

## Face racism or labor is disarmed



by John Marcotte

The AFL-CIO convention held its first contested election for president in its 40-year history on Oct. 25. Some say the election of SEIU president John Sweeney could be a turning point for American labor, a watershed, where labor will take on a more militant direction. I have not found this to be a hot topic of discussion at work. Nor has the planned merger into one big union of the United Auto Workers (UAW), United Steelworkers of America (USWA) and the International Association of Machinists (IAM) by the year 2000 been talked about much. While every worker is for unity and sees this as generally positive, neither event has generated any excitement or hope.

Maybe some light on where we are today in the labor movement, and how we got there, can come from rolling the film back 23 years, to November 1972, and the reelection of President Nixon. Andy Phillips, a white worker, wrote in the December 1972 N&L:

"For the first time in modern America, so many working-class whites voted for a Republican...a thoroughly racist Republican, Nixon. So deep was their racism that workers had to disregard their own self-interest to vote for Nixon. For the overwhelming majority of white workers know very well that Nixon's economic policies mean a continuation of high unemployment, worsening working conditions and worsening standards of living.

"Every worker, both Black and white, understands very well what Nixon means when he says, 'What is good for business is good for America.' It means that the working class will not only have the company to fight, they will also have the government on their backs." It was in 1980 that we felt the full weight of that government when Reagan fired PATCO workers and opened the era of union-busting. Today, Gingrich

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### Black World

## October 16 — the Left's day of absence



by Lou Turner

It is a curious *quid pro quo* to expect an [East] Indian revolt to assume the features of a European revolution.

—Marx, On the Sepoy Indian Insurrection, Aug. 29, 1857

What is new, and what is not about the Oct. 16 Million Man March? There is no lack of contending opinions regarding its meaning. We rummage through American history to construct or deconstruct clumsy parallels and cyclical returns of the old; others tremble as they listen for the recognizable footsteps of prancing tyrants and demagogues that they frantically warn us Farrakhan is in lock step with.

None of this seems real, not for any lack of facing reality, but because ours is a "changed world" of multiple and contending realities. In our "era of disintegration," Immanuel Wallerstein recently reminds us:

"The real space for groups necessarily implies the space within groups. All groups represent partial identities. Defensive frontiers between groups tend to have the consequence of creating hierarchies within groups. And yet, of course, without some defensive frontiers, groups cannot exist.

"This, then, is our challenge—the creation of a new Left ideology in a time of disintegration of the historical system with which we live." (See *After Liberalism* (New York: New Press, 1995), p. 247.)

The crisis of Left politics after the collapse of Communism, and for the American Left, after the collapse of Liberalism, centers precisely on this: how to make sense of so new and contradictory a phenomenon as the Million Man March, and the moment in our contemporary history that it occupies, in the apparent absence of a theoretical framework capable of comprehending it?

A "curious *quid pro quo*" is substituted for the needed working out of that "new Left ideology in a time of disintegration." That is to say, we expect a Black outpouring of the historic proportion and contradictory content of the Oct. 16 Million Man March, at the nadir of the post-Civil Rights era, to assume the features of the 1963

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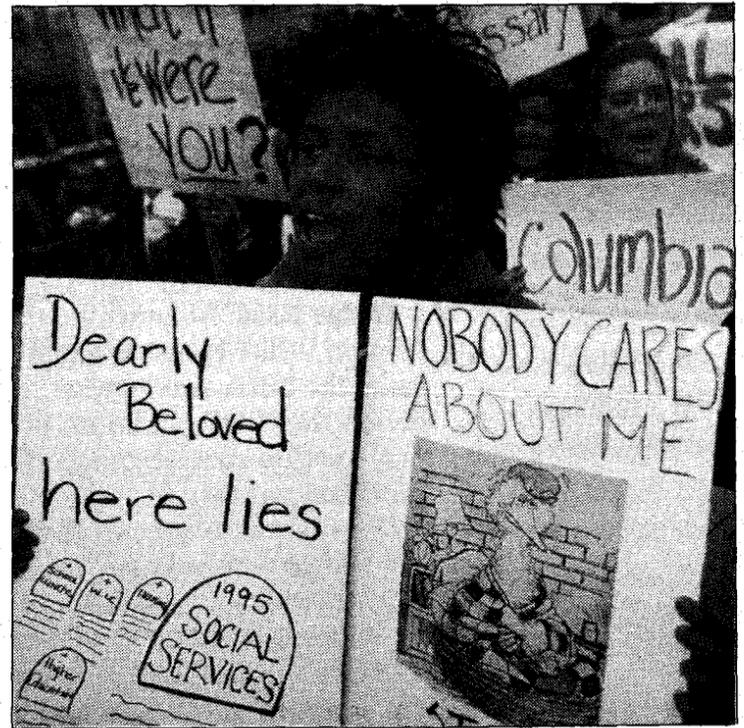
## Gingrich, Republicans intensify class warfare with inhuman budget

by Olga Domanski

The magnitude and brutality of the legislative counter-revolution Gingrichism has unleashed on the American people was spelled out in the votes that have swept through the House and Senate since Labor Day: in the \$10 billion to be cut from the federal student loan program; the elimination of more than 80 federal job training programs; the slashing of funds for enforcement of the Occupational Safety and Health Act; the virtual elimination of the federal government's guarantee to aid poor families with a welfare program; and what none have dared to touch before, the reduction of \$180 billion in Medicaid for the poor and \$270 billion from the Medicare program that provides health care for 37 million seniors. The speed with which every social gain won through the last 60 years of labor and civil rights struggle is about to be wiped from the record is unprecedented in U.S. history.

All the draconian measures approved with machine-gun speed in six short weeks after Congress returned from "vacation" only set the stage for the rapid-fire votes, on Oct. 26 in the House and a day later in the Senate, to pass the massive tax and spending bill called "reconciliation" which Gingrich claims will "balance the budget" by 2002. A *New York Times*/Canadian Broadcasting Corp. poll on the eve of the vote revealed that 82% of those polled reject that claim. The \$1 trillion savings aimed for will come heavily out of the pockets—and life blood—of the nation's children, elderly and poor.

Two-thirds of those polled voiced special opposition to the intended gutting of Medicare. The \$452 billion to be cut over the next seven years from the projected funds that would be needed to take care of senior citizens on Medicare and those on Medicaid who cannot get any other health care includes no less than half of the nation's nursing home patients. It is not just this \$452 billion that are to be axed, however. At the end of the "magic" seven years, the entire federal entitlement would end



Protests have greeted cuts in social spending.

completely, and the responsibility for the sick and elderly would be turned over to the states.

One measure of the brutality with which the measures have been devised is that a sufficient number of Republican Senators balked at the proposed concomitant elimination of federal standards for nursing homes. The standards were put into effect in 1990 because of decades of abuse of patients that went unchecked by the states. The proposal was dropped from the Senate bill, but retained in the House version.

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## Quebec 'No' vote leaves divided province

By the razor-thin margin of 50.6% to 49.4%, voters in the Canadian province of Quebec on Oct. 30, rejected a referendum proposal to declare Quebec a sovereign nation. The intense passion on both sides was reflected in the 93.5% voter turnout, a figure one commentator compared to the turnout in the first elections in South Africa "following the dismantling of apartheid."

The closeness of the results signifies that this referendum is but the beginning of a new period of examination, dialogue, struggle, and turmoil, within Canada and within Quebec.

The 30-year-long drive for independence for the province of Quebec is rooted in the unique language and heritage of its French-speaking majority (82% of the population), and their long history of domination by English-Canadian economic, political, and cultural institutions.

At the movement's origins in the late 1960s, left-leaning tendencies were strong within it, with issues of economic and social justice inextricable from questions of language and cultural identity and pride, including in the platform of the separatist Parti Quebecois (PQ).

In 1995 this vision of an independent Quebec meaning the possibility for a genuine, total alternative was once again the energizing force for many PQ rank-and-file, garnering "Oui" (Yes) votes from unemployed and underemployed workers, from educators and artists, from a new generation of youth facing an uncertain future.

One coalition of "Oui" activists from trade unions and community groups called itself "Popular Network for the Yes." They issued a declaration outlining a concept of an independent Quebec that defended the primacy of French language and culture but maintained the rights of minorities; that redistributed wealth and invested in health and education; that upheld the equality of women and the self-determination of Native peoples.

Yet their leaflet also implicitly recognized that a progressive voice for "yes" was being submerged by the much narrower nationalism of the politicians who had initiated and were running the referendum campaign.

These right-wing tendencies in Quebecois nationalism had grown through the 1980s and come to the fore by the '90s, based on the growth of a French-Canadian business class, and on opportunist politicians happy to play the nationalist card as a distraction from their own inability to solve social and economic problems within the province.

In his last, intense weeks of campaigning, separatist leader Lucien Bouchard spoke of how independence would help Quebecers solve all their difficulties, including "family problems," namely the (supposed) abnormality that "we're one of the white races with the lowest birth rate."

His emotionally manipulative campaign, tinged with such racism and sexism, led one French Canadian woman to remark on French-language radio: "I've been independantiste all my life. But I'm not going to vote for something promoted by that conservative man who has no principles. He's very dangerous."

The "concession" speech on election night by Quebec Premier Jacques Parizeau similarly left many alarmed by its tone and implications. We almost won, Parizeau said: "We lost because of the money and the ethnics." Negating the idea that other racial or cultural groups would be welcome within a possible future sovereign Quebec, he spoke of "revenge" and emphasized: "Let's talk about ourselves, les francophones (French-speakers): we're going to have our country."

That a number of prominent supporters of the "Yes" campaign moved quickly to publicly make clear how far Parizeau's sentiments differed from their own pluralistic vision shows the deep divisions within the "Yes" camp, which had come within 53,000 votes of their dream of an independent Quebec.

These dividing lines within the independantiste cause may be as deep as those which divide "Yes" and "No" within the province, and the evident divisions between Quebec and the rest of Canada. They can be covered over only at great risk, in this decade in which national self-determination has too often translated into narrow nationalism, with the most retrogressive results.

As one Montreal resident told N&L: "Perhaps now, out of this whole experience, there can be more dialogue amongst all of us—both 'Yes' and 'No' voters—who see the need for something different." —Michelle Landau

### ON THE INSIDE

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## LA guts healthcare

Los Angeles—The drama of the L.A. County public health system continues this week with the retirement of its director, Robert C. Gates, and the last of what has turned out to be over 3,000 layoffs and demotions. Six county clinics have now been designated for privatization. Massive protests by health workers, patients and other groups apparently prompted these modifications after the chilling announcement Sept. 15 of 5,200 job cuts, all county positions providing or supporting medical services. One county hospital and many clinics and health centers were set for closure.

Among those receiving pink slips were 300 emergency room nurses. One emergency room nurse said after the announcement, "If they do this Oct. 1, the impact will be death. It's murder. The emergency trauma network was supposed to be left intact in all of this (budget cutting), but it's not."

On Sept. 18 and 21, so many nurses called in "sick" that services were debilitated. They explained that people needed to see what services would be like once the layoffs take effect. An oncology nurse stated to the *Los Angeles Times*, "I don't always agree with calling in sick, but in light of what's going on, we just felt that we need to make a statement. We are just really concerned. We are just barely making it as it is."

Supervisor Gloria Molina, who has fought against the layoffs on a governmental level, called this cry of anguish an "irresponsible act." Meanwhile, the liberal press has been trying to convince their public that if the poor are denied health care, even the rich will be affected by the spread of disease and the higher number of babies with birth defects, as if the effect on the poor were not enough.

Proposed and defeated measures to avoid the layoffs and other cutbacks in essential human services were: a bill to reduce relief checks to poor men without children, reduction in services to the mentally ill, reduction of health care to the homeless, and others. This shows how government habitually pits human needs against one another. Human beings, however, can and do transcend that low level of "reality" imposed on us by corporate values. Winetka Pleasant, an SEIU union member not yet threatened by layoff, said that she would take a pay cut. "I am willing to do it if it saves devastating someone, someone at home contemplating suicide."

SEIU union-proposed solutions include voluntary leave and early retirement programs, and the incorporation of county jobs into private facilities with the retention of union wages and benefits. During a Sept. 20 protest hundreds of union workers yelled out "No privatization" when a union spokesman brought it up.

On Sept. 21 President Clinton breezed into Los Angeles with a \$364 million "rescue package" that has kept hospitals and clinics from closing outright, and has provided a reprieve from over 2,000 of the planned layoffs. Federal government criteria for "reform" will direct the use of these funds, and private hospitals will still be expected to take on more of the poor and indigent. Hospital stays will be cut for people on Medi-Cal (Medicaid).

The county medical system has historically been heavy in administration but understaffed in areas of direct services to patients. Waste, mismanagement and dishonesty from within have cost the health system millions of dollars yearly, but fingers are being pointed at undocumented immigrants.

However, one day laborer whose 23-year-old wife was suffering gall bladder stones took her to the hospital. "What was I supposed to do?" he asked. "Allow my wife to go without treatment and just die because we have no money and no papers? Is that supposed to be just?" The studies also show immigrants pay more taxes than originally assumed when Prop. 187 was passed.

This chapter is not over. Dropping nickels and dimes onto profound social problems has always diverted the threat of social unrest on the short term, but the original message has been heard and we know where we stand. I have often used county facilities when not covered by insurance, and I cannot fall into denial that my very life is threatened by the attitudes and assumptions of the rulers. We must all participate in "irresponsible acts" which clearly point to the human reality at hand, and keep us—and the rulers—awake.

—Anna Maillon

## Take back the night

Detroit—Despite heavy rain over 200 people held "a march and rally to oppose violence against women, including rape, battering, anti-abortion terrorism, homophobic and racist hate crimes, and economic violence against poor women and children" Oct. 5 at Wayne State University. But the rally reached beyond the campus with the presence of a group of women and young children from Interim House, a battered women's shelter, and the Detroit Clothesline Project, a display of T-shirts with artwork and messages by and for women affected by violence.

The speakers represented many dimensions and included City Council President Maryann Mahaffey who spoke of her experiences at the women's conference in Beijing. (Ms. Mahaffey, with her husband, has spent several nights on the picket lines of the Detroit newspaper strike and has been criticized for "lack of impartiality" by those favoring management's side.)

The most moving speakers were unscheduled. A woman from Interim House overcame shyness and laryngitis to plead for continuing support from the assembled group. Equally moving were the tales of violence and assault at the speakout following the march. Clearly the anti-violence coalition has more work to do.

—Participant

## IN MEMORIAM:

## Genora Johnson Dollinger (1913-1995)

At whatever point in her long and active life you met Genora, you knew she was a fighter—the kind of fighter whose enormous creative imagination was fired by a passionate vision of a future socialist society. Most of all you knew that her sense of history was never "past" but always as history-in-the-making—including the history of the famous Women's Emergency Brigade she organized in Flint, Mich. in 1936, during the sitdown that won the first auto union strike in U.S. history from the powerful General Motors corporation.

The hundreds of wives, sisters and mothers of the men occupying the plants who poured out for that Brigade transformed the whole concept of "auxiliary" from the kind of support that limited itself to making sandwiches in the kitchen, to the kind of support that saw the women in the front lines, armed with wooden two-by-fours against the police. As Genora herself described it when the new Women's Liberation Movement rediscovered the story of the Brigade four decades later: "We were filled with determination to win our struggles. We were reaching for the stars and were willing to lay down our lives to win this fight for the betterment of humanity..." (For the story of the Brigade, see *Working Women for Freedom*, pp. 17-18.)

