

NAFTA awakens U.S. labor



by Felix Martin, Labor Editor

NAFTA is called "free trade." All my life as a worker I always thought the capitalists had free trade after they had stolen the laborers' production. I can't figure out why they call it "free trade," when all it is is conservative Republicans and conservative Democrats going further south for lower wages and tearing down tariffs on the commodities shipped back to the northern markets.

I read a story about a business, Glenn Furniture factory in Huntington Beach, Cal., which closed and moved to Tijuana, Mexico to exploit the low wages. After being there for a few years, they found out that the bosses couldn't kick the Mexican workers around like they do in the U.S. The owners thought they would move back to Huntington Beach and steal two weeks' wages owed to the workers.

A LESSON FROM MEXICO

Trucks were sent to move the machinery out of the plant on Saturday while the workers were off for the weekend. When the truckers entered the plant, they had a surprise waiting for them. The Mexican workers were there, sitting on the machines. They told the truckers to get the hell out, nobody was moving these machines until they got their two weeks' pay. After a month or so of guarding the machinery but not getting their pay, the workers sold the machinery for \$250,000 and divided up the money.

There could be a lesson for U.S. workers to learn from the Mexican workers. We are forced to work for these thieves every day. In 1936 the workers sat down in General Motors' plants and took them back. Really they are stolen property anyway—laborers' dead labor. But when John L. Lewis sat down to negotiate that first contract, he gave the company back to the stockholders.

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Black World

Crises testing Africa's Left



by Lou Turner

Editor's note: This month I am turning over my column to Ba Karang, an African Marxist Humanist, whose commentary on the African Left comes at a time when on the one hand, Africa is experiencing the most violent contradictions in its post-independence history, and on the other, when the African Left is debating the fate of socialism in Africa.

Whether the present situation in Africa will result in a more democratic atmosphere in the political life of the continent is doubtful. The refusal of the generals in Nigeria to hand over power after the June elections, and General Sani Abacha's November 17 coup against the civilian puppet government of Ernest Shonekan set up by Gen. Babangida, is supporting evidence of this. The return of the generals in Burundi is further evidence.

In Zambia, President Frederick Chiluba, a former trade union leader, betrayed the most successful pro-democratic movement. In Ghana, the opportunism of the pro-democratic parties made it easy for President Rawlings to emerge as the victor of the elections.

DEMOCRACY RUN AGROUND

From one country to another, pro-democratic politicians have betrayed the masses. What will come out of the tense situation in Zaire, or Guinea-Bissau, or South Africa will not be any different.

Perhaps the most frustrating situation is the absence of the Left in this great historical movement the continent is witnessing. And where it is present, it becomes unreliable by tailing behind the rhetoric of constitutionalism. Although the Left is in charge of the leadership of these pro-democratic movements, will it guarantee a more democratic situation for the masses? Is there any proof that the Left has taken account of its past ideological standpoints?

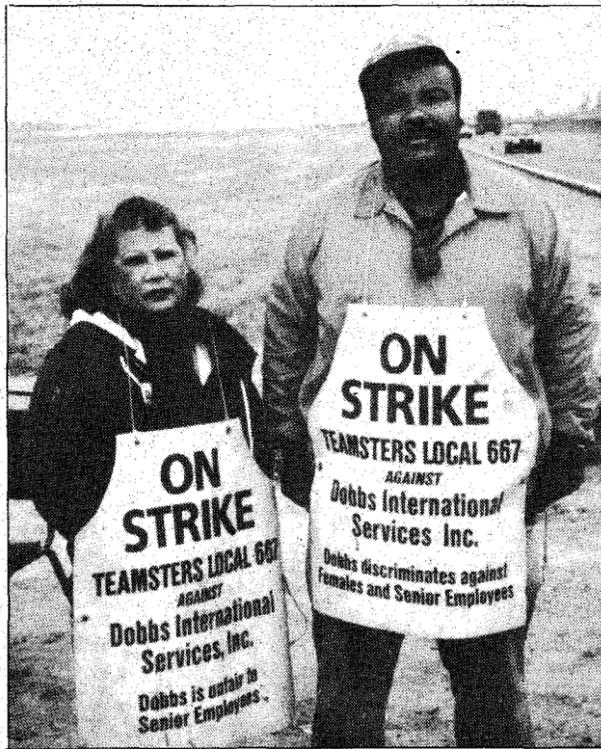
In Mozambique, the leadership is more concerned with drawing a clear line of separation from its so-called Marxist past to satisfy the IMF (International Monetary

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Struggles of labor, Blacks, women emerge in a changing South

by Michael Flug

The hidden dimensions of new, often unreported, struggles now erupting in the "changed South" of the 1990s were everywhere in evidence on a trip Lou Turner and I recently took to Mississippi and Tennessee. Nearly 30 years after the high tide of the Civil Rights Movement,



News & Letters

Workers on strike against Dobbs International at Memphis airport symbolize the growth of industry—and revolt—in the 1990s South.

swept the region, the turmoil spinning off the accelerated and highly uneven industrial and commercial development has resulted in a collision between the old reality of the South and its sharp new dualities. In discussions with workers, students and civil rights activists, we heard not only of ongoing struggles on issues of race, class and gender, but of a new thirst for liberation ideas.

DOBBS STRIKE FOR RESPECT

At a service road behind the Memphis airport, we talked with strikers from Dobbs International, a worldwide catering company that serves airlines. Members of Teamsters Local 667, 120 food service, warehouse workers, and drivers—nearly all Black—walked off the job nine months ago, after the company demanded that older women who had worked in Dobbs kitchens for 20 years or more prove that they could carry 50 pound boxes, drive trucks and load airplanes—or be permanently laid off. Dobbs sought to get rid of older workers who would draw health and pension benefits, and at the same time, bust the union in a strike.

The union was organized in 1970, in the spurt of labor activity which hit the South in the wake of the 1968 Memphis sanitation workers' strike and the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King. Soon after the 1993 strike began, the company brought in scabs to attempt to run production. But deliveries continued; Teamster officials did not ask drivers to refuse to cross the picket line. And a near-total news blackout on the strike has not been broken by any significant solidarity actions by AFL-CIO unions in the area.

Despite all the forces lined up against them, the Dobbs strikers have high spirits. They have organized themselves and maintained a picket line 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, ever since the strike began. And they say that they are not going back without a contract which protects the rights of the older workers.

Forty miles away, in rural Fayette County, Tenn.—one of the ten poorest counties in the U.S.—workers at Somerville Mills have been conducting

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Bosnian editor rejects apartheid solution

Editor's note: The following consists of excerpts of a talk given on Dec. 2 at the University of Chicago by Mr. Kemal Kurspahic, editor in chief of *Oslobodenje* (Liberation), the only independent daily newspaper now publishing in Sarajevo.

I would like to start with the so-called "peace" talks on Bosnia occurring in Geneva. I consider these talks to be blackmail in that they accept division and apartheid as the solution for Bosnia. I am sure the partition of the country will not bring peace.

A year-and-a-half ago, when all this fighting started, there were not exclusive Serbian, Croatian, or Muslim territories on Bosnian soil. We had a variety of different ethnic and religious groups sharing the same neighborhoods, towns and cities. The only way the Serbs could divide the different groups was through terror.

The mentality of division is the source of the suffering of Bosnia and its peoples. It is very sad that the international community, instead of protecting Bosnia against obvious aggression by Serbia and now Croatia, is insisting upon an apartheid formula of division for the country. They want to create separate Croatian and Serbian states within Bosnia, with a small Muslim state between the two. I believe that this will bring another wave of suffering and ethnic tension, for there are still many towns which would need to be "ethnically cleansed" in order to be called Serb or Croat.

I'm especially fearful of the future of cities like Sarajevo, which still enjoy a tradition of tolerance and multi-ethnic culture. The resistance to the siege of Sarajevo has developed an even higher sense of community and solidarity among the different ethnic groups; if it wasn't for that solidarity I believe thousands more would have died last winter. If anyone has some source of water, food, or oil, they share it with their neighbors to help them survive, regardless of their ethnicity.

As against those who talk of centuries of hatred between the different religious and ethnic groups, I would say we instead enjoyed centuries of a tradition of tolerance and living together. As evidence I would mention some of the most beautiful buildings in Sarajevo, such as the mosques, churches, and synagogues which none touched during the first and second world wars, but which have now been destroyed.

When Susan Sontag was in Sarajevo last summer, she

asked me if hatred between different ethnic groups was really always under the surface of this culture of tolerance. I told her that whatever is happening there now was imported and imposed upon the people from the outside. It was imported first by the idea of Serbian expansion through creation of a greater Serbian state. That project was not invented in Sarajevo or elsewhere, but rather in the Belgrade Academy of Sciences. Second, it was imported through the Yugoslav National Army, which was the only army on the soil of Bosnia when this so-called war broke out.

I say "so-called," because to have a war you need two armies fighting each other. Bosnia had no army when it declared independence. Those who organized terror in Bosnia, like Karadzic's Serbian Democratic Party, came from elsewhere. He and his associates didn't belong to this culture of tolerance and living together.

The partition plan is blackmail. Lord Owen of the European Community has stated that if Bosnia does not accept the partition plan, the UN will withdraw all humanitarian assistance. They want Bosnia to capitulate. It has no means to oppose this pressure. If there is partition and the islands of multi-ethnicity such as Sarajevo and Tuzla are destroyed, then new tensions between the different ethnic groups will inevitably arise. I personally believe that it is less costly for the international community to do what it's supposed to—protect the integrity of Bosnia—rather than police an unjust peace for decades to come by imposing apartheid on the country.

I often ask myself, how can the world be so silent when everything the Nazis did—concentration camps, mass executions, ethnic cleansing—is now occurring in Bosnia? I am in total disbelief. I don't know how long it will take, but between the snipers and the absence of humanitarian assistance Sarajevo and Bosnia will die unless there is a change in the position of the international community.

There is still a high spirit in Sarajevo, for the people try to defy the situation by refusing to hide out; minutes after a shell lands people are walking through the same area. You also see the defiance of the people in the way they insist on dressing up and going out to the film festivals, the musical programs, and other cultural programs while the city is under siege. These are several of the forms of mental resistance to the death sentence that has been imposed on them.

'Warrior Marks' slams torturous tradition

by Laurie Cashdan

Alice Walker and Pratibha Parmar's new documentary film, *Warrior Marks: Female Genital Mutilation and the Sexual Blinding of Women*, and their co-authored book by the same name about making the film, jumps into a vortex of international debate about feminism, culture, nationalism, and revolution.

Parmar, an Indian filmmaker raised in Kenya and Britain, whose work explores issues of race, culture, gay and lesbian identity, and feminism, argues that the "fear of being labeled cultural imperialists and racists has made many women reluctant to say or do anything about genital mutilation." (p. 94-95). *Warrior Marks* brings to an international audience the faces and voices of African women and calls for opposition to this torturous practice affecting 100 million.

Woman as Reason

The film documents Alice Walker's journey in early 1993 to London, Senegal and the Gambia, where she interviewed African women working to stop genital mutilation, as well as women who continue the practice, including circumcisors. The harrowing story woven through the film and dramatized by a dance, in which a woman recounts her experience of circumcision and infibulation, comes from Senegalese feminist Awa Thiam's 1986 book, *Black Sisters, Speak Out: Feminism and Oppression in Black Africa*.

Alice Walker also recounts her own "patriarchal wounding." She was blinded in one eye at eight when her older brother fired his air gun at her, and suffered from her parents' insensitivity to her pain. I question calling this "patriarchal," but Walker and Parmar use it to convey their view that genital mutilation should not be seen as African barbarism but as an extreme form of the patriarchal violence that prevails globally.

THAT GENITAL MUTILATION has served as a tragic pawn within the specific historic context of the dialectics of revolution and neo-colonialism in Africa since World War II emerges most clearly in several interviews published fully in the book.

Efua Dorkenoo, director of an African women's organization in London, comments on Kenyan national liberation leader Jomo Kenyatta's historic support of clitoridectomy: "Kenyatta was a politician, [and] he realized this tradition was a key issue he could use as a political tool, to mobilize the people against the colonialists. And even now we find that in our campaign here, you always have opportunists" (p. 248).

Others interviewed argue that support for this "ancient tradition" has recently been connected to Islamic fundamentalism. Genital mutilation is widely seen as Islamic law, though its practice predates Islam's introduction in Africa. Daniele, who works with the Commission for the Abolition of Sexual Mutilation in Senegal, argues that although many young Senegalese women are refusing sexual mutilation, some communities are starting to practice it which never did before.

AWA THIAM'S COMMENTS are most revealing: "I find in some African intellectuals...an indescribable dishonesty. They...say that struggling for women's rights is something specifically for Western civilization and has nothing to do with Africa, the real Africa, traditional and traditionalist Africa. I find that very wrong. Liberty concerns all of us, and fighting for universal rights is also fighting a universal struggle" (p. 289).

Thiam's description of excision and infibulation makes clear the abusive form of property relations at stake: "When you cut off a woman's genitals, when you sew them together, when you open them to have sexual relations, when you sew them up again when the husband is absent, open the genitals again to allow her to be penetrated by her husband, there's no need for explanation—everything is clear. You control the woman as you control no matter what object, no matter what possession or property" (p. 288).

The point I see emphasized by these women is not that culture and nationality cannot be points of revolutionary

unity when fighting domination, but that the perpetuation—and even deepening—of "traditions" which represent abusive forms of property relations signal the need to revolutionize such relations.

In Marx's study of pre-capitalist societies in his 1881-82 *Ethnological Notebooks*, he highlights this kind of drive to revolutionize human relations, including "Man/Woman" relations. Pivotal to his analysis were the



Recently circumcised girls in Dar Salamay, The Gambia (seated), at a coming-out ceremony.

live human Subjects whose drive to freedom from domination could transform the specific economic and social relations. The comments of many women interviewed in *Warrior Marks* represented to me this kind of drive to freedom, against both traditional and capitalist social relations.

It is painful to realize that the practice of genital mutilation continued and perhaps expanded through the post-World War II era of African revolutions. However, the dialectics of women's liberation and national self-determination reveals that a new pathway is already being trodden by some very exciting African women.

German women's strike

Editor's note: Below we print excerpts from a "First Call for a Women's Strike in 1994" which was sent to us via *Women Living Under Muslim Laws*.

The re-establishment of a greater Germany is taking place at the expense of refugees, at the expense of the "others," the weak, the poor and at the expense of women. This is why we call for a WOMEN'S STRIKE!

With this we want to protest against the cutback in fundamental rights, against the reduction of social welfare benefits and the increasing poverty of women, against the pushing back of achieved women's rights, against the destruction of environment and against German military intervention. In 1975 the women of Iceland went on general strike. In 1991 the Swiss women went on strike. Now we are striking! This strike will take place in the second week of March, 1994 (with March 8th being International Women's Day).

We are fed up with 30% less pay than men and will fight against the old-boy networks which prevent women from rising into well-paid places of work....Stop violence and humiliation. Rape is being used as a weapon in war. In Germany rape is still not prohibited in marriage. Women are subjected daily to sexual harassment because men are fighting to maintain their predominance....

We want equal rights for immigrants, refugees, non-white Germans, Gypsies, Jews and that they can live here in security and without fear.

For more information contact: Streikkomitee Koln-Bonn, Tel.: 0049/228/167609.

Women and students blast police injustice

Oakland, Cal.—On Nov. 16, over 100 students and activists gathered at Laney College to demand justice for victims of police brutality and neglect. The main target of the protest was Alameda County District Attorney Jack Meehan for refusing to prosecute cases of police brutality and violence against women. The Coalition Against Selective Prosecution which sponsored the event is comprised of women's, civil rights and other groups.

Korissa Russell, a Black woman who was choked in her home by a boyfriend, told of how the police refused to gather evidence, and the D.A. refused to press charges. After she battled the system, her assailant got a small sentence. She said, "It's a crime to kick a dog, but it's O.K. to beat a Black woman in her home! We have a Black police chief, but he isn't doing a damned thing. Black women are going to have to stand up and shout, 'No, I'm not going to take it anymore!'"

