

# NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

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50¢

## Courts gag women at Mitsubishi



by B. Ann Lastelle

*The infinite degradation in which man exists for himself is expressed in this relation to the woman as the spoils and handmaiden of communal lust.... The direct, natural, necessary relationship of man to man is the relationship of man to woman.... From the character of this relation it follows to what degree man as a species has become human...*

—Karl Marx, 1844

Twenty-nine women in 1994 filed a sexual harassment lawsuit against Mitsubishi Motor Manufacturing of America, an auto plant in Normal, Ill., which employs 4,000 workers, 800 of whom are women. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission found evidence of widespread sexual harassment and in 1996 filed its own suit, the largest case ever brought by the commission. The initial suit was settled in 1997; the EEOC suit, in June 1998.

What motivated the 29 women to try to change their conditions? How did their suit and its settlement change their lives? We cannot know. While the case was pending, their attorneys said no plaintiffs were talking to the press. Now, as part of the settlement, they are gagged. Ninety percent of sexual harassment lawsuits are settled before they go to trial. The women do not testify in court, and it is common practice to refuse plaintiffs the right to speak about the resolution.

Other Mitsubishi women have been reluctant to speak due to a fear of retaliation by male coworkers or the company. EEOC officials said when announcing their suit, "Female employees who had the courage to complain...were ridiculed, ostracized and physically

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## Black World

### Clinton's Race Initiative



by Lou Turner

After more than a year of exhaustive investigations, testimonies by scores of witnesses, and millions of taxpayers' dollars, the report and recommendations finally released to the public in mid-September fell far short of the media hype about explosive revelations and far-reaching consequences for the nation. There was simply nothing there, and the American people were tired of discussing the matter.

No, it's not Kenneth Starr's Special Prosecutor's report on the misadventures of President Clinton's sex life that seems to endlessly titillate the fancy of a salivating national media and a voyeuristic right-wing Congress. It's instead Clinton's own advisory report that the McCarthyite Starr report and the release of Clinton's video-taped testimony to the grand jury succeeded in whitening out, namely, The President's Initiative on Race report: "One America in the 21st Century."

Clinton's Race Initiative report and the timing of its release are full of ironies, both banal and bizarre. That Clinton has sought to wrap himself not in the American flag as all other patriots and scoundrels have when facing adversity and scandal, but in race and religion, especially in the Black dimension, is one of the more bizarre ironies now playing itself out in American life. In the category of banality is the Race Initiative report itself whose title is an unimaginative composite of two of the most powerful aphorisms ever formulated to sum-up the intractable contradiction of race in "American civilization."

The designation "One America," which is apparently derived from Clinton's own personal "vision" and which the report defensively acknowledges in its very first endnote as having come under criticism as "misleading and even worse, hypocritical," is an allusion to the famous summary judgment in the Kerner Commission report that there is not one but "two Americas—one black and one white, separate and unequal."

The reference to the "21st century" is an homage to W.E.B. DuBois' famous 1903 prophetic utterance in *Souls of Black Folk* that "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line—the relation of the darker

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## Russia's economic nose dive exposes roots of capitalism's global turmoil

by Peter Hudis and Andrew Kliman

In what looks like a topsy-turvy world, the global economic downturn, which began in East Asia in 1997, has become so severe that some of the biggest advocates of the "free movement" of capital have suddenly proclaimed the need for greater state intervention in the global economy. The London *Financial Times* of Sept. 18 called on the Japanese state to embark on "widescale nationalization" of its failing banks. Leading economic analysts in Asia, Europe and the U.S. are calling for controls on the movement of capital and limits on the "free market"—views considered heretical only months ago. Even the leaders of the Group of Seven industrialized nations, due to meet later this month, are considering some form of capital and/or currency controls to stave off global economic meltdown.

These events show that the ideology of the pure, unrestricted "free market" as a panacea is dead.

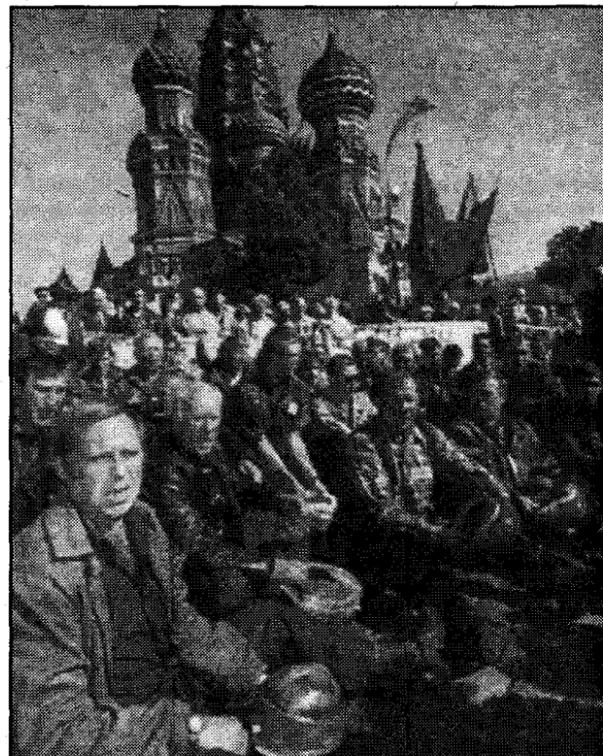
- Malaysia, once a key proponent of the "free market," broke with it last month by introducing controls preventing investors from converting their holdings in Malaysia into other currencies. This limits the outflow of foreign capital.