The most dramatic proof of Genora's concept of history as today and in-the-making was the battle she led at the United Auto Workers' 40th anniversary celebration of the 1937 Flint strike victory. When Genora returned to Flint to join in that celebration and discovered that, despite the crucial role the women had played in that victory, not a single woman was included anywhere on the program, she called us at the News and Letters office in Detroit to work out how this outrageous situation could be turned around.

The telephone calls to action quickly brought angry women from the Coalition of Labor Union Women, the National Organization for Women, Women's Liberation News and Letters Committees, the Ann Arbor Labor History Project and the Washington, D.C. Women's Film Cooperative to Flint. At the auditorium we all pinned on red crepe paper armbands, gathered other sympathizers—men and women, young and old—and at the moment that Genora rose to make a "point of order" and demand that women be represented on the platform, unfurled our bed sheet banners from the balcony and chanted in unison: "Let the women speak!" The banners read: "1937-1977: The Struggle Continues" and "The UAW Needs an ERA!"

Most important, when Genora was quickly "invited" to speak, she did not leave it at the critical contribution women had already made to UAW history, but spoke of the grievances and needs of women workers right then, in 1977. The event was fully filmed by the Women's Film Cooperative and became the highpoint of the documentary "With Babies and Banners," which was nominated for an Academy Award that year.

The continuity of the struggle for freedom is what permeated Genora's actions and thinking throughout her entire life. It was no surprise that in the last letter I received from her, in which she expressed the thrill it was to have been inducted into the Hall of Fame of the Michigan Women's Historical Center last year, she singled out two reasons for her excitement. One was that the honor was being given, she insisted, not to her, as an individual, but to all the women of the Brigade. The other

## Women Worldwide

by Mary Jo Grey



Members of the New Japan Women's Association joined more than 4,000 people marching in Tokyo, Oct. 4, to protest the rape of a 12-year-old girl in Okinawa by three U.S. servicemen who dragged her off the street as she walked to school. Demonstrations throughout Japan in October, including more than 60,000 people in Okinawa on Oct. 21, have demanded the removal of U.S. military bases.

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The long struggle to pass a single abortion law in post-1990 unified Germany has just ended with abortion being ruled illegal (except in cases of rape or health emergency), although women who choose to have them in the first 12 weeks will not be prosecuted if they attend compulsory counseling focusing on "the protection of unborn life." Women are not faring any better in the workplace as a five-year-old lawsuit by 120 women packers protesting higher wages for men doing the same work was shot down by the Federal Labor Court. Men in Germany currently earn an average of \$1,032 more a month than women.



Genora Johnson with the Women's Emergency Brigade, 1937.

was that they would all be in the same Hall of Fame as Sojourner Truth.

We mourn her death and honor her spirit. The struggle continues.

—Olga Domanski

## Beijing: View from African-American caucus

Chicago—Many important dimensions of the international women's conference in China in September never made it into the media and still haven't been discussed much. One is the controversy over the African-American women's caucus. We tried to get a tent for our delegation at the NGO (Non-Governmental Organizations) Forum in Huairou. The organizers told us we were not a nationality and we would have to use the North American or the African tent. This sparked intense debate on which the African-American Women's Caucus held meetings throughout the conference, some involving as many as 200-300 women.

This Caucus had been organized originally by African-American women affiliated with the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under the Law. The product of our meetings was a comprehensive statement on the differences in women's communities and the problem of ignoring the ramifications of race and class in the U.N.'s Platform for Action. We handed this statement to the formal representatives from the U.S. to the U.N. Conference on Women.

For me, these meetings and the workshops I attended on reproductive rights made me think more about the difference between reproductive rights and reproductive justice. You can't see this difference if you ignore the implications of race and class.

The Cairo population conference last year marked the first time that reproductive rights were discussed in an international document. What does it mean to discuss reproductive rights when the population is growing by 90 million annually? The Cairo and Beijing conferences made it very clear the answer is not population control, but reducing poverty and promoting education and economic development for women. These policies lower birth rates, but any discourse focusing purely on rights results in inequity because rights are accessed only by those who can afford them.

Women are generally the poorest of the poor and we need a discourse of justice. We need abortion to be not just for those who can afford it. We need universal access to prenatal care, including for drug-addicted women who should not be punished for requesting it. We need protection for sexuality regardless of the age of the woman.

A story I heard from a Chilean woman about the problems she had in obtaining an abortion underscores the importance of reproductive justice. After going through the gruelling experience of obtaining an illegal abortion she was prosecuted and both she and her children were sent to prison.

Similarly, I heard from an Irish woman who related domestic violence, class and reproductive rights. In Ireland there is no provision for divorce, even if you are a victim of domestic violence. If you are married and have young children it is illegal for you to obtain a job. When she got pregnant again, she flew out of the country to get an abortion. She was beaten up by her husband on her return and imprisoned. A grassroots women's organization crossed the boundaries of rights and justice by fighting to get her out of prison and change the divorce laws.

We need to keep discussing these issues. Where do Americans fit into the whole discussion of human rights? Everyone is talking about China's one-child policy, but who is talking about the family cap for women on welfare that is part of the new welfare "reform" bill?

—African-American feminist attorney

## ROSA LUXEMBURG, WOMEN'S LIBERATION, AND MARX'S PHILOSOPHY OF REVOLUTION

By Raya Dunayevskaya

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## Strike showdown at Delta Pride catfish plant

Indianola, Miss.—Today, Nov. 1, it looks like we are going to be forced to strike at the Belzoni, Miss., Delta Pride catfish plant, if we are going to get any respect. We were in negotiations with Delta Pride up to the time the contract at the Belzoni plant expired on Oct. 31. But the truth is that the company didn't come to the negotiations with an open mind; they didn't come in good faith at all. They came to the table with a list of 18 givebacks they demanded from us.

We knew it would be rough when they opened negotiations and the leader on their side of the table was a man we had never met before—a hired gun anti-union specialist named Scott Abel from Ft. Smith, Ark. Delta Pride management let him call the shots. It was clear that their goal is to overturn everything we won in the 1990 strike.

The worst giveback they demanded was an end to time and a half pay after eight hours in a day. We won that protection in the 1990 strike. Before the strike, they would make people work from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. or even later, on straight time. You didn't get time and a half until you went over 40 hours in a week, and in catfish production the schedule can really go up and down.

Let me tell you why this is so important. About 95% of the workers at Delta Pride are women. And women have to worry about child care. If you are working 10, 12 or more hours and you don't even know when that will happen, there is a lot of strain put on your mother or sister who is caring for your children. If you are paying for child care, it's taking all your money. It makes your life hell.

Our union, UFCW Local 1529, went on strike at Delta Main in Indianola in 1990 to gain control over this overtime. In the contract we have now, they don't work you 10 or 12 hours; they had to hire more workers instead. We fought too hard to go back to the kind of slavery we had before 1990.

Management also proposed givebacks on our breaks. Now we get a break after 2 hours. First they said they wanted it to be after 3 hours; then they said after 2½ hours, but you wouldn't get a third break until after 9 hours. People who are saying this have never worked on the kill line in a catfish plant.

They want to force us to take vacation time when we are sick. And they want to wipe out the "experience pay" provision in the contract. If you have 10 years experience in catfish production, and you have been out of the industry taking care of your family, they want you to come back as a new hire—at \$4.30 an hour.

## Workshop Talks

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and company have just gutted the NLRB and OSHA. It was white racism that elected Nixon, Reagan and Gingrich.

I will quote Charles Denby, a Black worker and editor of N&L until his death in 1983, about that same 1972 election because it sheds light for today on what has been the role of the UAW and other unions:

"Many white labor leaders who did support McGovern can't understand why so many of the white working class deserted their tradition and voted for Nixon....because they too have swept the question of Black workers under the rug from the early beginnings of the UAW. They would say it is a class question, with no separate or special problems outside the class nature. They never would take on management alongside Black workers when it came to breaking down lily-white departments.

"In those early days of the UAW, practically every local union had one officer called the Education Director, and at least once a month we were asked to attend an educational meeting. And every teacher would be ready to lecture on the class question, or trade unionism, or any political question except the independent struggle of Blacks in the shop or the country as a whole. Many white workers, some just up from the deep South, were ready and willing to learn all about the struggle that Blacks were fighting. But the union leaders weren't ready."

Twenty-three years later, as we reflect on the lost opportunities the labor movement had, we must learn from that past so we do not keep repeating the same mistakes. I see that Sweeney ran for AFL-CIO head as a supposed reformer. He didn't even name a Black as running mate. He created a special post for a woman, Linda Chavez-Thompson. Doesn't he trust her in a "real" position? Is she window dressing?

Sweeney wants to take credit for SEIU's Justice for Janitors campaign, but this tremendous struggle was led by mostly Black and Latino rank-and-file workers. This same rank-and-file had to put together their Multiracial Alliance slate to fight the racism of their own SEIU Local 399 in California! And where was Sweeney?

Twenty million dollars for organizing promised by the "new" AFL-CIO cannot make up for the lack of a unifying philosophy. Or for a lack of addressing the issue, racism of white workers. Nor will a bigger UAW-USWAM change that attitude. We need today to begin to work out new human relations between white and Black and immigrant workers.

The racist elections of Nixon, then Reagan and now Gingrich have got labor up against the wall. Until we talk about race, we are not going to solve the class problem in this country. I see no desire by organized labor, old or reform or united, to do so.

The union negotiating committee included workers from all three Delta Pride plants, not just Belzoni, because the contract will affect all of us. On the next to last day of negotiations the company got a surprise. One of the few white women who works at Belzoni became a member of our negotiating committee. She spoke up at the table and said that she used to love her job, but now she sees that the whole management team is made up of people of poor character, prejudiced people, who only want to divide and abuse the employees. Management was shocked. They just stared at their shoes.

When they made their "best and final offer," it was all givebacks. They didn't even propose a wage increase at all; they said we should talk about it next October when the Delta South and Delta Main (Indianola) contracts expire.

I know that the Belzoni workers will reject their "offer." They are forcing us to strike because they believe that since Belzoni has only about 260 workers, with much less production than Delta Main, they will still get most of the fish out to the customers. And they know that Belzoni has never been out on strike before because the plant was only organized after the 1990 strike.

We will have to show them that they are wrong. We know how to reduce production, to slow down the process. We learned how to fight long ago. Workers at Delta Main will have to help out on the picket lines at Belzoni too. We are all in this together. We will be asking for your help too.

—Two Delta Pride union activists

## Profex strike for survival

Memphis — We've been out on strike since Sept. 6 against Profex Medical where we make medical cabinets and tables, for about \$7.85 an hour. Teamsters Local 984 has been at Profex at least 15 years, but it was more working in the company's favor. The company had to have drawn the contract up and the union just sign it. It was like the Bible: "Thou shalt not, Thou shalt not." No one ever grieved against the company because the contract was written in the company's favor.

We changed union representatives in 1994 and it was a clean sweep with new union people. We just wanted to update the contract, make it more modern. The company said, no, they didn't want to change a word. They said we won't give you a raise but if you give up your sick leave we might give you a dime. When the contract expired in April, they wouldn't negotiate, they just got up from the table and left.

Before we went out on strike, the company fired all the union workers they could. They offered free transportation to and from the job if workers were willing to come across the line. We're under an injunction; we can only have five people, 500 feet from the property line. Our biggest problem is we got eight union members in there who were afraid they would starve if they came out. Out of about 40 workers, about 25 are in the union.

What it's all about is the company is out to break the union. They forced us to strike. They hired this union busting-lawyer who is calling all the shots.

We're not taking this—It's a brand new day. I hope we win it. If not, there's other things we can do. I know if I survived before, I can make it now. Somebody's got to stand up and fight. We knew when we came out it wasn't going to be easy but I don't have any regrets.

—Striking Profex workers

## War against service labor

Chicago — With the explosion of technological development in the 1980s and now, there is so much talk by economists and other "experts" about the disconnecting of the economy from production. High-tech and service sector jobs are the "new stage of capital," they say, but this "new stage" is still under the same laws and dynamic that Marx wrote of in *Capital*, Volumes 1, 2 and 3.

I see that in the service sector where I work. There is the constant need to lay our capital on physical things, or what Marx called constant capital, as opposed to the laborer, what Marx called variable capital. I put up displays at Toys-R-Us, which stay up only about four months, but they lay out lots of cash on these things. They also have increased constant capital in computerizing the whole store, with all the functions of the stores nationwide tied in to one central computer at the main office in New Jersey. The lights in our store even go on and off per New Jersey! The time clock is via New Jersey too. It took them a while to set that up, so we were signing in and out, and you know we took long lunch breaks.

While it may manifest itself stronger in production, you also see in service sector jobs the constant need to revolutionize production, the need to expand constant capital to lessen variable capital. They don't need workers to put price tags on the merchandise now, for example, since it is all by bar code and they have scanners on the floor for customers to use. This cheapens the value of everything, but the commodity that gets really cheapened is the human being.

They sent in a new store director who is trying to slash everything he can, to sweat every dime. He can't get that out of the constant capital, so the only thing he can squeeze the penny from is variable capital. Marx showed that it is only out of living labor that you can squeeze out much more than you paid.

All these things exist in production, but what Marx spoke of is relative to all forms of labor in this society.

—David L. Anderson

## Somerville jobs at stake

Somerville, Tenn.—We voted in United Furniture Workers Local 282 at Somerville Mills in 1987, but we have been trying to get a contract ever since. Now the company's goal is to continue to lay off union workers and hire non-union. We might have about ten active members and 50 or 60 solid union workers among 95 who sew garments for Victoria's Secret and other major companies.

The company may close the plant if a favorable decision comes down after a National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) hearing the third week of November on all the charges in the last four years. They have violated and played around with the federal labor law. I feel that the hammer is going to hit.

When Somerville Mills started moving our work out to Mexico they said they were paying us too much money. Our union requested to know how much it cost. The company refuses to give us that information. They are spending more money by sending our work to Mexico, bringing it back, then hiring temporary workers to go through that work, check it, repair it, pack it and get it ready to go out to the stores.

The temporary workers don't get anything but minimum wage. A lot of them are non-union workers' children. One little girl came in the other day at 1:30 when she got out of school and worked until 4:00. They can work children 15 or older 30 hours a week. Workers who did everything to get rid of the union now say, if the company gets a decertification petition, they would never vote against the union. Even the white workers in shipping are furious with this company. They finally realize that Somerville has used them all this time to get the union out. The company told them that shipping would be there. Now they're not certain and the workers feel their jobs are going to end.

One worker said, "I'm fed up. I get sick when I have to come in in the morning and I get sick when I'm in here. This is the worst job I ever worked, it's taken so much out of me. But I'm not going to quit until I get my lay-off papers or this building closes down. I'm not going to let this man think he can beat us."

Every day workers ask God to give them strength to get through that day—it's just that difficult. They try to sew and make a decent salary and the plant manager and supervisor moves their work, takes their work from them, doesn't pay them time. At one time the company would try to give work to the ladies who were not supporting the union so they could make production. When they moved all the work out, they really hurt those workers. They are down to minimum wage where before some were up to \$5 or \$6 an hour.

One thing that has kept Fayette County behind for so many years is people think it depends on if you're the nicest or because the boss likes you better. It really comes down to who he can make the most money off of. The whites don't want to believe that they're a part of it—but they are. The owner's mentality is still the same when it comes to them and the dollar sign—it's always going to be the dollar sign that's going to win.

