

# NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

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## Support women at Mitsubishi!



by B. Ann Lastelle

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission on April 9 filed charges against Mitsubishi Motor Manufacturing of America in Normal, Ill., for engaging in "a pattern and practice of discrimination against a class of female employees" by "creating a hostile and abusive work environment based on unwelcome verbal and physical sexual conduct, including sexual graffiti, sexually derogatory and explicit comments and innuendo, and unwanted groping, grabbing, and touching." Of 4,000 workers at the plant, 800 are women. The company denies the charges and has launched a battle to defend itself.

Mitsubishi is located in central Illinois, the scene of fierce struggles in the last four years against Bridgestone/Firestone, Caterpillar and A.E. Staley, all of which were defeated. The company undoubtedly is emboldened by those defeats; the workers are discouraged about the prospects for fighting corporate power.

Mitsubishi gave employees a choice on April 22. For their day's pay they could either come to work or ride to Chicago on buses chartered by the company (with lunch provided by the company) to protest at the district EEOC office. This pro-company demonstration of 3,000 workers was a new low for the labor movement. It is not, however, the only recent instance of a corporation sponsoring pro-company employees' actions against dissident workers. Caterpillar is providing financial support for scabs who have sued the United Auto Workers union for abuse and torment during the strike.

Mitsubishi is a UAW shop. Where, one might ask, is the union? While International officials decried (from

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### Black World

## Whither Liberia?



by Lou Turner

The outbreak of factional violence in Liberia over the Easter weekend has once again plunged that fractured nation into a new, more vicious round of factional fighting. Sparked this time by the government's attempt to arrest Gen. Roosevelt Johnson, leader of one of the four factions that had been pressed into a volatile alliance under Liberia's strong-man Charles Taylor, Johnson's forces went berserk in the downtown area of the Liberian capital of Monrovia. Thousands fled for safety into the U.S. embassy.

Nearly a month after the outbreak of hostilities, the U.S. embassy in Monrovia, with the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs George Moose headquartered there, came under attack on April 30 by Johnson's forces. With several thousand U.S. Marines aboard ships offshore, the unusual presence of a State Department official of Moose's rank in Monrovia raises questions about U.S. military intentions.

The arrest order for Johnson was expedited because his supporters had killed 17 soldiers from the West African peacekeeping force ECOMOG, along with Liberian civilians, in December. The West African forces had entered the country six years ago to disengage the warring factions, and were just beginning to carry out the Abuja Peace Accords of August 1995, which called for the disarming of the factions, when they were fired upon by Johnson loyalists.

In the present fighting ECOMOG forces have maintained their neutrality and stood aside as Monrovia once again became a war zone, while U.S. helicopter gunships evacuated U.S. nationals to Freetown, Sierra Leone. Writing for *West Africa* (April 15-21, 1996), Maxwell Nwagboso observed that "As the helicopter gunships homed in to ferry out waiting refugees, snipers went to work in a manner reminiscent of what happened not so long ago in Bosnia-Herzegovina."

Throughout much of African commentary on Liberia, analysis like Lindsay Barrett have compared the Liberia crisis to that in Bosnia, and contrasted the U.S.'s response to the two conflagrations. The well over 200,000 Liberian lives lost in six years of fighting, the mass refugee problems created, and the impact on the conflict in

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## New voices of opposition to prison warehousing of the poor

by Gerard Emmett

*"Prison is a slaughterhouse with dollar signs in return for destroyed lives."*

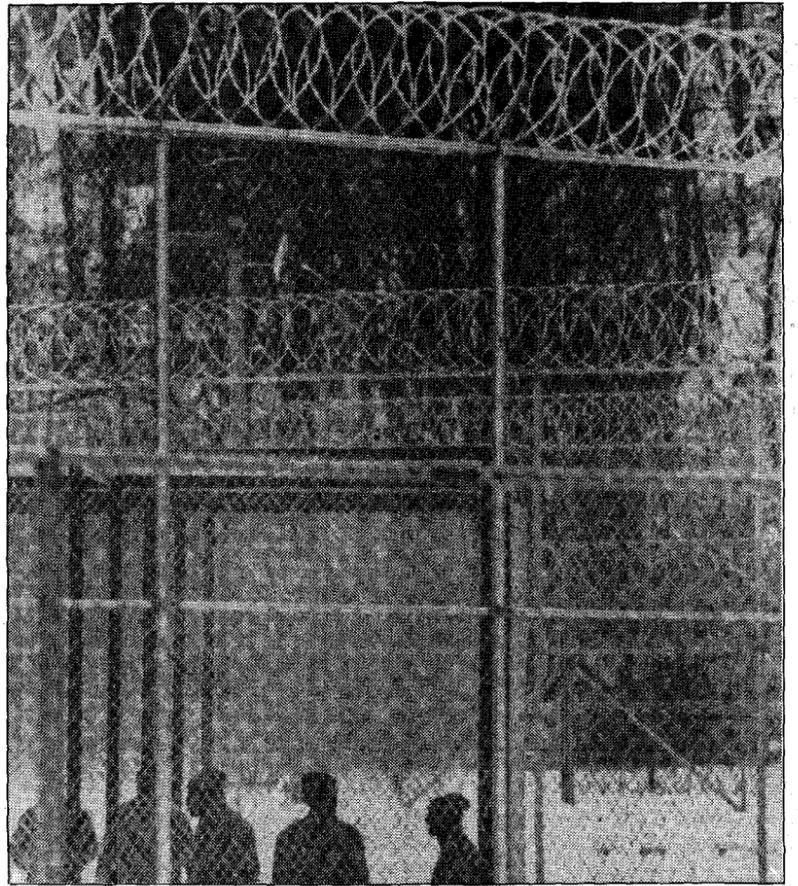
—Arizona woman prisoner

Four years ago, the Los Angeles Rebellion exploded upon the national consciousness as the largest urban insurrection in U.S. history, sparked by the racist obliviousness of a white Simi Valley jury. The specter of this rebellion, initiated by Blacks and joined by large numbers of Latinos and some whites, has driven the racist powers that be to a frenzied reaction ever since.

The videotaped brutal beatings by police of a Black woman motorist in North Carolina and, a continent away, the police beating of Mexican immigrants in California—both so reminiscent of the Rodney King beating—provide a proper frame for viewing what America has become for the poor and non-white. Recent incidents in Chicago have included the cold-blooded shooting of Joseph Gould, a homeless Black man who had offered to wash the car window of an off-duty police officer; the beating to death by police of Jorge Guillen, a mentally disturbed Honduran immigrant whose family had called on them to take him to the hospital; and the police execution of Eric Smith, a deaf Black man, while his family members looked on in helpless horror.

The attack on Latinos, particularly immigrants, has also now become more intense nationwide as the Republican Congress is contemplating new anti-immigrant legislation that would not only rescue the "ethnic cleansing" measures of California's racist Proposition 187, but extend them nationwide. President Clinton's election year response to this is simply to try to compete with the Republicans in appearing to be tougher on so-called "illegals." Raids by his Immigration and Naturalization Service across the country recently rounded up over a thousand immigrants.

The burgeoning prison system is the centerpiece of the burgeoning of population and provides ample proof that for the United States of America, the road to hell is marked by signs reading "Law and Order." One of the most obscene examples of this was Senator Robert



Dole's recent campaign tour of the death chamber at California's San Quentin prison. This hypocritical crusader for "decency" presented himself as the head cheerleader for executions in the very presence of those already condemned. This goes beyond the usual campaign

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### ON THE INSIDE

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## We urgently need your help to stay in the fight!

The global nature of the myriad economic and political crises we suffer today is easily seen in the headlines of any daily paper. We learn of the unconscionable slaughter of hundreds of Lebanese civilians, caught in the veritable rain of Israeli bombs retaliating against the Hezbollah's Katyusha rockets. We are told the slaughter of the Bosnian people is past, now that four years of Serbian and Croatian aggression and a so-called "peace plan" has succeeded in the complete partition of that tortured land. At home, pictures of the beatings of immigrant Mexican laborers recall pictures of the beating of a Black motorist, Rodney King—while "law and order" is daily meted out on the heads of youth, especially, who are treated like the "throw away" generation. Meanwhile, at the same time that we are told the economy is "picking up," it has become harder and harder for working families to make ends meet. And "downsizing" has become the euphemism for discarding half of a work force and speeding up those remaining—while corporate profits soar.

Every day we are told there is no alternative to this barbaric system. This makes it crucial to recognize the forces in revolt against this barbarism and let them be heard—the kind of voices that are heard in every issue of *News & Letters*. They are heard in this issue in the report of Women for Peace in Israel; in the stories of Black workers fighting for union recognition in the South; in our Lead on prisoners determined to speak for themselves. **They ring louder and clearer in these pages because only here are they heard unseparated from the articulation of a philosophy of revolution that discerns the future from within the dialectic of the present.**

\* \* \*

It is that unique combination of philosophy and revolution that makes it urgent to keep *N&L* alive and to help strengthen its outreach. This year that involves ev-

erything from our publication of a new, expanded edition of *Bosnia-Herzegovina: Achilles Heel of "Western Civilization"*; to our assistance to help bring to reality a new pamphlet written by prisoners themselves; to the establishment of a new local *News and Letters* Committee in the South. In all these tasks, **WE NEED YOUR HELP MORE THAN EVER.**

We urgently ask for your help to pay the ever-rising bills for our office rent, our staggering postage costs, the \$1,500 it costs to print every issue of *N&L*. And this year we are asking your special help to pay the additional \$3,700 printing bill for our new edition of the only book on the struggle for a multiethnic Bosnia which links the urgency of developing its concept to our struggles right here at home.

As we have since our birth over four decades ago, we must turn to you, our readers, to help us keep *News & Letters* alive and growing. **YOUR SUPPORT WAS NEVER MORE NEEDED. PLEASE GIVE AS GENEROUSLY AS YOU CAN TO HELP US CONTINUE!**

Enclosed is my contribution \$\_\_\_\_\_ to help keep *N&L* going.

I am enclosing \$\_\_\_\_\_ for gift subscriptions (addresses enclosed).

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## Middle East: bombs, revenge and hope

*Editor's note: Below we print excerpts from the passionate words of an Israeli feminist and peace activist which reached us too late for the last issue, but are even more important today in light of the recent horrors in Lebanon. We conclude with her update on Lebanon.*

**Jerusalem**—On Sunday, March 3, I awoke to the second bomb in Jerusalem. This time "only" 18 dead, "only" 7 seriously wounded. But Sunday was the last day that my friend Nahum would sit in official mourning for his son, killed in the first bomb a week earlier, so I felt I had to see him, although I was afraid to use the buses. After I left Nahum, I decided I was brave enough to take the bus 18 home. Everything was quiet until we got to the area of the bomb, where mobs were gathering and beginning to get violent. They were shouting "Death to Arabs," and "Death to Peres." After about 15 minutes, the police got the mob to let the bus through.

The next day I heard two wonderful items of news at noon: 1) The head Muslim Sheikh in Israel declared that terrorism was against the Koran and called upon clergy throughout the Muslim world to call for an end to it; 2) A mass demonstration of several thousand people in Gaza came out to support the peace process and called for an end to the bombs and terrorism.

At 4 p.m. the third bomb went off. The newscaster said that so far there were about 15 dead and over a hundred wounded, some of them children.

Then the next blow: The government announced its "defense" measures against terrorism, Prime Minister Peres trying to placate the Right by the old-fashioned "iron fist" policy. It would be a total closure of the territories, including foodstuffs and medical supplies, the demolition of the homes of the families whose sons had been the suicide bombers and possible expulsions of the male members of the families.

I called the B'Tselem human rights organization (where I was about to step down as chair) and we talked about how to stop it. But bad precedents make all of this a struggle doomed to failure. Not a single case to prevent collective punishment of Palestinians has been won ever since the occupation began.

After considerable soul searching, I finally decided to call the mother of someone who was just killed—who I knew might be sympathetic—to ask if she would be willing to speak out against the house demolitions. Well, although she agreed with the principle, she didn't agree to do it for various personal reasons, especially not "exploiting the death" of her son to advance any form of ideology. I do understand and respect that, but what a lost opportunity. It also makes me want to say right here out loud, on paper:

If I get hurt or killed in a terrorist act, I refuse to sanction the use of my injury or death by the government of Israel to justify harm to innocent people. Furthermore, I hereby authorize use of my injury or death to advance the cause of peace, including blatant use of my funeral or mourning or death, and especially all acts of outreach, kindness, compassion and humanity to all those responsible for my death.

That night, a Peace Now demonstration was quickly organized and I went bearing a homemade sign: "Peace = No more revenge! Do not harm innocent families." Amazingly, the organizers became incensed at the sign, and asked me to stand apart from everyone else. Some of them objected because they were afraid it would sound like criticism of Peres (it was!!), who the demonstration wanted to support, and others because they disagreed with the sentiment!

## Women in Action forum

**Berkeley, Cal.**—The Long Haul community activist center sponsored a ground-breaking meeting for feminists on April 1, entitled "Women in Action: a forum on radical women's organizations." The forum brought together over 50 women from a variety of women's organizations including STORM (Standing Together to Organize a Revolutionary Movement), the Lesbian Avengers, Asian Immigrant Women Advocates and Comite Emiliano Zapata to discuss "What are we doing? What directions are we moving in?"

One woman from STORM, a group formed by mostly women of color who wanted to study theory and history as well as act upon what they had learned, said, "We're at a critical space in history. We have to take from people's experiences and what they've seen."

A woman from the Lesbian Avengers (LA), a group known for its creative activism, spoke of how their group wanted to go beyond just trying to gain media attention. "It's the revolutionary movement, that's where I'm heading." In the East Bay, the LA are expanding their work to include race and class issues.

A woman from Comite Emiliano Zapata, a group which bases its vision on the Zapatista movement in Chiapas, asked, "Am I working to be a Latina with a job, or am I working to develop a vision of a whole different world?" Within a mere five minutes of this woman speaking, the forum participants had decided to sponsor another meeting in one month to discuss "our visions of the future."

I was so excited by this event, especially after feeling frustrated during the past several years with my involvement in feminist groups who limit their scope to planning actions and refuse to give ample space for developing ideas about where we are going with our revolutionary feminism and how to relate to others fighting for a new kind of society where we can be free.

I look forward to the second Women in Action forum scheduled for May 6 at the Long Haul. Call 510-540-0751 for more information. —Julia Jones

Even the famed left-wing author, David Grossman, whose book *Yellow Wind* did more to raise awareness of the oppressive nature of the occupation than almost anything else, spoke out publicly in favor of the house demolitions, calling them "painful but legitimate."

The only ray of hope—as usual in Israel—is the women's peace movement. A week ago, a group of Jerusalem women got together and decided to put an ad in the paper of women who condemn the collective punishment. Just about all the 250 Jewish and Arab women who signed the ad had been peace activists during the years of the intifada, almost all in the Women in Black vigils.

\* \* \*

**April 22**—And then another round began with Lebanon. "They started it," both sides were saying, which would have been laughable had it not resulted in 400,000 people fleeing their homes and more pointless death and destruction. So it's back to the streets. One Jerusalem intersection now has three regular demonstrations on facing corners, each touting peace: "Peace with Peres" (i.e., support Peres and he'll find a way to climb down from the tree of war); "Peace with the Likud" (i.e., support the Likud and they'll bomb the Hezbollah into submission) and, less abstractly, Women in Black's "Get Out of Lebanon."

How long can we in the Middle East keep up this level of intensity? We haven't even recovered from the bombs, finished demolishing all the houses or lifted the closure, and we get distracted by yet another war. Maybe we just have to learn how to focus. —Gila Svirsky

See "Lebanon invasion undermines peace process," page 12.

## Thousands 'fight the right'

**San Francisco**—Tens of thousands of people desiring to "Fight the Right" filled a park near Fort Mason on April 14. Sponsored by the National Organization for Women, the event was organized to demand no retreat on affirmative action, fight racism and immigrant bashing, support medicaid and medicare, protect abortion and reproductive rights, stop all forms of violence against women, ban discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation, promote fair labor practices and end the war on poor people. Such a melding of issues is unprecedented in national marches such as this.

