

NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

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25¢

The American way: poverty wages



by B. Ann Lastelle

Here we go again. One Wednesday line #2 made 92 pallets of product; the rate is 72 pallets. The line leader proudly announced the feat the next morning at our kickoff meeting, and our supervisor praised the people who had worked on that line. One co-worker asked: "If the rate is 72, what sense does it make to do 92? They'll just raise the rate for that job." Our supervisor said that if she really didn't understand, he would explain it to her after the meeting.

What he said was that if we make the product faster, using fewer "man hours," we make it cheaper; the company will make more money; and we thereby secure our jobs. One problem with his line of reasoning is that, of the 14 people on line #2 that day, only two—the line leader and me—were Helene Curtis employees.

The 12 others were day laborers, whose jobs are never secure. Just the opposite: the faster we all work, the fewer hours they work. Sure enough, by Friday only two lines (instead of five) were running—and only 33 people (instead of over 60) were working—because we had done "so well" earlier in the week. Fewer than 40 hours at \$4.50 an hour is hardly a living wage.

Karl Marx, in his analysis of capitalist production in *Capital*, established the value of labor power—what workers sell to the capitalist, their ability to labor—as equal to the value of the necessities of life. The capitalist makes a profit by forcing workers to labor longer and harder than they would have to to merely produce the equivalent value of their own needs. In the search for ever greater profit, the capitalist may also resort to lowering wages below the value of labor power, below the level at which workers can maintain themselves and their children.

Marx noted: "What experience shows to the capitalist generally is a constant excess of population... Hence capital is reckless of the health or length of life of the laborer, unless under compulsion from society." He gave an

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Black World

1964 — the Summer that never ended



by Lou Turner

The Civil Rights Movement (CRM) brought many things to pass. The interminable memorialization of the Movement's milestones with conferences, commemorations, museum exhibits and "homecomings" continues to evoke "remembrance of things past." More often than not, however, these nostalgic pilgrimages evince the raw reality of a present where the spirit of "freedom now!" has long since succumbed to a spirit of piling despair.

Memorials to the CRM often confront us with just how profoundly unfinished the revolution is. This is unavoidable, despite all efforts to limit such gatherings to the spirit of reunion and remembrance, which was the intention of the organizers of the 30th anniversary commemoration of the 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer Project, held in Jackson, Mississippi, June 23-26.

As remote as so abstruse a philosopher as Hegel might appear to be from the Mississippi Blackbelt, his philosophic description of the outcome of all practical movements aimed at realizing the Good is strangely apropos when considering today's post-Civil Rights reality. In the aftermath of such movements, "There are still two worlds in opposition," writes Hegel, "one a realm of subjectivity in the pure regions of transparent thought, the other a realm of objectivity in the element of an externally manifold actuality that is an undisclosed realm of darkness" (*Science of Logic*, trans. A.V. Miller, p. 820).

Whatever may be said of the subjectivity that inhabits the "pure regions of transparent thought," for instance, its evoking of historical memory with freedom songs and testimonials, or the assertion of fresh commitments of our personal and collective will to new struggles, there is no avoiding the fact that the key to the "unresolved contradiction" between thought and reality is the troubling question of how to face that "externally manifold actuality that is an undisclosed realm of darkness."

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Draft for Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, 1994-95

The objectivity of philosophy in today's world crises



'Militant Black women lead southern labor battles.'



'Unemployed—casualties of China's economic 'boom.'

I. Dialectics of organization and economic reality

News and Letters Committees publishes the Draft of its Perspectives Thesis each year directly in the pages of *N&L*. We urge your participation in our discussion around this thesis because our age is in such total crisis that no revolutionary organization can allow any separation between theory and practice, workers and intellectuals, "inside" and "outside," philosophy and organization. We are raising questions and ask you to help in working out the answers.

Nowhere is the hypocrisy of U.S. foreign policy more evident than in regard to Haiti. After renegeing on his campaign promise not to turn away the Haitian boat people fleeing the murderous regime of General Cedras, and after allowing Cedras' army to perpetrate thousands more political murders, President Clinton has suddenly feigned compassion for the tortured Haitian masses by sending signals for a possible invasion of Haiti. It has included such markers as rounding up political consensus from world leaders, especially in the Caribbean and Latin America; tightening the economic sanctions; presenting a Black point-man in former Congressman William Gray to front U.S. imperialist policy; and the ever-ready rationale of "protecting American lives" for public consumption at home.

What drives Clinton's actions is neither the sharp denunciation of his duplicitous policies by ousted Haitian President Aristide nor any concern with the needs of the Haitian people. It is rather his effort to "vindicate U.S. leadership" and the "credibility" of U.S. military forces, as Secretary of State Warren Christopher put it at a recent Senate subcommittee hearing.

This need to "vindicate U.S. leadership" flows from the mishaps which have afflicted recent U.S. foreign policy, especially in Somalia and Bosnia. Despite the illusion that the collapse of Communism and the U.S. "victory" in the Gulf War would usher in a "new era" of American dominance, recent events have instead demonstrated the limits of U.S. prowess. As a result, Clinton has become selective about entangling himself in new forms of intervention overseas.

For that reason, and for the moment, the simmering crisis on the Korean peninsula is being left to simmer. Clinton's diffidence about the ability of the U.S. to impose "order" overseas may even lead him into an arrangement that would stop short of the outright invasion of Haiti. However, since Haiti is seen as far less entrapping an area than other global hotspots, it has been chosen as the location for "demonstrating U.S. resolve."

These realities have their origin in the economic crisis at home. The inseparability of economic-political crises from ideology has always been the hallmark of our state-capitalist age. What has intensified today with Clintonomics is the inseparability of domestic crises from the conduct of foreign policy. So deep is the economic and political morass of this most affluent nation that U.S. capitalism no longer possesses the material resources to supply the basic needs of the mass of its populace—let alone provide for the rest of

the world. That is starkly shown by the social agenda of that "New Democrat," Bill Clinton.

A. 'Ending welfare as we have known it' or restructuring poverty?

The growth of homelessness and poverty in the U.S. received a new bureaucratic impetus with Clinton's June 11 unveiling of his \$9.3 billion welfare reform program. The most draconian welfare plan ever proposed by an American president, it includes punitive measures against young women having children and a two year limit to benefits. The architect of the infamous "benign neglect" of the Nixon administration, sociologist-cum-Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, beamed with glee that Clinton was "the first President in our history to have the courage and nobility to address the problem of out-of-wedlock births." Social relations were so turned upside down that the noble, the humanism of the poor, is made to appear "base," while the base, the demonization of the poor, is made to appear "noble."

The announcement of Clinton's plan coincided with the NAACP-sponsored African-American leadership summit, called to face the social crisis in Black reality. That not a word about Clinton's attack on the poor was uttered at the concluding press conference of the Baltimore summit where "leadership, leadership, leadership" was the order of the day, is a measure of the failure not only of this summit but of post-Civil Rights Black leadership historically. The only thing that unified the disparate agendas at the summit was their defense against the media-generated clamor for them to disavow the anti-semitism of Louis Farrakhan—a self-righteous defense of their own noble yearning to "never again allow an external force to attempt to dictate with whom we can meet."

The Republican Right wasted no time in brandishing its criticism of Clinton's welfare reform, motivated no doubt by their chagrin at him stealing their agenda. Where Clinton usurped the conservative crime issue earlier this year with his "three strikes and you're out" Crime Bill, his Welfare Plan stipulates "two years and you're kicked off," whether you have a job or not. Moreover, he intends to pay for his program by reducing spending for other social programs, especially for immigrants. "Ending welfare as we have known it" Clinton-style will therefore not end poverty, but only restructure it.

This restructuring of poverty flows from the restructuring of the U.S. economy over the last two decades—a restructuring which has disclosed the most uneven differentiation of American capital accumulation in this century. **De-industrialization** of the Northeast, Midwest and parts of the far West, along with **re-industrialization** of the South, is the

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Women's history in civil rights debated

by Laurie Green

So many discussions at the Third Southern Conference on Women's History at Rice University in Houston June 2-5, represented serious efforts to grapple with the South's legacy of freedom struggles, that the conference often transcended the bounds of academia. Particularly significant was that many focused on women civil rights activists—their historical significance, their invisibility in historical accounts and their legacy.

The choice of Houston as a site for the conference drew attention to the neglect of the Latino dimensions of Texas and Florida. Traditionally, Chicanos and Latinos

Woman as Reason

have been viewed as "not really part of the South" because they don't fit the Old South model of development. However, the absence of Chicanos at the conference was as striking as the small number of women from historically Black colleges.

Significantly the first speaker was Evelyn Nakano Glenn, a Japanese American historian. Her talk, "Beyond Biracialism: Multi-Racial Relations and Regional History," addressed the invisibility of women in the South who don't fit into "bi-racial" (Black-white) categories. Glenn warned against erasing the rich diversity of women's positions at the intersection of race, class, ethnicity and gender. She also argued that different groups of women have power over other women.

Thinking back on some comments that followed, however, I worried that this discussion sidestepped Black-white relations as hegemonic in the U.S. specifically because of the history of slavery and Black liberation struggles. Other forms of racism cannot be ripped out of the context of that dual legacy.

The speech that impressed me most was Tera Hunter's at a panel on "How New is the New South? Voices from the Borders." Hunter's forthcoming book on household workers in Atlanta is called *Washing Amazons Strike Back*. She discussed the general strike of laundry workers during the 1881 Atlanta Exposition and threatened strike during the 1895 Cotton Exposition at which Booker T. Washington gave his infamous speech supporting Black accommodation to segregation.

Hunter challenged interpretations of the conservative turn-of-the-century New South economic, political and social relations based on the alternative vision found in these laundry workers. Her talk discussed the importance of dialectics in relation to race, class and gender—what she called the "contradictory dialectic of domination and dissent."

Hunter's comments illuminate how oral history became a thread running through the conference. Two white graduate students from Arkansas have begun an oral history project on women in the Civil Rights Movement: "Rearing a Revolutionary: Mothers and Daughters of the Arkansas Delta." A woman from North Carolina, writing on the impact of historical memory of past struggles on today, focused on Tillery, a town important in the Civil Rights Movement. The Concerned Citizens of Tillery now work on issues like water pollution by corporate hog farmers who are forcing Black farmers off their land.

Constance Curry, a white woman who was a civil rights leader in Mississippi, chaired one important workshop. She is now doing an oral history on Mae Bertha Carter, the Black woman in Sunflower County who led the fight to integrate the schools there (See N&L, May 1993). Curry, in turn, was discussed by Bernice McNair Barnett, who is writing a book on women-leaders in the Civil Rights Movement.

Barnett's comment that the very decades white feminists consider the "doldrums" for feminism—the 1940s and '50s—were decades of activism for Black women, prompted much discussion. This point, to me, signifies even more than the ongoing nature of Black women's activism. A new world of struggle was emerging with the activity of Black and working women during and after World War I—a point made powerfully by Raya Dunayevskaya in her *Women's Liberation and the Dia-*

lectics of Revolution (1985). Barnett related her dismay with feminists who argue that Black women's work wasn't feminist because they didn't call it that.

However, another participant, a white historian, asked Barnett why, if she considered these women's activism as feminist, whether she would also consider as feminist such women's organizations as the one formed by white women in Little Rock to keep Black children out of the segregated white schools in 1959—since they too were organized as women. Barnett and others gave her an impassioned response that feminism had to mean everyone's freedom or it wasn't feminism.

The discussion in this workshop underlined to me that while oral histories are indispensable because of how they link scholars to their "sources," this relationship is not alone the total answer for making history serve the purpose of working out the "contradictory dialectic of domination and dissent." Thus this conference, while inspirational because of the attention historians gave to these untold stories, must also be taken as a challenge to the battle of ideas over what direction feminist theory will take in relation to grasping the meaning of historical experience for today.

♀ Women Worldwide

by Mary Jo Grey



More than two and a half years after they went on strike against Diamond Walnut in Stockton, Cal. for decent wages and benefits (see March 1992 N&L), women workers are still on the picket line battling for their jobs. The company replaced the more than 200 women—many with over 20 years seniority—with mainly younger men.

Several hundred South African women who live in a squatters settlement on the pavement of Umgeni Road outside of the Durban train station are facing not only homelessness, but the daily fear of attack, rape and robbery by local thugs. Although the police station is only a few blocks away, cops have left the women and children to fend for themselves. Women's groups are petitioning newly elected President Nelson Mandela to ensure that police regularly patrol this area, investigate the attacks and arrest those responsible.

—Information from Equality Now

A group of women in Ukraine are organizing the Ukrainian Center on Women's Studies focusing on: ending discrimination against women; supporting women who are victims of violence; medical research to combat the ecological impact of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster; reviving the cultural achievements of Ukrainian women; translating feminist works into Ukrainian; creating the first feminist library in Kiev, and preparing women's studies programs for the universities.

Media sells O.J. hype

Chicago—I am writing this in response to the article in the June issue on the mind of the oppressed. (See "Spirit of revolt," N&L, p. 1.) The ruling class fears the mind of the oppressed because they realize its potential. They try to manipulate it in many ways. Recently, the covers of *Time* and *Newsweek* depicted an almost identical picture of O.J. Simpson, except that *Time*'s was a darker-enhanced picture. Why did they do it? To portray a more sinister-looking O.J. Simpson to sell more magazines?

This is not a new thing for people who are familiar with the concept of the "culture industry" and how it makes the masses its object. The media wants to decide Simpson's guilt for the masses because it's a spectacular story which sells. Culture industries have a way of twisting the truth for their own benefit.

Why has there been so much media attention devoted to O.J. Simpson's actions of wife beating? It has brought spouse abuse to the public's eyes more than ever before, which is good. But when we buy into the "O.J. Simpson is guilty" story without a trial, or co-opt the press's view as our own, we buy into, not the tragedy of his ex-wife's death, but the spectacular idea of a superstar, an American Hero, beating his ex-wife to death.

It is clear the media wants us to think Simpson is guilty. Why? What is the issue here? It has enabled the media to take our minds off the issues of national health care and other questions which require a lot of thought. We need to not only watch the story itself, but how it affects society as this piece of news unfolds inside the press. Does the press merely want to report the news, or is there something more to it? —Christine

Workers take on Sipes

Editor's note: Workers at Howe Sipes baseball apparel and jacket company in Memphis, Tenn., most of them Black women, voted in Local 282 of the United Furniture Workers of America in 1993. Because Sipes refuses to bargain in good faith, the AFL-CIO has sanctioned a boycott. Below is a N&L interview with workers.

Memphis, Tenn.—The boss is very prejudiced, especially toward us Black women. One supervisor likes to look down ladies' blouses. But more it's how the boss figures we don't deserve our rights to anything—the work, the say-so, the money, the respect. He doesn't want to give us a contract and he treats us like dirt, like we don't even exist. He called us b----s and trash.

If my day care calls, the manager gets mad. He throws the phone down and says: somebody's calling about your child. All of us are heads of household. The majority in the plant receive food stamps and work 40 hours a week, and we can't even provide ourselves with lunch.

We don't get any insurance—it's too high. For a single person, all they pay is \$71 a year. We have to pay \$30 some dollars per week. It's \$500 a month for a family. I take home \$168 a week. You think I can afford that? Out of that whole plant, only seven people have insurance.

Our biggest problem is favoritism. The boss has certain picks. If you're for the company you have all the privileges, like access to the phone, the bathroom, chit chat with your friends. But as long as you're for the union you have to sit there and be quiet. If the boss is mad at you, he'll take you off your work and put you on somebody else's. They use rules to lay you off. Last week we got a whole board full of rules. It's so many it'll take your whole break to read them.

Now the boss is slacking off work. He's sending workers home, telling them to call back Monday. What he's doing is taking our work and shipping it to another plant. He had a man come in with a video camera. He's going to say this is a time study. He took that video to another plant and is showing these people our work. Now baseball season is over and it's wool time. They got the tape, so they could learn how to sew wool jackets.

Since we voted the union in, he ships work out so all we can get is \$5 an hour [because there's not enough production to make above the base rate]. You've got ladies that have been here 27 years making \$5 an hour. People in the cutting department are cutting the work, but they're boxing it and they don't put labels on it. The boss has a truck come to drive it to Mississippi.

He came to the workers one by one, telling them he was losing money. He said he couldn't bring the work out because union people wouldn't sew the work. And he had to go borrow money—and this man is filthy rich. He didn't let the union people get the work, that's why he couldn't bring us the work out.