—Black woman unionist

## Staley hunger strike

Editor's note: In the October N&L a locked-out Staley worker reported on the hunger strike of fellow worker Dan Lane and on continued action against scab production of sweetener for Pepsi and Coke more than two years after the Decatur, Ill. Staley plant locked them out. Here Dan Lane updates the story.

Decatur, Ill.—Oct. 31 is day 61 of my hunger strike. Last week I was flown out by the AFL-CIO to the AFL-CIO convention. I spoke regarding a task force to activate a network available to the AFL-CIO in the campaign against Pepsi. New AFL-CIO president John Sweeney had phoned. Many delegates and union officers had introduced themselves, many were informed about the situation in Decatur.

As for my health, the trip to the convention was a setback. I lost a lot of weight, more so than I should have and have largely been confined to my room since returning to Decatur.

We got pledges of support. Now we wait to see if the expressions of support become more than words, but the support we needed from the beginning.

## Union scabs still scabs

Los Angeles — Operating Engineers Local 12, the union construction workers in southern California who run rock crushers, bulldozers and other heavy equipment, are on strike. Hundreds have been replaced over the last few months. Still other union members have crossed Local 12 picket lines rather than risk losing their jobs.

The craft unions that are crossing Local 12 picket lines are working cheaper and are taking the strikers' jobs. Butch Copeland, Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local 166 in San Bernardino County, said his local members "can't refuse work."

What has happened to working people in this country? They are together the producers of everything of value. When one worker crosses a picket line, all workers are hurt. When one local union is on strike, all union and non-union workers need to support that strike. If that local loses that strike, all workers in the country and the world lose.

Under this capitalist system, when a worker works he creates his or her own wages each day plus capital for the capitalists. The capitalists produce nothing. This every worker needs to know. The capitalist is dependent on the worker, not the worker dependent on him.

—Felix Martin

From the Writings of Raya Dunayevskaya  
**MARXIST-HUMANIST  
ARCHIVES**

### Editor's Note

Here we reprint excerpts of a letter from Raya Dunayevskaya to Herbert Marcuse, one of many between them from 1954 to 1978. The letter discusses the role of revolutionary subjectivity in a highly technological society, and follows the 1960 republication of Marcuse's *Reason and Revolution* whose new Preface held that modern capitalist culture has absorbed the revolutionary subject.

This letter also follows Herbert Marcuse's commentary (Dec. 22, 1960) sent to Dunayevskaya on her first attempt at outlining her book, *Philosophy and Revolution*, then called "Subjectivity of Self-Liberation." The exchange and outline can be found in Volume 7 of *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, #4316. More correspondence can be found in Volume 12, beginning at #9889, and in Supplemental Volume 14.

We publish this letter at the same time it is being considered for a forthcoming collection of selected writings by Raya Dunayevskaya on dialectics. For details, please read the reports from the News and Letters Committees Plenum (see ad on page 9).

January 12, 1961

Dear H. M.:

I should like to divide what I have to say into two parts, the first dealing with your question as to why I "need the Absolute Idea....[W]hy translate if you can speak the original language?" I disagree with you when you say that, "The very concept of the Absolute Idea is altogether tied to and justifies the separation of material and intellectual productivity at the pre-technological stage." It was not the pre-technological stage that impelled Hegel to the Absolute Idea. Although he certainly lived in a pre-technological era, it was the fact that the French Revolution had not brought about the millenium—Reason, Freedom, Self-Liberation—which impelled him towards the Absolute Idea.

As we know from his First System,<sup>1</sup> he couldn't accept the fledgling proletariat as that absolute negativity which would reconstruct society, but he didn't just "give up" when he stopped short with that work. Insofar as he compromised with the Prussian State, he seemed to have accepted the State as the Absolute and the opportunist in him, no doubt, did. Marx, in fact, was transformed from the petty bourgeois intellectual into the Marx we know by so profound a critique of [Hegel's] *Philosophy of Right* that the materialist conception of history was born. But, in all fairness to Hegel the philosopher, he just couldn't stop either at the State or even Religion or its Art (Forms) of the Spirit, but proceeded on to the Absolute Idea. Why? Why, when you consider that he had broken with all preceding philosophy and had no use whatsoever for the empty Absolute of Fichte, Schelling, Jacobi?

Let's approach this from another way—Marx's constant return to Hegel and constantly breaking from him. After Marx's *Critique of the Philosophy of Right* came the "Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic" [1844]. There, where he breaks with the Absolute Idea—and he had to break from it or the discovery of the Materialist Conception of History would have been just empirical, rather than dialectical, comprehensive, total and human—it is no longer just material foundation vs. superstructure; it is against the de-humanization of the Idea. While he is at it, he rightly rejects the philosopher as the yardstick without forgetting, however, also to break with Feuerbach's anthropological materialism and vulgar communism. By that time he has barely mentioned Absolute Mind when the whole essay breaks off.

With the 1848 Revolutions, Marx certainly has no further "use" for Hegel, and yet in 1859 he is back again. If you contrast the "copying" of Hegel in the form chosen for *Critique of Political Economy* and in the language of the *Grundrisse* with his re-creation of the dialectic from the life of the historic period, 1861-67, you see at once that this break from Hegel, the final transcendence of the Absolute, reappears but is this time split into two—for capitalism the general absolute law of capitalist accumulation, and for "the negation of the negation" the new passions and new forces.... That is to say, the historical tendency, the whole movement from primitive accumulation through capitalistic to the expropriators being expropriated, now is not just a negation of the negation "in general" but the specifically self-developing subject, in its logical philosophical, historical and individual development. You will remember that Marx makes some cracks at the "pre-technological" proletariat—the artisan—to the fully-developed individual who will have absorbed the technological achievements, and we will get to this Subjectivity when we return to Hegel again.

Again, why the Absolute Idea, only this time tracing it through with Lenin's need. It would, of course, be nonsense to consider that without "a transformation into opposite" that he found in Hegel, Lenin wouldn't have known what to do about the betrayal of the Second International [in 1914]. That man never wavered for one second on what to do with or without Hegel. But the need to break with his own philosophic past, that vulgar materialism to which his Materialism and Empirio-Criticism gave the green light, the need for self-liberation in

1. Hegel's "First System" refers to his initial outline of the Philosophy of Spirit, written in 1803/4. It is now available in *English in System of Ethical Life and First Philosophy of Spirit*, ed. and trans. H.S. Harris and T.M. Knox (Albany: SUNY Press, 1979).

# Dialogue with Marcuse on the dialectic

thought must have been overpowering for him to have felt so very much at home with that idealist Hegel. Indeed he learned that the freedom, the leap to freedom one gets from a generalization is a release from the empirical, the factual, the deed, to where one truly reaches a new human dimension. Think of his writing, and all to himself at that, "man's cognition not only reflects the world, but creates it."

I will take only one single sentence from the Absolute Idea chapter which so preoccupies my every waking moment, and "translate" it. You will see at once that though all translations are "correct" and surely historical, they are far from exhausting what Hegel meant, and therefore, the constant compulsion to return to him. The sentence is, "The self-determination in which alone the Idea is, is to hear itself speak."

If any man understood self-determination in the Marxian sense of self-determination of nations, it certainly is Lenin. At least there you would have thought he would have no need for Hegel. Yet, if you contrast what self-determination of nations meant to Lenin pre-1914, when it was merely a principle, to what it meant post-1914 when life and theory and philosophy combined, it will be clear that two different worlds, not contradictory perhaps, but different, are at issue there. For, by 1916 when the Irish Revolution had occurred, self-determination wasn't something that was being given by principled Marxists, but something that the masses were getting and giving to Marxists, a new beginning for their revolution which had been betrayed, the bacillus that would



Workers making semiconductors in Texas.

bring onto the stage the proletariat in action.

After 1917, when it is the Bolsheviks who had to be doing the giving, and when a Nikolai Bukharin was willing to take liberties with it, because now we were at a "higher" stage, how that revolutionary dialectician, Lenin, hit out. In his Will he was to remind the world that Bukharin never truly understood the dialectic. Isn't that something for a reigning statesman to bother himself with on his dying bed?...

Now all that meant self-determination in 1914-24. If I took only the political translation, how was I to have seen the humanism in the self-determination of the African Decade, 1950-60? "The self-determination in which alone the Idea is, is to hear itself speak," and it speaks with a different voice now, and to be able to hear it there is a necessity not only for the practice of hearing today's masses, but the theory of Hegel's philosophy.

If I must further justify myself, I would say that, frankly during the 1940s, when I first became enamored with the Absolute Idea, it was just out of loyalty to Marx and Lenin; Hegel was still hardly more than gibberish, although by now the music of his language got to me even if I couldn't read the notes. But once the new technological period of Automation got to the miners and they started asking questions about what kind of labor, the return to the early Marx meant also the late Hegel.<sup>2</sup>

As I said, I do not agree with you that the Absolute Idea relates to a pre-technological stage. So long as classes still exist, the dialectic will [exist], and the Absolute Idea will forever show new facets. What I do agree with is that once on the world scale we have reached the ultimate in technological development, then the response of the masses in the pre-technological underdeveloped economies are the spur to seeing something new in the Absolute Idea. Be it backward Ireland in 1916, or backward Russia in 1917, or backward Africa in 1960, somehow that absolute negativity of Hegel's comes into play.

One final word on why "translation" is no substitute for Hegel. It has to do with the limits of the age one lives in, which creates the concrete, but also exhausts it and there is need for a return to the abstract, the new universal which will become the new concrete. For example, for Lenin's age "transformation into opposite" was the category, while "cognition not only reflecting but creating" was left alone. To get to a new relationship of theory and practice, on a new foundation, [for] a new concrete in life to create a new stage of philosophic cognition, a return to Hegel was necessary. Or at least I needed it.

Now to the second reason for this letter. I am glad you agree that a reformulation of the relation between theory and practice and the notion of a new Subject is the key. Without a new formulation, the second negation

2. For the way workers' struggles against automation in our age raised the question "what kind of labor should man/woman perform," see *The Miners' General Strike of 1949-50 and the Birth of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S.* (Chicago: News and Letters, 1984).

could be diverted, as it is by the Stalinists, to mean a new object—a technique, a Sputnik, even an Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile—instead of the self-developing subject. Of course, technology means the conditions for universality, but without a new subject one would automatically relapse to the state or "science" doing it....

The point I want to make here is that vulgar materialism, which rests upon a contemplative attitude toward reality, has, when it is in power, a very vindictive attitude to the self-developing subject. This it tries to hide, either by disregarding the subject or transforming the object Science into "Subject."

A new beginning must be made, needless to say not from the Object but the Subject. That, I hope, is what you mean by "the self-transcendence of materialism." Let me return once again to Hegel and that key passage on the Second Negation and Subjectivity: "The negativity which has just been considered is the turning point of the movement of the Notion. It is the simple point of negative self-relation, the innermost source of all activity, of living and spiritual self-movement, the dialectic soul which all truth has in it and through which it alone is truth; for the transcendence of the opposition between the Notion and Reality, and that unity which is the truth, rest upon this subjectivity alone." (SL, 477)<sup>3</sup>

...The following and last pages are all on self-relation, "personal and free," free release, self-liberation, and it is all done via the three movements of Universal, Particular and Individual, which has characterized the Science of Logic as a whole, as well as in each of its sections. Let me retrace my steps once again: "The beginning was the universal; the result is the individual, the concrete, and the subject." (SL, 479).

And yet, the dialectic method, "the method of truth," has here extended itself into a system. Unless one fully holds on to the fact that it is only because the result has been "deduced and demonstrated" (SL, 480), he is likely to give up at this point and say that's where Hegel must really be stood on his head because he is nothing more than an idealist, after all, who has yet one other system to present as the "Absolute," and his own at that. But, neither the "system" nor the foundation is any longer a mere assumption, and we have not stopped going to the objective for proof. It does not come out of the philosopher's head at all, although "each new stage of exteriorization (that is, of further determination) is also an interiorization, and greater extension is also higher intensity." (SL, 483)

No doubt, Lenin here again took heart and near the very next sentence, "the richest consequently is also the most concrete," referred us back to Capital. Indeed, it is at this point most likely when he wrote so frantically to the *Granat Encyclopedia*,<sup>4</sup> asking whether he couldn't after all still add some things on the dialectic, even as he had concluded to himself what no Marxist in the past half-century had understood—Capital, which it is impossible to understand without the whole of the Logic. History, however, put barriers even before a genius like Lenin; he remained happiest when he could "pretend" that the Logic ended with Hegel extending a "hand to materialism," because as a totality the unity of Notion and Reality, after all, assumed the form of Nature, which Lenin "translated" as "Practice."

I am certainly all for the practice of the 1917 Revolution. But even as Lenin had to live also with what "happens after," 1917-24, so we who have lived with what "happened after" for nearly four decades must find the self-developing subject, the new subject, and new, not only in a country and regarding a specific layer in the proletariat (as against our "aristocrats of labor" and for Marx's deeper and lower "strata" that have continued the revolutionary impulse), but new that embraces the whole world. That is why it is impossible to look only at

(Continued on page 10)

3. "SL" refers to Vol II of the translation of Hegel's *Science of Logic* by Johnston and Struthers (New York: MacMillan, 1951).

4. This refers to Lenin's famous article on Karl Marx, written for the *Granat Encyclopedia*, which he sought to revise after completing his Hegel studies in 1915.

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# Origins of Serb war on multiethnic Bosnia

*Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse*, by Christopher Bennett (New York: New York University Press, 1995)

*Yugoslavia's Ethnic Nightmare: The Inside Story of Europe's Unfolding Ordeal*, ed. by Jasminka Udovicki and James Ridgeway (New York: Lawrence Hill, 1995)

The present effort of the Clinton administration to impose ethnic partition upon Bosnia through its latest "peace" plan not only undermines Bosnia's very existence, but also threatens to elevate ethnic apartheid into a principle of international relations. Coming at a time when the state of interethnic relations in the U.S. has taken a turn for the worse, this is an important moment to ask whether the trajectory of past events in Bosnia might foreshadow events to come here at home.\*

These two books shed important light on this question by recounting the path by which a small group of narrow nationalist politicians seized control in the former Yugoslavia and initiated the genocidal bloodbath that the world has come to know as "ethnic cleansing."

## MILOSEVIC'S RISE TO POWER

Christopher Bennett's *Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse* shows that the peoples of former Yugoslavia largely lived peacefully with one another and only came apart under the impact of developments in the 1980s. One of the main factors which led to this was a deep economic crisis. Between 1982 and 1989 the standard of living in the country fell by 40%. This created fertile ground for a new breed of politicians to utilize the politics of ethnic identity and narrow nationalism for the purpose of seizing the political limelight.

The irony, however, is that the man who at first seemed the least likely to promote Serbian narrow nationalism ultimately became its champion—Slobodan Milosevic. Before 1987 Milosevic was a faceless bureaucrat who showed no interest in nationalism. He was head of Beobanka, one of Yugoslavia's leading banks (with which he spent two years in the U.S.), and became secretary of the Yugoslav League of Communists in 1984.

Though Milosevic showed no interest in Serbian nationalism as of 1984, he did have a huge thirst for power. Bennett shows there is a direct parallel between Milosevic's rise to power in Serbia and Stalin's rise in Russia in that both used their positions of being in charge of appointing party functionaries to gradually accumulate power from behind the scenes.