- Hong Kong, the most renowned bastion of "free market" capitalism in Asia, has seen its government negate private investors' actions by buying up a massive block of stocks in an attempt to halt a plunge in its stock market.

- Japan is being pressured by world policy-makers to run up huge deficits in order to spend its way out of its most severe recession since World War II.

- Russia, where the fetish of the "free market" took off after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, took the unprecedented step in August of defaulting on \$446 million of its foreign debt—signaling that it no longer considers itself part of the post-Cold War global economy. The fall of its free market reformers from power and the ascendancy of Sergei Primakov as prime minister has led to a new emphasis on state intervention.

- In the U.S., Clinton indicated in a speech to the Council on Foreign Relations last month that the U.S.



Unpaid Russian miners demonstrate in Moscow.

may favor coordinated multilateral central bank policy to lower global interest rates. If adopted, this would amount to international Keynesianism—a government-led effort to stimulate investment spending by cutting interest rates worldwide.

All of this flows from the depth of today's economic crisis. In the past two decades, controls on the movement of capital have been lifted around the world. As a result, the

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## Editorial The U.S.'s 'war of the future'

The pornographic tidal wave unleashed on us by the Republican Right, in an unprecedented attempt to drive from office a president they have been targeting for six years, has buried the ever-deepening crises confronting this country today. This new version of McCarthyism, aided and abetted by a frenzied media and fed by the sex scandals around Bill Clinton, cannot, however, erase the monumental real problems facing us—from growing signs of impending economic crisis to rampant racism, sexism, homophobia and police abuse which the freedom forces have been fighting in a multitude of ways every day.

What the rabid attacks by the far Right have most of all succeeded in hiding is that it was these crises at home that the Clinton administration had itself been aiming to divert attention from with its "war of the future." This alleged "war on terrorism" arrived when the U.S. bombed Afghanistan and Sudan without warning on Aug. 20. It is nothing less than the beginning of a frightening new permanent stage of militarism.

Clinton's bombs could not help but bring to mind the sudden attack Ronald Reagan launched on Libyan targets in the Gulf of Sidra in March 1986 which helped give birth to so deep a new stage of retrogression that it could only be called a "Changed World" (see "Marx's new moments and those of our age," page 4). The new permanent stage of militarism Clinton has declared represents the apex of 12 full years of this retrogressionism, taking it to a frightening new dimension. Clinton's was a declaration that the U.S. can attack any country, whenever it desires, on whatever grievance it chooses.

### A NEW STAGE OF STATE TERRORISM?

Marxist-Humanism's deep opposition to terrorism demands both our condemnation of those who showed total contempt for human lives, primarily African, in planting the bombs in Kenya and Tanzania, and our condemnation of the chilling new stage launched at home in the guise of a war against "terrorism." That the U.S. is no stranger to state terrorism is refreshed in our minds by the 25th anniversary of the coup that brought down Chile's democratically elected Socialist government and led to the death of its leader Salvador Allende—and by the recently released evidence of direct involvement by the CIA and the Nixon administration

The uniqueness of Marxist-Humanism's theory of state-capitalism in the analysis of the global economic crisis—find it only in *News & Letters*

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(see page 12).

Public outrage over the revelation of a long list of assassination attempts through the 1960s led to Congressional hearings and an executive order to end them. That senators like Dianne Feinstein and Joseph Biden are now asking for clarification of whether that order makes a distinction between killing heads of state and permission to assassinate others signals how little we have moved from the barbarism we are supposedly declaring war on.

The truth is that the "terrorist training camps" the cruise missiles were sent to destroy on Aug. 20 had been set up by the CIA in the 1980s for the fundamentalist anti-Soviet mujahedeen when they and Osama bin Laden were called "freedom fighters" by the U.S. The truth also is that the evidence is heavy that the alleged "nerve gas plant" bombed in Sudan was not owned by bin Laden and was manufacturing medicines for human and animal use.

The number killed by the bombs has not been released. What is known is that the bombing has increased the starvation in Sudan because relief agencies will no longer fly planes in for fear they will be shot down in retaliation for the bombing. The bombing has succeeded only in giving the unpopular and oppressive regime in Khartoum a new lease on life as anti-government rallies begun at Khartoum University during the summer,

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### ON THE INSIDE

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# Workfare: slave-style forced labor

by Sarah Hamer

What faith does this capitalist power structure bring to thousands and thousands of families across the U.S. who have been humiliated, degraded and stripped of their little or nothing benefits so as to be introduced to this "cure," workfare, that the government proclaims will turn this nation around? This system has prompted slave-style forced labor.

In Mississippi, down in the Delta, where as far as you can see are cotton fields and fish ponds, many mothers and families have suffered due to this program set up on an experimental basis in 1995 with the tip of the hat from the Clinton administration which placed more than 7,000 in "WorkFirst" classes that were to serve as cheap labor for catfish and chicken processing plants.

