of thousands more came out in towns and cities across Austria.

A change is definitely in the air since last fall, when racist groups seemed to have the initiative. In Germany last year, there were 2,180 reported rightist attacks in which hundreds were injured and 17 killed. In Austria last fall, the far rightist so-called Freedom Party, which gained 16.6% of the vote in 1990 national elections, vowed it would get a million signatures for its racist, anti-immigrant referendum initiative.

But the crisis is far from over. While the anti-racist demonstrations were going on in Germany, the conservatives and the social democrats agreed upon a new immigration policy which will effectively bar most foreign immigrants in the future. This issue was not seriously addressed by most of the demonstrations, which confined themselves to generalized attacks on racism and appeals for tolerance.

And while the Austrian Freedom Party did not get its one million signatures, falling far short with only 400,000, that was more than enough to place on the ballot their proposed constitutional amendment to the effect that Austria is not a country of immigration.

## China's political prisoners

The release last month of Wang Xizhe from a decade of imprisonment in China, followed by the release of Wang Dan and three other political prisoners, may indicate how urgent it is for China's rulers to ward off U.S. and world economic sanctions. It is all the harder for them to present a new face to the world on internal dissent when students and workers have been jailed in every year since the June 4, 1989 massacres of Tiananmen Square and Chengdu.

Wang Dan, a key student leader from the beginning of the Spring, 1989 movement for democracy and human rights, did not admit to "mistakes" in order to be released, but vowed to remain in opposition. His attitude is a reminder that, in spite of thorough repression, acts of defiance have continued.

Likewise Wang Xizhe made clear his continued dissent as a Marxist. Reporters found that puzzling when they figured there were no Marxists left in the Communist Party. He was first declared a "counter-revolutionary" when as a part of the Li Yizhe group they put up a big-character-poster on socialist democracy and the legal system calling for dismantling of the whole system that Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping presided over.

Out of jail after Deng's return to power, Wang Xizhe reopened constant debate over the nature of China under Communism, measuring it against the Marxism of Marx and finding that it fell short of "the development of human power which is its own end, the true realm of freedom."

At another point Wang concretely defended the Chinese workers' noon rest against those who would abolish it as a part of modernization: "The right to rest of the Chinese worker is precisely the result of bloody struggles of the proletariat." Such sentiments were more than enough to return him to jail until now.

We demand that the hundreds of other political prisoners remaining in China's jails be released. Their voices of revolt need to be heard. —Bob McGuire

## Russia & U.S.

(continued from page 1)

adds up to a shift away from the "New World Order" established in 1989-91 by Bush and Gorbachev. That era of near-alliance between the U.S. and Russia underlay such major world events as the break-up of Communist rule in much of Eastern Europe, the Gulf War, plus negotiations over "regional" conflicts in Central America and Southern Africa, and even the Middle East peace negotiations.

During this period, Russia, first under Gorbachev and then under Yeltsin, tacitly agreed not to contest the U.S.'s position as sole superpower in exchange for vast Western aid. At home, the Russian masses were told that this aid plus bourgeois democracy and the "free market" would bring peace and prosperity.

Instead, living standards had plummeted dramatically, while a small group of predatory traders and small-time capitalists enrich themselves. Ethnic conflicts have increased, even after the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991. Today the rate of child immunization has plunged so low, with so many refugees and other poor living under terrible conditions, that high rates for diseases such as diphtheria have returned, with 4000 cases reported in 1992 for Russia and 1300 for Ukraine.

By late 1992 it was also clear that Western governments would give no more substantial aid to Russia. Given their own sick economics at home, there was little the Western capitalist leaders could offer anyway. Last summer, the West as a whole promised nothing further than a paltry \$24 billion in credits, agreed to long before, a sum which amounted to less than what had been spent on the Gulf War. Even Germany, which essentially "bought" unification from Gorbachev with promises of massive aid, announced in December that the unanticipated costs of unification would preclude any more loans above the \$50 billion already pledged. Seemingly without intended irony, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl suggested that the slack be made up by private Western investors. The latter have been so wary of Russia that they were investing nearly four times as much in Poland in 1992 as in the whole of Russia.

