

NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

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25¢

Two-tier result is over-work



by B. Ann Lastelle

The display packaging department at Helene Curtis operates on a 20%-80% basis—20% Helene Curtis employees and 80% agency workers. The agency workers come in on a daily basis according to which orders and lines are scheduled to run. When there is a slowdown, the agency workers are "laid off"; Helene Curtis employees are not.

The particular agency which has the contract for display packaging is a social service agency which employs people with physical and mental disabilities, behavior problems and other "barriers to employment," such as language or the lack of a high school diploma. Agency workers are paid \$4.50 per hour; Helene Curtis employees make \$10 an hour and up.

THE HUMAN FACTOR

Nevertheless, a body on the line is a body. We are expected to meet the standards for staffing and units produced that are set by the young, white, male engineer (who, not so incidentally, does not stand on bare concrete floors or sit at the wrong height on unpadded metal stools eight hours a day). A Helene Curtis line leader, during a break time discussion of the standards, asked, "Where is the human factor in this?"

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Black World

Legacy of Grenada tragedy



by Lou Turner

The U.S. imperialist incursion into the Caribbean in October 1983 with Ronald Reagan's savage invasion of Grenada marked a new one-worldedness of the crises of our age, what Raya Dunayevskaya later called a "changed world." In its tragic depths, Grenada made the question "For whom doth the bell toll?" absolutely unavoidable for the Left. To what lengths the Left has sought to avoid its political-philosophic ramifications has been seen over the last several years in everything from the collapse of the anti-war opposition to Bush's Persian Gulf War to the Left's deafening silence over genocide in Bosnia.

The portent of three ideological markers in the development of world politics over the last decade appeared with the Grenada crisis. First, the artifice of "democracy" became the new shibboleth of U.S. imperialism's drive for Pax Americana. We have seen the imperialist marker of "restoring democracy" everywhere from Panama to the Persian Gulf to Somalia, with its latest form of appearance articulated by Anthony Lake, Clinton's National Security Advisor, as the Administration's foreign policy objective of guaranteeing the security of the new "market democracies," and intervening in "humanitarian crises" wherever needed.

Secondly, Grenada gave a boost to Reagan's unprecedented drive to militarization, which not only pushed U.S. imperialism's superpower adversary Russia to economic collapse but undermined the U.S. economy as well. One result is that U.S. militarization has become an umbrella for new regional alliances with U.S. imperialism, following the example of the East Caribbean stooges that provided Reagan the political fig leaf for his invasion. Today, that has evolved into the new auspices U.S. imperialism has found under UN sanction.

The third marker is what most impinges on the present moment, namely, that so passionate is the masses' desire for peace and so cynically adept have the rulers become at playing the game of peace, that the Left has been less and less able to distinguish itself from bourgeois politics. It isn't hard to recall that Reagan's 1983

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From the Writings of Raya Dunayevskaya — World crises from the vantage point of freedom of the masses.....p. 4

On the Inside

PLO-Israeli agreement driven by discontent and fear of fundamentalism

by Kevin A. Barry

The Sept. 13 signing of an interim peace agreement between the Israeli government and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the largest and oldest Palestinian resistance organization, has created a dramatic new situation in the Middle East. The agreement, sealed with a public handshake between PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, may work to undermine the decades-old and often murderous hostility between Jews and Arabs, who, ever since the 1940s, have each been fighting for national self-determination on the same tiny piece of land.

The agreement includes the following provisions: (1) mutual public recognition by Israel of the PLO and by the PLO of Israel's right to exist; (2) Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza strip and in the West Bank town of Jericho to begin by December, 1993; (3) five years from now, by 1998, a full peace plan, possibly including a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza, will be put into effect.

It should be underlined that the agreement was not the fruit of any sudden change of heart by the former general Rabin or the former terrorist Arafat, or still less because of the "good will" of U.S. imperialism. The main factors bringing about this turning point in Middle East politics are: (1) the new pressures brought about since 1987 by the Intifada freedom movement among the Palestinian masses, and (2) the fear on all sides of the growing Islamic fundamentalist movements.

These retrogressive, sexist Islamic fundamentalist movements have fed on the sense of defeat, and economic and political crisis inside the Arab world. They are growing stronger not only within the Palestinian community, but also in Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, and Algeria. They were initially supported at least tacitly by Israel, the U.S., and conservative Arab rulers as a way of undermining the Left and (in the U.S.'s and Israel's case) the more secular PLO. But today, fundamentalism threatens those very conservative rulers themselves.

Left unclear in the peace agreement is how soon areas of the West Bank other than Jericho would be put under Palestinian rule, the status of Jerusalem, and the fate of over half of the Palestinian population, the over three million presently living in exile outside Israel-ruled territory—often under horrendous conditions in refugee

camp in Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan. In this sense, the peace agreement hardly means full and immediate Palestinian self-determination, showing instead that the Israeli government still may try to cling to major parts of the West Bank and the whole of Jerusalem.

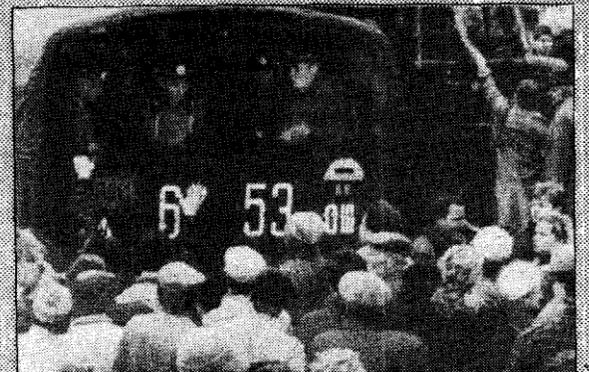
Yet, despite these contradictions, the peace negotiations have challenged years of growing anti-Arab racism among the Israeli population, where, just weeks ago, it seemed that only a minority would even consider giving up the West Bank and Gaza, the lands conquered by force in the 1967 war. These anti-Arab sentiments were the very type of narrow nationalist politics which had moved Israel ever rightward during the years 1977 to 1992, years when Israeli rulers such as Menachem Begin declared that Jews had a god-given right to occupy the whole of Jerusalem as well as all of the territories gained in 1967.

The Sept. 13 peace agreement also puts into question nearly 50 years of Left and nationalist politics in the Arab world, a type of politics where Israel was declared enemy number one, and any Arab ruler, from the

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Yeltsin's attempted coup

Letter from Russia, p. 5



Also, 'The void in Eastern Europe', p. 5

Chicago school protests shut down Loop



by Jim Guthrie

Chicago, Ill.—"They just think they can keep doing this year after year after year, and the people won't do anything about it!" declared a parent from a South Side school as she pushed a stroller down the center of LaSalle St. at the beginning of the downtown rush hour.

Over a thousand of us had just taken over the full width of the street for more than a city block on Tuesday, Sept. 21, and we were marching from the State of Illinois Building to the Chicago Board of Trade, as the markets were about to close, chanting, "If you close down the schools, we'll close down the Loop!" We were protesting because the federal judge's temporary restraining order keeping the public schools open was to run out in two days.

The schools had first been shut down by the Chicago School Finance Authority a week before the new school year was to begin and on the day the teachers' contract

expired, because the schools had a budget deficit of \$300 million. The state legislature, unable to work out any type of bail-out plan, passed a temporary waiver of the state law which requires the Chicago schools to be closed if the Board of Education cannot balance its budget, at which point the School Board postponed opening the schools one week.

Once the time on the legislature's temporary waiver was used up, a federal judge, on request of the School Board, ruled that to keep the Chicago schools closed would be a violation of the rights of minority children to get an education. The judge's ruling, however, did not overturn the state law, which only applies to Chicago, where 85% of the students are Black, Latino or Asian. As we go to press, the Board is no closer to working out an agreement with the teachers' union or balancing the budget.

STUDENTS FIRED UP

The leaders of the coalition of parent, community and student groups that organized the rally in Daley Plaza on Tuesday, Sept. 21 called for a mass demonstration to paralyze the Loop if the schools did not remain open on Friday. Following the rally in Daley Plaza the protest moved across the street and into City Hall. When the contingent of Curie High students, led by their marching band, reached the door, the police blocked the entrance and began shoving protesters as the drummers beat their drums chanting, "Aw shucks! You got the band fired up!" and the trumpeters blew out riffs followed by the whole crowd shouting, "Charge!" This confrontation lasted 20 minutes as hundreds of demonstrators blocked off Clark St.

A parent declared, "They closed the doors of the schools to the children, and now they're trying to close the doors of City Hall!" as we abandoned the attempt to get into the building. Instead we joined the rest of the demonstrators in a march through the State of Illinois Building. Following this we headed down LaSalle St. to have a rally in the middle of the intersection of Jackson in front of the Board of Trade.

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Bosnian feminists shatter myths about war

Editor's note: Below we print excerpts from speeches and an in-person interview with Diana Kapidzic and Aida Daidzic, two Bosnian women touring the U.S. on behalf of B.I.S.E.R., an organization created by women from Bosnia-Herzegovina to help women refugees.

Diana: When the Serbian army besieged Sarajevo, I talked to friends on the phone asking them what to do. I was desperate and couldn't believe this was happening. The last time I talked to a friend was three months after the shelling started. She said, "Do everything you can. Don't think it's just small things and doesn't work." A month later, the first reports were on the news about the concentration camps and death-rape camps.

Only a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, democratic society can provide lasting peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina. We are asking for support to establish this type of society. We are not ready to accept reservations or apartheid. If this happens, another apartheid in the present time, this is a horrible violation of every principle of international law. It could happen to a minority anytime, anywhere.

Aida: We have 6,700 written statements from rape victims. Approximately half of the victims are being killed after they've been raped. People usually believe that the moment they discovered the concentration camps, they were stopped. That's not true. The rape camps are even in "pink" zones under foreign protection.

Our calculation counts that 7.98% of the Bosnian Muslim female population is being raped, or 65,000. Sixty percent are pregnant as a consequence, or 37,500. We would expect about 34-35,000 babies to be born. The Bosnian Red Cross estimates there are going to be 5-7,000. Many women undertake all sorts of resources to get an abortion.

People usually think, in every war there is rape. They picture drunk soldiers coming into a house raping women, and leaving. It is not like that at all. When the Serbian soldiers come to a village, they kill all people of power and influence, rich people, intellectuals, priests, from a list. After that, they separate men and women. Men are being killed, women are being raped in public. That's the story repeated thousands of times in the same period of time in many places in Bosnia.

[People say] this is civil war. Well, there is no civil war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. There is an aggression from Serbia and from Serbian paramilitary forces in Bosnia and there is an aggression from Croatia. The Bosnian government is made from all ethnic groups. There are not only Serbs, Croats and Muslims. They forget Jews, Romas (Gypsies), and other nationalities. They forget one very, very important group of people which are mixed people. There is no one of us who has not members of another group in the circle of her family.

It seems there is a comfort to say it is a civil war, and it is an ancient hatred. It doesn't force you to do something against it. Well, it is not. If they are talking here about something that is ancient, then it is ancient tolerance. Bosnia-Herzegovina is the oldest multi-ethnic state on the territory of Europe.

Our thesis is that western politicians and the U.N. are

supporting Serbian aggressors by providing time. Also by providing an arms embargo which is actually damaging only the Bosnian side, leaving them unarmed. The number of rape victims is that high because there was nobody who could protect them.

We feel there hasn't been enough support from the women's organizations, because most of them are stuck at this level presented by the mainstream media. Only a small minority of international women's groups are willing to deal with the real problem, even though women are the worst victims of this war.

Diana: When they say they want to give humanitarian aid, they collect money in order to give something for Bosnia, then immediately they have to send something to Serbia and Croatia as well, which is ignoring that it's thousands and thousands of people being killed because this army is trying to preserve Yugoslavia.

Another thing is that some of the women's organizations reduce this to being simply men against women, which is not reality. There are thousands of men in concentration camps, and there are women, children and men in these camps and in the besieged cities.

Aida: Another question in women's groups is stigmatization. When the first reports came out about systematic, genocidal rape, the main question was whether Muslim men are going to reject raped Muslim women, instead of "Who's doing that to them?" This is totally fantasy. Those women are integrated in their families and that's the only way they can heal. Many people forget the men are being tortured also and raped.



Women-Worldwide

by Mary Jo Grey

Hundreds of Filipina live-in domestic workers demonstrated in downtown Hong Kong in mid-September demanding double the wage increase granted by the Hong Kong government, Sept. 1. The wage "hike" brought the women's monthly salaries to \$449.00—which a government statement called "favorable" compared to domestic workers' wages in other countries.

A group of lawyers, law professors, law students and community organizers have initiated the Illinois Clemency Project to free battered women imprisoned for having killed or injured their abusers. The group states that by "doing this as a mass clemency we can educate people...about the dire situation of battered women who fought back." About 2,000 U.S. women are in prison for killing abusive partners. While men kill women at three times the rate that women kill men, men's sentences average two to six years while women receive 15 to 20 years.

In Memoriam: Effie Owens/Ethel Dunbar (1912 - 1993)

To remember the life of Effie Owens—a founding member of News and Letters Committees, known to our readers by her pen name Ethel Dunbar—is to recollect the thinking and doing of a revolutionary Black working woman determined to help a new world come to be.

Many of our readers met her as "Christine," Charles Denby's wife, through the two chapters she wrote for his book, *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*, telling in one chapter of her early rural life in the Deep South and in the other of her life in the auto shops when she moved to Detroit during World War II. Seeking a new life in the North, she found, with countless others, only new forms of racism and sexism to battle.

She waged some of that battle right in her column in *News & Letters*, "We Are Somebody," beginning with the very first issue on June 24, 1955. Raya Dunayevskaya, in her "Retrospective/Perspective: Thirty Years of N&L," called special attention to this column, asking: "How long was it before Jesse Jackson made a category out of 'We Are Somebody'?" By then Dunbar had changed the title of her column to emphasize its international dimension, calling it "Way of the World." **

But it was especially to stress the way the category of Women's Liberation as Reason as well as revolutionary force had been seen in N&L from the start that this column had been singled out. Ethel Dunbar had looked at the struggles Black people were waging in the 1950s in light of Harriet Tubman's struggles a century earlier. The Black women's "struggles for their rights," she wrote, "are sometimes with men against their bosses" and sometimes "because of the oppression of women and especially Negro women." Like Harriet Tubman, she wanted it known, these "women of freedom" were "fighting to help build a free America for all humanity."

When Women's Liberation moved from an Idea whose time had come to a Movement at the end of the 1960s, Ethel Dunbar helped to personify the special contributions Marxist-Humanism sought to make to this revolutionary new movement. They were three-fold: the Black dimension, working women, and philosophy were considered crucial because without them no total uprooting of this racist, sexist, exploitative society was possible.