By the mid-1980s Serbian narrow nationalism began its resurgence, quite independent of Milosevic. It started as a movement of intellectuals. Its most infamous expression was a 1985 Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences, penned by such former dissidents as Mihailo Markovic and Ljubomir Tadic. He argued that the Serbian minority in the province of Kosovo (where Serbs are 10% of the population) was being systematically exploited by Albanians.

Though Milosevic at first ignored the Memorandum, Bennett says its "simplistic analysis struck a chord among many Serbs at a time of declining living standards and severely diminished expectations" (p. 82).

By April 1987 this led to large protests by the Serb minority in Kosovo. Milosevic went to Kosovo to calm the protesters and get them off the streets. When he got there, however, a mass rally of 50,000 Serbs turned into a veritable riot. A fascinating accounting of what transpired is contained in an essay by Slavko Curuvija and Ivan Torov in *Yugoslavia's Ethnic Nightmare* (Curuvija witnessed the 1987 events in Kosovo firsthand).

As Milosevic faced the crowd of protesters, Curuvija recounts, "something happened that I believe defined the future of this man and of the country. By accident, I found myself right next to him. He was pale, bewildered. The people carried him, yelling and pulling at him. We were pressed together when an old Serb, his air completely gray and his mustache yellow from tobacco, yelled directly in his face: 'They are beating us, President! Don't let them beat us.' The old man was crying and Milosevic began trembling. 'You must go upstairs, address them from the window,' my colleague Milos Antic yelled at Milosevic. 'How? How can I get myself up there?' he asked.

"The next thing we knew he was up there, addressing the crowd. From the window of the Cultural Center Milosevic gave a short speech, later infamous, which marked the beginning of the end of Yugoslavia. The main point was to call for people to calm down and select representatives to participate in a closed meeting inside the building. But Milosevic, nervous and improvising, uttered one of those dramatic phrases that changes histo-

ry: looking down into the eyes of the old Serb who had appealed to him for help, he cried out to the frenzied crowd, 'Nobody must ever again dare to beat this people!'"

The phrase soon reverberated throughout Serbia. The response it generated from many Serbs convinced Milosevic that the key to consolidating his hold on power was to use the trump card of Serbian nationalism. From that moment onward his every act was geared at stirring up hatred and violence against non-Serbs—including in areas which, unlike Kosovo, had little or no recent history of conflict between the different ethnic groups.

## COLLAPSE OF THE HOUSE OF YUGOSLAVIA

The initial mechanism for achieving Milosevic's designs was an intense media campaign promoting Serbian nationalism and the use of terrorist "citizen militias" which sought to drive a wedge between Serbs and non-Serbs. Bennett writes, "These fanatical groups fed off the discontent and frustrations of young males and prospered in inverse proportion to the Yugoslav economy. Recruits were generally unemployed...they were indoctrinated with hatred for non-Serbs, obsessed with the notion that Serbs were perennial victims and believed that when committing atrocities they were merely righting historical wrongs."

Members of these groups—such as the Arkanovci led by thugs like Zeljko Raznatovic—were usually not indigenous to the areas in which they carried out their murders, rapes, and mutilations. As Ejob Stitjovac shows in an essay on Croatia in *Yugoslavia's Ethnic Nightmare*, it took outsiders to spark atrocities since in most places there was such a sense of community between Serbs, Croats, and Muslims that neither side could demonize the other to a level necessary for fighting to break out. Bennett shows that this was also true of the Croatian "citizen militias" which initiated outrages against Serbs. Most of its members consisted of emigres from Canada and Australia who had recently returned to Croatia.

The lesson is obvious but by no means trivial: the more different ethnic groups go their separate ways, as against living and working amongst one another, the

easier it is for them to fall prey to the level of demonization required for "ethnic cleansing."

By 1991-92, Milosevic's stoking-up of Serbian nationalism reached such a fervor that the other nations of Yugoslavia moved to declare independence. Shortly afterward the war spread into Bosnia as well, where the Yugoslav Army and the Serb "citizen militias" took over two-thirds of the country in three months through a genocidal campaign of ethnic cleansing. Yet from 1992 until the recent military advances of Croatia and Bosnia, the front lines largely stabilized. So how did Bosnia, without an army at the outset of the war and shackled by a U.S.-imposed arms embargo throughout it, manage to withstand the armed might of the Serb rulers?

Both works indicate that one reason was the level of interethnic cooperation in Bosnia. Bennett writes that it was "almost impossible to find someone without relatives from a different ethnic background. As urban Serbs joined with Croats and Muslims in defense of their homes, they proved less a potential fifth column and more a source of optimism for the prospects of a multiethnic Bosnia."

Though both works present the importance of the Bosnian struggle against Serbian (and Croatian) narrow nationalism, neither draws out the implications of the Bosnian concept of multiethnicity for freedom struggles occurring outside the former Yugoslavia. To do that, however, one would need to go beyond the bounds of historical narrative by probing reality with eyes of the concepts which can explicate the overall meaning of Bosnia's struggle—a task which neither work sets itself.

These books are nevertheless of great importance in showing how much damage a small group of unscrupulous politicians can cause when the right set of historical conditions are present. These conditions—economic crisis, a ruling class trying to hold onto power, and lack of an emancipatory ideology to counter narrow nationalism—increasingly present themselves to us here in the U.S. At a moment when the state of inter-racial relations in this country has taken an especially regressive turn, this is a history which no force of liberation in this country can afford not to consider.

—Peter Wermuth

## Nobel prizefighters for rational exploitation

*Chicago*—Karl Marx once referred to the economists of his day as "prizefighters for capitalism." This observation came alive once again as Robert Lucas swilled champagne with University of Chicago (UC) colleagues, having won a cool million-dollar Nobel Prize in economics for his work on "rational expectations theory" last month.

Lucas' colleague Gary Becker won the prize in 1993 for his work on "human capital theory." But the success of the UC economists—five Nobels in the past six years—is not a measure of the strength and combined intelligence of their economics department. Becker and Lucas, following in the footsteps of their mentor, Milton Friedman, who won the Nobel Prize in 1976, provided the theory for a new stage of capitalism and its "new world order." The million-dollar Nobels were the rewards for being good prizefighters.

In the wake of a global capital crisis in the mid-1970s and the subsequent collapse of the "old world order" (the post-World War II Bretton Woods Agreement), Chase Manhattan Bank's David Rockefeller and cold war theorist Zbigniew Brzezinski founded a global capitalist class think tank known as the Trilateral Commission. Here the vision was born of a "new world order" where capital could move unimpeded across national borders. The global crisis could be resolved by cheapening the costs of production. Global firms could accomplish that by moving about the globe to avoid paying labor living wages and to avoid adhering to standards for worker health and safety on the job and standards for consumer products and the environment.

An institutional structure was developed first by the imposition of "structural adjustment programs" on developing nations that took the bait of foreign capital with certain conditions attached. These included the elimination of governmental interference with capital movement and activities within their countries. Economic development could come only through unrestricted markets. Government social programs and government enterprise were eliminated.

Structural adjustment was initially implemented through the old Bretton Woods institutions—the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Later the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was transformed into the World Trade Organization, which on a regional basis took the form of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Along with these institutional developments came the theory to support it. Here is where the UC's economists earned their stripes (and their Nobels) as world champion prizefighters. For years UC's Milton Friedman had been arguing for the theory of Monetarism. His theory contended that the economy will flourish and everyone will benefit most when markets operate without regulation and where government's role is limited to controlling inflation by regulating the supply of money. Until the 1970s Monetarism was on the fringes of an economics profession dominated by the theories of John Maynard Keynes who favored using government spending and taxes to regulate national economies.

In 1973, however, Friedman and his UC disciples were given a chance to put their theory into practice in the aftermath of Pinochet's brutal coup in Chile. After the coup successfully deposed President Salvador Allende, Pinochet invited the "Chicago Boys," as they were

known, to come to Chile and "liberalize" the economy according to the dictates of their theory. Backed by the junta's muscle, they imposed a regime of austerity on the people of Chile and freely opened the country to foreign capital.

During this same period Becker and Lucas developed their theories. Becker's contribution was to reduce all human behavior to "rational" choices based on the old Benthamite notion of maximizing "utility." Whether you choose to get an education, brush your teeth or have an extramarital affair, all was seen as a consequence of the individual as consumer making calculations of how to maximize pleasure and minimize pain. The catch was that you needed an institutional structure to send the right signals so that your choice was an informed one. The poverty, unemployment, and homelessness that accompany the new world order were explained in terms of bad individual choices. Becker's theory eliminated any role for a social individual who was part of a class, race or gender group.

Meanwhile Lucas took a highly complementary tack. He went directly at Keynesian development policies that see government spending as a way to stimulate an economy and reduce unemployment. His Rational Expectations Theory posits that government efforts to eliminate unemployment are self-defeating. The reason is that individual consumers and corporate managers are so smart that by anticipating the effects of government policy, they will make that policy counter-productive.

If there is unemployment, for example, and government decides to increase spending to stimulate the economy, workers will anticipate price increases and ask for higher wages and firms will respond by cutting back on production! Also Lucas sees unemployment as voluntary since, by choosing to work at lower wages, everyone can be employed. The only effective government policy is for the Federal Reserve Bank to announce that it will tolerate only a certain level of price increase and if inflation is greater it will reduce the money supply.

The Chicago Boys' theory is the perfect ground for the new world order. It provides a justification for a deregulated world where global capital can roam unimpeded. And it attributes all resulting problems either to interference with the markets which global capital is creating or with bad, even pathological, choices by individuals. Marx's concept of the social individual is the absolute opposite of Becker's and Lucas' rational maximizer. It lays the philosophical ground for a theory rooted in a movement from below that opposes the pathologies of the new world order with a declaration of what it means to be a human being and thus a vision of a new society.

—Dave Park

**THE PHILOSOPHIC  
MOMENT OF  
MARXIST-HUMANISM:  
Two Historic Philosophic Writings  
by Raya Dunayevskaya**

See literature ad on page 7.

\* For a detailed analysis of the latest U.S. "peace plan" and how it is imposing a forced partition upon multiethnic Bosnia, see our editorial statement, "U.S. Pushes Bosnia Partition," *News & Letters*, October 1995.

## NEWS & LETTERS

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## FARRAKHAN AND THE MILLION MAN MARCH

The Million Man March of Black men in Washington was some event! It shows the immense revolutionary potential in the Black "communities of resistance." But the sight and sound of Louis Farrakhan, that extreme right-wing reactionary and demagogue, and his organization misleading the march was quite frightening and conversely shows the potential for "counter-revolution" in it.

Brian Higgins  
England

In my view, the Million Man March was something historically new. We can't act like the million Black men were all there in support of Farrakhan, because then we are just bowing down to Farrakhan's ideology. We need to develop what was there as an act of Black humanity, or else we are making it easier for that conservative Black leadership. Farrakhan is a conservative, who is about trying to become respectable and part of the system, and not a revolutionary against the system. If Black people follow his program, then the Republicans could claim that what they are doing, in cutting welfare and so on, is just giving the Black masses what they want. But the Black masses are definitely not calling for the same thing that Gingrich is calling for. That has to be spoken to; we have to have an answer for today that's very new.

Gene Ford  
Los Angeles

Every time you turn the television on they're saying how Black men don't support their families, how they don't do anything, how they're not a role model. So I thought it was a good start for some of them to stand up and do something to get their reputation back. I want them to show some interest. If they don't do anything but start something with the boys in the community as role models, that would be good.

Black woman activist  
Tennessee

It didn't matter whether the participants agreed with him or not, that march was Farrakhan's triumph. Only time will tell what the real launching of this sexist demagogue ranting anti-Semitic cult leader will lead to. It can't be anything good.

Feminist  
Chicago

I don't really see the point of the Million Man March. It seemed to me that the marchers and Farrakhan had two different ideas about what the purpose was. Farrakhan said that it was for Black men to "atone" for not standing up and for how they have treated Black women. If that was the purpose, they didn't need to go to Washington to change the way they act. I wasn't upset that sisters weren't invited. But I think many men went for other reasons—either they wanted to protest the way Black men are disrespected by white society or just wanted to be there at a historic occasion, since many of them were too young to have gone in 1963 when Dr. King was there. Many people I've talked to say that they loved the mass turnout, but when I ask them what will happen differently now, they don't have any specific ideas.

Skeptical sister  
Chicago

I am not for Farrakhan, but the march did have a point: as Blacks we always get the short end of the stick, and we don't stick together enough. Instead of me being jealous if you got something and try to bring you down, we should help each other.

Observer  
New York

Marx called anti-Semitism the socialism of fools, and W.E.B. DuBois put it this way: "Even unconscious repetition of current folklore—such as the concept of Jews as more guilty of exploitation than others—has helped the Hitlers of the world."

As for those "Hitlers," they must have loved seeing the anti-Semitic, misogynist, homophobic petit-bourgeois Farrakhan as the centerpiece of the Million Man March. This has its logic, and Jesse Jackson using the march to bash rebellious prisoners is just the begin-

ning. The possibility that the revolutionary passions and traditions of Black America could be dragged down to Hell behind a fascist cult leader must give the racist ruling class in this country more sheer, visceral pleasure than anything since Jonestown.

Gerard Emmett  
Chicago

Hearing the voices of African-American men who went to the Million Man March makes clear that the reasons of many for attending had nothing to do with any aspect of Farrakhan's agenda. One organized grouping who definitively did not go either for "atonement" or "family values" was the contingent of Black gay men from the Los Angeles-based Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum and the New York-based Gay Men of African Descent. They went, banners flying, to assert their proud presence as part of Black male existence in America. The fact that the rank and file at the march did not share Farrakhan's homophobia was shown in the warm reception they received; they reported that in no other situation had they ever felt such a bond and openness between gay and straight Black men as at the march.

Gay rights supporter  
Los Angeles

A friend of mine told me that the day after attending the Million Man March, a male teacher who had expressed subtle homophobia to her in the past was now emboldened enough to start yelling in the cafeteria of a Black public high school to a group of teachers that "all the faggots in our community should be rounded up and shipped off to the white community!" He said gay people shouldn't be teaching our kids or walking the streets, "flaunting" themselves securely.

The notion of the breakup of "the family" (which includes gay existence as well as the supposed "matriarchy") being the cause of the crises in the Black community was strengthened by this march. So while Black men felt so good about not getting their backs up when others stepped on their toes, and weren't afraid, women and all gay people as well as children in the community have plenty to be afraid of when it comes to the family values of patriarchal fundamentalism.

Sonia Bergonzi  
Chicago

The Million Man March could never have been as successful as it was without the support of Black women. Black women were at the march. Black women were a part of the program as speakers and were represented in the concerns expressed by speakers about man/woman relationships, children and the quality of life in the Black community. Betty Shabazz received a big round of applause; her presence on stage was a powerful symbol of reconciliation of differences which legitimized the march (and Farrakhan).

There was a call for Black men to join organizations like the NAACP, the Urban League and the Black Church, and to register to vote. Youth at the march were the same as those who took part in the Los Angeles rebellion in 1992; unfortunately, the Left was unavailable to provide an alternative. Many youth will ignore the call to join organizations like the NAACP and the Urban League. The Left missed a huge opportunity when it failed to attend the rally to raise important questions and contradictions.

