

We need more than daily resistance



by B. Ann Lastelle

Capital, wrote Karl Marx, presents itself as the command over labor. The company commanded workers in my manufacturing unit to go to 12-hour shifts in June in order to meet expanded production goals. Working relationships and friendships were rent asunder as people moved to new jobs, new shifts and new crews.

The night crews are short of the number of employees required on the lines and generally lack mechanical expertise and experience with the machinery. I thought, with some satisfaction, that the company's plan would never work; they would never get out production under these conditions. I was wrong. One night crew ran more than the rate on the first night they worked together; both have continued to perform well (in capitalist terms).

My mistake—our mistake—is that we workers sometimes think we're important as individuals to the production process. The history of the development of capitalist machinery showed Marx that "in machinery the motion and the activity of the instrument of labor asserts its independence vis-à-vis the worker. The instrument of labor now becomes an industrial form of perpetual motion."

"Because it is capital," Marx wrote, "the automatic mechanism is endowed, in the person of the capitalist, with consciousness and a will. ...it is animated by the drive to reduce to a minimum the resistance offered by man, that obstinate yet elastic natural barrier." Certainly our automated filling and packaging line has reduced to minimal effect the passive "it will never work," "I'm going to do my job and nothing more" resistance that we have offered so far.

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Black World

Charles Denby: recollection and meaning



by Lou Turner

August 25th marks the 90th anniversary of Charles Denby's birth. That alone would be reason enough to write the series of articles on his life and thought that will appear in the next several issues of *News & Letters*, the newspaper for whom he was the editor from its founding in 1955 to his death, Oct. 10, 1983. There are more compelling reasons to remember Charles Denby than the occasion of an anniversary, however, reasons that won't be fully evident until we have completed our exploration and discussion of the historic and philosophic significance of Denby's life and thought.

Charles Denby was born in Lowndes County, Alabama in 1907, the son of rural farmers and the grandson of slaves. He is most noted for his autobiography, *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*, a work considered a "proletarian classic" among scholars of African-American and labor history. The famous African-American writer Kenneth Rexroth gave this literary appraisal of *Indignant Heart* in a 1957 letter to the poet Morgan Gibson: "The novel or autobiography [*Indignant Heart*] is the only convincing story of a proletarian Negro I have ever read—it sounds like it was written by a worker, not a novelist.... I devoted a 15 minute book review program to the whole thing and passed the *News & Letters* on to the [City Lights] Bookshop where Ferlinghetti, in time, has given them all away to people he thought might be interested."

The African-American writer William Gardner Smith ended a Sept. 24, 1951 letter to CLR James with his own appraisal of the draft manuscript of *Indignant Heart* which he had just read: "The tremendous power of [Denby's] book is the power of accumulation. Minute detail is piled on top of minute detail; incident is piled on top of incident—until, in the end, a mighty overall impression of American society, particularly as it concerns the Negro and the worker, remains with the reader. Repeated, small, but strong brushstrokes—and the picture is painted, indelibly, on the mind!"

In fact, long before Alex Haley's *Roots*, Denby took up the question of African-American genealogy in his June 1962 "Worker's Journal" column in *News & Letters*, prompted by receiving a copy of a Gambian newspaper,

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Draft for Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, 1997-1998

Openings, contradictions, and the specter of Marx in today's global crises

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

I. American 'model' or American gulag?

Three recent speeches by Bill Clinton—his June 14 speech in San Diego on race relations, his June 20 speech to the meeting of the major industrial powers in Denver, and his June 26 speech to the UN Environmental Conference in New York—reveal the extent to which capitalism, in the form of the so-called "American model," is intent on removing all barriers to capital's self-expansion, regardless of the human cost.

At the Denver summit Clinton touted the "American model" of deficit reduction, corporate downsizing and massive cutbacks in social programs as having enabled the U.S. to achieve rates of economic growth envied by other industrial powers. The "proof" of American "success," he said, is that the U.S. unemployment rate is at its lowest point in 20 years.

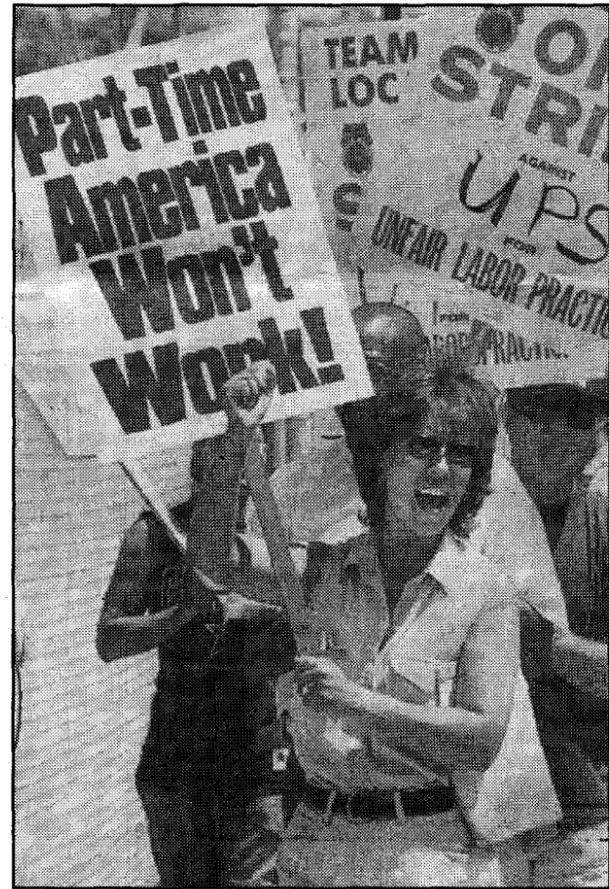
Clinton did not mention that the official unemployment rate of 5% leaves many uncounted. According to a recent study in *The Chicago Reporter*, there are 210,000 more unemployed in the Chicago area alone than reported in government statistics. Moreover, the rate of unemployment among Blacks is more than twice as high as whites and shows no sign of abating. Some Black neighborhoods in Chicago, such as Garfield Park and North Lawndale, have real unemployment rates in excess of 45%.

At the same time, while corporate profits have soared 50% since 1990, real weekly wages for those who are working have sunk to 1968 levels. This is largely a result of the smashing of unions and strikes, which has been continuous since Reagan's defeat of PATCO in 1981. In light of this, U.S. capitalists have decided they can live with a slightly lower rate of unemployment, as they feel it won't translate into pressure for higher wages. Thus, while the unemployment index may have gone down, the misery index is going up.

The dismantling of the federal welfare system, which took effect on July 1, reveals just how low wages are dropping. Under the new legislation welfare recipients are to work at least 20 hours a week and be paid the minimum wage of \$4.75 per hour. Yet because the states have been granted control over the welfare programs, and average monthly payments vary widely from state to state, many may end up not even paying the minimum wage. According to Kevin Ryan of Covenant House, an advocacy center for homeless youth in New York, "In 18 months only Alaska, Hawaii and part of New York will provide welfare participants with compensation at or above the \$5.15 per-hour minimum wage that will become effective in October. By then, most states will pay welfare participants less than \$2.99 an hour. Alabama and Louisiana will pay \$1.26 an hour, and Mississippi, which pays the lowest benefits in the nation, will pay 89 cents an hour" (*Washington Post*, July 3, 1997). The latter is less than in some of the poorest parts of Mexico.

The extent to which all restrictions in the way of capital's self-expansion are being removed was also seen in Clinton's speech to the UN conference on the Environment, where he said, "We have been blessed with high rates of growth and millions of new jobs over the last few years." Yet he admitted that "this has led to an increase in greenhouse gas emissions."

As a recent World Health Organization study has shown, global warming is responsible for the spread of serious diseases like malaria and dengue fever. Conditions have worsened since the Rio Earth Summit of 1992; over 100,000 plant and animal species have been wiped out since then. In the Asia-Pacific region, where two-thirds of the populace live in absolute poverty



UPS strikers challenge the "new economy's" falling living standards. (See story on page 3)

despite high levels of economic growth, there are growing problems with soil degradation, marine and coastal resources, deforestation, and inadequate water supplies. Africa alone contains 19 of the 25 countries with the highest percentage of the population without access to clean drinking water. Yet though the U.S. emits a quarter of worldwide greenhouse gases, and is projected to increase its emissions of them by 50% of 1990 levels by 2010, Clinton gutted any effort to reduce them.

Clinton's June 14 speech on race relations also proclaimed that "our economy is the strongest in a generation...our social problems, from crime to poverty, are finally bending to our efforts." His emphasis, however, was on the racial divide as this country's most intractable problem. Clinton is worried that conditions among Black Americans ranging from the economy to police brutality have so worsened in the five years since the Los Angeles rebellion that new upsurges beckon. Though his effort to head this off by "leading the American people in a great and unprecedented conversation about race" had him bemoan such backward moves as the elimination of affirmative action, he actually had little to say about the specific realities facing Black Americans.

Clinton instead engaged in abstract discussion of the importance of a "multicultural, multiethnic" America. His rhetoric of a "pluralist" U.S. embracing "over 100 different racial and ethnic groups" completely covered over the specificity of the Black dimension, which when it has become masses in motion has always played a vanguard role in U.S. history.

Though Clinton did not mention Bosnia in his speech, his effort to appropriate the concept of multiethnicity is the very opposite of Bosnia's struggle for a multiethnic society. As we showed in our writings on Bosnia, the struggle for a multiethnic society there is not reducible to "pluralism," for it represents a potentially revolutionary pole of opposition to narrow nationalism. This is precisely what Clinton has severely undermined through his efforts to partition Bosnia with the Dayton accords.¹

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1. See our analysis in *Bosnia-Herzegovina: Achilles Heel of Western Civilization* (Chicago: News and Letters, 1996).

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Honduran campesinas demand change

Honduras is the second poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, second only to Haiti. About 63% of the population is malnourished, the average life expectancy is 66 years, and every day 33 Honduran children die of preventable disease mostly related to lack of food and poor sanitation. Women are the second most malnourished group, after children under age six. Abortion is illegal, and female mortality from self-inflicted, botched abortions is one of the top five causes of death.

These are only a few of the appalling facts that my partner and I discovered in preparation for our nine-month trip to western Honduras, where we stayed in three rural communities which work with an organization called Life Development (LD). We collected the oral narratives of six campesinas.

In **Don't Be Afraid Gringo: A Honduran Woman Speaks from the Heart** (1987), Elvia Alvarado states that Honduran women must realize that many forms of machismo are detrimental. Women should not allow themselves to be victims of sexual, mental, economic, and/or physical abuse from men; nor should they allow precious income to be spent on alcohol or drugs while the family suffers, even though rampant alcoholism and drug addiction is an effect of the ubiquitous poverty in which most Hondurans live.

We visited one community where, with the help of LD, the women started a cooperative general store. For many, this is the first time they have earned personal cash. Although some of their husbands demanded control of the profits, many women make the decisions concerning how the money is spent. One woman, Rosa, said that women use the money to meet the needs of their children and the home.

To fight against their poverty, those involved with LD created spaces for new ways of relating to one another and the land as they learned together, women and men, about gender issues, women's health, spirituality, and communal cooperation.

Elvia Alvarado and Rosa are only two of the many women in Honduras calling for change and liberation. Women said, over and over, that being organized changed their lives. They begin to love their bodies and their thoughts and gain a new sense of themselves as human subjects—as women. They uproot the old in these processes of creating the new, and they begin with themselves. Testimony from one campesina, Lupe, follows.

—Revolutionary woman solidarity activist

I had problems with my husband because he is so machista, never using birth control. He knew about it because he was in the army. I decided that we would break up because he was a drunk. He didn't give me anything for the children.

He didn't let me go to meetings. One time, it was my turn to go to a workshop. He said that if he found me at the bus stop he was going to take me back to town and

Breast cancer speak-out

Berkeley, Cal—La Pena Cultural Center sponsored an inspiring speak-out about breast cancer in July. The program, which centered around the mural, "Who Holds the Mirror? Breast Cancer, Women's Lives and the Environment," painted by San Francisco Women's Building muralist Miranda Bergman, brought into focus myriad issues affecting women's lives.

From healthcare rights to social and environmental justice, immigrants' rights, women's liberation, sexuality and self-esteem, to literacy, medical research, and non-traditional healing practices, the focus of the program was wide-reaching, informative, and especially moving.

The mural was the culmination of a year of work conducted by The Breast Cancer Oral History Action Project. Led by Beth Sauerhaft, a radical educator inspired by the works of Paulo Freire, the project brought together culturally diverse, limited literacy women and trained them in how to become "action researchers" in their own communities.

Each woman researcher gathered the oral histories of medically underserved women with breast cancer in their native languages of Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese and English. The researchers then translated the histories which were incorporated into the visuals of the striking mural.

At the meeting we had the great fortune of hearing not only from the muralist and project leader, but also from the women action researchers, cancer survivors who had been interviewed, and powerful women leaders from community environmental and healthcare justice organizations. It was inspiring to see these women, Black and Latina and Asian and white, of various sexualities and economic backgrounds, coming together in a common struggle against a society which "values profits over human need," as one speaker put it.

Women told their stories of survival against a deadly disease, of battles fought and won against the corporate polluters who are responsible for the proliferation of the disease, and of creating communities of strong active women and men empowered in their struggles to create a different kind of society.

The mural is on tour throughout the country, from California to Massachusetts, Indiana and North Carolina. For more information contact **SPEAKOUT!** at (510) 601-0182.

—Julia Jones



Elvia Alvarado and other campesinas.

not let me go. We were separated for 15 days because of this. I demanded child support. He didn't even help me with five cents. I demanded a divorce.

I had to work. I cooked, swept, washed, and cleaned. A maid. That's how I earned my salary—seven dollars each month... Now my house is my house, and because of this I could say to my husband: Get out! If you are not going to do anything, then I'm sorry, but hit the road.

I learned how to plant coffee, to fertilize and cut coffee plants, to make a farm, to cultivate corn. I had to learn for my children, so that we would not die of hunger, and so they wouldn't have to beg in the streets. I have had so many problems in my life. I think, if women were weaker than me... Oh God! All this can kill somebody. But I have overcome so much with the training I have received from LD. It's a gift.

Practically no other organization talks about the rights of women, only LD. Still there is manipulation and slavery. Even in my own family. When I need something, I have to ask my brothers. Sometimes I need their advice... But I tell them, I am not a child! I am free! You made your life, now I need to make mine!

But we, the younger ones, are not really to blame. We are up against old creations. This is how we were raised. Our culture is like this: manipulated, enslaved, always dependent on someone else. But I don't want to bear this. I just wasn't born to put up with any of these things. I don't want to be imprisoned. I don't want to be anybody's slave... I like freedom!

Restructured economy: women, race, class

The question I want to address is: Has the struggle changed since before the Civil Rights Movement, and if so, how? In the 1960s, there were not many Black women in workplaces at all in Memphis, other than in laundries and in homes doing domestic work. Skilled jobs had no Black women. The Civil Rights Act passed in 1964 allegedly outlawed discrimination based on race, sex, age and national origin. But what has happened is that management has gotten a little slicker in their discrimination. It has not stopped.

