

NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

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Special need of machines—human touch



by B. Ann Lastelle

Zenith Electronics Corporation announced in early April that it would lay off 409 workers (later increased to over 800) at its color picture tube plant near Chicago. The *Chicago Tribune* reported that the plant "has been wracked by problems in implementing new automated technology. Rather than helping to... turn out more picture tubes, the new technology has caused... production to plummet."

Engineers, brought in by the company where I am employed, have introduced workers to the concept of Cycle Time Reduction. It is, they said, a Japanese technique to increase utilization of existing equipment. The aims are: zero downtime, zero defects, zero waste. The result is survival —of this plant and of our jobs.

Raya Dunayevskaya in *Marxism and Freedom* wrote that "[Karl] Marx...could anticipate the key question of our epoch: is productivity to be increased by the expansion of machinery or by the expansion of human capacities? Capitalists and their ideologists think always of expanding productivity by more perfect machines." Zenith and my employer are no exception.

Oh, yes, the engineers did say that Cycle Time Reduction is "a team-based effort." They will be meeting with us in small groups to get our ideas, because the people who run the machines every day know best what causes downtime and what needs improvement. The engineers put a large tablet on an easel at the end of the lines so workers could write their suggestions.

Nevertheless, the focus remains on the expansion of machine, not human, capacities. It is a manifestation of

(Continued on page 3)

Black World

Chicago's Black radical legacy



by Lou Turner

The Black Radical Congress (BRC) convenes in Chicago, June 19-21. The date chosen was in recognition of the Juneteenth holiday, commemorating the late June 19th date that Black slaves in Texas got the news that slavery had been formally abolished six months earlier.

Chicago may seem an accidental choice for such a gathering, that is, until its Black radical legacy is brought to light.

In one sense, Black radicalism in Chicago may be said to have begun in 1876 when Lucy Parsons, the Black, Latino and Native American anarchist joined the First Workingmen's International headed by Karl Marx, along with her husband Albert Parsons, who in 1886 became one of Chicago's Haymarket martyrs. Lucy Parsons was also an organizer of the May 1, 1886 general strike that demanded the eight-hour day and which became the first workers' manifestation of May Day. Before Ida B. Wells, Lucy Parsons was a militant campaigner against the wholesale lynching Blacks and the oppression of women at work and in the home.

Another significant, but long hidden, strand of Chicago's Black radical legacy—significant also because 1998 marks its hundredth anniversary—appeared in the form of Black anti-imperialism. While the leadership of the labor and the Populist movements, as well as the liberal press and academic world were either conspicuously silent about, or otherwise capitulated to, U.S. capitalism's plunge into imperialism with the 1898 Spanish-American War, the Black press and activist-intellectuals of the day maintained a consistent, principled opposition.

The Black working class in Chicago in this period, nevertheless, remained small. However, by the time the Great Migration swelled the Black industrial army in Chicago's plants, mills and shopfloors, in the 1920s, not only had a critical mass in workers' power been reached but a new social consciousness had become manifest. At this point the first of two challenges to Black radicalism arose.

The "Red Summer" of 1919, with its bloody race riots and Black rebellions of self-defense, announced the appearance of a "New (radical) Negro" on America's historic stage. Even before 1919, a new Black radicalism was

(Continued on page 8)

Clinton's ready to deal in China

by Bob McGuire

On this ninth anniversary of the June 4, 1989 massacre at Tiananmen Square of students and workers demanding freedom and democracy, Bill Clinton will be preparing for his summit meeting with Jiang Zemin. No more is there the annual farce in which Clinton questions then decides that China's record on human rights and political prisoners merits continued free trade—not when so many U.S. companies have grown fat on the labor of workers China has offered for superexploitation in this decade.

The summit in Beijing scheduled for late June will take place surrounded by the tottering and crashed economies of the Asian rim. India's decision to gain popular support by flaunting its long-known capacity to build atomic weapons has turned the spotlight on conflicts in a pan-nuclear Asia, and on high-tech military proliferation. And the revolt led by students in Indonesia which ended the rule of Suharto put on display the mass anger over the human costs of domestic exploitation in the global market into which all Asian leaders have led their countries. The bigger headlines involving China's neighbors make it the calm site in the eye of the storm.

EXPLOIT, EXPORT, EXPLOIT

That China's own export-based growth continues after the meltdown of production in Thailand, South Korea and Indonesia has been a matter for self-congratulation among Chinese officials. Other Asian exporting nations have devalued their currencies in hopes of returning to prosperity by surpassing China in exports, and a prime source of capital investment like Japan suffered a plunge in real estate value and a run-up in corporate debt. On the other hand China, while maintaining 8% annual growth for the moment, has found it necessary to deny repeated-



Labor alienation on the Nike shoe line in Guangdong Province.

ly any plans to devalue the yuan.

What they have continued to further devalue are living conditions of workers in the export industry. From the beginning these workers were not granted the wages and rights of workers in the state enterprises, but subjected to the whims of factory owners. As competition for work stiffened, not just between countries but between provinces, export zones and even subcontractors, already unbearable conditions worsened.

The 10-hour day has become 12 hours, 15 hours or more. Newer factories have dropped wages by as much as half from \$3 a day. Whatever forms of coercion contractors have chosen in order to exact control of the

(Continued on page 10)

After Suharto, where to next in Indonesia?

by Mary Holmes

All eyes were on Jakarta in May, as ex-General and now ex-President Suharto was forced to give up power after he lost the confidence of his own ruling classes to control the growing mass unrest in Indonesia. Backed by the military, Suharto's vice-president, B. J. Habibie, one of Suharto's closest "crony capitalists," took over in a so-called "constitutional" transfer of power.

While the anti-Suharto students who had occupied the Parliament building were jubilant, most expressed the idea that the struggle is not over, but just begun.

The military has been the central element in stabilizing the existing ruling structure. While soldiers had escorted the buses which brought anti-Suharto students into Jakarta and allowed them into the Parliament building, the military command quickly made their agenda clear after the head of the previously rubber-stamp Parliament called for Suharto to resign. The head of the army, Gen. Wiranto, went on television to say the military stood united against any immediate move to depose Suharto.

More ominously, Wiranto warned off a mass nationwide demonstration which had been planned for May 20. After Suharto was finally forced by his own ruling class to resign on May 21 and Habibie took over, Wiranto ordered the soldiers to remove the 3000 students who still occupied Parliament, in opposition to Habibie, who they reject as "Suhartoism without Suharto."

INSURRECTION ELEVATES CRISIS

Habibie has attempted to deflect ongoing discontent by removing the most egregious of Suharto's cronies (except himself) from government, promising open elections in the far future, and most recently agreeing to release, under pressure, some 200 political prisoners. On May 26, Mukhtar Pakpahan, who heads the Indonesian Labor Welfare Union which organizes in the factories and sweatshops, was promised his release. Habibie's "Justice" Minister, however, stated that Xanana Gusmao, leader of the East Timor armed struggle against Indonesian occu-

pation, will remain a prisoner.

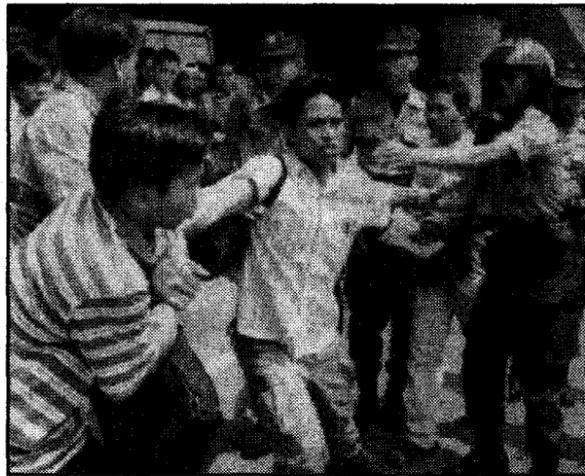
Jakarta has been an occupied city in the aftermath of the May 12 killing by riot police of six students who were taking part in an anti-Suharto demonstration at Trisakti University. The shootings ignited a rebellion in the streets of the capital. For two days, the non-student youth, poor and unemployed, targeted the palaces of Indonesia's rich elite, including the enterprises of the Suharto clan—shopping centers, banks, office towers, and auto showrooms.

The smoke cleared only after the army rolled in with a massive deployment of tanks and soldiers. By then Suharto's clock was already ticking out of time, as it became clear that he could no longer contain the mass opposition to his continuance in power.

Indonesian students, especially from the less prestigious public universities, have become the most outspoken critics and organized opponents of the Suharto regime ever since the Asian economic crisis exploded in Indonesia last summer. While protests, strikes and so-called "riots" over food and other basic commodities have erupted since, the student movement has been the most sustained, reaching a new stage three months ago after Suharto anointed himself for another presidential term, thereby ensuring that the misery for the vast majority of Indonesians would worsen.

Embroiled in all this was the face off between Suharto and the IMF, whose \$43 billion bail out demands included severe austerity measures as well as inroads into Suharto's "crony capitalist" wealth. While Suharto failed

(Continued on page 10)



Students take to historic stage in Indonesia.

ON THE INSIDE

- EDITORIAL • The state and Teamster vote...Page 3
- FROM THE WRITINGS OF RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA
 - Practicing DialecticsPage 4
- ESSAY • Queer Left legacy and Marxist-HumanismPage 5

Philosophic dialogue: Luxemburg today

Editor's note: Below we excerpt the talk the International Rosa Luxemburg Society invited Olga Domanski to give in Chicago on May 2.

The todayness of Raya Dunayevskaya's **Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution** lies in how its three parts relate directly to the todayness of three anniversaries we are celebrating this year. One is the 100th anniversary of the event that the International Rosa Luxemburg Society is celebrating, addressed in the very first sentence of the book: "Rosa Luxemburg's very entrance, May 1898, into the German arena, center of the Second International, shook up the largest and most prestigious of world Marxist organizations. From the start, she became a subject of contention that has not abated to this day." Written nearly 20 years ago, that may be even more true today.

The second anniversary we are celebrating is the 150th of the **Communist Manifesto**, the concretization of the whole new continent of thought and revolution Marx discovered in his 1844 "Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts"—a continent that is known to the world as "historical materialism." And the third is the 30th anniversary of 1968, the climax of a turbulent decade at the end of which a new force of revolt made itself known as the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM), an idea whose time had come. Whether or not it may seem a coincidence that these three anniversaries point directly to the three parts of **Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution**, it is their integrality that has become more important to grasp today than ever.

SINCE LUXEMBURG WAS Dunayevskaya's focus from the beginning, let's begin with her relationship to women's liberation. While it was surely the WLM's appearance that made Dunayevskaya look at Luxemburg with new eyes, it was the new WLM's nearly total disregard of Luxemburg because she supposedly had no interest in what used to be called the "Woman Question" that worried her enough to want to tackle it head-on. It was Luxemburg's revolutionary dimension that she felt the new women's liberationists needed to absorb, not, as she put it, "for history's sake, but for their demands of the day, including that of autonomy."

As for the myth that Luxemburg had no interest in women, Dunayevskaya discovered when she started looking for it that not only did Luxemburg have a "feminist dimension"—which included her refusal to be "pigeon-holed" to the role by the party hierarchy trying to keep her out of the leadership—but that it is part of the male-chauvinist myth-making to call the period of Luxemburg's greatest independent self-development "The Lost Years: 1906-1909," as Peter Nettl did in his biography of her, just because of her break-up with Jogiches. Adrienne Rich, the U.S. feminist and theorist, put it succinctly in her Foreword to the expanded 1991 edition: "Luxemburg's

Mothers march on jail

Chicago—The second annual Mothers' March For Justice this Mother's Day at Cook County Jail and Court House was organized by Mothers Against Injustices/Justice is Blind, a group of Black and Latina women whose sons have been convicted of crimes they did not commit. Many have been beaten, coerced into signing false confessions, or murdered by the police.

The protest put the spotlight on the criminal and racist nature of the entire injustice system—cops, prosecutors, judges, defense attorneys who just take poor peoples' money and juries who can't fathom why the cops would lie, beat, plant evidence and extract false confessions. All ten mothers who spoke had horror stories about what the "justice system has done to their sons, themselves and their families." Their sons remain incarcerated.

Susan Ester, founder of MAI/JIB, said, "Our struggle is everyone's struggle. It's not about your son. It's not about justice for one. It's got to be justice for all."

Many women believed in the justice system until they had to confront it head on and saw evidence created, evidence ignored, or covered up, lost medical records showing police violence, set-up line-ups, etc. These mothers have done their homework. The level of corruption and conspiracy they have found is what transformed MAI/JIB from an emotional support group to an organization that is, as Susan Ester said, "going to start monitoring these judges, lawyers and policemen. We know your names and it is a matter of time before you come down for the way you've taken us down!"

There were a lot of tears shed at this Mother's Day demonstration. Whole families came out to demand justice and to let the prisoners themselves hear their support for them. And some of the prisoners did hear us—and we them—at the newest multi-million dollar building added to the jail we marched to.

This new building warehousing people has thick windows we couldn't see into, but which prisoners see out of. We chanted: "We love you! We're fighting for you!" and "Hey, Hey, Ho, Ho, the prison walls have got to go!" We could hear prisoners banging on the windows, letting us know they heard us. One man told me his son was in the fourth window down. He kept waving—his face filled with a huge smile that would turn into a cry and then back into a smile. People threw their fists up and sang freedom songs and spirituals changing words to things like: "Mothers marching on prisons to tear those walls down." It was a great display of humanity in one of the most inhuman places on earth—Cook County Jail.

—Sonia Bergonzi

Woman as Reason

central relationships, in Dunayevskaya's eyes, were her intellectual relationship with the work of Marx as she understood it and the relationship of her whole self to the revolution. Most biographers of women still fail to recognize that a woman's central relationship can be to her work, even as lovers come and go."

One of the book's most powerful messages directed to the then-new women's liberationists was what it means to recognize yourself as a new revolutionary force, which has raised altogether new questions and made important new contributions, but nevertheless has to confront that the task—to achieve the totally new human relations that the WLM was demanding—was a task that remained to be done. It appears to me that the retrogression we have seen in the WLM by today irrefutably bears out Dunayevskaya's worries.

IN THE MAY ISSUE of *News & Letters*, in the column we call "From the Archives," you will find a letter Dunayevskaya penned just before she got down to actually writing the book. It had a frontispiece quote from Luxemburg: "The revolution is magnificent, and everything else is bilge."

Here is what Dunayevskaya then said about it: "When Luxemburg writes of revolution which is 'magnificent, and everything else is bilge,' she doesn't mean the down-

(Continued on page 9)

Wisconsin abortions blocked

Madison, Wisc.—About 150 protesters rallied at the capitol while physicians at women's clinics across the state ceased all abortions May 14, in protest of a new retrogressive law that took effect that day. Ostensibly aimed at banning so-called "partial-birth abortions," the law is so vaguely worded that it could apply to all abortions at any stage. As many feminists have warned, such laws use the recent right wing-fueled hysteria over this unusual late-term procedure as a way to block all abortions and shift attention from women's self-determination.

The harshest partial-birth abortion ban in the U.S. to date, the law carries **mandatory** life sentences for doctors performing the procedure. It thus threatens to permanently place behind bars those who haven't been intimidated out of performing abortions by daily threats to their lives from reactionary "right to lifers." Equally harsh to ordinary women, legislative supporters of the law made no exception to save a woman's health, reluctantly agreeing only to make exceptions to save a woman's life.

Because the law describes "partial-birth abortion" as "a person partially vaginally deliver[ing] a living child," it could even apply to suction curettage or vacuum aspiration abortions in the first trimester, in violation of the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision which protects abortions in the first two trimesters and those needed in the third trimester for medical reasons. It accomplishes this by relying on right-wing religious ideology that defines "living child" as beginning at conception.

Even though similar laws in other states have been declared unconstitutional, Federal District Judge John Shabaz in Madison refused to grant a restraining order requested May 13 by Planned Parenthood and several doctors. The 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Chicago turned down an appeal, May 19.