Marcher  
Detroit

I agree with bell hooks when she said: "I don't have a problem with a million men marching, but it was the underlying assumption and principle they were marching behind." Witting or unwittingly that ruling principle was patriarchy. It is the worst kind of retrogression imaginable to place one category of the oppressed as more important than another. When a social movement gets so compartmentalized to have one force and reason (women) stay home while another turns itself into a solitary icon, it's nothing new. History is filled with so-called activists (for religious freedom, economic justice, etc.) who want to change society only to a point and al-

## Readers' Views

ways leave out the most crucial revolutionary question—man and woman relations, gender roles and sexuality.

Htun Lin  
Oakland, Cal.

I would not go to anything led by Farrakhan. I won't have anything to do with racism or being against Jews. Martin Luther King's march was not like that, it was for everyone together, Black and white.

Black worker  
New York

I don't support Farrakhan because he personalizes all the ills of society as it's our fault that we are poor and disadvantaged. I believe he did not hold the Million Man March to support the cause of humanity but to get recognition and power for himself. As a woman, I am offended by a man who asks me to stand in the back.

Black woman  
Chicago

I know that Farrakhan is just as racist as the white supremacists in many ways. But for the sake of unity among Black people, I stayed away from work on the day of the Million Man March. I also wanted to tell my boss that they cannot take minorities for granted.

African-American woman  
Chicago



SUPPORTING  
LABOR  
STRUGGLES  
TODAY

It appears to me that the struggle in Decatur is getting desperate. I have watched all my life how supporters rally 'round when a struggle is hot, but desert when it appears to be losing. I saw it with the UFW and with Hormel. We can all go back to our daily lives, but the people on strike can't. They are, not surprisingly, embittered and I wonder whether they might be "sitting ducks" for reaction. I have a lot of questions: What do you do when a struggle is being lost? How do you regroup?

Joanne Forman  
New Mexico

When the Contract With America came out, people said it was a bunch of Republican crap. People now say that all politicians are the same. Instead, maybe it will take small numbers of people to empower others. That's why I wish we got more people to travel from here to Cooks Hams in Kentucky. They have been in a serious union struggle for two years. When they saw that people were coming down there from Decatur, they felt power. Or when they came up here, we felt like it was energizing. Cooks Hams is in hill country, very separated from anything else. Companies like Con-Agra, who owns Cooks, look for people like that. They automatically look for people who live in depressed places. Visiting this way makes people feel renewed.

Staley family  
Decatur, Ill.

Striking Detroit newspaper workers had an information table at the October North American Labor History Conference at Wayne State University. Among the many things a Teamster representative there told me was that the Newspaper Guild had established a Speakers' Bureau to go around the country and explain the issues of the strike. They had already received requests for speakers from such diverse places as Harvard, Boston and Milwaukee among others.

Any organization wishing to have a speaker can contact them at the Newspaper Guild by calling 313-963-4254.

Strike supporter  
Detroit

## ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM

Franklin Dmitryev's Essay, "Rising community struggles fight toxic environmental racism" (July 1995 N&L), made a good point about environmental issues being focused on wilderness preservation and not on toxic issues. I found myself relating back to my manufacturing engineering days, working in environments that were legally "safe" but about which I had my doubts. I have worked around graphite dust, trichlorethane, nickel powder, aluminum oxide, rust inhibitors and exhaust from plastics being burned out. The long-term effect on workers exposed to specialized work environments may not be known for years, as they take the toxins into their bodies very slowly. If I had not been laid off I would probably still be taking them into mine.

Larry  
Santa Barbara, Cal.

NOTIONS  
OF QUEER  
SUBJECTIVITY

The article on Queer Notions in the October N&L goes to the core of what makes up families and what role that plays in terms of revolution. It is interesting that the mass media and all the slick publications are trying to personalize the whole thing of gay and lesbian. By personalizing they remove the threat to the nuclear family. It was great to see that worked out so clearly in print. There is a tendency in the gay/lesbian movement to be absorbed into this personal thing. The backlash against feminism is happening because when people get the idea that these movements threaten the very concept of the family there's an attempt to take the teeth out of it. There is even some of that within the community itself because of these hard economic times.

Radical feminist  
Oakland, Cal.

Jennifer Pen's essay points to the true revolutionary question: "what is human?" You can say the Black question is revolution, but those in the Million Man March need to ask that question. Metaphysicians before capitalism asked that question. Native American societies raised that question. We can kill only when we begin to dehumanize others. Humans need air to live. If we poison it, there won't be any humans. Humans need to not work 16-hour days. Humanism is an inclusive ideology that rattles the Right and the Left. If we categorize people according to race or who we want to sleep with, we lose sight of humanism. That is what I liked about Jennifer's article. She begins with human beings and what they need to live. Marxists get bogged down when they look to what Lenin and Marx said. They aren't with us today. New metaphysicians are needed right now to reach the masses and make them aware of what is happening.

Black gay man  
San Francisco

## AN INHUMAN SOCIETY

The Unabomber belongs to the inhuman industrial and high-tech society in spite of his declaration against it. His is an inhuman reaction to the inhuman usage of science and technology within an inhuman society. What surrounded the O.J. Simpson murder case has the same meaning. This society is dehumanized so thoroughly that any strong reactions against it must take inhuman forms.

Chinese intellectual  
California

**GINGRICH'S UNRELENTING WAR ON THE POOR**

People are starving even here in America, and sometimes you got to steal just to survive. A lot of people out here on the west side are like Robin Hood. If you're hurting, and I'm hurting, why should I rob you? The way people think is you should take from the person who offended both of us. If you see boys take a 60-pound bag of potatoes from a truck you know that they've got to be hungry, and they are going to share it.

Unemployed worker  
Chicago

The proposals for welfare cuts are horrible. They concentrate on the very poor. They are turning people into animals. People will do anything to survive. It will push the crime rate through the roof. They put drugs here in the poor neighborhoods. People try to forget their troubles and afterwards you wake up with more troubles.

Welfare recipient  
Oakland, Cal.

When I was reading the biography of the great civil rights activist, Fannie Lou Hamer, I found that in 1969 in Drew County, Miss., the school superintendent ruled that no one with an "illegitimate child" could teach, or work in the cafeteria, library or gym of the public schools. Only women were affected because the superintendent said, it's "easier to find an unwed mother...because she is stuck with the results."

It made me think that this is where

Charles Murray and Newt Gingrich, who want to restigmatize unwed mothers and their children, are going. Fannie Lou Hamer was right when she told the court: "You are trying all of us."

Terry Moon  
Chicago

People like Jesse Helms, all they know is accumulation. You don't have to go overseas to see the harm capitalism does. They don't even want to take care of their own people. What morality?

Iranian exile  
Oakland, Cal.

Hungarian economy and the large scale impoverishment of the population is the result. The IMF has forced Hungary to raise its consumer prices to international levels (sometimes even higher) while the average income is one-fifth or even one-tenth—an hourly rate of 80 U.S. cents is about the norm. Because of the incredible taxes that must be paid by both employers and employees, the black market is flourishing. Workers are paid their minimum wage "under the table" with no health insurance, pensions or any social benefits.

Correspondent  
Budapest

**CRISIS IN EAST EUROPE**

The economic and political crisis here continues, with various fascist and reactionary groupings waiting in the wings for an eventual return to power. The major international corporations continue their rape and exploitation of the

Your next commentary on East Europe should note that the protest against the damming of the Danube was a prime issue in the overthrow of the old regimes; all the new ones signed on to it, most notably the Czechs. A bit over a year ago I was in Prague (and Budapest, where things have changed less dramatically), and the accelerating increase in automobiles is the surest sign of the ecological degradation coming with "privatization." You can see the retreat from the public concerns to aspirations for suburban houses with two-and three-car garages. Any turnaround has to be envisioned and articulated in a very broad sense: a new way of living.

Environmentalist  
California

**WHY READ N&L?**

During a distribution of N&L at the Detroit newspaper strike picket line, one of the strikers who had received it came up later with a friend to get another copy because, as he put it, "I've never seen a small paper like this having such a wide range of important subjects. This is really a great paper."

Andy Phillips  
Detroit

I find N&L to be one of the strongest and most thorough voices of counterpoint there is.

Reader  
Auburn, Calif

**Let the voices of the imprisoned be heard!**



As part of the effort to let the voices of the incarcerated speak for themselves, News & Letters is helping to distribute a questionnaire, drawn up by prisoners, which aims to elicit their views on current prison conditions. For a free copy of the questionnaire, write to Prisoners Pamphlet, c/o News & Letters at 59 E. Van Buren 707, Chicago, IL 60605.

From the Introduction to the questionnaire:

We as individuals find ourselves in a society in which we have to struggle on a daily basis, but unfortunately many of our struggles run into a cycle that fails to improve our overall conditions within the prison walls. In order to break out of this pattern, we need to comprehend the reasons as to why we let such hardships be imposed upon ourselves. Once we do so it becomes possible to carry out a plan of action that can defeat the current cycle of misery. In order for that knowledge to be available, we would like you to help by answering the following questions. Our aim is to use this material to compile a pamphlet which will be available to prisoners so that they can learn how to improve their surroundings.

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## Black/Red View

by John Alan

The Million Man March on Washington, D.C., has been hailed by some political commentators as a "great historic event." This spontaneous judgment is based solely upon the vast numbers of African Americans who came, and not upon what they were thinking or upon the rationale of the ideology espoused by the speakers. Thus, the March has yet to stand the real test of history.

It should be quite obvious that the hundreds of thousands came to protest the current invidious racism in this country and the permanent economic crisis in the Black community, which brought a whole generation of African Americans to the brink of 19th-century poverty. At the same time, it is also obvious that those assembled on the Washington Mall wanted to hear what Black leaders had to say about this crisis and what they heard was: that they were not protesting against the conditions of racism and poverty, but were engaged in a "Holy Day of Atonement and Reconciliation." This shifting of the focus of Black alienation from within the reality of American society to an alienation from God, was masterminded by Louis Farrakhan, the head of the Nation of Islam.

Farrakhan's ideological domination of the March has provided a convenient shield behind which the present Black leadership can hide their failure to take on the re-

## A Black feminist's view

*Chicago*—While understanding that revolutionary situations occur without a blueprint and with the understanding that dire, hardened, murderous conditions exist against Black men in today's society—with all of this said, I cannot arrive at the conclusion that the Million Man March took place for Black people as a whole.

It was indeed necessary for Black men to come together, to embrace each other, to feel their own humanity, to make a statement against today's inhumanity against them; it was indeed a necessity to force upon the world's consciousness the plight that Black men have borne and are now bearing. Yet my only question to this is, "Yes, but at what cost?" Upon what ground are we standing with this October 16th call to Washington by the anti-Semitic and woman-hating ideologue, Farrakhan? Some may call this merely a moral stance; a stance that cannot be proved philosophically or one may say this is not dealing with the world of the here and now. With that in mind, why not bring in a point for theoretical discussion?

Under different conditions and during a different time, Sojourner Truth broke from her leader, Frederick Douglass, when he alluded to the "Negro Hour" (at the time of the passage of amendments to the Constitution) as if it were only for Negro men. This is not the view of any puritanical leader—nor of any kind of purist. What I am coming to realize is just what an important and very, very difficult break Sojourner Truth had to project, especially when she called him shortminded.

If anyone says this is a march by Black men which is supposed to mean it is for the Black family, which is supposed to imply some sort of stance for Black women and children, please spare anyone the condescension of such statements. It is sickening to witness how some Black men feel it necessary to stand tall based on their patronizing idea that they need to "protect our women." Women are not possessions. We are not commodities to be bought, sold or locked away and to be told to keep silent while Black men have their say.

What is unnerving is to equate the women's conference in China to the events in Washington. Did the women's conference organize itself based on anti-Semitism and the hatred of men? Did that conference promote patriarchy: to say we need to have men again as heads of households as if that is to prove there is something inherently wrong with female-headed households? Why not start breaking away from these limitations and discuss what is exactly happening? Capitalist society and its embryo—the family, or what Marx saw as the Latin term, "familium" which means servitude—needs to be stripped at its core. Tell me exactly, what is the future of the relation of woman to man to be? To merely, at certain times, stand side by side with men?

There has been a need to speak about the messenger and the message. As many times as Farrakhan has been mentioned as a point of divergence between groups of people in the U.S., isn't it true as well that he is a point of attraction? What I have witnessed, as I have discussed with Black women what their reasons are for their support of this march, is that—while they emphatically express that the march had nothing to do with the messenger (and many Black men at the march expressed the same idea)—on the one hand, the personality is rejected by some, while on the other hand the expressions of his sentiments are not.

Here lies a contradiction, a very serious and dangerous one. Once Farrakhan may gain more political power and clout will we be forced to ask ourselves, as Shakespeare had, "Upon what meat hath this our Caesar fed?" He is not Caesar...yet... but... This is how he is building his political base—upon the expressions of race hatred, of anti-Semitism and to see to it that women are second-class citizens. This is the realm upon which Farrakhan operates successfully among many Black people. This has been one point of attraction to the March on Washington. And what has not been mentioned in detail are the class differences between those who did attend the march and those who did not. These are not minor points, these are very troubling concerns that need to be brought to the supporters of this particular March on Washington in 1995.

—Diane Lee

## Farrakhan and the Million Man March

sponsibility of developing a new vision of society and the encouragement of new forms of Black mass struggle to concretely end racism and poverty in this country. This task demands a totally new kind of Black leadership—a leadership capable of establishing a relationship between themselves and the Black masses based on a free flow of ideas. This failure reflects the depth of the crisis in the thinking of Black leadership, which can't be swept away by closed summit meetings of Black leaders or by Farrakhan's attempt to hustle the discontent of Black masses to gain for himself a broker's position between them and the leaders of the capitalist state.

Thus, as impressive as the "Million Man March" was, the leaders on the platform expounded no new ideas or concepts of a new beginning in the struggle against racism and poverty. Farrakhan, in his keynote speech, presented "true Black liberation" as a passage from atonement of Black males for their sins, to their unity and reconciliation with their brothers and their final redemption, through the mediation of Allah, who will return to them their original "power and dominion." In Farrakhan's words: "Our failure to accept the call of Allah to be responsible heads of our families and community is our principal failure. Therefore, we as a people must atone to Allah..."

In one swoop, he lifts the real life conditions of American racism, which expresses itself objectively in permanent poverty and social disintegration in the African American communities, from its roots in the crisis in American capitalism to a "moral" contradiction with Allah. And, by the way, he slams the Civil Rights Movement because of the current reversal of its gains by the present reactionary Congress. Farrakhan says it's a waste of time to petition the government; our petition now must be to the "Author of all creation" who will give us power if we meet his requirements.

Both President Clinton and House Speaker Gingrich have applauded Farrakhan's "moral" position simply because Farrakhan's "morality" reflects their own image of African American masses. Three years ago the President claimed, in his infamous Memphis speech, that the country would go down the drain economically if Black violence and illegitimacy wasn't stopped. Gingrich and the ultra-conservative Congress are now using their power to discipline poor Black women by giving the states the right to compel female-headed families on Aid to Families With Dependent Children to work for mini-

## One marcher's view

*Chicago*—I went to the Million Man March, and it was one of the greatest experiences of my life. I wasn't old enough to participate in the Civil Rights Movement, and it has been a long time since we had a real movement in our community. I don't see the March as a rejection of the past of the Civil Rights Movement, but as a fulfillment of it. People who didn't go to the March only know what the media tells them.

So let me tell you why I went. We need to empower ourselves economically, politically, socially. For me, the whole March is summed up in "taking matters into our own hands."

