

# NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

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50¢

## New ways to shaft temps and full-timers



by Felix Martin, Labor Editor

I am 76 years old, worked all my life and retired from General Motors. During my lifetime if I went to get a job and the company wasn't organized, I'd organize it to make better wages and benefits to take care of my family. Those days are gone.

Last October, the California Supreme Court allowed older workers to be terminated for economic reasons. The original case involved a man, age 49, who was fired just one year before he would have been entitled to a retirement package worth nearly \$200,000 at age 55. In the lower court the judge said "age discrimination laws were never intended to impede a company from controlling its costs." The Supreme Court let the ruling stand but only two of the seven judges were really in favor of the ruling.

William Quakenbush, a labor lawyer, was quoted as saying, "what they have permitted is for an employer to point to high salary as the explanation for a decision whom to terminate." The lower court judge also said, "decision making by costs, reliance on relative prices if you will, goes to the very core of a market economy." This seems to be what capitalism is all about. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to understand what the courts and the companies are all about. The market economy, according to the Supreme Court of California, is more important than the human workers. This has always been the way under capitalism.

In December an administrative law judge in Illinois decided a similar case. The experienced worker, age 56, was laid off instead of younger inexperienced workers. The article quoted the California case but went on to say "labor lawyers say these rulings are not flukes, similar decisions are being handed down by judges across the country." These decisions, when they become practice, will get rid of older workers and replace them with inexperienced younger workers at low pay and benefits. At GM, for example, it now takes three years to get paid parity (receiving the full amount the job calls for) and a year to get health benefits.

(Continued on page 3)

## Black World

### Race, rebellion and affirmative action



by Lou Turner

Twenty years ago this year the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the Bakke Decision that the University of California's affirmative action program to recruit minority and economically or educationally disadvantaged applicants for its medical school at Davis was a violation of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the U.S. Constitution.

Whereas the Supreme Court's famous 1954 Brown Decision was a judicial precursor of the Civil Rights revolution that would transform "American civilization" in the 1950s, '60s and '70s, so the 1978 Bakke Decision was a terrible foreshadowing of the two-decade-long retrogression ushered in by Ronald Reagan in 1980. The old movement lyric "We shall overcome" was replaced by the cynical refrain "We shall overturn."

In today's stifling climate of civil rights retrenchment, especially the Right's assault on affirmative action, it is easy to forget that the first federal affirmative action program, called the "Philadelphia Plan," was forced upon the Nixon administration in 1969 by the urban insurrections of the period.

While no doubt Clinton's rhetorical support of affirmative action is also tempered by the spectre of the urban rebellion that erupted in Los Angeles in 1992, the more hegemonic trend is the reactionary campaign led by the Right to convince white Americans to abolish the 30-year-old social policy. California's anti-affirmative action Proposition 209 and similar propositions and bills in other states are evidence of the white backlash against the LA rebellion.

So far, however, the debate around affirmative

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## Massacre of Chiapas Indians stirs mass ferment throughout Mexico

by Mitch Weerth

A turning point has been reached in the peasant revolution in Mexico. The massacre of 45 unarmed Tzotzil Indians, mostly women and children, on Dec. 22 in Acteal, Chiapas, by paramilitary forces trained by the government, has issued the definitive proclamation that the Zedillo administration sees only genocide as the answer to the demands of the country's most destitute population.

In order to drive this message home, the army brazenly followed up on the massacre by advancing into dozens of communities of displaced peasants and Zapatista supporters in the first weeks of the new year. They conducted searches in these towns where enthusiasm continues for the Zapatista National Liberation Army, or EZLN. They robbed them of their food and animals, and burned dwellings on the pretext of "protecting" the inhabitants from the paramilitary force that carried out the massacre. So far they have not succeeded in provoking an armed conflict with the EZLN, but this is clearly not their only objective.

While Zedillo and his interior secretary come up with new lies each day to rationalize their actions as those of a neutral force unwillingly thrust into "a war among the poor," one of "inter-family and inter-community conflicts," their 50,000 troops armed to the teeth with tanks and helicopter gunships continue their march. Although nearly half of the Mexican army is in Chiapas, they tell the rest of the country and the world this is "social work" they're conducting.

They bypass the illegally armed paramilitary strongholds of the local governments and landowners to go after unarmed Indian peasants. Many of them are organized in

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Women of Altamirano demonstrate against army sweeps through indigenous villages in the state of Chiapas, Mexico.

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## To our readers: Keep N&L going

The myriad crises we confront today have deepened and multiplied with each new year. As 1998 begins, East Asia's economic crisis has exposed the fault lines in the global economy. Mexico has been plunged into another kind of deep crisis in the aftermath of the government-inspired massacre of Indian supporters of the Zapatistas. In Israel Netanyahu continues to foment the fanatic settlers' moves against the Palestinians. In Bosnia the U.S. and NATO refuse to arrest the war criminals and have guaranteed that the Serbian destruction of Bosnia can continue unchallenged. And at home, while the pundits talk of a "booming economy" and the "success" story of dropping welfare rolls, over half of those forced off welfare have not found jobs and most of those who have are suffering extreme poverty wages.

At the same time, any analysis of these objective events demands recognizing humanity's struggles for a very different kind of world embedded in this reality. You will find that proved in the kinds of voices you can hear in every issue of *News & Letters*. In this issue you will hear the stories of the woman who has been organizing the catfish workers in Mississippi traveling to Mexico to talk with workers fighting to organize a union there; of the hundreds of Black and white demonstrators who poured out in Memphis to stop the KKK and found themselves needing to battle the police; of the German students who have been striking against the severe reductions in the university budgets. And in every issue you can hear the voices of prisoners who have refused to be de-humanized.

What is unique with N&L is that you will hear all these voices unseparated from the articulation of a philosophy of revolution that lets these voices ring louder and clearer because it discloses the future embedded in the present. It is this combination of philosophy and revolution that makes it urgent to keep N&L alive. BUT WE CANNOT DO IT WITHOUT YOUR HELP!

Although we have no paid staff, our bills for printing, postage and rent continue to soar. This year,

we have an additional need for your help: We aim to bring out a new pamphlet on a critical subject—what the prisoner author who has written it calls "The Grim Reality of the American Criminal (In)Justice System." We were asked two years ago to help him send out to the widest number of prisoners we could reach a series of questions he had composed eliciting their thoughts on their lives. Their answers became the basis for his work, and the following quote he had discovered in his own reading became a frontispiece for one of the sections: "Our epoch is a birth-time and a transition. The spirit of man has broken with the old order of things ... and with the old ways of thinking." It is a quote from the philosopher, Hegel. The last section begins with a quote from Fred Hampton: "You can jail a revolutionary but you can't jail the revolution."

We will need approximately \$4,000 to print this new Marxist-Humanist pamphlet in addition to the \$1,500 it costs us to print every issue of N&L. Ever since our birth more than 40 years ago, we have turned to our readers for the help we have needed to keep us alive and strengthen our outreach. CAN YOU HELP US NOW? YOUR SUPPORT WAS NEVER MORE NEEDED. PLEASE GIVE AS GENEROUSLY AS YOU CAN TO HELP US CONTINUE!

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# Woman as Reason Algerian women struggle amidst tragedy

by Laurie Cashdan

Amidst intensifying massacres in Algeria, brutal murders of Algerian women by Islamic extremists continue. The mainstream media has emphasized the "irrationality" of the massacres and called for an international investigation of the government's role in perpetuating the cycle of violence—one that Western governments have been reluctant to carry out if it threatens their oil interests.

We urgently need to dig further into the historic roots of this vengeance wreaked disproportionately on women, if we hope to extend solidarity to our Algerian sisters. Equally as important, we need to look at the still ongoing underground feminist movement.

Since 1992, when the government cancelled elections which the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was sure to win, Algerian feminists have had to fight on two fronts: against the FIS and the more violent Armed Islamic Group (GIA) which broke from it; and against the government itself, which has steadfastly refused to revoke the retrogressive Family Code which it implemented back in 1984.

After the cancelled 1992 elections, the Islamic fundamentalists' first targets included feminists who had publicly opposed the further restriction of women's rights that the election of the FIS would have ushered in. Many feminists have been grotesquely butchered. Nabila Djahmine, to take one of the most prominent, was killed in Tizi Ouzon in Feb. 1995. Djahmine headed Cri de Femmes, formed by Kabyl (Berber) women who, as part of an ethnic minority, have historically opposed attempts to Arabize Algeria or to impose Islamic fundamentalism. Her work illuminated the interrelation between Women's Liberation and multiethnic struggles in Algeria.

The GIA also issued decrees proclaiming as its military target all women who go unveiled in public, or who worked in non-traditional jobs outside the home. Last September, GIA attackers shot or slashed to death 11 women teachers in front of their students in Sfisset, southwest of Algiers.

Even in the recent massacres in villages outside Algiers and in southwest Algeria, women are especially vulnerable. One GIA manifesto declares their intention to fight all supporters of the government by "track[ing] them down in the cities, towns and villages and in the deserts to liquidate them, annihilate their homes, confiscate their wealth and possess their women."

International concern has finally been drawn to the abductions and rapes of young women. Algerian feminist journalist Zazi Sadou shared testimonies from several rape survivors at the Women's Tribunal on Violence Against Women during the 1995 UN Conference on Women in Beijing. Women Living Under Muslim Laws, based in France, also continues to publicize the plights of women under attack in Algeria.

Within Algeria itself, amazingly, feminists continue to organize clandestinely. One important effort is support for women who have lost family members or survived kidnappings. Algerian women publicly demonstrated against the violence on Oct. 20 in Algiers, holding pictures of their disappeared loved ones.

Feminists are endangered not only by their opposition

to Islamic fundamentalists, but by their protests against the government, controlled by the National Liberation Front (FLN) since it won independence from France in 1962. Despite their sympathy for the government's cancellation of elections in 1992 to prevent an Islamic state, feminists have strongly opposed the subsequent curtailment of civil liberties, such as freedom of the press.

More significantly, amidst the violence that has enveloped Algeria since 1992, women's liberationists continue to demand the repeal of the 1984 Family Code. The Code requires that a woman be given in marriage by a man of her family and accords the husband the right to marry up to four women, to divorce or repudiate their marriages, and to keep the family domicile. According to SOS Women in Need, 80% of those they assist are women with children who have been abandoned through divorce and put on the streets by their husbands.

Last March, 13 feminist organizations launched a campaign to collect a million signatures on petitions demanding that the government revoke the most discriminatory articles of the Code. Khalida Messaoudi, who has fought for women's rights since the early 1970s and continued to work clandestinely in Algeria after being condemned to death by FIS fundamentalists, argues that in the code, Algerian women may only exist as "daughters of," "mothers of," "wives of."

In the 1980s, the FLN opportunistically resorted to retrogressive measures like the Family Code in an effort bolster its failing image, rather than solving any of Algeria's social crises—most significantly severe youth unemployment. By 1992, however, Islamic fundamentalists, who had organized social programs and appealed to a sense of family and culture, had stepped firmly into the void left by

the FLN's inability to solve Algeria's crises or pose any genuine alternative.

Today, international authorities have suggested that the FLN is assisting in the violence in order to maintain chaos and thereby avoid having to deal with the underlying economic and social crises. Even if this is false, the FLN's willingness to make women and ethnic minorities into their sacrificial lambs in the name of cultural nationalism has greatly contributed to the present violence.

Fériel Lalami-Fatés, leader of Association for Equality Under the Law, an Algerian women's organization, writes: "[B]y insisting on the abrogation of the Family Code...women pose implicitly the achievement of the secularization of the state; by insisting on a statute of citizenship for women (by their aspiration to equality), women fundamentally refuse oppression and necessarily pose the question of fundamental liberties..." (*Esprit*, Jan. 1995, p. 129).

The Algerian women's movement challenges not only Islamic fundamentalism, but the FLN's opportunistic Arab cultural nationalism. As such, it reveals a quest not only for peace but for revolutionary democracy, including new Man/Woman relations and a multiethnic society.

## 25 years of *Roe v. Wade*

Meetings and demonstrations around Jan. 22 marked the 25th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion. But in recent years, the anniversary received little attention. According to a New York Times poll, young women take abortion rights for granted, and even many of those who use the procedure believe it should be restricted. In fact, the idea of women's self-determination seems to have succumbed to issues of fetuses' supposed rights.

To mark the 25th anniversary, Planned Parenthood of New York City sponsored a conference, "Mapping the Future of Choice," which drew 600 people. The audience cheered Faye Wattleton when she said, "This is an issue about liberation," and Frances Kissling, who declared, "I am here to celebrate the revolution that began in 1973, not to walk in its funeral procession." While speakers decried women's continuing lack of rights and urged us to re-seize the initiative, none grappled with the serious possibility that we will continue to lose our freedom.

**YET LOOK AT THE CONDITION** of reproductive rights. Although abortion is legal, it is often not accessible—to poor women, to young women burdened with severe legal hurdles, or to women in the 84% of U.S. counties that have no abortion provider. This past year 15 clinics were burned or bombed—more than in any year since 1984. Dec. 30 was the third anniversary of the cold-blooded murder of clinic workers, Lee Ann Nichols and Shannon Lowney. Six clinic workers and doctors have been murdered since 1992. Countless others have been roughed up, threatened and stalked.

The Supreme Court is close to trashing *Roe v. Wade*, and over 50 laws have passed in 31 states that obstruct women's access to abortion. The right wing and its friends in Congress may soon pressure a pusillanimous president into outlawing the late-term dilation-and-extraction abortion procedure. Congress has stopped U.S. foreign aid from being used for abortion, in spite of the fact that 100,000 women die every year from back-alley abortions in countries where it is illegal.

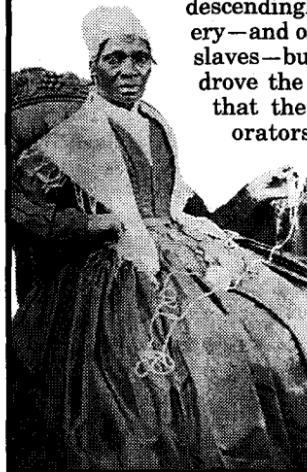
The reproductive rights movement is not standing on our own ground. Rather, we are reacting to what the right wing is doing. That is seen in how abortion rights activists are looking to technology to solve the problem of access to abortion. They are looking to mifepristone and methotrexate, drugs which cause abortion and are now legal and available; they anxiously await the time when U.S. women will be able to obtain RU-486. They are hopeful that a new technique making abortion possible in the first two weeks after conception will help blur the line between contraception and abortion. These activists believe the Right can't stop abortion if it can be dispensed in a doctor's office with a pill. Yet the Right has kept RU-486 out of the U.S. for years.

**NO. THE ANSWER CANNOT** be a technical one. It must be a human one. Many speakers at the conference implied as much when they discussed abortion in terms of Women's Liberation. Carol Gilligan described *Roe v. Wade* as having "legalized women's voices." Frances Kissling declared that revolution cannot be achieved by the stroke of the Supreme Court's pens. "A majority of the country agrees with us that abortion should be legal," she said, "but not about women's nature, women's role, destruction of the patriarchy, the rights of teenagers and the poor. We need to return to the core values that we began with—and be willing to be out of step with the majority." Yet none of the speakers believed *Roe v. Wade* would be overturned or spoke of the bombings and murders—even though every time we entered the room, we were checked for weapons.