The father of Jerrold Hall, the young Black man who was shot dead in the back of the head by officer Fred Crabtree, also spoke at the rally. His son was unarmed when he was killed, yet despite public outcry, D.A. Meehan refused to press charges against the officer. Mr. Hall spoke about Rosa Parks and how the great Montgomery

Bus Boycott brought the system to its knees, and should be a model for us today.

A woman from Cop Watch told the crowd about Nina Gelfant, who was repeatedly raped in her home by uniformed police officer Bernard Riley. Even though she sued the City of Oakland for over \$800,000 and won, the D.A. has not prosecuted the officer.

After these moving testimonials, the crowd marched in the street to the Alameda County Court House. On the courthouse steps one woman took the microphone and told of how she was gang-raped at a fraternity on the UC Berkeley campus. Although she wanted to press charges and had medical evidence, the D.A. refused, saying they couldn't win a date rape case! She still sees her assailants walking freely on the campus.

Many others told stories of police brutality. Black men from Laney spoke of being approached by officers with their guns drawn. "It could be me one day who is shot for no reason," one said, "and that's why we need to fight for justice now!" One student brought a large collage to the demonstration which tied the incidents in Oakland to the Rodney King beating and the killing of Malice Green in Detroit.

—Julia Jones

'Girls' shut down airline

Editor's note: The Association of Professional Flight Attendants struck American Airlines on Nov. 18 after the company had imposed a wage package, reduced staffing, and new contributions to medical and retiree health benefits. The strike ended five days later when the company agreed to binding arbitration. We print below the thoughts of one flight attendant on the picket line.

Chicago, Ill.—Ninety-eight percent of flight attendants walked out. That day American Airlines was shut down. The company thought we couldn't do it and said, "The girls will be back." I'm 31 years old. I'm not a girl and neither are the flight attendants who are men. Management is really sexist. They think they can just push us around because most of us are women. We actually surprised ourselves with how strong we are.

People think we're waitresses on planes; they don't realize how much we do. We are concerned with the safety of the passengers and ourselves. We have to deal with all kinds of medical problems; we all have had first aid training. We can be forced to work 14 hours a day with five hours of sleep, so god forbid there's an emergency and we have to think clearly.

I've had the equivalent of 150 X-rays in the past year from flying. We have no protection from the radiation in the atmosphere. American Airlines refuses to test our levels. They won't even let us wear badges that can be taken off and tested later to check the radiation levels we've absorbed.

The company raised the "reserve" time to 22 years (from 10 years) before you get senior status and can bid on regular routes. That's a lifetime before you get seniority! "Reserve" attendants are on call all the time. They only give us two hours to get to work after they call us, and people have to get ready and find child care.

We don't get paid for helping passengers get on board, helping with the luggage, or sitting time, only for time in flight. We can be laid over in Europe for two days and they don't give us enough money for food. Now they are requiring pre-payment of pension benefits. We want to know what the company is doing with all our money.

Here at O'Hare the ticket agents, who along with the sky caps are the only non-union work force at the airport, are harassing us and treating us like we're their enemy instead of management. I don't understand it. This country blames labor for everything. And we're not the enemy! We like our jobs and want to do them well. We need more than five hours of sleep to do that.

Deadly fire in China

For the second time in the past six months, young Asian women have been sent to their deaths by inhuman working conditions. More than 81 workers, mainly women, died in a Shenzhen, China toy factory fire, Nov. 19, because the doors and windows were locked during business hours to keep people inside. Countless others were injured. In May, more than 200 Thai women workers also died in a fire in a locked toy plant which had few exits and no alarms.

bell hooks in Detroit

Detroit, Mich.—Over 300 people, many of them young Black women, traveled beyond the boundaries and barriers of everyday ideas with bell hooks, who spoke on "Race, Gender, Representation: Moving from Pain to Power" Oct. 28. Hooks reviewed recent movies dealing with race and sexual relationships as a springboard to discussing Black feminism as "a commitment to reorganizing U.S. society."

She argued that only in a little-known French film, "Momma There's a Man in Your Bed," is there a white man who wants to understand the world of the Black woman who cleans his office. The more popular movies have negative messages. The young, righteous Black woman in *Menace II Society* "succumbs to sex so she can be put in her place. She is a betrayer punished for having a mind of her own."

Hooks reiterated the need to "interrogate the given...Society is so anti-intellectual that Black people have turned off critical thinking." Bad as media stereotypes are, "what is more scary is that people accept these images and don't talk about their meaning."

She developed a dynamic concept of a revolutionary feminism that confronts "white-supremacist-capitalist-patriarchy." In contrast to reformist white feminism, she argues, revolutionary feminism "should critique...The new generation of writers, like Susan Faludi and Naomi Wolf, ignore race...Let women of color speak!" Her critique ranged from Anita Hill's politics, which she called "never feminist," to Ice Cube's view that "Black women have been in cahoots with white men." She challenged a "one-dimensional notion of Blackness; there is a Black cultural history but no one Black identity."

Her most revolutionary concept was of the relation of intellectuals to masses. "I refuse to believe that poor people have no ability to develop their minds....We must demand that our nation give people freedom to read and write...Unemployment must become a space for people to develop their own minds. Many Black revolutionaries read Marx in prison and became intellectuals."

Hook's awareness was clear that the intellectual's endeavor is abstract and incomplete without the masses. However, does she see that the masses themselves create a form of theory through their experiences?

The audience continued the dialogue well into the night. This kind of exchange of ideas keeps the possibility of revolutionary transformation alive and real.

—Miriam C. Drew and Susan van Gelder

Somerville Mills: 'our own organization'

Editor's note: The members of the union negotiating committee at Somerville Mills are production workers. Since 1988 when more than 200 workers, all Black and nearly all women, voted for Furniture Workers Local 282, they have been fighting to win a first contract with the company. Somerville is the seat of Fayette County, scene of civil rights struggles in the 1960s, including the famous "Tent City." I. Appel, the New Jersey-based corporation which owns Somerville Mills, is a major garment manufacturer with several plants in Tennessee.

Somerville, Tenn.—At Somerville Mills we make upscale ladies' garments for labels like Victoria's Secret, Laura Ashley and Frederick's of Hollywood. The average wage in the plant is about \$5 an hour—that's for both hourly workers and "incentive" workers. If you are an incentive worker, there is the minimum rate and the base rate. For many jobs the minimum rate is about \$4.35 an hour, and the base rate is about \$5 or a little more. To get the base rate you have to work at 100% of the production the company has set for the job. All the sewing machine operators are incentive workers.

You have to kill yourself to make the base rate. If you sew the seat in panties, you sew three or four pieces at a time, complete the amount in the tub and send it down the line to the next operator. To make the base rate you have to do 100 dozen a day.

Another worker may sew waists; to make the base rate she has to sew 300 dozen a day. She gets \$41 for the day; the company gets 300 dozen panties. Many workers sit at their machines all day, working as fast as they can, and still can't make the rate. You get charged for all the defects, even if the fault is the company's. If the supervisor gives you the wrong instructions, you have to redo the garments on your own time.

There is lint in the air throughout the plant; cotton is the worst. After one month in the plant you have sinus problems, and some workers end up having surgery. Some of the dyes, like yellow, make you sick. The masks are not effective; there is no real ventilation system and not even many windows.

We have gone to the NLRB (Labor Board) and the EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) with complaints, and over and over they have found Somerville Mills guilty of unfair labor practices and discrimination. We went to the EEOC about the women's bathrooms. In the middle are the washbasins, on the sides are the stalls. The whole end of the bathroom is open to the plant—there's no door, no wall. Supervisors come right up to the bathroom and yell for you to hurry up. The men's bathrooms have regular doors. The EEOC ruled against the company, but nothing was done.

The greatest time was when we voted in the union in 1988. The company was scared to death. They hired a

big, union-busting law firm to represent them, and we have been in negotiations ever since. Norman Katz, one of the owners of I. Appel, said that he would never sign a contract with our local. We are not going to sign a sub-standard contract just to get one.

When the company opened the plant eight years ago, they thought they had everything—low wages, no union, scared workers. But we got our own organization. It would be easier if the government and the other unions would join with us. The ILGWU (Ladies' Garment Workers union) represents some other I. Appel plants, but they won't even allow us, the negotiating committee, to see a copy of the contracts at those plants. It's like we are "competitors," instead of unions together.

We negotiate on our own time after a full day's work. We fight grievances on the plant, even though the company won't agree on a grievance procedure. We tell our co-workers that when the supervisor burns you, you have to burn the supervisor.

—Somerville Mills workers' negotiating committee

To get in touch with us, write to Local 282,
1254 Lamar, Suite 212, Memphis, TN 38104.

Hood Furniture: secret contract repudiated

Jackson, Miss.—It is four months now that every worker at Hood Furniture has been suffering under the contract negotiated in secret by IUE International President William Bywater and Hood Furniture President Warren Hood. (See N&L, October 1993.) In 1989 we joined Local 282 of the Furniture Workers. We spent four years trying to get Warren Hood to sign a contract with us, but he wouldn't sign a contract with a local led by African Americans. So Hood and Bywater cooked up this deal to turn us over to a white local, IUE Local 797.

Aug. 4 was the day they called a meeting to ratify this secret contract. To get into the meeting you had to agree to leave Local 282 and join Local 797. Only 16 people went in and voted; 14 voted for the contract. About 250 of us stood outside; we refused to leave Local 282. They declared that the contract was ratified anyway.

We have learned that Local 797 is nothing but a destroyer of human rights. They are totally in the control of the company. The company allowed Thurstin Blue from Local 797 to speak to us on our lunch break in the plant, even though they never allowed Willie Rudd or other Local 282 officers on plant property.

They gave us copies of this contract, and we told Blue that there's nothing in it for us. All we have is a piece of paper that tells us how bad the company can treat us. There are two pages of single-spaced typing where they list "management rights." They have the right to do anything they want and change anything they want.

The plant manager, Richard Pickford, has put in a point system to discipline workers. Eight points gets you fired. You get one point for being off sick; you get one point if you are an hour late. If you get your supervisor's permission to leave on an emergency, you still get a point, and on and on. Pickford says that the point system will go on for 20 years!

Everything is worse since the contract. We have had no heat at all. When it rains, the roof drips. They put cardboard over the line to protect the furniture, but employees are in the rain. Water is all over the floor. You are not supposed to go to the bathroom without notifying your supervisor.

Many workers have been fired since Aug. 4, but they are hiring every day. Now there are over 300 workers. Hood and Local 797 signed this contract for three years, but it isn't our contract. We will never accept it. The IUE thought they would get dues income from 300 workers, but since Aug. 4, only two people have signed their cards.

We have printed up 75 T-shirts to show who we support. On the front they say, "Don't Blame Me, I Didn't Vote For It." On the back they say, "Member of Local 282." We wear the shirts right in the plant to show the company that they can't control us. We are still fighting for justice, telling our story to anyone we can.

—Hood Furniture workers

The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State Capitalism

selected writings

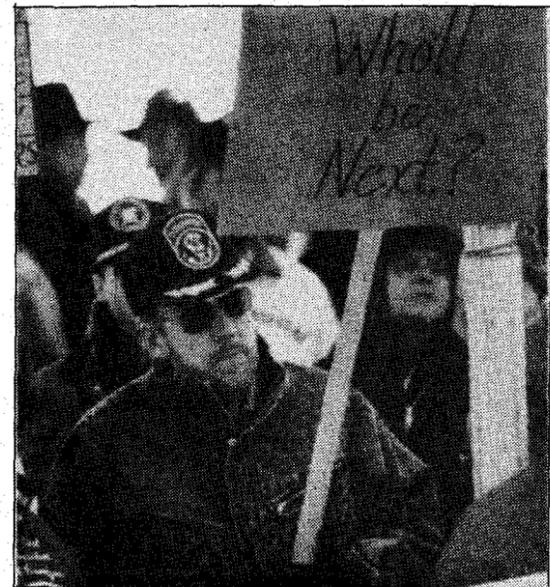
by Raya Dunayevskaya

"...the most basic question of all—labor productivity...depends not on yet one more automated machine, but on the human hand and brain that will not produce at ever-greater speeds. Some very basic questions wait to be answered about what kind of labor should man/woman do."

—from "New Beginnings that Determine the End"

To order, see literature ad on page 7.

Staley solidarity



Chicago, Ill.—Fifteen hundred "dedicated unionists," their families and supporters braved 30-degree temperatures and snow in Decatur, Ill. on Nov. 6 and rallied to support 760 members of Allied Industrial Workers Local 837 locked out since June by A.E. Staley Manufacturing Company. The work of the Local 837 "road warriors" to spread word of their struggle was evident in both the geographical areas and the number of different unions represented.

Rank-and-file Local 837 members have initiated a campaign to disrupt the company that caters to scabs inside the plant and have demonstrated outside the offices of the Decatur Herald Review to protest that newspaper's anti-labor bias. The union has called for a boycott of the Decatur Herald Review produced by Staley's British parent company, Tate & Lyle.

—Rally participants

Team concept at GM, Ford

Oklahoma City, Okla.—General Motors has eliminated 200 jobs here since January, and that will be 300 by year's end. The zone man has ten of his favorite suckies on the line to help the company eliminate jobs—they call it making the jobs more equal. What's left is nothing but bad jobs. A worker has no strength to do the work added on.

They came down and gave us a lecture on time and motion study. They put their time and motion study in value/non-value time. They timed jobs in hundredths of a second, and if a worker is spot-welding, they only count the time actually spot-welding, not all the working time to get the gun in position or moving stock. On one job they time each of 32 welds at 3/100ths of a minute, and they figure a spot-welder is working 36 minutes an hour. They want to get that to 55 minutes an hour.

When GM introduced the team concept here, the VIP program or "voluntary input," if you joined you got 20¢ an hour more. You did such things as rotating jobs. One guy rotated onto an unfamiliar job and hurt his ankle so badly on the first day that he is still on sick leave. Now 90% of the workers in the VIP program have dropped out, and participation once was nearly 100%.

The 1994-95 changeover will be the last on this model because 1996 is the last year they can produce it due to federal side impact standards. To get the next model, the P-90, the whole plant must go to straight team concept—VIP will not be voluntary. They want to produce the car with 2,000 workers, 1,000 per shift. In the body shop they intend to go from 400 workers down to 50 per shift.

—Second shift worker

Detroit, Mich.—Ford Motor Company paid \$2.4 million in September to have the 2,200 hourly and salaried workers involved in producing the 1994 Mustang all meet for a three-day seminar to be brainwashed into accepting the "team concept." Both UAW and company officials stressed how crucial it was to change the "old ways" of confrontation into new modes of cooperation. After all, they said, they are all in the same boat, and they will sink or swim together. Under team concept, workers do every kind of work involved in production, from giving out supplies to changing soldering tips to working on the production line.

One Ford spokesman put it all in a nutshell when he said, "They (management and workers) monitor each other and measure each other's performance." What this means is that workers will be doing management's job of forcing themselves to work harder, and becoming stool pigeons in the process since they'll have to report those who don't measure up to the production standards that are set.

At other plants where the team concept has been attempted, at NUMI, the GM-Toyota plant in California, Saturn in Tennessee, Nissan in Kentucky and Mazda in Michigan, workers have learned, or are learning, the great difference between the language of team concept and the harsh reality of production. They have either already rescinded the team concept agreements or are trying to do so.

It's the old game under a new name—how to get more production out of the rank-and-file workers.

—Andy Phillips

Workshop Talks

(continued from page 1)

NAFTA isn't what workers should let occupy their minds. Workers need to learn that when they take back the power of production, that's only the first act, what is called "first negation." They then have to take that second step, "second negation." "Second negation" is the new system of production already worked out in their minds before taking power.

As a worker, I saw the Democrats moving away from the working class in the late 1960s and early 1970s. With Clinton kicking labor's ass over NAFTA, the process has been completed. The Democratic Party has come to represent multinational corporations and financial interests. The AFL-CIO has sat on their fat asses too long.