I don't think the government has any intention of helping Black Americans, especially in the inner cities. White people are losing their jobs; white people are living in poverty now. White corporations and the white government can't even take care of their own people. So if we rise up, it may wake up poor white people too.

I am sick of the white media saying that the March was about Farrakhan, about hating Jews, and about disrespecting women. None of that is true, as far as I could see. The march showed that we as a people are not going to be disunited. The March was not a coronation of Farrakhan; it wasn't even about Farrakhan. It validated the idea of "doing for self." Farrakhan is called a separatist, but that doesn't mean that people at the march were separatists; there were many points of view.

No one I heard came because they hate Jews. The truth is I admire what the Jewish people have done since World War II; if Jews are attacked they fight back. Black women came to the March, thousands and thousands of them. Everywhere I went, they were welcomed. The fact is that Black women have been out there fighting a long time; Black men need to stand up now and share the burden with them. The March called for men because of the urgency of the predicament of Black men in America.

We had a sea of Black men committed to changing their communities and this whole country. It was very inspiring. It is an experience I can hand down to my son. Being there was the opposite of what Black youth see all around them: the imprisonment of Black men, the hatred of Black men by the media, Black men thrown out of jobs, Black men drawn to gangs.

In this march we were saying that we are going to clean up our community and unite for liberation. The March was a big splash. Now I believe we will begin to see little ripples everywhere in the Black community.

I'm a cartoonist, and when I got home from the March I drew a cartoon of this enormous crowd with Uncle Sam hanging on to the top of the Washington Monument, saying "OK, I'm listening." There's really just two things I want Uncle Sam to listen to. First, that Black men are ready to bear their share of the responsibility for changing their communities and this country. Second, that we need an open honest dialogue about the real state of racism in America—overt, covert and institutional racism. We don't need another commission. We need to get rid of Gingrich and all his friends. We need to get rid of the liberals who can't stand up to him. It all revolves around one thing: we need to take matters into our own hands.

—Greg Harris

mun wages. Clearly, the Clinton-Gingrich concept of "morality" is an economic duty, that is, the ethics of capitalism imposed in the interest of capital accumulation and not in the interest of poor Black people.

Farrakhan, with the help of Allah, constructs another world for African Americans, but it is not a free world; it's one that is dependent upon the so-called "white world," materially and morally. At the same time, Farrakhan has a history of his own alienated relationship with Black masses in motion. This is not a theoretical supposition; he opposed the Civil Rights Movement, became a bitter enemy of Malcolm X when Malcolm participated in that movement, and has been implicated in the assassination of Malcolm X.

In conclusion, what we do know, and this is a crucial determinant in the long struggle for Black liberation in the U.S., is that we didn't hear in Washington the voices of the Black masses or any articulation of the impulses for a new society expressed by the Los Angeles rebellion. The voices that we heard in the Mall were the voices of the past, spoken by personalities embedded in the past. In spite of the militant character of the rhetoric, these voices were bound by the limits of capitalist politics while the struggle of Black masses in motion is inherently a transcendence of that politics and the creation of a new human society. Every time Black masses move, they create a new leadership.

## Black World

(continued from page 1)

March on Washington, whose purpose, at the height of the Civil Rights Movement, was not only to "legislate the conscience of the nation," as the leadership claimed but to make the demand for "Freedom! Now!" real, a the masses sought.

Left postmodernist theories have eulogized the death of the subject, presuming that so-called identity politics have been completely defined by fundamentalism, because of Marxism's perennial failure to take the question of national consciousness seriously.

The March's themes of self-help and empowerment that seem to be throw-backs to Booker T. Washington's bootstrap capitalism, actually flow from a very different source. It is no mystery of historical development that in periods of deep social and economic restructuring the momentum of popular social forces is determined not by their aims but by their conditions. And while the March disproved the claim that the Black community is demoralized and demobilized, the real slippery slope that the Left finds itself on is the false assumption that what is stirring in the Black community, with all its contradictions, is without material foundations.

Two clues as to what is going on will suffice. First, the evisceration of internal markets of the Black community underway for the last two decades, is romanticized by Black nationalists and liberals alike as the ruin of an indigenous Black capitalism, while actually signifying the final integration of the Black community in U.S. capitalist economy. Whence arises the ideology of self-help and empowerment. The Washington-Garvey period represented the creation of those indigenous petty capitalist structures in the Black community; the present moment represents their disintegration.

Secondly, the expansion of Black consumerism and the integration of an educated Black workforce into U.S. labor markets that attend this disintegration, leaving Black "underclass" in its wake, has laid the ground for new political and economic restructuring of Black reality.

The Million Man March reveals to what extent the leadership of the Black middle class stands poised on the threshold of negotiating a new, South African-style, tripartite contract between Black America, capital and the state. Not only Farrakhan's Nation of Islam, but all the major civil rights organizations, and many community organizations are ready to negotiate, whether with Gingrich or Clinton, the same kind of structures that commenced the empowerment of South Africa's Black middle class at the end of the 1980s.

Without a clue as to the dialectic of historical and material conditions that manifest such phenomena as the 1992 LA rebellion, on the one hand, and the Oct. March, on the other, the Left, adrift in its Sargasso Sea of failed theoretical engagements with today's reality is certain to ignore the one for whom the Million Man March may yet be a big pay day—Gen. Colin Powell.

## South Side woman's view

*Chicago*—The Million Man March is not what seems to be. The way I see it, Farrakhan took advantage of the situation. You had the O.J. Simpson trial and aftermath, which ripped the blinders off America's view of race relations and showed the reality for what it was: a wound that has never healed. So Farrakhan was filling a void which Jesse Jackson, the NAACP and all the Black leadership left. They are asleep.

But here is the point. The march got away from Farrakhan. He was going to use it for promoting himself but it became more than he knew. The million people who came didn't come for atonement. You had the whole age group, from teenagers to old people there, looking for answers. Some wanted a new version of 1963; some were looking for universality, for brotherhood. For what I've seen and heard, half of them were ignoring Farrakhan altogether. They were looking for the icon, not the man. They were speaking out about the condition of the Black man in America. I know what that's like, from a Black woman's point of view.

# Gingrich, Republicans intensify class warfare with inhuman budget

(Continued from page 1)

Any such differences between House and Senate bills, of course, will easily be "negotiated" before a final version is presented for Presidential approval. More significantly, no one doubts that the expected Clinton veto, and the subsequent "negotiations" with him, will finally result in a bill that will differ only in minor details from the ruthless bill just passed. The deadly road ahead will be marked by some of the most draconian measures ever dreamed up:

- The elimination of the federal entitlement to welfare will see it replaced with "block grants" to the states, completely unchecked by any federal requirements. We can estimate the horrors ahead from the way Mississippi Governor Fordice has already received a waiver from the Clinton administration, as of Nov. 1, to prohibit others on welfare from collecting extra benefits for additional children; has proclaimed that the only job training welfare recipients need "is a good alarm clock"; and has launched "Work First" which gives companies .25 an hour to employ welfare recipients who cannot use whatever job is chosen for them. The employers are required to add only \$1 to bring the pay up to minimum wage for six months, after which, if they do not employ the welfare recipient on permanently, she is sent on to another such job.

- The sweeping cuts in Medicare will go well beyond increasing premiums for the elderly and forcing them into managed care plans. They will also force major teaching and public hospitals to slash the doctor training programs that are the heart of medical care in poor neighborhoods throughout the entire nation—and in some cases to simply close down.

- The slashing of education aid to students will have a special impact on tens of thousands of legal immigrants who make up 10% of the needy college students now receiving Pell grants. Requiring that immigrants report the names of their sponsors when applying for assistance will in most cases be enough to prevent students from receiving aid.

## THE ALL-OUT WAR ON THE POOR

The ruthless, all-out war on the poor is being waged on nearly every front imaginable. At the same time that Gingrich is determined to slash a \$245 billion tax cut to the most wealthy, he is equally determined to take away the Earned Income Tax credit that benefits the 35% of all Americans who are among the millions of working poor. Under the 1996 budget it would lift about 4.5 million people just above the poverty line.

For two decades most of the income gains in the U.S. have gone to the wealthiest 20% of the population, and most of that to the top 5%. By today there is a greater concentration of wealth at the top than at any time since the Great Depression. The extent to which the Gingrich budget will accelerate that concentration can be judged from the fact that it represents the greatest transfer of wealth in U.S. history.

It was in the midst of the Great Depression that capitalism attempted to save itself from the revolution it had invited, through Roosevelt's "New Deal" and the invention of the very "Welfare State" Gingrich is now determined to destroy. The vicious meanness of the onslaught today that has shocked many analysts is no psychological problem, although Clinton's press secretary Mike McCurry was no doubt right that Gingrich was leaning forward not only to Medicare but the elderly themselves "withering on the vine." Capitalism finds the historic figure needed to do the job at every moment in its development and decay. And its decadence today is so great that capitalism can no longer afford the "luxury" of allowing wages to rise and providing a "safety net" for those who cannot find work.

It was in the mid-1970s, when capitalism began to show its deep structural crisis, that even the bourgeois ideologists began to quote Marx on the "decline in the rate of profit" and worry whether his analysis of "the law of

motion of capitalism" to its collapse had moved from theory to reality. Just as capitalism at that point found a Reagan to carry out Phase I of the counter-revolution it demanded—pushing back, through the 1980s, as many of the gains workers, women, youth and the Black dimension had wrested since the 1960s as he could—so the ever-deepening crisis has now called on a Gingrich to push through what he has proudly called "Phase II" of the counter-revolution Reagan began.

## MARX'S THEORY IS NOW REALITY

What we are living through today is the reality of what Marx called in *Capital* the "absolute general law of capitalist accumulation"—that is, the concentration of wealth into fewer and fewer hands at one pole, and the concentration of poverty and a "surplus population" of the unemployed at the other. As always in America, it is the Black dimension that tells the tale most starkly because both class oppression and class struggle have consistently been mediated and defined by race in this benighted land, where the economic remains of slavery, in the form of the "Boss-Black" relationship, continue to shape the devastating social conditions of Black America



in today's high-tech capitalism. Indeed, our high-tech society has exacerbated this situation, increasing the permanent army of the Black unemployed so greatly that by the beginning of the 1980s that Black unemployed army was given a new designation—the "underclass."

The very term signaled that the system would no longer even try to pretend it could curb unemployment—especially for Black youth. Instead it has been housing them increasingly in prisons. That the inmates of no less than four federal prisons erupted simultaneously to protest discriminatory sentencing in drug-related cases involving powder and crack cocaine, as soon as the House refused to vote for changing it, is a sign of the explosion waiting to ignite.

It is not only a question of Black youth, although their survival is the most acutely in danger today. At the same

## Breathing makes us sick

**Los Angeles**—Since January 1995, I have been under doctor's care for congestive heart failure. I am 74 years old, and among the elderly in Los Angeles that are in danger on days when the air pollutants reach peak levels. In my case, the level seems to have been stuck at peak levels all year.

I read an article in the *Los Angeles Times* discussing a report in the *American Journal of Public Health* that concluded that 6,515 cases of congestive heart failure in Los Angeles County from 1986 through 1989 were the result of carbon monoxide exposure.

This study was by epidemiologist Dr. Robert D. Morris and his co-workers at the Medical College of Wisconsin. The information for the study came from two sources, the Environmental Protection Agency and Medicare. One question I have is: why are both of these agencies on the Republican hit list?

Since the article states that "medical researchers have long suspected that high levels of carbon monoxide pose a risk to people with heart disease," my question is, What led to this person's heart disease? Was it many other unhealthy things coupled with carbon monoxide? We workers are forced to breathe all kinds of poisons each day, trying to earn a way to live under capitalism. What effect does all this have on a young worker's healthy body? I remember when my body was healthy and strong. What caused it to become weak and sick? I don't want the age-old answer that it's just "old age."

Why have the medical doctors overlooked this health hazard so long? We all know capitalism is not in the business of taking care of the health of people; they are in the business of making money. The bottom line is higher and higher profits, even though everyone, including the capitalists and the Republicans, needs clean air to breathe and clean water to drink.

My doctor said that congestive heart failure means the heart muscle can't pump blood forcefully enough to deliver oxygen-rich blood to all parts of the body. I wonder. If a large part of the oxygen in the air has been burned up by fumes from cars, trucks, airplanes and farm machinery, and the fumes are carbon monoxide, I say it's lack of oxygen that causes congestive heart failure.

Dr. Morris wrote: "When they breathe in excess carbon monoxide, the added stress can be enough to send them to the hospital."

Just breathing: that makes us sick. —Felix Martin

time, although the number of white women on welfare greatly outnumbers the number of Black women, as a whole, the "welfare question" has become both "the race question and the woman question in disguise" as one woman who grew up on welfare expressed it, adding, "and so far the answers bode well for no one."

## CAN WE FIND A TURNING POINT?

There is no question that the situation for Black America is desperate and that the racism on which this country was founded has seen the division into which the Kerner Report 27 years ago called "two societies, separate and unequal" grow wider and deeper, the greater the crisis. There is also no question that what American Civilization on Trial traced out throughout the entire history of the U.S.—that only when the Black and the labor struggles for freedom coalesce have we reached decisive turning points—is more necessary to grasp than ever at this moment.

What has to be asked at so great a point of retrogression as we are suffering today is whether we are headed toward that kind of turning point or away from it?

The election of John Sweeney, president of the Service

Employees union, to the presidency of the AFL-CIO, although he has promised more actions of confrontation and civil disobedience—the kind of tactics the union leadership has not called for since the 1960s—has certainly not indicated he will move toward the kind of confrontation with racism so profoundly demanded today. It is the question that all the forces of revolution have to confront in the search for a turning point out of today's horrors.

That search is what makes it necessary to critically examine the Million Man March—which has brought forth the intense debate now raging about it in Black America. Some of the most intense critique has come from Black feminists, in particular bell hooks who has castigated Farrakhan's patriarchal, anti-Semitic and homophobic agenda. USC professor Donna Franklin declared the March "an attempt to 'vindicate' Black manhood. But the creation of a new Black patriarchy is the last thing that African-American women need." A

less high profile Black feminist has pointed to the critique Sojourner Truth had to make even of Frederick Douglass, when she called him "short-minded" for disregarding the importance of demanding the vote not only for men but also for women. (See debate and discussion on the march, p. 8.) Not all Black women share their sharp critique, though many were disturbed at the divisiveness of Farrakhan's agenda.

There is no question that the hundreds of thousands of Black men who poured out for the rally Farrakhan had called do not fully share his hate-filled "fundamentalist" agenda. Yet there is also no question that the outpouring has now propelled so reactionary a character as Farrakhan to the national leadership he was aiming for.

What drove that outpouring is surely the deep rage in the Black masses at the devastation they are suffering in this degenerate capitalist society. The question that remains is whether that rage will be released to uproot it and begin the creation of totally new human relations, or whether that rage will be restrained—and diverted. That Jesse Jackson, who joined Farrakhan on the platform on Oct. 16, rushed to quell the prison revolts that erupted right after the march cannot be brushed aside.

What is demanded at this moment is not to shy away from a critique of all the tendencies that would compromise the Idea of Freedom, but to reach for a way to make it real.