Several clinics have resumed abortions, but only up to 18 weeks. For women whose pregnancies have progressed beyond 18 weeks, those who cannot afford to travel out of state may have no options. The law remains in effect at least until June 4, when Shabaz will consider a constitutional challenge to the law.

—L.C.

'A Shining Thread of Hope'

A Shining Thread of Hope: The History of Black Women in America by Darlene Clark Hine and Kathleen Thompson (New York: Broadway Books, 1998), 355 pages.

Darlene Clark Hine and Kathleen Thompson set out to write "a history of African-American women" in a unique way: "No one has told that story, separate from any other" (p. 315). Thompson was editor-in-chief of the **Encyclopedia of Black Women**. Hine co-edited **Black Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia** as well as editing and writing numerous books, including **Hine Sight: Black Women and the Re-Construction of American History**.

Hine has broken new ground in the study of African-American women's history, as well as developing historical theory. Much of that is reflected in **A Shining Thread of Hope**, both in its breadth—beginning in 1619, with the arrival of the first slaves brought to North America, and ending in our day—and in its depth, weaving Black women artists in with the more expected subjects of slavery, civil rights, and so on.

Hine and Thompson identify four "themes" that run through African-American women's history: community, education, dignity, and triumph. What they do not mention, but what nevertheless unites the whole work, is that the centuries-long struggle for freedom they trace—where Black women put American civilization on trial and found it guilty over and over again—is a revolutionary struggle.

That their work is not a simple chronological recounting of African-American women's history is seen in how they show the powerful Black women's club movement as African-American women's response to the end of reconstruction and the renewal of KKK terror, and the disenfranchisement of Black men. **Threads** reveals the

Maquiladora murders

Since the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement, international attention has been drawn to the horrific conditions workers, especially young women, face in northern Mexico, where sexual abuse in the *maquiladoras*—foreign-owned assembly plants—is rampant. But even activists acquainted with these facts would be unprepared for the recently publicized revelations from Ciudad Juárez, the largest *maquiladora* city, where over 100 young women workers have been raped



Family members of slain women workers demand justice

and murdered since 1993 alone, their bodies strewn in the desert.

These women were most likely attacked not at work, but on dates, outside of bars, or at home. Although law enforcement officials have blamed a serial killer, it is more likely that they were committed by many men—acquaintances and strangers, husbands and lovers.

In contrast to the lackadaisical attitudes of many officials in Juárez and the state of Chihuahua, who view this violence as part of the status quo, a feminist movement has arisen, including family members of the slain women. Feminists have not only demanded an investigation, but called attention to the larger situation women face. As Esther Chávez with the Grupo 8 de Marzo (March 8th Group—a reference to International Women's Day), asserts, "What we were trying to get people to see was a general climate of violence against women in Juárez."

Young women migrants from the rural countryside make up the majority of *maquiladora* employees. Living in sprawling desert shantytowns, often without running water, electricity or sewers, they work for subsidiaries of giant U.S. corporations making car, television and appliance parts, or for smaller clothing or candy manufacturers. These firms began moving to Juárez in 1964. Over one million people and 400 tax-free assembly plants now inhabit Juárez.

In this context, women work while men often remain unemployed. Just as Marx pointed out 150 years ago in the **Communist Manifesto**, the constant revolutionizing of the instruments of production revolutionizes not only production relations but "the whole relations of society," including Man/Woman relations. Young women workers embrace their new independence from traditional male-dominated rural family. But they have become targets of domestic violence, date rape, and murder. In the case of Marcela Díaz, one of 106 women murdered in five years, her husband strangled her during a fight, buried her, and reported her missing. Others, like Sandra Juárez, have simply turned up strangled or tortured to death.

The new women's organizations denounce not only specific acts of violence their loved ones suffered, but the entire climate of antagonism toward women who dare to be independent from men. As Marx made clear, even if changed production relations create the **material** base for new Man/Woman relations, only social revolution can truly uproot the old ossified ones. —Laurie Cashdan

self-organization of Black women that took place in every major city where club women created the infrastructures that would carry the race by founding hospitals, homes for the elderly and for working women and girls, kindergartens, and burial societies. Black women's work in clubs and the church developed the skills that would serve them in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s-60s.

Threads is not only an academic work. As Darlene Clark Hine said recently in Memphis: "We wrote this book to bring 20 years of scholarship to the widest possible reading public. We show how African-American women with nothing were able to create families, save communities, define themselves and bring Black women through 380 years of history and never give up hope."

So powerful is the history they reveal—be it contrasting the development of free and enslaved Black women in Philadelphia, Charleston, and New Orleans, or taking up individuals as diverse as Ida B. Wells-Barnett and "Stagecoach Mary" Fields—that it pushes this work beyond its concluding chapters on the 1970s to today. These chapters are more a recounting of gains by contemporary African-American women, rather than a continuation of the drive for freedom that characterized the rest of the work. What we need to experience in those chapters is the concept of "history in the making."

History in the making is seen in the lives of Black women in the Mississippi Delta struggling to organize their workplaces, and in women on welfare fighting against a dehumanizing system that would push them and their children into starvation and neo-slavery. That is the spirit that pervades most of **A Shining Thread of Hope** and what makes it an extremely important book for all to read and to use.

—Terry Moon

Texas Prison Labor Union for worker-prisoners

Since 1990, Texas prisoner populations have increased from 50,000 to 140,000 while the number of prisons has grown from 36 to 110. This prison expansion program is the result of a war perpetrated against the working class of Texas by the ruling class in Texas including the capitalists, media, politicians and law enforcement.

Texas prisons have always had a reputation for brutality, and Texas prisoners are forced to perform hard labor and are not paid for their work. Yet Texas prisoners are charged three dollars per medical visit. The only money prisoners get is that sent by friends and family, or if they are lucky, they might be able to sell some handicrafts from the craft shop.

If they have no money but have to go to the doctor, a lien is put on their account. Needless to say, prisoners who receive little money are likely to put off or avoid going to the doctor. Never mind that the medical care is questionable and often dispensed by doctors who have had their licenses revoked in other states.

Texas prisoners also work in hazardous conditions, and Texas prisons are an unregulated industry. OSHA is not even allowed in the door.

The Texas Prison Labor Union was started in 1995 to try and combat the myriad injustices and indignities foisted on working class prisoners by the State of Texas. We are working to get prisoners paid for their toil, to get safe working conditions commensurate with rehabilitation,

and to stop the brutality. We still have lots of work to do and we need all of you Texas prisoners to join in and help.

We need to galvanize solidarity among Texas prisoners system-wide. So write to Dwight Rawlinson, 2121 South Fourth, Waco, TX 76706, and tell him you want to know more about TPLU. Tell him you want to find out how to get paid for your labor. In addition, have your friends on the outside and family members write him, too. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your letter as Dwight is always in need of stamps and the same will ensure a prompt reply.

—Prisoner

May Day in New York

New York—May Day brought out 200 union members, retired union workers and workfare workers, in spite of a heavy rainstorm, to demand fair wages for all. Our "slavefare" workers are fighting for health and safety rights, the right to unionize, and an opportunity to hold permanent union jobs instead of being used to replace union workers. The labor unions have only recently begun to back them, and their combined struggle may force the mayor to back down on plans to lay off 600 hospital workers and replace them with welfare workers.

The rally also featured workers from a number of small strikes going on around the city, from cemetery workers to construction workers. Retirees spoke of the need to fight threatened cuts to and privatization of Social Security and Medicare. A member of Teamsters Local 808 talked about the closing of the Swingline Stapler plant in Queens. It is moving to Mexico, where the workers will be paid \$35 to \$45 a week, not enough for them to survive on.

A postal worker described the threat to break their union through privatization of postal services.

The assembled group passed, by acclamation, a resolution to end sweatshops and privatization, and to establish social services, jobs, and union rights for all. One speaker said to loud cheers, "The labor movement is back and it's here to stay!"

—New York News and Letters Local

Black farmers conference

Detroit—At the National Black Farmers' Conference here May 9 well over 500 people gathered in response to the alarming rate of loss of Black-owned farmland. If the trend continues there will be no Black-owned farms by the year 2000.

According to the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund, Black farmers will be more seriously affected by the 1995-96 Farm Bill (which denies loans to anyone who has filed for bankruptcy), because Black people have had less access to credit than others. The decline of farming as an occupation is especially serious today for the Black population, which can no longer count on migration to a city to obtain employment.

Although the conference was called by two Black Congresspeople (John Conyers and Carolyn Cheeks-Kilpatrick) with the primary aim of bringing more Blacks into agribusiness and encouraging Blacks to become entrepreneurs, it was located in Detroit because all recognize the need for a new relationship between urban and rural Black people to combat the continuing erosion of all gains during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.

In his autobiography *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*, Charles Denby wrote about the formation of the Lowndes County Christian Association Movement for Human Rights, a Detroit support group formed in 1967 for Blacks kicked off the land for registering to vote. In 1968, 200 acres were purchased in Lowndes County, Ala. At that time Blacks trying to purchase land there were asked to pay \$1,000 per acre when whites were paying \$75 to \$100 for the same property.

Detroiters who attended the conference came away determined to spread the word about the loss of Black-owned land, to involve the churches, and to teach young Black people about the importance of farming and food production into the twenty-first century.

—Susan Van Gelder

Wildcat at Freshwater

Belzoni, Miss.—About 100 workers, half the workforce, walked off the job May 8 at the Freshwater plant here. They complained that the company and the union too weren't doing what they were supposed to do, so they decided to act for themselves. They had the first wildcat strike in the Mississippi Delta catfish industry. The company tried to use some of the old tactics with them, even though they have a union contract. The company put time limits on the bathroom, wasn't promoting from within to management jobs, had started making the workers pay for equipment, and was being disrespectful to them.

The workers had called their regular UFCW representative, but he was tied up in grievance meetings, so they just walked out. They stayed out all day Friday and Monday. On Monday morning a different union representative came down and met with the workers and the company. The company apologized and signed off on the workers' list of demands, saying they would correct those problems. The workers felt the union was not acting quickly enough on grievances, and got the union's commitment on that.

Even though you have a union contract with the company, you always have to keep struggling and striving to keep them at their word. It's always an ongoing struggle to keep what you have. That solidarity was there at Freshwater and they wanted to keep that contract strong by taking the chance of walking out on this wildcat strike.

—S. Hamer

Workshop Talks

(Continued from page 1)

the perverse relation of subject to object in capitalist production. The machines are the actors, and we poor workers are mere appendages to them.

Machines dominate workers in the process of production. We adapt our movements to their speed and functions. We are more flexible and mobile, so we clear their jams and fetch their material (plastic film, boxes, tape, labels). We stand and watch. Our eyes and brains anticipate and solve problems to which they can only react (shut down). We keep the machines running.

The excruciating boredom of this enslaving subordination to machinery is recognized implicitly in the company's Plant Rules: "Unauthorized reading, use of radios or other sound equipment, or any other activity which interferes with work assignment" is prohibited. A third violation merits termination.

The company four years ago reduced the number of absences allowed before disciplinary action is taken and the number of times a vacation day may be taken for an emergency. Most galling, the new policy applied only to production, maintenance and warehouse employees, not to office staff, who are salaried and/or have sick days, which we do not.

The difference is not an arbitrary one. When the machines are ready to run, an appropriate number of workers must be there to tend them. They must be there for 12 hours at a stretch. They must be there overnight, when a person should be at home asleep in her own bed. They must be there despite illness or family obligations. Absenteeism is a problem for the company, and our supervisors now seek still stricter interpretations of and changes in the attendance policy.

Karl Marx in *Capital* described the fate of the worker in production: "...within the capitalist system all methods for raising the social productivity of labor are put into effect at the cost of the individual worker; ...all means for the development of production...become means of domination and exploitation of the producers; they distort the worker into a fragment of a man, they degrade him to the level of an appendage of a machine, they destroy the actual content of his labor by turning it into a torment..." It is an inhuman system.

Editorial The state's hand in Teamsters vote

Despite the powerful forces arrayed against them, U.S. workers continue to battle. That the rank and file is eager to get organized and to support an aggressive leadership was dramatically demonstrated by the successful Teamsters' strike against UPS last year under the leadership of Ron Carey. That victory inspired workers in other industries, aching to confront management to resolve long-standing health, safety, production and wage issues.

The UPS victory, however, set off alarm signals in corporate board rooms across the nation as well as in Congress. Furthermore, Carey and his top aides opened the door to hostile forces by misappropriating union funds during Carey's re-election campaign against James Hoffa Jr. whose candidacy represents a return to paternal and business unionism. Anger over conditions at UPS, often as horrific as before the strike, and inside locals where reform has not come, have opened the door further.

HANDING UNION TO HOFFA

Findings of misappropriation of funds and perjury resulted in the nullification of the 1996 election won by Carey over Hoffa, and the disqualification of Carey to run in the rerun election slated for this fall or whenever Congress okays funding. Many predict Hoffa will win over his opponent, Tom Leedham, head of Teamsters' warehouse division, even though candidates supporting Hoffa were decisively defeated in recent elections held in large Teamster locals in the midwest and south.

A subsequent investigation of Hoffa's campaign

Unionizer assaulted

Lafayette, Ind.—I was fired Dec. 17 from the Kirby Risk Service Center for trying to organize a union. While I knew the probable outcome beforehand, human rights abuses at the Caterpillar subcontractor were simply unbearable.

After returning on Jan. 7 to collect my last paycheck, I was physically assaulted by Jeff Albrecht, an upper management employee. I had a few leaflets detailing the company's criminal activities which I was placing on workers' windshields when Albrecht and another manager chased me around the building. Albrecht grabbed me, wrapping both arms around my upper arms and shoulders, and attempted to throw me to the pavement, but I slipped into my car from the passenger side and escaped.

The Tippecanoe County prosecutor is an ally of the local religious Right. The Lafayette police officer who took my report of assault said, "You could knock me over with a feather" if the prosecutor presses charges. The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers has lodged a complaint with the capitalist state, but direct action is needed from the working class to expose this abuse of power.

Severe anti-immigrant harassment was common at the plant, and night shift supervisor Jerrod Holley called one African-American worker a "slave girl." Knives, scissors and pliers were thrown at me by Holley for refusing to conform to his right-wing views. One company goon, Chet Soule, used to scream "Conform, conform, conform!" into my face for refusing to shave my head and attend his church. Two women were disciplined for refusing to have sex with an assistant supervisor.

—Ryan Amptmeyer

revealed that he too was guilty of misappropriation of funds and perjury, precisely the same charges brought against Carey, but Hoffa was not disqualified from running. Clearly, a different standard was used for Carey.

This tilt toward the more pliant alternative follows a pattern of government efforts to stifle labor militancy. Measures proposed in Congress and at least five state legislatures and referendums would require union members to give written consent each year for the use of union funds in political election campaigns. This is shaping up as a major political battle in California where it has been submitted as a referendum, Proposition 226.

LAWS TO BEAT DOWN LABOR

The battle arsenal of capital is also stocked with many legal weapons developed since the near-general strike right after World War II. The 1947 Taft-Hartley Act, the McCarran Act, and the national transportation act are major measures designed to club militancy into submission. Today, as conditions for poor and working families worsen, anti-immigration laws drive undocumented workers further underground, welfare reform laws force mostly women on assistance into minimum or sub-minimum wage jobs, and the North American Free Trade Act (NAFTA) encourages outsourcing of jobs.

While the frantic pace of megamergers in telecommunications, banking, and industry trumpet the triumph of the so-called free market, behind the scenes stands the silent partner, the state. One reporter had it right when analyzing the mammoth \$40 billion merger of what is now called DaimlerChrysler. Peter Passell suggested that the Daimler-Chrysler deal may be a "model for global capitalism" as a study of "just how 'free' free markets really are," and pointed out that "Hitler, Eisenhower, Adenauer, Carter, all figure in any honest history" of this biggest industrial merger ever (*New York Times*, May 10, 1998).