Mississippi companies are granted enormous subsidies, nearly 75% of each new employee's minimum-wage earnings. That is, the state pays \$4.15 of the wages, while the companies only pay one dollar. Many mothers are outraged because they are paid minimum wage at mostly non-union plants with no benefits, no health insurance. They are basically paying out all their wages to pay for the care of their children.

Mothers dropped from the welfare lines are now turning to relatives, boyfriends or other federal programs for help, or traveling long distances in search for work. In the smaller towns where there are no factories, some mothers travel more than 50 miles to find work, always with the thought: "Are my children safe?"

**In the state of Mississippi many people are financially worse off working than on welfare because of the labor camps here. Patricia T., a mother of three children, talked to me about how difficult it is trying to raise her children after being cut on welfare to \$23 a month. Working a \$150-a-week job doesn't help, with no health insurance or other benefits. She stated that the system doesn't understand or doesn't care that women have to struggle to take care of their children. To be forced to work when**

## Woman as Reason

you don't have medical care for your children is inhuman.

She talked about the struggle to find a decent babysitter because the day care centers are eight miles away and it costs her \$50 a week to get someone to take care of her twins, leaving her with very little to live on. She used to receive about \$494 from the state and Medicaid for her children but now she makes less than that on her job, after deducting child care. So how does workfare help mothers be in a better position to take care of their children? As a once recipient of welfare, I understand the struggle of worrying about how I'm going to make ends meet. I had a son and only \$60 a month to take care of my child. There were no jobs to work on.

Mothers depend on the once a month check and food stamps to take care of their children, even though we had to go through hell to receive it. I remember how the system would send someone out and check your apartment to see if you had a man living with you, so they could have an excuse to cut you off. They would ask you all kinds of personal questions.

**I give these examples because we as women, as mothers, have always been oppressed by the system. How can you expect mothers to just leave their children unattended to go into these slave labor camps they call decent jobs? To slave from sunup to sundown and not make a decent living to take care of their children? Or be cut off Medicaid?**

Welfare is the only resource that some mothers have to take care of their children. Some mothers have children that need the care of their mothers, and for this system to push them out into jobs or cut their income off is heartless.

This is another look at how this capitalist power structure dominates us as human beings, as women. It's also a picture painted for us as true fighters for freedom to start thinking seriously about what kind of future are we looking for and what are we willing to do to change this corrupt society?

## 'Critical Resistance' conference

Berkeley, Cal.—More than 3,000 activists participated in a conference, "Critical Resistance, beyond the prison industrial complex," on Sept. 25-27 at the University of California.

In the very first plenary former prisoners spoke about their experiences. Current prisoners sent messages with their hopefulness inspired by the fact that this conference was taking place. Dorsey Nunn, a Black former prisoner, caught the spirit of the conference. He said his son would be more welcome in San Quentin, where they are just waiting to receive him, than at University of California, where they just abolished affirmative action.

There were literally hundreds of workshops on many topics, from resisting police abuse to medical neglect in prisons, from new slavery to the war on drugs. The workshop on clemency for battered women was typical. The 30 activists, social workers and lawyers overflowed the classroom capacity. Because stories of battered women are so horrific, participants were focusing on the immediate relief that is "achievable" for individual cases. Yet there was an underlying understanding that the problems cannot be solved as long as rape and abuse are normalized in society outside.

In a workshop, "Mothers against the prison industrial complex," Theresa Allison and Georgianna Williams recounted their stories of organizing Mothers ROC (reclaiming our children) in the wake of the LA rebellion of 1992. They both discovered through their own bitter experience that the police, district attorneys and the courts cannot be trusted to "do the right thing" and must be prevented from over-prosecuting and railroading young

men into prisons. Georgianna compared her grandmother's struggle against racism in 1920s with Charles Denby's in the '30s as he described it in *Indignant Heart*. She saw a continuity with her own struggle in the '50s and her sons in the '90s.

D.A. Sheldon's voice was heard in a workshop, "History of prison activism: past, present and future," where excerpts from his pamphlet were read. The over 100 participants heard also from long-time prison activists and from youth organizing a high-school walk-out next week. The youth are protesting not only the building of prisons and lack of funding for education, but the conversion of their schools into prisons.

Youth participation in this conference made it successful. Youth led many of the panels and brought in a serious discussion of theory. A Latino youth on the "Urban class struggle" panel saw Marx's category of surplus labor and his value theory as concrete for today and criticized "traditional" Marxists and labor unions for missing the changes in the nature of the economy.

A young woman in the closing plenary summarized the conference as just a beginning of the much-needed solidarity between inside and out and was looking forward to what will be done next. Immediately following the closing plenary, the youth staged a rally and a march to Berkeley's juvenile hall which is constructing a control unit, like the infamous SHUs, for youth!

—Participant

## Passions for freedom run high in women's lock-up

Chicago—For several months I have been involved in a discussion group for women prisoners. The women talk about being on the streets, using drugs and abusive relationships. Many of the women are mothers who talk about the pain they feel being locked away from their children and their fears of their children ending up like them. There are always the horror stories: the beatings, rapes, destruction of the women's personal property, taking away their clothes; anything that can be done to de-humanize them.

