

## NEWS & LETTERS

celebrates the 150th anniversary of the birth of Marx's Humanism

Raya Dunayevskaya

On Karl Marx's ECONOMIC AND PHILOSOPHIC ESSAYS of 1844

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# Western Europe in deep crisis: economic, political, intellectual

by Kevin A. Barry

Berlin, Germany—Some snapshots of Western Europe in crisis, July 1994:

- In Germany, three fascist youths receive several years in jail for their part in the infamous "hunt for foreigners" in Magdeburg in May.
- In France, 900 gather to hear prominent intellectuals denounce the French government's refusal to lift the arms embargo on Bosnia and its complicity with the genocide in Rwanda.
- In Italy, the new Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi is forced by popular outcry to rescind a decree curtailing the ongoing political corruption investigations, and then his own brother is arrested for bribery on behalf of the corporation they jointly run.
- In Britain, European parliament elections in June humiliate the ruling Conservatives, but by this time Labor has undergone a Clintonite transformation, moving closer to the Conservatives.
- As genocide, rape and "ethnic cleansing" continue in Bosnia, only a small minority of the European Left has come out in support of Bosnia, or even of lifting the arms embargo.
- The current recession, which has led to West European unemployment rates unknown since the 1930s, has sparked not so much labor unrest as the growth of racist, anti-immigrant sentiment.

In short, Western Europe is experiencing in 1994 its greatest economic crisis since the 1930s and its greatest political and cultural crisis since the 1960s. Yet, unlike these earlier periods when politics was polarized between



Mass anti-fascist demonstration in Wiesbaden, Germany.

Left and Right, today there is an amazing degree of unanimity between Left and Right, as the Left has given up even the pretense of standing for an alternative to capitalism. This does not mean that there are no counter-movements to the established order, but it does mean that these movements, often fragmentary, remain hemmed in by the reigning conception that bourgeois democracy and "free market" capitalism offer "the best of all possible worlds." Below I will assess briefly the situation in two of the most important West European countries, France and Germany.

### FRANCE: CRITIQUE SANS MARXISM

In France, as the moribund economy shows continuing signs of weakness, the youth revolt which broke out this spring simmers below the surface. In July, after a small pro-Communist student federation launched protests against the absence of places at the University of Paris for 2500 students who had passed their baccalaureate exam, nervous administrators simply closed registration until September. With regard to women, Gisele Halimi of the feminist group Choisir has gained much support for her campaign to require that the French parliament include at least 25% women among its members.

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## Editorial

# Rwanda, Haiti—twin apocalypse

There is something monstrous in our midst. It's not to be found on the lava plains of the Goma refugee camps in Africa's season of cholera. Nor is it found among the prancing despotism of Haiti's drug-trafficking colonels. It's found instead in the day-to-day savageries of "American civilization."

"To die," goes a Rwandan proverb, "is the ransom of life." Given the daily savageries of American society—poverty, predatory crime, homelessness, etc.—it is no wonder that life has been ransomed in the domestic and foreign policy of the Clinton Administration. The more unsettling fact is that it has become a dimension of the American mind.

How else to explain the U.S. response to the twin, but by no means identical, horrors of Rwanda and Haiti? How else to explain the despicable discussion of "national security interests" in the face of the genocidal apocalypse in the heart of Africa, and the raw military terror that has committed over 400 political murders just this year while instigating a mass exodus of some 50,000 Haitians since the 1991 coup that deposed Haiti's first democratically elected President, Jean-Bertrand Aristide?

Let us admit it. This country has been so preoccupied with its own social and political malaise, that it has for some time been indifferent to the genocidal effects of the foreign policy carried out in its "national interest." Military atrocities against civilian populations in the Panama invasion and the Gulf War seem only to have de-sensitized the American mind to "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia. And just as in Bosnia, in Haiti rape has become an instrument of terror which the U.S. embassy in Port-au-Prince has the unconscionable gall to dismiss as one of the "fabricated" human rights abuses that Aristide supporters "manipulate...as a propaganda tool!"

To be sure, America's declining ability to manage the proliferation of global crises reflects its declining ability to manage its own domestic crises. However, the corollary to this is: By what logic has the genocidal impulse become imbued in a people such that they commit the most heinous crimes in the name of national or ethnic identity? It is in their inseparability that these two questions form the starting point of any understanding of today's apocalyptic reality.

### HAITI AND THE WHITE MAN'S BURDEN

In the very week, beginning August 1, that the UN au-

thorized the use of military force in Haiti to oust the military junta headed by Gen. Raoul Cedras (without setting any deadline), Bill Clinton announced at his press conference that he agreed with the unanimous Senate vote earlier that day that the U.S. is not bound by UN authorization and time-tables. Translation: the heat is off Haiti's military tyranny.

Clinton has gained a foreign policy with a Black face to deflect charges of racism (making former Congressman Bill Gray his point man on Haiti, and even dispatching Jesse Jackson to be his emissary in the simmering Nigeria crisis). As a foreign policy devised more for public consumption at home than for any genuine concern for

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## Black World

# Of Black women and the South



Editor's note: As part of our ongoing coverage of the latest developments in the "New South," I am turning my column over this month to the following reflections from Diane Lee on her recent trip South.—Lou Turner

In his new book *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi*, John Dittmer explores what Lou Turner called in his column last month the South's "undisclosed realm of darkness." Dittmer writes "that northerners and southerners alike agreed that Mississippi was in a class by itself, 'the last vestige of a dead and despairing civilization.' The image of Mississippi as America's dungeon not only persisted but intensified over the [last] three decades" (pp. 9-10).

In his Afterword, Dittmer ends by talking about the numerous reunions and conferences on the Civil Rights Movement that had so changed the political geography of the South, evoking a sense of nostalgia for the past. He sees a continuity between the life and struggles of Fannie Lou Hamer and the Algebra Project of Bob Moses and Dave Dennis, as though the latter is the sole alternative to the present state of poverty and the seemingly dismal subjective response to it. But is this the kind of alternative that is needed to take us into a new society with new human relations?

We have seen such courageous new labor struggles as the one being waged by workers at Hood Furniture in Jackson, and the emergence of a statewide Black student movement around the Ayers case to preserve historically Black colleges. Nevertheless, whether the movement is against the power of private capital or state authoritarianism, the clear and present danger is what Charles Tis-

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## Haitians oppose U.S. invasion

Editor's note: We received the following report from a young woman journalist with the Haitian Information Bureau, July 20.

Port-au-Prince—On July 19th about 13 popular organizations gathered to sign a document to call for a mobilization and for the return of democracy back to Haiti. They also called for no intervention. They published a report about the political situation in Haiti and they said "no intervention."

The repression is now generalized in the whole country. Last week people in the south of Port-au-Prince found 12 bodies in the street killed by gunfire. Yesterday people in canal-au-coeil found three severed heads.

The popular movements in Haiti need very strong solidarity to fight. We do not need military intervention in Haiti. People can help us build democracy by helping us to build our own resistance.

It is very hard for journalists to work on the streets. The defacto regime says they will arrest any journalist who calls them "defacto regime." There are a lot of attacks against the personnel. Journalists are under a lot of pressure from the civilian army. For example a lot of press releases were sent to a radio station to put pressure on the journalists.

# Who defines battered women's struggles?

by Anna Maillon

Domestic violence is a personal issue, and the personal is political. There can be no denying its intimate relationship to all forms of exploitation and repression. As a mental health worker in the area of domestic violence, I have been disturbed by the hypocrisy of the capitalist media's coverage of Nicole Simpson's murder. Capitalism is a predator, exploiting our pain, shame, fear and hunger any way it can.

This story would be a public relations victory for feminists were it not for its tragedy and the fact that since the 19th century African-American men have been falsely scapegoated as the greatest danger to white women. Although African-American men are no exception to what Karl Marx pointed out, that "the infinite degradation in which man exists for himself is expressed in his relation to women," still, if fingers were pointed with the same urgency at white men guilty of rape, sexual harassment, child abuse and domestic violence, imagine the numbers, the revolutionary impact!

Are the lives and dignity of African-American men to be sacrificed for the lives and dignity of women? Or vice versa? Are these revolutionary dimensions pitted against one another in the legal and media circuses? In the street? Once a gladiator bound body and soul to the media, Mr. Simpson is apparently still fair game. Can we expect women to ever live freely and safely in a society that buys, sells and discards any one of us at will? We can't let the media play with our heads if we're about freedom.

For the same reason we can't allow the abuse and murder of women to keep on slipping by. Women of all races have been gathering in front of the television at the battered women's shelter where I work, wondering how the Simpson story will end up, how it will affect their lives. In their-our-world men are let off the hook for their abuses all the time. The denial and woman-blaming with which "society" receives news of men's misogynistic behaviors is a part of the reality this capitalist patriarchy expects us to accept.

Within patriarchy, male "batterers" count on a system of values which, if not overtly condoning their violence, supports the "logic" behind it. Battering is not a loss of control; it is the establishment of control. And most of it is done in non-physical ways.

A Mexican Indian woman who stayed recently at our shelter said she had repeatedly asked her husband to treat her like a human being: "You treat me like a thing, like a piece of furniture you never think about, as if I had no mind or feelings. Sex is your right, no matter what I want. I'm like a chair you sit in or get out of according to your convenience." For confronting him she was beaten. And after leaving him she feared for her life.

I have worked at three different battered women's shelters. These "safe houses," originally the underground railroad of the battered women's movement,

started in the early '70s in the homes of women, many themselves previously battered. Many participants were lesbians. Many were women of color. It was a movement in which the empowerment of women was not an act of charity but a process of rebellion and self-definition. There was excitement that relationships between men and women, women and women, men and men, and adults and children would be transformed. Their voices could no longer be ignored.

And then? Legal definitions of abuse were developed. Statistics were taken. The FBI stated that 30% of female homicide victims are killed by husbands or boyfriends. Three to four million U.S. women are battered each year. The government concluded medical and legal institutions should take preventative measures to avoid "wasting" money on domestic violence fallout. The battered women's movement became one more element of the bourgeois, bureaucratic structure of social reforms dependent on state funding and charity organizations.

And the experiences of battered women was reduced to an emotional dysfunction: codependency. "Why do women stay?" was the question, not "Why do men batter?"

This society, based on racist, classist, sexist "norms," encourages us to believe that we all get what we deserve and deserve what we get. This attitude, together with social science's insistence on "value neutral objectivity," tends to "mask the male domination underlying violence against women" as James Ptacek writes. "Clinical and criminal justice responses to battering are revealed as ideological in the light of their collusion with batterers' rationalizations."

Only a few "maverick" feminist therapists and social workers have challenged the so-called objectivity of science by pointing out that the privileged status of men as husbands in this society makes domestic violence virtually inevitable or "normal." Aside from the temporary beds available at subsistence-level shelters, the "solution" to domestic violence has been deflated from a vision of human revolution to a dead end of research and psychological treatment.

As Raya Dunayevskaya put it in *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution*, "Capitalism tries to use everything for its power. That's why Marx criticized science under capitalism and said it was not neutral—'To have one basis for life and another for science is a priori a lie.' He said that phrase in the same essay, 1844, *Private Property and Communism*, in which he discussed how pivotal is the Man/Woman relationship, and not only the class struggle."

For the Los Angeles police, the courts and the media to have suddenly become great defenders of battered women is suspect. I once went to the same police department and the same courthouse seeking protection from a violent husband, and experienced misdirection and humiliation. It's time for us—revolutionary women and men—to take the struggle against the abuse of women back into our own hands—and heads.

## International groups denounce repression

*Editor's note: Below we publish excerpts from the "Final Declaration of the 1st International Meeting of Mothers and Women Who Struggle," dated March 30, 1994, sent to us by the Madres de Plaza de Mayo of Argentina.*

Gathered in Paris and coming from different countries, we have managed to debate in depth during several days topics that made us feel as if we all came from the same place. Discrimination, persecution, torture, rape, militarism, exploitation and racism were common experiences. All of this has brought into the open women from different worlds who express the same opinions.

In our clamor we rejected all oppressing systems, even those which call themselves democratic because they implement economic models in which profits are more important than human life.

Authoritarian governments continue to repress their people turning to assassinations, disappearances, torture

and jailing of all those who dissent. Formal democracies cloaked in appearances of guaranteeing freedom implement economic models that sacrifice and marginalize sections of society through unemployment, lack of sanitary assistance or poverty. They are frequently unjust systems, where hunger and environmental pollution are as mortal as bullets, to which they also turn when the degree of repression demands it.

Another tragic phenomenon is the manipulation of the legitimate right of people to their language and cultural characteristics, which exacerbates nationalism as a form of political control that risks leading to tragedies that bring about death and destruction to these same peoples.

While there exists a single tortured or disappeared person, while there is a single child who dies of hunger or is assassinated on the streets, while the system continues to marginalize young people through drugs, while Mafias continue to be anti-states within the state, while women are discriminated against and raped, there can be neither freedom nor democracy.

This collective of women of the world commits itself to working to transform human relations, so that children and the young are able to receive an education in which solidarity, freedom, equality, respect for the environment and defense of human rights mark out the path towards peace and coexistence. While also supporting the development of a civil society.

The following organizations signed this declaration: Madres de Plaza de Mayo of Argentina • ACARI (Mothers of Assassinated Street/Disadvantaged Children) of Brazil • CONAVIGUA (National Coordinating Body of Guatemalan Widows) • COFADEH (Relatives of the Detained/Disappeared of Honduras) • Women in Black of Israel • PFWA (Palestine Federation of Women's Action) • Palestine Human Rights Information Centre • ANFASEP (National Association of Relatives of the Kidnapped, Detained and Disappeared of Ayacucho, Peru) • AFAPREDESA (Association of Relatives of the Disappeared of the Saharan Republic) • "Mama 56" Kiev Mothers Group of the Ukraine • Centre for Anti-War Action of Belgrade • Belgrade Women in Black • Sarajevo Women's Movement • Centre for Women War Victims of Zagreb • Women Against the Mafia of Italy • Association of Mothers of Conscientious Objectors and the Insubordinate Green-Scarved Women.

## ♀ Women Worldwide

by Mary Jo Grey



Japanese women students marched in Tokyo, July 27, demanding fair treatment for women in the job market. Their banners read: "No sexual harassment," "No discrimination for female students" and "To work is the people's right; the companies must fulfill their duties."

Women's and human rights organizations are mounting international support for 117 Tunisian women who have been interrogated, harassed and threatened by police after signing an appeal for democracy and freedom. The women, including academics, lawyers, journalists and doctors, condemned "serious attacks on the foundations of a tolerant and pluralist society" and called for "respect for freedom and fundamental rights which are the only guarantors for dignity in our country."

—Information from *Women Living Under Muslim Laws*

The Sisterhood is Global Institute is demanding that the Clinton administration condemn human rights abuses in Haiti, especially the growing use of rape as a primary tactic in the political oppression of Haitian women. Human Rights Watch and the National Coalition for Haitian Refugees have charged Haitian soldiers, police and their armed civilian thugs with using rape to intimidate women who support or whose male friends or family members support exiled President Aristide. Despite evidence of such violence, the U.S. government has denied political asylum to women who have been raped.

## Pro-Choice in shadow of Pensacola murders

Chicago—As we go to press, the news of a fatal attack on abortion providers and their supporters is shaking pro-choice activists around the country. On July 29, Dr. John Britton, a doctor who performed abortions in Pensacola, Florida, and James H. Barrett, a volunteer escort for the clinic, were killed by a protester wielding a shotgun who opened fire at the two men's heads. June Barrett, the wife of the slain volunteer, and a volunteer herself, was wounded.

This double murder occurs 16 months after the slaying of Dr. David Gunn, another abortion provider in Pensacola. Paul Hill, the killer of Britton and Barrett, is a religious fanatic who has appeared on *Nightline* and *The Donahue Show* advocating violence against abortion providers.