In debates over NAFTA, I listened to these conservatives speak about Adam Smith maybe a dozen different times, John Kennedy a few times, and Abraham Lincoln's name was used quite a bit by the Republicans. I began to think that Newt Gingrich, the House GOP leader, was a history teacher. He's a good example of what is wrong with the U.S. school system.

THE TRUE HISTORY

Back in the late 1850s the new Republican Party represented the rights of the northern working class, wage earners, against the competition of slave labor in the South. Today, under Gingrich's leadership, the GOP has looked farther south to find a new, cheap and oppressed labor supply with which to try to undermine the rights of the wage earners of the U.S.

These conservatives talked about Adam Smith, but not one said anything about his great discovery. In 1776, the year labor and the Black slaves were kicking the British rulers out of this country, Adam Smith discovered that labor is the source of all value.

It took Karl Marx years more to finish what Adam Smith couldn't finish, that labor is also the source of all surplus value produced. Surplus value is the stolen production of the working people—the factories, machinery and materials. This is why I call capitalists labor thieves.

The capitalist politicians are using Ross Perot and union bureaucrats as the enemies of capitalism like they used to use Communism as a club to keep labor split and down. Ross Perot a spokesman for labor! One of the largest labor thieves in our time! Perot's billions come from the sweat and misery of women minimum wage workers making computers.

Perot has his reason for what he is doing. Perot has a lot to lose if a revolution comes in this country. Clinton's NAFTA might have awakened the sleeping giant in this country—labor.

(For more discussion of NAFTA, see page 5.)

From the writings of Raya Dunayevskaya Marxist-Humanist Archives

by Raya Dunayevskaya
Founder of Marxist-Humanism

Editor's note: News & Letters devoted an entire issue to labor struggles in August-September 1960; it was titled Workers Battle Automation. It was later issued as a pamphlet edited by Charles Denby, the Black autoworker who was editor of N&L. This pamphlet, he stated, "is the combined effort of the worker and the intellectual. Neither one nor the other could have written this pamphlet by himself. This is not a matter of giving credit but to show that today this unity is a necessity." Raya Dunayevskaya wrote to Denby on March 10, 1960 as part of a challenge to work out this unity. The letter, which we reprint here, concerned French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty's article, "Marxism and Philosophy." The letter can be found in the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection (#13734).

There is a certain philosopher in France, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who has done some very good things on Marxism, especially its Humanism. One article in particular, "Marxism and Philosophy," printed as far back as 1947, gave me a new insight when I reread it with Automation in mind.¹

So I decided to write you a letter...Discuss it with a worker...whether the worker is new or an old hand at Marxist Humanism for they might be able to help because even when a worker says "I don't understand," he adds something concrete...

Do not worry if you do not grasp at once or all of it. If just a little sinks down somewhere in the unconscious, you may get help when you write the concrete about Automation, even if it is only on the question of what to put in and what to leave out.

Now then to philosophy. I'll begin with the end of that article I referred to in my first paragraph. The point that [Merleau-Ponty] makes at the end is why Marx at one and the same time (1) attacks philosophers ("Philosophers have interpreted the world; the point is to change it.") and yet (2) attacks workers who would turn their back on philosophy "and by giving it softly and with averted glance a few ill-humored phrases."



Maurice Merleau-Ponty

It is because you cannot "negate," that is, abolish philosophy by evading it. And the philosopher surely cannot be used as the yardstick in any case. "But," says Merleau-Ponty, "if the philosopher knows this, if he sets himself the task of following the other experiences and the other existences...instead of putting himself in their place, if he abandons the illusion of contemplating the totality of fulfilled history and feels himself, like other men, caught in it, and before a future to build, then philosophy realizes itself and vanishes as separate philosophy."

I need not tell you that "other experiences and the other existences" are those of workers, and that when philosophy "vanishes as separate" it means that thought and existence have become [one]. Since it is Automation that is in the back of my mind, I would say that when workers pose questions, not answers, but questions, they are well on the way to hewing out a road to the vanishing of philosophy as "separate" and to unite theory and practice.

But you have to ask the serious questions that point to a new direction. In Hegelian philosophy "pathway" is a very important word, a "category" which, whether it is only remembrance or description of the moment, it nevertheless cuts through a dark forest and lets you see the light, the path.

I will now jump back to the middle of the article where the subject considered is why Marx was not a vulgar materialist. (Indeed he never even used the word material-

ist, by itself, to describe his philosophy. It was the unity of materialism and idealism, the human factor. Just as Marx refused to consider seriously "property forms," but insisted instead on production relations of men to men, so when he did use the expression "practical materialist" he meant practice pure and simple. Or, to put it another way, human activity.) You have often heard me say "philosophy in the Marxist sense of human activity." But let us never forget that that human activity was all-comprehensive and meant not only practical work but the work of thinking, which is just as hard labor as anything else.



Denby (r), Dunayevskaya, and Yoshimasa Yukiama (l), Japanese translator of *Marxism and Freedom*.

Merleau-Ponty says that this introduction of the "human object" into classical philosophy "was carrying to its concrete consequences the Hegelian conception of a "spirit-phenomenon."

Of all the mystical words, the one that gets the greatest laugh out of what Marx calls "vulgar materialists" and what we know as "old radicals" is this word, "spirit-phenomenon." For Hegel had dehumanized the idea and instead of seeing workers, or even people in general, saw some sort of "Spirit" or God doing the work of history. Or so, he says. The truth is, his philosophy lives today because Marx had seen through this "spirit" and saw it was in actuality living history, or collective men shaping history, and doing so on the basis of a very concrete type of production, capitalistic production which "negated personality," made men into parts of machines, and therefore produced WORKERS' REVOLT.

At this point this French philosopher has something very wise to say for he stresses the fact that the so-called objectivity of scientists is itself a form of "alienation" and that it enters the Marxist movement "only when

Radical scholars and activists debate future of Marxism

Chicago, Ill.—This year's Midwest Radical Scholars and Activists conference, held at Loyola University Oct. 29-31, revealed much about the state of the Left and of Marxism in the 1990s. Over 700 people attended, more than in previous years, many of them youth.

The conference began Oct. 29 with a four-hour mini conference co-sponsored by the Marxist-Humanist Forum at Loyola, and the Departments of Philosophy and Sociology, entitled "On the 175th Anniversary of Marx's Birth: The Continuing Relevance of His Ideas for Today's Changed World."

Nearly 200 people, many of them students, attended at least part of the mini-conference on Marx. The first speaker, Moishe Postone of the University of Chicago, argued that the fall of Communism and its aftermath have shown that neither Communism nor Western capitalism have overcome the basic crisis of capitalism. He urged us to look at Marx's *Capital* and the *Grundrisse* as critiques not so much of private property and the market, but instead of impersonal forms of domination.

The next speaker, Olga Domanski of News & Letters, pointed to Adrienne Rich's return to Marx via a reading of Dunayevskaya's Marxist-Humanism. She also discussed her own years working alongside women auto workers and Marx's late writings on women such as the *Ethnological Notebooks*. Both of these dimensions, she concluded, are crucial to today's women's liberation movement.

Next, William McBride of Purdue University recounted his 1988 visit to Hungary when Communist bureaucrats were already attracted to the notion of a pure "free market" economy. He found it curious that, like Stalinists before them, today's free marketeers want a strong state to defend their new economic policies against opposition, while at the same time promising a minimalist state down the road.

The next speaker, Paresh Chattopadhyay of the University of Quebec, argued that the Soviet experience leads us to return directly to Marx, while refuting much of Bolshevik theory and practice. Their elimination of private property did not solve the country's economic problems, nor did it create socialism.

Following Chattopadhyay, this writer used Dunayevskaya's work to argue against the postmodernist notion that Marx's thought constitutes a "grand narrative" which swallows up "the particular" and against those who term Marx a "Eurocentrist." Marx's writings during his last decade illustrate his great sensitivity to the history and cultures of non-Western society, showing us that Marx was a multiculturalist theorist par excellence.

The last speaker, Bertell Ollman of New York University, pointed to the tendency to ridicule dialectics as hocus pocus and so on, and asked how we can put dialectics to work in concrete studies. With regard to the process of abstraction in Marx's work, would-be critics of Marx are often unaware at what level of abstraction he is operating at a given moment. These critics then seek empirically to "refute" what Marx did not intend as an empirical statement.

A number of critical issues and topics were raised in

Merleau-Ponty, philosophy, and the human factor

revolutionary consciousness wanes," and he points to the revisionist Bernstein.

What he is trying to do here is to sum up Marx's conception of the dialectic as TOTALITY, which not only denies the so-called "eternal" nature of man, and takes a specific concrete economic epoch up, and what relations men are to each other in these historic periods of slavery and capitalism, but even though economics was the foundation of all thought and history its proof, history "cannot be reduced to economic skeleton." The human factor is the decisive factor and if that is so it is the total human being, not any single portion of him.

And because this is so, and because all history is the history of the struggles for freedom, Hegel's "Absolute Idea" was in actuality TOTAL FREEDOM. That is how Hegel and Marx met, so to speak, and why Hegel's abstract ideas are in actuality the reflections of this historical movement so that, as I put it in *Marxism and Freedom*, Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind* is in reality the philosophy of history established by the "indignant hearts" who made the French Revolution.

Finally, to get back from the history of the French Revolution when the machine age had just begun to the age of Automation, when the machine is the full master of man and they still don't have total freedom, we have to face the specific, concrete, daily experiences AND thoughts of workers on the job.

1. "Marxism and Philosophy," *Politics* (July-August 1947), translated by Eva and Harold Orlansky. Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961), a leading French philosopher of the twentieth century, co-founded in 1945 with Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, the journal *Les Temps modernes* where "Marxism and Philosophy" first appeared in 1946. Among his better known works are *Humanism and Terror* (1947) and *Adventures of the Dialectic* (1955). Dunayevskaya discusses Merleau-Ponty in the *Supplement to the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection—Marxist-Humanism: A Half Century of its World Development*, #12858 - 12863, and in *Philosophy and Revolution*.

"Marxism and Philosophy" can also be found in *Sense and Non-Sense*, Northwestern University Press (1964), translated by Hubert L. Dreyfus and Patricia Allen Dreyfus.

the discussion from the floor, ranging from the Los Angeles rebellion, to the growth of fascism, to labor, women's liberation, and the importance of practice. Lauren Langman of Loyola, chair of the last part of the mini-conference, ended by declaring, "Tell the post-modernists that the reports of our death are premature."

Some of this notion of the continued relevance of Marx carried over into the main part of the conference. At a large plenary session on postmodern politics, Doug Kellner of the University of Texas and Moishe Postone each pointed to serious weaknesses in postmodernism, and defended the contemporary relevance of Marx against those who would argue that we are in a postmodern world, one which Marxian theory can no longer describe intelligibly.

The dimensions of Marx and revolution were also present at some of the sessions on women's issues. A plenary on "Women in the 1990s" attended by 60 people disappointed many in the audience, some of whom came the next day to a session on "Rethinking Women's Liberation" where two Marxist-Humanist speakers, Terry Moon and Jan Kollwitz, helped to touch off a lively discussion on the need for a total social transformation.

A plenary session on the Balkan crisis which drew over 60 people showed some serious grappling with how to respond to the genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Branka Magas, author of *The Destruction of Yugoslavia*, criticized the Left for failing to recognize how *sui generis* was the multicultural character of Bosnian society before the horrific Serbian "ethnic cleansing." She termed the Bosnia struggle for self-determination a beacon for a different kind of future.

Ljubomir Sopcic, a Croatian-American activist who had just returned from Bosnia, spoke of how betrayed he felt by the majority of the Left's accepting the Western governments' premise that it is an ethnic war. Frieda Afary from the Loyola Marxist-Humanist Forum saw parallels between Bosnia today and the Spanish Civil War and Warsaw uprisings of 1943 and 1944. The Left's failure on Bosnia, she argued, is rooted in its failure to develop Marx's humanism.

A speaker from the International Socialist Organization, Lance Selfa, received far less support from the audience than did the other speakers, because he accused the Bosnian Muslims of wanting a Muslim state and attacked other speakers' calls to lift the arms embargo on Bosnia. Judging by the discussion which followed, most in the audience felt that Selfa's comments exemplified what the other speakers had referred to as the insensitivity of much of the Left toward the struggle for self-determination in Bosnia.

While the conference did not resolve any issues, it was a venue in which serious problems confronting the Left, both theoretical and practical, could be taken up. There was often a real sense of probing, of searching for something new, as the Left tries to come to terms with the changed world of the 1990s. This year, more than in previous years, Marxist-Humanists made some important contributions to these discussions.

—Kevin Anderson, Northern Illinois University

A Common Thread...

What do these thinkers have in common?

- Herbert Marcuse
- Jean-Paul Sartre
- Louis Althusser
- Paul Mattick
- Tatyana Mamonova
- Bertell Ollman
- Georg Lukacs
- Simone de Beauvoir
- Theodor Adorno
- Roxanne Witke
- Antonio Gramsci
- Roman Rosdolski
- Karel Kosik
- CLR James
- George Armstrong Kelly
- Frantz Fanon
- Silvio Frondizi
- Gunnar Myrdal

They can be found—discussed, critiqued, analyzed—in The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection—Marxist-Humanism: A Half-Century of Its World Development.

Order microfilm editions of the Collections from Wayne State University Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs Detroit, MI 48202.

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News & Letters

Editorial

Boris Yeltsin's road to one-man rule

Though the approach of Russia's parliamentary elections is being touted by the Western press as proof of Russia's entrance into the realm of "true democracy," recent events instead suggest the country is moving toward greater authoritarian and one-man rule, backed up by direct military force. This is especially seen in how Boris Yeltsin has used his October victory over the antic collection of monarchists, ex-Communists, and outright fascists grouped together in the "Red-Brown" alliance as an excuse to crack down on all forms of opposition to his rule, especially independent anti-Stalinist Left activists seeking a genuinely democratic society.

The Western press has reported that Yeltsin followed his crushing of the "Red-Brown" alliance by banning 15 publications and 10 political groups, mainly of the far-Right. It has not reported, however, that members of such leftist groups as the Anarcho-Syndicalist Confederation and the Russian Party of Labor (headed by Boris Kagarlitsky) have also been attacked, arrested, and in some cases tortured by the authorities.* Members of the independent trade unions have also come under sharp attack. This crackdown has even extended to the banning of an assortment of books from Moscow bookstores dealing with Western Marxism and revolutionary theory.

RUSSIA VIOLATES HUMAN RIGHTS

So severe is this crackdown that a group of former dissidents, including Larissa Bogoraz—one of seven who took part in a 1968 demonstration in Red Square protesting the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia—have set up an independent oversight commission to monitor

* A rare exception is Celestine Bohlen's "Police Harassment Reported in Moscow" in *International Herald Tribune*, Oct. 12, 1993. See also "The Moscow Crisis and the Future of Democracy in Russia" by Vera Tolz in *RFE/RL Research Report*, Oct. 22, 1993.

On the Israel/PLO accord

Despite the recent escalation of violence, it seems highly likely that the Israel-PLO peace agreement will be followed up, because the plan fits in so well with the imperialist new world order. A correct analysis of the event has to flow from and contribute to the concept of a changed world.

One aspect of this changed world, since Raya Dunayevskaya first introduced the idea in 1986, may be that the puppet regimes of the old world order are being replaced with populist and/or nationalist regimes with some mass base. To a great extent historically determined, these new regimes can carry out a counter-revolutionary role more effectively than the puppet regimes. Compare the Shah's regime with the current one in Iran. It seems plausible to introduce the term post-neocolonialism to refer to this new era of international relations.

In Iran the populist/nationalist counter-revolution emerged from within the revolution. Saddam Hussein attempted to make the conversion independently in Iraq. And now, the PLO is being assisted to assume the role of the counter-revolution from within the Palestinian revolution. All the talk of positive and negative possibilities that misses out on this determinant, may prove tragic, as indeed it did in Iran in 1979.