The most notably focused and energetic group was the contingent of immigrants rights activists. Waving colorfully painted banners, "Who is the illegal alien?" and "Borders are for squares," the crowd chanted, "Aqui estamos y no nos vamos, y si nos echa regresamos" (We're here and we're staying, and if they throw us out we'll come back!)

Other contingents included an astounding number of Les/bi/gay activists, coalitions for affirmative action, young feminists, health rights organizations, labor unions, environmental activists, welfare rights groups, animal liberationists and a huge contingent from the groups fighting the Civil "Wrongs" Initiative (CCRI).

Despite their pleasure for the opportunity to come out against the Right, many showed disappointment with the liberal focus of the official speakers who promoted an active relationship to electoral politics. Many were frustrated by such self-limitations and wanted to talk about how to move forward.

Despite this, thousands left hopeful of a revitalization of the fight against the Right. As one Black homeless woman put it, "We must go back to our communities and become the leading force in this country." I couldn't agree more. —Participant

## Mitsubishi intimidation

**Normal, Ill.**—Mitsubishi Motor's response to the sexual harassment charges against the company has divided workers and resulted in a backlash against the plaintiffs. Mitsubishi has made it easy for employees to support the company instead of their fellow workers.

Telephones were installed at the plant so that workers could call the EEOC and legislators at no charge. A three-page handbook was distributed with names and addresses of local and regional newspapers, the White House and the EEOC, as well as legislators. Workers were told at a "unity" meeting that if they did not stick together, car sales would drop and people could lose their jobs.

The women have experienced direct intimidation from both the company and fellow workers. Mitsubishi has asked the court for documents on the women involved in a private lawsuit against the company, including complete gynecological records, information on abortions, divorce records, the names and addresses of people with whom they have cohabitated as well as the women's credit card records.

Attorney Pat Benassi was told that a message in the men's bathroom warned that if women caused him to lose his job, he would "go hunting" for women. The local newspaper reported that as a female employee was leaving an employee meeting someone told her, "Watch your back b----." Another woman found a note in her locker which read, "Die b----! You'll be sorry."

Women need to be able to go to work free from fear of harassment. The Mitsubishi lawsuit offers us the opportunity to stand up in defense of women everywhere who have suffered the humiliation of sexual harassment. —Sherrin Fitzer

## Women Worldwide

by Mary Jo Grey



More than 100 pro-choice supporters rallied outside the federal building in Chicago, April 1, denouncing the threats of Operation Rescue "terrorists" to close down abortion clinics during the week of the Democratic Convention in August. "The clinics will stay open!" vowed the demonstrators.

\* \* \*

A group of German social activists has formed Intact: International Action Against Circumcision, an organization to help the international campaign to publicize in the West the medical dangers of female genital mutilation, and to help women's groups in Asia and Africa who are fighting to end this misogynist practice. An estimated 100 million women, as well as two million more young girls each year, are victims of this barbarous procedure. More than 150,000 young girls die annually when this occurs under unsanitary conditions.

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Housekeeping workers at the Red Lion Coliseum Inn in Portland, Or.—mostly immigrants and women of color—are fighting health problems caused by toxic cleaning products; harassment on the job, and poverty level wages. Despite meetings to discuss these dangers, Red Lion management has refused to make changes.

## Workshop Talks

(continued from page 1)

Washington) "Mitsubishi's efforts to pressure its employees into demonstrating," Don Shelby, vice president of the local "said the local told members they were free to attend the protest" (Chicago Sun-Times, April 23). The local reportedly has refused to reiterate the UAW's position against sexual harassment or to use this opportunity to educate its members on what sexual harassment is.

The context for this specific abdication of responsibility is 15 years of the labor bureaucracy's general abdication, beginning in the early 1980s with a "controlled" or "strategic" retreat on wages and working conditions, followed by implementation of employee participation/team concept schemes. Labor "leaders" bought into the ideology of "competitiveness," the myth of a common interest between workers and company in saving jobs, and thereby undermined the principles of unionism. No wonder the Mitsubishi local is unable and/or unwilling to establish an identity independent of the company.

One of the lawyers representing 29 women who filed a private civil suit in December 1994 against Mitsubishi for sexual harassment told me that the company's defense is "these women are sluts." That defense was amplified by a worker at the Chicago rally: You do it with them six days a week, and then one day you're on your period or you got out on the wrong side of bed and you don't want to be bothered, so you go file charges.

Vilifying women, their sexuality and their determination to choose their own relationships and lives is a tactic Mitsubishi shares with right-wingers who attempt to control women on welfare through "reform." Sexual harassment and being on welfare are supposedly personal, not social, problems. These attitudes are only attempts to make women feel more isolated and helpless. I know, as a woman subjected to sexual harassment, how confused and hurt a woman can feel, how it cuts to the very heart of who she is as a human being. No one else can determine for you when your humanity has been violated.

The union, asserted the same worker, has to remain neutral because it represents both the accusers and the accused. A true workers' organization, however, represents not specific individuals nor simply the majority (in this case men), but stands for the interests of the labor movement as a whole and takes care of the future of that movement. Company loyalty and sexual harassment are the past and the present; they are not the future.

It is not enough to wait for the women to testify in court when we will find out exactly what happened. We, labor activists and women's liberationists, must find a way to support these women, even though they remain mostly hidden due to a well-founded fear of retaliation. At stake is the future of the workers' movement and its relationship to working women, who must be an integral part of it.

## Boycott supports Taylor Chair strike

**Clarksdale, Miss.**—Workers at Taylor Chair in Clarksdale, Miss., the Delta town made famous as the "Home of the Blues," have plenty of reason to be singing the blues. The workers, members of Furniture Workers Division, IUE, Local 282, have been on strike since Jan. 11. Although the mostly Black work force only makes an average of \$6.50 an hour, they were forced onto the picket line by a management determined to extract devastating givebacks in a new contract.

Taylor Chair, a wealthy, family-owned corporation based in Ohio, is demanding that the workers agree to losing sick pay and optical benefits, freezing wages for two years and raising the employees' out-of-pocket health care deductible by over 600%. In addition, the company wants the monthly premium increases in 1997 to be paid entirely by the workers, whether \$50 or \$500.

The real issue, say the workers, is this: Why should Taylor Chair workers in Mississippi be treated as second-class employees compared with Taylor Chair workers in unionized plants in Ohio and California? Workers in Taylor's Bedford, Ohio plant make nearly twice what workers in Clarksdale make and get better benefits. The workers call it "plantation wages."

A flyer written by Taylor Chair workers sums it up: "For many years, the Taylor family has presented them-

selves as the model of compassion, fairness, decency and willingness to help the underprivileged. This is the image they display in the Cleveland/Bedford, Ohio area, but in the Mississippi Delta town of Clarksdale, Dr. Jekyll becomes the vicious Mr. Hyde with a display of arrogance that is seldom shown by Southern plantation owners. For instance: Women are paid less than men for performing comparable work. Qualified women and minorities are overlooked for promotions. All we want is to be treated with fairness, equality, dignity and respect. Is this asking too much of a company that prides itself in being the oldest furniture manufacturer in the U.S.?"

"Negotiations have been a mockery of the process," says Local 282 president Willie Rudd. "We don't even have a date for the next talks." Workers have picketed the plant every day since Jan. 11, through ice and tornado warnings. Most of the workers walked out, but a few scabs and supervisors continue to cross the picket line. "They aren't getting much done in there," Rudd said. "The Bedford plant had to close down several days last month because they didn't have parts from Clarksdale."

Willie Rudd went to Cleveland the first week of April where he was joined by other IUE locals and local unions from the Central Labor Council in picketing a Taylor Chair showroom. Picket lines in other cities are now being planned and so is a march in Clarksdale involving union and civil rights supporters in Mississippi. They are calling on union members and friends to spread the word about the struggle at Taylor.

For information, call the Nashville office of IUE Local 282, at (615) 889-8860.

**BOYCOTT TAYLOR CHAIR!  
JOIN THE PICKET LINES IN YOUR CITY!**

## Newspaper strike deepens



**Detroit**—Nearly 4,000 striking newspaper workers and their families, and supporters from other unions and the community jammed into Cobo Convention Center's Riverfront Ballroom April 13 for a rally led by striker Susan Watson who edits the *Detroit Sunday Journal* (published by strikers). Spirits were high as the crowd cheered AFL-CIO officers John Sweeney, Linda Chavez-Thompson and Richard Trumka.

All six unions on strike against the Detroit Newspaper Agency (DNA) have refused to bargain separately since they walked out July 13, 1995. The DNA has not held talks since Feb. 13; the reason, they claim, is an ongoing NLRB investigation into charges brought by the unions on nine counts of labor law violations. The DNA failed to respond to subpoenas delivered in February by the six unions and unilaterally declared an "impasse." On April 25 they declared (again unilaterally) that their workplace was now an open shop, which means that workers may "choose" whether or not to belong to a union.

Support for the strike continues to broaden. Several community and union leaders traveled to the Knight-Ridder shareholder meeting in Miami to plead the strikers' cause. Readers United, a community and labor coalition, continues to spearhead civil disobedience actions every Thursday outside the Detroit News Building. (To date, 232 people have been arrested.)

Despite a television advertising campaign and manipulative telemarketing by the DNA to increase circulation, the unions have asked people to refuse to subscribe to or advertise in the scab newspapers and to subscribe to the *Sunday Journal* instead (call 313/567-9818).

—News and Letters Committee member

## Jobs and Living Wages

**Chicago**—A powerful voice was raised in favor of raising the minimum wage and obtaining a living wage for all workers on April 25, when over 2,000 marched as part of the Jobs and Living Wages Campaign.

About 1,000 members of the SEIU (who were holding their national convention at the time) joined the march, as did workers from other unions, ranging from the UFCW to the Teamsters. But the most distinctive dimension of this march was the hundreds of unemployed and/or homeless Black men and women from the South Side who joined with "organized" trade unions.

Many from a homeless shelter on the South Side were clearly angered at Mayor Daley's decision to close the homeless shelter in the Loop as a way to present a "clean" image of Chicago for the upcoming Democratic National Convention. Many of the unemployed came to voice their support for an ordinance that would require city contracts to be awarded to companies that provide a wage of no less than \$7.57 an hour.

Though it was most unusual to see so many unionized workers marching alongside the unemployed and homeless, many felt this was precisely the kind of coalescence needed to make the voices of labor and the Black dimension heard.

—Peter Wermuth

## On new labor organizers

by Felix Martin, Labor Editor

I read where college students are being recruited by labor unions to become organizers and that the young people see this as working for social change. Chris Woods, who runs the AFL-CIO's efforts, said that she had been "surprised by the upswing in applications from college campuses." She went on to state that students from many major colleges are applying for full-time jobs as organizers after graduation.

These students realize they're the first generation that will have a lower standard of living than their parents. They are beginning to realize that change has to come from them. There is no future getting a job in a large corporation because downsizing would have you back on the street before you could get the chair bottom warm at your desk.

I am a retired auto worker, farmer, and from the coal mining part of eastern Kentucky. I come out of the 1930s, when preachers, workers and unemployed became union organizers by first organizing themselves. You were not taught organizing unions in college when I was a young man. For the most part, in those days, you were taught how to lick the capitalists' boots. I am glad to read where these young people see what capitalism has done and want to do something to change this social system from destroying all of humanity.

I think the new generation should first get jobs and learn from the workers on the jobs. There is where they will get real education. A bourgeois education can help also, if it is used in the right ways. The two together can help workers and organizers organize themselves.

Then the power of production can be transformed in the hands of the workers where it rightfully belongs. Production in the hands of capitalists, and workers under control of "labor leaders," cannot work for the good of all people.

Those 70 million jobs that have been created since 1979, that Chamber of Commerce officials try to brainwash you with, are low-paying part-time jobs. No one can get married and raise a family on part-time work. This is the world of capitalism in the year of 1996. Only the people themselves can change things. To do what they need a philosophy, a Marxist-Humanist philosophy of revolution in permanence.

## Swindled out of benefits

**Somerville, Tenn.**—When Somerville Mills sent its production to Mexico and laid off all the sewing machine operators—most of whom were the union members (see *News & Letters*, March 1996)—about 40 of us applied for unemployment insurance. Then we were ordered to jobs at Allison Corporation and Master Apparel, and all of us had our unemployment cut off.

At a hearing on one woman's appeal, the unemployment representative, claimed that the worker said she wasn't interested in working and had other options and didn't come in. The worker said that when called for sewing jobs she reminded the unemployment representative that after surgery for carpal tunnel syndrome, she didn't want to take a chance on injuring her wrists again. She was told it doesn't make any difference and then asked twice, "Are you coming in?" Four days later the worker received a notice in the mail saying her unemployment had been terminated for refusing a job.

When the union representative explained the reason the worker didn't want a sewing job was because of injury, the referee cut her off, saying, "I have no interest whatsoever." He didn't want it on record that she wasn't refusing work, just that job, because it would damage her wrist. That would show unemployment was discriminating against someone because of a disability.

When questioned, the unemployment representative admitted that they got a call from Nashville, the state capital, and were ordered to send the Somerville workers to jobs at Allison Corporation and Master Apparel. The union representative asked, why weren't other unemployed people offered these jobs? "Because we were only told to send the workers from Somerville Mills" was the answer.

The call from Nashville was from John Wilder, the Lieutenant Governor of Tennessee. He has a hand in everything going on in Nashville and he has always supported the companies.

For years, Mr. Wilder has been running things here in Fayette County. About 90% of Fayette County used to be owned by Blacks. Wilder and banks he was working with made loans to farmers and other poor people in the community—made them loans they couldn't pay back and forced them to give up their land.

—Garment worker

## Injuries at Sinai Kosher

**Chicago**—There's a lot of harassment at Sinai Kosher when people get hurt. The human resources department ordered a woman with a broken ankle to report for light duty work. Why can't they let people like her stay home?

They have their trophies in the office for a good accident record, but they get them by keeping hurt people on the job. That's why they harass you if you're hurt.

Quite a few of the women have problems with their hands or wrists. On the packaging lines, if your hand hurts, you have to keep going. The company knows there's a problem. They used to give out ace bandages, but they didn't do any good. Now they have people wearing wrist bands that go around the thumb and up the wrist, but they don't help either. They are so uncomfortable that come people can't wear them.

—Sinai Kosher workers

## A wake-up call for GM

**Shreveport, La.**—Five days after the 17-day strike in Dayton, Ohio which stopped production at most GM North American operations, we went back to work at the GM plant here. By returning to work on a Wednesday we lost that week's unemployment insurance payment (\$193) as well as pay for a short work week (95% of our weekly pay).

The strike sent a signal to all workers that GM needs the workers much more than the workers need GM. It's a shame that some workers have been so brainwashed that they don't even realize the power or control that they themselves have. Most of those I've talked to are worried about more plants going on strike. Don't they understand that with each strike we could strengthen labor instead of the capitalist?

I think the union was established so all workers' rights can be protected. But my feeling is that we let the union sell each of us out. I feel a union is better than no union, but workers need more than what they have—especially when you pay union dues.

On April 15 UAW Local 112 workers at the Lords-town, Ohio assembly plant walked out three hours after the first shift started, due to the firing of a shop chairman. After GM demanded that the workers come back to work, it went to a Cleveland Court for an injunction to end the walkout.

What's happening at GM? Have workers finally decided to use their own minds? I think it scares the capitalists to see that workers have their own thoughts and ideas. What happened in the 17-day Dayton strike has caused GM workers to move. The Dayton strike has also scared the hell out of some workers.

I say to GM that this is your wake-up call. People who struggle to make ends meet will, when pushed, revolt! I hope that workers who are afraid of change remember how the strikes and movements of labor in the past have helped create a better chance for labor now. But now the capitalist wants all the surplus and wants workers to give back what the workers before us had to do to get us to where we are today!