One of the issues that comes up all the time is the life threatening problem concerning the lack of health care. One woman told us, "I'm a diabetic and they won't give me my medicine when I need it. A guard told me that when I'm unconscious on the floor and my pulse has stopped, then they'll give me my medicine. I've gone into a diabetic coma twice since I've been here. They accuse me of being crazy and threaten to take away my kids. I feel like I am going crazy because I don't know what's happening with my kids. I don't know if I'm going to die or not while I'm here. They could kill me and get away with it."

During another meeting, two women started shouting at each other. One of them stopped and burst into tears. The other women in the room became very quiet. One by one they went over and hugged her. I quickly found out she was upset because family members had driven her children a great distance to see her and they were not allowed in.

Not all the women who come to our group participate. Some say nothing until it's time to leave. One woman sat at the table, arms folded across her chest, an angry expression on her face until the end of the whole discussion. When the room was quiet she spoke up. "Spike Lee don't know nothin'," she said. "He wrote

## Women Worldwide

by Mary Jo Grey

Jean-Paul Akayesu, former mayor of Taba, Rwanda, became the first person in history convicted of inciting rapes and sexual violence as part of a plan of genocide. The conviction came, Sept. 2, from the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda which has spent the last



three years investigating the 1994 massacre of more than 800,000 minority Tutsis and Hutu moderates, including the rape, torture and forced impregnation of hundreds of thousands of Tutsi women, by the Hutu-majority government. Women's advocacy groups lobbied long to get sexual violence included in the genocide indictment in 1997.

\* \* \*

Republican Governor John Engler of Michigan has barred Radhika Coomaraswamy, the United Nations' Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, from visiting three Michigan women's prisons accused of widespread sexual misconduct by male guards against the women prisoners. Her visit was part of a tour of prisons and Immigration and Naturalization Service detention facilities in six other states investigating the growing abuse of women prisoners. The organization Human Rights Watch charged that Michigan women's prisons are among the worst in the country. Since 1980 the number of U.S. women prisoners has risen by close to 400%—double that of men—with 52% of these prisoners being Black women, although they make up only 14% of the population of women in the country.

\* \* \*

Women activists in Chiapas have been threatened with death. Yolanda Castro, director of the women's group, K'inol Antzetik, and her sister Ines both received written death threats from a paramilitary group tied to the state government demanding that they leave the area.

—Information from off our backs

\* \* \*

Women workers are reported to be among the hardest hit in the current economic crisis in Southeast Asia. Although they make up 42.7% of the labor force, women are mired in unskilled jobs with no chance of promotion and have been the first laid off as jobs are cut. Many women, especially in Thailand and Indonesia, have been forced into prostitution because they can find no other way to survive and support their children.

—Information from Women Envision

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## GM Delphi workers after Flint strike

**Flint, Mich.**—We know our Delphi East plant is doomed, and the workers are pretty depressed. As a result of the strike we have a year's reprieve, but after that it'll be gone. We had a plant wide meeting with GM management and were told that Delphi (GM's parts plants) would all be spun off by the corporation.

Since we returned to work following our strike, they've gotten a lot stricter, looking over our shoulders more closely and speeding us up. An important change is when they put you on a job. Before, they used to train you until you had some idea about the job, but now they just put you there and expect you to make production. You just can't do it, then they get on your back for not doing your job.

Production is the only thing that matters. When there are no rush orders, you can usually have enough time to do a job right, and the company talks safety and lets you work safely. But when a rush order comes in, all of a sudden it's "Safety who?" And what was rejected yesterday as bad work is passed. We know it's bad, and the company knows it's bad, because we tell them. But they still pass it to meet the rush order deadline. And when the bad work is returned, we're the ones who are blamed for not doing our jobs right.

Management really shows its hypocrisy when we have our plant meetings. They talk about how important it is to cooperate and respect each other and how we have to look to the future. Now I ask you, just what kind of future do you have to look forward to when you know your livelihood is going to be taken away from you?

When this plant is gone next year, a lot of people are going to lose their homes, their cars, everything they've spent years of sacrificing, scrimping and saving to try to improve their standard of living. And then it's all gone.

The ones who will be most adversely affected are workers with 10 years seniority or less. When a plant closes, workers are put in a corporate hiring pool and are rehired according to corporate seniority at plants where openings come up. If the rehired worker has 20 to 25 years of seniority, he or she is given plant seniority

## Sealy no bed of roses

**Memphis, Tenn.**—At Sealy Mattress we've been working many days from 7 a.m. to 10:30 at night and back the next day at 7. But then after 40 hours in four days sometimes they stop to keep from paying overtime. Some days you don't have time to do anything but work, sleep and eat.

Last Saturday we were supposed to build 200-some beds and a lot of people didn't show up, so it took five hours. Then they decided they weren't going to finish the schedule for over half of them. That only left three people so they sent them home and left 150 beds there. Monday we couldn't start because people had left all these beds. Then they cut our schedule off for Monday and Tuesday and we still worked 8 to 11 hours.

Management doesn't have enough people to build the number of beds they want built. People want the schedule cut down until they hire enough workers. It's been rough on me. When you work this kind of hours, sometimes you go to sleep tired, wake up tired and start back over again.

—Black worker

## Workshop Talks

(Continued from page 1)

threatened." A current woman worker said, "It's still a hostile environment." A former woman worker added that after the EEOC settlement "people who still work there were told to keep their mouths shut. If everything is fine and dandy, why not let people talk?"

