

# NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

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25¢

**'We have a life outside this plant'**



by B. Ann Lastelle

The second shift crew on my line was forced to work overtime on a Friday night without notice. Everyone was angry, and we demanded the presence of the manufacturing unit manager (our supervisor's boss) at our Monday kickoff meeting so that he could explain why the overtime and why the second shift.

The discussion at that Monday meeting centered on the production schedule, training, experience, time spent in team meetings and comparisons between shifts—until a woman said that she had a problem: "I have to deal with a babysitter who doesn't like it when I don't come home on time and stay at work until whenever."

The manager ignored her comment until another woman raised her hand and said: "You haven't answered S's question. What is the policy on notification of overtime? When do you have to let us know?" The manager: "There is no policy." One of the men: "And overtime is mandatory?" The manager: "It's mandatory." It took a woman speaking up about a "personal" problem to get the crucial question out into the open.

A similar situation persisted at a meatpacking plant where I worked five years ago. The company offered to open contract negotiations early in order to upgrade our medical and pension benefits. The only other point on which they were willing to negotiate was wages.

The whole prior year workers had been talking, not about wages and benefits, but about the conditions of labor that impinged on our daily lives: the attendance policy which began penalizing us after only three days absence and made no provision for taking sick children to the doctor or for emergencies; the company's ability to change our starting times and shifts with no notice and no time to make child care arrangements; and no limita-

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## Black World

**Engels, Douglass, and DuBois**



by Lou Turner

There is an interesting convergence of anniversaries in the intellectual calendar of the radical tradition in 1995, and the end of this most turbulent year is an opportune, if belated, time to consider their relevance to our pressing concerns.

The centennials of the death of Frederick Engels (1820-1895), the closest theoretical collaborator of Karl Marx, and the death of Frederick Douglass (1818-1895), the foremost Abolitionist and Black leader in 19th century America, have more in common than the fact that the fullness of their revolutionary lives shared the same historical moment. Indeed, the revolutionary cast of their personalities bespeaks the historical propulsion and reason of the times in which they were privileged to live.

As a young radical intellectual, Frederick Engels was acutely aware of what the young Marx was already beginning to theorize when they met originally in November 1842 in Cologne and again in the summer of 1844 in Paris. What Marx wrote to another Young Hegelian Arnold Ruge, in September 1843, evinced the same spirit of the times that animated the young Engels:

"[N]othing prevents us from tying in our criticism with a criticism of and participation in politics, that is in real conflicts, and in identifying with them. Thus we do not confront the world dogmatically with a new principle, proclaiming: Here is the truth, here kneel before it! We develop for the world new principles out of the principles of the world. We do not say to the world: Give up your struggles, they are stupid stuff: we will provide you with the true watchword for the struggle. We merely demonstrate to the world why it really struggles, and consciousness is something it must adopt, even if it does not want to do so."

Despite his limitations as a continuator of that new world-historic continent of thought and revolution that became Marxism, Engels was aware that he was not only privileged to live in revolutionary times but more importantly privileged to work and collaborate with the epoch-revolutionary philosopher of those times, Karl Marx.

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## Rabin's assassination lifts veil on emerging ethnic apartheid



by Peter Wermuth

The assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by a member of a far-Right paramilitary organization, like the Oklahoma City bombing last April, sharply reveals the threat posed by those opposed to inter-ethnic dialogue and cooperation. At the same time, the response to Rabin's murder by hundreds of thousands of Israeli Jews and Arabs, who attended massive peace rallies and anti-rightist protests in its wake, shows a determination to beat back the threat posed by advocates of ethnic cleansing.

Where this develops in the future will depend on whether the Israeli and Palestinian masses transcend the limited agendas of their respective political leaders.

### FUNDAMENTALISM, ISRAELI STYLE

Rabin's murderer, Yigal Amir, was no isolated lunatic, but part of a tendency deeply rooted in Israeli society. He not only worked with far-Right fringe groups like Kahane Chai and Eyal, but also with larger Jewish settler groups on the West Bank such as Zo Artzeinu (It's Our Country). This group, which has blocked roads and violently attacked Palestinians in order to sabotage Israel's

Peace Now rally in Tel Aviv Nov. 6 moments before shooting of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

peace agreement with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), emerged as a major political force last summer.

Such groups are fueled by a reactionary ideology rooted in Jewish fundamentalism. They want Israel to be ruled by halacha (Jewish religious law), with only those following Judaism's most extreme tenets and agreeing to expel all non-Jews from Israel to have a voice. They are as intent on turning Israel into an Iran-like theocracy as any Islamic fundamentalist.

Their virulent hatred of Palestinians is not just shared by religious fanatics. Rightist members of parliament like Rehavam Zeevi accused Rabin of "leading Israel to annihilation" through his peace agreement with Arafat, while leaders of Likud, the main opposition party, routinely made racist statements like declaring his parliamentary majority "illegitimate" because it sometimes depended on the votes of Arab deputies. Such rhetoric

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## Politics not peace dictate Bosnia accords

by Kevin A. Barry

The U.S.-orchestrated Dayton agreement on Bosnia has little to do with peace, and still less to do with supporting the multiethnic Bosnian state against aggressors and war criminals. It has everything to do with efforts by the U.S. and other NATO powers such as Britain, France and Germany to reach a compromise with the perpetrators of genocide in order to remove a source of "disorder" in Europe by way of an apartheid-like ethnic partition of Bosnia.

The agreement gives nearly half of Bosnia over to Serbian neo-fascist control, officially recognizing it as legitimate. Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, the Serbian war criminals actually indicted by the World Court, will step down but will not apparently be prosecuted. The top Serb leader, Slobodan Milosevic, who has pulled the strings during three and a half years of mass rape, concentration camps, mass executions, shelling and sniper attacks on civilians, and the horrendous ethnic expulsions—all of which gave the world a new term for genocide, "ethnic cleansing"—is being anointed as a hero of peace by the Western powers.

### U.S. COMES DOWN ON BOSNIANS

At Dayton, the U.S. negotiators came down hardest not on Milosevic or on Croatia's equally authoritarian and racist President Franjo Tudjman. In fact, they found these two strongmen easy to work with. Instead, the democratic, multiparty Bosnian government delegates were faulted because they dared to have differences among themselves, thus "delaying" the negotiations.

There was also an overtone of anti-Muslim racism in the stories leaked by U.S. diplomats, for example when it was reported that the non-Muslim Milosevic's "taste for drink and hearty meals made him accessible." U.S. pressure on Bosnia even became physical: "At one point, Warren Christopher, the unfailingly polite Secretary of State, started yelling at the President of Bosnia... At another, Richard C. Holbrooke, the chief American negotiator, grabbed the Prime Minister of Bosnia by the shoul-

der" (New York Times, Nov. 23, 1995).

Milosevic's second-in-command, Mihailo Markovic, a former Marxist humanist who in the 1990s became a turncoat and joined the side of the most rabid Serb chauvinists, got it right for once when, in a Nov. 22 interview with the BBC, he praised the Dayton agreement as far better for his side than any earlier partition plans put forward by Washington.

Another sign of the retrogressive nature of the Dayton agreement was the warm praise it received from the British government, which in three years has done little to hide its pro-Serb leanings.

### SERBIAN ECONOMIC SANCTIONS END

The ink was hardly dry in Dayton when, the very next day, the UN suspended all economic sanctions on Serbia, while passing a very ambiguous resolution on the arms embargo, a resolution which left it unclear whether Bosnia could receive the heavy weapons it has been requesting since 1992 to defend itself against aggressors armed with planes, tanks and other modern weapons.

One of the few positive features of the agreement, the Serb concession that Sarajevo would not be divided, was immediately contested by Karadzic, who evidently thinks his threats of armed Serb resistance can pressure NATO to give in once more.

Go razde, population 45,000, is the only government-held town left in Eastern Bosnia after the fall in July of Srebrenica and Zepa and the massacre there by Serb forces of 6,000 Muslim men and boys. This multiethnic

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# Adrienne Rich's *Dark Fields of the Republic*

by Jennifer Pen

Poised as we are between the retrogression swept into power in the 1994 U.S. elections and a future which the capitalist rulers are trying to shape in ever more constricting antihuman ways, listening for affirmations of humanity is especially crucial. I found a location of feminist resistance and creativity in Adrienne Rich's recent collection of poems, *Dark Fields of the Republic* (NY: Norton, 1995), which provides philosophic lenses for considering women's revolutionary subjectivity.

## Woman as Reason

Throughout the book, she takes up urgent issues — anti-immigrant hysteria, rising fascism, the effects of religious fundamentalism, the violence of warfare — and counterposes them to subjectivities based in relations between people. In "Deportations" she writes, *It's happened already while we were still/searching for patterns*

*A turn of the head/toward a long horizontal window overlooking the city/to see people being taken/neighbors, vendors paramedics/hurried from their porches, their tomato stalls/their auto-mechanic arguments/and children from schoolyards*

By highlighting the everyday quality of the lives of the deported, Rich draws attention to how the "takers-away" are deliberately disrupting human relations, denying the "common bond" of humanity in their actions.

Women's work, and its alienating effects, are brilliantly distilled in a poem which recalls the horrors of the Hamlet, North Carolina, chicken factory fire:

*The repetitive motions of slaughtering — fire in wrists in elbows — the dead birds coming at you along the line — how you smell them in your sleep.*

The women are forced to turn their bodies into machines for the factory, whose owners then lock the workers behind "doors padlocked on the outside." The slow deterioration of their bodies from the nature of the work precedes the explicit dehumanization of the workers, then leads to their deaths: this is capitalism's noxious "repetitive motion of slaughter."

One poem that struck me especially concerns the continuity of human subjectivity and passion during war. In these brief lines, the "I" and the "you" blur, their connection profoundly intimate, even while they despair of love's survival:

*I was telling you a story about love  
how even in war it goes on speaking its own language*

*Yes you said but the larynx is bloodied  
the knife was well-aimed into the throat*

*Well I said love is hated it has not price*

*No you said you are talking about feelings  
Have you ever felt nothing? that is what war is now*

## In Memoriam:

### Johnnie Tillmon Blackston

Just when we need her the most, Johnnie Tillman Blackston has died. Her rage, determination and labor activist history came together in the early 1960s to fight a deeply sexist and dehumanizing welfare system. The organization she formed in Watts, Aid to Needy Children-Mothers Anonymous, was the beginning of the National Welfare Rights Organization (NWRO) that demanded poor women be treated with dignity and insisted that the work of raising children and holding together poor communities be recognized as the significant contribution that it is.

With Tillmon at its head, the welfare rights movement changed the very ground of the welfare debate. Tillmon exposed the racist and patriarchal foundations of the welfare system, demanding that welfare be seen as an issue for women's liberation and Black liberation. She turned the tables on a system that tried to control poor women's lives, and put the punitive welfare ideology on the defensive. Precisely this new ground is under vicious attack today by those like Charles Murray who re-demonize women on welfare and re-stigmatize unwed mothers by legitimizing the terms "illegitimate children" and "bastard."

Tillmon didn't limit her struggle to welfare reform. During the 1992 Los Angeles rebellion she sharply criticized politicians who "come to the war-torn area, they claim to see what can be done and nothing's changed since [the Watts rebellion of] 1965...I think the riots sent out the right message, but I don't think the folks are comprehending the message."

Tillmon's fight was always about freedom: "[T]he ladies of the NWRO are the front-line troops in the struggle for women's freedom. That's because we have so few illusions and because our issues are so important to all women...the right to a living wage for women's work and the right to life itself."

She raged against the attempt to portray women on welfare as the Other: "I'm a woman. I'm a black woman. I'm a poor woman. I'm a fat woman. I'm a middle-aged woman. And I'm on welfare. In this country, if you're any of those things—poor, black, fat, female, middle-aged, on welfare—you count less as a human being. If you're all those things, you don't count at all."

Johnnie Tillmon counted. She died Nov. 22 in Los Angeles from diabetes, only 69 years old. Her voice, ideas and activism were never needed more than today.

—T. Moon

*Then a shadow skimmed your face  
Go on talking in a normal voice you murmured  
Nothing is listening*

As I read it, this poem addresses the brutality of combat and those ideologies which would deny love as a form of connection, including homophobia. "Love is hated...it has no price" rings true, but so does the reply: if we keep love at the level of feelings only, without developing it as part of our totality, such sentimentality will leave us with nothing. So when the narrator, in a brief moment of shadow, fully sees her interlocutor, the sharp preciousness of life is manifested without any shallow romanticism.

Similarly, Rich brings together the ecstasy of lesbian love and the humanism of Rosa Luxemburg, but without losing the reality of her vicious murder in 1919, her body dumped in to the Landwehr Canal. The very words themselves, in their terseness, become touchstones of personal, collective, physical and intellectual passions:

*Suddenly I understand the verb without tenses.  
To smell another woman's hair, to taste her skin.  
To know the bodies drifting underwater.  
To be human, said Rosa — I can't teach you that.*

The presence of the dialectic is even more definitive in the poem entitled "Movement," where self-direction leads our activity: "thinking/not I have joined a movement but I am stepping in this deep current" (p 61). She asks, "When does a life bend toward freedom? grasp its direction?" and answers that "entering that deep current" is a form of consciousness.

Using the image of an "old backswitching road" she suggests that revolutionary subjectivity will require us to persist past the "repetitive blows" which strike at our hopes: we must "see that quenching and decide" still for freedom. Living the dialectic requires "all your strength.../all your patience and your labor," and this feminist, lesbian poet underlines the struggle as "desire pitted against desire's inversion." Throughout *Dark Fields of the Republic*, Rich keeps us in the contradictions of contemporary reality, but not without validating our own collective, self-directed telos.

## D&X abortions attacked

Chicago—The current right-wing attack on the late-term D&X abortion procedure is the most ingenious ploy since the coining of the term "pro-life." The Canada/Smith bill that would ban such late-term abortions is the vehicle intended to drive a swath through women's hard-won reproductive rights.

Who could possibly speak in favor of such a gruesome medical procedure that requires an incision at the base of the head and suctioning out of a fetus's brains? If you haven't heard about this yet, you certainly would if you were to take a pro-choice stand on this issue. The "pro-life" movement has made a standard of such bloody depictions to shift the debate from the woman to the fetus and to villainize pro-choice men and women. Medical procedures are never appealing, but are often necessary, and abortion is one of the safest.

What you will not see in that "pro-life" picture is the woman and why that invisible woman would choose such a risky, expensive and inaccessible abortion. Only one doctor in the U.S. regularly performs this rare procedure.

Ninety-five percent of all abortions occur in the first trimester because the procedure is safest, most affordable and most accessible—if a woman is fortunate enough to live in one of the 20% of counties nationwide with an abortion provider, or can travel to one.

Geographic limitations and such restrictions as parental notification and low income are reasons some abortions are pushed into the second trimester, when fewer than a dozen doctors nationwide are equipped and allowed to perform these more complicated abortions.

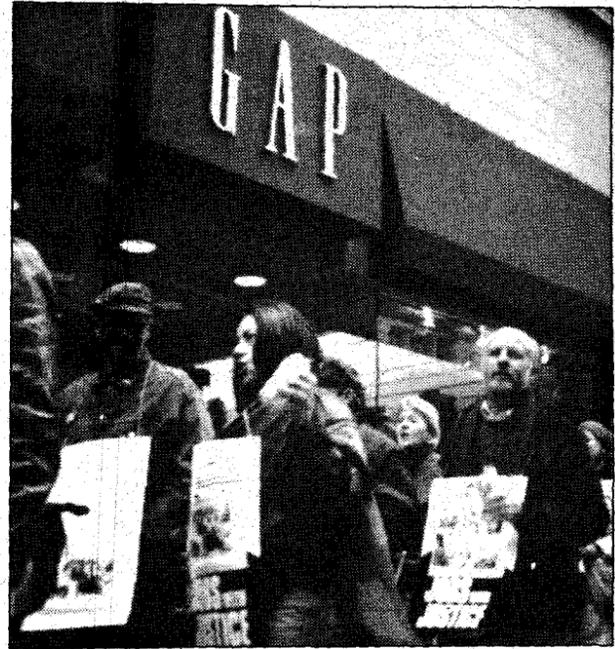
Other reasons for later-term abortions are the mother's health, severe fetal abnormalities that would prohibit survival outside the womb, fetal death, and a lack of awareness of pregnancy until late in the term. Only about 450 of the million abortions each year are attributed to the D&X procedure.