Within a few days of the agreement, Egypt, Jordan and the PLO teamed up to develop a 20,000-man Palestinian police force to insure "law and order" in the area. Since then, Arafat has submitted a bill of 14 billion dollars to install industries, an army and a police force (*The Jerusalem Report*, Oct. 21, 1993).

Of course, as always, only the masses armed with the dialectic philosophy of liberation can have the final say in history.

—Ali Atesh

Film review: 'Tito and Me'

"Tito and Me," directed by Goran Markovic, Yugoslavia, 1991, in Serbian with English subtitles, 104 minutes.

Remember when Josef Broz-Tito split his Yugoslavia off from Stalin's bloc, introduced "democratic workers' control" and got rewarded with U.S. aid and good P.R.? All the while he was conducting a one-party state with thought control and the trappings of a Stalinist personality cult. At least he kept Serbs, Croats, Muslims, Slovenians, et al from one another's throats, as in the most un-Marxist present day.

Serbian director Goran Markovic started filming this autobiographical film about that era just days after the outbreak of the war that was to rend his country asunder. All is seen through the eyes of Zoran, a plump, squat, joyless ten-year-old boy who loves only food, a skinny girl and—Marshal Tito, who is shown in a series of fine newsreel clips. Meanwhile the boy observes trenchantly the foibles of his extended family of anti-Communists.

With an adulatory poem to his hero, Zoran wins a place in a "March Around Tito's Homeland," a hike full of misadventures which destroy its leader Raja, a party stalwart. The delightful comedy gives way to a poignant climax when the boy declares his primary loyalty, not to the demi-god Tito, but to his family, his friends and even the town looney. When the moment of epiphany arrives, a reception by the Great Father of the South Slavs, Zoran has already returned to materialism—he prefers to munch cake.

"Tito and Me" is a film gem that makes us laugh, while taking us back to an Orwellian, nightmarish time. Would that the Yugoslavs had replaced it with something better.

—A. Fortunoff

Yeltsin's increasing violation of human rights.

Together with the turn to press censorship and the government's total control of radio and TV, the recent events belie any claim that the Dec. 12 vote for a new



Yeltsin and anti-Yeltsin forces in street clash

parliament and constitution represents a move toward genuine democracy. Though Yeltsin's defeat of the "Red-Brown" alliance has allowed him to more vigorously pursue "free market" economic reform, this is now being effected through an increasing reliance on such undemocratic forces as the Russian military and secret police.

Yeltsin's dependence on the military has already had a crucial impact on Russian politics. Shortly after his October defeat of the parliamentary opposition the Defense Ministry unveiled a "new military doctrine" consisting of 1) an insistence on the "right" of Russian troops to intervene in the former countries of the USSR, and 2) a renunciation of Russia's pledge never to be the first to use nuclear weapons. The military apparently insisted on this as part of its payback for supporting Yeltsin in his showdown with parliament. Yeltsin insisted on adding a clause to this "new military doctrine" calling for "the use of Russian troops to help police and Interior Ministry forces quell internal conflicts."

Though the growing role of the Russian military is widely acknowledged, less discussed is the growing influence of the successors to the KGB, the hated secret police. Mainly centered in the Ministry of Security and the

Beyond NAFTA: fighting capital's global assault

To understand NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) and to see a future beyond it, we can look to the struggles against the structural adjustment programs imposed upon the less developed nations by the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). In southern India, for example, one day after the terrible earthquake, up to a million farmers engaged in a one-day march which culminated at a site not far from the earthquake itself. They were protesting the imposition of intellectual property rights which would be strengthened in the current proposal for a new GATT.

Cargill and other transnational food corporations were forcing Indian farmers off their lands by requiring royalties on seed. Seed, the farmers declared, was the product of generations of work on the land and was thus community property. They vowed to defy intellectual property rights and establish cooperative seed banks to aid farmers throughout the developing world to hold onto their land.

NAFTA and the most recent proposal to overhaul GATT constitute a globalization of structural adjustment, which gives "supranational" corporations the ability to move capital and goods whenever and wherever they want. Since the mid-1970s, structural adjustment programs have forced countries like Mexico to open up their nations to foreign investment and imports; alter food production to emphasize food for export at the expense of feeding their own people; privatize state owned industries; eliminate the practice of subsidizing domestic food and other commodity production; balance budgets by the elimination of social welfare programs. As workers and peasants attempted to organize and rebel against the harsh conditions which ensued, government elites engaged in repressive measures.

BUT STRUCTURAL adjustment was not confined to the developing world. In the U.S. it became the program of Ronald Reagan, George Bush and now Bill Clinton. While some got very rich under these conditions, most of us suffered a serious decline in living standards. In Canada, which negotiated its own trade agreement with the U.S. four years ago, one quarter of the manufacturing jobs were lost and living standards have declined for most.

Meanwhile, in Mexico, where World Bank-imposed structural adjustment "opened up" the economy to foreign investment and trade, hundreds of thousands of peasants were driven off the land and forced to work under wretched conditions for four dollars a day. Wages and living standards for most Mexicans declined while well-connected elites got very rich.

NAFTA establishes a set of rules and institutions to perpetuate these conditions. Half of the 2,000-page 15-pound document consists of complex tariff schedules that represent countless deals as big capital haggled amongst itself throughout negotiations. Clinton's shameless offerings of trade protection for a vote for "free trade" resulted in more of the same. The other half of NAFTA includes the rules and institutions.

Yet, as Bill Clinton has shown us, the provisions of

Ministry of Internal Affairs, the secret police also played a pivotal role in Yeltsin's victory over parliament. After the collapse of the USSR, many former KGB members moved into new commercial ventures, as they were in the position to obtain access to the new "privatized" corporations through their government connections. The security agencies have thus turned out to be one of the strongest advocates of the turn to the "free" market. At the same time, they have supported Yeltsin's drive for increased presidential power, partly out of fear that delegating power to regional authorities will undercut their own control.

The crackdown on independent Left activists who opposed Stalinism far longer than longtime Communist Party bureaucrats such as Yeltsin indicates the extent to which the victorious "democrats" have already turned to greater reliance on the methods of the secret police to deal with their political opponents.

The fact that this crackdown has received virtually no coverage in the Western press is a testimony to how blinding is its illusion that "free market" capitalism necessarily goes hand-in-hand with greater democracy.

U.S. HYPOCRISY ON CHINA

The West's approach to Russia thus increasingly resembles its hypocrisy in dealing with China. Clinton's embrace of Chinese President Jiang Zemin at the Seattle meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Council last month—the first such meeting between U.S. and Chinese heads of state since the Tiananmen Square massacre of 1989—once again shows how quick the U.S. is to embrace authoritarian rulers so long as they obey the dictates of the world market. Human rights, decency, and democracy all take a back seat to the dictates of dollar diplomacy.

The co-existence of "free market" capitalism and greater statist control over aspects of everyday life has in fact been a mark of state-capitalism ever since it emerged as a world stage of production in the 1930s. Our effort to break out of this dehumanized logic calls on us to extend a hand of solidarity with the genuine forces of opposition in Russia who are now feeling the iron heel of Yeltsin's drive for one-man rule. To oppose Yeltsin's crackdown, contact the U.S. Committee for Democratic and Human Rights in Russia, P.O. Box 1890, Stuyvesant Station, New York, NY 10009.

NAFTA are not etched in stone and can be overturned at any time it is politically necessary to do so. A continuation of the campaign against NAFTA and GATT can begin to combat capital's global assault on working people. The campaign has already taken the issue of trade and supranational investment out of the corporate board rooms and into public discourse.

THAT DISCOURSE crossed international boundaries as activists from Mexico, Canada and the U.S. began to discuss principles upon which the peoples of the three nations can best share their resources, skills and ideas. The campaign against NAFTA spawned a series of international conferences on the regional economy, education, women's rights, health care and the environment which looked at these issues from a cooperative and internationalist perspective.

There have also been cooperative ventures among unions in the U.S. and Mexico; cross border organizing around conditions in the factories along the border; the formation of a "worker to worker" organization to help link struggles across borders. Non-governmental organizations have linked up to share information about the ravages of structural adjustment and to develop common strategies for resistance to this and the new GATT proposal.

What this evolving struggle against NAFTA and GATT is for was best stated by a representative of a Mexican peasants' association. He was speaking at a meeting of anti-NAFTA activists in Zacatecas, Mexico, the scene of the last battle of the Mexican Revolution. His talk was about how intellectual property rights affect farmers in his home state of Chihuahua. But he began his talk with these words. "Many years ago, Pancho Villa rode on Zacatecas to fight for democracy. We do the same today."

—David C. Ranney

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READERS ON THE STATE OF THE WORLD AS 1993 CLOSES

An illegal toxic waste dump in Juarez, Mexico has been found littered with 600 55-gallon drums all bearing U.S. marks. Yet, the startling revelation that 163 brainless babies were born in Juarez in the past four years with 90 more such births downriver in Matamoros and Brownsville, Texas makes no impact. Instead, the collusion of government, multinationals, unions and science vomits up "a U.S.-Mexican study" that found no link to pollution or workplace hazards!!!

Angela Terrano
New York

* * *

As the bloody century limps to a close, capitalism is the name of the game nearly everywhere. Now shorn of its tawdry Soviet foil, its external bogeyman, the ruling class will need ever-fresher obfuscations to justify the ugly thing that is their "triumphant" system.

A. Fortunoff
California

* * *

I see many different things during any week. I see people getting stuck up on my way to school, people getting beat up on their way to school, bums begging for "spare change" by my cousin's house. I see gangs marching through the streets deeper than Atlantis with no fear of anybody. I see women being exploited up and down Cicero, and "dumb" girls getting paid by pimps who tell them to turn over their last \$5. I hear songs that make playing with girls' minds seem "fun." My evaluation of the things I see is that it's time to make a 180-degree turn.

14-year-old Black male
Chicago

...ON HAITI AND THE 'NEW WORLD ORDER'

UNITA's siege on Cuito, Angola, that already has taken the lives of 25,000 of its people, is another example of what Lou Turner, in his lead article, "Somalia, Haiti test U.S.'s 'new world order,'" (November N&L) calls the "arbitrariness of U.S. intervention into and withdrawal from Black and Third World nations."

The consequences of last year's elections in Angola (another deal among the U.S., the UN and the ruling factions of the country—MPLA and UNITA—that both provoked the displacement of one-fifth of the country's 10 million inhabitants and killed an estimated 100,000) show clearly that instead of "containment of chaos," the U.S. foreign policy still does not have a clue to where it is shifting in this "new world order." It reflects its own internal contradictions, like the military occupation of Los Angeles during the rebellion there.

Carlos Varela and Sin Mas
New York

* * *

I oppose the dictatorship in Haiti, but I don't want U.S. or UN troops intervening. That would jeopardize our independence. The Haitian revolution was this continent's second revolution, and we were able to win it without arms. It is important to guard the independence that we fought for with our blood.

Haitian Student
City College of New York

...ON THE BRITISH SCENE

I can well understand why Harry McShane was taken with Raya Dunayevskaya's Marxist-Humanism. After the beating that socialism has taken by the expose of the so-called communist system of the USSR, the humanism of your movement may be the counterbalance that could retake the ground lost by the socialist movement as a consequence of the distortions of capitalism. Right now, socialism is a dirty word, particularly in areas of England.

Bill Johnston
Scotland

* * *

At the Labour Party's convention this fall its leader, John Smith, rammed through a new rule downgrading the voting power of unions in the party. Old left-socialist Tony Benn lost his seat in the LP executive. Smith railed against the Thatcherite giveaways to the rich but far be it from him to take them back. The process is called "modernization." Truly Clintonesque. Meanwhile

the recession goes on, the government wants to sell off the postal service for \$3 billion, and a neo-Nazi got elected in a white working-class area. There a few thousand leftists turned out to inveigh against racism. Otherwise, the Left seems a thing of nostalgia.

American visitor
London

* * *

Everyone recognizes the collapse of so-called Communism as a world-historic change. The collapse of social democracy has been less spectacular, ending not with a bang but a whimper. The British Labour Party retains its electoral base but the real opposition is to be found not on the Labour benches in Parliament, but in the industrial and social struggles from below. Yet the harsh reality is that the campaigns and struggles of 1993 were almost all concerned with opposing new reactionary measures, just trying to stop things from getting worse.

Richard Bunting
Oxford

...ON PLO/ISRAEL ACCORD

The orderly development of the health system in Gaza has been arrested during 26 years of Israeli occupation. This health system is about to be handed to a Palestinian authority while in a state of dependence upon Israeli medicine. In certain medical fields services do not exist at all and in other fields they function on a partial and unsatisfactory basis and are dependent upon specialists and modern medical equipment in Israel.

The Association of Israeli-Palestinian Physicians for Human Rights believes that a responsibility exists on the part of Israel to correct this situation fundamentally and to co-operate with the Palestinian authority which will receive responsibility for the health services in Gaza. Adequate health services are a cornerstone of social justice and liberty and we regard them as a basic human right.

Israeli-Palestinian Physicians
for Human Rights
POB 10235 Tel-Aviv 61101
Israel

* * *

A new consciousness is starting to grow, after so many wars, expulsions, bombings, knifings and assassinations, that both sides have legitimate national rights in the same land. Of course, apprehensions on both sides are real and deep. It is critical that peace activists who believe strongly in both Israeli and Palestinian rights make explicit our principles and flesh out the agreements in human terms.

Issues like scarcity of water, abject poverty, nearly two million Palestinians still in refugee camps, real security for both sides, the final status of Jerusalem—all remain critical. The road to peace must be traveled hand in hand by people who have feared and wept but are now learning to recognize their own souls in each others' eyes.

Member, Artists for Mideast Peace
Massachusetts

* * *

After the peace accords we were much more optimistic. We knew not all the problems were solved but now there was hope that that there might be money for the important things: education which has been neglected for years, social medical treatment, housing, roads—all the social aims politicians told us had to be sacrificed because so much money had to be spent on security.

Young Israeli woman
Ramat-Gan

FIGHTING RACISM

I recently went to hear the man who has been dubbed the "foremost Black intellectual of our times"—Cornel West. The keynote speaker at a public meeting that opened the 1993 National DSA Convention here, he appeared at a church one block from a welfare office in a South Central neighborhood strongly affected by the 1992 rebellion. Yet of the rebellion and its aftermath he said not a word. To use an analogy from a previous time in my life: I never liked weak whiskey. And I don't even remember the weak whiskey that West fed us.

The whole situation was not "real."

Readers' Views

After he had pontificated on this and that, several "ushers" walked around the church, taking small cards on which audience members had earlier been asked to write down their questions. The result? No life, no interaction, no spontaneity, no intellectual courage.

Gabriel
Los Angeles

* * *

I especially appreciated Matt S's article (November N&L) on "Milwaukee Organizes." It's important to realize the progressive history we share in fighting racism and segregation, a history the capitalist class spends much energy trying to ignore and silence. Milwaukee is the only American city to have elected three Socialist mayors who served for more than 40 years. Frank Zeidler, the most recent, spent much of his tenure working to fight prejudice, especially in public housing, and many progressive labor and religious movements spent decades working to integrate Milwaukee.

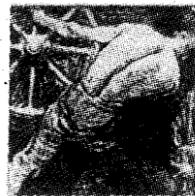
Both N&L and Matt S. deserve credit for making readers aware of the racism Milwaukee continues to suffer. It's my hope that we continue to combat it, but acknowledge the struggle we have been fighting all along.

Karl Fisher, Co-Chair SPUSA
New York

* * *

The story you carried in "Our Life and Times" (November N&L) about the 200 youth who demonstrated against racism in Prague was an important one. In these times, when so much history is being rewritten by omission, it's also important to note that they were Anarchist youth. It's important because they are the only ones doing so.

Non-anarchist
New York



LABOR'S
LIFE
TODAY

I've been working so much overtime at my job lately—ten hours a day, six days a week—that I haven't had time to do the thinking and reading that I normally like to do. But I remember what it was like last year when I was unemployed, and I know how high the official unemployment rate is now. I really don't know which is worse, being unemployed, or working the way I am working now that just takes my life away.