So powerfully did Ethel Dunbar help express the totally new relations the Women's Liberation Movement was reaching for that Raya Dunayevskaya—this time in the last major work from her pen, *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution* (1985)—included part of the



Raya Dunayevskaya and Ethel Dunbar in 1985 at the opening lecture for the Marxist-Humanist Archives Exhibition at Wayne State University in Detroit.

article Dunbar had written for the 1970 pamphlet, *Notes on Women's Liberation: We Speak in Many Voices*:

"I was at a discussion several weeks ago on the question of women's rights...where one white woman, an old politico, said she had just left a caucus in her union which had been discussing the problems of women in the shop. The question came up of white women fighting for higher pay, because even Black men were getting higher wages than white women.

"Being a Black woman, it made me angry to have it put that way, because it sounded as though white women thought they should make more than Black men. Black men do hard, hard work. And there is something wrong with that whole way of thinking...White women have to make sure that they do not let white men mix up their thinking" (WLDR, p. 24).

We mourn the death and honor the memory of a revolutionary whose life was truly woven into the fabric of Marxist-Humanism.

—Olga Domanski

*This "Retrospective/Perspective" was published in pamphlet form as *The Myriad Global Crises of the 1980s and the Nuclear World since World War II* and can be ordered for \$2 plus \$1 postage.

WAC protests lesbian custody decision

Chicago, Ill.—Twenty-four demonstrators picketed noisily outside the Federal Building in Chicago Sept. 10 in an early morning rally called by the Lesbian Caucus of the Women's Action Coalition (WAC) to protest the homophobic decision three days earlier in a Virginia Circuit Court to take away the child of a lesbian mother. A Chicago lesbian mother, Sharon Brown, spoke emotionally at the rally of her own experience of having her son taken away from her seven years ago solely on the basis of her sexual orientation.

The Lesbian Mothers National Defense Fund in Seattle reports that there are at least 50 similar cases pending around the U.S. in which lesbian mothers are at risk of having their children taken away from them in states with similar sodomy laws. Only in Massachusetts, New York, Vermont, Oregon, Washington, Alaska, California, and the District of Columbia, do lesbian and gay couples have the right to co-parent adoptions.

The protesters called for an end to all sodomy laws and the protection by the federal government of civil rights of people with all sexual orientations. WAC and other Chicago groups are planning a larger demonstration for later this fall. Below are excerpts of the leaflet distributed at the rally.

—Laurie Cashdan

* * *

On Tuesday, Sept. 7, Virginia Circuit Court Judge Buford M. Parsons took Sharon Bottom's two-year-old son away from her because she is a lesbian. Custody of the child was awarded to Bottom's mother who took her daughter to court armed with Virginia's strict and archaic sodomy law.

In general, sodomy laws prohibit, among other things, oral sex but do not specify the sexual orientation of those engaged in it. These laws, however, are never used in custody cases involving heterosexuals. Sodomy laws have been used simply as a thinly veiled legal rationalization for blatantly homophobic prejudice.

In the '70s and '80s there were many well done studies comparing children of straight couples and lesbian couples...The only trends found were that girls were slightly more assertive in lesbian homes than in straight homes and boys were slightly more communicative. That's a trend that all families could benefit from. Judge Parsons had no reasonable reason to take away Sharon Bottom's child, except homophobia.

Considering the amount of sexual and physical abuse of children in heterosexual families in this country, it is obvious that "good" parents are not a given. Parenthood requires love, patience, and understanding. It does not require that a parent be heterosexual.

Indian women speak out

Sujata Gothoskar, ed., Struggling for Space: Stories of Indian Women Workers' Struggles (Hong Kong: Committee for Asian Women, 1992), 97 pp.

The idea for *Struggling for Space* came out of discussions in the Committee for Asian Women and developed as Sujata Gothoskar met with women workers and union activists in Bombay, Ahmedabad, Pune and Nipani. Gothoskar modestly begins by saying how much she has learned from the working women who told stories of their struggles "to be treated as human beings"—from textile and domestic, pharmaceutical and *beedi* (locally made cigarette) workers, to vegetable vendors, airport contract workers, teachers, bank employees, and stenographers.

A common thread through the book is each worker's description of facing horrid working conditions and organizing strikes, demonstrations, and unions for better conditions of work. The first story by a domestic worker in Pune City takes us through the domestics' struggle from the beginning. Their salaries had remained stagnant for over a decade; they had no sick leave, weeks off, or bonuses. Employers would drastically cut workers' pay at random.

In February, 1980, "it all exploded." Two *molkarins* (domestic workers) fell ill and asked their employers not to cut their pay; the employers refused. The women got angry and met with other *molkarins* on the road to discuss going on strike. They "were not sure what a strike meant"; however, within one hour over 100 domestic workers were ready to strike.

Or take "story 3," "We roll *beedis* and make history": "Our work was tough. It was mainly manual and heavy without any rest. Our only joy was singing in chorus while doing certain jobs. It gave us a feeling of togetherness...Then came the cutter machine and the sieving machine. They made so much noise and threw up so much dust that singing too became impossible!"

Many other issues are taken up, from vendors and domestic workers' fights to become permanent employees, to battling automation and unemployment, to women's work at home and relationships between men and women. The reader can see how these stories don't have "endings" and how the struggles are continuing.

However, the concluding chapter, "the context," limits the workers' stories to a discussion solely on the "gender division of labour" and the realm of achieving goals through legislative means. Certain questions such as nationalism are not discussed, and there are only brief glances at workers' criticisms of Communist Party-led unions and the importance of women forming independent unions. In contrast, the stories by the working women themselves discuss creating a movement to "grant workers a decent human life."

—Diane Lee

What is next for Southern labor?

Delta Pride Catfish

Indianola, Miss.—We are in negotiations with Delta Pride Catfish management, trying to get a new contract. Our current contract runs out on Oct. 31. Negotiations began on Aug. 31 and now, after nearly a month, we aren't getting anywhere at all. Delta Pride hasn't offered any change in their positions on the "non-economic" issues, and we haven't discussed any "economic" issues yet. There is going to be a real struggle ahead.

Back in August, before negotiations, we decided to try to involve all the union members at Delta Pride, United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 1529, in deciding on our demands. Stewards went through every department, discussing what we wanted in the contract. We even made up a questionnaire so that the members could write down what they thought was important. We don't want to be like unions where the membership only finds out about negotiations when they are over.

POVERTY WAGES

Three things everyone agreed on. First, we need a living wage. The way it is now, you can work for Delta Pride all year and still be in poverty. For the last few months it's been even worse than before, because we are only getting 25-30 hours work a week due to what the company says is a shortage of fish to process. We have to get a real wage increase this time.

The company says that they lost millions of dollars on new machines that didn't work and on changes OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) ordered, so they don't have money for wage increases. They have the money. We sacrificed while they made big bucks and spent money on experiments designed to take power away from workers. This will be our third contract; we are owed. It is time for the company to put up or shut up.

Second, the rules about harassment have to be changed. The way it is now, both workers and supervisors are supposed to "treat each other with respect." But in reality, if a worker blows up at a supervisor, the employee is discharged. If a supervisor curses a worker, nothing happens. Most of the workers are African-American women, and most of the supervisors are white—that's a fact. In the negotiations so far, Delta Pride won't even agree to deal with this problem.

Third, there is the question of job standards in different departments. They are set way too high and workers are getting hurt trying to keep up at that level of production. The company's job standards were set by a time study by people who never worked kill lines or in the freezer. They don't ask workers what the job standards should be. We haven't gotten anywhere in negotiations on this either.

ONE PLANT CLOSED

The way the negotiations are going now, we have workers from all the different departments, plus the local president and a local staff person on our side. The company has its management team from California, its personnel specialists, on the other side. We are thinking of calling in a federal mediator.

There are a lot of strange things going on. The Sunflower (Miss.) plant, which Margaret Hoolins and I organized last winter, has been closed down by Delta Pride management. The workers who were there have been moved to the main plant in Indianola. We are working two shifts now, with more workers but fewer hours. No one really knows why this was done.

We don't want to have to strike to get a fair contract. With the hours we have been working this summer, it's been very hard for us to save up money to prepare for a strike. What we need is help from all those who helped us during the 1990 strike—workers, civil rights groups and women's groups from all over the country. *News & Letters* has never forgotten us. We need that kind of support again. You can contact us at UFCW Local 1529, 218 Second St., Indianola, MS 38761. —Sarah White

Hood Furniture

Jackson, Miss.—After being forced into a contract and a new union local they did not want, more than 250 workers at Hood Furniture Manufacturing are now charging that they were betrayed by the international union which represents them, the IUE. The workers at Hood Furniture, 95% of whom are Black, making an average wage of about \$5.25 an hour, had been represented in their four-year-long struggle for a first union contract by the Furniture Workers Division of the IUE, Local 282. The division is led by local president Willie Rudd, an African American. Hood Furniture repeatedly refused to negotiate a reasonable contract with Rudd and other African-American unionists. (See story in May, 1993 *N&L*.)

Suddenly, in May, Hood executives opened secret negotiations with the IUE in Washington, agreeing to negotiate a contract if, and only if, the workers were moved to another local. All the participants in these secret negotiations were white. By July, they had a contract ready, but the workers wouldn't buy it. Told they would no longer be represented by Rudd and other elected leaders, they walked out of the first ratification meeting.

A second meeting was called for August 4. All those who worked at Hood Furniture were invited. But, as Local 282 vice president Ida Leachman put it, "No one was allowed in the room unless they first signed a new check-off card, agreeing to be represented by Local 797, a local with white leadership which had never been involved in the Hood struggle. Only 14 people ended up being al-

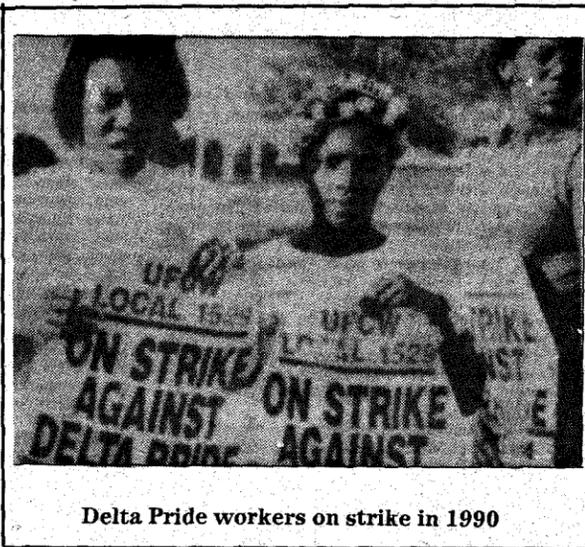
lowed into the room and voted on the contract. Everyone else stood up for Local 282."

The contract was declared ratified, with terms the workers had previously rejected. Then a story broke in the *Jackson Advocate*, with quotes from rank-and-file workers and from Willie Rudd, charging that the IUE actions were "blatant racism." One of the outspoken workers, John Jefferson, was fired on trumped-up charges after the meeting. He had worked in the plant for six years and participated in the union campaign. It seems that Local 797 is not making any effort to get him rehired.

Meanwhile, IUE International president William Bywater and IUE District 7 Counsel, Richard Rice, who had endorsed the secret negotiations, have launched a campaign of vilification against Willie Rudd and the Furniture Workers Division. Michael Giardino, president of IUE's District 1, barred Rudd from attending his district's convention and vowed to prevent any future Furniture Workers Division meetings anywhere in District 1 territory. Ida Leachman's response was: "Whatever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Many people are asking whether international union leaders, becoming aware of new organizing and new consciousness among Black workers in the South, are now moving to try to reassert their tight control.

—Michael Flug



Delta Pride workers on strike in 1990

National Standard

Editor's note: Two workers died on a picket line in Columbiana, Ala., Sept. 7 when an 18-wheel truck ran them down. The slain workers, Walter Fleming and Keith Cain, and 180 other members of United Steel Workers Local 15015 struck the National Standard plant rather than knuckle under to company demands for concessions. Send donations for the families to Cain and Fleming Memorial Fund, P.O. Box 192, Shelby, AL 35143.

Columbiana, Ala.—We went out on strike on May 31. They had 15 guards there that night and ever since, until our two men were run down. The guards are from Stone Security from Kentucky, a strikebreaking company. The company has about 72 scabs in there.

The truck driver told one of the company guards that he was going to run over any s.o.b. that got in his way. Brothers Fleming and Cain weren't on the pavement. They were both on the grass. You can clearly see that on videotape.

Walter Fleming was 58 years old, had one daughter and one granddaughter. He never bothered anybody. He was a brass plater operator, which is a hot job, but he never got dirty! Keith Cain was 23 years old, married, had one daughter and a two-year-old. He had the roughest job the in plant, a bead plater operator. Like everyone else, they were out there to save their jobs. They were tight as anyone could get on not giving up concessions.

Management made a take-it-or-leave-it offer before the contract even opened up. It was a \$7 per hour concession—a dollar and a half reduction across the board, reduction of health insurance and loss of overtime, vacation pay, holidays and time off for vacation. They want to contract out 25-30 maintenance jobs, among others, and combine the other jobs. Management wants to change the work schedule from a 40-hour work week to 12 hours a day, no overtime pay, with three-day and four-day weeks. We would rather have eight-hour days.

Since brothers Fleming and Cain died, it has been obvious that everyone around here has changed their idea about the company and the scabbing. The morale of the folks now is that they would rather the company go ahead and shut the plant down and go the hell somewhere else before we give up anything. —Striker

Trade school lock out

Chicago, Ill.—I am one of 30 displaced Oscar Mayer workers, among several hundred locked out of the plant for almost a year, who now face the prospect of being locked out of Washburne Trade School, a Chicago public school which failed to open this September.

We went to school on Wednesday (Sept. 15), because a judge had ruled that all the city schools were to open. (See story on page 1.) We found a sign on the closed door that said we will be notified by mail what to do. One hundred twenty-four of us are displaced workers—not only from Oscar Mayer, but American Can, AT&T, Spiegel and other companies that have moved out of the city.

Many of the displaced workers don't have high school diplomas or GEDs. Washburne is the only school around that has hands-on training. You can't do anything but learn—lots of different trades—welding, auto mechanics, upholstery and so on. I always wanted to be a chef, to get a job I could afford to live on, a decent salary.

This summer we saw a report in the newspaper that the Board of Education was going to close the school to save \$4.1 million. About 100 students and teachers went to the Board meeting to talk. I spoke to the Board with another displaced Oscar Mayer worker. The Board didn't say anything.

Now we have been locked out again. We went to Mayor Daley's office in City Hall and wouldn't leave. He called a special meeting with the President of the school board and the Superintendent of Schools. They sent out a deputy to say that we would get a letter a couple of days later. It is now several days later and we haven't heard anything. They are talking about transferring programs to the City Colleges. Why take this jewel and break it up? We are planning more protests.

—Displaced Oscar Mayer worker

Workshop Talks

(continued from page 1)

Neither the capitalists, their engineers, their economists nor their ideologists are concerned with the human factor, except insofar as it interferes with increasing productivity. It was Karl Marx who put workers at the center of production. He began Chapter 25 of *Capital*, "The General Law of Capitalist Accumulation," with these words: "In this chapter we consider the influence of the growth of capital on the lot of the laboring class."