Today, there are so many people that work 40 hours a week and yet qualify for food stamps because they work for \$4.75 an hour. Even if the minimum wage goes to \$5.15, one can hardly make a living wage. The labor movement in America is why we have the 40-hour week, public schools, and a lot of benefits that we now take for granted. Now they are attempting to do away with the 40-hour week and the 8-hour day.

I represent both Black and white, the majority being Black. In the South, employers believe that white people won't support a Black union. I do have some white people in our union that are just as mean as I am; but for the most part the employers are correct. This is why industry from the North moves to the South. In Tupelo, Miss., about 100 miles from Memphis, there is a nest of manufacturers that have come there from the North because they are promised a union-free environment.

Beyond the city line is a little place called Olive Branch, named that because they extend that "southern hospitality," the olive branch. We represent the Serta Mattress workers in Memphis. Serta wanted to leave Memphis because of the tax breaks that other cities give manufacturers. The Olive Branch Chamber of Commerce told Serta that because they had unionized workers, the town was not going to sell land to Serta, nor were they willing to rent it to them. So they went to Batesville. My local still represents Serta. Companies do not just get rid of a union that quickly.

Companies that move south from the North come for the anti-union climate. Even when we do succeed in winning a union election, they do everything they can to avoid agreeing to a first contract by bargaining in bad faith. Management either has to agree to a contract, close the shop, or get the workers to decertify the union. They figure that if they don't agree to a contract, they can eventually get the workers to decertify the union.

Certain companies will close down or run to Mexico to avoid dealing with Black unions that are willing to defend all workers. With NAFTA in place, corporate America is free to take our work to Mexico, Guatemala, Haiti, the Philippines, or China to get it done. But companies running to the South are willing to do anything to stay non-union. Local governments are working with unions to control people; as long as workers are not unionized, they have no rights on their job about how much they earn, the conditions in which they work, what kind of treatment they receive.

Besides this attack on unions, you see the same kind of restructuring with workfare and prisons. One federal bill, which was voted down, would have made work-

Rich refuses arts medal

Editor's Note

Adrienne Rich sent N&L a copy of the following letter rejecting the National Medal for the Arts award.

July 3, 1997

Dear Jane Alexander,

I just spoke with a young man from your office, who informed me that I had been chosen to be one of 12 recipients of the National Medal for the Arts at a ceremony at the White House in the fall. I told him at once that I could not accept such an award from President Clinton or this White House because the very meaning of art, as I understand it, is incompatible with the cynical politics of this administration. I want to clarify to you what I meant by my refusal.

Anyone familiar with my work from the early '60s on knows that I believe in art's social presence—as breaker of official silences, as voice for those whose voices are disregarded, and as a human birthright. In my lifetime I have seen the space for the arts opened by movements for social justice, the power of art to break despair. Over the past two decades I have witnessed the increasingly brutal impact of racial and economic injustice in our country.

There is no simple formula for the relationship of art to justice. But I do know that art—in my own case the art of poetry—means nothing if it simply decorates the dinner table of power which holds it hostage. The radical disparities of wealth and power in America are widening at a devastating rate. A President cannot meaningfully honor certain token artists while the people at large are so dishonored.

I know you have been engaged in a serious and disheartening struggle to save government funding for the arts, against those whose fear and suspicion of art is nakedly repressive. In the end, I don't think we can separate art from overall human dignity and hope. My concern for my country is inextricable from my concerns as an artist. I could not participate in a ritual which would feel so hypocritical to me.

Sincerely,
Adrienne Rich
cc: President Clinton

ers non-employees. They would not be covered by the Labor Act or fair wages standards. This would put them at the mercy of employers. If they quit they would get no assistance. This bill has been sent now to the states. It is about a form of slave labor.

The state of Tennessee is using more prison labor than any other state. This also is slave labor. If you're in prison, you've got to do the work. In Tennessee, if a company provides equipment and raw materials, they can get any product they want made.

This also attacks the mind. With welfare, they make you think it's all Black women who don't want to work. It's the same with the prisons; they make you think it's all Black men, hoodlums and scum. They use racism. Workfare passed easily because it's for lazy, trifling Black women. In some people's minds, there's nobody on welfare but Blacks, but that's not true. In California and Texas, they're going at the Hispanic immigrants and immigrants from Taiwan, Haiti and other places.

When you put this all together, what do you have? The prisons cannot be organized, the workfare workers, if they are not classified as employees, cannot be organized. So you've got a non-union situation competing with Mexico and China. If they keep people from organizing, it keeps power from the people. One worker has no power. But think what people could do if all workers would organize.

—Ida Leachman

Ida Leachman is Vice-President of Local 282, Furniture Division-IUE. This article is adapted from her speech at the "Frontline Feminisms" conference at University of California-Riverside in January.

Women Worldwide

by Mary Jo Gray

After 20 years of struggle, the women's movement in Mauritius is celebrating the July passage of the first Protection from Domestic Violence Act. The new law allows women to get eviction orders, tenancy orders, and occupation orders against violent husbands. In the time the bill was being debated in Parliament, two women were murdered—beaten and set on fire by their husbands.

—Information from Muvman Liberasyon Fam

International activists participating in a women's human rights institute at the Center for Women's Global Leadership at Rutgers University in June, issued a call to action on behalf of the rights of Afghan women. They are circulating a petition internationally demanding that the Taliban end gender apartheid in employment, education and public mobility; eliminate forced dress codes; and uphold the human rights of all Afghans.

—Information from Women Living Under Muslim Laws

UPS strikers reject part-time living

Memphis, Tenn. — We are full and part-time workers, 185,000 nationwide, on strike against United Parcel Service (UPS) since Aug. 4. I work close to 40 hours a week so I should get full pay but I don't. We part-timers make one half what the full-timers make. One problem is the hours they give us. We want full-time work and we believe that UPS could do it if they stopped contracting jobs out to non-union labor and just paid us for the full-time work we are already doing.

Part-time workers have to work two years to have one year of full-time health, retirement and welfare benefits. We would have to work here part-time for 50 years before we could retire!

What we're out here against UPS for isn't all about wages. We're also fighting about who is going to control our pension, health care and welfare funds. Right now the Teamsters Union controls it, but now UPS wants it back. If they do that, we workers will have to pay for these benefits the way management has to now.

These big trailers that haul the packages, UPS truckers are supposed to be pulling them, but they are hiring independent non-union drivers to do it. This strike is full-time and part-time workers — we're a whole union and we back all the workers.

I'm proud of the people who have shown up here supporting what we are doing. People in the public won't understand if they don't hear our side of it.

—Memphis hub worker

New York City — UPS management wants a seven year contract and wants to give us 30 cents an hour each year. Everything would be going up except our pay. They say they'll raise part-timers two dollars an hour, then they'll have them deliver the air packages instead of full-timers on overtime. They'll still be part time, still be at half pay, and they would have limited time to do it and get back.

—UPS driver

Chicago — I worked part time for six years and I have ten years of full time. UPS is still paying part-time people \$8 an hour the same as in 1982. It was rough then, it's terrible now.

UPS got rid of all the full-time employees at the Willow Springs Super Hub. There were 4,000 full-time employees there at one time. Now there's only 50. That's what they want.

The majority of low-seniority part-timers are actually working full time. They guarantee part-timers three hours, and then keep you working 8, 9, 10 hours. That's why UPS tells you that the majority of part-timers make over \$16,000. UPS says there are no full-time jobs available, but then why do the part-timers have to work those hours? It's so they can give them part-time pay and benefits.

On packages 70 pounds and above, after the one-day

Hoodwinking union workers

Jackson, Miss. — The Hood Furniture manufacturing company notified Local 282, Furniture Workers Division - IUE, that it closed officially on Dec. 15, 1996, with the last day of work being Friday, Dec. 13, 1996, with 258 workers were terminated. But on Monday, Dec. 16, a number of employees were told to report to work at the same place but now the company was called Livingston Management Inc. Our response was to say: You said you were closing. Who are these people working for? Who pays the bills? They said that Hood contracted out to Livingston to sell off all the inventory and to keep the building open and in repair.

But all the supervisors were the same, the work, everything was the same as before. We filed charges against the company with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) but even though they ruled that Livingston Management Inc. was a dummy company, and it was really Hood all along, they had waited so long that a different company, Straits Furniture Company, had become the so-called "new" owners. So the NLRB ruled against us, going against their own laws.

We filed a 16-page appeal of this unlawful ruling and, as a result, the NLRB reopened the investigation. We are waiting to see.

We still are not at all certain that Straits is really a new company. Hood owns the building and the property it's on; all the same supervisors are still in the plant. But out of the 150 employees working there now, only about one half are former Hood workers. They stopped hiring any Hood employees and now are only hiring new people who have no experience making furniture even though there are 300 unemployed skilled furniture workers in the area. None of the workers who were part of the in-plant leadership that was instrumental in the seven-year battle against Hood had been rehired. This is nothing but another effort to get rid of the union.

We have made a request for union recognition but the company is keeping us dangling. They say they haven't yet reached full employment. But the real reason is that there is a statute of limitations for filing charges and the deadline is Aug. 14. After that, we can't bring charges against them for not recognizing the union. That is why the company is taking their time.

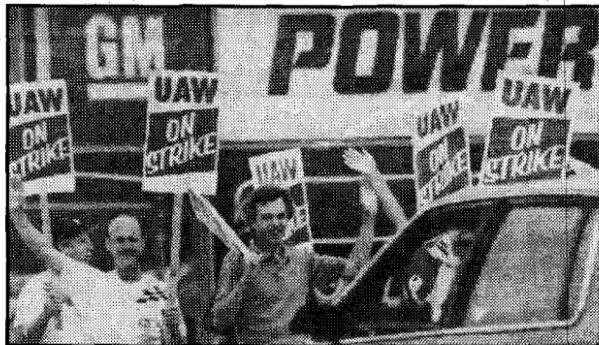
Despite all of this, the workers are continuing the battle. They have no intention of leaving things as they are now. I have never met any workers as strong as these. They just refuse to give up.

—Willie Rudd, President, Local 282

strike, UPS said we could call and ask for help. Sure enough, you can call. I'm a package car driver, and you can't call 50 times a day. I know of only one occasion when a package driver got help.

On one route, which usually had 20 packages a day that were 100 to 180 pounds, they lost three drivers to back injuries. A third of the employees go out on disability every year.

—Package car driver



GM strikers at the Warren, Mich. transmission plant settled after six days (and six shutdown plants) with gains on outsourcing and hiring more workers. One picketer had told us: "We had 75 workers retire before Christmas, not one of them was replaced. Many workers are being injured, we can't take a vacation because GM won't let us take the time off, and we can't even take a break to go to the bathroom. We have to get relief, and that's why we're on strike."

Who backs Kaiser nurses?

Oakland, Cal. — On July 17-18, 7,500 nurses of the California Nurses Association (CNA) walked off their jobs at northern California Kaiser Permanente. Kaiser was forced to cut back to a minimum operation. Many service workers honored their picket line. However, there was a dramatic drop from the overwhelming support of the nurses' one day strike of April 14.

Immediately after that strike, the AFL-CIO leaders announced a "strategic partnership" with Kaiser management. (See "Why Sweeney-Kaiser deal" July 1997 *News & Letters*.) This made the rank and file question the level of commitment the leaders had to solidarity actions. It eroded the rock solid spirit of solidarity that was building among all Kaiser workers.

A nurse on the picket line reported the President of the Central Labor Council of Alameda, Owen Marron, demanded with fists pounding that the CNA take the issue of the quality of patient care off the bargaining table. He forgot his own high sounding rhetoric in support of the nurses on this very issue just two months earlier. A recent headline proclaimed that Kaiser received a "clean bill of health" from the Department of Health Services and the Department of Corporations. They may fool the state, but not us. We, who deliver health care, warned of deteriorating conditions long before the patient deaths caught media attention.

Now the union bureaucrats have been drawn into Kaiser management's surreal world in a flashy video with AFL-CIO President Sweeney promoting a top down partnership with Kaiser. Then they reported that the vote on the partnership got "overwhelming support." Why won't they say how many voted? Or how many voted on the last Local 250 SEIU contract ratification where the union re-submitted basically the same proposal that the rank-and-file had overwhelmingly rejected? In the one-day strike on April 16 we voted with our feet.

—Kaiser rank-and-filer

Immigrant worker burdens

New York City — As an immigrant, economically I can survive, but psychologically I am dying. In my country, psychologically I can be well, but economically I die. Here you are often alone, sometimes ill, with no one to help. You have friends and maybe relatives here, but they are always busy, and if they miss work they are fired.

We are all waiting for the new immigration laws to take effect in September. These new laws will make life more difficult and will cause more fear for workers. But friends looking for work say everywhere now the employers are requiring papers. There are some jobs that don't. They say up front, "no problem with papers." You know what to expect in those jobs. They are the worst.

Starting in September, if you marry a resident, you have to go back to your country and wait three years for your papers. Where it took two years to become a legal resident, it will now take ten. People are so taken by surprise by these changes they have not absorbed them yet.

Too many still say, "My boss likes me because I work fast." They feel that is their protection. So the boss demands an impossible amount of work in one day, knowing that out of fear, the worker will do it, and so the next worker has to do it too. We should be more conscious, and each only do what can be done in a day without killing yourself.

Despite the new law, everybody is saying, "As long as they don't throw me out, I am not leaving." The spirit of the Latino march on Washington: "We are here and we're not leaving!" The young men who came here for three or four years and never thought to bring their wives, are now sending for them. There is no more hope of making a little money and then going back. Those who thought they were only here for a while are now going to have to make their struggle here. We are in the belly of the beast.

—Latino workers

Cargill bends in Canada

Calgary, Alberta — Striking meatpackers at Cargill's High River Alberta plant on Aug. 1 voted by a narrow margin to return to work. UFCW local 1118 members had been on strike since July 10.

Over 1,000 pickets blocked the entrances to the plant on the first day of the strike. The pickets were so boisterous that the company security force recommended to the company that they discontinue their scab shuttle for management and those workers who were crossing. Cargill responded quickly by getting an injunction to ban pickets from coming within ten feet of vehicles entering or leaving the plant.

Despite the fact the picket lines were solid, Cargill made strong efforts to lure the workers back with lack of success, and little success with scabs. U.S. managers were astounded that so few workers crossed the line.

"Everybody wants to go on strike because they're fed up with this place. They treat you like slaves," said one meatcutter during the strike. The same line that processed 1,300 cattle during an eight hour shift a year ago was processing 2,000 just before the strike. Is Cargill willing to share with its employees? "If you get hurt you lose your bonus," said a two-year employee. A meatcutter told me he had worked at Cargill for two and a half years and "I do a good job, but there's always a supervisor standing behind you saying 'do it this way, you're not doing it right.'" These are grown men and women, not children.

Cargill has a multinational workplace. Its workers represent every part of the globe. As one told CTV news, "I didn't come here to be a slave. I came here to be a man." One worker on the line told me he was amazed by the solidarity. "Most of the people here don't speak English, but it's really coming together."

Only about half of the 1,600 strikers showed up to vote 457 to 404 in favour of the new contract. Cargill had proposed a \$1.50 increase over four years. The union proposed a \$1.95 raise over three years. In the end a deal was reached for \$1.50 over three and a half years. Full time employees also received a signing bonus of \$150. The base wage now raised to \$8.80 an hour and full time employees are guaranteed 36 hours of work per week (it can be 32 hours a week ten times a year).