Young and with no choices
California

* * *

I do not know why some who are fighting NAFTA are surprised about the way the vote turned out. The reason that the capitalists felt that they could do it was that they do not see the "absolute opposite" that can challenge them. Neither the union big shots nor Perot can win without a strong international working-class movement. That is the absolute opposite of the internationalism of capital.

David L. Anderson
Chicago

* * *

Some UAW workers had a table of handmade buttons at a recent labor rally in Decatur, Ill. I spoke to the woman behind the table who said she had been laid off for two years. There was one button that was just plain red. I asked, "What is the significance of this button?" She replied, "We don't know, but it drives the foreman crazy."

Jim Guthrie
Illinois

ECONOMICS OF HEALTH CARE

Because corporations are feeling the pinch of high health care costs, "health care reform" has finally become more than talk. What gets overlooked, however, is that one capitalist's high health care costs are another's high health care revenues. With recent job creation in the U.S. having been confined mostly to the health care industry, what will Clinton's health care "reform" do? Undoubtedly, the health care industry will stop being

the source of fast job growth. But rather than other industries picking up the slack, they are far more likely to use the savings to lower prices and compensation to workers and thereby better compete internationally. This "reform" alone could well push the U.S. unemployment rate up to the double-digit figures now being experienced in Europe.

A. Anielewicz
New York



PRISON
VOICES

Prison uprisings have shaken the foundations of the penal system. Our struggles are not unlike many going on around the world today. We are inmates but first and foremost we are human beings and cannot live in an inhuman, corrupt and oppressive environment.

I cannot say I'm a proselyte to the Marxist-Humanist philosophy but the two issues of N&L I've read inspired me to define my own views. I do believe Marxist-Humanism is a philosophy of liberation—liberation from the myopic demagogues currently running this country, and I'm very interested in learning more about it.

Prisoner
Ohio

* * *

Your paper is greatly needed. The voices of opposition are many, while outlets of expression are too few.

Prisoner support group
Trenton, New Jersey

FEMINISM IN INDIA

There is in India a very strong anti-Muslim feeling. At the time of the riots in Bombay, women were killing women and it shocked the feminist groups there. We are now preparing the Fourth National Conference that will take place in 1994 in South India. There is always the problem of deciding who should be invited. Should it be open to every woman, irrespective of her ideology (for example Hindu fundamentalism) or only feminists who want a change in society? Those are crucial questions in a country like India where religion plays such a central role in culture and politics.

Feminist
Bihar, India

POETRY AND POLITICS

When Adrienne Rich read from her new book at the Public Library October 12, she treated the 200-300 people in the audience to new concepts of the relationships between poetry and daily life and between creativity and revolution. Her discussion of her *What is Found There: Notebooks on Poetry and Politics* engaged Marx's humanist philosophy of revolution in the investigation of poetry's power and how we live our lives.

Rich said that through this book of prose interspersed with others' poems, she is trying to bring poetry out of the academy and to prove that poetry's power to witness is also the power "to participate, to be functional, like an exchange of energy."

From the Preface she read, "In the general public disarray of thinking, of feeling, I saw an atrophy of our power to imagine other ways of navigating into our collective future." In contrast, rooted within herself she finds a vision of the future, which she links to Marx's philosophy of "revolution in permanence."

Rich's discussion of Marx's humanism at "respectable" gatherings at this moment in time, when "radicals" are ignoring Marx, is a challenge to feminists and others of good will to re-think their understanding of art, philosophy and their daily activities.

Anne and Sheila
New York

DIALOGUE = MOVEMENT
SEND YOUR VIEWS TO N&L

QUESTIONS ON THE UNIQUE CONCEPTS OF MARXIST-HUMANISM

In her From the Archives column on "Marxist-Humanism's original contribution: Absolute Idea as new beginning," (November 1993), Raya Dunayevskaya seems to be challenging us to rethink the ground on which we stand, and any thinking that does not grasp full freedom. I hear her saying a new leap has to be made right NOW so the movement can go forward. If the final three syllogisms that Hegel came up with at the end of his life represent that new leap that we must grasp, then we have to try raising questions we haven't been able to before. It is not something we must grasp as external to us, some ideas Hegel came up with in the early 19th century, but a further development of what we now know. We must be much closer to those who have ideas and want to develop them. It may be that an old way of organizing—taking our newspaper out to events after they've started and listening to what people have to say—is no longer sufficient. The idea of total freedom must be there at the beginning, or it will again be doomed.

Activist Bay Area, Cal.

I have been thinking about Dunayevskaya's philosophic critique of Lenin on the vanguard party. Hegel says that Method is the Universal form of the Absolute Idea, and if we relate that to organization, we would say that we could have a different form of organization at different stages; the form is not the Universal. One could argue that the vanguard party was needed against Tsarist Russia and to fulfill the needs of socialist construction. But if the Communist movement took this as the only form, that is not a critique to apply to Lenin.

Iranian Marxist revolutionary California

In 1945 there was a popular mass movement in Italy for the punishment of the fascists and the recovery of their loot. Laws to this effect were passed but they were carried out by the bureaucratic apparatus. The result was that all the

fascists were released from the jails and obtained restitution of their loot. The problem is not "what happens after" the successful revolution as you put it, but how to prepare ourselves for that revolution.

So far there has never been an anti-capitalist revolution, but only partial insurrections in countries where the overall productivity was very low. No vanguard party, no matter how big, can transform a backward country into a socialist country if it does not have the support of the industrialized masses. Today the problem is not how to organize the future society but how to sweep out the old ruling class and its system.

Itcor Italy

The mention of Taylorism in the November archives writing brought to mind how capitalism twists all ideas which can't overcome it completely. When Taylorism first arose it was as an answer to the problem of how to structure production so that all, even the most unskilled, could participate. The peasants, freshly thrown off their land, did not have many manufacturing skills. The "style of management" which broke down the production process into parts small enough so that anyone could be productive in a short period of time must have seemed like a very progressive idea. Why else would Lenin have flirted with it?

Urszula Wislanka Berkeley, Cal.

When, in your Draft Perspectives (August/September N&L), you wrote that merely repeating Marxist-Humanist conclusions "only succeeds in turning past accomplishments into nothing more than a pillow for intellectual sloth," does that mean that each and all must travel the same road to understanding, experience the same or comparable philosophic moments, absorb the meanings of Hegel and the teachings of Raya, before accepting and orienting oneself to the revolutionary conclusions of Marxist-Humanism?

Are you expecting your readers to understand Hegel and Raya as well as the editors of N&L understand? I don't. But I know something of Marx. Please comment and I will respond.

Longtime Marxist Philadelphia

Dunayevskaya's point is not to prove whether Hegel was a revolutionary, but that his dialectic enables each generation of revolutionaries to reinterpret Marxism anew. Indeed, this is exactly what Marx continuously did.

Anne E. Jaclard New York

The difficulty in grasping Raya's presentation in the November issue is that it presents us with a seeming contradiction. She sees the return to Marx's Marxism as what is crucial for today. And yet she confronts us with her discontinuity with Marx in order to achieve that. That's what we have to unravel to be able to continue her Marxist-Humanism.

N&L member Chicago

Editor's Note: To receive a copy of Dunayevskaya's "Marxist-Humanism's original contribution: Absolute Idea as new beginning," send 52¢ for postage to N&L.



MARXISM FOR TODAY

I spent an interesting afternoon at the Marx Memorial Library reading the Julian Harney Papers. His high point was 1848-51, before he got in a fight with Marx over a "united front" he wanted to get Marx and Engels involved in. There was, however, an interesting exchange with Marx on the Commune and the Trade Unionists sellout, which has a certain relevance to today. With republicanism being discussed today in Britain, its limitation in 1848 and in 1871 and Marx's dealings with "republicans"

seem worth a look.

Correspondent London

NYC ELECTIONS

I felt Dinkins had moved so much to the right that he opened the door to Giuliani. I was beaten by police employed by Dinkins. Revolts are going to happen in a more drastic form. I've been talking with lots of young people, who say, "I ain't gonna vote because none of them are gonna solve my problems." Class pervades every race and culture.

Dominican revolutionary New York

Dinkins lost because of Crown Heights. They say he was too slow to send the cops in that rebellion. But Dinkins did something, he built houses. He inherited a mess from previous mayor Koch. Koch messed it up, he divided the races. Dinkins did good considering the mess he inherited.

West Indian worker New York

There was a referendum, which won, for mostly white Staten Island to secede from the rest of New York City. Pushing it was Guy Molinari, a small fish (Staten Island Borough president) in a big pond (NYC), who sees this as the sure way to become a big fish in a small pond. He is just like Serbian president Milosevic. The surest way for a politician to gain power in hard times is to stir the pot of hatred; "everything would be good if it wasn't for those people," they say. It directs people to a false alternative. If Staten Island secedes, will that add one job? Will that build one school? It won't solve one single underlying problem.

John Marcotte New York

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by Raya Dunayevskaya

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Philosophy and Revolution: from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao
Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution
Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future
The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism: selected writings.
The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism: Two Historic-Philosophic Writings by Raya Dunayevskaya.
Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal

—PAMPHLETS—

- American Civilization on Trial, Black Masses as Vanguard
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- Theory and Practice, by Rosa Luxemburg
Nationalism, Communism, Marxist-Humanism and the Afro-Asian Revolutions by Raya Dunayevskaya
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Exploring the original contribution of Marxist-Humanism

Philosophic context of Women's Liberation

*Editor's note: As part of our commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the publication of Raya Dunayevskaya's **Philosophy and Revolution**, we begin a special feature this month—discussion of her original philosophic contribution, **Absolute Negativity as New Beginning** (the title of chapter 1 of her **Philosophy and Revolution**). The following consists of responses to her April 18, 1976 speech on Marxist-Humanism's original contribution which we printed in the November issue of **News & Letters**. In coming months we will print further contributions to the discussion. We welcome our readers' contributions to this ongoing discussion and dialogue.*

'When revolution is here'

The November 1993 issue of **News & Letters** published a 1976 speech by Raya Dunayevskaya on Marxist-Humanism's original contribution: Absolute Idea as New Beginning. This writing spoke to the reality of Marxist-Humanism from its origins in the 1950s to today and challenges us to work out a new beginning. For me, that new beginning must also be found objectively within the context of the 1992 Los Angeles rebellion.

The L.A. rebellion showed the presence of a new social consciousness beyond the political quick fix presented by the politicians who only want to front-off this new social consciousness by talking about the need to rebuild the structure of L.A.'s economic base.

The L.A. rebellion cannot be narrowed down to economic analysis but must be seen as the revolt against a torturous existence by a people who have too long been cut out of American "civilization." While we see wealth around us in America, we cannot find comfort within our existence. The "justice" system in the Rodney King trials showed how it consigns Black and working people to a brutal existence.

The question is: how do we as revolutionaries work out the meaning of the L.A. rebellion as ground and process by which to uproot the whole system of capitalism whose brutality sparked the revolt?

Raya Dunayevskaya characterized it this way: "If...Hegel throws out his Logic [at the end of **Philosophy of Mind** in paragraph 577] what could be greater? He says the Self-Thinking Idea is the self-bringing forth of liberty. That's when we already have it, the revolution is here, and everything is ready for not putting things off for the day after. It's right here and you better go do it and think it and everybody be part of the dialectic."

Even as great as the activity of the L.A. rebellion was, it is not enough to get to freedom without the consciousness of the masses reaching theoretical recognition of that historic moment.

Concretely, what this means within the Black community is that Raya Dunayevskaya's call for Marx's dialectic method to be worked out within the forum of Marxist-Humanism is not an exclusive philosophic concept of freedom, but is inclusive of all revolutionary thinkers and activists. As a Black worker, I have always appreciated her emphasis on workers as Reason, and the need to combine workers and revolutionary intellectuals.

We need to work out the relationship of worker to intellectual with the additive of color, the Black dimension. Being from Alabama and feeling the impact of color, I know that while education was always based on the struggle for freedom, the Civil Rights Movement opened the door for some Blacks to become doctors and lawyers. In other words, civil rights ended in bourgeois rights, the right to become the boss or the intellectual.

We have to break from ourselves again, go to second negativity. I look at the relationship of the Absolute Idea to the movement of the 1960s and see how we have to transcend that by making a new break within the movement.

Among the many points in Dunayevskaya's 1976 speech that are in need of being worked out is the division of thought from reality within capitalist society. It is against this that there arises the drive of humanity to transform its oppressive reality into an environment where creative ability can grow as naturally as a fresh spring rain gives green new life after a harsh cold winter. Should not a philosophy of revolution stimulate that new life, new thought, a new humanity? —Gene Ford

The idea that is so compelling in Raya's April 18, 1976 speech is that when philosophy reaches a new sphere it brings with it all the developments in the preceding ones so that nothing is ever lost. That is what Raya tried to do for our women's liberation groups when she said what is unique with us is Black, labor and philosophy. Does this make you think of that passage from Adrienne Rich that we all liked so much in the Hungry Mind Review where she spoke of not wanting to get disoriented with all the talk of the "death of Marxism" and "falling walls"? She rather wanted to go back to revolutionaries of the past to see the continuity and the vision they had that is yet to be fulfilled. She wanted that particular kind of summation where nothing revolutionary is lost. Isn't that the only way one can have a continuity?

Raya says that when it is not fixed, the "particular is the way to get to the second negativity; there is no other way to get to it." I'm wondering, what is the relationship between a particular not being fixed, and second negativity at each stage? When women's liberation began, Raya singled out what made it not a fixed Particular, but a pathway to the Universal. It critiqued the Left from a revolutionary perspective, saying we will not wait until after revolution to fight for our freedom. Further, our critique was not limited to pointing to the male chauvinism of the men but, more importantly, to their narrow concept of revolution that we knew did not mean our freedom—or ultimately anyone else's either. That was a beginning that revealed how the Particular of women's liberation could get to freedom.

What I think we've witnessed since then is individual self-development that has led to second negation in people like Rich (for whom the words "Marxist-Humanism" would have seemed a funeral knell in the 1960s) and Margaret Randall (who had to rethink her whole conception of the revolutions in Cuba and Nicaragua). But what we haven't seen is the second negation at each stage in the movement as a whole. Is that why

postmodernism's denial of any universals, especially that of freedom, has such a pull?

The added paragraph in Rosa Luxemburg, **Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution** (p. 109) sheds light on the relationship of the Particular not being fixed, on starting from the totality, and on how second negativity is at each stage. There, and in the whole chapter on "The Task That Remains to be Done," Raya makes a summation of what the Women's Liberation Movement has achieved. This time she singles out women beginning the Russian Revolution, the Persian Revolution of 1906-11, and Isabel do Carmo raising the new concept of *apartidarismo* in Portugal. In other places Raya singles out different events, yet each time it is a summation of the philosophic kind that reveals women as Reason of revolution. Then she says, "It is precisely because women's liberationists are both revolutionary force and Reason that they are crucial. If we are to achieve success in the new revolutions, we have to see that the uprooting of the old is total from the start."

Her summation shows the Particular of women's liberation when it is not fixed, but a pathway to the future, and she states that the uprooting of the old must be total from the start. Is it that both these elements have to be involved if second negativity is to be experienced at each stage? I think she also brings in the kind of Individualism that lets nothing interfere with its Universalism, i.e., freedom, when she adds: "Which is what Luxemburg meant when she defined 'being human' as 'joyfully throwing your life on the scales of destiny.'"

What is crucial, and is meant for us, is where she says: "This was for purposes of showing that the women were the ones who initiated that revolution. Even now I am not sure that we totally understand that that, in turn, depends on women practicing the immediate problems inseparable from the philosophic context." I think that's exactly what she is asking us to do in the speech we printed in the November issue.