The "general law of capitalist accumulation," Marx found, was a constantly growing reserve army of the unemployed produced by the movement of capital to increase productivity by replacing human labor-power with machines. The unemployed army takes many forms, one of which is those people with "extremely irregular employment," who furnish "to capital an inexhaustible reservoir of disposable labor-power." We know them today as "contingent workers."

U.S. manufacturers employ an estimated 425,000 temporary workers each day. Some, including my department at Helene Curtis, operate on a "ring and core" basis, the "core" being employees with better pay and benefits and more job security. A Nike executive explained to *The New York Times* (7/6/93), "We think of the core employees as team leaders.... They do the same jobs as the temps, give them direction and make sure the work is done right."

This system gives a bizarre twist to one relationship Marx saw between employed and unemployed: "The over-work of the employed part of the working class swells the ranks of the reserve, whilst conversely the greater pressure that the latter by its competition exerts on the former, forces these to submit to over-work and to subjugation under the dictates of capital."

SAVING OUR JOBS

Helene Curtis managers say that they cannot hire more permanent employees in this department because it would be unprofitable. If we are unprofitable, the company will simply shut down the operation and contract out the work. Not only must we work harder to save our jobs, we must force others to work harder as well. We are held responsible for "poor performers."

Two-tier is not just about wages, benefits, job security and saving corporations money. It has an ideological function: the identification of our interests with those of the company. Just yesterday a Helene Curtis line leader asked me to corroborate her observation that two agency women on our line were talking, not working. When I told her that I didn't care what they were doing, she gasped, "Don't say that! You have to care. You work for the company."

There is no middle ground. Those who contend that there is, like the union leaders who endorse "worker-management participation" schemes, are selling their souls to capital. A new labor movement must arise which bases itself not only on the employed, but on the unemployed and partially employed as well. All are part of the class which Marx saw as the "gravedigger" of capitalism.

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I love Marx's expression, "The worker has no country, the world is my country," because it brings to mind the power of labor. It puts to shame NAFTA now being negotiated between the U.S. and Mexico, while labor is being used as a pawn. For the worker, the world is our home, and we are being over-ruled in our own home. The importance of a newspaper like *News & Letters* is that the voice of the worker can be heard in it.

—Gene Ford

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LETTERS**

From the writings of Raya Dunayevskaya Marxist-Humanist Archives

by Raya Dunayevskaya
Founder of Marxist Humanism

Editor's note: This month marks the 10th anniversary of the counter-revolution which destroyed the revolution in Grenada. The urgent need to work out "how to begin anew" in light of the decade-long stage of worldwide retrogression which followed that event, explains our publication of the following essay by Raya Dunayevskaya, written on Feb. 15, 1984 as an Introduction to a new edition of her pamphlet, Nationalism, Communism, Marxist Humanism, and the Afro-Asian Revolutions.

Our period is a birth-time and a period of transition.

Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*

When the narrow bourgeois form has been peeled away, what is wealth, if not universality of needs. . . the evolution of all human powers as such. . . the absolute movement of becoming.
—Marx, *Grundrisse*

The emergence in our age of a new Third World, not only Afro-Asian but Latin American and Middle East, was no mere geographic designation, as massive and substantive as that was. Rather, Third World became synonymous both with new forces of revolution and with those new forces as Reason. These new revolutionary forces — peasants as well as proletarians, Women's Liberationists as well as youth anti-war activists — saw in that most exciting color, Black, so deep a revolutionary dimension and so intense an internationalism imbedded in their national liberation struggles that, far from being a "Third" World, it encompassed the whole world.

The world of the 1960s, indeed, was aflame with rebellion, North and South, East and West. The depth of the revolt that freedom fighters in East Europe unleashed against the Communist totalitarism characterized, as well, the new generation of revolutionaries in the West, rebelling against the bureaucratic, militaristic, capitalist-imperialist world they did not make.

JUST AS THE AFRICAN DIASPORA meant not only South Africa but South USA, and Black meant not only Africa — South, West, East and North — but also Latin America, including the Caribbean, so Black Consciousness, plunging into the struggle for freedom from Western imperialism did not stop at the economic level anymore than did the East European freedom fighters struggling against Russian totalitarianism calling itself Communism. By no means did this signify a forgetting of the economic impoverishment of the masses; while man does not live by bread alone, he must have bread to live.

Once in power, however, the division between the leaders and the masses, whose revolutionary spontaneity had achieved power for them, widened. What increased the distance between leaders and ranks was the problem of how to industrialize non-capitalistically, private or state; of how, at the same time, to expand political liberties and maintain worker control of production and the state. What was disclosed was a void in the philosophy of revolution. The banner of Marx's theory of liberation, which had been so great a pole of attraction, so powerful a force of mobilization and solidarity, was now narrowed to staying in power. Indeed, all sorts of shortcuts and substitutions, religion included, were indulged in. The revolutions were aborted.

As I put in in this pamphlet in 1959¹: "So powerful and polarizing a force is the Marxist theory of liberation that throughout the Middle East, the Orient and Africa, there are attempts by various religions, Buddhism, Christianity and Mohammedanism, to find a bridge to it, even as there is a similar attempt on the part of Communist China and Russia." I warned that because the petty-bourgeois leaders had not faced the realities of the new stage of capitalism — state-capitalism, and had not grasped the meaning of what the masses were doing in opposition to that new tyranny, they would inevitably fall into the old trap of thinking the workers backward and misled them.

IT WASN'T ONLY AYATOLLAH KHOMEINI who transformed the 1979 massive Iranian revolution into its total opposite — a counter-revolution². It was the Left itself in Iran who aided in that usurping of their revolution by bowing to the religious substitute for philosophy, whether that affected the workers, the peasants, the Women's Liberationists, or the question of education. For that matter, the same attitude of capitulation characterized the national liberation leaders in power who hung onto the state-capitalist Communist orbit of nuclear power.

The Communist world, parading its state-capitalism as "Marxist-Leninism," still serves as a pole of attraction

1. First published by *News & Letters* in Detroit, in August, 1959, this pamphlet was republished in England in May, 1961 by the Left Group, Cambridge University Labour Club with a new Introduction.

2. See the collection of my eight *Political-Philosophic Letters* on "Iran: Revolution and Counter-Revolution," written between Nov. 13, 1978 and Sept. 25, 1981, and translated into Farsi by Iranian revolutionaries. See also the English translation of the Introduction to the Farsi edition of this pamphlet on the Afro-Asian Revolutions by Raya, which was printed in *News & Letters*, August-September, 1983. Of the many crises in the Middle East, the most horrifying is the disintegration and destruction of Lebanon, which began even before Israel's genocidal 1982 invasion. I am referring to the 1975-76 Civil War. See my *Political-Philosophic Letters* of 1976, especially *Letter Number 6, "Lebanon: The Test Not Only of the PLO but the Whole Left."*



for some revolutionaries in the Third World. And while Reagan's description of Russia as the "evil empire" convinces none outside of Reagan's capitalist-imperialistic co-rulers, because U.S. imperialism is today's reigning world Behemoth, even an Ayatollah Khomeini has succeeded in presenting himself as "anti-imperialist" and the U.S. as the "Great Satan." None have faced world crises and realities from the vantage point of the freedom of the masses. It has resulted in the degradation of the national liberation movement itself.

TAKE GRENADA, which won power on its own and maintained it for more than three years, and yet tailed one of the world superpower orbits, which meant silence on the crucial question of dialectics of revolution. The result was both that philosophy of revolution was degraded to the question of "leadership methods" and that they were so dominated by the view of the "backwardness of the masses" that all discussions were kept a secret from them. Can the Left possibly not face the fact that the first shot of counter-revolution came from within the new Party, which thus opened the road for U.S. imperialism's invasion?³ Nothing can erase the stark fact that the shot that murdered Maurice Bishop came from his co-leaders in the Party, led by Coard and Austin. Nor can anyone skip over the infantilism of making the point of debate a question of Maximum Leader vs. collective leadership and "leadership method," instead of the dialectics of revolution and the question of which road to take out of the crisis in their country, a crisis determined by the myriad world crises.

As the analysis of the battle of ideas in *Nationalism, Communism, Marxist-Humanism and the Afro-Asian Revolutions* shows, from the very first emergence of the Third World, I held that to assure the forward movement of this new world it is as important to work out the new stage of cognition as the new stage of economic realities. It now becomes imperative for the Left to face itself; to take a deeper look at what was truly new in the last two decades since the first publication of this pamphlet when a new world had arisen. None of the mass revolts have suffered either from lack of daring or from initiative. Nor, for that matter, have they suffered from lack of sacrifice by both masses and leaders. Nevertheless, what the past two decades has revealed is a failure to meet the challenge from the masses. What was demanded was a totally new relationship of theory to practice which was grounded in the new movement from practice that was itself a form of theory.

Just as, from the start of the new stage of production — Automation, now computerized into robotics — the American workers have asked "What kind of labor should men and women do?" (by which they did not mean skilled vs. unskilled, but why should there be such a division between mental and manual labor?); and just as the East European masses fighting against "work-norms" have, from the 1950s right through today, tried to throw off the shackles of the Single Party state-plan, and thereby placed Marx's Humanist Essays on the historic stage; just so the theoretician's task is to work out a new point of departure in theory, a philosophy of revolution.

THE TASK IS NOT SIMPLY to go in for ever more activism as if that alone could achieve a full, successful, social revolution. Theory is a rigorous as well as creative activity that cannot be picked up "en route." It gives action its direction. Each age must work out for itself the principles of Marx's Humanism.

The new generation of revolutionaries cannot avoid responsibility for that by indulging in shortcuts and weightless abstractions. When, in the last decade of Marx's life, he witnessed the unprincipled, empty rhetoric for unification of two socialist organizations, he insisted, in his sharp critique, that only an internationalism unseparated from principles of revolution-in-permanence could become the ground for organization.⁴ Otherwise, Marx cautioned, the unity should be limited to unity of action against what is, while one continued to work

3. See my *Political-Philosophic Letter* of November 28, 1983: "Counter-Revolution and Revolution: Grenada, The Caribbean Today, and the Challenge from 30 Years of Movements from Practice that were Themselves Forms of Theory," available from *News & Letters*.

4. See Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Program* and my analysis of this profound document in Chapter XI of *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution: "The Philosopher of Permanent Revolution Creates New Ground for Organization."*

World crises from the vantage point of freedom of the masses

out theory as ground for principled unification. First of all, it was necessary to clear one's head.

To meet the theoretic challenge of a new stage of cognition, one has to have full confidence in the masses, not only as force but as Reason — that is to say, confidence that their movement from practice as a form of theory does, indeed, signify that they can participate in the working out of a new theory. That is exactly what was lacking in the leadership in Grenada as they debated so-called "leadership methods" instead of the dialectical methodology which flows from a philosophy of revolution. Without that, leaders inevitably fell into the trap of hanging onto one or another state power.

There are signs of a new direction in the attempts, East and West, North and South, to restate Marx's Humanism for our age. Thus, in Nigeria, among other African countries, the Marx centenary brought out no less than a thousand scholars, trade unionists, and revolutionary activists, to discuss the "body of theories, founded by Karl Marx," a discussion which was broad enough to also focus "on the way in which patriarchal and sexist prejudices are being increasingly propagated in Africa."⁵ This recognition of a new revolutionary force is a beginning but a beginning only.

THAT THIS PAMPHLET can aid in grappling with the task today of articulating, rethinking, how to develop the unification of theory/practice with these new forces of revolution has been proved by what we have learned from Marx's last writings — his *Ethnological Notebooks*.⁶ That is to say, the presentation of Marx's Marxism as a totality, as a new continent of thought and of revolution, has been verified by the publication of those writings which touch on the problematic of our day — the Third World. They round out Marx's break with capitalist society and his first discovery of a whole new continent of thought as Marx articulated it in the 1844 *Humanist Essays*, which did not limit his revolutionary challenge to capitalism only to what he was against and meant to overthrow. Rather, in unfurling the banner of revolution, Marx's magnificent vision disclosed the new human relations he was for, from a new relationship of Man/Woman to the end of the division between mental and manual labor. In the 1850s that vision pointed to the need for a "revolution in permanence"; and by 1857 his *Grundrisse* projected humanity's as well as the individual's development as an "absolute movement of becoming."

What the last writings reveal are the "new moments" which round out — that is, totalize as well as concretize — his philosophy of revolution. Thus:

1) Marx insisted that the climactic analysis of "The Accumulation of Capital," in his greatest work, *Capital*, was not a Universal which the East must follow, but the description and historic truth of West Europe; that other paths to revolution could come from technologically under-developed countries.

2) Marx's multilinear view of the four historic stages of human development — the "Asiatic Mode of Production" as well as slavery, feudalism and capitalism — opened so many new roads to revolution, in such concrete ways, that the 1857 "absolute movement of becoming" was spelled out in the last decade of his life — though only in notes — as a Promethean vision of the possibility of a unity of the two extremes — primitive communism and the future developed communist society of totally new human relations.

This trail to the 1980s is not any blueprint, nor was it fully worked out for his age. It is there for us to work out for our age. This pamphlet has laid the ground for that task. When the capitalistic (private and state), exploitative, crisis-ridden imperialistic world of 1984 threatens to unleash a nuclear holocaust that would put an end to humanity as we have known it, it is clear that it is the urgency of the times which demands that this generation of revolutionaries turn to revolutionary praxis, to philosophy as action and action as philosophy.

Let us put an end to substitutionism and return to Marx's philosophy of "revolution in permanence" to create non-exploitative, non-sexist, non-racist, totally new human relations.

5. See report by Saidu Adamu, Conference Coordinator for the Steering Committee, in *Journal of African Marxists*, Issue 4, September 1983. The Conference was held March 14 to 19, 1983.

6. See chapter XII of my work, *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution: "The Last Writings of Marx Point A Trail to the 1980s."*

A Letter from Russia

Behind Yeltsin's recent coup attempt

Moscow, Russia—"We have gotten used to it. Up there, they are doing things, and down here, we just try to live our lives. It is like the Tolstoy story of the boy who cried wolf. After the third time, nobody paid any attention." They are the words of one Moscow woman who vividly expressed the attitude of ordinary Russians to all these theatrical battles in Moscow — the tug-of-war between Yeltsin's executive and Khazbulatov's legislative branches.

I would like to stress the significant feature of the current Russian political life — the decline of this life at the grass-roots level. The mass disillusionment in the politics up in Moscow greatly shifted the power center down to the local republics and regions where political elites try to pose as defenders of the man in the street who is neglected by the center. And it must be said they succeeded in this. These local leaders do not hurry to Moscow for instructions, they do their own things and watch for the results of the clash in the capital as theater.

Therefore, there must not be any illusions that today's Russia represents something like a unified structure. It is no such entity, rather it is a patchwork where some regions experiment with monetarist models a la Friedman-Gaidar, others keep the remnants of the old pre-Perestroika economic system. It will be these regional elites who in the long run will dictate their own terms of the future order to the government in Moscow.

After Yeltsin's arbitrary action (dissolving the Parliament), the positions of the proponents of the free market were reinforced. KGB, the internal ministry, the military, the Central Bank all supported Yeltsin. The ousted Gaidar was reinstated as Deputy Prime Minister. The Parliament is obviously losing its power.