The highest point of our struggle to control our own bodies and lives was summed up by Raya Dunayevskaya in the Introduction to *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution* (1985): "Our bodies have heads, and they, too, belong to us and us alone...No one except ourselves, as women, will get our freedom. And for us that means full autonomy" (p. 3). This vision of wholeness and freedom is the opposite of the woman-hating, death-dealing fanaticism of the right-wing anti-abortionists. Such a vision must be our banner if we are to regain our own ground, help the movement grow, and move forward to a day when women will at long last control our bodies and our lives. —Terry Moon and Anne Jaclard

### SENECA FALLS, 1848-1998

"Take the Women's Rights Convention...in 1848, at Seneca Falls, N.Y.... All underestimate the Black dimension which inspired the white, middle-class, educated women to strike out on their own. Sojourner Truth and sometimes also Harriet Tubman are dutifully mentioned, con-



descendingly admitting their bravery—and of course their suffering as slaves—but never as Reason which drove the educated to face reality: that the Black women were the orators, generals, and yes, thinkers, whereas they, the middle-class intellectuals, were but subordinates." —Raya

**Dunayevskaya, Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution**

Available from News and Letters for \$15.95 + \$2.00 shipping.

Sojourner Truth

## Women of Kenya speak, 1955 to today

Charity Ngilu, who attempted to become the first woman president in sub-Saharan Africa by running against Daniel arap Moi in the recent Kenyan elections, did not win that election with the 469,807 votes attributed to her, against the 2,444,801 given to Moi. There was nothing new in the election: It was rife with corruption and confusion and Moi won as he has in the last four elections since 1978. But Charity Ngilu, who was urged to run for president by working women in her neighborhood after she raised money for clean water and clinics for the poor, is no mere footnote to history.

Far from trying to "break with tradition," as the press described it, her campaign resonated with the crucial and distinctive role women have played throughout Kenya's history. Though a very different kind of story, it brought to mind Mbiyu Koinange's story of the Kenyan people's bitter struggle after World War II for independence from Britain, written as it was ongoing and published in 1955 as *People of Kenya Speak for Themselves*, which was dedicated to a woman named Njeri.

**OUT OF THE STRUGGLE** to control their own lives, this illiterate woman had organized a powerful African Women's League and been thrown into a Kenyan prison camp, where she remained with 9,000 other women at the moment the book was published. To rally support for these women and the thousands of other Kenyans being "liquidated" (Mbiyu Koinange's blunt phrase), Koinange sought help internationally to tell their story.

Njeri's story began in 1940 when she heard in the market about the "Kenya Teachers College" which Koinange had initiated to further the independent African schools Kenyans had organized because government schools were not preparing African students for the modern world. When Njeri came to see the college, she discovered the boys living in a stone building, but all the girls had was a mud hut. She returned three weeks later with 25 other women, each one representing a different district, who informed Koinange that they were going to build a suitable girls dormitory.

The story of how they collected the money to buy the stones, hire the workmen and build a modern dormitory, a dining hall, a reception hall and kitchen facilities is the story of hundreds of women walking 30-50 miles day to bring a few pennies to a meeting to discuss the work and participate in the building. Like Njeri, most of these

women were illiterate. What they did at Kenya Teachers College was duplicated at schools in districts throughout Kenya and the African Women's League grew to 10,000.

**THREE DECADES LATER**, the story of Njeri could not help but come to mind again in another form when the UN Decade for Women Conference was held in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1985. There, while the 10,000 women present at the non-governmental meetings were far more representative of the problems of women around the world than the 3,000 who took part in the official meetings, the most serious meetings sprang up spontaneously on the lawn, where women who had just heard the conference was going on stopped and joined the discussion.

One such woman was Elizabeth Wanjara, who heard about it on a transistor radio in her hometown 450 miles from Nairobi and told others, who sold honey and knitted sweaters to buy her a bus ticket. That she, too, was illiterate, but came so she could "go back to all the women in my place and tell them the stories on all the happenings here.. how we can be ourselves and no longer just have babies and have babies dying," only underlined the power that is exerted by the very idea of freedom and the need to find out how to achieve it.

**THAT IS WHAT MARXIST-HUMANISTS** had felt was so important about Mbiyu Koinange's story that when we could not find an established publisher to bring it to the world, we undertook that task ourselves, circulating his manuscript and collecting funds. The first issue of *N&L*, June 24, 1955, reproduced the picture of Njeri and connected her story to that of Harriet Tubman in the Civil War.

What rings powerfully today, when you read *People of Kenya* and think of Charity Ngilu's very different campaign, is the way Ngilu targeted the ethnic appeals of all the other candidates, fighting passionately against the lethal divisions among the Kikuyu, Luo and other tribes that Moi has exploited. *People of Kenya*, too, stressed that "Kenyan Africans want to be a part of the world, not separate from it. It is the officials who have encouraged separation, racialism as well as tribalism."

At a moment when ethnic divisions have become more deadly than ever, whether we are looking at Africa or the Balkans or right at home, it is with pride that we can look at *People of Kenya* as an important part of the history not only of Kenya but of News and Letters Committees.

—Olga Domanski

# Delta to Mexico, worker to worker

*Indianola, Miss.*—I'm a catfish worker who for years experienced the racist, inhuman, unjust treatment of the white catfish owners in the Delta. But through union recognition and believing in the dream, things changed.

We fought several companies for years and demanded the dignity and respect that we have today. But on the other side of the cotton fields stands a plant called America's Catch. On Dec. 12, they held a union election and for the third time a majority of the workers rejected the union. They are oppressed workers who are too afraid to do anything about their situation. The old plantation mentality has them locked down until they are afraid to change.

In my mind I was contrasting that defeat to some Mexican workers I met in Tijuana. They are fighting desperately to organize a union and are fighting the corrupt labor board and the Mexican government who refuse to recognize their choice to be unionized.

They told me how the women on the night shift are locked in and the bosses wouldn't return until morning; how one night a fire broke out and they were trapped. They talked about how the bosses would take 14-year-old girls in the back of the plant and threaten their job for sexual favors and, in some cases, assault them.

I told them that the same things happening to them were happening to us: how they had a fire in Hamlet, N. C., that burned all these people because they were locked in; and the same under-the-table relationship with the labor board is happening in the U.S. I told the workers how we had encountered second-degree burns, that 90% of us suffered from carpal tunnel syndrome from repetitive motion. They looked amazed—like, wow, it's the same situation.

In one of the plants the Mexican workers voted the union in but the Mexican labor board let the company bring in management to vote, to try and stop the union. I wonder, where is justice going to come from? The Mexican workers are trying to go to a higher method, organizing rallies, boycotts, passing out literature, getting the community involved, trying to force the government to hear their cry and make things better.

I told them what we had accomplished by organizing. I wanted to motivate them to not give up because every day the company would fire a worker. I let them know that running to another country to look for better working conditions wouldn't solve their problem, that we had to stand in solidarity to change things even though it seems to be a slow process sometimes. We have to lock these countries down so these companies have nowhere to run. I told them we've got to organize everywhere until we can be developed and transform this society. I learned from those workers and I hope that they learned from me.

Those Mexican workers made me look again at the America's Catch workers. When you realize how much

this capitalist society needs to change, you see how important it is not to lose the concept of what our purpose is and how to accomplish our goals. On the one hand, with the Mexican workers you've got fighters, people knowing that their situation has to be changed for their survival. On the other hand, you've got the same conditions at America's Catch but the workers are afraid to take charge and change their situation. They're letting the company keep them afraid to fight for the changes they need in the workplace. But even though one plant, America's Catch, is not unionized, the state of Mississippi has changed as far as banishing some of this plantation mentality that has existed here for years.

—Sarah Hamer

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—RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

News and Letters Committees founding conference, 1955

See literature ad on page 7

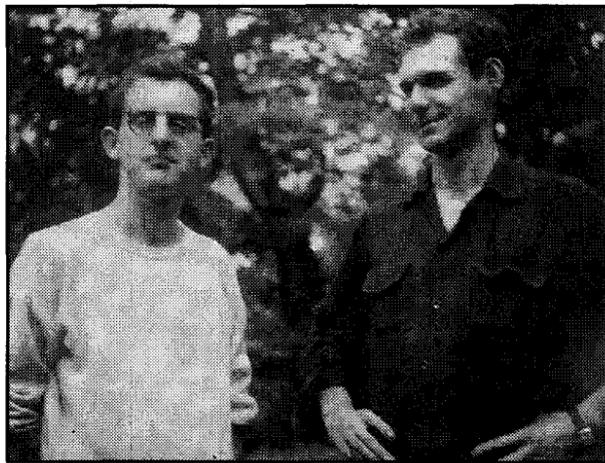
## Raymond Inghram 1925-1997

We mourn the loss of Raymond Inghram, friend, comrade and founding member of News and Letters Committees, who died in Los Angeles of cancer on Dec. 31. Iggy, as we called him, lived his entire adult life in the revolutionary movement, following World War II after he was discharged from the Navy and joined the Johnson-Forest Tendency in the Workers Party.

At that time, working class struggles in the U.S. swept the nation in near general strikes, with coal miners, who had well earned their designation as "shock troops of American labor," leading the way. Iggy, who came from the coal mining region of southwest Pennsylvania, went to Morgantown, W. Va., to help establish a local organization.

It was there, in my home town, where I first met Iggy in 1947 and joined the group. We remained together as close friends and comrades until the end of his life, sharing a revolutionary philosophy and political convictions that maintained us, along with others, through a split from the Workers Party in 1947, entering the Socialist Workers Party in 1948, splitting from them in 1953 and establishing Committees of Correspondence, and finally, following a 1955 split in Correspondence Committees, joining with Raya Dunayevskaya to found News and Letters Committees.

In Morgantown, Iggy worked in a coal mine and took advantage of the GI Bill for classes at West Virginia University, where he was when the historic 1949-50 coal miners' general strike against automation erupted. He organized a student miners' relief group on campus that sent out hundreds of letters to labor organizations throughout the East and Midwest soliciting aid for the striking miners. He also spearheaded the organization of a very successful informational picket line seeking financial help at a West Virginia-Pittsburgh basketball



Raymond Inghram and Andy Phillips in West Virginia.

game. As Iggy put it, it was a way to help break down the division between mental and manual labor among the students and miners, as well as help bridge the huge differences between campus life and life in the surrounding coal communities.

The impact of these concrete historical events on Dunayevskaya's philosophical development is set forth in **The Coal Miners' General Strike of 1949-50 and the Birth of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S** to which

Iggy made significant contributions.

After moving to Pittsburgh in the early '50s to work in a steel mill, Iggy went to Detroit and then Los Angeles, working in a variety of industrial jobs. Although he graduated from college, he never exhibited anything but true proletarian attitudes and behavior.

One especially significant contribution Iggy made to News and Letters Committees was the revolutionary sense of responsibility toward organizational finances he consistently displayed, especially during his last three decades of service as the financial secretary of

the Los Angeles committee. Iggy's characteristic revolutionary dependability was reflected during the last months of his life when, despite constant pain, he continued to attend local meetings to the very end.

A regular joy of his was to ride out to the desert where he would surprise you by identifying almost every tree, cactus and flower spotted along the way, often describing the seasonal changes each underwent. His love of nature complemented his vision and unwavering determination to achieve a new human society that would preserve and enjoy nature—and most essentially, human nature.

And so, while we do indeed mourn the loss of Iggy, we also celebrate his revolutionary life and the proud legacy of Marxist-Humanism that he helped to create and leave for the future.

—Andy Phillips

## Workshop Talks

### New ways to shaft temps and full-timers

(Continued from page 1)

You can see what is coming in the future. They want to hire younger workers at low pay and use them up before they can become permanent employees.

This is not the only trend. At Microsoft's annual meeting in December they announced another year of record-breaking profits. Microsoft has 9,000 employees entitled to full benefits, but thousands of other employees are hired and paid through something called "payrolling agencies." Microsoft calls these people "permatemps." They make lots of money for the company but they have no employee status with Microsoft, no stock options, no medical insurance, and no permanency. And they even wear different color badges. The Dec. 7 **Los Angeles Times** stated: "Microsoft is in the vanguard of a growing movement in corporate America, especially American hi-tech companies, using full-time temporary workers who save the company millions of dollars in benefits but who can be fired in the time it takes to boot-up a computer."

The two men involved in the age discrimination cases had good jobs. What about all the people that this happens to who don't file suits because they don't have the money? What about the Microsoft "permatemps" who have to provide their own health care benefits?

People have to pay the rent and utilities and often don't have enough for food. The **Los Angeles Times** on Dec. 27 said that unemployment rates have sunk to a 25-year low and the economy is "humming," but across the nation 38% of those seeking help at food banks and soup kitchens are employed. In Phoenix, unemployment is reported to be at 3% but four out of five people asking for help for food are working poor.

Low pay, lack of benefits, probably both parents working, make people live on the edge. This is where capitalism has brought the masses of people in this country. What are we the people going to do about it?

Now I see that all the efforts we put into making good salaries and a good living for the workers of this country did not provide anything permanent for labor itself. Only a revolutionary movement in permanence can change this kind of situation.

*Kalamazoo, Mich.*—The murder-suicide in the Milwaukee main post office on Dec. 19 and the hostage situation at the Denver regional mail center on Christmas Eve give the lie to the image that the U.S. Postal Service has been promoting in advertisements that post offices are happy "Santa's workshops" where employees gleefully jump at the chance to work on Christmas day. This has been going on since well before 1986, when disgruntled letter carrier Patrick Henry Sherrill opened fire at the Edmond, Okla. post office, killing 14 of his co-workers before shooting himself. At the time, it was the worst instance of mass violence in American history, since superseded by the bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City.

In the Milwaukee incident, a former official in the postal union said supervisors had picked on the gunman, who had recently been transferred against his will and passed over for a new job. "It was just difficult for him to adjust and management made it more difficult. Management pushes people, they harass people and intimidate them. It was just a matter of time," said Robbie Jungbluth.

Postal violence has, indeed, become so commonplace that "going postal" is a slang for crazed mass violence. The stereotype of "crazed Vietnam veteran/disgruntled postal worker" allows the ruling class to marginalize and criminalize more and more workers.

The only way to stop violent actions like these by individuals against their co-workers is to understand why it happens, and then change the situation. Most postal workers seem to be among the most solid, decent and responsible people there are. Instead of building on these positive qualities, the postal system destroys them. Postal management accepts none of the responsibility of the stress by their own management practices. Anyone who works at the post office knows that the pressure to produce and the ridiculous rules arbitrarily set by management are the problem.

Whether because of sheer stupidity, ineptness, arrogance, or indeed, conscious decision—the Postal Service allows this situation to fester as one more means of control

## Going postal on capitalism

over workers already fearful of losing their jobs who now must fear for their lives—the captains of industry directing the U.S. Postal Service have shown themselves utterly incapable or unwilling to alter this violent situation for well over one decade. The labor lieutenants of the numerous postal unions (American Postal Workers Union-clerks, National Association of Letter Carriers, National Postal Mail Handlers Union, and various others) presiding over this mess, show their talent mainly by stabbing each other in the back, especially at contract negotiation time, when they try to work out sweetheart deals with U.S.P.S. For the most part, these pro-capitalist minions work hand-in-glove with the company in selling postal workers down the river.

Seen in its larger capitalist context, these postal killings are but one more indictment of the brutal, corrupt capitalist system under which we all live. Postal workers occupy a strategic position in our society, constituting a threat to capital's continued rule—thus they must be fettered by every means possible. Especially since the nationwide postal strike of 1970, every management rule change has been aimed at this goal. It is a felony for postal workers to go out on strike, for example. But proletarians who are not allowed to withhold their labor power are little better than chattel slaves.

Karl Marx remarked that either the working class is revolutionary or it is nothing. Today, postal workers, fighting amongst themselves in an extreme form of the competition for jobs that characterizes and has always been fostered by the capitalist system, are accomplishing nothing. Every difference between the workers, whether based on race, age, sex, job classification, etc. exploited and widened by postal managers. Too often, those who are suffering are left to hang out on a limb.