In the same period, under pressure from his political rivals, Yeltsin has edged away gradually from his previous pro-U.S. and "free market" policies. When the events below are looked at as a whole, Russia's Jan. 25 statements opposing the U.S. are not as surprising:

Oct. 29—Russia announces it is suspending troop pull-outs from the Baltics.

Dec. 7—Kohl visits Russia without offering new aid.

Dec. 14—Yeltsin fires Prime Minister Yegor T. Gaidar, whose "free market" shock therapy policies have allowed living costs to soar. Gaidar's replacement, Viktor S. Chernomyrdin, thought to represent the military-industrial complex, states: "Our country, with its powerful infrastructure, must not become a country of small shopkeepers. No reform can work if we totally destroy industry." On the very same day, Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev delivers a speech in Stockholm denouncing the West's policies toward Serbia and making imperialist claims on the Baltics and Ukraine. A few hours later, he says it was all a joke to shock the West into giving more aid.

Jan. 29—Yeltsin signs a huge deal to sell advanced military technology to India, despite U.S. objections. Similar deals had been struck earlier with China.

While Russia, with its deep political economic crises, can hardly position itself any longer as a true superpower rivalling the U.S., it also seems clear that in the future Russia will assert more freely its own imperialist interests, even in opposition to the U.S. It has already strengthened its hegemony in Central Asia, and threatened the Baltic lands, and is beginning to assert its power in the Balkans and Middle East.

## Oil spills threaten lives

Within a two-month period at least four tankers have spilled substantial amounts of oil into the oceans. The worst making the news was the tanker Braer which spilled 26 million gallons off the Shetland Islands.

The Braer wreck was played up for being a "better" disaster than it might have been because the cargo was light crude oil, a raging storm dispersed the oil, wildlife was not nesting on the shore at the time—and so on.

However, this is the first time that an oil spill has directly affected large numbers of people on shore. Oil slick and vapor was blown over 25 miles up the coastline, damaging pasture land, sheep and crops. People in the area complained of sore throats and eyes, headaches and respiratory problems.

Health officials ordered blood and urine tests for everyone living within a two-mile radius of the tanker. And after chemicals fell on their homes, residents protested to stop the spraying of oil dispersants whose toxic effects are unknown.

The long-term effects of oil spills are also not known. But in the short term, some officials were quick to blame the tanker's crew for too soon abandoning the ship. Reports are still not public as to why the ship lost its engines. The crew had complained to their union about working 200 hours a month, over what is considered safe operation at 70-80 hours.

Supposedly, double-hull tankers will solve the problem of oil spills. But it will be 2015 before all old ships are phased out, and due to weather, no ship could have survived the Shetland Islands wreck. Oil is part of constant capital, consumed by capitalist production, and oil spills will continue to kill life over the short and long run as long as capitalism exists.

## Who We Are and What We Stand For

News and Letters Committees is an organization of Marxist-Humanists that stands for the abolition of capitalism, whether in its private property form as in the U.S. or its state property form, as in Russia or China. We stand for the development of new human relations, what Marx first called a new Humanism.

News & Letters was founded in 1955, the year of the Detroit wildcat strikes against Automation and the Montgomery Bus Boycott against segregation—activities which signaled a new movement from practice that was itself a form of theory. News & Letters was created so that the voices of revolt from below could be heard unseparated from the articulation of a philosophy of liberation. We have organized ourselves into a committee form of organization rather than any elitist party "to lead."

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

The new visions of the future that Dunayevskaya

left us in her work from the 1940s to the 1980s are rooted in her rediscovery of Marx's Marxism in its original form as a "new Humanism" and in her recreation of that philosophy for our age as "Marxist-Humanism." The development of the Marxist-Humanism of Dunayevskaya is recorded in the documents on microfilm and open to all under the title *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection-Marxist-Humanism: A Half Century of Its World Development*, on deposit at the Wayne State University Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs in Detroit, Michigan.

Dunayevskaya's philosophic comprehension of her creation and development of Marxist-Humanism, especially as expressed in her 1980s writings, presents the vantage point for re-creating her ideas anew. Seeking to grasp that vantage point for ourselves and make it available to all who struggle for freedom, we have published Dunayevskaya's original 1953 philosophic breakthrough and her final 1987 Presentation on the *Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy in The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism* (1989), and have donated new supplementary volumes to the *Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*. News and Letters Committees aims at developing and concretizing this body of ideas for our time.

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