Obviously this is a reminder that the anti-abortion "protest" movement has become increasingly violent and extremist. Anti-choice zealots have become more intent on harassing and threatening volunteers, medical staff and women seeking services instead of fighting their battles in the courts and legislatures. For the past few years, harassment has become so acute as to frighten women away from clinics, often forcing them to return on a later day. Women lose extra days of work and must rearrange childcare and travel arrangements due to the intimidation known in the anti-abortion movement as "sidewalk counseling." This shooting is an extension of that strategy.

The effects of harassment and intimidation against medical staff and volunteers have a direct effect on access. Bomb threats are routine. Volunteer escorts are harassed at clinics and in their homes. Doctors' children and their playmates have been confronted at elementary schools with graphic pictures of fetuses and the like. Fewer and fewer medical students are learning to do abortions as more ob/gyn residencies in teaching hospitals do not offer the procedure as part of the standard curriculum.

Women in the rural West and the deep South have been particularly hard hit by this strategy. With few doctors trained in the procedure, and laws that prohibit nurse practitioners, midwives or physicians' assistants from performing abortions, finding an abortion provider in places like Pensacola is nearly impossible.

Dr. Britton was the only provider for miles around. Reports are that he was not always respectful or sensitive to women, sometimes refusing to do the procedure if he was not convinced by their reasons for wanting it. Unfortunately, women had nowhere else to go in the county. Now that a doctor and a volunteer are gone, women of the Pensacola area will have even fewer options.

—Maggie Thompson

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## The war at work and labor's power

**New York**—The trucking company where I work is at war against the dock men. The company wants to replace them with "combination" jobs, where the dock worker has to hold a trailer license so he can move trailers if needed. But a war has two sides.

Those left working, including the combination men, know if we work slower they will have to bring in our buddies who aren't working. The power we have is to make sure the trucks don't get loaded on time. Management has the power to come up with these efficiency plans and productivity schemes; we have the power to produce less. It's a war every night.

We wanted the union delegate to come down and negotiate on this. He was too busy. Anyway, he wouldn't have done anything; he just goes along with what the TM (terminal manager) says. So we took care of things ourselves.

The best thing that happened was our steward transferred to another terminal. So when all this came down, we had no shop steward. Instead of the usual—telling the steward he had to do something and then grumbling and complaining when nothing happened—a number of guys just started acting like stewards and went in the office and argued with the TM. The result of all this "negotiating" and getting the trucks out late: we saved two dock jobs.

The war is not over. We still work slow. One young guy used to zip around on that hilo and do 150% to 200% productivity. Then his uncle got laid off, and he's making sure his productivity won't go over 100%. He says he's looking out for his family.

A driver told him: You have to work slow all the time, not just when your uncle is off. How about Sam and Willy, two good guys who worked the dock as casuals, but now the company "doesn't need them"? They need jobs too. If the older drivers hadn't kept their productivity down, we would never have been hired, he said.

We had the power to bring back two men on our job. We had more power than we knew because that shop steward had stood in our way for so many years. When he was gone, it lifted a block from our minds and we found our voices. We stopped waiting for someone to be steward. We started talking to everyone about what we should do and doing it.

Labor does have that power to do things ourselves, but the union often gets in the way. You wait for the union to act, and then you complain. We do need a union and a contract. We could not slow down and fight the boss if he

could just fire us. It is the contract that permits us to do this; let's not forget that.

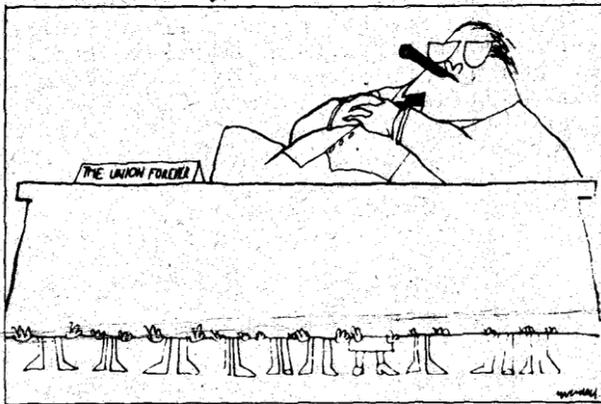
The greatest power we have is not just working slow; it is withholding our labor. I call it the personal strike. The supervisor gets you mad, so you book off (call in sick) on Friday, just when they need you most. Some guys take a day off once in a while just for the pleasure of showing them you can hurt them too.

So we do have more power in our hands than we know, but we are still chained to the job, and that we accept as normal. One thing that doesn't get discussed is, why don't we get rid of management? I guess we know we don't need them. We're just used to that relationship; it seems the only way things could be. When our steward left, it lifted a block from our minds in a small way. What kind of upheaval would lift this bigger block from our minds, to where we could see we have all the power if we only take it?

The power to withhold our labor is a great power. I don't agree with unions being willing to give it up in the face of court injunctions and scabs. Unions now push in-plant strategies, leafletting stockholder meetings and boycotts as the new way to fight. Those can bring people together, but they don't compare to the power of withholding your labor.

I bet if the AFL-CIO didn't stand in our way, workers would have expanded some of these hard strikes, taken it on themselves to spread the strikes no matter what a judge said. We know what it means when they attack one of us, and we want to stand together. I see that on my job.

—John Marcotte



## Community-based workers' centers meet

**New York**—Representatives from 20 "workers' centers" around the country met here July 8-10 to discuss the new labor movement emerging from their community-based groups. Many led by women, the centers help workers to fight for their rights and sometimes to unionize, while also addressing their other concerns.

At a public forum attended by 200 people, Young Shin of Asian Immigrant Women's Advocates in Oakland discussed the development of such centers in the early 1980s as a response to a changing economy which emphasizes "flexible" workers and non-manufacturing jobs, and a changing political climate which is anti-union and encourages the exploitation of immigrants, women and people of color.

Maria del Carmen of La Mujer Obrera in El Paso said her group "has always had a process for developing women's leadership. We want genuine social, economic and political power for workers, and workers' centers are the only place in our community where workers can learn to struggle."

She described their experience with the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union: "The union gets away

with saying it represents workers when in fact it is paternalistic and doesn't include women as leaders. It divided the work force from the community. We need our own methods and models to rescue our identity as workers and to carry out our struggle with dignity. The old union movement won't change its form of organizing, so a new movement is the only alternative."

JoAnn Lum of the Chinese Staff and Workers Association (CSWA) in New York discussed the need for a new labor movement: "Today everyone talks about being pragmatic and is resigned to narrow choices. We debate within the framework of those in power and choose what is less bad instead of what we want. In addition to the structural changes in the economy and the globalization of labor and capital, the government has passed laws and pushed ideas that are divisive. People are fighting for crumbs. Divisions by race, anti-immigrant, etc., depend on accepting scarcity."

"In Chinatown, the laws that are supposed to protect workers are ignored. Many restaurant workers make 70¢ an hour and garment workers, \$1 an hour. Ninety percent of the 500 garment shops in Chinatown are unionized, but the people are actually making \$2 an hour, less than they make in nonunion factories in midtown."

"The social services agencies in the community mostly tell people to learn English and get out. Some are worse, like the Chinese American Planning Council, which gets millions of dollars to do training and then uses the trainees to work on public projects for low wages."

"When we try to use the labor and anti-discrimination laws, we are told that we came too late or didn't know how to make a complaint, in short, that we are the problem. We need a new labor movement, where people feel entitled and will fight, relying on their own power and defining their own political agenda."

"Our issues are not only economic; we don't look at workers only as tools to make things. We take positions on many other things: men, women, parents, health care, schools, gay and lesbian rights, etc. These are all workers' issues. People change their thinking through struggle. The fight is not just about getting a contract, but about going way beyond to the changes we want."

Jerome Scott of Project South in Atlanta related the national attacks on workers, on the unemployed and on welfare. Project South concentrates on the 30% of the labor force that is temporary, part-time and day labor. "This population is transient, so our center has to be a place to come together, to offer some survival services, and also to do political education and research. We need to overcome ideologies that infect us all: white chauvinism, male chauvinism, anti-immigrant," he said.

In the discussion that followed Wing Lam of CSWA said, "Workers' centers are not just a new tactic, they are a new content to the labor movement. The unions failed and there is no chance of reforming them. Even if you took over the unions, you couldn't get better wages under the system today. We are into changing the system."

—Conference participant

## Temping for survival

**Oklahoma City**—General Motors is having a "Jobs Fair" the week of Aug. 8, but listen to what they are doing: letting people with seniority move to other plants and giving early retirement incentives! Then management and UAW Local 1999 are working through the International to get people hired for \$12.75 per hour for as long as two years. They would be considered temporaries!—with minimum benefit packages different from other workers that are already there. I see the future of auto workers and all workers being sold out.

The people who take these \$12.75 positions will be doing the same work as other workers who make \$18.50 an hour. The workers coming in probably aren't giving up high-paying jobs. It doesn't matter that it's only two years; it's the dream of being able to struggle a little less. We, as workers, aren't left with many chances so we do things out of need, not because we have a choice.

I went to work for a company as a temporary and busted my butt to get a permanent job with good—or should I say better—wages and benefits. They had about 40 temps. You had to pass a test and see who could kiss ass for three stinking jobs! In some ways it's the same as being raped or robbed.

Capitalism takes not only the physical toil, but the dignity as well. I just know that if I can see this more workers see the same thing, but it's like the decision whether to survive or be swallowed up. It's not any worker's fault that they can't just stop and put an end to the problem.

Just being aware and talking and even writing about the horrible things that capitalists do to us is a start. I myself would like to take some kind of step to let these capitalists know that I am very aware of the things that they are doing for more profit from my labor and sweat!

—Working woman

**Chicago**—I've been working as a temporary in factories since 1987. Tonight I'm probably going to lose a whole night's pay because the damn bus didn't come for a half hour. If you're not there when the jobs come in you don't work. Last night I was sent to a factory that made cookies, and I spent the night standing in cookie dough all over the floor.

I work at Helene Curtis a lot, but they always call in more people than they really need. If they call you in they're supposed to pay you for a minimum of four hours, but they always try to cheat you out of that.

Another place made me so mad because they gave us our breaks and our lunch all in the first three hours and had us standing on our feet for the last five hours straight. We can't let them treat temps like that. We've got to fight back. If your paper wants stories from workers, I've got a lot of stories.

—Woman at the bus stop

## 'We selected our own union'

**Editor's note:** More than 200 workers, all Black and nearly all women, at Somerville Mills voted in 1988 for representation by Furniture Workers Local 282, but have yet to win a first contract. I. Appel, the New Jersey-based parent corporation, owns other plants in Tennessee with contracts with the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union (ILGWU). The ILGWU refused to assist the Somerville Mills negotiating committee by providing copies of those contracts.

**Somerville, Tenn.**—I truly feel that Somerville Mills has fear of the strength of Local 282 simply because Local 282 has one of the best reputations for supporting their workers. And I repeat that: They truly support their workers. They don't bend, they don't twist; they don't go behind the workers' backs. Companies nowadays want to be able to buy what they want, and Local 282 doesn't want to deal with anybody like that.

Two ladies from ILGWU came up on the plant parking lot two days before we had our election and tried to get union cards signed to intervene in our campaign. I know the company had something to do with it because Bob Young, one of the company's managers, came to the door and he was laughing, looking out there at those ladies. Later that evening, those cards came up in a meeting with the company.

At several of our negotiations, one of the company men told us that if we had let ILGWU represent us we would have had a contract. We say that we're not going to let that company select our union for us, because when that company came into Fayette County, there was no union. They could just as well have brought ILGWU in then and given us a contract as they did when they brought them in to try and destroy our campaign.

We selected our own representatives. We knew who we wanted. If we had given in to the company like that, we'd have still been letting the company choose for us.

—Black women workers

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.\*

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\*From "The objectivity of philosophy in today's world crises," July 1994, *News & Letters*

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## Workshop Talks

(Continued from page 1)

tees and signed up their own co-workers," he said. I hope this message will get to the CIO misleadership to stop meddling in the workers' affairs and get back to representing the workers. Workers are thinkers; they don't need to be led. Every worker is an organizer.

In the early 1970s the UFW had contracts with 80% of the grape growers in the San Joaquin valley. Two decades later not a single contract remained. The movement got transformed from struggling in the fields to boycotts, to writing to Congressmen. Workers know that the government is owned and controlled by capitalism. They know that together workers can produce the world or destroy it, and the capitalists and their bureaucratic bootlickers are the lice that feed off workers' labor.

Trade unions are part of the capitalist control over the workers. The truth of that lies in how the capitalists along with the union leadership have used automation to replace millions of workers' jobs and have not reduced the hours of work each day to keep every worker employed at a higher standard of living.

I also see the beginning of a new labor movement in the South. The Black women, like those at Somerville Mills, don't want to give up their self-won power to a union leader. As a wage slave, retired, who has spent his life in the labor struggle, I see the thinking of these Black women as a higher level of thinking, a great leap in cognition. I also see the importance of this Marxist-Humanist organization, News and Letters Committees, present to give support to that self-development of workers taking back their power to think for themselves.

## From the Archives of Marxist-Humanism

The Writings of  
RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

## Editor's Note

One hundred and fifty years ago this summer, Karl Marx completed what became known as the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. In celebration of that historic beginning of Marx's humanism, we publish a writing by Raya Dunayevskaya that explores those "Humanist Essays." The piece reproduced here is a 1968 draft of Chapter 2 of Dunayevskaya's *Philosophy and Revolution: From Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao* (1973).

The Humanist Essays were rediscovered by Dunayevskaya as she developed her theory of state-capitalism in the 1940s. Her translations of "Private Property and Communism" and "Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic" were the first of Marx's Humanist Essays published in English when they came out as an appendix to her 1958 *Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today*. The writing excerpted here can be found in its entirety in the *Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, microfilm number 4227.

by Raya Dunayevskaya  
Founder of Marxist-Humanism

## Introduction

As established Marxism has proven more than once, the attempt to sunder Marxism by separating its "scientific materialism" from its "Hegelian idealism" does not cleanse its advocates of "Hegelianism," but, on the contrary, leads them directly to the same mire where Hegel ended: glorification of the state, the "mediator" between opposing forces that remain irreconcilable. Because Marx had foreseen the possibility of just such a development—and due not merely to personal opportunism but for the vastly more substantial reason of a fatal flaw within the given philosophy of freedom—he warned his co-revolutionaries: "We should especially avoid re-establishing society as an abstraction, opposed to the individual. The individual is the social entity." (p. 295)<sup>1</sup> This statement in the essay "Private Property and Communism" is part of the now-famous *Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts, 1844*.

The year 1844 was a crucial one both in objective developments such as the revolt of the Silesian weavers<sup>2</sup> and as the point of origin of Marx's historical materialism.<sup>3</sup> Thus, two forces quite distinct from each other and unbeknown to each other, working independently in vastly different spheres of endeavor which seemed worlds apart, were each "preparing" for the revolution that would in four years cover the entire continent of Europe. The coincidence of the spontaneous proletarian outbursts and a worked-out theory of liberation fairly riveted the world's attention on the author of the *Communist Manifesto*, as a revolutionary, as founder of a new world view of history, a new unity of theory and practice that very nearly transformed the world.

1. ...Except where otherwise noted, I am using my own translation, especially the one of "Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic," as they appeared as Appendices to *Marxism and Freedom*, Twayne, N.Y., 1958, first edition.

2. Here is how the young Marx hailed this uprising: "The wisdom of the German poor stands in inverse ratio to the wisdom of poor Germany... The Silesian uprisings began where the French and English insurrections ended, with the consciousness of the proletariat as a class"...

3. Marx himself never used the term; both "historic materialism" and "dialectic materialism" were coined by Engels. Marx himself preferred the more precise though longer phrases such as "the mode of production in material life" or "material base," and "the dialectic method" or simply "revolutionary." In the essays under discussion here, he calls his philosophy "humanist," later it was "Communist," still later "Internationalist," and at all times "revolutionary." Nevertheless, as a shorthand term, and because the quintessential distinction always was historic as both movement and change, that is, not permanent but transitory, we will here use the term historic materialism to designate that materialist conception of history which was specifically Marxian.