Cargill is retaining 75 workers who were hired during the strike, but in a touching display of reconciliation it was agreed that neither workers who walked the line nor those who scabbed would be penalized.

"I think we got screwed" said a meatpacker, who voted no because the wage increase was too small. Other workers believed it was the best they could have achieved. One worker who voted for the deal noted "They said they'd never budge [on four years]. They did." Moreover he boasted, regarding the scabs "One by one, everyone of those [expletive] are going to be out of the plant."

Small gains perhaps, but the workers took on one of the biggest companies in the world and won. Could the union have done more? Workers I spoke to on the line argued that in the past few years the leadership had become more responsive to the demands of the workers. Still, it is worth repeating that a call to the International Union revealed they were not aware a strike was taking place!

First Safeway, now Cargill, the long hot summer in Alberta continues.

—Neil Fettes

Workshop Talks

(Continued from page 1)

Our job is to serve as what Marx called an "appendage of a machine." We supply the machines with bottles, caps, labels, plastic film, corrugated boxes and adhesive tape. We turn off the machines when they jam, clear the jam, make minor adjustments and repairs, and restart the machines. We have some record keeping and quality control functions, but mostly we watch the machines and correct their mistakes.

The first employees to come into this unit received over two months of training. Now with the push for expanded production, employees displaced from other, shrinking departments are thrown onto the lines with no training whatsoever. Temporary workers run machines on the night shifts. And still we produce.

"The separation of the intellectual faculties of the production process from manual labor, and the transformation of those faculties into powers exercised by capital over labor, is...finally completed by large-scale industry erected on the foundation of machinery," Marx wrote. "The special skill of each individual machine operator, who has now been deprived of all significance, vanishes as an infinitesimal quantity in the face of the science, the gigantic natural forces, and the mass of social labor embodied in the system of machinery..."

Marx condemned a mode of production which put all knowledge and science into machinery, leaving only torment and drudgery for the minders of those machines. He envisioned a new, humanist society where "the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labor, and therewith also the antithesis between mental and physical labor, has vanished," and "the productive forces have also increased with the all-round development of the individual."

My co-workers try to maintain their friendships, value good working relationships and deny that the individual machine operator has been "deprived of all significance." Therein lies their humanism.

From the Writings of Raya Dunayevskaya
MARXIST-HUMANIST
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Editor's Note

This month we publish the following letter from Raya Dunayevskaya to the Scottish Marxist-Humanist and famous labor radical Harry McShane, because of the way it speaks to a central theme of this year's "Draft for Marxist-Humanist Perspectives—the need to develop new openings which emerge from the objective situation. The letter was written while the Portuguese Revolution was still ongoing. For a full treatment of the Portuguese Revolution and its roots in the anti-colonial struggles in Africa, see her article "Under the whip of the counter-revolution: Will the revolution in Portugal advance?" in the Jan.-Feb. 1976 issue of *News & Letters*. The following letter can be found in the Harry McShane Collection, series I.D.19.

Aug. 15, 1975

Dear Harry,

You're right, both in your analysis of the tragedy of the events in Portugal, and in not separating these political contradictions from the economic ones. Not only are the Communists very far from anything resembling Marxism, but they do not even know what the private capitalists know very well, that what gives the capitalists their life of luxury are all those unpaid hours of labor of the workers. In a word, when you speak about their missing the point about the production of capital, they show their state-capitalist mentality of thinking that capital is a thing instead of the congealment of those unpaid hours of labor.

What is heart-breaking in Portugal is that the hunger for power is a damn sight more fatal to the masses than merely "taking the masses for granted," and it is this which makes even the talk of the two superpowers struggling for single mastery of world capital not sufficiently concrete and indeed creates a loophole for the Maoists to behave as if they are Marxists. This week alone, when the Catholics have revealed their true fascist character, and, as you put it, "the Socialist Party has been pushed into the arms of the archbishop," the new face of Maoism has reappeared in so-called non-party form of the military "from below," separating themselves from both Communists and Socialists as well as Catholics, asking for an end to all party rule and up with supposed spontaneity of councils—as if workers' councils, workers' militia, mass upsurge can be ordered from above. It seems no word is sacred anymore so that the workers' councils, ever since the Hungarian Revolution which stood both for de-centralization, control of production at the point of production as against the damn bureaucratized trade unions at the "headquarters," have been transformed into something that Gen. Carvalho,¹ having visited Cuba and Fidel's glorification of military focus, not to mention Mao's hypocritical "bombard the headquarters," can order "be created."

You know, Harry, it is really fantastic, this whole ques-

Lessons of the Portuguese Revolution



Angolan children, taught to read and write by guerrillas, argued ideas of freedom with captured Portuguese soldiers.

tion of vanguardism and the party. When Marx wanted to stress how great is the self-spontaneous organization of the proletariat, not stopping at the trade union level by reaching to the genuine lower depths and creative heights of the Paris Commune, he would refer to the party in a very complimentary way, even if sometimes there was nobody in that party but Marx and Engels. In other words, it was shorthand for what Marx held to be "the political form finally discovered to work out the economic emancipation of the proletariat." Then, in his thorough disgust with not only the Lassalleans who had the whole secret to mass party structure that would send them to Parliament, and "his" Eisenachists² who were supposedly at that unity congress in Gotha in order to teach the Lassalleans theory, but ended by completely capitulating to the theoretic void and hypostatization of the iron law of wages,³ he wrote very sharply that he would have absolutely nothing to do with this new creation of a supposedly Marxist party.

But in the process of this magnificent critique and in the many letters to the people involved, he decided not to break openly because "one step forward in the Movement is more important than one hundred theses." But using the word Movement instead of Party (as that first revisionist Bernstein³ was soon to prove as he misused the word "Movement" to reject theory especially the revolutionary Marx's) hardly saved Marx. It took Engels another decade before he could even get the party or the Movement to publish Marx's profound critique of that party's theses. And by then, the German Social Democratic Party, at its birth, laid the foundation of that vanguardism from which we suffer to this day and which became the foundation for Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?*—that the workers could not get to socialism on their own; that socialism would be brought to them by the intellectuals from the outside.

As for Portugal, I'm sure the Maoists are doing a lot of quoting from Lenin's *State and Revolution*; that's how the whole ideological battle of the Sino-Soviet conflict

first began. Mao would quote from *State and Revolution* whenever his power was not the one being questioned, and Khrushchev would quote from *What Is To Be Done?* This charade of using one book against the other and one period against the other continued until neither was interested in quotations and began massing the troops against each other. What do you suppose they're doing in Portugal now? I just saw on the TV a "third" left group, and they tried to show their "international" "revolutionary" character by wearing masks over their heads and marching on the CIA headquarters as against either the CP or the army. In fact, they would any day accept the CIA as against the GPU.⁴

The situation is still fluid but for how much longer can that remain when no new philosophic banner of total liberation is raised? For awhile it looked as if the women's liberationists who, after all, preceded the April 1974 revolt, could occupy an independent field. There must be so much machismo there that last year when the women's liberationists marched, they were attacked by the Communists in every bit as vulgar a manner as any male chauvinism in the most reactionary country. I have been trying to get some information from Maria Barreno⁵ but thus far I've only received a sympathetic letter that promised to write at greater length but didn't...

The only other field I can see that may be both revolutionary and philosophic is Africa. Surely the whole movement in the Portuguese armed forces began under the impact of the Black guerrilla fighters. But at this moment, when the Sino-Soviet conflict is tearing Angola apart—and I don't only mean Sino-Soviet conflict as Russia and China—but, what is a great deal more tragic for Africa, the African revolutionaries themselves are not asking: what will freedom mean for the masses who are doing the fighting? How can philosophy and revolution become integral to Angola and initiate a new world stage of revolution? But they themselves are saying: who will most efficiently run the production process and develop the raw materials?

You're also absolutely right on Helsinki.⁶ Not only was it a big zero, but, though Brezhnev was the victor, "he was in the dock," since that did allow the West to get away with not having either Korea or Vietnam questions raised at a conference in Europe, whereas such a conference was the precise place for everyone to talk about Czechoslovakia and Hungary. I am sure that you meant the expression that they were all hypocrites as a political and not just a psychological analysis. That genius Hegel had a great deal to say on that subject too, the most prescient of which was that it stems from "dissembling." That is to say, when the world is in crisis and everything is disintegrating, the admixture of conflicts and "self-sophistication" can lead nowhere else but to hypocrisy.

One of the few phrases of Kant's that Hegel was so very fond of that he kept quoting it in that section on dissemblance was Kant's description of the so-called cosmological proof as "a perfect nest of thoughtless contradictions."⁷ That is exactly what Mao is constantly doing with contradiction. Instead of seeing it as either genuine class contradiction, he's always talking about "good" and "bad," as anyone who opposed Mao's line, or a worker who dares to ask for better conditions of labor—which are immediately branded by Mao as "bourgeois," whereupon he sends 10,000 troops to put down the revolt as he did just last week. It's this delusion and the very rejection of subjectivity that Hegel was describing as the achievement of the "beautiful soul" luxuriating in self-hypnosis, which Hegel in turn called "self-willed impotence," leaving him to do "precisely the opposite of what it means to do." The whole point was to show that "the self-absorbed uncommunicative knowledge of itself can lead to nought but hypocrisy," and that there is no way out of this self-indulgence unless the Ego (and that, dear Harry, in our day, is most certainly not just individual Ego but national Ego) strips itself of the selfishness which could lead it to universalism, i.e., freedom.

Yours,
Raya

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1. General Carvalho headed Portugal's left military forces (MFA) who assumed power after the April 1974 overthrow of the fascist Caetano regime.

2. Eisenachists was the popular name of the Social Democratic Workers Party of Germany, founded in the city of Eisenach in 1869, some of whose members claimed to be followers of Marx and Engels. The party entered into a unity congress with the followers of the state-socialist leader Ferdinand Lassalle in the city of Gotha in May 1875. Marx's "Marginal Notes" or *Critique of the Gotha Program* were written as a criticism of his Eisenachist followers.

3. Eduard Bernstein was a theoretical leader and journalist in the German Social Democracy, of its reformist revisionist wing. He came to socialism through the influence of Lassalle and Eugen Dühring, and joined the Eisenachists in 1872. It was against Bernstein's "evolutionary socialism" that Rosa Luxemburg wrote her famous *Reform or Revolution*.

4. GPU was the abbreviation of the hated State Political Directorate, the original State Security Services, or secret police, of the former Soviet Union, which became known as the KGB (*Committee for State Security*) under Khrushchev.

5. Maria Barreno was one of the "Three Marias," authors of *New Portuguese Letters*, an early work on women's liberation that became one of the sparks of the Portuguese Revolution. For an excerpt of a speech from her U.S. speaking tour, see the April 1975 *News & Letters*.

6. This refers to the July 1975 conference of European powers.

7. This and the rest of the quotations from Hegel come from the section of his *Phenomenology of Mind* (translated by J.S. Baillie) called "Dissemblance."

Openings, contradictions, and the specter of Marx in today's global crises

(Continued from page 1)

Far from Clinton's complicity in the destruction of multiethnicity in Bosnia and "defense" of a multiethnic society in the U.S. being opposites, in each case the aim is the same—to subsume a revolutionary force of opposition. In Bosnia, Clinton undermines multiethnicity through the politics of partition, while in the U.S., he undermines the revolutionary specificity of the Black dimension by indulging in abstract rhetoric about "multiethnicity"—at the very moment when the inhumanity of capital accumulation is most sharply exposed by the conditions, struggles, and social consciousness of Black Americans.

Clinton revealed his hand when he said "full participation in our strong and growing economy is the best antidote to envy, despair, and racism." This gets everything backward. It is not Black America's "exclusion" from U.S. capitalism, but rather the impact of restructured capitalism upon it, that explains the depth of today's "misery index." Black America's forced "participation" in the restructured economy, with its conditions of permanent unemployment, segregated schools and neighborhoods, poverty wages, homelessness and burgeoning prisons is the objective foundation for the racist conditions Clinton claims to decry.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the warehousing of the permanent army of the unemployed in prison. According to a recent study, if current incarceration rates continue, six million will be in prison by the year 2010. That is more than Stalin's Russia had in its slave-labor camps at the height of the "gulag archipelago." In the 1930s, Stalin used those camps as a way to absorb "surplus labor" resulting from his brutal effort to industrialize Russia through the eviction of peasants from the land and to build infrastructure like railroads and mines. Today's conditions are not as distant from those as may appear. For U.S. capitalism is using prisons to absorb surplus labor resulting from the deindustrialization of the inner cities and the stagnant state of the economy.

The drive to remove all barriers in the way of capital's self-expansion is also reflected in new restrictive anti-immigration laws, which are scheduled to take effect this Fall. At the very moment when the globalization of capital is forcing down living standards for masses of people worldwide, and thereby spurring increased emigration to the U.S., the Clinton administration and Congress are eliminating even the most basic social benefits for immigrants. This, too, is solidifying the creation of a permanent grouping of sub-minimum wage earners working in conditions of outright slave labor.

As one immigrant worker from Latin America recently put it, "Because of the economic devastation in our

country, the rulers know we will have to keep coming to the U.S. They know we can be a force of revolution here, so they are trying to keep us helpless with these new anti-immigration laws."

These conditions reveal that nowhere in the industrially developed world are the naked laws of capitalist accumulation more blatant than right here in the U.S. This explains why the specter of Marx is beginning to loom so large. Even bourgeois pundits are beginning to see that if present trends continue masses of people may turn to the revolutionary solutions articulated by Marx.

As a June 8 article in the *Chicago Tribune* by Ron Grossman and R.C. Longworth put it, "A century and a half ago, Marx and Engels [in the *Communist Manifesto*] predicted a rising of the have-nots against the rule of the rich and famous...More recently, such visions have seemed permanently consigned to college courses studying history's ideological trash bin. Yet the boardrooms of Europe have once again become haunted by Marx's specter... And it's possible—just possible—that a similar spooking awaits the American political scene."

The sense that the specter of Marx may be upon us, however, is not where our work ends. It is only where it first begins. For it would be an illusion to presume that Marx's Marxism can be restated simply on the basis of a critique of existing conditions. After all, there has never been any lack of proof that capitalism is an inhuman system. So why has the radical movement been in such a prolonged and profound crisis?

The answer lies in its failure to project an alternative to both existing capitalism and the state-capitalism which called itself "Communism." Unless we work out what Marx's Marxism means for today in light of this problem, this reality, this contradiction, we will not be able to break through the stranglehold of retrogression which has engulfed the world since the early 1980s.

Recently a scholar from China wrote us, "In Lenin's time, he was surprised by the fact that in more than 50 years [since Marx's *Capital*] no Marxists really understood Marx. Today we realize that for more than 100 years, there has not been a single Marxist or Marxist political party who can figure out the real road to the new socialist society. It is a historical tragedy."

