

# NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

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## Unhealthy to rely on GM promises



by Felix Martin, Labor Editor

My General Motors assembly plant closed in South Gate, Cal. in 1982. Some of the blue-collar workers retired while others transferred to plants all over the country. GM had to hire them instead of hiring off the street because pension and benefits for blue-collar workers were covered in our union contract. But management and white-collar workers were not covered because they belonged to the corporation heart and soul. They had only a promise of benefits, good old Generous Motors gave them a promise and they took it hook, line, and sinker.

GM had brainwashed them into believing they were part of the family. So GM was able to shaft them deeper by taking away their benefits, and the non-union retirees had to sue to try to get health care benefits back. Last month the Federal Appeals Court upheld the company's right to cut benefits. Legal experts say if the ruling stands, it will open the floodgates to broad-scale corporate cutbacks in retiree health benefits.

What is the reason GM is going back on its word to the white-collar workers? The reason is ever-expanding capital, dead labor over living labor, which has intensified ever since automation was introduced. It began in the mines right after World War II. In 1949-50 the coal miners went out on strike against automation. Later the miners broke with John L. Lewis, the president of the United Mine Workers of America, when he told the miners to go back to work because "you can not strike against progress." The workers asked "what kind of labor must workers do?" What kind of progress is it when automation puts the machines in the hands of the

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## Black World

### David Walker's radical awakening



Editor's note: This month I am turning "Black World" over to the following review by Jennifer Pen.—Lou Turner

Peter Hinks, *To Awaken My Afflicted Brethren: David Walker and the Problem of Antebellum Slave Resistance*. Pennsylvania State Press, 1997.

When it was published in 1829, David Walker's *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World, but in particular, and very expressly to those of the United States of America*, sent revolutionary waves crashing into the edifice of slavery. The *Appeal* called on Blacks to destroy the ideologies of slavery and white supremacy. Walker — an obscure free Black — challenged everything from slavocracy to the pseudo-scientific racism of Thomas Jefferson, who had impugned the full humanity of Blacks, comparing them to animals.

#### RADICAL THOUGHT AND ORGANIZATION

In this new book, Peter Hinks traces the material, political, and philosophic underpinnings of the worlds in which Walker moved. He demonstrates that Walker's *Appeal* was both a highly original work, and the direct result of radical thought and activity among southern Blacks.

Walker's life probably started in the Wilmington, N.C. area in 1796-97. Though he was born free, he lived amidst a slave culture in which he regularly witnessed Black slave laborers who were more competent and skilled than their so-called "masters." As a young man, Walker moved to Charleston, S.C. where, Hinks speculates, he was probably sympathetically involved with Denmark Vesey's failed anti-slavery revolt in 1822.

By 1824, after some travel around the South, Walker was living in Boston, where he became a used-clothing merchant. His activities there focused on efforts to form networks and organizations among Blacks. Primary among these were the Massachusetts General Colored Association, and the first national Black newspaper, *Freedom's Journal*, for which Walker acted as the Boston agent.

The creation of new organizations was "a reflection of the degree to which southern African-American culture

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## LEAD EDITORIAL

# Stop ongoing U.S. war on the Iraqi people

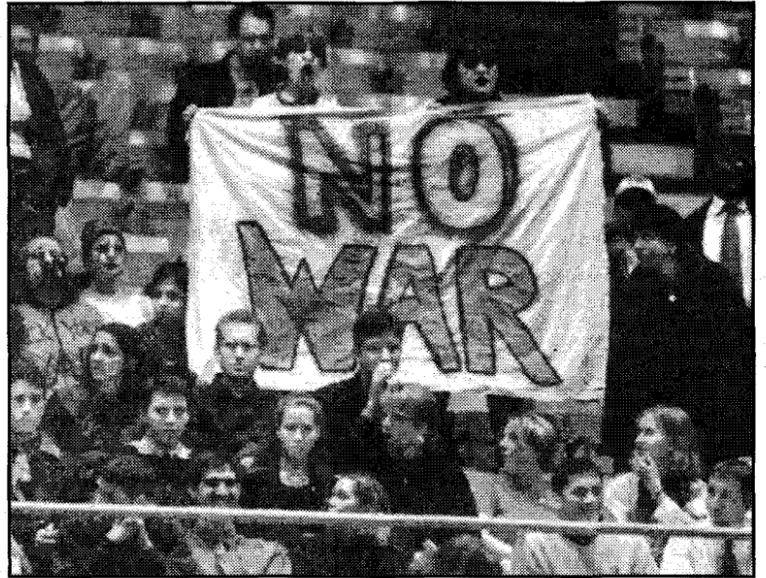
by Gerard Emmett and Peter Wermuth

The decision of the Clinton administration to hold off its planned military attack on Iraq, following a last minute agreement between Iraq and UN Secretary General Kofi Annan on Feb. 23, is no reason to relax our vigilance in opposing the irrational and deadly U.S.-led sanctions against the Iraqi people. Though Annan's diplomatic coup has, for now, created a hiatus in the outbreak of military hostilities, the key is to use this hiatus to generate renewed opposition to the entirety of U.S. policy in the Persian Gulf.

The latest threat of military action was at least temporarily forestalled when Annan obtained a promise from Saddam Hussein to provide UN agencies with "unconditional and unrestricted access" to inspect all sites suspected of making weapons of mass destruction. The agreement applies to the eight presidential palaces to which Hussein had earlier refused to allow UN inspectors access.

But this does not mean the crisis is resolved. First, the build-up of U.S. forces in the region continues, with over 20 warships, two aircraft carriers, 400 warplanes and 35,000 troops now stationed there for the foreseeable future. Second, Clinton has made it clear that he will make "rapid and full use" of these forces if he claims any aspect of the agreement is violated. And third, since the agreement allows Clinton to pretend that he went the "extra mile" in agreeing to a negotiated settlement, it may make it easier for him to get away with launching a massive strike against Iraq in the not-so-distant future.

The biggest reason Annan's diplomacy does nothing to fundamentally change the situation, however, is that



Protesters at Ohio State University's "town hall meeting" greet Clinton administration officials who had come to the media event to sell Clinton's war against the Iraqi people.

it fails to lift the sanctions which the U.S. has imposed upon the Iraqi people. Though the agreement states that "the lifting of sanctions is obviously of paramount importance to the people of Iraq," it makes no mention of any timetable or mechanism for doing so.

#### GENOCIDE BY SANCTION

The sanctions are the critical issue, for they mean that the Gulf War of 1991 never really ended—at least insofar as the Iraqi people are concerned. The eight years of sanctions have reduced a nation which was one of the most technologically developed in the Middle

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## After bombing, Jackson Advocate 'still here'

by Michael Flug

Jackson, Miss. — The *Jackson Advocate* newspaper, the largest and oldest Black-owned weekly in Mississippi—and the state's only pro-labor newspaper, Black or white—was firebombed by arsonists in the early morning hours of Jan. 26. The attackers broke open the front door of the *Advocate* offices, poured gasoline on furniture and papers, and then threw in two fire-bombs. The fire swept the first floor newsroom, destroying investigative files, computer equipment, furniture, and a collection of rare Black history books and documents gathered by *Advocate* publisher Charles Tisdale. The fire did more than \$100,000 in damage to the offices, located in the landmark Hill-Holly building on Parish street in the heart of historic Black Jackson.

In the weeks since the fire, it has become clear that something else was also ignited. A broad-based movement of civil rights and union activists, church leaders and neighborhood residents has burst into action, raising funds to keep the newspaper going, and holding rallies to demand that the authorities arrest the arsonists and uncover those who hired them.

There may be a long wait for arrests. Doris Saunders, retired professor of Mass Communications at Jackson State University, believes that "it probably won't be solved. That's traditional in Jackson. The only difference between this and past years is that there is a new Black mayor, Harvey Johnson, and a new Black police chief. But I don't expect them to find the perpetrators." Mississippi's lone Black Congressman, Bennie Thompson, succeeded in getting the FBI and the ATF to agree to investigate. But three weeks later, neither agency had even interviewed Charles Tisdale.

The *Jackson Advocate* has been vandalized or bombed more than 20 times since Mr. Tisdale bought the paper in 1978. In 1981 and 1982 Ku Klux Klan members shot up the office with automatic weapons and tried to burn it down. Then, as now, the attackers failed to halt the publication of a single issue. "We have reopened in temporary offices across the street, and we came out only 11 hours later than usual," said associate publisher Alice Tisdale. "We know how to keep going. But we can't pin-

point who is responsible for the attacks. Every week there is something in the paper that will make people angry. We see ourselves as agitators, trying to get the dirt out."

Such a mission surely creates powerful enemies. The "dirt" being dug up is not only about the openly Jim Crow Mississippi of the 1960s and earlier; it is dirt unearthed about what is happening in Mississippi today. In a state which reminds travelers entering on its interstate highways that "only positive Mississippian [is] spoken here," the *Jackson Advocate* single-handedly investigated and publicized 46 Mississippi jail house hangings in the early 1990s. Nearly every issue of the paper includes an expose of Mississippi's still-pervasive racism and official corruption.

Many of these battles have centered on struggles of Black workers. The *Advocate* took on both Warren Hood, one of Jackson's leading power brokers, and former IUE International President William Bywater, in an eight-year campaign supporting Hood Furniture workers, right to a union of their own choice. And the paper has consistently backed Jackson's municipal workers' unions in their still-ongoing struggle for recognition.

For the past several years, first during the administration of Jackson Mayor Kane Ditto, and continuing since the 1997 election of Jackson's first Black mayor, Harvey Johnson, the *Advocate* has fought relentlessly against Capital Center Inc. (CCI). CCI, which Mr. Tisdale calls "a group of wealthy, powerful, and essentially white business owners supported by government officials" is seeking to privatize certain governmental services, and to impose their lucrative scheme for urban renewal on the historic

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# Dunayevskaya, Kristeva and philosophy

by Maya Jhansi

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the publication of Raya Dunayevskaya's second major work, **Philosophy and Revolution: From Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao**. Today, the virulent attacks that women face and resist, and the corresponding disarray in feminist thought makes a re-examination of this work imperative for those of us seeking to revive the revolutionary momentum of women's liberation as an idea and a movement.

Because the Women's Liberation Movement of the 1960s and '70s refused to wait until the day after the revolution for liberation, to Dunayevskaya it raised the philosophic question of "what happens after the revolution?" This implicit reaching for philosophy by the movement, however, had to be met by a movement from philosophy itself to reconstitute the very Idea of socialism by grappling with the Hegelian dialectic, both as it was appropriated by Marx and "in and for itself."

To me the fact that women's struggles for new human relations reach for philosophy brings the central category of **Philosophy and Revolution (P&R)**, "Absolute Negativity as New Beginning," alive. As she put it: "Because the transformation of reality is central to the Hegelian dialectic, Hegel's philosophy comes to life, over and over again, in all periods of crisis and transition..." (p. xxiii).

A thorough exploration of "Absolute Negativity," or what Hegel calls the negation of the negation, is impossible here. Briefly, however, to Hegel negativity is not only the negation of external obstacles. Rather, one's own act of negation must itself undergo negation. Self-relation, self-reflection, self-movement are integral to the negation of the negation. Marxist-Humanists hold second negation to be not only the destruction of the old, but the creation of a truly new society.

To dig out the uniqueness of Dunayevskaya's reading of the dialectics of negativity in Hegel, a contrast with feminist philosopher, Julia Kristeva's understanding of the same in her **Revolution in Poetic Language** is helpful. (It was published in 1973, the same year as **P&R**.)

**KRISTEVA UNDERSCORES** the materialist underpinnings of Hegel's dialectic of negativity. Quoting Lenin's 1914 study of Hegel's **Science of Logic**, she emphasizes Lenin's notion of "inherent negativity" as an objective principle of life, rather than as

## Salvation Army 'recovery'

**San Francisco**—As a woman in recovery I was thrilled to get a job helping other women recovering from addiction. I was aware when I accepted a job from Salvation Army Recovery Home for Women that they were a fundamentalist organization. I knew that I would have to follow their rules, taking women to chapel, and so on. I knew I would have to be a model according to their guidelines.

What I didn't know was that when they said that recovery was the purpose of the program, that it was not true. The real purpose was "work therapy." The women got room and board, but they had to put in eight hours of labor without any pay. They would sort clothes, hang them, answer phones, work in the store. They were expected to participate three nights a week in group sessions sponsored by Salvation Army and on other nights AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) meetings.

As a manager of the household I would take the women to AA meetings. I took it upon myself to be mentor and counselor for women in early recovery who had trouble with feelings they had. It was not in my job description, but I know it is good to be listened to and to be heard.

I was told that I was not professional. I was too recovery-minded, and that was not what they were about. I was no longer to take women to meetings because that was being too friendly. They didn't like my hair being too short, they didn't like my wearing Levi's, and they questioned my sexuality.

It felt worse when I saw the Captain's wife take items donated to the women of the house and take them to the store for sale. When she told me to take the tampons that a nice elderly couple donated to the women of the house to the canteen to sell to the women, I defied her. Those items were donated to the women already. I should not be selling them to them!

We were collecting and sending money every three months to the central AA office. We had about \$60 when the administrator's wife took the AA money. I don't know where it went.

We have a Spring festival every year. The women's auxiliary gives donations to sell at this festival. Some of them are collectibles. The administrator's wife told one of the women to wrap up collectible glasses and put them in her car quietly without being seen. The woman felt like she was a party to pilfering. Administration is worried that the women will steal from the house, yet not only do they themselves steal, they use the women to steal for them!

Recently I was fired. Losing this job is a big emotional and financial blow to me. Yet I feel freer now, no longer having to compromise my values, integrity or recovery.

—D. Ryan

a "subjective craving to shake down what is fixed and true" (p. 110). Furthermore, to Kristeva, a subject "submerged in negativity" is not external to this objective negativity, but rather, quoting Hegel, the "innermost and most objective moment of Life and Spirit" (p. 11).

Here, Kristeva seems to recognize, like Dunayevskaya and Marx, the ways that the dialectic inheres in reality and in the subject. However, while she recognizes negativity in general as objective, she still does not recognize the subjectivity of the second negative as objective. What this means is that there is no room left for philosophic self-reflection. Without the moment of the second negative, negativity becomes determinateness or quality without self-movement, or, as Hegel puts it, a dialectic without "the principle of personality" (quoted in **P&R**, p. 24).

Kristeva's skipping over second negativity is recapitulated later in the book when she argues that "the notion of 'practice' in Marxism implies a subjectivity which does not go beyond that of the Practical Idea (particularization, finitude, no self-reflection: in other words, it lacks the 'theoretical element')" (p. 200). This is merely a common post-Marx Marxist vulgarism of Marx's concepts.