Trace the todayness of Marx's  
Economic and Philosophic  
Manuscripts of 1844

"The real question is not why there was a historic break with Hegel in the mid-nineteenth century, when new revolutions covered Europe, but why, after the break, there has been a continuous return to Hegel by the creator of historical materialism and theorist of proletarian revolution, Marx..."

Philosophy and  
Revolution  
From Hegel to Sartre  
and from Marx to Mao

(Original edition 1973; new expanded edition 1989; also available in Spanish, German, Italian, Russian)

See literature ad on page 7.

Not a trace of Hegelian "language" seems to have been left in the new philosophy of revolution. And, indeed, as against both Marx's theory of liberation and the actual freedom struggles, Hegel's mere concept of freedom, even where it reflected a historic drive, was history as finished, as past events, not as present, much less as anticipation of the future. Yet it was no accident that Marx saw the emergence of revolution not only as result of empiric, that is immediate class struggles, but out of the logic of class struggles, out of the dialectic of historical development, for Marx's vision was rooted in the idea of a philosophy of history which Hegel had propounded. And it was the Hegelian dialectic which he re-created and which gave his materialist conception of history so distinct a quality that he could separate himself not only from "idealists" but from "materialists," Feuerbach included. Because the dialectic was not, as with Hegel, restricted to thought, but was the dialectic of actual history, he was enabled also to see as the "subject," as the "negativity" that would transform the world—the proletariat—and with [this subject was] propelled to shape

the future instead of merely "contemplating" the past or present.

There is no doubt as to its originality or world-shaking significance. But it would not have come to be without Hegel. Nor could he have fought Hegel's idealism without Hegel's dialectic. But it was not out of mere indebtedness to Hegel that Marx presented his view, not as mere opposition of materialism to idealism, but as their "unity." Rather it was the positive in his revolutionary vision that led him to write, in his "Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic," that "thorough-going Naturalism, or Humanism, distinguishes itself both from Idealism and Materialism, and is, at the same time, the truth uniting both... Only Naturalism is capable of grasping the act of world history."

The 1840s: From a Critic of Hegel to  
the Author of the *Communist Manifesto*

Within little more than a decade since Hegel's death, in 1831, Hegelianism, as a philosophy, was not only splintered between conservative Old Hegelians and radical Young Hegelians, but—and this is what is truly decisive—it was being undermined by the new objective situation that was bringing onto the historic stage a proletariat more mature than Hegel had ever confronted. Marx's debt to Hegel, however, began not so much on the day he became a Young Hegelian in college but, on the contrary, on the day he broke with the whole of bourgeois society, Young Hegelians included, and began settling scores with his "philosophic conscience." It turned out to be "A Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right" and, as all the other works of that period—1844-1847—this turned out to be a critique also of Hegel's critics.

He no sooner stated that "man makes religion; religion does not make man,"<sup>4</sup> than he moved away from atheism, as such, as well as from philosophical materialism (Feuerbach) and all existing tendencies, to throw out a Promethean challenge: "The immediate task of philosophy, which is in the service of history, is to unmask human self-alienation in its secular form now that it has been unmasked in its sacred form... It is with good reason that the practical political party in Germany demands the negation of philosophy." Its error lies in thinking "that it can achieve this negation by turning its back on philosophy, looking elsewhere, murmuring a few trite and ill-humored phrases... you cannot abolish philosophy without realizing it."<sup>5</sup> Just how thorough he himself was can be seen clearest as he grappled with Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind* and *Encyclopedia* in his next essay, "Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic."

This essay is a work of such "seriousness, suffering, patience and labor of the negative," to use a Hegelian phrase, that, though the reader too "suffers" (since he or she is presented, not with ready-made conclusions, but with the act of creativity itself), he finds that he has been made witness to the origination of the Marxian dialectic, historic materialism.

Once Marx reaches Hegel's *Phenomenology*, he states its simple facts—"Hegel regards human essence, Man, as equal to self-consciousness. All alienation of human essence is, therefore, no more than alienation of self-consciousness"—but [also] elicits the contradiction within [it]: "The actual alienation, which appears as real, is... nothing but the appearance of the alienation of actual human essence..." (p. 311) No wonder that what was "regarded as the essence of alienation, which is posed and to be transcended, is not the fact that human essence materializes itself in an inhuman manner in opposition to itself, but the fact that it materializes itself from and in opposition to, abstract thinking." (p. 309) Now that Marx has shown the inadequacy of Hegel's strongest point, his theory of alienation, he brings about a confrontation between the great merit of Hegelian philosophy—"its thoroughly negative and critical character"—and the fatal flaw inherent in a philosophy which appropriates objects only as thought and movements of thought, for "hidden in embryo (is) the latent potentiality and secret of uncritical positivism and equally uncritical idealism [of the later Hegelian works]—philosophic

disintegration and resurrection of extant Empiricism." (p. 308)

Having thrown a glaring light on the development that will result, Marx moves back to hammer away at the contradictions already existing. Despite, for example, its phenomenal achievement—"the dialectic of negativity as the moving and creating principle"—which enabled Hegel to grasp "the essence of labor and conceives objective man, true, actual man as the result of his own labor," (p. 309) and despite "the positive moment"—"transcendence as objective movement"—the limitations of abstract thought, the restriction of knowing only mental labor, and the fact that "knowing is its sole act" all lead to reducing transcendence to mere appearance. "Thus, after transcending, for example, religion, after the recognition of religion as a product of self-alienation, he still finds himself confirmed in religion as religion... Man who has recognized that in law, politics, etc., he is leading an alienated life, pursues in this alienated life, as such, his true human life." (p. 317) Marx now hammers away at the "lie of his principle... Thus reason is at home in

Marx's transcendence of, and  
return to, Hegel's dialectic

unreason as unreason."

In effect, what Marx is now saying is that the total dichotomy between the philosophic world where alienations were "transcended" and the actual world where they are as big as life is proof enough that the philosophic world is bereft of practice, that existence didn't enter the world of essence, and Hegel's Absolute, far from achieving a unity of thought and reality, only compelled accommodation to reality. And the Other of that world of beautiful Reason, abstract rationalism, is total irrationality of the true, existing world. The manuscript breaks off before Marx has carried through the promise that "We will see later why Hegel separates thinking from the subject." (p. 323) But, in the process of his struggle with Hegel's concepts on Hegel's ground, he has pointed to how different the problems would be when "actual corporeal Man, standing on firm and well rounded earth, inhaling and exhaling all natural forces" becomes "Subject" and the philosophy, Humanism, that has Man at its center would be "capable of grasping the act of world history."

This, however, is not the culminating point of the essay, which is the last of the 1844 manuscripts that had dealt with alienated labor, private property, capital, communism. In these he not only criticized natural scientists whose "abstract materialism" blinds them to the fact that "To have one basis for life and another for science is a priori a lie," (p. 300) but he also took issue with political economy which begins with labor as the source of all value but proceeds to attribute nothing to labor and everything to private property. Marx holds that:

"Private property has made us so stupid and one-sided that any kind of object is ours only when we have it, i.e., when it exists for us as capital, or when we possess it directly—eat it, drink it, wear it, live in it, etc.—in short use it... In place of all the physical and spiritual senses, there is the sense of possession, which is the simple alienation of all these senses... seeing, hearing, smell, taste, feeling, thought, perception, experience, wishing, activity, loving... To such absolute poverty has human essence had to be reduced in order to give birth to its inner wealth!" (pp. 296-297)

He naturally levels his attack against the capitalist "or whatever one calls the lord of labor" and has already introduced a totally new concept, as his theory of alienation, though based on Hegel's, moves to the solid ground of production and alienated labor as the center of its development. This new term which we will see in its most mature form in his greatest theoretical work, *Capital*, is "reification," transformation of man into a thing, which the capitalist process of production does to the laborer. But an ambiguity was apparent when he stated that "communism, as such, is not the goal of human development, the form of human society" since Marx also gave communism high praise: "It is the solution of the riddle of history and knows itself as this solution."

Suddenly, in the midst of the essay on Hegel, precisely at the moment when Marx (in opposition to Feuerbach's criticism of the "negation of the negation") stresses the "positive moments of the Hegelian dialectic"—"transcendence as objective movement"—he returns to the question of communism. He wrote that "communism is humanism mediated by the transcendence of private property. Only by the transcendence of this mediation, which is nevertheless a necessary presupposition, does there arise positive Humanism, beginning from itself." (p. 319-20)

The very idea of taking up the birth of "positive Humanism" as the result of the second negation after communism, in a defense of Hegel against Feuerbach who at the beginning of the essay was credited with nothing short of having "transcended the old philosophy," is truly phenomenal. Here is Marx, who had already broken with the Young Hegelians and who was so sharply antagonistic to Hegel's abstractions which cover up loopholes in his theory of alienation. Marx holds that Hegel reduces transcendence to accommodation with the irrational world; he calls the key concept of Otherness, of absorbing objectivity, nothing short of the "lie of his principle." Here Marx finally stood Hegel "right side

4. Karl Marx: *Early Writings*, trans. T.B. Bottomore p. 43.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 44, 50.

(Continued on page 11)

# Western Europe crisis: economic, political, intellectual

(Continued from page 1)

The draconian anti-immigrant laws passed by the current rightist government remain in effect as France experiences jitters over the prospect of tens of thousands of "boat people" arriving on its shores if, as many have predicted, its former colony Algeria were to fall to Islamic fundamentalists. Already in a celebrated case in July, 22-year-old Nadia Elkebir confronted the French government with a request for political asylum. Having fled Algeria in 1992 after her life was threatened by fundamentalists because of her secular lifestyle and in order to escape a forced marriage to a man old enough to be her father, she stated that in Algeria today: "For the men of the Islamic Salvation Front, a woman is a movable vagina. I want to let them know that a woman can think and is not there to make the bread every day and a child every year" (Le Monde, 7/3-4/94). In grudgingly granting her asylum request, the court was careful to deny claims by her lawyers that Algerian women as a whole are a "persecuted group."

Intellectuals have continued their human rights campaigns with respect to Bosnia and Rwanda. The 900-strong meeting in Paris in July at the Odeon Theater was called by the journal *La Règle du Jeu*, a voice of "new philosophers" such as Bernard-Henry Levi and Andre Glucksmann, to follow up an earlier attempt to form a "Sarajevo Slate" in the June European elections.

The declaration adopted at the July meeting pointed not only to Bosnia, but also to Rwanda and Algeria as places where new forms of totalitarianism were already in place. It castigated the French government for its complicity with the genocidal Rwandan regime and took a strong pro-Bosnia stance as well. The "Appel de l'Odeon" also stated: "The century which is ending was that of totalitarianism. The disappearance of Na-

zism...then that of Communism...allowed us to believe for a moment that the spirit of democracy had triumphed definitively. The truth is that a new nationalism, grounded in ethnicity, has rushed in to fill the empty space....Faced with this return to barbarism, the response of democratic governments has revealed itself to be a failure married to a capitulation" (Le Monde, 7/14/94).

Despite their general empirical accuracy, such formulations do not—and in fact refuse to—discuss any fundamental type of alternative to the corrupt, racist, oppressive so-called "democracy" found in France and Western Europe today. This is in no small part because several of the signers of the declaration, the former "new philosophers" of the 1970s, are among France's most virulent critics of socialism and especially of any form of Marxism, all the while continuing to consider themselves on the Left. They refuse to recognize that it is the form of democracy under capitalism which is a major part of the problem.

In his recent book, *Les Spectres de Marx*, the famous French philosopher Jacques Derrida has savagely attacked "the dominant discourse" today wherein "Marx is dead, communism is dead, and a good thing, with its hopes, its discourse, its theories and its positions—long live capitalism, long live the market, economic and political liberalism live again." Derrida has called for a rereading of Marx, calling Marx perhaps the most relevant philosopher to help us come to grips with today's crises. Yet despite Derrida's fame, the book has not made a very large impact so far in France.

In Germany, where at least in the West, Marxism was never tied as closely to Communism as in France, the lingering influence of radical philosophers such as those of the Frankfurt School means that Marxist and dialectical thought continues at least in some form. At the same

time, abstract forms of radical thought such as Adorno's dead end of a "negative dialectics" or the Kantian liberalism of Habermas' "theory of communicative action" do not offer concrete perspectives to activists seeking to combat racism, sexism or classism. This may be related to the failure of most German Left intellectuals even to debate the Bosnia issue, let alone to take a pro-Bosnia position. (See my interview article, "German Student Activists Support Multiethnic Bosnia," N&L, 7/94.)

## GERMANY: CRISIS IN THOUGHT, ACTIVITY

Nonetheless, the continued presence of dialectical thought in Germany offers at least the possibility of conceptualizing radically different human relations than those of the given society. New editions of Marx, especially the comprehensive *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe* (MEGA), continue to appear in German, and one can also find readily in bookstores works by Benjamin, Fromm, Adorno, Bloch, Lukacs, Horkheimer and Marcuse, albeit not so prominently as before. This is also seen in the decision of a leftist German publisher to bring out a German edition of Raya Dunayevskaya's *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*.

Today, even the Habermasites have begun to lose some of their faith in bourgeois democracy as the large anti-racist movement has been unable to stem the tide of violence. The latest major outrage occurred May 12 in Magdeburg, a small, economically depressed city in the former East Germany, where unemployment is officially over 20%. On Ascension Day, a state holiday, a gang of up to 150 drunken fascists and skinheads beat up five African asylum seekers and then chased them through the streets of the center of town in broad daylight. In a country where police regularly issue tickets for stepping off the curb when the light is red, no police were to be found. Nor did any white German citizens intervene. Finally, the Africans found refuge in a Turkish-owned cafe. There, the fascists got some of their own medicine, as up to four of them were stabbed by Turkish immigrants who intervened on the side of the Africans.

Police later arrested 50 rightists, as fascist gangs continued to roam the streets beating up non-Europeans, but soon released all of them for "lack of evidence." When anti-racists marched the next day, police suddenly appeared in force to "prevent violence." This time they also brought their video cameras, something they conveniently forgot to bring when the fascists were on the rampage.

Ten weeks later, as three of the perpetrators were finally sentenced, Judge Evelyn Majstrak stated: "There reigned on that day not an anti-foreigner sentiment, that would be too mild a characterization. There reigned a warlike situation. Foreigners are in mortal terror." How, she asked, can foreigners receive "so little tolerance" in Magdeburg? (*Die Welt*, 7/23-24/94) Yet even in this seemingly forceful denunciation of racism, the word "foreigners [Auslandern]" stands out. Why could the judge not bring herself to use the term favored by multiculturalist activists—not "foreigners" but "immigrants" [Einwandern]?

It is important, however, not to view a city like Magdeburg as uniformly racist and conservative. In the state of Saxony-Anhalt, of which Magdeburg is the capital, June 26 elections swept to power Germany's most leftist government, a minority Social Democrat-Green Party coalition which can govern only with the tacit support of the Party for Democratic Socialism (PDS), the former Communists. The Greens and the PDS each take very strong anti-racist stands and together won nearly 30% of the vote. Rightist Chancellor Helmut Kohl, who was silent about the Magdeburg riots, suddenly began mentioning Magdeburg in his speeches in order to attack the Social Democrats for forging a link with the PDS.

Kohl, whose tacitly racist and overtly anti-immigrant policies have gained him so much support, is now favored to win another term in elections this fall despite the terrible economic crisis. What is in store for labor if he wins is seen in the struggle at the post office. In June and July, thousands of postal workers staged strikes to protest Kohl's plans to divide up and privatize the German postal service, which combines mail and telephone services with a state bank. The 670,000 workers will face wage and benefit cuts plus layoffs if the new plan goes through. In a conversation two young women postal workers from Cologne expressed outrage not only over Kohl's privatization plan, but also over the retrogression in politics and in living standards since unification in 1990, which they said had come too quickly. "We are shocked by the racist, anti-immigrant atmosphere in Germany today and scared for the future of our country," they added.