The problem was often addressed by Raya

Dunayevskaya, the founder of Marxist-Humanism. In May 1987, as she embarked on a work on "Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy" she wrote: "All those national revolutions, the rise of a Third World and the endless continuing struggle, and nowhere in sight, not even telescopic sight, is there an answer to the questions, what happens after the conquest of power? Why so many aborted revolutions? What type of party or organization? What have the various forms of spontaneity—councils,

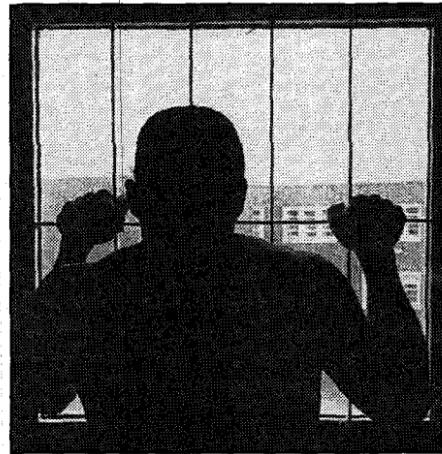
soviets, committees, associations, communes—achieved? And why when they did come close to power, it was the political organizations that didn't take them over so much as that they themselves looked to be taken over."²

This is the central problem of our time. In the past decade we have witnessed the collapse of "Communist" regimes, which made it clear that the "Marxist-Leninist" model of defining socialism as nationalized property and state plan is totally bankrupt. At the same time, the Social Democratic model of reform which leaves capitalism intact has likewise been proven empty. Yet an alternative concept of a genuine socialist society has not been projected from the Left. In light

of this, what is needed now is to project the liberating vision of the future that Dunayevskaya was working out from the moment she founded Marxist-Humanism in the 1950s to her very last writings in 1987.

The problem isn't that new struggles aren't emerging. The problem is that because of the lack of a projection of a goal of a new society, the struggles become hemmed in by non-revolutionary tendencies before they even have a chance to breathe. Whether the struggles are taken over from outside by elitist leaders or whether they themselves "look to be taken over" is not the crucial point. The crucial point is that for them to reach their potential a direct encounter with the philosophy of Marxist-Humanism is essential. Working out organizational responsibility for the full body of ideas of Marxist-Humanism, which is inseparable from its philosophic comprehension, is how we can help today's new openings reach fruition.

2. See "Another 'Talking to Myself,' this time on what has happened since 'Not by Practice Alone,' 1984-87" (May 19, 1987), *Supplement to the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, microfilm no. 10955.



If trends continue, 6 million people will be incarcerated in U.S. prisons by 2010.

II. Emerging new openings, from Africa to Europe to China

a) The Congo after Mobutu

The foremost opening facing us today is the overthrow of Mobutu's regime in the Congo. For one of the most imperialistically entrenched, neocolonial regimes in the world to have come to so swift an end involved more than the whirlwind eight-month military campaign of Laurent Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (AFDL). It is the result of mass opposition that rose up everywhere, at times in advance of, at other times in concert with, the AFDL. The Congolese masses had had enough.

The impetus that led to the formation of disparate political organizations into the AFDL came from the mass upheaval in the eastern Kivu provinces, occupied by refugee camps of Rwandan Hutus, the Rwandan Hutu army, and militias that had



Kisangani youths celebrate the fall of Mobutu by raising the flag of revolutionary Lumumba's Congo.

perpetrated the 1994 genocide against Tutsis and moderate Hutus in Rwanda. The opposition of Congolese Tutsis, called Banyarwandans, to being ethnically cleansed by these forces precipitated the upheaval that ultimately brought down Mobutu.

The insurrection has led many to recall the multiethnic vision of the independence movement led by Patrice Lumumba during the first phase of the African Revolutions. In a country with 250 ethnic groups, and a regime that had manipulated these divisions for decades, it is amazing that a movement should suddenly galvanize into a single, over-riding aim. This is seen in the multiethnic composition of the AFDL army, whose ranks quickly grew as a result of many local insurrections against the Mobutu regime. These insurrections gave the military offensive its breathtaking momentum,

confounding efforts by the West to broker a settlement to its liking with Mobutuists and oppositionist figures like Etienne Tshisekedi.

Welcomed by the people as **Abakombozi** (liberators), the AFDL utilized grassroots forms of organization and political structures, especially village and urban neighborhood structures called **chembe chembe**. Despite being one of the most resource rich areas of the world, Mobutuism impoverished the Congolese masses (in the 1990s per capita income fell by half), necessitating the creation of strong grassroots organizations to see to the needs of its populace.

It is among the mass of workers, peasants and students who have been outsiders in their own country that the new Kabila government enjoys most of its support, for now. That is because poverty, not ethnic differences, was the impetus behind Mobutu's overthrow.

This new opening does not free us from the responsibility of measuring the events by the Idea of freedom developed by Marxist-Humanism. For many unresolved problems face the revolution, from the AFDL ordering women to adhere to dress codes to Kabila's increasing military control over the mass movement, inherited in part from Guevarism and Maoism. The question of "what happens after" the seizure of power has gained the greatest urgency.³

When the African revolutions came to power in the 1950s and 1960s, Marxist-Humanists singled out, in *Nationalism, Communist, Marxist Humanism and the Afro-Asian Revolution* (1959), both the creativity of the movements and the division between leaders and masses which emerged soon after the seizure of power.⁴ What greatly exacerbated this division was the bipolar conflict between the U.S. and Russia, as each tried to coopt the leaders of the new revolutions.

What is different today is that there is no bipolar

world; Russia is nowhere around. Yet the U.S. is very much around, as is the world market. Its pull is seen in the way Western capitalists are also talking of "openings" in Africa, by noting that sub-Saharan countries which have opened themselves to the world market are experiencing modest rates of economic growth. Western corporations are now greedily eyeing the vast untapped mineral resources of the Congo.

The measure of where the revolt in the Congo goes from here is offered by developments in South Africa. South Africa had one of the most creative liberation movements on the continent. Yet by now, the part of the movement led by the ANC has largely been sucked into the vortex of the world market. This shows it is no easier to escape the world market today than during the Cold War. The question hanging over all movements in Africa is whether they will succumb to it as well.

b) Europe: crisis and resistance

Another new opening is the massive defeat of the Conservatives in the French elections. This is no isolated event, but the result of the West European labor protests of the past two years.

These protests, especially in France and Germany, have challenged the austerity programs being imposed throughout the continent as a condition for achieving a single European currency. That the victorious French Socialist Party (SP) will not live up to its meager program of lower unemployment and a shorter work week, does not take away from how the election manifests a desire to avoid "the American model" of economic restructuring. That sentiment is rampant throughout West Europe and is sure to show itself in developments in Belgium, Spain, and Italy.

The quandary faced by Europe's rulers is that they are trying to impose an austerity program without having first subdued the power of the European trade union

3. For more on the Congo, see "Will new Congo be born after the fall of Mobutu," by Lou Turner, *News & Letters*, June 1997.

4. *Nationalism, Communism, Marxist Humanism and the Afro-Asian Revolutions*, by Raya Dunayevskaya, first published in 1959, was reprinted with a new Introduction by her in 1984.

(Continued on next page)

Draft for Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, 1997-1998: Openings,

(Continued from previous page)

movement. Reagan and Thatcher both understood that in order to impose a "low-wage, high growth" policy, they first had to crush the power of organized labor. That is why Reagan embarked on his program of economic restructuring by smashing PATCO in 1981; Thatcher did the same by defeating the British miners' strike in 1985. It set the stage for the next decade-and-a-half of roll-backs against organized and unorganized labor.

The situation on the European continent is quite different. Not only was the power of the trade union movement never as directly attacked, but the protests of the past two years may even have strengthened it.

France's rulers may hope that the victory of the SP will mollify the workers and even

provide them with a respite from the past two years of labor unrest. But in light of the mass protests by workers—demanding jobs, a shorter work week, and improved working conditions after the SP's victory—this seems highly unlikely. Now that the workers have tasted at least a partial victory in France and have continued their cross-border organizing, new battles are sure to lie ahead.

Yet the present moment is not without its pitfalls. Foremost in this is the alarming growth of the far-Right, as seen in the openly-racist National Front of Jean-Marie Le Pen, who won 15% of the vote in the first round. Le Pen's advice to his followers to vote for SP candidates in the second round shows how the emerging openings also have an underlying downside.

By tying European integration to an economic austerity program centering on the Maastricht Treaty's requirement that governments cut their budget deficits to 3% of GDP, Europe's rulers are playing into Le Pen's hands, by allowing him to present his narrow nationalist position as the best guarantee against austerity and cutbacks.

The drive for economic austerity is not only fostering the rise of neo-fascist tendencies in France, but also in Austria, Switzerland, and East Europe. Nor is this restricted to Europe, as seen in the rise of the far-right militias in the U.S. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, 380 militias are now active in the U.S., a significant increase over the number before the Oklahoma City bombing.

The threat posed by various neo-fascist tendencies makes it important to refocus attention on Bosnia. Attitudes toward Bosnia's struggle for a multiethnic society remain a crucial measure as to whether the newly emerging openings will prove able to escape the perimeters of today's retrogression. That is most directly borne out from last winter's protest movement in Serbia.

When the mass protests erupted there against Serbian President Milosevic's annulling of local election results, it certainly seemed an opening at the time. Yet where is that movement now? After forcing Milosevic to agree to the election results, which put opposition leaders into power in the major cities, it completely dissipated.

This is because the protests never came to grips with



Students in Strasbourg, France, march against neo-fascist Le Pen.

Serbia's responsibility for genocide in Bosnia. Those who opposed Serbia's stance against Bosnia chose to march with the nationalists without raising the issue of Bosnia, on the grounds that the issue was "divisive" and could be put off until after the achievement of "democracy." As a

result, the protests never escaped the confines laid down by its narrow nationalist component. Once its leaders took office, the protests were simply called off.

It is a striking example of how efforts to forge a path out of today's retrogression will not succeed so long as the significance of Bosnia's struggle for a multiethnic society is not grasped and built upon.

Bosnia also becomes of critical importance in light of the major issue confronting Europe, NATO expansion.

Only a few years ago, NATO

appeared to be a dead carcass, in part because of its do-nothingness on Bosnia. That changed after NATO's intervention into Bosnia and the Dayton Accords. NATO's role in enforcing the partition of Bosnia gave it a new lease on life.

Bosnia is likewise central to NATO's expansion to include Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. Western leaders realize that NATO expansion will prove hollow if fighting erupts again in Bosnia. Therefore, the U.S. is under heavy pressure to keep its troops in Bosnia long past the mid-1998 deadline for their withdrawal. This means NATO expansion may be bought at the price of the permanent partition of Bosnia.

An even graver threat is the impact of its expansion on relations with Russia. Yeltsin reluctantly signed on to NATO expansion after the U.S. promised it would consult Russia on major issues related to NATO. Yet there is deep anger over this in Russia. Even Yeltsin admits the expansion means the START II treaty limiting the size and potency of nuclear arsenals has no chance of being passed by Russia's parliament.

NATO enlargement will in fact make it more difficult to conclude any future arms control agreement with Russia. This is no small matter, since Russia possesses 20,000 nuclear weapons, 2,100 of them with a first strike capacity. To eliminate the threat of these weapons, deep cuts are needed in the Russian nuclear arsenal. Yet there is virtually no chance of this in light of Russian fears over NATO expansion.

The extension of the "Western umbrella" over Central and East Europe is being bought at the price of allowing Russia to maintain and even modernize its nuclear arsenal.

Thus, while new openings have emerged in Europe, they arise in a most fragile environment in which several dangers loom on the horizon.

c) New upsurges in China and Latin America

At the moment all eyes are on Hong Kong's return to China. That the Hong Kong business elite is the firmest supporter of unity with the mainland makes most fitting the description of China as "free market Stalinism." Yet even here openings have appeared, as in the brave rally of 80,000 Hong Kong residents on June 4, on the anniversary of the Tiananmen and Chengdu massacre.

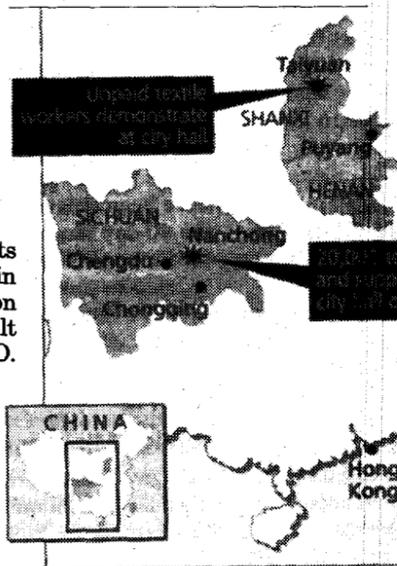
These voices are also becoming louder on the mainland. Though barely reported in the Western press, China experienced one of the most massive workers' revolts since 1949 this March, in Nanchong, located in Sichuan province. Tens of thousands of workers in a state-owned textile factory who had not been paid in months attacked factory managers, besieged city hall, and shut down production for several weeks.⁵ In this same Sichuan province a massive peasant revolt occurred in 1995. Many of the workers who participated in the Nanchong revolt were recently uprooted peasants who took jobs in state enterprises.

This coalescence of peasant and worker revolt is so striking that it recalls Marx's letters to Vera Zasulich concerning the conditions needed to bypass a capitalist stage of industrialization.

This coalescence can also be seen in Latin America, where new peasant revolts have broken out in Brazil, led by the Landless Rural Workers' Movement, in Paraguay, involving the National Peasant Confederation, and in Bolivia, where former miners who have returned to farming have helped mobilize a mass movement against neo-liberal restructuring. Moreover, for the first time international organizations linking peasant struggles have emerged, such as the Via Campesino group.

Of foremost importance in this internationalism is Mexico, where the Zapatista revolt focused national and global attention on the devastating impact of neo-liberal restructuring on that country. Though the Zapatistas are now totally surrounded by the Mexican army, other peasant revolts have occurred in Mexico drawing from their example, and in the urban areas, the leftist Cardenas has captured the mayoralty of Mexico City. Mexico is clearly in store for explosive developments in the coming period, which can have a direct impact on emerging social struggles here in the U.S.

5. The revolt was reported on by Matt Forney in the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, June 26, 1997.



III. 'The Power of Negativity':

Forces of revolt as reason, philosophy as force of revolt

It may seem we have no such openings in the U.S. as overseas. And yet new developments have emerged here which can reignite the movement for freedom. Foremost in this is the release of former Black Panther Geronimo Pratt from prison after 27 years, an event that would not have been possible without years of struggle on the part of a number of grassroots organizations and individuals.

The persistence of such struggles is also seen in the solidarity campaign with the locked-out Detroit newspaper workers; in solidarity actions with strawberry workers in California; and in new labor struggles in the deep South against economic restructuring and for a new way of life.

A crucial new movement on a national level is prisoner solidarity, involving youth, Blacks, Latinos, and feminists opposing the incarceration of the permanent army of the unemployed. There has also been a rise in campus protests related to feminism and against gay-bashing.

Most important of all, five years after the Los Angeles rebellion, is the profound discontent of Black America, as seen in indigenous community protests on public housing, welfare reform, police brutality and environmental racism, much of which goes unreported in the bourgeois press.

A crucial dimension of these struggles is the interest shown by many in them to reexamine Marx. We especially encountered this in our classes this spring, "On the 150th anniversary of Marx's *Communist Manifesto*—Marx's Philosophy of Revolution in Permanence: Its Meaning for Today."