—GM workers

## Why loss at American Cat

**Itta Bena, Miss.**—The union was defeated at American Catfish on April 5 (see *News & Letters*, April 1996.) The count was 115 to 64 against the union and we had 187 out of 221 sign UFCW Local 1529 union cards. Someone backed down. We got together to discuss why.

Some of the workers had tried to tell us: "Y'all didn't win." "Y'all?!! It's not 'You all,' because you all are the union. They know they can do better, it's just being afraid to do better.

A week before the election a worker got up and said he had worked for a union plant, Delta Pride, that he was fired three times on a trumped up charge and all three times he got his job back with back pay and no lost seniority. That evening they went back two months to fire him for not bringing an excuse for going to a meeting.

A Black woman union activist responded: "That's what killed it! Everyone got scared." People feel, "I can't lose that job. They fired him because he was talking union, so I better leave this union stuff alone." I was looking for a job when I came here, and I will be looking for one when I leave. So I don't have to bow down and scrape and kiss and lick and lap just to keep a little job. If they ever realized that they are the union, they would do something."

Another Black woman unionist said, "When they realize the Man lied, these people will be back. The Man was saying, 'I'm going to give you something and that's it.' Next time, give me the contract."

The first woman summed it up: "The workers at Sealy Mattress in Memphis had 13 elections before they got a contract. I honestly believe that organized labor is going to revive because of the treatment, the downsizing and cutting of the wages and allegedly trying to compete. Workers just take so much and then will do something about it. It's going to take some dedicated work."

—Black women union fighters

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

**Editor's Note**

A celebration of Karl Marx's birth (May 5, 1818, in Trier, Germany) can be a way to recreate his new continent of thought and revolution for today. That is why this month we excerpt a letter by Raya Dunayevskaya to Marxist-Humanists. It previewed a talk she was to give on May 4, 1980, to the Detroit News and Letters Committee on Marx's philosophy of revolution in permanence.

Immediately following the lecture, which she titled "A birthtime of history," Dunayevskaya offered the first tentative outline of her book, then known as the "Rosa Luxemburg book." "Post-Marx Marxism as pejorative," her critique of all those who have limited Marx's own Marxism, became the central concept in the book published as *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* in 1981.

N&L readers can find the full letter and outline in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection, Marxist-Humanism: A Half-Century of its World Development* (pp. 6454-6458).

April 8, 1980

I wish to write on the special May 4 meeting on Karl Marx's birth, not as a day but as what Hegel called "a birthtime of history," and what we call a new continent of thought and of revolution. It will be a projection of some of the fundamental points of the final chapter of the Rosa Luxemburg book. That may be, and is, a contradiction to the dialectical principle that you cannot know before you know. In the specific instance of the book when I have finished only about half of it, this means I cannot possibly relate to it directly. Yet as a review of the 40 years of Marx's creativity, from the moment of his break with bourgeois society in 1843 and the early writings, to a brief four months before his death and the *Ethnological Notebooks*, the talk cannot but relate all Marxists (including Rosa Luxemburg) since Marx's death to the new continent of thought Marx discovered.

Our age has one advantage, that of knowing more of Marx's writing than did Luxemburg's age. We as Marxist-Humanists, again by drawing no distinction between "the young" and "the mature" Marx, made philosophy, economics and politics into a totality. The objective situation helped us since it was the period of a new type of revolution (Hungary 1956) against Communism's transformation into opposite, state-capitalism, thus creating a movement from practice to theory and compelling revolutionary theoreticians to constantly create anew.

Nevertheless we must never forget Hegel's warning about knowing something so well as to take it for granted: "In general, what is well known, precisely because it is well known, is not known. The most common mode of self-delusion and of creating illusions for others is, in knowledge, to presuppose something as being well known, and to accept it as such. Such knowledge, without being aware that this is happening, refuses to budge despite all discussion." (*Phenomenology of Mind, Preface*).

Take, for example, the fact that all of Marx's works have the word "critique" in them, and we certainly know that from the time he was working with Arnold Ruge and trying to start a new magazine, Marx wrote him in September 1843 that the purpose of the journal must be "the relentless critique of everything that exists." But has "critique" been made the equivalent of "revolutionary" and "practical" as totally as it was with Marx, beginning with the *Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts* which he completed the next year?

Those manuscripts didn't, after all, come to light for some 84 years, needed nothing short of the November 1917 Russian Revolution to bring them out of the Second International's vaults, and another 38 years before a new generation of revolutionaries, rebelling against the new monstrosity of Russian state-capitalism, brought them onto this period's historic stage, and thereby also to the English-speaking world. Nearly a quarter of a century has passed since then and while we have produced more of that whole new continent of thought Marx had discovered in 1844 than either the old left or the so-called New Left, it is first now that we are scheduling, at one and the same time, a new book and projecting the transformation of *News & Letters* into a theoretical as well as an activist organ. So again I say the fact that "we know," and indeed "live by" the fact that Marx was a revolutionary does not yet mean grasping in full Marxism as a whole new continent of thought.

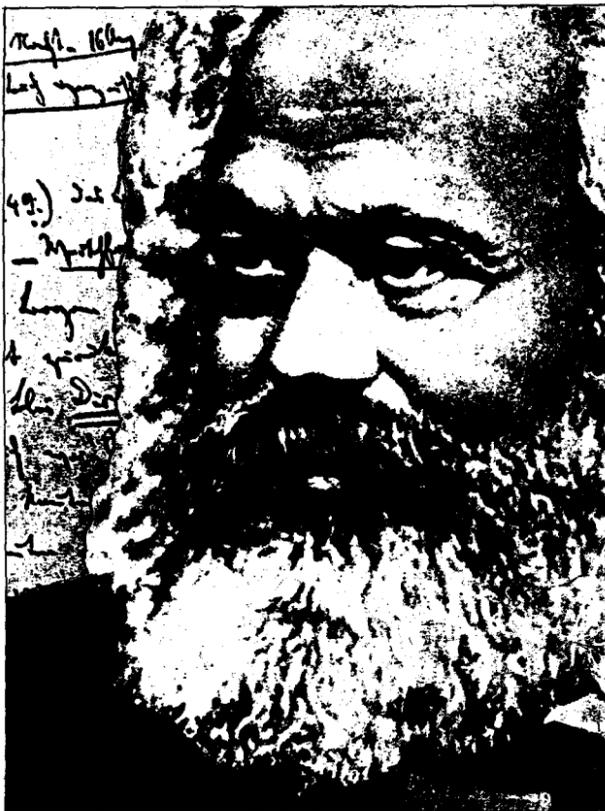
Luxemburg certainly was a revolutionary, and so was Lenin, and so was Trotsky, and even some Social-Democrats who later turned out to be counter-revolutionaries, were revolutionaries when they first established the new Second, Marxist International. None of them saw it as a new continent of thought (except Lenin, who had to break with his philosophic past and have the world fall about him in the First World War before, by returning to Marx's deep-rootedness in Hegel, he recognized that not a single Marxist, himself included, had understood Marx's *Capital*; especially its first chapter).

What I'm driving at is that if you recognize Marx only as founder of a socialism and not as the founder of a new continent of thought, your attitude is such that of necessity you recognize also Lassalle as a founder. As for Engels, who was also not only a founder but the only one ca-

# Do Marxists know Marx's own philosophy of revolution?

pable of issuing Volumes 2 and 3 of *Capital*, didn't he also nevertheless first rush to issue his own *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, as a "bequest" by Marx? And here was a man, a founder who knew that Marx was "one" and he was only "two"!

Let me try to stress that point from a different direction. That point is crucial not just for the book, not just for the May 4 talk, but for the whole march of history to that point of unity of philosophy and revolution. For, otherwise, we would always have a duality—philosophy and revolution—instead of philosophy of revolution. Let me state first, on the question of Lassalle as a founder,



that that type of attitude is exactly what led inexorably to the revolutionary, super-erudite scholar and author of the first (and still, unfortunately, one of the best) biographers of Marx—Franz Mehring—shutting all doors to any conception of what a new continent of thought Marxism was. Class struggle, yes; brilliant, yes; a founder, yes; but that shouldn't keep "the new generation" (I'm referring to August Bebel) from writing rather angrily about the "two old men in London" not really understanding "the new." The "new" Bebel was referring to was the need for a "unified Party" predominating over theoretical quibbling. Reconsider this:

1) In 1875 the Lassalleans and the Eisenachists (supposedly full Marxists) are uniting to form a new party at Gotha. Lassalle is dead, but its program is fully Lassallean. 2) Marx and Engels hit the ceiling, want to disassociate themselves from that Party, but instead feel that the movement is so important that they should limit themselves to criticizing it in lengthy letters to the Eisenachists. 3) Marx writes "marginal notes" on that program; the *Critique of the Gotha Program* is one of the greatest of the shorter historical political writings ever, but it doesn't get published. 4) Sixteen years pass, a new, mass, "genuinely Marxist Party" [the Second International] is headed by Karl Kautsky, Bebel, Eduard Bernstein—and they write a new program, the Erfurt Program. Engels is still alive and when he sees that program, he writes a critical letter and insists that Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Program* now be published. When they finally can resist no longer, they publish it with an editorial note which says that it is "a contribution to the discussion."

And that, dear youth and others, is what the whole International lived on until its total collapse in 1914. How much clearer would the road have been for all of us had we known Marx's analysis not only of the Lassalleans, but of his first meeting with Kautsky: "A small-minded mediocrity, too clever by half (he is only 26), industrious in a certain way, busies himself with statistics but does not derive anything intelligent from them, belonging by nature to the tribe of Philistines." (Letter from Marx to his daughter Jenny, April 11, 1881)

The question, the serious question, is the attitude of the serious revolutionaries, serious in the sense of their acknowledging "orthodox Marxism"—could they also be just egotistic and "correctly" non-cultist regarding Marx when they acted that "independently"? No, it's a great deal worse, for it was not only those who deviated but those who were "orthodox," "sincere," and revolutionary. No wonder Lenin said there is no such thing as a "sincerometer." What made them believe otherwise is that they were not petty-bourgeois individualists. They "sincerely" believed they were reducing their own individuality to the Universal of socialism, as was "proven" by the fact that the most important thing for them was to "popularize Marx" and "apply" it to the concrete situation as they saw it.

So it wasn't just that they didn't know the 1844 Manuscripts, or that their understanding of the 1850s and the *Critique of Political Economy* was inadequate because they didn't have the *Grundrisse*, but that when theory

was spelled out in organizational form, they felt free to disagree on "little" organizational questions.

Let's take another look at those 1844 Manuscripts and deal this time with still a newer generation of intellectuals that discovered them. One of the finest analyses of the 1844 Manuscripts was one of the first—Herbert Marcuse's—when it was finally published in Germany in 1932. The very title of his review essay, "The Foundation of Historical Materialism," shows that the young Marcuse, far from separating the early philosophical Marx from the mature economist, actually made the early work the foundation for Marxism and for all aspects summarized in historical materialism. He certainly was also the one who saw revolution as inherent in the very first writings of Marx. This 45-page essay is quite comprehensive in the economic, political and philosophic aspects.

And yet there is not one single word of Marx's profundities on the Man-Woman relationship, though it's in the very same paragraph that Marx speaks against vulgar communism which is what Marcuse did recognize as central. Nor is it only a question that there was no movement from practice as a Women's Liberation Movement. Marx first had the vision and the philosophy and the "new humanism" which he declared was both a compelling need and had a revolutionary force.

Clearly, it isn't only the last few years of Marx's life when he was working on the *Ethnological Notebooks* that need to be brought back to life, to theory, and made into a challenge for our generation. For that matter, the very year, 1871, which supposedly every Marxist understood and certainly always celebrated—the Paris Commune—remained nothing but a celebration. It wasn't until Lenin, on the eve of revolution, "rewrote"\* *The Civil War in France as State and Revolution* that the Paris Commune was studied seriously as both theory and practice, as well as foundation for new revolutions.

Let's not forget that to this day, the anarchists keep saying that Lenin wrote *State and Revolution* as pure demagoguery whereas they followed the true intellectual forebearers of the Paris Commune—Proudhonists and Bakuninists. In a word, it is not only Lenin they oppose but Marx they slander as an alleged "statist" though the whole of *The Civil War in France*, as the whole of *State and Revolution*, is directed to the destruction of the bourgeois state, to establishing "no state" but the commune form of existence since, said Marx, the greatest achievement of the Paris Commune was "its own working existence."

May 4, which brings Marx's May 5 birthday a day ahead of time, follows by three days May 1. The two [dates] give that new continent of thought its American roots as well as its Black dimension. I hope we never consider as a cliché Marx's statement that "Labor in the white skin cannot be free so long as labor in the Black skin is branded." It was, after all, not only as an oppressed race that Marx embraced the Black dimension, but as that creative revolutionary force which opened a new epoch for the whole world. It is in this sense that this year's "May celebration" opens up a new stage for us both as the year of Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's *Philosophy of Revolution* and as the period of the transformation of *News & Letters* into a twelve page theoretical as well as activist organ. I'm confident that this also means that you will not keep the date of the meeting as your secret, but bring part of the "outside" world with you to it.

\* The so-called independent, erudite Marxists who think *State and Revolution* is no more than a "rewrite" of Marx's analysis of the Paris Commune should study, study very carefully, how Georg Lukacs and Karl Korsch, the very Marxists who did reintroduce dialectics as the indispensable revolutionary element in Marxism, nevertheless stopped short, far short, of identifying dialectics of the Idea with the dialectic of liberation; whereas Lenin went directly from Hegel's *Science of Logic* and its principle, that "man's cognition not only reflects the world but creates it," to the National Question as the dialectic of history that would help transform the imperialist war into a civil war, and his very last Testament where he characterized Bukharin as not fully a Marxist because he did not understand the dialectic.

## NEWS & LETTERS

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# Dialogue from India: On the dialectics of Women's Liberation

*Editor's note: A new book has recently been published by revolutionaries in India entitled **Dialectics of Women's Liberation**, which contains six chapters of Raya Dunayevskaya's **Women's Liberation** and the **Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future**. Because of the importance of their effort to rethink the meaning of Marxist-Humanism for the reality facing today's freedom struggles, we publish here excerpts of the Foreword (by Arvind Ghosh) and Preface (by Nita and Shankar).*

## From the Foreword

The relationship between Marxism and the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) has remained strained due to two reasons. First is the attitude of Marxists and Communists who have rejected the WLM as totally bourgeois and therefore not worthy of support. A section of Marxists have evaded the whole question by saying that women's oppression is inevitable under capitalism and can only be abolished when that society is overthrown—thus ignoring the ways in which the oppression of women itself becomes an obstacle to the overthrow of capitalism and therefore a struggle against this oppression becomes an integral part of the struggle against capitalism. Second is the attitude of theorists of the WLM who have rejected Marxism as inadequate and even incapable of explaining women's oppression and therefore of little use to the WLM. According to these theoreticians, Marx is supposed to have totally ignored the presence of womankind in the reality he was analyzing.

Michelle Barrett, known as a Marxist feminist, writes, "On the question of feminism even the most committed Marxists now suspect that our idol has feet of clay. Many feminists see this weakness as one which vitiates the whole of Marx's works. Gone are the days when 'The Woman Question' could be answered from the writings of Marx: his treatment of the issue is now widely regarded as scattered and unsatisfactory. The situation is scarcely improved by the fact that much of what is attributed to Marx, particularly in relation to the emancipation of women, was in fact the work of Engels. It is not entirely clear how far Marx himself accepted arguments, such as those eventually set out in Engels' *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*."



Alison Jaggar goes even further: "Marxist theory was not designed primarily to provide an account of women's nature and women's oppression. What Marxism has to say about women is peripheral to the central claims of the theory, so that Marxist reflections on women's situation could be dropped entirely without changing the system in a substantial way."