In the criticism of Yeltsin's policies by Parliament leaders, we find much truth: yes, the level of life for many Russians fell below the poverty line; yes, there is no law and order; yes, Russia is being transformed into a Third World-type country. What else? Everything is right. But will the present Parliament leaders be able to head the opposition movement? I believe the answer will be "No."

Let's see who they are. Some 90% of them are representatives of the old Communist nomenclatura with the characteristic type of mentality. If you put aside their rhetoric, what they lament is the loss of their former positions in the state-capitalist economy and political structure. Occupationally, they are former leaders of the re-

gional party committees and cells, or directors of the large state-owned Soviet factories. Many could not find their place in the present "robber barons" system.

A good case in point is their inability to organize any workable opposition movement — they cannot divide the leadership positions. One gets a vivid picture of the mentality of such people from the recently published book by the leader of the Russian Parliament, Ruslan Khasbulatov, *The Struggle*. A self-exposing document!

It seems that a certain amount of time must pass before new fresh opposition leaders appear. In the long run, everything will depend on the grass roots. My point is that the continuing chaos in the politico-economic life of Russia might produce only Bonapartist leaders who will certainly come as "saviors of Russia." It may be a leader of a Zhirinovskiy type, or some other civilian with distant or recent military background (the pure Russian military is not good for coups because of the lack of a "Latin American" tradition). This person will evidently be a personification of the strong hand (not necessarily military), with Russian orthodox values, and a man from the street.

The second scenario is developing right before our eyes — the Yeltsin Russia: "capitalism of the period of the first accumulation of capital." From the textbooks you probably know what it is. We might learn it on our own skins. So far we see the state in limbo, that, of course, cannot continue for long.

Hopefully, the self-organization of the people from below will change the situation. —Nikolai Zelinski



Life in Russia, 1993

Theoretical void in Eastern Europe

by Stephen Steiger

Prague, *The Czech Republic*—Eastern Europe today presents a vast area of a void in politics, economics and ideology. Those who favor the reintroduction of what they call democracy—i.e., capitalist order—cannot refer to any serious obstacle in their endeavor, in spite of the word "destabilization" being in constant use. Members of the so-called Left complain that the Right continues unhindered in its crusade against anything suspected of being "Communist," which it uses as a label for everything considered Left or even liberal.

As far back as 1958, Raya Dunayevskaya wrote in *Marxism and Freedom* that "Our epoch is the epoch of the struggle for the minds of men." Observing the East European scene today we can only agree with this dictum. Confusion of minds is perhaps the most negative part of the grave legacy of the Communist era. The corrupted version of Marxism, which the Stalinists passed for the only genuine interpretation, now not only offers an easy target for any rightist who simply compares their words with the regime's reality, but is also being rejected by the Communists themselves.

The Left is refusing to accept Marxism for two different reasons: those thinking in terms of power regard what they call ideology as an obstacle to their advancement, both of their own and of their party. In this respect they argue in a way very similar to that of their adversaries on the Right. Both try to be "pragmatic," to be free of any set of "strict" ideas—except perhaps of vague notions of human rights.

DE-IDEOLOGIZATION OF POLITICS

Let me cite two significant examples, one from my own country, the Czech Republic, and the other from Slovakia. The leader of a new party which has just broken from the Communist Party and calls itself "Party of the Democratic Left" (a very popular name for break-away Communists in East and West) said, "What is specific with the Party of Democratic Left is that it consists of the elimination of an ideologization of politics, elimination of ideological schemes as a measure of the government's coalition being successful or not." And a speaker of his Slovak counterpart, a party of the same name, said, "The PDD refuses to base itself on radical attitudes because this type of a party comes in for immediate reminiscences of the past."

Those Left groups that may still keep to some kind of "ideology" hold Marxism to be obsolete. Disregarding Marx's philosophy they point to the Soviet experience as proof that Marx's conception of society and economy is not suitable for the end of the 20th century. If we leave aside dispersed individuals we can say that although they could represent some potential for implanting new ideas, there are no significant groups of Marxists who could oppose these two currents on the Left.

On first sight this void of ideas would seem to be fertile ground for a new philosophy of freedom. Yet even if

we leave aside practical stumbling blocks like language barriers or publication possibilities for both articles and books, what seems to be fertile ground is poisoned unto its deepest layers. An introduction of a new body of ideas will have at the same time to denude this ground of all the venom that accumulated there during those long years—the Stalinist interpretation of Marxism, the dominating rightist ideas and the "de-ideologization" representing the most serious impediments.

EXPROPRIATION OF IDEAS AND HISTORY

In a recent essay prepared for a conference in commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the 1968 Prague spring, Czech philosopher Karel Kosik wrote, "The essence of modern history and its end is the growth of the non-essential, the driving out of the essential by the non-essential and the confusion between the one and the other: people absorbed by hunting for the irrelevant and accumulating the secondary while the essential is escaping them."

It is perhaps in politics that this is best seen. Hunting for the non-essential, there seems to be neither space nor time to deliberate on ideas of freedom and thus self-rule which these societies could have expected following 1989. All you can observe are the shallowest forms of parliamentary democracy, including the most adverse forms of politicking and scandals. Remedies are being sought in restricting of political parties' access to parliaments, like in Poland, or anti-communist laws, like in the Czech Republic, or attempts to "unite" all political

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Editorial

New social consciousness challenges labor's dualities

Events of the last several months, in the rural South and in the inner cities of the North, in the minefields and in manufacturing towns, have infused an old contradiction with new meaning and challenged Black and labor activists alike. On one side, a new American social consciousness, simmering ever since the Hamlet, N.C. poultry plant fire and the Clarence Thomas/Anita Hill hearings in 1991 were followed by the 1992 Los Angeles rebellion, has now burst out in a diversity of appearances, from Black labor struggles in the South to mass demonstrations by inner-city youth in the North. (See articles from Mississippi and Chicago, pp. 3, 1.)

On the other side, the continuing economic and ideological attack on the real conditions of life and labor for workingclass Americans, has now been coupled with a new intensification of state-capitalist integration of government, corporations and the labor bureaucracy.

The Clinton administration's conference on the "Future of the Workplace," held in Chicago this summer, starkly underscored the way Reaganism's retrogression in the sphere of production is actually being intensified and developed in new directions now that the Democrats are in power. Under the banner of "global competitiveness," government officials, corporate executives and top union bureaucrats met to define the "high-performance workplace" of the future. Virtually all the invitees agreed on the need for strong measures to cut costs and increase workplace efficiency, in part by redeploying workers in "multidisciplinary work teams."

What they did not agree on was whether unions were to play any future role at all. "The jury is still out on whether the traditional union is necessary for the new workplace," was Labor Secretary Reich's view. He was joined by Commerce Secretary Brown, who offered the opinion that "Unions are OK where they are. And where they are not, it is not yet clear what kind of organization should represent workers."

Union bureaucrats, anxious to save their jobs even as those of their members were being eliminated, touted new productivity-based contracts with unprecedented lengths. One United Steel Workers contract they had the audacity to highlight is a new one at Magma Copper in Arizona. It features a no-strike, no-reopener clause for 15 years! Even in 17th century Virginia, contracts for indentured servitude did not run to such lengths.

Naturally, at a forum in which such legalized slavery agreements are touted, no rank-and-file workers were permitted; Oscar Mayer workers who picketed outside had already seen enough of the "workplace of the future" when their unionized Chicago plant was closed, replaced by new, non-union operations.

The conference exposed the truth that, as against the illusions of the "free market" and the ideological calls for "privatization" which dominated the 1980s, what is being advanced in the 1990s to levels previously unknown in the U.S., is state-capitalist integration of politics and economics, of corporation, state and union bureaucracy (this last only "if needed"). The economic and political trends which have determined the new directions in state-capitalist integration have also revealed that Black and Latino workers in the central cities, especially the youth, are ever more likely to be excluded from production and consigned to permanent marginality.

Even as conservative a scholar as William Julius Wilson concluded, in the 1993 edition of the classic sociological study, *Black Metropolis*, that the permanent, crucial difference between the southside Chicago Black ghetto of the 1940s and the same neighborhoods today is "a segregated community heavily populated with working poor adults in contrast with a segregated community largely populated with nonworking poor adults."

What Wilson didn't mention, but what the police forces of the central cities are now oppressively aware of, is the undercurrent of rebellion that has been ceaseless since Los Angeles 1992. In Chicago this month, it forced elaborate contingency plans to try to head off "civil disorder" in the event public schools were forced to close.

Whether one looks at Detroit during the trials of the cops who murdered Malice Green, or at Miami during similar trials there, whether at the new labor rallies in downstate Illinois, or at Mississippi, where Black women workers organized the whole catfish industry, the rulers are nervously looking over their shoulders and asking, "what will blow next?"

And yet, the weight of retrogressive ideological conditions, and of all the old labor and Left organizations, with their bankruptcy of principle, have very nearly made it impossible for any movement to develop beyond its initial spontaneous upsurge.

We are indeed living in what Raya Dunayevskaya had, by the mid-1980s, already called a "changed world," one in which the "pollution of thought itself" has reached into the attitudes of the labor movement and the Left. As workers—employed and unemployed—in Mississippi and Chicago, in Appalachia and Los Angeles, create new forms of struggle, the challenge to revolutionaries to work out both the meaning of the new stage of state-capitalism, and to concretely re-state the Idea of Freedom, has become more urgent than ever.

THE LOS ANGELES REBELLION IN RETROSPECT

The media's intense focus on the trial of those who allegedly beat a white truck driver during the Los Angeles rebellion is very deliberate. They are trying to drive out of our memory the creativity and revolutionary consciousness which emerged during that rebellion by demonizing it through all these trials. We cannot allow them to do this, because the rulers will then rule our minds.

White intellectual
Illinois

* * *

It is a sign of the times that the best the defense could come up with in the Reginald Denny trial was to put "sociologists" on the stand who testified that during the "riots" a "mob mentality" developed that transforms individuals into "irrational creatures." So we're back to being viewed as animals when we take to the streets to demand justice.

Black worker
Chicago

* * *

In the days immediately after the L.A. rebellion, there was a real sense of kinship among Blacks and Latinos, the feeling that we had done something important together. We smiled at each other on the streets, in the buses and stores. Then the leaders came in and have been trying to divide us again.

African-American reader
Los Angeles

I don't agree with all the violence in L.A. but I'm so angry that if I were there I would have done the same thing. There is a point when anger builds up and reaches the breaking point. The media is portraying the people as "mobs." But these are ordinary poor people who are suffering and are desperate for basic needs. The media doesn't give you the whole meaning behind what happened. They don't say that these people have lived through 12 years of Reagan-Bush. I'm glad that there is anger and passion by people. If there weren't any protests I'd feel scared.

Latina
Chicago

* * *

I am disappointed with the narrow political views of many of my colleagues on the question of race in the U.S. I believe we need a multi-cultural view in order to build solid relations between all ethnic groups.

Korean-American law student
Los Angeles

* * *

The rulers brainwash us to think they have all the power and there's nothing we can do, then L.A. exploded and you saw how scared Bush and all of them were, and you said, damn, we really have the power, we can do anything we set our mind to. I'm not saying the Caterpillar workers should have occupied or

Marxist-Humanist
New York



MULTI-PARTY
DEMOCRACY
IN AFRICA

The pro-democratic movement in Africa is not a constitutional struggle, as some in the Left have argued. The desire of the African masses is far beyond that of multi-party democracy. That is the demand of the leaders. Historically we know that leaders and the masses always speak different languages. This is precisely what we are witnessing in Zambia. Fredrick Chiluba must have been mistaken that all the Zambians needed was multi-party democracy. He made a mistake and over night became a dictator more dangerous than Kaunda.

Correspondent
The Gambia

STAND UP FOR
GAY & LESBIAN
RIGHTS



The Women's Action Coalition of Los Angeles is furious at Judge Buford's judicial bigotry in the Sharon Bottoms Lesbian child custody case. The idea that a mother should be declared legally unfit, simply because she loves and is honest about that love, is a blow aimed at the humanity and passion of all people, not just mothers and lesbians. Women, lesbians and mothers will not be silenced; we will fight for Sharon Bottoms, April Wade, their son Tyler Doustou and all other victims of shallow-minded oppression.

Jennifer
Los Angeles

Editor's note: To contribute to the Sharon Bottoms legal fund, make checks out to: ACLU Foundation of Virginia, Attention Steven Pershing, 6 North 6th St., Suite 400, Richmond, VA 23219.

We Latina lesbians active in the empowerment of women and gay people, third world cultural identity and anti-imperialism are falling short of a full revolutionary movement as long as we continue to reject the ideas of Marx. It is not enough to be a worker, a Latino, an African, a woman, a gay—I have found that there are always contradictions there. The thinking of Marx can help us move forward. It's true that the Left and Marx himself did not work out questions that are essential for us to confront today, such as the realities and struggles of women not only in labor but in the home; gay and lesbian struggles; the absolute necessity of re-creating our rela-

tionship to nature; the equilibrium of our bodies; a sense of ourselves as spiritual beings unseparated from our concrete existence—and not dependent on religion; the reclaiming of identity and dignity by repressed cultures; and new ways labor has been exploited, unforeseen by Marx.

It is up to us today to bring together these issues, which it seems to me are connected. We must support one another's struggles, or we'll never get anywhere. And we need to look again at Marx and see what he says to us today.

Yan Maria Castro
Mexico City, Mexico

* * *

As Clinton's empty words open the way for renewed gay-bashing, it is terribly saddening to note the death of Paul Stensland, long-time revolutionary Gay liberation activist, most recently with ACT-UP's People of Color/Poor People's Caucus. Paul recently said, "I wanted to say something and I wanted my message to be, that gay is good, it is part of nature, and you shouldn't feel guilty about it. That sort of says it all."

Gerard Emmett
Chicago



RUSSIA
AND THE CRISIS
OF THE MIND

In the (former) Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe, the physical walls have come down. But there are mental walls, the walls that the intellectuals raised over the years through their failure to formulate an emancipatory vision. They were against Communism, but they did not work out what they were for.

Student of Marxist-Humanism
Los Angeles

* * *

There really is a crisis of consciousness now, as News & Letters has been pointing out. There is a crisis of people's imagination. People are feeling blocked; they don't think anything can be done to bring change. The system in power seems so omnipotent. That's why it's important to study philosophy and revolution, to see where things are in motion, both in life and in ideas.

Feminist writer
California

* * *

The Russian edition of Raya Dunayevskaya's *Philosophy and Revolution* is now in Russian bookstores and libraries, and this is the best news I have ever had. Now those Russian workers can read how their Russian state-capitalist rulers fooled them all these years by calling themselves Communists. And now the American workers can understand how the American capitalists have enslaved them all these years by telling them how better off they are under their "freedom" than the Russian workers under Communism. This will allow workers all over the world to break out of the mind-forged manacles and begin to use and develop their own minds to think and do.

Felix Martin
Los Angeles

PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST?