**TO DUNAYEVSKAYA**, Marx's relationship to Hegel is not circumscribed by the Practical Idea, but is developed in Marx's appropriation of the dialectic of second negativity. Hegel specifies second negativity as transcendence when he writes, "For the transcendence of the opposition between the Notion and Reality, and the unity which is the truth, rest on this subjectivity alone.—The second negative, the negative of the negative, which we have reached, is this transcendence of the contradiction but is no more the activity of an external reflection than the contradiction is." Although Kristeva quotes this, she ignores the second negative so clearly identified by Hegel as the turning point.

Marx, in his 1844 "Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic," did not single out the objectivity of negativity in general, but rather the second negative, "the positive moments of the Hegelian Dialectic"—"transcendence as objective movement" (quoted in **P&R**, p. 54). As Dunayevskaya put it: "The overcoming of this 'transcendence,' called absolute negativity by Hegel, is what Marx considered the only way to create a truly human world, 'positive Humanism, beginning from itself'" (p. 54).

Dunayevskaya argues that revolutionaries need to take responsibility for this idea of second negativity. Feminists have too long skirted this responsibility by evading philosophy as a male domain. But the reaching for philosophy implicit in women's liberation makes a confrontation with the concept of second negativity in Hegel imperative if we are ever to make the dialectics of revolution inseparable from women's liberation. To further explore **Philosophy and Revolution**, News and Letters Committees is holding a class series to which all are invited. See page 4 for details.

## Woman as Reason

## Women Worldwide

by Mary Jo Grey

International Women's Day marches are planned in Ireland—in both Derry and Belfast—for the first time in years, as the Alliance for Choice demands the extension of the 1967 Abortion Act to Northern Ireland, where abortion remains illegal. British Prime Minister Tony Blair said there are no plans to give women in the North the same right to abortion as women in the rest of Britain. According to Marjorie (Mo) Mowlam, the Labour Party's voice in Northern Ireland, "all the Members of Parliament are against it" and "the peace process comes first." At least 1,600 women from the North travel to Britain every year to get a legal abortion (a conservative estimate of 60,000 since 1967). The operation and travel expenses can be as high as £650 (over \$1,000). Surveys show 79% support availability of abortion.

—Information from Women's News, Ireland

Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand threatened, at the end of January, to lower women students' grades if they don't go along with the school's ban on short skirts by lowering their hemlines.

Demonstrations against domestic violence swelled in Madrid and four other Spanish cities at the end of 1997, after the murder of a 60-year-old woman by her former husband. Ana Orantes was beaten, thrown off her balcony, doused with gasoline and burned alive two weeks after she described on television nearly 40 years of beatings during her marriage.

## International Women's Day



"Nor should we forget...when [Clara] Zetkin proposed to the 1910 Second International Women's Conference that an International Women's Day be adopted, it was an act of solidarity with the organizing struggles of the American garment workers who had erupted in the 'Uprising of the 20,000' the year before. Six days after the first IWD was celebrated in March 1911, the infamous Triangle Fire took the lives of 146 workers..."

—Raya Dunayevskaya, *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, pp. 83-84.

To order *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, see page 7.

More on International Women's Day next issue.

## 'Linking Arms in Dangerous Times'

**Washington, D.C.**—Over 400 feminists, more than half women of color, came together Feb. 20-22 at the National Organization for Women's (NOW) "Women of Color and Allies Summit: Linking Arms in Dangerous Times." It was an historic attempt to revitalize and reinvent the women's movement. The passion to come together and transcend the racism that has separated the women's movement for decades characterized the entire gathering—plenaries, workshops, and even meal-times and playtimes.

NOW obtained 150 co-sponsors from unions to community health centers to welfare rights organizations and YWCAs. Young women with orange hair joined civil rights and women's rights leaders out of the need to stop letting our struggles be divided by "the man's" lies about feminists. We talked of saving what is left of social welfare and women of all colors adopted the slogan that "women's rights are human rights, and human rights are women's rights."

Today's "dangerous times" were taken up in workshops on reproductive rights, affirmative action, and bilingual education—all threatened with extinction. Others dealt with hate crimes, gun violence, sexual harassment, AIDS, domestic violence, and poverty. One was on the Taliban government in Afghanistan that is re-enslaving women.

A highlight was our participation in a picket line on behalf of the women who clean the Capitol buildings (see page 3). We joined AFSCME union members to shout in front of the Architect of the Capitol's office which pays the men a dollar an hour more than the women—who until recently were called "charwomen." Many of us expressed dismay that we still have to picket for equal pay after 30 years of struggle. There was a similar feeling at workshops, where we tried to figure out how to stop losing the rights we thought we'd won:

Other highpoints included:

- Plenary speaker Dolores Huerta of the United Farm Workers linked the ongoing unionization of strawberry workers to the California battles over immigration, affirmative action and "English only," and to fed-

eral welfare "deform." She linked the recent decline of Black feminist groups to the government's attack on welfare and affirmative action. All feminist organizations "have to figure out how to work with poor women," she said.

- Loretta Ross of the Center for Human Rights Education in Atlanta spoke of her work in NOW as a young Black feminist and cited 1986, when 107 women of color organizations endorsed a huge abortion rights demonstration, and 1989, when African American Women for Reproductive Rights was founded, as breakthroughs in Black feminism.

Class was addressed in a workshop called "Looking Back, Looking Forward: A Feminist Vision," featuring Ross, NOW President Patricia Ireland, and Marian Kramer of the National Welfare Rights Union. They discussed the missed moments and breakthroughs in relations between Black and white women's movements.

But although women talked about class and poverty, there was not much analysis of why the Right is so powerful now. Though a number of women called themselves "revolutionaries," there was little talk of what revolution means. Several speakers denigrated "isms" while calling for unity, thereby closing the door to inquiries we need to make in order to demystify these reactionary times. Marxist-Humanist women did raise the current crisis in capitalism and in Left thought as vital subjects for feminist analysis, but there was little opportunity for public discussion of these issues and NOW leaders tried to focus the conference on working in legislative channels.

The conference broke new ground on racial unity and could lead to a new stage of feminism in the U.S., but only if we don't stop at bringing women together across the racial spectrum and think that alone can transform this society into a just and human one. Now that we have "linked arms in dangerous times" we need to link minds and delve fearlessly into precisely those "isms"—especially Marx's Marxism—that some wanted to avoid.

—Anne Jaclard and Terry Moon

# Cat workers reject push for contract

Decatur, Ill. — It's ironic that throughout the struggle, Caterpillar maintained, "Don't let the union leaders in Detroit tell you what to do." Well, the UAW told us accept the contract, and we said, "Don't tell us what to do." The final vote was 58% to reject.

Our local union in Decatur had the only leadership who did NOT recommend the contract, and we turned it down by 91%. The other locals who voted were Peoria and Pontiac, who turned it down, and Aurora, Memphis, and Chicago, which accepted it. Aurora bought the contract by 82%. Chicago did the last time too. Pontiac bought it last time, but not this time.

Over the past seven-year period, 150 people were fired. We are still arbitrating 50 of those cases. Caterpillar wants us to give amnesty to all the people who refused to pay union dues since 1991 and tell them, "You're forgiven," but we have 50 buddies of ours. One worker was fired for driving a forklift too slow. Another was fired just because a scab named he called him a scab.

There were a lot of other things wrong with the proposal. There was a copay on retirees' health insurance. Caterpillar wanted to give the retirees more on their pensions, but then make them pay for health insurance. Retirees are eligible for Medicare which pays 80% of Part B benefits. Caterpillar didn't even want to pay the other 20%. **On top of that, the company wanted to bring in new hires at a low wage, and to hire 15% of the workforce as part-timers.**

And the people who retired since '91 got nothing. That's unfair. They stood on the picket lines in all kinds of conditions when we were on strike, five and a half months the first time and 17 months the second time. There are two thousand three hundred in Decatur and hundreds more elsewhere.

## UAW berry pickers at UIC

Chicago — Two United Farmworkers from Watsonville and Salinas, Cal. spoke at a teach-in Feb. 24 at the University of Illinois here, marking the renewal of the struggle by California strawberry workers. Co-sponsored by the Graduate Employees Organization, the teach-in also heard students cite links between the corporation's and researchers, and agribusiness giants who propagate near-slavery conditions.

One strawberry worker described the "discrimination, threats, and not being paid enough to raise our families." "The companies hire consultants," he explained, "who take us out of our work, and insult us. They know if we say anything back, we will be fired. We want to put a stop to this. We saw that the same water that was used to water the fields is served to co-workers. When we asked for clean water, we were given a ticket. If you're given enough tickets, you're fired."

"Because I support the union, I'm discriminated against. I've been there 13 years. People who have been here for two years are allowed to get into the fields to work before I do. I've come here to ask for support because it's a just cause."

Farmworkers and supporters will march in solidarity for this cause in most major cities at the end of March. (Chicago readers, call 312 454-9096.) Already the advances of the campaign in 1997, though falling short of needed contracts, include modest pay raises, compensation to fired union supporters and those cheated out of overtime pay, promises by 4,600 supermarkets across North America to buy union-picked strawberries, and a pledge of neutrality for organizers to talk union with workers of the giant Coastal Berry Company. These pave the way for a renewal of the strawberry campaign.

—Jim Mills

## Latest strikes at Kaiser

Oakland, Cal. — On Feb. 24, 7,500 nurses of the California Nurses Association staged a 24-hour strike at Kaiser HMO facilities, only the latest strike while working without a contract since January 1997. In their last 10-day strike beginning Jan. 28, Kaiser nurses revealed unwavering determination to win the right to control the standard for quality care.

At issue is how this society values the health of its workers. Frontline health care workers, carrying on a protracted battle over staffing levels, demand control over the very nature of their work in face of management's permanent restructuring.

Why Kaiser's intransigence when all they had to do to end the immediate emergency on Jan. 28 was to open up the Martinez emergency room? The Contra Costa County Health Director lamented, "I don't believe it's within my power or anyone's power to require facilities to reopen." We can only regulate open facilities but Kaiser can close their facilities at will. The nurses measure reality in terms of its human costs. Kaiser's response is that this reality is "closed."

Closures in low income areas—redlining health care—no concern in this way of thinking. Nurses not only know that power resides in their own labor, they also know it is the opposite of the Wall Street principle of easily moving capital as the golden calf before which all must reflect.

That's why rank-and-file workers like myself in other unions support the nurses even if their leaders don't. Government agents say we cannot make a barrier to free market capital. That leaves labor as the only contender against management in this struggle. Only workers will withhold their labor can back up the demand for human centered health care. —Kaiser rank-and-filer

We have been fighting this long, so what did we have to lose by turning this proposal down? Maybe the UAW wants to get the whole thing over with and they think people here can be sacrificed.

The International UAW wanted to sell the contract Caterpillar offered in '95. Yokich told one of us that we had to go back to work, that he would have to make some hard



Cat workers picketed in 1992 — and battle still.

decisions to buy a rotten contract and that the 150 fired people had to accept. That was after a 17-month strike. But after the membership turned it down, he said it was a victory. Now he is turning around and doing the same thing, claiming this vote is a victory.

**Caterpillar is only one or two percent of the UAW membership, so we're nothing to them. But who else is going to get kicked through the roof once companies see what Caterpillar can do? It's true, the UAW has been behind us with \$300 per week, health insurance, and support for the people still fired. You can't say they abandoned us. But they are ready to quit. We're not.**

What the Steelworkers union did for the Firestone strikers is something we didn't see with the UAW at Caterpillar. When Firestone said to a bunch of people, "No way are you going to come back," the Steelworkers paid them \$250 per week and got them jobs in other union shops.

Where do we go from here? Caterpillar is saying they are ready to negotiate. I say, prove it, actions speak louder than words. Our local is in the middle of arbitration on some other issues. And we still have over 400 unfair labor practices against Cat pending with the Labor Board.

The company is smug. They have a product they can sell. It's not like we can do a consumer boycott of earthmovers. Still the Caterpillar retirees group goes around to implement, tractor, boat, and agriculture shows around the country. We handbill against Caterpillar. We're always there, talking about what they did to us. They get really mad and have tried to get us arrested. We've been doing this for over a year.

—Fighting retiree

## Capitol equal pay battle

Washington, D.C. — We are the custodial workers—mostly Black—who clean the government buildings. We are involved in a lawsuit against the Architect of the Capitol for equal pay for women. I've been working here for the past 23 years, and we've never been treated like the men. We've never been allowed to work overtime on a regular basis, but the women's workload has increased. We used to have 12 rooms to clean; now we have 18, 19, and extra rooms if someone is off. We do two and three people's work and get the same pay while the men do one job.

We started fighting for equal pay in 1996 but didn't get into the courts until 1997. When women came from the NOW conference and supported us by joining AFSCME in a big picket line by the Capitol (see story page 2), I felt just like the cavalry came to our rescue. We haven't gotten support from anyone else.

The longer this lawsuit goes, the more I feel like it's not going to end in our favor. We've been arguing and fighting with these people for years. We didn't just start because we have a union. We only got the union last year. We fought for water to drink. We were told to buy our own water and bring it. We now have water in all three buildings.

They are now spending \$200,000 to pay for our uniforms, but they can't give us any money. Most people find it hard to believe that this discrimination against women is going on right here on Capitol Hill. We are working for the lawmakers and they are the ones that are breaking the law.

—Hazel Dews, President, AFSCME Local 626

## Shorten workday at Sealy

Memphis, Tenn. — We just started contract negotiations at Sealy Mattress. One thing the company wants is to shorten the grievance procedure. They want to hurry up, and make everything really fast. We want all overtime after ten hours in one day to be on a voluntary basis. They are trying to fix it where we have to finish the bed production schedule. They don't care how long it takes.

The past two weeks it's been pretty reasonable. All this week we've been getting off by 5:30, sometimes 3:00. During the negotiations they cut back to make us think everything is all right. Then as soon as this contract is signed, they will throw whatever they want down on the schedule. Two weeks ago, some people were in until 8:00 or 10:00. Then they started shortening. People are glad to get off at a decent hour, but most think it's something they're doing during negotiations. This week they've kept the schedule to less than 550 beds.

The most important thing to the workers is to get a time to come home. No one is going to want to move on that issue. Those ten-hour days, 50-hour weeks—that's one demand the company's going to have to agree on.

—Black production worker

## Back to future of labor

Detroit — I belong to one of the oldest trade unions in North America, the International Typographical Union, now a part of the Communication Workers of America (CWA). The ITU's first locals were chartered in 1850 in New York, although our roots go back much further.

Detroit's Local 18 was chartered in 1854. Our union demanded equal rights and equal pay for women in 1869, and we were the first union to pay unemployment benefits to our members.