Even the far-left socialist feminist Sheila Rowbotham is no exception to this general line of thinking. She writes, "Although Marx was formally committed to the legal emancipation of women and to the right to work, his intellectual passion was not directed towards relations between men and women, but towards class."

In this monotonous backdrop Raya Dunayevskaya's views comes as a refreshing change. Here is a Marxist revolutionary who is at the same time an activist and a theoretician of the WLM. She appears on the scene as a sharp critic of those Marxists as well as WLM theorists who have tried to reduce Marx to a single discipline—either as an economist, a philosopher, an anthropologist or a political strategist—forgetting that "Marx at all times, in theory as in practice and in practice as in theory, was a revolutionary" and that women's liberation was integral to Marx's theory of revolution. Tracing the views of Marx on Women's Liberation from 1844 to 1883 Dunayevskaya convincingly demonstrates that far from being indifferent to women, Marx considered the man-woman relation as the most fundamental of all relationships and that this concept is of central importance in his total philosophy of revolution....

Dunayevskaya not only delves deep into Marx to bring forth the connection between his views on Women's Liberation and his philosophy of revolution in permanence, she also distinguishes Marx's Marxism from the post-Marx Marxists beginning with Engels himself. The failure of the theoreticians of the WLM lies in their inability to distinguish the revolutionary humanist content in Marx's thought and practice from the post-Marx Marxists who had deviated from Marx and whom they wrongly equate with Marx.

She shows that the views expressed in the *Origin of Family, Private Property and State* differs fundamentally from that of Marx on the question of Women's Liberation. Firstly, "the world historic defeat of the female sex," which according to Engels formed the basis of transition from matriarchy to patriarchy, is no expression of Marx. No defeat of Marx could be a world historic defeat and what was important for him was the lesson learned from defeat so that the next battle could be transformed into a victory.

"Moreover, for Marx, the dialectical development from one stage to another is related to new revolutionary upsurges, whereas Engels sees it as a unilateral progression." The "world historic defeat" which in turn is related to the "primordial division of labour between the sexes" is again no concept of Marx. Even in *The German Ideology* where Marx and Engels are supposed to have put forward the view that the first division of labour was sexual, it was perceived as a social division and not just a personal one. Rather, Marx had shown that the most

fundamental division characterizing all class-societies is the division between mental and manual labour which needed a thorough uprooting in order to establish a classless, casteless, non-sexist, non-racist, truly human society....

It is from the standpoint of the proletariat as a conscious subject struggling to constitute itself as a class that the importance of specifically feminist struggles within the working class can be measured. The acceptance by women of the present situation is a condition for the stability of the capitalist system while struggle against these forms of oppression strike at the roots of the reproduction of capitalist relations of production.

As Marx pointed out in relation to the English and Irish workers, it is inconceivable that the proletariat could overthrow the class-domination of the bourgeoisie unless it has first eliminated all relations of domination and subordination within its own ranks. Another way of putting this is to say that the constitution of the proletariat as a human community is the condition of its revolutionary success.

So long as proletarians collaborate in suppressing the development of capacities of other proletarians, they put obstacles in the way of these others participating in the class-struggle and thus put obstacles towards constituting working-class solidarity. At the same time they dehumanize themselves and thus render themselves less capable of struggling against the dehumanization of bourgeois society. Male chauvinism in the working proletariat and dominates it. Dunayevskaya has rightly pointed out that the WLM was born in the mid-1960s against this very male chauvinism, and the unique feature of this movement was that "not only did it come out of the Left but it was directed against it and not from the right but from within the Left itself"....

In so far as the WLM is directed against dehumanized human relationships, domination and for mutual affirmation, it is an integral part of the struggle for socialism, without which the struggle cannot be successful.... Although to specify the forms which human relationships will take in the future society is difficult today, some such attempts will have to be made since it is the task of the communists to anticipate not only in theory but also in practice the relations of a society which has yet to be built.

—Arvind Ghosh

## From the Preface

The capitalist order is in the grip of ever-deepening all round crisis—social, economic, political, cultural and moral crisis. The global capitalist economy shows no signs of stabilizing and the crisis is continually deepening in spite of all the newest "recipes."

On the other hand, there is continual and growing resistance of the working people, sporadic rioting by the

youth, local uprisings and powerful militant protests. The desire for freedom is obvious in ever-renewed forms of resistance. As seen during the recent powerful protests of working men and women in France, the history of revolutions are very much in people's minds as exemplified by some placards carried by demonstrators on which was written simply "1871 to 1995"! The aspirations of freedom are there everywhere and yet no new beginnings are being made to advance the revolutionary movements from practice.

An emancipatory vision as an alternative to the capitalist order and its barbarism is not emerging globally even six years after the state capitalist dictatorships collapsed under the blows of repeated working-class revolts and the objective crisis of capitalism.

The resistance of workers, of all oppressed, exploited humanity remains fragmented. A deep sense of confusion, frustration, cynicism, pessimism is very much evident among revolutionary activists, among struggling exploited humanity everywhere. Neither activism for the sake of activism nor "vanguardism" offer any solution.

Particularly when movements from practice are not leading to new beginnings in the revolutionary movement even when the global capitalist order is in ever-deepening all-round crisis, although resistance of exploited humanity against it is going on everywhere, it is particularly necessary to work towards a movement from revolutionary theory, to make new beginnings in revolutionary theory-philosophy which can facilitate, help advance the revolutionary movement.

For that, it is very necessary for all of us to assimilate the highpoints reached by previous social revolutions and revolutionary movements—the revolution of 1917 in Russia, the East European revolts against "statism" (1953-89), the global revolutionary upsurge of the 1960s, the revolutionary uprisings in Chile, Portugal, Iran. It is crucial to develop a total philosophy of revolution for total human liberation. Marx's philosophy of revolution is crucial to the working out of this total philosophy of revolution and therefore it is necessary to rediscover Marx's Marxism for our age.

It is in order to facilitate this process that this small collection is being published, "the red thread" running through which is Marx's total philosophy of revolution. This is a very small part of Raya's work and hopefully it will stimulate interest in the whole body of her theoretical work, especially what she called her trilogy of revolution—Marxism and Freedom; Philosophy and Revolution; and Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution.

Women, especially working women, in every revolution have not only shown that their activity is indispensable to the advance of the revolutionary process, but they have initiated the profoundest social revolution—the Russian Revolution of 1917. The fullest and deepest growth of the Women's Liberation Movement is a condition for and inseparably linked to the fullest growth of the fight of labour to emancipate itself, to all struggles for freedom, to the fight for a classless, stateless society, for total human liberation. And therefore it is a necessary part of the advancement of the revolutionary movement today to recover the concept of "Liberation," which has been pushed to the margins in the Women's Movement, to develop a revolutionary theory of Women's Liberation for our times.

—Nita and Shankar

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## WILL THE STRUGGLE IN MEXICO ADVANCE?

I was so excited by the April issue of N&L. Mitch Weerth's lead on Mexico seemed to directly illustrate what Raya Dunayevskaya was covering in the Archives page on the Absolute Idea. When Mitch wrote of how a merging of the radical rural poor with the urban working class would pose an even greater threat to the powers that be, it made me think of how when subjectivities get together, the idea of freedom is deepened.

The self-determination of the Idea is what seems to be all around us in many activities we have been attending here in the Bay Area as well. From the strong Latino presence at NOW's "Fight the Right March" a few weeks ago, to the Women in Action meeting where a young Latina from the Comite Emiliano Zapata spoke of creating a vision of a new society, to the welfare lines where women I spoke with aren't buying Farakhan's bourgeois call for "atonement," there is a visible outreach for more than just reacting to today's retrogression.

Sharon Cannery  
Bay Area

Mitch Weerth's piece on Mexico ("Will Mexico's Civil War Become Total?", April 1996 N&L) was one of the best pieces I have read on that country's crisis. It made me feel as if I were sitting in Chiapas looking out at the rest of the world. To me it is proof that having a philosophic perspective does not detract from having a "grassroots" view of an unfolding situation.

Latin American solidarity activist  
Illinois

I question the headline on your article on Mexico. The Zapatistas are totally surrounded, armed struggle has been contained to the area of Chiapas, and the Left is largely on the defensive throughout Mexico. So where is the "civil war?" If there's one going on, it must be an awfully one-sided one.

F.L.  
Indiana

There are many on the Left who criticize the Zapatistas for not having a political program that outlines how the masses can seize power. Maybe there is some reason to be critical of them for allowing themselves to be boxed into a corner by the Mexican government. But maybe their position also represents a consciousness of the need for revolution to assume a new path. Instead of concentrating on seizing power first and then trying to figure out how to create a new society, they are putting the emphasis on creating new forms of democracy and grassroots participation before any change of power. We should look closer at the situation before coming to snap judgments.

Chicano activist  
California

When I look at the course taken by revolutions in this country, I cannot help but think that the revolutionaries were not really interesting in changing the relations of power as much as taking power for themselves. You can sound radical by talking "revolution," but it doesn't mean anything if the relation of rulers to ruled isn't changed.

Mexican immigrant  
Los Angeles

As far as I can see there is almost a total absence of discussions on Marxism in Latin America nowadays. It sometimes seems futile to even raise the subject. But I see your point that there is a good reason for this which may in the end yield a positive outcome. Revolutions took the wrong path by following a Marxist-Leninist or Stalinist direction, and it is not yet clear there is an alternative pathway. But once an alternative becomes clearly articulated in theory, something new might emerge, because it is very doubtful many will want to repeat the wrong paths taken by revolutions in the past.

Philosophy student  
California

The National Commission for Democracy in Mexico-U.S.A. is committed to providing accurate, up-to-date information and analysis in the U.S. regarding the struggle for democracy in Mexico, neoliberalism, the Zapatistas and the

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THE PLIGHT  
OF THE  
IMMIGRANT

In response to John Marcotte's excellent "Workshop Talks" column in the April issue: He talks of the immigrants' labor power brought here by capitalism to expand the value of its labor in industries like agriculture, garment, restaurants and health care. Even though they bring their own ideas, skills and special training and are able to find work they usually become underemployed—doctors not being physicians, teachers not teaching and nurses not being able to provide nursing. This is how the capitalist really creates value, getting a lot for a lot less—kind of a double fetish.

Jerry K.  
Chicago

What can we say about the times we live in when about a week after the televised beating of immigrants by the Riverside County Sheriff's deputies, 6,000 people protested against it, while the exact same day over 200 people protested to demand criminal prosecution of "illegal immigrants" and sending military forces to guard the border with Mexico. All this happened only hours after a second incident in Temecula, California where this time seven immigrants died. Furthermore, about a week after this demonstration, the ex-chief of police Daryl Gates headed off to a rally in support of the deputies that did the beating.

Unlike Rodney King, today the public support of the police officers and public attacks against immigrants have become very mainstream. Militia groups are threatening to take matters into their own hands by going around checking for green cards and making sure that people do not hire "illegal immigrants." What does it mean that "illegal immigrants" take all kinds of risks, including risking their lives by trying to smuggle into this country for work, and once here are submitted to abuse and exploitation?

Immigrant  
Los Angeles

## BOSNIA TODAY

I find it rather revealing that whereas the U.S. is having so much trouble identifying and capturing the Serbian militiamen who everyone knows massacred thousands of Bosnians, it has found it easy to discover "evidence" of an "Islamic fundamentalist connection" to the Bosnian government. They are treating reports that Iran shipped a relatively small amount of arms to Bosnia and that 800 soldiers from Iran remain in the country (they never did any actual fighting on the front, by the way) as some major revelation. Could all this be one more way in which the U.S. and NATO is trying to pressure the Bosnians into not saying or doing anything the U.S. might consider "out of line"? We should believe today's lies no more than yesterday's.

Supporter of Bosnia  
Chicago

Your insistence that the lesson to be learned from Yugoslavia's collapse is what happens when a liberating alternative to capitalism isn't projected from the Left is right on! I hadn't thought of it exactly in these words, but that's what has been going through my mind for some time. I see it right before me today with Buchanan. He is attacking corporate America at the very time the Left is afraid to come out with a clear alterna-

## Readers' Views

tive to capitalism. There are lot of angry people out there, and we have to find new ways to speak to them.

Journalist  
Los Angeles

## GENDER AND LABOR

To date, the Bloomington, Ill. Pantagraph has printed a dozen letters from Mitsubishi employees decrying the sexual harassment lawsuit against the company. A recurring line goes like: "I've worked here for years, and I've never witnessed any sexual harassment." The plant in question has 4,000 employees. Some who have written letters reside in towns with a smaller population. It would have been as meaningless had they said, "I've lived in this community all my life, and I've never witnessed any spousal abuse."

I work in a factory that is a fraction the size of the Mitsubishi plant. Most of the day, my attention and movement is restricted by the demands of production. Much happens that I haven't the opportunity to witness.

Tesla Coil  
Central Illinois

The "protest" march of thousands of Mitsubishi workers reminded me somewhat of the Million Man March. The right people marching for the wrong reasons. Twenty-five years ago there would have been no doubt in my mind that this was a protest in support of the hundreds of women that have accused Mitsubishi of sexual harassment. In fact, when I first heard about it on the news, I assumed that's what they were going to say it was. I felt the same sense of confusion that I initially felt when I heard about the Million Man March, even though the Mitsubishi protest is obviously different. I was appalled by the voices I heard of the women involved in that protest. Where are the voices of reason?

Suzanne Rose  
Chicago

FEMINISM  
AND THE  
BLACK  
DIMENSION

In his column, "Two indignant hearts of Black feminism," Lou Turner separates Black feminists who had the "political experiences of the '60s," from those of today's generation who didn't and who, therefore, in his view, are not political. How can an entire generation of today's Black feminists be written off because they didn't live in a certain time? Today's Black feminists have absorbed the consciousness that Black women developed from their experiences of sexism within the movement of the '60s and '70s and have at the same time, and of necessity, been sharp in their critique of the truly "non-political" nature of the Million Man March, for example. Experience of consciousness is not limited to the historic moment one lives in.

As for the phrase, "unenforceable" patriarchal order of the Black community," it serves to erase the power Black men do have over Black women. While the white male establishment is the patriarchy of the U.S., patriarchal relations nevertheless do exist within the Black community. The implication that the Black community operates along the lines of a matriarchy is what Black feminists have had to prove a myth ever since the Moynahan report tried to blame all the problems of the Black community and country on the women. They also fought against the matriarchal myth pushed by Black leftist men.

Sonia Bergonzi  
Chicago

The story on the Dept. of Children and Family Services made me think

about the relationship of women to their children. A man can just walk away from his children, but the reality of children's lives, pulls on a mother. The concept of love for their children which so many women feel is a rock and foundation for building a new society. We see its manifestation in organizations like Mothers Reclaiming Our Children, women organizing against police and court abuse and injustice. It is a concept of human relationships that demands the creation of something new.

Black activist  
Los Angeles

As an African woman who has lived in Poland and is now in Britain, I can tell you that women are oppressed everywhere, be it in Africa, Asia or Europe. An English woman has just discussed with me what both of us see as the suppression of women at work as well as at home by men who see women as objects or as a threat to their own interests, instead of as partners in fighting for freedom and justice in our societies.

Women's Liberationist  
England

THE  
IDEALISM  
OF YOUTH

Even though the April 21 "60 minutes" feature on 13-year-old Canadian human rights activist Craig Keilburger focused on the child prodigy angle, it was thrilling to see how the idea of freedom captivated a youth half a world away from Pakistan, where Iqbal Masih was gunned down at age 12 for his activism against child slavery.

With major legislation to his credit (labels on imported rugs must declare child labor content; firecrackers made by children are now outlawed in Toronto), Keilburger has the makings of a great revolutionary. Unfortunately, the government's efforts to contain him—e.g., the Minister of Foreign Affairs offered him an advisory position—will likely orient him to an unrevolutionary career in politics. For all his astuteness in scoffing at the notion that slavery has been abolished, he may never understand that Iqbal's parents and the company that purchased a four-year-old Iqbal for \$16 are bad actors in a system that punishes good actors more.