But we stand our ground. We speak our minds. The plant manager gives you these stupid questions like: Why were you in the bathroom? He knows what you do in there! They want to run it like it's the nineteenth century. You're a slave, do what I say.

Global issues test NWSA

Ames, Iowa—The 1994 National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) conference in Ames, Iowa, saw 900 women gathered to discuss "Teaching theory and action: Women working in a global context." This global theme was certainly manifest in the number of panels on China, Russia, East Europe, Africa and Latin America.

In a panel on "Feminist responses to Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina," Katarina Vidovic, from the Croatian feminist organization *Kareta*, critiqued feminists who fail to understand that rapes committed against women in Bosnia and Croatia were not a weapon of war as in "all wars," but a genocidal policy by the Serbian government. She challenged any abstract appeal for peace which does not distinguish between perpetrators of genocide and those who are its victims.

Frieda Afary, a Bosnia solidarity activist, asked, "Why are the Bosnians being forced to accept a plan masterminded by world powers which solidifies ethnic cleansing? And why are solidarity activists in the U.S. either tailending Clinton or making alliances with right-wing critics of Clinton?" To her this betrayal showed what happens when a solidarity movement accepts the limits of the given instead of working out a humanist philosophy of liberation independent of all state powers.

At the plenary on "Feminist Theories in a Global Perspective," Chandra Mohanty, editor of *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, argued feminists cannot address global issues without taking a stand against racism and capitalism: "At the same time that we hear about democracy in East Europe, democracy is being undermined in the U.S. Democracy is a code word for capitalism, free-market capitalism." She challenged women to work out a new feminist praxis.

It was sad that Barbara Smith's powerful talk was scheduled for the very end of the last plenary, after most had left. Smith, who is currently writing a history of African-American lesbians and gays, challenged postmodernism for reducing her subjectivity as a Black lesbian to a literary and political construct.

You could hear the anger in Smith's voice when she attributed anti-historical and anti-revolutionary trends in theory to reactionary regimes and the move toward fascism on a global scale. The key question in taking the measure of any theory remains, in Sonia Sanchez's words, "how do it free us?" Smith emphasized that she still considers Marxism the best theory because of its analysis of power and its vision of a new world of revolution. The questions raised at this conference demand serious discussion and action. —Sheila Fuller

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Southern Black labor fights back

At Somerville Mills...

Editor's note: More than 200 workers at Somerville Mills, all Black and nearly all women, voted in 1988 for representation by Furniture Workers Local 282, but have yet to win a first contract with the company. They sew upscale ladies' garments for labels like Victoria's Secret, Laura Ashley and Frederick's of Hollywood for an average wage of \$5 an hour.

Somerville, Tenn.—Thursday, June the 23rd was our 53rd negotiation session. The company has quit even sending company representatives to the table. No one ever shows up now but the attorney, and he never settles anything or comes to an agreement on anything. As long as the union holds, we are going to hold our position. We are not going to move.

Before we won the campaign we were working 9½ hours a day and 5 hours on Saturday. After we won the campaign, there was no work in that plant. That created layoff after layoff until it discouraged a lot of the girls. A lot of them quit and went elsewhere for jobs.

The ladies that are on welfare, food stamps, drawing child support and living in low income houses can make it like that. What divided the workers so was those on welfare didn't care that the ones that had no other income but wages from Somerville Mills couldn't pay their bills. Those workers who were getting extra benefits said they didn't need a union, because coming in there working a 40-hour week and making a decent wage would eliminate some of those other assets.

About three years ago this company brought in about 20 Cambodian workers. They were bearing the expense of renting a bus to transport these workers out of Memphis, which is 100 miles a day, and providing a job for the bus driver. The company told them, "Don't speak English," and told them, "Don't talk to those union people." All of them quit eventually.

The company went back this year and brought in five Asians and about six Africans. We feel that the company only brought them in to be names on a decert (union decertification petition) going in. They have shown no interest in joining the union, but the Africans are accepting our literature and ask questions.

When we see that the company's doing wrong, we're going to take a stand. That's all we have to show right now. That company is able to give people jobs; they're able to allow people to do what they want to do, work the way they want to work; they are able to pay people to where they feel that they're being satisfied. What the company does, it shows. What the union does is through the Labor Board and what we just do in the plant.

Even though we have a lot of workers in there that don't support the union, a lot of times they'll tell us, "We need this" and "Can you tell me how to do this because my supervisor gave this to me." That's why we feel that, if we continue to fight and press on this company and we're fortunate enough to get this contract signed and in motion, we're going to have a lot of support.

—Somerville Mills workers

...and Hood Furniture

Editor's note: Workers at Hood Furniture Manufacturing, 95% of whom are Black, voted in January 1989 to be represented by the Furniture Workers Division of the IUE (International Union of Electrical Workers), Local 282, whose leaders are Black. In May 1993 Hood executives suddenly agreed to negotiate a contract with white IUE representatives in Washington, D.C. if the workers were moved to white-led IUE Local 797.

Perils of work in China

Authorities in mainland China have acknowledged 52 workers have died in the collapse of a factory building in Zhuhai's Quinshan Industrial Zone. Employees of Yue San Textile were ordered by management to salvage valuable cotton from inside the building on June 17, the day following a fire which had caused extensive damage. A four-hour rainstorm had further weakened the structure as had the presence of heavy machinery on center floors.

Laborers were reported visible throughout all six floors of the building moments before the catastrophe. Yeung Chi-kwong, director of the factory, refused to comment publicly on the management decision, stating that many questions remained in need of clarification.

After a 75-hour rescue effort revealed 160 injured survivors, Zhuhai authorities demolished the remains of the factory with explosives, the stated purpose being to prevent further accidents. A 500-meter area was sealed off by the People's Liberation Army and a news blackout imposed during the operation.

In a "final site briefing" given June 21 authorities estimated "about twenty" workers still missing. A newspaper in Macau reported that the whereabouts of as many as 200 workers were unknown. The factory employed over 2,000.

Speaking before the International Labor Organization in Geneva, Han Dongfang, exiled founder of the Beijing Autonomous Workers Federation, told of industrial hazards constantly threatening rural Chinese factory workers, the routine exploitation of 30 million migrant workers employed by foreign-funded enterprises and the failure of official trade unions to offer protection. In the past year tens of thousands of Chinese workers have taken to the streets in protest of labor conditions and, he said, an already simmering situation has reached "a boiling point."

—Tesla Coil

Jackson, Miss.—It is nearly a year since IUE President Bywater and Hood Furniture's owner, Warren Hood, signed a secret agreement to force us into a local union we did not want and make us work under a contract we refused to accept. We are still together, still fighting. We will never accept this crooked deal.

They tried to force us to leave the union we fought four years to have, Local 282, and tried to get us to join Local 797, a white-run local. Thurstin Blue, from Local 797, comes to the plant to meet with us and tell us to join his local, but he has no support. He lies and says that Willie Rudd, the President of Local 282, wants us to join Local 797. He disrespected us and Rudd by signing this contract. If you read it, you see that it allows Hood to do anything they want to do to us.

There are 350 workers at Hood Furniture now. They hire new workers nearly every day because people are fired constantly. New hires come in at \$4.45, even in the hardest jobs, and they don't get a raise for 60 days.

The worst thing is this "point system" that is in the contract. If you total up 8 "points," you are fired. If you are absent, it's 1 point. If you are absent and don't call in by 11:00 a.m., it's 1½ points. If you are forced to work Saturday overtime and you don't make it, it's 1½ points. Certain people are shown favoritism, but the rest of us are just a step away from being fired.

Bywater thought he would get dues from 350 workers, but fewer than 20 workers are dues-paying members of Local 797. We are boycotting it. The contract expires on Aug. 4, 1995, and we will hold out as long as they will.

It seems like no one will help us. Warren Hood is one of the most powerful men in Mississippi; he is president of Deposit Guaranty Bank. Bywater is big in the AFL-CIO. They have a lot of power. We are appealing to all our friends in labor and civil rights for help. We need the truth to be told about how they are abusing us in Jackson, Mississippi.

—Hood Furniture workers

To get in touch with Somerville Mills workers and Hood Furniture workers, write to Furniture Workers Local 282, 1254 Lamar, Suite 212, Memphis, TN 38104.

Getting Cat back on track

Montgomery, Ill.—What's the difference between this strike against Caterpillar and two years ago? That one was over contract bargaining. This strike is over Cat's unfair labor practices. At this plant, one guy was fired for kicking cars of scabs 2½ years ago. It wasn't even on company property. Three others were fired from that period, too. They have fired a United Auto Workers (UAW) committeeman and a union rep. Cat still hasn't brought any of them back.

Cat has had 92 unfair labor practice complaints since the last strike. For two years we have been working without a contract. We are the only thing that's union in there now. We tried to do something about this situation. The Aurora plant has been on strike three times since the companywide strike in 1992. Caterpillar plants have gone out nine times altogether.

Without a contract, health and safety grievances just weren't getting anywhere, so we had to go outside to get help. OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) came in and imposed a big fine against Cat. Cat has been bringing in outside contractors. One of them moved a welding machine, and they didn't set it up right. As a result a welder was electrocuted. He didn't die, but he is still disabled.

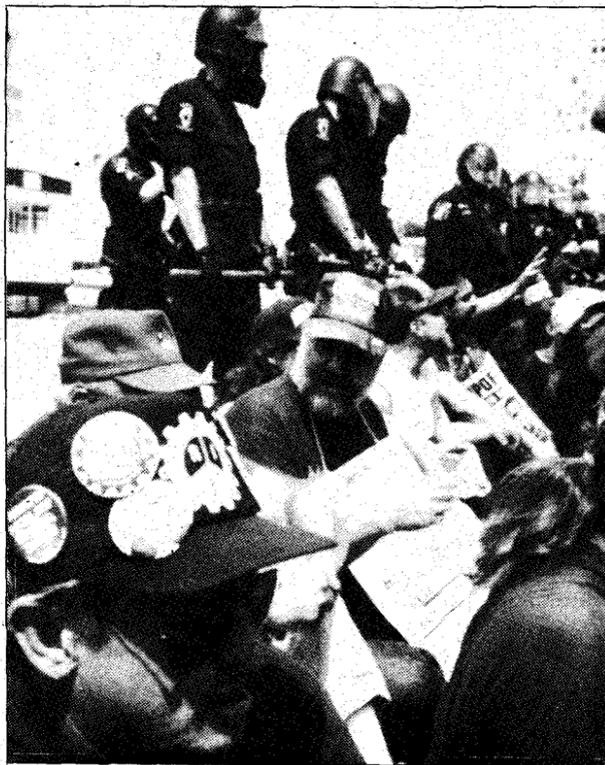
Caterpillar had 8,000 people here years ago. At the time of the strike in 1992 we had 5,600 people, and now it's down to 1,900. Many of the losses are due to attrition, but all along whenever they bring in a new robot, four jobs are lost.

Caterpillar won't say openly that they're trying to break the union, but when the talks broke down, Cat put up a sign at the gate. It said that when you enter this gate, you leave behind your right to strike. Cat has been hiring people—they can't say they are replacing us—and someone crossed the picket line to go in. One of the foremen got carried away and told him, "You're my property now. I control you." He worked for four hours and left.

What's amusing is the company keeps saying "Detroit" (the location of UAW International headquarters) is the union. Sure Detroit sanctioned the strike, but we're the union. The Caterpillar locals in Peoria, Decatur and others didn't wait for the strike deadline and walked out early. Does that sound like the International union tells us what to do?

—Caterpillar worker

Staley rally, sitdown mark one-year lockout



News & Letters

Editor's note: Members of AIW/UPIU (Allied Industrial Workers/United Paperworkers International Union) Local 7837 observed the one-year anniversary of being locked out by sitting down at the West Gate of their employer, A.E. Staley Manufacturing Company. The action concluded a regional solidarity rally June 25 that brought together coal miners, striking Caterpillar workers, Firestone workers, other workers and supporters.

Decatur, Ill.—The rally and the sitdown were a solid show of people who are behind us and against the lockout. Everyone on the line at the West Gate was sitting with their backs towards the police, waiting for arrests. The next thing I know, the police were hitting people with pepper gas. No one was charging the police. So why gas us?

Staley ran a full-page ad in the Herald & Review newspaper here in Decatur. Staley says we would rather rally and make speeches than negotiate. We do that because we want the community to know what Staley is up to. We have already proved to the community that we are here to stay. The police proved that they could only address the rally with bayonets strapped to their legs and armed with pepper gas.

—Staley worker

We brought a lot of people in and got the attention we were looking for. As far as organized labor groups, there were not as many as I expected. The president of an international union isn't concerned with one small segment. When we are being picked off one by one, they give us a little support, but not enough.

—Black unionist

Should it have been like this sooner? Should we have done this a year ago—sitting down, getting arrested, getting help? This has been on my mind because I believe the union leaders should have gone out on strike when PATCO was fired by Reagan.

—Woman Local 7837 member

A group of us in Local 7837 founded the Black Community Awareness Committee. We planned the community rally on April 9, which was the anniversary of Dr. King's visit to Memphis to help the sanitation workers. A month after the rally we had a picnic to celebrate what we had done. We wore our "Locked Out" shirts and left at 9:30 when the park closes.

We learned later that we had been charged with picketing in a residential area, but there were no picket signs. They even changed the park to "restricted" after the picnic so we couldn't have any more.

—Black Local 7837 members

Workshop Talks

(Continued from page 1)

example of where that had led in the 1860s: "In England women are still occasionally used instead of horses for hauling canal boats, because the labor required to produce horses and machines is an accurately known quantity, while that required to maintain women of the surplus-population is below all calculation."

That there is, from the capitalist point of view, a "surplus-population" in the U.S. is evidenced every time my supervisor calls a temporary agency and within 45 minutes has 30 more workers on the floor. The only "compulsion" this society is under, given the tragic state of our labor movement, is to pay the minimum wage of \$4.25 an hour. That comes to \$8,840 a year if you work 40 hours every week.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), a 25-member group of industrially "advanced" nations, this June issued a report on unemployment. "The debate on jobs has been between the European approach of keeping wages high while unemployment rises and the American approach of creating jobs at all costs, even if wages fall. The report generally concluded that the American approach is better..." (Chicago Tribune, June 8, 1994). Official unemployment in the U.S. is 6%; in the European Union, 11.7%.

OECD recommendations include: "adopting flexible working times, such as part-time work...; discouraging minimum wages...; permitting job-creation programs at below-average wage levels..." (The New York Times, June 8, 1994). Further, "Wages should be allowed to fall when necessary, it said, noting that 'low-wage jobs are bad jobs only when people become trapped in them.'"

The workers' movement in Marx's day fought to shorten the working day to prevent the capitalists killing them off through overwork. Isn't it time for today's labor movement to take up the cause of low-wage, part-time and temporary workers before the capitalists kill them off through starvation and homelessness and "ending welfare as we know it"?

From the writings of Raya Dunayevskaya Marxist-Humanist Archives

by Raya Dunayevskaya
Founder of Marxist-Humanism

*Editor's note: At a time when Black intellectuals, policy makers and community activists are searching for a comprehensive analysis of the social crises besetting Black America, some have taken advantage of the fact that 1994 marks the 50th anniversary of the publication of Gunnar Myrdal's *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* to return to that massive two-volume work on the Black dimension of American "civilization." As a contribution to the current discussion and assessment of the "Myrdal project," we publish excerpts of the review that Raya Dunayevskaya wrote 50 years ago as *An American Dilemma* was coming off the press (all pagination in the text is to the original 1944 edition). The full text of Dunayevskaya's critique of Myrdal and the Black intellectuals who worked on the four-year-long project was titled "Negro Intellectuals in Dilemma" and originally appeared in *The New Internationalist* (November 1944). It can be found in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, #271-74.*

Over four years were needed to complete this study. It is a product not only of the Swedish scholar, Gunnar Myrdal, and his two associates, Richard Sterner and Arnold Rose, but of some seventy-five intellectuals, both white and Negro, who gave full or part time to the gathering and analysis of data....The Myrdal work comprises the most comprehensive [studies] thus far produced on the subject, and makes it possible to clear our shelves of many of the earlier volumes on this topic. This assertion, which has been made by the Negro intellectuals in their reviews of *An American Dilemma*, is not, however, repeated by the present reviewer as unqualified praise of the book. On the contrary, that this work makes such a clearing possible is only further testimony as to the paucity of adequate books on the subject. There is not a single outstanding work dealing with the Negro problem "in general," although there are good studies of specific facets of the Negro problem. In the present research we get an over-all view of the entire field....