As one Black woman from a catfish processing plant

in Mississippi who participated in these classes put it, "Marx's writings are hard, but they relate to our workplace. As far as the capitalists are concerned, we are just tools to produce and make them money, and they don't care about anything except the value they are going to get from us. Marx wrote *Capital* over 100 years ago. It amazed me how things happened in past history. It's the same thing over and over. That's why you have to search for this new-found revolution to make things better. It just repeats itself unless you take control of it."

The past year has also witnessed renewed interest in Marx's work among theoreticians. In several areas we were directly involved in this reconsideration of Marx, as seen in the reception to work on the new edition of the Marx-Engels Collected writings (MEGA), our participation in a number of conferences on Marxism, and our critique of Istvan Meszaros' *Beyond Capital*.⁶

Whether renewed interest in Marx emanates from practice or from theory, the task is the same—to work out what Marx's Marxism means for today. Marx's Marxism is not an heirloom, not something one just inherits "as is" and repeats as a dogma. The task is to work out what Marx's thought means in light of today's objective-subjective reality.

The foremost task which speaks to this is our work on a new book containing Raya Dunayevskaya's writings on the Hegelian dialectic, tentatively titled, "The Power of Negativity."⁷ This collection helps disclose how Marxist-Humanism's contributions flow from, and are rooted in, the way Dunayevskaya began where Marx left off in his journey into Hegel's dialectic.

a) From Marx's Humanism to Marxist-Humanism

In his 1844 *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, Marx posed the abolition of private property as a mere first negation, which must itself be negated in order to reach a new society. In doing so, he hit out at the communists of his day, who acted as if collectivized property equals socialism. As against both capitalism and what he called "vulgar Communism," he called for "positive Humanism, beginning from itself."

What proved decisive in this call for a New Humanism was Marx's encounter with Hegel's concept of "absolute negativity," in the final essay of the 1844 Manuscripts, "Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic." Marx's deep digging into the "the negation of the nega-

6. See Kevin Anderson's essay on the new MEGA in *News & Letters*, Jan.-Feb. 1997, and Peter Hudis' on Meszaros, "Conceptualizing an Emancipatory Alternative," *Socialism and Democracy*, Spring 1987.

7. A provisional table of contents of "The Power of Negativity" can be found in the special section on the tenth anniversary of the Presentation of June 1, 1987 in the June 1997 issue of *News & Letters*. This section should be considered an integral part of this thesis.

(Continued on next page)

Contradictions, and the specter of Marx in today's global crises

(Continued from previous page)

on" took him all the way to paragraph no. 384 of Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind*, the work in which Hegel most fully projected the concept of absolute negativity. Marx's refusal to consider that this dialectic of absolute negativity applies to thought alone led to his translocation of Hegel's revolution in philosophy into a philosophy of "revolution in permanence."

Though Marx's "Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic" breaks off at the start of Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind*, the reports of "absolute negativity" never left him. He returned to it in *Capital*, in citing the "negation of the negation" as the principle of the destruction of capitalism.

The task which faced revolutionaries after the death of Lenin was to achieve continuity with Marx's unchaining of the dialectic in face of the new reality which merged with Stalinism—**counter-revolution** from within the revolution. In light of this, Dunayevskaya felt compelled, in her "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes" of May 1953, to begin her commentary on Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind* with paragraph no. 385. She proceeded to explore the whole of this work, including its final three syllogisms, which Hegel added to the last edition of the work shortly before his death.

Though the problem of counter-revolution from within led Dunayevskaya to explore Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind*, she did not view counter-revolution as at the heart of Hegel's Absolute. The negativity which she found in the Absolute referred, not to counter-revolution, but to the need for a negation of all factors which impede humanity's full development. In a word, she saw in Hegel's Absolute Mind the vision of a new society.

"The Power of Negativity" helps disclose that this breakthrough on Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind* led to a number of crucial developments.

First, it led to the subjectivity of forces of revolt in a new way. Instead of simply posing mass revolt as a revolutionary force, Dunayevskaya's 1953 breakthrough disclosed a movement from practice "not alone to theory but to the new society which is its essence." In other words, she saw that instead of resting with the mere negation of what is, at specific historic turning points mass revolts embody a reaching for absolute negativity, for new human relations as the positive from out of the negative. She called it "a movement from practice that is itself a form of theory."

Dunayevskaya saw that a new **relationship** is needed between the movement from practice and a movement from theory which articulates this idea of absolute negativity. As she put it, there is a "dual movement" in the Absolute, "from practice that is itself a form of theory and the movement from theory that is itself a form of philosophy." Only through the unity of the two is either Absolute.

This relationship between theory and practice cannot be posed abstractly, because its specific nature depends on changing historic realities. In the 1950s, the new reality was the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, in which workers demanded a totally new society opposed to both communism and Western capitalism. It represented a new stage of cognition, because the workers pried from the Archives Marx's long-forgotten 1844 Humanist Essays, leading to their discussion worldwide. Far from being limited to East Europe, this new stage of cognition covered the globe, as seen in developments ranging from the Montgomery Bus Boycott in the U.S. to the African revolutions overseas, each of which in different ways raised the banner of Humanism. Two of the finest examples were the works of Frantz Fanon in Africa and Lancelotti in Eastern Europe.

The new stage of cognition posed by the mass revolts demanded above all else that the movement from theory root itself in the new voices from below. For this reason, the movement from practice set the whole structure for Dunayevskaya's first major work, *Marxism and Freedom* (1958).

b) The road to *Philosophy and Revolution*

The writings collected in "The Power of Negativity" show that a new situation emerged by the late 1960s. An array of creative mass revolts emerged in that exciting decade. Yet though a new stage of **revolt** occurred, a new stage of **cognition** did not. It was reflected in the prevailing attitude that activism was sufficient to "make the revolution" and that theory could wait. The link to Marx's Humanism was **not** reestablished. What re-dominated instead were such alternatives as Marxism as Maoism, Trotskyism, and Existentialism, each of which fell far short of the "negation of the negation."⁸

That a new stage of cognition did not emerge in the 1960s meant that the demands facing the movement from theory became that much greater. It led to a shift of emphasis in the development of Marxist-Humanism itself. The stress was now placed on the need, not just to listen to the new voices, but to dig deeply into the Hegelian dialectic

tic "in and for itself." So sharply was this projected that Dunayevskaya's next work, *Philosophy and Revolution*, opens not with "new passions and forces" of revolt, but with a chapter entitled "Why Hegel, Why Now?" It projected a whole new category, "Absolute Negativity as New Beginning."

Marxist-Humanists understand that capital cannot be abolished in one blow. Since capital is deeply rooted in class rule, racism, and sexism, it can only be eliminated by a total uprooting which leaves no sector of society untouched. This is why Marx spoke of "revolution in permanence."

That revolution will need to go through various phases before reaching its goal is borne out from the experience of the revolts of our time, which get so quickly hemmed in by false alternatives, if not the rulers' armed might. To "begin from the Absolute" does not imply that any revolt can work out new human relations in isolation from one another.

Rather, it means the **concept** of a total uprooting must be present from the start, or else the **direction** needed to move the revolution from the overthrow of the capitalists to the creation of new human relations will be missing.

The new stage of Marxist-Humanism reached in the decade-long development of *Philosophy and Revolution* showed that the task is not only to elicit from the movements from practice, but to introduce subjects to it, and issue a **critique** when tendencies internal to the movement fail to live up to that Idea of second negativity.

This can especially be seen from the discussion on the Black dimension in "The Power of Negativity." In her 1969 speech to the "Black/Red Conference," Dunayevskaya showed that the Black dimension is internal to the dialectic of negativity. Yet she did not hesitate to take issue with those who would try to contain the revolt within the perimeters of first negation.

She wrote, "What you have to ask yourself is how it happens that Blacks should follow Mao or Castro? Is it sufficient to hate and want to get rid of just your own specific capitalist? American imperialism is the enemy of Mao and Castro—and it is your enemy. But is that sufficient reason to join with Mao and Castro? Or do you have to do what Marx did and raise up an entirely new banner that will say: No, I'm not only opposed to American imperialism, but also to Russian Communism

and Chinese Communism—I want an entirely new society."⁹

The reason the writings from the 1960s and 1970s in "The Power of Negativity" are of such importance is that the new point of departure contained in the development of *Philosophy and Revolution* remains largely unabsorbed by our organization.¹⁰ The need to grapple anew with this today is borne out from the impact of the global stage of retrogression which emerged in the 1980s.

c) Toward the dialectics of organization

Since the 1980s, we have confronted the collapse of any serious effort to project an alternative to capitalism. Why is this so? After all, there were many efforts to project an alternative during the Cold War era. So why does it seem harder to project one today?

One reason is the impact of objective changes in capitalism. For decades, socialism tended to be defined as the nationalization of property and state control of industry. So widespread was this, that even many who opposed totalitarian Communism and bureaucratic Social Democracy from the Left considered that the presence of nationalized property and state control of production in them proved they were on a

"higher" level than traditional capitalism. Such views unraveled once capitalism faced the need to restructure itself in the mid-1970s. Capitalism now moved away from some aspects of nationalized property and direct state control of production, by reemphasizing "free markets" and privatization. To those who viewed nationalized property under state control as some sort

8. See Part II of *Philosophy and Revolution*, "Alternatives," in which each of the tendencies is extensively taken up.

9. "Speech to the Black/Red Conference," (Detroit: News and Letters, 1969; reprinted 1986).

10. See Dunayevskaya's discussion of this in "What is Marxist-Humanism? How to Project it at Momentous Historic Moments?" (March 16, 1987), *Supplement to the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, microfilm no. 10869.

(Continued on next page)



The 1956 Hungarian Revolution "Freedom Fighters" unearthed Marx's Humanist Essays, challenged totalitarian Communism.

Marx's Marxism in the "Trilogy" of Revolution

Marxism and freedom, from 1776 until today

The historical and logical in [Marx's] *Capital* are not two separate movements; the dialectic contains them both. It is not that Marx has interrelated them. It is the very nature and life of the one to contain the other. What Marx has as his underlying assumption is that history has not discharged theory from the need to transcend the given society. With Marx, theory is not kept above the earth, but rather takes its departure from reality, which is also its point of return. It is the reality out of which the movement comes, and what Marx does is to see that object and subject are kept as one. The two together, theory and practice, make up the truth of any moment. (Page 120)

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

[Powerful foundations have been laid for this age which we would disregard at our peril, even as it would be fatal not to build on the theoretic practical Humanist ground... which Marx in his day called "positive Humanism, beginning from itself." The restatement, by the mature proletarian revolutionary author of *Capital*, of the young Marx's exuberance of 1844—"the development of human power, which is its own end"—demonstrates beyond the shadow of a doubt how Europe's 1848 revolutions, America's Civil War, 1861-65, and the Paris Commune, 1871, verified Marx's "new Humanism." Any other foundation, any other ground, such as "nationalized property," with or without military "focus," can only lead to still another tyranny. (Page 290-1)

Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution

As Marx, in the last years of his life, was turning to anthropology, his reference was neither the philosophic anthropology that ran through his 1844 Essays nor just the latest empiric data of the 1880s. Rather, whether Marx focused on the quality of women during primitive communism or on Morgan's theory of the gens, his point of concentration always remained that revolutionary praxis through which humanity self-developed from primitive communism to the period in which he lived. That is what kept him enthralled as he dug deep into the latest anthropology, archeology, early history, technology, agriculture, craftsmanship, and primitive human relations. Truly, we see here that no greater "empiricist" ever lived than the great dialectician, Karl Marx. (Page 185-6)

Openings, contradictions, and the specter of Marx in today's global crises

(Continued from previous page)

of step toward "socialism," it appeared that history was no longer moving in a "socialist" direction.

The abandonment of the effort to project an alternative by so many today flows from the way their truncated concept of socialism left them unprepared to deal with the objective changes introduced by capitalism.

This does not by itself, however, explain the profound crisis of the radical movement. The deep digging into the limits of all post-Marx Marxists reveals that the foremost barrier in the way of projecting an alternative is the separation of dialectics from organization. In *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* (1982), Dunayevskaya showed that this separation characterized even the greatest post-Marx Marxists. It was true of Lenin, who dug deeply into Hegelian dialectics in his 1914-15 *Philosophic Notebooks*, but who never connected dialectics to organization. He held instead to the elitist "vanguard party to lead." This separation of dialectics from organization also characterized Rosa Luxemburg, who dug deeply into spontaneous forms of mass self-organization, but who kept clear of Hegelian philosophy.

The central category in *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*—"post-Marx Marxism as pejorative, beginning with Engels"—discloses that even the greatest revolutionaries failed to assume organizational responsibility for the dialectic of second negativity. As a result of this legacy, by the time a "changed world" emerged in the 1980s, revolutionaries were unprepared to respond to the objective changes in capitalism by projecting a vision of a totally new society.

In light of this, the effort to transcend today's retrogression must begin by assuming organizational responsibility for the dialectic of absolute negativity.

Herein lies the significance of Dunayevskaya's return to her 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes" in 1986-87. She now stressed that her 1953 journey into Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind* projected not only a new view of the movements from practice, but also a new concept of organization centering on organizational responsibility for the self-determination of the Idea of Absolute Negativity.

"The Power of Negativity" contains material on this never before collected in one place. Part 1, which contains the "Presentation on the Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy" of June 1, 1987 as well as the 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes," and Part 5, which contains a survey of writings from 1982-87, speak to how organizational responsibility for philosophy is the pathway by which to work out "what happens after the seizure of power." For this reason, Parts 1 and 5 serve as the pillar of this year's pre-Plenum discussion.

These writings disclose that the task is not just to measure up to the movement from practice, but to project Marxist-Humanism's own theoretic contributions organizationally. The task is to measure every development, whether in practice or in theory, against the Idea of freedom developed in the body of ideas of Marxist-Humanism.

Clearly, the demands facing the movement from theory today are even greater than in the 1960s and '70s. As Dunayevskaya wrote in her Presentation of June 1, 1987, in returning to the conclusion of *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*: "It is not a question only of meeting the challenge from practice, but of being able to meet the challenge from the self-development of the

Idea, and of deepening theory to the point where reaches Marx's concept of the philosophy of 'revolution in permanence.' [This] is a further challenge to the form of organization which we have worked out as the committee form rather than the 'party-to-lead.' But though committee-form and 'party-to-lead' are opposites, they are not absolute opposites. At the point when the theoretic-form reaches philosophy, the challenge demands that we synthesize not only the new relations of theory to practice, and all the forces of revolution, but philosophy's 'suffering, patience, and labor of the negative,' i.e., experiencing absolute negativity. Then and only then will we succeed in a revolution that will achieve a classless, non-racist, non-sexist, truly human, truly new society."¹¹

11. The "Presentation on the Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy" of June 1, 1987 can be found in *The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism* (Chicago: News and Letters, 1989).



California students sat-in when anti-immigrant Proposition 209 passed in November.

IV. Our tasks for 1997-98

The task that Dunayevskaya challenged us to work out in her "Presentation on the Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy" of June 1, 1987 is formidable. It means overcoming a "112-year void on organization and philosophy" since Marx laid the ground to overcome their division in his *Critique of the Gotha Program*. With her death a week later, this formidable task would have seemed to some impossible to even consider tackling.