**We were a strong, progressive, militant trade union whose members were highly skilled and whose apprentices were educated in all phases of the trade as well as in labor history.**

Automation began to take its toll on us in the 1960s, and by the 1990s has devastated the trade. In 1960 there were some 850-900 printers at the Detroit papers and about 2,000 in my local. Today, before the strike, there were about 110 at the papers and 300 in my local. We negotiated guaranteed lifetime jobs for our members in the early 1970s in exchange for giving the companies the right to automate. Now printers can almost be bypassed altogether.

### PLUMMETING UNION ROLLS

In the 1950s when I joined the work force unions had organized about 40% of the workers in this country. A person could expect to buy a modest home, own a car and raise a family on one income. Not so today. As union membership declined to about 14% of the work force, workers in this country found themselves in competition with workers in Third World countries. Now, in a lot of cases both husband and wife have jobs, sometimes two, just to provide the essentials.

**Unions have to reverse this decline. They are our only protection against unrestrained capitalism. Many large corporations' only concern today is to please their stockholders with gifts of ever-greater profits by cutting wages, moving production overseas if necessary, cutting work forces to the bone and forcing one person to do the work of two.**

Unions need to organize all workers and educate their members and the general public about labor issues and history. They have to become more militant in fighting strikes and lockouts. Union leadership has to be willing to call for work stoppages and general strikes in serious situations.

### ALL IN ONE UNION

Unions also have to merge. In the newspapers here there are six major unions and five smaller ones. We should all be in one union. If we had been, we would have had a greater voice in the running of the newspaper strike and the outcome might have been different.

Unions need to merge internationally too. Workers who build cars in the U. S. should belong to the same union as workers who build cars in every country. As companies get larger, unions have got to do the same, with all workers in a company belonging to the same union. An injury to one should truly be an injury to all. We at the newspapers could not have held out this long if it wasn't for the support we received from other unions. It is vital!

Finally, we need a political party that truly represents working people. I think the new Labor Party is a step in that direction. Labor laws need to be changed to level the playing field between workers and management. The Taft-Hartley Act must be repealed, we need a national health plan and replacement workers (scabs) must be outlawed.

—Armand Nevers

## Workshop Talks

(Continued from page 1)

capitalists? The miners lost that strike and Appalachia was created. Today the whole world has become Appalachia.

Automation hit steel, rubber and the automobile industry. By the 1980s when President Reagan fired the air traffic controllers, he opened the gates for all corporations to do what they wish to the working people of this country. First they hit the blue-collar workers, especially organized labor, destroying unions and making them afraid to go on strike. The only weapon workers have to fight the companies, short of revolution, is taking production into their own hands.

Union leaders, governments and capitalism are the cause of what is happening to millions of workers today. Blue-collar workers used to be the ones looked down upon. Today the white-collar workers who used to see themselves as separate, are now the focus of the corporations' attention. Today they are finding out they have always been part of the work force, but capitalist masters pitted them against blue-collar labor. In other words, they were used by the capitalists against themselves. They were so brainwashed by the capitalist system they couldn't see themselves as labor.

Does anyone want to bet whose side the U.S. Supreme Court will be on when the white-collar retirees appeal the Federal Appeals Court's decision? Most people think the governments and courts are there to protect people. They are there to protect this capitalist system, not the rights of people, especially working people.

Karl Marx wrote about 150 years ago that capitalism can not overcome its fatal defect even if it made workers labor 24 hours a day and live on air. It seems in the last 15 years we are developing rapidly on that path.

From the Writings of Raya Dunayevskaya  
MARXIST-HUMANIST  
ARCHIVES

### Editor's Note

March is Women's History Month, and this year is also the 150th anniversary of the First Women's Rights Convention held in Seneca Falls, N.Y. *News & Letters* presents previously unpublished writings by Raya Dunayevskaya which discuss the history-making events of 1848 as they relate to subsequent periods of revolutionary women's history including our own.

The first selection, written in October 1980, is the opening part of a draft chapter which Dunayevskaya titled "Women's Liberation, then and now," for what later became chapter 6 of *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*. The second selection, titled "The Black Dimension," contains earlier material drafted for the book.

These documents can be found in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, microfilm nos. 14894 and 14339, respectively. Numbered footnotes are the author's, corrected.

"Life itself becomes too  
dear,  
So vast are one's dreams."  
—Louise Michel

"A work is never  
beautiful, unless it in some  
way escapes its author."  
—D.H. Lawrence

### I. YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW

We have reached a turning point in our work which can by no means restrict itself only to Luxemburg and Marx. We must go both backwards and forwards in history and cover the globe. I dare say, since life itself began, woman has had to struggle; and in order to see the dialectic of development, both of our age and other historic periods, we will need to gather disparate strands that may, at first, look quite disconnected. I trust, however, that at the end a direction will manifest itself.

The phrases referring to "since life itself began" and "global" may seem too pompous but what I have in mind is quite simple. I'm referring to the never-ending rebellion whether we begin in 1647 with the first Maid's Petition to Parliament for "liberty every second Tuesday"<sup>1</sup>; or whether we jump to 1831 when, in the very year Nat Turner led the greatest slave revolt in the U.S., a Black woman named Maria Stewart—the first woman to [do so] publicly, white or Black—spoke out in Boston<sup>2</sup>:

*O ye daughters of Africa, awake! awake! arise! no longer sleep nor slumber but distinguish yourselves. Show forth to the world that ye are endowed with noble and exalted faculties...How long shall the fair daughters of Africa be compelled to bury their minds and talents beneath a load of iron pots and kettles?...How long shall a mean set of men flatter us with their smiles, and enrich themselves with our hard earnings: their wives' fingers sparkling with rings and they themselves laughing at our folly?*

Other "firsts" crowd into mind, whether we are referring to Flora Tristan who was the first to call for an International of working women and working men in 1844, the year that Marx discovered a whole new continent of thought; or whether we look at the 1848 revolutions in Europe and see that what looked of much lesser importance, the First Woman's Rights Convention at Seneca Falls, New York, actually opened up a whole new force for revolution. That women did hear that call became clear in 1851, when Jeanne Deroin and Pauline Roland sent greetings to the Second National Woman's Rights Convention in Worcester, Massachusetts from the St. Lazare prison in Paris, to which they had been sentenced for their activities in and after 1848. On behalf of the Convention, Ernestine Rose declared: "After having heard the letter read from our poor incarcerated sisters of France, well might we exclaim, Alas, poor France! where is thy glory? where the glory of the Revolution of 1848?"<sup>3</sup>

The Black dimension is the most exciting of all. Not only did it inspire the creation of the 1848 Woman's Rights Convention, but it did so through its own activity; that is to say, when the white middle-class women in the antislavery societies saw the Sojourner Truths and Harriet Tubmans<sup>4</sup> as orators and travelers and thinkers, while their own work was reduced to auxiliary tasks, they recognized what it means to be Reason as well as Force. This became especially crucial in 1867 after the Civil War in the U.S., when even the most revolutionary Abolitionists, like Frederick Douglass and Wendell Phillips, refused to help collaborate with the women's fight for suffrage on the grounds that this was the Negro year. Sojourner Truth hit back at her own leader, Frederick Douglass, calling him "short-minded." Not only did she separate from her Black male colleagues and align with the white women, but it became clear that "short-minded" was more than an epithet. Rather, it was a new language—the language of

1. Sheila Rowbotham, *Women, Resistance and Revolution* (New York: Pantheon, 1972), p. 15.

2. *Black Women in 19th Century American Life*, edited by Bert James Loewenberg and Ruth Bogin (University Park, Pa.: Penn State University Press, 1967).

3. *Feminism*, edited by Miriam Schneir (New York: Random House, 1972).

4. See especially Earl Conrad, *Harriet Tubman* (New York: Paul S. Erikson, 1943), and *Narrative of Sojourner Truth*, an Ebony Classic (Chicago: Johnson Pub. Co., 1970).

# Women's liberation, then and now

thought—against those who would put any limitations to freedom.

In four years, the world had, indeed, become witness to the greatest revolution of men and women for a totally new, classless society—the [1871] Paris Commune. Why, may we ask, did it take nearly a century to learn all the facts of the breadth of women's actions, and why, even then, did it take a woman to write *The Women Incendiaries*?<sup>5</sup>

Nor should we forget...that the American labor struggles,<sup>6</sup> with very active participation by women, had been continuous since the very first National Labor Union was established in the U.S. and affiliated with the First International. However, it was not until 1908, when the infamous Triangle [Shirtwaist] Fire took the lives of 143 women working in that sweat shop, and Rose Schneiderman organized no less than 120,000 in the funeral march—not just to mourn but to declare solidarity with all unorganized women workers—that it first reverberated to Europe. By 1911, Clara Zetkin's proposal to the Second International for an International Woman's Day became reality.

Rosa Luxemburg becomes central here, but if we try to begin at some alleged high point on what was considered to be the "Woman Question," we will blind ourselves both to Luxemburg's multi-dimensionality and the newness that our age brought to the concept of women's liberation. Let's, instead, see what ground she laid in a letter that was, in the main, devoted to the anti-war work from which the revisionists stayed far, far away. In this letter [from prison] to Mathilde Wurm, seemingly out of nowhere, there suddenly appears a reference to the queen of the Amazons (and evidently, not as she is known in Greek legend as the one who was killed [by Achilles, but as] told by the famous German playwright, Heinrich Von Kleist, who had Penthesilea not only kill Achilles, but eat him). All this appears in a letter where she is so furious at her friend's defense of the revisionists' position on the war that she writes:

*I'm telling you that as soon as I can stick my nose out again I will hunt and harry your society of frogs with trumpet blasts, whip crackings, and bloodhounds—like Penthesilea I wanted to say, but by God, you people are no Achilles. Have you had enough of a New Year's greeting now? Then see to it that you stay human... Being human means joyfully throwing your whole life "on the scales of destiny" when need be, but all the while rejoicing in every sunny day and every beautiful cloud. Ach, I know of no formula to write you for being human...<sup>7</sup>*

It's this need to throw your whole life on the scales of destiny, it's this passion for revolution, it's the urgency to get out of prison confinement and open entirely new vistas, it's this need "to be human" that has character-

5. Edith Thomas' *The Women Incendiaries* was published in France in 1963 and in the U.S. in 1966 (New York: George Braziller) but is long out of print; and there never was a paperback edition.

6. Union WAGE (Berkeley, California) issued two pamphlets in 1974 by Joyce Maupin—*Working Women and Their Organizations, 150 Years of Struggle and Labor Heroines, Ten Women Who Led The Struggle*.

7. This letter, written Dec. 28, 1916, is included in *Briefe an Freunde*, edited by Benedikt and Kautsky, (Hamburg: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1950), pp. 44-6.

ized the whole of Luxemburg's vision, in the struggle for a new society. It has put the stamp on all she ever did, and ever longed to make real. And it is this which put so totally different a mark on her concept of women's liberation which was called the Woman's Question in her day, that it makes it possible for our age to first understand it fully; in a great measure more fully than she herself was conscious of...

## The Black Dimension...

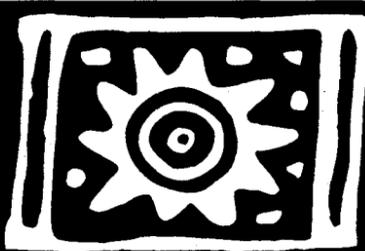
When the 1907 Congress [of Russian Marxists] referred back to the 1848 revolution, it was naturally mainly for purposes of debating the question of Marx's analysis of a revolution he participated in, as well as the theory of revolution that preceded the actual [revolution]—the *Communist Manifesto*. Peculiarly enough, it did not extend to the concept of permanent revolution that Marx projected in his 1850 Address to the [Communist League] after the defeat of the 1848 revolution. This is the more curious because Trotsky had projected his own theory of permanent revolution and Lenin referred at one point disparagingly to it in 1907. What none talked about was what was "in the air," be it 1848 or 1907, that is to say the ramifications of an ongoing revolution into countries not experiencing it.

And yet, that is precisely the point that is of the essence to us today. Take the ramifications of the 1848 revolution, not as discussed in 1907, but in the period it happened. The very first women's liberation movement took place in the U.S. in Seneca Falls in 1848. Though none there, either, discussed a European proletarian revolution, revolution was in the air in the deepest possible manner in the U.S. both as a struggle for freedom against slavery, and as the beginning of women's liberation movement. And there is no doubt that the inspiration for it came precisely from the Black dimension towards the middle-class women who were working in the anti-slavery movement, and moved to extend that towards their own very different type of liberation. And because [the] Black dimension was so crucial to any freedom struggle in the U.S., no matter what struggle you were engaged in, the Black dimension was the inspiration force, be it in the Abolitionist movement, in women's rights, or for that matter in the great literature of the day.

By 1860 when John Brown attacked Harper's Ferry, Marx considered it a world signal for freedom, and indeed, began leaving the library for actual activities which led to the establishment of the First Workingman's International. The point is that everything, most especially the theory of revolution, so deepened that whether it was his greatest theoretical work itself, *Capital*, the organizational work of the First International, or woman as Reason as well as force, in the participation in his organization, it became a multifaceted total philosophy of revolution. In a way, a

(Continued on page 9)

\* In 1907, all the Marxist tendencies convened the Fifth Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party to discuss the then-ongoing, first Russian Revolution of 1905-7.



## PHILOSOPHY AND REVOLUTION

in history, in theory, in today's freedom struggles

A series of classes. Check the directory on page 9 for the location nearest to you.

"Because the transformation of reality is central to the Hegelian dialectic, Hegel's philosophy comes to life, over and over again, in all periods of crisis and transition, when a new historic turning point has been reached, when the established society is undermined and a foundation is laid for a new social order... Marx, the discoverer of a totally new continent of thought—Historical Materialism—grounded his philosophy of liberation in the PRAXIS of the proletariat as well as in Hegel's dialectic."

—Raya Dunayevskaya, from the Introduction to *Philosophy and Revolution: from Hegel to Sartre, and from Marx to Mao*

This year marks the anniversaries of two world-historic moments. 1998 sees the 150th anniversary of Marx's *Communist Manifesto*, written on the eve of the 1848 Revolutions—at a revolutionary moment which stretched from Europe to the Seneca Falls Women's Convention in New York. This year also marks the 30th anniversary of 1968 when new mass revolts covered every corner of the globe, giving the lie to those who said the drive for social revolution was a thing of the past.