The capitalist system will continue to produce these sparks of energy, whether through stupidity or design—it is the duty of all class-conscious workers to fan and direct these flames of discontent, using the "giant bellows" (to use Lenin's term) of newspapers like News & Letters to produce a conflagration that will consume capitalism.

—Ex-postal worker

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

### Editor's Note

The emerging global economic crisis, set off by the financial crisis in East Asia, gives new timeliness to this discussion by Raya Dunayevskaya of Marx's critique of capitalist production. It consists of excerpts from the first draft of what became her first book, **Marxism and Freedom**—a manuscript entitled "State-Capitalism and Marxism," written in 1947. The original can be found in **The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection**, microfilm no. 472.

Volume III [of *Capital*], which deals with the phenomena of capitalism in their concrete movements, is the one which is preferred by present-day academic economists. These tell us that it is only from this vantage point, where Marx deals with prices and profits, that one can understand Volume I where he deals only in abstractions: value and surplus value. **Marx's point was the exact opposite.** He maintained that once you understand the law of surplus value, the law of profit would present no difficulty; if you reversed the process, you could understand neither the one nor the other.

It is true that Volume III is Marx's nearest approximation to the real world. Commodities are seen to exchange not at value, but at prices of production, that is, cost of production plus average rate of profit. Furthermore, surplus value does not remain an abstract mass of congealed unpaid labor, but assumes the palpable shape of profit, interest and rent—all in the form of liquid capital. The merchant and his middleman's profit and the financier and his transactions and credit manipulations all come to life. What, however, is lost sight of by those who think that this shows that in Volume III common sense has triumphed over the Hegelian mysticism of Volume I, is that none of the laws enunciated in the latter is abrogated in the former. The laws, modified in their actual operation, may not, through the intervention of counteracting tendencies, ever reach their ultimate limit, but none of these laws is controverted.

**SURPLUS VALUE REMAINS** a given magnitude, the congelation of so many unpaid hours of labor, which serves as the straitjacket of capitalists, which they cannot get out of by any market manipulations. All that competition can accomplish is to effect a general rate of profit, a sort of "capitalist communism" which assures that all capitals of given magnitudes receive corresponding shares of the total surplus value.

The transformation of the rate of surplus value into the rate of profit is merely the expression of the ratio of surplus value to total, instead of only to variable, capital. But this in no way changes the law of surplus value, which is that only living labor is creative of surplus value. Individual prices oscillate above or below value, but, in their totality, all prices are equal to all values. Monopoly also brings a modification into the operation of the average rate of profit, but that is not the dominant law of capitalist production.

The dominant law of capitalist production—and the heart of Volume III—is the Law of the Falling Tendency of the Rate of Profit. Marx considered the theory of the declining rate of profit the "pons asini" of the whole of political economy, that which divides one theoretic system from another.

The constant revolutions in production and the constant expansion of constant capital necessitate, of course, an extension of the market. But the enlargement of the market in a capitalist nation has very precise limits. The consumption goods of a capitalist nation are limited by the luxuries of the capitalists and the necessities of the workers when paid at value. The market for consumption goods is just sufficient to allow the capitalist to continue his search for greater value. **It cannot be larger.**

**THIS IS THE SUPREME** manifestation of Marx's simplifying assumption that the worker is paid at value. The innermost cause of crises, according to Marx, is that labor power in the process of production, and not in the market, creates a value greater than it itself is. The worker is a producer of overproduction. It cannot be otherwise in a value-producing society where the means of consumption, being but a moment in the reproduction of labor power, cannot be bigger than the needs of capital for labor power. This is the fatal defect of capitalist production. On the one hand, the capitalist must increase his market. On the other hand, it cannot be larger. This is what Marx calls the **general contradiction of capitalism** which cannot be overcome other than by the abrogation of the law of value.

The only "market" that enlarges beyond the limits of the working population paid at value is the capital market. But there too the constant technological revolutions make the time necessary to reproduce a product tomorrow less than the time to produce it today. Hence there comes a time when all commodities, including labor power, are "overpaid."

The crisis that follows is not caused by a shortage of "effective demand." On the contrary, it is the crisis that causes a shortage of "effective demand." The worker employed yesterday has become unemployed today. A crisis occurs not because there has been a scarcity of markets—the market is largest just before the crisis—but because **from the capitalist viewpoint** there is occurring an unsatisfactory distribution of "income" between recipients of wages and those of surplus value or profits. The capitalist decreases his investments and

# The fatal defect of capitalist production

the resulting stagnation of production appears as overproduction. Of course, there is a contradiction between production and consumption. Of course there is the "inability to sell." But that "inability to sell" manifests itself as such **because of the fundamental antecedent decline in the rate of profit which has nothing whatever to do with the inability to sell.** The decline in the rate of profit, which proves that capitalist production creates a barrier to its own further development, is what causes competition, not vice versa.

**THE LAW OF THE FALLING** tendency of the rate of profit is the expression of the law of value under the most advanced conditions of capitalist production. Under these conditions the ever greater preponderance of dead over living labor brings about such a falling relation of surplus value to total capital that a day might come when, even if the capitalist could appropriate all 24 hours of labor of the employed army, and the laborers lived on air, the capitalist could not get sufficient surplus value to run the mammoth capitalist machine on an ever-expanding scale. The general contradiction of capitalism thus reaffirms the three principal facts of capitalist production: (1) decline in the rate of profit, (2) deeper and deeper crises, and (3) a greater and greater unemployed army.

Today, when we see the fruition of the most abstract postulates of Marx—the concentration of capital in the hands of one single capitalist or one single capitalist corporation—we can see that the absolute limit of development of the law of centralization and concentration of capital has in no way been able to solve the problem of crises and the declining rate of profit. The given single capitalist society remains dominated by the law of value,

the law of the world market, having its origin in technological revolutions no matter where they originate. Atomic energy may be the secret discovery of the United States. But Russia must follow suit or perish...

One section of *Theories of Surplus Value*, entitled "Accumulation of Capital and Crises"...is of particular pertinence to today's discussion...Marx's critique of Malthus, for example, is also the answer to the underconsumptionists of today.

"The only merit of Malthus," wrote Marx in 1865, "is that he emphasized the uneven exchange between capital and labor. This merit is negated thanks to his confusion between the determination of value (*Verwertung*) of money or commodity as capital with the value (*Wert*) of the commodity as such..."

"The condition of overproduction is the general law of production of capital: production proceeds in accordance with the productive forces...and disregards the existing limits of the market, effective demand...besides, the mass of producers is limited and, because of the nature of capitalist production, must always remain limited..."

In contrasting classical political economy with "vulgar" economics, Marx comes to conclusions which cannot be overestimated for our day. He contends that finance capital theorists are so far removed from the direct process of production, live so fully in the fetishistic realm of interest, that they have produced theories of money and credit which are nothing short of "a fiction without fantasy."

The fact that this very important work has been wholly neglected in the United States by Marxists and non-Marxists alike does not lessen, but heightens, the interest in it by scholars and the public alike.



Lynd Ward

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## 'One World, Ready or Not'

*One World, Ready or Not: The Manic Logic of Global Capitalism*, by William Greider (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997)

Marxism was barely declared dead before a new wave of journalists discovered that Marx, at least as an economist, captured the impossible contradiction facing this system's production planners. Greider's central theme appears in a chapter called "The Ghost of Marx." He says there is an "enduring contradiction" now haunting capitalists the world over: "how to dispose of the surplus production." (p.45) Greider's forays into all industries shows the depth and generality of the crisis, telling the tale of "enormous supply surpluses...accumulating across nearly every major sector of industry, from cars to steel, from chemicals to aircraft." (p. 47)

This book was published before the financial crises in Asia and the collapse of currencies there. These collapsing dominoes raised the specter of global deflation and depression. The ensuing IMF bailouts are designed to save world capital markets, but for workers in those countries they promise a precipitous decline in living standards and a surge in unemployment. At the same time there is an ominous feeling among capitalists that these devaluations will threaten profits in the U.S. and Europe as a flood of cheaper goods from Asia is exported. Suddenly Greider's fear that we are on the verge of a 1929 type of economic implosion felt all too immediate.

The strength of this book is its volume of data, especially interviews with those who are the most fervent believers and practitioners of capitalist production. Greider reveals that in today's economic environment being a manager of a big multinational corporation and trying to proactively plan production, is no escape from the deepest uncertainty and dread about the future. The same policies they must institute to expand their market share are the ones that "erode the consumption base" as a whole. The "consumption base," comprised largely of workers' wages, erodes through policies like layoffs due to increasing productivity. Moving production to a subsistence wage area of the world both erodes the consumption base and undermines the power of labor unions to keep wages up.

Thus, Greider presents himself as a neo-Keynesian, out to correct capitalism's "imbalance" through policies that would increase demand. In so doing he presents a skewed view of both recent history of the overthrow of Communist state-capitalist regimes as well as the more distant period during and immediately following the Great Depression.

For the latter he claims that Keynesian "demand stimulus more or less worked for many nations, including Hitler's Germany and eventually the United States." (p. 51) This ignores the fact that the use of the war machine restarted the process of global capital accumulation. It was **wholesale supply destruction** as much of Europe, Russia and Japan, including their capital, lay in ruins.

One might ask, in light of Marx's total opposition to underconsumptionist theories, why is Marx resurrected here? Greider answers by expressing his indebtedness to Marx while distorting him: "The contradictions of capitalism that originally inspired Marx's critique are enduring, largely unchallenged and uncorrected. The greatest of these is the maldistribution of wealth and the grossly concentrated ownership of income producing property, that is, of capital itself." (p. 416) Thus, the key element which Greider borrows from Marx is "contradiction."

Greider then introduces his own solution by falsely attributing an idea to Marx: "The problem is not that capital is privately owned, as Marx supposed. The problem is that most people don't own any." (p. 416) Limiting the possibilities for the future to the realm of ownership of capital, Greider introduces his scheme of universalizing capital ownership through Federal Reserve policy.

While acknowledging that the 1980 rise of Solidarity in Poland was the "seminal event that inspired the popular dismantlement of the Soviet Union and its satellites" (p. 424), Greider focuses on the post-1989 Solidarity. Why? In the 1980-81 strikes, workers forced their aspirations on the Solidarity leaders, keeping them in check. Far from ownership, workers focused on social inclusiveness—the principle to help the weakest—and staged active strikes where

(Continued on page 11)

## Essay Article

## On the 150th anniversary of the Communist Manifesto

## Revolution in Permanence as Marx's Organizing Idea

by Franklin Dmitryev

On its 150th anniversary, Karl Marx's **Communist Manifesto** is once again the object of much attention. With hope or dread, disdain or despair, commentators recall the **Manifesto's** anticipation of capital's penetration of every nook of the globe, its recurring economic crises and the suffering of the working masses.

But few turn seriously to the vision of the future embedded in the **Manifesto**. Few grasp that Marx's concept of organization is totally different from our century's Marxist parties-to-lead, Stalinist or anti-Stalinist. Marxist-humanism points to these elements as key to spelling out the kind of responsibility revolutionists must assume today if we are ever to overcome the retrogression engulfing us.

## A NEW CONCEPT OF ORGANIZATION

The underlying tidal force—Marx's philosophy of revolution in permanence—has escaped the attention of all too many Marxists.

We today have the advantage of knowing Marx's philosophic moment of 1844, which laid the ground for his future development. The core of his 1844 Humanist Essays is Marx's critical appropriation of Hegel's concept of absolute negativity. To Hegel, self-development occurs through negation of the negation. To Marx that meant that transcending this alienated reality takes not just the overthrow of the old but the creation of the new, a process he had labeled "revolution in permanence."

Marx thus rejected what he called "vulgar communism," which stopped at first negation, the goal of abolishing private property. The needed second negation meant transforming human relations, and the relationship between men and women showed just how deep the uprooting of existing society had to be.

Shortly afterward Marx presented his overall materialist conception of history to Friedrich Engels, who enthusiastically agreed to work with him. After having further clarified it through incisive critiques of various contemporary radical thinkers, they formed a new international organization, the Communist Correspondence Committees.

Marx's theoretical and organizational work led the Communist League to invite in his group and to call a Congress "where the critical views we had expressed would be laid down in an open manifesto as the doctrine of the League," as Marx later wrote. Engels brought a first draft of a theoretical program to the First Congress of the Communist League in June 1847, which Marx could not attend, and a second draft to the Second Congress in November, which, after lengthy and heated discussion, assigned Marx to write a manifesto. Marx finished writing the **Manifesto** at the end of January 1848, not long before the February Revolution in France.

As an integral part of expressing a new philosophy of revolution, the **Manifesto** revealed a concept of organization quite different from any previously seen. Some revolutionaries believed that a small group could organize an insurrection, take power, and institute socialism by decree. Utopian socialists wove plans from their heads for how society should be reorganized, with no relationship to an actual mass movement. Both currents existed in the Communist League.

Against both of those, the **Manifesto** projects the revolutionary proletariat, its self-activity and self-organization "into a class," as the revolutionary subject that can dig the grave of capitalism. But this does not imply that the role of the revolutionary organization is little more than to record and support the voices and actions of the masses. Consider what Marx wrote at the beginning of Part II, "Proletarians and Communists":

"The communists do not form a separate party opposed to other working class parties. They have no interests...apart from those of the proletariat as a whole. They do not set up any sectarian principles of their own, by which to shape and mold the proletarian movement...."

If the aim of "overthrow of the bourgeois supremacy, conquest of political power by the proletariat" is not, as Marx says here, what distinguishes the communists, then what does?

The only distinction from other working-class parties is, according to Marx, that the communists "bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat," internationally, and that, "in the various stages of development [of the class struggle] they always...represent the interests of the movement as a whole." A few pages later, he spells this out as, "The communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class, but in the movement of the present, they also represent the future of the movement."

To Marx, steeped in the movement of negation of the negation, the future means not just the immediate aim of overthrow but what happens after the revolution:

"In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all."

This passage continues the critique of vulgar communism expressed in his 1844 Humanist Essays. Moreover, it not only marks the division between Marx and Engels

versus the utopians but the difference between Marx's **Manifesto** and Engels' drafts of the program. Engels' first draft, "Draft of a Communist Confession of Faith," does not go into what happens after the revolution beyond abolishing private property.

The second draft, "Principles of Communism," written after receipt of Marx's critique of the first, does contain a beautiful passage about "the all-round development of the abilities of all the members of society through doing away with the hitherto existing division of labor...." But Engels presented it as if it were nearly automatic:

"...through society's taking out of the hands of the private capitalists the use of all the productive forces...and managing them according to a plan corresponding to the means available and the needs of the whole of society, all the evil consequences of the present running of large-scale industry will be done away with.

In contrast, the **Manifesto** says that "the theory of the communists may be summed up" as "abolition of private property" **only in the sense** that it means a transformation of production relations involving abolition of class society. A world that has witnessed the brutality of state-capitalism based on nationalized property and state planning can more easily grasp the distinction that only Marx seems to have recognized in his day, and the need to face the question of what happens after the revolution.

This is closely related to other differences between these texts. For one, unlike Marx's 1844 critique of man/woman relations as showing how total the uprooting of the old needs to be, Engels' first draft states, "We will only interfere in the personal relationship between men and women or with the family in general to the extent that the maintenance of the existing institution would disturb the new social order." This is not much changed in his second draft, and both drafts imply that this type of oppression "is rooted in private property and falls with it" (from second draft). The **Manifesto**, however, not only trumpets "Abolition of the family!" but says "the real point aimed at is to do away with the status of women as mere instruments of production."