What enabled us to continue the organization she founded as News and Letters Committees was our adoption of that challenge as the perspective for our all future work. Our publication of *The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism* in 1989 manifested our determination to begin anew on the basis of the June 1, 1987 presentation.

Our constant return over the next 10 years to this new moment propelled us to find new openings in both theory and practice. It has been a decade of profound retrogression, of the kind Dunayevskaya warned in her last "Theory/Practice" column, where she spoke of how it had "polluted the ideological air, not only of the ruling class, but penetrated the Left itself." Such a deep retrogression," she said, "urgently demands that, along with the economic and political tasks facing us, we look for philosophic new beginnings."¹²

Our search for this prevented us from succumbing to retrogression by digging for new openings. That is especially seen in our work on Bosnia. Had we taken the ground of retrogression, we would have done what much of the Left did—denounce all sides in the conflict as equally responsible for narrow nationalism. As against that, we singled out the revolutionary potential to keep a multiethnic society alive in Bosnia. Far from

being restricted to Bosnia, this approach of going "lower and deeper" dictated our response to events in the U.S. It is especially seen in our creation of a new local of workers and intellectuals in Memphis and Mississippi, committed to developing Marxist-Humanism as the only viable alternative to today's degenerate capitalism.

We have a great deal to be proud of in our work of the past year: projecting of the new edition of *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution*; developing a pamphlet written by prisoners; obtaining new translations of Marxist-Humanist works in German and Chinese; work with immigrant labor in New York and California; donating a new volume to the Archives of Marxist-Humanism, *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*; and our work on "The Power of Negativity."

While none of the tasks spelled out at last year's Convention can be considered finished, the foremost unfinished task facing us which we remain committed to carrying out is the writing of a Marxist-Humanist Statement on the Black Dimension.

As we work to complete all our tasks in the coming year, it is vital to keep front and center the warning issued in Dunayevskaya's final writings concerning stopping at the "Practical Idea." In 1986-87, she took issue with Lenin's view that one could stop at the section on the Practical Idea in his 1914-15 commentary on Hegel's *Science of Logic*. Despite the importance of his encounter with the "dialectic proper," Lenin in a one-sided reading of Hegel viewed Practice as "higher" than theory and as representing the resolution of the contradiction between subjective and objective.

It isn't that Lenin failed to concretize the dialectic for subjects of revolt. He profoundly concretized the dialectic for national liberation struggles against imperialism. He certainly grasped the subject's objectivity. What he didn't develop was the objectivity of cognition.

Far from being restricted to Lenin, the temptation to

stop at the Practical Idea has exerted a powerful pull on even the greatest revolutionaries of our time. The reason that pull remains so strong is that working out the inseparability of dialectics of philosophy and organization is an untrodden path.

That is why we aim for our work on "The Power of Negativity" to permeate all our tasks. Thus, our continued work with *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution* aims to project the way in which the voice of feminists are heard there in the context of an explicit projection of philosophy. It is why we aim for our activity with the forces of revolt to hold as inseparable their voices as reason and the full projection of Marxist-Humanism as a body of ideas.

This inseparability is the measure of all our upcoming work, be it developing *News & Letters* newspaper, achieving organizational growth; creating a new pamphlet on Queer subjectivity; or undertaking trips to Mexico and Europe.

Revolutionary finances is a crucial a test of this inseparability. While the Raya Dunayevskaya Memorial Fund, established in 1987, and News and Letters Committees, founded in 1955, are two distinct organizations, the responsibility for both rests upon us as Marxist-Humanists. The special Appeal we have issued for the RDMF this year will help complete the translations of Marxist-Humanist works. The \$40,000 sustaining fund we are proposing for *News & Letters* for 1997-98 is the minimum needed to keep alive and expanding the only Marxist-Humanist journal.

This is how we aim to concretize organizational responsibility for the Idea of Marxist-Humanism, as well as of Marx's Humanism, in 1997-1998.

— The Resident Editorial Board

12. "On Political Divides and Theoretic New Beginnings," by Raya Dunayevskaya, *News & Letters*, July 25, 1987. This essay will also be included in "The Power of Negativity."

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Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching For The Future

A 35-Year Collection of Essays—Historic, Philosophic, Global

by Raya Dunayevskaya

New edition with Preface by Adrienne Rich

A deeper look at new beginnings will, of necessity, lead us to the spontaneous mass movement: land seizures by revolutionary sections of the poor peasantry as well as the great proletarian strikes, of which there were no less than 100 the very first month after the overthrow of the fascist regime—the youth as well as Women's Liberation Movement, which has been paid least attention, though it is a pivotal force.

When the Socialist Party-Communist Party had, in 1969, organized the Democratic Women's Movement, it was strictly limited to economic issues... Even when women were complaining they were as afraid of their men at home "as of bosses in the factory," it did not move those "advanced politicians" to change the nature of their organization. The Women's Liberation Movement thereupon arose on new ground, ground that didn't separate philosophic foundation from feminism or class struggles.

—From "Will the Revolution in Portugal Advance? Under the Whip of Counter-Revolution," January 1976.

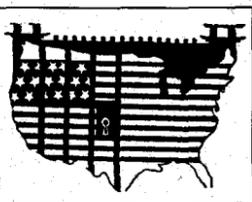
ISRAELIS AND PALESTINIANS

The Israeli Government has approved a proposed law to prevent Palestinians injured by Israeli security forces from filing compensation suits. They intend to pass the law before the Knesset recesses in August. It will affect thousands of Palestinians who were injured, maimed and killed by Israeli forces, leaving them without resources to fund medical treatment and granting immunity to the State whose sole objective is to save money. It can only result in the further deterioration in the situation both in the Occupied Territories and in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

**B'Tselem
Israel**

I greatly appreciate Gila Svirsky's reports from Jerusalem. They have considerable relevance to the British/Irish situation, I think.

**Observer
England**



CRIME OF PRISONS

There are hundreds of thousands in prisons on drug charges in the U.S., most on non-violent charges. As the economy in the U.S. crumbles and the middle class gets squeezed, the prison industry aimed at African Americans and "hippies" is the fastest growing industry we have. The War on Drugs is immoral and has stupified this country. Refusing to see the injustice of jailing people is creating a climate without possibilities for any reform.

**E. G.
Santa Cruz**

Comparing Britain with the U.S., two differences stand out immediately: the proportion of people imprisoned here is only one-fifth the American figure; and the death penalty is not in use, although it still exists in law as the penalty for treason.

A recent BBC report suggested that Russia, with a prison population of about one million, has the world's highest rate of imprisonment, and noted that the treatment is often brutal and that tuberculosis is wide-spread. Whether the figure is actually slightly higher in the U.S. or vice-versa, the significant point is that a high level of incarceration is common to both countries. These are both societies where current living standards and future expectations have collapsed for many people, in stark contrast to the rapid enrichment and extravagant consumption at the other pole. Crime is private enterprise taken one stage further.

**Richard Bunting
Oxford**

I read the projections about the six million prisoners marked for the next decade. It wouldn't surprise me if two million of them were from Texas. The way Texas has built all of these new prisons is a royal scam, whereby prisoncrats and politicians and their "resource and service" buddies all get rich off of the tax dollar trough. And now we are back at 98% capacity. It's a racket in which the parole people are revoking paroles on innocuous and often made-up reasons so only 3% make parole now. It puts us back where we were when the public was bamboozled into buying all the new prisons. If it were not so serious, we would be laughing at the foolishness involved.

**Prisoner
Texas**

Please keep your paper coming. I pass my issues around and each copy is read by many of us. So you have already been sending N&L to a large number of us. It makes for some lively discussions here!

**Prisoner
Virginia**

Readers' Views

FIGHTING FOR A HUMAN WORLD

Gene Ford's commentary on the fifth anniversary of the Los Angeles rebellion (June N&L) touched on the inevitability of more inner city violence in the not too distant future. As we look back at the events that took place in 1992, we should be prepared to push forward next time. Unity, according to class, would lend strength to a movement to demand change. We should all promote such unity as best as we are able.

**White worker
Louisiana**

If you become homeless, and wind up in the street, your kids can be taken away. There's not enough shelters out here, not for the amount of people who are getting ready to be homeless now that the welfare "reform" has kicked in. What happens to the woman and her kids? Will they take these children and leave the mother in the street? Where will they put the children? Are we going back to the day of orphanages? Do they realize the real problem separating mothers from their children will create?

**Single mother
Chicago**

I do not understand why J. Marcotte, in a Readers' View in the July issue, counterposed the tenant movement in support of rent regulations to the fight for public housing and welfare for the poor. Of course the latter fight is very important, but why is it presented in opposition to the multi-racial, working and poor people's tenant movement? Marcotte also perpetuates a racist stereotype of saying "the poor and Blacks" are those affected by public housing and welfare, but not mentioning that many poor and Black people live in private housing. Let us work for social justice for all, which can only be achieved through a social revolution that includes all the working class.

**Anne Jaclard
New York**

Are you aware of the deal to keep the nuclear weapons labs quiet if they agreed to the nuclear test ban treaty? They have been promised forty billion dollars over the next ten years to conduct "subcritical" tests (in which plutonium will be

used but have "zero yield" in fallout). If we are out of the nuclear weapons race, why "subcritical" tests? Because large parts of the military establishment live from these programs. Did a single member of the Congress who voted the forty billion think one minute of hungry children or legal immigrants facing cutoffs of all benefits? Readers interested in learning how we are trying to fight this militarism can write to the War Resisters League, 339 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10012.

**David McReynolds
New York, NY**

We immigrants are staying in the U.S. not only for an economic reason, the fact that there is no chance of surviving back home. We are also staying for cultural reasons. We begin to grow here, in contact with different cultures. It is in multiculturalism that you begin to learn your culture. Meeting all these identities, I find my own identity.

**Greta
New York**

I agree with N&L about the four forces of revolution. When you look at the civil rights struggle, Blacks were being severely persecuted and they rose up. Then the youth threw off the shackles of their fathers and mothers and decided to be radical, and then you had women's liberation arise. I agree with all that 100% because I lived through it. Once people started struggling for their rights, everybody wanted theirs. One group educates another. If you lived through those struggles in the '60s and '70s you found a new freedom. But now the powers that be have got the control back.

**Environmental justice activist
Memphis**

Forces for freedom think about what a new society should be and how to make revolution. News and Letters Committees has within its membership all those forces as Reason. What makes the difference is that those voices are within the context of a total philosophy of liberation.

**Women's Liberationist
Tennessee**

ening the discussion of Adorno. He also has hit on a most exciting theme in focusing on Raya Dunayevskaya's discovery of a "new Hegel" that no one outside of Marxist-Humanism seems to have grasped. It seems to me a rich way to intervene in the battle of ideas with feminist theorists.

**Jan Kollwitz
Chicago**

LEV KOPELEV— OPPOSITIONIST

The recent death of Russian oppositionist Lev Kopelev (1912-97) needs to be marked by those who opposed statist Communism without giving up their commitment to Marxism. As a naive young Communist who rose to captain in the World War II Russian army, he was sentenced to a Stalinist labor camp for attempting to prevent soldiers under his command from carrying out acts of murder, rape and pillage against German civilians. Solzhenitsyn, in his famous novel *The First Circle*, modeled the character Rubin on Kopelev, whom he met in the camps. But Kopelev never gave up his own brand of independent socialism, even as he denounced Stalinist horrors such as the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia.

Expelled from Russia in 1980 he went to Germany but was never seduced by Western capitalism and continued his lifelong interest in independent Marxism. Once, in the 1980s, as I stood behind a N&L literature table outside Columbia University, Kopelev expressed excitement that works by Raya Dunayevskaya were available and bought some of her pamphlets.

**Kevin A. Barry
Chicago**



WHO READS N & L?

Having been a regular reader of N&L for three years I can unhesitatingly call it the best journal available in India. The articles have a seriousness and depth not found in other revolutionary journals. (I would like a few more articles on the nature of the crisis faced by world capitalism along with the articles on philosophy, and critiques of other groups' positions would be welcome, too.)

**Revolutionary
India**

The breadth and scope of the subjects covered in N&L are amazing, from the loftiest subtleties of Hegelian dialectics, through the analysis of international events, to the letters from workers in the fish plants of Mississippi or Black youth in prison!

**Musician
Canada**

You have a great paper. I especially appreciate the balance between news and theoretical issues. My only criticism is that it is too short. Here's my renewal for two more years.

**Subscriber
Amherst**

'ON THE DIALECTICS OF PHILOSOPHY AND ORGANIZATION'

The special section in the June issue really was special. The two articles went well together even though Raya Dunayevskaya's powerful piece was from 1976—well before she turned directly to the question of "the dialectics of organization and philosophy." I felt Peter Hudis' essay pinpointed the key for our age, in the way he argued that even before Marx discovered the proletariat in 1844 he posed the problem of how to begin anew in the effort to unify theory and reality. What I saw him saying is that while we, as Marxist-Humanists, have recognized that the subjects of revolt are integral to the dialectic of freedom, the truly new is freeing up philosophy to become a force of revolt.

**Mitch Weerth
California**

Raya brings new life to the ideas she presents, seeing them with the eyes of today and what makes the ideas concrete. She is showing that Hegel's organization of categories speaks to today.

I liked Peter Hudis' essay because there was a lot of original thinking in there, especially in presenting the "early" Marx and tying it to today. I found the conclusion provocative. At the very end, where he says that the new element today is organization (where in Marx's time the new element was the proletariat), I'm not sure I'm ready for that.

**Urszula Wislanka
Bay Area**

I have enclosed a check in support of your Appeal for the Raya Dunayevskaya Memorial Fund. The basic message of ending class division and all of its related roots and branches needs strenuous promotion to overcome the threatened strangulation of life. For solidarity in our diversity!

**Longtime supporters
Bayfield, Wisconsin**

Editor's Note

The Raya Dunayevskaya Memorial Fund was established in 1987 to keep her works in print, make them available in new editions, and continue the collection, organization and donation of her documents to the WSU Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs. Help is greatly needed to continue and expand this work. Donations can be sent to the RDMF, 59 E. Van Buren, Room 705, Chicago IL 60605.

NEWS & LETTERS

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Black/Red View

by John Alan

Last month the *New York Times* printed almost a page-long article on the 30th anniversary of the 1967 Detroit rebellion. As one would expect, the article devoted much of its space to the immediate social reason for this historic revolt, which set into motion over a hundred urban Black revolts in cities across the country, caused panic in the Johnson administration, and dramatically changed the goal of the Black liberation movement from political rights to human rights.

Robyn Meredith, the author of the *Times* article, accurately recalls that the immediate reason for the Detroit rebellion was "The long-simmering anger of Black residents at the abusive, mostly white police force... [The] flash point was a raid by white police officers on an after-hours drinking and gambling club..."

African Americans have long known that if you're Black, any perceived criminality on your part at once exposes you to the generalized abusive racist practice of the police. The most recent celebrated case was the beating of Rodney King, the "flash point" which set off the 1992 Los Angeles rebellion.

Meredith's article contends that the reasons why Detroit can't resolve its present economic and social problems, 30 years after the rebellion, are due to two "lingering effects." One is "the looting" of the once prosperous 12th Street area, which still remains a place of weed-covered lots. The other is white flight from the city and the dwindling jobs at General Motors, Ford and Chrysler caused by the competition of Japanese auto makers.