There are men of good will, as well, who would silence the women. A trial "would have been hardest on the community," said Abner Mikva, the former judge who negotiated the EEOC deal. "They would have heard women [say] how they had been abused by their fellow employees—men who live in the area."

This conspiracy of silence suppresses a difference of opinion, a battle of ideas, going on in that workplace and community, a battle which goes far beyond legal questions. The struggle is about what it means to be a woman, to be a man, to be a human being. It is about the nature of capitalist production and society.

"What do you see for the future?" I asked a Mitsubishi woman worker. She answered, "I see them trying to put on a great big front that it's a model workplace, but their main concern is building cars. People are numbers. There is no humanity in there."

The local chapter of the National Organization for Women sponsored a rally supporting the Mitsubishi women's right to a day in court and a safe work environment, and held a sexual harassment workshop at the public library. It also established a fund for the 29 original plaintiffs, some of whom were out of work and nearly homeless. Yet the NOW local spokesperson admitted, "The women probably do feel isolated."

"[T]he relationship of man to woman cannot be treated as a private matter.... That is only one more way to make women feel isolated and helpless. Once there is a Women's Liberation Movement, the whole atmosphere of the country changes, so...you don't feel alone any longer," wrote Raya Dunayevskaya in 1970. How can we begin to create the ground for that type of movement today, so that working women won't feel alone any longer and their voices will be heard?

dating back to 1985. But if you have 10 years or less, those years go out the window, and your plant seniority begins as day one. A newly hired worker with only one year seniority in case of layoff would have more plant seniority than the transferred worker with 10 years of corporate seniority.

A lot of Delphi workers are trying to transfer to other plants, but there are already many high seniority workers in the corporate hiring pool who have not been placed. And with the closing of the Buick Riviera and Oldsmobile 88 lines in the nearby Lake Orion GM plant, that's going to put that more high seniority workers in the corporate hiring pool—to say nothing of the thousands more next year when GM closes its Buick City plant.

On top of all of this to worry about, GM is working us six and seven days a week and rushing us to get out more and more production. We know nothing was settled with our last strike and everything is just delayed until September of next year when our contract runs out. But we can't wait until then to start fighting. We have to keep on fighting every day to stop management from running all over us, or we just might not be around for next September.

—Delphi woman worker

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## June 29 march opened war on non-union construction

**News York**—Mayor Giuliani, the police department, and union leaders were caught completely by surprise back on June 29 by the mass turnout and the depth of anger felt by the workers on the day that became, in fact, a general strike in construction in New York City. The demonstration by some 40,000 construction workers shut down over 200 construction jobs, completely escaped the control of their union leaders, and shut down midtown Manhattan for the better part of the day and battled the cops. The cops were so scared and outnumbered they maced themselves. In the end, there were 38 arrests and dozens injured, including 20 cops.

The demonstration had been called by the Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York to protest the awarding of the contract for a new Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) control center, a state job, to a non-union contractor, Roy Kay. The next day, the union leaders were falling over themselves trying to apologize for the street rebellion that the demonstration turned into and downplaying its numbers—the cops reported 40,000, the unions insisted only 20,000 of their members showed up! How's that for a change! The unions cancelled future rallies.

Giuliani had been so arrogant that he had even denied the unions an adequate sound permit and a march permit—these are the unions, which endorsed him and fellow Republican Governor Pataki! Denying those permits only made it harder for the union leaders to keep control of the rank and file, who couldn't even hear them.

This "general strike" was no accident. It comes at a time when there has been broad sympathy for the UPS strikers throughout the country last year, as for the GM strikers this year, against what is identified more and more as "corporate greed."

It was the young rank-and-file workers—laborers, carpenters, plumbers—who got impatient with the rally in front of MTA headquarters on Madison Avenue and formed their own march to the actual non-union construction site on Ninth Avenue. According to one account, one carpenter jumped up on the stage, and since the leaders shut off the mike, he pantomimed to the crowd, "Let's go to Ninth Ave," and they took off. The union leaders tried to stop them but were booed and shouted down. It is these young workers who know it is their jobs that are at risk from growing non-union competition.

What was new about this demonstration was these young, angry workers who are ready to take on the non-union threat directly and with militant tactics. They are

## Overnite workers picket NLRB over criminal hours

**Memphis, Tenn.**—We're in the process of negotiating a contract with Overnite Transportation. (See August-September 1998 News & Letters.) Because of all the unfavorable rulings we've gotten from the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), Overnite employees are going to picket them. One particular individual there, any time he hears a charge that we file—even if someone from the company came out and spit on us—finds no merit in any of our charges. We're going to picket the NLRB just because of him—John Bowders. He's anti-union, anti-anything that has to do with us. He's even been heard to say that he hates unions. It has nothing to do with the Teamsters, who are negotiating our contract. We're just a group of independent workers from Overnite Transportation.

Now, a guy can be fired for any reason and Bowders doesn't find any merit to our protest. For example, we have a category we call "HazMat" for hazardous material. If you forget to put "HazMat" in the particular spot for it on the manifest, when we say what is going on the trailer, you do need some kind of reprimand. But we've had guys fired for that. Then when people drive the forklift every day, they may have an accident. If a guy who has an accident is involved in union activity, he's fired, while others who do the same thing don't get fired. But Bowders doesn't find that this is the grossest discrimination between people involved in union activity and people who are not.