Not only is legislation banning the D&X procedure difficult to fight in a war of sound bites and televisual images, but it also gets to the heart of the "pro-life" strategy of demonizing and destroying doctors. Whether pursuing the radical path of "justifiable homicide" of providers or the legislative approach of banning a rare but necessary procedure, the result is to deplete the number of doctors willing and able to respect women's reproductive decisions in an extremely hostile environment.

While the anti-choice movement has been unsuccessful in convincing a majority of Americans and legislators that women should not make these decisions, it has fought to decrease the number of medical schools teaching abortion procedures and been responsible for the declining numbers of providers nationwide. Reproductive rights are hollow without access. Women in the U.S. will have a harder time exercising their right to choose now than any time since Roe v. Wade (1973), particularly teens, low-income women, and women in rural areas.

Under the guise of a gruesome photo, even "liberal" Congressmen have voted to criminalize the D&X procedure under any circumstances. Current legislation makes doctors guilty until proven innocent. Some doctors are afraid that performing any abortion after 12 weeks of pregnancy could land them in jail. Outlawing D&X, is one of the planks in the Christian Coalition's "Contract With the American Family." —Larra

## Don't shop the GAP!



Pickets converged on the GAP store in the Chicago Loop Nov. 18. It was part of a national GAP protest campaign intended to send a message that North American retailers are responsible for conditions under which their products are made. Teenage women from the Mandarin/GAP factory in San Marcos Free Trade Zone in El Salvador recently toured the U.S., relating stories of sexual harassment and labor repression under which they produced shirts for 16¢ apiece which were sold in GAP stores in the U.S. for a great deal more. (See "Latin teens tell of free trade zone hell," N&L, October 1995.)

## Women Worldwide

by Mary Jo Grey

The 27,000 member California Nurses Association voted in October to end its 98-year affiliation with the American Nurses Association because they felt the national group was turning a "deaf ear" to patients' interests. The California nurses challenged the industry's pursuit of profits which results in shortening a patient's hospital stay and using unlicensed care providers, and vowed to increase their work in the area of patient advocacy.

Women in Namibia are fighting mad at the comments of Police District Commissioner Egbert Shikerete who blamed women for cases of rape if they drink or go out alone. He maintained, "They must stay at home, they should not go out in the evening." The magazine *Sister Namibia* retorted: "Women have the right to safe freedom of movement in this country, day or night. Condemn rape, not women!"

—Information from *Sister Namibia*

Angry E-mail users from around the U.S. flooded Cornell University, in November, with demands that the school take action against four freshmen who posted on the Internet "75 reasons why women (b--ches) should not have freedom of speech"—including "if she can't speak, she can't cry rape." No official action has yet been taken against Evan Camps, Rikus Linschoten, Patrick Sicher and Brian Waldman.

A little-known act of resistance against the Nazis by the "women of Rosenstrasse" in Germany in 1943 was immortalized in a Berlin memorial by 80-year-old sculptor Ingeborg Hunzinger, dedicated in October. Rosenstrasse housed the concentration camp deportation center where 1,500 Jews were sent who had gentle spouses or parents. For seven days and nights 6,000 non-Jewish women faced down heavily-armed SS troops to protest outside the center demanding the release of their loved ones. On March 6, 1943, the Nazis released 1,500—including 25 already sent to Auschwitz. The memorial's inscription reads: "The strength of civil disobedience and the strength of love defeat the violence of dictatorship."

## Maine gay rights battle

Bangor, Maine—The anti-gay ballot initiative in Maine was narrowly defeated 53% to 47% on Nov. 7. The tireless energy of volunteers, who generated a large voter turnout, especially among college youth, was instrumental in this victory. But the question that remains for the les-bi-gay liberation movements is simple: what do these victories over the far-Right really mean?

In the words of Elizabeth Birch of the Human Rights Campaign, "Gay and lesbian citizens of Maine have now moved one step closer to basic human rights (OutNOW! Nov. 14, 1995) More seriously, the successful "Maine Won't Discriminate" campaign was self-limiting from the start; it aimed only to defeat the initiative, and actually deflected attention away from affirming lesbian and gay lives.

This pragmatic, utilitarian approach needs to be questioned by gay and lesbian communities before the 1998 election, which could bring a spate of such initiatives attempting to coat-tail the conservatism of a national presidential campaign. It is time to articulate a drive for freedom, rather than investing our energies and risking our lives merely to perpetuate the status quo. —Jennifer

## Defiant return to work at Caterpillar

**Decatur, Ill.**—The contract we rejected Dec. 2 was worse than what we were offered a couple of years ago. Amazingly, Cat wanted us to give the scabs complete amnesty in return for us keeping a closed shop and dues checkoff. That was actually on the table! The proposal was: If you buy this contract, we'll take each of 150 illegally fired UAW members case by case and decide what happens, whether they go to work, or are fired. No arbitration, no recourse. The international brought this back to those people in the union. They said no way.

Actually, the international did not want us to reject the contract. But they said if the members did reject it, they wanted it rejected big, not like 51% to 49%, so that we send Caterpillar a big message: 81% against, and 94% against in Decatur, was a big message.

The contract also left a bad taste in everybody's mouth because the international left the bargaining committee completely out of the negotiating process. Yokich and Shoemaker did all the negotiating. The president and bargaining chair of the local in Decatur, who are on the central bargaining committee, didn't know what was in the contract until the Friday before the Sunday vote.

Even if Caterpillar hadn't had the issue of illegally terminated people, they still wanted to terminate the grievance procedure. The foremen would have the right to say if you have a grievance or not. If you file a grievance, he could say someone else filed that grievance last week, so you don't need to. Or he could say it was frivolous. They also wanted to restrict the committeemen to a set number of hours to take care of problems. If they run out of hours, they can't investigate.

What they were after in proposed shifts was making you work with no overtime pay and no weekend premium whatsoever. For instance, on one shift, a person would have to work 12 hours every Friday, Saturday and Sunday—36 hours in three days.

In Decatur, Cat didn't propose the straight two-tier wage system that they did elsewhere, but they proposed 70% starting pay, and working up to top pay over the life of the contract — six years. Tennessee, Morton, Ill., York, Pa., and other plants had the regular two-tier offer, with people starting at a low wage like \$8.

When we finally go back to work at Caterpillar, we will have to go through orientation as if we are new hires.

## Koch's Poultry wildcat

**Chicago**—On Aug. 11, we voted in a union, UNITE (Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees) by 90%. We wanted a union because Koch's Poultry keeps the salary from going higher than \$6.50.

We began feeling something was wrong when the union just came out of bargaining and told us their decisions—and that they had not given up anything. Our people from the plant wanted to talk too, but the union said they had to wait, that they should do it their way.

Then on Oct. 11, the people here voted to accept the contract. But what the union and the owner agreed to they never showed to anybody, including the bargaining committee. We found out about the betrayal when the owner told us what was in the contract. We wanted a 90¢ an hour raise now, but the union let him get away with a 40¢ raise now and 40¢ over the next three years. Not only that. The 75¢ bonus before we had a union was lost in the new contract. We also saw there was no insurance. The contract even had a no-strike clause in it. The bosses also call us "f---ing ladies," they push us to work harder, and the job is boring.

When we walked out, Monday, Oct. 30, we were fired. After we walked out, Koch's called the police and kicked us off the property. There are 350 workers on the morning shift alone and 85% of them went out, mostly Latinos.

All the workers went to a meeting with the union which told us anyone who still wants to work had to sign papers; 40 to 60 people didn't sign. We showed Koch and the union that the company can't keep abusing people without anyone knowing.

—Koch's strikers

## Workshop Talks

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tion on mandatory overtime, also without notice.

It was the women who spoke about these questions at the union meeting and persuaded their co-workers to vote unanimously to turn down the company's offer and fight for a better contract. One young, Black woman put it succinctly: "We have a life outside this plant."

Situations like these, where women have led in attempting to humanize the conditions of labor, make me wonder what will be the effect of "welfare reform," which will attempt to force thousands of women with children into production. The capitalists' intentions are clear: formation of an indentured, minimum-wage, strikebreaking, union-busting workforce.

As a union activist at the Indianola, Miss., Delta Pride plant said about that state's "WorkFirst" program: "(T)hey are saying that if you get in a fight with the supervisor and you quit, you will get nothing. If the plant goes out on strike and you don't cross the picket line, you will get nothing. They want you totally in their power. They picked these six counties not to get women off welfare, but to keep wages and benefits down and keep the union out..." (N&L, January-February 1995).

But can we simply assume that the capitalists' intentions will prevail? Or will "welfare reform" create the conditions for new forms and forces of resistance to emerge? Will it mean the further degradation and dehumanization of this society? Or revolt?

They'll give us new work rules then. We aren't allowed to use the word "scab" and we can't wear apparel that says anything about the strike. The only thing about the union we can have is just the union logo.

People aren't down on the UAW international since it came through on strike pay and insurance for 17 months. The only thing that disappointed people is why didn't the UAW send us back a year ago? But no one knew Caterpillar would go to these lengths to break the union. We made mistakes in four years, but we've learned a lot, too.

When Yokich took over as president of the union, a lot of people thought he was supposed to be superman and get this thing settled. But he seemed to tuck his tail between his legs and take what Cat gave him. Yokich was willing to give away those 150 people who have been fired. You don't do that—if you're a union.

Why did the international make a deal like this for us to return? Maybe they were tired of hearing from other UAW locals who were only getting \$150 a week in strike pay. The UAW made a special circumstance for the Caterpillar strikers to get double strike pay. Still, it didn't stop people from crossing the picket line. That leaves a bad taste.

The international said to go back to work, and people wanted the strike to be over. They knew they would have to go back to work whether the contract was voted up or down. People who have been out are tired and ready to go back to work. But they would rather go back under unfair labor practice charges by the Labor Board against Caterpillar. This way they feel that the company will come back to the table with something better.

—Caterpillar worker

## Belzoni: ready to strike

**Belzoni, Miss.**—Here at the Delta Pride Belzoni cath processing plant we are at a standstill (see November N&L). We have rejected the company's final offer but we wanted one more meeting with a mediator. But it seems like the company doesn't and wants to force us out on strike. A lot of the concerns with the Belzoni proposal had nothing to do with Belzoni but rather was honing in on the Delta Main plant. For example, overtime. Only Main gets that.

We heard the stewards had a meeting and were excited about the distribution of News & Letters at the Belzoni plant. People were reading the story during breaks and lunch and talking about the paper. It had a good impact. It meant a lot that someone from the outside was concerned about what was going on. People cheered the white woman who had chewed the company out about their racist attitude.

We heard the company accused her of writing the story. The truth is: the story did not come from her. The company doesn't know how this paper got the story—and they never will! They should stop making false accusations!

After the N&L distribution the president and the personnel manger had meetings with 10 or 15 workers at a time, trying to get us to accept the contract. They said they didn't want our time and a half, that the plant wasn't going to close and it was a good contract.

Every group had some people talking back. We chewed them up and told them we wouldn't accept the contract, that it was a disgrace, that they were trying to take our time and a half, we didn't want to work no ten hours on four day shifts. They said they don't have to pay for experience—anyone off the streets can do our jobs. When he said that, we just cut up and carried out a scandal!

The Delta Main can help Belzoni, but this strike is up to us at Belzoni to show our strength. We got to fight to hold on to what we've got!

—Ready to strike workers

## Union kills Profex strike

**Editor's note:** As we go to press, without letting striking workers vote, Teamsters Local 984 declared the strike over and ordered the picket line closed down.

**Memphis, Tenn.**—At Profex Medical, we have been on strike since Sept. 6 because the company is trying to take away our paid sick leave, even the days we have already accumulated (see November N&L). About 15 of us out of 40 are still out but we aren't getting the support we used to.

The company is not bargaining in good faith. What we asked for was nothing! It's what they want to take from us that brought the strike about. It was one conversation—give up all your sick leave.

We have made a leaflet to get some attention, signed by the strikers, not the union. Some of us are thinking of suing the union and the company. It's the principle of the thing.

No one has been here supporting us for a long time. Our union representative, Mr. John Bratcher, said he doesn't come to the picket line because the workers talk about him so bad. When this thing first began, after three days a Teamster vice president in Washington, D.C., said that the union representatives were going to escort us back into the job because he could work this thing better from the inside than he could on the outside.

We said, "You should have told us that before we came out." We said, "We're in Memphis, Tenn. We work for Profex Medical and you don't. You can't tell us what's going on in there. We'll be damned if we'll go across our own line." The international man came out when we were all on the line and said, "You're all the hardest-headed women I ever heard tell of in all the days of my life."

—Strikers

## Boeing strike solid

**Seattle**—The strike has been going on now since Oct. 6. First, Boeing wants us to pay for our own medical insurance, \$450 a month for a family of worker-spouse-children. Most American workers, even unionized workers, must pay such large sums of money every month for their own insurance. Or more. But for Boeing's IAM members (International Association of Machinists District 751), the company's demand gave us all "sticker shock."

If the largest single group of Machinists in the U.S. were to retreat on our historical benefit of free medical insurance for our members, then the entire discussion on how the populace can have free access to medical care would suffer a big defeat. I'd like to help establish discussion circles of workers here, something along the lines of Swedish study circles, to help us find our own voice and views on access to medical care.

A second offensive contract demand by Boeing is for the total elimination of unionized janitors from the company's payroll. The company's current contract offer demands that we receive no wage increase during the next three years. Everyone else in the union, according to this contract proposal, will receive a 3% wage increase—in October 1997. IAM leaders refer to this issue as being a problem of "subcontracting."

In plain English, Boeing wants the right to bring subcontractors inside the shop to take your production and tooling jobs whenever top management sees fit. (Boeing already is subcontracting facility maintenance work and laying off our members!) We refuse to see Boeing jobs auctioned-off to the lowest bidder. No question but that the company's subcontracting and downsizing schemes are key to the militancy with which IAM members are fighting right now.

On the other hand, the current District 751 strategy is notably weak when it comes to concrete commitments to organizing workers employed by subcontractors here in the Puget Sound region, Mexico, and elsewhere.

A third reason why IAM members voted to strike was to protect retired union members. Back in June, Boeing offered a so-called "golden handshake" to employees near retirement age. Now that these people are gone, Boeing's contract proposal would take away much of that "golden handshake."

The situation has really changed since the membership rejected the last contract proposal Nov. 21. This was the same day that Boeing's grace period ended. Boeing had a 45-day leeway to settle the strike. This is a grace period written in every contract, that it can delay delivery and payment without a penalty. Boeing is now paying millions of dollars a day. United Airlines is calling every day wanting Boeing to fix planes. The situation with the membership is really different too. Before the strike was a vacation. Now it's serious. It brought people together.

—Boeing Machinist

## Unreal jobless future

**The Jobless Future: Sci-tech and the Dogma of Work**, by Stanley Aronowitz and William DiFazio, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994, 392 pp.

The jobless future that Aronowitz and DiFazio project is not the nightmarish horror that an increasing number of American workers face, but an entirely different world in which technology, knowledge and information will provide for all needs as well as develop human potentialities without the need for a person to work. Unfortunately, they provide much greater insight into capitalism's problems than the solutions.

Submitting comprehensive economic data, as well as the findings of their own original research in 1985 on the effects of computerized municipal work in New York and New Jersey, the authors of this revealing work contend that technology has so profoundly changed the American economic landscape that new categories of thought and action have to be created to solve the burgeoning contradictions that produce chronic social, economic and political crises.