I was glad to hear the news that the PLO and Israel are recognizing each other and that Rabin and Arafat shook hands right out in public. It's no small thing. Ever since I was a small kid all I can remember is hearing nearly every day about someone getting killed by one or the other side. If we're fed up with seeking it from such a distance, imagine what it's like to live through it. But why only now after more than 20 years of it? Sometimes I think it's because these two men have finally had enough. Everyone has their limit to how much they can stand. Then I wonder sometimes if there's more to it than that.

Black truck driver
Oakland

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA: IS THERE A WAY OUT?

After reading your pamphlet on Bosnia, I have to ask, where do we go from here in the practical as well as the theoretical tasks? The "Draft for Marxist-Humanist Perspectives" (Aug.-Sept. N&L) gives some important directions. Papers such as N&L are helping to create public opinion through readers discussing these ideas with those with whom they come in contact, as well as through debate via correspondence and publication of discussion letters in the paper itself.

It seems to be one of the core premises of your trend that most of the Left since Marx have failed to understand Marx's humanism. How could such a fundamental essence of Marx's philosophy have been overlooked for so long? The essay in the Bosnia pamphlet by Raya Dunayevskaya alludes to Engels' and Lenin's shortcomings, while giving support to those such as Gramsci, Luxemburg and Fanon. At the same time, I am a bit perplexed when Dunayevskaya seems to belittle those who want to lay out a blueprint for the future. How are we to go forward without a plan or vision? This does not seem possible. Marx had this, as far as I understand it. This points to the need to better ground ourselves in Marx's basic writings and from there to link them with the pressing theoretical tasks—and practical tasks, too—facing us today and those that will face us tomorrow.

D.A.
Greensboro, NC

* * *

What concerns me is your point that the ideological void in addressing a genuine concept of freedom allowed narrow nationalism and outright genocide to take center stage in Serbia. I worry about this, because I see a very big ideological void here in the U.S.

Croatian student
Chicago

* * *

It is not at all clear to me why News & Letters is so opposed to the current plans to partition Bosnia-Herzegovina. You argue in support of lifting the arms embargo against Bosnia so that the Muslim forces can continue to battle the Serbs. But is a bad peace a worse alternative than a bad war? In the end the Bosnians will be forced to accept the partition of their country in any case. So why encourage them to take what amounts to suicidal actions?

Sociologist
Pittsburgh

* * *

What is needed in order to energize solidarity with the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina is to discern the depth and humanist content of the struggle of the Bosnian people to create a multi-ethnic society. There is a direct continuity be-

tween the struggle in Sarajevo and the legacy of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising of 1943. Yet the Left has remained silent and inactive on Bosnia and has in some cases even sided with the Serbian nationalist murderers.

Sheila Fuller
Chicago

* * *

For all those who continue to argue the pros and cons of whether the U.S. should "intervene" in Bosnia-Herzegovina, allow me to point out that the U.S., as well as the European powers, intervened in this crisis long ago. They have done so by doing exactly what the Serbs have always wanted—preventing the Bosnians from arming themselves and pushing for the partition of the country between Serbia and Croatia, with a small Muslim enclave left in-between. The European powers promoted the idea of partition as early as the February, 1992 Lisbon Conference of the European Community; both the U.S. and Europe pushed the idea in a modified form with the Vance-Owen "peace" plan; and they push partition openly today in Geneva. The blood of the Bosnian people is on their hands.

Anti-war activist
New York

* * *

Here in Scandinavia doors are being gradually closed to refugees from Bosnia. Kosova-Albanians have no right to political asylum. Men, women and children are seeking refuge in churches to avoid being forcefully sent back to Kosova. The racism of Europe is daily getting worse, now that the social democrats are competing with the Right and far Right as to who is more hostile to the migrants. The racist migrant laws have left us without any rights as human beings. The daily assault on migrants is now almost an acceptable norm.

Houses are put on fire, unlawful arrests and detentions are the order of the day. The right-wing argument that "all migrants must be seen as potential criminals" is now a reality. But the struggle against white racism continues to consolidate. The continuity of the struggle is the only thing we can rely on to defend our existence.

Correspondent
Norway

* * *

If the struggle to preserve the multi-ethnic society in Bosnia-Herzegovina is allowed to go under, it won't mean only the destruction of a country. It will mean the destruction of an idea that could serve as a barrier to the worldwide resurgence of racism and narrow nationalism.

P.L.H.
Chicago

THE CLINTON HEALTH PLAN SEEN FROM BELOW

However Clinton's health plan comes out, we'll end up paying for it. The rich don't pay taxes. So who is left to pay for it? Unionized blue collar workers with health plans fully paid by the company will probably be worse off. They'll say: Here is your free medical care. The poor already have free medical, so that won't help them. But we'll have to pay \$100 a week in taxes for our "free" medical.

**Freight Teamster
New York**

I have to laugh everytime someone says the poor have "free" health care. Ever look at the bills charged for emergency room care for those who can't afford insurance? And how often does Medicaid delay or even refuse payment for such treatment? The disclosure that those earning under \$15,000 a year have a 25% shorter life expectancy than those earning over that amount tells the real tale.

**Unemployed
Los Angeles**

I will await judgment on Clinton's health plan until I see what it means for those who are unemployed. The details seem pretty sketchy on how it affects the unemployed thus far. You can bet we're going to have a lot more unemployed in the next couple of years.

**Skeptical
Illinois**

In case you wondered, like I did, why the President and big business are suddenly so "worried" about our health care, like they ever cared before, I came across this quote from Dun & Bradstreet in the *Wall Street Journal* (Sept. 3, 1993): "The price of a unit of labor isn't fixed. If an employee breaks down, you have the added cost of health care. If a piece of equipment breaks down, it's easier and less costly to repair." I am not a "unit" of labor. I am a human being. That's why capitalism cannot be reformed: it is inhuman at its core.

**Human being
New York**

I've been unemployed for two years and that's how long it's been since I had

a medical checkup. I hope Clinton can do something for people like me, not for the rich.

**Unemployed Black woman
New York**

A number of commentators have recently pointed out that Clinton's health plan doesn't address how to hold down the escalating costs of hospitalization, especially insofar as the huge growth in expensive medical technology is concerned. What they haven't said is that the reason the health service industry is investing so heavily in expensive hi-tech equipment, while providing hardly any out-of-hospital patient support services, is that the profit margins are higher there. You can't separate the crisis in health care from the inner core of the crisis of capitalism—the domination of dead over living labor.

**Anti-capitalist
Illinois**

THE DEBATE ON MULTI- CULTURALISM



I'm concerned with the discussion of multiculturalism I've been seeing in N&L. Isn't it important in education to single out contributions other than Europeans? Isn't that revolutionary? I'm talking about an intellectual movement to go back 7,000 years to talk about history as including Africa.

**New reader
Bay Area**

I'm not against multiculturalism as long as it is part of the total overthrow and doesn't harken back to oppression of women. Liberation is too often a word that has been erased from the national liberation movements. Marx's concept of

the self-determination of people and ideas meant that, although he was European, he transcended that limit. There is a movement from national consciousness through culture to liberation. The problem comes when it stops at culture.

**Philosophy student
Bay Area**

Multiculturalism can be a new kind of tokenism at the same time that it's a fetish. That's why people are having trouble with it. It seems like it's meaningful. But it competes with the whole history of liberation struggles instead of bringing forth its own history, of Black liberation in the context of all movements to tear up capitalism. Multiculturalism doesn't answer what direction the movement is going to take or what the parts are going to mean. The history of struggle goes through filtering in institutions at the hands of multiculturalists.

**Radical thinking
El Cerrito, Cal.**

I think it should be pointed out that few philosophers displayed a greater appreciation for multicultural perspectives than Karl Marx. He spent the last decade of his life researching Russia, China, India, Java, Sumatra, the Arabs of North Africa, the Berbers, the Indians of North America, Incan civilization and much more. Just as he recognized that a multicultural perspective was needed to recognize the expanse of human creativity, so the same is true today.

**Multiculturalist
Chicago**

THE SHRINKING U.S. ECONOMY

The economy has had a lot to do with radicalizing many of the retired workers I know. As for younger workers—Black, brown or white—they are struggling just to stay alive. Clinton wants to help small business get back into business to furnish low-paying jobs as if that will get the economy going again. That is as stupid as loggers floating their logs to market on a low tide. Capitalism just isn't working. It never has, for humanity.

**Retired auto worker
California**

A consequence of Reagan retrogression, with its destruction of unions and lowering of real wages of U.S. workers and its decline into pauperism for millions of people, is the return to wages by commission in retail stores and the return to wages by piece work in large scale shops. In one you are pitted against yourself; in the other you are pitted against other workers.

The head of something called Lincoln Electric was thrilled to inform the nation in a recent interview that his company does not pay for holidays, vacations or health benefits; workers can work as much or as little as they want; their wages depend on how hard they work. The intent of U.S. capital to return U.S. workers to pre-union-struggle working and living conditions is crystal clear.

**Angela Terrano
New York City**

I was eating at a fast food restaurant recently and got to talking to a 23-year-old Mexican man who was working there. It turns out that he has to work three jobs, just to be able to earn \$1000/month—hardly a huge amount of money, especially in expensive southern California! I had been feeling down from my own crazy hassled day at my office job, but talking to him, and thinking about all the others in his situation, gave me new energy to try to change all this.

**Reader
Los Angeles**

NICARAGUA ON STRIKE

Today (Sept. 22) I saw Daniel Ortega, ex-president of Nicaragua, on TV. There is a general strike, including the transportation sector, aided by students and popular organizations, in many of the country's cities. Ortega said the blame lies only with Ms. Chamorro's government, even though the military and police are repressing the strikers and the Sandinista Humberto Ortega is the head of the military. It is yet to be seen if the spontaneity of this movement will go beyond the plans of both the Ortega brothers and the Chamorro government.

**Latino activist
New York City**

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by Raya Dunayevskaya

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"Presentation on Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy of June 1, 1987," and 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes."
.....\$3.00 paperback, \$10.00 hardcover

- Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal**
1989 edition includes* Afterword by Raya Dunayevskaya, "Charles Denby 1907-83"
by Charles Denby.....\$14.95 per copy

—PAMPHLETS—

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Black/Red View

by John Alan

Richmond, Cal. is located on the northeast shore of the San Francisco Bay across from the skyline of San Francisco and wealthy Marin County. It's a unique city in this section of Contra Costa County, because it is not a suburban town or a bedroom community of white commuters. Instead Richmond is a working-class town scarred by its industrial past as a shipbuilding town and its present high rate of unemployment in its large African-American population.

Richmond is also unique because it has a Black urban environmental movement, the West County Toxic Coalition. For five years the Coalition has been pressuring the giant Chevron oil refinery, which is butted against the Black community of North Richmond, to clean up its act so that the citizens of North Richmond can breathe clean air. The Coalition has also sharply criticized Chevron and other companies that store and manufacture toxic chemicals, inside and outside of Richmond, for ignoring the poverty and joblessness in the Black community. In the words of Henry Clark, founder of the West County Toxic Coalition: "We don't see any economic benefit from living next to the (Chevron) refinery; very few North Richmond residents work there."

In North Richmond, last July, a valve on a railroad tank car containing oleum (a form of sulfuric acid) exploded as it was being unloaded by workers at the General Chemical Corp. plant, creating a three-mile-wide, 15-mile-long toxic cloud of sulfuric acid over



Malice Green verdict

Detroit, Mich.—The city seemed to be holding its breath as we waited to hear the verdicts in the trials of the three white police officers charged in the beating death of Black motorist Malice Green last November. Euphoria broke out when two officers, Walter Budzyn and Larry Nevers, were found guilty of second-degree murder by two separate (predominantly Black) juries. However, many were disappointed when Judge George Crockett, who had held a bench trial for Officer Robert Lessnau, acquitted him on grounds of insufficient evidence.

Despite strong emotions surrounding the trial, and a sense that justice had been done to the two officers who had delivered the most blows to Malice Green, questions remain. Some felt that first-degree murder would have been more appropriate, considering the "service" records of the pair known throughout their precinct as "Starsky and Hutch." Many fear that these officers will never spend a day in jail.

The fact that the police chief quickly fired all seven white officers involved in the beating and has waited over four months to suspend two other police officers charged in the wrongful shooting death of a Cuban immigrant, Jose Iturralde, last April, has left many cynical about the much-heralded achievement of attaining a 50% Black police department. People are also aware that in the white suburbs outside Detroit the feeling is, "the officers were just doing their job."

One Detroit resident put both the legal details of the trial and the upcoming mayoral and city council elections into the same category: "It's not even about racism. It's the Establishment, the whole Establishment," he said.

—Detroit resident

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Flint, MI 48502

Battle for air in Richmond, Cal.

North Richmond. Within a few hours, the emergency facilities of local hospitals were jammed with thousands of people—mostly African Americans, seeking treatment for burns and breathing difficulties.

A spokesman for the company said that the crisis was caused by a malfunctioning valve. However, after a two-month investigation the Bay Area Air Quality Management District has reported that the General Chemical Corp. lied about the cause of the accident in order to conceal the company's negligence in the unloading and storing of toxic chemicals at the Richmond plant.

The real cause was that the company had assigned the hazardous task of loading oleum to workers who were not trained to do the job. Furthermore, the report points out, the company didn't get the required permit to do this risky kind of work.

For this negligence the Bay Area Air Quality Management District has recommended that General Chemical be fined up to \$45,000 for violation of clean air regulations and that the Contra Costa County District Attorney should consider charging the officials of General Chemical with criminal negligence.

But Black activists are extremely doubtful that chemical companies and government agencies will ever seriously move towards correcting the toxic danger in west Contra Costa County. "They're telling us there is no harm to the community, and if something's released, it won't affect us in any long-term way...It's nonsense. We want to know how to protect ourselves." This person speaks from experience. The chemical companies, at times, have acknowledged that accidents do take place, a serious breakdown might happen at any time and it could leave "dead bodies in the streets of Richmond."

According to Contra Costa Health Department records, the explosive leak of sulfuric acid fumes over Richmond last summer represents less than 1/10,000 of the amount of dangerous chemicals stored by companies in Contra Costa County, near neighborhoods and schools. Many of these chemicals are extremely lethal, like the million pounds of hydrogen fluoride, which is far more deadly than hydrogen cyanide used in the San Quentin prison gas chambers.

The yet-to-be-implemented decision of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District did not bring a truce in the battle for air that humans can breathe without fear. Indeed, this battle has become more politically intense, now that it has become an issue of a regulatory decision.

Several weeks ago, the Chevron refinery in Richmond presented an environmental impact report to the state and federal governments asking that it be allowed to make the air "dirtier" for Black residents around its refinery, as a part of a plan to enlarge its present five plants and build a new plant to produce "cleaner gasolines," which means releasing an additional 500 tons of pollution into the atmosphere. Chevron wants to offset this increase in pollution with its "air pollution credits" earned from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District for closing plants in the past.

Black World

(continued from page 1)

invasion of Grenada barely evoked more opposition from the Left than does genocide in Bosnia today.