## Can the Idea of freedom re-mobilize today's mass movements?

Reports from the News and Letters Committees Plenum, Sept. 2-3, 1995

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## Editorial

# Guatemala in the shadow of massacre

The Guatemalan army murdered 11 unarmed civilians, and wounded over 20 others, in an unprovoked attack Oct. 5, one day before a UN human rights investigator was due to arrive in Guatemala, and five weeks before Nov. 12 national elections. The president, Ramiro De Leon Carpio, immediately condemned the attack, but the brazen brutality of the army gives the lie to any notion of "civilian" rule in Guatemala.

The army's victims were the indigenous people of "Aurora 8th of October." They were part of a community of refugees recently returned from Mexico, where they had fled with tens of thousands of other Mayan people to escape military repression that began in 1960. During the army's scorched earth campaign of extermination against guerrillas in the 1980s, the refugee population grew to anywhere between 45,000 and 100,000. They are now returning to their homes in what has become a new social movement.

The Aurora community had gathered to commemorate the anniversary of their return when an army patrol entered their camp. Eyewitness reports state that after the soldiers refused to disarm or leave, nearly a hundred people, many of them women and children formed a semi-circle around the patrol and shortly after that, the soldiers opened fire to kill.

The massacre was denounced immediately in Guatemala. Rigoberta Menchu called for the death penalty for

## Federal prisons explode

**Chicago** — Guards and administrators lost control of at least five federal prisons across the country after a Congressional decision on Oct. 18 to sustain glaringly disparate sentencing requirements for the possession of crack versus powder cocaine.

Unrest began immediately following the decision, prompting an order for a lockdown of indefinite length from the Justice Department. This move provoked an angry response from prisoners, who seized control of dormitories and attacked guards in Memphis, Tenn., Allentown, Penn. and other sites.

The uprising of longest duration took place in Greenville, Ill., where prisoners surrounded a number of guards inside the facility. Control there was regained by a SWAT team on the morning of Oct. 21.

Federal correctional officials tried to downplay the political nature of the uprisings, but reports from employees who were briefly detained by prisoners in Talladega, Ala., confirmed their motives.

In a parallel effort, Jesse Jackson condemned the uprising and urged prisoners to await the efforts of reformers on the outside.

The mandatory sentence for the possession of five grams of crack, the cheap, crystalline form of cocaine, is five years, while it requires possession of one hundred times that amount of powder cocaine to warrant a similar penalty. This disparity reflects a racist targeting of the Black and Latino users of crack, which is widely available in urban areas blighted by deindustrialization.

It is significant to note that a different outcome of the Congressional vote would not have affected the sentences of those currently serving time at all. Their reaction is a sign of rage and frustration at a federal penal system crammed with over 90,000 people, thereby used increasingly as a means of social control over a jobless and alienated section of the population.

— Kevin Michaels

## Wildcat against sellout

**Chicago**—Some 300 workers at Koch Poultry Company (4404 W. Berneau) walked off their jobs Oct. 30 when they learned the details of their newly signed first contract. Management immediately fired the strikers, almost all Mexicans, the majority women.

The shop had overwhelmingly voted in a new union, UNITE, in August in the belief that it would fight for better wages, health insurance, an end to management abuses. Resentment grew after the union and company excluded rank and file representatives from contract negotiations, according to strikers.

Watch for the full story in the December N&L.

## Dialogue with Marcuse

(Continued from page 4)

the advanced economy; that is why it is necessary to look also at the most backward; and that is why the world must be our country, i.e., the country of the self-developing subject.

Back then to that final paragraph of the Absolute Idea, the insistence that we have not just reached a new transition, that this determination is "an absolute liberation, having no further immediate determination which is not equally posited and equally Notion. Consequently there is no transition in this freedom... The transition here, therefore, must rather be taken to mean that the Idea freely releases itself in absolute self-security and self-repose." (SL, 485)

You see I am not afraid either of the "system" of Hegelian Philosophy, nor of the idealism of the Absolute Idea. The Absolute Idea is the method of cognition for the epoch of the struggle for freedom, and philosophic cognition is not a system of philosophy, but the cognition of any object, our "object" being labor. The unity of object and subject, theory and practice and the transcendence of the first negation will come to realize itself in our time....

those who were responsible for the atrocity. In Honduras, some 400 indigenous people marched to the capital, Tegucigalpa, to protest at the Guatemalan embassy. Emergency meetings and demonstrations were organized in many cities throughout Latin America and the "other America" in the U.S.

### U.S. COMPLICITY

U.S. collaboration with Guatemalan military repression dates back to the 1954 CIA-engineered coup. It has continued through the recent collapse of Russian Communism, only changing its ideological garb for Latin America. Since then, the U.S. has led a campaign in the western hemisphere to solidify its blockade isolation of Cuba. It has simultaneously pronounced its version of the "end of history" for Latin America by proclaiming that the rest of the region has successfully made the transition from military dictatorship to civilian "democracy."

What does that mean in Guatemala? As late as January 1995, CIA agents were busy shielding their ties with Guatemala's military butchers. Much of the recent filth

## Indict Fuhrman!

**Los Angeles**—Over fifty protesters gathered outside the Criminal Courts Building in downtown Los Angeles on Oct. 25, in a spirited move to rally attention to the danger of a known criminal-on-the-loose: Mark Fuhrman, racist retired cop whom supposedly "everyone," from Prosecutor Marcia Clark to President Bill Clinton, "abhors."

Yet despite all that abhorrence; despite the fact that he lied under oath on the witness stand — a behavior previously deemed to constitute perjury; despite his admission to planting evidence and beating and framing suspects: Fuhrman remains free in Idaho, on full police pension, while only a snail's pace of a federal "investigation" may, at some point, begin.

The women of Mothers ROC (Mothers Reclaiming Our Children), organizers of the demonstration, knew all about Mark Fuhrman long before he gained notoriety during the O.J. Simpson trial. He is one of many, police and prosecutors, who have participated in the railroad-ing of their husbands and sons; one woman carried a poster bearing a picture of her son, framed by Fuhrman. "We're calling Fuhrman's name, not because he's the only one," one mother said. "The Police Department is full of cops like him. But he's the only one who has been caught on tape. We want all the false arrests and police abuse to end."

The mainly African-American crowd consisted of Mothers ROC activists, community people who had heard a discussion of the protest on a Black radio station at five o'clock that morning, and angry citizens who were at the Courts Building for other reasons, and joined in.

Some of the slogans on the hand-lettered signs read: "Reopen all Fuhrman Cases"; "Uncover the Cover-up in the LAPD"; "Stop Discriminatory Prosecution"; and "Fuhrman + Power = Fuhrer."

## Bertell Ollman on Marx and the Dialectic Today

Bertell Ollman's *Dialectical Investigations* (Routledge, 1993) is a work which swims against the current of much contemporary radical theory in that it elaborates and defends Marx's concept of dialectic not as history, but as a living perspective for today and the future.

Some readers of N&L will be disappointed that Ollman does not carry out a direct analysis of what Marx termed "the source of all dialectic," Hegel's work. Others will disagree with Ollman's brief chapter on the former Soviet Union, where he characterizes that society as "neither socialist nor capitalist" (p. 110).

But to focus on such issues alone would mean missing some of the very important points on the dialectic in Marx which are developed in this interesting work. The core of the book is a lengthy essay on the process of abstraction. Here Ollman does something that few other Marxists, in their rush toward practice and the (pseudo) concrete, have done: he takes seriously Marx's statement in the 1867 preface to *Capital* to the effect that "the power of abstraction" rather than empiricist methods are what he will be using to uncover the structure and development of the capitalist system.

Ollman shows, for instance, that Marx operates throughout his work at several different levels of abstraction, ranging from a focus on the individual, to a specific capitalist society, to capitalism as a whole, to all human societies, and so forth. He argues that critics of Marx often misconstrue his statements as to their level of generality, taking more general ones to be specific ones about a particular capitalist society.

Also, Marx uses abstract categories to draw out the forward movement of history. Thus, in the *Grundrisse*, "the social formations that preceded capitalism are mainly viewed and studied here as early moments of capitalism abstracted as a process" (p. 57). Without appreciating how Marx uses abstract categories, critics often dismiss as empirically unsound statements by Marx such as all history is the history of class struggle.

A related point, which Ollman develops in another chapter, is what he calls "studying history backward." Such a notion might seem strange to historians focused on narrative or buried in empirical facts, but here Ollman has once again illuminated something central to Marx's writings. For in *Capital*, Marx does not begin his account of the dialectic of bourgeois society by discussing its historical origins out of feudalism. Instead, in his first chapter Marx takes up commodity fetishism, even

concerning U.S.-CIA trafficking with the Guatemalan army came to light after Jennifer Harbury started a daring and persistent campaign to uncover the fate of her husband Efraim Bamaca, a Guatemalan guerrilla. The army colonel, Julio Roberto Alpirez, implicated in Bamaca's torture and disappearance in 1992, and in the murder of U.S. civilian Michael DeVine in 1990, was a paid CIA agent. The Bush administration cut off over military aid after the uproar over DeVine's murder, but the CIA picked up the funnel for even more aid, which continued through April 1995.

The U.S. inflated the Guatemalan military to bloated proportions especially under Reagan in the 1980s. But is now being pressured to downsize under domestic edicts such as the recent law to end forced army conscriptions, and the recent demobilization of the "comisionados militares"—the network of some 24,000 informants, collaborators and death squad assassins.

A human rights activist dismissed the phony transformation of the "comisionados" not as a question of numbers, but the lack of any "mental demilitarization" of people who are civilians still at the service of the military. It is a military of 40,000 soldiers and another half million with some military ties, against an estimated 800-strong remnant of a guerrilla force.

### NEW INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATIONS

Nobody thinks the army's massacre at Aurora 8th of October was an arbitrary act. It is part of a campaign to disrupt the upcoming negotiations between the Guatemalan government-military and the URNG (Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity) guerrillas, to sabotage any mass participation in the Nov. 12 general elections, and to stem the refugee return movement.

Akin to the eruption in indigenous peoples' aspirations that emerged in Chiapas last year, new voices and organizations are emerging among the Mayan peoples of Guatemala, who represent over half the population and have been the most brutally oppressed over 500 years. Nukuj Akpop ("Experiment in Governance") is a political coalition of over 100 organizations formed to focus on participation in the November elections, as well as long-term demands for indigenous rights, an end to militarization of social institutions, and improvement in life and labor.

Rigoberta Menchu is now leading a drive to reverse the boycott of elections in Guatemala. In the last election, non-voting reached 80%, mainly among indigenous people. A number of indigenous leaders have called for electoral participation as a way to stop the direction of consolidation of the ruling government, and to have say in the negotiations with the URNG, which will embrace issues directly concerning Mayan peoples. Menchu does not support any party but is promoting mass indigenous participation, especially by women who have seldom if ever voted because of state repression and patriarchal discrimination.

The Nov. 12 elections will be cited by the U.S. as another evidence of "democracy." They will do nothing to solve Guatemala's fundamental social problems. On the new emerging forces can grasp that power.

though it first emerges at a fairly advanced stage of capitalist development.

Ollman also separates himself from those, be "Marxists" and postmodernist opponents of Marx, who think that Marx collapsed all particularity and difference into a single "grand narrative." "The effort by most Marx's followers and virtually all of his critics to encapsulate the materialist conception of history into a single generalization regarding the role of production (or economics) has never succeeded, therefore, because it cannot succeed" (p. 63).

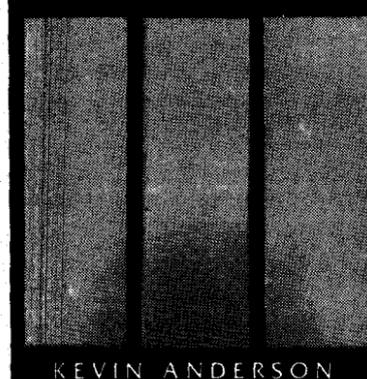
Taken as a whole, this book has many insights for those seeking to think dialectically and in a revolutionary manner with regard to present-day society.

—Kevin Anderson

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# Racist measures spark National Day of Action on college campuses

*Editor's note: Below we print reports from California on demonstrations motivated by the elimination of affirmative action in education there and threats to its entire existence nationwide. Protests were held Oct. 12 at campuses around the country, including several universities in New York, Univ. of Wisconsin at Madison and the Univ. of Michigan, which had its largest anti-racist rally in years. Many students have organized hunger strikes to stop the "educational genocide" and are declaring affirmative action to be a human rights issue.*

**Los Angeles**—Over 2,000 enthusiastic students—Black, Latino, Asian, Native American, and white/Anglo—rallied and marched on the campus of the University of California-Los Angeles (UCLA) for a student-led National Day of Action in defense of education, affirmative action, and the rights of immigrants, workers, and indigenous peoples.

The primary theme was a protest against the July UC Regents decision to end affirmative action programs in admissions, hiring, and contracting. The rally was the culmination of a two-week-long series of events organized by the UCLA Affirmative Action Coalition, which included candlelight vigils, discussion forums, and the erection of a tent encampment, "Freedom City," in the center of campus.

Hand lettered signs carried by the students read, "Leave Jim Crow in our history books," "Education not incarceration" and "No More Lies!"

The crowd was far more integrated than any off-campus rally held in Los Angeles in recent memory, and while some African-American students noted the disproportionately low turnout of white students, relative to their total enrollment numbers, others expressed satisfaction with the multi-racial crowd.

"This rally is a microcosm of this country," one Black man told *News & Letters*. "And this entire country needs to wake up! Maybe as students we can revitalize the movement for change with vigor."

"People are really tired of not getting their due," a Black woman added. "Affirmative action is not the best program in the world, but our frustration is that they want to take this away, with nothing real in its place. The government is against immigrants, against affirmative action. With all they say, they are systematically attacking our minds. What they're talking about is not my vision of what a society should be like."

"Our generation has to deal with the issue of race, left to us by our parents' generation," a white student commented. "Most people where I come from still don't see how obvious it is that white youth raised in the suburbs have so many advantages. But I've always thought differently, I don't know why. I value justice."

After two hours of rallying and marching around the school, the protesters proceeded to a nearby busy intersection and blocked traffic. Thirty-three were arrested. "People sometimes think that they're all alone in their views," a Chicana remarked. "That's why these rallies are so important."  
—M.L.

**Berkeley**—Fourteen thousand students jammed Sproul Plaza where the list of demands was presented by a Black student leader: 1) rescind the vote to remove affirmative action from UC campuses; 2) stop the California Civil Wrong (Rights) Initiative; 3) create a third World college for our people; 4) funding for ethnic studies for grades K-12; 5) destroy Proposition 187; 6) roll back the current fee hikes; and 7) reform the regents election.

At 4 p.m. 2,000 students began an enthusiastic march passing through Berkeley headed west toward the freeway. An army of militant protesters filed down both sides of a two-way street; the sound of drums, cowbells and loudly clapping hands joyfully greeted the emerging light sky.

During a standstill between police and protesters, one Asian male, Maxxine, told me: "The queer community has to realize that within our community we are very diverse and that there are queers who are part of affirmative action because they are queers of color. Women who are lesbians are also part of affirmative action. You don't put a higher or lower value on parts of yourself. We have to redefine what we mean by gay and lesbian issues. If we are not together then we might as well give up fighting for ourselves."

The protest ended after peacefully blocking several major intersections on the way back up to the campus.  
—E.G.G. Allen

**San Jose**—At San Jose State University over 600 people attended a four-hour teach-in and rally where the speakers adopted a multi-issue agenda, focusing on the racist impact of Proposition 187, the attacks on affirmative action, and the Trustees' plan to eliminate remedial education at Cal State campuses. Many speakers pinpointed the genocidal effects of capitalism and imperialism; one Latina professor noted that we are "without a base of humanity" when "a Republican Congress is continuing the legacy of Columbus (who) came...with greed and a lust for gold."