Tracing the industrial development of the U.S. following the Civil War, they become more sharply focused at the turn of the century on Frederick Taylor, the father of time study and speedup (Taylorism), and Henry Ford's introduction of the mass production line (Fordism). Technological changes in production before, during and after World War II eventuate in the growing alliances between the government and industry that prompted President Eisenhower to warn of the dangers posed by the "military-industrial complex."

Reviewing the series of recessions/recoveries since WW II, they note that not only is unemployment a chronic feature of the economy, but that recoveries do not reemploy all of those laid off during recessions, resulting in a growing number of the permanently unemployed. Furthermore, Aronowitz and DiFazio contend that it is impossible for the problems to be solved under existing capitalist conditions.

Whereas the authors pose thoughtfully challenging concepts and visions at the beginning of their work, they wind up with a program that virtually any labor bureaucrat can propose, ranging from a guaranteed annual wage and free child care to a six-hour day and international coordination of labor demands—plus a new, independent national technological research agenda.

While accepting much of Marx's analysis of capitalism's contradictions, they reject his conclusions that the worker, subjected to the horrors of these contradictions, is the historic subject that can reconstruct society on human beginnings: "the core material precondition [for a new civil society] is that labor need no longer occupy a

(Continued on page 11)

From the Writings of Raya Dunayevskaya  
**MARXIST-HUMANIST  
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### Editor's note

Today's global crises continue to illuminate the importance of Marx's critique of capitalist production in his greatest theoretical work, *Capital*, especially Volume I. The following is a detailed discussion of the conceptual core of *Capital*: Marx's analysis of the commodity-form in the first chapter of Volume I. It was written as a letter on Oct. 20, 1950, as part of a three-way correspondence between Dunayevskaya, C.L.R. James and Grace Lee (Boggs) throughout 1949-51, and should be studied alongside the text of chapter 1 of *Capital*. The letter has never before appeared in print. For other writings on *Capital* by Dunayevskaya in the period 1949-51, see *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection: Marxist-Humanism—a Half Century of its World Development* (Vols. 3 and 12) and *The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism* (Chicago: News and Letters, 1992), pp. 89-98.

We have slightly edited the letter for publication, adding footnotes and bracketed material.

[In Marx's *Capital*] commodity-form means all of the following things at once:

- 1) Material body of value.
- 2) Phenomenal form of bourgeois wealth.
- 3) Immediate form of the unity of opposites, value and use value.
- 4) Universal concrete form of capitalist production.
- 5) The fantastic but nevertheless real form in which relations of persons appear as relations of things.
- 6) This inverted form arises in production where concrete labor is transformed into its opposite, abstract labor, but manifests itself only in exchange.
- 7) The fetishism of the commodity-form, which arises from the very form a product of labor assumes in capitalist society, pervades everything—so that even living labor seems detachable from the living person since it "takes on the form of a commodity," labor power, when it is in the market, and "takes on the form" of a component part of capital, variable capital, in the process of production. [Living labor] is but a means to the creation of all value and is the constant and only producer of surplus value, yet it has no direct manner of expression or connection with the labor process, but rather seems to be brought into it by another form, means of consumption or wages. By means of this irrational form [living labor] is brought into the factory on equal terms, only to be entirely subjected to the master. [As a result] it is sucked dry by another product of labor, the means of production.

Now nothing, absolutely nothing, can tear off this fetishism. Neither the discovery of labor as the source of value, nor the hatred of the living labor[er] subjected [to it], nor an outsider who sees the living labor subjected and can "prove" it; nor the awareness that consciousness of class relations is involved in this exchange of things. The sole exception is freely associated men planning their own production directly and not by indirection—and even then, only when this plan is not an abstraction but is being put into practice.

In the *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859), Marx merely assumed that class relations were hidden in this exchange of things.<sup>1</sup> I don't mean that he couldn't and didn't prove it was so, but he did so from history and from the development of exchange. I mean "assumed" in the sense that having "known" that was so, the mystification of the commodity-form appeared simple. Instead of probing why this fantastic form he proceeded to draw conclusions on the basis of the history of class struggles plus exchange, and not on the active opposition between abstract and concrete labor in the labor process itself.

The reflection of this opposition in the commodity-form was treated intellectually, idealistically, as if it directly expressed precisely what it does not directly express. Both the elimination of the individuality of the laborer and the creation of the constantly-changing gage, socially-necessary labor time, were treated passively—so that ratios and proportions and disproportions and "universal" labor time became the subject of the analysis. Both the worker in revolt and the revolting method of production (or rather the revolt or contradiction between method and aim) were in the back of [Marx's] mind only, in reality only footnoted, or kept separate from the economics; the class struggle was politics.

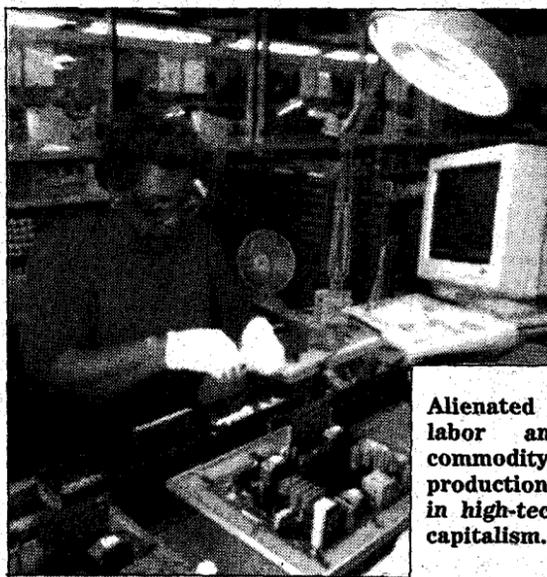
Now in *Capital* (1867), on the contrary, where the subject becomes the labor process itself, the concrete laborer so revolts against the capitalistic transformation of his individual labor into social labor that everything, EVERYTHING is a form of the enemy: Cooperation is, because by the time the laborers become cooperators they are no more than component parts of the capitalists' capital; Manufacture is, because the division of labor transforms the whole worker into a detail laborer; Machinofacture is, both because it transforms the worker into an appendage of a machine, degrades and tor-

# On Marx's concept of the commodity-form

ments him, and also because that wonderful order in the factory is after all not a real social plan. Only ideally it is Plan, whereas in reality it is once again the authority of the capitalist.

All the opposition which is not heard—because the voice of the laborer is stifled in the labor process and the capitalist demands that he stick to his side of the bargain, free and equal exchange—gathers up its forces and revolts openly, totally against the commodity-form. In the process of revolt it also reconstructs, shows the absolute opposite to that form—whether you call it freely-associated men as *Capital* does, or the Commune as [Marx's] political works call it, or soviets as the Russian workers named it.

What I try to express in that last sentence is what appeared only in the second edition of *Capital* (1873).<sup>2</sup> In the first edition (1867) he made this tremendous leap from the simplicity of fetishism to its actual complex



Alienated labor and commodity production in high-tech capitalism.

overbearing oppressiveness, but he attached fetishism to the equivalent form where it was most striking.<sup>3</sup> By the second edition, he said to hell with the equivalent form and its striking appearance; it is the form itself that is the real enemy and I have its direct opposite.<sup>4</sup> There is to be no separation between politics and economics for exchange is the politics of the economics of the labor process, and we must destroy it at its very root, the commodity-form itself.

We can easily leave out the Paris Commune and whether that directly affected Marx.<sup>5</sup> The result would be the same: the complete victory of Marx of *Capital* over Marx of the *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* is contained in the analysis of the fetishism

2. The second edition of *Capital* appeared in German in 1873; it incorporated a number of important changes in the sections of the first chapter on the form of value and the fetishism of commodities from the French edition, which Marx had made a year earlier.

3. Marx defines the equivalent form as the situation in which commodity x (e.g., a coat) serves as the equivalent in which the value of commodity y (e.g., 20 pounds of linen) is expressed. Marx writes, "The coat seems to be endowed with its equivalent form, its property of direct exchangeability, by nature, just as much as its property of being heavy or its ability to keep us warm." See *Capital*, Vol. I, trans. by Ben Fowkes (New York: Vintage, 1977), p. 149.

4. See Marx's statement in *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 164: "Whence, then, arises the enigmatic character of the product of labor, as soon as it assumes the form of a commodity? Clearly, it arises from this form itself."

5. For a discussion of how the Paris Commune impacted Marx's decision to rewrite the sections on the form of value and the fetishism of commodities in the French edition and second German edition of *Capital*, see chapter 6 of Dunayevskaya's *Marxism and Freedom*.

## Labor and commodity fetishism in Marx's CAPITAL

From The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism

"Marx never tired of repeating that his original contribution was the split in the category of labor — abstract and concrete; labor as activity and labor-power as commodity; labor as not only the source of all value which includes surplus value, but the subject who would uproot it." (132)

From Philosophy and Revolution

"Deceptively simple, the commodity makes its rounds as the most common of all things and yet it is an opiate which reduces all consciousness to false consciousness, so that even "pure science" cannot penetrate through it to a true knowledge of reality. Having reduced 'pure' ideas to mere ideology, commodity as fetish becomes the golden calf before which one genuflects while being under the illusion that one is doing nothing untoward at all. This is capitalism's Geist." (89)

To order, see literature ad, page 7.

of commodities.

But we have skipped to fetishism without going through all the mediating movements. There is not only the two-fold character of commodities and that of labor; there is also the form of value itself. The contradictions are in the method of production as well as in the production relations. Again, form here means many things at once. The form of value is:

- 1) Phenomenal expression of value.
- 2) Independent form of exchange when exchange, having reached a form of its own, is so dizzy-from-success that it lives in a world of its own, full of nothing but money.
- 3) Form of the unity of opposites—its relative and equivalent forms. Any balance it has is due only to retaining the opposites in their polar extremes.<sup>6</sup>
- 4) The form in which other opposites are expressed.

Thus a) use value is the form of manifestation of its opposite, value; b) concrete labor that of abstract labor; c) individual labor takes the form of its opposite, social labor.

Here there are two other fundamental contradictions for the universal, equivalent form of exchange, money, is a mediator which appears as a completed economic relation because it holds the opposites together. While it is not the true economic relationship it is a necessity which arises from the opposition of use and exchange value.

In the *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* Marx sees the mediation and its hypostatization as well as the necessity for that form. What he doesn't see is that that form arises not only from the opposition of use value and value, but from the opposition within value. In *Capital* on the other hand, having probed deep beneath this business of "taking the form of its opposite" he came up with the fact that the fetishism arises from the form itself as is seen by: a) equality of labors taking on the material form of one and the same substance, value; b) measure of expenditure of labor by duration taking on the form of the magnitude of the value of products of labor; and c) relations of producers taking on the form of relations of things.

Furthermore, in this perverted capitalist society, not only does everything "take on the form of its opposite," but the forms resolve themselves, or rather are integral parts of, some general form.

Thus there is the general form of surplus value sans fragmentation into profit, interest and rent. [Marx says] they should be analyzed first in their fundamental general form. He relegates the divisions of surplus value into a minor battle among the capitalists. Then, and more importantly, there is the general value-form—labor without any specificity other than that it is human, masses and masses of abstract labor.

Ah, that is it—the general form of value is nothing but the REDUCTION of all kinds of actual labor to human labor in general. By its very structure the general form of value shows it is but the social resume of the world of commodities.

The exploitative relationship is therefore reflected right in the general value-form. That is the leap over the historic barrier that kept classical political economy at [labor as the] source [of value] and kept it from going to conditions [of labor] and being alive to the contradictions in the very method of production. The minute you arrive at that generalization, the contradictions leap at you from all sides:

1) Not only between use value and value but within value itself, between the form, exchange value, and the reality, mastery of dead over living labor, which reduces all sorts of concrete labors to one abstract mass.

2) Yet although value is the abstract universal of capitalism, the concrete universal is the commodity-form of that abstraction, value.

3) [There is] the contradiction between constant and variable capital. Although they are both component parts of capital (a new category discovered by Marx to distinguish them from mere market manifestations of fixed and circulating capital), and although constant capital is master over variable capital, variable capital being the only source of value nevertheless has production at its throat. The hell of a spot that puts the capitalist in is seen in the market by the decline in the rate of profit. The method of capitalist production cannot only not es-

(continued on page 10)

6. See Marx's *Capital*, Vol. I, pp. 139-40: "The relative form of value and the equivalent form are two inseparable moments, which belong to and mutually condition each other; but, at the same time, they are mutually exclusive or opposed extremes, i.e., poles of the expression of value."

## NEWS & LETTERS

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## Essay Article

by Dave Black

### 1916, 1921 AND TODAY

Since the Irish Republican Army (IRA) announced a ceasefire in August 1994, comparisons have been made between the current dilemma of Sinn Fein president, Gerry Adams, and that of Michael Collins, the republican leader who "compromised" back in 1921 to found an Irish "Free State" that left two-thirds of the North-East province of Ulster under British rule. The treaty Collins signed with Britain also left the nationalist working class in the Six Counties of Ulster subjected to unrelenting political repression and religious discrimination until the civil rights revolt of the late 1960s upset the status quo.

The republicans, after 25 years of armed conflict leading to bloody military stalemate with the Crown forces and loyalist paramilitaries, have presented the current "Peace Process" as a "new phase of struggle" in which the movement has won the "freedom to achieve freedom." This is to some extent an appropriation of Michael Collins' legacy since he resolved to eventually reintegrate the Six Counties into Ireland by political means. Gerry Adams, though, with his peace missions to the United States, is also following in the footsteps of Eamon De Valera who in 1921 as president of Sinn Fein sought support from the American "Irish Lobby" and deluded himself into believing that Woodrow Wilson's "Crusade for Democracy" should be extended to the Irish part of the British Empire.

The proposal for a "Free State" in Ireland was introduced into the 1921 treaty negotiations by Arthur Griffith of Sinn Fein, when the British insisted that an Irish republic was out of the question and that Ireland must remain tied to the British Empire and Commonwealth as a "self-governing" dominion. The "Free State," which was conceptualized by Machiavelli, became reality during the English Revolution in 1649 when Cromwell's parliament, fearing republicanism and democracy more than the return of the monarchy, decreed that England should be known as a "Free State or Commonwealth."<sup>1</sup>

When the words "Free State" appeared again in the Gotha Program of the German socialists in 1874, Marx noted their failure to oppose the imperial monarchy with the call for a democratic republic and caustically argued that it was not the job of the workers' movement to "set the state free;" the Paris Communards of 1871 had shown the way by smashing the state and replacing it with the "revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat" as a first phase in overcoming the "antithesis of mental and manual labor" and increasing the productive forces with "the all-round development of the individual." "Freedom," wrote Marx, "consists of converting the state from an organ standing over society into one completely subordinate to it."

A generation later, when Lenin reorganized his thought during the period 1914-16, he reworked Marx's Critique of the Gotha Program into his own State and Revolution. Elsewhere he related the prospective overthrow of capitalism to national self-determination. When the 1916 Rising in Ireland took place and socialists such as Radek, Gorter and Pannokoe dismissed it as "putschism" and a "played-out song" of petit-bourgeois nationalism, Lenin disagreed and pointed out that the insurrection had tremendous importance for the Irish masses as it had been preceded by years of planning and a strong period of mass struggles.<sup>2</sup>

Raya Dunayevskaya, in a debate with Herbert Marcuse in 1961 on Lenin's study of Hegel's dialectic in 1914, singles out Hegel's statement: "The self-determination in which alone the Idea is, is to hear itself speak." She contrasts what self-determination of nations meant to Lenin pre-1914 — as "merely a principle" — to what it meant "when life and theory combined. 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 the Marxists, a new beginning for their revolution which had been betrayed."<sup>3</sup>

The experience of 1916 convinced the Irish that the old organizational forms of insurrection would never defeat the British military machine and its intelligence networks. As a result, Michael Collins put together an underground organization that would later serve as a model for other leaders of "national liberation" struggles — including Mao Zedong and Yitzak Shamir.