The company has a policy that after 47 hours you will receive time and a half pay for overtime. That was something they gave us after the union started to organize. They are supposed to give overtime after 40 hours. At one time you could work 75 hours and you wouldn't get it! But after saying they agree to overtime after 47 hours, Overnite came up with this cop-out waiver of your rights to get time and a half. If you didn't sign this, you wouldn't get any overtime, even though you had more seniority than the next man who was working 60 hours because he had signed the waiver.

When they get up towards 47 hours you may come in and work five hours and have to go home. Our goal is overtime after 40 hours. If they have any kind of way they can wiggle around it they will; they use every trick, every means necessary to do it to you, and at the same time they'll say, "You're our employees, you're important to us." And then they stick the knife in.

The NLRB has done nothing about this, even though it is illegal to work us more than 40 hours a week without overtime. You and I can see that something needs to be done. Maybe the picket won't solve the problem but it will let them know that we are not satisfied, we're not going to go away, and we're not going to lay down and take it.

—Black worker at Overnite

as opposed to their sell-out leaders who have always been ready to cut deals with contractors as they are to the bosses. But how do you take on the non-union contractors? Is it just a question of being more militant? Or are there other reasons non-union contractors have been able to make inroads, rooted in the concept of what a union is, what trade unionism is? And in that, have these militant young workers fully broken with the old leaders?

What makes me ask these questions is a conversation I had with a Chinese construction worker: "I was at the rally, and I introduced a couple of the Chinese construction workers to one of the guys I work with. And I heard him turn to some of the others and say, low but loud enough for me to hear, 'I hope they're in the union.' Which is ridiculous! I mean you look around at the rally and there were almost no minorities there. Why is that? Is it because we don't want to be included? Sure, we will work cheaper. Is it because we want to?"

He told me that minority construction workers who have long been fighting racism in the industry are raising deeper issues than he saw addressed by anyone at that demonstration. "As long as their attitude is that these jobs belong to us because we are white men, by rights, they will never understand why non-union contractors are taking over." You created your own cheap competition, whom you now blame for "taking your jobs." As long as the non-union workers, including immigrants and Blacks and women, are looked at as enemies, as "scabs," when you have excluded them from your union, you will never understand why the unions are losing ground.

The worker concluded: "The unions and union workers feel more comfortable attacking scabs than attacking the boss. White construction workers have been doing very well over the past 20 to 30 years. Now the contract between management and labor has been tossed aside. But the unions still cling to the hope that management will give them a decent contract. But management has cheap immigrant workers to exploit: Chinese, Mexican, Polish, Russian, Croatian. So why should they hire more expensive labor? They're just being good capitalists. I think that Chinese workers, African-American and Latino workers, that are campaigning at New York University—against a union contractor which won't hire women or minorities to build new dormitories on 14th Street—see the need to build up the union. By calling for inclusion and equal opportunity, words that scare this system, that is exactly what will build up the union."

—John Marcotte

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

**Editor's Note**

Raya Dunayevskaya presented the sixth and final lecture in a series of workshop/classes on "Current World Events and the Dialectic Method" in April 1986. It came in the wake of Ronald Reagan's attack on Libya in March 1986, and in it she deepened her view of Marxist-Humanism's historic right to exist because of its half-century of world development in a "Changed World." We reprint excerpts from this lecture in light of Bill Clinton's recent imperialist cruise missile bombardments on Sudan and Afghanistan followed by his declaration of war (see editorial, page 1) and as ground for restating today's need for an absolute opposite, that is, new revolutionary beginnings and the re-creation of Marxist-Humanism. Bracketed phrases were added by the editors. The lecture can be found in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, 11532.

Today, what faces us in these crisis-ridden counter-revolutionary times is not just "terrorism in general," and not just in a single country, but **nuclear terrorism**. On a global scale, then, which new beginnings—in the absolute opposites of revolution and counter-revolution—will determine the end, **not** of humanity but of establishing totally new human relations?

We have, on the one side, the undeclared, ongoing civil war in **apartheid** South Africa, and, on the other, the magnificent Black struggles, which just established the first-ever national Black trade union, COSATU. At the same time, there were great revolutions in Haiti and the Philippines, as well as a new awakening here of the divestment movement and the great mass movements in Europe—as well as the opposition here—against the abysmal depths of Reagan's Retrogressionism.

What is as disastrous as Reagan's criminal actions in his attack on Libya is the Reagan ideology that pollutes the air. Here is the President of the U.S., unashamedly saying, "I am also a contra," and following this up with a blitz on Libya which he dares to call "self-defense" against "terrorism," as if he wasn't committing a **state-terrorist** act.

With this bombing of Libya, Reagan Retrogressionism has reached such an abyss that the whole of today's talk is entitled:

**Which new beginnings will determine the end—the new developing revolutions or the Reagan counter-revolution and its putrefaction of thought?**

There are two opposing worlds in each country—the rulers and the masses. The Reagan degenerate chauvinistic super-patriotism pollutes our air. Long ago, Samuel Johnson had the right description of such patriotism when he said, "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel."