Those revolts, however, showed that in our era, no amount of revolutionary will and energy is sufficient to complete the revolution so long as a philosophy of liberation rooted in Hegel's dialectic and Marx's humanism is missing. In addressing this reality, Raya Dunayevskaya's *Philosophy and Revolution: from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao* did not just speak to the impasses reached in the movements of that era, but provided a direction for overcoming the barriers to writing a new chapter in the revolutionary struggle.

Today, on its 25th anniversary, the challenge of *Philosophy and Revolution*, to work out a viable alternative to this racist, sexist, heterosexist, class society, is more relevant than ever. These classes will return to that challenge with the eyes of today to work out the integrality of philosophy and revolution for today's freedom struggles.

### Class 1

The Todayness of Hegel's Revolution in Philosophy

### Class 2

Marx's Rootedness in and Continuous Return to the Hegelian Dialectic

### Class 3

The Hegelian-Marxian Dialectic in Post-Marx Marxism (I)

Lenin's Philosophic Ambivalence in Light of the Problem of Revolution Today

### Class 4

The Hegelian-Marxian Dialectic in Post-Marx Marxism (II)

From Mao, Sartre and Fanon to Lukacs, Adorno, and Derrida

### Class 5

Economic Reality and the Dialectics of Liberation

The core readings will be in *Philosophy and Revolution*. Many other readings will be in "The Power of Negativity," a forthcoming collection of writings by Dunayevskaya on dialectics. For each class, full and open discussion will follow the presentations. Reading materials are available from News and Letters Committees.

## Essay Article

# From the streets to the prisons—Black mind in revolt

by Gene Ford

*The emphasis must be on the transformation of mentality. We are revolutionaries because we believe in revolution as our protein, vitamin of life. We believe in the human element to revolt against oppressing forces. We believe in this new mentality as the ultimate and only guide to freedom.*

—Hugo 'Dahariki' Pinell,  
imprisoned since 1964

The character of America is dominated by racism. Its heart is a chamber in which people of color are locked. In this prison society some are locked up while others are locked out—unemployed, welfare cut, and unrecognized. Still others, especially whites, have the key and are free to roam about and control.

### POST-LA REBELLION BACKLASH

The streets of South Central Los Angeles are a reflection of prison existence. The violent-by-nature LAPD (Los Angeles Police Department) dominates those streets with rifle butt, billy club, gun fire and fear. The recently reported drop in the murder rate in Los Angeles is viewed by the politicians as a success story of this "war on crime."

Stiffer sentencing and the "three strikes and you're out" law are credited with the drop in crime. What is not reported is that these laws have increased the murder and attempted murder rate of the police themselves. What is also not reported is that the 1992 Gang Truce in Watts, not the LAPD, is responsible for the decrease in "gang related deaths."

Yet, the Gang Truce, which dates from the time of the 1992 LA rebellion, has been attacked by the politicians and the LAPD. With the Truce, the community, especially the youth, claimed their own reality of housing projects like Jordan Downs, Imperial Courts and Nickerson Gardens that contain so much of the intense poverty and gang activity of Watts and South Central LA.

The police have never stopped being against the coming together of factions of Crips and Bloods, and have set out to destroy any unity. This unity is itself a conscious uprising that has proven to be more powerful than the original founders of the Truce may have realized. The state sees its power and seeks to destroy the peace. The police systematically distribute leaflets that promote the assassination of police officers as an excuse to crush the peace.

Following the appearance of these leaflets the police riot against peaceful gatherings of mothers, children, and grandmothers who feel a need to come together after 20 years of being divided by railroad tracks, a street, or gang affiliations. Ever since the '92 LA rebellion the LAPD has been mopping up anything they see as a threat to their control of the community. The police have been out for revenge for that rebellion, which saw the whole community put down the LAPD, while Black elected officials continue to say and do nothing to ease the pain inflicted by the LAPD on the Black community.

The laws that have been passed in the state of California in the six years since the LA rebellion such as three strikes (Proposition 186), the anti-immigrant Proposition 187, the anti-affirmative action Proposition 209, and all the cutbacks in welfare and education, have made California the proving ground for this country's reactionary backlash. White America, from liberal to conservative, experienced a new kind of "white flight"—fear that they had nowhere else to run and that what they had in common was property to protect.

The cowardice and revenge of this backlash was seen recently with the LAPD's harassment of Damian Williams on trumped-up charges of parole violation. Damian is one of the LA 4+ defendants who was convicted five years ago for the alleged assault on Reginald Denny, a white truck driver, at the corner of Florence and Normandie during the rebellion. The other defendants were also violated as soon as they were released.

This kind of police repression has been ongoing since the LA rebellion. Only weeks after the revolt a unity party held at Jordan Downs, 500-deep with gang and family members from the Watts projects, came under attack by the LAPD. There had been no violence until the police showed up to disperse the peaceful crowd who had come to express the strength of their unity (Watts love). Before the police showed up if people came into the gathering and attempted to provoke a fight they were removed by a security force chosen beforehand by the different sets participating in the unity rally.

It wasn't until the Metro police and the CRASH unit of the LAPD showed up at the park that violence occurred. The police formed a line of about 80 cops in riot gear and forced people to go through their gauntlet, using batons to beat people exiting the park. One nine-year-old had his nose broken, others were choked out and stomped, some were arrested for assault on the police when the police were the ones doing the assaulting. Despite this, the LAPD has not been able to kill the Truce in six years.

### WAR ON PRISONERS' RIGHTS

That however has not stopped the steady incarceration of the ghetto poor. Nor has it stopped the state's attack on prisoners' rights inside the prison walls. Recent legislation attempts to turn the massive California prison population of 156,000 inmates (which grows by 10,000 each year) into statistical non-existence with bigger and taller walls to contain the real human element inside.

California's new prison laws limiting prisoner rights are aimed at dissolving those rights that the prison movement fought long and hard to get enacted 30 years ago. California's current governor Pete Wilson is reversing prisoner rights laws that former governor Ronald Reagan was forced to enact under pressure of the mass movement of the 1960s and '70s.

New restrictions include removal of law books from prison libraries, random drug testing, ban on overnight visiting privileges for prisoners serving life sentences, ban on packages sent from the outside, and removal of all weight-lifting equipment. These new restrictions are nothing less than an act of war on prisoners.

Matthew Jay, 30, serving 15 years to life at Solano State Prison for a second-degree murder conviction in Los Angeles is one of thousands of prisoners whose home is a bunk in a prison gym. The strain of overcrowding is an overwhelming fact of prison life. Lifting weights is one of the few things that relieves the strain and frustration, Jay said. Without it tensions rise. However, he's more worried about the loss of law books: "If that access is taken away, we are no longer in a prison. We are in a war camp, like prisoners of war. When rights are violated, we're left with no alternative but to react."



George Jackson

*The system excludes and debases the human rights of the people, the system has no concern for the people's welfare or their lives. All around us and above us force is the weapon used against the people's will. Here inside the concentration camp these attitudes are more to the extreme. We are like the people outside of the prison walls, forced into resisting.*

—John Clutchette, Soledad POW Brother

The Black masses today live in urban and prison ghettos equal in alienation. But the criminalization and imprisonment of Black life demands a confrontation with ourselves beyond the identity the state is attempting to destroy. We must push beyond the horror of this reality to reach a new beginning in social existence and in thought.

A new movement is growing behind the high-tech security, the maximum isolation measures, the shatter-proof glass, steel bars and concrete walls of such gulags as California's infamous Pelican Bay S.H.U. (Security Housing Unit). The state's attempt to isolate and destroy reason with facilities like Pelican Bay has instead created a confrontation with self that has opened the door to the mind. Out have stepped "guerrillas in the mist" of a system that creates its own gravediggers.

Soledad Brother George Jackson characterized this relationship of force to what it creates this way: "When the prison gates blow open the real dragons will fly out." Jackson didn't live to open those gates. Instead his written words sustained him: "I want something to remain to haunt him [Ronald Reagan], to make him know in no uncertain terms that he did incur this n—s sore disfavor."

In 1998, this spirit of George Jackson continues to haunt the state in the form of the "new Afrikan political prisoner movement."

*Ninety-five percent of the new Afrikan political prisoners, POWs and politically active prisoners are isolated in solitary confinement, control unit prisons and segregation units. I myself have been in isolation for the past 14 1/2 years—but many of us have been able to use what was meant to destroy us as a means to help build our liberation movement. This isolation affords us the opportunity to seriously focus our intellectual capacity on those issues which are of great concern to our people/community. I have for the last nine years devoted at least 80% of my time towards analyzing the science of crime, criminology, the new Afrikan criminal mentality and the role this KKKovernment has played in all this. Thus, we have criminology 101.*

—"New African Institute for Criminology 101"

The "New Afrikan Institute for Criminology 101" is a writing by Abdul O. Shakur and Mutawally J. Kanbon, two new Afrikan prison activist-theoreticians incarcerated at Pelican Bay. Their manual is an attempt to confront the mentality of state institutional racism, that is, how crime and the identification of images of crime with Black and Brown faces gets reflected in the American mind. On the college level this "Bell Curve" mentality is being ingrained in the consciousness of students. Criminology 101 confronts head-on the criminalization of populations of color.

### GEORGE JACKSON: FIGHTING IMPRISONMENT OF THE MIND

This "new Afrikan prison movement" within the California prison system has its roots in the philosophy and writings of George Jackson: *Soledad Brother* and *Blood In My Eye*. Jackson showed that it wasn't only physical strength but mental seriousness that threatened the prison system at San Quentin. He characterized young people like himself who were denied a decent education or job and who therefore had to teach themselves to read and write as "lumpen-proletarian intellectuals." Their greatest weapon against their oppressors was the liberation of their minds.

George Jackson showed in his writings that survival is

not alone a question of economics. Behind the prison walls extortion, drugs, prostitution, and gambling exist just as they do on the streets. The battle not to allow the inhuman conditions of being in prison to imprison the mind also goes on.

Jackson was a forerunner of Mumia Abu-Jamal though their prison sentences are different. Mumia is on death row today in Pennsylvania, and Jackson at 19 was given an indeterminate one year to life sentence in 1961 for a \$70 gas station robbery. He had been in for 10 years when he was murdered on the plaza outside the Adjustment Center at San Quentin by shots from a gun tower. Prison authorities characterized it as an escape attempt that left three guards and two tier tenders dead with their throats cut.

Even though Mumia faces a death sentence, his struggle and writings have made people conscious anew of prison conditions today. Jackson was also given a death sentence because of his political thought and struggle. He spent most of his life in the prison system fighting against repressive laws as an "outlaw," from the youth authority to the adult system. Jackson was no angel; many people who are caught up in the system are not "innocent." But what was key for Jackson and today is how the transformation of the prisoner's mentality can take place behind the prison walls. In George Jackson's case:

*I was angry. I was in prison and I looked around for something that would really bother these cats. Well, I couldn't find anything that bothered them more than philosophy. I gave everyone a chance. I gave Adam Smith as much attention as I gave Karl Marx. But Smith's whole point was to justify the bourgeoisie and because that was his aim, his conclusions were strained. The things I read in Marx made more sense.*

Jackson went on to say that he and other comrades attempted to transform the Black criminal mentality into a Black revolutionary mentality. This attitude to the mind of the imprisoned as the key to the struggle can be found throughout Mumia's writings. It is also reflected in the preface written by Julia Wright, the daughter of Richard Wright, for Mumia's new book *Death Blossoms*:

*Resolutely on a move... Mumia makes us understand that 'free' men and women can imprison and arrest their own revolution just as 'inmates' can set free a boundless revolution of the mind. As Frantz Fanon, the late psychiatrist and freedom fighter, wrote in *Wretched of the Earth*, 'Imperialism leaves behind germs of rot which we must clinically detect and remove from our land and from our minds as well.'*

In theory and in practice, the new Afrikan consciousness among the youth, street soldiers hardened and educated by prison time, has been reinforced by the 1992 LA rebellion and the Gang Truce. The Watts Gang Truce has influenced Latino gangs to call a truce among themselves as well. This peace movement has spread from the streets to California's jails and prisons:

*In Men's Central Jail, while being processed out of state prison, Darren 'CW' Williams, 36, said being a shooter on the streets is no longer something to be proud of inside prison walls. 'Don't think you can shoot a brother and come up in here and think you gonna get any love,' said Williams, who served 13 years for murder. 'That ain't gonna fly anymore. You ain't getting any stripes for killing a brother.'*

### WOMEN, PRISON, AND REVOLUTION

Along with this new prisoner consciousness has also come a new prison subject—women prisoners. The conditions of women prisoners are worse than those of men. While many are imprisoned for the same crimes, there is a double standard in the law, especially when it comes to women defending themselves against the violence of their spouses. Many put up with years of abuse to themselves and their children until they are killed. Many women also strike back in self-defense. However, the state will not hear their self-defense pleas. Instead, women are usually convicted and sent to prison for life.

*It is impossible to think that a man who lived through what a woman lived through would have been seen as a criminal. A man held at knife point, beaten with fists, kicked, pistol whipped, tied up and left for hours to listen to his children in the next room being beaten and then released to be brutally sodomized would not have ever been arrested on murder charges if he finally got free long enough to shoot the perpetrator. He would more likely be given praise and viewed as a hero defending his life and the lives of his children. But she is still serving time on second degree murder charges. As if what she has already been through is not enough, the prison time she is doing is filled with all the degrading and dehumanizing efforts that the California Department of Corrections has at hand.*

—The Fire Inside

Women's struggles in prison have a special character, which is not separated from the overall movement behind prison walls. Although the bourgeois media make their struggles invisible, we cannot afford to. Thus, while it is true that society must be judged by the treatment of its imprisoned, the lowest is the treatment of women.

Not only should American society be put on trial and condemned for its war crimes against its own population. The poor shall, out of their deep alienation, judge this system that perpetuates a self-destructive mentality among its own people. Only then will we be able to carry out a social revolution in thought and in act that will allow us to live unbutchered lives.

## WOMEN'S LIVES AND STRUGGLES AS WE MARK INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S MONTH, 1998



### WOMEN OF KENYA AND OF ALGERIA

It was good to see side-by-side articles on the WL page of the Jan.-Feb. issue taking up the challenges faced and raised by women in Kenya and Algeria. The article about the Kenyan women reminded me of the 1929 Igbo Women's War, where African women united across tribal lines and "sat" on their chiefs to stop them from taxing the women on behalf of colonialism. The article about Algeria was a breath of fresh air after all we have read about the stoning of unveiled women in Algeria because it showed Algerian feminists continuing to fight for new human relations, grounded in a feminist and multicultural perspective. Like Bosnia, where the struggle to maintain a multicultural society seems not to have been hemmed in by Islamic fundamentalism. Why do the forces of reaction seem to attack feminism and multiculturalism simultaneously? Perhaps they know that the two are ultimately inseparable.