But no sooner had the British been fought to the negotiating table than De Valera brought Collins out from the "underground" where he had been most effective, and sent him along with Griffith to negotiate with Lloyd George and Winston Churchill. De Valera knew, of course, that an all-Ireland Republic wasn't on offer in London and that Collins wouldn't be able to take up the armed struggle where he left off. Collins himself knew that his guerrilla strategy was viable only for as long as he could maintain mass support and move the situation forward. But when it could do neither, he signed the treaty with the comment that he had just signed his own death warrant.

By sacrificing his life in the ensuing Irish Civil War between De Valera's anti-treaty forces and the Free Staters (1922-23), Collins provided the Free State with a nation-

al martyr and made De Valera, the "rejectionist," look like a revolutionary. All this and the subsequent shift to the Right by De Valera's defeated faction might seem to confirm the argument that "nationalist" revolutions are irredeemably bourgeois. Collins though, in his assessment of the 1916 Rising as a "terribly botched affair," wrote that he "would have gone through hell" with James Connolly, the revolutionary Marxist who, in contrast to Padraig Pearse and the "dreamers" of 1916, he praised as an "earthy realist."

Collins' belief in the unique strengths of Ireland drew on that historic Gaelic culture which had escaped military subjugation by the Roman Empire and held itself together by a unity which "was not of any military solidarity. It came from sharing the same traditions. They never exalted a central authority. The land belonged to the people." James Connolly similarly wrote that "common ownership by a people of their sources of food and maintenance" was a "Gaelic principle;"<sup>4</sup> and Marx, who in his last years studied ancient but still existing forms of village life in Russia and Ireland, considered the possibility that capitalist "development" in some parts of the world might be avoided if traditional collectivism could be allied with the international workers movement.<sup>5</sup>

The Irish Citizen Army, a workers' militia formed to defend trade unions during the Dublin Lockout in 1913, was, under the leadership of James Connolly, an important contingent of the 1916 Rising. Unfortunately once Connolly had been executed by the British after the Rising, the army's role in serving organized labor was lost when it was absorbed into the IRA. This doesn't mean, however, that workers' organizations played no part in the Irish War of Independence.

#### PROTESTANT WORKERS AND UNIONISM

Connolly predicted: "The North and South will again clasp hands. The pressure of a common exploitation can make enthusiastic rebels out of a Protestant working class; earnest champions of civil and religious liberty out of Catholics, and out of both a united social democracy." He was writing, however, before the rise of the Protestant "Ulster Volunteers" who opposed Home Rule for Ireland.

In 1921, the loyalists in the North abandoned Ulster as an "identity" when they conceded one third of the province to the Free State and "re-defined" themselves as Protestant and British or as British and Irish. What is different today is the changed role of the Six Counties in the United Kingdom now that unionism in Scotland and Wales has lost ground to regionalism and nationalism, making the British "identity" itself questionable. With the ending of the Cold War, "Loyal" Ulster now has little strategic importance and with the long-term decline of shipbuilding and engineering, what was once a profitable industrial asset for the empire is now a heavily subsidized liability for post-Thatcher "enterprise culture."

Politically, Protestant workers no longer look to either the British Tories or the unionist politicians of the old landowning-industrial ruling class of unionist Ulster to safeguard their remaining privileges in jobs and housing. Despite their "loyalism" during the 1969-94 period of the "troubles," some Protestant paramilitaries were themselves targeted and manipulated by the security services as part of Britain's "dirty war" against the republicans. As a result, some loyalists have developed "anti-state" attitudes and are talking about class, using the word "socialist" and calling for a "new society."

Such talk, however, is coming from political spokespersons who carried out deliberate mass murders of Catholic civilians. Despite the current efforts by the Trotskyist Militant Tendency to forge an alliance with some Protestant paramilitaries as "working class allies," "unionist socialism" is no more convincing now than it was when James Connolly opposed it in Belfast before World War I. On the extreme Right, self-proclaimed fascist groups are trying to exploit ethnic nationalism and stir up racial hatred now that the jobs market in the Six Counties has been stimulated by the ceasefire and more Black people from England are moving there.

It is possible, though, that non-sectarian voices could emerge on the Left in the Protestant communities now that unionism-loyalism is in such a crisis. Younger Protestants reject Reverend Ian Paisley's religious fundamentalist brand of unionism as out of touch with the economic and cultural reality of modern European society. Indeed, now that the moral authority of the scandal-ridden Catholic church is at an all-time low in the South, the "Protestant republican" tradition of Wolfe Tone and the "United Irishmen" might again hear itself speak if socialists and republicans take on all of the religious reactionaries North and South on the issues of divorce, gay rights and abortion.

4. James Connolly, *Labor in Irish History*.

5. Raya Dunayevskaya, *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* (Champaign-Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), pp. 186-7

## Northern Ireland at the Crossroads



Behind the sideshow of John Major's demand for a handover of IRA arms and republican counter-demands for release of prisoners and withdrawal of British troops, it can be assumed that the real ongoing talks in London, Dublin and Washington center on how to move to a "single island economy" in Ireland backed by money from Washington and the European Union (EU).

#### THE 'PEACE PROCESS' AND THE LEFT

On the "political level," it is likely that a constitutional assembly in the Six Counties would enshrine the existing apartheid-like divide of the two "religious communities" — in effect a kind of a re-partition but with a "cross-border," "Irish" dimension and a role for Britain as guarantor of Protestant rights.

On the economic level, the road and rail route between Belfast and Dublin is seen as a potential "economic corridor." Big business would like to see southern Ireland's communications systems, gas and electricity supply integrated with Britain's as well as with the Six Counties. Transport planners are seeking EU funding for a "Northern Arc Road Network" linking the southwest of Ireland, Belfast, and Scotland by road and sea for trade with Scandinavia and the Baltic. The British Tories' own road-building plans, which have run out of money and public support, could yet be bailed out by the EU Structural Fund if increased European trade with Ireland through the Channel Tunnel is recognized as part of the "peace package."

Although southern Irish politicians like to say "we're all Europeans now," for the British Tories, the "economic unity" of Ireland might be harnessed to British capitalism's economic thrust against its rival "European partners." The "Peace Process" as it is, may be not so much about detaching the Six Counties from Britain as integrating the whole of Ireland into a "competitive" low wage, corporation-friendly haven for inward investment; a renewed capitalist economy of the British Isles.

In an analysis published almost 15 years ago by News and Letters Committees, Michael Connolly criticized the republicans for their "usurpation" of the mass struggles of the late 1960s and early 1970s with the bombing campaign. He added that the young activists in the mass campaigns over the hunger strikes in 1981 were raising issues which went beyond the question of political status for prisoners and the border. He concluded: "There is no way forward for Irish freedom under the presently 'dominant ideological and organizational form' in which the liberation struggle is imprisoned, no matter how intensive the activity in the period ahead."<sup>6</sup>

Sinn Fein's move into "community politics" in the 1980s succeeded in co-opting many activists in campaigns such as housing and subordinating those struggles to the party agenda. The "Communities of Resistance" however, beleaguered by unemployment, poverty and growing crime, may face imminent repression should the ceasefire unravel.

In debate on the Left in both Ireland and Britain (Militant aside) there is some serious and sober rethinking taking place. Eamon McCann, a longtime associate of the Socialist Workers Movement, calls for the resurrection of James Connolly the labor organizer and the repudiation of James Connolly the insurrectionist of 1916, now that today's many working class nationalists — and indeed Protestants — are "tired of dreaming someone else's dream." The Republican Worker Tendency, based in Scotland, holds to the unity of Connolly's thought and actions but warns that failure to involve the masses today could lead to yet another substitution of the "physical force" politics of the bomb and the gun by "rejectionists" in place of "meaningful politics."<sup>7</sup>

The independent socialist Bernadette Devlin-McAliskey points out that the Sinn Fein leaders simply "don't object to the fact that their class [the nationalist working class] aren't in power. My argument with the 'peace process' is not with the ending of violence," she insists, "but with those republicans who have weakened the republican agenda" — which for her has always been a socialist one.<sup>8</sup>

Indeed, "Marxism" — that of Marx himself in his own lifetime as well as the best and worst of post-Marx Marxism — has influenced every generation of Irish radicals for the last 150 years. Most recently, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Sinn Fein adopted a version of the Stalinist "stage-ist" strategy of national liberation which reduced the struggle to the problem of the border and the occupation of the North side of it by British troops. It now seems that, as with ANC in South Africa, the "last" stage, socialism, has been cancelled until further notice.

Stalinism apart, Lenin's important insights into subjectivity in 1914-16 cannot provide a firm road back to a "correct position." Apart from the failure of the Bolsheviks to apply his principles in the Soviet Union's dealings with national minorities, Lenin's positive contribution on the question has to be contrasted with his failure to see the dialectic of a multinational but centralized party transforming itself into Great Russian chauvinism's destroyer of freedom.

As the "Peace Process" runs its course, the Left faces a formidable and urgent task in rethinking history and reworking socialist ideas if the bi-centenary of Wolfe Tone's Rebellion of 1798 — which the bourgeoisies of North and South would rather forget — is to see any cause to look forward to freedom in the new century.

6. Mike Connolly, "Ireland, Revolution and Theory" (Chicago: News and Letters, 1981).

7. The Downing Street Declaration. RWT Pamphlet (Edinburgh), 1994.

8. Interview with James Young, *Irish World* (London), Sept. 30, 1995.

William Everdell, "From 'State' to 'Free State,'" *Republic* (London), Summer 1994.

I have drawn on Kevin Anderson's discussion of Lenin's analysis of the state and the national question in Lenin, Hegel, and Western Marxism (Champaign-Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995).

"Dialogue with Marcuse on the dialectic," *News & Letters*, November 1995.

## WHY NEWS &amp; LETTERS? WHY NOW?

It seemed to me at each of my poetry readings that people generally are starving for words that speak to their sense of being conned, manipulated, treated with contempt, disinformed. Poetry, of course — but also the kind of works you are publishing in N&L: informed, grounded assessments of such diverse phenomena, showing the connections.

In your special 16-page October issue, the last sentence in Gene Ford's article on South Central L.A. reads: "We need to say yes to everything that's human, and everything that's knowledge and creativity that feeds the mind and not dulls it." Well, certainly that issue feeds the mind.

Adrienne Rich  
California

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I have deep disagreements with you, particularly your views on Lenin and the character of the revolutionary party, as well as your tendency to multiply the subject of revolution (some might call this opportunism), but I think you perform an important service by reporting on workers' struggles and keeping a certain type of critical perspective alive.

Enclosed please find a check for \$25 as a renewal of my subscription — I know it comes closer to the actual costs of a sub than the \$2.50 you charge.

Radical intellectual  
Washington, D.C.

\*\*\*

What Marx was talking about in the 19th century is true today. He goes back to Africa and the idea of using Black skins for production, bringing them as slaves to America for cheap labor. He also saw how leaders can sell people out and that the struggle has to come from the people.

Black woman worker  
Memphis

I am sending you a donation to help keep you going. You can use part of it to send News & Letters to several acquaintances in Poland whose addresses I'm enclosing. I think they will appreciate it. They have suffered from "state-socialism." Please use some of the rest of the donation to also send your material to students in Asia or Africa. I will keep trying to help you in this way as much as I can.

Supporter  
Finland

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Discussing dialectics at this time of retrogression when so many in the Left are seeing it as the end of history is the only way to respond to an objective situation, especially when the forces of reaction are fighting so hard to control our minds.

African-in-exile  
Scandinavia

\*\*\*

Dunayevskaya was concerned with a whole new concept of theory based on the new movements from practice. There are going to be theoretical groups (like us) around, but the point is to develop the idea of freedom. You have to have mass activity but you have to have an idea to know where you are going. That's why News and Letters Committees has spent so much time trying to solve the problem of organization.

Committee member  
Bay Area

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I agree with you that it is important to talk about what kind of vision of the future you have. I think you need to do that even more in News & Letters.

Maggie Soleil  
Hawaii

## GENORA IN HISTORY

I have before me the beautiful memorial article for Genora Johnson Dollinger in the November issue of N&L. It was sent to me by someone with the Kerr Publishing Co. who knew I had been associated with Genora in the GM sit-down strike of 1937. Your article contained a lot of information about her later activities I didn't know, including the activities around the 40th anniversary in Flint. I wish I could have been there, too.

I, too, mourn the death of this magnificent fighter for workers' justice. To me, she'll always be our La Passionaria, because in action she was like that inspiring woman who defended the Spanish Loyalists from the attacks of the fascist Franco. It was January of 1938, while we were occupying factories here, that a cablegram came to UAW headquarters from the workers in the GM plant in Barcelona. They had ejected the management and were producing trucks for the Loyalists. Since we were also fighting GM they congratulated us for starting the revolution in the U.S. It wasn't quite the scope of our efforts, although some of us radicals would have liked it to happen. Your fine labor paper encourages us that the "Left" is not entirely dead. More power to you!

Bruce E. Sloan  
Windsor, Cal.

\*\*\*

Olga Domanski's "In Memoriam" to Genora Johnson Dollinger was a powerful example of labor history writing. It was also an expression, in itself, of the formulation she used about history needing to be seen as "history-in-the-making," given that both women and labor are under such serious attack from the Right today that the discussion of Genora's life and work gives us the kind of inspiration we need to keep fighting in such retrogressive times.

Women's liberationist  
Chicago

\*\*\*

Thank you for the memorial article on Genora. Of all the obituary notices, yours goes to the top of the list for its personal expression of comradeship in action. It was also accurate. It is hard to rate some of the others, they held so many errors.

Sol Dollinger  
Los Angeles, Cal.



## GUATEMALA'S HISTORY OF STRUGGLE

The recent army massacre of eleven Guatemalans, including two children, took place two years after the signing of the "Global Accords of Human Rights." At the same time, information regarding the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency's involvement with the Guatemalan military continues to be revealed. "Women for Guatemala" is committed to increasing awareness about the socio-political realities in Guatemala as well as to creating a network of support for popular organizations there struggling for justice and life free from fear and terror. The urgency of this struggle for human rights was emphasized in a letter to us from Fermina Lopez of Conavigua (a national committee of Guatemalan widows). While gratefully acknowledging receipt of funds for mechanized corn mills, she stressed that the conditions affecting human needs will only change when the human rights of Mayans and all Guatemalans are respected. Please let your readers know that we'll be glad to send them information about how they can help bring that about.

Women for Guatemala  
529 S. Wabash, Rm. 404  
Chicago, IL 60605

\*\*\*

I consider the declarations of Rigoberta Menchu calling for the death penalty for those who were responsible for the massacre this past month of indigenous people of the "Aurora 8th of October" refugee community in Guatemala, to be an example of the retrogressive character which permeates the Left in Latin America.

Indigenous people in Guatemala have a long history of struggle against the inhuman system in which we are living. Genocide was, and will be the weapon for Guatemalan state capitalism against that struggle. Rigoberta Menchu's call for the death penalty in a country where the death penalty is already the rule is not going to change at all the oppressive situation in which our sisters and brothers live.

Carlos Varela  
New York

## Readers' Views

## QUEBEC'S REFERENDUM

The article on Quebec in the November N&L was quite accurate. Having lived ten years in Montreal I took it for granted that eventually they would separate, nationalism being an incurable sickness. My question was only if they would separate as a leftist or rightist (almost fascist) entity. As a musician, I was familiar with how "les artistes de chez nous" ("our own artists") were considered first class citizens, English Canadians second class, and the rest of us "neo-Canadians" were pseudo or third class citizens. As I had my share of being an unwanted Jewish minority in Europe, I left at the first opportunity.

Montrealer  
Canada

\*\*\*

Many who voted "no" believe that Quebec independence would be a form of collective suicide, and I agree. Firstly, there is the overwhelming American presence, and with a separated Canada both English and French Canada would be much more vulnerable. Also, "culture" is not the issue; Quebec is drowning in culture. At issue is the economic illusion that somehow Quebec would be prosperous if only it were independent, "free" of the "English." But Quebec has almost reached the limits of political emancipation, and this illusion could prove disastrous.

Above all, there is the Amerindian question and that of Quebec's many minorities. The crisis at Oka and Kanewake in August 1990 and the violent outburst of racism against the Amerindians there was a critical and perhaps fatal turning point which puts a giant question mark over the whole idea of Quebec independence.