Rationalization of the economy, always state-assisted, carries two features, layoffs and speed-up. Furthermore in the 1990s, reorganization follows global lines. In the case of DaimlerChrysler, the relatively higher standard of living of German workers will fall to that of their North American counterparts, and both will approach that of cheap, Third World assemblers. Globalization exacerbates already existing pressures to lower the cost of labor in the aggregate. Already the average minimum wage worker is not a teenager, but someone who provides more than half a family's weekly earnings. Today's minimum wage, when adjusted for inflation, is actually much less than a minimum wage worker made 30 years ago.

That's not to say growing dissatisfaction among workers in other industries isn't erupting. Mississippi catfish processors have walked out over company abuses and union neglect (a first). Northwest Airlines machinists have staged a slowdown. Budweiser workers have authorized a strike. Postal workers scheduled a one-day informational picket. Non-unionized McDonald's workers in Ohio struck (also a first) over employee harassment. And the three-year Detroit newspaper strike-lockout continues.

These actions are taking place throughout the nation every day, but we usually don't hear about them due to the conspiracy by the mass media to ignore working class actions. This makes a newspaper like *News & Letters* all the more important, for workers speak here in their own words about their own struggles which sound all the louder when raised in the context of a philosophy of revolution.

From the Writings of Raya Dunayevskaya
MARXIST-HUMANIST ARCHIVES

Editor's Note

When Dunayevskaya wrote the following letter to her colleagues on the National Editorial Board of News and Letters Committees, she had just completed a draft of her second book, **Philosophy and Revolution** (published 1973). In it, she takes up the just completed class series on philosophy that the organization had undertaken and the need to go beyond merely "understanding" dialectics to "practicing" dialectics. The full text of the letter can be found in **The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection**, microfilm no. 14036-14038.

May 28, 1968

Dear Colleagues:

This is as good a time as any to throw out some ideas relating the book to the organization....[A]lthough on different levels, isolation from ideas—the daily practice of dialectics—is every bit as stifling as isolation from the masses. Nevertheless, just as we try hard to surmount the latter, so we must the former. So, here goes:

A decade has passed since the publication of **Marxism and Freedom**. Though not only the solid but the unique theoretic foundations it laid for the formation of News and Letters Committees remain with us and will continue to serve us, the dual impulses—from the objective situation and from the theoretical void in the Marxist movement—that have emanated these past 10 years make imperative not a mere "updating" but new development that could rightly be called new discoveries. There may be some who are so bereft of a sense of history, or so involved in what Hegel called "a giddy whirl of self-perpetuating disorder" (that is to say, a world that revolves around Ego rather than around Subjectivity as mass and as theory), that they fail to see that **Philosophy and Revolution** is the most concrete of all the tasks facing the Chairman, not as "author," but as leader of a revolutionary organization. [*Chairman is a reference to herself by Dunayevskaya—Ed.*] Let me explain one of the theoretical differences between Lenin and Bukharin that has the greatest applicability for our own development now. It is neither the state-capitalist debate, nor that on Subject—both of which I believe the organization has in the very marrow of its bones. No, it is self-determination of nations as a dialectic of revolution vs. Bukharin's conception that it was a veritable reactionary step away from the "world revolution."

You must understand that Bukharin was not only not a betrayer of the proletariat, but also not a Trotskyist, which tendency Lenin considered a lot of bombast. Bukharin was a Bolshevik and a co-leader with Lenin. Moreover, he was considered "the greater theoretician." (Which all goes to show how much of bourgeois ideology creeps into the Marxist movement when theory can be equated to "pure theoretical questions" as against one, like Lenin, who always has a specific political or organizational question in mind when he deals with philosophic questions.) They had just finished collaborating on a book on economics, **Imperialism and World Economy**. Neither the economic analysis nor the common solidarity of the specific Bolshevik tendency as the organization for revolutionary Marxists could, however, unite their view on self-determination of nations. Again, this wasn't just a "general question," for the Bolsheviks were all "for" the right of the self-determination of nations. Rather, the question was: are you for it as a "right" or because you consider it integral to the very dialectic of proletarian revolution. Lenin said, Yes. Bukharin said, No, the "new" situation of imperialist war, the "new" situation that the proletariat, along with the bureaucratic leaders of the Second International, were participating in this imperialist war, the "new" sit-

Practicing philosophy and revolution

uation that nationalism, more than ever before, was backward as against internationalism, all mean we must be "uncompromising," must take nothing short of proletarian revolution as the revolution. Lenin retorted that the imperialist war must have "suppressed" your reasoning for you to fail to see the development through contradiction, the dialectics of the many varied forces that participate in a mass outburst, etc.

Now, I'm not interested in the debate as such, not only because most of us know it, but also because the point that concerns us at this period in our development is not the theory, but the attitude to the theoretician. You must understand that Lenin and Bukharin were both theoreticians, and, though Lenin was known as the founder of the Bolshevik organization, he was not known [as]—that is to say, history had not yet proven him to be—the founder of a unique theoretical tendency, which, in fact, would become the Marxism of the age of monopoly-capitalistic imperialism. They had just authored a book on that very new stage of capitalist development and there seemed to be no differences between them. There were therefore those who were even



feeling that, since Bukharin was the "pure theoretician," Lenin was revealing "opportunism" (sic!) by being for a national "development" when even capitalism was thoroughly "international" but, of course, from the wrong class point of view.

Let me get away from Russia for a while, come over to the U.S. as the referent. We all recognize Abolitionism as the freedom movement that had the greatest affinity to Marxism, although it was religious and limited to wanting the abolition of slavery, and not a socialist society. It would therefore be natural for us to "prefer" Wendell Phillips, who is the only one of the Abolitionists who came over to the labor movement, to William Lloyd Garrison who did not. And yet history records that Garrison, not Phillips, was the founder of Abolitionism. You might ask: why care about who first founded the movement when, obviously, the more "advanced" was Phillips? The question, however, is not one of "advanced" or any other adjective like "best." The question is that historically (and this Historic should have been with a capital H because before ever History gets around to "proving," the historical movement would be 10 feet underground if some who had a sensitivity on the question weren't there to become adherents with "proof" and thereby help create the movement that would become "the proof"); to repeat, the question is that historically the importance of being the founder is that he creates the atmosphere for all others to grow in and develop to be more "advanced," or "best." Without him, there would be no room for others; it would just be one more lost moment in history—and they are a great deal more tragic than "lost weekends."

So you see that the historic and American and international demands on the Marxist-Humanist tendency to be born are not accidental, nor are they what Hegel would have called "the arbitrary caprice of prophetic utterance." It isn't "prophecy"; it is the "labor, patience, seriousness, suffering of the negative" that are the prime requisites on leadership, on ranks, and, if they would try the patience of Job, impatience is no more capable of creating "shortcuts to revolution" than are guerrilla tactics. Moreover, none but self can create the discipline needed for the task of working out **Philosophy and Revolution**. (Marcuse used to tell me that I was "too close" to the proletariat and, by remaining in a "so-called" ivory tower, he had both the advantage of "objectivity"

[and the] "tension" needed for development of original theory. The resulting **One-Dimensional Man** showed, however, that, unfortunately, it resulted in a one-dimensional theory.) You cannot afford, as collaborators, not to create free time for me to complete the work.

And yet, of course, there was no way for me not to engage in those organizational problems that are directly (and not so directly) related to the work....As part of the inseparability of **Philosophy and Revolution** and the organization, I had decided last winter to take time out to work up the Outline of Lectures.¹ It wasn't just a question of gaining some new members—though both Detroit and New York did so—but of internalizing a methodology both for analyzing events and participating in them as well as relating ourselves to other organizations in a new way. It is the latter I'm not sure the leadership in New York internalized. To make sure, however, that the first reaction of self-defense or apportioning blame doesn't beat down the second negativity before it ever has a chance to emerge; and, above all, because it will become of [the] essence to any pamphlet that may result and therefore is first to be tested later, I will give an example, not from New York or even News and Letters Committees anywhere, but from a far off place. The place is France, the subject is the relationship of methodology, not only for analyzing events but for being "act-ors of change," for those who would be revolutionaries. And the person involved is Jean-Paul Sartre, a petty bourgeois intellectual of such "high" stature as to have created a philosophy other than Marxism: Existentialism. After a full decade's existence—actually it had begun in the late 1930s in France but World War II made it invisible, so to speak, and it didn't become a challenge to Marxism till [the] end of war—Jean-Paul Sartre felt so totally impotent to create act-ors and he, too, having gotten, he claims, some new impulses from the death of Stalin (not to mention that Existentialism almost got a following in East Europe) that he decided to declare [himself] a Marxist after all! But still his task was not "to join" but "to search for a methodology" for revolution. It is there that he declared that Marxism will remain the philosophy of our time, and that Existentialists merely "tended the garden" because "today's Marxists" had stifled Marxism's self-growth. He called Existentialists "ideologues." You must understand it was not a compliment. It is a word used by Sartre like we use "popularizers" plus the way Marx uses the word ideology as false consciousness. (With Sartre it's always a hybrid; that's so easy for the brilliant writer for whom words are toys, "dialectical" toys.)

In a single sentence, this means that it is impossible to create an organization without a Marxist methodology, one that needs constantly to be "restated" to meet the challenge of new situations, and that any "pretenders to the throne," as the Existentialists were to the Communists, not Marxists, must know how to bow to the organization-builders on a different methodological basis....

Finally there is the book itself, and I want to quote just a few sentences from the Introduction that [were] not in the first draft: "It becomes necessary to return to Hegel whose philosophy has a validity all its own. That is why Marx kept returning after he broke with Hegelianism and created historical materialism. Marx's problems, Lenin's problems, aren't ours. No age can speak for another. Precisely because the impulse to grapple with Hegel's Absolutes came neither from scholastic needs, nor even [from] the founders of the new world view of Marxist-Humanism, but because our age imparted a new urgency to it, it would be at our own peril if we were to dismiss the new facets unfolded by our world in transition."

Yours, Raya

1. "Lenin on Hegel's Science of Logic: Notes on a Series of Lectures," Dec. 14, 1967, **The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection** microfilm no. 3885. Reproduced in **Dialectics of Liberation** (News & Letters, 1974, 1982).

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Essay Article

The Queer left legacy and Marxist-Humanism

by Jennifer Pen

In a monumental collection of over 800 pages, entitled *We Are Everywhere: A Historical Sourcebook of Gay and Lesbian Politics* (1997), Shane Phelan and Mark Blasius have helped make manifest a queer left legacy. From the French Revolution to the present, they show that les-bi-gay voices have emerged in tandem with revolutionary movements, engaging directly with Marx's thought in their search for a total uprooting of this exploitative society. One of the impressive aspects of this legacy is the universality of les-bi-gay thought, and its consistent connections to other freedom movements.

What would it mean to critically study and develop this thought within a Marxist-Humanist philosophy of revolution? Raya Dunayevskaya, speaking about the Women's Liberation Movement, said that women have been not merely hidden from history, but hidden from philosophy, which means that women were recognized as force, but not as Reason. This compares all too well to lesbian, gay and bisexual people, who have likewise been hidden; in fact, our liberation follows what I call the dialectics of silence and passion. This contradiction between passion and silence can result in both an invisibility as force—though queers have been an unacknowledged part of all freedom movements—and an invisibility in thought.

The thinkers who make up this queer left legacy span 200 years, before and after Stonewall: Edith Simcox, Anna Reuling, Adrienne Rich, Frank Kameny, Bayard Rustin, Monique Wittig, Walt Whitman, Carl Wittman, John d'Emilio, Jeffrey Weeks, Alan Bérubé, Charlotte Bunch, Barbara Smith, Gloria Joseph, Guy Hocquengham, Angela Davis, Cheryl Clarke, Merle Woo, Margaret Randall, Martin Duberman, Robin Morgan, Minnie Bruce Pratt, Mary Daly, Leslie Fienberg, Tony Kushner, Larry Mitchell, the Radicalesbians, and many others. The five thinkers I am going to briefly consider are: Edward Carpenter (1844-1929), Harry Hay (b. 1912), Audre Lorde (1934-1992), Mario Mieli (d. mid 1980s) and Gloria Anzaldúa (b. 1942). Because of the dialectics of passion and silence, these thinkers have not always been aware of each other's work, so finding their common themes necessitates a philosophy of revolution.

The pattern of radical movements opening a space for queers to emerge is consistent: the Abolitionists and Transcendentalists inspired Walt Whitman. Whitman's vision and the Paris Commune moved Edward Carpenter to socialism and solidarity with the working class. Harry Hay was won over to radical action by the longshoremen's strike of 1934 and joined the Communist Party, but by 1949-1953 he found it necessary to leave and build the first radically "homophile" organization, the Mattachine Society. His later work was further inspired by Native American freedom movements. As a Black woman, worker, and mother, Audre Lorde's political thought was shaped by the Rosenberg trial, the Civil Rights Movement and the Women's Liberation Movement. The New Left and the student movements of the 1960s galvanized the Italian Marxist, Mario Mieli, who was a founding member of the London Gay Liberation Front and the Italian group Fuori!. Poet and theorist Gloria Anzaldúa imbibed the politics of labor and Chicano liberation as well as feminism. All these thinkers had experience as part of mass movements, and in being told not to raise the issue of sexuality within those movements. They had lived this dialectic of passion and silence, even within revolutionary organizations.

GAINING A MIND OF ONE'S OWN

One of the first commonalities in their thought is a critiquing of false naturalisms, and, through that critique, gaining a mind of one's own, entering the journey to self-consciousness. Anzaldúa describes it thus:

For the lesbian of color, the ultimate rebellion she can make against her native culture is through her sexual behavior. She goes against two moral prohibitions: sexuality and homosexuality. Being lesbian and raised Catholic, indoctrinated as straight, I made the choice to be queer (for others it is genetically inherent). It's an interesting path, one that continually slips in and out of the white, the Catholic, the Mexican, the indigenous, the instincts. In and out of my head. It makes for loquería, the crazies. It is a path of knowledge—one of knowing (and of learning) the history of oppression of our raza (Borderlands/La Frontera, p. 19).

Anzaldúa sees her queerness as a way to inhabit all her identities, without reifying any of them. Writing 75 years earlier, prior to Stonewall, Carpenter, believing queerness to be biologically determined (he refers to gays and lesbians as "intermediate" persons), also sees philosophic reflection as inherent:

[We can see...the probability of the intermediate man or woman becoming a forward force in human evolution..., not wholly belonging to either of the two great progressive branches of the human race, his nature would not find complete satisfaction in the activities of either branch, and he would necessarily create a new sphere of some kind for himself. Secondly, finding himself different from the great majority, now an object of contumely and now an object of love and admiration, he would be forced to think. His mind turned inwards on himself would be forced to tackle the problem of his own nature, and afterwards the problem of the world and of outer nature. He would become one of the first thinkers, dream-

ers, discoverers (Intermediate Types, p. 59).

Both Anzaldúa and Carpenter are suggesting that their sexuality prompted them, and will prompt others, to think about social conventions and false limitations. They did not fear that their sexuality had depleted their revolutionary impulse, but theorized it had added a crucial dimension of critical self-consciousness.

MARX AND GAY LIBERATION

Another commonality in these thinkers is their search for a non-determinist Marx. Harry Hay, as a teacher in the Communist Party, had a thorough but mechanical knowledge of Marx and the dialectic. After Stonewall and his role in founding the Los Angeles Gay Liberation Front, Hay began writing a theoretical work on gay subjectivity. Here he broke with Marxist dialectics because he (mistakenly) felt it was merely objective, with no room



Audre Lorde, 1934-1992

for human subjectivity. Yet he still believed that Marx and Engels's relating of "the principle of the Unity of Opposites and of the Negation of the Negation, to the political struggles of their times were then and are now precisely those exercises by which the Human Mind acquires the skills and dexterities to make the qualitative leap from Binary to Analog thinking" (*Radically Gay*, p. 207).

Mario Mieli's book, *Homosexuality and Liberation: Elements of a Critique*, is one of the few full-length theoretical works to unite Marxism and gay liberation. Published in 1977, then translated into English by 1980, the work has fallen into an undeserved obscurity outside of Italy. Mieli was thoroughly disillusioned with the Communist Party of Italy, and followed the works of Herbert Marcuse and the New Left in general:

The gay movement is fighting to negate the negation of homosexuality, because the diffusion of homoeroticism will qualitatively change our existence and transform mere survival into life...Only the struggle of those who are the historical subjects of the basic antithesis to the male heterosexual Norm can lead to overcoming the present opposition between the two sexes (pp. 37-38).