All over Western Europe today, there is a sense that the future is ominous, that reactionary and retrogressive forces are gathering strength. This feeling was deepened after last spring's Italian elections brought a fascist party into the government for the first time anywhere in Europe since World War II. On the Left, there is both a loss of confidence and incredible confusion over how to respond to the developments since the fall of Communism. Yet just below the surface—among youth and workers, among Third World immigrants and women, among lesbian and gay activists and intellectuals—is a yearning for a non-racist, non-sexist, non-classist society, in other words, a human not a capitalist society.

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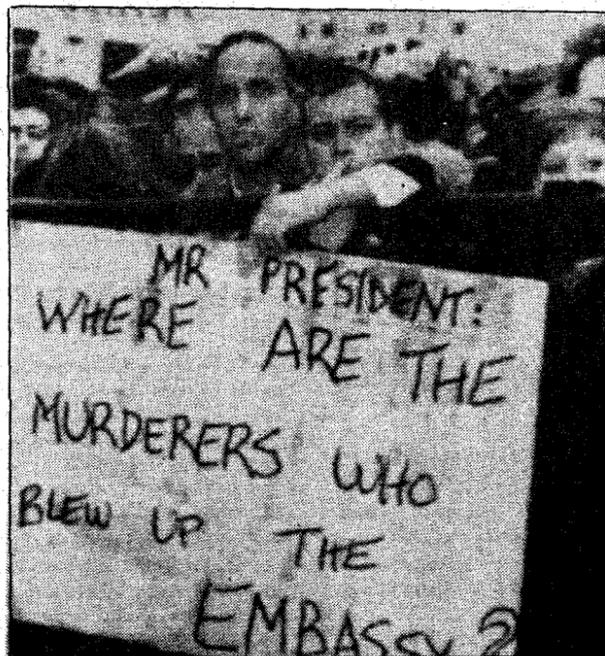
## Eyewitness report: hope and horror in Argentina

Hope and horror converged during our stay in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Within a tense environment, on July 18, a car bomb exploded in a busy part of the city reducing to ruins a building that housed the social welfare and political organizations of Argentina's 300,000 Jews (the biggest Jewish community in Latin America) and the surrounding buildings. At least 38 people died, more than 200 were injured and many are still missing, making this the worst terrorist attack against a civilian population since World War II, after the neo-fascist bomb attack in the Bologna, Italy train station in 1980.

The responsibility for this racist, cowardly, irrational act—two years after a similar bomb exploded in the Israeli Embassy here killing 30 people—was assumed by the southern Lebanon-based Islamic group Ansar Allah, Partisans of God (a split of Hizbullah). There is an enormous possibility that a local rightist group gave support to it. Immediately after the attack Argentinian president Carlos Menem took advantage of the situation in order to create a Supersecretary of Security (SS), which centralized the domestic security, as well as to push the death penalty to be included in the country's new constitution. Not even in Stalin's Russia was there a concentration of power of this nature.

Three days after the brutal massacre, 200,000 people gathered in front of the Congress to claim justice and to protest the inaction on the part of the government to solve this crime.

One week before our arrival, on July 6, 50,000 workers from all over the country marched spontaneously into the historical Plaza de Mayo, in the Argentinian capital, to repudiate the economic policies of the current government as well as to protest the corruption of the political structure. (In the Buenos Aires City Council, eight kilos of cocaine were being sold weekly among the council members.) Some of the workers' columns marched about 1,850 miles—a distance equivalent to the one between Paris, France and Tripoli, Libya.



The Federal March, as it was called, was spontaneous and organized, but, of course, its meaning, if it is not taken in its totality, can run the risk of being taken over by a false opposition built on the hopes and struggles of the working class and the poor.

The government is refusing to address the economic, political and social problems affecting workers, despite recent social explosions in the northwest of the country and in the extreme south—Patagonia. Menem's government is ignoring the claims of the poor. The inhuman economic policies create a "stability" (with the lowest inflation rates recorded in the last decades) that is maintained at the cost of both a shocking recession and an economic polarization between the major cities and the countryside. In the northern province of Formosa, 93% of the population has its basic needs unsatisfied while in Buenos Aires, the capital, the percentage averages 5%.

At the same time, the government is mounting an offensive against women. The ruling party, the powerful and conservative Argentinian Catholic Church, and important sectors of the "opposition" want to include a clause in the National Constitution, which is currently being reformed, in which abortion is not only penalized, like it always was, but also its penalization would be extended to cases of rape and even to cases of danger to the mother's health.

All these reactionaries that promote a crusade against abortion in the name of the "right to life" are the same ones that closed their eyes, ears and mouths during the so-called "dirty war" in which 30,000 people disappeared. President Menem was also the one that pardoned the criminal military officers that planned the genocide in the name of the Western and Christian "civilization." His government allocates only 2.5% of the gross domestic product to health (less than in Haiti, Mozambique, Bolivia and Pakistan).

President Menem sent troops to the Persian Gulf War and is preparing others to send to Haiti in case of another U.S. invasion. He wants to be part of the so-called first world; however, the reality is that Argentina became another piece of the game being played by the powerful capitalist countries.

—Marina Azurdry and Carlos Varela

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## OBJECTIVITY OF PHILOSOPHY IN TODAY'S REALITY

It's necessary to focus on the dual nature of reality. In South Africa a new nation is born with the essence of the old within it. In Palestine a similar development takes place. But the old holds on with a new face, laboring to railroad the people's struggles. Those at the bottom who voice their discontent with the system are finding few traditional allies. Their own voices are all they have, using it in unique and creative ways, but without a comprehension of the philosophical roots of their rebellion and ideas. Theorists like Dunayevskaya play significant roles here. What is lacking is mass knowledge of her work and the strength it can bring to those engaged in lower and deeper work. That is what I see your call to "take organizational responsibility for Marxist-Humanism" seeks to project forward.

D.A.  
North Carolina

In the Draft for Perspectives in July N&L, the revolutionary organization of Marxist-Humanists is contrasted with the failure of post-Marx Marxists to "specify the objective role that a group of workers and intellectuals who are revolutionary theoreticians can play in helping to transform reality." Should "workers and intellectuals" have been written "workers-and-intellectuals" to emphasize that we mean workers are also theoreticians? Another question: When we work organizationally, whether we are participating in the freedom struggle, writing for the paper, working with the paper or developing theory, we are also practicing philosophy. Did the thesis make that perfectly clear? Or would some think that only the intellectual writing an essay is practicing philosophy?

S. Van Gelder  
Detroit

Gene Ford was writing about important philosophic concepts in his Lead in the June N&L on the "Spirit of revolt beneath today's Black, Latino and labor reality," but it was mostly about reality—the reality of what it is to be a worker and Black and be living today. The paper needs more articles like that, that relate theory and reality.

Teenage revolutionary  
San Francisco

South Africa, the country with the most dynamic revolutionary potential on the entire continent, must now face the raw fact that the struggle for freedom cannot be just a change of guards. It is perhaps the only country in the world where Stalinism is growing. It is not only in South Africa that the liberation struggle is facing a new stage. Nor is it even only a question of the genocide in Liberia or Rwanda.

Consider the rarely discussed struggle of the Black people in Mauritania. In Mali the Arab-Berbers are at war with the state to get the country divided into two so they can rule themselves, and in Algeria the Muslim fundamentalists are nearer to power than anywhere on the continent. There is very little chance for Tanzania to escape being divided in two

by the fundamentalists. And I can't remember how many times the so-called Marxists in Guinea-Bissau have cancelled general elections after involving the people in more than 14 years of struggle.

Some of the people I know are now part of the government in Senegal. They are Stalinist at heart and evidently needed to save their souls in this trying time. But they are disgraced by the day to day political struggle of the people of Senegal.

Ba-Karang  
West Africa

You're right. The rulers need to prove their power to the world, and at the same time are constrained by economic weakness at home. But whether they argue for or against intervention in situations like those in Bosnia and Rwanda, the message is still that the masses are powerless to do anything. Everything is supposedly in the hands of the rulers and/or evil, immutable "human nature." So they hide the causes of genocide by reducing them to old ethnic or religious rivalries. Which is why your call for grassroots aid initiatives combined with dialogue on ideas of freedom is so important.

Computer analyst  
Chicago

One thing I found striking in reading Jacques Derrida's new book *Les Spectres de Marx* is that he is worried that the talk about the "death of Marxism" is an effort to make "actually existing capitalism" more palatable. He writes, "In rereading the Communist Manifesto and several other important works of Marx, I told myself that I know few texts in the philosophic tradition, perhaps no other, whose message appears to be more urgent today...It would always be an error not to read and reread Marx."

Sociologist  
Indiana

The Marxist-Humanist Draft Perspectives provides a very thought-provoking challenge and alternative understanding of our world crises showing that the simultaneous globalization and fragmentation of societies has a philosophic underpinning rooted in retrogression, and has a logic of its own. It is not a simple recombining of cultures.

I especially appreciated the connection made between China and the U.S. South: that these two distant cultures not only share features of authoritarian traditions and cheap labor, but most crucially they share the objectivity of the quest for the idea of freedom which comes from within and provides a way out of these contradictions. Today it is crucial for activists everywhere to have a philosophic perspective which guides them away from the pitfalls of sentimentalizing the past or ignoring the objectivity of today's realities.

Chinese American  
Oakland

What the July 1994 issue brought home for me was that you never take anything for granted in the struggle for

## Readers' Views

freedom. In "1964-the Summer that Never Ended" and "Stonewall 25" and in the critique of the "Swedish farce," the actual struggle for freedom both in reason and reality over a long period of time is what captures the dialectic as a defining moment.

The people that got off the freedom train 25 and 30 years ago have missed the dialectical development of the last decades and can never get that back. You're not at the home station until there is a revolution in permanence, reformation ain't even close.

Jerry  
Chicago

Sometimes when I think of the world situation, and try to process everything that's going on—I feel almost overwhelmed by it. I think about the 1992 L.A. Rebellion, and how nothing seems to have changed. But then I realize that we can't set an artificial time limit, as if revolution is like the production of a commodity.

New reader  
Los Angeles

## NEW JAPANESE TRANSLATION

We are undertaking a translation of *The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism for Japan*, where there are so many kinds of state-capitalist theories now it is like mushrooms after rain. All want to win the dispute so they can magnify their party. We are hoping to spread knowledge of Dunayevskaya's theory to get to the truth.

Intellectual  
Hiroshima, Japan



## WORKERS SPEAKING OUT

I work in the garment district of Manhattan. I haven't been paid in two weeks because the boss says he doesn't have the money. We are always being laid off when there is no work. Most of us make the minimum wage; those who iron make a little more. Wages are five to six dollars an hour. There are no benefits, no insurance. But it is better than Queens, where they pay less than the minimum wage.

Latino garment worker  
New York City

Workers here need to export some help for Mexican workers to organize and get a chance at a better life. If we don't we'll wind up at their wages and conditions. We have to unite, especially on what they are trying to take away from us.

Black worker  
Decatur, Ill.

GM and the UAW have really screwed their workers. Every year for the two or more weeks of model changeover we have received unemployment and sub-pay. The new contract this year makes changeover mandatory vacation time, instead. We pay our unions to represent us but they have become another capitalist buy-out. We need to take back our control. Why do we let someone else speak for us? If we could stand together like the people in the Paris Commune we would put capitalism under!

Lynn  
Oklahoma

BART (rapid transit) workers dumbfounded the media and their union leaders by rejecting their contract offer. When I heard that one of the things they're demanding is fewer managers, it made me think about what is going on at Kaiser, the HMO where I work. They announced that all 3,200 managers have to reapply for their positions. A typical reaction was that there are too many managers anyway. Their presence is part of the lack of respect for workers who are concerned with giving patients quality care. Respect has to do with what ideas are deemed worthy. The middle managers whose jobs are now in jeopardy mouth the rhetoric of valuing each individual's ideas, but everything that

ends up in the blueprint for restructuring comes 100% from the top. They respect us so much, they respect us right out the door.

Htun Lin  
Oakland

## EFFECTIVE BORDER PATROL

September will mark one year of "Operation Hold the Line," an intensification of U.S. Border Patrol efforts to shut off immigration of Mexican unemployed between Juarez and El Paso. The U.S. House Appropriations Committee favors expansion of the program, evaluating results thus far as "extremely effective."

It is, in fact, so extremely effective that the U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform has financed a University of Texas study into the obstruction to international commerce that is being imposed. Border enforcement congests traffic, inhibiting cargo transport opened by NAFTA. It has also rendered impossible the consolidation of Juarez and El Paso airports.

"There is clearly some irony," senses a writer for *The Economist*, "in trying to slow down human traffic while simultaneously attempting to expand commercial activity."

Tesla Coil  
Normal, Ill.

## FARE-JACKING

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority Board here in L.A. just jacked the fares from \$1.10 to \$1.35, eliminated monthly passes, and increased passes for students, seniors and disabled. The cost for the Blue Line train from Long Beach to L.A. more than doubled. The bureaucratic lice who feed off the sweat of the workers had four armed MTA cops in front of the rostrum during the meeting on this at City Hall. They acted as if they expected the audience to turn violent and then made everyone angrier by rudely chatting with each other all during the testimonies. It's one more example of why we have to take control of our own lives.

Retired auto worker  
Whittier, Cal.

## WHO READS N&amp;L?



I've been passing around my copies of N&L and a few of the guys here are enthusiastic. Even one I always felt had a "capitalist" mentality said he was impressed with the writing in N&L. While I cannot call myself "Marxist" I find your ideas stimulating. I am not against Marxism, just haven't decided what I fully believe in. I do support many of the ideas and attitudes that come through in N&L. I'm sending some stamps to help pay for my sub.

Prisoner  
Michigan

There is nothing in rural Georgia that provides me with the kind of information I get from N&L. Another great thing about N&L is that the subscription price is so LOW! Thanks for a great paper. I leave all my copies at a Youth Center here to help each issue go further.

Teacher  
Georgia

At the National Federation of the Blind National Convention in Detroit this year, I found a steady interest in *News & Letters* and *Freedom Ideas International* (FI) on tape. I was not alone in my outrage that the National Library Service (NLS) refuses to carry either *News & Letters* or most of the numerous socialist and international Left periodicals represented in FI on tape or in Braille. Another person said "Cool!" when I told him that we do cover the gay and lesbian movements.

Good friend of N&L  
Michigan

## ARISTIDE: PHENOMENOLOGY AND 'REAL POLITIC'

Here is Jean-Bertrand Aristide "speaking for himself" at Stanford University:

There is a current in philosophy that pushes for the human will to be rational, logical and based in scientific analysis. The German philosopher Hegel adopted Phenomenology as the philosophical methodology, to examine events without pre-conception so as to discover the consonant structure of the consciousness....We should follow this objective line of thinking as we analyze the strategy to restore democracy to Haiti. We must be rational. We cannot say that red is blue because of the guns or the economic interests and lies that motivate the strategy of the gun. Our challenge is to demonstrate with the pen, through our strategy of non-violence, that red is red. We must reject irrational conclusions. This is not often easy. Those with the gun, the enemies of truth, have money to influence public opinion. But those of us who use the pen, dialogue and peaceful democratic

change as weapons have always had to search for solutions. In our search we must move to where the people of Haiti led us to search for this solution. It is those with no pens—because we have 85% illiteracy—who are the principal actors in the policy to restore democracy to Haiti. We have to respect their will. Respecting their will we can hear their message. And the message is for the world. Because it is a message rooted in democratic principles, urging politicians and policy makers to design policies based upon democratic principles and not economic interests. This is the real politic in Haiti. And this can be the real politic in the new world order. As we pursue the policy of the pen as our strategy to restore democracy to Haiti we must be true to the meaning of democracy. Democracy is the rule of the people, either directly or through their elected officials. Since when can a small minority dictate to the majority? We welcome a dialogue....