MYRDAL'S 'VALUE PREMISES'

The present study was projected by [the Carnegie Corporation] which sank over a quarter of a million dollars into the venture. So prejudiced are the American "social scientists" that, in order to get the facts on the Negro problem impartially set down, the corporation found that it would need to engage a foreign scholar. Not accidentally, however, its search for one unprejudiced in racial questions ended when it found one who was anti-Marxist in political outlook. Mr. Myrdal's anti-Marxism colors his approach to the entire work as well as to his co-workers. Mr. Myrdal's insistence on the invalidity of the Marxian theory shows that he knows quite well where the "main enemy" is and who his sponsor is.

Mr. Myrdal denies that "the economic factor" is the primary one in the development of society, or rather, in the existence of the Negro problem. To him the Negro problem is a moral problem arising out of the conflict between the "American creed," that all men are created equal, and the American reality, in which the Negro minority is so unjustly treated. However, it is clear from the 1,000-odd pages of text, that, if the Negro problem is in the "mind and heart" of America, it has nevertheless a most solid economic foundation, and it is precisely the chapters that deal with the economic foundation that are the best in the two volumes. A particularly admirable job was done with the section on the Negro laborer. That section was under the general direction of Mr. Sterner, who also is the author of the appendix relating to this section. This appendix is entitled "Pre-War Conditions of the Negro Wage Earner in Selected Industries and Occupations." It deals both with the industries in which the Negroes are the predominant labor force, lumber milling, fertilizer manufacturing, turpentine farming, etc., and with the industry which practically excludes any Negro labor, the major Southern industry, textiles. From it we also get a glimpse of the difference between the conditions in a non-unionized industry and a unionized one. In turpentine farming the Negro earns little more than \$200 a year and some forms of peonage are still extant. In mining, however, the worker gets comparatively high wages, being unionized in the United Mine Workers, where no discrimination exists. In fact, even in Alabama, the Negro union member talks as freely as the white union member, and the local union itself is generally administered by a white president and a Negro vice-president.

The study of the Negro worker is preceded by an examination of the plight of the Negro share-cropper. The chapters on Negro and Southern agriculture are on as competent a level as those on the Negro in industry. Anyone who has entertained any illusions as to what the New Deal meant to the poor farmers, white and Negro, in the semi-feudal conditions of the South, will have them quickly dispelled by the accumulated weight of evidence. This shows that the governmental agricultural policies had graver consequences in uprooting the Negro farmer than soil erosion, the boll weevil and the Southwestern shift of cotton culture combined.

The above citations indicate that the value of *An American Dilemma* does not reside in its "value premises" but in the fact that it offers up-to-date informational summaries of the economic, legal and social status of the Negro in America....

It is [in the South] that the contradiction between the "American creed" and the economic reality is sharpest.



Intellectuals who commented on or critiqued the Myrdal study (clockwise from upper right corner): Charles S. Johnson, L.D. Reddick, W.E.B. DuBois, Ralph Bunche, and George S. Schuyler.

It is therefore not at all surprising that it is there that the contradiction between Mr. Myrdal, the scholar with "value premises," and Mr. Myrdal, the "social scientist," becomes not only acute but ludicrous.

Mr. Myrdal, the scholar, writes that with the entrenchment of slavery in the South, the blackout on independent thinking was so overwhelming that Southern thought to this day suffers from lack of free intercourse with the varied currents of thought since the early nineteenth century. "...The region is exceptional in Western non-fascist civilization since the Enlightenment in that it lacks every trace of radical thought. In the South all progressive thinking going further than mild liberalism has been practically non-existent for a century" (page 469).

IN PLACE OF A CHALLENGE A WHIMPER

Mr. Myrdal, the scholar, further demonstrates that the war, which has increased the militancy of the Negro, has scared these Southern white liberals into an outright reactionary position. They would not continue their cooperation with the Negro intellectuals against discrimination unless the latter accepted, nay, avowed, social segregation. So benighted is that region that the following passed for the words of a liberal! It is Mark Etheridge, ex-chairman of the FEPC, [Fair Employment Practices Committee] who writes in July, 1942:

There is no power in the world—not even the mechanized armies of the earth, the Allied and the Axis—which can now force the Southern white people to the abandonment of social segregation. It is a cruel disillusionment, bearing germs of strife and perhaps tragedy, for any of their [Negroes'] leaders to tell them that they can expect it, or that they can exact it, as the price of their participation in the war.

This, then, is the "American creed" when expressed in Southern lingo. What happens now to the scholar's "value premise," that the Negro is entitled to full participation in American democracy? Overboard goes the scholar and out emerges the "social scientist," who turns out to be a bourgeois politician. Mr. Myrdal, the "social scientist," begins to appeal to his Southern bourgeois brethren. Since, says Mr. Myrdal, the good bourgeois, "changes should, if possible, not be made by sudden upheavals but in gradual steps" (page 518), the South had better start enfranchising its Negro citizens now. Mr. Myrdal pleads that this "is truly a conservative" conclusion. And just to prove to the Southern bourgeois that it is not a wild-haired Marxist who is asking them to take this plunge, he writes that they can, to begin with, start enfranchising "the higher strata of the Negro population" (page 519). The appeal of the "social scientist" is not a challenge; it is a whimper.

Here you have the political formula of this massive work in a nutshell! Here is a scholar who has digested the major part of the available literature on the subject of the Negro problem, who has conducted field studies and case histories, all of which lead him to uphold "value premises" that demand the full participation of the Negro in all aspects of American life, who holds no brief for intellectual Uncle Tomism of either Negro or white variety, who says the South is as backward intellectually as economically, that its ignorance is, in fact, unique in non-fascist Western civilization, and yet so bourgeois is he that his class instinct prevails upon him to produce so impotent, so ludicrous a "solution" as to turn the American tragedy into a Swedish farce!...

THE TREASON OF THE INTELLECTUALS

One might have supposed that the Negro intellectuals would arise one and all in criticism of *An American Dilemma*. But any such supposition is, unfortunately, quite unfounded. Mr. Du Bois, for example, who considers the "acculturation of the masses" to be the task of the "talented tenth," did not consider it the task of the "talented tenth" to criticize a work saddled with so much high-brow talk and so little high or low-brow action. On the contrary, he considered it to be a "monumental and unrivalled study" whose scientific approach should be emulated (*Phylon*, second quarter, 1944). In general, the Negro press met the work with paeans of praise. A sadder commentary yet on the state of the Negro intelligentsia than the Negro press is the manner in which Mr. Myrdal

Revisiting An American Dilemma, 50 years later

got from it its staff members. These intellectuals were at his beck and call at all times, although some of them seem to be so far to the left of him as to be on the opposite side of the fence. Mr. Myrdal's chief complaint against them is that they have been influenced by Marxism. Consider, then, the case of Charles S. Johnson, who has been so influenced and who considers the Negro problem to be rooted in economic factors. During the extensive Negro migrations northward in the period of World War I, Mr. Johnson saw the solution to the Negro problem in the urbanization and proletarianization of the Negro which, more or less automatically, would shift the problem from a racial to a class plane. When the depression interrupted the continuity of this development, Mr. Johnson seemed to rely upon the impact of the crisis to cause such an upheaval in the Southern economy as to unseat King Cotton. When the AAA [Agriculture Adjustment Administration] pumped some subsidies into cotton culture and propped up the collapsing regime of cotton tenancy, Mr. Johnson still had his eyes on some "automatic" economic revolution to be caused by the introduction of the mechanical cotton picker. Mr. Johnson the scholar seemed blissfully unaware of the significance of the political alliance of the New Deal-Wall Street North with the bourbon semi-feudal South. Or perhaps not so much unaware as unwilling to give up the quiet of an academic chair for the hubbub of mass activity which would "induce" the "economic" revolution. Yet he continued to write radical words:

The acuteness of the industrial and relief situation in the cities of the North will find white and Negro unemployed making their demands together. There is, however, one disturbing possibility. It is that the anti-Semitism generated in Europe, in response to a hopelessly depressed economic situation, will find in the urban Negro an emotional scapegoat. In this event anything can happen.

Every so often in the works of Mr. Johnson one finds a situation described so lucidly that the revolutionary answer to "anything can happen" seems clear enough. But it is never stated in so many words. The reason lies partly in the fact that the majority of the research projects or economic and social analyses regarding the Negro have white guardian angels in the form of some bourgeois fund, whether it is Carnegie, or Rockefeller, or Rosenwald, or the government. It is only natural that the studies stop short of their implicit conclusions, if indeed the professors ever breathe the conclusions even to themselves and thus jeopardize the comfort of the academic chair....

BUNCHE AND REDDICK

The sorriest spectacle of the Negro "talented tenth" is presented by Ralph Bunche. Mr. Bunche is critical not only of the economic, political and social status of the Negro, but of all existing Negro organizations that strive to ameliorate this condition. He calls them "philosophic and programmatic paupers." He is critical likewise of all Negro leaders who, he says, "think and act entirely in a black groove." In his pamphlet, *A World View of Race*, he even comes up with a solution to the Negro problem:

The Negro must develop, therefore, a consciousness of class interest and purpose and must strive for an alliance with the white working class in a common struggle for economic and political equality and justice.

Yet this most radical of radicals found it permissible to shelve his more radical conclusions in the Schomburg Collection, while his research data is used by Mr. Myrdal for his own conservative ends. This is not at all accidental. Mr. Bunche's revolutionary thunder is no more than radicalism of the chair....

Of the Negro intellectuals who have reviewed the Myrdal volumes, the only critic so far has been L.D. Reddick, curator of the Schomburg Collection. Mr. Reddick has written two reviews, one for the *Journal of Negro Education*, spring, 1944, and the other for *Opportunity*. In both reviews he offers three criticisms of the book. He rejects Mr. Myrdal's sociological concept of caste. He shows himself aware of the weaknesses of the historical sections of the book; and he is critical of Mr. Myrdal's solution. The best thing in the reviews is his recognition that the ultimate solution of the Negro question is along class lines. However, the way in which Mr. Reddick phrases this is extremely significant. He writes: "Finally, Dr. Myrdal is unduly pessimistic over the possibilities of Negro and white workers uniting and struggling together for common goals." If Mr. Myrdal is unduly pessimistic, it is clear that Mr. Reddick is not unduly optimistic.

Thus far we have not considered George S. Schuyler, who in the past has done one of the finest reportorial jobs in popularizing the CIO to the Negro workers and the Negro community as a whole. Mr. Schuyler for some time has shown himself a believer in managerial society. He condemns both sides of the war as imperialist. He has turned away from the revolutionary movement, but retains some Marxism. It is not surprising that, although he considers the Myrdal book a superior work, he is cynical of any solutions. In his review of the book in the July issue of *Politics* he writes: "He [Mr. Myrdal] is modest enough to predict no solution, for the problem may well be insoluble."

THE GARVEY MOVEMENT

This brings us to one of the most significant omissions of this book. If even Mr. Myrdal is unaware of the Populist movement, no one who thinks of the Negro question

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THE OBJECTIVITY OF PHILOSOPHY IN TODAY'S WORLD CRISES

(continued from page 1)

strategic outlook of this stage of capital accumulation.

This restructuring is not peculiar to the U.S., but is a global development. As the Marxist urban sociologist Manuel Castells noted, "More often than not, the theory of capitalist restructuring has missed the specificity of the process of transformation in each area of the world, as well as the variation of the cultural and political factors that shape the process of economic restructuring, and ultimately determine its outcome. Thus the de-industrialization processes of New York and London take place at the same time that a wave of industrialization of historic proportions occurs in China and in the Asian Pacific."¹

One of the main problems facing the capitalist restructuring in the U.S. is the speculative bubble supporting it. The pin that threatens to burst it is the hidden unemployment of workers too discouraged to look for work and part-time workers wanting full-time jobs who are counted as employed. The real rate of unemployment is actually double that of the 7.5% official rate. Such unforeseen phenomena as a "jobless recovery" and other non-cyclical "surprises" do not escape Marx's Absolute General Law of Capitalist Accumulation, wherein each new increase in productivity is inextricably linked to an ever-growing and permanent army of the unemployed.

Although capitalist ideologues are now extolling the 3.2% growth rate of the last four quarters, they fail to mention the growth rate of only 0.11% for the previous four years. Both capitalist ideologues and their critics are confusing a cyclical upturn with a long-term declining trend in the economy.

This is having the same effect on today's Left as the rise of imperialism had on Marxists at the turn of the century. In that era the phenomenal appearance of imperialist superprofits and monopolistic restructuring led Marxists such as Rosa Luxemburg to theorize about unlimited capital accumulation, unmindful of the long-term tendency of the rate of profit to decline which culminated in the Great Depression. It is all the more remarkable then that today's Left, which certainly recognizes the social crises created by capitalist restructuring, has nevertheless decided that revolutionary socialism is impossible to attain and that Marxism is "passe."

The opposite of the present stage of capitalist restructuring lies in the new organizational forms assumed by today's mass struggles. Whether restructuring has meant de-industrialization or re-industrialization, a new despotic discipline of capital over labor has elicited broad social and democratic impulses from the working class that cannot be comprehended except in Marxian terms.

In both the North and South many of the struggles go unreported, whether it be protests by Black workers at construction sites in Chicago and the organizing of "Justice for Janitors" in the North, or the battles against sweatshop conditions in the Delta Pride Catfish plants in the South.

As we have shown this year in *News & Letters*, especially significant in these struggles is the role of women. In the South a new generation of militant, articulate young Black women has arisen who have organized their own shops "from the inside" and do not shy away from confronting anyone—management or union. Nor do they shy away from asking how they can keep their new organizations from becoming coopted, as so many have before.

An in-plant organizer and chief steward at the Indianola, Mississippi, Delta Pride Catfish plant measured the success or failure of their long struggle for a union contract: "I feel we fought to get a darn good contract. The only problem is with the wage scale. 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. I ask myself how you know whether you've done the right thing."²

1. Manuel Castells, "European Cities, the Information Society, and the Global Economy," *New Left Review* 204, March/April 1994, p. 19.

2. These and other voices of Southern labor have been recorded in *News & Letters*. See especially the issues of November and December 1993 and April and July 1994, as well as this issue pp. 2-3.

Internal to the new social consciousness emerging in today's labor struggles is a search for ideas and perspectives which can help the effort to create alternative forms of organization avoid the impasse which has confronted so many of the freedom struggles of our time. The urgency of responding to this search is underlined by the events of the last year in both Mexico and South Africa.

B. From Chiapas to South Africa

There is no question that the ongoing revolt in Chiapas, Mexico, has brought forth new forms of struggle and organization. As against the elitist concepts of "focoism" and "vanguardism," the Zapatista revolt, by being deeply rooted in the struggles of the indigenous peoples of Chiapas, has given birth to a new kind of broad-based, grassroots movement. Its impact has reverberated throughout Mexico, as seen in the emergence of spontaneous land seizures and peasant revolts elsewhere in Mexico and in intense discussions on the need for alternative forms of organization throughout the country. Its impact inside Chiapas can be measured by the way the Zapatistas have helped put an end to arranged marriages and the sale of women in the areas under their control.

On June 11 the Zapatistas rejected a proposed government "peace" settlement and called instead for a "National Democratic Convention" of Indians, peasants, students, workers, women and intellectuals, and a constituent assembly to draw up a new constitution along with a provisional government to call for new elections.

Implicit in this appeal to the broad mass of social forces



Opposition candidate Cardenas visits the Zapatistas.

that are being marginalized further by the current capitalist restructuring is the recognition that the unity of capitalist politics and economics has meant not less, but more oppression of the masses.

When opposition political leader Cardenas finally went to Chiapas during his presidential election campaign on May 21, the Zapatistas made him wait for five hours in the sun and then listen to five more hours of speeches before agreeing to meet with him. Despite Cardenas' Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD) having received a fresh influx of leftist intellectuals and activists, the difference between the PRD and Mexico's ruling party (the Institutional Revolutionary Party), when it comes to economic policy and the practice of democracy, is not at all self-evident to the Zapatistas.