David  
Oakland

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

I enjoy your publication very much, but am somewhat mystified by the fact that the vast majority of readers' letters, as well as some of the articles, bear no one's real name. Instead, we see bylines like "Caterpillar Worker" and "Boeing Machinist" and signatures like "Radical Intellectual, Wash., D.C." "Supporter, British Columbia" and "African-American activist, Chicago." Is that just a self-perpetuating style that everyone adopts? I can see why workers might be reluctant to reveal their identities for fear of employer retribution. But why are so many radical readers hiding their identities? I would be grateful for an editor's note (if you print this) with an explanation. Until then, in the spirit of current N&L practice,

Curious, proud and unafraid radical  
Washington, D.C.

Editor's note: When N&L began in 1955 in the midst of McCarthyism, we used such designations as "White worker" or "Black student" or "Working woman" not only to protect writers but because we found that such designations told far more about who a writer was than "John Smith" or "Mary Doe." We still do, unless the name is well known enough to be meaningful to the readers of N&L or the writer insists on having his/her "real" name published.

### IS THE STRIKE STILL A VALID WEAPON?

I read an article in the business section of the L.A. Times that the G.M. strike in March caused a 0.5% drop in U.S. industrial output, but, discounting the strike's broad impact, production grew 0.3%. If 2,700 auto workers that struck G.M. caused a 0.5% drop in U.S. industry, what would happen if 40 million workers went on strike against cuts and takebacks which enrich CEOs who produce nothing?

Retired auto worker  
California

A number of striking Detroit newspaper workers come in here, and we sell the *Workers Journal*. How is the strike going? I'm glad to hear that there is community support, but Gannett and Knight Ridder [joint owners of the Detroit News and Free Press] are such big companies that it hardly makes a dent in their profits. We need to get support at their other newspapers all over the country. The striking unions and strike supporters have asked readers to boycott USA Today and The Miami Herald.

Pharmacist  
Southwest Detroit

I've been drafted onto a government "training program" in information technology. It means that in addition to the usual hassles of living on nothing, I've had to do a five-day a week commuting to East London. The course is run by a TEC ("Training Enterprise Council"), which is given heaps of money to subsidize employers and contract out to training companies, who get paid on the principle of the "New 3 Rs": Recruitment (the firm gets 150 quid a week per trainee for two months); Retention (I couldn't leave); and Results (a piece of paper called a National Vocation Qualification).

A few weeks into my course, signs of rot began to appear: the computer magazines stopped appearing in the tea room; the tea and then the coffee ran out in the machines; the printing paper ran out and wasn't replaced; the badly paid trainers looked depressed; then management announced the firm had gone broke and was closing down. The gov-

ernment could have given us the computers for the money they spent and we could have learned everything we've been taught off the Help menu. The TEC is making arrangements for us to complete the course, so I supposed we'll get our bits of paper, but nobody gives a damn. The whole program is one enormous scam.

Disgruntled  
England

The ADM strike in Decatur occurred in the early '80s. Throwing skilled trades out was the issue, and ADM was asking for major concessions. The union there went on strike. Things got heated and ADM brought in scabs on buses. But back in the '80s everyone said, "This doesn't pertain to me." The attitude came back to bite them in the ass. In two and a half years of the Staley struggle, if we succeeded in getting that across to people, we will not consider it a waste. If I can help one person from working on rotational shifts at Staley or anywhere else, it was worth it.

Staley militant  
Decatur, Ill.



### DEFEND SARAH BALABAGAN!

Sarah Balabagan, a teenage Filipina, is scheduled to be released from a United Arab Emirates prison in May. Originally sentenced to die by musketry, in a conviction for stabbing her 58-year-old employer while attempting to fight off his attempt to rape her, she was penalized \$40,000, ordered to serve time and be given 100 lashes (all of which have been consummated).

According to the *Filipino Reporter* of March 29, she "eyes a career in law" to return the favor given by the lawyers who handled her case—"to fight for those who need legal help." She told the *Reporter* that there are many Filipina

women, several of them young girls, serving time in her facility, convicted of illegal pregnancy (pregnancy without benefit of marriage), and escaping from their employers. In addition to the stream of world-wide individual supporters, women activists in many parts of the world (including the U.S.) are organizing.

Sheila G.  
New York

### ISRAEL AND PUNISHMENT

That the government which supposedly represents the whole nation of Israel, can act so stupidly in order to take out the wind of the sail of Mr. Netanyahu and the Likud before the elections is beyond comprehension! Collective punishment did not work in Guernica or Lidice, and will definitely not work on the West Bank or Gaza. It will just get new converts to terrorism.

Holocaust survivor  
East Europe

Israeli Prime Minister Peres may think he is showing the world he is his "own man" in launching his bloody attacks on Lebanon. In fact, it only shows he is following in the mold established by Menachem Begin and Ariel Sharon. He is a kept man, imprisoned by the failed policies of the past.

Subscriber  
Illinois

In the aftermath of the bombing in Oklahoma, for days the news was full of an "Islamic-fundamentalist-foreign conspiracy." A few days later, it turned out that it was the work of some homegrown, right-wing fundamentalist fanatics. Is it possible that behind the hysteria whipped up after attributing the bombings in Israel to Hamas that they were actually committed by the same kind of homegrown, Israeli fundamentalist zealots who committed the massacre in Hebron a year ago and who recently killed Itzhak Rabin in order to sabotage his peace initiative? Or is it just a sad coincidence that the goal of the fanatics of Hamas and the Jewish funda-

mentalist zealots is the same, while the Palestinians end up being persecuted and quarantined behind a new, eventually electrified iron curtain?

Correspondent  
Vancouver

### A NOTE ON HAITI

Concerning Lou Turner's article on Haiti in the January-February issue: I was in Cite Soleil when the clashes between the police and what he referred to as the "Red Army" underground group occurred. I was close enough to see the guns and a national police member get shot in the arm. After speaking with many people both that afternoon and the next day, the story that emerged was very different from what you've been led to believe. The gun battle I saw was between the national police and a group of well-armed men identified by almost all I spoke with as Macoutes [right-wing death squads]. Many people theorize that the so-called "Red Army" is really the hired guns of the Macoutes. I was told that "Red Army" is not a name a Haitian would pick, even if they were socialist.

Lynn  
California

### CROMWELL'S REPUBLICANISM

I'm afraid Dave Black, in his essay article in N&L a few months ago, has his history of Cromwell and republicanism wrong. The Calvinist conception of republicanism held in the 16th and 17th centuries was far from being about democracy. Cromwell and "the Commonwealth men" were in the difficult position that their theology predisposed them to be monarchists. It is why many former Parliamentarians rallied to the Crown during the Civil War and why the Presbyterians and Independents then fell out and fought a second civil war. To them, Republic meant aristocratic republic, and though that was indeed just what it was, they had to find a different term.

Laurens Otter  
England

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## Black/Red View

by John Alan

May 18 will be the 100th anniversary of the United States Supreme Court's Plessy v. Ferguson decision, the "separate but equal" doctrine regulating race relations in the United States. In practice the doctrine placed its emphasis on "separate" and nothing on "equal."

In 1953, the Warren Supreme Court reversed itself by ruling in the Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas case that "separate but equal is inherently unequal." But eventually it took the mass action of African Americans to root out the most flagrant and subtle forms of racial segregation, the most historic action being the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott.

The "separate but equal" doctrine originated in a case brought to the Supreme Court in 1896 by Homer Plessy, a man of African-American descent. Plessy contended that his arrest for ignoring the Louisiana state law that mandated separate train coaches for Blacks and whites was a violation of his rights protected by the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution. The Court ruled against Plessy and thus gave an aura of Constitutional authority to the racist terror raging through the South.

Two worlds of race still exist in the U.S. and they still stand in opposition to each other. Liberals and quasi-radicals are offering various theoretical ways to prevent another explosion like South Central Los Angeles. One of them is to go beyond racial identity politics to a multicultural democracy, as if a multicultural democracy could be created within America's historically existing conditions of racism by people of good will. Or, in other words, racism can be transcended in the objective world by ignoring the racial identity of the subject engaged in the battle to transcend the two worlds of race.

It is precisely the identity of the subject that contains the will to transcend. As Raya Dunayevskaya, the Marxist-Humanist philosopher, states: "It is clear that for the Black masses, Black consciousness, awareness of themselves as Afro-American with a dual history and a special

## Black World

(continued from page 1)

Sierra Leone, the entrenchment of the military junta of Gen. Sani Abacha in Nigeria, and the instability throughout the West African region have not exactly mobilized the "moral imperatives" of U.S. foreign policy.

On the contrary, considering the U.S. defeat in Somalia, its indifference to unthinkable genocide in Rwanda, and its bowing to the capitalist interests of Western oil corporations by turning a blind eye to the military thugery in Nigeria, there is no reason to expect U.S. policy on Liberia to be governed by anything other than imperialist expediency.

As in the case of the Bosnian Serb warlords who had to be legitimized by the U.S. and NATO in order to do the bloody business of partitioning Bosnia and writing off the genocide of Bosnia's multiethnic population, so Liberia's warlords, whose forces have massacred hundreds of thousands of Liberians, have been made into respectable heads of state (sic).

Regardless of the events that are thought to be the immediate cause of the present round of fighting, there are two totally opposite conditions that together constitute the proximate ground whence the present crisis arose.

First, an April 1 target date had been set for the return to civil rule, the turning over of faction-held territory and security duties to the ECOMOG peacekeepers, and the disarming of military factions, especially the cadres of armed youth. This threatened to immediately diminish the armed power of the faction leaders. Fighting ensued a week later.

However, unlike the situation six years ago when Charles Taylor's forces invaded Liberia, with the backing of Libya's Qaddafi, to overthrow the regime of Samuel Doe, a widespread public and organized resistance to the armed terror imposed on Liberian society had developed. On Feb. 15, a massive one day general strike, called by the Inter-Faith Mediation Committee of Christian and Muslim leaders, the Liberian Women's Initiative and the Council of Chiefs succeeded in closing down government offices, schools, shops and street markets; taxi drivers and public transport workers shut down most means of travel; and newspapers suspended publication, while radio stations refused to broadcast.

But even as this unprecedented, one day strike for peace expressed the depth of Liberian civil society's desire for disarmament and a return to civil, democratic rule, the existence of a very different condition produced by the six year civil war represents the most serious obstacle to peace. Like the Sudan, Uganda, and Somalia, Liberia must address the question of the fate of its young fighters in a postmilitary society. Pressed into military service with no more political education than the capricious factionalism of military leaders like Taylor and Johnson, the fate of these Liberian youth under arms has been swept under the carpet by almost every party.

Far from the coalition Council of State showing any interest in the education of these armed youth in the ranks of their military factions, they are doing everything to hold onto their loyalties by reinforcing their legitimacy as "liberation forces." The concerns of the warring collective leadership of the Council of State are the spoils of humanitarian aid, instead of the revolutionary rehabilitation of society, beginning with its youth. It is this question of youth and revolution that has become crucial, not alone in Liberia, but as the most fundamental question of our changed world.

# Still separate, unequal 100 years after Plessy

pride, is a drive toward wholeness. Far from being a separation from the objective, it means an end to the separation between the objective and the subjective."

Black race identity remains a powerful force in American civilization because that identity has a dimension of negativity that pushes for the creation of a new kind of society based on totally new human relations. Abandonment of identity of the subject keeps the struggle within the necessity of political tactics. Thus, in California some in the movement against the repeal of affirmative action have decided to de-emphasize the issue of race in order to take the advantage away from conservatives.

When the U.S. Supreme Court handed down the Plessy decision in 1896, the post-Reconstruction counter-revolution had, in the words of African-American historian Rayford W. Logan, "dimmed the bright promise of the Emancipation Proclamation. The high hope of the reconstruction era ended by the sharp blows of race hatred." He could have also added that the Jim Crow system, the disenfranchisement, and lynching terror created the first modern African-American movement against racism and produced the first two major modern Black leaders, W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington.

DuBois wanted full African-American equality with white Americans and their integration in the American society. Washington wanted parallel separate Black eco-

## The killing of Ebrahima Sey

London—Saturday, March 16 will always stay in our memories, as it marked another police murder in Britain: this time a Gambian brother, a young man called Ebrahima Sey, a husband and father of two.

Ebrahima was arrested by Forest Gate police officers after a domestic dispute. During the arrest he wasn't violent. He walked freely into the police van without causing any trouble. One of his friends, Pa Ndimbalan, an eyewitness to the arrest, said he wanted to go to where the police were taking him and they accepted.

At their arrival to Ilford police station almost 20 police officers came out of the station to get Ebrahima inside. They rushed him down, strangled him, but he was still talking to his friend, "Pa, do you see what they are doing to me?" After that the police screened Pa, the witness, and asked him to leave.

Pa went outside and waited for five hours. He was called by a senior officer inside the police station and was told that Ebrahima was dead. A Scotland Yard officer called the media and told them that someone in police custody just died in King George Hospital that morning without even contacting Ebrahima's family.

According to what had been said by the police to the media, CS gas had been used and Ebrahima was suffering from a heart condition. But the family said that Ebrahima was a footballer, a very healthy man.

Ebrahima's older brother went to see the body and he took photos of him. His lower lip was cut and he had bruises on his forehead. He is sure that his younger brother had been tortured, beaten to death by the police.

There were two demonstrations held at Forest Gate police station to show how angry the whole Black community was, that another young man had died in police hands again, the fifth within a year. The demonstrations were attended by a cross section of Gambians who gave up one day's pay to give the family their support.

This is the right time to fight for cases like this, for the Black and Asian community to feel safe in this country. Many Black people have been killed and it won't stop until justice is done.

—Gambian journalist

nomie development in mutual relationship with capitalism. This is the essential core of the two opposing theories of Black liberation and both have remained a constant in Black leadership thinking, even though at times of crises both theories have been seriously challenged.

However the sudden birth of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s owed nothing to these two theories. Rosa Parks—defying segregation by refusing to give her bus seat to a white man in Montgomery in 1955—got her impulse to act from the historic ongoing opposition of African-American masses to racial oppression and because her impulse was universal, it ignited a new mass movement. But that movement lacked its own real philosophical/theoretical dimension. Thus, even though it regained the Civil Rights taken away in 1890s, it never reached its full development by going beyond the struggle for political rights to absolute human rights.

Dr. King alluded to the necessity to do this in some of his speeches, but his inherent feeling for a new human society never became the theoretic/active goal of the movement. And it was precisely there where it fell apart and factionalized itself. Recognizing this as the stopping point of the movement is neither hostile nor idle criticizing, but a recognition that the consequences of an unfinished revolution in past history shows itself at first as a return to a reactionary past. This has become the most obvious movement in America today. But there still remains considerable opposition to this present reactionary trend. The crucial need is still to find the road to the future philosophically/theoretically and actively in spite of the road blocks erected by racism.

## NYC Racial Justice Day

New York—"Racial Justice Day," March 28, brought out hundreds of young Blacks, Latinos, Asians and whites to protest police brutality. In a loud challenge to Mayor Giuliani's pro-police and anti-youth policies, the demonstration began at City Hall to demand action be taken against the policemen who have recently killed young people. The protest was sponsored by Parents Against Police Brutality and an unusual coalition of Black, Latino, Asian and Left organizations and gangs. Veteran demonstrators were greatly outnumbered by the teen-age crowd. Some white college students also came.

There were heart-breaking speeches by parents of children who had been killed. Iris Baez said her son Anthony was killed "for playing football in front of our house." She added, "We have to fight or all our children and grandchildren will be killed. This is a fight to the end."

Another parent described his sit-in at the Brooklyn D.A.'s office to insist they indict two cops who shot a Puerto Rican and a Chinese youth in their backs. One speaker attributed the rash of official violence against youth to an attempt to criminalize all young people of color. He said 98,000 arrests of young people had been made in the last year during the mayor's "quality of life" sweeps of the streets.