**LIVING ARCHIVES: RESONATING WITH TODAY**

There was a real resonance between Dunayevskaya's 50-year-old review of Myrdal's *American Dilemma* and the rest of the July issue especially the articles on Black labor in the South today which show that you have to keep working out a new relationship of class and race and that one does not "predominate" over the other. It was eye-opening to read the review in the context of News and Letters Committees Perspectives draft which discussed a "new sense of objectivity" in terms of economic changes in the South, as well as the Black-Red column on the NAACP convention which was a microcosm of Black tendencies whose concept of Black masses is that they need to be controlled so there will be no more L.A. Rebellions.

Librarian  
Detroit

I read the Archives column in the June N&L—Dunayevskaya's critique of Mao on the ground of Hegel's Phenomenology—right after attending a very serious discussion on questions facing Iranian revolutionaries today. The opening talk was by an Iranian feminist, and much of the discussion revolved around questions of "leadership," and the relationship the masses have to religion.

Feminists are battling Islamic fundamentalists in many countries, but the traditional Left has focused on "materialism" versus what Hegel called "spiritual life," by which he meant the self-development of the Idea of Freedom. That narrowness from the Left contributed to the Iranian Revolution turning into its opposite, and cannot help the revolutionary forces inside Iran today who are trying to break through the regime's stranglehold. Dunayevskaya shows in her article that without the needed breakthrough in the field of ideas—even if you are a revolutionary, you will retrogress.

Cyrus Noveen  
Los Angeles

In the May "From the Marxist-Humanist Archives" column which you called "The dialectics of labor and the labor of dialectics," it is striking how Dunayevskaya puts revolt at the center of capitalist development, even of tech-

nological development. Then the main enemy ends up being not the reformists but the impatience to get immediately to the absolute, which turns you away from the revolt that "shows an entirely new mode of life." Any "form" separated from that, she seems to be saying, ends up being appropriated by capitalism and turned against the workers.

F.B.  
Chicago

The view presented by Raya Dunayevskaya (May N&L) that organizing unions was a compromise on the part of the workers is something that has been lost today. Unions reflect(ed) a stage of capitalist production, and mean that we agree to the capitalists stealing from us. So how can we go beyond what capitalist society represents, and make a break from capitalist production within workers' organizations? Dunayevskaya develops Marx's concept of the dual character of labor as a plague that affects workers themselves. It is a fetish that makes a worker half a thing and half a human being. We need to make a total break with that view of ourselves, if we are going to get to controlling production and running society.

Gene Ford  
Los Angeles

**HEALTH CARE IN CRISIS**

My sister was recently laid off when the hospital supplies plant where she had worked for 25 years closed down. As part of her retirement plan, she has to pay for her own health insurance. She paid into that plan for 25 years and never used it; but recently she became ill and was in intense pain. When she went to the hospital for help—they treated her like a dog! They made her wait four hours before they gave her a shot to relieve her pain. There was no compassion—nothing! I couldn't stand it; I started to make a scene. And people say there's not a health care crisis in this country!

Chicana worker  
Pomona, Cal.

Because I have health insurance I still have my right leg. Blue Cross and Blue Shield say the surgery I had is "investigational" but without it I would have lost my leg to midcalf. I keep thinking about what happens to people without insurance. Shouldn't every person be entitled to the same treatment I received? The rich don't have to worry but working class people only make enough to survive. Our whole lives revolve around money because capitalism is always looking for ways to get more from the source of all its wealth.

Working woman  
Oklahoma

Management at Somerville Mills treats health and safety issues just like the police in Los Angeles. The L.A. police let O.J. Simpson beat his wife for all these years, and now suddenly they act like they think it's a horrible thing that she was killed.

Black woman garment worker  
Tennessee



**ISSUES FOR WOMEN'S LIBERATION**

Nicole Simpson's story has not been forgotten as a media event but it has been forgotten as the story of a woman's life. By now the murder has been largely reduced to the strategies and tactics of one crack legal team versus another. Everything is deconstructed, reduced to bits and pieces of evidence. What is forgotten in all the National Enquirer sales, O.J. collectors cards, comic books, 800 numbers and 900 numbers for the O.J. joke-of-the-day is the death of an abused woman. And now the question of race has entered into the fray because of the perversity of the system we live under. Questions of race and sex and class are all factors naturally intertwined because they exist in real life and make up each of us. The problem develops when they are twisted around by the type of social system we live under.

Erica Rae  
Illinois

Despite the 1992 reinstatement of Abortion Services at Cook County Hospital in Chicago, thousands of women still rely upon financial support from non-governmental organizations. This unmet need is caused by the low number of first trimester abortions performed weekly at Cook County Hospital (about 30), leaving a massive number of low-income women unable to access abortion services. They turn to the only source of abortion funding in Illinois, the Chicago Abortion Fund (CAF). CAF assists low-income women in their second trimester with information, referral and direct financial assistance for abortions.

The need for funded abortions in Illinois is not being met. Your readers can help to make a difference by sending 1) a message to Congress that health care reform must include a full range of reproductive options, including abortion or it will be discriminatory towards women; 2) a donation to the Chicago Abortion Fund (P.O. Box 578307, Chicago, IL 60657) to help a woman exercise her constitutional right to choose a safe and legal abortion.

NARAL activist  
Illinois

In most shops where the majority are women you find they are treated badly. With the boss at Howe Sipes baseball apparel company, it's not a Black or white thing—he has the white women in tears too. Some don't recognize it, but most women know we got the power and we know what direction to put it in.

Black woman labor organizer  
Memphis

**HOMELESS IN NEW YORK**

We didn't get any sleep last night because the police came and threw all the homeless people out of Central Park. There is nowhere we can sleep in peace. Last winter when it was so cold, we were sleeping on the subway. The police waited for the trains at the end of the line and arrested everyone. It was four degrees out and I only had a thin jacket. I think the police get paid according to how many people they arrest.

Unemployed couple  
New York

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Marxist-Humanist Literature Catalogue  
A full list of publications (many publications are not listed here) available from News and Letters Committees  
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## Black/Red View

by John Alan

The current multicultural, racially diverse concept of the American Civilization presents itself as an original revelation of a long hidden dimension of the American Civilization. Only now, at this point in American history, do people dare to say openly that the United States is NOT a homogeneous country, "one nation indivisible," as it claims to be. This is neither new nor original. Nor does it reflect the historic reality.

The bringing of generations of dispossessed European workers, of many different cultures, and Black slaves from Africa, with non-European cultures, to America to work on the expropriated lands of native Americans and in mills and factories was one of the greatest intermingling of cultures that the world has ever experienced. It was a terrible, inhuman process, but this conjunction of human labor and various cultures created a unique American culture, literally breaking away from the European culture of their masters.

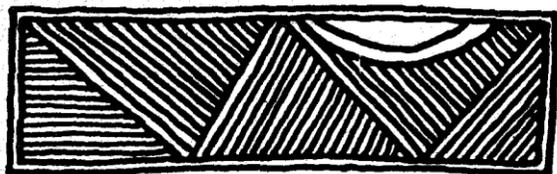
### HEGEL AND FANON ON CULTURE

Recognizing that the United States is not various cultures indifferently connected with each other in no way means that the American culture is not a self-estranged culture, like every other culture in the world today. This ignores culture as a process of self-estrangement that Hegel called a stage when the spirit "...breaks up into two regions. The one is the actual world, the other is that which the spirit constructs for itself in the ether of pure consciousness, raising itself above the first. This second world, being constructed in opposition and contrast to that estrangement, is just on that account not free from it; on the contrary, it is only the other form of that very estrangement, which consists precisely in having a conscious existence in two sorts of worlds, and embraces both. Hence it is not self-consciousness of Absolute Being in and for itself..."

Hegel revealed the major flaw in all movements seeking to find in the realm of culture a pathway to freedom. At the same time, Hegel sought to transcend alienation in culture and in actuality.

Frantz Fanon saw transcending the opposition between existing culture and life as a crucial issue. In his analysis of the state of culture in Africa, at the time of the 1960s anti-colonial revolutions, two things were apparent to Fanon. One, the African middle classes and intellectuals had long embraced European culture as their own. And two, the poor peasantry, after two centuries of occupation, possessed only the symbolic remembrance of their former culture. In Fanon's words: "The withering away of the reality of the nation and the death-pangs of the national culture are linked to each other in mutual dependence."

Fanon saw a solution in the struggle for freedom



## Gambia coup tests Left

by Ba Karang

On July 22 the military took over state power of the Gambian government at a time when the country was witnessing political unrest in certain parts of the country. July 30 would mark the 13th year of the bloody 1981 attempted military coup which was crushed by the brutal intervening Senegalese military forces.

The July 22 coup in Gambia came as a surprise because of the presence of the almost 100 Nigerian military forces in the country and a visit by the U.S. Marines a day before the military takeover. U.S. Marines were in fact still in Gambian waters.

The uncompromising way President Jawara was handling the contradictions in the military might have made him think that he was in control of the military forces. He must be disappointed by the still silent Nigerian forces present in the country on whom he was highly dependent after he decided to dissolve the Senegambian Confederation and sent the Senegalese military forces out of the country.

The young military officers who took over power recently announced that they will hand over the government to civilians in the very near future. But we must not be taken by surprise if they don't.

The Gambian military force consists of youths who never made it in the job market and took up the only available job in the country and that is the military. These young military officers had been radicalized by the hard economic and political situation in the country long before they did make up their minds to join the military. And the fact that the most politically minded youths took over the leadership of the coup was not surprising.

But no matter how radical these youths are they are not likely to change the situation in the country. They have no political programs for the country. Without a doubt a great part of the Gambian Left will condemn the coup and will distance themselves. A possible left alliance to join the military is possible and this will be the Left that has never learned its lesson. The experience of Ghana and Liberia should be a guiding principle. What will happen in the coming days, with or without a military intervention, will be the greatest test of the Gambian Left.

# Can multiculturalism transcend alienation?

which is, in itself, the creation of a new culture, along different paths and tracing out entirely new cultural development.

This relationship between revolution and culture is the dividing line between Fanon and today's multiculturalism. Fanon wasn't opposed to culture per se, but saw existing and historical cultures as processes

## Rwanda, Haiti apocalypse

(Continued from page 1)

suffering Haiti, Clinton knows that American public opinion is fed at two troughs. Polls show that most white Americans want nothing to do with Haiti's problems, neither its refugees nor its political turmoil.

On the other hand, African-American political opinion has been stoked by a Black national leadership in support of U.S. military intervention. In large part, Black political opinion has been in response to the racist refugee policy of the Bush and Clinton administrations. However, a U.S. invasion of Haiti is no less racist, inasmuch as it is Clinton's way of enforcing a racist refugee and immigration policy by other means.

### AFRICA'S 'HEART OF DARKNESS'

But if U.S. policy on Haiti represents a new version of the "White Man's Burden," Rwanda is the West's new "heart of darkness." The world's attention has been riveted to the unfolding genocide and refugee catastrophe in Rwanda since April. Although the statistics are staggering, and the graphic media images overwhelming of mounds of hacked bodies in Rwanda and cholera-plagued bodies being bulldozed in Goma, Zaire, their relationship to the political designs of Western powers must never be lost sight of, especially France's expanding role in Africa.

The genocidal agenda of Rwanda's political and military leaders is clear. As Donathe Ntegeyiminise, who left the Goma camps to return to his northern Rwandan town of Ruhengeri said, "We were deceived. In Goma the peasants suffer alone while the former administrators who forced us to go there are in hotels, driving cars and drinking wine."

Nevertheless, all the machinations of the despotic rulers in Rwanda and Haiti do not sufficiently explain the carnage of civil society. The civilian militias which have unleashed campaigns of terror in both countries are the creation of the ideological manipulation of political elites. In Haiti, the paramilitary front FRAPH (Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti) is the military's instrument against the liberation theology base communities, peasant organizations and trade union groups. The Habyarimana regime armed and directed its own civilian militias in its genocide against the Tutsi minority and the regime's Hutu political opponents.

Thus, it was not alone the ethnic character of the genocide in Rwanda, as the Western media continues to report, but the emergent informal associations, especially in the rural areas, who began to declare their independence from the state, that the government sought to crush. And these arose in Rwanda, as in Haiti and virtually every Third World country, in response to the structural adjustment programs of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

This is why the Left's slogan calling for the "restoration of democracy," and its preoccupation with the supposed virtues of civil society, is woefully misplaced. Democracy and civil society comes to nothing but social catastrophe without the revolutionary uprooting of the state machine and expropriation of the bourgeoisie. Revolution too is no less the answer to the daily savageries of "American civilization" which increasingly sees the mirror image of itself in the twin apocalypses of Rwanda and Haiti.

—August 4, 1994

## Black World

(Continued from page 1)

dale, editor of the Jackson Advocate, calls "a Machiavellian attempt to control and channel all independent social movements" in Mississippi today.

Far from this confirming the Left's threadbare notion of "American exceptionalism," that is, that revolution is impossible in the U.S., the new reality of the South demands theoretical examination of its social and historical development. This so-called "most underdeveloped" region of the American capitalist economy may show to the more developed the image of its own future.

That is certainly true regarding the new Black, labor and women's struggles I encountered on my trip to Memphis recently. Although Memphis is very different from Mississippi, my experience with Black women workers is not unlike what is occurring in Mississippi and throughout the South.

For example, at a Fayette County garment plant in Somerville, Tenn. Black women workers are fighting against enormous odds to get a contract. They are now in their 53rd negotiating session with the plant management. Not only are they fighting against horrendous working conditions, but they are struggling with the contradictions among their own co-workers.

In the words of one militant woman faced with these contradictions:

"The company fears the strength of the workers in Local 282, because we've had members of the local come from all around to work our campaign. They have supported us from day one, and the company is afraid of

of alienation and permanent duality. He vigorously opposed Leopold Senghor's concept of "Negritude," a philosophy of neo-colonial culture founded upon the concept of an European-African duality. This double consciousness of "spirit" living in two worlds, the world of thought and the objective world, is unable to realize itself in the objective world. Thus the spirit (mind) remains an alien in its own culture.

### A NEW STAGE OF EXISTENCE?

Multiculturalism is in a similar predicament. While it is conscious of the opposition between culture and reality, it does not seek to annul the objectivity of its self-alienation. Instead, it attempts to give a validity to multiculturalism without finding a universal reason for its validity in concrete actuality. For example, Afrocentrism when it gains state power fuses together alienation of high technology with self-alienated cultural ideas and practices created by societies that no longer exist as viable social entities today. They use the old culture to discipline the masses and to control opposition to the class in power.

Culture is not an absolute, i.e., an unmediated phenomenon without change or development. The word multiculturalism is bandied around as a tag of identity rather than Hegel's concept of culture as a totality which "embraces all the means of self-development," "ideas" as well as material factors such as "wealth."

Hegel concentrated on the dialectics of the process of self-alienation within culture. Today's global capitalism obviously transforms cultures into commodities. Multiculturalism, in all of its ambiguous and sometime reactionary forms, is a manifestation of the crisis of world capitalism. Can there be a new beginning in culture which would transcend its duality? Hegel apparently believed so, if the recollection of "self-consciousness of vanished existence" provides the knowledge for "the new stage of existence, a new world" and a new mind.

## Workers battle K-Mart

Greensboro, N.C.—In the years following the explosion and deaths at the Imperial Food Products chicken processing plant in Hamlet, North Carolina, there has been a steady flow of activity related to workers' rights and organizing here. Workers in various industries have raised issues about their conditions of work and quality of life. And Black workers have been in the forefront of many of these efforts for self-definition and democracy.

For the past year, workers from a new K-Mart warehouse have struggled for better working conditions, pay and leave policies. Many of these workers are Black; all are lowly paid. And the company has stonewalled all attempts to improve these conditions. In July 1993, the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers' Union (ACTWU) began an organizing drive at the Greensboro K-Mart distribution center. Two months later the vote was held, and the union vote won out.