Former Montrealer  
California

\*\*\*

It is to Canada's credit that the Quebec vote could take place in a civilized manner, almost totally lacking in hysteria or hyperbole. I suspect that over the next few years the world is going to witness many such wishes for "identity." The powerlessness of most people to control their destinies is bound to make for converts to the small-is-beautiful school.

The world, which for many held some promise at the end of the second world war, is on a very slippery slope. The United Nations (which as you may recall many of us scorned) has proven to be an immense bureaucracy of very small achievement. Having said that, one cannot help but feel that its powerlessness is precisely what many countries, including your own, would wish.

Supporter  
British Columbia

## FARRAKHAN: IS IT TOO EARLY TO TELL?

I am now convinced that the Iranian Revolution of 1979 was the harbinger of a new type of social movement that appeared first in the Middle East but is spreading to other parts of the world (Rabin's assassination last month proved that militant fundamentalism is no longer a phenomenon limited to the Muslim Middle East).

Naturally I am aware of the fact that Farrakhan and his followers, who are building a mass movement along the lines of Ayatollah Khomeini and Ali Shariati in Iran, are hardly a majority in this racist land. But Farrakhan's alliance with the White Supremacist Aryan Nations and his support for the conservative values many in the Republican and Democratic parties hold, point to the possibility of a militant populist coalition that instead of critiquing late 20th century capitalism and the resulting disappearance of jobs would base itself on anti-feminism (send women back to the home and there will be 50% more jobs for men), anti-immigrant sentiments and anti-Semitism (if not the capitalist system, someone should be blamed).

For anyone in the Left, most of all any Marxist-Humanist, to credit this hodgepodge of right-wing and left-wing populism with the potential of becoming a

progressive radical social movement such as the Civil Rights Movement shows the retrogressive nature of the era we live in. The most important thing I learned from Dunayevskaya was to look for contradictions of social movements at the time of their origin, instead of waiting for the time when they are full-blown and highly destructive. The massive size of a movement does not make a progressive cause, be that in Italy or Germany in the 1930s, Iran in the 1970s and 1980s, or even Black America in the 1990s.

Neda Azad  
Iranian in exile

\*\*\*

Being a woman of African-American and Jewish ancestry, I find Farrakhan an abomination. What do I think then of the Million Man March? I think the march was symbolic of a beginning of becoming aware. I saw a lot of excitement and energy generated by the march. Men who have come back have been discussing, getting ideas about what can we do now? I heard Farrakhan's speech. The only thing he said that I thought was good was, when you go back to your community, get involved, organize. I don't want to get too excited by the march, because I don't know what the momentum will be. It is too early to tell.

High school student  
Harlem



## RADICAL QUEER ACTIVISM

In Tom Williamson's article "Gays Protest Bashing" in the October issue of News & Letters, regarding the anti-violence march organized by Queer Nation/Chicago last Sept 28, he overestimated the turnout. My assessment is about 60 people, in sharp contrast to the very first anti-violence protest organized by the recently defunct ACT UP/Chicago five years ago when the crowd was around 700 and the most racially diverse.

The most dramatic part of the march was the speak-out at the school playground on Halsted and Addison concerning the International Socialist Organization chant "Gay/straight, Black/white, same struggle same fight!" Queer Nation and others thought the chant wasn't appropriate. Although people are oppressed by the same forces in society and there are similarities in discrimination, they are distinct.

I'm concerned that Queer Nation is headed toward assimilating into the Democratic Party partly because they expressed pro-police chants and they invited Mayor Richard Daley's liaison to the queer community. It also seems as though with the election of Clinton, the queer march to Washington (1993) and Stonewall 25 (1994) in New York put a climax to radical queer activism.

African-American activist  
Chicago

## AN APPEAL

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OUR 1970  
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A WOMEN'S NEWS JOURNAL

Off our backs is facing a financial crisis and needs help. Our largest distributor went bankrupt owing us \$8,000. It really hurts. To tide us over, we are asking for donations, which could be in the form of a gift sub for a friend, or, if money is impossible right now, the names of friends and cohorts who would like a sample issue of oob. It will help make sure that our 25-year tradition of uncompromising coverage of feminist news and debate continues.

The oob collective  
2337B 18th St., NW  
Washington, D.C. 20001

BACK TO THE FUTURE? OR A NEW WORLD IN STORE?

The Burmese government invites corporations into that country and supplies them with lists of people who can be hired. They permit people to work who have not protested the government or who are otherwise acceptable.

Feminist Chicago

\*\*\*

A recent article in the Los Angeles Times showed that diseases "that had been nearly extinguished by the now-defunct Soviet Union have returned with a vengeance."

In my mind, this is the picture of what the U.S. will be like if Newt Gingrich and Bob Dole have their way.

Worker California

\*\*\*

Dan Lane of locked-out Paperworkers Local 7-837 ended his hunger strike on Nov. 4, day 65. AFL-CIO president Sweeney promised they would back our effort on Pepsi, that still buys sweeteners from Staley.

Locked-out Staley worker Decatur, Ill.

\*\*\*

The one thing that needs to be said about the labor contract just agreed to between New York City and the municipal unions, particularly DC 37 of

AFSCME, is not how much the raise is or what concessions or any of that. It is that Workfare is now clearly accepted by both the mayor and the union leaders, particularly Stanley Hill, as central to the city's labor strategy.

The labor leaders have accepted that members' jobs have been cut back over the years, only to be replaced by poor people forced to do those jobs with no pay, no rights, no benefits, on the condition that their union members get to be the supervisors of these slaves.

John Marcotte New York

\*\*\*

Asking "How do you elect from one white elephant?" was a standing joke during "elections" in Communist countries, since there was only one candidate for each position.

Witness to this tragedy Canada

'WORKING TEAMSTERS'

Teamsters Local 70 is having elections and last month out at Crescent Truck Lines, where I work, all the leaders came out to give us their pitch.

of the local for decades.

When Carey was running for office he came out here to our barn to speak, and when he climbed onto the dock our "leaders" showed up to harass him.

Teamster Oakland, Cal.

THE ISRAELI RIGHT

Your analysis of the Oklahoma City terrorist bombing came to my mind with the recent assassination of Prime Minister Rabin in Israel.

Black historian Pennsylvania

\*\*\*

My work with Amnesty International, which catalogues torture, disappearances and death, certainly does not lessen. A draft law entitled "Prohibition on Torture" amendment to Article 277 of the Israeli Penal Law states that a public servant who tortures is liable to imprisonment except for pain or suffering inherent in interrogation procedures or punishment according to the law.

Margaret Canada

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With every visit to my family in Israel over the past three decades, I have come more and more to the conclusion that if it was not for the fear of being overrun by the one hundred million Arabs and another potential Holocaust, the centrifugal forces of the Jews pulling in all di-

rections would have seen the State of Israel blown apart a long time ago. A country whose very existence is not accepted by the ultra-orthodox Jewish community, where the most bigoted and fundamentalist reactionary parties can hold the balance of power and dictate to a basically secular country, has very slim chance of surviving long enough to really become a nation in its own right.

Still hopeful Vancouver

SOJOURNER, MARIA, AND REVOLUTION



American Civilization on Trial shows Black masses in the vanguard in the "unmasking of Western civilization's racism." And it shows how women have fought to have a voice. I learned about how Sojourner Truth, a great Black revolutionary, went about getting her name.

Black woman organizer Mississippi

A REMINDER

Please thank the donor who paid for my sub. I really like the philosophical, prison and global news you cover. I would like to write but have been putting in a lot of time with classes and doing slave labor.

Prisoner Texas

Editor's Note: When you send in your holiday gift to help keep N&L alive, don't forget our special donors fund.

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## Black/Red View

by John Alan

A month after the Million Man March the Associated Press reported that Benjamin Chavis and Louis Farrakhan met with a coalition of Black leaders, politicians and intellectuals to create a political and social agenda that they plan to present to a "national Black political convention" before the 1996 election. According to Chavis this coalition would work "to change the political landscape of the United States of America."

A week later, in a *Washington Post* article, it was announced, without referring to Chavis or Farrakhan, that the Black political convention would be held in August after the Republican and Democratic conventions and would act as a forum to evaluate the candidates. In the same *Washington Post* article Ronald Walters, a Howard University professor and a leader of the coalition, said that the Black convention "would intervene into his (Clinton's) relationship with black voters and maybe steer them in a different direction."

These two scant press reports obviously indicate that the top organizers, leaders and ideologues behind the Million Man March are planning to enter the arena of bourgeois politics as agents who have the right to offer the Black vote to either of the capitalist parties, depending on which one meets the demands of the Black Political Convention. This appears to be a new bold radical political strategy, when it's the quintessence of American politics, dealmaking. This type of politics is filled with many pitfalls which in the end would block any real effort to end racism and poverty. This prediction is not a speculative theoretical warning, because the ruins of the Black inner cities are monuments to decades of political wheeling and dealing.

Blacks have reached a point when leaders and intellectuals need to understand the limits of "a political solution" and begin to search for another way out of the permanent crisis. Those who are planning the Black Political Convention can start doing this by asking themselves if there were elements of an unexpressed desire in the Million Man March wanting a fundamental change in society beyond wheeling and dealing with the two capitalist parties. If this was so, it is very important, because the real historic test of that march rests upon whether or not it is a beginning or a catalyst of a new Black move-

## After Million Man March

ment capable of universalizing itself, that is, to be conscious of itself as pivotal in the struggle against the present political, social and economic counterrevolution in this country. This is absolutely a crucial test and it will determine the degree of freedom in this country.

As the Million Man coalition of leaders prepares to enter the political arena, they should remember essentially what the Civil Rights Movement did and did not accomplish. First: The Civil Rights Movement was not totally Black but it was centered upon Black masses in motion directly challenging and eventually getting racist social and political practices of segregation declared illegal by the courts. In other words, the movement regained those legal rights of citizenship already in the U.S. Constitution which were taken from African Americans during the post-Reconstruction counterrevolution.

Second: What the Civil Rights Movement did not do was to end Black alienation in American civil society. American society is now composed of "two separate and unequal" societies, one Black, one white. They are also latently and overtly, racially hostile societies. White racism, which was once mainly considered a Southern problem, is now a serious Northern urban problem and is aggravated constantly by elements in law enforcement who give vent to their racism by brutalizing Blacks.

The objective source of this racism lies in the structural changes in capitalism, which has created an army of permanently unemployed Blacks, materially devastated the inner cities and dehumanized all social relationships. All this deterioration in American life has been ideologically placed on alleged Black American amorality and irresponsibility. This has been so effectively sold that it is even accepted by people in the Million Man March.

Although African Americans are politically free and constitutionally equal to white citizens, they're alienated racially and economically. This glaring contradiction can't be resolved by politics but only by the creation of a non-racist humanistic society. However, to recognize the limits of political freedom does not mean Blacks should stay out of politics. The goal of freedom should determine the way they function in politics. They shouldn't give up the struggle for a new society when they deal with conflicting social issues in politics, but use those conflicts to develop principles for a new society.

Washington's conservatism ideologically subsumed, was all but lost until W.E.B. DuBois, in 1935, published the first study to trace Black history within a Marxian framework. Thus, in 1995, we also celebrate the 60th anniversary of DuBois' *Black Reconstruction in America*, a work that the radical Black archivist L.D. Reddick referred to in a 1937 article for the *Journal of Negro History* as "DuBois' brilliant attempt to apply the Marxian dialectic to the Reconstruction tumult."

In the year that Engels published *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, Douglass published one of the classics of the emancipatory canon, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself*. That the young Engels was discovering the universal quest for freedom in the European working class at the same time that Douglass was expressing that same quest for universality through plumbing the depths of his individual experience as an escaped slave is no accident or irony of history.

What we are witness to in Douglass' incomparable *Narrative* is precisely what Marx had given philosophic expression to and which Engels was revealing in his sociological study of class relations in England, namely, the self-determination of the Idea of freedom for a "birth-time of history," as Hegel called the age of revolutions unleashed by the French Revolution. Experiencing the self-determination of that Idea was an irrepressible event in Douglass' life, one which he recounts in the most powerful prose:

"The silver trump of freedom had roused my soul to eternal wakefulness. Freedom now appeared, to disappear no more forever. It was heard in every sound, and seen in every thing. It was ever present to torment me with a sense of my wretched condition. I saw nothing without seeing it, I heard nothing without hearing it.... It looked from every star, it smiled in every calm, breathed in every wind, and moved in every storm."

The gathering storm, fed by the great movement of Abolitionism afoot in the land, was of course an intimation of the coming Civil War. Marx, Engels, Douglass and DuBois recognized in that storm so profound a turning point in the historical course of human emancipation that their thought and experience converge in a dialectical manner that we can ill-afford to let go unrecollected.

## Rally for Mumia

*Philadelphia*—A justice-walk and rally was held Nov. 20 in support of a new trial for Mumia Abu-Jamal, and for abolishing the death penalty entirely. The rally was organized in conjunction with a conference of religion scholars, and so spawned some blatant contradictions, as when Pam Africa of the MOVE organization said we had to be revolutionary enough to go backwards to the Bible! But both she and white lesbian ethicist Carter Heyward were excellent in drawing out the implications in comparing Mumia's case to the recent executions in Nigeria. In Africa's words: "If injustice happens anywhere it'll be knocking on your door soon!"

The noon-time rally culminated with over 100 people marching to the office of the Philadelphia district attorney, Lynne Abraham, who refuses to investigate police corruption and has written (in the *NY Times*) against Mumia's appeal for a new trial.

—Participant

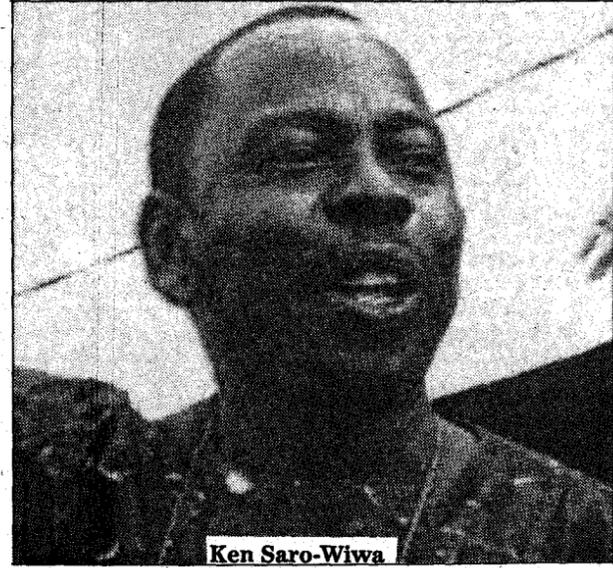
## Essex Hemphill, 1957-1995

Essex Hemphill, Black gay poet, died from AIDS complications Nov. 4 in Philadelphia, at the age of 38. Hemphill and his work were featured in two films by the late Black gay director, Marlon Riggs: "Tongues Untied" and "Black Is...Black Ain't." His was an important voice for freedom and struggle, cherished in many communities.

Like Audre Lorde, Hemphill was determined to remain a whole person, rather than segmenting his multiple identities. He was scathing in his critique of the powers of control: "the State wants to seize your bed and sleep with you. The State wants to control your sexuality, your birth rate, your passion." ("The Occupied Territories"). The question he asked in his poem "For My Own Protection" is one we must ask in surviving him: "If we have to take tomorrow with our blood are we ready?"

## Ogoni fight imperialism on two fronts in Nigeria

We are made to believe that the struggle of the Ogoni people in Nigeria is a question of protecting their human rights against the murderous military junta of Gen. Sani Abacha. However, the political reaction of the international community to the junta's outrageous execution of Ogoni environmental activist and writer Ken Saro-Wiwa is only an attempt to divert the attention of world opinion from the demands of the Ogoni people.



Ken Saro-Wiwa

Western Europe and the U.S. have had conflicting interest with the junta long before the barbarous murder of the militant members of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), including their leader Ken Saro-Wiwa. The U.S. calls its ambassador back home. Members of the European Union did the same, and suspended a yearly payment of one hundred million U.S. dollars to the military junta.