What is self-evident is that the Zapatista revolt is challenging the way the Left has increasingly allowed "actually existing capitalism" to define the horizons of its thinking. The crucial question is whether this will now become inseparable from the projection of the idea of revolutionary socialism for our life and times, freed from the narrowness and distortions which have plagued post-Marx Marxism.

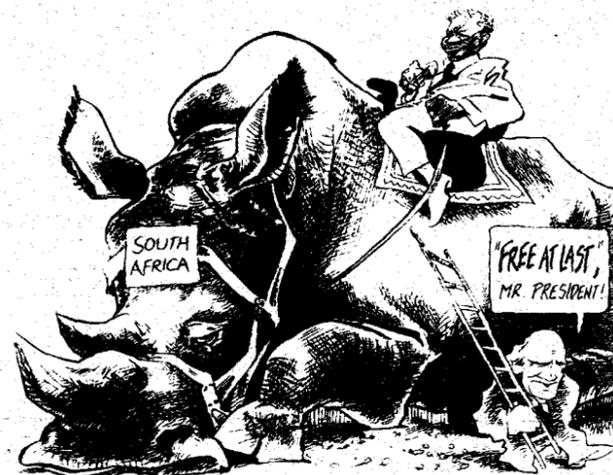
That this remains the truly critical issue is shown by the outcome of the elections in South Africa. The mass outpouring for Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress (ANC) represented nothing short of a revolution against the legacy of over 300 years of white domination. Yet many revolutionary intellectuals like Neville Alexander continue to labor under the illusory notion that "the more radical the democratic project can be within the limits of capitalism...the better for us, the better for the nation-building and the socialist project."³

3. See *Work in Progress*, November 1993.

What explains this crisis in socialist theory which seeks the marriage of markets and the "radical democracy" of civil society? What explains the Left's rationalization of the party-state formation as existing outside any historic imperative to overthrow it? What explains the fetishism for organizing civil society under the hegemony of a "democracy" defined by that very same party-state formation?

South Africa has brought these questions to a head because there a modicum of state power is being bought at the cost of the withering away of the liberation movement itself.

What has gone unreported during the year-long runup to the April 26-29 elections is the emergence and expansion of many grassroots organizations. They will have to come to terms with their own recent history of succumbing to the political dictates of the ANC which now presides over an eco-



nom system scarcely changed from what these grassroots organizations had vigorously opposed.

The problem is that in civil society coming under the "structural adjustments" of the ANC-National Party alignment, an emerging "culture of negotiation and compromise" has appeared in place of one "driven by mass mobilization and confrontation." It is a political-economic restructuring that sees trade unions now cooperating with management in tripartite talks between capital, labor, and the state.

What is being "restructured" out of the hands of the masses is seen most dramatically at the point of production, as the new ANC-led state will be joining the drive to increase productivity for market competition. The instrument of the retrogressive restructuring is the "Reconstruction and Development Program" (RDP) put forward by the ANC, the South African Communist Party, and the leading trade-union federation, COSATU.

As two COSATU Left dissidents wrote, "The political arithmetic, when it comes to paying for the RDP, is clear. It is wage restraints + strict monetary policies + eternal cooperative partnership between capital and labor + achieving higher levels of profitability + government expenditure without existing constraints = the workers will pay."⁴

Rank-and-file workers and shop floor leaders have been vocal in opposition to COSATU's concurrence with the ANC's plan to balance the economy on the backs of the workers. But it is the unemployed township youth who represent the most crucial flashpoint for renewed spontaneous outbreaks.

C. Back to the homefront: two years after the Los Angeles rebellion

Because the unemployed inner-city youth in the U.S. represent a crucial flashpoint for renewed spontaneous outbreaks here at home, we need to turn to the continuing ramifications of the Los Angeles rebellion of two years ago.

As against the slanderous assertions of Left ideologues like Cornel West that the 1992 revolt was "barbaric," we have defended the political content of the insurrection inas-

(continued on page 6)

4. *South African Labour Bulletin* 17 (5), September-October 1993, p. 86.

HOW TO BEGIN ANEW

Discover the historic-philosophic ground for projecting the idea of "revolution in permanence" for the 1990s.

"The whole question of the relationship of any ongoing event with the past with the very concept of Archives, depends on the two opposite words—continuity and discontinuity. Whereas only great divides in epochs, in cognition, in personality are crucial and may relate to turning points in history, no discontinuity can really achieve that type of new epochal 'moment' unless it has established continuity with the historic course of human development."

—Raya Dunayevskaya, 1986

To order these books by Raya Dunayevskaya, see page 12.

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—Adrienne Rich

THE OBJECTIVITY OF PHILOSOPHY IN TODAY'S WORLD CRISES

(continued from page 5)

much as it represented the self-conscious action of the victims of a decade of Reagan retrogression. In stripping the ideological fetish from U.S. democracy, the rebellion showed a determination on the part of the Black mind to know itself as the vanguard of the struggle to transform American society.

Yet the spontaneous nature of the L.A. rebellion continues to confound the Left, both because of its failure to confront the Black question in the U.S. and its view that the L.A. rebellion "lacked organization." So long as the Left is unable to face the Black question in the U.S., it remains ignorant of the dialectic of U.S. social development in which democracy has always served as the outer appearance of America's authoritarian inner core.

As against this, we have listened carefully to the voices and reason of the new subjects of revolution. Speaking at a community meeting commemorating the L.A. rebellion, Teresa Allison, founder of "Mothers ROC (Reclaiming Our Children)," declared, "We have to think, to take the streets and march because the mind is what they [the police] are afraid of."⁵

It is true that the L.A. rebellion has not yet given rise to an organized movement but rather to modest organizational forms such as Mothers ROC, the L.A. 4+ Committee, and new community newspapers such as *Voices of Cabrini* which consistently editorialize against the police sweeps of Chicago housing projects. And yet the organizational steps taken before and after the L.A. rebellion intimate the kind of national consciousness which Frantz Fanon held was not narrow nationalism but had an international dimension.

The L.A. gang truce signed three days before the rebellion was called the Unification Treaty Guaranteeing Free Passage Throughout Watts, modeled after the 1949 Egypt-Israel peace accord. There are also many references to the rebellion being an *Intifada*. Mothers ROC and the L.A. 4+ Committee, much like the mothers in El Salvador and Argentina, organized around disappeared or incarcerated loved ones and family members. Moreover, new self-organized initiatives have become necessary to resolve internal conflicts in the Black and Latino communities.

As Raegan Kelly wrote in *urb* (August 1993), the success of today's post-rebellion organizations can be attributed to: "1) an ongoing and open dialogue, and 2) the communal, or essentially headless organization from within—within the hood, within the mind."

What the new social consciousness finds in this regard is that it is the latest form in which the Idea of Freedom accomplishes its self-organization. The dialectic of the L.A. rebellion discloses that by virtue of its lack of a demonstra-

5. See *News & Letters*, June 1994.

ble organizational form, the social consciousness arising from it can only satisfy its philosophic needs and thus conserve itself through the self-organization of the Idea of Freedom.



Los Angeles mothers denounce system of injustice.

The Left, however, has shifted the entire task of philosophically clarifying this new social consciousness onto the shoulders of the masses whom it at the same time declares to be no longer revolutionary. The Left in fact increasingly assigns the task of democratization to the state-capitalist economy whose current restructuring is anything but democratic—as testified by that area which is becoming the center of the world economy, China and the Pacific rim.

II. China's new 'Great Leap Forward': A bubble inside the boom

A. The Pacific rim as center of world politics

The dispute between the U.S. and North Korea over the Clinton administration's insistence that it scrap its nuclear weapons program reveals the extent to which events in East Asia have now become the fulcrum of U.S. foreign policy.

Clinton's conflict with North Korea may seem at odds with his effort to disengage from further military intervention in areas such as Somalia and Bosnia. The debacle in Somalia left such a bad taste in his mouth that he no longer speaks of using U.S. troops for "humanitarian" purposes overseas. He has therefore totally ignored the slaughter in Rwanda, refusing to send even token humanitarian aid. He is also trying to "disengage" from Bosnia by forcing the Bosnians to accept a Franco-Russian plan which partitions their country along ethnic lines. What we pointed to from the start of Bosnia's struggle—the complicity of the U.S. in Serbia's genocidal attempt to destroy Bosnia's multi-ethnic heritage—has become starkly evident.⁶

The U.S. policy toward Bosnia is not just a "Balkan question," but is the measure of what really guides U.S. policy on a world scale—including toward an area like North Korea. Clinton is not concerned with North Korea because of its human rights abuses and totalitarian control over its citizens. He is concerned with North Korea because no U.S. ruler wants to see a source of instability in the one part of the world which is generating serious economic growth—the Pacific rim. As his recent decision to uncouple the renewal of China's Most Favored Nation (MFN) trading status from progress on human rights shows, the only "value" guiding U.S. policy in East Asia is its effort to protect the "healthy investment climate" which its underpaid labor provides for U.S. corporations.

Clinton's threat to impose sanctions against North Korea because of its refusal to abandon its nuclear program, however, has itself proved to be quite destabilizing. Though the Western rulers certainly want to prevent North Korea's Kim Il Sung from getting nuclear weapons, they do not want his regime to totally collapse as they fear the instability that would trigger throughout the area. Clinton is therefore still trying to arrange a negotiated settlement to the conflict.

However, the determination of North Korea's Stalinist old guard to save face, and the determination of the U.S. to project its prowess in an area deemed "vital to our national interests" makes for a volatile combination which could still lead to war.

The crucial factor in all of this remains China. Whatever Clinton wants vis-a-vis North Korea, he certainly does not want to take any action which would jeopardize relations with China, whose economic expansion (along with that of Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Taiwan) is helping to fuel what little real growth is occurring in today's world economy. Clinton has gone out of his way to avoid offending the Chinese leaders on almost anything, as his decision on MFN showed.

China will remain the critical issue in U.S. foreign policy for some time, as the Clinton administration certainly knows that developments in post-Deng Xiaoping China (Deng is now 89) could prove far more destabilizing than any threat emanating from North Korea. We therefore need to take a closer look at the nature of the "Chinese economic miracle" which has so beguiled today's Western rulers.

B. Whither China?

The figures being reported about China's "booming" economy may sound impressive, given the stagnant state of the U.S. and world economy. Who else can boast a 13% annual economic growth rate and a 21% growth rate in indus-

trial output over the past year? This economic expansion is being fueled by massive foreign investment—\$20 billion in new investments from overseas in 1993 alone. Thousands of foreign-owned firms are now operating in China with total contract investment exceeding \$200 billion.

But does this mean world capital has reached the point of being able to industrially develop China? To answer that, we need to face some basic realities.

To whatever extent China is undergoing a "massive economic expansion," it is not characteristic of the country as a whole but is strictly a regional phenomenon. While the economies of coastal areas like Guangdong and Fujian provinces are growing at rates of 27% a year, the vast interior is either languishing or falling backward. As in earlier periods, the rapid economic growth of some of the coastal areas is being generated by slave labor-like conditions in urban industry and the expropriation of China's peasantry which constitutes 75% of its population.

Declining living conditions and rising unemployment in the rural areas have uprooted tens of millions of peasants, cre-



ating a migrant labor populace of over 100 million roaming the country in search of work. As a result of such dislocations as well as major environmental destruction, almost 10% of the country's farmland has been taken out of cultivation in the last several years. According to official government figures, China loses enough farmland each year to feed 40 million people.

As the dissident journalist Liu Binyan wrote in *China Focus* (October 1993), "The plight of China's peasantry can be traced to Stalin's theories about the process of socialist construction. Without colonies to strip, where do you get the capital needed to accelerate industrialization? Stalin's blunt answer was 'strip the peasantry,' and China has been doing just that since 1953."

Herein lies the continuity of today's "free market reforms" with Mao's legacy. As Raya Dunayevskaya, the founder of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S., showed in her analyses of Mao's China, Mao never questioned the idea that reducing the laborer to a component part of capital prevails under "socialism"; like Stalin, he held that the capitalist law of value was fully compatible with the "new society."⁷ In the face of China's "backwardness," Mao advocated the use of forced labor to create what Marxists had always called "the primitive accumulation of capital." It was the underlying "principle" of his "Great Leap Forward" of 1958-59.

This is likewise the principle underlying China's would-be "Great Leap Forward" of today. Of course, a crucial difference separates Mao's efforts to "make one day equal 20 years" and today's "economic boom": As against Mao's illusion that China could develop through its own internal resources under the command of "Mao Thought," the current rulers realize that the primitive accumulation of capital can-

7. Among Dunayevskaya's many analyses of Mao's China, see especially *Nationalism, Communism, Marxist-Humanism and the Afro-Asian Revolutions* (original edition 1959; reprinted with a new introduction 1984), "The Challenge of Mao Tse-Tung" in the 1964 and subsequent editions of *Marxism and Freedom: From 1776 until Today*, and "The Thought of Mao" in *Philosophy and Revolution: From Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao*.

not be sustained without opening China to foreign capital and technology. As one commentator put it, "If Mao had not imposed a repressive system from which Chinese workers are still emerging, much of today's [corporate] pleasure in having low-paid work could not be counted on."⁸

The working conditions in the multinational factories operating in China's coastal provinces are clear enough: 14-hour days, seven-day weeks, no regard given to workers' health and safety, employers withholding workers' ID cards so they cannot look for work elsewhere, and so on. The bulk of the workers in these "free market" sweatshops are women. Child labor is widespread: in the booming Pearl River delta alone, 14,000 factories employ child labor.

And yet, even with all these "economic incentives" provided for multinational corporations, foreign capital is not investing in the country as a whole, but only in specific regions. Nor is this true just of China. More and more, world capital seeks not nations but regional areas for investment, such as the Strait of Malacca linking Malaysia and Indonesia, parts of Vietnam and China's Hainan island, or the Kansai region of Japan. The global shortage of capital drives this selectivity. World capitalism now finds it can generate growth only in relatively small regions, each of which acts as a sponge soaking up capital from the surrounding area.

In China's case the result is an ever-widening gap between "boom" areas and the vast interior, which has become so serious as to threaten to pull China apart. Provincial leaders especially are becoming increasingly assertive—to the extent that some have even begun issuing their own currency. Ironically the more China becomes "integrated" into the world market, the more it begins to undergo internal fragmentation.

At the same time, whatever economic growth is occurring rests upon a most shaky foundation because the bulk of the growth is due not to real internal productive investment, but rather to a burst in speculative capital. Non-productive investment grew 83% in 1993, indicating a "bubble economy" underpinning China's "boom."

The reason for this is twofold. First, the government finds itself forced to provide credit and money to largely bankrupt state enterprises which still employ two-thirds of the workforce. As a result, though investments in the state sector grew by 65% in 1993, this was not met by any corresponding rise in production. The constant government injections of cash into bankrupt state enterprises fuel inflation and lead to a shortage of capital for more "productive" parts of the economy.

The government can hardly act differently, for it fears that allowing state enterprises to close will lead to huge unemployment and a massive workers' revolt. They have good reason to fear. Thousands of illegal strikes and over 200 worker-inspired "riots" were recorded in the last year alone. With the specter of outright revolt haunting China, Communist Party head Jiang Zemin recently called the threat of workers' strikes and revolts "the most important hidden peril" underlying his regime.

Second, the burst in speculative capital is due to the co-existence of state-capitalism with the free market. Thanks to their government connections, the managers of state enterprises have easy credit to government funds. They then use these funds to set up their own privately owned corporations without of course giving up their state positions. They then "sell" the products made in "their" factories to their new privatized concern, often at fantastic markups. The result is an economic "boom" based not on rising production or investment but mere speculation.

In this sense, the developments in China are not as distant from those in Russia as they may appear. There too, the co-existence of a state-capitalist economy that once called itself "Communist" with the "principle" of the free market has allowed the old ruling class to enrich itself in speculative transactions without leading to any real development of the economy. Of course, there is a big difference between Rus-

8. Perry Link, "The Old Man's New China," *New York Review of Books*, June 9, 1994.

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6. For our analyses of the Bosnian struggle, see *Bosnia-Herzegovina: Achilles Heel of Western "Civilization"* (Chicago: News and Letters, 1993) and "U.S. and Russia Enter Bosnia Cockpit," *News & Letters*, March 1994.