Many gang members called for unity among the ethnic groups there. One speaker from a gang said that the corporations and the system are the real problem, and the police only serve them.

There was a march and a second rally at Thompkins Square Park. The police turn-out was huge, with police lining the march every two feet, and motorcycles and paddy wagons ready. We went through Chinatown and past housing projects on the Lower East Side, calling for people to join. The march swelled to at least 2,000 people, and those we passed shouted support. —Participant

## In memoriam: Johnny Zupan

The sad news of the death of John Zupan on April 14 sent our thoughts back over four decades to the important role he had played in the birth of Marxist-Humanism at the time of the Coal Miners' General Strike of 1949-50 and of News and Letters Committees a few years later. For Johnny Zupan was the white skilled auto worker who in 1955, co-edited the first issues of *News & Letters* with Charles Denby—the Black production worker who, once Zupan stepped down later that year, took over the full responsibility of editorship until his death in 1983. With Raya Dunayevskaya as chairwoman of the National Editorial Board, the practice of "worker as editor" manifested the unique kind of unity of workers and intellectuals that N&L was founded to help work out.

Its concept had its roots in the new ways of thinking—for both workers and revolutionary intellectuals—that came out of the 1949-50 Miners' General Strike. As Raya Dunayevskaya put it in telling its story many years later,\* that event "seemed to touch, at one and the same time, a concept Marx had designated as alienated labor and the absolute opposite to it, which Marx had spelled out as the end of the division between mental and manual labor... It led me to conclude that two new vantage points were needed for the book I had been working on, titled 'State-Capitalism and Marxism.' One was that the American worker should become a point of departure not only as 'root' of Marxism but as a presence today. I therefore proposed that a worker be present at future discussions of the drafts of the book." The worker who was invited to that next discussion was Johnny Zupan.

The second vantage point proposed for the book that later became *Marxism and Freedom* concerned the way in which Lenin's study of Hegel concentrated on the

Doctrine of the Notion, over either Being or Essence. At the discussion to which Zupan had been invited—where the Doctrine of the Notion was explained as "the subjective as well as the objective paths to liberation"—he expressed what it meant to him, as a worker. "When you don't have a notion of the future, you just counter-pose essence to form. Is that what all this means?" he asked, seeing "essence" as the class struggle, and "form" as the form of the union contract. "Clearly," Raya continued the story, "the worker's presence went a great deal further than 'the class question' (to) grappling with the relationship of subjective to objective."

Johnny Zupan will rightly be remembered for his long decades of labor struggles—from the year he joined the International Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in 1941; through the 1940s in the UAW at the Ford Highland Park plant, where he edited the union paper; to his presidency of AFSCME local 1497 when he worked at Wayne State University in the 1970s. He will surely be remembered for the highpoint of those labor struggles, when he was the organizer of the Detroit city-wide union drive that resulted in sending seven trailer trucks full of food and clothing to Appalachia—a caravan that helped the coal miners, after nine months of struggle, turn the tide in their historic 1949-50 strike.

But, most of all, he will be remembered by Marxist-Humanists for the part he played at that point in what Raya called "the emergence of a new movement from practice that is itself a form of theory" and in the birth of Marxist-Humanism that followed. We mourn his death and honor his memory.

—Olga Domanski

\*The full story is told in the *News & Letters* pamphlet, *The Coal Miners' General Strike of 1949-50 and the Birth of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S.* (To order, see page 7.)

# New voices of opposition to prison warehousing of the poor

(continued from page 1)

rhetoric and represents an eruption into public speech of the kind of sadistic pornography that was once confined to the Ku Klux Klan or Nazi literature passed around in Mississippi or Chicago's Marquette Park.

## DISGUISED THE CRISIS OF CAPITALISM

In light of the fantastic increase in the number of prisons and prisoners in the last few decades, which in no way reflects a proportionate rise in the rate of crime, it isn't far-fetched to see the rapid growth of the prison population as a direct response to the sort of threat to the system represented by the Los Angeles Rebellion. At its core is a militant racism.

The figures are staggering. The population of state and federal prisons dropped during the 1960s, and in 1970 stood at 196,429. Through the 1970s this number rose, and in 1980 stood at 315,974. The really incredible increases have, however, come in the politically retrogressive '80s and '90s. Today there are over 1,150,938 held in prison in this country, more than anywhere else in the world.

This imprisonment binge has fallen heaviest on young Black men. According to a 1995 study by The Sentencing Project, one in three young Black men between the ages of 20 and 29 is under the supervision of the criminal justice system—either in prison or on probation or parole. Blacks, who only make up about 12% of the population, make up over half of all prison admissions.

This disparity holds true whether looking at the rate of imprisonment for drug offenses, where it is acknowledged that while most users are white most of those imprisoned are Black, or at the new phenomena of "three strikes, you're out" laws pioneered once again in California. A study by the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice found that while Blacks only make up about 7% of California's population, they account for 43% of those sentenced under the "three strikes" law. Eighty-five percent of all those incarcerated under these laws were charged with a nonviolent third offense which could as well have been treated as a misdemeanor—such as the infamous life term given one man for stealing a slice of pizza.

The forms of imprisonment are also becoming more brutal. For instance, there is the proliferation of Control Unit prisons, rightly described as torture dungeons where every effort is made to break the prisoners' will, both physical and psychological. Here the system hopes to "disappear" people as into the gulag.

The chain gang has also been brought back in a number of states. Here is how Brent Staples in The New York Times Magazine described this: "Many Alabamans delight in the chain gangs' reappearance. Drivers roll down their windows to taunt the prisoners, barking like dogs. Others look on the predominantly Black gangs and feel nostalgia for the South they knew as children. 'I love seeing 'em in chains,' one elderly white woman said. 'They ought to make them pick cotton.'" (Sept. 17, 1995)

In fact, prisoners are made to do many different jobs, as low or no-pay prison labor is now used by companies from JC Penney to Microsoft. Whatever hot air is blown about how this trains people for the work force, the truth is that it is meant to prop up a crisis-ridden capitalist economy that simply can't provide jobs at decent pay. The current number of incarcerated amounts to 2% of the entire labor force.

## SPEAKING FOR THEMSELVES, TO EACH OTHER

As the segment of society upon whom the current social crisis falls most heavily, it is to be expected that those in prison are compelled to look for an understanding of the situation they are in as a prelude to changing it. One way this can be seen is in the response that has been received to a questionnaire drawn up by prisoners, who asked N&L to help get it circulated to others. It consisted of 17 questions concerning different aspects of prison life.

The depth of insight shown about the true nature of the guardians of "Law and Order" was shown in the way so many identified racism and the mercenary nature of the prison system as central to their incarceration. One inmate from Kansas said that the greatest obstacle to positive change in the system is the "mentality of the so-called correctional experts...who have not openly declared it, but espouse it quietly, that prisons, prisoners, crime and more of it are big business and huge money makers...Such business has job security for hundreds, even thousands in each state, and any changes in the manner of their operations, ideals and cries of crime might lessen profits...They are not law-followers, but only greedy profiteers on the lives of others."

This pretty well sums up the debates around prison labor, which has inmates toiling at slavery-like non-wages as part of an effort to drive down all wages. It is a voice that needs to be heard by organized labor because of the rise of powerful prison guard unions which are masquerading as a legitimate part of the labor movement.

One thing on which the prisoners themselves were unanimous was that any positive changes in their situation must be the result of organization both within and without the prisons. As a woman prisoner put it, "It would take a large group of prisoners, which is hard to accomplish, especially on a women's yard because they are already so suppressed, and are greatly afraid of repercussion, or harassment. Support from society is mandatory."

There are instances in which this organizing has begun. It is seen in community organizations like Mothers Reclaiming Our Children and the L.A. 4+ Committee that were formed in the wake of the Los Angeles Rebel-



Return of chain-gang labor in Alabama.

lion by people refusing to allow the courts and police to dehumanize their loved ones and their community. These organizations remain active around such issues.

It is also seen in the efforts at a gang truce also born in Los Angeles. There are ongoing efforts to cement a truce between the Bloods and Crips, but also between Black and Latino youth gangs who are thrown together in crowded conditions in L.A. County Jail. At an April 27 gang truce rally in Los Angeles, one Latino youth said, "The events that we are participating in today have world repercussions. The gang truce here impacted events in Rio de Janeiro by helping to create a gang truce there."

Students at the University of California at Santa Cruz have initiated another front, by protesting the way the state is spending money on prisons (a billion dollars a year) while slashing funding for education. Students there are waging a hunger strike over this issue, and recently invited speakers from the California Coalition of Women Prisoners to speak to a rally.

One former prisoner at the rally said, "I have various thoughts about captives and how they are seen by the captors. It seems that every rule and every attitude was designed to make me feel diminished and inferior—morally inferior to the rest of the world. I think my captors really believe that prisoners are not quite human, that we already had to have been criminal types before getting to prison. My own experience was one of battling that underlying sense of futility that comes from facing the obvious contempt every moment of every day."

Such dialogue among prisoners shows the beginning of an effort to organize their own thoughts in opposition to the prison system—and also to that voice within that says (in the words of one former prisoner) "don't believe in anyone, don't pay attention, everyone here is just trying to get over one way or another." This is the whisper of all the world's hopelessness and oppression of spirit which is stronger than armies in defense of the status quo.

Of central importance, too, has been the struggle for

## VOICES FROM WITHIN THE PRISON WALLS

by D.A. Sheldon

On Feb. 26, 1996, two Latino prisoners at the Iowa Medical Classification Center (IMCC) in Coralville, Iowa, destroyed \$12,000 worth of state property while holding off numerous guards during a two-and-a-half-hour mini-riot.

At approximately 10:15 p.m., a guard making security rounds in LU-B (a newly established lock-up unit that warehouses 60 prisoners) caught two Mexican prisoners, Jorge Borges, 21 and Sam Cheatham, 18, smoking in their cell. The guard then called A/B control center by hand radio requesting cell B-9 be unlocked. He then ordered the two occupants of the cell to go to the day area on the first floor of the unit. A short scuffle broke out between the prisoners and the guard.

Eventually the guard was knocked unconscious, and the prisoners fled to the recreation day area. A few minutes later eight guards rushed into the unit, but were immediately chased out. The prisoners then barricaded the emergency and entryway doors to the unit, and thereafter started to trash the unit.

An hour-and-a-half into the rebellion an emergency response team (CERT) guard pumped gas into the unit. This gas also affected those prisoners who were locked into cells surrounding the unit, even forcing some to use wet cloths in order to breathe.

Ten minutes later 20 CERT guards called in from different institutions throughout the state, tried to enter the unit, but again were chased out. For another 30 minutes more gas was pumped into the unit, this time forc-

the lives and freedom of prisoners like Mumia Abu-Jamal, the former Black Panther and MOVE supporter whose case has had worldwide support, and Manuel Salazar in Illinois, a young Mexican-American who has had great support in Chicago's Latino community. Although much more needs to be done, the refusal to allow these accused so-called "cop-killers" to be railroaded despite the intense hostility of police organizations shows that the struggle can be waged.

The importance of hearing the voices of these lower and deeper levels of society can be seen by the way the massive prison rebellion which broke out after the Million Man March last October exposed the hollow rhetoric of the "leaders" on the speakers' platform. There was a lot of talk (and truth) by Jesse Jackson and others about the gross injustice of the cocaine sentencing laws in giving out higher penalties for crack than for powder cocaine, which fell disproportionately on poor and Black users, and the March surely emboldened prisoners. Yet there was no attempt to positively relate the two. Jackson in fact asked the prisoners to end the rebellion in the name of the Million Man March.

At its height the rebellion included five federal prisons which were out of the authorities' control. In this case it was the prisoners with their determination to change their conditions of life who exposed the leaders' words as simply an attempt to use and deceive the masses' social consciousness.

## IMPRISONED MIND OF WHITE AMERICA

It almost goes without saying that these struggles should be differentiated from the so-called anti-government, anti-law enforcement agency stance of the white militias. Four years later, the Los Angeles Rebellion still haunts the ruling class of this country, but only one year after the bombing in Oklahoma City it is clear from the kid gloves treatment of the Montana Freemen that the government has reached an accommodation with these neo-fascist militias. The unprecedented "legal" assault on Black America shows that the government has no deep-seated aversion to the militias' hatred of the Constitutional amendments which granted citizenship to the former Black slaves.

Further, the racist ideological core of these militia groups (Aryan Nations, and so on) reflects very well the internal divide-and-conquer politics inside prison, and their current growing popularity in white America shows nothing more than the dire lack of spiritual freedom that prevails there.

When the Los Angeles Rebellion issued its ringing challenge to the established order and showed the existence of a new social consciousness, it called forth vicious repression which might seem to be triumphant in today's political landscape. But this only emphasizes the importance of confronting this reality with a philosophy of liberation which can both hear the voices from below and help them to recognize themselves in the Idea of freedom that breaks down all prison walls.

## Iowa prisoners mini-rebellion

ing the two prisoners to retreat to the top tier.

Seeing that both prisoners were unarmed the entire CERT team stormed the unit, and told the prisoners to lie flat on the floor. These guards then jumped on their backs, sprayed pepper mace in their faces while handcuffing both legs and arms, and dragged them to the maximum lock up.

As usual the mainstream press only told the prisonrats' side of the story. Guards had been continually harassing prisoners on the unit, and because of the buildup of frustration something was bound to happen. Also, the unit was overcrowded with prisoners sleeping on bunks placed out in the day area, thus increasing the tension within the closed environment.

The guard involved in the melee had been intimidating one of the Latino prisoners for over a month, and prisonrats ignored the request that criminal assault charges be brought forth. In retaliation the prisonrats placed both Latino prisoners in strip cell status for four days, denying them bedding, clothing, toilet paper and other hygiene supplies. They were fed foodloaf and the water to their sink and toilet was shut off.

The request by the Latino prisoners for a shower, to wash the mace off, and medical care for injuries sustained during the riot and the events thereafter were sarcastically refused. Furthermore, the prison disciplinary committee (sankaroo court) sentenced each prisoner to humiliate sanctions of one year disciplinary detention followed by another year in administrative segregation, a loss of all earned good time credit and restitution in the amount of \$6,000. The prisonrats also filed a battery of criminal charges against the prisoners seeking a total of 25 years consecutive added to their current sentence. Neither defendant has been appointed requested counsel. The prisoners now reside at the long-term isolation unit (cellhouse 220) in the Iowa state penitentiary in Fort Madison, Iowa.

These excessively inhumane penalties were also used by prisonrats to instill fear into those prisoners who thought of rebelling against the system, thus keeping oppressive control of the prison class. Though this event was not planned, and the prisoners were serving short sentences with a possibility of parole this year, these defensive actions by two oppressed Latino prisoners was truly upstanding.

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# Opposition mounts against abuse of immigrants

## The immigrant war

**New York**—Thousands rallied around the country April 6 to protest growing racist discrimination against the so-called illegal immigrants. Signs reading "No immigrant is illegal," "Immigrants yes, migra no," "No to the police brutality against immigrant workers," and "No to H.R. 2202" were present in demonstrations in Los Angeles, Chicago, New York and 11 other cities.

Campana 96, a movement that encompasses immigrant workers, human rights, religious and political organizations, initiated these rallies which will culminate in a march in Washington, D.C. on Oct. 12th. Organizers are expecting no less than half a million people.

These demonstrations show the anger of the U.S. immigrant community toward the fascist policies of the government and opportunist politicians. H.R. 2202 for example, would allow states to bar undocumented children from public education and to cut social benefits to "legal" immigrants. But they also show anger at the April 1 brutal beating of two Mexican workers, Alicia Sotero and Enrique Funes, by Riverside County, Cal., sheriff's deputies and at the killings, one week later, of another seven immigrant workers in a car accident near San Diego after being chased by the police. Both barbaric acts were captured on videotape and watched all over the world, like the 1992 beating of Rodney King by the LAPD officers, the seed of the Los Angeles Rebellion.