The exclusion of Nigeria from the Commonwealth of States, against the lone vote of The Gambia (it is also said that Kenya voted against exclusion), shows another dimension of the whole issue. The political battle that Nigeria is involved in with the international community has nothing to do with the decades long struggle of the Ogoni people.

Nigeria earns between 80 and 90 percent of her export earnings from her oil industry. Along with her \$38 billion external debt, Nigeria owes the international oil industry \$200 million; half of this is owed to Shell.

Is it true that the repayment of debt and the loss of billions of dollars pumped out of the country through the oil industry does not have any significance for international financial institutions and the oil companies? The success of the campaign for economic sanctions against the military junta will help to answer this question. Shell, British Petroleum (BP), and other smaller oil companies like Norwegian State Oil are making very clear that politics and business are two different things.

I see no reason why President Nelson Mandela, a front figure in the campaign for the economic boycott of Nigeria, should be so optimistic that sanctions are achievable. He forgets that it is the same Shell that refused to move an inch out of South Africa when the struggle against the apartheid regime was most intense.

For almost 30 years Shell has pumped oil out of the Niger Delta, exposing its ecology to day-to-day attack. The indigenous people never benefited but rather became victims of this brutal ecological reality. Oil pipelines run across farmlands and people's houses. They began rotting in the eyes of the Ogoni people as the leakage from the oil pipelines made their lives unbearable.

People buy water from other areas because theirs is undrinkable. It was under these conditions that the MOSOP was born. A mass mobilization in 1993 succeeded in temporarily halting oil production by Shell. This victory against international capital which was so threatening became a justification for the militarization of Ogoni land and political destabilization of the struggle. This is what created the condition for the murder of Ken Saro-Wiwa and his comrades.

What the junta intended to achieve, other than the impossible — that is, the demoralization of the Ogoni people — is yet to be known. Nor will it be made any clearer with the coming trial of other militants of MOSOP.

If there is an idea in the heads of the Ogoni people to live dignified lives, then it will no doubt cost many more lives for the military junta to crush their struggle.

— Ba Karang

## Black World

(continued from page 1)

(For the Marxist-Humanist analysis of the Marx-Engels relationship and the Engelsian roots of today's post-Marx Marxist deviations from Marxian dialectics consult Raya Dunayevskaya's *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*.)

Marx's appreciation of Engels as a collaborator was most explicit in the period leading up to and during the 1848 Revolutions. What Marx most valued was Engels' 1845 *Condition of the Working Class in England*, and his 1850 *Peasant Wars in Germany*. In the historical dialectic of the latter, Dunayevskaya argued, can be seen "the relationship of land and peasant in our own South" that explains "the Negro Question" (*American Civilization on Trial*, p. 13), following the Civil War.

Just as the betrayal of the 16th century peasant revolts in Germany by Luther and the bourgeoisie led to the disappearance of Germany "from the ranks of countries playing an independent part in history," so the betrayal of the Black freedmen and women led to a period of social and political retrogression which ultimately found its material foundations in a new stage of capitalism (monopoly imperialism) by the turn of the century.

In the year of Engels' and Douglass' death Booker T. Washington gave his Atlanta Compromise speech, marking the end of a generation of Black radicalism that Douglass helped forge, while articulating a new conservatism that has found favor across a broad ideological spectrum of Black leaders and intellectuals today.

The revolutionary dimension of Black emancipation that the betrayal of America's "second unfinished revolution" (the Civil War) sought to enchain, and which

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## Editorial

## Sweeney climbs on shoulders of restive labor

To this day, workers sense the betrayal of 1981. That's when the AFL-CIO, headed by Lane Kirkland, failed to call solidarity strikes when Ronald Reagan fired striking air traffic controllers. Similarly, none can miss the tug of war inside the United Auto Workers union (UAW) as the 11-month Caterpillar strike ends, for now. Largely out of solidarity, the rank and file overwhelmingly rejected a contract whose worst feature to them was letting the company get away with firing 150 of the strikers, something negotiated by UAW President Stephen Yokich. That sentiment in the ranks had a lot to do with the change in leadership of the AFL-CIO during its convention in New York in October. The "New Voice" opposition slate, headed by John Sweeney, unseated Thomas Donahue, former secretary treasurer under Kirkland who was "retired" in February. The press reported this to be the first contested election in a hundred years for the AFL presidency, supposedly evidence of a new course. Yet while replacing one labor bureaucrat with another may have produced light at the top, we need to look at the bottom to find any heat—and meaning.

## EAT AT THE BOTTOM

Filling the ranks of U.S. unions are minorities, women, and immigrants who are joining faster than any group, increasing their proportions rapidly (though still under represented) in organized labor. They are heavily represented in the growing service sector and sweated industries, and their ferment has contributed to successful organizing drives recently.

Furthermore, two-thirds of all contracts in the U.S. will be negotiated between 1993 and 1997. Flash points have already erupted in fights against capital-intensive, union-busting companies like A. E. Staley, Caterpillar, and Bridgestone-Firestone in Decatur, Ill., and elsewhere, and in the Detroit News-Free Press newspaper strike.

Teamsters struck against freight industry concessions, and car haulers at Ryder struck and defeated contract concessions this year. The current strike by 32,500 technicians at Boeing in Washington and Kansas shows combativeness also, in this case against layoffs, subcontracting, and picking up average health costs of \$1,500 a worker. Many lesser known fights dot the map.

That same ferment is even brewing in the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) which Sweeney is pushing out of. For example, employees at the Kaiser Health organization in the Bay Area of California have voted in on the SEIU's accommodation to layoffs. And a Latino caucus called the Multiracial Alliance took the SEIU's Justice for Janitors campaign seriously and voted out the white do-nothing leadership of Local 399 in Los Angeles. (The international union subsequently took the local into receivership.)

In the South, burgeoning labor-intensive industries are the scenes for new organizing. However these have their own inspiration not from Big Labor, but from the Freedom Now! movement of the 1960s led by poor

Blacks. Because of that, the AFL-CIO has either played down new footholds (like at Delta Pride in Mississippi), or ignored struggles (like at Dobbs International in Memphis), or outright subverted Black-led locals (like at Hood Furniture in Mississippi).

So it's ironic that the New Voice leadership pledged to sink \$20 million into organizing the unorganized. Only time will tell if life will be breathed into the campaign, but it bears a striking resemblance to Operation Dixie in the 1950s which failed to organize the South because it refused to challenge racial segregation.

In fact, when it comes to Black workers, the House of Labor has not been a home. For this reason, Black workers turned to the brand new Congress of Industrial Organizations in the 1930s (before it quickly ossified), or formed the revolutionary Black union caucuses in the early 1970s. Such self-activity appears today and some white workers recognize the importance of it as well.

## IN THE NEW ECONOMY

The current struggles are unfolding in a new economy where driving down the standard of living of workers in all industries, labor-intensive and capital-intensive alike, is a condition for capital accumulation and economic expansion.

The shape of that condition is becoming painfully clear. This year, companies have laid off 345,000 employees through October, now accelerating toward the 3,000-per-day rate at the start of 1994. Laid off workers who find new jobs typically take a 20% pay cut.

As for government assistance to capital-hungry industries, the Gingrich Congress and Clinton are forging welfare reform, trade agreements, new tax structures, and anti-immigration policies. Severe cutbacks in the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Mine Safety Board, and other agencies mean nothing less than erasure of worker protections.

It's clear the 1990s conditions for capital accumulation are finding more and more opponents among workers. Yet it's also clear the labor bureaucracy not only cannot challenge those conditions, but is one with them. The best example is the rise of the "Teamwork for Employees and Managers" (TEAM) bill, passed by the House in September. It's foundation was laid when Clinton's Labor Secretary Robert Reich, suggested that unions as they now exist may not fit the needs of industry.

Congressional Republicans are preparing to follow his lead and amend section 8(a)(2) of the National Labor Relations Act, sweeping away the independent status of unions in favor of shop floor organizations created by management. Upon them would be bestowed the "right" to address areas formerly reserved only for organizations of the workers' choosing.

What's sad is how the workplace teams became so widespread, paving the way for the TEAM bill's sanctioning of company "unions." For during many years on the AFL-CIO executive council, Sweeney as with Donahue and Kirkland hardly mustered the ranks against management-labor cooperation teams aimed at raising

productivity. And productivity can rise only at the expense of workers. In fact, a willingness to make contract concessions has characterized all players in recent federation politics.

If it were just a matter of reversing the greed of those who manage state-capitalism, the goals of class struggle would be clear. But capitalism also has a logic which even the humblest and most democratic of leaders (which Sweeney is not) find it hard to separate themselves from. Against that attitude, those experiencing the ravages of capital accumulation have the most to say about what needs to change and how to do it. Therein lies the challenge to revolutionaries to also break mentally from and pose a total opposite to the logic of capitalist production.

## Laws to control labor

by Felix Martin, Labor Editor

The great question the Dobbs worker asked in her article in the October News & Letters was: "Are labor laws there to actually help the workers?" The answer is no. All laws, including so-called labor laws, are there to keep the working people and the unemployed in line, for the capitalists to use when needed. They are also there to force workers to become dependent on their union leaders and bosses.

The grievance procedure is there to keep the workers at the point of production working. In the old days of the CIO when a worker had a grievance it was settled on the job right then, or the workers would walk out until it was settled. In those days many of the workers wanted full pay for the time off, because the company was the cause of the work stoppage.

But in those days most workers didn't want anything that they didn't earn by their own sweat. They didn't know then that everything the business was worth was produced by their labor. A worker needs to know that he or she is a producer and reproducer of everything that humanity has to have to live.

The grievance procedures were agreed to by the union leadership and management to keep production going, while they worked out a satisfactory settlement of the grievance in a quick time going through the steps. Many workers saw that the grievance procedure was a most important right they gave up to the company. Today, you see just how important it is to have a grievance settled because grievances are caused by management 99.99 percent of the time.

Arbitration is nothing but a law to make management look like they are important and workers wrong. Today when a grievance goes all the way to arbitration, the cases are settled most of the time in favor of management.

The power has to be in the hands of the worker. Both sides have to live up to the contract, or no work. The company gets shut down while the workers are on strike. And no worker goes through a picket line.

## Private prison factories

by D.A. Sheldon

Fred Gaines, a former factory worker of the Wackenhut Corporation, was recently laid off from his job as an assembler of computer circuit boards. He is 52, with two children, a wife to support and a \$40,000 mortgage tied on his house. The corporation denied Gaines' request for severance pay, despite 10 years of loyal service. Given his tenth grade education and lack of employment opportunities, this family of four will surely experience hard times in the near future.

Wackenhut official explained, "Due to budgetary constraints, downsizing was appropriate if we are to stay competitive in the computer assembly market." Yet a few months later, Wackenhut announced that its former assembly operation was being transferred to the Lockheed Work Program Facility in Lockhart, Texas. Lockheed is a private prison managed by a subsidiary of Wackenhut.

It was never mentioned that the inmate workers at the private prison are paid drastically lower wages than former employees at Wackenhut—about 10% lower. Fred Gaines is but one of many victims affected in the decade as U.S. companies increasingly tap into the lucrative multibillion dollar prison industry.

As prison populations across the nation explode, the growth of private prisons has expanded by 500% between 1985 and 1995. Eighteen companies have contracted or rehabbed 93 private prison facilities, thus creating space for 51,000 prisoners incarcerated in an already overburdened criminal justice system.

For these companies to compete, they are required to bid on federal, state and local grants. Once a grant is awarded, company officials examine exploitable, cost-cutting measures to maximize their profits.

Last June, Esmore Correctional Services Inc., which operates four brutal private prisons in the U.S., discovered the consequences of its actions when over 300 immigrants at the INS Processing Center in Elizabeth, N.J. rebelled against inhumane conditions. These men and women immigrant prisoners were stored in a converted house where they were underfed, sexually mistreated and subjected to daily brutality and abuse.

After a six-hour riot, the prisoners were quickly transported to county jails and INS facilities in New York, Pennsylvania, and Maryland. Shortly thereafter the Elizabeth Facility was closed down.

This incident is an example of what to expect in the future, as this new "Fortune 500" industry grows.

## The looming threat of a 'Red-Brown' Russia

**Prague, Czech Republic**—Four years after it was declared dead and buried, Communism is again haunting Russia. The Communist Party (CP) was briefly declared outlawed after the failed 1991 coup against Gorbachev. It seemed perpetually discredited. Yet now it leads in most opinion polls and is expected to win more votes than any other party in parliamentary elections in December, perhaps allying with hardline nationalists to become the dominant political force in Russia.

Ironically, the rehabilitation of Communism and the growing appeal of hardline nationalism come at a time when the policies of the reformers who came to power in 1991 appear finally to be paying off. Inflation is lower, the ruble has stabilized, gross domestic product which declined by 19% in 1992, 12% in 1993 and 15% last year is expected to fall by only 5% this year. Western economists say it could grow by up to 10% next year.

But Russians have yet to be affected by any economic "feel good factor." The price of austerity has been a fall in consumption and real wages, and a rise in unemployment. Many people including soldiers, teachers and doctors are being paid their wages with a delay of several months. Life expectancy has plummeted and Russia has become a country in which violence is commonplace.

A second source of anger is the popular belief that members of the elite have used market reforms to transform the prerogatives they enjoyed under Communism into the even more pleasant rewards of capitalism. In almost every region of the country a local factory allegedly given away to its director at a bargain price serves as a focus for public resentment of the country's leaders.

For Communist Party leaders government corruption is a particularly effective campaign slogan since it allows them to distinguish between the good, honest rank-and-file Communists (themselves) and the corrupt Communist leadership (the current government) which oppressed Russians under the old regime and continues to do so with a different ideology today.

In exploiting popular discontent over economic reform and corruption the Communists have forged alliances with the hardline nationalists, particularly the Congress of Russian Communities. This new nationalist party was formed only this year and is organizationally weak. Its deputy leader, however, Alexander Lebed, a former general, regularly beats all other Russian politicians including Boris Yeltsin in opinion polls.

Predictions of a strong showing for the Communists and nationalists in December's parliamentary elections have become conventional wisdom in Russia. But many Western diplomats argue that a "red-brown" triumph would not have much impact on the country because of the limited nature of parliament's constituted powers.

Many observers also expect the Communists and nationalists to moderate their sometimes vehement campaign rhetoric if they achieve real power.

Furthermore, in contrast with the gratuitously offensive Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, General Lebed, the rising star of the nationalist camp, appeals to moderate patriots as well as hardliners. His tactic is to shy away from committing himself to specific policies, relying instead on his aura as an officer and a gentleman to attract voters.

However, as the ratings of the Communists and nationalists have been steadily rising in opinion polls, other analysts have begun to warn that Russian Communists and their new nationalist allies pose a very real threat. In a reference to their links with nationalists Yegor Gaidar, who first launched Russian reforms as Prime Minister in 1992 and today leads Russia's Choice, a pro-reform party says that the CP "is shifting not from red to pink but from red to brown. Their ascent will mean the ascent of a party of destruction, a party of war."

As Gaidar points out the greatest impact of a Communist-nationalist dominated parliament is likely to be felt in foreign policy. Despite popular dissatisfaction market reforms are firmly entrenched in Russia with more than 80% of the workers employed by at least partially privatized enterprises. Reversing this change in ownership would be quite impossible. Striking a note of robust Russian nationalism offers an easier way for the "red-brown" coalition to win support. Over the past few months the Russian government has already begun to shift to a more nationalist and anti-Western stance, objecting to NATO air strikes in Bosnia, opposing the eastward expansion of the NATO and pledging to fund the construction of a nuclear reactor in Cuba.

In the months following the upcoming vote Western politicians might well discover that Russia's new Communists have been converted to capitalism but are almost as hostile to the West as their Soviet predecessors were.

—Stephen Steiger

# Rabin assassination lifts veil on emerging ethnic apartheid

(continued from page 1)

reached a crescendo after Rabin signed the second stage of the Oslo accords with the PLO last Fall. It set the stage for Amir's bloody deed.