Jan Kollwitz  
Illinois

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Nowhere in North Africa is the status of women so acutely threatened as in Algeria. Due to the increasing force of Islamic fundamentalism, identity as an individual and as a woman have been virtually denied the feminine half of the country's population, leaving it totally devoid of any voice in legal, political and intellectual institutions.

As Laurie Cashdan's article points out, Algerian women's important contributions to independence during the 1954-62 war with France have virtually been forgotten by the socio-political forces which now rule the Algerian State as well as the fundamentalist factions which seek to overthrow the government. It is only through diligent coverage by humanist vehicles such as N&L and ongoing campaigns to foster continued monitoring of the deplorable civil rights situation in Algeria that the world will hear of the plight of women in that country.

Algerian Scholar  
Indiana

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"Women of Kenya speak, 1955 to today" showed that the significance of Charity Ngilu's campaign for president goes far beyond the elections which Daniel arap Moi rigged once again. Her struggle against the ethnic divisions that Moi is trying to live on was the critical part of her message. When Olga Domanski placed Ngilu's campaign in the context of previous struggles by Kenyan women and the "power that is exerted by the idea of freedom and the need to find out how to achieve it," you got a sense of its universality.

Feminist  
California

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While the "Woman as Reason" column rightly focused on the vicious attack on Algerian women by Islamic fundamentalists and hinted that the government has been involved in some of the attacks on the Algerian population, one factual error needs to be corrected: Since 1992, when the government cancelled the elections in which the Islamic fundamentalists were sure to win, the Algerian government is no longer the FLN. It is a military government. It should also be pointed out that the close to 60,000 people who have been killed in the massacres since 1992 included many women as well as other journalists and intellectuals, ethnic minorities and working class villagers.

Sheila Fuller  
Los Angeles

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The story about "The People of Kenya" written way back in 1955 has a lot to do with what we face today. When I read about how the Kenya people wanted their own schools I thought about how dissatisfied we are today with our schools which aren't organized to educate our kids but just to keep them until they can be shoved to work — or to prison, whichever comes first. And when I read about how Njeri came to look over the schools the Africans had built for themselves and discovered the girls weren't considered important

enough to have more than a hut to live in, I thought about how it is still such a male-dominated world.

The woman who came to that UN conference in Kenya in 1985 so she could find out how to stop just having babies and have babies dying could have been talking to a lot of women on welfare today who have to figure out how to feed their kids and keep them alive in today's world. It's only the food stamps and vaccines we've been able to keep getting so far that has been able to keep the mortality rate down. It would be wrong to say that things are the same today here as they were in Africa then, but when you see we are fighting so many of the same problems you know there is a whole lot in this story to think about today.

Mother on TANF  
Chicago

### 'CRIME' OF POVERTY

I learned from the *New River Free Press* that the Virginia Organizing Project, part of the Campaign for Virginians in Need, is rallying public opposition to State House and Senate bills requiring the fingerprinting of all people applying for public aid — most of whom are women and children. They are pointing out how the bills single out and stigmatize low-income Virginians who need assistance. They want it known that "Poverty is not a crime."

Women's liberationist  
Chicago

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You have to have a job after two years on TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), but no one is clear on when your two years began. Was it July 1, 1997 or August 1996, when Clinton signed the bill? I've heard both answers from two different people at public aid. So I don't know when I'll be cut off. Nobody knows what's going on.

Rose  
Chicago

### ROE V. WADE 25 YEARS LATER

Though I appreciated the depth of facts presented in the article on "25 years of Roe v. Wade," I was disappointed to see its inaccurate representation of youth. I don't know who the *New York Times* polled to discover that "young women take abortion rights for granted," but I do know that young women have been consistently active in clinic defense all over the U.S. during the past 10 years. A lot of these young women are lesbian or bisexual and would rarely need abortion services, but they still go out and fight for the right over our own bodies week after week, at 5 in the morning, come rain or shine. Let's celebrate the feats of these dedicated youth rather than affirm the biased views of the NYT.

Julia Jones  
Bay Area

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It's important to make the Right-wing respond on our ground. The way the article in the Jan.-Feb. N&L said the answer has to be a human one made me think of where the debate is centered. There has been a shift from women's rights to science. The question of when does a fetus become a baby ignores the whole issue of women's rights. A lot of younger women today are falling into the pro-life category and seem to look down on abortion as if they are too good for that. They don't think of other women who might not have as good a life as they do.

Teenaged activist  
Memphis

### WOMEN IN PRISON

Most of the problems women prisoners have are shared in common with men. However, the following, ranked in order of importance, are ours alone: 1. The disruption of the family unit. Most of the women are the lone parents, and in half of these cases the children become a ward of the state. The cost to society is high, but who can put a price on the suffering of innocent children?

2. The matter of privacy. We are permitted no window coverings, and there are peep holes in all of the doors. We are constantly viewed in various stages of undress by male and/or lesbian officers. Providing a urine sample for drug testing must be done completely naked in front of an officer. All of this is done in the

## Readers' Views

name of almighty security.

3. The lack of medical care. I have two friends who have been diagnosed with a lump in a breast. Years have passed since the lumps were originally detected but both have been denied medical care that could cost them their lives. No one within corrections seems to care.

Unfortunately I believe things are only going to grow worse as recent decisions are most discouraging, but we continue to struggle. Thank you for listening to our small voices.

Noelle Diamond  
Ohio

### FOR KARLA FAYE TUCKER

Despite her high-profile religious "supporters" Karla Faye Tucker was doomed all along. Her own apparent repentance was not enough to throw against the weight of the racist Texas murder machine. Nothing could be allowed to call in question the right of the State to execute — mostly Black and Latino men. By executing Karla Faye the State feels it has purchased that right in perpetuity. For this, she had to die. Her execution became a drama, a morality play that could only ratify the existing system of death, a pious spectacle that reinforces the mentality of righteous racists. The religious Right has reason to shed tears. Karla Faye died for their sins.

Gerard Emmett  
Chicago

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Of all the disgusting signs held by those waiting outside the Death Row facility for the execution of Karla Faye the one I can't get out of my mind was the one held by a man which read: "Women's Lib = Die Like A Man." It is no accident that using the expression "women's lib" wipes out the meaning of the word "liberation" which called for something totally new for women and men, a new society that would not execute any human being.

Erica Rae  
Illinois



### JERICHO 98

The U.S. government denies that there are any political prisoners in this country, but there are over 150 prisoners in U.S. jails because they are committed to taking action for social justice. Some have been in jail for over 26 years, making them some of the longest-held such prisoners in the world. Many were locked up as a result of the FBI's Counter Intelligence Program (Cointelpro), developed in the 1960s and '70s to attack leaders of the Black Panther Party, the American Indian Movement and other powerful social movements. The U.S. government is determined to keep them locked up. We are just as determined to work until they are free. Jericho '98 was formed to show, as the biblical story of Jericho shows, that when we raise our voices collectively, we can cause walls to come tumbling down. Join us on March 27 in Washington, D.C. for a rally in front of the White House to demand amnesty for Political Prisoners. Call 773-278-6706 for information.

Jericho '98  
Chicago

### WAR AND PEACE

Paralysis is the key word to describe the Palestinian-Israeli crisis today. Even the liberal left is not pushing for progress on this front, distracted by the side-show in Baghdad. The mood among the Palestinians and those who care about peace with them is despondence. Jewish settlements in the territories are expanding, the homes of Palestinians are being demolished, bypass roads are being paved, and all the basic human rights violations of Palestinians continue. At the same time, the economic situation in the territories is worsening. It's no wonder that Arafat is losing support in the territories — no redeployment, no peace, no prosperity. He didn't stand a chance with Netanyahu in the Israeli driver's seat.

Gila Svirsky  
Jerusalem

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In the face of the mobilization of the American and British military forces in the Gulf, and the deft handling of the

media, the small group of MPs who voted against a war in the Gulf need every bit of support and encouragement they can get. Tony Benn, as one of the veterans and indeed an active serviceman in the Second World War, is worthy of praise.

Pat Duffy  
England

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The drive to start dropping the bombs on the Iraqi people has been halted at least for the moment. But the Administration's determination to do it was so fierce it made me realize that Barry Goldwater's Vietnam days ambition to "bomb them back to the stone age" still lives in new dehumanized heads.

Determined to stop them  
Illinois

### NIGERIAN JUNTA AS PEACE MAKERS?

The forces under the leadership of the Nigerian military junta have finally taken over Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone. However, we must never believe that this has finally stopped the many years of civil war. Taking over Freetown will only lead to the intensification of the crisis. The effort of the Nigerian military junta to parade in Freetown as democratic and peace-loving is part of their offensive to keep away international criticism of the dictatorial situation in Nigeria. The claim by the military junta that their effort is to bring back to power a deposed elected president is false and criminal. It was these same military forces who still hold in detention the elected president of Nigeria, and they are the same people who murdered the human rights activist, Ken Saro-wiwa. Nigeria has anything but a moral claim over Freetown.

BaKarang  
Gambia

### FIGHTING RACISM

As I reflect on my recent experiences as a patient in a major hospital in central Scotland, my memory keeps coming back to the critical question Bob Dylan asked in "Blowing in the Wind": "How many times can a man turn his head, and pretend that he just doesn't see?" I have been forced to write about my experiences there.

I was shocked to hear the most disgusting racist remarks from a group of a dozen men, shouted at a young African doctor who entered the ward. When a young Indian patient was admitted in severe pain some of the bigots shouted that "black bastards" should not be allowed into beds in a white hospital. Though I was hooked up to some of the new technology on wheels I went to talk to him and encourage him to talk to some of the older working men. When the worst of the racists were discharged I began to sleep more soundly.

When I challenged an "educated" man who had joined in the laughter at the racist jokes, he said that "world fascism is the wave of the future and we have to 'go with the flow' before a more civilized world order emerges." My motive in sending an article on all this to the *Herald*, where it was published, is to let it be known that the need to combat racism is an urgent one.

James D. Young  
Scotland

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After the police riot against the anti-Klan rally here, described in the Jan.-Feb. issue, the police called the tune and the media danced to it. They covered up that it was a riot by the police, not the people. One of the TV reporters acknowledged to Memphis Against Racism that they had to give out what the police told them, or they wouldn't tell the media anything in the future.

Anti-Klan youth  
Memphis

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The In Memoriam to Raymond Inghram in the last issue reminded me about stories he had once told about how he had fought against anti-Semitism in the Navy. He was the only one who would fly with a Jewish pilot and was labeled as either a "Jew lover" or as Jewish, himself. He said that he would never deny being Jewish and if the anti-Semitism continued either toward himself or others he would use his fists to make his point. It was those kinds of principles he brought to all his work with News and Letters Committees. I will miss him a lot.

Terry Moon  
Memphis



**WORKERS MAKING CONNECTIONS**

Since the UPS strike in August, we had been working under an extension of the old contract (until final ratification Feb. 9). The UPS bosses have used this period to try and undermine our morale, scuttle safety procedures, and finally force layoffs in order to thwart the implementation of more full-time jobs. We are fighting back though with grievances, jobs actions, and union literature. However, the absence of Ron Carey is sorely felt. It seems clear that federal intervention in the Teamsters union, in particular, and the labor movement in general, works against the best interests of the workers. I want to thank *News & Letters* for their fine coverage of the UPS strike and their solidarity.

**Teamster  
San Francisco Bay Area**

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A call is going out to mobilize workers in every country of the Americas from April 15 to 18 around this program: On April 15, the same day the Western Hemisphere heads of State convene their Summit in Santiago, we call for unionists and activists to organize cross-border human chains to symbolically unite people from the Arctic Circle to Tierra del Fuego against the current "free trade" and structural adjustment policies. On April 16-17 Teach-ins will promote awareness of the disastrous consequences of NAFTA, and the MAI. On April 18 a Peoples' Summit will hold a mass demonstration in the streets of Santiago, with similar mass actions on the same day in major cities throughout the Americas. We call on all unionists and activists to send us information about the actions planned in their cities and countries (phone: 415-440-4809; fax: 415-440-9297; e-mail: unite@igc.apc.org).

Western Hemisphere Conference  
SF Labor Council  
1188 Franklin St.#203  
San Francisco, CA 94109

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In 1992 Ross Perot predicted NAFTA would result in a giant sucking sound caused by all the jobs and money going to Mexico. It didn't fully develop at that border but it can be heard today in and around Huntsville, Texas. It's not caused by NAFTA but by TDCJ, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice that operates Texas prisons. It is ranked among the 15 largest businesses in Texas, and one would conclude that the \$3 billion annual budget should create a lot of jobs in Texas and nearby states. The reason it's not happening is that TDCJ regularly ships millions of dollars and thousands of jobs out of the country, and it's not because domestic industries are unable to supply the Texas prison system with the things it needs. Maybe someone should get down to Huntsville to investigate the source of that giant sucking sound.

**Prisoner  
Texas**

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The article from Mississippi by Sarah Hamer last issue showed workers' experiences in Mexico are remarkably similar to what is happening here and all over the world. People think the U.S. is the greatest country in the world but she shows that we are all connected on the economy. It's almost like nations really don't exist any more because we all fall under the same order and that order is capitalism.

**Young revolutionary  
Tennessee**

**150 YEARS AFTER THE  
COMMUNIST MANIFESTO**

Franklin Dmitryev's essay on the 150th anniversary of Marx's *Communist Manifesto* shows that neither the Stalinist-type parties-to-lead nor the far Right wing understand the Humanism of Marx. Lenin, in his time, wrote that none of the Marxists understood Marx. That is even more true today. Marx rejected what he called "vulgar communism." To me, the two capitalist parties of this country are really the same as the vulgar communists. The American revolution stopped at the

"first negation." The next revolution has to be completed, or our world will be destroyed.

**Retired auto worker  
Whittier, CA**

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The way the essay on the *Communist Manifesto* contrasted Marx's concept of organization to Blanquist insurrectionism as well as to utopianism sent me back to reread Raya Dunayevskaya's Archives column in the December issue, in which she wrote about Che Guevara's isolation from the mass movement and his substitution of guerrilla warfare for revolution. I see this kind of attitude in things happening right here in Memphis today, where some leftists plan all kinds of activities and never even think about the African-American population here. The essay took up 1850 and the defeats of revolutions then. We live in a similar time, rife with retrogressive tendencies.

**Women's Liberationist  
Memphis**

**THE GAY STRUGGLE**

One of the things I really appreciated at the Midwest BiSexual Lesbian Gay Transgender Conference was the way the struggle for a gay identity was being waged within the context of a struggle for a whole different society. Two of the posters tell that story. One said: "Marriage is a white cake and a white dress; it isn't a challenge to white supremacy." The other said: "Marriage is access to your spouse's health care plan; it isn't universal health coverage."