At the Marxist-Humanist literature table discussions of affirmative action were quickly transformed into a wide-ranging debate on racism, and the role African Americans have played in actualizing freedom in the U.S. The students were eager to connect their activity with history.

Several students took on an engineering professor who claimed, among other things, that incidents of obvious racism are just isolated acts of individuals. By the end of the day the students were challenging the professor's contention that engineering is non-political.

How can such discussions develop into a re-examination of what education is and should be?

—Jennifer and Urszula



*News & Letters*

Fourteen thousand students protest the elimination of affirmative action in education at Berkeley.

**Hayward**—Ferment on California college campuses continues to grow after the Oct. 12 National Day of Action in opposition to attacks on access to education. As if the assaults on affirmative action and immigrants were not enough, the Trustees of the California State University (CSU) have now targeted all remedial education programs at the system's 23 campuses. They propose to change the mandate of the CSU from admitting all students who finish in the top 30% of their class to denying admission to those who don't pass "college-level" tests in math and English.

This would have a devastating effect on students from under-funded urban high schools, students who have acquired English as a second language, women who were discouraged from studying mathematics, and many more: the Trustees' proposal could affect over 50% of incoming students; the percentages for students of color are even higher.

At a meeting in Hayward on Oct. 24, the Trustees claimed that their proposal was not intended to exclude students, but the faculty, administrators, staff and especially the students who had gathered to speak at the forum passionately and unanimously denounced the plan.

A Native American Chumash student from San Francisco State proclaimed that the university should "build human unity," and a science professor reminded the trustees that educators wanted to educate students, not condemn them for what they don't know!

Many students and alumni who had taken remedial classes spoke eloquently in defense of them, and offered stinging indictments of the craven political short-sightedness and inhumanity of the current state emphasis on prison spending over education.  
—Jennifer Pen

## Free 16-year-old Sarah!

In sentencing Sarah Balabagan, the 16-year-old Filipina who killed her rapist-employer, to a flogging of 100 lashes, one year imprisonment and a fine of \$41,000 blood money, the rulers of the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) reveal their intent to kill and not to render justice, seeking to cow the 75,000 Filipinos, mostly women, working in that country.

Replacing the original sentence of death by musketry with flogging is neither justice nor mercy, but merely switching one means of death to an even worse way to die. Flogging kills and inflicts permanent bodily injury. Each whip stroke takes off a strip of skin, traumatizing underlying tissues, and causes both external and internal bleeding. Very few survive 50 strokes, much less 100.

This sentence is the result of the "diplomatic moves" of the Philippine government under General Fidel V. Ramos. Since the Sarah case started, the Philippine government's main intent was to stifle public outrage by claiming that consideration has to be tendered to the U.A.E. because of differing cultures and laws. We condemn the U.A.E. for this cruel, unusual and unjust sentence. We condemn the Philippine government for consistently kowtowing to the racism and sexism of host countries using Filipino labor for their own advancement.

We repeat our call for the immediate and unconditional acquittal, release and repatriation of Sarah Balabagan. We repeat our demand for an end to the labor export policy of the Philippine government and the disbandment of the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency, the principal pimp which funnels so-called "surplus" labor into the international labor market.

We urge the Philippine Government once again to embark on true development through a program of self-reliant industrialization and genuine land reform. We urge once again a cap on interest payments on loans from the International Monetary Fund World Bank. Such payments eat up nearly 40% of the national budget, to the detriment of health and education services. More, we urge repudiation of fraudulent loans obtained by the Marcos Regime and an end to the borrowing of money which is the principal cause of the country's need for foreign currency. These are the factors which keep alive the unconscionable export of Filipinos (340,000 women in 1994) to 168 countries.

Even as we make these demands, we are aware that overseas Filipinos cannot rely on the Philippine government for protection. We urge all overseas contract workers of the Philippines, particularly women, to organize and unionize. We ask you to express your outrage by writing or faxing both the Philippine Embassy and the Embassy of the U.A.E. We ask you to organize pickets and rallies, and to conduct forums and public information activities so that the crimes of the Philippine government against Filipino workers, on whom it depends for survival money, may be exposed.

We ask our friends in the U.S. to contact their representatives and senators and to bring up this case of a girl who struck out against domestic and sexual violence and will now be killed for it.

—Gabriela Network

## No to nuclear dump!

**Los Angeles**—Some 300 people, from a coalition of environmental and progressive groups, along with representatives of various Indian tribes (including the five Colorado River Indian tribes), met in an encampment at Ward Valley, Cal. from Oct. 10-15. Ward Valley is located in the southeast Mojave Desert, 18 miles from the Colorado River and 22 miles from the town of Needles.

We were meeting on the emergency issue of the proposed Ward Valley nuclear waste dump site. The immediate issue was the House of Representatives' Budget Reconciliation Bill, which has attached to it the transfer of Ward Valley from the Federal government to the State of California. If passed and signed, this would exempt the proposed Ward Valley nuclear waste dump site from federal environmental laws, forbid the public from filing lawsuits over the dump, and allow the contractor, U.S. Ecology (sic), to profit from the dirty business of nuclear waste dumping.

Waste would be transported by trucks to Ward Valley from many of the 121 nuclear generators in the U.S., and possibly from overseas. The plan is to bulldoze giant trenches, deposit the steel containers with the waste (these could potentially corrode in a short time), and cover them with dirt. **Out of sight, out of mind!**

There is an aquifer (lake) beneath the desert surface. Any radiated contamination that seeps into the aquifer will find its way to the Colorado River where southern Californians get some of their drinking water, as do many farms.

If the ward Valley dump site opens, the nuclear industry will have leverage to open a whole new generation of nuclear reactors. A report by the Brookings Institution earlier this year showed that the U.S. government has spent \$4 trillion on the nuclear program since the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. That averages \$80 billion per year for 50 years—money that the industry does not wish to give up.

The encampment combined political meetings and workshops with morning sunrise circle dance prayer ceremonies—led by Western Shoshone Indian Corbin Harney—communal eating, a spiritual run, swimming in the Colorado River, musical concerts, and participation in the annual Native American Parade in Needles, where our contingent held signs protesting the dump site, and Seeds of Peace performed anti-nuclear street theater. We ended with a demonstration at the U.S. Ecology office. The theme of the spiritual prayer was "One air, one water, one people, one mother earth."

—Kei

### "We may not be on the threshold of revolution,

but the fact that the idea revolution simply refuses to be silent even when we are not in a prerevolutionary situation speaks volumes about the philosophic-political maturity of our age. We may not have a Hegel or a Marx or a Lenin, but we do have what no other age has had in such depth — the movement from *praxis* whose quest for universality does not stop with practice but hungers for a uniting of theory and practice. It is this, and therein lies the uniqueness of the dialectic — which resists any retrogressionism *within* the revolution. Retrogressionism seeks to particularize tasks, to 'fix' the universal, to confine the tasks of the masses to 'making' the revolution and not bothering their heads about 'self-development.'" (page 285)

## PHILOSOPHY AND REVOLUTION

From Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao

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## Our Life and Times

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

As the U.S.-orchestrated three-party negotiations to carve up Bosnia were to begin on Oct. 31, new instances of Serb genocide came to light. On Oct. 20, the New York Times reported in a front-page article: "Two senior Western officials said today that they had evidence that thousands of Muslim men and boys may have been killed over the last week or so by Bosnian Serbs in a contested area of northwest Bosnia."

At a time when Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic is being touted by Washington as a peacemaker, and contrasted to the indicted Bosnian Serb war criminals Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, the *Times* article noted that the new killings "were reportedly conducted by paramilitary groups that have close ties to Serbian leaders in Belgrade," in other words, Milosevic.

Despite these reports, the U.S. continues to negotiate with Milosevic, a man who also deserves to be indicted for war crimes and genocide. Unlike the Srebrenica massacres last summer, these in the Banja Luka region were made public immediately. One UN official commented that if the reports of killing were true (and we have no reason to doubt them), then if "the Americans are simply observing it, they will be as morally culpable as those officials in World War II who saw the photographs of the lines of Jews outside the gas chambers and did nothing."

As U.S. pressure forced the Bosnian and Croat offensive to an end, an offensive which had liberated a large swath of territory, Bosnian forces succeeded in liberating the strategic town of Sanski Most. In order to do so, they fought their way across the highly fortified Ozren mountains, over territory so rugged that neither Tito nor the Germans had been able to conquer it during World War

## South African contradictions

As hotly contested elections loom in Natal, a state still controlled by the reactionary Zulu-based Inkatha movement, there are signs elsewhere of the limited character of the changes wrought since the African National Congress came to power last year in South Africa.

For example, it has taken over a year for the courts to end the notorious practice of imprisonment for debt in which people, mainly Blacks, were sentenced to jail terms if they owed as little as \$42.

Today, 60,000 whites still own 80% of the farmland. After the ANC promised land reform, landowners accelerated evictions to prevent Blacks from claiming land they had farmed for generations. Today, thousands of Blacks are camped on the roadside in rural areas, having lost their homes and their livestock.

## India bans new Rushdie book

The Indian government banned from circulation Salman Rushdie's latest novel, *The Moor's Last Sigh*, on Sept. 29. It had already been banned in the state of Maharashtra, whose capital is Bombay.

The book, which takes up the persecution of Muslims by Hindu chauvinists in Bombay, includes a thinly disguised and scathing portrait of Bal Thackeray, Maharashtra's new governor. Thackeray is a Hitler admirer whose Shiv Sena movement instigated the massacre of hundreds of Bombay Muslims two years ago.

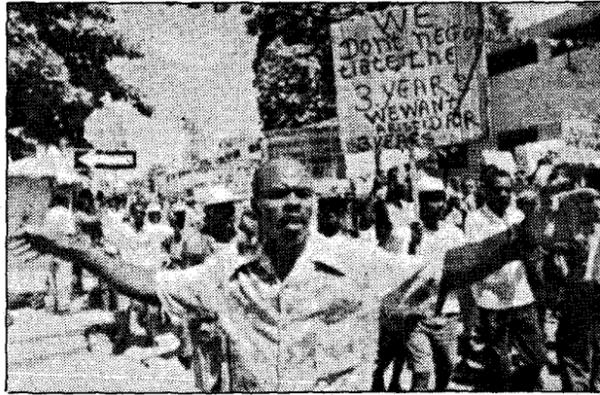
## Serb genocide during Bosnia negotiations

II. Capturing stocks of Serb arms as they proceeded, Bosnian government troops made it clear that their struggle for a democratic, multiethnic society had nothing to do with the racist, genocidal aims of the Serbian Chetnik.

As they told a French reporter: "We do not burn

## Haiti one year later

On Oct. 15, when Tipper Gore, wife of Vice-President Al Gore, saw her limousine windows smashed by a crowd of protesters in the Port-au-Prince slum community Cite



Pro-Aristide supporters march in Port-au-Prince demanding that he remain in power.

Soleil, the incident pointed to a more generalized social crisis in the land—one year after Aristide's return with the help of a U.S. occupation force. This was true despite the claim that the real target of the crowd was not Tipper Gore but corrupt local officials.

Two days earlier, pro-U.S. Prime Minister Smarck Michel had resigned, complaining that Aristide was not giving enough backing to his "free market" economic plan. Al Gore, apparently referring to hotly contested plans to sell off the national telephone and electric companies as well as the airport and the harbor authority, warned publicly of a cutoff of international aid. He spoke of "the steps the government of Haiti and its people need to take in order to ensure the continued flow of these funds" (*Haiti Info*, Oct. 15). The U.S. also wants Haiti to scrap plans to increase aid to education and health care.

There is a new mood on the streets, especially now that the army has been dismantled. The elections of June 25, Aug. 13, and Sept. 17, flawed as they were, have nonetheless resulted in the utter marginalization of all of the old reactionary parties, giving Aristide's leftist Lavalas movement plus a few other small left parties almost a monopoly on national and local elected offices.

It was this landslide that pushed Smarck Michel to resign, especially after growing street demonstrations against privatization and austerity. The new confidence of the masses is also fueling demands from below that Aristide reject the rotten compromise forced on him by Clinton whereby he must leave office in January. As the nationalist left grows in confidence and strength, the old opposition of the Haitian masses to American and French imperialism has come to the fore once again.

churches or homes. We avoid wounding civilians. We fight for justice. We are the army of Bosnia-Herzegovina, not just the army of the Muslims" (*Le Monde*, Sept. 30, 1995). These are the troops who have been deprived of arms for three years by the UN embargo.

Not only the U.S., but even more so the European powers and the UN, have stood aside for four years in the face of Serb genocide. Today Dutch "peacekeepers" who did nothing while Serbs massacred thousands of Muslim civilian men and boys in Srebrenica last summer, have come under attack at home. In July, despite having witnessed atrocities and suspecting many more the senior Dutch officer in Srebrenica, Major Robert Franken, signed a paper before leaving certifying that far as Muslim civilians were concerned, "the evacuation was carried out by the Serb side correctly." So far, the investigation of Dutch military complicity in genocide being handled by the Dutch Defense Ministry, not by an independent international body as demanded by former UN Balkan human rights monitor Tadeusz Mazowiecki.

Clinton is also looking the other way at Croatia threats to and designs on Bosnia. An anti-Semite, Croatian President Franjo Tudjman has written that on 900,000 rather than 6 million Jews perished under the Nazis. In a recent interview (*New York Times*, Oct. 25) he pointedly refused to predict whether Bosnia would even exist as an independent state 20 years from now. Tudjman seems bent on federating much of the land recently liberated from the Serb fascists with Croatia, leaving the Bosnians with only 20% or so of the original territory of the country.

## British stall Irish talks

Over a year after a cease-fire was declared by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Northern Ireland in exchange for British promises to negotiate, the British government is still stalling, not only on making substantial concessions to the nationalists, but even on starting the negotiations.

The British government claims that its "principles" do not allow it to meet with terrorists, and it has demanded a series of humiliating concessions, including total disarmament by the IRA before the peace talks even begin. Pressure on the British government to start the negotiations has begun to build in recent months, not only from the U.S. and the Republic of Ireland, but also from within England itself.

British hypocrisy on the issue of violence was revealed once again last summer when the authorities released a British officer who had been sentenced to life in prison for killing a young Irish woman. This happened after he had served only ten months of his sentence.

## African view of UN at 50

On the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, the April 1994 Rwanda genocide is no more than a passing event, despite the fact that not since World War II have we witnessed such a brutal massacre of human beings for political reasons as we have in that central African country.

What is new is that our human conscience has been put to a serious test, and we failed. The most heartbreaking is not that this is happening in the most advanced technological age, but the fact that the UN, which passed resolutions to send troops to oversee the protection of innocent people, allowed its armed forces to become passive witnesses to the most brutal massacre in recent history.

Everyone has sought to save his soul. UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali confessed to his failure to stop the genocide in Rwanda, stating that it was his biggest failure since he took office. He had talked to every member of the Security Council, and attended the OAU (Organization of African Unity) summit in Tunis to confer with the president of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, warning them of what could happen if there is no intervention.

The establishment of the UN was supposed to have meant that our age would never be witness to such human brutality as occurred in Rwanda. What more can we expect of this organization in its next 50 years?

—Ba Kara

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

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

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

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

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

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