Though some expressed shock at "a Jew killing a fellow Jew," there is nothing new about rightists murdering other Jews to promote their political agenda. As far back as 1933 right-wing Zionists killed Haim Arlosoroff, a leftist labor leader, and in the 1940s the founders of today's Likud, like Menachem Begin, engineered the murder of Jews who tried to cooperate with Arabs against British imperialism.

There is something subtly racist about the "shock" of "Jew killing Jew" as it dovetails with the anti-Semitic notion that Jews are some closed-knit cabal without internal fissions. In reality, the far-Right in Israel, as is true of narrow nationalists everywhere, reserve their most visceral hatred for those of their own nationality who oppose ethnic separatism.

## THE LIMITS OF OSLO

Yitzhak Rabin, however, was not cut from the cloth of Israeli-Palestinian cooperation either. He was not only an architect of Israel's major wars of conquest, but also directed a brutal crackdown against the intifada (uprising) in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1987-91.

Rabin's rabid anti-Palestinian stance may have seemed to soften when he shook Yassir Arafat's hand on the White House lawn in September 1993. Yet despite its initial promise, the Oslo peace accords did not represent a new stage in Israeli-Palestinian relations. It instead is leading to a new stage of ethnic apartheid.

The first stage of the Oslo accords called on Israel to hand over the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho to Arafat under the guise of a new entity, the Palestinian Authority (PA). But it also provided for the maintenance of all Jewish settlements in Gaza and the West Bank, which Israel is allowed to protect through a series of fortifications separating the settlers from Palestinians.

Moreover, after signing the Oslo accords Rabin expelled tens of thousands of Gazan Palestinian laborers from Israel. Though Rabin at first said the expulsions were a temporary measure to deter terrorist attacks by the Islamic fundamentalist group Hamas, which opposes the Oslo accords, they have since become semi-permanent. As a result, a new Berlin Wall—with hundreds of square miles of barbed wire and lookout towers—has been erected between Gaza and Israel.

Under the second stage of the accords Israel is now handing over control of six major West Bank towns to the PA (Jenin, Bethlehem, Ramallah, Nablus, Qalqilyah and Hebron). PA control of 420 villages will follow in the next year. Yet Jewish settlements are to remain in place under Israeli military protection.

In Hebron, this means 2,500 Israeli soldiers are protecting 450 Jewish settlers—most of them fanatical fundamentalists. As the Hebron Solidarity Committee recently stated, "The Agreement imposes on Hebron the most severe and arrogant form of apartheid, in which rights and services will be distributed on an ethnic, rather than a territorial basis."

The accords also allow Israel to construct a series of by-pass roads so that Jewish settlers can travel from one place to another without passing through Palestinian-controlled areas. Large amounts of Palestinian land are being expropriated to build these roads, yet Palestinians are strictly forbidden to travel on them.

Meanwhile, the restrictions on Palestinians from entering Israel remain in force. Just two days after signing Oslo II Israel imposed a total closure on the Gaza Strip, and later on the West Bank. Thousands of Palestinians are being left without any livelihood—a situation explic-

## Slaying unites N.Y. Latinos

**New York** — The Latino Coalition for Social Justice brought out 1,000 people to a march and rally Nov. 18, to protest the killing of a Dominican woman by a policeman and to make a variety of demands on behalf of the Latino community.

Maria Rivas, a working woman, mother and student of nursing at Hostos Community College (CUNY), was killed in a restaurant on her birthday by a drunken police officer. This created tension in Washington Heights, a heavily Dominican community where police brutality is common and which had its own rebellion right after Los Angeles' three years ago, when a young Dominican man was killed by the cops.

The march began at City College and ended in a rally at 183rd Street. For the first time, the Latino Coalition put forth a series of demands that affect Latinos in general. They included: justice for Maria Rivas, stop police brutality, free Mumia Abu-Jamal, free all Puerto Rican political prisoners, and "No" to the U.S. military's plan to construct radar stations in Puerto Rico. The U.S. wants to build radar stations in the mountains and on the island of Vieques in order to spy on the rest of the Caribbean and Latin America under the pretext of the "war on drugs."

Other demands were to stop the cuts in funding education, Medicare, Medicaid, and welfare; to create jobs; lesbian and gay rights; women's rights; immigrants' right; no increase in the subway fare; no hikes in public college tuitions; and other issues of social justice.

This was a broad coalition of Latinos of different nationalities, especially Puerto Ricans and Dominicans, who are the major hispanic groups in the Northeast and New York City. This coalition was formed by leftist activists in the Latino community, the People's Campaign, students, unions, and grassroots organizations of the Latino community in New York City. —Billy Zapata

itly sanctioned by Oslo II, which grants Israel "the right to determine the extent and conditions of the labor movement into its area."<sup>1</sup>

Thus, the real effect of the Oslo accords is to solidify ethnic separation between Jews and Palestinians while providing a "Palestinian entity" politically dependent on Israel, since Israel reserves the "right" to overall "security" of the area.

## A PATHWAY TO PEACE?

This is not to say that the Oslo accords are a totally negative phenomenon, for they have introduced important changes into Israeli and Palestinian society.

In Israel the accords have led increasing numbers of people to openly argue in favor of a comprehensive peace with the Palestinians. Reflecting a greater willingness to listen to Palestinian concerns, many Israelis are speak-



Protest at El-Khader on West Bank

ing out for the dismantling of the settlements and the creation of an independent Palestinian state. This was reflected in one banner at a massive rally for peace in Tel Aviv held after Rabin's murder, which read "Who starts a mitzwa [a good deed] should complete the job; for two states, an Israeli and a Palestinian one."

This is precisely what drives the fury of Israeli rightists. They know as well as anyone that the Oslo accords as now constituted will not lead to a truly independent Palestinian state. They instead fear that the situation created by the accords could create a climate in which Israelis and Palestinians will come to see the need to go beyond the framework of Oslo by demanding the total dismantling of the Jewish settlements, the full withdrawal of Israeli troops, and the achievement of true Palestinian self-determination.

## PERES AT HELM, ARAFAT AT HEEL

Such an outcome is not what Rabin's successor at the helm, Shimon Peres, has in mind. He supports turning the West Bank into an Israeli-controlled "Palestinian entity" in which Palestinians will serve as a source of cheap labor for Israel's burgeoning high-tech industries. One of his first acts as Prime Minister was to announce plans for two industrial parks in the West Bank, so that Israel can make use of Palestinian workers without having them enter Israel—a sort of maquiladora zone.

Peres is also pushing for a comprehensive peace agreement with Syria which would involve an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights. Peres is following his time-worn approach of going over Arafat's head by working out an agreement with his adversary.

Meanwhile, Arafat is now taking charge of the six West Bank towns being vacated by the Israelis. Yet it is already clear that his rule in Gaza and parts of the West Bank is no laboratory in participatory democracy.

In Gaza, for instance, Arafat has put together a police force of 18,000—one policeman for every 50 Gazans (as compared to one for every 2,200 residents in Los Angeles). Nine separate security agencies have been set up in Gaza alone. These are being used to round up dissidents, close opposition newspapers, and intimidate the political opposition.

Though the core of his opposition comes from Islamic fundamentalists in Hamas and Islamic Holy War, Arafat is trying to work out a reconciliation with them. Several leaders of the Gazan wing of Hamas have announced they will form a political party to compete in the Jan. 20 elections for Palestinian town councils. This partly reflects a decline in support for Hamas' terrorism, although the armed wing of Hamas, Izz al-Din al-Qassem, still enjoys wide support among the urban poor and residents of the refugee camps in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, who are totally written off by the Oslo accords.

Most important, Arafat is trying to control the outcome of the Jan. 20 elections by making use of the antiquated clan structure (the hamayil) that still prevails in parts of Palestinian society. He is eliciting the names of candidates from the heads of big families and tribal leaders. This reliance on the hierarchical and patriarchal clan councils (the dawawin) angers many women, since they cannot participate in them.

Those on the Left who decry Arafat's emerging "dictatorship," however, should take a hard look at themselves, since they helped pave the way for it by insisting for more than two decades that the PLO should not be openly criticized—even though it tail-ended an assort-

ment of reactionary state powers.

This proved deadly in Lebanon in 1976 when the PLO supported the Syrian invasion which crushed an emerging revolution. Syria's anti-Israeli rhetoric held greater sway for Arafat than seeing a social revolution succeed in an Arab country.<sup>2</sup> Such tail-ending of state power proved no less deadly in 1991 when Arafat supported Iraq during the Gulf War on the grounds that the Palestinians cheering the scud missiles falling on Tel Aviv gave him no other choice. As a result of his stance, the end of the Gulf War left the PLO bankrupt and isolated. This forced Arafat to seek an accommodation with the Israelis, on their terms.

The worst part of the PLO's tail-ending of such state powers is that it prevented it from openly confronting the class hierarchies within Palestinian society. This was especially seen during the intifada when the masses created new forms of organization and struggle. The massive participation of women in the intifada posed an especially sharp challenge not only to the Israeli occupation, but also to the patriarchal clan structure in parts of the Palestinian community. Yet because the PLO did not build upon this, by the end of the intifada many Palestinian women were forced back into the kitchen and the hierarchical structures of the hamayil reasserted themselves. These are now being used by Arafat to solidify his emerging dictatorship.

The notion that one can advance by directing one's energies solely at the external enemy, without dealing with the internal hierarchies of class and sexuality which confront national liberation struggles, has dealt a serious blow to the Palestinian movement—as it will to others who do not learn its lessons.

## NEW VOICES TO BUILD UPON

This situation compels us to listen to new voices. A Manar Hasan of Al-Fanar, the first independent organization of Palestinian feminists, said earlier this year "Nobody took the trouble to understand that women are the most oppressed group, and that the postponement of their struggle really meant giving up the struggle, surrendering to the patriarchal tradition."

She adds, "The Israeli radical Left had painted for itself an idealized picture of Palestinian society and its leadership, refraining from any criticism of it. For the Israeli Left, the Palestinians, as an oppressed people, must automatically be progressive. When Palestinian feminists began to criticize their leadership and Palestinian society in general, there was a lot of outrage. The Left felt that the whole picture of the world that it made for itself was threatened, and tried to prevent the shattering of its idealized illusions by rejecting the criticism. In my opinion, this mistake is part of what brought about the weakening of the Left and its transformation into a completely marginal element of the political map."<sup>3</sup>

As we reflect on the impact of the Rabin assassination and oppose the effort to impose a new form of ethnic apartheid upon the Palestinian people, the lessons presented by the history of the Israeli-Palestinian issue need to be absorbed by us all.

1. The best source of information on Palestinian labor in the occupied territories is Kav La' Oved, which can be ordered from 78 Allenby St., POB 2319, Tel Aviv.
2. For the Marxist-Humanist critique of the PLO's tail-ending of state powers, see Raya Dunayevskaya's Writings on the Middle East, a pamphlet available from News and Letters.
3. See "Al-Fanar: Brave and Determined Palestinian Feminist in Israel," News from Within (Jerusalem), April 1995, pp. 14-19.

## Capital's commodity-form

(continued from page 4)

cape this—for it must use ever more constant capital [relative to] variable capital—but what is worse, the aim of production for ever greater masses of surplus value is so constantly against the very method [of reducing the proportion of variable capital to constant capital] that there is no other expression but crises.

4) Then there is the contradiction in the two departments of production, between means of production and means of consumption, which is further aggravated by the fact that while [the capitalist] uses means of consumption to ensnare the worker, he has no direct control over [the worker] until he gets him in the factory.

5) And then the constant persistence of form, the more various form-determinations transcend each other—whether that be in price versus value, or depreciation of existing capital vs. cheaper new values, or money as a being-in-itself vs. money as a mere means of circulation to get expanded reproduction.

Now these contradictions are not something to be cleared away theoretically alone, as Marx does in the Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy. Capital, it becomes a practical question—the magnitude of the working day. The civil war between capital and labor appears immediately in Capital hidden in the commodity-form.

Here is what Marx does in Capital: he makes a clear distinction and says that anyone who did not consider the commodity or exchange [a class relation] was either a bourgeois in reality ("a practical bourgeois") or least in thought (the "usual method of procedure"). Having thus put any other method but that in Capital on the other side of the barricades, Marx proceeds calmly in this "other world," the proletarian world, while analysing nothing but the capitalist method of production. But he himself having always been a revolutionary, his Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy cannot be that easily dismissed....

# post-anarchIST possibilities

This is a response to the News & Letters October 1995 Youth Column review of Ulrike Heider's *Anarchism: Left, Right, and Green*. Her book's basic perceptiveness can feed my "permanent critique" of the crisis of radical currents. The current crisis exposes problems in resolving internal contradictions and in reaching out to the rest of the repressed/oppressed social environment.

Even if this crisis is overcome by popular insurrection within our time, there must be a permanent critique to ensure permanent revolution/permanent revelry. Hopefully, my post-anarchISM response to Maya Jhansi's review will contribute towards building an uncompromising permanent critique to thwart authoritarianism in the present and future.

Right now, we have to not let the ever expansive psychic terrains of despair devour our projects, goals and critical faculties. Spectacular events such as Bosnia's crisis, French government nuclear testing, the contradictions of the Million Man March, cop brutality/cop culture as well as lesser publicized daily degradation with work, debt, rent, loneliness, etc. drive many to desperation.

Ideologies promise the illusion of security and superiority to the desperate. The need to be more "vigilant" of ideological shifts should be followed by a need and a desire to abandon ideologies. **Do you have ideas or do ideas have you?**

Heider's argument for rekindling anarcho-syndicalism over the other "brands" of anarchism has some merit but comes from wearing ideological blinders as well. She limits her discourse to old left, green and right tendencies, unaware of or willfully neglecting diverse past and present experimentation outside the left, right and center orthodoxies. Orthodoxy is a strait jacket bazooka and ideology, the hunting license.

The continued existence of formal and informal hierarchies, gangbanging sectarianism, the reified roles of activists for action's sake and insulated academics, the reflection of current managerial/professional/bureaucratic business strategies, restraining relevant subjectivity within abstraction and an abandonment of imagination in favor of utilitarianism again plagues anarchists and Marxists (vulgar or otherwise). These counter-revolutionary conditions prove there are radicals really afraid of change and willing to become the new cops to control it.

Heider, from what Maya wrote, doesn't mention the autonomists or May 1968 or the 70s' Italian Autonomia movement—all negational and pleasurable moments with millions of students and workers engaged in festive insurrection. The autonomists are one of the experimental post-anarchISM tendencies that wisely synthesized what was vital from both anarchy and Marx.

Just as the sexual hermaphrodite is an affront to phallogocentric and gynocentric ideologies, anti-sex moralism and capitalism's sex role agenda, the fluid use of subversion, synthesis, pleasure, humor, spontaneity can help offset character structure rigidity and use surprise to radical advantage. The liberating possibilities with

## Educational racism

**Fayette County, Tenn.**—They are stripping our kids of all their rights in the schools here. They are preparing them so the boss in the workplace won't have any problems.

The majority of the white public school teachers, the members of the Board of Education and County Commission, have their kids in private schools. They are taking the public funds for the private schools. Fayette and Haywood Counties are the poorest counties in Tennessee, and each got a federal grant of a million dollars in July. That's all we heard of the money. We don't know how it was spent. This was to fund federal programs for the kids, to get them off the streets. We have seen no new buildings, we haven't got any response on what new programs are being organized or anything.

Their alibi is: "We are running things the way we are because we cannot get the parents involved." They set up these meetings and don't inform the parents. We got one notice at the end of the year of when they were going to do the business meeting. It's not the parents, it's the way they run the system. They run it to keep the parents from getting involved.

The kids have no idea where the money they and the parents are raising is going. The kids come home and complain, "We don't get new majorette suits; we don't get new football uniforms." They want to take the funds without asking the kids. They give the scholarships to whoever they want to.

Our kids cannot go inside a private school in Somerville. But when the private school gets ready to have a community gathering, they have it at our school. It's not a good picture to take to our children: theirs is so good for us to come to, but ours, they can come to anytime they want.