Unseparated from the **Manifesto's** ruthless criticism of capitalism, Part III of the **Manifesto** criticizes all other socialist and communist tendencies; these negations needed to be transcended themselves. Engels' first draft had no such battle of ideas, and his second contained a very short one, without the section Marx kept returning to in the next 30 years on "Critical-Utopian Socialism and Communism." Its critique shows why Marx would tread carefully in envisioning the future society, avoiding "systems" and blueprints, without ever abandoning that vision as a guiding principle in organization, action and theory.

## REVOLUTION AFTER 1848 DEFEAT

The experience of the 1848 Revolutions—their high points as well as their defeats—both proved the **Manifesto's** conception and allowed Marx to make further concretizations of his Humanist philosophy. To explore this we focus on the year 1850, when it became clear that the revolution's defeat was not just a brief lull before a new revolutionary storm. Marx, in any case, never took defeat as his ground; rather, his gaze was to the future.

That was not the lesson taken by most tendencies, since the June revolution was defeated, with the massacre of over 3,000 workers, initiating a "retrograde process." The defeat was commonly thought to mark the limits of the possible. For some, overthrow of the form of government was the limit; for others, the defeat proved the futility of revolution altogether.

In contrast, Marx's articles on "1848 to 1849," later called "Class Struggles in France," projected that even a proletarian revolution that spreads from France to England "finds here not its end but its organizational beginning, is no short-lived revolution. The present generation is like the Jews whom Moses led through the wilderness. It has not only a new world to conquer, it must go under in order to make room for the people who are able to cope with a new world."

Within days of writing this, Marx, with Engels, wrote another document centering on the philosophy of revolution in permanence, working it out as strategy and tactics. The March 1850 Address to the CL was also a summation of the two years of revolution, but, unlike "1848 to 1849," it was an underground, directly organizational document.

Here Marx takes a critical look at how his organization had participated in the revolutions, making organizational-political conclusions for three moments, before, during, and after the next revolutionary struggle. All are worked out in view of the before, during, and after of not only the next revolutionary struggle but the one anticipated after it, the proletarian revolution, with both seen as steps, neither of them final, in the continuous revolutionary movement not merely to proletarian rule but to the new, classless society.

What is elaborated for all three moments is the need for independent organization of the workers' party all the way to establishing armed revolutionary workers' governments as a dual power. The workers "must do the utmost for their final victory by making it clear to themselves what their class interests are, by taking up their

position as an independent party as soon as possible and by not allowing themselves to be misled for a single moment by the hypocritical phrases of the democratic petty bourgeois into refraining from the independent organization of the proletariat. Their battle cry must be: The Revolution in Permanence."

The proof that revolution in permanence wasn't just a phrase was, as Raya Dunayevskaya put it in **Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution**, "that in the constant search for revolutionary allies the vision of the revolutions to come was in no way changed." That is, Marx continued to project the vision of revolution as negation of the negation in continuous transition to a classless society, and concretized it for new situations. He continued to search for new allies (beginning with the rural proletariat and then the peasantry), new pathways, new theoretical bases for a total revolutionary uprooting and "foundation of a new" society.

In the period after the defeats of the revolutions, Europe was awash with retrogressive tendencies. They were not conscious of, but recoiled instinctively from, the difficult discipline of Marx's concept of organization as being responsible to the historical movement, to which the self-determination of the idea is as integral as is the spontaneity of the masses in revolution.

Those who did not reject revolution altogether either sought to halt it at the first step, or looked for shortcuts to revolution through practice alone: state-sponsored schemes, stronger organization, greater determination of will, coup plots. How Marx dealt with such retrogression speaks to our age, when the failures of revolutions have become so ingrained in consciousness that ideologues believe they can make the idea of revolution unthinkable.

The pull to separate theory and practice was also manifested in a swarm of new organizations characterized by totally unprincipled combination. One was called the Central Committee of European Democracy. Its manifesto argued that the revolutions had failed because the organization of revolutionary power was weakened by the many divergent theoretical systems, to which they counterposed "the people in motion, it is the instinct of the masses...it is action....The hand-clasp of a worker in one of these historic moments which inaugurate an epoch will teach us more about the organization of the future than could be taught today by the cold and unfeeling travail of the intellect...."

In their "Review: May to October," Marx and Engels hit back against those who stop at first negation:

"In their view indeed revolution consists merely in the overthrow of the existing government; once this aim has been achieved, 'the victory' has been won. Movement, development and struggle then cease, and...there begins the golden age of the European republic and of slumber declared in permanence. These gentlemen also abhor thinking, unfeeling thinking, just as they do development and struggle....The people shall have no thought for the morrow and must strike all ideas from its mind; come the great day of decision, and it will be electrified by mere contact, and the riddle of the future will be solved by a miracle."

Previously there had been differences within the Communist League, but now the objective atmosphere of political retrogression forced them out into the open. Pulled by the practical idea, the faction led by August Willich and Karl Schapper caused a split. Determined to have revolution immediately, yet absent the proletariat's self-activity, they would substitute their own activity, seize power, and institute communism by force. In order to seize power, they would join with whatever "revolutionary" movement seemed to be going on, even though it was the self-limiting movement of the democratic petty bourgeoisie.

The explanation for this retrogression is found in Hegel's Third Attitude to Objectivity, which, Dunayevskaya writes in **Philosophy and Revolution**, "would always recur when, in the process of battling contradiction, the Subject becomes impatient with the seemingly endless stages of negation it must suffer through, and therefore, instead, slides backward into Intuition."

Marx did not slide backward, because what he was driven by was not the pull of the practical idea but organizational responsibility for the Idea of Freedom, his vision of revolution in permanence. Willich claimed (Marx later wrote) that "the schisms were caused solely by personal disagreements." Marx "laid bare the differences of principle which lay behind the clash of personalities."

It was Marx, therefore, who was able to keep deepening the ground for revolution for the next 30 years in both theory and practice, precisely because he was not separating the two. However, Marx's opponents split the League and behaved so recklessly as to make it easier for the Prussian police to uncover and destroy what was left.

The **Communist Manifesto** was not Marx's last word. Nor did his concept of organization stop developing when the Communist League dissolved in 1852. But the crises of our age's revolutionary movements demand a new look at that concept, as Marx articulated it in the **Manifesto** and practiced it in the League years—if, that is, we keep in view the realities of our day, as well as what we know of Marx as a whole.



## THE REAL STATE OF THE UNION AS 1998 BEGINS

The reports in N&L on the events in various localities show that capital has become a worldwide monster strangling the lifeblood out of workers everywhere. Here in the Cajun French area of Louisiana known as Acadiana, we have not been spared. In the last months of 1997, Fruit of the Loom, a large local employer, has laid off over 4,000 workers, the majority of them working mothers. These jobs are going to Honduras to make use of the cheaper labor there. Meanwhile, the city government is cutting off grants to local community services such as shelters for battered women and homeless people — at the same time that it is talking of building a new golf course. Some mainstream leaders attack the NAFTA deal as the reason underlying all this sorrow. They miss the point. These events are the expected workings of the capitalist market. The need is to abolish the system of capitalism which is enslaving us to its machinations.

**Student  
Louisiana**

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Texas, with 140,000 prison inmates, is one of the few states in the U.S. which does not pay their prisoners a wage. Many inmates work 50 hours weekly and are paid nothing. These unpaid inmates must now pay \$3 each time they request (not receive) medical services. The prisons are also authorized to "rent out" inmates for use as labor gangs. The Texas system is an embarrassment to anyone who pursues the struggle for freedom. To quote Dostoyevski, "The degree of civilization in a society can be judged by entering its prisons."

**Prisoner  
Texas**

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No sooner did California vote to do away with affirmative action than a group of white parents in Riverside objected to naming a school after Dr. King because they say the perception that it is a "Black school" will hurt their kids' college chances. So the excuse that affirmative action is no longer needed because discrimination is a thing of the past suddenly reveals itself to be nothing but mean-spirited, selfish hypocrisy.

**Disgusted  
San Diego County**

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At the demonstration here in December for International Human Rights Day, there were mostly Latinos, doing guerrilla theater, protesting U.S. military aid to Mexico. What angered me was that it was well co-ordinated by the police. They had barricades surrounding the demonstration so no one walking by could stop. They insisted people either join the demonstration or leave. It made it an event where we were preaching to the converted.

**Demonstrator  
San Francisco**

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The December Lead on all the ways the "Right wing bares its teeth" pointed to the opposition to Bill Clinton's appointment of Bill Lann Lee to become Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights. That this has Clinton looking like a good guy is a manifestation of the right disguised in liberal clothing. It's how he has dismantled welfare with very little reaction. The end of 1997 brought out a number of reports on how the

hunger in the U.S. and the number of soup kitchens is on the rise (a three-fold increase!) with all the cuts not even in effect yet.

**Alarmed and Angry  
Chicago**

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While the right wing has done its homework and carried out its tasks at various universities, the Left hasn't. Left activism on the campuses has, at best, been anarchic and lacking meaning or ideological sustenance. Even in the '60s, campus activism was centered on one issue only: to get the troops out of the Vietnam War without any clear idea as to why the war was wrong. That movement quickly faded away when the war was over, to yield to Reagan and the emergence of the "new right." Today a thousand one-issues will not make up an ideology. Study circles to discuss Marxist classics and papers like N&L can allow college students to leave with a solid foundation that will not wash off like watercolors once the Vietnam war ended or if Nike pulls out of Indonesia. Most important, it will be a foundation that neither McCarthyism nor Jerry Falwell will find easy to overcome.

**Ana Lucia  
Texas**

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At the rally in San Francisco in December for the release of Mumia Abu-Jamal and an end to the death penalty, one of the most powerful speakers was Bear Lincoln, a Native American from the Round Valley Indian Reservation in Northern California. He had been found not guilty of murder in a death penalty case but the D.A. then decided to pursue the manslaughter charge the jury had been hung on. Nine of the 12 jurors pledged to help him in his fight. Here is what he told us:

"What those jurors realized is the reason the Deputy was killed that night was due to the way the Sheriff's Department was acting. They have the same attitude to the reservation that the government has to any little country, like Grenada or Haiti. It has always been that way, ever since the middle of the last century when 90% of Native Americans in California were killed off. Up until the 1960s we couldn't even sit with whites in the local movie theater. That segregation ended when the Blacks stood up and started the Civil Rights Movement. What hit me about Mumia's case is the way he was railroaded, very similar to my case and Leonard Peltier's. The fact that they pursue us like this is a real test of the power the state has."

**Supporter  
Oakland, CA**

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The article in the December issue about the gay student who was beaten up is a real study in irony. The high school principal decided to stand on principle when he would not allow the attacked student to look through the year book for fear he might pick out the wrong person. Evidently he could not bear the thought of someone being wrongly persecuted.

**Not buying it  
California**

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In "Right wing bares its teeth" you state "bigotry has been disguised as 'science' ... the very concepts of feminism and civil rights have been twisted and

## Readers' Views

perverted to mean their opposite." Add to that the distortion of the concept of science itself when the Right attacks the teaching of evolution. I was glad to see that the National Science Teachers' Association has published a position statement on "The teaching of evolution" that asserts: "Parental and community involvement in establishing the goals of science education ... should be nurtured in our democratic society. However, the professional responsibility of science teachers should not be bound by censorship, pseudoscience, inconsistencies, faulty scholarship, or unconstitutional mandates."

**Science teacher  
Detroit**

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Black people being bought and sold and owned, all people sitting idly by while Black men dangled from trees, separate-but-equal, Asian people working for slave-wages then carted off to American concentration camps, Hispanic people driven from their land and denied re-entry — all of the shameful atrocities committed by callous racists in America's past are things most Americans won't condone in 1998, the things that have to be fought, contested, and stamped out in their humble beginnings. No longer can the atrocities against racial minorities be tolerated. No longer can there be inhumanity and injustice wreaked upon any people.

**Fighter  
Tennessee**



**VIEWS  
FROM  
ECUADOR**

There seems little doubt, now that the right is firmly in control of all the country's political institutions, that there will be implementation of most of the measures millions took to the streets against just this past February — cutbacks in education and health, privatization, and higher prices for basic utilities. In the face of such retrogression, the popular forces have not been silent. Labor revolt has been particularly intense, with prolonged strikes among health workers, teachers, electrical and petroleum workers and others. A peoples popular assembly was held by the indigenous community, which continues to be one of the major forces in the country. In the two major provinces the organized women's movement chose to field candidates for the Popular Assembly and achieved high levels of support.

In recent months a movement of gays, lesbians and transvestites successfully brought to attention police harassment and discrimination against them. This culminated in the overturning of that part of the criminal code that made homosexuality a crime punishable by 4 to 8 years on prison. A major victory and long overdue.

**Roger  
Ecuador**

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The effects of the "El Nino" current have devastated crops and homes and, as always, it is the poor who pay the highest price. Together with this the political instability and the economic measures have left the country bleeding from all pores at the moment when the constituent assembly is meeting and one can deduce from the correlation of forces that neoliberalism's precepts are going to be legalized in body and soul. The social forces have announced days of protest outside the constituent assembly to undertake reforms, threatening that if these steps are not taken they will refuse to recognize whatever constitution is approved by the assembly. But I do not think those forces are sufficient to give that decision the support it would need.

**Activist  
Ecuador**

### THE BRITISH SCENE

Supporters of capitalism claim as a success story that expanding production is keeping ahead of rising population. To my mind it is the greatest indictment

against capitalism that despite expanding production it fails to satisfy human needs. It is a perverse system that fosters poverty in the midst of abundance. And while the greatest concentration of poverty is to be found in the villages and urban slums of the Third World, absolute poverty is also to be met with in a developed country like Britain — where the life expectancy of a homeless person sleeping rough is just 42 years.

In those parts of the world where production has actually fallen, notably sub-Saharan Africa, many factors are involved: the crushing burden of debt, environmental degradation and the spread of desert conditions, and the AIDS epidemic have all added to the problem. But the greatest single factor is probably war which directly destroys roads, bridges, power lines, and forces peasants to live as refugees while making land unusable because of anti-personnel mines. War is fueled although not caused by arms exports from the "advanced" countries. It seems that in each century British capitalism has one really evil trade: in the 18th, slaves; in the 19th, opium; and in the 20th, arms.

**Richard Bunting  
Oxford**

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It is tragic that there is no viable syndicalist movement at a time when the Blair government is showing that every prophecy we made about Labour being as bad as the Tories was correct. Every governmental move penalizes the poor and gives yet more to the rich. There is enormous working class discontent.

**Laurens Otter  
Britain**

### LOVE BETWEEN EQUALS?

I liked Jennifer Pen's "Woman as Reason" column on heterosexism and sexism in the December issue very much. I am concerned not so much with what is "natural" in sexuality but in what ways it can be an affirmation of our humanity. Love as a positive affirmation of one's humanity can only happen between equals, as also an affirmation of one's lover's humanity. Rampant sexism, such as in the ancient Greek society, thus makes homosexual relations the only human expression of love. I think this is a reason to condemn sexism, not because the resulting relations are "immoral" but that sexism limited their humanity, excluding half the human race from the human love relation. I hope that revolution means that every way we relate to each other is not based on a pre-conceived "nature."

**Urszula Wislanka  
California**

### FRANCESCA PATAI (1930-1998)

Frances Sheldon Patai, a teacher, writer, historian, political activist, and contributor to N&L in recent years, died on Jan. 18 of pancreatic cancer. In recent years she wrote widely on the contributions of American women during the Spanish Civil War, and had received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities for her research on "Heroines of the Good Fight." In the early 1990s she founded Urban News International, a news agency specializing in women's and labor issues.