The racist repression against immigrant workers has to do with today's machinery of federal law enforcement, the biggest that ever existed in this country. Despite Clinton's declaration that "the era of big government is over," the amount of money for federal law enforcement doubled over the last three years as did the number of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) agents.

The media has also helped prepare fertile ground for chauvinist ideologies, as in the constant repetition in the media of Pat Buchanan's references of Mexicans as "Joses" and the lack of condemnation of these racist remarks.

Democrats have joined forces with Republicans in this war. After the beatings, California Sen. Barbara Boxer proposed to triple the number of border patrol agents.

On the other side of the Rio Bravo, the hypocritical Mexican president, Ernesto Zedillo, urged the U.S. to stop these brutal attacks. Meanwhile, rural workers are massacred regularly in southern Mexico.

Today's anti-immigrant mood has to do with the fact that capitalism is in crisis all over the world. "Illegal" immigration cannot be stopped in these days of capitalist devastation, not even "with a wall that reaches the sky," a Mexican worker said after hearing of Dole's and Buchanan's proposal of "walling" the border. The spirit of rebellion that emerged in 1992 in Los Angeles is alive. On Oct. 12, march on Washington, D.C.!

—Carlos Varela

## Beatings spark outrage

**Los Angeles**—In late March, the Spanish language newspaper *La Opinion* carried an article announcing a march in defense of immigrants, from La Placita to the Federal Building. The organizers, Coordinadora '96, stressed that the short distance of five blocks was to facilitate participation. Yet the organizers did not initially expect much.

At 11 a.m. on April 1, the now all too familiar police beating of a Mexican man and woman in Riverside occurred, and the whole perspective changed. What had been a third page article now appeared on page one. In response, the march was rerouted and extended to eight blocks. The local media gave voice to local politicians condemning the beating and asking people to come.

## New energy, anger in UFW

**Watsonville, Cal.**—This working-class, farming town was the scene for a United Farm Workers' (UFW) march on April 21, with over 3,000 participants. Shouting "Chavez Si! Wilson No!" against the state's racist governor, the march wound its way three miles through town with enthusiastic support from local residents.

The rally and march were held to commemorate Chavez on the third anniversary of his death, and more urgently, in support of farm workers at various local companies who are trying to unionize and negotiate fair contracts. Many workers came with banners identifying the companies for which they work, most of them in the strawberry industry.

Other farm laborers already with the UFW came not only to support the effort, but to share their experiences of organizing in the fields. Workers from other professions, including teachers and Teamsters, came from as far away as Los Angeles and the Central Valley.

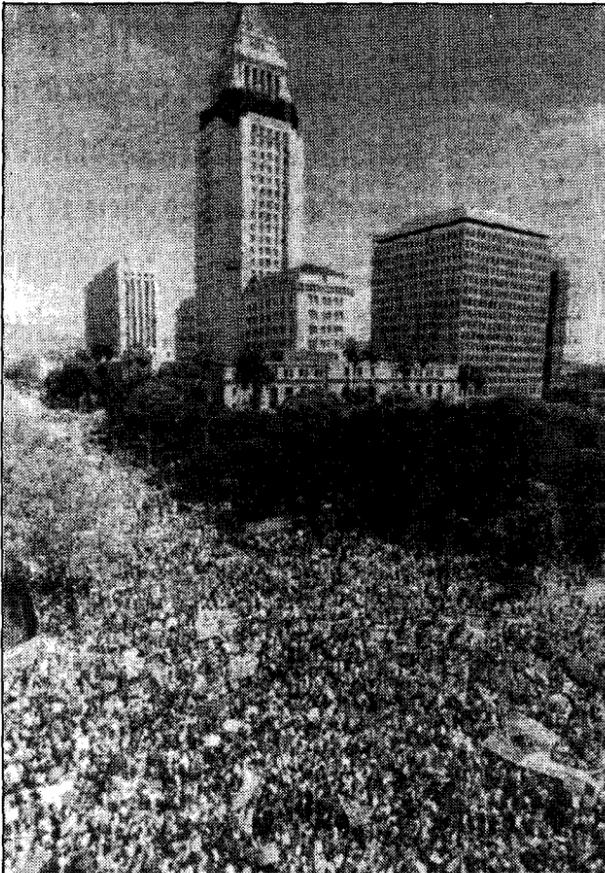
A 53-year old Chicano worker analyzed what is at stake: "I've been working here in the Pajaro Valley for fifteen years, in the lettuce fields. The company I work for is the only one in the area that is unionized. The rest have kept the UFW out by using contractors from Salinas to hire the workers. This is how they take less and less responsibility for their workers. The workers, we don't expect to get rich—I'm making only \$6.90 an hour after all these years—but in the U.S. it's not possible to care for a family without medical insurance. That's something we want through the contract."

"All the problems you see in the streets and the cities are here, too. We can see the limits to civil rights in this country as easily in the fields as when the immigrants got beat up by the cops in Southern California."

—Participants

Mexican Consulate Jose Angel Pescador extracted the most benefit out of the tragedy. Within 24 hours Pescador took center stage and control by obtaining the lawyers who were able to get the immigrants freed, and got the INS to grant them working permits for six months on the day just prior to the march.

This unexpected blessing did not catch the march organizers completely by surprise as they were able to use the local media to regain the center of attention by the day of the march. People began to gather at 10 a.m. for the march at 11. The outpouring of people from many



Los Angeles immigrant rights rally April 6.

different tendencies seemed to worry the organizers, and the PA system began to deliver messages about good behavior, respect for the system, love of democracy, and most of all, "Please, this is a decent march, do not pay attention to the agents provocateurs."

The people were questioning the leaders of the event in a way that gave me and many others a strange but most pleasant feeling. Because the speakers' addresses were being ignored by much of the crowd, many of us began to form small clusters and to talk among ourselves.

The two beating incidents sparked a series of commentaries in the opinion pages of the local newspapers. One of the most striking statements was from a victim in the second beating, recorded while still in his hospital bed: "Even if I am not totally well, as soon as I get out of the

hospital I will attempt to cross the border again. The conditions in Mexico are so bad that there is no hope."

What had initially been expressions of appreciation for Pescador turned into condemnations of him and the government that he represents. This shift showed a polarization of the extreme Left and the extreme Right with a changed center. After seeing the extremes express themselves, I ask myself, will philosophy be able to meet the challenge and will this small dim light of hope grow?

—Antonio

## The humanist response to Oklahoma bombing

**Oklahoma City**—April 19 was the one-year anniversary of the Oklahoma City bombing. Living only 20 miles from the Oklahoma City Federal Building, we will never forget. Nor should we. The terrorists who committed this inhuman act will never forget either.

Out of all the horror, I personally saw the most humanism I have ever experienced. People from every walk of life gave of themselves to help those who they may never know or see again. It didn't have any stigma such as race, religion, sex or so on. If only we'd act this human all the time, what a different society we'd truly be!

In the faces of death and fear, Oklahoma City and the nation showed terrorism that instead of tearing apart and destroying, people came together as never before. If you have seen the new Garth Brooks video, the pictures show the whole story—the faces of the bombing victims and mass confusion, the faces of the rescuers, driven by pure desire to save. I think the best reminder, which will never be erased from my mind, is the picture of Bailey Allmen, her little lifeless body laid in a fireman's arms.

All the unsung heroes did so much, not for glory or fame but to show true humanism. There was a young man who gave one year's salary to help start a survivors' fund; a doctor I know who lost a family member in the bombing, saved a bombing victim's leg from amputation and would not accept payment for his services; federal workers elsewhere who gave their vacation and sick time to victims' family members and survivors who had no more paid leave time; and pilgrims who still go to the bomb site and leave a piece of their hearts—letters, poems, flowers, stuffed animals, even T-shirts.

It has given me a real sense that there is a great chance for the humanism that capitalism can't destroy. I agree we need to change this capitalist system. But terrorists and the far Right are not the answer. They will only try and control us more. None of the people in the Oklahoma City bombing had any more control over the system than the bombers. They were people who had to struggle to make ends meet, just like the rest of us. What a waste of human life. And the children, the ones who can change the future—why them? Because their parents had to go to work! Was that their crime?

Oklahoma City will never be the same, but I hope it has opened the world's eyes as to what a new society built on humanism could be.

—Working woman

## Editorial

## The simmering East Asian cauldron

the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere.

What lies unstated in any new U.S.-Japan military cooperation is China, the country Clinton has not visited. As powerful as the army has been since Mao Zedong accorded it a place alongside the Communist Party, then used the army both to begin the Cultural Revolution and to end it, the army has never been stronger.

As guarantor of the present government after it crushed students and workers in Tiananmen Square and elsewhere in the 1989 movement for freedom and democracy, the army's position is central in the death-watch on Deng Xiaoping and maneuvering to succeed him. The army even can finance an arms buildup beyond the state budget, from profits of army-owned factories.

Yeltsin made his own election-year trip to Beijing, exchanging his endorsement of China's claim on Tibet for being able to claim he had persuaded Jiang Zemin to sign a nuclear test ban treaty this fall. China showed a willingness to play the Russia card to counter the U.S. doubling down on the Japan card. How this will play out we will see, but it sounded like the army talking when China backed away from the nuclear test ban, claiming the need to develop nuclear missiles to deflect asteroids headed for earth impact—the same threat Jesse Helms uses to try to prolong Star Wars spending.

China may have grossly overestimated separatist sentiments in Taiwan, because a growing section of capitalists are investing more in mainland China than anybody but Hong Kong and have their interests tied to closer relations with China. China's show of military might during Taiwan's elections may not have been wasted if it was intended to send a message to the rest of its Asian neighbors.

Clinton's "get-tough" policy toward China right now is framed not against imprisonment of dissidents or prison-made exports or exports from army-owned factories, but against copyright infringement. That sets the stage for China to crack down on pirated compact discs and Clinton to renew China's most-favored-nation status.

More seriously for the long run is the escalating arms buildup all around the Pacific Rim. Security arrangements are built on sand as long as the capitalist drive for domination is allowed to continue.

Two election-year trips to East Asia in late April — Bill Clinton's stops in South Korea and Japan en route to the G-7 meeting in Russia, and Boris Yeltsin's trip to Beijing — spotlight lines that still mark the bipolar world years after the end of the Soviet Union. Clinton arrived in Tokyo to extend the U.S.-Japan security alliance just as North Korea was publicly denouncing the 1953 Armistice and symbolically disregarding UN rules in the Demilitarized Zone. This comes shortly after China's massive military "exercises" in the Taiwan Strait during Taiwan's election campaign.

Back in 1960 when the first U.S.-Japan mutual security treaty was signed, student anti-American demonstrations prevented Eisenhower from making his scheduled trip to Japan. This time protests against Clinton's visit were sharpened by the rape of a 12-year-old girl by three U.S. servicemen in Okinawa. The U.S. is insisting on maintaining a Cold War-level presence in East Asia even in "concessions" to Okinawan rage—agreeing to give up 11 military facilities on Okinawa, but decreasing combat troops not at all.

The agreement that Clinton and Prime Minister Hashimoto signed expanding Japan's military role, including supplying military parts to U.S. forces in Japan, treads on slippery ground. Right-wing elements in Japan have been hostile to the constitutional provision renouncing war and the use of force, which the U.S. occupation imposed but which Japanese public opinion has strongly supported. The constitution is already battered enough by Japan's \$50 billion "Self-Defense Forces."

One Japanese business paper trumpeted that the scope of U.S.-Japan military cooperation now extended to the islands of the Pacific and to East Asia as far as Thailand. By no coincidence that is the scope of Japanese economic penetration in Asia. Movement of capital out of Japan and into production in Southeast Asia has been sizable enough to drop the level of the Japanese trade surplus with the U.S. as goods once produced in Japan may now be labeled "Made in Indonesia."

By no coincidence, the same area excluding China represents the limits of what pre-1945 Japanese imperialism claimed dominance of, and ultimately invaded, as

**Youth**

**Punk diversity and revolt**

by Kevin Michaels

The recent announcement of a Sex Pistols reunion tour may have officially marked the end of the punk rock era, but many rushing to comment on the music's demise ignore one of its greatest features—its role as a meeting place for the diversity of youth. The past decade has seen the term "punk" become little more than a nostalgic term while much of the music inspired by its initial success has gone on to great success under the marketing name "alternative." At its best, though, punk and today's music which remains true to its spirit express the social turmoil in capitalist society and a human response to it.

The emergence of punk in Britain in the late seventies occurred in a period of enormous unemployment. While the racist National Front was making recruiting inroads by scapegoating West Indian and Pakistani immigrants, bands like the Slits, the Ruts and Sham 69 played to interracial audiences and celebrated the rhythms of Jamaican music. The huge Rock Against Racism festivals were bold statements against the Right's street terror.

The excitement of British punk gave youth in America, experiencing the same economic downturn, a huge stimulus. Reagan's ascendancy seemed to crystallize the scene and young people rose to the challenge. The all-Black Washington, D.C., band Bad Brains, playing some of the fiercest hardcore to date, provided the lead for dozens of bands to follow and set a precedent for integrated shows. It was not unusual for all-white bands like Minor Threat to share bills with Trouble Funk, the stars of D.C.'s local brand of rap, called go-go. Integrated bands, like Scram and Dag Nasty, were not uncommon.

The D.C. scene's awareness of racism went beyond its immediate environment as well. 1985 saw the organization of a series of anti-apartheid "Punk Percussion Protests" in front of the South African embassy. Integrated crowds of hundreds of young people beat drums and cymbals for hours at a time to disrupt business as usual at the embassy. Fliers for the event even featured the old Abolitionist slogan, "Am I Not a Man and a Brother?"

The West Coast scene reflected California's diversity.

At least two members of the ever-shifting early lineup of Black Flag were Latino. Other bands, like the Zeros and the Plugz, were all Latino.

Women's participation in punk was always made difficult by the amount of physical aggression exhibited at shows, which sometimes degenerated into outright violence. More significant was a pronounced element of sexism which permeated a music performed by and for a predominantly male audience. Several bands on the L.A. scene, though, proved exceptions to the rule. The Germs and the Bags, hailed as pioneers of the music, included women members.

The line dividing punk from the rest of popular music began to blur as the term "New Wave" was stumbled upon as a way to make the underground seem less threatening. MTV played a huge role in this process, but even its huge impact couldn't destroy the network of independent labels, zines and show-booking enthusiasts which had sprung up in the early eighties.

The nineties has seen a specialization of the music into such genres as Straight Edge and Emocore but also a broadening of the historical diversity in what remains of its initial explosion. Women have successfully combated sexism to come to the fore in bands like Bikini Kill and Spitboy. Gay youth now have an acknowledged presence through such bands as Pansy Division and Tribe 8.

Punk's diversity, unrecognized by many, continues to be a meeting place for youth. Although the path to a new society intimidated by much of the music may not be explicit, a desire for something profoundly different than what prevails is understood.

**'Content of Our Character'**

Los Angeles—In South-East L.A. on April 6 there was a youth conference defending affirmative action entitled "The Content of Our Character" and sponsored by South Central Youth Empowered Through Action and Youth for Justice. There were about 50 people there, a melting pot of color, from Black youth to white, Brown, Asian and Indian, discussing the attacks upon affirmative action as being at the heart of the attack upon education of all youth, white included.

An Indian youth stated that if the society we live in is based on race and gender (racism and sexism), then we need solutions based on race and gender, i.e., affirmative action programs to help fight this discrimination. A white high school youth spoke on the importance of affirmative action for whites as well: "Multiculturalism is fair to everyone. If 30 years of affirmative action hasn't solved the problem, then it's no time to abolish it now."

A Black woman showed him it was impossible to be free after the Civil War had been fought and won to abolish slavery: "To be a free man or woman, it was not so. How can you be free without rights?"

Many of the Latinos spoke against the recent police beating of two "illegal" immigrants from Mexico. One Latina stated that we don't have the movement of the 1960s—there is no Vietnam War and body bags coming home from Vietnam—but we do have body bags right here at home and it's the police who are creating them.