Since the vote, K-Mart has refused to negotiate a contract. Union organizers on the job have been harassed. And the struggle took a public turn this spring when people supported the workers' cause by stopping play at the K-Mart-Greater Greensboro Open golf tournament. Joining hands, dozens of people were arrested in an act of nonviolent protest.

The sacrifices these workers have made and continue to make help all workers. But their actions make a significant contribution to the continuing Black freedom struggle. This is helping to expose who are the real friends of the people, as well as give the masses experience in carrying out the struggle at the workplace so that they can gain the necessary knowledge as they take up the mantle of the new leaders of the people's movement.

—D.A.

that type of strength and support.

"However, it bothers me when I work with a lot of women. I feel that women are pessimistic and it's just so many things they can do with their lives. It bothers me deeply when I see that they are trapped by a company that has no future for them. It's like they're living in fear and they're not even using their heads. That company has only been there 10 years, and these women are in their 30s and 40s. They were making it before the company was here, so...Most of the time I guess everybody thinks I'm living in my own world at work because I'm trying to figure these things out." (See the articles from Somerville Mills workers in the July News & Letters, as well as on page 3 in this issue.)

She also spoke about the various ways the company tries to divide workers, such as telling immigrant workers not to speak in English to union organizers nor to any other worker. And almost every worker I spoke with never failed to mention the plantation mentality that they are fighting against.

At another plant, Howe Sipes, which makes baseball apparel, I talked with several Black women workers during their half-hour lunch break. In their fight against the barbarism of the plant management and the production method of going from speedup to having no work at all, the women at Sipes are very conscious of who they are as working women. When asked do they think that they are treated the way they are because they are women, their response was, "No, it's because we are Black women."

Clearly, there is a new "state of mind" emerging in the South, one which will not develop, however, without at one and the same time overcoming the limits of the given reality as well as its own inner contradictions.

## Essay Article

by Eugene Walker

### I.

Nineteen ninety-four is the 100th anniversary of the birth of the great Peruvian Marxist Jose Carlos Mariategui, whose *Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality* remains, more than 60 years after its initial appearance, one of the major writings of Latin American social thought. As well, 1994 is the 150th anniversary of Marx's *Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, which signaled the birth of Marx's new humanism, historical materialism. The conjunction of these two anniversaries is in turn given new meaning by their appearance in the year of the Chiapas rebellion. Let us briefly explore the interminglings of these revolutionary moments, not in the accidental sense of an anniversary, but rather in asking whether the ideas of these two social thinkers can speak to, and help give direction to, the new beginnings taking place on the Latin American continent in the 1990s.



José Carlos Mariátegui

It becomes important to explore the relationship of Mariategui and Marx at this moment when so many are claiming that Marxism has been eclipsed globally, including in Latin America. The ground for such a claim lies in the false amalgam that has been made between the collapse of totalitarian Communist state-capitalist regimes and the Marxism of Marx. An exploration of original sources will show how absolutely opposite are the ideas of Marx to the practice of those who claimed to be his followers in state power. Mariategui's ideas too have been claimed by those whose practice is worlds apart from his revolutionary vision.

The need to examine the ideas and interrelationship of Mariategui and Marx does not originate from a desire to "clear the historic record." Instead, the compulsion comes from today's reality, both the terrain of unfreedom that characterizes so much of Latin America and the continuous striving for new beginnings as seen in the Chiapas rebellion. In the 1990s, a philosophy of human liberation, one that can help these revolutionary new beginnings come to fruition, is crucial. We want to ask if the writings of Marx and Mariategui might help to create such a liberatory vision.

### II.

Though Marx's writings on what we call the Third World—particularly the "Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations" from his *Grundrisse* and his writings of 1873-1883 on the Russian peasant commune and his *Ethnological Notebooks*—show how much Marx thought about and wrote on noncapitalist lands,<sup>1</sup> we want to concentrate on what Raya Dunayevskaya identified as the birth of historical materialism, his "new continent of thought and revolution," the *Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*.<sup>2</sup> This is because the relationship of Marx and Mariategui genuinely begins with these writings. For it is here where Marx's discovery of a new Subject of revolution, the proletariat, would illuminate his thought for the next four decades. In the early part of the next century Mariategui would seek out and work with a new revolutionary subject on Latin American soil.

The three central manuscripts of 1844 were "Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic," "Alienated Labor" and "Private Property and Communism." These essays were the birth of Marx's concept of human liberation, an integrality of economics and philosophy, a "new Humanism."

With "Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic," Marx, at one and the same time, critiqued Hegel for the dehumanization of philosophy and singled out the greatness of Hegel's dialectic, the "negation of the negation" as the moving and creating principle. Marx's theoretical labors allowed him to appropriate the Hegelian dialectic for a new historic moment—one in which proletarian impulses reached for the skies. It was Marx's appropriation of the dialectic of negativity right within this essay which led Marx to formulate his new world view in its most compelling form: "We see here how thorough-going Naturalism, or Humanism, distinguishes itself both from Idealism and Materialism, and is, at the same time, the truth uniting both. We see, at the same time, how only Naturalism is capable of grasping the act of world

# Mariátegui, Marx and Chiapas

history." With the emergence of the proletariat came the human bearer of Marx's idea of freedom, his "thorough-going Naturalism or Humanism."

Marx's new world view would brook no separation between philosophy and economics. In "Alienated Labor" Marx centered his inquiry on the lot of the worker in the production process: "The worker becomes all the poorer the more wealth he produces...the worker becomes an ever cheaper commodity the more commodities he creates...labor produces not only commodities: it produces itself and the worker as a commodity..." He critiqued political economy for its blindness to this linchpin of capitalist production: "Political economy conceals the estrangement inherent in the nature of labor by not considering the direct relationship between the worker (labor) and production."

Marx traced how man has become alienated from nature, from himself, from his species existence and from other men. He hit out against a labor process in which the "worker's own physical and mental energy, his personal life—for what is life but activity?—is an activity which is turned against him, independent of him and not belonging to him."

In "Alienated Labor" Marx expressed the direct relationship between alienated labor and private property: "Private Property is thus the product, the result, the necessary consequence, of alienated labor, of the external relation of the worker to nature and to himself...when one speaks of private property, one thinks of dealing with something external to man. When one speaks of labor, one is directly dealing with man himself. This new formulation of the question already contains its solution."

In his essay "Private Property and Communism" Marx continued his discussion of labor and property, but here his critique was directed not so much at classical political economy as at "vulgar communism":

"Regarding private property in its universality, communism appears in its form only as its generalization and completion...Since it completely negates the personality of man, this type of communism is only the logical expression of private property...insofar as it has not yet grasped the positive essence of private property and to the same degree has little understood the human nature of needs, communism still remains under the influence of private property."

Marx ended this essay by showing that even when communism's positive affirmation was the actual moment needed for the immediate historical development it did not represent a new society: "Communism is the necessary form and the energizing principle of the immediate future. But communism, as such, is not the goal of human development, the form of human society."

There is no more compelling moment in Marx's life than his reworking the Hegelian dialectic with the revolutionary subjectivity of a new human bearer, the proletariat. In 1844, Marx seized upon Hegel's concept of *transcendence* as objective movement and re-created the dialectic in so revolutionary a manner that it allowed for the fullness of his critique of classical political economy, of vulgar communism, of Hegel himself. Now he could truly coalesce with a revolutionary new Subjectivity, the proletariat, and discern double negation as pathway to the future: "Only by the transcendence of this mediation, which is nevertheless a necessary presupposition, does there arise positive Humanism, beginning from itself."

Three-quarters of a century after the young Marx had penned his 1844 Manuscripts, and without ever knowing of their existence, the young Jose Carlos Mariategui began writing of the Peruvian Indians as a revolutionary subject within Peru's communal, "feudal" and capitalist modes of production. Mariategui began to hew out new paths to revolution on the Latin American continent. Herein lies the intertwining of Mariategui and Marx.

### III.

The strands of Jose Carlos Mariategui's development are multidimensional. They encompass a discovery and first working out of socialist ideas at the time that the Peruvian working class was discovering itself as a class, engaging in strike activities which culminated in a successful workers' general strike for the eight-hour day in 1918-1919. We find Mariategui witness to and participant in a student activism which developed a relation to Lima's working class in 1919. Mariategui's brief period abroad (1919-1923) was in a Europe reeling under the impact of the Russian Revolution. In Italy he found rich discussion and concrete activities of revolutionary change. He returned to Peru, bringing this international dimension of Marxist thought and activity. This became fused with what he came to recognize as the concrete specificity of Peruvian reality and its Indian path toward socialist revolution. By the second half of the 1920s he had developed a Marxist perspective that was at one and the same time national and international, a dialectic of race and class in Peru.

Here we want to concentrate on the dimension of Mariategui's thought which brings him closest to our age and connects him to Marx. This centers upon Mariategui's discovery of a revolutionary Subject within Peru's reality, the indigenous peoples, and on his determination to link that Subject to the creation of socialism: "Socialism orders and defines the just demands of the working class. And in Peru the working class are four-fifths part Indian. Our socialism then would not be Peruvian—it would not even be socialism—if it did not first consolidate itself with indigenous demands."<sup>3</sup>

In putting forth the concept of the revolutionary subjectivity of indigenous peoples in Peru, Mariategui, like

Marx, had to break with the established radical thought of his day. Particularly he had to break with those radicals who wanted merely to apply Marxism to Latin America, concentrating on the working class in the cities and dismissing the question of the indigenous dimension as only peripheral to the class question. Mariategui broke with this kind of thinking and strove to work out the relation of class and race, worker and peasant.

In reaching out to the Indian Mariategui refused to make a sharp separation between the Indian as peasant and the Indian as worker. He recognized that the Indians who were miners were in fact primarily peasants who became indebted to merchants and thus obligated to work off the debt in the mines. "The Indigenous of the mines, for a large part continue to be peasants, such that the adherent who is won among them is also an element won in the peasant class."



Chiapas, Mexico

At the same time Mariategui recognized that once the Indian was forced to become a worker he could gain a new dimension of revolutionary consciousness: The mining centers are "important proletarian concentrations" which "bring the Indigenous laborers together with industrial workers, with workers coming from the cities, who bring to these centers their class (conscious) spirit and principles." Thus for Mariategui, there could not be a wall between worker and peasant within Peru; often they were one and the same.

In turn, this objective intertwining of worker and peasant helped Mariategui formulate his view of a worker-peasant alliance, which he took a number of steps to organize:

- 1) He proposed a new form of newspaper, one specifically devoted to the problem of the peasant, to be named *El Ayllu*.
- 2) He proposed a specific form of struggle—a veritable civil war against *gamonalismo* (the phenomena of parasitic landlords who entrapped the peasant)—which he began by publishing within the pages of his magazine *Amauta* a special journal, *Proceso del gamonalismo—Boletín de defensa Indígena*.
- 3) He analyzed the specific labor process, the various forms of enforced work which the peasant masses were subjected to, and contrasted these to the surviving communal Indian systems of agriculture.
- 4) He and members of his organization began an organizing project among miners in the late 1920s.
- 5) He proposed that Indians who had become proletarianized would be the ones who could best return to organize in indigenous centers.
- 6) Mariategui recognized the racism that had to be confronted if any worker-peasant alliance was to be built: "The peasant Indians will not really understand except from individuals from their bosom who speak to them their own language. They will always mistrust the white, the *mestizo*."

Just as Mariategui had not seen a sharp separation between worker and peasant in Peru, he did not view the Indian question as one that could be thought of only as a class question or only as an oppressed nation. The key for him was the interrelationship between race and class within Peruvian reality. The Indian was class—worker/peasant—and race—not white nor *mestizo*—at one and the same time. Mariategui insisted that because the Indian was both race and class, both worker and peasant, he could not be compartmentalized off into any one category, whether that be his own separate state as an oppressed race, or be considered as a worker without a consciousness of race.

In working out the complexity of relations between socialism and *indigenismo*, Mariategui was able to recreate Marxism for a Peruvian reality, rather than simply apply Marxism to the Latin American continent.

### IV.

The kind of questions which Mariategui raised have reappeared again and again in Latin America, particularly where the Indian is either a majority or a large minority. Today the question has been posed in a dramatic new way in the Chiapas rebellion in Mexico.

We need to stress the newness of Chiapas. This is not because certain aspects of the kind of "feudal-like" relations Mariategui described for Peru in the 1920s cannot be seen in Chiapas in the 1990s. They can. Nor is it merely the need for "modernization." Rather, the resonance with Mariategui's time, or for that matter with Marx's description of so-called primitive accumulation, is that these economic forms are not only vestiges of the past embedded in the reality of the late 20th-century capitalism in many areas of Latin America, including Mexico. It is the development of underdevelopment.

It is also true that the rebellion in Chiapas can be viewed as a continuation of the Mexican revolution of 1910-17. There is a resonance with Zapata, the struggle for land and the preservation of the communal land, the *ejido*, that was so central to that revolution.

But Chiapas is not so much a continuation of an early 20th-century revolution as it is the stirring of revolutionary new beginnings at the edge of the 21st century. Two events of the 1990s—the abrogation of Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution on the right to land, the signing of a Free Trade Agreement with the U.S. and Canada—were major catalysts for the rebellion.

(Continued on page 10)

1. For Marx's writings of his last decade see especially his letter to the editorial board of *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*, November 1877 (his reply to N.K. Mikhailovsky, a theoretician of Narodism, Russian populism; his draft letters to the Russian revolutionary, Vera Zasluch, in late February and March, 1881; Marx and Engels' preface to the Russian edition of the *Communist Manifesto*, January 21, 1882 and his *Ethnological Notebooks of 1880-82*. These notebooks discussed Iroquois society in America. Another as yet unpublished section of those notebooks took up Inca society.

2. See Dunayevskaya's commentary on the *Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts* in her *Marxism and Freedom, 1958 and Philosophy and Revolution, 1973*.

3. Mariategui's writings quoted in this essay can be found in *Amauta*, the magazine he founded. Lima, Peru, 1926-1930.

# Inside look at disastrous truth of Russia's 'economic miracle'

There have recently been articles in the American press saying that, despite all the hardships, privatization has begun in Russia and a middle class has begun to appear. The general impression given the reader has been very positive. Let me tell you what the Moscow Institute of Consumers' Research found when they investigated the actual situation of grassroots Russian consumers. These results were not advertised in Russian newspapers, but only in special publications.

First, we must note that in the U.S. you measure the conditions of people by a "poverty line." In Russia there is a different level by which to measure. It's the physical survival line. According to the findings of the Research Institute, 15 million people now live below the physical survival level in Russia. That means they are in absolute poverty, not relative but absolute poverty.

The data published shows that 90% of the population spend 80% of their incomes on food. A second category—engineers, professionals—who make up 6% of the population spend 50% to 60% of their salaries for food. And in the 4% of the population at the very top, even in this category, 20% to 30% of income is spent for food. The increased price for food is so dramatic that basic food is unavailable for many people. For the past five months the price of bread increased nine times, beef 10 times, sausage and milk 12 times, onions and cabbage 16 times. The production of food has declined so much it is not on the level of 1955. Only the production of liquor has increased.

There are still no tools in Russia to raise production of any kind. The entrepreneurs who might be interested in

## Essay Article

(Continued from page 9)

The newness of Chiapas lies within the historic moment in which it has occurred. A number of Latin American intellectuals have recognized one aspect of its newness as being a post-Communist rebellion, that is, after the collapse of the state-capitalist regimes of the East and while there is a deep isolation of Cuba. From neither Mexico nor the U.S. can it be claimed that Moscow or Havana is behind this rebellion.

But a number of intellectuals wish to impose their own ideological manacles upon Chiapas. To them post-Communist means post-revolutionary. For them revolution, either as idea or action, is not in view. Instead of a social uprooting, they wish to discuss "democracy, justice and peace," but all within the existing society. They may recognize the indigenous dimension of this rebellion—how could they avoid it—but want the context of struggle to be inclusion within "civil society" rather than the struggle against a class society with its racism and sexism.