Her life and work were profoundly affected by her early life of poverty and difficult jobs. She was also permanently affected by the Holocaust, and also by her witnessing of the Peekskill riot of 1947, during which people attending a Paul Robeson concert were attacked by police on horseback who shouted that the audience were "New York n-----r-loving Jews." Knowing that stereotypes about groups of people could hurt and kill, Frances endowed a course called "The Nazi Holocaust: Its History, Consequences, and Contemporary Significance," to be taught at the City College of New York Center for Worker Education. She is survived by her many friends in New York, Philadelphia, California and Spain.

**Hannah Samuels  
California**

### FREE RUCHELL CINQUE MAGEE!



Ruchell Magee is the longest-held political prisoner in the U.S., whose struggle cries out for recognition and solidarity.

In the early 1960s he was arrested on bogus charges of kidnapping and robbery after getting into a fight in Los Angeles. As a Black man unable to afford a decent attorney, he was quickly sentenced to life in prison.

Inspired by the Black liberation movement of the 1960s, he became politically active in prison and took the name of Cinque — the African freedom fighter who seized control of The Amistad.

In 1970 Magee appeared as a witness in the trial of James McCain, who was

trying to expose the racist nature of the California prison system. During his testimony Jonathan Jackson, brother of George Jackson — the famed Black militant activist and writer — took over the courtroom in an effort to free George. Magee joined in what became known as the Marin County Courthouse rebellion, which was bloodily suppressed by the police.

Though Magee has never received the attention accorded other political prisoners, he continues the struggle for a new society. He wrote, "My fight is to expose the entire judicial and prison system, a system of slavery. This cause will benefit not just myself but all those who are being criminally oppressed or enslaved by this system."

To extend your solidarity, contact *The Ruchell Magee Defense Fund, PO Box 8306, South Bend, IN 46660.*

**STATE OF THE WORLD: CHINA, MEXICO, ITALY**



The financial situation in China is a mess, much more serious than those countries of Asia now in big trouble. It is merely because China is not fully open to the world money market that it is less affected by external impact. Nobody can predict what is going to happen in the next year, but the government is now desperate to prevent an explosion. They stubbornly reject the devaluation of the currency for fear of its political consequences (on Hong Kong included).

China faces formidable obstacles in its pursuit of a better future. The intellectual elites are so satisfied with the status quo that very few of them bother themselves to try to find a way out for China. A country of 1.2 billion population now is suffering with a poverty of ideas, of theories.

**Dissident journalist China**

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Following the recent events in Mexico, a sociologist here who toured Chiapas last summer reported: "It is an occupied country. Everywhere there are the Chiapas state security forces in their blue uniforms. It is a state army. There are thousands of federal troops in Chiapas on the order of President Zedillo. Both have been arming, aiding and even directly assisting the paramilitary groups. No federal soldier has ever been charged for rape and murder. The low-intensity war on the poor of Chiapas has always been directed by the federal government, As President Zedillo stated this past December: 'I prefer to go into history as a repressor before implementing the agreements with the EZLN.'"

**Correspondent Canada**

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There are protest movements throughout Europe. Italian dairy farmers, angered at being told they, rather than the state, should pay European Union overproduction fines, have taken to the

streets with a vengeance. On Dec. 14 they dragged a huge black and white cow (named Ercolina and now a national celebrity) into Vatican City, just as the Pope was delivering a traditional weekly benediction. He expressed pleasure at seeing the demonstrators. Four days later the farmers staged a March on Rome, blockading the main roads and railways with tractors. The next day throughout the country they handed out free fruit and dairy products to passers-by to gain "solidarity."

The demonstrations have angered the authorities. President Scalfaro warned they were illegal. Prime minister Prodi was displeased by the vast coverage given by Italian TV. The publicity had an effect: olive oil manufacturers, rice growers and sugar producers now want to join the protests.

**Observer East Europe**

**NEW GLOBAL CORPORATE CONSTITUTION?**

Recently, the Swiss banks have been pilloried for hiding Jewish fortunes and gold looted by the Nazis. Could the Swiss banks come under scrutiny one of these days for laundering wartime profits of Ford, GM and perhaps other U.S. corporations from the "other side" of the front? Henry Ford's admiration of Hitler is a well-documented fact. What is less known is that Ford and GM (under the German trade name Opel) both before and during the second World War, produced tens of thousands of cars, trucks, tank engines, etc., not just for the U.S. Army and its allies but also for the Wehrmacht, Hitler's army.

While the U.S. and allied soldiers died for the "national interest," the huge national and multinational corporations have never had and don't have now any national loyalty. The profit margin is the sole reason for their existence. Now, through the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) being secretly negotiated in Paris, they are discussing nothing less than the "Global Constitution of Corporate Rule" which will supersede any rights of national governments. Is this the final stage of capitalist imperialism? Already the FTA, NAFTA, IMF,

GATT, etc., etc. have caused irreparable damage on many parts of the globe. The MAI will enshrine the "rights" of corporation to bring in a new dark ages for all of humanity.

**Witness Vancouver**

**NO EULOGY FOR COLEMAN YOUNG**

Former Detroit Mayor Coleman Young doesn't deserve the eulogy he got in the "Readers' Views" of December 1997. I consider him one of the worst American mayors in recent history. Once elected, he completely abandoned his constituents and became the tireless champion of the Big Three auto makers. During his long term, Detroit went from decline to nose-dive. He destroyed Poletown, refused federal funds for mass transit, and let the schools come apart. He was brutal and contemptuous of Black youth. Instead of confronting white racism, he became its beneficiary, using it as political leverage to keep himself in power.

**Former Detroit Bay Area**

**FIGHTING RACISM**

The police acted criminally in Memphis at the anti-KKK rally. They planned for a riot and produced one. After this, those of us in Memphis Against Racism want to keep going. We have to because the Mayor and police are not going to say they were wrong and the protesters were right. It was a unifying experience before the police attack and is continuing to unify us now. There is definitely a place for a group like this in this town.

**Member, Memphis Against Racism**

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Many of us left the anti-Klan rally here not knowing who we should be fighting: the Klan or the police. The mass media grossly misreported the entire incident and blamed the violence on gangs. But everyone in Memphis knows that the biggest gang in this city is the MPD.

**Angry demonstrator Memphis**

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Walter Budzyn and Larry Nevers, the two Detroit police officers convicted of

beating Malice Green to death in 1994 have been released from jail while they await new trials. Nevers' release shortly before Christmas brought out a number of protesters, including members of his family, in front of the building where Green was killed and where a mural portrait of him has been maintained since his death. Over the past four years, the media has played up Green's drug use and steadily eroded the image of a murder victim. Sentiment today is much more deeply divided along racial lines: many whites, especially suburbanites, are saying "It's time to forgive (the cops) and forget." Most Blacks are angry or disheartened. Detroiters will be watching the upcoming trials very closely.

**Susan van Gelder Detroit**

**LEARNING THE LESSON OF CHE**

Raya Dunayevskaya's column on the tragedy of Che Guevara (Dec. 1997 N&L) stresses his failure to do in Bolivia what he had done in Cuba — "relate himself to the masses" instead of substituting himself for the masses, by working out a new relationship of guerrilla fighting to social revolution and of theory to practice. I felt that the story of how Charles Denby had to break with Stokely Carmichael, which Lou Turner took up in the essay on the page directly opposite the Archives column, speaks to that critique of Che in an important way. In **Philosophy and Revolution** Raya also showed Carmichael's affinity to Che's impatience with the masses of people who are the only ones who can make the revolution. Working out that difficult relation of theory to practice is still the problem for revolutionary theoreticians.

**Women's liberationist Memphis**

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Dunayevskaya's article on Che Guevara sharply posed the link between spontaneity and theory. Those who reject theory, from partisans of guerrilla warfare to anarchists, inevitably end up in isolation from, if not in opposition to, the masses. With recognition of their spontaneous, creative self-activity, the theoretician can prepare for revolution.

**Former anarchist Tennessee**

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**BY RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA**

- Marxism and Freedom: From 1776 until today** 1988 edition. New author's introduction ..... \$17.50
- Philosophy and Revolution: from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao** 1989 edition. New author's introduction ..... \$14.95
- Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution** 1991 edition. New author's introduction. Foreword by Adrienne Rich ..... \$12.95
- Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future** (1996 edition) \$15.95
- The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism: Selected Writings by Raya Dunayevskaya** ..... \$8.50
- The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism: Two Historic-Philosophic Writings by Raya Dunayevskaya** Contains "Presentation on Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy of June 1, 1987," and 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes." ..... \$3 paperback, \$10 hardcover

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- Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal** 1989 edition includes Afterword by Raya Dunayevskaya ..... \$14.95

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- Lenin, Hegel, and Western Marxism: A Critical Study** First full-length treatment of Lenin's studies of Hegel. .... \$15.95

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# King Day protest against the Klan attacked by Memphis cops

**Memphis, Tenn.**— At a rally protesting the national holiday for Dr. Martin L. King, Jr., held on Jan. 17 on the courthouse steps by 25 members of the Indiana Ku Klux Klan, a rogue faction of the Memphis Police Department (MPD) incited a riot, attacking peaceful anti-Klan protesters with tear gas and violence.

By 10:00 a.m., approximately 2,000 protesters—an even mixture of Black and white people—gathered in downtown Memphis to protest the appearance of the Klan. With helicopters circling above, MPD cunningly ushered protesters along heavily guarded streets, to a checkpoint where hordes of police used metal detectors to search peaceful Memphians for weapons.

The protest grew steadily, including members of Memphis Against Racism, Defense Depot of Memphis Tennessee—Concerned Citizens Committee, News and Letters Committees, Women's Action Coalition and numerous human rights organizations. Young Blacks, enraged at a white supremacist group spreading hate, displayed their intense dislike of the Klan.

Dr. Herenton, the lost and confused Mayor of Memphis, secretly met with Police Chief Winfrey before stealing away in the luxury of his black Lincoln Continental. Both Herenton and Winfrey are totally incompetent, as both Blacks lack the nerve to stand up to the white-racist element of the MPD. Earlier in the week, MPD laid the psychological warfare groundwork for the rally, planting rumors of gang-violence in the news media and claiming that gangs were planning to shoot down the Grand Dragon from Indiana, like a dog, on the courthouse steps.

Safely chaperoned, Klan speakers, reveling in their First Amendment rights, called Black people "n—rs with no business in America." An elderly Black woman shook her head in disgust. "How could the Mayor of Memphis allow this to happen? Look at all of the MPD officers protecting the Klan. Who is paying their salary? When our group tried to hold a march, we were told that it cost \$200 per hour for each policeman. This is ridiculous. Black taxpayers are paying the salaries of Black policemen protecting Klansmen calling us n—rs."

Then, suddenly, without cause, MPD officers tossed tear gas canisters into the closely packed crowd of protesters, despite the presence of senior citizens and babies. Wheezing, coughing, and crying, most protesters were alarmed, trying as best they could to protect themselves from the onslaught of tear gas, vicious policemen, and mounted cavalry. A few of the protesters kicked the tear gas canisters back at policemen. Having nowhere to go, a stampede ensued. MPD officers attacked, viciously, without mercy.

It was horrible, like a battlefield, like the pandemonium that broke out in Memphis in the 1968 uprising. Screams pierced the air. Blinded mothers grappled in vain to find their babies. Peaceful protesters were knocked to the ground. MPD officers sprayed downed protesters with automatic tear gas machines! Much practiced MPD dispersed the main body of protesters, only to see sporadic groups confront them, inquiring about their civil rights, their freedom of speech, their First Amendment rights. MPD responded with more tear gas and violence, slamming young Black men to the asphalt.

The entire rally turned into one of the biggest contradictions in Memphis history. Under the pretense of protecting the Klan's constitutional rights, the MPD systematically and viciously violated the constitutional rights of peaceful protesters. —Kenneth Bradshaw

The police were totally out of control. If it had just been Blacks out there, there would have been fatalities. The police had never seen that many white and Black together and not fighting. It was not just Black and white. It was Asians, it was Hispanics, everybody turned out. It was thoroughly diverse, age-wise and people of color. There were a lot of older people, whole families. That made me feel real good and positive about the whole thing.

The paper said the whites and Blacks were separate, but the unity was there. If that many white people turn out I just knew they weren't going to attack. But by the time we got there, they had already sprayed some white youth with tear gas—two hours before police went berserk. They were just testing their equipment. They had tear gas sprayers that looked like machine guns. You see nothing in any of the reports about anyone actually hitting a policeman. It wasn't a riot. It was a police attack on the people.

When I got sprayed, and went down, the guy who sprayed me helped me back up. I sat on the steps and told him I had asthma and he was still spraying! There was a heavy woman on the steps too and they kept spraying her and she started throwing up and they still kept spraying her and finally she went into convulsions and they had to take her away. That's when her two children got lost in the crowd.

Some people said you should just ignore the KKK and not pay them any attention. I say you know what Hitler did to the Jews. If you don't challenge it, it gets worse and worse. I look at it like this. They do this to us **all the time**. The day my grandson was born I was shoved by a policeman. He didn't have a warrant to come into my house. They claimed they were looking for my son, but they were looking for any Black child. Because somebody got killed they were going to load up all the Black male children and take them down to the police station. This is what young Blacks have to go through daily. People need to be aware that this is how Black people are treated in America. That's why I say if that anti-Klan demonstration had been all Black there would have been deaths because they would have shot us. —Doris Bradshaw

As we go to press, we received word of the despicable bombing of the militant *Jackson Advocate* in Jackson, Mississippi. Look for our report next issue.

## Black/Red View

by John Alan

Steven Spielberg's new film *Amistad* began its debut at the end of a legal conflict over copyright and then went on to generate many controversial battles in the press, on television talk shows and on the internet. Black nationalists didn't like it because they thought that Cinque, the leader of the slave revolt, played by the African actor Djimon Hounsou, was not given a powerful speaking role in his defense and was upstaged by John Quincy Adams, played by Anthony Hopkins. White conservatives charged that it was a falsification of history because Africans were presented as an advanced people. Spike Lee, the Black film director, told Debbie Allen, the Black executive producer of *Amistad*, that a white director could not express the reality of the Black experience. The truth, however, is that opposition to slavery in the United States was not exclusively a Black experience, it was a Black and white experience dealing with the incompleteness of the first American Revolution.

These polarized opinions speak more about the prevailing conditions of race relations in this country today than about the social and political conditions existing more than 150 years ago at the time of the *Amistad* mutiny.

Spielberg brings no new historical facts to his *Amistad*. The story of the *Amistad* mutiny has often been summarized by historians within the context of the political battles between Northern and Southern politicians around the issue of slavery during the 1830s. It's also true that Spielberg's *Amistad* isn't a factually accurate story of the *Amistad* mutiny. Some of the incidents and characters, like the Black Abolitionist played by Morgan Freeman, as well as much of the dialogue, were created by the filmmakers. However, people didn't go to the cinema to see an historical documentary, but rather an exciting dramatization of an historical event.

Spielberg has re-created a remarkable dramatization of that event. He caught the spirit of the *Amistad* revolt by showing how a small revolt of African slaves off the coast of Cuba became united with an idea of freedom and spurred into action all the anti-slavery forces in this country, including the reluctant John Quincy Adams. Spielberg certainly didn't recognize the inherent dialectic that brought this unity into reality.