Both Mieli and Hay miss the mark of a full dialectic of Absolute Negativity, however. Marx, in a phrase which resonates with lesbian and gay experience, evocatively sees that "new forces and new passions spring up in the bosom of society; but the old social organization fetters them and keeps them down" (quoted in Dunayevskaya, *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, p. 150). The logic of negating current conditions, within the mediation of revolutionary struggle, must include the transcendence of the constrictions placed on us, in order to create a new human future. Dunayevskaya describes this as the "integrality of second negativity with Marx's Humanism" (Dunayevskaya, *Philosophy and Revolution*, pp. 54-55). Hay, still imbued with Stalinist vulgarisms, even when making his organizational break from them, can only see Marx as a determinist, and the dialectic, even of second negativity, as an "exercise."

Similarly, when Mieli is looking for how to "transform mere survival into life" he turns primarily to Marx's 1844 *Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts* and the *Grundrisse*. But he shies away from the Absolutes of Hegel and of Capital, preferring to call for a single "total qualitative leap" to a new society (p. 209). Thus, when Mieli seeks to "negate the negation of homosexuality," he rightly valorizes revolutionary gay subjectivity yet stops short of negating the total alienation of capitalism.

Dunayevskaya addresses the role of sexuality in a total uprooting of this society. Noting that our contemporary society is "backward on the whole question" of sexuality, she sees "that we will have to go through a lot of stages of actual experimentation, with people having the right to choose." Stressing that proscriptions won't do—"There is just no way of giving answers from above"—she makes the profound connection between sexuality and Marx's "revolution in permanence": it is "not just a political expression" but an opening to the creation of the new in all human relations (*Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution*, p. 181).

Whatever his dialectical shortcomings, Mieli's work is prompted by a critique of the Left, similar to, though not as developed as, Dunayevskaya's critique of what she called "post-Marx Marxism." He mocks the "protectors of the Left" (p. 212-213), pointing out that despite their

efforts "to extinguish our movement," the queer critique of the Left "is among other things the negation of all male supremacist political rackets" (pp. 213-214; see also Julia Jones's review of Simon Edge's *With Friends Like These*, in *Queer Notions II Bulletin*, available through *News & Letters*).

EROTIC AS POWER

These thinkers do engage Marx's categories and launch a thorough critique of capitalism. The queer Left saw that sexuality and labor were intimately connected, from the reproduction of the laborer in heterosexuality to the humanist questions: What kind of work should people do? What is the role of the human being as revolutionary, as simultaneously thinker and doer? (*Philosophy and Revolution*, p. 76). Audre Lorde pointedly raises this in her famous essay "Uses of the

Erotic: the Erotic as Power," when she says that the erotic is not confined to sex and the bedroom, but is a quality of passion that flows through our entire lives. She condemns capitalism when she says:

The principal horror of any system which defines the good in terms of profit rather than in terms of human need, or which defines human need to the exclusion of the psychic and emotional components of that need—the principal horror of such a system is that it robs our work of its erotic value, its erotic power and life appeal and fulfillment. Such a system reduces work to a travesty of necessities, a duty by which we earn bread or oblivion for ourselves and those we love. But this is tantamount to blinding a painter and then telling her to improve her work, and to enjoy the act of painting. It is not only next to impossible, it is also profoundly cruel (Sister/Outsider, p. 55).

Lorde's revulsion at the alienation of labor echoes Marx's observation that "the machine does not free the laborer of work but deprives the work of all interest" (quoted in *The Miners General Strike and the Birth of Marxist-Humanism*, p. 33). Likewise, her understanding of all of life as

humanly embodied and humanly created echoes Marx's philosophic call for revolutionaries to understand the subjectivity of "human sensuous activity (and) practice" ("Theses on Feuerbach," quoted in *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, p. 115).

Mieli links the economic and the relational, pointing to: *the fetish, the stereotyped fantasy, the commodity. The coerced sexuality of capital transforms women and men into commodities and fetishes, and yet underneath their masked appearance as zombie and robot, as things, living beings are hidden, and a censored desire is struggling (pp. 168-169).*

BEYOND DIALECTIC OF PASSION AND SILENCE

It is the particular responsibility of queer left thinkers to point out the role that heterosexism plays in maintaining capital's ill logic. But it is here that the problems with this legacy begin to multiply. There is a pull, for instance, toward intuitionism and immediacy. Anzaldúa and Hay have turned to questions of spirituality as primary. For example, Hay speaks of a "socially invisible Arc" between gay men that can "zap into both our eagerly ready bodies total systems of knowledge" which, he speculates, is an "inheritable consciousness" (pp. 257-58). Once the intuitive is so invoked, it becomes an inaccessible fact of individual consciousness, rather than a consciously shared objective development.

It is important to critique these thinkers with an eye to what they bring to the movement of the Idea of Freedom. The fact that the queer left legacy is incomplete provides new opportunities, and a responsibility as exemplified in the queer left's attitude to organization, which can best be characterized as deep distrust. Carpenter makes a fascinating comment that from 1883 "forward I worked definitely along the Socialist line: with a drift, as was natural, towards Anarchism" (*England's Ideal*, p. 115). Why did it seem natural, especially at an historic juncture prior to even the reformism that Bernstein imported into established socialist circles? Perhaps because the rigidity, hierarchy and self-importance—not to mention puritanism—of the Left appeared as yet another false naturalism. The fun-house mirror effect of being a closeted gay theorist was a price that these thinkers were unwilling to pay.

But this attitude of distrust can become self-limiting in today's post-Stonewall era rather than self-developing. The queer left critique of post-Marx Marxist organizations is appropriate, but not outside of a thorough consideration of the dialectics of philosophy and organization. While some—from Bayard Rustin's key role in the Civil Rights Movement, to Huey Newton's stated support for the Gay Liberation Movement, to the decentralized forms of ACT-UP—have raised crucial questions concerning les-bi-gay liberation and organization, the task of returning to the high points of these movements and not allowing the needed revolutions to fall short, is ours.

Transcending the dialectics of passion and silence cannot be achieved through assimilation. We have to negate the alienation of capitalism, and negate that negation with the creation of a new human being, embodied and loving other human beings without the fetters of the old order. The thinkers of the queer left legacy have bequeathed a responsibility to us: to bring the fullness of Marx's humanism to bear on queer liberation and, thus, human liberation.

READERS AS REPORTERS ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE

Here is the bad news that has just been introduced by the Italian left-wing government — a new law now legalizes private employment agencies to hire workers and introduces the renting of workers. A gospel of flexibility-mobility-globalism has triumphed that will optimise exploitation, subject workers to variable times and an intense rhythm. About 30 agencies and 200-300,000 workers a year are expected to be involved. The Dutch multinational START aims at getting 10% of the Italian market and the ACLI (Associazione Cristiana Lavorati Italiani) came to an agreement with Kelly, the U.S. agency, for placing workers.

**A. Massaro
Milan**

The monthly delivery of N&L means more to me than you can imagine. The corruption and absurdity of the official political world and the "justice" system in Ecuador is so blatant and palpable that one could easily be living between the pages of Kafka or Lewis Carroll. N&L helps to bring me up to earth.

The Popular Assembly (which voted to call itself a "constituent assembly") has turned out to be a cruel joke. The two major right-wing parties control it and stifle any possible efforts at genuine constitutional reform. Assembly members get paid about \$5,000 a month while public school teachers get \$400 and went on strike because the government was over two months late in paying them. Hospital workers went on strike for the same reason, and a nation-wide network of campesinos shut down all inter-city transportation in protest over a proposal to privatize their social security. By mid-April papers reported a total victory for the campesino protest. Of course, the political leaders and journalistic pundits insisted social security was never in danger and said the campesinos had been "manipulated" by their leaders for political reasons. Sound familiar?

**Roger
Ecuador**

N&L is the best thing on the Left since Karl Marx. I have been in Romania for a year witnessing the day to day fightback against the retrogressionist agenda of the West, President Clinton and the IMF in the person of Poul Thomsen. After eight years of rule by Ceasescu's former right hand man, Ion Iliescu, the country went from having no foreign debt and hunger to having a massive debt and hunger. The facade of bourgeois democracy since the "revolution" has brought with it also a cut in social spending, a doubling of medical costs, and massive layoffs. The rosy dawn of market economics has also brought with it the re-emergence of child labor and child slavery.

**J. Gigante
Romania**

One condition for the survival of the Serbian regime is the permanent production of hate, war, isolation and sanctions. Patriotic euphoria and closing ranks regarding the national question are only an instrument which diverts attention from the economic and social poverty which affects a majority of the population in this country. The violation of basic human rights of the Albanian people in Kosovo is not an internal issue, nor is the escalation of one more war in the Balkans. The regime's media wants us to get used to victims as statistics. They want to convince us that the state of war is a natural state in the Balkans. We will not get used to this. We know that there are alternatives to war. As a women's peace group we will widen our solidarity with our Albanian friends and continue our protest against the war in Kosovo.

**Stasa, Women in Black
Yugoslavia**

Everyday we see what is passing for "the new South Africa" is turning out to be just what I predicted in my speech in Washington, D.C. on the eve of the elections — that "nothing is going to change. Only the faces in the government are going to change — white faces replaced by black faces." The South African revolution is still to come.

The euphoria is over. The people are looking for an alternative. But the "Left," as usual, is still in splinters.

**Phyllis Ntantala
Michigan**

Israel's Independence Day saw a gathering by 10,000 right-wingers at Har Homa for a day of picnicking, speeches, nationalist songs and placement of the cornerstone for the settlement planned at the site. This was offset (in decibels rather than quantity) by a counter-demonstration of 1,000 peace activists from Bat Shalom, Peace Now, and Gush Shalom, directing our sirens, horns, drums, cowbells, kazoos, trumpets, whistles, and chanting at the spectacle opposite. Under the present Israeli government we cannot do very much but we felt the need to let the settlers, government, outside world, our children and heaven know that this evil will not pass unremarked. We hope that next Independence Day will be marked by peace, justice and a sister state of Palestine beside the state of Israel.

**Gila Svirsky
Jerusalem**



AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES

On Mother's Day, ADAPT gave out its "Ten Worst States Awards" to recognize the 10 states who most clearly failed to demonstrate a commitment to home and community-based service options for Americans with disabilities and older Americans who want to remain independent and live at home as long as possible. Instead of creating programs to promote that kind of dignity, these states prefer to spend their money on costly and dehumanizing institutional programs such as nursing homes and ICF/MR facilities. Your readers ought to know which they are, beginning with the very worst: Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana, Missouri, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Florida, Ohio, and Kentucky. (And Washington, D.C., Texas, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Arkansas weren't far behind.)

**Jennifer Burnett, ADAPT
Memphis**

SUBSTITUTE FOR MURDER?

When Wisconsin passed its new law so vaguely worded that it banned all abortions, the shock was to learn that the penalty that doctors faced was a mandatory life sentence. Evidently this is the next best thing to murdering them that the anti-abortion forces could come up with.

**Outraged
Chicago**

WHO MAKES HISTORY?

It was the East German Revolt in 1953, the Hungarian Revolution in 1956, the Polish workers in 1970 — and the Russian workers at the point of production through it all — that brought state-capitalism down in Russia. President Reagan had nothing to do with it, even though the Republicans claim that victory for the "gipper." It shows how little the Republicans know about history and who makes it.

When the East German workers on June 17, 1953, showed that no power on earth could continue to force them into submission, when they laid down their tools and walked out, they opened a new epoch of freedom struggles against state-capitalism that hasn't stopped yet. When labor gets up from their knees the whole system of capitalism falls apart. That's what working people have to recognize.

**Retired worker
Whittier**

I was shocked when I heard about the Daimler buyout of Chrysler. There goes Chrysler's "Buy American" campaign. Company officials are saying our jobs won't be affected, but we know from experience that what's good for the company is not good for the workers.

**Chrysler employee
Detroit**

In the past we had an international auto union. We're going to have to go back to that but on a much higher level so autoworkers throughout the world will be able to get together. That's the only

Readers' Views

way we're going to be able to stand up to these new giants.

**Retired Chrysler workers
Detroit**

I'm an 80 year oldster who has seen a lot of history and continues to read a lot. I've had my belly full of Social Democrats who think socialism can come about via parliamentarism. I'm convinced that the international emancipation of all workers at the point of production is where all things in society have to begin. I'm also convinced that the most creative labor movement was right here in the U.S. In the late 1870s the Paris Commune was the influencing factor for all workers in America trying to move toward the future which means to socialism. When a worker begins to reason out working conditions at the point of production it's the beginning of socialist thinking.

**Still fighting
Minneapolis**

●

POL POT AND 'JUSTICE'

Pol Pot's death brought home all over again how millions of people in Cambodia died for absolutely nothing. Some newscaster said Pol Pot's death "robbed the Cambodian people of justice," but what justice would there have been if he had lived? Would a trial have brought justice? To have justice we have to have a just and free society. In life or death Pol Pot only proves the need for a totally new human society.

**Women's Liberationist
Bremerton, Washington**

●

INDIA

The hypocrisy of the U.S. "regulating" India's belligerent nuclearism is terrifying enough. But the BJP-led government's decision to develop the bomb marks a frightening progression from the sacking of the Ayodhya mosque in 1992 to the present, as discussed by Maya Jhansi in the N&L April lead. This masculinist and obscurantist political party has now sacrificed all of India's history on the altar of intimidation: not only of Pakistan but of labor and of thought. Human creativity and progress — which had been the spiritual root of Hinduism for millennia — is now banished in favor of "the domination of world labor," as Raya Dunayevskaya once described the hunger for nuclearism by the capitalist leaders.

**Professor
San Jose**

The bombs set off by the BJP in India and the response to it there shows how tragic it is when there is no one addressing the crises a country is facing except the Right. It made me think of this country in 1996 when no one was addressing trade issues for blue-collar workers, people felt desperate, and Pat Buchanan came forward. Young African Americans who look to Farrakhan have something in common with those workers who looked to Buchanan.

**Activist since the '60s
Memphis**

I have been reading N&L for more than a decade and am grateful for how it informs me about the important issues worldwide like the human rights movement, welfare reforms, and socialization of labor. The way the theoretical issues tied to practice are presented is invaluable. We here get a rosy picture of the West from the regular newspapers and magazines but the other side of the picture is never shown to the developing or underdeveloped countries.

**Philosophy teacher
India**

●

DIALOG ON ISRAEL-PALESTINE

I attended a very interesting meeting on Israel/Palestine here that included Dr. Ghada Talhami, a Palestinian professor, and Rabbi Arnold Wolf. Dr. Talhami spoke of the importance of Fanon to the Palestinian movement, and in response to a question on Fanon's view of the single party state as the "dictatorship of the bourgeoisie," she talked about the rethinking within the movement. "We have to fight on two fronts, including for

democracy in our own movement. It will be a long struggle," she said. It was moving when Dr. Talhami and Rabbi Wolf embraced at the end, and it made the latest news of violence against Palestinian demonstrators even harder to take.

**Gerard Emmett
Chicago**

●

NO TO LA MIGRA!

The Gestapo-like raids carried on by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (La Migra) against "illegals" here recently are creating a police state atmosphere for people without papers. Those arrested, reportedly from Mexico and Guatemala, were led away in handcuffs and chains, for the crime of trying to earn a living. Seven work places were raided; people were arrested dining out; others were arrested in their homes.

The director of the District Office of the INS told us, "Most of the money ends up leaving the country as money orders to moms, dads, spouses and kids in Mexico. It doesn't do your community any good. The INS looks at this as an opportunity to re-create 78 jobs for citizens and legal aliens." So now the INS is a job creator? It's evidently fine when a multinational corporation takes its money out of the community to give to its board of directors and stockholders. But when workers send a little home to help their families, somehow they are robbing the community. We say "No" to La Migra!

**Angry citizen
Oregon**



WHAT IS WOMEN'S LIBERATION?