The bottom line from the youth at this conference was that: "All of us, Black, Brown, white and Yellow, should be able to reach our goal as a clenched fist, and that whenever there is change in this country the youth have done it, and we will do it again!" —Gene Ford

**Victory for ethnic studies at Columbia U.**

New York—On April 15, a substantial gain was won by students fighting for a Department of Ethnic Studies at Columbia University in New York. Two weeks earlier a hunger strike was begun by four students after a long period of unsuccessful negotiation with the administration which had culminated in a sit-in at the Columbia College Dean's Office. Despite administration assurances to take seriously demands for an Ethnic Studies department—with control over a budget and hiring of tenured faculty to teach Asian-American, Native American, African-American and Latino studies—nothing happened.

the administration, but it is also clear that the struggle has only just begun. As one graduate student put it, "What guarantees are there that Columbia will hire radicals? Columbia has a track record of not tenuring its more radical and outspoken faculty."

For the democratization of the university to have any reality, one activist said, students need to have more say in the academic and administrative decision-making process, including tenure decisions.

The movement, and the feelings of solidarity, have had an enormous radicalizing effect. "I've experienced some of the most powerful moments in my life," said one student whose feeling that he had experienced a real education was echoed by many. Whether this movement will herald a new student movement remains to be seen, but coming at the moment when many Black and women's studies departments have been closed or threatened with closure, it represents students' refusal to be always on the defensive. —F. Shelley

**Youth in Revolt**

Over 400 students rallied at Borough of Manhattan Community College on March 28 to decry Gov. Pataki's cuts in education funding. A major focus of the demonstration was the effect budget cuts would have on child care offered by schools to students with children.

Students in Utah face a ban on all extracurricular clubs, passed by the state legislature in April. The action was a direct response to the forming of a club for gay students at a high school in Salt Lake City. By banning all student organizations, legislators hope to avoid charges of anti-gay discrimination.

Over 1,100 University of Michigan graduate student teaching assistants began walking picket lines in early April because of the university's refusal to bargain in good faith with their union, the Graduate Employees Organization. One prominent issue in the dispute is the current requirement that international students must undergo an unpaid, three-week training period.

Thousands of South Korean students mobilized to protest the death of 20-year-old Roh Soo Sok after a beating by riot police on March 30. Over 10,000 marched in Seoul on April 4 to demand the resignation of President Kim Young Sam and the disbanding of the riot police force. Soo Sok's death took place during a demonstration against government corruption and cuts in education funding.



With the hunger strike there began a series of campuswide disruptions to force the issue. Students set up an informational tent on the grass alongside college walk and entered into a battle of ideas over the very idea of "Ethnic Studies."

Finally, responding to student demands, George Rupp, the university's president, issued a statement declaring that he was in agreement with the student's demands. His overture was bogus. In a response to Rupp's letter, "the Committee on Ethnic Studies and the Core Curriculum" stated that "we do not have the same goals... the administration seeks ostensibly to diversify the curriculum through tokenization while we seek to democratize the university."

Demanding immediate action and incensed that Rupp had totally ignored the ongoing hunger strike, over 100 students took over Low Library. Despite threats of arrest, students stayed the night.

Late the next morning New York police, in full riot gear, were ordered onto the campus for the first time since 1968. Clearly meant to intimidate and break the movement, 22 students were arrested for trespassing. But the movement's appeals for solidarity were largely met. This was a simple case where students became convinced that unity would cancel the administration's threats.

A mass meeting, called after the arrests, was held on Low Plaza. From there 300 sat in inside Butler Library and then marched into Hamilton Hall, the site of the disinvestment campaign of a decade ago when it became "Mandela Hall." Opposite the Patriarchs inscribed into the facade, students plastered the walls of "Hamilton" with other names like Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, Steve Biko and Cesar Chavez.

After five days of occupation an agreement was reached: no department but the hiring, over the next year, of four professors to teach Asian-American and Latino studies. The students left the building two by two chanting, "The students united will never be defeated." Clearly the movement had wrested concessions out of

**A challenge to pragmatism**

San Jose, Cal.—As progressive Californians face the task of defeating the draconian anti-affirmative action ballot measure—known by the misnomer of the California Civil Rights Initiative (CCRI)—a variety of strategies are being tested. Two different viewpoints were in evidence at a press conference held on April 18 at San Jose State University.

The event launched an "Affirmative Action Education Campaign" sponsored by the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), an organization that has taken the lead in the legal battles against Proposition 187. But at this event they were pragmatically self-limiting, focusing only on the immediate task of defeating the CCRI.

However, MALDEF had chosen a university campus for this press conference in order to hear from faculty and students of color, and so they did, loud and clear! Jorge Gonzales, a professor and community activist, reminded the audience that "nothing of the finest ideals comes from the government—it is a product of struggle, from the people." Henry Gutierrez, another Chicano professor, pointed out that these attacks on affirmative action are part of a larger economic, and ideological, restructuring on the part of the rulers.

A professor of African-American studies, Cobie Kwase Harris, targeted CCRI as another example of white supremacy, which attempts to suppress all peoples' "objective interests as human beings." He added that CCRI will not crush the "indomitable will of people to struggle for justice," noting that African-Americans "never have and we never will...rest in our quest for justice."

While there was only one student speaker, Alberto Verduzco, he militantly refused to keep isolated from each other as he passionately related incidents of institutional racism on the San Jose State campus to the climate which fosters attacks like CCRI.

All of this was in sharp contrast to the "official" video, and the lawyers, politicians and business people at the press conference. They stressed—positively—how affirmative action was compatible with capitalism, militarism and social class divisions. The video highlighted Colin Powell and corporate CEOs as veritable poster people for affirmative action.

While this may seem a "prudent" strategy for an election issue, I think the militant voices from campus suggest otherwise. The totality of peoples' disgust with racism, profits and false limitations can be heard in those voices that search for something more than staving off the assaults of the far Right. The real question emerging from this internally divided press conference, even if its full philosophic import remained unspoken, is "What kind of society do we want?" —Jennifer Pen

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<b>DETROIT</b> P.O. Box 27205 Detroit MI 48227 <b>MEETINGS</b> Thursdays, 7 p.m. Central Methodist Church Woodward and Adams	<b>OAKLAND</b> P.O. Box 3345 Oakland, CA 94609 510 658 1448 <b>MEETINGS</b> Sundays, 6:30 p.m. 2015 Center St. (at Milvia) Berkeley
<b>LOS ANGELES</b> P.O. Box 29194 Los Angeles, CA 90029 213 960 5607 <b>MEETINGS</b> Sundays, 5:30 p.m. Echo Park United Methodist Church 1226 N. Alvarado (North of Sunset, side door)	<b>MEMPHIS</b> 1725B Madison Ave. #59 Memphis, TN 38104
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**INTERNATIONAL MARXIST HUMANISTS**  
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## Our Life and Times

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

For 16 days in April, Israel pounded Lebanon with U.S.-supplied aircraft and artillery, killing over 100 civilians, and creating nearly half a million refugees. The most horrific attack came on April 18, when Israeli artillery hit a United Nations peacekeeping camp, killing over 75 refugees.

Earlier, Israelis used a U.S.-made Apache helicopter to attack a clearly marked Lebanese ambulance, killing two women and four girls, and then callously refused even to apologize. They blockaded Lebanese ports for the first time since 1982. In a region which has seen the per capita water supply sink to one third what it was in 1960, Israeli warplanes also destroyed a reservoir supplying water to 20 villages. All of this rained down on a country which in the last few years has begun to rebuild after years of civil war and invasions.

The raids began on April 11, after a series of tit for tat incidents in southern Lebanon between Israeli forces and the fundamentalist Shiite Hezbollah movement. In late March, Israeli forces killed two Lebanese civilians, claiming that it was by mistake, but Hezbollah retaliated by launching a few of its Russian-made Katyusha rockets into northern Israel. A week later, two Lebanese boys were killed in an unexplained explosion which was blamed on Israel, prompting another rocket attack into

### Growing revolt in Indonesia

In recent weeks, a series of strikes, revolts by oppressed nationalities, and acts of defiance by liberal journalists have plagued the conservative Suharto military regime, in power in Indonesia since 1965. This year, the 20th anniversary of Indonesia's 1976 conquest and subsequent genocidal repression in East Timor, has been marked by small but significant new youth demonstrations there.

The population of the Indonesian-ruled territory of Irian Jaya, part of the island of New Guinea, has also risen in revolt. In January, after a series of massacres of the local population by the Indonesian army, guerrillas of the Free Papua Movement (FPM) kidnapped 13 employees of Freeport Indonesia, a U.S.-owned mining company which extracts 120,000 tons of copper, gold and silver ore per day, and which is sitting on the world's largest known gold deposits. Freeport Indonesia and logging companies also operating in the area are polluting the rivers and destroying the forests on a vast scale, while the wealth they create is going either abroad or to the Indonesian ruling class based hundreds of miles away in Jakarta.

In March, after the death in prison of FPM leader Thomas Wapai Wainggai, ascribed officially to a "heart attack," indigenous people armed only with bows and arrows attacked the airport and the mining company's offices. Joined by college students, they battled heavily armed Indonesian troops.

Indonesia's low wages (the official minimum is \$2.10 per day) have attracted Nike and other multinational corporations. Despite severe repression, a young and growing working class has staged hundreds of strikes. Journalists in Jakarta have also fought for freedom of the press, in some cases going to jail and then continuing to publish on the Internet from there after the government shut down their magazines.

## Lebanon invasion undermines peace process

northern Israel. All of these incidents are rooted in two longstanding facts: Israel's illegal occupation of a ten-mile self-proclaimed "security zone" in southern Lebanon, and the Iranian-backed Hezbollah's commitment to the destruction of Israel.

According to *The Other Israel*, "there were protests taking place and critical articles of individual columnists appearing in the different daily papers. After yesterday's (April 18) bloodbath there was a shock reaction. As a result there were new spontaneous protests, involving a wider circle, taking place in Tel-Aviv, Haifa and Jerusalem, and today several protest demonstrations were organized by different organizations, each mobilizing some hundreds during the early afternoon hours of the busy Friday."

Israel's barbaric and totally disproportionate response to some relatively minor incidents was rooted in election-year politics. Elections, scheduled for May, will now come at a time when the Labor government of Shimon Peres has lost ground in the polls due to its inability to stop the Hamas suicide bombings which have claimed the lives of so many Israeli civilians.

The 16-day bombardment of Lebanon was a blatant

appeal for votes from supporters of the Right. It was also a deep humiliation for those Arabs who have stuck their necks out for peace, and against narrow nationalism. Finally, it has strengthened fundamentalist and rejectionist forces throughout the Middle East.

As we go to press, a cease-fire seems to have been worked out between Israel and Hezbollah. However, Israel's imperialist incursions into Lebanon have actually overshadowed the historic April 22 vote by the Palestine National Council to remove from its charter all clauses calling for Israel's destruction, as well as the vote the next day by the Israeli Labor Party to end its opposition to a Palestinian state.

### Chernobyl: then and now

Chernobyl is a nuclear disaster that erupted April 26, ten years ago. Chernobyl is a nuclear disaster that is still erupting April 26, 1996. As if a smoldering ember suddenly flared up to prove its continuing deadly existence, a fire spread quickly through abandoned villages surrounding the reactors still operating at the nuclear power plant complex in Ukraine, only days before April 26.

The fire was started accidentally by commemorative candles lit by former residents who had returned for the anniversary to commemorate those killed by the disaster ten years ago. The wind and fire raised fresh fears about a new release of radioactive dust.

Yet the threat of potential new dangers could hardly be worse than the human devastation of the last ten years: from 5,000 to over 125,000 killed directly or indirectly by the nuclear disaster; up to two million people still living on contaminated soil and eating contaminated food products; one-fifth of the Republic of Belarus, north of Chernobyl's winds, unfit for any agriculture. Most damning is the 100-fold increase in thyroid cancer among children.

The nuclear security summit of the world's state-capitalist powers, meeting in Moscow, adjourned only days before the anniversary, paying unanimous lip service to Chernobyl but agreeing to do little. There are still promises but no firm commitment from international powers to ante up the \$3 billion which Ukraine's government demands to take off line the two reactors still operating at Chernobyl. Since 1986, political life in the former USSR has gone through upheaval, while the 15 Chernobyl-style nuclear reactors still operating across the former Russian empire have not.

Instead of insisting these reactors be shut down, the summit leaders suggested they be "improved" to meet international "safety standards"—ten years after Chernobyl exposed the inherent design flaws in reactors which were built to produce material for nuclear weapons, not to generate electricity. Their final declaration included a commitment "to measures which will enable nuclear power...to continue in the next century to play an important role."

At the same time, anti-nuclear citizens' groups held their own "Nuclear Summit Watch" in Moscow. While the rulers were meeting in Moscow, one of the activists, Alexandr Nikitin, was spending his 11th week in a KGB jail, charged with high treason through espionage—punishable by death. His crime was co-writing a report on the dangers of Russia's deteriorating nuclear submarines. Nikitin's group, Bellona—especially his co-author, Igor Kudrik—have been targeted for repression.

Every day, more and more is being added to the world's collective pile of radioactive waste, especially in the technologically "advanced" West. As the nuclear waste "industry" tries to dump this lethal mess in economically starved, usually minority communities, they are increasingly being confronted by new groups opposed to eco-racism.

Chernobyl, in the east, was preceded by the 1979 Three Mile Island disaster in the U.S. The difference in magnitude should not cloud their sameness. Capitalist nuclear technology—whether for weapons, commodity production, or stockholder profits paid for by the consumers—will never have anything to do with human life.

### Elections in Italy

The April 23 parliamentary elections made the re-named Communist Party, the Democratic Party of the Left, the dominant political force in Italy for the first time since World War II. The Olive Tree coalition, composed of the Democratic Party of the Left, some former Christian Democrats and social democrats, liberals, and ecologists, received over 40% of the vote, putting it in position to form a government.

Yet this election was no breakthrough for Leftist ideas or policies. A New York Times editorial (April 25) noted that the Democratic Party of the Left today supports "markets, NATO membership, and the European Union" and that it had campaigned "not for ideology but for clean and workable government." Representatives of big capital such as Fiat and the Bank of Italy applauded the election result, and the stock market rose.

On the losing side were the demagogic business tycoon Silvio Berlusconi and the supposedly reformed neo-fascist party. These groups represent a hard right committed to drastic austerity and the "free market," and opposed to immigration, women's rights, and lesbian and gay rights.

The victorious Olive Tree coalition promises a kinder and gentler form of austerity, but has no solution to Italy's nationwide unemployment rate of 12%, let alone to the staggering 30% rate in southern Italy. Olive Tree is to the right even of Eurocommunism.

### Brazil peasant occupations



Police attacked landless peasants occupying a highway in the northern Brazil state of Para on April 17, killing 19 people. It was the most serious confrontation between authorities and the burgeoning movement of rural land occupiers since last summer. Videotapes of the massacre, showing police machine gunning protesters armed only with rocks, produced outrage across the country.

As April began, over 31,000 families, under the banner of the Landless Rural Workers Movement (MST), had occupied government and private idle land. Nearly half of Brazil's huge area is owned by a tiny 1% of the population. The landowners use the property for investment and tax shelters—anything but agricultural production—while over five million families are landless, according to the government's own figures. The MST estimates 195 million acres are idle.

The peasant movement has seen numerous advances in the last two months alone. Women invaded a ranch in Pontal do Paranapanema to mark International Women's Day, March 8. And at the beginning of April, the MST organized marches on 17 state capitals and took over an 18,000 acre ranch in Mato Grosso state.

## 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 recreation of that philosophy for our age as "Marxist-Humanism." The development of the Marxist-Humanism of Dunayevskaya is recorded in the documents on microfilm and open to all under the title *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection-Marxist-Humanism: A Half Century of Its World Development*, on deposit at the Wayne State University Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs in Detroit, Michigan.

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

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