After Joseph Cinque picked the locks and released the chains which bound him and other slaves below the deck of *Amistad* and took control of the ship, he ordered the two surviving white crew members to sail them back to Africa. But, instead, they sailed by night west toward the United States, hoping to land in some Southern port where the claim of slave owners would be respected. This trickery failed. *Amistad* missed all of the Southern ports during its 300 mile journey up the American coast and was eventually intercepted by the U.S. Coast Guard cutter *Washington* a mile off the coast of Long Island. From there the Commander of the *Washington*, Lieutenant Thomas R. Gedney took the slaves to jail in Connecticut to claim them and the cargo aboard the *Amistad* as a salvage prize.

## Zimbabwe food riot



Urban warfare breaks out in Harare, Zimbabwe as workers fight police across burning barricades.

## Amistad comes to life

As Howard Jones\*—Reach Professor of History at the University of Alabama—has pointed out, the story of the *Amistad* mutiny "might have ended quietly there in a prize court in Connecticut" if white abolitionists like Lewis Tappan, Roger Baldwin, Simeon Jocelyn, Joshua Leavitt and others had not got involved in the *Amistad* case and raised a number of doubts whether Cinque and the other Blacks were legally slaves. They were, really, people kidnapped from Africa and were being forced into slavery by Spain's trafficking in African slaves after the treaty of 1817 had ended the trade.

Without getting into the legal detail of the *Amistad* case, the Abolitionists had singled out Spain's illegal practice in the slave trade to establish a principle that all people, regardless of their race, had an inherent right to freedom. This principle in 1839 was a philosophical missile directed at slavery in the United States. In other words, a solitary revolt of Blacks against the institution of slave labor in the Caribbean had universalized itself into a principle of freedom to be used in the struggle to end slavery in the United States.

Although Spielberg did not catch the tremendous anti-slavery movement energized by this case, his film is the best movie Hollywood has ever made about the opposition to slavery.

\*Howard Jones has written a book *Mutiny on the Amistad*.

## Black World

(Continued from page 1)

action has missed the mark inasmuch as it has centered on merit and admissions policies at institutions of higher education. In fact, for the last thirty years affirmative action has been one of the more important factors effecting the historical changes in the U.S. labor market. The relation between education and the labor market arises in the context of affirmative action only in this regard, according to Gertrude Ezorsky: "The racist impact of qualification requirements in employment is the terminus of a cumulative impact that begins in school."

So structurally racist is U.S. capitalist society that so-called neutral procedures as personal networks, qualification standards and seniority status historically have had an adverse impact on the selection and promotion of Black workers. Affirmative action was a policy enacted by employers, private and public, as a strategy to stave off the financial burden of Black workers' complaints and class action law suits such as the Black steel workers law suit in the 1970s.

The role of the courts and government agencies in the '60s and '70s was crucial in setting affirmative action goals to remedy the racial inequalities of the labor market, which is why those same institutions came under attack by the Reagan administration in the '80s. Affirmative action social policy represented the legal expression of the civil rights revolution that the Reagan counter-revolution mobilized to dismantle.

Reaganism was quite simply the political expression of the capitalist restructuring that had been purging the Black industrial labor force for half a decade when Reagan came to power. The current attack on affirmative action resumes that racist campaign now at a more developed stage of high-tech capitalist production. Its virulence, which carries at times undertones of social fascism, is in response to the 30 years of occupational integration that had been achieved through affirmative action in the private and public sectors of the economy.

Naturally, this is not to say that employers voluntarily complied with affirmative action guidelines and goals. The reverse is true. After 1980 Reagan phased out all affirmative action enforcement against employers for non-compliance. Thus, the subterranean history of revolution and counter-revolution that actually lay beneath today's neoliberal debate over affirmative action, when disclosed, reveals the spectre of social rebellion that has not stopped haunting "American civilization."

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Editorial

# America's unfinished war on poverty

For those who became revolutionaries as young people in the massive freedom movements of the 1960s, it is sad to realize that 30 years after the Poor People's Campaign of 1968, racism and poverty remain unabated. The idealism of the Black struggle inspired youth, rank-and-file workers', women's and welfare rights movements; being part of those masses in motion led us to believe poverty would be eliminated. Instead, today in the U.S. ten million more people live in poverty than did in 1968.

## POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN

The Poor People's Campaign was sponsored by Martin Luther King Jr.'s organization, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, at a time when he was expanding civil rights issues to include labor and economic rights. King was assassinated just before the May-June event, when he went to Memphis to support striking sanitation workers. This was also a time of welfare mothers' activism to change benefits and conditions of welfare.

The Poor People's Campaign was geared toward whites as well as Blacks, and many local organizations joined civil rights groups in turning out people to the marches that began all over the South and around the country and ended in Washington. The depth of the movement for change and its ability to self-organize were revealed as civil rights, church, and community groups sent money, food and clothing to the various staging points for the marches.

Over 100,000 people rallied in Washington and thousands remained for two months in an encampment by the Washington Monument called Resurrection City. While mired in mud, the tent city was the base for lobbying Congress to live up to President Johnson's declaration of a "war on poverty." The movement won some more anti-poverty programs; aid to nascent Black capitalists through small business loans and such was thrown in too.

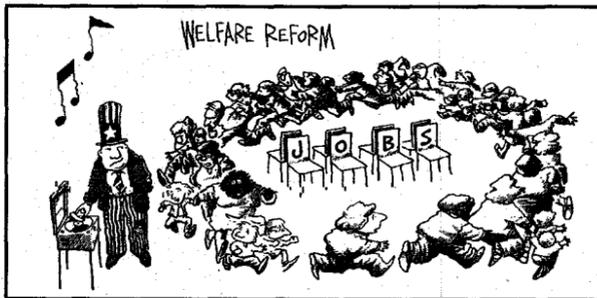
But when the mass movement died down, the government programs did too, and soon the crisis in capitalism necessitated a change in government ideology, from "buying them out" to "stomping them out." This culminated in Clinton's welfare "reform" law of 1996 which ended 60

years of federal government assistance to the poor, especially children.

These 30 years have seen an increase in the gap between rich and poor, and no reduction in the rate of poverty. In 1996 (the last year for which government statistics are available) there were 36.5 million people below the poverty line, 13.7% of the population. In 1968, the figure was 12.8%. Poverty is defined by the federal government as income under \$16,036 for a family of four—a figure which working class families understand is absurdly low.

## WELFARE MEANS 'POOR'

If statistics for 1997 were available, they would undoubtedly show an increase in the "very poor"—whose income is less than one-half of the poverty level—because



recent state and federal "reforms" have forced between one and two million people off the welfare rolls in the last year. The Center on Hunger, Poverty and Nutrition Policy reports that already, 12% of U.S. families are "food insecure" and matters are going to get worse.

Although more whites than Blacks are poor and more whites receive welfare—racist stereotypes notwithstanding—the 28.4% rate of Black poverty far exceeds the overall national rate of 13.7%. The figure for Hispanics (who can be of any race) was 29.4%.

Eighty-nine percent of people receiving federal welfare money are women with children. Raising children is hard and important work, and the addition of workfare (compulsory work at minimum wage so as to equal one's government benefits) is unconscionable. It is ironic that mid-

dle-class women are still portrayed as bad mothers if they do not stay home to care for their children, whereas welfare recipients are treated as lazy moochers if they wish to do the same.

**In the absence of a mass movement to confront the continuing plight of the poor, even individual efforts to get out of poverty through education are thwarted. The welfare rights movement advocates education and training as legitimate work, but the new federal law mandates the states to compel all welfare recipients to enter workfare instead.**

What has happened to the approximately 1.7 million people who were forced off welfare in the last year? There is little tracking to show if they found jobs or merely sunk deeper into poverty. There are guesses that about half found jobs in the recently expanded economy featuring minimum wage jobs that still leave families in poverty. More people rely on private charities; the long lines snake around food pantries and homeless shelters every day. And it is going to get much worse, since the states have not yet implemented all the requirements of the new federal law, including the mandatory time limits that disqualify whole families from further welfare for life.

## THE POOR CAN DEFEAT POVERTY

Welfare rights groups are fighting state by state to increase benefits and restore eligibility, and even held nation-wide demonstrations on Dec. 10. Some groups are attempting to unionize workfare workers and to turn workfare into real, living-wage jobs. Some groups advocate job creation, but it is absurd to think that capitalism either can or wants to employ everyone.

Moreover, even as the capitalists are enjoying an increased supply of cheap labor caused by welfare "reform," they are terrified by the prospect that "full employment" will push up wages. Although the capitalists would have us believe Marx's ideas are dead, poor people constitute the same "army of the unemployed" he described in the 19th century, the gravediggers of capitalism that will replace it with a human society that doesn't breed poverty.

# Massacre of Chiapas Indians stirs mass ferment throughout Mexico

(Continued from page 1)

"mobile" communities, having been displaced at least once before from their original homes over the past two years by the paramilitary "white guards." Acteal was one such community.

## WOMEN DEFEND THE COMMUNITY

While the EZLN has been forced to retreat further into the mountains since the massacre, women have been blocking the advance of the troops by preventing them from entering some villages. If only with six or ten, they form a line and shout at the troops to stay out and "not murder your brothers and sisters." Without their actions the military would easily succeed in displacing many more than the 5,000 that have already been dislodged from their homes.

For two days straight in the second week of January, dozens of Tzeltal women were able to keep the army from advancing on the important *ejido* (communal property) of Morelia. The army then had to set up camp five kilometers from there.

On Jan. 12, the day of international protests, 500 Tojolabal and Tzeltal Indians from a dozen independent organizations confronted the police in Ocosingo on their march. It was there that one Tzeltal woman was killed when the police fired into the crowd.

Afterwards, representatives of the organizations demanded, in addition to justice for the murder, the formation of a "Constituent Congress that would result in a new political project with viability and legitimacy among the population."

The same demand is being expressed by the organization Kinal Antzetik (Women's Land) which has been holding a fast since Jan. 8 at the cathedral in San Cristobal de las Casas. One Tzeltal man expressed his view of the recent events this way: "The women are demonstrating their valor like never before in Mexico's history. Those in Morelia are an example for other women, and for us too."

## ALL EYES ON CHIAPAS

The fact that Mexico's four-year-old civil war has reached a dangerous juncture has not been lost on the rest of Mexican society, nor on those outside the country who have solidarized with the movement throughout this time.

Over the holidays there were protests from Canada to Tokyo, and from Uruguay to the Republic of Togo. In Spain several cities held large protests in the days after the massacre.

In Buenos Aires the Mexican embassy headed by an ex-governor of Chiapas was served a letter by protesters which read in part: "You gentlemen assassins, do you know you only killed the bodies of our brothers? We will cry a long time for them, but their spirits will fill ours for the struggle. Their death has paired the pain with a newborn conviction that we need a new world."

Not surprisingly, the depth of this general outrage has not been matched by that of any state power. Nothing has come from the U.S. government other than an initial weak condemnation from the one who could do the most to force Zedillo's hand, Bill Clinton.

Within Mexico the popular response has been continuous. There have been protests in at least 20 cities, repre-

sented nearly every state, and in the capital itself some new developments have occurred.

Several participants in the march in Mexico City on the international day of protest described it as not only the biggest they have seen since 1994 but the most important in terms of how many workers came out spontaneously as the progression moved toward the Zocalo (city center). As it was put in one report that appeared in the daily *La Jornada*: "What a difference from the marches of February 1995 [when the army last tried to invade Zapatista territory]! Then it was the middle class that predominated, those who could read and had access to the communiqués of Marcos."

Another important event took place in the capital a week earlier, this one organized by FZLN youth (Zapatista Front for National Liberation, which is autonomous from the EZLN) who had recently returned from a trip to Chiapas. For three hours on the morning of Jan. 5, 32 of them occupied the offices of two radio stations with the intention of broadcasting a pre-recorded, 30-minute testimony of Tzotzil Indians of the massacre. Their aim was to "break the informational blockade of the violence in Chiapas," and they succeeded in attracting a number of local residents who were able to keep the police from throwing them out. At the same time, dozens of FZLN sympathizers also blocked the entrances to the stock exchange for two hours to publicize the plight of the "indigenas."

## MASS ASPIRATIONS EXCEED LEADERSHIP'S

Sadly, though, both of these events were condemned that very evening by the FZLN leadership, who considered the day's activities to be "a grave political error" for which they "expressed our regrets to the workers in the media, especially at the radio station." This despite the fact that the youth didn't so much as knock over a flower vase in the building.

Three days later, an influential leftist writer, Carlos Monsivais, chimed in with his denunciation of the youth. Monsivais's critiques of the government's internal crises as well as its handling of Chiapas are frequently published in *La Jornada*, as was his long correspondence with EZLN spokesman Subcomandante Marcos earlier in the war. Now, however, in response to the youth he wrote that "this type of action exhibits with pathos the desperation, the sense of being hounded, of political impotence, exactly the contrary of what one would want to promote."

**These two responses, one from the FZLN leadership and another from an independent leftist, are representative of the crisis within the Left everywhere.**

The youth certainly are "desperate," "hounded," and "politically impotent" in the ghetto of 20 million that is today's Mexico City. The great irony, however, is that they and the workers express a more concrete vision of freedom than most of the Left. With their actions they express what the "leaders" never seem able to convince themselves of in theory: that a new society is only possible through the unity of the indigenous peasant and urban workers' movements, both armed with a concept of a profound change in social relations.

In Chiapas, Bishop Samuel Ruiz Garcia has done much to support the struggle, and no doubt will continue to. To an extent, he has also captured what the workers and

youth in Mexico City are trying to express. In a recent interview, for example, he said: "We cannot ask for radical change in Chiapas without a real transformation of the system which generates these violent situations. In this sense, the question returns northward." For his insight he was nearly assassinated in November, along with another bishop, by the paramilitaries.

But it should come as no surprise to us that he too does not have confidence that the "wretched of the earth" have the ability to bring about the peace he would like to see. As he also put it, "There are certain things that we cannot expect in an ideal form, like a total transformation of this global system that might open a road to peace." We are told our only option is to "oppose the oppressive dynamics of the system," in the hope that we will be able to resurrect a more benign form of capitalism.

We have pointed out in earlier issues of *News & Letters* the powerful impact this Liberation Theology has had on the EZLN itself, especially as expressed by Subcomandante Marcos. It is understandable, though, that he too would reduce the struggle to one against "neoliberalism," and seek support from the institutions of "civil society." For when the campesino movement is isolated by a Left that is bereft of a full philosophy of freedom, there are no other options.

## WHAT KIND OF SOLIDARITY?

What can be done to change this? First, our solidarity must be expressed in a total opposition to renewed efforts of Zedillo and Clinton to exterminate the new openings brought about through the last four years of the Zapatista struggle. This includes recognition of their demands of autonomy and women's rights as expressed in the San Andres accords, signed by the government, in 1996.

These accords can only be carried out if the army leaves Chiapas and the paramilitaries are disarmed. There must be respect for the EZLN's right to be armed, and a united call for the "disappearance of powers" in the state followed by a reorganization on all levels.

But must our solidarity stop there? Every one of the above points have been reiterated daily, including by the main center-left opposition party, the PRD headed by Cuauhtemoc Cardenas, who last year won the mayorship of Mexico City thanks to greater and greater mass hatred of the ruling party, PRI. Yet the PRI government is not, at this moment, overly concerned that any political opposition exists that can stay its authoritarian hand. So what will have to happen in order to change the fantastic imbalance of forces that keeps the demands from being carried out?

The only way to answer this question today is to search for those, both within Mexico as well as in the U.S., who are hearing the clamor for a truly new society emerging from below. We can expect much of the Left to continue reducing the struggle to narrow channels. Where, though, are those who are seeing the need for an organized expression of a total opposition to the capitalist labor process and its despotic organization of every corner of society?