Just look at the concrete disgusting rationale with which Reagan followed the attack in the Gulf of Sidra with an actual attack on Kadafi's living quarters, killing his 15-month-old infant and severely wounding two others of his children, three and four years old. Eighteen bombers flew from England to drop the bombs. If anyone can be lower as a terrorist than Kadafi, then Rambo-on-the-loose, Ronald Reagan, is the one.

It is this type of pull from the gutter imperialist politics of nuclearly armed capitalism that makes it important to struggle against all rulers. And it is the enemy at home that Marxist-Humanism must struggle against, not only by being active in all mass movements and by solidarizing with international movements, but by the specificity of a totally opposite philosophy of revolution. The philosophy of classless new human relations is also a **force** to be projected in our daily lives journalistically as well as philosophically.

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HERE ARE THE THREE MARX PRINCIPLES that form the ground of 1986 analyses, whether they relate to Workshop/Classes; or to *News & Letters*; or to Volume XII of the Marxist-Humanist Archives [The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection] that was being finished in the same three months; and, of course, to the events themselves as they will affect our 1986-87 Perspectives [giving direction to News and Letters Committees]:

1.) Marx's concept of history **in the making**. That is to say, recording an event both as the masses in motion are shaping and reshaping history and as the Marxist philosophy of revolution practices the Idea as a force, even as action itself is force. First, then, is history in the making.

2.) Inseparable from it is **Dialectics**. It is not something restricted to any one historic period. The Dialectic Method examines every event in the context of both historic **continuity** and **discontinuity**, as well as the perspective for tomorrow.

To put it another way, while there is no substitute for action, action like theory is in itself one-sided. The unity of action and thought is what motivated Marx from the very start when Marx designated his philosophy "a new Humanism" and unfurled a banner not only for the over-

throw of capitalism but for the creation of totally new human relations.

Whether an event happened in Marx's lifetime, specifically, his founding of a new continent of thought and revolution in 1844; or whether the event happened in Lenin's time, 1914, and he issued the call for the transformation of an imperialist war into a civil war—what all Marxists singled out from Hegel was the "materialistic" statement that wherever there is life, there is movement, there is the Dialectic.

Marx's transformation of the Hegelian Dialectic from a revolution in philosophy into a philosophy of revolution led him, when the 1848 Revolutions were defeated, to call for "revolution in permanence." The second principle, then, is Dialectics.

3.) The third principle is the relationship of **objective** to **subjective**, neither as mere generalization nor something that stops at the first negation—that is, the overthrow of private capitalism-imperialism, the uprooting of capitalism, private or state. Rather, it analyzes the concrete events inseparable from a vision of the future. This isn't something Marx said only in 1844 or 1848. It is something Marx experienced; he lived it. The "new moments" in the very last decade of his life, with his dialectical attitude to the so-called new science of anthropology—i.e., his new appreciation of pre-capitalist society, what we now call the Third World—are proof of this.

We all know what the *Communist Manifesto* projected as the world outlook



of the newly named Communist League: "Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. **WORKING MEN OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!**" Why, then, don't we remember as well that the *Communist Manifesto* was practicing Marx's 1844 proclamation of "revolutionary, critical-practical activity," not only against the ruling state-party, but by separating himself from "the varying existing opposition parties?"

In a word, why don't we remember the battle of ideas in all periods?

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IT IS HIGH TIME to detail Marxist-Humanism's development because what becomes imperative in this crisis-ridden capitalistic-imperialistic world—and that of course includes both nuclear Behemoths—is Marx's multilinear concept of human development, be it of the industrialized world or what he called the pre-capitalist world, and we know as the Third World, as well as the whole concept of **organization** for that final battle, that would be inseparable from Marx's philosophy of revolution. This of course is what we point to when we say that Marx's new moments make it clear that the 1880s is the trail to the 1980s. But this requires concretization by this new generation. First we broke with all post-Marx Marxists and worked this out explicitly in Chapter 12 of *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*. The turning point in the global struggle for freedom was the recognition that the Absolute Method is the philosophic ground for the present world struggle for freedom.

In a word, we must face what we consider the burning question of today—**ORGANIZATION AS INSEPARABLE FROM THE IDEA**, i.e., **MARX'S PHILOSOPHY OF REVOLUTION, VS. THE VISAGE OF HITLER AND THE ONGOING REALITY OF REAGANISM**.

The visage of Hitler in South Africa extended itself to producing the Lesotho coup which didn't stop Reagan from rolling out the red carpet for the most notorious mercenary, Savimbi, financed by apartheid South Africa which is getting very substantial help from Reagan to intensify their counter-revolutionary work in Angola and in Mozambique. This turned out to be just a "curtain raiser" for the imperialistic, savage onslaught against Libya—which Reagan dared to call "self-defense" against terrorism. In truth, he is the greatest terrorist. He must be stopped. Nor can the activities in opposing him be separated from the battle of ideas against this new form of counter-revolution.