To be sure, the failure of the Marxist Left regarding Grenada stems, as one of the cadre of the New Jewel Movement (NJM) told Charles Mills, from "Marxism-Leninism...not promoting black pride, not acknowledging the African origins of our culture. The fact that we're oppressed as blacks and working class. It alienated many people—it didn't relate to their experience. We just closed our minds to developing any further theory, creating something new."*

One of the key determinations at the center of the Grenada tragedy is the utter failure of the Marxist Left to comprehend the Black dimension as a cultural national question unseparated from its self-evident proletarian consciousness. That theoretical void has been filled today by the most narrow forms of nationalism, religious fundamentalism and postmodern multiculturalism, while on the ground, the youth have turned to rap/hip-hop counter-culture and Afrocentrism.

The particularization of what had formerly been revolutionary internationalism into the channels of narrow nationalism, East and West, has run its course right up to today's inaction by the Left in the face of a whole world of imperialist crises. Abstract internationalism, whether in the form of Castro's "non-interference" declaration regarding the leadership strife in the NJM in 1983, or in the form of today's left peace activists who talk abstractly about neutrality towards all sides in Bosnia, has so shrouded the actual philosophic void in revolution that it contributes to the ideological screen for genocide.

What Raya Dunayevskaya originally posed in her November 1983 analysis of counter-revolution in Grenada as the absolute opposite of this retrogressive internationalism remains as much a challenge today. The new moments of non-capitalist revolutionary development that Marx discovered in his last decade can no longer be ignored by serious Marxists, as they had been in the 1970s when new Third World revolutions and a new global Women's Liberation Movement raised anew the question of internationalism unseparated from the need to make the revolution in permanence.

* Charles W. Mills, "Getting Out of the Cave: Tension Between Democracy and Elitism in Marx's Theory of Cognitive Liberation," *Social and Economic Studies* 39:1 (1990), p. 83.

In this ongoing contest for clean air, two distinct, but inseparable, things have emerged: air itself, an essential natural element for human existence, has been made into a commodity, which can be bartered or bought in the process of regulatory negotiations; and an urban environmental movement based in the African-American community has been able to grasp that there is a connection between the pollution of the environment, racism and permanent Black unemployment.

Crises in West Africa

Military dictator General Babangida has been systematically creating a political atmosphere throughout West Africa that will ensure the military hegemony of Nigeria over the region. Nigeria is in control of Liberia militarily. With the help of logistical information from the U.S., they have to some extent been able to put rebel leader Charles Taylor at bay. And the military government in Sierra Leone is only able to survive to date with the military help of Nigeria.

Small Gambia is totally dependent on Nigeria on the question of defense. For the past several years the head of the military in the Gambia has been a Nigerian, and the secret police consist of many Nigerians.

The '90s are, like the 1960s, witnessing the redrawing of the map of West Africa, and the difference is not purely political. This became more actual when Burkina Faso made a sudden turnabout with the overthrow of Thomas Sankara, and then with the Liberian crisis. New political alliances with Nigeria have been made possible by Nigeria announcing a possible Libyan-backed West African revolution. With fear created in the minds of paranoid leaders, it was easy for Nigeria to gain friends with each crisis.

Achieving such great influence in the whole region, the Nigerian military government is not sure that a civil government would be able to continue the pace. Moreover, Abiola, the winner of the recent election, is talking of Pan-Africanism (in his own way), which could mean a change of position as far as the Liberian and Sierra Leonean crises are concerned. It would be a total defeat for the military if Abiola should come to power and do otherwise!

One thing is certain, if Nigeria should explode, we will witness a more serious situation than we are presently witnessing in Bosnia. The chances of that are so great that it is developing into a nightmare for many of us. It would be a crisis that would likely spread over the whole region, and a whole generation will have to face the most barbaric situation in our lives. With poor Gambia now the center for West African refugees, what can we expect?

—Ba Karang

Void in E. Europe

(continued from page 5)

parties under the banner of nationalism, like in Slovakia, etc. This trash is being mostly presented—especially to the younger generation which has no memories of the pre-Communist regimes—as an important part of the "rule of democracy."

Kosik is right when he points out, "If we investigate the history of central Europe since 1938 to the present...we find the following: this short historical period exuberates in displacements and transfers of property, in alternating different ways of expropriation and appropriation. At first it was the Jewish property that was confiscated [by the Nazis], afterwards it was the property of the [quilings, traitors, transferred Germans, but also of the capitalists, landowners, the aristocracy, the church, the farmers, the commercial classes, and the artisans that was confiscated [by the Communists] and passed into the hands of the state, which became the monopoly owner not only of things but also of the human inventory and thus disposed with this ownership...at its will and discretion. This confiscated property is now being again redistributed and goes back to the aristocracy, the churches, former owners, or their successors."

With this description Kosik has in mind changes going on especially in the Czech Republic. However, even if differing in dimension and depth, basically they are the same or very similar all over Eastern Europe. Yet in spite of these revolutionary reversals one basic condition did not change: working women and men keep selling their labor to those owning or managing the means of production, be they new or old.

While nobody is defending the idea of state property—called "people's property" under the Communist regime—the most daring leftists came forward after 1989 only with the idea of participation of the employees in the ownership of some corporations where they work. There is no case of any of those ideas being realized.

This explains the necessity and need for introducing a new body of ideas, for the idea of freedom itself. At the same time it also explains the difficulty this process of introduction encounters. Those of you who wish to draw comparisons with the American scene will comprehend.

Post-Plenum Bulletin #1

Reports to the 1993 Plenum of News and Letters Committees

Send \$1.50 (plus \$1 for postage) to News & Letters, 59 E. Van Buren, #707, Chicago, IL 60605.

Latin American liberation thought

Cultural Identity and Social Liberation in Latin American Thought by Ofelia Schutte. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993, 313 pp.

Latin America is a deeply changed world from the period of the liberation struggles of the 1970s and early 1980s. These changes are not alone in day-to-day reality, but impinge on Latin America's ideological terrain. The collapse of Communism, while affecting Cuba directly, has profoundly impacted the Latin American Left. At the same time, neo-liberal economics have gained ascendancy among the rulers of most Latin American nations.

Under these circumstances, Ofelia Schutte's *Cultural Identity and Social Liberation in Latin American Thought*, which brings to the fore the long and rich discussion on cultural identity and social liberation in Latin America is a breath of fresh air.

We learn of the great Peruvian Marxist of the 1920s, José Carlos Mariátegui, who sought to re-create Marxism for a Peruvian reality in which the Indian is conceived as revolutionary subject. There is the juncture where philosophy and the search for cultural identity meet in the work of Mexican philosophers Samuel Ramos and Leopoldo Zea and Peruvian thinker Salazar Bondy the philosophic historicism of Zea and Argentine philosopher Arturo Roig; the Christian-Marxian dialogue examined in the works of Brazilian Paulo Freire and Peruvian liberation theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez.

Argentina's 'new order'

New York, N.Y.—Argentina's President, Carlos Menem, in his persistent delirium calls Argentina part of the "first world." We arrived in a country where there is 10% unemployment and 8% underemployment; a country where 44% of its people live under the "line of poverty," i.e., cannot satisfy their basic needs; and where the state does not have a single policy directed toward a social issue. In one year the "growing" economy generated 342,000 more unemployed workers.

Among the horrors of the "new economic order" (free market) is the new project of "labor reform" presented in August to the Chamber of Representatives. The project contains an increase in working hours, up to 12 hours a day without overtime pay, according to the "needs" of the business cycle of the company.

Companies also can postpone holidays for 30 days; reduce vacation days; hire under temporary contracts for up to three years without indemnification after the worker is fired and without pension contributions. Because of pressures from the Argentinian Industrial Union (a union of corporate heads), there are no more limits for overtime work ("to reduce labor costs").

REDUCING REGULATION

The financial minister said that companies are not fulfilling their obligations to the state. He calculated three million workers whose companies are not paying their social security and pensions—in other words, three million illegal workers. He proposes to reduce regulatory obligations on the companies so all the workers become "legal." He calls this the labor convertibility law.

We saw a train approaching the station, full of people, workers, squeezed on the roof, in the doors, windows. It was getting dark and the polluted air was floating near the surface—an image of the so-called Third World.

However, today Argentina (like Chile) is considered a model of economic growth and development by the "first world" media and intellectuals. Thousands of Bolivian, Paraguayan, Peruvian and Brazilian workers arrive without jobs and are received with an increasing racism fed by politicians and union "leaders."

A fascist military officer, now converted into a politician, is getting strong in the poorest communities. Using the typical populist and chauvinist discourse, and together with the most reactionary part of the Catholic Church (the Opus Dei), he and his party/mob are harassing community-based organizations like the one we visited in one of the Buenos Aires suburbs.

In a district with one million inhabitants, there are only 49 beds for after giving birth. In this huge shantytown, AIDS is not a priority despite its presence. Malnutrition is much more of a priority; its consequences are many. Poxiran (glue) and alcohol are being used among the youth as an escape from their alienation.

WOMEN SELF-ORGANIZE

Domestic violence is becoming the daily reality for children and women. Women's organizations, with few material resources but with all their humanity, struggle against this system, despite being constantly harassed.

The Left has suffered retrogression since the beginning of the current government to the point of not having either new ideas or any organizational plan to work along with the masses. Close to the elections, their only purpose is to "criticize" the current government in order to get more votes. Power is their irresponsible "deal."

Just before we returned to the U.S., President Menem conferred the highest decoration upon Nicholas Brady, former secretary of the U.S. Treasury, for his "good will" in creating a plan for the reduction of the external debt of the country. Now the Argentinian people can pay the debt with better rates and for more years! Pinochet of Chile was decorated last year with the same medal.

The rulers want to erase our history, our memory, but workers, community-based organizations, students, committed intellectuals and the Mothers of the Disappeared (Los Madres de Plaza de Mayo), with their admirable human work, are still crying. They are still singing and their voices won't stop!

—Marina Storni and Carlos Varela

Argentina's "philosophy of liberation" of the 1970s is critically examined and finally Schutte takes up Latin American feminist theory.

While she catches the uniqueness of Mariátegui's "socialist anthropology" in his placing the Indian at the center of his concept of Peruvian socialism, Schutte's examination of Mariátegui's Marxism would have been enriched had she explored Marx's *Ethnological Notebooks* on non-capitalist societies, especially his writings on the Russian peasant commune, the mir.*

RELATIONSHIP TO MASSES, EUROPE

Schutte's critical presentation of Leopoldo Zea's analysis of Mexican cultural identity and his writing on a philosophy of history based on the idea of the search for freedom asks two particularly important questions: 1) Does Zea's philosophical historicism lead to centralizing "the interpretation(s) of the meaning of history in the hands of a small group of intellectuals and politicians" far removed from the masses? 2) "Despite his efforts to mediate the effect of the conquest in Latin American history, [isn't] the notion of reason prevailing in his work a product of European culture?"

The relationship of European to non-European is developed further with Salazar Bondy's "dependency theory," which he wishes to extend to philosophy. According to Bondy, a Latin American philosophy has not developed because imperialism has never allowed it. This conclusion, however, is at odds with Zea's notion of philosophy as the search for freedom in history.



A group of indigenous women, northern Oaxaca, Mexico.

While Schutte's critique of Zea suggests that such a philosophic search still does not presuppose that the "wretched of the earth" have the power to actually change the world, Bondy's position ends up in a fatalism, a dependency in thought, that cedes all power to the Other, the imperialist power, and not to a self-developing subject of revolution and serious intellectuals who want to align themselves with the Latin American masses.

With the Argentinian Roig, Schutte presents another view of subjectivity: "Roig transforms the notion of the subject (either in its singular form, 'I' or in its abstract form, 'Spirit') to a 'We,' a plural, culturally rooted subject whose reflexive forms as a 'for itself' would therefore be a 'for us.'"

For Roig the Latin American subject gives a different understanding of the Hegelian dialectic. Instead of totalization as center, Roig wants to give priority to the particular, which would create and re-create totalities for the outside, the Other.

EMPHASIS ON 'OTHER'

This emphasis on alterity, the Other, among Latin American thinkers derives from their commentary on the master-slave dialectic in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind*, where the bondsman and the lord regard one another as the "other." For intellectuals such as Zea and Roig, there is a parallel between Hegel's discussion of the master-slave relationship and the position of Latin America vis-a-vis Europe and the U.S. Despite their appropriation of the master-slave dialectic, Latin American philosophers shy away from continuing with Hegel's dialectic into his Absolutes, which many view as a form of totalization which leaves no room for alterity, the marginalized of the underdeveloped world.

What needs further exploration is whether this reading of Hegel's Absolutes as totalization, as a swallowing up of history, particularly of the marginalized, captures where his Absolutes lead, or whether there can be the re-creation of Hegel's Absolutes as New Beginnings. I realize that such a view of Hegel's Absolutes can speak to today's Latin American reality only in a dialectic in which particularity, individuality and universality inter-mediate. Such a dialectic, in my view, is articulated in Raya Dunayevskaya's *Philosophy and Revolution*.**

Schutte's work is a real contribution which deserves to be taken up and to become part of an ongoing philosophic dialogue between social thinkers and activists in Latin America and the U.S.

—Eugene Walker

* I explored this relationship in a 1984 thesis, "José Carlos Mariátegui and Karl Marx: Paths to Revolution in the Third World."

** See Raya Dunayevskaya's "Absolute Negativity as New Beginning: The Ceaseless Movement of Ideas and of History" in *Philosophy and Revolution* for a full discussion of Hegel's Absolutes as New Beginning.

Immigrants as scapegoats

Pomona, Cal.—I'm really pissed about all the immigrant bashing that's been happening here in California lately, even from our liberal, feminist Senators, Boxer and Feinstein. Those two lately want to prove how strong they are in doing something to "stop illegal immigration."

The immigrants are the scapegoats for all the economic problems. The Immigration and Naturalization Service has been doing a lot of raids here in Pomona at car washes, which is where a lot of poor Mexicans work. They've been taking in everyone who "fits the profile." They even took in the Mexican-American mayor of Pomona, who was driving a pick-up truck and stopped at a car wash when a raid was on! The ones who can't show papers—they just deport them right away, no matter if they have families here, children, anything.

The immigrants that come here, whether legal or illegal, contribute so much. The immigrants from Mexico and Central America work at jobs that other people won't take. The ones from El Salvador, Guatemala—they want to contribute! After all the U.S. government did to their countries, supporting dictatorships that killed people at random, just because you said something the rulers didn't like—now the U.S. wants to get them again.

I work cleaning people's homes, and I listen to a lot of talk radio while I'm doing my job. Immigrant bashing is one of the most popular things. One very wealthy Filipino doctor that I work for is a fan of that pig Rush Limbaugh, and he's been trying to convert me.

Tammy Bruce, who is the head of the Los Angeles chapter of the National Organization for Women, is sometimes on the radio and, compared to the others, she is a breath of fresh air. But she said one thing the other day, that the city should hire more police, and I had to say to myself: "What the hell is she talking about?"