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sia and China—China is experiencing a 20% yearly **increase** in industrial output as against Russia's 20% **decrease**. However, China's increase is not due to any serious growth in domestic capital investment, but rather to foreign capital rushing in to take advantage of cheap labor and an authoritarian state that, unlike Russia, has not undergone fragmentation and near-collapse.⁹

This likewise resonates with the situation facing the "reindustrialized" South USA, where multinational corporations have taken advantage of cheap labor and an authoritarian state—as in Mississippi—to embark on **regional** capital investment. As elsewhere, such investment is quite **ephemeral** as world capital goes in constant search of ever-cheaper sources of labor power.

In a word, the Chinese economy, like the world economy as a whole, is suffering from a shortage of capital. In China this "capital shortage is already a potentially dangerous bottleneck to growth, stunting the creation of new jobs and casting vast migrant populations across the country in search of work."¹⁰

The difficulty China is facing in creating a basis for productive economic development is **not** due to the way its "former" planned economy still supposedly shields it from the law of value dominating the world market. On the contrary, it is precisely the identification of both "planned" and "market" economies with that law of value which explains China's difficulty in overcoming its shortage of capital.

As Marx long ago showed, though capitalism is a system of "production for the sake of production," it does **not** have unlimited capacities for growth. The capitalist surely tries to accumulate capital by reducing the relative magnitude of the variable part of capital, in other words, wages and benefits, compared with the constant part, that is, the means of production, machinery, technology, and so on. "Dead labor" or capital thus dominates living labor more and more. Howev-

9. For our analysis of the developments in Russia, see "Where is Russia Going?" by Peter Hudis in *News & Letters*, January-February 1994.

10. See "Bursting China's Bubble" by Richard Hornick, *Foreign Affairs* 73 (3), May/June 1994, p. 35.

III. Dialectics of philosophy in today's changed world

"Because the transformation of reality is central to the Hegelian dialectic, Hegel's philosophy comes to life, over and over again, in all periods of crisis and transition."

—Raya Dunayevskaya, *Philosophy and Revolution*

A. Can the Idea of revolutionary socialism be reconstituted anew?

The need to spell out the role that a Marxist-Humanist organization can play today flows from the changing nature of today's objective situation. Foremost in this is the way the crises of existing society are leading many to question the talk about "the death of Marxism" as a bit premature.

Even the postmodernist French intellectual Jacques Derrida argues in a recent book that the enduring crises of capitalism call for a reconsideration of Marx's legacy. Though Derrida has his own twist on what it means to revisit "the spectre of Marx," the view that the human imagination needs to envision broader horizons than those of bankrupt "state socialism" and "free market capitalism" is being voiced with greater frequency in today's battle of ideas.

Nor is this restricted to debates between intellectuals. Today's social crises are proving so intractable that the talk of "free market capitalism" as humanity's only available option sounds less and less convincing to masses of people. So dissatisfied are the masses of East Europe in particular, with the reality of the "free market" that the former Communists, now anointed as "democratic socialists," have won recent elections in Lithuania, Poland, and Hungary.

One need hardly add that the "conversion" of former statist bureaucrats into advocates of "a mixed market and planned economy" poses no serious alternative to the bankruptcy of existing society. Though an array of old alternatives are trying to take advantage of a new mode of existence—from former Stalinists parading as "democratic socialists" to former anti-Stalinists jettisoning the very concept of socialism in the name of "radical democracy"—the void in projecting of a liberating alternative to capitalism remains.

To fill this void calls for far more than halfway measures or "a peace treaty with existing needs." It calls for a serious reexamination of the philosophic principles upon which the Marxian concept of social revolution is based.

This is what Raya Dunayevskaya pointed to at the very moment a "changed world" of retrogression emerged in the 1980s. As she wrote in 1987, "The most difficult of all tasks that have confronted every generation of Marxists is to work out what is Marx's Marxism for its age; the task has never been more difficult than the one that confronts" us today. That very difficulty, she contended, called for a re-encounter with the work which first projected the revolutionary dialectic in a comprehensive philosophic form—Hegel's *Phenom-*

er, this leaves the capitalist with a smaller proportion of the only substance which can create new value—living labor. The logic of capitalist production, Marx showed, is that even if the capitalist system utilizes the full 24 hours a day of labor without remuneration, it would still reach the point where it cannot reproduce the value of the constant component of capital. Marx put it this way: "The greatest barrier to the self-expansion of capital is capital itself."

This is not theory. This is a **fact** of the world economy. As against those baffled by today's reality because of their failure to grasp the theory of state-capitalism, what prevents Russia and China from achieving a smooth transition to the "free market" is the same thing which prevents the "free market" economies of the West from achieving a smooth transition to significant economic growth. Though the former Communist countries are clearly the weak links in the world capitalist system at the moment, for both them and the Western economies the greatest barrier to the self-expansion of capital is indeed capital itself.

C. Is revolution enough to bring forth a new society?

The depth of revolt upwelling from within China today can point toward a very different future. This revolt includes the discontent of the **peasantry**; major peasant protests, strikes, and "riots" were reported in 20 provinces over the past year. It also includes the unrest among the **urban proletariat**; eight million workers in state-run enterprises took part in **slowdowns** and work **stoppages** in 1993, and 800 new labor unions have spontaneously sprung up in the privatized firms of Guangdong alone. Incredibly, over 10,000 workers came into the streets in an unauthorized open protest against labor conditions in Shanghai this spring. A crucial factor in this ferment is **women** who are speaking out against the way the "free market" has led to rising sexual abuse and commodification of women's bodies. This dissent also extends to **intellectuals and youth** who are questioning the way the oppressive collectivism of the Mao period, when everyone was told to "sacrifice" for the state, has now turned into the excessive individualism of the Deng period, when everyone is told to "sacrifice" for the self-indulgence of the *nouveau riche*.

The rulers are terrified of such opposition, which explains the force of the oppression, now sure to be even more severe thanks to Clinton's decision to uncouple consideration of China's human rights record from renewal of its MFN

enology of Mind.¹¹

This "spontaneous work of genius" contained in embryo the **whole** of what Hegel was to work out over the next three decades and proved of critical importance in the birth of Marx's "new continent of thought and of revolution." A look back at Marx's encounter with Hegel's *Phenomenology* in his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* on this, its 150th anniversary, can reveal much about what it means to restate Marx's Marxism.

In the final essay of his 1844 *Manuscripts*, "Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic," Marx praises Hegel's *Phenomenology* for the way its presentation of the myriad stages of development of human consciousness discloses the actual nature of alienation in modern society. In critiquing Hegel for treating history as the unfoldment of so many stages of consciousness instead of the activity of **live** human beings, Marx reconstructs Hegel's theory of alienation by tying it to alienated relations of labor/capital and of man/woman.

Yet alienation is not the only insight which Marx drew from Hegel. Marx most of all praises Hegel's *Phenomenology* for revealing, in abstract form, the actual process by which humanity **transcends** alienation. Marx does so by appropriating Hegel's notion that the pathway to freedom proceeds through "the negation of the negation"—that is, not alone the destruction of the old, but also the creation of the new. Marx concretely breaks this down by insisting that the communist abolition of capitalist private property is only a first negation which fails to liberate the worker; to reach true liberation, he insists, this negation must itself be negated.

By critically reconstructing Hegel's concept of the **transcendence** of alienation through double negation, Marx projects the need for a new **philosophy** to comprehend the strivings of the **whole** person for liberation, freed from the division of mental versus manual and theory versus practice. He concludes, "We see here how thoroughgoing Naturalism, or Humanism, distinguishes itself from both Idealism and Materialism, and is, at the same time, the truth uniting both...only Humanism can grasp the act of world history."

Marx's leap to the future in 1844 entailed far more than simply the recognition of the proletariat as revolutionary. It was a call for the total uprooting of capitalism, its production and its culture, as embodied in relations of labor/capital and man/woman, which Marx called the most fundamental of all in society. It was a call for a total revolution to uproot all conditions "in which the human essence materializes itself in an inhuman manner in opposition to itself."

It took four decades for Marx to flesh out that challenge to existing society. This ranged from his activity in the 1848 revolutions with the *Communist Manifesto* in hand; to the 30-year process of writing and rewriting *Capital*; to the work of his last decade (1875-83) in which he probed anew into the revolutionary capacity of the peasantry and indigenous

11. See Dunayevskaya's "Why Hegel's *Phenomenology*? Why Now?" in *News & Letters*, May 8, 1987, and "Why *Phenomenology*? Why Now? What is the Relationship Either to Organization, or to Philosophy, not Party? 1984-87" in *Supplement to the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, Vol. 13, microfilm #10883-99.

trading status. This is also reflected in the government's ongoing drive to integrate the functions of the party, government, and secret police. The army's growth is reflected in its call for a more belligerent approach toward China's neighbors. Clearly the army is positioning itself to once again play a crucial role in the post-Deng era.

Despite this situation, several specific features of the opposition in China can lead to new developments in the 1990s and beyond.

First, nowhere else has the co-existence of state-capitalism calling itself "Communism" and "free market capitalism" been so glaring. The masses' growing disdain for the latter after having thoroughly rejected the former opens the door to breaking us free from the greatest myth of the twentieth century—the notion that totalitarian communism and "democratic" capitalism are "absolute opposites" and humanity's only alternatives.

Second, unlike in Russia and Eastern Europe, a significant current of the opposition within China has not rejected Marx's Marxism. The humanist vision of Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* continues to attract many youth. And the availability of Marx's *Ethnological Notebooks of 1880-81* in Chinese—though kept out of the reach of the masses by the Communist rulers—reflects a continued interest to rethink what Marx's Marxism means for today. Indeed, a passion for a **philosophy** of revolution is very much embedded within China's development, as seen in the continued interest in a **humanist** Marxism.

This indigenous search for a philosophy of liberation may be the most crucial determinant of all. Our generation has seen living proof that a new society cannot be created by practice alone. This was starkly revealed by the way the emergence of so new and creative a form of workers' self-organization as the **Solidarity** movement in Poland in the 1980s ended up leading not to a revolutionary new beginning, but rather to the rebirth of "free market capitalism." It showed that even the most creative, massive, spontaneous form of organization does not lead to a revolutionary new beginning when separated from a new stage of cognition.

In this sense, the presence, development, and unfoldment of the philosophic dimension which inheres within China's development can help point the way to actualizing what remains an untrodden path—the **dialectics of organization and philosophy**. Though the current which is reaching for a new revolutionary beginning in China may yet be only a ripple in the stream, it can prove of critical importance not alone for China, but for the world—which is why we must turn to the responsibilities facing us as Marxist-Humanists right here in the U.S.

peoples. We can especially see Marx's projection of how total, continuous, global must the concept of revolution be now, in his *Critique of the Gotha Program* of 1875 where he sharply critiqued his own followers for separating organization from the philosophic principles underlying revolution. It represented his full organizational concretization of the principle contained in his demystification of Hegel's concept of "the negation of the negation" in his 1844 *Manuscripts*.

The tragedy is that post-Marx Marxism did not fully catch this humanist vision. To this day, even those Marxists who consider the 1844 *Manuscripts* of epochal importance emphasize but one of its dimensions, the emergence of Marx's critique of bourgeois economics. The way in which Marx projected a new **philosophy** rooted in his critical reconstruction of Hegel's concept of absolute negativity continues to be skipped over.

Indeed, that dimension was skipped over even by such important Marxists as Lenin, who did return to Marx's roots in Hegel in his own 1914 *Philosophic Notebooks* but stopped at the threshold of the Absolute, and Rosa Luxemburg, who raised the critical question of the need for revolutionary democracy after the seizure of power without, how-

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ever, turning to philosophy.

That Marx's Marxism is not just a "theory of class struggle," let alone a "move from philosophy to the critique of political economy," but rather the development of a philosophy of revolution in permanence, was not recognized until our age.

What proved to be the determinant for recognizing this was the journey Raya Dunayevskaya took in her "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes" of May 1953. They probed into the culmination of Hegel's philosophy as presented in "Absolute Knowledge" in his *Phenomenology of Mind*, "Absolute Idea" in his *Science of Logic*, and "Absolute Mind" in his *Philosophy of Mind*.¹² She took this journey neither for academic purposes nor for debunking Hegel's Absolute as just a synonym for an empty abstraction or "God." Rather, what motivated the journey was the effort to come to grips with the central reality of this century—the emergence of counter-revolution from within revolution. The narrowing of socialism to one or another form of "nationalized property" had robbed the movement of the sweep, depth, and revolutionary power of Marx's original insight into the shortcomings of existing society. To recapture that humanist thread of Marx's thought it became imperative to directly confront the dialectic of absolute negativity.

Dunayevskaya's plunge into this dialectic in her 1953 Letters provided an altogether new insight into the nature of the emerging freedom struggles of that period. For it pointed to a new movement from practice reaching to go beyond first negation by asking "what happens after" before the revolution. At the same time, her 1953 Letters projected the need for a new movement from theory to meet this mass quest, "for a totally new revolt, in which everyone experiences 'absolute liberation.'" This led to the birth of the philosophy of Marxist-Humanism.

It took the next three decades for that philosophy to be worked out as a full body of ideas, embodied in Dunayevskaya's "trilogy of revolution": *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). The heart of this development is Marxist-Humanism's unique contribution: absolute negativity as new beginning.

Throughout our historic period, "absolute negativity as new beginning" has provided the philosophic basis for restating Marx's Marxism. Yet in light of the profound impasse which has confronted both the movements from practice and from theory over the last decade, it has become clearer and clearer that this concept can no longer remain in a separate compartment from organization. Indeed, in response to a retrogressive "changed world" which emerged in the 1980s, Dunayevskaya returned with new eyes to her 1953 Letters, seeing them now as the "ground and roof" for working out what remains to be fully concretized—the inseparability of the dialectic of second negativity from organization

12. Dunayevskaya's 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes" can be found in *The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism* (Chicago: News and Letters, 1989).

itself. Working this out is the philosophic point upon which our future depends.

B. Why Hegel's 'Phenomenology'? Why Now?

One of the most daunting barriers blocking the restatement of the idea of revolutionary socialism for our day is the legacy of the elitist "vanguard party to lead." Though Lenin is most closely associated with that concept, its originator was Ferdinand Lassalle, whom Marx called a "worker's dictator." Lassalle's notion that a vanguard party is needed to provide the political leadership over the mass struggles, deemed incapable of reaching socialist consciousness through their own endeavors, permeated all sections of the radical movement.

What makes the concept of the "vanguard party" especially pernicious is the separation it introduced between organization and the philosophic principles underlying revolution. The role of "the party" became more and more defined, not by how it embodies and projects the ultimate goal of a new society, but rather by how it obtains political hegemony over the masses by "organizing" the struggle for immediate demands. With all the talk of "leadership, leadership, leadership," the relation between dialectics and organization fell off the map.

So ingrained was this that even after Lenin creatively returned to the Hegelian dialectic in his *Philosophic Notebooks* of 1914, he still kept dialectics in a separate compartment from organization, holding to the end to the elitist concept of the "party to lead."

That the concept of the elitist party has by now come under wide disrepute does not signal the resolution of the problem it introduced, namely separating organization from philosophy. This can be seen in those revolutionists who correctly rejected the concept of the "vanguard party" by emphasizing the importance of spontaneous forms of organization. Yet in ceding everything to these spontaneous forms, anti-vanguardists acted as if the projection of a vision of a new society could be left to spontaneous action alone.

But isn't the role of theory and theoreticians just as objective as the new forms of organization which emerge from mass struggles? If the role of a group of revolutionary theoreticians is left abstract or suspended, does not the question of philosophy once again get removed from the province of organization? So ingrained has this separation between philosophy and organization proven to be in the entire movement that by now revolutionaries worldwide have found themselves unable to seriously answer the rulers' claim that "actually existing capitalism" defines humanity's future.

To combat this, we embarked this year on an effort to break down the separation of dialectics and organization by finally taking seriously Dunayevskaya's insistence in 1986-87 that we re-examine Hegel's most creative work, his *Phenomenology of Mind*. At a moment when Marxism is being declared "dead" and the notion of "Absolutes" disparaged in favor of a rootless relativism, we initiated a new kind of dialogue on the dialectic by inviting all we could reach to a class series on Hegel's *Phenomenology*.¹³

This was not for any scholastic purposes, but in order to grasp the dialectic of negativity as an organizational effort. For far too long, radicals have rested on the results of philosophy rather than grasping its process. In recognizing that this was no longer adequate given the need to restate Marx's Marxism for a radically changed world, we set ourselves the task of grasping the dialectic in philosophy itself. Only in that way would we have a contribution to make to projecting and concretizing the idea of freedom for our age on the basis of absolute negativity as new beginning.