—Terry Moon

Fanon, politicalization and the Absolute

The year Dunayevskaya penned the article under discussion, 1976, was also the year of the Soweto Rebellion and the Black Consciousness Movement. What attracted me to Marxist-Humanism at the end of the 1970s was its analysis that that movement represented a new stage of revolt and consciousness among Black youth in South Africa. Nobody on the Left outside of Marxist-Humanism (except for the Black Consciousness Movement of Steve Biko) made a category of SOWETO.

Nevertheless, that new stage, which became so exciting, was never developed theoretically as preparation for revolution after Biko's death. In the early 1980s the spontaneous movements were far in advance of the political organizations, but by the late 1980s their tremendous activity had become exhausted and ready to be taken over by different types of vanguard organizations—whether that be Stalinist, Trotskyist, or Nationalist. All of these have provided no philosophical alternative to the elite negotiations.

Why have the tremendous mass movements not been successful over the past two decades? One reason is that there has not been a sufficient and serious battle of ideas that matched up to the seriousness of the challenge of the spontaneous movements. Too quickly the space opened up by those movements was hemmed in by the old political categories.

In **Black Skin White Masks** (1952), Frantz Fanon criticized Jean-Paul Sartre for hemming him into old categories. Sartre had "intellectually" but never "experientially" understood Negritude. Despite Sartre's praise of Negritude he saw it as an emotive, not logical, value and dismissed it as a "minor term" in the dialectic.

In the 1976 discussion Dunayevskaya mentions Fanon's critique of Sartre as an important example of particularization. In Sartre's case there is no relation between the particular and the universal, so that the universal is reminiscent of a type of moral imperative.

The particularization that we are looking for is quite different from a "transitional demand" and is, according to Dunayevskaya, "the way to get to the second negativity." In other words, when Fanon argued in **The Wretched of the Earth** that he was not interested in a rational discussion of the universal, he had in mind any abstract universal lording over the concrete particular. Instead it is this particular which becomes universal when it is subject to negativity.

It is this that made Fanon the profoundest critic of Negritude and national consciousness, at the same time as he emphasized that national consciousness was the only way to get to a true universalism. However, he immediately warned of the consequences if national consciousness didn't develop into a humanism (into a social and political awareness).

Fanon's profound critique of the leaders of the new independent nations was directed at their separation from the masses. In this Fanon presciently pointed to areas that Dunayevskaya considered in chapter 7 of **Philosophy and Revolution**: The leaders began so quickly after independence to view workers merely as labor power and called for increased production while instituting discipline and silence. This critique is valid today because Africa's freedom has still not been achieved. However, even though Fanon appreciated the masses as Reason and insisted that they be the basis of any post-independence politics, one never gets a sense of individuality in the notion of the "masses." Does Fanon consider the masses in motion as a form of theory? Perhaps this question is tied to the fact that with Fanon the notion of second negativity is a political, not philosophical one. The question is, is it possible to be political and philosophical?

When Fanon argued that he was not interested in a rational confrontation of points of view, he added that he was propounding an untidy idea as an absolute. Though it is difficult to know exactly what Fanon meant, it is plain that when he begins his **Wretched of the Earth** with an absolute, what he calls "the absolute substitution of one species of men with another," he is mapping out the dialectic of revolution in the colonial context. In this he followed Hegel who argued that each beginning has to be made from the Absolute, but is only Absolute in its completion.

In contradistinction to the postmodernist critics whose superficial reading of Hegel has led them to believe that Hegel presents a teleology moving towards a pre-ordained end (they treat "absolute" in the "ordinary" sense of the word), Absolute, as presented by Hegel and restated by Dunayevskaya in **Philosophy and Revolution**, is a process of becoming, open to all sorts of new impulses as it is filled out. The philosopher, rather than being an onlooker, is part of the negation of the negation which propels the New Beginning. In other words, the movement from practice which is a form of theory, those revolutionary thoughts and actions that are in the lives of everyday people, has to be recreated within a philosophic context.

The postmodernists would find an a priori philosophic context abhorrent, but they have a hidden agenda of relativism. They truly believe that by relativizing all standpoints they will give everything equal play. But this is merely a rerun of 18th century skepticism.

We present our standpoint, not as something complete but rather in the process of becoming. Marxist-Humanism, Dunayevskaya's return to Hegel and re-articulation of Marxism for today, is not a finished product which we present to the world; it is only concrete in its critical relationship to reality (negation of the negation). In other words what is called the "self determination of the Idea" of Marxist-Humanism is not in a totally different realm from politicalization. Indeed it is organic to it, not as an imperative, or religious fervor, but as its lifeblood (its concretization). Politicalization, which we might call "revolutionary-critical-practical," does not exhaust Marxist-Humanism's body of ideas but is a central element of its recreation. —F. Shelley

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by Raya Dunayevskaya

Philosophy and Revolution

From Hegel to Sartre
and from Marx to Mao

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Black/Red View

by John Alan

President Clinton went to Memphis in November to deliver a "sermon" on crime in the African-American community from the same pulpit Martin Luther King gave his last sermon on the journey to the "Mountain-top."

In the style of a revivalist minister, Clinton told a Black audience of clerics and lay people that they need to "meet the crisis of the spirit that is gripping America today" and unless "we do something about crime and violence and drugs that is ravaging the community, we will not be able to repair this country." He gave examples of mindless juvenile crimes and teenage pregnancies and said: these were not the things that "King lived and died for," they are an "abuse of freedom."

Anyone who knows the covert racism of American politics would know at once that Clinton was not carrying a moral crusade to Memphis to save the souls of Black Americans, but was descending into the murky waters of American racist politics, the kind of white fear politics which was the linchpin of the Reagan/Bush administrations. Although he spoke before a Black audience, he indirectly guided his "sermon" to the ears of a larger audience, those white Americans who, in the wake of the Civil Rights Movement, fled the inner cities to white suburbs to avoid racially integrated schools and housing.

Clinton needs the support of these people as he moves to reorganize the crisis-ridden American economy and "reinvent" government. A dramatic way to gain their allegiance is to be tough on Black juvenile crime and violence while standing in King's last pulpit. It assures them that he is not a political captive of African Americans; and, at the same time, he undermines the monopoly Republicans have held over the issue of "Black crime" while pushing Jesse Jackson's longtime crusade

Clinton distorts M.L. King legacy, reality

against Black juvenile violence into the background.

The cost that the African-American community pays for Clinton's racial politics is the vulgarization of Martin Luther King's image, while no prominent African-American leader, political or religious, has the courage to call



Martin Luther King makes his last speech in Memphis.

upon him to apologize. These African-American leaders have no vision of a pathway out of the social disintegration in the inner cities. They have forgotten why King made his fatal trip to Memphis or why that trip was a turning point in the Civil Rights Movement.

Much has been said about King's final sermon and its personal, prophetic content. Clinton, however, appropriates that sermon as a text to tell a Horatio Alger story about great freedoms and achievements gained by the African-American middle class. In telling his story, Clinton blots out the fact that King was invited to come to Memphis by striking Black sanitation workers to help them get a decent wage from a racist city government that had gotten an injunction from a local court denying them their Constitutional right to assemble.

King's first speech in Memphis was the address to these striking workers: "You have assembled for more than 30 days now, to say 'We are tired of being at the

bottom....We are tired of having to live in dilapidated, substandard housing. We are tired of working our hands off and laboring every day and not even making a wage adequate with basic necessities of life. We are tired of our men being emasculated, so that our wives and our daughters have to go out and work in the white ladies' kitchens."

Now these few bare words from King's speech tell the story of the kind of life African Americans were living in the inner cities of this country during a boom time in U.S. capitalism. Poor Blacks not only suffered from the pangs of poverty, but also from a demeaning racism which took from them every iota of self-respect, the very core of their humanity. The truth is: this reality of poverty and alienation is still the way of life for millions of African Americans living in the inner cities.

The tragic martyrdom of King has hidden the dialectic of Black liberation causing him to go to Memphis, that is the self-movement, the self-development of poor Black laborers to end their poverty and alienation. This was a great leap in the practice and thought of the Civil Rights Movement. But it was King alone who saw it as a new development in the Black movement and he thought it could become the basis for the Poor People's March on Washington that he and his colleagues were planning.

African Americans have to make a clear separation between why Martin Luther King went to Memphis 25 years ago and why Clinton made his journey there today. King went there to support Black labor in a battle against poverty and racism. The President went there to engage in the politics of racialism to advance his plan to "repair" American capitalism. He intends to do so by reorganizing the government, economic markets, the welfare system, and the class relationship between labor and capital in the interest of capital accumulation.

The "crisis of the spirit gripping" America today and the social dislocations in the inner cities are the manifestations of both the crisis of capitalism and the absence of a clearly articulated alternative to capitalism.

Black World

(continued from page 1)

Fund), as if Marxism is responsible for the ever-growing discontent, poverty and frustration of the masses, rather than the leadership's state-capitalist programs.

In Uganda, we are told by the leadership that what is new in their revolution is the revival of "African democracy" which is more advanced and indigenous than Western democracy. At the same time, Ugandans are more the daily victims of the horrible AIDS epidemic than any people in the world.

Even in Namibia, where the political consciousness of the masses is unquestionable, the leftist leaders are sliding into the very situation we have witnessed, i.e., the political and economic liberation of the "Vanguard" and the worsening conditions of the masses.

In Eritrea, we are told that the reason why men are occupying the leadership of most of the governmental positions is because there are few educated women capable of managing the affairs of the offices men are managing. This is not what concerned the revolution during the armed struggle. Then, women were in the center of all the activities, they were in the leadership of all types of committees.

So, why now is it that people who were mature enough to take up arms and liberate their country are not today mature enough to take up the responsibility of leadership? Is it accidental that there are more graduate men than women in Eritrea? No, because while women were occupied with the liberation struggle there were more men in Western universities. Do we need professors to run a democratic state?

This is not only the experience in Eritrea. No matter what role women have been playing in liberation struggles, their situation never improves with the coming of victory. What is unique in the case of Eritrea is that nowhere in Africa have women been so visible and militant in great numbers in an arm-struggle as in Eritrea. This is true not only in the military front but on all fronts. Reducing them to a mere accident of history is reminiscent of Bissauian, Angolan and Cuban women. The long political experience of these women is no guarantee against their continued oppression.

Nothing has convinced the Left that the masses are in fact more mature and prepared than they themselves, for they dismiss the mass movements as the people's discontent with one-partyism. The liberal democrats and religious fundamentalists are very clear as to where their political agendas must be directed; and they are clear that the masses are no fools, or that they are not interested in all that the Left claims to represent. So, lost the elections in Angola despite the many years hardship under the leadership of the "Marxists." It is no accident that a down to earth trade union leader won the elections in Zambia, or that the masses preferred Rawlings to the confused pro-democratic politicians in Ghana.

Since the people do not approach the "Party of the People" and ask to be led, we are told to wait until such time as they do before the masses are crowned "mature" and "prepared." Thus, refusing to identify the gap that exists between the masses and the Left will in no way help to draw a clear ideological line in the Left's approach to its ever-growing political confusion. To blame Marx and not the opportunism of the Left for the failure of the African revolutions will not result in a miracle that will save our souls.

—Ba Karang

Families oppose unjust drug laws

Editor's note: An organization called Families Against Discriminative Crack Laws (FADCL) was formed in early 1993 to work to reverse the current huge disparity in federally-mandated prison sentences meted out to those arrested for possession of "crack cocaine" (used primarily by Black inner-city residents) vs. "powder cocaine" (the identical drug in the form used primarily by white suburbanites). Below are excerpts from an interview with two FADCL members.

Mother of a prisoner Barbara Piggee: The idea of the organization came from the prisoners on the inside with the encouragement of the parents. A few of the guys inside got together and came up with the idea of starting this organization to work for changing the law, which was instituted by Congress. You see, Congress had determined that possession of even a small amount of crack cocaine is the most dangerous thing in the world. They are trying to show that they are tough on crime to get more votes.

The fact is that powder cocaine is used more in the white society, but when you ask, "Why don't you give them the same sentencing? How come they get probation?"—no one answers that question. They just want to talk about the war on drugs, the war on crime.

The whole thing is that they can't find a way to stop the other crimes that go on. They don't want to admit that it does with poverty and the fact that there's no education, there are no jobs. And nobody's doing anything about it! We had these different job programs in the '60s, but they all faded into the sunset.

Now they've branded our sons as troublemakers simply because they're trying to stand up for themselves and do something legal, learning about the law. They're being watched. They're being shipped around from prison to prison like pieces of meat. So we have a whole new issue other than what we started out with.

The authorities have said we tried to undermine the security of the prison by forming FADCL. Now, when you stop to realize that the people promoting this organization on the outside are old, poor, arthritis-ridden, broken-down parents on their last leg of hope—we never dreamed that the prisons would take this negatively! We thought they would be pleased because it kept our kids calm, in the law library reading books!

Now my son is considered a dangerous person. He got put on that level, just because he spoke out against the injustices in the judicial system.

Prisoner Roderick Piggee: Over 90% of the crack cases involve Blacks. Where they're not federal cases to start with, the state asks the feds to prosecute, so the accused will get the federally-mandated minimum sentences of 10 and 20 and 30 years. It's really selective prosecution, and I call it a form of genocide against the Black race.

We're not saying that every person in prison under the crack law should just be set free. We're asking for equal justice. We're saying that we should be sentenced according to the powder cocaine guidelines for the year in which we were arrested. I know a case where a guy got caught with 400 kilos [400,000 grams] of powder cocaine, and he got 20 years. But I know a guy that got caught with just 250 grams of crack and he also got 20 years.

A bunch of us were together in the African Cultural Workshop in the prison in Phoenix, and we got shipped out of there because we were all united. The authorities didn't like the fact that there was no gang tension between the Crips and the Bloods. Everybody had come together collectively as one to try and do what they could do. That's really a white person's worst nightmare, to have some Black unity.

I refuse to sit here dormant, to just lay dead, while this goes on with my life. I'm going to do all I can to better my situation. They can put me in the hole, they can transfer me—but whenever they let me out in the population, I'm going to speak my piece. We're trying to help ourselves, and they don't want us to do so.

For more information, contact: FADCL, P.O.B. 62252, Los Angeles, CA 90062.

Peace in shadow of Irish massacres

Editor's note: Our British correspondent sent the following report before the latest revelations confirmed that the British government and the Irish Republican Army (IRA) have been engaging in direct negotiations.

After a quarter century of "The Troubles" in Northern Ireland, which have claimed over 3,000 lives, there is a tantalizing hope for peace, and a present reality of in-canting bloodshed and fear. Hopes were raised by the talks between John Hume, of the Social Democratic and Labor Party, and by Gerry Adams, of Sinn Fein, the militant nationalist party which is linked to the IRA. The Hume/Adams proposals which have not been published probably, envisage an IRA ceasefire, Sinn Fein to be included in all-party talks on the future of the province, and a date to be set for British withdrawal in 25 or 30 years' time.

Reacting against these tentative peace moves, and determined to uphold the Protestant ascendancy, the Loyalist paramilitaries stepped up their attacks on the Catholic/Republican population. The Ulster Defense Association/Ulster Volunteer Force and the Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF) carried out 11 sectarian murders of Catholics in the three months before the IRA's Oct. 23 Shankill bombing. Last year, the trial of Brian Nelson revealed how a "rogue" element in British Intelligence had aided and abetted the Loyalist terror groups.

The IRA bomb which blew up a fish shop in Shankill Road, at the heart of Belfast's Protestant working class community, was intended to "take out" a meeting room upstairs used by the UFF. The bomb exploded prematurely, killing IRA man Thomas Begley and slaughtering nine innocent Protestants doing Saturday afternoon shopping, including two young girls.

After the Shankill bomb, the initiative passed once more to the Loyalist death squads. Their most horrific attack came one week later at Greysteel, a mainly Catholic village of 2,000 residents, where there is a certain tradition of good relations between the Catholic and Protestant communities. The attack was timed at 10 pm on a Saturday night, exactly when the local pub, the Rising Sun, would be most crowded. Two masked gunmen burst in, shouted, "Trick or treat!" (this was Halloween) and sprayed bullets. Seven people died, 11 were wounded. The death toll would have been even worse but for two nurses among the survivors, who gave emergency treatment to the injured. In a period of eight days, from the Shankill bombing to the Greysteel massacre, there were 23 violent deaths, in a province of 1.5 million people.