At a meeting of Indonesians in the U.S. May 17, there was much praise for the women in the current uprising. Women's political activism is not new, however. One participant compared women's groups in Sumatra to those in Argentina because in both countries women went all over the country demanding information about the disappeared. Sumatra has been so devastated by the current regime that where there are no longer men present to protest the continued land-grabs by the government, women have taken up the task. And in 1992, once when the government was trying to seize land from poor people to build a golf course and another time when it was taking the land so one of Suharto's companies could build on it, women stood naked in front of the bulldozers to stop them. This required two kinds of bravery in a Muslim country.

**Anne Jaclard
New York**

My interpretation is that a major problem with "feminism as we know it" is that it doesn't go further into the dialectic beyond the first negation. Thus it remains within the bourgeois realm and can't reach for true human liberation. The "feminism" I see simply strives for "equality with men" while men themselves are not liberated. I think politically men suspect this is the case. It makes me wonder if the movement isn't tending to split the genders rather than appeal to true liberation — which men would probably go for.

**Concerned
Chicago**

The plan to change welfare child support into a forced work program for the caregiver parent is not only an attack on mothers as women, it is also a deadly combination of classism, racism and mother-hatred.

We are told that "work will set you free," but wasn't that a sign over the gate at Auschwitz? Money, not work, is what sets the rich free. Money, not work, is what a child needs to be assured of having one-on-one care. Whether we call it "Mothers' Pension" (the name for welfare from 1920-1935), or "Family Allowance" (as in European countries), or simply "government child support," the solution is guaranteed child support for all dependent minors — not forced work "programs" for their caregiving mothers.

**Pat Gowens, Welfare Warriors
Milwaukee**

IS MARXISM ALIVE TODAY?



There have been some stupid articles written about the "zippy new edition" of the **Communist Manifesto** that is being sold in bookstores from B. Dalton in Greenwich Village to Waldenbooks near Wall Street. But there was one sensible quote reported from the managing director of Verso, the leftist publisher, to explain why it has done well enough to demand a second printing of 20,000 copies: "It describes capitalism as a system capable of transforming the entire globe, but also as a system prone to the most terrible crises and convulsions. And that captures the mood of the moment, the sense of insecurity."
Agreed
New York

I appreciated your classes in **Philosophy and Revolution**. I believe in Marx's philosophy. On the 150th anniversary of his **Communist Manifesto**, it is important to see what it means for today. We are in a process of negation. People are complaining that their jobs are going because of NAFTA and that they have to work two jobs. Their conditions are terrible. The process is historical, as long as there are people, there will be negation. Marxism will continue to live as long as there are working people.
Haitian woman
New York

I went to a forum for Wei Jingsheng, the famous democratic activist who was exiled from China. In talking about Marxism Wei said it was the root of all the sufferings the Chinese people have undergone. I have a feeling that although Wei is strongly against communism he will cooperate with the Chinese Communist Party if he really wants to be the so-called "father of the Chinese democratic movement." I believe the next generation of leaders there will abandon Marxism and Mao Zedong's

thoughts openly and change the name of the party, because otherwise they will not coexist with the private capitalists who have been getting stronger and demanding more political power. Only then do I think Marxism will win back the working class.
Chinese Scholar
Canada

Raya Dunayevskaya's critique of Molyneux's **Marxism and the Party** in "From the Archives" (April N&L) leaves one breathless at the idea that Marxist organization could be separated so totally from both philosophy and the actual revolutions of the day. No wonder Molyneux thought Marx's "legacy" had to be "overcome." Vulgar Marxists are always allergic to the integrality of philosophy and organization that Marx practiced, which demands that revolutionaries be disciplined by the Idea. But if it is not the self-determination of the Idea of Freedom that is the life-process of the organization, how can its historic right to exist even be conceived?
Revolutionary organizer
Tennessee

prise to me was that this is the first time there has ever been a strike against McDonald's in the U.S.!
Erica Rae
Illinois

I woke up this morning hearing a news report that while California spends a very small amount per student in public schools, it spends three times that amount per student in jail or prison. It sounded as though they were saying if you wanted a good education, you should commit a crime and go to prison.
Observer
Bay Area

The voices of revolt are not allowed to be heard.
Revolutionary internationalist
Memphis

I've been reading some collected writings of Rosa Luxemburg. It is pretty good stuff, all in all. She was a pretty sharp lady. I think I side more with her on the National Question than with Lenin. I wonder about some of the things she said about Lenin and Trotsky being anti-democratic. But I was really interested in her historical analysis of Christianity, where she said in effect that the early Christians were "consumer communists."
Prisoner
Texas



Workers who come from previously so-called "socialist countries" seem to have a more profound picture of capitalism than others. One such worker now in the U.S. told me: "Yes, America is a free country. But the only freedom you really have is freedom of speech and that doesn't mean that your voice is really heard. In practice you have no freedom at all if you don't have a lot of money."
Translator
Canada

Now we have even state legislators complaining about "capitalism." It was OK until the corporations started threatening their jobs, like trying to take over the state prison system by privatizing it. You never used to hear politicians saying capitalism was getting too greedy. Now you hear it all the time. With capitalism taking over their turf, they will be like kings without a throne.
Militant Black worker
Memphis

ROSA LUXEMBURG
How the Archives column on Rosa Luxemburg in the May issue made me long for the type of revolutionary who would arm the masses in a place like Indonesia today with a philosophy that can build on the spontaneity of their actions. The media present the youth in Jakarta's streets as incomprehensible and mindless.

WHO READS N&L AND WHY
I am pleased and excited to know that here in the imperialist-capitalist environment there are still active groups who do not compromise with the present evil system of our society today. I am the brother of a human rights lawyer murdered in the Philippines in 1988. It is true that "a tree is born, a tree dies, but the forest lives forever." The struggle for the protection of human rights is increasing in the Philippines. The triggerman was sentenced to life imprisonment, while the mastermind was later promoted from major to colonel.
New subscriber
California

What a great paper! Your coverage of every issue is outstanding. It gives me an insight to all freedom struggles around the world. This helps me to prepare for the future and my return back into society from prison and to see what role I can play to help change the world.
Prisoner
Arizona

I'm enclosing \$5 for a sub for my grandson who is 19 years old. When I was 19 I was at Pearl Harbor with the fleet that got the hell beat out of us. I never had a newspaper like N&L then, and it took me a while to find out I was a revolutionary and not just a rebel. I hope this sub will help him find the way to know himself.
Retired worker
California

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Black/Red View

by John Alan

Recently PBS carried a documentary called "Struggles in Steel." This documentary was essentially a passionate retelling, by retired Black steel workers, of their long struggle against racial segregation and discrimination in the steel industry and in their own union, the Steelworkers.

As one Black steel worker in "Struggles in Steel" put it: "No story, no museum can know what it's like unless you were in there."

"In there" for this steel worker meant that until the 1970s Black workers in the steel mills were restricted to working at the "lowest, dirty, filthy, man killing jobs" such as in hot flue holes where the skin on the face of workers came off with their goggles, at the blast furnaces and maintaining and cleaning the coke ovens. The bossing and skilled production jobs were reserved for white steel workers and called "white man's" jobs.

"Struggles in Steel" places the story of these Black steel workers in the context of the urbanization and industrialization of Black workers after World War I. They do not hide the fact that African American workers were used to break strikes during the 1919 steel strike. The overt racism of white workers supposedly dates back to that. But the memories of these senior Black steel workers soon reveal the eventual crucial role Black workers would play during the Steel Workers' Organizing Committee (SWOC) campaign of 1936.

In a chorus of animated memories, Black workers recited a history of how they and their fathers organized the Union. They said with emphasis: "WE organized it; other people didn't need the union, the doors were open to them."

One Black worker remembered how his father went around to Black bars and churches to collect union dues. "At that time if they knew you were organizing a union you were automatically fired." Another worker said: "In 1936 the union finally realized that they needed Black workers to survive, [and then] the SWOC launched a recruiting campaign with a policy of racial equality that

Black class 'Struggles in Steel'

Black workers could support ... but racism would still remain a sore point in the union."

Throughout this section of "Struggles in Steel", Black workers recall how they had to fight both the company and the union during the World War II years by wildcat strikes. Although the Black workers didn't mention it, there was a legal method by which racism could be practiced then in the Wagner Act itself. This Act had given legal status to unions and to union-negotiated contracts. Thus, even if these contracts contained race discrimination clauses, they were enforceable under the law. For 40 years, the National Labor Relations Board rejected any idea that race discrimination constituted unfair labor practice. It took the Civil Rights Movement and the 1964 Civil Rights Bill to invalidate those management/union contracts which froze Black steel workers in low paying menial jobs.

The underlying theme in "Struggles in Steel" is the uneasy relationship that Black workers had with the Steel Workers Union. On one hand they knew that they needed a union to deal with the steel companies. And on the other hand, they knew from experience that the union engaged in racist practices detrimental to their interests.

For example, the 1970 law suit brought by two Black steel workers to the Federal Court in Northern Alabama charged both the United Steel Workers of America and the steel companies for violating the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The court ruled in favor of these workers. It ordered the steel companies and the Union to divide a \$30 million compensation reward to all Black steel workers and open all job classifications to Black workers. The Black workers said that the \$300 checks they received were a pitiful reparation for 30 years of racial discrimination.

The Implementation Committee, created by the Court to end racism in promoting and hiring workers, was itself a bureaucratic barrier. Because this Committee was mandated to be composed of one Black worker, one Union representative and one company representative, it could never arrive at a required unanimous decision and thus each case reverted back to the Northern Alabama Federal Court.

As the struggle continued, Black steel workers were shocked and disturbed that their fight for equality was considered by leaders of some of the United Steel Workers locals to be reverse discrimination and wanted to lead their locals out of the National Union. "This is more hurt than [when] we didn't get enough money," said a Black worker, "money is tangible, [that] idea is non-tangible." Another worker said "Until we eliminate racism in the United States we will never have a humanist society in the United States."

What these Black steel workers discovered is that there is no final victory. Racism is not the only force they are concerned with. After they won equality in the steel

mills and in the union, permanent restructuring pulled the rug out from under them, as plant after plant was torn down. The globalization of the steel market and technical changes in producing steel are causing widespread unemployment which, as one worker put it, calls upon them to "organize and defend themselves ... in and outside the union ... to fulfill our destiny."

Black World

(Continued from page 1)

indisputably in the air. On the one hand, it became the vital impetus to the breathtaking growth of the Garvey movement. On the other hand, it and the 1917 Russian Revolution led to the organizational formation of Black Marxists into groups like the African Blood Brotherhood and around socialist journals like A. Phillip Randolph and Chandler Owens's *Messenger*.

Chicago, in 1925, saw the six year aftermath of the "Red Summer" of revolt culminate in the most proletarian expression of Black radicalism to date with the founding of the American Negro Labor Congress (ANLC). Organized principally by the darkling figure of Lovett Fort-Whiteman, one of the Black radical tradition's first Marxists, and the editor of the ANLC's revolutionary organ, *The Negro Champion*, the Congress represented an historic step in Black radicalism.

As the Black radical economist Abram Harris wrote of the founding of the ANLC, in W.E.B. DuBois's *Crisis* (April 1926): "Lovett Fort Whiteman [is] the Negro who more than any other person responsible for the Congress convening.... [I]t is evident that no assemblage like the Labor Congress, where Negroes gathered in primary



interest of their economic fortunes as wage-earners, could have come to pass merely because Soviet Russia or some of its missionaries bade it meet. Not Soviet gold but social facts furnish the explanation for the convention's radicalism and its departure from the racial assumptions and logic of the older Negro social institutions."

By the time the sun had set on the ANLC and Lovett Fort-Whiteman, the organization had moved from Chicago to New York (in 1928), and Fort-Whiteman, who emigrated to Russia in 1930, had perished in Stalin's purge of the Bolshevik leadership later in the decade.

The birth of ANLC did not come easily. Between 1919 and 1925, what transpired to bring such developments as Black revolt and the new national consciousness that found its organizational expression in the Garvey movement to the radical culmination represented by the ANLC was the kind of radical critique that Lenin and the militant Jamaican poet Claude McKay leveled at American Communists for their failure to "face the Negro Question."

If the challenge to respond to a new stage of spontaneous mass revolt, organization, and consciousness is the first test of Black radicalism, whether it is the "Red Summer" of 1919 or the 1992 Los Angeles rebellion, the second challenge came in the decade of the Great Depression. At this juncture, Chicago stepped forward as the center of Black radicalism in the form of the "Chicago renaissance." This little recognized, yet more radical, proletarian based, successor to New York's "Harlem renaissance" emerged out of the social and economic depression besetting the Black working class.

This second challenge was met by Black intellectuals, activists, writers and artists in Chicago during the Depression and World War II in so radical and creative a manner that it produced a new moment in Black cultural and political expression. Although Richard Wright, more than any other figure, is identified with this new stage of Black social realism, other significant contributions were made in the social sciences by St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton with publication of *Black Metropolis*, as well as a host of writers and artists.

Black intellectuals, writers and artists of the "Chicago renaissance" were radicalized by their efforts to respond to the crisis in the Black condition. Black radicals of the "Chicago renaissance," as Margaret Walker recently recalled at a conference recognizing the multifaceted renaissance, held in Chicago's South Side Woodson Regional Library, were part of the historical movement of organized labor's creation of the C.I.O. A half century later, when the Black working class was nearly decimated in the Reagan decade by capitalist restructuring and deindustrialization, Black conservatism, not radicalism, emerged as the ideological response.

The Black Radical Congress, meeting in Chicago this June, has before it not only the challenge to respond to the social and economic crisis of the Black working class, especially in light of the ideological obfuscation of Black conservatism. The BRC has also to meet the challenge presented by the 1992 Los Angeles rebellion, which like the "Red Summer" of the 1919 became so pivotal a challenge to an earlier Congress of Black radicals, six years after the revolt. That 1925 Chicago Congress met the challenge, until the inner contradictions of Stalinism destroyed it. What lies ahead for the Black Radical Congress?

Positive Sexuality Coalition

Chicago—The Coalition for Positive Sexuality (CPS), the guerrilla-style HIV prevention/birth control outreach organization, has been under attack by Bishop Henry Trotter of Sweet Holy Spirit Full Gospel Baptist Church for distributing "Just Say Yes" booklets to Chicago Public School youth. He held two press conferences expressing his objection to "Just Say Yes" because he thinks CPS is forcing the material onto students, that the material is too graphic, and that it is promoting homosexuality. Trotter is starting a campaign to stop CPS handing out information to youth in front of the schools.

CPS is an organization made up of AIDS and pro-choice activists, students and educators that came together in 1992 out of the need for a quality sex-ed curriculum, which is lacking in Chicago schools, and condom availability. The Family Life material used in the schools is not sufficient to the needs of youth. "Just Say Yes" addresses sex-ed, birth control information from a pro-sex, feminist and queer point of view in teen lingo to hand out to students as they enter into school along with condoms.

CPS wants to force the Chicago Public Schools to come up with a comprehensive sex-ed program that is pro-sex, pro-queer, feminist and culturally sensitive. We believe it's great to be proud of one's sexual orientation regardless of whether one is lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered or heterosexual and that one's sexual orientation is a state of being, not a lifestyle choice. The booklet also discloses resources for teens in the city and across the country. It's harder for queer teens of color who live outside of the predominantly white queer ghetto on the North Side to find allies or support due to an absence of a queer movement on the West Side and South Side and they face greater retribution due to isolation. CPS believes it is okay to be sexual as long as it is consensual and responsible.

If you want further info about CPS phone (312)604-1654.
—Darrell Gordon

Ogoni student demo

Chicago—On May 2 Amnesty International and the National Union of Ogoni Students—the Students' Unit of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP)—held a "Day of Education and Action for Human Rights in Nigeria." About 50 people participated. Many of the dozen or so Ogoni and other Nigerians there had experienced the terror of the Abacha regime firsthand, including Charles Wiwa, refugee and nephew of Ken Saro-Wiwa.