Our class series on Hegel's *Phenomenology* represented the beginning of this labor. It opened new doors for us in revealing that: 1) the dialectics of organization cannot be worked out without a collective journey into the dialectic in philosophy itself; and 2) this journey cannot be truly achieved if we become loose or imprecise about our organizational responsibilities.

To fail to jam together the two—the dialectics of philosophy and actual organizational self-development—would simply have us repeat all the errors of post-Marx Marxists who failed to specify the objective role that a group of workers and intellectuals who are revolutionary theoreticians can play in helping to transform reality. In light of the crisis we face today in the articulation of a liberating alternative to capitalism, we cannot afford to be abstract or indifferent about the development of our own organization.

It is by jamming together the seeming opposites of dialectics of philosophy and organization that we can concretize the principle contained in the "philosophic moment" of Marxist-Humanism, the 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes" which projected the dialectics of philosophy and organization as a single dialectic.

In a document entitled "Why Hegel's *Phenomenology*? Why Now? What is the relationship either to Organization, or to Philosophy, not Party?" written in April 1987, Dunayevskaya spoke of the critical importance of keeping philosophy and organization as one in any effort to work out a philosophic new beginning. She here refers to the "parallel" between two very different periods—the mid-1950s, when the philosophy of Marxist-Humanism was born in response to such events as the Hungarian Revolution, and the 1980s, when a new stage of retrogression emerged.

She poses the question of "how to begin anew when two totalities—reality and thought, philosophy and revolution—are in such drastic collision as to [impel the] search, not for a non-existent haven, but a totally new beginning. This new beginning is not really just a new beginning. When

two such wholes collide, a totally new philosophy emerges that would unite the 'contingency,' the past, history, with notional comprehension. For that you need new forces of revolution, new passions, a new vision of totally new human relations, be it of man/woman, master/slaves, the end of alienated labor, and the end of the fetishism of commodities. The long trek of history, striving to achieve this in different historic periods, fought under the name of freedom but always crippled by the narrowing of specific freedoms have not, however, sunk into oblivion but reappear in this recollection of forms now inwardized as the ground for the new."

Dunayevskaya is here referring to the final paragraph of Hegel's *Phenomenology*, where Hegel suddenly twice mentions organization—he poses organization the first time as a spontaneous expression of history, the second time as the intellectual expression of the meaning of history.

She then concludes: "The question that remains unanswered is why should suddenly the word Organization appear as the key, whether we talk about it as spontaneous free existence or all fully worked out as an intellectual expression which yet becomes a new beginning that is first to be worked out during actuality as history is first being 'made'? That is the arduous task that seems to have no answer and yet is put forward as something that must be answered by the coming generation who has absorbed all that objectivity of the past and the present."

C. Philosophic- Organizational tasks, 1994-95

The need to deepen our journey into the dialectic in philosophy inseparable from the further development of our organization as a whole defines our tasks for 1994-95. For we must ask whether it is possible for the self-determination of the Idea to develop philosophically without an organization which captures and embodies the aspirations, questions, and layers of the masses who are searching for a revolutionary new beginning. In this sense, our need for a more concrete focus on our organizational growth in 1994-95 is central to our follow-through on the classes on the *Phenomenology*.

1) Our work in the Black dimension has taken on new importance in light of both the new relations we have forged with ongoing labor and civil rights battles in the South and in our continuing effort to elicit the new social consciousness which emerged from the L.A. rebellion. *American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard* (1963; expanded 1963, 1970, 1983) remains our fundamental statement on the relation of Marxist-Humanism to the Black dimension in the U.S. Yet because of the need to speak to the changed realities of the past decade, we plan to issue a new pamphlet consisting of a restatement of the Marxist-Humanist view of the Black dimension this year.

2) The need to further concretize the relation between dialectics of philosophy and organization demands a new exploration of the historic development of Marxist-Humanism. We plan to do so through a concentration on five publications over the next year: *25 Years of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S.* (1980); *The Coal Miners' General Strike of 1949-50 and the Birth of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S.* (1984); *The Myriad Global Crises of the 1980s and the Nuclear World since World War II* (1986); the *Constitution of News and Letters Committees* (1956; revised 1973, 1983); and *The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism* (1989).

3) One of our prime perspectives continues to be to ensure that Marxist-Humanism's major philosophic works remain in print. However, an array of other philosophic writings by Raya Dunayevskaya are either out of print or unpublished. A central task for the next year consists of systematically publishing some of this material.

4) The past year has disclosed the importance of further developing our international relations. We have developed a unique position in support of self-determination in Bosnia and our work in this area will continue over the next year. At the same time, important new inreach has come to us from Chinese and Japanese revolutionists as well as from Russia. A central perspective is to pursue these openings, while strengthening our in-person dialogue with revolutionaries in Mexico—which is currently in upheaval as a result of the rebellion in Chiapas.

5) We cannot work out any of our activities without meeting our financial responsibilities for the continuance of News and Letters Committees. We propose a sustaining fund of \$40,000 to ensure our continued publication and activity.

Whether it concerns any particular task or our perspectives as a whole, our effort to become a "catalyst and propellant" to working out revolutionary new beginnings calls for a heightened sense of the relationship of individual to universal. If there is one thing we learned from the classes on Hegel's *Phenomenology*, it is the many pitfalls that await the individual when the narrow ego—instead of the mass movement and the self-determination of the Idea—becomes the judge of forward movement.

It is therefore crucial to see that "Self-discipline is not the absence of discipline; it is the absence of an order to be disciplined. Self-discipline is born out of the Idea of Freedom as Absolute and History as not only past, but history-in-the-making which Marx saw as the actualization of freedom, its struggles throughout human development. The long, hard road to revolution cannot be achieved if History is skipped over; history-in-the-making, as well as in the past, is inseparable from the self in the self-determination of the Idea of Freedom."¹⁴

—The Resident Editorial Board

June 28, 1994

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13. To order a copy of the presentations given in these classes in Chicago, see ad on this page.

14. See *Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, 1986-87* by Raya Dunayevskaya, Supplement to the *Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, Vol. 13, microfilm #11035.

LIFE IN THE 'NEW' SOUTH AFRICA

My life in this "new South Africa" is still the same. A better change hasn't yet been attained due to the fact that many things still have to be restructured. The ANC was able to come to power largely due to the impact of organizations like the National Union of Mineworkers, whose leader, Ramaphosa, was one of the main negotiators in drawing up the new Constitution. But many questions remain as to where to next.

Women trade union organizer
South Africa



WOMEN IN INDIA...

The caste system here in Maharashtra is rigidly in place and sex segregation is so intense—it's almost absolute! I feel very much as though I will explode unless I get away from here. Social relations are as they probably have been for centuries, and untouchability is still practiced (ironically, one home I was in which exploits Dalits has a picture of Gandhi in the front room, which demonstrates how much Gandhi really challenged social relations). The system of personal dependency is stubbornly practiced, but is being challenged by imported ideas of individualism. Something has to break up the stagnating relations and thought in rural and urban India! One can almost understand what Marx meant when he spoke in 1853 about British industry breaking up the old order of things. However, the old order of things has to be broken up from inside—obviously, there was nothing "progressive" about British imperialism, nor is there anything "progressive" about today's "new open markets."

Feminist
Maharashtra, India

...AND IN THE U.S.

I feel women have so many things they can do with their lives, and I feel bothered when women feel trapped by the company. They feel trapped by fear. These women aren't even using their heads anymore. And they're only 30 or 40 years old. I have to blame a lot on their education, because in school they only taught us about George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, not about organizing our communities and unions. Every parent needs to quit waiting on the school system to educate their children. If people are only for themselves now, it's because parents aren't educating their children about the struggles that came before.

Black woman sewing machine operator
Somerville, Tenn.

CONTEMPORARY CHINA

An encouraging shift in China is more intellectuals becoming aware that China cannot abandon socialism. I received a letter written by a group of dissidents, saying that "Leftists" (in China it's the way the hardliners are called) are "trying to exploit the outrage of workers and peasants against the social injustice in their struggle for power after Deng. We should not let socialism fall into the hands of the leftists and become their monopoly." Another statement in the letter says, "anticommunist appearances among Chinese intellectuals abroad would not be accepted by people here."

Dissident from China

The republication of one of Raya Dunayevskaya's writings on Mao in the June issue helped illuminate a striking reality about today's China—the way the same regime which once proclaimed the need for self-sacrifice for the state now proclaims the virtues of individual acquisitiveness and profiteering. I especially have in mind Dunayevskaya's point that Mao's thought corresponded to the section on "the discipline of culture" in Hegel's *Phenomenology*. In this section Hegel shows that the Universal is first approached by "relating oneself to state power." He then shows that when the limitations of this become recognized without reaching a total reorganization, the "individual ego" now gets posed as the Universal. Just as there is no class divide between "private" capitalism and state-capitalism that called itself "Com-

Readers' Views

SPIRIT OF REVOLT IN BLACK, LATINO AND LABOR REALITY

I agree with the statement by Teresa Allison which Gene Ford quoted in his article in the June issue of N&L: "We have to think, take to the streets and march because the mind is what they are afraid of." Everyone feels so isolated and cut off from each other nowadays. But when workers begin to see that there are a lot of others who think the same way about how we are being made to live today, you have the beginning of a movement. That is why the thoughts workers have against this system are never brought out by the powers that be.

Latino meatpacker
Chicago

These are times of stress, and the rulers and manipulators are trying to concentrate the hatred of the people against the so-called "illegal aliens." It's a recipe for a very dangerous confrontation. The right is blaming illegal aliens in an effort to salvage the status quo. The Left has to make clear where the enemy lies.

Chicano activist
Los Angeles

Black people were brought to this country to work for the white masters, but now the rulers have decided they don't need our labor anymore. So they are now trying to get rid of us any way they can. That to me explains why the drugs, the guns, the violence have become so much a part of our reality.

Black worker
Chicago

Jim Mills' lead article in the May N&L provides an excellent analysis on crime in America. America refuses to admit its part in creating a society that wallows in crime and injustice, and consequently is unable to take intelligent and humane actions to change it. All it can come up with is incarceration and execution—if need declines for those it considers undesirable or maybe less human. I was also reminded of the times I was in the Philippines. There is nothing that I feared more than being arrested. Back then, arrest was tantamount to death. It still is. Here, too. Three weeks ago in Staten Island, a Black youth died while

munism," so there is no philosophic divide between the deification of the state and the deification of the isolated individual.

Student of philosophy
New York

It was compelling to read Raya's analysis of Mao in terms of Hegel's study of human consciousness, and how Hegel recognized Mao as "Spirit in Self-estrangement." The question she raised concerning Mao's pull on young revolutionaries is important to answer over 25 years later, because that development of consciousness is crucial for a successful revolution that "does not repeat the past."

Reader
Detroit

The extreme in capitalism which is coming to life today is prison labor, as in China. I don't mean the use of outright prison labor, but the fact that the whole country is a prison labor farm, run for the benefit of the state-capitalist elite.

Observer
Oakland, California

LESSONS OF BOSNIA

As early as the beginning of the war in Bosnia, Marxist-Humanists pointed out that we cannot depend on the capitalist state powers to defend what the Bosnian struggle for self-determination was for. Unfortunately, others in the Bosnian support movement took a different approach, such as supporting direct U.S. intervention there as the "solution." They now have to face the fact that this has only brought Bosnia closer to partition. To me it shows how deadly is the movement's acceptance of the idea that we must accept the limits of the given.

Sheila Fuller
Illinois

in police custody. When I see children and youth, I wonder about their future.

Filipina activist
New York

Fayette County [Tennessee] sometimes seems like the other side of the world to me. It's like they still want slavery here. But I'm not going to be anybody's slave. Never. The only time I was like a slave was when my seven kids were little and I would do anything for them. But that was out of love; it was different. I won't even be a slave to my husband.

Black working woman
Somerville, Tenn.

I've listened to TV, radio and friends blaming immigrants for workers being out of jobs, for the health care crisis, welfare crisis and all the other economic problems of this country. A big percentage of immigrants as well as North Americans need to understand that we are here, first of all, because powerful American companies took over our countries, not as immigrants but as owners. They took over everything from oil to bananas, devastating the country, leaving people with no ways to survive. When people don't have the opportunity to learn, they internalize the lies that they hear. One sees more and more immigrants, especially Latinos, walking down the streets of this big country with their heads down, hoping not to be noticed. They feel scared and guilty, as if they were causing the crises here.

Ecuadoran woman
New York

The article by Gene Ford on "Spirit of revolt beneath today's Black, Latino, labor reality" (see June N&L) was the best article I ever read in New & Letters. The most intense part was when he pointed out that no one makes a category of the most important force of all—the mind of the oppressed. For a revolutionary organization to connect with the masses, it has to be in touch with what is brewing within those minds.

Ed
Chicago

When you look at the outright fascism that has arisen in a former "Communist" country like Yugoslavia, you have to wonder about whether "first negation"—what Marx referred to as the abolition of private property—is any kind of "progressive" step at all.

Activist
Flint, Michigan

REVOLT IN CHIAPAS



It is important to see that Peter Wermuth, in his article "Dialogue with a Zapatista Revolutionary" (N&L, June 1994), is following up on the events in Mexico and its repercussions in this country. However, it struck us that he dedicated a large part of his article to the "contradictions" facing Mexico based on the declaration of a so-called legal representative of the Zapatistas invited to the U.S. by the reactionary Worker's World Party. No doubt the spirit of Mao was present in the Chicago event. Was this really a dialogue with a Zapatista revolutionary?

Marina Storni, Sin Mas and
Carlos Varela
New York

The article about the Zapatistas in the June issue really hit home for me, especially when Pedro Castillo said the Zapatistas oppose the vanguard party. What has always bothered me is that I don't need some "leader" telling me what I have to do and think. I get enough of that from my boss at work. What I need is an idea of what we are going to do after we get rid of this system. Working that out takes a lot of time

and effort from people who come together in the struggle.

Martin Almora
Chicago

WHY PHILOSOPHY? WHY NOW?

Years ago I read *Marxism and Freedom* and it helped me to develop a modicum of hope for the future during a time when I had severe doubts. Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's *Philosophy of Revolution* was so complex that I tried again and again, but couldn't get through many of the terms. I try to wade through some of the theoretical presentations in N&L but terms like "negation of the negation" are rarely if ever defined. Still, here is my renewal and a donation. I pass my own copy on after it is read and that friend passes it on once more.

Longtime reader
Oregon

The Marxist-Humanist classes on Hegel's *Phenomenology* helped me a lot. What I am seeing now is how in the past people have looked for change with only a halfway understanding. The focus was all on the external class struggle and not on the internal changes that were also needed amongst the people. In the past, the Communists have often played on the desperation of the people, and the revolution then became just a change of masters.

Mexican revolutionary
California

I have just read Erich Fromm's preface to Raya Dunayevskaya's *Philosophy and Revolution*. It is a clarion call to those of us who know that the spirit of the Gospels and the ideas of Marx's humanism flow in the same stream of human historical realities. The reality of counter-revolution throughout these 2,500 years was clearly anticipated by both Jesus (vulgar anti-christ Churchianity) and Marx (vulgar communism) as was the passing away of all institutions. Every call that challenges our humanness is simultaneously a call to leave alienated forms of organization and to embrace the Revolution In Perpetuity and heal our own alienated relationships.

El Monte Dan
California

After reading *Marxism and Freedom*, what Raya Dunayevskaya calls "post-Marx Marxism" is becoming clearer to me, as are the lines of demarcation you have with other groups.

Correspondent
North Carolina

The idea I get from your organization is that it's like the blade of a knife, a force of negativity that cuts through revolutionary struggles just when the revolutionary ideas are going to be subsumed. I want to know more about the idea of "negation of the negation" from Hegel that seems to be very important to you. I went to Ghana with the Peace Corps several years ago and came back disillusioned with both the Peace Corps and Nkrumahism. I decided to go back to study philosophy. This may have been a retreat, but I keep feeling philosophy must be able to help us understand revolution in a new way.

Philosophy grad student
Memphis, Tenn.