While there are very real feelings of anguish and despair, and people talk of wanting to leave Northern Ireland, there is a grassroots desire for peace and new human relations. Catholic and Protestant workers together stopped work to support a protest against the Greysteel massacre. This is something to build upon.

Nov. 7, 1993

—Richard Bunting

Struggles by labor, Blacks, women emerge in South

(continued from page 1)

an even longer struggle. We were able to meet with the Furniture Workers Local 282 in-plant negotiating committee which has been fighting to win a decent contract for five years. (See "Somerville Mills," page 3.)

BLACK WOMEN IN THE FOREFRONT

What stood out in our discussions, not only at this plant, but in all of the labor battles we visited in Tennessee and Mississippi, was the emergence of a new dimension of rank-and-file workers' leadership: militant, articulate, savvy young Black women who organized their shops "from the inside," and do not shy away from confronting anyone—management or union.

So objective is this new dimension that it is having an impact in the universities of the South. The Memphis State University Center for Research on Women has joined in a collaborative project with its sister center in Chapel Hill, N.C., to document "Southern Women: The Intersection of Race, Class and Gender," while the union to which the Somerville Mills women belong has been the subject of a Vanderbilt study called "The Local Labor Union As a Social Movement Organization."

What is happening in Somerville is representative of the contradictions which have accompanied the last decade of industrial investment in a region now designated as the "Sunbelt." In the wake of the Mercedes-Benz decision to locate its \$300 million plant in Vance, Ala. The New York Times (10/4/93) concluded that "increasingly, manufacturing in the United States has a Southern accent...The Southern economy, particularly in manufacturing, is outperforming the national one."

At the same time, however, the South's traditional "philosophy of development," as James C. Cobb put it in his book, *The Selling of the South*, "that insured restricted growth, and confirmed rather than threatened established power relationships," is now under sharp challenge from the new human passions and forces that the last decade's economic development has drawn out.

The considerations which drew many corporations to locate labor-intensive plants in the South—low wages, weak unions, cooperative officials in state and local government—have resulted, in the post-Civil Rights Movement period, in many plants with workforces in which Black workers, and often Black women workers, predominate. And despite brutal repression and government collusion, workers in textile and garment, poultry and catfish, furniture and chemicals, have increasingly sought out unions and attempted to organize their plants.

MISSISSIPPI 'CONSPIRACY' CHALLENGED

Nowhere are these struggles today more intense than in Mississippi where they reveal both continuities and discontinuities with Mississippi's infamous "Magnolia Jungle" of the 1960s. Charles Tisdale, publisher of the state's leading Black newspaper, the *Jackson Advocate*, is the man who last year nearly single-handedly investigated and publicized the story of Mississippi's 46 jailhouse hangings. He told us that "Mississippi is not a government in the generally accepted sense of the word. It never was. It is a conspiracy between those who have and those who govern."

In the present battle at Hood Furniture's 10-year-old manufacturing plant in Jackson, all the elements of the old conspiracy are present, with new ones added. (See "Hood Furniture," page 3.) Warren Hood, the principal owner of the company, is also the controlling force behind Deposit Guaranty Bank, one of the state's largest. It was Hood who involved the white, Washington, D.C.-based president of the IUE, William Bywater, in a secret sweetheart contract. To pull off such a deception, Bywater installed an alternate "union" at Hood Furniture against the wishes of the workers.

None of the Jackson-based Black civil rights, political, or church leaders stepped forward to fight the deal. Tisdale, whose *Jackson Advocate* broke the story, allowing rank-and-file workers and Local 282 officers to tell what really happened, was subsequently threatened by Hood. What neither Hood nor Bywater counted on was the fierce and persistent resistance by the rank-and-file Black workers—to the sweetheart contract.

When we met with these workers, they were wearing bright yellow T-shirts which proclaimed their loyalty to Local 282 and denounced the contract. One man asked:

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"When will there be a job with human rights where we can work?"

DEVELOPMENT, ECONOMIC AND HUMAN?

In one or another form, this question is at the root of the debates on economic development now raging in Mississippi. How to "catch up" economically, in a state many describe as a "Third World" economy? The many questions we heard about NAFTA, both from workers and from students at Jackson State University, were connected with this concern. Would Mississippi lose the new manufacturing jobs of the last decade? If corporations came South for low wages, why wouldn't they go further south—to Mexico—for even lower wages?

In Holmes County, Miss., we met with Arnette Lewis of the Rural Organizing and Cultural Center. Lewis argued that "Mississippi has one of the highest rates of Black elected officials. But now there's a shift. We have to be much more economically focused if we are going to do something about poverty here."

What became clear, in these discussions on Black economic reality was that struggles for human conditions of life and labor were bound up with current battles over the meaning of Black history, and with searches for new vantage points in history and philosophy.

The battles over the meaning of Black history could not be more current. While we were in Memphis, Presi-

Who killed Leroy Jackson?

Ranchos de Taos, N.M.—Leroy Jackson, a Navajo active in environmental affairs, was found dead in a remote region of northwestern New Mexico on Oct. 9. His body was found wrapped in a blanket in the back seat of his van. In his pocket, according to stories spreading like wildfire all over the Southwest, was a plane ticket for Washington, D.C. Indeed, he planned to meet with John Leshy, solicitor general of the Department of the Interior, and with Ada Deer, head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

According to what has been released to the public about the autopsy, "there is no reason to believe Jackson died of natural causes." His widow has already stated that she believes he was murdered.

The eerie comparisons with the case of the late Karen Silkwood are inevitable. Silkwood blew the whistle on nuclear contamination at one of the facilities of the giant Kerr-McGee Corporation, and died in a mysterious auto accident. It is widely believed that she was murdered.

In one of the more elegant ironies of history, it turns out that Native America is sitting on a very great part of the remaining mineral and timber wealth of the United States. The result is constant turmoil. The much-publicized Hopi-Navajo land dispute, for example, is not so much about the peoples involved—as it is about the fierce desire of Peabody Coal and others to get at the billions of cubic feet of coal lying under Navajo and Hopi lands. This, incidentally, would require billions of gallons of scarce water to process.

Another cause of strife is a plan to clearcut 18 million board feet of timber in the Chuska mountains of northeastern Arizona. Clashing here are traditional religious and cultural beliefs, the insatiable needs of the market for timber, the needs of Indian reservations where unemployment is humongous. Leroy Jackson was the co-founder of Dineh CARE, an environmental organization that some felt challenged the need for jobs.

But how did the whole complex question get reduced to the false dichotomy of jobs or the environment? And whose interests are served by the notion that we must either continue as we are or "freeze in the dark"?

—Joanne Forman

Giuliani's racist victory

New York, N.Y.—White conservative Republican Rudolph Giuliani defeated New York's first Black mayor, David Dinkins, in the November election. Giuliani voiced several "key issues." One was "crime," another was the decline of the economic viability of New York. No one said the word "race," they said "crime" or "fear," but break down each borough's vote and you see the mayoral race was about race.

Giuliani said his first act would be to reinstate "street-level drug busts," and anyone who doesn't understand that that means giving the police carte blanche to harass minority youth is living in Never-Never-Land.

It is interesting to see the Black leadership who had been for the bourgeoisie now calling for a "third party," feeling the Democratic Party has betrayed the interests of Blacks in New York City. They use the fact that Democrats Hevesi and Green were elected comptroller and ombudsman by a large majority. So it's obvious many whites voted for Democrats except Dinkins.

On the other hand you have another segment like Congressman Charles Rangel and other elected Blacks who are saying, "No, we still represent Blacks." So you already have factions going at each other over the crumbs. The crux is, neither faction knows what Black youth on the streets are going to do, and that's why they are talking "third party."

Black youth can't get a job or a good education. They have to be wondering, "They don't even accept a mild-mannered guy like Dinkins, what is in this country for me?" It is obvious neither Al Sharpton nor Dinkins, who was the champion of the bourgeoisie's point of view, and certainly not the elected officials, are making a difference. It is obvious the Black nationalists aren't doing it. And nobody knows what form the next revolt will take.

—Ray McKay

dent Clinton arrogantly attempted to appropriate the legacy of Dr. King by accusing Blacks of "abusing the freedom" King fought for—while speaking in the Memphis church in which King had made his last speech. That sort of reading of the legacy of the 1960s Black movement for freedom is at odds with what youth are thinking today. Two days earlier, we had listened to an account of how teenage youth from the Rural Organizing and Cultural Center researched, wrote, and published an oral history of the Civil Rights Movement in Holmes County, *Minds Stayed on Freedom*. These youth concluded that it wasn't any elite, but "the dirt farmers" who sparked the movement there.

American Civilization on Trial, written in 1963, just as the Holmes County movement was gathering momentum, also sought to single out the human dimensions which have driven U.S. freedom struggles forward. In it, Raya Dunayevskaya pointed to the way "the first appearance of trade unions and workingmen's parties in the U.S. paralleled the greatest of the slave revolts and the emergence of the Abolitionist movement. This parallelism is the characteristic feature of American class struggle. Only when these two great movements coalesce do we reach decisive turning points in U.S. development." "What is needed now," she went on to say, "is a new Humanism."

The thirst for such new liberating vantage points in both history and philosophy was evident both among workers and on the campuses we visited. At Memphis State and at Jackson State, discussions with faculty and students on "Hegel and Frantz Fanon," and on "revolutionary Black journalism" were among the most illuminating ones of our trip.

The objectivity of that thirst was seen clearly in our meetings with worker-activists at Delta Pride Catfish, in Indianola, Miss. We arrived just as the impact of the new three-year contract signed Oct. 31 was being hotly debated by workers there. The contract, the third since workers at Delta Pride voted in UFCW (Food and Commercial Workers) Local 1259 in 1987, was controversial. It was ratified by a vote of 226 to 23, but many workers did not attend the meetings.

DELTA PRIDE UNION AT CROSSROADS

Sarah White, chief steward at the Indianola plant and one of the original in-plant organizers, told us of the two-month-long negotiations:

"I feel like we got a darn good contract. The only problem is with the wage scale. On that, for the older people, with more seniority, we have moved; but for the younger people, we did not. We had a lot of gap-holes in the old contract. Now we have closed up all the gap-holes, and it's in real plain language anyone can read.

"In the old contract, you only got time and a half after 40 hours. Now you get it after eight hours in a day—this will stop a lot of abusing people on overtime work. We got a lot more control over break time—it has to be within 30 minutes of midway between start-up and lunch, instead of whenever the supervisor decides. We won a 20¢ premium for the night shift, and a premium for training other workers. We stopped the company forcing you to go to another department after you put eight hours in your own department.

"But what I feel bad about is that I had in my heart that we would show the company that this is the time we would end these poverty wages. We didn't do that; we ended up with a pretty good increase for workers with more than seven years, less for four years or more, and only the regular service raises for the people with three years or less. People just weren't ready to strike like they had in 1990. We had been working on 25-to-30-hours-a-week wages for six months. I ask myself how you know whether you've done the right thing."

The challenges facing Delta Pride workers, and all the new workers' organizations which have sprung up across the South, are formidable. They include not only the old political-economic order unique to the South, especially Mississippi—an order which has taken on some very new forms today—but also ideological pollution which threatens any new grassroots movement. This ideological pollution, which originated with the Reagan retrogression of the early 1980s, has today penetrated deeply into the labor movement itself, with its acceptance of concessions contracts, "quality management" agreements, and Clinton's new "workplace of the future" initiative.

In the Mississippi Delta, new grassroots movements, which never get reported in the press, are continuing to emerge in the atmosphere which followed the successful 1990 Delta Pride strike. In October, some 400 Black workers at Modern Line Products in Indianola, members of the Steelworkers union, staged a wildcat strike to protest firings under a new personnel manager's system. After a march from the union hall to the plant, and a two-day strike, the company gave in. Meanwhile, workers at Fruit of the Loom, a huge new plant in Greenville, Miss., with about 1,000 workers, are looking for a union to help them fight intolerable working conditions.

For Margaret Hollins, another Delta Pride steward, and for Sarah White, part of their response to the new movements and new challenges is to begin writing a book about the Delta Pride struggle, from its birth in 1986 to today. They want to "turn the plantation mentality around, to say something to every worker about what we went through."

When we returned to Chicago, and reported on what we had seen and heard in Tennessee and Mississippi, one retired Black worker responded: "Labor in the South has the experience of 244 years of slavery, and all that came after it. I believe that what happens with these movements of workers in the South today may determine the future of all workers in this country."

Youth

25 years after Paris '68

Making revolution thinkable

by Maya Jhansi

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the great rebellion in France, 1968 when thousands of rebelling students were joined by ten million workers on general strike. Where the '60s saw the greatness of youth activism, 25 years later many youth and adults think that the world can't be changed and the very idea of revolution has become unthinkable. To battle this attitude I would like to jam up the anniversary of 1968 with another anniversary—that of the publication of Raya Dunayevskaya's work, *Philosophy and Revolution*.

1968 was the closest that contemporary Western society has come to total revolution, when the idealism of youth was united with the creativity of labor and the rallying cry was, "Tout est possible!" Despite its greatness the movement collapsed with such a resounding thud that we can still hear echoes of its failure today. The movement capitulated to the ideological machinations of DeGaulle and the French Communist Party, which succeeded in keeping the workers to reformist demands without DeGaulle's army firing a single shot.

While there are umpteen theories about why '68 failed, one fact seems clear: that it collapsed, not through external pressure (like the military), but through its own internal contradictions. This is a fact that today's revolutionaries must grapple with since the failure of '68 is often used as proof that liberation is impossible. In the final chapter of *Philosophy and Revolution* (P&R), Dunayevskaya critiques the '60s youth for thinking that activism alone was sufficient and that theory could be picked up "en route" to the new society. This evasion of theory ultimately left the students unprepared to battle the perversions of Marxism that the French Communist Party used to sabotage the movement.

For many participants of '68, this collapse signaled the death of the idea of genuine revolution. For Dunayevskaya, however, the fact that it collapsed through its own internal contradictions meant that revolutionaries had to take philosophical responsibility to work out those contradictions.

A POINT CENTRAL to grasping the importance of this is the distinction Dunayevskaya makes between the decade of the '50s and the '60s. She argues that the East European revolts against so-called Communism in the '50s as well as the Montgomery Bus Boycott initiated a new epoch in thought. Paris, 1968, however, did not. To be an "epochal new beginning" a new stage of revolt must initiate a new stage in thought which cannot be erased from history even if it is defeated. The revolt of the workers in East Germany in 1953, the first workers' revolt against so-called Communism, raised the whole question of the Humanism of Marxism—projecting a vision of total freedom as against "Communist" totalitarianism.¹

That 1968 did not achieve such a new stage in thought meant that the responsibility for projecting a banner of liberation could not be left on the shoulders of the movement from practice but was ours. We can no longer take for granted that the possibilities for freedom that open up in a moment of rebellion will become actual. We have to make them actual. How to do that is a theoretical question that can be worked out. That is why Dunayevskaya wrote about the need to take responsibility for the development from theory to the philosophy of revolution.

She did not begin P&R, as many wanted her to, with all the movements of the '60s (that's chapter 9), but with the section entitled "Why Hegel? Why Now?" in which she develops the category of Absolute Negativity as New Beginning. This original category which she defines as "beginning with the totality" is the deepening of Marx's concept of revolution in permanence for our age.² Following the decade of the '60s, with its pragmatic refusal to deal with theory, what was needed was a re-creation of a deeper concept of freedom than those revolts projected—a recapturing of the revolutionary vision of Marx for our age. This is what P&R does.

Dunayevskaya challenges us to immerse ourselves in

the historic development of the idea of freedom and not accept our age of failed and aborted revolutions as a given that we are limited by. Why not instead seize control of our future and this time be theoretically prepared?