**Conference participant  
Chicago**

**A CAR NAMED TIMOR?**

Guess what is the name of the latest Indonesian car coming out of the auto factory owned by the son of Suharto? With all due modesty they name it TIMOR! Who knows, he might also get a Nobel prize for this. One does not know whether to laugh or cry, seeing what is going on all around us.

**Correspondent  
British Columbia**

**WHO SUPPORTS NEWS & LETTERS?**



The aspect I found most attractive in the November issue of N&L I just received was the clarity of analysis and non-dogmatic style of your presentation of these analyses. Here is my payment to keep receiving it.

**New reader  
Johannesburg, South Africa**

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Your paper is strong concerning the fact that workers are the potential revolutionary force to smash the rule of capital. You are also strong on the ABC's of Marxism and its Achilles Heels. But you are too soft on religionists, nationalists, and the union labor peddlers, and you don't point out that "oppressed nations" are also class-divided. Come out swinging comrades! Here's my contribution.

**Longtime radical  
Los Angeles**

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I have just posted an answer on the internet to the question: "Whatever happened to the working class?" The answer: Some of the best of them are writing for *News & Letters*.

**Dave  
Cyberland**

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Although funds are very hard to come by, I want to offer a small token of support by contributing a donor sub. Please give it to a woman prisoner. It is my way of saying to some sister locked down, "You are not alone."

**Male prisoner  
Wisconsin**

**READERS:** Have you sent in your contribution to help us keep N&L going and to publish a new pamphlet on what its prisoner author calls "The Grim Reality of the American Criminal (In)Justice System"? **Your support was never more needed!**

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## Black/Red View

by John Alan

Last month, in San Jose, Cal., at a session of President Clinton's Race Initiative Advisory Board, William Julius Wilson, professor of Afro-American Studies at Harvard University, said that it was racism that originally forced many African American workers to take low-skill jobs, and has trapped them without opportunity to escape.

"There is no way to explain the disproportionate number of minorities who are poor without taking the legacy of race into account—and the legacy of race is the urban ghetto," he said.

Wilson went on to say that the new contributing factors now keeping Blacks in poverty are the "profound transformations in the economy, such as the decline in

## Black World

(Continued from page 1)

had come to shape the political and religious thinking of northern blacks," since southern Blacks had "more deep-seated traditions of active resistance, more far-flung communication systems, and a more rebellious religion" (197). At the same time, Walker recognized that "his freedom was bound up with the slaves' freedom, and that any modicum of freedom he already possessed in no way validated his abandoning the struggle" (40).

Networks of inter-communication were often strategically grounded in Black labor. For instance, Black ship captains along the riverways of the South were slaves who "often labored without any white supervision, were gone for many days at a time, and had wide geographic mobility" (51), so they could easily carry news from port cities to slaves in the interior regions.

These Black networks often hummed with news of revolutions. From the American Revolution, to the slave-led revolution in Haiti, Blacks stayed abreast of current political events. Hinks stresses that Walker's voice emerged from his vital engagement in a mass social movement.

"David Walker's *Appeal* did not generate slave resistance in the South. The slaves did not need Walker to tell them what they had been doing all along...Indeed, Walker was a product of their tradition of resistance rather than the other way around. Yet the pamphlet was a rallying point...While the *Appeal* did not make the turbulence of 1829-1831, it did act in concert with the insurrectionary spirit, broadened its meaning" (172).

### MOVEMENT OF IDEAS AND PEOPLE

This movement of ideas is concretized in the history of the distribution of the *Appeal*. The governments of the Southern states brutally suppressed the pamphlet. This violent response by Southern authorities showed they were well aware of the volatility of these ideas and the organizational strength behind Walker's ability to get these ideas into the Black South. Contact with the idea of freedom could not be halted, finally, since it traveled in too many ways to be controlled.

For instance, white anti-slavery missionaries, who were defending the land-rights of the Cherokees in Georgia, were "maltreated and imprisoned in 1829 or 1830 for having one of Walker's pamphlets, as well as for admitting some colored children into their Indian school" (127). Walker had drawn the obvious parallel between white treatment of the Natives and Blacks, and "believed the Native Americans would probably be likely allies in the struggle" (131). Apparently, Walker was not merely hoping for such an alliance, but had a concrete base from which to build it.

Walker understood the universality of the struggle against slavery, being the first to assert "with such vehemence...that the security of African Americans was in jeopardy so long as blacks anywhere in the world were enslaved and treated like subhuman brutes" (179). Philosophically, Walker was absolutely opposed to the conditions which existed, and he knew their absolute opposite: Black activity and thought, which could "smash slavery finally and decisively" (198).

It is on this point that Hinks falters somewhat: he feels that "Walker's revolutionary endeavor fell short," when the South was seemingly able to quell the fires the pamphlet had helped to ignite (257-8). But this takes too immediate a view. In fact, Walker's *Appeal* helped to fuel the slave revolts that culminated with Nat Turner's Rebellion in 1831, and the growing unity of Black and white Abolitionists in the North. While the defeat of Turner's revolt was devastating, it led to the creation of a new form of Black revolt, the Underground Railroad, which was made possible by the same networks that facilitated the distribution of the *Appeal*. As such it represents a continuity and expansion of Walker's ideas and organizational philosophy.

Similarly, Hinks does not appreciate the feminist dimension that Maria Stewart added to the Black dimension immediately following Walker's death. Hinks concentrates on what he calls her "haughtiness" and "disdain" for manual labor (254). He misses that Stewart—herself a servant—had a passion to break down the division of mental and manual labor, for both men and women. Hinks sees Stewart only as a representative of a nascent Black middle-class moralism, rather than as bold speaker extending Walker's work (see N&L, March 1997, p.2).

Despite these limitations in his interpretation, Hinks' intrepid scholarship bears stirring testimony to the creativity of Black masses. David Walker emerges as a social individual who let nothing interfere with his universalism: freedom itself.

—Jennifer Pen

## William Julius Wilson's racing economy

demand for low-skill jobs." To resolve this problem, Wilson proposed, rather abstractly, that the government needs to address the changed nature of the job market which hampers all races. And the best thing for the economically depressed Black communities is to "extend this (national) economic recovery for next several years."

In his statement about "extending economic recovery for the next several years," he was presenting President Clinton's political position that the so-called booming industrial economy would automatically eradicate hardcore poverty in the African American working class.

As if to make Professor Wilson face reality, the Feb. 17, 1998 *New York Times* published an editorial under the title "Black-White Income Inequality" with the following information: "The income gap between black and white families closed slightly between 1993 and 1996, according to the White House Council of Economic Advisors. But the gap remained huge and may have only temporarily receded. Indeed, black and Hispanic families are further behind whites than they were twenty years ago. The yawning gaps between rich and poor and between blacks and whites are not going away anytime soon."

The editorial concludes that "The plight of the low-skill worker has been decades in the making and will not turn around by the temporary flush of economic recovery."

**While it's true that racism is a powerful social force in American society, which does hinder the self-development of Black Americans, it is hardly responsible for this permanent poverty in Black working class communities.**

The nearest that Professor Wilson got to the real cause for Black poverty was when he said that the contributing reasons for Black poverty were the "profound transformations in the economy." Obviously, Wilson was alluding to the growth of high-technology in production which made large numbers of Black workers redundant.

Neither of these "profound transformations in the economy" are new, but are only an intensification of the general law of capitalist production which gets its surplus value (unpaid labor hours) from workers and at the same time throws them into the ranks of the unemployed. In other words it is a mode of production which creates both poverty and wealth at the same time.

President Clinton from the first moment he took office became a political supporter and an unabashed booster of high-tech production. He was the first pin-up President in Silicon Valley and there is no doubt that high-tech moguls have attributed to his policies the present so-called booming economy.

But African-American workers are still, according to the old adage, "last hired, first fired." Black urban communities are still grim areas of run-down houses with alienated unemployed Black youth standing on the corners with no other alternative except to work at low-paying jobs or turn to crime.

**President Clinton has called these Black youth amoral and a drag on the economy. Henry Louis Gates, W. E. B. DuBois Professor at Harvard, thinks these youth "might as well be from Mars," living out of this world. Both are wrong. These youth are indeed, totally in this world as the human results of the werewolf need of capitalism to accumulate wealth at the expense of human needs.**

Racism, even when it is expressed in the racial division of labor—is not the prime reason for Black poverty.

## After bombing, Jackson Advocate 'still here'

(Continued from page 1)

Farish Street Black Entertainment District adjacent to downtown Jackson.

Stephanie Parker-Weaver, Mississippi Executive Secretary of Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), charged that the CCI scheme, to which several prominent Black politicians have also signed on, seeks to "create a Memphis-style Beale Street entertainment district to help revitalize downtown Jackson. Nothing on Beale Street is Black-owned currently."

The *Advocate* joined with SCLC, civil rights and neighborhood preservation groups to fight the CCI plan. Mr. Tisdale sued CCI in 1996 for misuse of government funds, and amended his lawsuit on Jan. 19, 1998—only a week before the bombing—to include \$30 million in punitive and compensatory damages.

"We don't know who did the firebombing," Mr. Tisdale told N&L, "but the fact is that the white power structure in Mississippi today is working very well through its Black servants." Ms. Parker-Weaver agreed, arguing that "the *Jackson Advocate* was firebombed for one reason and one reason only. It has spoken 'truth to power' for many, many years—Black power and white power." At the same time she cautioned that "we are not by any means saying that CCI officials and/or their proponents actually firebombed the *Advocate* themselves or had knowledge of the bombing."

The real question, says Ms. Parker-Weaver, is "who would feel comfortable enough to firebomb the *Jackson Advocate* in the first year of the administration of Jackson's first Black mayor?"

In court, Mr. Tisdale's suit was assigned to Judge Swann Yerger. He turns out, Ms. Parker-Weaver said, to be "the brother of Wirt Yerger, a founding board member

of CCI. Swann and Wirt Yerger are cousins of Byron De La Beckwith, the convicted murderer of Medgar Evers." Wirt Yerger is a major figure in the state Republican party. Judge Yerger refused to excuse himself from the case, although that decision is being appealed.

Not until after the bombing were SCLC activists able to uncover the actual CCI rendering of the plan for the Farish Street Entertainment District. The artist's rendering showed the site of the building housing the *Jackson Advocate* as the "Walter Payton Club." Among the detailed drawings of Farish Street approved by Mayor Harvey Johnson, the *Advocate* was nowhere to be found.

Three days after the firebombing, hundreds of *Advocate* supporters, some from as far away as New Orleans, participated in a prayer vigil and rally in front of the burned-out building. A *Jackson Advocate* Defense Fund was established to help rebuild the *Advocate*; it has already received contributions from civil rights groups, women's organizations, unions and individuals across Mississippi and outside the state. But the *Jackson Clarion Ledger*, the largest daily newspaper in the state, has refused to mention the Fund. Ms. Parker-Weaver noted that "Duane McCallister, its publisher, is a founding and current board member of CCI."

Mr. Tisdale sums up the situation by remarking that "Mississippi is not a government in the generally accepted sense of the word. It is a conspiracy between those who have and those who govern." As for those who want to see the *Advocate* silenced, he offers this succinct response: "I'm still here."

Donations may be mailed to: JACKSON ADVOCATE DEFENSE FUND P.O. BOX 2016 JACKSON, MS 39205-0291.

## Toxic backyard

Memphis, Tenn. — I've lived in the area around the Defense Depot all my life and I've worked in chemistry since 1964.

A drainage ditch from the Depot ran adjacent to our property. We actually played in the water. We found a lot of old gas mask canisters in the ditch. At the time we had no idea what the mounds of chemicals inside the Depot were and for a while they were left uncovered. In the early years we didn't have running water and took our water from the water table, from wells.

Just before my dad died, I remember some guys coming down dressed in protective clothing, taking tests in the area. They didn't tell us why. A couple of our neighbors had kidney problems. One died from it.

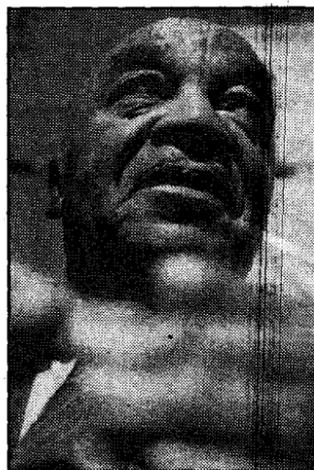
I read an article in the paper about mustard gas being buried there. Knowing what mustard gas is about, that really shook me up. It all started to come together. The community had two meetings at some schools and the movement got started.

I'm not totally sure Depot officials would have fought us had it not been a Black neighborhood. I know a lot of situations of this type happen to be in Black neighborhoods. If you're concerned about people as a whole, it's not one single cause that you get attached to. You get attached to anything that you see is unjust. I don't think you can separate this from the Civil Rights Movement. In the 1960s I was very active in the Civil Rights Movement.

When our environmental justice movement was getting started in 1995, the government was selecting a Restoration Advisory Board [RAB, which is supposed to "advise" on cleanup]. At one meeting they were talking about a toluene compound, saying there's no danger because it's in cleaning fluids. But you don't ingest cleaning fluid! They talk about drilling wells to clean up the water, but the premise is that they've got it contained and know exactly where it is, and none of it has left the spot that it was initially buried in. Some of the things have been buried a long time, and they didn't have chemically resistant containers. A lot of them have probably decomposed and contaminated the soil.

From working in chemistry I have some idea of what the hazards are. It looks like there's a lot of cleanup activity but it's strictly cosmetic. They said they neutralized the mustard gas. I asked: what was the neutralizing agent, what was the chemical reaction? They've never given an explanation. The very fact that they buried things indicates that they realized there was a problem.

—Black chemical worker



Jackson Advocate publisher Charles Tisdale



# Stop ongoing U.S. war on the Iraqi people

(Continued from page 1)

East to a state of preindustrial backwardness. Hundreds of men, women and especially children are dying every month because of lack of access to food, medicine, and decent clothing.

It is therefore not necessary to wait for the outbreak of military hostilities before initiating new protests against U.S. policy in the Gulf. With the sanctions, the U.S. is effectively at war with Iraq already. The sanctions imposed after 1991 simply continued the war in a new form. This was recognized by a young supporter of Voices in the Wilderness, a humanitarian aid group, who said at a recent demonstration in Chicago, "The sanctions haven't done anything to hurt Saddam, they only hurt the civilian population of Iraq."