The indigenous rebels who took up arms and made demands in Chiapas have posed a much deeper challenge. The rebellion in Chiapas compels us to rethink the future, to work out a new social consciousness. To do so we need to turn once again to Marx and Mariategui, not as past, but as a needed prologue in Latin America's reaching for the future.

### V.

The objective reality Marx faced from the 1840s to the 1880s was worlds away from the Peru of the 1920s in which Mariategui was active. What united them as revolutionaries through these differing historical moments was their search for pathways to overthrow the ruling societies they lived under. Marx, both in his *Grundrisse* of the late 1850s and in writings of his last decade, expressed the development of societies from communal to capitalism as being a multilinear, not unilinear, one. This multilinear view involved not only an investigation of pre-capitalist economic formations per se, but was also a search for new paths to revolution that would encompass non-capitalist areas as well as technologically developed countries. Whether his search took up the Russian peasant commune, the mir, or the studies by anthropologists of New and Old World societies, for Marx the determining feature was the paths to revolution that were being opened. His last writings were a concretization of the "new continent of thought and revolution" he had begun in 1844.

Mariategui's revolutionary journey of a dozen years led to his creative labor with the Indian peasant dimension. When Mariategui's singular contribution of discerning the inseparability of socialism and indigenismo as the truth of Peru's reality is juxtaposed to Marx's Humanism, his view of the human dimension in non-capitalist lands, then the oneness, not of content, and not always of methodology, but of revolutionary spirit, of a search for revolutionary subjects, of a concrete seeking of paths to revolution, comes to the fore.

Each of their views of reality had as goal the transformation of that reality. Marx's view of community in the Russian mir and Mariategui's view of community in the sierra Indian village were not a look backward, or simply an outcry against the very real destruction of these indigenous forms. Rather for both Marx and Mariategui, the vision was one of trying to discern a path toward the future, a future where "human power is its own end." From the vantage point of Chiapas, a path toward the future may well lay within the revolutionary thought of Marx and Mariategui.

production find it more profitable to speculate with foreign-made products than to increase production at home. The political and economic situation is so unstable that no one will invest money in the production sector.

Those who believed in market miracles thought that when people started to compete with each other production would increase. But it turned out that all we got was a "speculative industry." All industry—including state industry—has now been pushed to the level of 1965. The decline is not just in the production of basic commodities but of Russian technology. In the coal industry the economy is at the level of the mid-1950s.

The coal miners are against selling the mines into private hands, but they also hate state ownership. Some of the leaders from the strike committees have become middle-men—almost petty entrepreneurs themselves—in joint ventures they have initiated between German enterprises and their own comrades, the Russian miners.

The military industrial complex is still a big industry and 70% is not dismantled yet. To do so it means to kick people out. The present government cannot afford to do

that. This is the hope of the Russian nationalists because everyone from the chief managers to the workers demands that the industry be kept from collapsing. Nobody knows how to solve the issue.

The death rate is now exceeding the birth rate in Russia. It is called "minus birth rate." There are several reasons for it. Economically, women don't have any means to support their families and don't want to have children for that reason. Psychologically, the change from a past reality to the newer horrible reality was so drastic many say they don't want to bring children into this kind of world.

At the same time, the rate of suicides is very high. It is high among old people who belonged to the bureaucracy and can't find a place in the new reality. But it is also high among young people who cannot find work. It is estimated that within two years 25% of the population that can work won't be able to find work. Already so many cannot support their families with the minimal salaries they now make that it has become an unbearable situation for them.

All this is what the "economic miracle" of "market reform" has brought Russia so far. —Nikolai Zelinski

# Haitian peasant leader opposes intervention

*Editor's note: Chavanne Jean Baptiste is the founder and leader of the Peasant Movement of Papay, and the national peasant movement of the Papay congress. With over 100,000 members, this is Haiti's largest and most powerful peasant organization. Jean Baptiste is a close adviser to President Aristide, having served on Aristide's presidential commission and participated in the Governor's Island negotiations. He was interviewed by Cyrus Noveen on July 19.*

It is a pleasure for me to be speaking to people who are trying to understand and help the Haitian people in struggle. Since the beginning of the coup we could see that the Haitian people have maintained a very strong resistance to the coup and this is what explains the increased repression.

The Peasant Movement of Papay (MPP) was the most targeted organization in the country after the coup d'etat. That is why in the very first days of the coup there were orders given to the military to try to totally dismantle the MPP. That is why today we have many leaders who if they are not in hiding they are in prison or out of the country. Two months after the coup we were able to identify 200 of the leaders of MPP that were in prison and about 5,000 or more that were forced into hiding. In spite of this, however, the resistance has taken other forms. There are other means of communica-

tion and different organizations are able to communicate with each other. The MPP continues to struggle.

Today (July 19) there is a big debate among us concerning the reinforcement of the police force that was part of the Governor's Island Accord. The two other points of debate are: 1) How to restore the president to power? Will it be by way of a U.S. or multilateral intervention, or by other means? And 2) there is also a big debate on the question of when Aristide is restored, what kind of program could be implemented so that the country could be put on the track of survival?

My personal position and the position of MPP is that we are against all forms of military intervention in Haiti. And we believe that if the international community really wants to help the cause of democracy in Haiti it does not need an intervention to do so. We call upon them to give strict orders to Raul Cedras and Michel Francois to leave the political scene. Once they receive this strict and unequivocal order they will do so. We are calling for this and the implementation of the Governor's Island Accord.

We think that the only chance for the restoration of democracy in Haiti is for President Aristide to be restored and for the Lavallas movement (The Flood—the multi-dimensional movement that brought Aristide to power) to be able to develop so that justice and peace could be restored to the country.

# Bosnia's indictment of the West and the Left

by Sheila Fuller

*Why Bosnia: Writings on the Balkan War, ed. Rabia Ali and Lawrence Lifschultz. Stony Creek, CT: Pamphleteer's Press, 1993. The Destruction of Yugoslavia, by Branka Magas. London: Verso, 1993.*

The essays in *Why Bosnia* powerfully reveal that the view of the war in Bosnia as a civil war rooted in "ancient ethnic hatred" was perpetrated both by the Serbian government in its drive to create a "Greater Serbia" and by the Western governments in their effort to avoid defending Bosnia's multicultural character.

In their introduction, Rabia Ali and Lawrence Lifschultz trace how the U.S. government shifted from the recognition that Bosnia was the target of externally backed aggression (London Conference, August 1992) to the view that the war in Bosnia was a "civil war" conducted by "three warring factions" who had a history of "ancient ethnic feuds." (Geneva Conference, September 1992). Thus the U.S. and the European powers recognized war criminals such as Radovan Karadzic as "legitimate" representatives of the Bosnian Serbs.

Slavoj Zizek, in his essay, "Caught in Another's Dream in Bosnia," writes of the U.S. and European governments and media's "ideological mystification" (p. 234). "The logic is therefore ultimately the same as that of metaracism...the support of 'ethnic cleansing' under the guise of its opposite, the distance of an impartial observer." (p. 234) He further recalls "Hegel's dictum that evil does not reside in the object perceived as bad, but in the innocent gaze which perceives evil all around," and concludes that the truly irrational factor in the Balkans today is "the gaze of the West, babbling about archaic ethnic passions." (p. 239)

This ideological mystification became the basis for the Vance-Owen plan to partition Bosnia into "ethnic cantons" in 1993. It also left the door open for the government of Croatia under Franjo Tudjman to start engaging in its own campaign of territorial annexation and ethnic cleansing in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the spring of 1993. It is still used to justify the U.S. and European governments' refusal to lift the arms embargo, leaving the Bosnian population without the means to defend themselves against genocide.

To move to the real roots of the war, Slavoj Zizek views the rise of neo-fascist nationalism in Serbia in the context of the post-Cold War world and the failure of the crumbling "new world order" of free market capitalism to offer an alternative to humanity: "Hegel said that the moment of victory of a political force is the very moment of its splitting. The recent deadlocks of the triumphant liberal-democratic 'new world order' seems to endorse

fully this view." (p. 235)

Zizek, Ivan Banac and Branka Magas all argue that the rise of rabid nationalism in Serbia was the product of the Communist rulers' attempt to maintain their hold on power by "putting on nationalist clothes" in face of the crumbling of their regimes in a period of immense social, economic and political crises in the 1980s.

Branka Magas' *Destruction of Yugoslavia* examines this question in greater detail in discussing Left dissident intellectuals from the journal *Praxis International*, most specifically the role of the former Marxist philosopher Mihailo Markovic in supported Milosevic's aim of creating an ethnically pure "Greater Serbia."

As early as 1981, when the Belgrade government of Yugoslavia attacked youth demonstrators in the autonomous province of Kosovo and placed them under martial law, *Praxis* was shamefully quiet. In January of 1986, members of the editorial board of *Praxis* signed a petition along with 200 other intellectuals, priests and army officers, calling for: 1) abolishing the autonomous status of Kosovo and Vojvodina, 2) making Serbo-Croatian the official language throughout the Republic of Serbia, and 3) expelling all Albanian immigrants. (p. 52)

Later in 1986, Markovic co-authored the now infamous Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, which became the blueprint for the Milosevic regime's nightmare of a "Greater Serbia." In 1992, following this total betrayal of Marxism, Markovic became Milosevic's vice president.

In a 1986 response, Magas had called this astonishing alignment of *Praxis* editors with narrow nationalism a "complete break with the political and philosophic tradition represented by the journal." She continued, "There has been a somewhat disingenuous feeling that the Party has betrayed them and a search for alternative ideological shores." In the aforementioned petition, the word socialism appears not once. (pp. 52-53)

Magas demonstrates that in face of continuing workers' strikes and mass discontent in the former Yugoslavia, many Leftist intellectuals were turning away from developing socialism as an alternative to free market capitalism. Unfortunately, Magas herself expresses nostalgia for the "system of socialist self-management" under Tito, instead of challenging Tito's distortion of Marxism and the alienation under his state-capitalist regime.

Nevertheless, her discussion of the transformation into opposite of Balkan "socialist humanists," and their responsibility for the rise of neo-fascist nationalism is very important. It shows how deep the retrogression of the Left in the 1980s has been and how dead the philosophical void in the Left's articulation of an emancipatory vision rooted in Marx's Marxism has become.

## Youth South Africa youth at crossroads

by Jim Guthrie

"Nothing has changed since Nelson Mandela became president," was the verdict of a group of homeless Black South African youth who were staying up all night around a fire to keep from freezing within blocks of the African National Congress's (ANC) national headquarters. The reporter who spent the night talking to young people on the streets of Johannesburg did not have a hard time finding evidence to support this view.

From the overcrowded homeless shelters filled with street kids, to the unemployed youth who complain that they will be too exhausted to look for work the next day because their unheated flats are too cold to sleep in, to the 17-year-old who will attend high school in Soweto after stoically staying up all night guarding a hawk's stand to eke out a living, we can see how the material conditions that Black South African youth are facing three months after the ANC's historic landslide election victory remain unchanged.

Over 57% of young Blacks in South Africa are unemployed; 29% of them live in shacks or huts; only 36% of them live in homes with running water; and only 47% of them have electricity. Over a million young Blacks never go to high school. Young Black women are even more likely to be unemployed or not finish high school than young Black men.

It is out of these objective conditions that the impatience of so many Black youth with adult "leadership" is emerging. This division came out in the open for the world to see last year after Chris Hani, a popular leader among the youth, was assassinated. Thousands of angry youth battled the police outside the stadium where his funeral was held, and ANC general-secretary Cyril Ramaphosa denounced the youth as "agent provocateurs."

The election itself became a source of youth dissent when the voting age was set at 18 by the transitional government. As Thabo Mthandi, 17, a member of the Congress of South African Students put it, "Students sacrificed their lives across years in the struggle, but now we're not allowed a voice in the choice of government." Mandela was practically alone among the ANC leadership to recognize this and advocated the lowering of the voting age to 14.

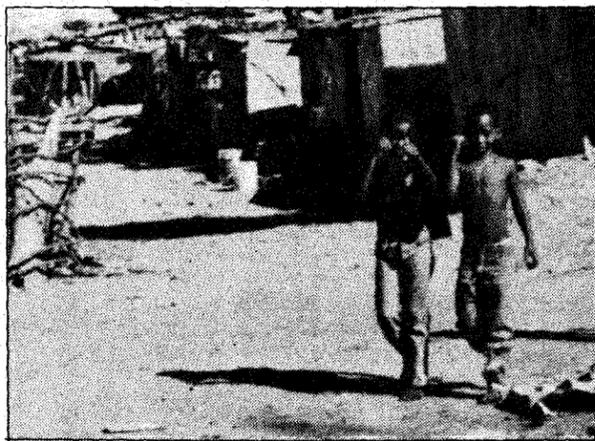
The refusal of the ANC's leadership to lower the voting age must be seen in the context of a larger ideological assault on South African youth of the '90s as a "Lost Generation." As Hein Marais, who has argued in support of this generation, put it: "In the imaginations and rhetoric of progressives, youth have 'mutated' from heroes (Young Lions) into victims (Save the Children) into the demons (Lost Generation) of today." ("The Young Barbarians," *Work In Progress*, July/August 1993).

For American youth, like myself, who were quite literally moved to the idea of revolution by the contemporary actions of our peers in South Africa, learning of this ideological attack is almost as poignant as hearing about the endless massacres our sisters and brothers were forced to endure. Here we thought this "lost gen-

eration" nonsense was only being applied to us!

That this rhetoric is nonsense is clear if you listen to the youth themselves, and just what adults are saying about them. Mlame Mothe, 16, a member of the Pan African Congress' youth wing made it clear that his generation could easily go back to its methods of direct revolt against the new government, but it would not be because they are "lost" or "untameable." "Without land reform," he said as an example, "we cannot start out fresh. And that is what the youth are watching for, the issue our forefathers struggled for in the three centuries since the land was taken from us."

Yet one should not be under the delusion that this generation in the '90s is the same as the youth of the Soweto Uprising of 1976, or even the struggles of the '80s. The anti-apartheid leadership, and not the youth themselves, should be held responsible for the degree to which today's youth have been marginalized from mean-



Shanty town outside Cape Town, South Africa.

ingful participation in the freedom struggle.

This can be seen in how the needed uprooting of the apartheid regime was almost entirely dumped on the backs of the masses with the youth seen as the "cutting edge," and in how quickly the youth were pushed aside once state-power was in sight. In both cases the mobilization of the youth has been viewed primarily as a force. They were "heroes" when their desire to tear up apartheid coincided with the ANC's own political goals.

The consciousness of the young Blacks who helped put them in power will only be acknowledged as valid as long as it continues to conform to the will of the new government. In other words, the jobless, landless, homeless, poorly educated youth will only continue to be viewed as "heroes" to the extent they are willing and able to alienate their consciousness from the revolutionary movement to uproot these objective conditions, that is, alienate their self-consciousness from itself. Any move to rebel against this alienated existence will lead to them being branded villains.

## 150th anniversary of Marx's humanism

(Continued from page 4)

up" after having long before parted ways with him in the analysis of the actual world. And yet it is at this fork in the road of philosophy "as such" that he turns to praise Hegel for his "insight, expressed within alienation...into the actual appropriation of his objective essence through the destruction of the alienated determination of the objective world, through its transcendence in its alienated existence." (p. 319) After [this] follows his settling of accounts with communism which he praises for transcending private property, but stresses that it is only after "transcendence of this mediation" that we will have a truly human society.

It is as if one watched an actual birth of a new world concept that finally separates him from all others, no matter how close they had been and no matter how they had served as transition points to this totally original idea; to this new fusion of philosophy and politics, theory and practice, that is destined to be known as Marxism.