I want to let you know how rewarding the classes on Hegel, Marx and history were for me, and to thank you for providing the first genuine education I've had in years. I also want to thank you for your continuing commitment to change. Enclosed is a contribution to your Appeal which I hope will make my appreciation a bit more tangible.

Counselor
Illinois

THANK YOU AND A REMINDER!

Our thanks to all our readers and friends who have contributed so generously to our Appeal for help in keeping N&L going. Have you sent in your contribution yet?

Black/Red View

by John Alan

The heated debate created by the invitation Benjamin Chavis gave to Louis Farrakhan to participate in the NAACP-sponsored summit conference of African-American leadership in Baltimore last month has unfortunately hidden the reactionary nature of that conference. While it's true that Chavis, as the director of the NAACP, violated the principles of the NAACP by inviting a leader of an anti-Semitic organization to the conference, his critics are quick to point out that Chavis has gone further than that in an organizational sense. He has refurbished and reasserted the conservative principle of Dr. W. E. B. DuBois' "Talented Tenth" to lead the African-American masses by ignoring African Americans living in poverty in the inner cities, the alleged subjects of the conference, and by casting a veil of secrecy over the deliberations of the 50 African-American leaders he had selected to work out a strategy to deal with economic and social crises now destroying the African-American community.

Many of Chavis' "leaders" are hardly household names and have only a marginal connection with the Black mass movement. Farrakhan's organization refused to participate in the Civil Rights Movement. And then there were "free floating" intellectuals like Cornel West who believe that the urban Black poor are a "nihilistic threat" to American civilization.

Of course, these unknown "leaders" and the "independent intellectuals" were not the main personalities at the conference; that honor went to the men with organizations, like Chavis, Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton and Farrakhan. These men have their own political agenda to gain power by organizing and disciplining African-American masses. Jackson said quite candidly, during an interview on the MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour that "organization is needed to control violence."

The secrecy surrounding the Baltimore Conference

Black World

(Continued from page 1)

Some 30 years ago civil rights workers, Black and white, entered that "undisclosed realm of darkness" called Mississippi. The evil of white supremacy that lurked there was manifest in countless ways. The wanton murder of three civil rights workers, Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman and James Chaney, was perhaps the most infamous manifestation of the evil that stalked Freedom Summer (an "undisclosed realm of darkness" still surrounds that crime).

More important though is the economic-political "manifold actuality" of the "New South" that systematically conspires to undermine the progress of newly emerging social struggles. Over the last decade we have witnessed the powerful beginnings of a resurgent labor movement across the South, one whose cutting edge is increasingly being sharpened in Mississippi. Mississippi too is where a state-wide Black student movement has mobilized against the legal machinations of the state's racist Governor Fordice to close down or merge historically Black colleges, following a Jim Crow history of denying them equitable funding.

Unfortunately, in the Freedom Summer conference workshops and plenaries, one never heard the voices and reason of this new insurgent labor movement whose content is predominantly Black women. And though the conference was held at Tougaloo College and Jackson State University, there was no opportunity to hear the voices and perspectives of the Mississippi Black student movement, except when Bob Moses, organizer of the Summer Project in '64, spontaneously elicited the views of students in a workshop that, until Moses's intervention, was taken up with singing freedom songs. A workshop I co-organized around the News & Letters publication *American Civilization on Trial*, an original Freedom School text, had scheduled Black women workers from the Delta; we also invited two student leaders to speak.

It was indeed odd then that in a state where a militant labor movement has emerged out of the last two decades of economic restructuring; where a state-wide Black student movement now challenges the state; where the old lynchocracy continues in the form of jailhouse hangings and the theft of Black-owned land; where the governor wants to close a Black college in order to turn it into a prison, that not a whiff of any of this was evident in the official proceedings of Mississippi "Homecoming" conference. No wonder Charles Tisdale, editor of the *Jackson Advocate*, felt that "the celebration is premature."

The conference still had its surprises. Beatrice Branch, the first woman to head the state's NAACP, departed from the moderation of other plenary speakers to tell us that in Mississippi today some 80% of all Black folk live below the poverty line; that 30 years after Freedom Summer, the average income of Black men in the state of Mississippi is only 45% that of white men; and that despite the number of Black elected officials in Jackson, a white ruling elite who live outside Jackson still run the city with the connivance of some Black politicians. The truth is that "the changes in Mississippi since the CRM are more 'cosmetic' than real."

In this context, it is therefore totally incomprehensible why the organizers saw fit to invite Jackson's Mayor Kane Ditto and Governor Fordice to address the conference. Kane Ditto obliged by opening the Saturday plenary.

Black 'leaders' reel backward

emphasized the historic estrangement of Black leadership from the Black masses. But to think that estrangement can be overcome without transcending the very concept of organization as it is known and practiced today would be foolish. Indeed, the internal dialectic of this estrangement and the objective alienating relationship that the African-American masses have to U.S. capitalism is the ground for working out a philosophy of liberation which could end this fatal dualism in Black thought.

The conclave of Black leaders meeting in Baltimore believes that the economic and social dislocation in the inner cities can be resolved by capitalism, even though the Black economic/social crisis is clearly a manifestation of the deep, unending crisis of capitalism itself. But still, we find that Chavis and many of the other leaders have a plan to bring capitalism to the Black community. Their plan is hardly different in theme from the nineteenth century economic moralism of Booker T. Washington even though banks and industrialists have had absolutely no interest in expanding their capital investment in South Central Los Angeles.

According to the June 12, 1994 issue of the *New York Times Magazine*, Chavis' plan to bring capital to the Black community is "his philosophy of self-determination," supported by an agreement the NAACP has with more than 60 companies to hire and promote more Blacks, as well as to buy supplies from Black-owned vendors, and with two banks to finance NAACP-staffed, neighborhood-based lending offices, as well as an entrepreneurial training program for high school and college students.

This is essentially the content and method of Chavis' "philosophy." It is the most crass perversion of the idea of self-determination that one can find. It removes self, the human subject, from self-determination and replaces it with an external force of capitalist development to come from outside the African-American community as

the real self-determining force of development. In the 1960s, African leaders also thought that was the way Africa would develop.

When one chooses to turn one's back on the realities of capitalism, one has to embrace the ideological logic that the economic-social crisis of capitalism is caused by the "social pathology" of the Black masses, i.e., their long stay on relief rolls, crime and unwed mothers. President Clinton has made this political sermon the center of his campaign to reform welfare. And, at the same time, this sermon has been taken over by most of the African-American leadership from Jackson to Farrakhan.

Thus we find that the real opposite, both in criticism and in activity of the American society, comes from the consciousness of the African-American masses. It is not an academic opposition, because in character it is essentially the will to transcend the existing race relationship in this country by canceling the alienating conditions of life, whether it be in the form of the Los Angeles rebellion or Black women workers self-organizing in the Mississippi Delta region.

The self-consciousness of Black masses is the opposite of the "nihilism" of Cornel West or other "theories of social pathology" currently in vogue. These "theories" are ideological attempts to hide the fact that the self-consciousness of Black masses in motion reflects the totality of the U.S. capitalist crisis, and thus is a consciousness rooted in Black life, limited by permanent unemployment, poor education, covert and overt racism and the humiliation of living in housing projects that are controlled by the police. But the negativity of Black life is the fuel of Black mass resistance. The dialectic of this resistance has not been fully comprehended or articulated by intellectuals, not at least since Richard Wright attempted to do so in his 1930s novels, because so many of them have simply grasped Black resistance in the realm of cultural survival and not as an act of objective transcendence of the American racist society.

N.Y. jobless speak

New York—Two Black men who are unemployed discussed the state of the City with News & Letters while waiting in a welfare office line:

Carpenter: "There are so many homeless, and so many empty buildings; why not fix them up for the homeless? On this welfare line there are carpenters, plumbers, electricians—we could do the job. But there are no jobs for us, while the mayor announces plans to create 'low income' housing for people making \$30,000 a year. That's not low income! Graft and corruption prevent the City from taking the abandoned buildings and making housing available to the needy."

"I'd gladly take a job if I could get one. I could earn more in a week than I get on welfare in a month. I can't get in the union; it's very difficult unless you know somebody. The only job I've been offered, you have to have your own tools. I'm going to ask welfare for money for the tools, but they'll give me a hard time. They never tell you what your options are, even if you know enough to ask."

Heavy equipment operator: "I want a job too. I just wasted four and half years in the military. I thought I would be able to use the skills I learned, but I got nothing out of it. I drove a tank and all kinds of equipment in the service, but when I applied for a job as a crane operator recently, they said I had no experience as a heavy equipment operator! There just aren't any jobs."

Tiananmen 5 years after

Oakland, Cal.—On the fifth anniversary of the Tiananmen Square uprising, I attended a memorial for the participants of that protest, in San Francisco Chinatown's Portsmouth Square. A student speaker, Liu Lei, reminded us that this memorial event comes on the heels of President Clinton's historic decoupling of trade and human rights, and simultaneously with the 50th anniversary of WWII's defeat of Hitler's campaigns. I found that Liu Lei's pointing out these apparently dissonant elements together was perhaps an attempt to uncover a unifying thread. He said that while D-Day is celebrated by the West for its triumph over Hitler's tyranny, do not forget the tyranny the participants at Tiananmen Square tried to overcome.

Perhaps placing a replica of the Goddess of Democracy at Portsmouth Square is symbolically very apt at pointing to that dissonance. The square is in the heart of Chinatown, on a street named after Dennis Kearney, an anti-Chinese demagogue from the days when Leland Stanford embraced heartily the masses of Chinese coolie-laborers who toiled on his railroads. It was an era when the likes of Kearney hated and feared the "Chinese menace" while the likes of Stanford loved the near-slavery conditions of imported Chinese labor. Have things really changed that much? One only needs to listen to the vicious demagoguery against immigrants in the election campaign rhetoric of California Governor Pete Wilson.

Another echo comes from a distant past when, in 1840, the British government sent troops and ships to a dissolute China to enforce the opium trade. In a way, Deng Xiaoping, with his "modernization" program, delivers a similar kind of message from the first opium war: China is, once again, ripe for conquest. How far we've come since the day Mao rolled out the red carpet for Nixon. It is telling that today President Clinton has eulogized the Great Warrior, but not the courageous students who erected and died for the Goddess of Democracy.

—Chinese American

Freedom Summer, '64

ry. While Fordice had the sense not to show his face, no doubt in fear of sparking a student protest, one is at a loss to explain why the organizers would invite Fordice to speak at the very Black institutions he has threatened to terminate!

Mississippi's unresolved contradictions from the period of Freedom Summer have borne new, more serious ones within the political remnants of the CRM. But just as surely has a new social consciousness been born among Black workers, women and student youth. The twin birth of a restructured South and a radical Black social consciousness may appear an exception in our so-called post-industrial, post-Civil Rights society. But what we risk forgetting, at our cost, is what has historically distinguished the South as a region, namely, that the superimposition of ever new social strata on the old does not necessarily mean the overcoming of the latter. Which is what makes 1964's Freedom Summer a summer that never ended.

Justice for janitors!

Los Angeles—About 400 janitors and their supporters gathered on June 15 to protest the work conditions of janitors employed by Los Angeles City and County. The city and county will not agree to require janitorial contractors to guarantee livable wages, health insurance and protection from mistreatment on the job, nor to respect the janitors' right to organize.

Protesters marched from the Justice for Janitors local headquarters eastward into downtown. We stopped in front of the Hilton Hotel, where slogans were chanted and flyers passed out. Hilton janitorial employees are not organized. When we reached the new downtown Metro (subway), police stepped aside as we streamed into the station and rode two stops without buying a ticket.

We marched into and through the Hall of Administration, a public building. Hearings were being held there in which another group of city employees, the police, were demanding raises. The janitors earlier had been denied a hearing. We moved on to City Hall, but were not allowed inside. A rally was held on the steps.

The Brown Berets were present, as were the Korean Drummers, the Pro-Immigrant Coalition and MECHA students from UCLA and Cal State Northridge. African-American supporters were present. But the great majority of the group were the janitors themselves and their families. Most are fairly recent immigrants from Mexico and Central America, most documented, some not.

Maria T. has been working at LAX (International Airport) for seven years and has been a union member most of that time. She makes \$5 an hour, no benefits. Most of her co-workers make \$4.70. "We pay \$770 rent and we have to pay for the children's needs. The city takes advantage of us. They see us as second-class and unable to defend ourselves," she said. Her husband, who works in a factory, marched beside her.

Martha works in an organized building and has been happy with her wages and benefits for most of the 17 years she has worked there. "But they have cut personnel, so we've ended up working extra hours for the same pay," she said. "They've told us we should be able to do the work in the usual eight hours. We held a meeting and demanded one more worker. The contractors finally agreed to add one half-time position."

—Anna Maillon

Youth

Where were the stones in 'Stonewall 25'?

New York—On June 26, 1.1 million people converged on New York City for the 25th anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion. The event marked the birth of the modern gay and lesbian civil rights movement. There was an international march on the United Nations to affirm the human rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people. There was also an alternative march organized by international AIDS activists to protest 13 years of the global AIDS epidemic with no signs of a cure or any real progress towards dealing with the millions of HIV-infected people in the world.

There was a large youth contingent in the March, presenting one of the largest and most vocal groups. The youth were the most inspiring to me, as I saw hope for the movement in their power. They held a drumming and dancing circle which some of the gay adults found quite annoying in the resort town of Greenwich Village.

Unfortunately, it seems that capitalism has poisoned us, and divisions of race, class and gender—that seemed unthinkable a few short years ago—have been drawn. The rift between those wanting to transform society and those wanting to assimilate into the mainstream has reached dangerous proportions. This is shocking for one of the most diverse movements in human history.

I personally witnessed drag queens, leather folk, and bare-chested lesbians being taunted and verbally abused by gay men on the streets of Greenwich Village. What is happening? Where is the philosophy of revolution?

Stonewall 25 was not considered to be as important as the Gay Games IV, an Olympic-type competitive sporting event, by the press or the people in the movement. The Stonewall anniversary was second place to almost everything. It was more important to dance on the U.S.S. Intrepid aircraft carrier museum at \$40 a pop for 4,000 men than to have dialogue about the direction of the movement or discuss human liberation for all.

The New York City police force faced their biggest job ever, with 6,500 cops on duty at one time. Surprisingly, there was not one arrest reported of the 1.1 million participants. How that happened, I don't know. But the cops even bowed to the "illegal" 10,000-person strong AIDS activist march down Fifth Avenue. They obviously realized the power of the masses, even if the masses don't realize their own power.

Many white gay men have disposable incomes that allow them to fantasize that they are safe, that they have arrived. They don't want to give up their piece of the pie. They don't understand that they are becoming the enemy within the movement for total human liberation.

I found it frightening that some people thought that AIDS activists are just too darn angry. One of the placards that AIDS activists carried asked, "Where is your rage?" Many people found that distasteful and not very polite.

Anne Wentworth, a speaker from ACT UP/New York, confronted the crowd on being "over AIDS," "tired of it," so to speak, and used to the fact that our friends are dying. I cannot imagine ever getting used to genocide. When this same speaker called for an end to racism and sexism within the movement, only half the people on the Great Lawn of Central Park applauded.

This breaks my heart and infuriates me at the same

time. When we sold our rage for a lie from Clinton, it seems no one went back for a refund.

—Tom Williamson

San Francisco—Twenty-five years ago, after police repeatedly raided and harassed drag queens and others who frequented gay bars in Greenwich Village, the community fought back. The Stonewall Inn, a local gay bar, became the focal point as people took to the streets, fighting cops and throwing bottles and bricks. Since hailed as the "start of the gay liberation movement," most participants from the Stonewall era are hardly fighting for their rights as they were then.

Today's gay liberation movement is comprised of a younger, angrier generation. We've grown up in a world of Reagan, oppression and AIDS. And we're fighting back, saying that we aren't free yet. Rap groups and hotlines do not solve alienation. We want more.

L.A. youth summit

Los Angeles—Some 200 teenagers, mainly African-American and Latino, met at South Central's Jefferson High School in late June to discuss the ominous implications of California's recently enacted "three strikes and you're out" law. Organized by the youth group South Central Youth Empowered thru Action (SC-YEA), the focus was on how to protest and change this law that, in the words of one youth, "is just another way of enslaving our people once again."