It is true that without such a philosophical position coming from the Left, the mass movement will continue, at least in fits and starts. That makes it all the more important not to limit our solidarity to opposing the PRI juggernaut, but to hold up our end of a cross-border philosophic dialogue.

# A discussion of the *N&L* analysis of Bosnia

## A critique...

In Stephen Steiger's critique in the November issue of the October *News & Letters* editorial "Bosnia-Herzegovina between two kinds of partition," he asserts that the editorial implies the Bosnian government should be rearmed "in order for them to start a new war," and that this call for war is "opposed to the Marxist-Humanist body of ideas." In their response to Steiger the Resident Editorial Board declares, "Far from having deviated from the Marxist-Humanist body of ideas our position on Bosnia is in continuity with Marx's position on the Civil War in the U.S." I found this unconvincing.

When Marx said, "a single Negro regiment would have a remarkable effect on Southern nerves," he was **not**, as the REB suggests, critiquing "U.S. Marxists who refused to take a position on the war" because they had an abstract concept of revolution. Marx was actually critiquing Frederick Engels, who, like Marx, critically supported the North. Engels in his letters to Marx criticized the Northern generals for not going on the offensive and concludes that if Lincoln does not institute conscription "that all is up" for the North.

Marx responds on Aug. 7, 1862: "I do not altogether share your views on the American Civil War. I do not think that all is up." He says, "A single Negro regiment would have a remarkable effect on Southern nerves." The REB presumes a continuity between Marx's call for "a single Negro regiment" and their call for a renewed offensive by the Bosnian government.

Yet **why** does Marx call for "a single Negro regiment"? It is not because he believes this regiment, in and of itself, would be more capable of inflicting a military victory than a whole army of white conscripts. Marx concedes the military advantages the South has over the North, yet he remains steadfast "that a war of this kind must be conducted on revolutionary lines, while the Yankees have so far been trying to conduct it constitutionally." By this Marx means that the North must end its alliance with "the representatives of the border slave states" which kept the war hemmed in as a bid to preserve the union and slavery.

Marx wrote that "the North itself has turned the slaves into a military force on the side of the Southerners, instead of turning it against them. The South leaves productive labor to the slaves and could therefore put its whole fighting strength in the field without disturbance." Marx was **not** advocating a militaristic solution, but was singling out a revolutionary subject internal to the South—the Black masses at the center of southern production—that could break the back of the slave system.

To follow out the REB's parallel: what revolutionary subject have they pointed to that is strategically placed at the heart of Serbian production that could cripple the Serbian Nationalists ability to carry out

their war? To look for a subject of revolution within Serbia now, they say, would be "an abstraction" because the military victory must come first. Steiger's statement that "a society can be remodeled only by a revolution from within itself, i.e., by uprooting the capitalist system with its own passions and forces," is no abstraction. In fact it is in continuity with Marx's method of grasping the dialectics of revolution that emerged in the Civil War. The response to Steiger reduces Marx's profound analysis to: **Marx took sides in a civil war, so we can too.**

The response does say that "we have to single out those forces whose very struggle is revolutionary because it issues a challenge to the stifling reality of ethnic and racial separation." Yet the only "force" the editorial and its defense single out is the Bosnian government and its army.

Before the Bosnian government signed the Dayton Accords in '95, of course Marxist-Humanists would "call for lifting the arms embargo on Bosnia to enable it to militarily defeat the Serbian campaign of ethnic cleansing." By signing those accords the Bosnian government invited the U.S. military in to enforce an ethnic partition of Bosnia. As we correctly argued in October 1995, those "who fought and died for the idea of a united Bosnia" called this "a betrayal."

Rather than confronting this contradiction, the REB uncritically eggs on that same government to reignite a bloody civil war with the faith that their military victory will teach the masses of the region a lesson. This view relies on abstractions instead of working the matter out dialectically. We should keep in mind that when Engels scoffed at the call for a "single Negro regiment," Marx replied, "It seems to me that you let yourself be swayed a little too much by the military aspect of things." —Jim Guthrie

## Our answer...

In his critique of the *News & Letters* position on Bosnia, Jim Guthrie says that our support for the Bosnian struggle amounts to, "Marx took sides in a civil war, so we can too." Nothing is further from the truth. The notion that the conflict in Bosnia is a "civil war" is a fiction fabricated by reactionary forces, which we have consistently argued against.

Far from being a "civil war" between three equally reactionary forces, the conflict was initiated by an invasion of Bosnia by the Yugoslav National Army, which took its orders from Belgrade; it was soon joined by invading forces from Croatia. Their presence provided a cover for the Serb and Croats in Bosnia who opposed the new government to launch their attacks. As a result, hundreds of thousands of Bosnians were killed and a million forced into exile.

In opposing this, we found that a new, potentially revolutionary force had arisen—the Bosnian people's

struggle for a multiethnic society. As part of this, from 1993 onward we supported extending military as well as political support to Bosnia, as in calling for a lifting of the U.S.-imposed arms embargo. We took this position because only by defending themselves from Serb attacks and liberating the parts of Bosnia occupied by Serbia could the Idea of freedom embedded in the struggle for a multiethnic society begin to be realized.

Nothing fundamental has changed since then which should dictate a change in our position. War criminals have not been arrested; refugees have not been allowed to return home; and the new-fascist Serb-controlled entity in Bosnia has gained international legitimacy. In light of this, the position we have projected is: 1) U.S. troops must withdraw from Bosnia NOW, and 2) the determination of Bosnia's populace to recapture the Serb-occupied parts of its country must be actively supported. That was recently voiced by one Bosnian, Muhammad Terzic, who said, "If the international community refuses to unite Bosnia we will do it ourselves" (*The New York Times*, Dec. 19).

In all of our analyses we have made it clear who is the revolutionary subject. It is not the Bosnian government; it is the Bosnian masses—those expelled from the Serb and Croat-controlled areas of Bosnia and throughout Bosnia who desire a multiethnic society, be they Muslims, Serbs, or Croats. But it is absurd to deny the Bosnian masses the right to conduct their fight alongside the Bosnian government, for that would deny them the material means by which to combat the forces opposing them.

This is no more a call for an "outside force" to liberate Bosnia or a capitulation to a bourgeois government than Marx's insistence during the U.S. Civil War that a single Negro regiment would have "a remarkable effect on southern nerves." The first Negro regiment was formed in Massachusetts, by Black slaves and freemen from both the North and South. It was led by an officer who took orders from a bourgeois government, headed by Lincoln. Support for their cause in no way projected an "outside force" to liberate the South or a capitulation to the policies of a bourgeois government. The same is true of our position on Bosnia today.

We are fully aware that Marx's comment on Negro regiments was stated in a letter to Engels. But Guthrie misses the whole point of our discussion of it. We cited it to say, just as Marx saw that a single Negro regiment would have a big effect on the South, so the defeat of the "Republika Sprska" would be a major blow to the nationalist hysteria which has swept Serbia. Guthrie's view that this involves calling for an "outside force" to liberate Bosnia shows that he considers the hundreds of thousands evicted from the Serb-controlled areas of Bosnia to be "outsiders" to their own country—a strange view, considering that they were forced out of areas like Srebrenica through brutal massacres. In denying these refugees the right to join with the Bosnian government to liberate their homeland, Guthrie is expressing the same kind of abstract revolutionism which Marx castigated among American Marxists in his day.

Guthrie moreover asserts, in regard to Serbia itself, that "to look for a subject of revolution within Serbia now, they say, would be 'an abstraction' because the military victory must come first." At no point have we said or implied anything remotely similar. On the contrary, we have consistently pointed to the forces of revolt within Serbia, such as the workers, women and youth who came into the streets against Milosevic last year. At the same time, we criticized that movement for not having broken with narrow nationalism and not having gained the support of much of the Serbian proletariat—something Guthrie completely ignores (See "Will Serbia protests confront legacy of ethnic cleansing?" *News & Letters*, January-February 1997).

As for the Bosnia government, it is bourgeois and we have not spared it from criticism. But it was also bourgeois in 1993, when we supported lifting the arms embargo against it. If it is wrong in "principle" to critically support a "bourgeois" government today, then it was surely wrong to do so in 1993. On the other hand, if our position in support of Bosnia was correct then but isn't now, one would need to demonstrate that so fundamental a transformation into opposite has occurred in Bosnia as to warrant a change in our position.

Both the facts on the ground and the history of Marxist-Humanism tell us not to be so quick to give up on the Bosnian struggle, including the ability of the Bosnian government, if given enough whips and kicks from below, to break from the Dayton accords and resume the struggle against the "Republika Sprska." Marxist-Humanists never give up on revolutionary forces, even when their political expressions become mired in a nest of contradictions.

We are not "uncritically egging on" the Bosnian government to "reignite a bloody civil war," but rather solidarizing with those who know that the defeat of the "Republika Sprska" is necessary to create a multiethnic Bosnia. The question is: **Do you or do you not stand with the Bosnian masses and say they have the right to use any means, including military ones, to destroy the fascist Serb entity which occupies a third of its territory?** Our position, at least, has been clear and consistent. —The Resident Editorial Board

## Struggle against criminal 'injustice' system

Chicago—The expansion of the "criminal justice system" has meant a relentless assault upon the poor and non-white people of this country. The struggle against this, much of which has developed out of the Los Angeles Rebellion of 1992, can be seen in a number of places.

On Dec. 6, the International Tribunal for Justice for Mumia Abu-Jamal took place in Philadelphia. The campaign to free Mumia, on Pennsylvania's death row, has been worldwide and deep. The tribunal showed this in microcosm by involving everyday people from Philadelphia's Black community, to radical youth of all kinds; and as a jury of Mumia's peers, prominent people from Julia Wright, to South African poet Dennis Brutus, to French filmmaker Claude Lanzmann who directed the Holocaust film, Shoah.

This time, though, it was not Mumia on trial but the U.S. government which threatens him. As the testimony from expert witnesses, including former victims of COINTELPRO attacks proceeded, it became clear that it was really American civilization itself that was on trial. The role of Philadelphia police in repressing Black struggle was traced from the 1800s through the 1960s, at which point a militant new youth movement arose.

A new generation learned of the mass march at the Board of Education in 1967 by Black youth which was met with extreme brutality by police led by Frank Rizzo, who thus became the spokesman for "white backlash." The march included young Wesley Cook (Mumia) a year before he attained prominence by opposing racist George Wallace and helping found the local Black Panther Party. A powerful connection was drawn between the generations to match the diversity of people present in the hall, as well as at the same day's massive march in San Francisco.



While awaiting the 'Guilty!' verdict against the U.S. 'justice' system, Black activist Safiya Bukhari spoke to the audience about the Jericho '98 project to free other of America's political prisoners, including Leonard Peltier of AIM, the MOVE Nine, and others less well known. There is a planned March on Washington, March 27. This kind of activity has received a great boost from the victory of Geronimo ji Jaga

Pratt's freedom campaign. (Geronimo himself got a tremendous standing ovation at the tribunal.)

Another kind of struggle could be seen in New York on Dec. 12-13 at the national meeting of the Oct. 22 Coalition which had sponsored a day of protest against police abuse. There it was agreed to continue activity year 'round, with a focus on the Stolen Lives Project, an effort to document and publish in a book the stories of those killed by police all over the country.

As one observer said, "It seems to me the most remarkable things about this movement are the transformation of apolitical friends and relatives into dedicated fighters for justice and questioners of their old assumptions about how this society operates; and the expansion of issues, from punishing 'a few bad apples,' the cops who kill people, to indicting the whole system: racism and anti-youth bias not only regarding whom the cops brutalize, but also in their refusal to investigate crimes against certain people; and the issue of private companies also brutalizing Black youth because the whole culture says this is OK, and profits are more important than people."

Wherever you find a case of police brutality today there is likely to be organizing going on around it, as organizations like L.A.'s Mothers Reclaiming Our Children are appearing nationwide. In Chicago we see Mothers Against Injustices taking on the cases of Black and Latino youth. —Gerard Emmett

# Youth German students demand access to higher education

by Kevin Michaels

Mass access to publicly funded higher education has been one of the features of the Western countries since World War II. The availability of a free or low-cost university education has been a means of offering the promise of social advancement to middle and working-class students, while at the same time ensuring that capitalism will have the skilled work force for the administration and research necessary in an increasingly complex world of production and exchange. Both European and North American universities offered large campuses, well-paid, tenured faculties and the latest in available technology in the classroom.

But the ongoing economic restructuring of the past decades has had a huge impact on the world of higher education. Concurrent with the attacks on state-funded social welfare has been a fundamental change in higher education policy. In the United States this took the form of substantial changes in financial aid offered by the federal government. In Europe it has meant the introduction of tuition fees into a system of heretofore free education.

Students in the U.S. opposed financial aid cuts over the 1994-1995 school year with a campaign of demonstrations and internet networking, but that effort pales in comparison to the recent massive mobilization of German students against the possibility of the introduction of tuition fees into their drastically overcrowded university system. In late October, students at Liebig University in Giessen, a town in southwestern Germany, launched a protest against the crowded classrooms and inadequate libraries they are forced to deal with. Several buildings were occupied.

Students at other universities did not wait long to express their shared discontent. The lower house of parliament's passing of a law which may lead to tuition charges as early as April gave focus to the 1.9 million students currently enrolled in a system which can only accommodate half that number. Tens of thousands of stu-

dents marched throughout November and December across the country to protest the difficulty they have in gaining access to overworked professors, the overcrowding of classrooms and the increasing privatization of research funding—4.5 billion marks were provided by corporate-sponsored private foundations in 1995, money which was earmarked for specific projects and could not simply be distributed to needy departments. Student banners carried messages such as "700:1", the national ratio of students to faculty members, and the more blunt "Let me study."

Implicit in the students' demands is the realization of the impact the introduction of tuition will have on working-class students. Seventeen percent of students from western Germany come from working-class families, as do



Students in Giessen, Germany protest spending on the Eurofighter at the expense of education.

less than six percent of eastern German students. The accessibility of higher education to these young people is directly at stake.

Arguments employed by the proponents of these structural changes in education echo those used in the efforts to attack social welfare benefits offered by European countries such as unemployment insurance and generous vacation guarantees—blame the victim. Students are being accused of being lazy, of taking an excessively long amount of time to finish their degrees and

in general, of being unprepared for the economic discipline that entry into the European Union will demand. But perhaps those critics are unmindful of the barrier to a timely completion of a degree represented by the inability to enroll in a filled course section or the competition for access to an expensive textbook placed on reserve in a busy library.

The German student protest does not, of course, represent a direct challenge to the order of things in the still newly-unified country. But it does pose a number of sober questions about the role of such an important institution as higher education in an advanced and wealthy country. The students are asking, "is higher education to be completely subordinated to the dictates of the economy? Does it represent at least the hope of advancement into a satisfying job which provides some fiscal security or does it solidify the gulf between the professional middle class and the people below it?" These are the questions that the mid-January students' congress to take place in Berlin will be forced to confront. The answers the participants come up with will be of great importance if the student movement is to reach out beyond the confines of the campus.

Stephen Steiger contributed details for this column.

## Another victim of cop violence

**Detroit**—Lamar Grable was senselessly and brutally murdered on September 21, 1996 by Eugene Brown, a Black police officer, and Vicki Yost, a white officer. He was shot eight to eleven times. The autopsy revealed that he was shot twice in the back and also showed one shot in the shoulder and three in the chest area at such close range that powder burns were left on his skin. The police department attempted to conceal the identities of the officers.

Lamar was twenty years old. He didn't have a criminal record, nor was he ever wanted by the police. Lamar was nothing like the crazed maniac the police department portrayed him to be. Lamar was a loving father, son, grandson and brother. He was a hard worker and very involved in community affairs. Lamar was killed simply because he was a young black male walking the streets of his own neighborhood.