It is at its point of origin—so much remains to be done. Marx will work at it for the next forty years of his life, but since we have witnessed it as it emerged rather than as a finished product, it is worthwhile to tarry another moment, especially since what we are tracing is the relationship to Hegel, not only in the 1840s, but after he became "Marx the economist" of the 1850s, and "Marx the world revolutionary and head of the International Workingmen's Association," culminating in Marx and the Paris Commune of the 1860s and 1870s. At the point in 1844, when Marxism is first taking shape when it is still a question of "pure" philosophy, what is the point that made it possible to transcend also Feuerbach's philosophic, contemplative materialism? Marx had, even when crediting Feuerbach with "genuine discoveries," noted that "Feuerbach regards the negation of the negation only as the contradiction of philosophy with itself, as philosophy which affirms Theology (Transcendentalism) after it had denied it." But it is necessary to remember that since Hegel himself comprehends that immanent in the concept of "the negation of the negation" is "the only truly positive...an act of self-manifestation of all being, to that extent he has discovered, only the abstract, logical and speculative expression for the movement of history." (p. 305)

Now it is this "movement of history" that Marx never let go of, not only because that was to be the body and

soul of his philosophy, but because, even within the strict confines of "the old philosophy," Hegel had discovered a dialectic which, as he will tell us even as the author of *Capital*, is the "source of all dialectic."<sup>6</sup> No matter how sharp the divergence, the dialectic will remain "the truth" of all movement so long as we live in an antagonistic, in a class society. Throughout the rest of the essay...he hits at and laughs at the "absorption of objectivity" but limited to thought, "transcendence of alienation" which finds itself back "at home" though this is an insane, irrational "home" which...is supposed to have [been] transcended so that reason itself lives "as unreason." Marx keeps reminding himself that "from the very nature of the activity of philosophy Hegel knows what all other philosophers have done...They have conceived of particular moments of Nature and of human life as moments of self-consciousness." (p. 310) Hegel has "collected them and, instead of a determinate abstraction, has created the abstraction of its entire range as the object of the critical philosophy." (p. 323)

But the promise that "further down we will develop the logical content of absolute negativity" (p. 321) was not fulfilled as the essay remains unfinished. What he had, however, done—and to this day this is precisely what established Communism fears as its main enemy—is to show this absolute negativity at work on the very opposition both to Hegel and the actual capitalistic world, on communism, the transcendence of private property itself, overcoming this transcendence as well in order to create a truly human world, "positive Humanism, beginning from itself"...

None can match this vision. And none can reduce it to their particular brand of Philistinism and/or power complex. It isn't a question of "proving" that Marx never jettisoned this Humanist vision by "quoting" *Capital* to show that the reign of freedom, too, begins only after the realm of necessity: "Beyond it begins that development of human power which is its own end..."<sup>7</sup> It is that they jettisoned the whole of Marxism, beginning with its very first appearance and not ending with the "mature" *Capital* until it was transformed into its opposite...

6. *Capital*, Vol. I., p. 654 fn., Charles H. Kerr edition (p. 744, Vintage/Pelican edition).

7. *Capital*, Vol. III., p. 954-955, Charles M. Kerr edition (p. 959, Vintage/Pelican edition).

## Stalinism warmed over

Chicago—There were about 600 registered participants in last weekend's "founding convention" of the Committees of Correspondence (CoC). These seemed to include everyone from old Stalinists and Trotskyists in search of a rejuvenated Left, to college age youth who wanted their campus organizations to remain independent of Old Left parties, to one man who said that Shoemaker-Levy Nine crashing into Jupiter was Heaven's reaction to the death of the great Kim Il Sung!

There was a lot of talk about new "democracy" in the movement. The CoC began as a split from the Communist Party, USA, so they could sure use some of that, but much of it was belied by what happened at the second afternoon's "Peace and Solidarity" session. When a young feminist introduced a resolution to lift the arms embargo on Bosnia and to oppose the partition of that country as neo-apartheid, it was tabled without discussion.

In fact, the chair refused even to read the resolution out loud, saying that it couldn't be discussed because it would be controversial. Most of those present had no problem with this, while others were reminded of Kafka, but overall it raised questions about what the "human rights" the CoC claims to support are going to mean to them. In this case, it looked like the same old defense of Stalinism expected from the Communist Party.

This was the light in which Angela Davis' keynote speech at that evening's rally had to be seen. Davis herself has a history of uncritical support of Stalinism, shown most clearly in her refusal to sign the appeal of imprisoned Czech dissident Jiri Pelikan, after she herself had been freed from prison aided by international appeals. There was no criticism in her speech of the "socialist states" or explanation of the downfall of Communism in Russia and East Europe, nor did she mention the defining moment in recent U.S. history, the Los Angeles rebellion. Rather, there was an effort to refocus ideology—a common theme throughout the weekend—by claiming that the demonization of minority youth and welfare mothers had replaced anti-Communism as the bourgeoisie's ruling ideology.

While these attacks are certainly real and must be resisted by all means, it is just as certain that they have deeper roots than a simple response to the end of the Cold War, as Angela Davis should well know. So her speech sounded like just one more way to avoid facing the Left's history. In failing to mention the L. A. rebellion, she also avoided dealing with the revolutionary subjectivity of the oppressed she claims to champion.

—Gerard Emmett

Chicago—At the CoC conference there was a great contradiction and contrast between Marx's Marxism and post-Marx Marxism. One example is the voting procedures on issues discussed at the conference.

When a vote was proposed on whether or not to hear a resolution denouncing the genocide in Bosnia, I overheard one man say, "We haven't talked about Bosnia in two years, why should we talk about it now?"

The general consensus was that non-party members should not speak but that they could vote. I was really shocked when the vote was taken to table the motion, party members whipped out red cards which they carried inside of name tags. They held these cards in hands high in the air, as if to declare the party has spoken!

When the second vote was taken to listen to the resolution, nearly the same amount of hands went up. However, only a few of these voters had red cards. The mediator said it was obvious that the majority feels that Bosnia should not be discussed at an "international peace and solidarity meeting."

What came to my mind was the second part of the Communist Manifesto where Karl Marx states, "Communists do not form a separate party opposed to other working-class parties...They do not set up any sectarian principles of their own, by which to shape and mold the proletarian movement." These people called themselves "communists" and they claimed to be working towards the socialism which Marx described. What a contradiction! What a contrast to Marx's Marxism! —Christine

## 'No illusions of reform'

San Francisco—I've become a lot more active in the youth community here, particularly because of writing about Mission High and because things are heating up for youth in the city. Even people I never thought would become politically active are starting to have an opinion. I think it's because life's getting really hard here, what with curfew, MATRIX's police crackdown on homeless and poor people, and budget cuts. People are starting to get it in their heads that writing to your senator just ain't gonna change things.

I recently attended a conference put on by the ACLU for youth called "Say What? An ACLU Celebration of Freedom of Speech." All youth were talking about was how we don't have freedom of speech.

The lawyers who were babysitting us kept saying, "Well girls and boys, why don't we just problem solve that. You could write to your congressperson, and then the President if that doesn't work." Yeah right. As if Clinton cares what some 14-year-old ghetto kid thinks! A lot of the youth at that conference were straight up. They know what's up. No illusions of reform there.

Youth are getting more radical too. I walked in on this discussion some kids were having in my homeroom. They were talking about how society treats us. Then one girl pipes up with, "Well, that's why we need a revolution." And everyone agreed with her and went on to talk about how we could avoid becoming like Russia did!

—Lynn Hailey

## Our Life and Times

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

While the three major parties in Mexico's Aug. 21 presidential election are campaigning heavily, an earlier poll indicated that nearly one-third of the Mexican people do not expect a fair election. Other polls have claimed a close race between the ruling PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) and the rightist PAN (National Action Party), with the left PRD (Democratic Revolutionary Party) trailing both.

The biggest challenge to the 65 years of one-party rule by PRI has been the Chiapas revolt and the unrest it unleashed throughout Mexico. The loosening of the ruling party's grip on power will mean even more fraud and violence in the elections.

Most recently, the PRD candidate for governor of Chiapas, Amado Avendano, was seriously injured July 25 when his car was run off the road by a truck. Supporters say they have no doubt it was an attempt to kill him organized by PRI. Avendano, whose family publishes a newspaper in San Cristobal, had expressed sympathy with the aims of the Chiapas revolt and later met with Zapatista leaders before declaring his candidacy in May.

The rulers may think they have bottled up the revolt in Chiapas by surrounding the area in which the Zapatistas are headquartered. But the movement begun in Chiapas is seeking new allies.

*Editor's note: We received the following from Yan Maria in Mexico City who was allowed into the "neutral territory" of Chiapas in June-July. She stayed in the Zapatista camp and spoke with men and women soldiers.*

Zapatistas and other residents of Chiapas have cleared away an area of Chiapan jungle and are constructing an

## Bosnia sold out again

On July 30, the so-called Bosnia Contact Group—composed of the U.S., Russia, Germany, France and Britain—voted once again to do virtually nothing in the face of the intransigence of the chauvinist Serbian leadership in Bosnia, the very group which has been responsible for three years of genocide, rape and "ethnic cleansing," and whose leaders have been singled out by human rights groups as war criminals.

Thus ended with a whimper a much-ballyhooed Great Power "ultimatum" demanding that the Serbian chauvinists (Serbs were less than 30% of the population of prewar Bosnia) agree to pull back to 49% of Bosnian territory and that the multi-ethnic Bosnian government keep only the other 51%. The Bosnian government agreed reluctantly to this apartheid-type ethnic partition plan which would have ratified much of the past "ethnic cleansing," but the Serbian chauvinists refused. In the days leading up to July 30, Serbian forces began to tighten the siege of Sarajevo, killed a British soldier and issued bellicose threats of a bloodbath.

On the ground, some Bosnian freedom fighters expressed relief that the plan had collapsed. They feel that the pressure of public opinion, especially in the U.S. and France, will force an eventual lifting of the arms embargo on Bosnia. Its lifting will permit them to fight more effectively for their own liberation. (See book review on page 10.)

## Future of Mexico on eve of elections

auditorium and living facilities for an estimated 4-5,000 visitors expected between Aug. 6-9. Starting over a month ago, the EZLN (Zapatistas) began sending out calls to marginalized sectors of Mexico's "civilian" population inviting them to meet among themselves in preparation for a national non-party, non-governmental political convention.

So labor organizations, women's groups, networks of land "squatters," youth groups, peasants, indigenous groups and representatives of gay and lesbian organizations from every state in Mexico have been invited to send representatives to the convention bringing their own lists of demands to be incorporated into a formal set of demands to be presented publically after the convention. This is the first such convention since 1910 when the Mexican Revolution attempted a democratic resolution to the country's many inequities.

According to subcomandante Marcos, "We have not threatened (the government, the military) in any way. We are willing to work things out peacefully but it is apparent (with the approach of more and more military personnel in areas surrounding the Zapatista camps) that the military sees things differently.

The two fundamental demands which will be announced after the convention are: 1) the construction of a pluralistic, transitional government emanating from the will of the people, and 2) the creation of a new Mexican constitution expressing the people's heartfelt needs.

This convention is being seen as an organism to give voice to the needs of the people of Mexico, and is part of

the Zapatistas' civil resistance to change the status—not only of the Chiapan indigenous population "who have inherited the idea that these lands are theirs and must be returned"—but of the Mexicans throughout the country who, as Marcos points out, have been very supportive of the Zapatista movement. The results of the elections will give an indication of whether or not the government is taking them seriously. If not, the Zapatistas are prepared to defend themselves.



SOUTH AFRICAN grocery clerks from the militant Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union struck for higher wages in mid-July and were attacked by police with snarling dogs and rubber bullets. In six months around the April election of Nelson Mandela, 1.2 million days of workers' time were devoted to strikes. "It's our turn to be treated as human beings," said a Black woman textile worker.

## Death of Kim Il Sung

Kim Il Sung, who constructed a Stalinist state-capitalist regime in North Korea which seemed to be an exaggerated form even of the term "totalitarian," left power upon his death in July to his son Kim Jong Il, in what has been termed the world's first Communist monarchy.

Kim Jong Il surely faces competition from rivals for power, some of whom may advocate different policies toward the masses at home, toward South Korea or toward the various powers interested in Korea—from the U.S. to Japan, and from Russia to China. Neither the domestic nor the international situation is without risks. A year ago, the *Washington Post* reported food riots. There are undoubtedly hopes for change simmering from below, hopes which will certainly feel at least some encouragement today, in the wake of the death of their tyrannical "Great Leader."

In South Korea as well, the masses are not to be discounted. Labor revolt continues there, with two occupation strikes in the auto industry taking place in June and with much popular disillusionment at the refusal of the South Korean regime to allow any of its citizens to attend Kim's funeral. So far, Kim Jong Il has shown at least one instance of political astuteness, greatly embarrassing the South Korean leaders with his open invitation to southerners to attend that funeral at a time when sentiment for Korean reunification is running strong.

Kim Jong Il commands one of Asia's largest armies, whose missiles can now reach Japan, and which may or may not have nuclear weapons. Few observers believe that North Korea's military-police-party regime can continue in its present form for very much longer, but even fewer doubt its ability to strike out with great destructive power against perceived internal or external threats.

## Attacks on East Timor

In mid-July, Indonesian soldiers brutally dispersed a rally of 500 youth in Indonesian-occupied East Timor. They were protesting an earlier incident in which soldiers from Indonesia's predominantly Muslim army had desecrated communion wafers at a Roman Catholic Church in Dili, the capital. Most Timorese are Catholic. Their leftist revolution upon gaining independence from Portugal in the 1970s was soon crushed by an Indonesian invasion, and resistance has continued since despite the massacre of hundreds of thousands by the Indonesian military.

In June in Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia, several days of street protests followed the decision by the long-ruling military-dominated Suharto government to shut down three popular new magazines. This occurred soon after one of them had publicized high-level corruption. Protesters took to the streets on several occasions and, on June 27 hundreds were attacked by police who beat them with rattan canes. Many prominent intellectuals have been involved in these protests, while a retired general, Harris Nasution, has also criticized the bannings.

## British political climate

Oxford, England—Just in the last few weeks, the British political climate has perceptibly changed. Elections for local government, the European elections and a series of parliamentary by-elections all showed a collapse of the Conservative vote. In part this is because the Tories have been tarnished by a series of scandals: arms deals with Iraq, Indonesia and Malaysia and sexual scandals just when they were promoting their "Back to Basics" campaign on traditional morality.

Also, in part, it results from the deep unpopularity of the government imposing Value Added Tax on domestic heating. More generally, there seems to be a spread of disillusionment with new right "free market" ideology that now includes sections of the middle class who previously approved. This shakeup of employment has been so widespread that middle managers also feel threatened.

The most significant difference between Labour and Conservatives seems to be their policies on employment. Labour is committed to a minimum wage and a 48-hour maximum legal working week (as per the Social Chapter of the Maastricht Treaty). Prime Minister Major attacks these modest proposed workers' rights, claiming that they would "destroy British jobs" by letting them be undercut by international competition.

Labour counters (correctly) that Major is intent on a sweatshop economy. Labour asserts that it is possible to have a "high wage/high skills" economy, supported by government training programmes. This depends on one highly unrealistic assumption—that capital will have the capacity to employ large numbers of skilled workers.

Over the past four weeks, 4,600 railway signal workers have been taking strike action every Wednesday. Strike have been few and far between (and successful strike very rare indeed) in recent years, following the bitter defeats of the 1980s. The signal workers have been driven into this one by the outrageous behavior of the Tory government.

The employer, Railtrack, had made an offer of 5.7% but the government, which has decided to hold down public sector pay, got Railtrack to withdraw it. Railtrack is one of the businesses into which British Rail has been split in preparation of privatisation. This illustrates the nature of state-capitalism today—not a question of ownership, which is increasingly privatised, but the state intervening in the economy.

—Richard Buntin

## Who We Are and What We Stand For

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

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

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

The new visions of the future that Dunayevskaya left us in her work from the 1940s to the 1980s are

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

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

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