Under the law, someone convicted as a juvenile of two "serious" (not necessarily violent) felonies (a conviction achieved under juvenile "justice" without a jury trial), and then convicted as an adult, at any age, of a felony of any kind (including, for example, writing a bad check) would automatically be imprisoned for the rest of his or her life, without possibility of parole.

At a time when Black vs. Latino teenage fights and killings are headlines, the affinity of Black and Latino youth was realized in bringing together youth from both backgrounds to fight for a common cause. Both women and men, African Americans and Latino/as, were equal, articulate participants, and while some adults violated the teens' stress that this was an opportunity for teenage self-expression, it was the youth who proved that they had the most penetrating things to say.

"How is it that Governor Wilson says the State of California has no money for jobs or recreation centers, but there is money to build 20 new prisons?" asked Marlo Jenkins, a SC-YEA organizer. "It costs \$23,000 for one of us to go to the University of Southern California for one year, but it costs the State of California \$32,000 to keep one of us in jail for a year. Forty-five percent of the youth incarcerated by the California Youth Authority are Latinos, and 35 percent are African American. I say give us rehabilitation, recreation, and education. Locking people up is not the answer. Youth need to come together and change things for themselves."

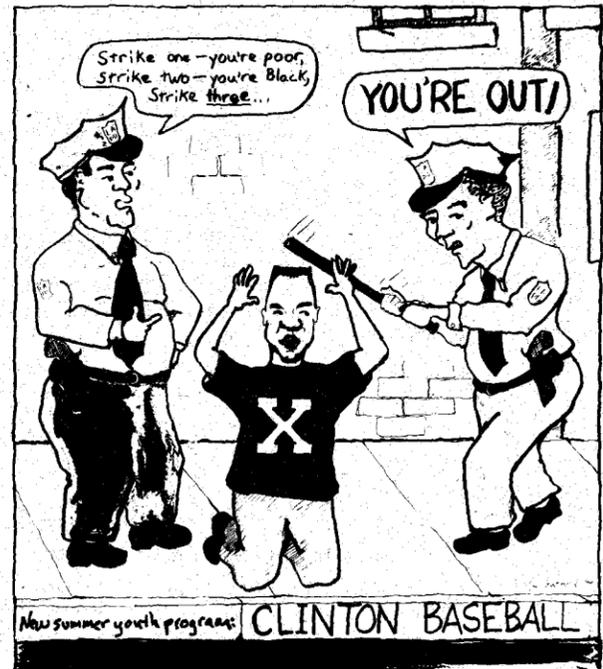
"They can't run away from the problem by putting us in jail," warned Tony Zepeda, student body president at Jefferson High. "I'm tired of coming to school and not

We are denied full access to gay organizations. Adults seem too afraid of getting in trouble, of being accused of being child molesters, to allow us to be a part of their world. So youth issues are just a sidebar, mentioned only because we "have a high rate of suicide."

Dubbed "Generation Q" by the mainstream gay press, gay youth today are more inclusive than our parents, more together than those before us, and are coming out at a younger age. The adult "gay community" has used this to prove that we are now fully accepted by straight society, therefore, we don't need to fight anymore. This is simply not true.

Gay youth are seen as "at risk," uncontrollable, rebellious and therefore dangerous, by the adult gay community. We have joined together and become leaders in direct action organizations across the country. And gay youth today want something more. We want to know that we have a future, that we aren't just fighting to prove to heterosexuals that "hey, we're okay, let us join you." We don't want just a seat at the table. We want a society where people are truly free—where we are recognized as human beings.

—Lynn Hailey



learning anything. I'm tired of being put down because I'm a Latino from the ghetto. I'm tired of seeing Black and Brown faces as the criminals on TV. I've had enough! Do we need all those police out there jeopardizing our lives? Let's work together to break down three strikes and we're out!"

In the discussion teens lined up at the microphones to voice their opinions. Some wanted to know more about the law, and many voiced angry views about how the state is targeting their young lives. A group of Black teens from Pasadena brought their solidarity and support, as well as copies of the first issues of a newsletter they have started, called "Express Yourself News."

—Michelle Landau

American Dilemma revisited

(Continued from page 4)

at all is unaware of the Garvey movement. This is the most remarkable phenomenon in the history of the Negro in the United States. Mr. Myrdal recognizes its importance. He writes:

For one thing it proves that it is possible to reach the Negro masses if they are appealed to in an effective way. It testifies to the basic unrest in the Negro community. It tells of a dissatisfaction so deep that it amounts to hopelessness of ever gaining a full life in America. (page 749)

Mr. Myrdal himself does not analyze the Garvey movement, although he states that this, along with a thorough study of the movement, ought to be done:

Negro intellectuals, for understandable reasons, show certain inhibitions in dealing with the topic, as do the white students of the Negro problem. But it is worthy of intensive historical investigation and careful reflection. (page 749)

Why Mr. Myrdal has not done so in a study lasting four years and covering 1400 pages of text remains inexplicable....

PORTENTS ON THE HORIZON

To anyone who is concerned about the Negro question today, this neglect of the Garvey movement has just about reached its end. There is stirring in the Negro people in the United States today a racial consciousness which has at present found its most extreme expression in the writings of Richard Wright....These are portents on the horizon which can be ignored only to the peril of the labor movement. But they must be approached upon the indispensable basis of the revolutionary struggle for socialism and of the proletariat as that social class which will solve the Negro problem along with all other major problems that capitalist society cannot solve. From the very fact that scholars like Mr. Johnson and Mr. Myrdal make such valuable contributions to the Negro question, it is necessary for Marxists to attack and expose without mercy their false philosophical premises.

German student activists support multiethnic Bosnia

Frankfurt, Germany—At a discussion on Bosnia I held in June with three student activists from the left student journal, *Perspektiven*, some of the barriers they faced from entrenched attitudes on the Left came up. One student, a German of Serbian origin, said: "We wanted to support those people fighting against extreme Serbian or Croatian nationalism and so we began to publish articles dealing with this issue. *Perspektiven* stands in the tradition of the non-dogmatic Left, of the student movement in Frankfurt, and of the Frankfurt School.

"We wanted to think about how to maintain a multiethnic, multicultural society here in Europe in a situation where a society is being destroyed. We started to discuss military intervention in 1992. Part of us thought intervention by UN forces would be necessary. But we have no unique position on this. What we have in common is the perspective of keeping a democratic, multiethnic Bosnia intact, and that of fighting for a democratic Croatia and Serbia. The war will not be solved only in Sarajevo."

A second student added: "There is a more or less consistent position within *Perspektiven* that the weapons embargo should have been lifted." A third student stated: "It should also be noted that we don't fall into undifferentiated support for the Bosnian regime. We have always tried to keep in contact with political forces that are non-nationalist and progressive, for example the left political parties in Tuzla who are proposing non-nationalist solutions.

"We have also had contact with the Belgrade Circle in Serbia, which is an intellectual, progressive association with 400 members meeting there every week and publishing quite important analyses. We also have contact with women's groups. As for *Perspektiven*, we see ourselves in the tradition of Critical Theory, of its analysis of society. We are convinced that Bosnia is a metaphor for emerging conflicts since the end of the Cold War. We need more differentiated theoretical categories."

In terms of organizing last February's conference on Bosnia, the second student recalled: "It was difficult to find academics and other theorists who were willing to participate. This resulted in most of the speeches being from former Yugoslavia." The third student added: "Al-

though we had invited a lot of German or Frankfurt academics, who always claim to be aware of what is happening in society, not one of them agreed to appear.

"It was a disgrace for those who came from the former Yugoslavia, some of whom had had 10 or 20 years of contact with professors at Frankfurt University. It was one of the most amazing consequences of our organizing. We invited the whole Institute for Social Research, and the Department of Philosophy, which means Professor Jurgen Habermas and his friends."

The second student said: "Some said it was difficult to decide who is fighting against whom there. It's a war in Europe and yet they don't know what's going on in Bosnia. It's amazing. The audience was mainly students from Germany and refugees from Bosnia, but almost no professors even came to hear it."

The third student added: "Daniel Cohn-Bendit, who did speak at the February conference, also spoke on Bosnia last Fall at a Green Party convention. They were booing him when he said that the arms embargo was unjustified, and that fascist aggression can never be tolerated in Europe. The situation has changed since last Fall, but only a bit. Especially in Germany, we have a highly ideologized perception of the whole conflict.

"Pacifists have to apply their pacifism to Bosnia, and thus cannot support a defense by force of arms of the people under attack. In addition, radicals with an anti-imperialist orientation who'd never bothered themselves with Eastern Europe and who had been quite comfortable in the Cold War time, would in many cases say that since the conservative German government recognized Croatia and attacked Serbian aggression that we as a Left have to take the opposing position. People never bothered with the real materialistic basis of the conflict.

"People tried to interpret the conflict with completely static, undialectical and ideologized concepts. The main issue for them was to preserve their own way of thinking in an unreflective, undifferentiated way and not to consider the real conditions of the people in the former Yugoslavia."

Perspektiven can be contacted at: Falkstrasse 106 HH, D-60487 Frankfurt, Germany. (See also "Our Life and Times," p. 12).

—Kevin A. Barry

Our Life and Times

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

Frankfurt, Germany—The U.S., Russia and the West European governments are planning at the July 8 economic summit in Naples to put the final touches on a "peace" settlement which will ghettoize the Bosnian population and leave the Serbian aggressors with nearly 50% of the territory. The only problem is that the Bosnian people show few signs of caving in to such a plan. Recently, Bosnian army commander Rasim Delic told the Sarajevo newspaper, *Oslobodjenje*: "Up to now, we have carried out a defensive war. Now, we will go to phase two, a war of liberation." (*Le Monde*, June 26-27, 1994)

As the Serbian genocide and "ethnic cleansing" continues, the UN and the Western powers keep the arms embargo on Bosnia; the European intellectuals and the Left have begun to show some belated signs of taking a stand against the genocide after two years of holding a hands off attitude of blaming "all sides."

In France, a campaign by several prominent intellectuals to create a "Sarajevo slate" in that country's European parliament elections touched off a furious debate in the leading newspapers. Although some of its initiators withdrew from the slate before the actual voting, the

French troops in Rwanda

On June 23, several hundred French troops crossed into Rwanda from Zaire on what was officially termed a UN-sanctioned humanitarian mission to stop the genocide which has claimed the lives of up to 500,000 people, mainly members of the Tutsi minority as well as people from the Hutu majority suspected of sympathy for the Tutsis. No one seriously believes that France's purpose is humanitarian, however.

Long the dominant outside power in much of Central and West Africa, France has for years backed the very Rwandan government and military who stand accused before the world. Not only did France openly arm the regime, but also according to Amnesty International, there is ample evidence that French "advisors" also helped to arm and to train the Interahamwe, the very militia which carried out the genocide in a cold, systematic, planned way, and which continues its murders on a small scale even today.

France stands out among former colonial powers in Africa for its continued success in dominating and controlling the post-colonial societies it once ruled directly, as well as some of those it did not, such as Rwanda, and to a certain extent even Zaire. Besides several previous interventions to prop up the Rwandan government since 1990, France has sent troops to Gabon in 1990, to the Comoros in 1989, and to Togo in 1986.

One of its biggest operations was in 1977 when thousands of French troops helped Zairean dictator Mobutu Sese-Seko thwart an invasion by opportunists. Today's intervention in Rwanda, which is based in Zaire, seems destined also to extend, at least a bit, Mobutu's rule once again, at a time when internal unrest has shaken his power as never before.

whole debate succeeded in moving French public opinion toward lifting the arms embargo. In addition, a special issue devoted to the Bosnia crisis of *Les Temps Modernes*, the journal founded by Jean-Paul Sartre, sold out its entire stock of several thousand copies in only a few weeks.

There are today 300 grassroots Bosnia support groups in France. Two days before Clinton et. al. had their media extravaganza on June 6 on the beaches of Normandy, the real anti-fascist forces, 10,000 strong, held a demonstration to support Bosnia, a few miles away in Caen. Organized by the National Convention of Committees Against Ethnic Cleansing, many of the demonstrators carried posters listing the names of Bosnian dead.

Others, mainly women's groups, protested the Serbian rape camps. Another held a sign which read: "American soldiers, did you die so that fascism could establish itself once again in Europe?" Here, unlike in the official ceremonies marking D-Day, German anti-fascists not only joined the march, but their anti-racist Association for Threatened Peoples was put at the head of the demonstration.

In Germany, students and intellectuals have also been raising Bosnia as a central issue for the Left. In February, Help for Bosnia, a group organized in part by activists from the left student journal, *Perspektiven*, held a three-day conference at Frankfurt University where intellectuals from the former Yugoslavia, as well as from Germany, spoke out against the genocide. These included Bosnian intellectuals such as Gajo Bozidar Sekulic, a philosophy professor at the University of Sarajevo, who is a former member of the Praxis group. Sekulic said at the time that it was a "great scandal" that so few prominent former left intellectuals had taken a clear stand against the genocide in Bosnia. (*Tageszeitung*, Feb. 17,

Bangladesh feminist in hiding

The Bangladeshi feminist writer Taslima Nasrin went into hiding in June when Islamic fundamentalists pressured the government to issue a warrant for her arrest. Nasrin was already a target of rightist religious parties who had put a price on her head for writing and speaking for women's liberation. The government claimed her "offense" was calling for a revision of the Koran.

While Bangladeshi women's groups and others have come to Nasrin's defense, it is clear she has become the rallying cry for religious factions to unite in their campaign for instituting Islamic law. They have also launched an attack against the non-religious press, including terrorist bombing of the publication which had previously run Nasrin's regular column. Recently some journalists were arrested for "offending religious sensibilities."

The religious right is now pressuring the government to pass sweeping "anti-blasphemy" laws which would muzzle criticism of religion and civil society. They aim to silence critics such as Nasrin, who wrote: "My main motto is let humanity be the other name of religion today. My main objective is to correct class and religious differences."

1994) The group *Perspektiven* also helps Bosnian exiles in Germany to publish their own journal, *Egzil*. (For an interview with students from *Perspektiven*, see p. 11.)

Arafat's 'homecoming'

Yasir Arafat's visit in July to Gaza and Jericho, where he will soon take up residency, has underlined the fragility of the Palestinian "self-rule" accord which he is now touting as the road to an independent state.

Arafat's hurried tour of such areas as the Jabaliya refugee camp in the Gaza strip, site of the birth of the Pal-



Arafat in Gaza: how long will the 'honeymoon' last?

estinian intifada seven years ago, was met by a massive demonstration in Jerusalem on July 2 of thousands of rightwing Israelis opposed to even the minimal amount of Palestinian "self-rule" allowed by Arafat's deal with Israel. Though the Israeli "rejection front" has recently been in some disarray, the July 2 demonstration showed that the ability of Israeli chauvinists to sabotage the "self-rule" agreement cannot be underestimated.

At the same time, Arafat has much more to worry about than just the Israeli right. He is facing intense opposition not only from the Islamic fundamentalists and Palestinian rejectionists opposed to any accommodation with Israel, but also from independent Palestinians increasingly disturbed at the autocratic nature of PLO rule being imposed in Gaza and Jericho. Though Arafat promises "democratic" elections in these areas, the emergence of a new layer of military officers, secret police, and PLO bureaucrats accountable to no one but Arafat himself is already giving much cause for concern.

In light of the unsettled nature of the present situation, international capital is holding off for now from bankrolling Arafat's experiment in "self-rule." Though \$2.4 billion in aid over the next five years has been promised the PLO, almost no money has arrived thus far. It remains to be seen whether the PLO-Israeli accord will be able to survive such internal and external pressures.

—Peter Wermuth

Nigerians protest military

The political crisis festering ever since the military in Nigeria cancelled last year's elections has come to the surface again. On June 12, Moshood Abiola, who most observers think won last year's elections, declared himself the country's only legal president before 3,000 people and then slipped away before police could arrest him. Twelve days later, by which time the military had charged him with treason, Abiola surrendered and was imprisoned along with other opponents of the regime.

Hundreds of youth immediately took to the streets against the government, demanding Abiola's release. The next day, 1,000 market women were teargassed as they attempted another protest march. So far, the military and the northern Hausa elites allied to them have refused to back down, apparently seeking to continue their decades-long rule over Yoruba and Igbo regions of the West and South.

Abiola, who for a year has disappointed those who voted for him with his attempts at compromise, seems to have regained much support. Hardly a revolutionary, he is a billionaire businessman with close ties to the U.S.

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