The vast majority of the participants were youth, including many high school students from campus Amnesty chapters. After watching a video documenting MOSOP's struggle against Shell Oil and listening to some representatives of MOSOP, we marched to a Shell gas station with a symbolic oil pipeline covered with red painted handprints of the youth to symbolize Shell's blood-soaked hands.

As we approached Shell, chanting many different things, Charles Wiwa started screaming: "Shell is a bloodsucker!" The power of that chant coming from him was overwhelming and everyone immediately joined in. His presence along with the other Nigerians' made a real impact on the American youth there.

—S.B.

U.S. occupation of Puerto Rico and Panama

New York—"Guns, Drugs, and Colonies: Panama, Puerto Rico and the Changing Face of U.S. Militarism" was the subject of a meeting on April 29 sponsored by the War Resisters League, radio station WBAL, and NACLA, a journal on Latin America. We learned from Jesus Alemañia, a popular educator and sociologist in Panama, and Wanda Colon Cortez of the Caribbean Project for Justice and Peace in Puerto Rico, that at the very moment the U.S. is talking about decolonizing their countries, it is actually expanding its military presence and control.

Colon Cortez explained that 13% of Puerto Rican land is taken up with U.S. military bases, including the entire island of Vieques. Even as Congress is planning to have Puerto Ricans vote on their status (it is now a "commonwealth" of the U.S.), Puerto Rico's traditional military role is being reinforced: the number of soldiers stationed there will be increased as U.S. soldiers are required to leave Panama; the U.S. is developing a huge radar project under the guise of an anti-drug campaign.

July 25 marks the 100th anniversary of the U.S. inva-

sion of Puerto Rico. While talking of giving people a choice of government, the U.S. is using the threats of drugs and illegal immigration to justify its occupation.

The U.S. signed a treaty with Panama in 1977 to remove its troops by 1999, but four years ago, Alemañia said, it began negotiations to station troops there permanently. Howard Center is a military base masquerading as a "multilateral center against drugs." There will also be a "tropic test center" for new weapons.

On the bases that the U.S. is giving up, it is cleaning up the unexploded ordnance on only a small fraction of the land, so the land will be unusable. Also, research has revealed that the U.S. tested chemical weapons and uranium in Panama.

Colon Cortez discussed the need to fight not only for your country's rights, but for others as well. She is involved in a network with native people in Hawaii, Samoa, the Philippines and others. She agreed that it is going to take more than education to change this militarized world; it requires a social transformation.

—Anne Jaclard

Rosa Luxemburg Society meets on May Day

Chicago—A three-day conference on Rosa Luxemburg, held here over May Day weekend, brought together Luxemburg scholars and activists from Japan, Germany, France, Korea, and the U.S.

Sponsored by the International Rosa Luxemburg Society, in cooperation with William Pelz's Institute of Working Class History and News and Letters Committees, conference participants viewed Luxemburg's life and work from two vantage points: (1) the 100th anniversary of her famous essay, *Social Reform or Revolution* (1898), in which she critiqued Eduard Bernstein's revisionism; and (2) the situation of labor and other movements for human liberation today.

In his opening speech, Narihiko Ito, author of *Rosa Luxemburg's World* (in Japanese), described the work of the International Rosa Luxemburg Society, from its founding in 1980 until today: "Why did we establish the Rosa Luxemburg Society? We wished first of all, to create an international network among Luxemburg specialists the world over. At the same time, we wished to stimulate the democratization of 'existing socialism' and to overcome the Cold War." Since then, international conferences on Luxemburg have been held in Switzerland, Austria, France, Germany, Japan, China, and Poland, with one scheduled for Finland in September. Ito said that Chicago was chosen as the site of the first U.S. meeting because the eight-hour movement Chicago workers launched on May 1, 1886, "bloodily suppressed by the police," involved "a fundamental demand of the workers to live as human beings." He also pointed to one of Luxemburg's first articles, "On the Origins of May Day," published in Polish in 1894.

"Rosa Luxemburg and May Day: As Concept and Experience" was the topic of Annelies Laschitzka, author of a recent biography of Luxemburg, and editor of her collected letters, both in German. Laschitzka pointed to other periods in which Luxemburg made a category out of May Day. In 1913, Luxemburg saw May Day as a form

through which the proletariat could make "a direct appearance" on the historical stage, not hemmed in by parliamentarianism nor national borders.

Three years later, in the midst of the carnage of World War I, Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht organized the historic rally of May 1, 1916, at which German workers for the first time came onto the streets against the war. They cheered Liebknecht's speech, in which he declared: "Down with the war! Down with the government!" Liebknecht was arrested on the spot, and Luxemburg soon after. For Luxemburg, May Day always represented a form of internationalism which sprang not from pious declarations at international socialist congresses, but from the living history of the labor movement.

In her presentation on Raya Dunayevskaya's *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, Olga Domanski of News and Letters Committees stressed the way in which Dunayevskaya had demolished "the myth that Luxemburg had no interest in women," and the relevance of this for liberation movements today.

In a presentation on "Rosa Luxemburg and the Berlin Workers' Uprising in January 1919," the Berlin-based historian Ottokar Luban detailed the days just preceding her murder by reactionary officers on the night of January 15-16, 1919. Luban also challenged the myth that Luxemburg was reluctant to participate in the abortive Spartacist uprising.

In a presentation entitled "The Spirit and Mind of Rosa Luxemburg," the Trotskyist theorist Paul Le Blanc, author of a book on Lenin, asked, in part on the basis of Dunayevskaya's work, whether "being a woman enabled Luxemburg to develop a Marxist orientation animated by qualities often beyond the reach of her male counterparts." Le Blanc emphasized the idealist dimension of Luxemburg's Marxism, her rejection of all dogmatism, and her unwavering confidence in the revolutionary consciousness of the masses.

Other presentations by the historian Harvey Kaye (on the continuing relevance of socialism) and by the Korean economist Kim Dae Hwan (on capital accumulation)

Rosa Luxemburg's significance today

(Continued from page 2)

playing of women. Rather, it is the totality she aspires for 'future.' The point, especially for us today, is not any counter-position of revolution and woman. Quite the contrary...[W]hy I have changed the proposed title of a book on Rosa Luxemburg and the relationship to Marx's theories, from Marx's theory of revolution to Marx's philosophy of revolution, is that so long as we only talk of theory, we are talking only of the immediate task of revolution, that is to say the overthrow of capitalism. But when we talk of a philosophy of revolution, we do not mean only the overthrow of capitalism, but the creation of a new society. Only when we have that in mind can the revolution be truly total."

When Dunayevskaya conceived of this book, so completely was the focus on Luxemburg that there was only one chapter outlined on Women's Liberation (WL), and only one at the end on Marx. By the time she had worked it out she realized, first, that she needed a whole part on Marx—which meant the "whole" of Marx, from his doctoral dissertation to his "Ethnological Notebooks" written at the end of his life. Only then did she decide she also needed a whole part on WL, including as integral to it the chapter on Luxemburg "as feminist," albeit a "reluctant" one. Once she had worked out Marx's Marxism as a totality and as a philosophy of "revolution in permanence," it became clear to her that the concept of Women's Liberation could not be limited to a contrast of "then" and "now" as different historic periods, important as those differences are. Rather, Marx's concept of the totally new human beings we have been striving to become is what had to be worked out for all periods.

All of this came after the part on Marx "refused to be confined to a single chapter," as Dunayevskaya put it in another letter on the process of the book (which you can read in *Women's Liberation and The Dialectics of Revolution*, the book she considered an "extension" of the Luxemburg work). The question is how did working out Luxemburg's totality—as revolutionary theoretician, as activist, as internationalist, as feminist—compel the digging into the totality of Marx's Marxism?

IT IS NOT THAT Dunayevskaya's long-standing critique of Luxemburg's *Accumulation of Capital*—a fight she had been waging since 1944—was lessened by her new appreciation for Luxemburg's genius in catching the new phenomenon of imperialism at its very first appearance and breaking with German Social Democracy leader Karl Kautsky in 1910, four years ahead of Lenin. Nor was it lessened by her recognition of the importance that Luxemburg was the first to raise the problematic of our day—the question of socialist democracy after the revolutionary conquest of power. If anything, her critique was actually sharpened, because those tremendous new facets Dunayevskaya saw in Luxemburg disclosed new facets also in Marx, in the way he had concretely anticipated her questions right in *Capital*, especially on accumulation.

Her question was whether what she called

Luxemburg's "tone-deafness to philosophy" could have prevented such a great revolutionary from seeing Marx's philosophy of revolution, not just as economic theory or political theory or even theory of revolution, but all of that theory as a manifestation of the whole new continent of thought Marx had discovered in 1844 and kept on rethinking and developing right to the very end of his life.

It may have been only a coincidence that the first transcription of Marx's "Ethnological Notebooks" appeared at the same time the WLM burst forth at the beginning of the 1970s. But it was Dunayevskaya's digging into those Notebooks as she was working out her Luxemburg book that disclosed his return at the very end of his life, on a new concrete level, to the Man/Woman relationship he had singled out at the very beginning, in 1844, as what reveals "to what degree man as a species has become human."

Indeed, looking at everything with the new eyes the WLM had given us, the study of Marx's last decade disclosed not only how ceaselessly Marx kept looking for new paths to revolution and how broad was his view of the forces of revolution. It also showed how distinctly different was his concept of a new society from that of all post-Marx Marxists, not only including but actually beginning with Engels. For, as against Engels' view in his *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* that woman-kind had suffered a "world historic defeat" with the move from a matrilineal to patrilineal society, for Marx there was "always one more revolution to make and the proof was in what one learned from defeat to transformation the next battle into a victory."

IN HER INTRODUCTION to *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, Dunayevskaya wrote that the unifying force for all three parts is the dialectical principle of the transformation of reality which she called "the warp and woof of the Marxian dialectic." That is precisely the integrality that is more urgent to practice now than when it was worked out "as a book," whether it be the relation of WL to Luxemburg as revolutionary and to Marx as philosopher of "revolution in permanence" or whether it be the relation of all of post-Marx Marxism to Marxism as that philosophy.

While there is no time to go into it here, I would contend that it is part of the "process" of this book that as soon as it was completed, she not only added new paragraphs (which can be found in the 1991 edition) but began work on a whole new book devoted to the question of the "dialectics of organization and philosophy" as the path no post-Marx Marxists had yet walked on, including both Luxemburg and Lenin. It remained unfinished when she died, but it verifies Narihiko Ito's view that, whatever his differences with some of her points, "Raya Dunayevskaya has given new life to Karl Marx and Rosa Luxemburg as revolutionaries for our time. We need to read Raya's last words in this work," he continued in his review of this book, "as her message encouraging us about the future of humankind: 'Only live human beings can recreate the revolutionary dialectic forever anew.'"

'Free our people!'

Memphis, Tenn.—On May 10, Mothers' Day, over 500 people from across the country gathered downtown for a national demonstration demanding that all people with disabilities have the opportunity to live independently in their communities with attendant care help, and not be warehoused in institutions. To begin with, the government must provide a living wage for the caregivers needed to make this possible. There are only four



counties where Tennessee allows attendant care at home, and only if you need 24-hour assistance and are homebound. Second, caregivers and agencies must treat people with disabilities as human beings with the right to self-determination.

The demonstration was called by ADAPT (American Disabled for Attendant Programs Today), which announced its first annual Ten Worst States List. Their statement said in part:

"Americans with disabilities and older Americans want choice in where they live, and the services necessary to live in the community should be provided at home. These services are known as home- and community-based, and while some states have developed exemplary programs, ADAPT recognizes that many have not even tried."

Speakers were Black and white, women and men, young and old. Stephanie Thomas, an ADAPT organizer from Texas, explained that the protest was held on Mothers' Day because 80% of people incarcerated in nursing homes are women. It was held in Tennessee because it tops the ten worst list. In this state, 95% of long-term care spending goes to nursing homes.

Mike Auberger, one of ADAPT's co-founders, said: "In every one of these states people die in nursing homes—three every day. How many will die before Tennessee rights its wrongs? The ten worst list is a list of shame. \$38,000 was given to Gov. Sundquist by the nursing home industry in his last election. The second worst state is Mississippi. Third is Louisiana. Way down South, people with disabilities, young and old, have no choice. It is an indictment. The governors are guilty. They are the people who smile, and put us away."

A woman in the crowd pointed out, "Anyone can become disabled at any time. There are people here from all classes, races, ages, all over the country."

From the rally many of us went to The Kings Daughters and Sons Home, a nursing home in the inner city. Many people driving by showed their support as we lined up and chanted to let the people inside know that they are not forgotten, that in fact there is a movement to "Free our people! Now!"

The next two days, over 100 people, many in wheelchairs, occupied the Governor's office, demanding he talk to them. At the same time, 100 more people outside blocked the parking garage. On the fourth day the Federal Building was blockaded, until a bomb threat forced protesters to leave. They were demanding a response by Al Gore, a Tennessean. During the campaign the administration gave lip service to home care but has yet to take real action.

—Another freedom fighter with a disability

Letter from Ecuador

The Movement of Feb. 5 [1997, that ousted President Abdala Bucaram] has been betrayed absolutely. A violent opportunism in the Ecuadoran government permitted the election of one of its most corrupt members as interim president, and called a Constitutional Assembly which today is completely discredited, as it is made up of people belonging to the same powerful groups. The Assembly, betraying the Feb. 5 Movement, cost an enormous sum, while the masses are drowning between the mud and their poverty. The circle of power is narrowing and the same people are the protagonists, to such an extreme that the political climate favors the disgraced Abdala, making it possible to put his picture all over television in the electoral campaign—a farce and a joke that has become intolerable.

We believe, as you do, and more every day, that the humanist thought of Marx is even more real today, and that we need his philosophic sustenance, which was so deformed and betrayed in the ghettos of the political parties that were unconditionally and uncritically obedient to Moscow and Peking. At this moment, there is a cozy alliance between all the politicians in order to capture seats in the Congress and other posts; this electoral system is repugnant and reproduces the abysmal structural class disparities in the country. We have done everything possible to keep alive the People's Assembly that was born in the Feb. 5 Movement, but the lack of commitment by most people has killed it.

How much we need to discuss how to make new roads out of this globalized and inhumane world, a world of seeming scientific and technological weightiness, really weighed down with enormous cruelty by the North to the South. Ecuador's external debt now absorbs 42% of our taxes. Don't stop sending us news and theoretical articles. With the Marxist-Humanist literature you have given us, you have clarified so much.

Clinton ready to deal in China as Asian economies teeter

(Continued from page 1)

workforce-locked factory gates and dormitories, confiscatory fines, beatings by private security—they are backed up as before by "Public Security," the police.

What makes this production possible, and what threatens the regime, is the world's largest army of the unemployed. Twenty million unemployed from state enterprises in the cities, by official count, is the smallest sector. Another 30 million are furloughed from state enterprises. Peasants displaced from the land have become a floating work force of perhaps 140 million in the cities and towns.

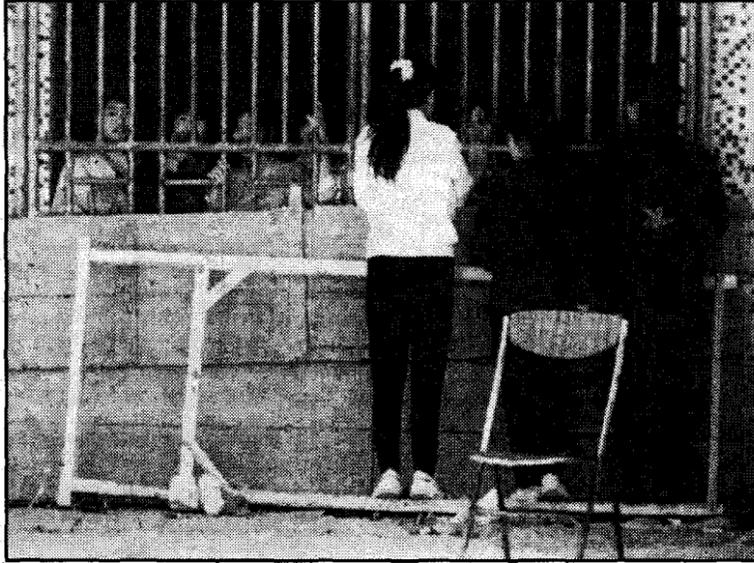
The young women of this group in particular have produced half of the shoes and a quarter of the clothing sold in the U.S. and have made Nike, Taiwanese factory owners, and Chinese entrepreneurs prosperous while working below subsistence. Nike recently aimed to divert boycotts and protests over its production in Asia by pledging to hire no more workers under 18. But Nike is not even pretending to make promises about paying subsistence wages. The brush-and-glue-pot production techniques exposed in a recent television report on Nike and Adidas in Vietnam demonstrate that below-subsistence wages save companies on capital investment, even at the level of 19th century technology.