**This is true, but even this is not the whole truth. For the sanctions have actually strengthened Hussein's repressive regime. Along with embargoes on food and medicine which have weakened the populace physically, the embargo on such things as books and papers is a blow at the intellectual opposition far more than at the regime itself.**

In early February, the UN raised the ceiling on the amount of crude oil Iraq could sell each year for purchasing such items as powdered milk, chicken and eggs, from \$4 billion to \$10.4 billion. Yet this still does not come close to meeting the needs of Iraq's 22 million people. Moreover, the devastation of Iraq's industrial base has been so severe that it is doubtful whether Iraq can produce much more than \$4 billion worth of crude oil in the immediate future.

Clearly, the sanctions have done nothing to hurt Saddam or his inner circle, who continue to live in opulence. Nor have they stopped Iraq's ability to create weapons of mass destruction, some of which—like the deadly biological agent anthrax—can be produced relatively cheaply and easily. Yet Clinton, as well as his right-wing critics, continue to illogically assert the need to continue the sanctions!

## A SPLINTERING ALLIANCE

What is new today, as against both 1991 and the various armed attacks launched by Bush and Clinton against Iraq between then and now, is that the seeming unanimity which bolstered U.S. policy on the Persian Gulf is coming apart.

This is reflected in new tensions within the U.S. ruling class, as seen in right-wing critics of Clinton accusing him of "caving in" to UN pressure for a negotiated settlement. Yet such accusations are off the mark. The UN today remains what it has always been—a tool of U.S. foreign policy. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright laid out to Annan what he could and could not offer to Hussein prior to his departure to Baghdad, and he acted accordingly. Clinton decided to make use of Annan's diplomacy because he realized he lacks for now the domestic and international support to launch a full-scale war.

The emergence of new anti-war sentiment has been striking, especially on the part of student protesters filmed on national news chanting "We don't want your racist war!" For millions of Americans the legacy of the Gulf War and U.S. intervention since then has shown up the futility of Clinton's policy. The 100,000 victims of Gulf War syndrome constitute an insurmountable legacy of mistrust in itself. Added to this is the memory of the U.S. debacle in Somalia, in which thousands of Somali citizens were massacred in a failed military operation to capture Somali clan leader Mohammed Farah Aided. The U.S. military casualties became a huge embarrassment.

The "liberal" Clinton is himself a dupe, in a sense, of the same kind of arrogance as his role models in the Kennedy administration, "the best and the brightest," who were architects of the Vietnam War. The growing popular disgust with the "arrogance of power" displayed by the likes of Albright and Secretary of Defense William Cohen was clearly evident in those who shouted them down at a nationally televised "town hall" meeting on the Gulf Crisis in Columbus, Ohio last month. The event shocked the administration, which had deluded itself that such strident anti-war sentiment was a thing of the past.

Growing popular dissatisfaction with U.S. policy toward Iraq, not only in the U.S. but worldwide, is to some extent reflected in the growing divisions between the rulers, though they come from a very different ground. These divisions are most sharply seen with Russia, which opposed any U.S. military action and has become increasingly cozy with Hussein's regime. France took a position half-way between that of Russia and the U.S. in decrying military action but demanding that Hussein agree to the UN inspections. As a whole, there is less support for U.S. military action in the Gulf than ever before, with the exception of Kuwait, Israel, and Britain.

The most important shifts in alliances are occurring in the Middle East. Syria's Hafez al-Assad, a longtime bitter enemy of Hussein, has opened its border with Iraq for the first time since 1991. As one commentator put it, "In 1991, after the collapse of its Soviet superpower supporter, Syria sought rapprochement with the U.S. and saw Iraq as a threat. Now it's the other way around."

In another first since 1991, the foreign minister of Qatar, a small emirate in the Persian Gulf, visited Baghdad in February to express his sympathy for Iraq's position. Even Saudi Arabia and Turkey, firm U.S. allies, refrained from granting permission for the U.S. to use their soil to launch air strikes.



Women rally outside UN Development Program offices in Baghdad, protesting food shortages blamed on UN sanctions.

**What the Gulf rulers fear most from any upheaval in Iraq is the effect it would have on their own restive masses. The most fundamental fact about U.S. policy in the region is that it is directed against the revolutionary tradition of the Middle East, which has come to life over and over, in Iraq, Iran, Lebanon and elsewhere.**

Fear of new revolts explains why the Middle East regimes increasingly indicate that they would like Hussein to remain in power. As Alistair Lyon of Reuters put it, "Countries like Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain don't want any weakening of central authority in Iraq." As for Iran, "It seems keen on settling its differences with Baghdad rather than trying to foment a militant Shi'ite revolt in the south...Iran wants a stable Iraq. It is very concerned about any upheavals and will not support any Shi'ite movement, even if there is an uprising in Baghdad."

Turkey also prefers to see Hussein stay in power, so as to prevent the Kurds in the north from being able to attain a truly independent nationhood. Turkey's war against the Kurds of northern Iraq has been unceasing, as seen in its Feb. 22 air attack on 7,000 Kurds trapped between the Kurdish enclave and areas controlled by the Iraqi government.

## CONTRADICTIONS FROM WITHIN

The way in which the U.S. policy in the Gulf feeds on and builds up the most reactionary forces can be seen perhaps most clearly in the way the current situation has been used to advantage by Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu. Even without the U.S. bombing, tremendous damage, perhaps irreparable, has been done to the peace process.

The U.S.'s callous disregard for the effect of its policies on the Iraqi masses has compromised its position even with the most reactionary Arab regimes, making them more reluctant to pursue any future U.S. initiative on the Israeli-Palestinian issue. It is clear that no progress on the peace process will come from Netanyahu. He is making use of the growing expressions of support for Hussein in the Arab world to argue that any talk of peace with Arabs is useless, as it automatically translates into policies that will lead to strengthening those who support Israel's total destruction. Many Israelis are complaining that the Gulf crisis is paving the way for his reelection.

New expressions of militant opposition to U.S. policy have meanwhile emerged on the streets of several Arab countries. Anti-war demonstrations, some spontaneous, erupted in Egypt in February, while in Jordan, a major demonstration broke out in Maan on Feb. 21, which government troops repressed. Throughout February hundreds of Palestinians engaged in protests on the West Bank, which Arafat repressed.

Yet we should be under no illusion about the political content of such protests, as seen in the slogan shouted over and over in the protests on the West Bank—"Beloved Saddam, hit Tel Aviv." This was much the same sentiment which predominated in the protests which arose against the Gulf War there in 1991, sending the movement into a dead end.

**Viewing the enemy of your enemy as your friend, and limiting yourself to what you oppose without ever working out a comprehensive perspective of what you are for, is not something that simply goes away with the passage of time. It is overcome only through a conscious effort, in which the emerging struggles are connected with a vision of genuine human liberation. There is nothing about the present situation which makes the emergence of such a vision any more automatic than in 1991.**

For this reason, in order to project a total opposition to today's drive for war, in which we oppose the machinations of all state powers in the region, we need to absorb the historic lessons of the recent past, by coming to grips with a philosophy of revolution which com-

prehends this history.

An historic relation has existed between the U.S. and Iraqi masses, who possess a deep revolutionary tradition. Yet whatever has been the attitude toward the tyrant Saddam Hussein, U.S. support for counter-revolution has been absolutely consistent.\*

## HISTORY AND RECOLLECTION

During the Iran-Iraq War, the U.S. "leaned" toward Hussein's regime, regardless of his use of chemical weapons against Iranian troops in the Faw Peninsula and upon the Iraqi Kurds of Halabja. Over a million Iraqis and Iranians died in the reactionary terror of that eight-year war.

When the U.S. turned against Hussein, after his invasion of Kuwait in 1990, countless thousands more were killed in Bush's Gulf War. These deaths included many thousands of Iraqi civilians, coldly termed "collateral damage," as for example the hundreds of women and children who died in the Baghdad air raid bunker penetrated by a "smart bomb" of the type Clinton is now relying on.

The Gulf War also saw thousands of conscripted Iraqi troops who had no desire to fight against any outsider and would have liked nothing better than to turn their guns around on their own oppressors. Instead, in acts of mass murder, these troops were massacred by the thousands on the "highway of death" leading out of Kuwait, or buried alive under the hot desert sands by American bulldozers.

Shortly after the Gulf War the Iraqi masses did rise up against Hussein's regime. The Kurds, Marsh Arabs, Shi'ites and other national minorities; women who armed themselves; workers who formed shuras, revolutionary councils, all used the moment to rise up. The response of the U.S. was a shift in policy toward Hussein, seeing his regime as preferable to the "instability" which a successful revolutionary upheaval would have brought to the region.

By 1996, Hussein was allowed to invade portions of Iraqi Kurdistan, and hundreds of Kurdish activists and militants were slaughtered. The Barzani faction of the Kurdish movement, which began to have armed battles with other Kurdish groups, helped pave the way for Hussein's invasion.

The revolutionary passions and forces in the U.S. must not be separated from those in Iraq or elsewhere. That is the only way to avoid the trap of reactionary positions—whether it comes from right-wingers like Richard Perle and Stephen Solarz, who prefer to try to corrupt the Iraqi opposition to the point where the current regime could be replaced with one more "cooperative" with the U.S. but no less reactionary, or whether it comes from leftists who tail-end Saddam Hussein instead of solidarizing with the masses of Iraq who are opposing him.

There is also the opposition to war against Iraq voiced by a racist xenophobe like Patrick Buchanan, who would rather turn his attention toward suppressing Blacks, immigrants, gays and women in the U.S. And there is the narrow nationalist opposition of Louis Farrakhan, who embraces the bloody Iraqi regime in the name of religion and, like Buchanan, anti-Semitism.

In combatting these and other reactionary tendencies, we need to keep our focus on the new voices of opposition to all the inhuman conditions of life in the U.S. while delving into the concepts of liberation which can move these voices forward. As Marxist-Humanists, we have an entire body of ideas to contribute to this effort. Opposition to war which roots itself in these new passions and new forces inseparable from articulating the idea of freedom itself can begin to create a real internationalism that includes within itself the very forward movement of humanity, as a vision and a goal.

— February 26, 1998

\*For the unique Marxist-Humanist view of the Gulf War, see the analyses in *News & Letters* in 1990-91, especially "Iraq's Revolutionary History" by Cyrus Noveen (December 1990) and "Bush's complicity in Hussein's genocide" by Peter Wermuth (May 1991).

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*It is insufficient to declare what you are against without declaring what you are for. To the barbarism of war we pose the new society.*

—RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA, 1957, 1960

See literature ad on page 7

**Youth**

by Kevin Michaels

The system of capitalism has succeeded in extending itself to literally every corner of the globe. But wherever it goes it inevitably provokes an antagonistic response from the human beings who are subjected to the alienation inherent in the production process as well as the negative things, like pollution, which result from it. One striking example of this conflict is the struggle of the people of the small South Pacific island of Bougainville to gain control over the question of mineral extraction on their home and the larger question of the right to determine the course of their future.

Bougainville, named after the French navigator Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, is one of the most northerly of the Solomon Islands. It is a mountainous place with at least two active volcanoes. Bougainville has been subject to several colonial powers, including both Germany and Japan. It became part of Papua New Guinea upon that country's independence in 1975, despite the fact that the people of Bougainville wished

**Bougainville fights for independence**

to either become independent or to be affiliated in some manner with the Solomon Islands—with which they have historic and ethnic ties. In contrast, Port Moresby, the capitol of Papua New Guinea, is 800 miles southwest over the ocean from Bougainville.

Copper is found in abundance under the forested hills of the island and after Papua New Guinea's independence, large-scale mining began. A huge transnational company, RTZ-CRA, soon moved in and developed a massive mine to dig for both copper and gold. The people of Bougainville were subjected to toxic runoffs from the operation as well as the accompanying chaotic development which did not profit them whatsoever. An organization, the Bougainville Revolutionary Army, was formed and began guerrilla-style interference with the mine.

**The conflict became a full-scale demand for independence for the island and the giant mine was forced to close down in 1989. Sporadic fighting against the Papua New Guinea government**

**has dragged on since then, claiming the lives of over one thousand people.**

The government's intransigence became such that last year, it contracted with an innocuous-sounding company called Sandline International to provide technical assistance to its army. Sandline turned out to be an outfit of South African mercenaries and Papua New Guinea's regular army was so outraged to discover that its government had paid \$27 million for the services of foreign mercenaries that it led a massive protest in the capitol in March.

The severity of this incident led to the downfall of the country's prime minister, Julius Chan, and the subsequent election of Bill Skate in his place. Skate represented Papua New Guinea at an important peace talk held in New Zealand in January of this year, at which Joseph Kabui, a representative of the rebel Bougainville Interim Government, and Sam Kaudna, leader of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army, both men with substantial government-sponsored bounties on their heads, represented the people of the island. Although Skate went into the meeting without stating a commitment to put independence on the agenda, a reluctance that another party to the talks, Australia, shares, the meeting resulted in a permanent cease-fire to begin on April 30 and an agreement to convene again by the summer to discuss the question of self-determination.

Joseph Kabui made plain his position at the talks: "Let there be no mistaking the intentions of all Bougainvilleans...of seeking a solution based on the fundamental human right of self determination." (*Green Left Weekly*, Feb. 11, 1998). Sam Kaudna also made a statement reminiscent of Frantz Fanon's assertion that a national consciousness distinguished from nationalism can be the basis of internationalism when he said, "Papua New Guinea should not fear Bougainville's independence because in the long run it would lead to stronger solidarity among Melanesian countries".

If the people of Bougainville successfully achieve the right to determine their own future in this world of globalized capitalism, it will send a strong signal throughout the Indian and South Pacific oceans—from East Timor to Tahiti—that freedom cannot be denied to even the smallest island nation. Those of us in the long-industrialized lands have a responsibility to see that this signal is conveyed around the globe.

**Anti-war protests challenge Clinton's war plans**

*San Francisco*—On Saturday, Feb. 21 at the Federal Building here over 500 came out to protest Clinton's war preparations against Iraq. It was amazing to see this showing in spite of a cold, hard-driving persistent rain.

Nothing could stop us from having our say after this prolonged media build-up over the impending war. Ron Kovic, the disabled Vietnam war veteran and author of *Born on the Fourth of July*, spoke about a new "powerful opposition to the illegal and immoral policies in Washington, D.C."

Kovic also attended the confrontation with Clinton's spokespeople in supposedly ultra-patriotic, safe Columbus, Ohio. That surprise greeting revealed the depth of opposition to Clinton's eagerness to unleash his new, improved high-tech war machine. The bottom line of demonstrators' opposition to Clinton is the disregard for human life, in particular the Iraqi people in both bombing and sanctions.