In Fayette County they just hire any teacher they want off the street. A lot of teachers come in, work a couple of years, get their Masters Degree at Memphis State and move on. A lot of times, the Board members hire their family. We got a guy who was charged with child molestation in another county. His sister was a member of the Board of Education and she hired him as principal at one of the grammar schools in Somerville.

I was talking to my son and some of the kids that come to the house. They said the first thing they would change would be the management, the principals and the teachers. The kids are seeing that the teachers are just here because they want the money. It's nothing about education. It's not about making sure this child learns. These kids see that.

—Black mother

polymorphous sexuality and what can crudely be called anarcho-Marxism aren't yet exhausted.

The richness of such synthesis and complexity is absent from Heider's scrutiny. A stellar example of this synthesis is *The Right to Be Greedy; These On the Practical Necessity of Demanding Everything* by "For Ourselves." This was an early '70s Californian pro-situationist group, formerly Negation, pamphlet (recently republished by Loompanics Books) synthesizing left Marxist and individualist anarchist tendencies for a communist egoism. For example, communist society is conceivable only on the foundation of the resonance of egoisms. The essence of the resonance of egoisms is this: the other person is a part of your wealth. The old moral question of whether one "thinks first of oneself or others" falls apart when we come to think only of ourselves and for this reason negate the otherness of others.

The trick for post-anarchISM currents is to interact with those who are really marginalized in both urban and rural environments. We need to find more commonalities such as combining the ludic (the playful) with basic needs and autonomous neighborhood organizing. There are people wondering how to get across layers of economic, social, cultural psycho-ideological conditioning without repeating reformist and/or vanguardist mistakes.

I believe that the currently unexhausted post-anarchISM realm of experimentation makes more sense to pursue than an orthodox return to anything that went before. As Nietzsche said, I like not knowing what the future holds.

—Ken Wong



## Oakland school strike

**Oakland, Cal.**—On Nov. 28 and 29, 3,500 teachers, substitutes, psychologists, librarians, nurses and speech therapists in Oakland's 90 schools struck for higher wages, smaller class sizes and a reduced bureaucracy. At least 80% of the students stayed home.

These two days were like a warning shot across the administration's bow; so far it hasn't forced them back to the table but we've shown them that we can bring the system to a standstill. They tell the newspapers that the strike will only make it harder to give us a raise since they lost a lot of money when the kids didn't show up, but we're not trying to get more money from the state, we want it from them, the administration.

We're not just asking for a 10% raise versus the 4% they offer, we're demanding they "chop from the top," as we like to put it. Administrators make two to three times as much as the teachers do. Their attitude is—and they tell you this to your face—if you want a raise, go into administration. When we demand a reduction in class size, it's so the bureaucrats can be reassigned to the classrooms.

Of course, they pretend not to hear us, despite the fact that the negotiations have been going on now for 16 months, and before that we were without a contract for a year. No other district in the state has been struck so many times in the last two decades as they have! Why? Simply because they will not understand that the classrooms must come first, and this philosophy is the only way to improve the education of our children.

—Strikers

## Youth in Revolt

by Kevin Michaels

Over 1,000 Haitian students in Port-au-Prince rallied on Aug. 28 against structural adjustment programs that the World Bank demands be implemented as a condition for monetary loans. The privatization of state universities figures prominently in World Bank plans for Haiti.

One thousand young activists calling themselves "the Movement of the Excluded" occupied the administration building of the National Autonomous University of Mexico for nine days in early October to protest the denial of admission to 30,000 applicants. Mexico's higher education system is under the duress of the recent peso devaluation, a stricture of the U.S. bailout of the economy.

Romanian students in the cities of Bucharest, Cluj and Suceava engaged in a week of protest beginning Oct. 17 against poor living conditions in dormitories and a government proposal to tax students who fail examinations. They demanded the resignation of the Minister of Education as well.

Dozens of students walked out of classes this fall at New Hampshire's Mascenic High School in opposition to the school board's firing of teacher Penny Culliton for using books with lesbian and gay characters in her English classes. One of the organizers of the protest is the daughter of the local police chief.

Hundreds demonstrated at a Pittsburgh court house on Nov. 1 to protest the police killing of Johnny Gammage. Police stopped Gammage, a 31-year-old Black businessman, as he was driving through a white neighborhood on Oct. 12 and fatally beat him. An autopsy concluded that he died of "compression to the neck and chest." Two days after the demonstration the jury recommended that the five officers involved be charged with homicide. Of the 21 inquests into police killings since 1980, only two have resulted in the filing of charges.

## Fighting anti-choice greed

**San Jose, Cal.**—On Nov. 14, almost 100 feminist students, staff and faculty gathered to protest the inclusion of a vicious anti-choice insert which had appeared as a paid "advertisement" in *The Spartan Daily*, the newspaper of the San Jose State University campus, earlier that month.

Jack Quinton, the faculty advisor to the advertising department, first asserted that only "factual" advertising was printed—but when asked who had testified to the factual accuracy of this shameless right-wing pseudo-science propaganda, he admitted it had merely been passed around to the advertising faculty!

While Quinton tried to hide behind the idea that all advertising was accepted, a women's studies professor challenged him, saying he had reduced freedom of speech to freedom of the pocketbook—an accusation that he seemed proud to claim! The students pressed Quinton to explain the advertising policies rationally—at which time it became clear that the paper had adopted a policy against racist advertising, but not against sexism.

While the protest ended with a promise of further discussion, the more important outcome was the unity of the participants, which included many students of color, pro-feminist men and community members, as well as representatives from all strata of the campus.

—Feminist professor

## Unreal jobless future

(Continued from page 3)

central position in our collective lives, nor in our imagination."

They say that Marx claimed that "communism is not only emancipation from exploitation but also emancipation from labor itself." Marx, however, in his *Capital* no longer calls for the abolition of labor; he now insists that labor is the first necessity of life and must be transformed to unite both mental and manual labor so individuals can achieve all of their natural and acquired potentials.

Aronowitz and DiFazio also maintain that capitalist unemployment cannot be explained by the "Marxist" conception that capitalist growth entails the existence of an "industrial reserve army" that can be utilized in periods of expansion. But Marx declares the unemployed army to be an absolute general law of capitalism and, far from merely being of use in economic recovery, constitutes a source of new forces and passions for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism.

Marx insisted that the working class was revolutionary or it was nothing, and the authors totally break with Marx when they maintain that history has "proven" that the working class is incapable of changing society. That task, the authors claim, rests with technology and the information producers—the new knowledge class.

Historically, new classes have arisen only when there has been a fundamental change in production relations, and they provide no such evidence. To the contrary, their evidence reflects concrete capitalist relations. How this new technocracy will wrest power from the capitalists and create such a jobless future is not answered. Their hope is abstract and is abstractly based.

—Andy Phillips

**How to contact**

**NEWS & LETTERS COMMITTEES**

<b>CHICAGO</b> 59 E. Van Buren, Room 707 Chicago, IL 60605 Phone 312 663 0839 Fax 312 663 9069 <b>MEETINGS</b> Call for meeting information	<b>NEW YORK</b> P.O. Box 196 Grand Central Station New York, NY 10163 212 663 3631 <b>MEETINGS</b> Sundays, 2:30 p.m. Washington Square Church 133 W. 4th St. (Parish House parlor), Manhattan
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**INTERNATIONAL MARXIST-HUMANISTS**

**ENGLAND**  
BCM Box 3514, London, England WC1N 3XX

## Our Life and Times

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

Despite worldwide condemnation, Nigeria's ruling military regime led by Gen. Sani Abacha sentenced nine members of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People to death for treason and, barely a week later, hung them on Nov. 10. The brutal execution drew international attention because it included Ken Saro-Wiwa, popular writer, Nobel Peace Prize candidate and fighter for the people of Ogoniland.

### Bosnia accord

(Continued from page 1)

city was able to hold out because hundreds risked death on six-day journeys through Serb lines to bring back supplies and weapons carried on their backs.

As Bosnian Commander Samir, a key local military leader, noted, "the difference is that here, we have never accepted demilitarization. In three years, our army has made progress. We will accept no compromises" (*Le Monde*, Oct. 20, 1995). For now, this determination has been grudgingly recognized—the Dayton agreement establishes a corridor between Gorazde and Sarajevo.

Clinton's rush to settle the war came at a time when the Bosnian army was finally making some important gains. The Dayton agreement stops these gains in their tracks and even rolls back some of them.

In addition, it leaves totally unclear the role of Croatia. Presently, ethnic chauvinist Croat militias loyal to Tudjman control the majority of the 50% of Bosnia not controlled by the Serbian neo-fascist forces. The dirty little secret of Bosnia today is that the multiethnic Bosnian government may end up controlling under 20% of the national territory once the dust settles.

Most of this has been obscured by the debate over whether to send in 20,000 U.S. peacekeeping troops, as Clinton is now doing. Tellingly, in his 20-minute speech justifying this move, Clinton spent less than one minute on the genocide suffered by the Bosnian people and the rest of the time talking geo-politics.

The crocodile tears shed for Bosnia by Clinton's isolationist Republican opponents, who on paper (but never too forcefully) call for lifting the arms embargo instead, was quickly given the lie by Texas Senator Phil Gramm's comments that this was, after all, a "500-year-old" ethnic conflict, thus blurring the difference between the perpetrators and the victims of genocide.

An outright fascist Bosnian Serb entity—complete with concentration camps—is being legitimized in the heart of Europe. This will give encouragement to similar retrogressive movements the world over—from the American neo-fascist militia movement and the Christian Right to the equally reactionary Farrakhanites, and from the Islamic fundamentalists of the Middle East to the anti-Arab National Front in France. For the truth is that, today, "democrats" like Clinton are ready to give recognition to some of the most reactionary forces seen anywhere since the 1930s.

In his novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Ernest Hemingway suggested that the Western powers' failure to aid Spain's anti-fascist struggles in the 1930s paved the way for Hitler's onslaught. He wrote that the bells tolling in Spain were ringing for all of us in the outside world as well, that the horrors would not end there. Those bells are tolling in Bosnia today, for those able to hear them.

## Executions in Nigeria

The Ogoni people, who comprise .5% of Nigeria's population, live in the oil-rich Niger Delta, which accounts for 80% of Nigeria's oil revenues and is pumped primarily by Dutch/Shell Oil. This wealth of a vital world commodity meant nothing to the Ogoni but misery in environmental destruction through oil spills and flare offs in the oil fields. No revenues were returned to the people.

The balance changed in 1992, when the Ogoni movement demanded that the government and oil producers pay \$10 billion to compensate for environmental damages and as a share of revenues—or leave. After a mass demonstration in Ogoniland at the beginning of 1993, Nigerian police killed a reported 2,000 Ogonis and destroyed over two dozen villages. Shell Oil was driven out, but the Ogoni defiance has continued.

The worldwide condemnation of the hangings has not included any serious pressure, not even an oil embargo—especially by the West. It is the fear of internal opposition that led to the execution of Saro-Wiwa and his comrades. Others suffer in Abacha's jails, not only Moshood Abiola, who actually won the 1993 presidential elections but was denied office by the military, but student, labor and intellectual dissidents. Independent international solidarity with the Nigerian freedom struggle is needed now more than ever.

### Haiti: Aristide fights back

Things continue to heat up in Haiti. On Nov. 9, the U.S. announced that it was suspending all remaining economic aid because the Aristide government had appointed a new Prime Minister, Claudette Werleigh. Werleigh is close to the liberation theology movement and is therefore believed by the U.S. government to be opposed to American-imposed free market and austerity-centered economic programs agreed to last year.

Two days before, parliament representative Jean-Hubert Feuile, a close colleague and cousin of Aristide, was assassinated, apparently by Duvalierist thugs. Responding to this challenge by the old elite, Aristide took the gloves off. At a funeral speech for Feuile, he complained that the U.S. and UN troops have done little to disarm the paramilitary forces of the old regime.

Aristide has gone on to attack the U.S. government for holding onto records it seized from the Haitian military dictators and from fascist groups like FRAPH. The Haitian government needs these records to find and arrest these elements and also as evidence when they are brought to trial. The U.S. won't release them because the records would also expose years of U.S. complicity with the same elements.

### Ireland legalizes divorce

The victory for the divorce referendum, narrow as it was, nonetheless represents a major change for women's rights in Ireland as well as overall human rights. In 1986, a similar referendum was defeated two to one after a massive campaign by the Catholic Church. This time, the forces of clerical obscurantism saw their support levels drop by a third, enabling Ireland to end its status as the last country in Western Europe which still banned divorce. Even with the changed law, however, divorce will still be severely restricted. Other fundamental women's rights, such as abortion, are still denied.

## French strikes spread

University students in France have gone on strike once again, demanding that more money be put into the country's overcrowded and crumbling universities. It be-



More than 100,000 striking workers marched in Bordeaux, Nov. 24.

gan in Rouen in October. Students occupied the rector's office and were then dispersed by police with typical brutality. This led to more protests. Finally, a government mediator agreed to unlock some funds for the university.

This has led in turn to protests at other universities, where students are also demanding more funding. Throughout November, public employees have also gone on strike in large numbers to protest threatened cuts in their pensions and other benefits. Both students and workers are confronting plans by the conservative Chirac government to make severe spending cuts.

## Sri Lanka attacks Tamils

The military offensive launched by Sri Lanka President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga against the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in their stronghold city of Jaffna has driven the rebels into the jungles. LTTE leader Vellupillai Prabhakaran has vowed to continue a guerrilla campaign for establishment of an independent Tamil state in northern Sri Lanka.

In face of Sinhalese oppression in Sri Lanka, the Tamil minority has been fighting for some form of independence in a 12-year civil war. Kumaratunga's Freedom Party was elected last year on a promise to end the fighting by offering an autonomy plan to Tamils under which they would gain some measure of self-rule, but the precondition was that the LTTE begin a formal disarming.

After a shaky cease-fire and tentative peace negotiations were broken last spring by a series of Tamil raids, Kumaratunga opted for military repression. The government expended over \$500 million, a huge chunk of the Sri Lanka economy, in a worldwide shopping spree for military arms and advice. Since the October military offensive began, hundreds of soldiers and civilians have been killed every day, adding to the 60,000 people who have died since the fighting began. The government has let it be known that only the death or capture of Prabhakaran can break the stalemate with the LTTE, while claiming at the same time that the armed struggle has to be separated from a "resolution of the ethnic conflict" between the Sinhalese majority and the Tamils.

## Who We Are and What We Stand For

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Walesa out in Poland

By a vote of 9,704,439 to 9,058,176 Poland closed an epoch. Alexander Kwasniewski, an ex-Communist, defeated Lech Walesa in national elections for President. The return of ex-Communists to power started two years ago when the post-Communist Party, SLD, won the most seats in the parliament.

One of the major factors which helped Kwasniewski defeat Walesa is the widespread disappointment with the "Solidarnosc" government, whose freedom—reduced to freedom for commodities only, free market—brought about a plummeting standard of living for most workers and much sharper divisions between the very poor and the wealthy. As Adam Michnik commented on the post-Communist era, "the question mainly was: whose Poland? but not what kind of Poland?"

Capitalist ideology has so blinded all reason that whether "whose Poland" refers to a privatization program which is turning state-run factories into private corporations, or to identity politics ("Poland for the Poles") bolstered by religion, nowhere in sight are the principles that moved people to create "Solidarnosc"—the concept of social justice became in post-Communist Poland a "socialist anachronism."

No one seriously thinks that Kwasniewski's government will re-establish old-style Communism in Poland. The free market economy is not threatened by the results of the election. The worst fear is whether the central bank will remain independent of the state.

If Poland has a future, it is clear that it, like the rest of the world, will have to break out of the ideological fetters of capitalism that only grants freedom to things. Appreciating that state and private capitalism are not fundamentally different is the first step in breaking from capitalism altogether. The hope for Poland, and the world, is not this or that President, but making real the high-minded principles *Solidarnosc* was based on in 1980.

— Urszula Wislanka