Someone else who is on the air is former Los Angeles police chief Daryl Gates. I never listen to him. To him everyone is an illegal alien. His solution to everything is to take everybody out and shoot 'em.

—Chicana grandmother/worker

Student La Raza protests

Bay Area, Cal.—On the San Francisco State campus we had two days of protests, Sept. 15 and 16, against all the immigrant bashing going on. On the 16th, Mexican Independence Day, after our rally at the campus we marched to the Civic Center with 40 students and met up with a rally organized by the Chicano Civil Rights Coalition. By that time we numbered about 700. We went on to the Mission District to hold another rally.

Over in the East Bay, at UC Berkeley, they also had a successful protest the same day which drew 1,000 to Sproul Plaza. Students from five different high schools in Berkeley and Oakland were there, plus activists from some of the community colleges.

I think both sides of the Bay were speaking about the same thing—letting the powers-that-be know what we think about their immigrant bashing. But at Berkeley they're also trying to win department status for Chicano Studies, whereas here at State we already have our La Raza Studies as a legitimate department. Many students there are saying that they're going to do what was done at UCLA back in May to force the administration to listen to them. That revolt, where they took over a building, tore it up, got thrown in jail and had daily protests that included a hunger strike, sticks in the minds of many students.

—Participant

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PLO-Israeli agreement driven by mass discontent

(continued from page 1)

thuggish Saddam Hussein of Iraq to the feudal oil kings and sheiks, were not be criticized or undermined so long as they continued to "confront" Israel. This type of politics had strangled the Lebanese near-revolution of the mid-1970s, when an Arab power, Syria, was allowed by the PLO to come in and crush the Lebanese Left. In a non-Arab country, Iran, the Islamic fundamentalist usurpers of the historic 1979 Revolution were also greatly aided by the ideology of Israel as enemy number one, even if they later made secret deals with the Israeli military.¹

GRAVE CONTRADICTIONS IN THE PEACE AGREEMENT

One can point to emancipatory possibilities flowing out of the new situation created by the peace negotiations, if the Arab and Jewish masses take history into their own hands. However, the fact should not be underestimated that conservative forces—whether the U.S., European, and Japanese governments, as well as those of the reactionary oil kingdoms of the Persian Gulf—are cheering the agreement, while even some parts of the Israeli Right are holding back a bit in their opposition. This support for the agreement from forces which have always undermined or opposed Palestinian self-determination helps to point up its deep contradictions.

The Israeli leadership may harbor the hope that, having "given" the Palestinians some sliver of territory, they can stop there and move next to agreements with Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. Some are already saying that an end to the Arab economic boycott would mean the possibility of a financial bonanza to Israel as a trade and communications center for the whole Middle East.

These serious contradictions have led many on the Left to view the agreement as a total sham and a sellout of the Palestinian people. But, while the establishment media, which is praising the agreement to the skies, is obviously playing its familiar ideological role, the critique of the agreement by the international Left, which for years denied even Israel's right to exist, needs also to be questioned.

For example, Alexander Cockburn writes with familiar cynicism in *The Nation* (10/4/93) that under the agreement "Palestinians get to manage the world's largest prison, the Gaza strip, plus one cow town." If in fact that is where the agreement stops, with the Israelis digging in their heels and playing on technicalities as they have done so many times before, then the Palestinians will indeed be relegated to little more than bantustan status, while continuing to serve as a pool of cheap labor for the Israeli economy. As a leftist Palestinian refugee in Lebanon told *Le Monde* (8/29/93) on the eve of the agreement: "We haven't lost 50,000 martyrs for Gaza and Jericho." As will be discussed below, however, while these critiques from the Left address real issues, they ignore the subjective factor, the power of the masses, both Arab and Jewish, to shape their own future, if they can build on the new openings which have been created.

A second problem facing the Palestinian masses is the undemocratic policies of Arafat and the top PLO leaders. Already in August, the PLO's own designated negotiators from inside the territories and Jerusalem had asked to resign, because of Arafat's high-handedness and secrecy. During the same weeks the Palestinian writer Mahmoud Darwish, considered to be one of the world's greatest living Arab poets, resigned from Arafat's PLO Executive Committee. He apparently did so because of criticisms of Arafat's recourse to secret negotiations and of the mismanagement of PLO funds at a point when the organization's financial crisis has meant cutting off the salaries and stipends of tens of thousands of medical workers, families of martyrs, students, and others up to now dependent on the PLO for their very survival.

Rashid Khalidi, a Palestinian intellectual and prominent PLO member, warned publicly of the possibility that, like previous Arab nationalist regimes, a PLO-led government would become "autocratic, partisan and undemocratic" in a situation where "corruption is rampant" (*The New York Times*, 9/14/93).

The PLO's political program is hardly radical, and does not even mention measures such as workers' control of industry. However, it needs to be stressed that the PLO leadership and the fundamentalists are not the only forces inside the Palestinian movement. New tendencies have been unleashed by the *Intifada*, and still newer ones may appear if the Israeli occupation forces pull back even partially, allowing a more open debate inside the territories.

A third problem is the very different agendas of the



Palestinian women in Israeli-occupied Gaza

Palestinian masses and their new-found "allies" in Washington and their "returned" supporters from among the Arab oil kingdoms. These governments want to defuse the crisis-ridden Middle East, whether from Islamic fundamentalist threats or from those coming from genuinely liberatory mass movements, so the oil can continue to flow freely.

The peace negotiations are taking place in a period when the Western powers, including the U.S., are exhausted and in no shape financially or politically to launch a massive intervention in the Middle East. They are still reeling from the cost of the 1990-91 Gulf War. Israel is also suffering from a deep economic crisis, and its six-month-old policy of preventing Arab laborers from Gaza from crossing into Israel to work has hurt the Israeli economy even as it has devastated what was already a desperate economic situation in Gaza.

The truth revealed in the years since the fall of Communism is that the Western powers are also mired in the deepest economic crisis since World War II. This does not mean that they cannot get some money into a small area like the Gaza strip, whose population is only 800,000, and use that money to create some economic activity and to influence events, but even their power is limited.

NEW EMANCIPATORY FORCES

The established rulers face not only their own internal limits, but also the challenge posed by the new forces unleashed ever since the beginning of the *Intifada* uprising in 1987. The *Intifada* showed for the first time that there was a mass, indigenous Palestinian movement inside the territories, one which no amount of Israeli repression could stop. The prospect of Israeli draftees spending years and years to come in occupation duty severely challenged Israel's self-image as a democracy and led to deep questions of where the country was heading.

The *Intifada* activists, especially at the beginning, stayed away from terrorism. During the period of the *Intifada*, indigenous Palestinian groups inside the territories reached out to the Israeli peace movement more than Arabs had ever done before. The new links between the *Intifada* and Israeli groups such as Peace Now point toward different, more comradely relations between Arabs and Jews. Serious obstacles exist even here, however. One often cited problem is the distrust left over from the uncritical Palestinian support of Saddam Hussein during the 1991 Gulf War, but what is seldom mentioned is the equally problematic stance of Peace Now during that same war, when it forgot about being a peace movement and instead supported the U.S. war effort.

The new spirit born from the period of the *Intifada*, not pressure from Washington, compelled the PLO leadership to recognize Israel's right to exist and to renounce terrorism in 1988. The conservative Likud government turned a deaf ear to these openings, something which fueled the growth of Hamas, Islamic Holy War, and other fundamentalist groups among the Palestinian youth. But the mass hunger for peace persisted, leading to the landslide election defeat of the Israeli Right in 1992.

Rabin and the Labor Party are hardly peace doves, but in 1992 their platform called clearly for serious negotiations, while that of Likud called for total stonewalling and continued construction of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. Thus, it was not only U.S. pressure, but, more importantly, the new spirit exemplified by the *Intifada* and Peace Now that pressured Rabin and

Arafat finally to begin serious negotiations in 1993.

Other world developments have also brought the Arab and Jewish masses closer in their thinking. It has not gone unnoticed that, with the rise of racism in Europe, both Muslims and Jews have come under attack, especially in Germany and France, leading sometimes to joint anti-racist efforts by Arab and Jewish youth such as SOS Racisme in France. More recently, the Serbian-induced genocide in Bosnia, with Muslim civilians as the chief victims, has sparked outrage in the Muslim world, while at the same time evoking special sympathy among Jews, who refuse to stand by and watch a second Holocaust take shape in Europe.

The biggest challenge facing the Palestinian and Israeli masses in their quest for peace may come from religious fundamentalism—whether among the right-wing Zionists of the 120,000-strong settler community on the West Bank or from the Islamic fundamentalist movements among the Palestinian Arabs.

Today the majority of the Palestinian and Israeli people seem to be supporting the peace agreements, but only as a very tentative first step toward a more comprehensive solution. It is they who may be able to keep the pressure on their leaders, so that a real opening can appear in Middle East politics. 1993 is sure to be a watershed year, the first time since the 1940s when Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs are in a genuine dialogue around the issue of how to co-exist on a small piece of land which they both claim. Looking to the future, the bourgeois commentators say "time will tell," as if time is an abstract force. Marx, pointing to the creativity of the masses, wrote instead: "Time is the room of human development."²

—Sept. 26, 1993

Time for free medical!

New York, N.Y.—A Washington reporter, after hearing Clinton's so-called impassioned speech on medical care, observed that the plan was structured to get what was wanted after the politicians hacked away at it. He said it would be "good" if they got 20% of what they asked for. If this proposed, very basic, plan got through Congress intact, will working and poor parents be able to pay the 20% designated as their share of medical fees?

At the present time a working and middle-class parent with a comparable medical plan can be hard pressed to care for their family. A parent compelled to take all the children in her family to the doctor, say, when strep hits, can easily expect to lay out \$300 or more for such a visit and simple tests, to say nothing of the cost of the medicine needed.

Mr. Clinton may think himself a knight in shining armor but what does "everyone must pay their share" mean as the real income of U.S. workers declines, when jobs disappear, when a \$5 an hour wage is becoming the norm, when unemployment grows, when the condition of homelessness is not considered a "disaster," and when the high cost of medical care is not addressed, i.e., the high cost of doctor fees, of drugs, of tests? In the last decade of the 20th century it is high time that we got free universal medical and dental coverage!

—Angela Terrano

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Youth

Facing the visage of Hitler

by Maya Jhansi

The collapse of so-called Communism was greeted by capitalist ideologues as the dawning of a new era of free-market capitalism. A capitalist utopia is supposed to spread democracy and good will around the world. Bosnia-Herzegovina has instead revealed another reality—that of brutal genocide raging unfettered in the center of Europe. The world rulers cannot hide the stark reality that the essence of “the new world order” is not “peaceful co-existence” but the genocidal resurrection of the visage of Hitler. In the face of this changed world, what we must confront is the sobering reality that while a holocaust unfolds in Bosnia-Herzegovina, there has been virtually no organized youth opposition to it here in the U.S.

Ironically, the barbarity of Hitlerite nationalism itself knows no national boundaries. It rears its ugly head all over the world: in India with the rise of Hindu fundamentalism, in Germany where neo-Nazis have perpetrated over 2,000 acts of racist violence, in South Africa where de Klerk's murderous rule has yet to quench its thirst for blood, in Brazil where out of some seven million street children, 2,000 have been murdered by death squads in an effort to “clean up the streets,” and of course right here in the U.S. where hate crimes have become the fastest growing form of violence. Klanwatch reports 25 racially motivated murders in the past three years. Violence against gays and lesbians has doubled in the last five years, and rape has gone up four times the national crime rate in the past ten years.

Undoubtedly, the global rise in narrow nationalism, racism, and xenophobia is related to the decrepit state of the economy worldwide. In the U.S., youth unemployment stands at 30% overall and 50% for Black youth. More and more college graduates are ending up working at McDonald's. Youth do not have a future in this society, and a society that has no room for its youth is a non-viable society. As Josephine Neives, the commissioner of the Department of Employment in New York City put it: “At some point you have to tell [the youth] the jobs are not there, and it could lead to a volatile situation.” The Los Angeles rebellion proved the truth of that statement a year ago, and it ain't over yet.

Everyone is hip to the fact that Clinton's not going to do a damn thing about the conditions of life and labor, health care and women's liberation on his own. The so-called winds of change that everyone blabbered about at the Democratic Convention last year were nothing more than hot air. Now the only winds blowing are the ones driving the Haitians and Chinese away from U.S. shores.

Perhaps no one knows better than youth that the fight is in the streets, not in the White House. Witness the tremendous demonstration in Chicago of 5,000 Black youth to protest the closing of health care clinics in the Black community this past May, or the student rebellion last spring at UCLA to save Chicano Studies. Though it's true that some youth are being pulled to retrogressive ideologies, in general youth all over the world are fighting for multicultural and multi-ethnic societies from Bosnia to Germany to India to right here in the U.S.

Witness also the resurgence of the Women's Libera-

tion Movement, where a whole new generation of women is asking what it means to be a woman in this society. The gay and lesbian liberation movement is experiencing a resurgence as well. Youth around the world are fighting back in many creative ways.

And yet...1993 is not the late 1960s. Whereas rebellion and social movements characterized that period our particular moment is captured in a single word: retrogression. I can only think of George Bush's sneering face as he boasted about solving the “Vietnam Syndrome” during the Gulf war two years ago. The anti-war movement that erupted to stop the war on Iraq collapsed in a matter of weeks. Today the quiescence on Bosnia leads me to ask—are we proving George Bush right?

The bourgeoisie is busy marketing our generation as the lost generation—spoiled, lazy, deadbeat, youth who whine about having no future. The truth of the matter is that the reality we are facing is worse than any generation before us has faced. Look at the fact that when the Paris rebellion erupted in 1968, there were 300,000 unemployed in France. Today there are over three million. Youth know the intensity of the problems of the world, and we know that opposition to those problems must be deeper than that posed by any previous generation.

Isn't it time now to take back our heads, reorganize our thoughts and pose that challenge—an absolute challenge to this decrepit society? After all, just as it's true that our problems are deeper, and our opposition deeper, so the stakes today are higher for we are staring in the face of Hitlerite barbarism itself. Because the ideas at stake have such life and death ramifications, it is an absolute imperative that we take history into our own hands and our own heads to confront with confidence the most pressing question of our day: *What is going to be our future?*

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The contradictory voices of hip hop



Reaction and revolution. Rap is a lyrical battle waged with rhythm and rhyme in which can be seen a small part of the struggle within the consciousness of Black youth.

Many different aspects of rap music, or hip-hop as its creators prefer to call it, have been written about: the music's African echoes expressed in call and response and rhythm, the syncopated blending of 1960s and 1970s Rhythm and Blues with updated cadences, and the adroit manipulation of the latest sound technologies.

But hip-hop also displays another dimension; it is a barometer of sorts, a measure of the ideas and levels of consciousness of today's Black youth—Black nationalism, misogyny, revolution, sex and violence, history, and escapism—they're all there. By listening, a lot can be learned about where we, as revolutionaries, are and how far we have to go.