Little wonder that this state-capitalist regime has reacted most harshly to any demands for worker control. As soon as they began, displaced peasant demonstrations in Beijing in 1979 and a union inspired by Poland's then-insurgent Solidarity union were both quickly crushed. (For this reason, it is worrisome to hear that in Indonesia one student leader refused an offer by workers' groups to join in the student demonstrations for fear things would "get out of control." Some leaders in 1989 similarly had tried to use student I.D.s to screen entrants into Tiananmen Square, to separate themselves from workers who had formed the Beijing Workers Autonomous Union there.)

Han Dongfang, jailed as a founder of that union, passed along a report from one factory in Guangdong which had the "right" to make a fired worker crawl out of the gate or face a beating. It was an all-too-typical factory, with 15-hour days, familiar as well to Karl Marx when he was writing "The Working Day" in *Capital* over 130 years ago. It shows the need to fight for the ten-hour day, let alone the eight-hour day, all over again, against capitalists who wouldn't be satisfied if they could take all 24 hours in a worker's day.

Han was writing from Hong Kong because he is still barred from the rest of China even after Hong Kong's return to Chinese control. (See China Labor Bulletin, P.O. Box 72465 Central Post Office, Kowloon, Hong Kong.) Han's exclusion gives the lie to Clinton administration claims that they pay attention to human rights and deserve credit for token release of political prisoners like

Wei Jingsheng and Wang Dan. They weren't released—they were expelled. This is just one more attempt to separate their voices from the opposition remaining within China, and is no more humanitarian than the mass deportation of workers and radicals in the U.S. in 1919 during



Survivors were locked in after the fire at the Zhili Toy factory in Shenzhen, just as before the blaze which killed 87 in 1993.

the Palmer Red Raids. The fact is that 2,000 more political prisoners remain jailed, their numbers have swelled with fresh arrests of dissidents even in the month prior to the summit.

This year it is projected that heavily subsidized state enterprises, the steel, chemical and other giant factories technologically behind world levels, will be shut down or sold off. This restructuring has been delayed so long because of the threat to those in power of massively expanding the numbers of unemployed. Premier Zhu Rongji has announced that, timed to the shutdown of state enterprises, ten ministries and fully half of the eight million cadres will be eliminated.

Given the corruption at all levels of the Communist Party and state apparatus, the well-connected cadres were best able to escape punishment for their extortion and personal enrichment. The fear is that these are the cadres likeliest to survive this massive cutback. Many of these became the first successful private capitalists by the simple technique of spinning state property into their own hands. Meanwhile, groups of veteran cadres have already joined demonstrations of the unemployed.

THE ARMY AS HIGH-TECH BOSS

Even as the state divests itself of many industrial enterprises, the army is concentrating its economic power. The army, of course, has long received the bulk of high-

tech investment. But with a tradition of sideline enterprise, the army as a whole and as individual units is connected not only to military-related industry but even to farms, stores and factories. The military company accused of contributing campaign money to the Democrats was in effect caught acting like a U.S. military contractor. It was in the satellite-launching business.

Because sales from high-tech sidelines, even nuclear and chemical, enrich the military, they have supplied customers from Pakistan to Iraq even at risk of sanctions to China's exports to the U.S. Export of the products of prison labor likewise makes money—something familiar to the U.S. as champion of free enterprise which is expanding prison industries at the expense of "free" labor.

The ultimate in for-profit enterprise—sale of organs from executed prisoners—has its parallel in the U.S. in ghoulish calls to harvest organs of death row prisoners. But for China it chillingly echoes the story from the pen of the great revolutionary writer Lu Xun in the 1930s, "Medicine," in which a poor family, in the belief that it can cure their child's tuberculosis, bribes a jailer with all that they have to obtain the blood of a beheaded prisoner, a young revolutionary.

Blood is at stake today, the blood of a generation overworked and discarded in coastal export industry, of peasants and workers displaced from land and work. The regime headed by Jiang Zemin may be able to dismantle Maoist state industry, but they cannot get past Mao Zedong's state-capitalist legacy. Whether the policy is the gargantuan Three Gorges Dam on the Yangtze River, worsening the North China water crisis, or military capitalism, or support for captive labor/free enterprise in export industry, the real hallmark of Mao's legacy is silencing the voice of the masses.

The recent factional document within the Communist Party, authored by Fang Jue, "China Needs a New Transformation," reveals some internal tension, indicated by the room the author had to hint at national self-determination for Tibet. Though Tibet is autonomous on paper, supporting actual Tibetan self-determination is as forbidden as workers' autonomous self-organization, a position dissidents outside the party have kept alive.

India's nuclear tests have raised the stakes for China. If these nations and Pakistan dare flaunt their possession of nuclear might for internal political gain, how far removed is actual use of nuclear might for internal political gain? Post war history has proven these three to be adversaries willing to do battle, and nuclear clout was a specter in China's war with Vietnam. To the list of countries with regimes ready to sacrifice a part of their populations to globalized production if not war, add Indonesia. That mass revolt there may not be matched elsewhere, at the moment, especially in China, makes it even more urgent to confront all regimes based on national chauvinism and suppression of workers' freedom and dissent.

Czech youth expose G8

Prague, Czech Republic — The biggest police riot since the Velvet Revolution of 1989 took place here May 16 between the police and youth. As in previous years when leaders of the Group of Eight industrialized countries (G8) met in economic summits, demonstrations against multinational corporations took place throughout Europe. This year demonstrations escalated into fights in Birmingham, England, the site of the G8 summit, Geneva, and here in Prague.

A rally was held at Peace Square here, with participants from Poland, Slovakia, and Germany as well as here. It seems that after the rally, someone called for a march to the center of town. The crowd grew from 200 at the beginning of the rally to 2,000. Since the march was not announced beforehand, the 10 or 12 cops on hand tried to stop it, but they were soundly routed.

However, when the riot police arrived, it was a different story. They came 200-strong with 100 more city police, and went in striking with the batons, hitting people on the sidelines as well as the youth in the forefront of the march.

The police said they "restored order" by 10:50 that night and Monday morning declared that their behavior was adequate. How adequate can be estimated by the fact that they had to assign police to take down the complaints continually streaming in.

An important moment in the march occurred when a billboard depicting the far-right Republican leaders was torn down. Such billboards with indirect racist comments against the Romany people were put up throughout the country.

The only left newspaper in town called the youths "vandals." The charge of vandalism will be used against the demonstrators because rocks were thrown through the windows of two McDonald's and one Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurants—the only very visible signs of multinationals and consumerism which is deplored by many here. What will be said in the coming days will be interesting to hear, for many of the politicians and commentators were active dissidents against the Communist regime. Their cry for sure will be "we are for peaceful demonstrations only."

The Czech youth hold a warm spot in the Czech hearts. There is a day set aside, Nov. 17, to commemorate the university students who demonstrated on Oct. 28, 1939 against the Nazi occupation. And they remember Jan Palach and Jan Zajic who in 1969 immolated themselves as a protest against the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia. —A.T.

After Suharto, where to next in Indonesia?

(Continued from page 1)

to dismantle the structures which channelled billions into his friends and families bank accounts, including Habibie's, he announced in May an end to government subsidies for fuel and electricity nearly doubling the price. After nationwide street actions erupted all over the country in response, he was forced to quickly cancel the order. It does not appear that Habibie will be able to impose IMF austerity demands on the masses with any more ease.

The abyss into which the Indonesian economy has sunk will make it impossible to salvage capitalistically without either concessions to the masses, or serious repression. The U.S.-Europe-IMF is playing carrot-and-stick with monthly incremental billion-dollar payments. The Clinton administration, which supported Suharto in the past, is holding back on dollars until the political crisis is "solved". The IMF Inc. has not come out immediately with any endorsement of, or check for, Habibie.

ROOTS OF REPRESSION, REVOLT

However, the events of the past year in Indonesia, and throughout Asia, have shown that the crises can't be solved "economically". The currency collapse and debt crisis cover over the heart of the problem, and the locus of revolt—the hothouse growth of industrial sweatshops fueled by international capital. The "students" of these factories, men and women who left the poverty of villages to go into the exploitative electronics, textile and other manufacturing industries, are now out of work, angry and rebellious. Over the past five years, one of the central jobs for the police and military has been to stamp out strikes and union organizing drives in these industries.

The Suharto regime was anxious to keep the student protests confined within campus gates because they did not want any coalescence with other forces. Although some student leaders have maintained their own separation, some student organizations have sided, if not actually united, with workers, women, human rights and other groups (See "Students lead opposition in Indonesia," page 11). When student demonstrations were able to break out into the streets in the last three months, they have been joined by workers, employed and unemployed, by bus drivers and street vendors, to medical workers and government employees. The rejection of

Suharto that trickled up to his own ranks, however, aimed to get rid of him in order to make Indonesia safe again for capitalism.

Whatever illusions may still exist among the students concerning the role of the military after it brokered Suharto's departure, they don't exist for the masses. The military has based its "legitimacy" going back to the anti-colonialist movement, where it played a dubious, but always nationalist role in collaborating with the Japanese occupation while during World War II fighting a guerrilla war at the same time.

More relevant is the last military split, when Gen. Sukarno, who had ruled Indonesia since independence, tilted toward China and alliance with the PKI (Communist Party) in the 1960s at the height of the Sino-Soviet conflict. The failed "leftist" coup led to the demise of Sukarno, and as Suharto rose to power, a "purge" of leftists which meant not only the slaughter of the PKI, but all other leftists whom the PKI itself had not already eliminated. Well over 500,000 died in the blood bath. Suharto instituted his "New Order" government which had little other ideology than to suppress opposition.

In a contradiction within the revolt, the anti-Chinese element of the Suharto-led reaction in 1966 that led to the murder of half a million Indonesians, many of them ethnic Chinese, now has reappeared within the current anti-Suharto movement, which has once again scapegoated ethnic Chinese Indonesians.

There are many tendencies within the current struggle, and although no new mass organizations have arisen, yet, out of the present moment, there are aspirants to power. Centrally is Amien Rais, head of the Muhammadiyah Muslim organization, who only recently shed his previously more fundamentalist religious views. Rais was not adverse to collaborating with Suharto in the past, and tried to impose his concept of a Philippine-style reformist "people power" on the Indonesian struggle.

None of the aspirants to post-Suharto power have any roots in the deep mass unrest. It is clear that at this moment the Indonesian masses will not settle simply for a substitute for Suharto. As one Suharto official described the working-class unemployed during the May rebellions in Jakarta, "No one can really control them, not even the religious leaders. They are a factor to themselves." All doors remain open in Indonesia.

—May 26, 1998

Youth

by Kevin Michaels

The results of an April 26 election in Saxony-Anhalt, a state in eastern Germany, startled many who have overlooked or ignored the resurgence of the forces of the extreme Right since reunification of the country in 1989. A party called the German People's Union (DVU) captured 13% of the vote on a platform of violent hostility towards immigrant labor, despite the fact that foreign-born people make up only two percent of the population of eastern Germany, and even less than that in Saxony-Anhalt itself. A disturbing element of the DVU's electoral success is that 27% of the voters who supported it are under the age of 30. Gerhard Frey, the DVU's leader, reacted to this by stating that "voting right-wing is part of youth culture, like techno [music] or skateboarding."

Emboldened by the vote results, a larger and more established far-right party, the National Party of Germany organized a large rally in the eastern city of Leipzig on May 1. Estimates of the turnout range from three to six thousand people. A small contingent of anti-racist demonstrators protesting the rally was set upon and beaten by police.

This phenomenon of large and violent right-wing organizations with a substantially young constituency is by no means limited to Germany, although that country alone saw 2,353 reported instances of racist attacks in 1996. Britain, the Scandinavian countries and the Czech Republic all have organized racist movements which encourage attacks on immigrants, Roma and Jews. Most menacing is France's National Front, the virulently anti-immigrant party which increasingly figures as an electoral threat which may overtake the "establishment" right-wing parties of that country.

Despite Gerhard Frey's assertion that the right has

Europe's youth set anti-racist example

won Europe's youth, however, large and energetic organizations have risen to challenge these racists. Activists in the Republic of Ireland recently organized a nationwide mobilization on April 25 to protest their government's anti-immigrant policy. Marchers in Dublin, Cork and Limerick turned out. Radical youth in Slovakia and the Czech Republic have been active in the defense of Roma, who are often targeted for racist attacks. And in France, a direct challenge to the threat of the National Front exists in the form of Ras l'Front, a large youth organization created in part by the revolutionary left to combat the upsurge of racism and fascism.

These efforts of European anti-racist youth should serve as a model for a similar movement in North America, one that will combine aggressive confrontation of violent racists in the streets with the development and dissemination of the idea of a new society, free from racism. Since the breakup of the integrated organizations of the Civil Rights Movement era though, the former element, the street-fighting model, has predominated over the latter.

Without doubt, America's Klan movement is a terroristic one which has historically employed murder as its chief weapon. While its factions should be physically denied every venue they seek out to publicize their message, as activists succeeded in doing in Ann Arbor, Mich., on May 9 when the American Knights of the Ku Klux Klan were driven from the steps of City Hall, to neglect the task of developing the idea of what should replace existing racist society fails to put American civilization itself on trial.

This task should be the goal of North American anti-racists: to mount a thoroughgoing challenge to racism which attacks its integrality with capitalism itself. The growing ranks of prison solidarity and anti-police brutality

activists can build such a movement, one such as European youth are developing, if they seek to unite theory and practice in the street, in their newspapers and leaflets and in the way in which they organize themselves on principles of democracy and racially integrated participation.

Free Farley Matchett

Montbéliard, France — I've been writing for two-and-a-half years to Farley C. Matchett who's been sentenced to death in Texas.

Here are the facts. A man owed Mr. Matchett some money. When Mr. Matchett asked for it, the man took out a knife and was stabbed in the fight. Farley wasn't responsible for this because the man hurt himself with his own knife.

During Farley's trial, his lawyer fell asleep and didn't defend Farley as he should have done. Farley is today appealing to the Supreme Court, but he needs a competent lawyer. Farley hasn't got any money since he is a truck driver.

Farley deserves to be helped because it's a case of self-defense, he's Black and poor, and it would be so much easier if he was a political prisoner like Abu-Jamal. If readers of N&L could write him a few words of encouragement and other newspapers could start a campaign in his favor, it would be a blow to the whole system of the death penalty.

—Hubert Truxler, 50 Rue Oehmichen, F-25200 Montbéliard, FRANCE

Conference slams war moves

Memphis, Tenn. — Demonstrating that Clinton's retreat from the brink of outright bombing has not stilled anti-war opposition from below, 30 people attended a forum at the Mid-South Peace and Justice Center April 30 on the ongoing crisis over Iraq. The bellicose U.S. policy toward Iraq, the history of counter-revolutionary intervention, the bloody regime of Saddam Hussein, and even the betrayals by the Iraqi opposition, all received critical analysis.

Pete Gathje, a professor of peacemaking at Christian Brothers University, traced the history of U.S. relations with Iraq since World War II, leading up to the 1991 war. Franklin Dmitryev of News and Letters Committees spoke on the revolt of minorities in Iraq, especially the revolution that broke out at the moment of Iraq's military defeat in 1991, and the complicity of the U.S. with Hussein's genocide against the Kurds and others at that time. Reading the voice of a Kurdish activist whose story was printed in the May 1991 *News & Letters*, he linked the voices of freedom from below within Iraq with the new U.S. voices of opposition to war, stressing the need to develop the concepts of liberation that can move these voices forward.