Demonstrators were well-aware of the long hypocritical history of bombing Saddam and controlling him through sanctions at the expense of the Iraqi people, even as the U.S. continually props him up to keep stability in Iraq or use him as a club against Iran. At the same time Saddam needs an evil external enemy to keep his ruthless totalitarian regime in place.

In spite of all the media hype, the new anti-war demonstrations show that Clinton will not have an easy time in his eagerness to play Commander-in-Chief in an actual war.



Memphis, Tenn. protest condemns U.S. aggression.

*Memphis*—In concert with other communities around the country responding to a call by Peace Action, individuals and groups here made our voices heard in opposition to Clinton's plans to bomb Iraq. On Feb. 11 Christian Brothers University held an interfaith prayer service.

Later in the day, Memphians stood on two different busy street corners during rush hour with signs that read "Don't bomb Iraq," "Stop the embargo, stop the starvation," "Eliminate all weapons of mass destruction," and "Bombs don't just kill dictators," among others.

Our leaflet condemned the U.S. and stated that "dropping more bombs won't stop Saddam Hussein." It made clear that we oppose U.S. aggression against the Iraqi people, and also recognize that "The people of Iraq have no control over Saddam Hussein's actions. Thousands of Iraqis who rebelled against Hussein's bloody tyranny have been slaughtered by his regime, with the complicity of the U.S."

The response we got from those who walked and drove by was overwhelmingly positive. We saw little support for Clinton's plans in the mid-South.

More demonstrations are planned for February and a town meeting to discuss the question is projected for March at the University of Memphis. Don't bomb Iraq! Freedom for the Iraqi people!

—Anti-war Memphians

**On Marx and Bakunin**

This is in response to Kevin Michaels's article in December's *News & Letters*, "Marx and Bakunin, then and now." In the article, I was hoping to hear more about Bakunin's influence in the Spanish Civil War and his specific ideas on what revolution means. I do know that without Bakunin, there may not have been a Spanish revolution. His ideas melded with other anarchists' ideas for 75 years before the actual revolution. Therefore, when the time was right for revolution, the people were armed with the principles of complete freedom. And for three years the Spanish managed to organize work, schools, production and agriculture without any big bosses. This is Bakunin's contribution.

Also, you stated that none of the groups Bakunin started are still around today. Many anarchist groups had to go underground because they were banned by governments and they feared the death penalty. Most of the organizations that were founded in the 1870s, whether communist or anarchist are not around today in their original form. Bakunin's ideas have lived on in anarchist organizations like The Black Cross, Love and Rage, Profane Existence and the newly formed Anarchist Collective in Memphis, Tenn.

—Kind Lady

**Rethinking queer activism**

*Chicago*—Over 1,000 people attended the 6th Annual Bisexual, Lesbian, Gay and Transgender College Conference at The University of Illinois at Chicago, held on Feb. 20-22.

More than 90 workshops covered everything from sexuality to campus organizing. One workshop I attended was about Ford Globe (Gay, Lesbian or Bisexual Employees), an officially recognized employee resource group of Ford Motor Company, with active chapters in the U.S., Great Britain and Germany. GLOBE is visible and active both in the community and in the plants and is responsible for the addition of "sexual orientation" to Ford's non-discrimination policy.

Another workshop was called "It's Time To End The Gay Rights Movement As We Know It." This workshop questioned the current mainstream "gay rights" movement and its focus on marriage and the military to the neglect of concerns such as health care, immigration, welfare, prisoners, racism and sexism.

Many of the 100 people who attended this workshop were struggling to find new ideas and questioning what one woman called "the narrowness of thinking of ourselves as only queer activists, as opposed to just being activists." Another woman said, "I always hear about how many Americans get hurt when we bomb another country, but I rarely hear about the pain and suffering our bombs inflict on them. I envision a system where this is not okay." One activist seemed to sum up the feelings of many of the people there when he said, "As queer activists who want to address these other issues, what should our focus be? Are there groups out there who are already addressing these things who will welcome me as a queer activist? Is there a banner under which all these issues can be addressed?" Unfortunately, I was not able to get called on to speak of the "banner" of a philosophy of freedom and the Absolute Idea.

—Suzanne Rose

**Zines express youth culture**

The zine revolution has been a major force for many youth of today. Zines are, for the most part, accessible to reproduce. All you need is a local copier store. I recommend Office Max, because you can scam a lot without them ever noticing. Zines are a perfect way for anyone to voice their passion for a better life. Kids hardly ever get taken seriously, so a zine is a way for them to take their life in their own hands and express it through art and the written word.

Be forewarned though. Before you go on a zine-buying extravaganza, know what you are getting. As much as there are a lot of great zines all over the world, there is also a lot of crap. Recently *Fact Sheet Five*, a zine which reviews other zines, has been attacked because it promoted a child porn zine and a snuff zine. People are urging a boycott of it.

**Free Radio Memphis**

*Memphis*—When the Ku Klux Klan came to town and the police incited a riot, blaming it on gang members and an "unorganized" coalition called Memphis Against Racism, 94.7 FM was the only radio broadcast station to defend the one thousand-plus peaceful protesters. At demonstrations against the proposed bombing of Iraq, the staff and numerous disk jockeys were there. Free Radio Memphis was the only station that gave air-play to the voices of protest surrounding the toxic Defense Depot. Since its inaugural broadcast, 94.7 FM has been a constant source of leftist news and communications.

Now, Free Radio Memphis is preparing for a rendezvous with destiny, a.k.a. the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The FCC has met with Free Radio Memphis and has informed the station of the illegal status of its activities and the consequence of continued broadcasting. The station, run democratically by a collective of 11 people, is facing anything from confiscation of its equipment to the arrest of collective members.

Free Radio Memphis maintains that broadcasting is within citizens' constitutional rights and that the FCC's nationwide crackdown on pirate radio stations violates the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (a document the U.S. has signed guaranteeing all people access to all forms of free speech, including broadcast) and the FCC's own mission statement. A court battle is likely, and the radio station has shown no signs of wishing to cut off the power. Currently, the search for a capable lawyer is well under way, and pro bono work is greatly needed, due to the less-than-comfortable financial state of the station.

Any and all help is immensely needed and appreciated. If you can contribute in any way, please contact Free Radio Memphis at P.O. Box 102, 111 S. Highland, Memphis, Tenn. 38111 or phone (901) 327-4174.

—Midnight Rider for Free Radio Memphis

The youth scene is thriving, you've just got to know where to look. You've got to be able to recognize what we find important in life so that you don't miss it. It's like when my parents say, "Oh how cute, she's doing her own newspaper." They're missing it. The fact is that there is power in expressing what is a part of our kid culture, thinking out what oppression means and what it is we want to replace it with. Whether the kids are hip hop, punk/hardcore, anarchist, ska, techno, or rap...the kids are doing something for themselves.

I do a zine called *Mons of Venus*. Issue number eleven contains an interview on revolution with the News and Letters Committees Memphis local. You can get it by sending a trade or \$1 and two stamps to P.O. Box 528037, Memphis, Tenn. 38152.

—Youth

## Our Life and Times

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

As the U.S. threatened war against Iraq, tensions between Israel and the Palestinians, stoked by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's intransigence and double-dealing, reached a crisis point. As in 1990-91, albeit on a far smaller scale, embittered Palestinians took to the streets to support not only the Iraqi people, but in some cases also the dictator Saddam Hussein and his chemical weapons. This type of extremely narrow and reactionary Arab nationalism is the fruit of a whole series of humiliations of the Arabs by Netanyahu and the U.S.

These have included (1) the way in which Israel, which has repeatedly violated UN resolutions on its occupation of Arab land, has faced no consequences from the U.S. and the other powers; (2) Israel's continued building of Jewish settlements on Arab land, in violation of the Oslo Peace Accords; (3) Israel's failure to turn over, as promised, large sectors of the West Bank to Yasir Arafat's Palestinian Authority; (4) a botched Israeli terrorist attack last fall inside the territory of Jordan, the one Arab country that has gone furthest in developing friendly relations with Israel; (5) the white-washing of the latter by Netanyahu's hand-picked commission of inquiry; (6) the failure of Clinton even to criticize Netanyahu seriously; (7) the insulting on-again, off-again invitation to Arafat to visit the Holocaust Museum in Washington, which would have made him the first Arab leader to do so, with incalculable impact on the entire Arab world.

## The Pope in Cuba

When Pope John Paul II took his reactionary message to Cuba in January, he was visiting the last remaining, nominally "Catholic" stronghold which still adheres to state-capitalism calling itself Communism. The Pope's message wasn't new in terms of anti-abortion and patriarchal "family values," curbing the "excesses" of globalized capitalism, and returning to the "true faith."

The Pope did endorse lifting the 37-year-old U.S. economic embargo on Cuba, although he did this in an indirect general fashion by stating his opposition to all "unjust" economic embargoes. For his part, Castro embraced the opportunity to share the world spotlight with this Pope.

Whatever Castro's opportunistic motives, we should remember that this Pope functioned as the supreme power in the church hierarchy whose "officials" often abetted, directly and by inaction, the repression of opposition in Latin America. The greatest toll was not among guerrilla foci, but among the popular oppositions, including Catholic priests, nuns and laypersons.

It is instructive to revisit what Raya Dunayevskaya wrote, in part, about the current Pope, shortly after his election (November 1978 *News & Letters*):

*With the election of Pope John Paul II, the Vatican has again plunged deeply into its professional anti-Communism, this time aimed not just at Russia but more specifically and directly against the Latin American liberation movement.*

*It is there where there is an ongoing Catholic-Marxist dialogue—and I do mean Marxist and not just state-capitalists calling themselves that. It's in Latin America where oppression by the totalitarian, militarist, reactionary, capitalist regimes has made life so nearly impossible for the masses, that a great schism has been produced within the church and some of the clergymen have been led to side with the liberationist movement. What more "brilliant" move on the part of the Vatican than the choice of Cardinal Wojtyla as Pope, a man as adept as the totalitarian Communists in the country in which he lives in using libertarian, sometimes even "Marxist" language, to cover up capitalist exploitation.*

## Israel undermines peace negotiations

As the state of Israel approaches its 50th anniversary this May, the country is frittering away the Oslo accords, the finest chance it has ever had to make a durable peace with its Arab neighbors. Until 1996, under those accords, the Labor Party, led by the martyred Yitzhak Rabin and his successor Shimon Peres, had begun to move, albeit too slowly and hesitantly, toward granting the Palestinians a state of their own on the West Bank and Gaza, in return for a durable peace.

This lost opportunity is not only the fault of Netanyahu, who all but promised to scrap the Oslo agreements during his 1996 election campaign. It is also that of Labor which, under Ehud Barak, has moved sharply to the Right. Barak has expressed reluctance to allow a Palestinian state, supported annexation of Arab East Jerusalem, and opposed dismantling Jewish settlements on the West Bank and Gaza. He spends much of his time courting reactionary religious parties, which form an increasingly large swing vote. This is why few

expect a serious renewal of the peace process even if, as many expect, the increasingly unpopular Netanyahu falls from power in the coming period.

## China workers' protests

The ongoing Asian economic crisis has not yet struck China dramatically. However, China's rulers increasingly are confronting protests by workers left jobless as "non-competitive" state-capitalist industries are drastically trimmed or shut down altogether.

In January, workers in Wuhan blocked city traffic in protest after loosing their jobs through the privatization of two factories. In Beijing, textile workers petitioned to hold demonstrations over job dismissal procedures but were denied. Last December, hundreds of textile workers in Hefei protested against mandatory retirements and layoffs.

The unemployment rate in the older urban industrial areas of northeast China now exceeds 20% and is still growing. Two other huge state-run sectors, railroads and textiles, plan to lay off 1.1 and 1.2 million workers, respectively, over the next three years. There are an estimated 130 million unemployed rural workers.

Jobless industrial workers are being told by the Communist Party to "emulate" their rural counterparts who fled to the cities over the past two decades and were forced into the subsistence service economy as street vendors or window washers.

## German unemployed march

The movement of the unemployed which began in France last December has spread to Germany. On Feb. 5, a total of 40,000 demonstrators, some of them carrying French flags, marched in 90 German cities to protest the country's 12.6% unemployment rate. Turnout was larger in eastern Germany, where a catastrophic 21% of the labor force is out of work.

Neo-Nazi agitation has surged once again in recent months. Fascists have attempted to create what they term "foreigner-free" and "leftist-free" zones in some urban areas. In Dresden in January, neo-Nazis marched to protest an exhibit which documents how the regular German army participated in the Nazi genocide. The neo-Nazis had to face hundreds of leftist counter-demonstrators, however, resulting in street clashes.

Earlier, in December, it came to light that Manfred Roeder, a neo-Nazi who has served prison time for the murder of two Vietnamese refugees, had been allowed to give a lecture in 1995 on Germans living in Poland and other eastern countries at an elite military academy. The military brass says it is investigating.

## Zimbabwe food riots

Serious riots broke out in Zimbabwe at the end of January. One cause was undoubtedly the unemployment rate which has climbed to 45%. Also, last November, the government of Robert Mugabe allowed the prices of food and other basic commodities to rise to "market" levels, prompting street protests and a general strike in December by the Zimbabwe Confederation of Trade Unions (ZCTU). This was the first time that the semi-official ZCTU leadership had ever gone against the government.

The January riots lasted three days and were quelled only when troops were sent in. Over the past year, Mugabe has attempted to blame all of the country's ills on the white settler community which still retained ownership of much of the country's best land. However, his plan to distribute large amounts of white-owned land to Blacks has faced suspicion on the part of the masses, who fear that most of the land will go not to poor Black farmers but to Mugabe's cronies.

## Opposition in Argentina



Protest of Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo.

Controversy erupted and hundreds protested in January when the Peronist president of Argentina, Carlos Menem, announced plans to tear down the notorious Navy Mechanics School outside Buenos Aires. Menem said the government would erect in its place a park and "monument to national unity."

The school was used as a prison, torture chamber and killing field by the military during the 1976-83 dictatorship's "dirty war" against the Left. At least 4,000 political prisoners perished inside its walls.

Menem decreed an amnesty in 1990 for military officers guilty of the kidnapping, murders and disappearances from that period. He has urged the military criminals to keep silence, and was forced in January to dismiss one of the most notorious butchers, former navy captain Alfredo Astiz, who bragged about his exploits in kidnapping and torture, and threatened the lives of journalists and politicians who sided with his victims.

As with other blanket amnesties (South Africa and South Korea, for example), the pardon of military and political criminals does not resolve the contradictions. In Argentina, the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo and other relatives of the murdered and disappeared were the first to oppose Menem's plan, demonstrate in front of the Navy Mechanics School, and demand that it be converted into a museum open to the public, so that all can know what happened in the "dirty war" to prevent it happening again.

## 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*.