Lamar was not known for carrying weapons. None of the neighbors at the scene saw the gun the police claimed they removed from his hand. Although it was obvious that he was no longer alive, his body was removed from the crime scene and taken to the hospital before the investigators arrived at the scene. The crime scene was never secured. The toxicology report showed there weren't any drugs found in Lamar's system.

The police department ruled the shooting of our son by Eugene Brown was a justifiable homicide because they alleged our son shot at him. Brown was given a medal by the police department because while pursuing Lamar on foot, he was wearing a safety vest. The mayor appeared on TV and portrayed Lamar as the perpetrator.

The police department has been very uncooperative in our investigation. Our attorney has made repeated requests for an independent medical examiner, for copies of the police reports and copies of the personnel files of the officers involved. It has taken us a year just to get the police reports. The other requests we are still waiting for.

—Lamar's parents

## Kids put heat on Nike

**New York**—The Settlement House Youth Nike Give Back Campaign came to Nike Town with one hundred, spirited, chanting, protesting youth on Martin Luther King Day in midtown Manhattan. They told N&L:

"We're here to say, don't do it, Nike! We're from Edenwald Gun Hill, over there in the projects, up in the Bronx. We came to protest Nike and what they're doing to us. Why do we have to pay \$160 for six dollar sneakers? That's just not right. It's really wrong because they are charging people a lot of money for sneakers that people are making elsewhere for cheap. We're paying \$180 and they are only getting paid like ten cents or 25 cents an hour. If they're going to make us pay so much, they should pay the people down there a nice amount of money so they can live.

"Is Nike going to provide these young kids coming up with good jobs so they can buy those Nikes?"

For information or to join the campaign, contact: Edenwald Gun Hill Neighborhood Center, 1150 East 229th St., Bronx, New York 10466. Or call (718) 652-2232.

—John Marcotte



## Defend Chris Plummer!

Chris Plummer is an anti-racist anarchist activist imprisoned in Texas. After being involved with the squatters' movement in New York's Lower East Side in the late 1980s and early 1990s, he was convicted in 1993 for his part in an action carried out against a Nazi skin-head house in Houston, Texas.

The action, in which Nazi hate literature was destroyed, was intended to halt the American Front, an openly fascist group proud of its record of extreme violence, from spreading propaganda in schools and local neighborhoods. He was convicted for breaking and entering with intent to burglarize.

Chris did not stop his organizing efforts after being imprisoned. One of the ways that control is maintained by the prison administration is by encouraging conflict between the different races of prisoners. In spite of this environment, Chris was able to set up a prisoner organization called Cell-One at Huntsville, also home of Texas' notorious Death Row. One of Cell-One's main projects was the Texas Prisoner's Anarchist Lending Library.

Prison authorities and white supremacist prison gangs alike were threatened by a library providing radical and progressive literature by and about African Americans, Chicanos, Native Americans and poor working-class whites. Around this time, an attack from a Nazi prisoner gang escalated in a murderous assault where Chris had his jaw and cheekbone broken and barely escaped death.

In May 1997 Chris was transferred to the Hughes unit in Gatesville Texas. Shortly after he was put in lockdown for arbitrary and unclear reasons. After Chris contacted outside groups and threatened legal action to expose this, guards seized and destroyed all of his property, including valuable legal material. Along with various threats to his well-being, he was told he was being charged with conspiracy to smuggle guns into the prison—a blatant lie and frame-up.

A conviction on these charges could result in 30 to 40 more years of prison.

How long can anyone endure these conditions? Chris has declared that he "will not do a day of the new conviction, if I'm convicted I will hunger strike to the end—that's that." We must defend Chris and halt this drawn-out, tortuous injustice—not just because Chris' life is on the line, but because he is one of those who has struggled against injustice to others.

Contact the **Chris Plummer Support Group**, P.O. Box 416591, Key West, FL, 33041 (305) 293-1186.

—Prisoner, Texas

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**Raya Dunayevskaya**  
*Chairwoman, National Editorial Board (1955-1987)*

**Charles Denby**  
*Editor (1955-1983)*

**Olga Domanski, Peter Wermuth, Co-National Organizers, News and Letters Committees. Lou Turner, Managing Editor. Felix Martin, Labor Editor.**

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## 'One World, Ready or Not'

(Continued from page 4)

workers took over production and determined what to do with it. By 1989, when Solidarity leaders latched onto "shock therapy" from the "Chicago boys," a form of capital ownership, "privatization," was the only option presented for the future.

Capitalism has often been willing to sell off obsolete technology to workers who then have to discipline themselves according to the new social conditions of production. If they can't match the prevailing technological stage of socially necessary labor time, they have to give themselves that much less in wages and/or raise more capital for technological innovation resulting in more layoffs.

**Greider bypasses the high point when the Polish workers' mass activity put their aspirations directly on the historic stage, for the same reason that he avoids Marx centering contradiction within the laborer. Marx's concept was that the very idea of capitalist political economy, the categories through which its facts emerge, could be transcended through workers' self-activity in a social revolution. Greider fears revolution, or at least the day when others explode into violent rebellion," (p. 53) because of a desire to save capitalism with its "great virtue...its efficient organization of production." (p. 45)**

In contrast to this, Marx never lets you forget the fetishism that is the basis of the emergence of all these economic facts: that political economy makes purely social properties like value into a material component of things, i.e., machines. Thus, for Marx the "internal contradiction," the barrier to capitalist expansion, and the decline in the rate of profit are rooted in "an alienated social power which has gained an autonomous position and confronts society as a thing, and as the power that the capitalist has through this thing." (Marx, Vol. III, p. 373)

In other words, empty-headed empiricism will never be able to challenge the religious fantasy at the core of capitalist thought—that it is capital, whether as finance capital or material machines, that employs human beings and not human beings who are the starting point and source for employing the material world and creating everything. It is only new, free social relations between workers that can strip away this "religion of everyday life."

It is good that new books like Greider's are appearing that rediscover Marx's relevance to today's economic reality. Hopefully, it represents an opening to Marx's philosophy of revolution and the rediscovery of new possibilities for the future before competitive struggle degrades even more into fascist ideology, war, and mass destruction on a new scale.

—Ron Brokmeyer

## Our Life and Times

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

Despite the promised injection of International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank billions of dollars to bail out capitalism in East Asia, the crises there continue to worsen.

**In Indonesia, the currency began a new spiral of decline in January and is now worth less than 25% of its value last July. With no end in sight, and their wages increasingly worthless, Indonesians stripped stores of food, fuel and other basic consumer goods.**

While the IMF was putting together terms for a \$40 billion emergency loan, the deal turned shaky when the Suharto military dictatorship appeared to waver on "austerity" measures which would cut directly into government-controlled enterprises. The Suharto family has gorged directly on these businesses over the last three decades.

The shrinking currency in Indonesia has intensified the unrest already experienced there, including strikes and other labor actions, and ethnic clashes particularly directed at the Chinese minority which controls most of the finance and commerce structures. Unemployment stands at 4.5 million and is expected to grow by another 2 million in 1998.

Expanding its concerns from "economic" to "social" and "political" regional stability, the U.S. leaned heavily on Suharto to meet the IMF's terms—break-up of government-controlled monopolies, drastic cuts in govern-

## Change in Central Africa

As all the old forces—from the genocidal Rwandan Hutu militias to French imperialism—try to strangle them at birth, new political movements unleashed since 1994 continue to remold Central Africa.

In Rwanda, well-armed remnants of the Hutu **genocidaires** continue to wreak havoc, most recently on Dec. 10, when they massacred 231 Tutsi civilians. Calling their victims "cockroaches," the killers left behind fliers making clear their aim of finishing what they began in 1994, when they murdered 800,000 Tutsi and non-racist Hutu. In a typical Western response to the December massacre, Mary Robinson, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, condemned killings on "both sides" and called for "reconciliation" between the multiethnic government and the **genocidaires**.

In Congo, the new government of Laurent Kabila, in power less than a year after having overthrown the tyrannical and corrupt Mobutu regime, is also facing stubborn hostility from the Western powers. Great emphasis has been given to charges that Kabila's forces killed Rwandan Hutu civilians during the liberation war. This ignores the fact that these same civilians, who had had several chances to surrender, were fleeing under the command of **genocidaires** who had participated in the 1994 genocide, and who were also mounting a last-ditch armed defense of the Mobutu regime. If true, these killings of civilians should be criticized, but they are dwarfed by the crimes of Mobutu and the **genocidaires**.

The new Kabila government's efforts to reconstruct the country and to create a genuinely multiethnic society, have also met with hostility, especially from France, which continues to aid both Mobutuists and the Hutu **genocidaires**. The U.S., eager to cash in on Congo's vast mineral wealth, has showed a more even-handed attitude, sending Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on a courtesy call to the region in December. But the U.S., which lavished billions on Mobutu and other African dictators, has so far offered, but not even sent, a paltry \$30 million in reconstruction aid for the entire region, including both Rwanda and Congo.

## Indonesia and South Korea on the brink

ment spending, ending subsidies for food and other basic commodities. After phone calls from the rulers of the U.S., Germany and Japan, and visits from Clinton cabinet members and the head of the IMF, Suharto agreed. The military has vowed to crush any opposition.

**In South Korea, the long-time government opponent and political "outsider" Kim Dae Jung was barely elected president on Dec. 18, with 40% of the vote. His win was due in large part to the anger of Koreans over the disintegration of the economy. Negotiations with the IMF for a \$57 billion loan were underway during the election campaign, and Kim Dae Jung dropped his initial resistance to austerity terms and supported the package.**

## French unemployed protest Socialist budget cuts

Beginning in late December, unemployed workers occupied dozens of government unemployment offices across France demanding a \$500 Christmas bonus. (In much of Western Europe, employed workers routinely receive a month's pay as a Christmas bonus.) Demonstrators also protested against the government's failure to rescind deep



**Demonstrators interrupted stock trading at the Paris Bourse, Jan. 13, scrawling "Give us some money to live" on the walls.**

budget cuts for job training enacted by the previous right-wing government. They also called for a \$250/month hike in unemployment and welfare benefits, "immediately, and for everyone."

This first serious challenge from below to Lionel Jospin's recently elected Socialist-led government has struck a deep chord among the working people as a whole. Since the election last June, France's 12.5% unemployment rate has not changed. The government promises to institute a 35-hour week to create more jobs, but not until the year 2002!

In Marseilles, 200 unemployed activists also blocked trains at the city's main railroad station. As an example of the kind of solidarity that has emerged, railroad workers announced that if police intervened, they would shut down all rail service in the area. Even the Louvre Museum experienced a brief occupation of its courtyard by the unemployed.

Groups such as Action Together Against Unemployment (AC!), which includes many far-left activists, from Trotskyists to anarchists, and the CGT have organized most of the demonstrations. As one AC! activist put it: "What is important in a movement like ours is that we are raising our heads and that we are proving to others that it is possible to fight back." Another added: "Acts of solidarity and expressions of sympathy are growing. People are saying to us: 'We understand, we are also unemployed. We are with you'" (*Le Monde* Dec. 31, 1997).

Counter to his four decades long history of opposition to South Korea's military dictatorships, Kim backed measures in the name of "national unity" undertaken by the outgoing president, Kim Young Sam, which belie his past associations with workers, students and other oppositionists. Most bizarre was his support of the pardon and release by Kim Young Sam of former dictators Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae Woo.

Besides being the butcher of the Kwangju uprising in 1980, during which the military killed over 200 people, Chun was responsible for the police and intelligence agencies which hounded, jailed and attempted on several occasions to assassinate Kim Dae Jung. Human rights organizations expressed outrage that these two criminals were released, while many political prisoners remain in jail.

More significant for what it may presage is the deal struck in January with South Korea's major trade union confederations. They agreed to cancel nationwide strikes which had been scheduled for the middle of the month, and to begin negotiations for implementing wide-spread layoffs of workers in the industries they represent.

Kim Dae Jung does not take office until Feb. 25, but he has already taken his oar in the boat of "national unity." It is doubtful how long the government's "patriotic" campaign, asking South Koreans to knuckle down and accept austerity, will keep the lid on. Despite the recent three-way agreement between the government, capitalists and trade union chiefs, there have been sporadic demonstrations by workers and student supporters rejecting the IMF bailout which rescues capitalism while they are to drown.

## Oppression in Kosova

The Balkans seem to keep their history as a European powder keg. A guerrilla warfare is already on its way in the Serbian province of Kosova where 90% of the two million population are Albanians. They are being oppressed more and more severely ever since Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic stripped Kosova of its provincial autonomy in 1989.

A demonstration of 2,000 students at the end of December in Kosova's capital Pristina demanding the right of university education in Albanian was suppressed by Serbian police. (The Kosova Albanians refuse to accept Serbian-language schools only and founded their own which take place in private apartments, camps and even bars. This parallel school system is financed by a so-called education tax which every employed Albanian is expected to pay—at a rate of 3-5% of their wage—to the internationally not recognized, self-appointed government of the Republic of Kosova.)

However, it was on Nov. 28 when armed men, claiming their membership in an organization the Serbian authorities call terrorist, made their first public appearance at the funeral of an Albanian killed in an armed clash with the Serbian police a few days before. The three men, one of them masked, said they belonged to a group called the Liberation Army of Kosova (UCK).

They declared in front of about 20,000 people the need to pursue the fight for the liberation of Kosova. To much applause, they accused the Serbian regime of reigning with terror and claimed that UCK is the only one to help unite the people of Kosova with the Albanians in neighboring Albania. On Dec. 16, 15 people were given jail terms of from 4 to 20 years for "terrorism" and membership in UCK. Defense lawyers and foreign diplomats denounced the trial as a farce with evidence based almost entirely on confessions the accused said were extracted through torture.

—Stephen Steiger

## NEWS AND LETTERS COMMITTEES

### Who We Are And What We Stand For

News and Letters Committees is an organization of Marxist-Humanists that since its birth has stood for the abolition of capitalism, both in its private property form as in the U.S., and its state property form, as it has historically appeared in state-capitalist regimes calling themselves Communist as in Russia and China. We stand for the development of new human relations, what Marx first called a new Humanism.

*News & Letters* was founded in 1955, the year of the Detroit wildcat strikes against Automation and the Montgomery Bus Boycott against segregation—activities which signaled a new movement from practice that was itself a form of theory. *News & Letters* was created so that the voices of revolt from below could be heard unseparated from the articulation of a philosophy of liberation.

Raya Dunayevskaya (1910-1987), founder of the body of ideas of Marxist-Humanism, became Chairwoman of the

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

This body of ideas challenges all those desiring freedom to transcend the limitations of post-Marx Marxism, beginning with Engels. In light of the crises of our nuclearly armed world, it becomes imperative not only to reject

what is, but to reveal and further develop the revolutionary Humanist future inherent in the present. The new visions of the future which Dunayevskaya left us in her work from the 1940s to the 1980s are rooted in her discovery of Marx's Marxism in its original form as a new Humanism and in her re-creation of that philosophy for our age as Marxist-Humanism. This is recorded in the documents on microfilm and open to all under the title *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection—Marxist-Humanism: A Half-Century of Its World Development*.

Dunayevskaya's philosophic comprehension of her creation and development of Marxist-Humanism, especially as expressed in her 1980s writings, presents the vantage point for re-creating her ideas anew. Seeking to grasp that vantage point for ourselves and make it available to all who struggle for freedom, we have published Dunayevskaya's original 1953 philosophic breakthrough and her final 1987

Presentation on the Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy in *The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism* (1989), and donated new supplementary volumes to the *Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*. News and Letters Committees aims at developing and concretizing this body of ideas for our time.

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