This explanation provides nothing more than the usual journalistic, popularly acceptable reasons, minus President Clinton's moralisms, for why things have gotten worse over the last 30 years in Detroit. And it certainly doesn't explain why "white flight" and "Japanese

'67 Detroit Rebellion

competition" during those last 30 years didn't prevent Detroit's auto makers from becoming today's dominant manufacturers of automobiles and trucks sold on the world market.

Why does there exist such a striking polarity between the economic success of corporations and the concentration of permanent Black poverty in inner cities like Detroit? The answer to this question lies in the process of the accumulation of capital which inherently creates a reserve army of unemployed.

The full nature of this process cannot be shown in this column, but many Black people have experienced the hard results of capital accumulation. According to Representative John Conyers, Jr. of Detroit (quoted in the *Times* article): "We still have a huge inner city problem of housing, homelessness, joblessness, an incredibly decrepit educational system, high crime rate, drug abuse, welfare dependency, teen-age pregnancy..."

Conyers is speaking 30 years after the Detroit rebellion, 33 years after he was elected to Congress and almost 30 years after President Lyndon Johnson's "war on poverty." Now he is saying that Black masses in Detroit are still living in an economic/social crisis in the middle of Clinton's booming capitalist economy. Obviously, this system of economy which created and concentrated 30 years of economic and social crisis in the inner cities can't undo what it has done.

This brings us back to 1967 when urban African Americans did challenge the system. At that time Raya Dunayevskaya wrote: "The dialectics of liberation will assure, with no matter what false relapses and deflection by racism, its forward movement towards ending Black slums and brilliantly white imperialism, Black poverty and white profiteering, exploitation of Black and white."

The L.A. rebellion has certainly indicated that this will happen, even though we do not know when.

Christian Coalition 'Tracking' our children

Fayette County, Tenn.—Things are about to boil over. People caught on to what the Christian Coalition (CC) is trying to do. They came here, got teaching jobs, and tried to take control of our public schools so they could make sure that some of the public funds are spent on vouchers for the private schools. (See article January-February 1997 N&L)

A lot of the CC teachers are leaving town because people are recognizing their agenda. Others are hoping they can get control of the public funds after the 1998 elections for county commissioners.

We have just discovered they are tracking our children in the high schools even though there are state and federal laws against tracking children into either vocational training or college preparatory courses. Areas children are majoring in are not going to lead to jobs. That is going to limit a child in what he can do for this society or for himself.

They give them a test in the eighth grade. When they get to the ninth grade they tell them they tested inferior. Instead of offering them an open curriculum, they put our African-American children on a vocational track. They don't tell the parents and they don't tell the students. Most of our African-American boys and girls

are in vocational tracts.

They tracked my son. He wasn't allowed to take any college preparatory courses, only vocational. Even if the child chooses technical, they are still supposed to have the option to go to an open path, to be able to choose college. Limiting their choice is a violation of the children's rights. In a class with 300 students, 90% Black, all but the honor students are being tracked.

With the Educational Empowerment Act of 1992 the state poured millions and millions of dollars into the schools to upgrade them to better educate our children for the year 2000. But all our children are learning is how to type stuff into computers.

About 20 parents whose children are being tracked had a meeting and talked to the principal who said it was too late to get them off the track. They just don't want to pay for the services the children will need if they go off a vocational track and want to take college preparatory courses. They are gathering names of the parents of children in this class and getting an attorney. No one has ever challenged the Board of Education or the county commissioners of Fayette County to really educate the African-American children. We're going to do it even if it takes a knock-down-drag-out fight.

—Candace

Black World

(Continued from page 1)



Charles Denby

Africa Nyaato (Forward). In the same manner he had begun **Indignant Heart**, Denby recalled stories from his childhood: "In the early years of my life it was a common thing among Negroes to discuss their relation to those in Africa. Many of the older ones would remember to which tribe in Africa they belonged while the younger ones would not understand their dialect. But it was practically impossible for any Negro not to

have a feeling of close kinship as he sat and listened to the stories of slave ships that the old ones told. I can remember my grandmother telling me about how people were put on the block for sale. She told me how she was sold in Virginia while her mother stood screaming. She never saw her mother again" ("Race and Class," N&L, June-July 1962).

Receiving a paper from the Gambia was not the only reason for Denby's reflections on the relationship between African and African-American history as a two-way road. There was something more immediate. In the same column, Denby brought his unique working-class perspective to bare on the Congo crisis of 1960-61 which culminated tragically in the brutal murder of the Congo's independence leader and first premier, Patrice Lumumba. He noted that "Where the middle-class Negro was quiet as a tomb, the working-class Negro first began to speak his mind during the assassination of Lumumba, lining up solidly behind Lumumba and his nationalist movement. The workers in my shop eagerly followed all developments both in the Congo and in the UN, warmly supporting the demonstrations before that

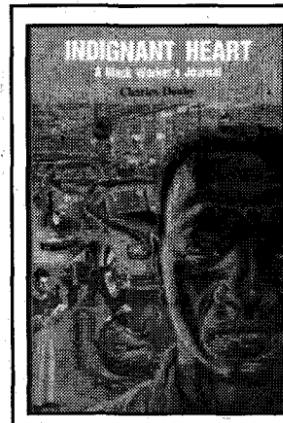
Remembering Charles Denby

body, holding it responsible for the murder."

In **For the People: Black Socialists in the United States, Africa and the Caribbean** (1987), Daryl Russell Grigsby singled out this very same quotation in order to make that point that "Black auto workers, Denby noted, were not so consumed in their own problems to miss the connection between racism at home and imperialism overseas" (p. 49).

It isn't difficult to see how in the mind of Charles Denby even genealogical recollection of the past becomes the jumping off point for his working-class insights into contemporary political developments, not only as they get discussed among workers, but, for us witnessing the reemergence of revolution in the Congo in 1997, how they foreshadow the future.

Clearly, **Indignant Heart** was not a finished work in Denby's mind. Next month we will explore the social, historical and economic conditions out of which his narrative grew, and what the persistence of those conditions signifies for Black and working-class reality and thought today.



"I consider my life story as part of the worldwide struggle for freedom."

To order see page 4

Army's toxic racism

Desperately trying to destroy the image of being a ruthless criminal regime hell-bent on destroying the Black community, the officials of the Defense Depot held a Restoration Advisory Board meeting, June 19, in the Commander's Conference Room at the Defense Depot.

The Army Chemical Corps operated a Chemical Warfare Section at the Depot beginning in April 1942, using and disposing chemical warfare supplies and weapons in the middle of a thriving Black population without ever notifying Black people.

Black people packed the meeting, and it turned into a typical Depot meeting with Mr. Chuck Twing, U.S. Corps of Engineers, attempting to whitewash the truth and minimize the danger the chemical warfare contamination poses to the Black community. When questioned, Mr. Twing admitted the chemical weapons still posed a danger to the community in regard to cancer in humans and toxicity in the environment.

Eric Holladay, the acting base commander at one time, exploded into a wild rage when members of Defense Depot of Memphis Tenn., Concerned Citizens Committee. (DDMT-CCC) revealed the "secrecy clause" in the Federal Facility Agreement shortly after demolishing Mr. Twing's slick presentation. Authorized by Gov. Sundquist, the federal agreement gives Depot officials the right to withhold important information about the Chemical Warfare Service from the public.

All the officials at the Defense Depot did was to tell the Black community a pack of lies. In Memphis the Corps of Engineers has recently been found guilty of racism in regard to Black employees.

Blacks at the meeting were astounded when Mr. Twing was forced by unrelenting questions to admit that the chemicals in the German Mustard Gas bombs—that he portrayed as "harmless as the chemicals found under your kitchen sink"—have been proven to cause cancer. But that issue was nothing compared to the complete failure of Defense Depot officials to explain why the infamous secrecy clause was included in the Federal Facility Agreement for the Depot.

Last September, at the Defense Environmental Response Task Force meeting held in Memphis, Col. Michael Kennedy said, "The Defense Depot has never handled or obtained any supplies that would be categorized as a national security risk." That fact completely eliminates any legal justification for the Defense Depot having any right to keep secrets about contamination from the Black community.

For over fifty years, the U.S. Army knowingly exposed the Black community to cancer and death, resulting in civil and criminal negligence.

—Kenneth Bradshaw, Staff Writer, DDMT-CCC
Editor's note—This article is excerpted from the July 1997 newsletter of the Defense Depot of Memphis Tenn. Concerned Citizens Committee.

Protest Police Murder of Black Youth

New Haven, Conn.—A multi-racial movement for justice had arisen here in Southern Connecticut in the wake of a brutal police murder of an unarmed young Black motorist. On April 14, Robert Flodquist, an officer from the all white East Haven police force, concluded a car chase in the neighboring town of New Haven by shooting the driver, Malik Jones, three times in the side. All of this was witnessed by Malik's friend and passenger Samuel Cruz, who had exposed police claims of self-defense as lies and exaggerations.

Malik Jones' mother, Emma Jones, is a life-long fighter for justice, from her youth spent participating in civil rights struggles in the 1960s in Alabama. In recent years, having earned a law degree, Emma Jones had been a key community activist against police violence and criminalization of Blacks.

Emma Jones and her supporters—organizing simply under the name "Malik"—called for a march on the 3 month anniversary of her son's slaying.

The route proceeded from the site of the killing in New Haven to the town hall of East Haven, to protest the fact that Flodquist had not only gone unarrested, but had already been restored to active police duty.

Though the protesters made their peaceful intent clear from the start, all sorts of alarm bells were sounded by the rulers, who prepared with dogs, horses and extra "forces," as well as the gratuitously smug remarks of East Haven's mayor who said the march was "deliberately provocative" and served "no legitimate purpose"—words better applied to his racist police department!

When the march did take place on July 14, about 750 people—Black, Latino, white and Asian-American—made the four-mile walk in blistering humidity. Chanting as one "Whose son is Malik? Our Son!" the marchers didn't flinch when racists taunted them with epithets and Confederate flags.

Instead, they kept the focus on the human dimension and the hypocrisy of the system. As Emma Jones said, the mistreatment of Blacks "is way beyond civil rights. It's now a human rights issue." An older Black man wryly noted "if we can send a probe to Mars, then we should be able to have peace and justice for our Black kids."

—Jennifer Pen

Youth

by Kevin Michaels

The struggle of the East Timorese people for the right to determine their fate is one of history's most heroic examples of creativity and persistence in the face of oppression. The sheer number of those who have died since Indonesia's 1975 invasion—over 200,000 of the inhabitants of this small country have been victims of mine, disease and outright murder—is in itself staggering. What is more moving though, is the way in which most the whole population, notably the youth, have found ways to participate in the fight for a free East Timor.

Tiny East Timor seems to be forcing itself into the world's consciousness. Tension within the country now seems to be at the highest point since the aftermath of the 1991 Santa Cruz cemetery massacre. The past few months have seen an upsurge of popular resistance which has been met by an Indonesian crackdown. David Ex, a longtime guerrilla leader, was recently captured by the Indonesian army and died while in custody. It is assumed he was tortured and killed. Nelson Mandela's state visit to Indonesia, in which he met with both the dictator, Suharto, and jailed East Timorese leader Xanana Gusmao, also made headlines.

Gaining a perspective on these events is made an easier task with the aid of a recently published book, **East Timor's Unfinished Struggle: Inside the Timorese Resistance** (South End Press). The book's author, Constanancio Pinto, gives a fascinating look behind the curtain of isolation maintained by Indonesia and world powers, like Australia, Britain and the U.S., who are complicit in the genocide which has been carried out here.

Pinto, a native of East Timor, was only 12 when Indonesia, seeking to fill the void left by the collapse of the Portuguese empire, invaded. He fled with his family to the countryside to escape the Indonesian army. For the next 3 years his family lived a life of extreme hardship. Hunger eventually forced the family, like many others, out of the hills, where the armed struggle against the Indonesians had all but broken down, and into the towns controlled by the invaders.

The resistance by the people to the occupation did not cease however, and Pinto soon became involved. His energy and determination earned him a leadership role and in 1990 he participated—in cooperation with the

The fight for East Timor's future



East Timorese risk their lives by protesting.

fighters still in the hills—in the establishment of a committee to coordinate the activity of the urban resistance. His age allowed him to participate in officially sanctioned youth organizations and use them to organize against the Indonesians. Much detail of specific acts of defiance—such as the demonstration which took place during the Pope's 1989 visit to the country—is given.

Pinto was arrested in January 1991 and forced into the dangerous role of double agent. He walked the tightrope of trying to stonewall Indonesian intelligence agents while at the same time participate in the resistance. The difficulty of this strategy quickly became overwhelming and Pinto went underground shortly before the Santa Cruz massacre in November of that year, in which at least 271 people were killed. He fled the country shortly after and made a difficult passage to asylum in the U.S. His wife, who narrowly escaped death in the cemetery massacre, was eventually allowed to join him, along with their son.

East Timor's Unfinished Struggle provides fascinating detail of the relationship between the forces of the resistance to the occupation; the students both in the country and in Indonesia, the people displaced from the countryside, the guerrillas and the political representatives abroad.

The book provokes questions about what makes this struggle unique: its character as a truly post-colonial phenomenon in which a formerly colonized nation is brutally transgressing upon one which was not permitted to

make a full transition to independence.

Additionally, because of East Timor's small size and geographic isolation, the world's superpowers took little interest in events there, thereby sparing the resistance from the pull to submit itself to the interests of one of them in return for material aid. This space has permitted the development of unique forms of organization which have the chance to lead the East Timorese nation

NY prison rebellion

As we go to press there is news that the July rebellion at the Mohawk Correctional Facility in upstate New York was the biggest prison rebellion since Attica. Inmates rebelled after a young prisoner allegedly committed suicide while in "the box," the isolation cells, where they are watched every 15 minutes. No one believes it was a suicide.

WBAI radio interviewed family members and ex-inmates, uncovering a history of violence and viciousness by the guards. This "suicide" was only the latest. There are a group of guards, the most vicious, who all have a tattoo of a Black baby with a noose around its neck.

The prison officials say ten guards were injured in the uprising but won't give any information on the inmates and have refused access to outsiders. State Sen. Feldman, because of the WBAI report, is calling for a federal investigation.

—John Marcotte

Selling the students

A fourth "R" has been added to the educational system, but "retail" is strangely out of line with "reading, writing and arithmetic." Aside from traditional methods, school is now being taught by various corporate and bureaucratic interest groups. Capitalism has found that targeting school children under the guise of education is a wonderful way to ensure its longevity. Meanwhile, corporations have discovered that schools desperate for resources will welcome with open arms any "educational" materials that can be provided. Consider the many weapons of greed assaulting the largest captive audience in the world:

- Channel One, a daily 12-minute news broadcast containing two minutes of commercials. Free TVs, VCRs and a satellite dish are provided in exchange for mandatory viewing by the students. The commercials draw around \$20,000 per 30-second slot.

- Schoolbuses become mobile billboards, as in Colorado Springs, Col., where 7-UP and Burger King are two of the beneficiaries.

- Star Broadcasting, which sends its signal into the halls and lunchrooms of about 400 schools across the country. Rock music (in some cases country) is mixed with advertisements and administrators can bring in up to \$20,000 per year.