The world seems very vast—from the problems in the Middle East to the ongoing genocide in Bosnia to the alienating conditions right here at home. I think my generation is oppressively aware that demonstration after demonstration will not change the world. We need a total way out. Only philosophy can give us a total outlook. I think that the idea of "beginning from the totality" can give us the revolutionary direction needed to bring the ongoing revolts worldwide to fruition in a freedom-filled future.

1. See Dunayevskaya's 1977-78 *Perspectives* for an extended discussion of this distinction between the '50s and '60s and its relationship to P&R.

2. See the 1976 speech printed in the November 1993 issue of *News & Letters*.

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to hear
from you!



Send your responses to our paper and stories about what is happening at your school, on your campus, or in your neighborhood to: *News & Letters*, 59 E. Van Buren, Rm. 707, Chicago, IL 60605.

Youth in Revolt

by Marna Leber

Students at the Institute of Technology in Cambodia held a mass protest demanding that English replace French as the language of instruction in their school. Street demonstrators targeted the French government's "colonial arrogance" for tying aid to the institution with the imposition of the French language in classrooms. Since 1991 when the United Nations began administering Cambodia, France has pushed to reimpose the cultural hegemony it practiced from 1945-1955, when Cambodia was a French Colony. After meeting with Cambodian government officials in October, the protesting students returned to their classes but expressed determination to pursue their demands.

* * *

Yu Zhou, the Chinese student who was arrested for hanging posters in 1992 to mark the anniversary of the Tiananmen Square democracy movement, has been sentenced to two years in prison. He was convicted for "spreading counter-revolutionary propaganda."

* * *

Demonstrations continue on almost a daily basis in San Francisco against Mayor Frank Jordan's "Operation Quality of Life," which is a police crackdown on poor people for "crimes" like begging and sleeping in public. Lately the cops have been arresting boys who skateboard on the Justin Herman Plaza at the touristy Embarcadero shopping center. The cops are doing daily sweeps, stealing the boards, and arresting young people, most of whom are from the Tenderloin and Civic Center and have nowhere else to hang out. One 12-year-old said, "You'd think they'd be glad we aren't out committing crimes or something, but they really just don't want us here 'cause we are kids."

about our civil rights?

Recall if you will the situation of Nisei (Japanese American) soldiers who served in Europe during World War II while their families were imprisoned at Manzanar, Tule Lake, or other camps (1942-1945). U.S. corporations recruited Mexicans to exploit in the fields and factories under the Bracero Act (1943), and when the economy took a downturn, deported them under "Operation Wetback" (1953-1956); all the while Chicano soldiers were fighting in Korea.

While Blacks were fighting against "the communists" in Vietnam, Blacks at home were fighting against police brutality and racist oppression....And while women were getting closer to the frontlines during the Persian Gulf War, they were losing ground in the struggle for reproductive rights under the Bush administration....

It is a contradiction for the lesbian and gay community to use the military to acquire "civil rights"; the military is an institution which violates human rights throughout the Third World....

Q*POC calls on the mainstream lesbian and gay community to address issues such as poverty, violence against all people, racism, affordable housing, the fight for same sex marriage, and Queer civil rights, to name but a few....It is time for us to come out of the closet against the military.

Cops fingerprint kids

Chicago, Ill.—The piercing cries of a five-year-old Mexican boy echoed through the halls of a school in the Division Street neighborhood. As I passed him, he was sitting on the floor with his legs spread apart and his arms hugging the edge of the doorway. His teacher had her arm around him saying, "Oh, come inside. They won't hurt you. Do you want me to let them do it to me first, so you can see that it doesn't hurt?" The kid wasn't going for it.

Were they giving all the kids in this poor neighborhood free flu shots or free dental exams?

I walked into a bilingual second grade classroom filled with smiling Mexican and Puerto Rican seven-year-olds proudly wearing plastic stars that said "Special Deputy of the Cook County Sheriff." Throwing up my arms in mock surprise I shouted, "Please don't arrest me! I'm innocent!" Without missing a beat, a boy stuck an imaginary gun in my face and said, "Keep your hands up, you're under arrest!" and got up to cuff me.

Another seven-year-old cop nabbed a classmate. "Up against the wall!" he commanded with a loaded finger aimed at the boy's head, "Spread your legs." Then he began to expertly pat him down.

Getting serious, I asked them where they got the badges, and they told me from the police. But it became clear that this went beyond the usual "take a bite out of crime" propaganda sweeps, when a girl proudly took out a copy of her fingerprints to show to me. The police were only giving the badges to the kids who brought in permission slips allowing themselves to be fingerprinted. When I asked the kids why the police wanted their fingerprints, they said, "It's in case we get lost."

Besides identifying a body or an amnesia victim, it's hard to imagine what use fingerprints would be in the search for a lost child. I think the children's own imaginative play better illustrates their understanding of the relationship of the cops to their community. Or as a seventh grader in the same school put it to me a couple of weeks earlier, "The cops are just another gang. When they put you in the cuffs, they always put them on too tight, and then they hit you in the back of the head."

Mike Davis, the author of *City of Quartz*, an important work on Los Angeles, points out in a recent interview that L.A. is becoming a model in the transformation of the policing of major cities into full scale counter-insurgencies against the Latino and Black populations. He singles out both the LAPD's Operation Hammer, which uses "anti-gang" dragnets in an effort to create a comprehensive data base on virtually every Latino and Black youth in the city, and the federal "Weed and Seed" program that is already in effect in 16 different cities, including Chicago, as examples of this trend towards viewing Latinos and Blacks as "a terrorist population" who need to be surveilled and controlled.

In that context, despite the reassurances of his kindergarten teacher, I think the boy who refused to go along with his own surveillance was right on target.

—Jim Guthrie

AIDS discrimination fights

Chicago, Ill.—Some 250 activists rallied at the doors of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) here Dec. 1. The organizers of the protest chose this time, "World AIDS Day," to expose the plight of homeless people whose health is imperilled by their living conditions.

One of the chants—"AIDS is a disaster, the homeless die faster!"—summed up the issue. One-third to one-half of all people with AIDS are homeless or close to it. And estimates of the homeless infected with the HIV virus range from 15% officially to 40% by care providers.

Although HUD regulations give preference to the homeless and disabled, the department doesn't consider HIV-positive or AIDS as a priority condition when reviewing applicants. Instead, to be eligible, people with AIDS must be homeless or living in shelters, where tuberculosis and other predatory diseases abound. And they must wait four years for placement!

During the rally, members of ACT UP, social service workers who look for housing for HIV-infected individuals, and other activists got the HUD regional director, Edwin Eisendrath, to schedule a meeting. Yet a rally speaker cautioned, "We will sit down for the first time since beginning of this plague to talk, but if HUD refuses to open up, we'll be back!"

—Jim Mills

Sacramento, Cal.—On Oct. 29, hundreds of people demonstrated for better health care for people with AIDS and for improved health care in state prisons. The ACT UP sponsored demonstration included a Day of the Dead "Political Funeral," and was a response to the state health budget disaster.

Chanting "Health care is a right—act up, fight back, fight AIDS," marchers swarmed over the state capitol building. People traveled from as far as Los Angeles and San Diego to demand no cuts in SSI, AFDC, and Medi-Cal benefits, as well as a state-funded needle exchange. Demonstrators were peeved that funding has not kept up with the growing AIDS caseload.

One woman said, "Since I tested positive five years ago, I've lost my job, my house, my husband, and my children. Now I'm about to lose my welfare and my Medi-Cal. I for one, can't take this anymore."

A young Black man unfurled a banner that read "Clinton Lies, Humans Die, Universal Health Care Now!"

—Lynn Hailey

The U.S. military is no road to gay liberation

Editor's note: Queer People of Color (Q*POC) is "an empowerment organization...actively involved in 'making the connections' between race, gender, sexuality and class." What follows are excerpts from their position paper on Lesbian & Gay Rights and the Military sent to News & Letters by two students at Pomona College. For the full statement, write to: Queer* People of Color, P.O. B. 1213, Claremont, CA 91711.*

The military-industrial complex gives a false sense of national security and economic stability. Politicians use war to remove public scrutiny from recessions, savings and loan bailouts, systematic disemployment, homelessness, and lack of health care....

Social stratification determines, for the most part, who serves in the military. The military is disproportionately comprised of Latino and African Americans. While middle and upper income people have the ability to avoid the military, the working poor often have to resort to the military to obtain education, health care, job training, and economic stability.

Lesbians and gays want to openly "defend" the U.S.—a government which does not grant same sex marriages, and which seeks to criminalize us through such things as anti-sodomy laws and Amendment 2 (Colorado). So to our queer white sisters and brothers we ask: How do you think serving in the military will bring

Our Life and Times

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

The economic crisis of the 1990s is by far the worst experienced by Western Europe since 1945, with unemployment rates averaging nearly 12% for the entire region, nearly double that in the U.S. This deep crisis, with worse in store for 1994 even according to bourgeois economists, has led to some unprecedented developments.

One sign of the times is what has been dubbed "Red Friday" in Belgium, when on Nov. 26 Belgian workers staged their first general strike since 1936. Red Friday was a protest against an economic austerity plan voted by parliament which will cut deeply into the standard of living of the working people. Taxes on investment income will be cut in half, there will be less spending on

Labor unrest in Spain

Spanish autoworkers held a series of strikes in October and November against SEAT which had announced plans to close its largest and oldest factory, Zona Franca, in 1994 and eliminate 9,000 jobs. SEAT, Spain's only national car maker, was bought out by Volkswagen in 1986 and is the country's largest industrial employer.

Workers struck at all four SEAT factories, halting production, and were joined by other workers and supporters in a demonstration of 20,000 people on Nov. 9 in Barcelona. VW presented a new plan to slash workers' jobs but keep the factory open as a parts supplier.

Labor unrest is growing in Spain where official unemployment is now up to a staggering 23%. The newly re-elected "Socialist" government, looking for new foreign investment, has pledged to make it easier for capitalists to get rid of workers who now have the legal right to lay-off benefits of 20 days pay per year worked.

More murders in El Salvador

Death squads in El Salvador murdered four leftists during one week in October. Francisco Velis, a former leader of the FMLN, was shot to death at close range on the streets of San Salvador. Heleno Castro, also a FMLN leader, was killed while driving on a rural road. An unnamed couple who were former guerrillas were assassinated while the woman was breast-feeding their child.

While reportedly there were three former guerrillas killed last year already 23 murders have been recorded this year. The increasing openness of the death squads comes together with reports that the Cristiani government is stalling on dismantling the National Police, the paramilitary force most responsible for death squad activity. The peace accords which ended the civil war in El Salvador called for breaking up the National Police, but it has instead grown by over 2,000 in the last few months.

Two current right-wing rulers, the Vice President and the mayor of San Salvador, have been implicated in death squad murders by the over 12,000 documents released under pressure in November by the U.S. Departments of State and Defense, and the CIA. The documents, covering the years 1979-1990, also clearly indict the Reagan and Bush administrations for working with notorious death squad leaders like Roberto d'Aubuisson. The Clinton administration, however, has remained presidentially silent on these crimes.

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

Economic crisis and revolt in Western Europe

social security benefits, plus a three-year ban on any wage increases going beyond inflation levels.

During the strike, not only were factories and shipyards shut down, but rail, bus and air transport was stopped, while schools, shops and banks were also forced to close. Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene was unmoved, however, and said the austerity measures were necessary to improve Belgium's competitiveness. With unemployment already at 14%, class antagonisms are sure to increase.

The parliamentary debate in France over a proposed job-sharing plan would have workers' hours reduced from 39 to 33 hours and their pay also cut proportionately. These new 5/6 time jobs would supposedly create jobs for some of the 11.8% of the French labor force which is unemployed.

While the current French proposal is hardly revolutionary and would even roll back some workers' rights

such as premiums for overtime or night work, the debate struck a responsive chord. For the first time in decades it opened up for discussion in the mass media the question of why, with the productivity of capitalist economies so high, part of the population is overworked while another part is left to suffer unemployment, poverty, and even homelessness.

This core contradiction of capitalism was pointed to by Marx in his famous 1856 "Speech on the Anniversary of the Peoples Paper," when he stated that "machinery, gifted with the wonderful power of shortening and fruitifying labor, we behold starving and overworking it."

France has also been experiencing social unrest. In late October, a violent strike by Air France workers against proposed massive layoffs and pay cuts shut down Paris airports. As strikers battled riot police for their right to a job, opinion polls showed that 70% of the population supported the strikers.

France has seen some new student demonstrations as well. Students are opposing budget cuts and the lack of enough professors to staff university courses, especially in increasingly popular fields like psychology and sociology. The protests grew louder after the conservative education minister said that the students had no real grievances, but were being manipulated by Communists.

At the same time, German employers have gone on the offensive, arguing that the gains of the postwar German labor movement—a 37-hour average workweek, 30 days paid vacation, relatively high wages, etc.—must be slashed if Germany is to be "competitive." So far, the strength of organized labor has prevented major cutbacks, but the power of the highly bureaucratized German unions is gradually eroding as the size of the industrial labor force shrinks due to automation. Union leaders are increasingly admitting also that they are out of touch with younger workers, and have recently given lip service to issues such as "humanization" of the work place and ecology.

Volkswagen, reeling under the economic crisis, has gotten the union leaders up to accept a four-day, 28.8-hour work week (down from the current 36 hours) with a 20% cut in pay, saying that if the unions would not accept this plan, then the company would reduce its work force from 108,000 to 70,000 by 1995. In Western Germany, the unemployment rate has already climbed from 6% a year ago to 7.6% today, while in the East, it rose in the same period from 13.5% to 15.3%.

Italy votes for the Left

The recent municipal elections held in November and December showed a marked turn to the Left by Italian voters. After a year of corruption and mafia scandals, voters were ready to kick out the two parties most implicated, the long-dominant rightist Christian Democrats and the slightly left of center Socialist Party.

Majorities went to leftist coalitions dominated by the Democratic Party of the Left (PDS), the renamed Communist Party. In the South, the neo-fascist Italian Social Movement gained some headway, while in the North the pro-business and anti-immigrant regionalist party, the Northern League, also gained, but neither of these newer rightist groups did as well as expected. Only last June, the Northern League swept to victory in Milan on a racist platform with 57% of the vote.

This time, leftist slates outpolled the League in Venice and Genoa. In Rome, the leftist slate, led by a 39-year-old ecologist, Francesco Rutelli, also defeated the neo-fascists. The same pattern held in normally more conservative southern Italy. In a closely watched contest in Naples, the leftist candidate easily defeated Alessandra Mussolini, granddaughter of the fascist dictator, receiving 54% to her 46%, while in mafia-ridden Palermo the left of center La Rete slate won a landslide victory in the first round, with 74% of the vote.

To be sure, the rise of the Right, especially the neo-fascist Right, is not to be underestimated, but their coming to power is no longer an immediate danger. They have been roundly repudiated by the voters. It should also be noted, however, that the PDS and its allies are hardly a real alternative to capitalistic ideology or reality. Last year, for example, PDS-led unions agreed to massive wage cuts until rank-and-file pressure forced their leader to resign temporarily, after which the unions had to reverse themselves.

Puerto Rican elections

In a November referendum, the proposal that Puerto Rico become the 51st state drew only 46% of the vote, and was therefore defeated narrowly by those voting to retain the present status, that of a commonwealth or colony of the U.S., which drew 48.4%. The option of independence drew only 4.4%.

This should not be interpreted as an endorsement of the status quo, however. Many of those voting for commonwealth status did so because they believed that statehood would mean the imposition of English and the destruction of Puerto Rico's centuries-old culture.



Randall Dennison

Independence rally in Puerto Rico.

Some observers have noted that because the mass media and established political discourse have made independence seem impractical or linked to terrorism, plus the fact that pro-independence groups have experienced government repression and even murder, many did not actually vote for that alternative even though they do yearn for greater independence.

With unemployment in Puerto Rico at 17% officially and even higher in real terms, with persistent poverty and economic underdevelopment, few deny that the island is in crisis. This explains why the turnout in the election was 73%, higher than in most U.S. elections.

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

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

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

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