Nabil Bayakly, a professor of Arabic and biology, told of the long history of civilization in what is now Iraq, asking Americans to remember that their bombs and embargo are destroying an advanced culture. Sister Pat McCarthy, a Catholic activist, dwelt on the need for activism.

In the discussion, several Kurdish and Arab Iraqi refugees, as well as immigrants from Syria and Lebanon, added an indigenous Middle Eastern view.

The participants left the meeting with renewed determination to oppose the ongoing war against the people of Iraq, and at the same time to oppose Saddam Hussein's brutal regime.

—Anti-war activist

No on Prop 227

Oakland, Cal. — Over a hundred teachers and activists of all colors marched through a Latino, Southeast Asian and Black district of Oakland on May 9 to denounce Prop. 227, the anti-bilingual Unz Initiative on the June ballot. Ron Unz, a wealthy, white technocrat who tried to buy the California governorship in 1994, makes no secret of his contempt for Latinos as his official argument to the State Legislative Analyst shows: "bilingual education means monolingual, SPANISH-ONLY education." Unz's English-only solution to this ghastly problem is not correspondingly highlighted with all-cap lettering—it is not even mentioned in the argument.

The Unz Initiative will give non-English speaking students in K-12 public schools a "year," which could be as little as 180 days depending on the school, to catch up to their English proficient classmates. During this generous grace period the affected students are to be placed in "sheltered English immersion" classes which are essentially intermediate English-only prep classes for the mainstream monolingual, English-only education that awaits them if they qualify.

At the rally following the march a Mexican-American woman told us of her resolve long ago to ensure her sons speak English only so that they might escape the discrimination she had faced as a child growing up in the United States. But now she regrets having had faith in such a strategy because her sons, both community activists, find themselves frequently hampered by communication problems. Many of us were grateful the woman gave her talk in English as well as Spanish, although even monolingual, English-only types probably understood at some level a sign someone carried that read: "Chale fregar a Unz, pinchi million racista."

—Participant

Youth protest police brutality

Chicago — Protesters of all races and ages came from the North, South and West sides for a noontime march through the Loop May 19, to mark Malcom X's birthday and to express their anger at the rampant police brutality that plagues their neighborhoods. The police had to stop traffic as marchers filled all but one lane for over a block and a half of city streets. Youth who bear the brunt of police abuse made up a large portion of the marchers.

Many expressed a renewed sense of hope following the march. As Abe, a Black high school student, said, "Adults and people not affected by police brutality don't realize that it's going on. Teenagers, Black teenagers, minorities, are the most affected. It was the first time in a long time that I saw a lot of adults who were concerned about police brutality."

Cleo, a classmate of Abe's agreed: "Some older people say the police are just doing their job. If something happened, you brought it upon yourself. But young people out here know it's not what people did to bring it upon themselves. It's because these cops feel that if they want to do it, they're going to beat you."

Chicago youth are quick to tell stories from their personal experiences to show how the police are at fault. Abe described one incident: "My sophomore year me and my

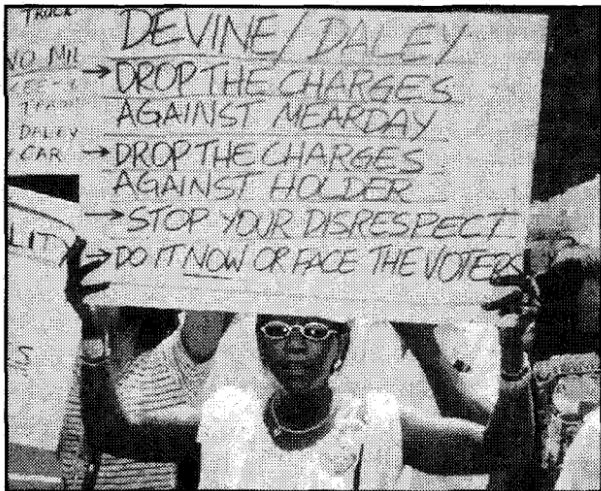
boys were chilling out on the street. The police rolled by once, and then they rolled by again. We were in the alley by this brick wall. They were like: 'Get up against it.' We were like: 'What did we do?' They were like: 'We heard someone say you got a gun.' None of us had a gun. We were down on our hands and knees, cross-ankled, and they pushed all of our heads into the brick wall. I didn't get a broken nose, but I was bleeding and had scratches on my forehead."

Another student, Taj, expressed disgust with the lack of freedom the police impose on young people of color: "Wrong place at the wrong time. There's no way to avoid it, unless you stay in the house all the time."

Cleo was optimistic about the possibility of a movement against police brutality helping young people to get over the feeling of helplessness. "People used to look at it, and not say anything because they were scared," he said. "But there are more people starting to speak up and fight against it now."

Taj, however, criticized the march's religious leadership: "I didn't like the end when they started singing and praying. That doesn't do anything. They laugh at us when we pray like that. 'God, please help these police to stop kicking our ass. Take the bible club from them when they are about to strike me with it.'"

—Jim Guthrie



Marcher demands Mayor Daley stop disrespecting Black and Latino community

Students lead opposition in Indonesia

The tragic shooting deaths of six student protesters in Jakarta on May 13 were a direct indication of how severe the ongoing crisis of Indonesia's New Order government was to become. That the shootings occurred on the campus of Trisakti University, a private institution, is evidence that campus opposition includes not only the students and faculty of public universities, but young members of Indonesia's middle class as well. In addition, the use of force against student protesters on that day was geographically widespread, as campus clashes were reported from Bandung, another Javanese city, to Kupang, in West Timor.

Indonesia is fundamentally a police state in which expressions of opposition to its repressive government and the prominent role of the army, popularly referred to by its acronym ABRI, in its society are highly circumscribed. Universities have traditionally been spaces where these expressions have repeatedly surfaced and, as in the most recent campaign of protests, tolerated by the ABRI as long as they remained within the confines of the campuses. It is a mark of the concern of the rulers this time around, however, that the tactic of "disappearance" has been used against activists. At least two non-student democracy activists who were released after their abductions report the use of torture against them and a number of disappeared students are still missing.

A document issued recently by the East Timor Action Network after a March information-gathering visit by a delegation of three activists includes a section on stu-

dent activity. It reports that "no group is organizing these demonstrations, either at the national level or the campus level. The students are only motivated by a common frustration with the Suharto regime." There is a current within the opposition which is not opposed to the role of the army and instead focuses on the corruption and nepotism of the government. This view was made explicit in a *Chicago Tribune* story which reports a student leader as refusing an offer to unite with workers and off-campus youth groups because of the possibility that, in his words, "the situation will run out of control."

Coexisting, however, is a more radical tendency which maintains ties to the outlawed Student Solidarity for Indonesia (SMID), an organization associated with the Peoples' Democratic Party (PRD), the opposition party declared illegal in the wake of the August 1996 unrest in Jakarta. These students are against the role of the ABRI and represent a possible force for a thorough-going revolt.

At an earlier stage in the ongoing crisis, army officials made explicit attempts to invite student leaders they deemed respectable into vaguely-defined talks. It remains to be seen whether or not this tactic will be viable now that blood has been shed. Similarly, all eyes should be watching to see whether or not a radical current of opposition to the New Order government will emerge and succeed in establishing solid ties with workers and oppressed nationalities of the Indonesian state.

—Kevin Michaels

Our Life and Times

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

Israel defies Palestinians

On May 14, as Israel celebrated 50 years as a state, tens of thousands of Palestinian Arabs came out onto the streets to mourn the catastrophe this has meant for them. The Israeli response was swift and brutal: nine Palestinians killed in the Gaza Strip, and hundreds more arrested. Even more telling was the way in which soldiers harassed and humiliated peaceful demonstrators who were merely trying to mark the event with two minutes of silence.

Israel's Likud government continues its stonewalling of legitimate Palestinian demands, now even coming into conflict with the Clinton administration's compromise proposal that it withdraw from 13% (!) of the West Bank. Apparently confident that the U.S. ruling classes will continue indefinitely to support even the most intransigent Israeli policies, Netanyahu ignored the hint when Hillary Clinton, in a supposed gaffe, said the Palestinians needed a state.

Basking in his embrace from the Republican Senate, Netanyahu also ignored the fact that the U.S. Jewish community supports the Clinton administration, not his own policy of undermining the Oslo accords. He faces a similar level of opposition at home.

South African conflicts

The contradictions of Nelson Mandela's South Africa—formal democracy for the Black majority but without any change in the class/economic relations which grew out of centuries of racial capitalism—have come to the fore most dramatically in recent weeks.

In April, a white farmer in a town near Johannesburg fired on three Black children crossing his land, killing a six-month-old child being carried on another child's back.

Earlier that same month, white parents beat up Black students in Vryburg, an Afrikaner-dominated farming town. The Blacks had demanded an end to segregation in the local high school, where they were denied access to computers and science labs, and had not even been issued textbooks during the whole of 1997.

In May, a judge, who evidently began his career during apartheid, ruled that 37 African National Congress (ANC) leaders would need to appear at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to confess to any acts of violence they had committed during the liberation struggle. This type of formalistic "even-handedness," in which minor acts of violence by the ANC are equated with those of the racist apartheid state, is the hallmark of bourgeois law everywhere.

Australian wharfies win

Australian wharfies (dock workers) won an important legal victory May 4 against a union busting campaign launched by Patrick stevedores, the country's second largest port operator. The Australian High Court ruled April 7 that Patrick illegally fired 1,400 members of the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA), and hired 400 non-union replacements.

Patrick has gotten full aid and comfort from the conservative government of Prime Minister John Howard, which has been gunning for the dockers. Last year it passed laws to abolish closed union shops and to limit unions' rights to go on strike.

Defying injunctions against meaningful picketing, the locked out MUA dockers set up pickets across Australian ports, halting the movement of cargo in or out of Patrick facilities. The MUA received international support from other dock worker unions, and boycotts of scab Patrick cargo helped turn the tide for the MUA. In the wake of their legal victory, the wharfies are still battling Patrick and the government over control of jobs and working conditions.

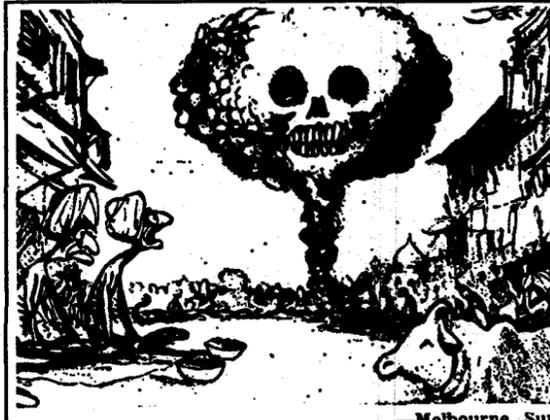
India raises menace of nuclear war

Crossing the nuclear threshold with the five underground nuclear tests conducted by the right-wing BJP-led coalition government, India now stands poised for a deadly arms race with Pakistan in what has become one of the most volatile continents in the world. Fundamentalist leaders in both countries have been sabre rattling over the disputed Kashmir territory. With a history of three wars and two near-wars between the countries, this conflict raises the menace of nuclear war with an urgency not felt since the end of the Cold War. (As we go to press, Pakistan has not only tested its own nuclear devices, but now claims to have affixed nuclear warheads to missiles aimed at India.—Ed.)

Not to be forgotten in this nuclear mania is China, with which India went to war over border disputes in 1962. Indian politicians, in the days preceding the nuclear tests, had declared China to be India's main enemy and a threat to India's national security. Since the nuclear tests, a press release by Xinhua, China's official news agency, charged India with having invaded China in 1962 and having illegally occupied 90,000 square kilo-

meters of Chinese territory. This forebodes the possibility of a revived border dispute, this time with India as a full member of the "nuclear club" to which China has long belonged.

The BJP, heading the recently elected coalition government, however, has more on its nuclear agenda than the so-called external threat to national security they fabricated to justify the tests. The nuclear explosions were meant to cement the BJP's shaky hold on power. Most of the elected parties in the coalition have rallied behind Prime Minister Vajpayee's act of nuclear terror in a rare show of unity. Left parties like the CPI and CPI(M) revealed their utter bankruptcy when they restricted their criticism of the BJP to the fact that it



Isn't science wonderful — it's cured my appetite.

(Reprinted from the June 1974 *News & Letters* at the time of India's first nuclear tests.)

had not conducted an open review before going ahead with the tests.

Ideologically, the jingoist rhetoric used to cast the nuclear conflict as one between imperialist powers and the Third World serves to help the BJP maintain its veneer of nationalism while it continues the liberalization policies of past Indian governments. While Indian politicians continue to thumb their nose at the U.S. and western sanctions, they are at pains to maintain a working relationship with the IMF and the World Bank. Indeed, we may see the BJP blaming the worsening economic conditions of the masses on the sanctions imposed by the imperialist powers, rather than on their own sell-out of India to global capitalism through liberalization.

The sanctions imposed by the U.S., the largest nuclear power in the world, stink with hypocrisy. In the end, the U.S. will, of course, only pursue those policies in its own best interest and it remains to be seen whether its two-faced sanctions will have any more bearing on India than those that were slapped on China following the Tiananmen Square massacre. (See April 1998 *N&L*)

The picture presented by the bourgeois media is that the BJP has united India behind its nuclear frenzy. This is far from the truth. Many Indians see through the BJP's blatant ideological manipulation. Noting the tragic irony that the explosions were conducted on Buddha's birthday, May 11, a statement issued by the National Alliance of People's Movements, an association of over 200 grassroots and environmental movements, denounced the tests, arguing that real national "glory would have been the availability of clean drinking water, housing, employment...health services and opportunities for education."

Several anti-nuke demonstrations have been staged in New Delhi and Calcutta, organized by various grassroots, peace and women's organizations. Participants carried signs that read "We don't want Nuclear Bombs in Gandhi's India!" and "We are clear, No Nuclear!" One demonstrator who was asked by an Indian TV reporter what the protest hoped to achieve, said, "We don't want the world to think that all Indians support nuclear testing. This is for all people of the subcontinent—we are saying we want peace and not war." Notably absent from these protests was the organized Indian Left.

What India's nuclear testing reveals is that the fight for a more human world is still a fight for the very survival of human life on this planet. The post-Cold War complacency over nuclear weapons has been dispelled and could lead to a reawakening of the global anti-nuclear movement.

—Maya Jhansi

NATO's imperial arrogance

Nothing since the 1991 Gulf War has revealed U.S. and Western imperial arrogance as much as the decision to expand the nuclearly armed and explicitly anti-Russian NATO alliance right up to the Russian border. Despite strong reservations expressed by virtually all U.S. specialists on Russia, from former top diplomat George Kennan on down, the Senate ratified Clinton's proposal for NATO expansion virtually without debate.

It is not surprising that many in the three small Central European nations who are now to join NATO—Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, each of which has experienced numerous Russian Tsarist and Stalinist invasions and occupations over the past two centuries—would want protection against Russia. But that will not be the result.

First, it is doubtful today that Western governments would actually defend these countries militarily were a war with Russia to break out.

Second, the U.S.'s true aims for expanding NATO have nothing to do with the stated goals of supporting democracy and the self-determination of nations, and everything to do with projecting U.S. economic and military power into the region as never before.

A third factor is the bonanza in store for the U.S. military-industrial complex as the new NATO members will be forced to tax their citizens to the bone to buy Western-manufactured military equipment, something the working people in the Western countries will also be paying for years to come.

The U.S. and the West evidently view Russian public opinion, which is unanimously opposed to NATO expansion, as something that can be written off because of Russia's present economic disarray. This is foolish. There are plenty of ways in which Russia can challenge the West right now, not to speak of down the road.

By no accident, as the Senate debated, Russia announced that it would sell missiles to Cyprus by July. This poses a direct challenge to U.S. ally Turkey, which illegally occupies part of that island. It also drives a wedge between the U.S. and its Western European allies, who do not share the U.S.'s tacit support of that Turkish occupation.

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 in 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.