- Teaching resources, such as videos, posters, booklets, brochures and activities of all kinds and for all ages. DuPont, McDonald's and the American Coal Foundation will tell us about energy and ecology. Visa will help us develop "better financial and consumer skills." The American Egg Board, National Livestock and Meat Board, Nabisco and Kellogg's will teach us about food and nutrition.

- Billboards, scoreboards, book covers, vending machines, concession stands, coupons, contests, fundraisers and more. They are all making money for the companies "brilliant" enough to take advantage of them.

Once again the true face of capitalism shines through: the exploitation of the masses brings wealth and power to a few. In this case, students have been made a commodity, a selling point. To CEOs, youth simply mean a source of profit.

Because who you are depends a great deal on your influence as a child, my generation will simply carry on the horrible legacy of capitalism, to be passed on to yet another generation. Thus, the youth of the world have an awesome burden on our shoulders. We must take action to break the chain. We must make ourselves not only participants in revolution, but catalysts of revolution. Youth play a critical role in the establishment of new human relations and we must do our part. Without our involvement, any honest attempt at revolution would surely fail.

—Peter Brinson

Philosophic Dialogue

Multiple visions, new societies

What does revolution in permanence look like? I think this is at the heart of what Raya Dunayevskaya and Peter Hudis are both discussing (See June 1997 N&L). Raya says it's more than the movement from practice to theory, it's more than totality, and so on. She makes a really good case. Maybe at the root is investigation of dialectics of organization and philosophy.

I want more about the subjectivity of movements—specifically the struggle with unification of the subjectivities of movements. Raya talked about subjectivity a lot. Like the paragraph quoting Adorno about how you have to believe, if you want to transform the world, that the subject's cognition has objectivity.

Subjectivity depends on culture. Honduras, Congo, Belize, all have different cultures. It's a question of new societies, not a new society, which makes it more complex. How do you account for multiple voices, change and diverse subjectivities? I had found not much room for diversity of voices in the **Critique of the Gotha Program**. It didn't address when people's ideas of organization are very different.

Peter's essay was helpful. I liked where Peter talked out a vision of the new. It's not just about forms of organization and types of struggle. It's also about Mind and multiple visions of a new society. Even though there are positions and movements, there's no force that contains

the idea in the fullness of its expression.

But I want to say that there are many subjects, and many forms of the self-thinking Idea. One of the biggest questions in urban anthropology is multiple, and/or conflicting visions. There has to be a lot of attention paid to the multiplicity of ideas and of individuals. What does revolution in permanence that takes multiple visions into account look like?

There are things I like about postmodernism, like experimenting with language, and relativism. But vulgar relativism, acceptance of anything that involves the destruction of human dignity, is problematic. We need a sense of space where it's all right for different voices to speak. I really like Raya's idea that negation of the negation happens at every stage. Peter's essay ends with the dialectics of organization and philosophy, and that we're going to be working this out far into the future. I got really excited about this.

—Young feminist, Memphis

Neighbors march for justice

Chicago—North side community residents marched from Chase Park pool to the hated Foster street police station July 25 to protest the choking and beating of a 13-year-old Puerto Rican girl by police as she walked home from the pool a month earlier.

The rally was called by the girl's family who posted only 125 fliers around the neighborhood. Despite the fliers being torn down very quickly they drew over 40 neighbors to the march. People showed up with hand-made signs. Many kids who were riding their bikes and playing in the park on that earlier Friday evening joined the march and enthusiastically chanted, "Stop police brutality," and "No justice, no peace!"

Along the route Black, white, and Latino youth shared stories of the routine harassment they face from the cops. One young Black man said, "We are out here to show that the cops are the real gang in town." Many people sitting on their porches gave the thumbs up, and drivers honked their horns in support.

When we reached the station Shirley Alejos, who has recently won a large settlement from the city, spoke out about how she had been brutally beaten by two male cops in an interrogation cell of that station.

A white truck driver who lives in the community said over the megaphone that he joined the march because the police had beaten him up when they interrupted a domino game he was having with friends and began searching his garage without a warrant. "We have Blacks, whites, and Latinos together here," he said, "This what we need. This is what I call real brotherhood."

While the march was small, people were elated to finally confront the Foster Street Station. Other youth began discussing making it a monthly event.

—Jim Guthrie

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133 W. 4th St. (Parish House
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Detroit MI 48227

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Central Methodist Church
Woodward and Adams

LOS ANGELES

P.O. Box 29194
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MEETINGS

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Echo Park United
Methodist Church
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North of Sunset, side door)

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510 658 1448

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Our Life and Times

Mexican voters reject one-party state

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

The July 6 national, state and local elections in Mexico dealt another blow to the governing Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). In closely monitored voting, by and large untainted by fraud, it's important to see exactly what happened:

- Cuauhtemoc Cardenas, founder of the center-left Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), won the office of mayor in the capital, Mexico City, with a decisive 47% of the vote. This was the first direct election for mayor in 70 years. In the past, the PRI had appointed the mayor.
- The PRI lost its majority in the national Chamber of Deputies for the first time in 70 years. This means the President (currently Zedillo) can no longer take rubber-stamp legislation for granted.
- The rightist National Action Party (PAN) won three governorships, including the industrial center, Nuevo Leon. It now controls seven of the 31 offices of governor.
- The PRI still rules Mexico. It controls the major political centers, as well as the military and police appara-

tus. But its once monolithic power is eroding.

Around 57% of the Mexican electorate voted. The victories they delivered to the PRD represent a rejection of the PRI, more than anything, its "neo-liberal" economic policies of "free market" capitalism, crowned by NAFTA. The collapse of the peso in December 1994 sent the living conditions of millions of Mexicans plummeting.

While the billion dollar U.S. loan has "stabilized" the Mexican economy and helped it regain ground lost in 1995, Mexicans have seen no turnaround. The prices of staples are still high, millions are still unemployed, and those who are working continue to see their real wages fall. While the "official" minimum wage is \$3 a day, many work below that in the aboveground and underground



Cardenas supporters rally in Mexico City.

economy. The only ones who see a "robust" Mexico are capitalist investors/exploiters.

The economy isn't the only reason for the PRI's defeat. The "neo-liberal" course of world capitalist development within Mexico was first and most openly challenged by the Chiapas uprising in January 1994. It called into question the whole ordering of Mexican society by the PRI one-party state rule—a possible new beginning which has hardly dissipated in the consciousness of Mexicans.

While many leftists, independent trade unions and grass-roots activists joined the PRD, it is doubtful that the unrest which supported the PRI's opposition will stay confined in parliamentary democracy. Post-electoral reports have already made much of the PRD's reassurances to capitalists interests, and Pres. Zedillo's conciliatory remarks to Mayor-elect Cardenas.

India 50 years later

As India approached the 50th anniversary of independence from over two centuries of exploitative rule by Britain, a Dalit (Untouchable), K.R. Narayanan, was elected for the first time to the largely ceremonial post of President.

That this was at best a token gesture was shown two weeks earlier, when 50,000 people came out onto the streets to mourn ten people killed by police in a slum district of Bombay inhabited mainly by Dalits.

An outcast group ranked below even the lowest caste in the traditional Hindu hierarchy, India's 250 million Dalits, nearly a quarter of the population, continue to suffer discrimination and oppression.

The condition of women is hardly better. With 100,000 female prostitutes in Bombay alone, India's sex industry is one of the world's largest. They are often girls under 15 years old from poor families, who have been sold or kidnapped from their villages, sometimes from neighboring countries such as Nepal.

Today one of the world's largest and most active women's liberation movements combats abuses such as dowry murders, wife beatings, sati (widow suicide), sexual harassment and economic discrimination.

Why, half a century after an independence movement which espoused both an end to untouchability and women's oppression, can all of this continue? Part of the problem is that Gandhianism, which dominated the independence movement, it did not call for the actual tearing down of the structures of oppression in the villages — the landowning classes, the networks of upper-caste groups, the patriarchal structures of domination. Instead of the needed social revolution, under the Congress Party of Pandit Nehru who governed until 1964, India got only a series of anti-discrimination and affirmative action laws, plus a veneer of social democracy. A venal and corrupt lot, more recent rulers have espoused the "free market." They have also appealed more to upper-caste Hindu groups, and opposed "caste-ing" to Muslims, Sikhs, and other minorities.

Few arrests in Bosnia

On July 10, NATO troops arrested one and killed another indicted war criminal in Bosnia. Simo Drljaca, the former head of police in the city of Prijedor, was killed as he resisted arrest. Milan Kovacevic, the former head of the Prijedor Hospital is now in custody of NATO troops. Both had been heavily involved in torture and "ethnic cleansing" at the Omarska concentration camps, Traopolje and Keraterm in Prijedor.

That same week Dusan Tadic, a bar owner and war criminal from Prijedor was sentenced to 20 years in prison by the War Crimes Tribunal in the Hague. The only other war criminal convicted by the court in the Hague has been Drasen Evdemovic, a Croat who pleaded guilty to taking part in the Srebrenica Massacre and received a 10-year jail sentence.

The latest arrests in Prijedor are no doubt related to NATO's effort to boost its image as "peacemaker" in light of the recent expansion of NATO. But these minor moves cannot erase the fact of NATO's support for genocide and its implementation of partition in Bosnia. As of July 1997 only 78 individuals have been indicted for war crimes in Bosnia. Only 10 are in custody of which have been sentenced. The mastermind of the genocide, Slobodan Milosevic and his main allies, Radovan Karadzic and Radko Mladic, remain free.

The media has made much of the recent internal fights between Karadzic, the former president of the illegal Republika Srpska, and the current president Biljana Plavsic whom he put in his place last year as his protegee. Plavsic was expelled from the Serb Democratic Party for having questioned Karadzic's profitable trade practices in Bosnia. She, however, continues to support the campaign of "ethnic cleansing."

Meanwhile Slobodan Milosevic, the architect of genocide in Bosnia, has dropped his title of President of Serbia and has made himself the president of the Yugoslav Federation which includes Serbia and Montenegro. The two candidates for the Serbian presidency are now Vojislav Seselj, an extremist nationalist who had organized the most violent paramilitary killings in Bosnia, Zoran Lilic, the Yugoslav president over the past 4 years, and a solid ally of Milosevic, and Vuk Draskovic, a nationalist member of the coalition which opposed Milosevic last winter and a current friend and ally of Milosevic.

—Sheila Fuller

Letters on Middle East Crisis

From: Jerusalem Center for Women
To: Bat Shalom Date: August 2, 1997

The Jerusalem Center for Women affirms its opposition to all kinds of violence and condemns clearly and deep from our hearts the strategy of killing. There will never whatsoever be justification for negation of life. The life of people is something that is given to us and each person has the responsibility of caring and protecting every life.

We feel that the tragedy that occurred in West Jerusalem is a tragedy also for the Palestinian people. The bitter reality in which we all live becomes characterized by a continuous state of alarm, waiting for terrible attacks to happen. We believe that destroying the possibilities for peace and the prevailing unwillingness for its commitment promote radicalism and fatalism.

Again, we condemn any threat on the lives of innocents and civilians, we condemn any act of collective punishment regardless of its motivation.

—Dr. Samiya Farhat-Nasser

To: The Jerusalem Center for Women
From: Bat Shalom Date: August 6, 1997

The women of Bat Shalom declare their condemnation of the violent measures taken by the Israeli government against the Palestinian population in the occupied territories following the bombing in West Jerusalem. Although these measures were ostensibly taken in the name of security, they obviously fulfill no security function, but only bring hardship and suffering to the Palestinians. This is a form of collective punishment that is a brutal violation of international law and a breach of the basic human norms of moral behavior. We condemn it in the strongest terms.

Bat Shalom further condemns the policies of the Israeli government to demolish Palestinian homes, engage in administrative detention, minimize the responsibility of the Israeli army for injury and death to innocent victims during the Intifada, expand Israeli settlements in the territories, and undermine the duly elected leadership of the Palestinian people. Doing so like this encourages extremist elements that are ultimately dangerous to both sides. Bat Shalom pledges to continue its struggle to bring these harsh policies to an end.

—Bat Shalom

Newspapers in Congo show ferment and debate

It is very hard to get a sense of the situation in newly liberated Congo, because of the filter of the Western media who seem determined to act as if a new authoritarianism has already been firmly installed. A far different impression can be gained from the numerous Congolese newspapers, published in French.

The June issues of *Mukuba*, a weekly from Lubumbashi, and of *L'Avenir* (The Future), a left of center Kinshasa thrice-weekly, arrived in U.S. libraries just before we went to press. They help illustrate the vigorous debate which has been taking place about Congo's future since the overthrow of the CIA-installed Mobutu dictatorship in May, and its replacement by a new regime led by Laurent Kabila, a supporter of Patrice Lumumba, and the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (AFDL).

In its issue of June 9-14, *Mukuba* reports on a speech in Kamina by Lwamba, a local leader of the AFDL. Lwamba called on the population to turn in all soldiers of the Mobutuist army and also spent much time "denouncing tribalism, which is the basis for dividing the people."

Fuller coverage and debate is found in the larger Kinshasa-based *L'Avenir*. While firmly supporting the new regime, its June 4-5 issue urges the AFDL to form a broad alliance with the "Congolese Left," rather than suspending all political parties indefinitely. Another article warns that many members of Mobutu's party have been seen participating in anti-Kabila demonstrations sponsored by Etienne Tshisekedi's right-wing opposition, the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS).

The June 9-10 issue of *L'Avenir* reports a demonstration sponsored by high school students calling for the abolition of tuition fees. The reporter, Nicole Lusamba, writes that "one can distinguish between factional marches such as those organized by the UDPS and marches conducted in good faith."

In the same issue, Alou Bashonga in an opinion piece denounces the "campaign of disinformation" by Tshisekedi, who has been calling for a "quick return to their country of origin" of all "foreigners." Seeking to stir up anti-Tutsi chauvinism, Tshisekedi is playing the ethnic card against Kabila, just as Mobutu had earlier. Bashonga points out that Congo borders nine other countries, and that colonialist boundary lines placed many ethnic groups on both sides of those borders, including the Tutsi and the Hutu.

However, a non-racist definition of who is Congolese must include all groups residing in the country. At the same time, he warns Kabila against basing himself too narrowly on a few ethnic groups, urging him to appoint people of all groups to leadership positions.

In the issue of June 19-20, several articles detail Tshisekedi's longstanding ties to Mobutu, noting that "since 1961 he held major posts such as Minister of Justice, of the Interior... and member of the central committee" of Mobutu's party. Even when Tshisekedi and other top politicians went into opposition in the 1990s, this opposition was itself heavily manipulated by Mobutu, and not truly independent of him. This is why, writes Kabongo Tshimbuubu, "as soon as it took power, the AFDL suspended political parties on the grounds that most of them were Mobutuist."

In the same issue, *L'Avenir* reports on statements by Antoine Gizenga, a Lumumbist from a different tendency than Kabila's. Gizenga offers Kabila his support in the face of those former Mobutuists who, crying dictatorship, want to undermine the new Congo's image abroad. However, according to *L'Avenir*, Gizenga urges that "solutions to social and economic problems should not be put ahead of the quest for peace and basic freedoms." (Unfortunately, on July 25, a demonstration by Gizenga's Unified Lumumbist Party against the ban on political parties was suppressed by the AFDL.)