One of the dominant themes of hip-hop is Black nationalism. It is heard from a variety of artists, from the Dis Masters' take off of James Brown's “Say It Loud, I'm Black And I'm Proud,” to Public Enemy with their Nation of Islam influenced militancy. The narrow nationalist Nation of Islam philosophy is featured prominently with its espousal of Black capitalism. Herein lies

'Bad cop, no doughnut!'

Chicago, Ill.—On Sept. 11, Queer Nation held its annual anti-violence march to protest street attacks on gays, lesbians and bisexuals and police harassment and brutality. This march of at least 200 also protested violence against women and people of color. With women from WAC (Women's Action Coalition) and its awesome drum corps, women made up half the march. What made this march stand out more than any previous year was the focus on liberation as opposed to an emphasis solely on equal protection under the law.

Several speakers talked about the upcoming 25th anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion (which initiated the Gay Liberation Movement after cops raided a gay bar). One said that the gays inside the bar were not—and today are not—“indecent.” Rather, it's the cops who are indecent for not letting people be themselves. He proclaimed if the cops raid the bars again, “we're gonna riot again,” and the crowd yelled, “No justice, no peace!” and chanted at the cops, “Bad cop! No doughnut!”

Another speaker talked about fighting for the freedom to be queer “by any means necessary.” The bisexual contingent demanded to be recognized as integral to the struggle for gay and lesbian liberation, saying “we are your struggle.”

Other chants expressed rage at not having equal protection under the law, yet recognized the need to go beyond electoral politics: “Clinton, you liar, we'll set your ass on fire!” and “We're queer, we're here, we're walking with no fear!”

One gay participant was glad to see many people of color at the march, but thought that the reason that dimension was still lacking was because of the racism within the gay and lesbian movement and the homophobia within the Black movement. He felt that these movements need a genuine dialogue on what the Women of All Red Nations speaker raised about the contradictory sexism, racism and homophobia within the social justice movements.

The march was lively and its broad focus on freedom was inspirational—and moved beyond the singular emphasis on the ban of gays in the military which has dominated recent events.

—Sonia Bergonzi

Chicago Schools Protest

(continued from page 1)

As we took over the street the band changed its chant to: “Aw shucks! We got traffic backed up!” One female student explained, “We got our marching band here because we want to save our performing arts. We go to that school for drama and music and they're cutting it. So we wouldn't mind going to jail for this.”

TEACHERS FACE CUTBACKS

All across the city classes have already been closed and teaching positions eliminated. Curie alone has lost 31 teaching positions and has closed down advanced placement and college prep classes. In all the high schools, classes that require hands-on experience like science and industrial arts, which until now would meet for two 40-minute periods so the students could have lab time, now only meet for one 50-minute period. So whatever the result of the teachers' struggle against concessions, these changes are already in effect and the quality of education has been drastically reduced.

A young Black woman who helped found the organization Students Alliance For Education said, “It may seem like the teachers are the bad guys, but we know different.” Her friend, a young white woman added, “If we were an all-white school they would find the money to fund us.”

The next day the teachers, who have been working without a contract, held a union rally in Daley Plaza to protest the massive givebacks the School Board is trying to force on them. Several hundred teachers showed up. This time the entire Curie marching band showed up in full uniform and with a pompon squad. Over a hundred more students from different schools spontaneously formed a student contingent and punctuated the band performance with chants of “Students unite and fight!”

On Thursday, Sept. 23, the School Board had neither reached an agreement with the teachers nor balanced the budget, but the schools remained open on Friday because the judge agreed to extend his temporary restraining order for ten more days.

This latest failure of Mayor Daley to broker an agreement brought out the largest demonstration of all on Friday, when 5,600 demonstrators, mostly Black youth from the South Side, ringed City Hall.

Homeless youth protest Mayor's crackdown

San Francisco, Cal.—The problems started, according to homeless youth that live in the Civic Center, last winter when police swooped down on people in line at a Food Not Bombs table. Over 20 youth were arrested for suspicion of being runaways. For months it seemed like things were calming down. But in late summer, Mayor Frank Jordan started a crackdown throughout the Tenderloin and Civic Center areas on homeless people—primarily youth.

His reason was simple: money. San Francisco has been trying to attract tourists for years and this crackdown, according to Mayor Jordan, is just one more way to “clean up the streets” and make the city more appealing to tourists. It's truly ironic that during years of budget cuts, the mayor would spend so much money on tourism, but doesn't care about the people that have to live here. Mayor Jordan has hired a former Parks and Recreation director to head a section of this beautification project.

During the past couple of months many members of Food Not Bombs have been arrested while distributing

one of rap's many contradictions.

Within the same group, within the same song even, can be heard calls for revolution, i.e., the destruction of capitalism, invoking the memories of Frantz Fanon, the Black Panther Party, and Malcolm X. Yet the same artist will champion the cause of Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam.

On one side is the blatant, derisively expressed hatred of women, both explicit and implied, that is contained in many rappers' songs. The flip side to this can be heard in the lyrics of female rappers like Queen Latifah, MC Lyte, and Salt 'N Peppa. Much has been written about the obvious sexism contained in hip-hop music. It's easy for those who rarely listen to turn the radio dial and catch an ear full of “bitches,” “ho's,” and “skeezers.” But what goes less noticed is the challenge to this within the hip-hop community itself.

As hip-hop has evolved, three images of women have emerged. The one most offensive, which we'll call hardcore rap, has been the references to women as “bitches,” “ho's,” and “skeezers.” It can be heard in rappers' songs about brutalizing women. The second theme comes from the Black nationalist train of thought. It is a reaction to the put downs of women in hardcore. I call it the “my black queen”—on-the-pedestal-defense. The final theme comes from the young female rappers and a small handful of male rappers and is one with more revolutionary content. In-it, young women rappers talk about respecting women as equals, women controlling their own bodies, and women's independence.

Raya Dunayevskaya refers to Black masses as vanguard. Well rap music originated with the Black masses. It was created by and continues to be an art form primarily of Black youth. Now due to its diffusion within U.S. culture, most hip-hop music, about 70%, is bought not by Black youth but by white suburban teenagers. You have a music that's listened to by both the Black masses and white youth, two revolutionary categories in U.S. society. For better or worse, the music is a barometer of today's youth. It is a reflection of some of their predominant beliefs.

—Robert Delaney

free food. They are being charged with a two-year-old law which prohibits distribution of food on city property without a permit. This law has never before been enforced. Food Not Bombs supporters came from as far away as Sacramento to fill in for those in jail. Police declared they won't stop until the “eyesore” of homeless youth and families that live in the plaza is removed.

On Sept. 15, over 200 Food Not Bombs members, supporters, homeless activists and youth demonstrated against Mayor Jordan's continued oppression of Tenderloin residents and police harassment of the homeless and their service providers. Chanting “What do we want? Freedom! When do we want it? Now!” protesters surrounded the plaza and the steps of city hall.

One street youth said, “It's obvious to us that live in the squats, cops are only doing this to keep us down because they are afraid of the power of us people. The cops don't care what happens to us because we are poor, we're women, and we aren't white.”

—Lynn

Our Life and Times

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

With Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic under intense pressure from Europe, the U.S., and UN negotiators to accept a partition plan dividing Bosnia into three separate republics, the Bosnian parliament voted overwhelmingly on Sept. 29 to reject partition. The agreement would have granted Serbs 52% of Bosnian territory and Croats 18%. The Muslims would be left with only 30%.

Under terms of the plan, each republic could leave the union in two years, a proviso which guarantees that Serbia and Croatia will be allowed to annex the lands they conquered by military aggression, and that "ethnic cleansing" won't end with this agreement but increase. Izetbegovic had referred to partition as "worse than war. I feel like a thirsty man someone is sending into the desert to look for water."

The pressure on Bosnian leaders to accept partition increased in early September when Izetbegovic met with U.S. President Clinton, who has backed away from talk of committing U.S.-NATO troops to enforcement of any agreement which is ultimately signed. John Mills, aide to European Community negotiator Lord Owen, was cynically blunt: "Muslims have the choice of accepting this plan or dying."

The Serbian government is supporting the plan, not only because it de facto legitimizes Serbia's genocidal policy of "ethnic cleansing" and its land grab of half of Bosnia for "Greater Serbia." Serbian rulers also want to have lifted international economic sanctions which have

Brutal war in Tajikistan

Whole ethnic groups face slaughter in a brutal war by the Russian-backed ex-Communist regime in Tajikistan. Based on a single ethnic group, the Kouliabis, the present government leaders shot their way back into power in 1992, and proceeded to hunt down all opposition, plus members of other ethnic groups. Over 20,000 people have died and one million are homeless out of a population of only five million.

The Tajik resistance has been branded Islamic fundamentalist by the government, by Russia, and by the U.S., who point to the aid some factions have received from the well-financed Afghan fundamentalist leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. But the reality is more complicated.

In rebel-held Pamir, a mountainous region comprising half of the country's territory, the population is mainly Ismaili, a branch of Shiite Islam. The Pamiris speak Russian and Tajik (modern Persian), but also one of six dialects of old Persian, dialects which are considered by linguists to be the closest living link to the original texts of Zoroastrianism, composed over 2,500 years ago.

Journalist Sophie Shihab visited Pamir and wrote recently in *Le Monde*: "Not only are the women never veiled, but they participate equally in social life. The Pamiris have neither mosques nor mullahs: just houses of prayer...A singularity which separates them from the Sunni Muslims of the rest of the country, and which makes them very resistant to Islamism." Hekmatyar has made no progress in Pamir, which remains opposed both to fundamentalism and to the Russian-backed government.

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

produced inflation, food scarcities, and other hardships. Lifting of sanctions would also provide Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic some breathing room before starting the next military campaign.

In an ominous move, Milosevic recently carried out a mass purge of the Yugoslav army, getting rid of 40 senior officers and leaving Zvonko Perisic, a young general

and extreme Serbian nationalist, in command. Perisic was a key military figure in the war against Croatia and the Serbian onslaught in Bosnia. Equally ominous, Milosevic has built up a force to control domestic social unrest by nearly doubling the Serbian police which now number around 80,000.

There is a deep sense of betrayal on the part of Bosnians—Muslims, Serbs, Croats and Jews who reject partition and have not stopped struggling for a multi-ethnic society—that Europe and the UN are demanding they accept an agreement signed by men whom the UN had earlier condemned as "war criminals." While state rulers can be relied on to betray, one of the most bitter residues of the Bosnian struggle has been the total abdication of left intellectuals to speak out on Bosnia.

The American writer, Susan Sontag, who went to Sarajevo twice this summer in acts of solidarity, made an important historic contrast: "Sarajevo is the Spanish Civil War of our time, but the difference in response is amazing...there is an underlying reason that is deeper and more disturbing [than danger keeping intellectuals away], and it is the difference between 1937 and 1993. I think there has been a failure of conscience on the part of writers and intellectuals in the Western world."

Protest British racism

During the summer, police in London killed a 40-year-old Black woman immigrant from Jamaica, Joy Gardner, the mother of a 5-year-old boy. When three police arrived at her home to deport her for overstaying her visa, Joy Gardner reportedly tried to resist. By their own admission, the police put her in handcuffs and also in a leather straightjacket, and then proceeded to gag her.

Joy Gardner went into a coma and died four days later. The first police autopsy covered up the cause of death, but a second one, demanded by her family, revealed that she had died of suffocation. Gardner's son was born in Britain, and both her mother and sister were longtime legal residents.

More than 1,000 people from London's Black community demonstrated against police brutality. Police officials, fearing a repeat of the 1985 Tottenham riots, moved immediately to suspend the three police and ordered an investigation. Demonstrators viewed the murder of Joy Gardner as a natural outgrowth of Britain's new and restrictive immigration law, which makes it virtually impossible for families to be reunited, even if members are already legal and longtime residents.

On Sept. 18, a neo-Nazi was elected to a council seat in east London, a heavily immigrant area. He ran on a platform of deporting all non-whites from Britain.

Poland rejects leaders

Former Communist Party (CP) members, reconstituted in the Democratic Left Alliance, won parliamentary elections in Poland in September with about 20% of the vote. It has reassured the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund that it will continue "market reforms," but with a "human face." The CP-allied Peasants Party got 15%.

The ruling Democratic Union, patron of the free-wheeling capitalist expansion of misery in Poland, got only 11%. The party formed by Lech Walesa won only half that. The voter turnout was only 48%.

This seeming "return to the old" does not mean Poles want a return to Communist state-capitalism, but are rejecting the present reality which in three years has meant the growth of 1.5 million new capitalist enterprises, and 2.8 million jobless workers. As an older woman retiree living on \$67 a month put it, "I want the [Left Alliance] to win because I don't want to worry about what I'm going to eat tomorrow." Women also showed their opposition to the growing intrusion of the Catholic Church, which had sponsored and supported anti-abortion legislation. The Church's Fatherland Party, which had ruled in the coalition government, got only 7%.

China fails to buy Olympics

The Chinese government played out a carefully scripted and ultimately ill-fated bid to win the world prestige and economic plunder of the Olympic games in the year 2000. Most dramatic and cynical was the release of a handful of political prisoners, most prominently Wei Jingsheng who by September had nearly served out his entire 15-year sentence for actions during the 1978-79 Democracy Wall movement.

The manager of the Olympic bid was Chen Xitong, the former mayor of Beijing who imposed martial law in May 1989. Many hundreds who took part in that rebellion, together with other political prisoners still incarcerated from the 1978-79 period, are serving harsh sentences. Reportedly, the government plans a new series of secret trials in October for 17 people arrested last year for protest activities.

The Chinese government pledged to spend \$11 billion if chosen for the Olympics. China also grabbed world sports headlines, and rumors about performance drugs abounded, when several of its women runners shattered previous world records.

The commodification of athletes and the exploitation of sports for political purposes is hardly unique to China. Coca-Cola, which helped buy the 1996 Olympics for its home town Atlanta, quietly supported Beijing's bid, seeing it as a unique marketing opportunity.

Bosnians refuse to accept partition

Somali protest



Somalis demonstrated in Mogadishu, Sept. 19, after a woman had her legs blown off when U.S. troops bombed a building near the country's largest hospital, in what the U.S. calls a campaign to "restore order in Mogadishu." The day before, UN mortar shells wounded 34 civilians just outside that same hospital.

Massacres in Brazil

The massacre of eight street children in Rio de Janeiro this summer shocked the world. The massacre of the street children was followed by two other atrocities in Brazil: the slaughter of a yet unknown number of Yanomami Indians by gold miners in the Amazon, and the police mass murder of 21 favela residents in Rio. One Brazilian sociologist tied the deaths together, they are "the unemployed and unneeded of today and tomorrow."

Conservative estimates report that 1,000 street children are murdered annually in Brazil by the police, or with police complicity. The July killings received attention because they were executed on downtown streets, and not on the fringes of the city where street children are usually taken to be killed.

There are 20,000 children living on the streets of Rio alone, with no support in the decaying social fabric. Merchants and others who consider them vermin who drive away business have applauded the police extermination campaign.

While many Brazilians have been outraged over the bloodletting, the government has done little to rein in the police, which operate more as a paramilitary than a civilian force. As one reporter put it, "The government is administering violence, not combatting it."

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.