The relationship between the battle of ideas and our actions against the reactionary age we are living in may not seem to be connected with what sounds like such a mystical abstraction as Absolute Method. The truth is that 1953, when the world witnessed the very first ever revolt against totalitarian Communism, was the very period when I broke through on the Absolute Idea. I said that signified that there was a movement from practice as well as from theory, and this involved the whole struggle

# Marx's new moments and those in our age

for total freedom in the specific post-World War II period. That is exactly why, in a similar period of Prussian reaction more than a century ago, Marx called his ideas "a new Humanism." All this we spelled out in our first major theoretic work, *Marxism and Freedom*, which worked out the continuity with Marx's Marxism and the discontinuity which was an actual concretization for our age's battle for freedom. Indeed, the very first chapter ended with a section called "Hegel's Absolutes and Our Age of Absolutes." In a word, Absolute Method, far from being any metaphysical abstraction, is actually the **process** of concrete dialectical development in each age.

The ceaseless movement of human development, through ever-reappearing contradictions, signifies that an end is really the ground for new beginnings. And new beginnings determine the end.

When the turbulent 1960s ended with an aborted revolution, it became clear that Youth activity alone, with its disregard for theory as if it could be "picked up en route," would only end in more and more aborted revolutions. We concretized this in *Philosophy and Revolution, from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao*.

To this day, neither post-Marx Marxists nor activist pragmatists have wrestled with the *Dialectics of Organization: Philosophy, the "Party" and Opposite Forms of Organization Born Out of Spontaneity*. That is the topic of my next book. Unfortunately it will take another two years to complete. All I can do here is touch with where I begin—with Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Program*, written in that last decade of his life when he experienced all those "new moments."

No Marxists understood fully this critique as it relates to organization, not even Lenin, who achieved the greatest leap on concretizing Marx's analysis of the need to destroy the bourgeois state in his *State and Revolution* which unfurled the banner for the actual November 1917 Russian Revolution. But insofar as the Party was concerned, he omitted entirely that question of Organization, leaving himself confined within his 1903 concept of the vanguard Party, notwithstanding the changes he introduced in 1905 and 1917, and hailing the spontaneous new forms of organization, like the soviets in 1917.

Rosa Luxemburg, who had made a category of spontaneity, likewise remained "orthodox" on the question of the Party and criticized Lenin only on the point of centralization and decentralization. Who, then, took **organizational** responsibility for Marx's philosophy, not just of revolution "in general," but specifically the question of what happens after the overthrow of capitalism? What Marx was pointing to concretely was that both those who called themselves Marxists (Eisenachists) and those who were Lassalleans considered that what was of the essence was unity, putting off or "taking for granted" the philosophic ground.

In actuality, what "taking for granted" achieved was to make a principle of the specifically **German** General Workers Association that was nationalistic, as against the First International Marx headed.

Put differently, what Marx was aiming at in the *Critique* was to tell Marxists they must not forget the Universal of freedom as what happens after overthrow, in their preoccupation with **immediate** activity, activity. It is true that those last three words were from the 1960s, not from 1875. But the essence of what Marx was aiming for was expressed in that simple word that everyone "took for granted" they understood—**labor**.

There Marx "repeated" at the very time he completed the French edition of *Capital* what he had been saying on labor since 1844: that labor must not remain alienated, that it must become a total human activity, never separating theory from practice.\*

The world in which we live now confronts us with all its counter-revolutionary actions, with the Reagan Retrogressionism on all fronts, including the U.S. itself and its "ideology," which we must never forget that Marx designated as false consciousness. The putrefaction of thought that the Reagan Administration is exuding is polluting the air for all.

That makes it all the more imperative to grasp what has happened in this post-World War II period since the movement from practice was so creative as to be a form of theory itself. Let us not forget that a form of theory is not yet philosophy. Rather, it is a challenge to the theoreticians to end the one-sidedness of theory, as practice is challenged to end its one-sidedness so that theory and practice can create a **new** unity, the new **relationship** of practice to theory in order finally to reach the realization of philosophy. This is what Marx was working out in his last decade, after the defeat of the revolutions in his period, and the fact that the 1875 attempts at organization put a priority on the **unity** rather than the principles which they supposedly "took for granted."

What is an imperative for our age is never to "take for granted" the Marx principles, Marx's Universals, the philosophy of revolution, as the age grapples with its immediates.

New forms of theory that have arisen from the spontaneous mass revolts, with its challenge to the theoreticians, are exactly where Marxist-Humanism started when working out a new newspaper where the produc-

(Continued on page 11)

\* A conversation with Herbert Marcuse in the late 1970s in a way revealed the whole relevance of that for our age, when he asked me what did I think of that specific paragraph in the *Critique of the Gotha Program*.

# Essay Article Contemporary challenges to dialectical thinking

by Kevin Anderson

author of *Lenin, Hegel, and Western Marxism*

*The crucial point is not only that for every stage of phenomenological development there is a corresponding historic stage, but also that thought molds its experience in such a manner that it will never again be possible to keep these two opposites in separate realms.... No matter what the phenomena are, thought molds the form of experience in a way that determines both the experience and the "ways in which consciousness must know the object as itself."*

—Raya Dunayevskaya, *Philosophy and Revolution*, (1973)

*Hegelian categories are all recovered in Marxism, and it is no accident that they were reactualized in Europe around, say, the years 1917-23.... And if after 1923 this renaissance of dialectical thought subsequently ended, it was because the revolutionary period was clearly over...*

—Lucien Goldmann, "The Dialectic Today" (1970)

We do not live in one of those periods, that Lucien Goldmann mentioned, of recovery of the Hegelian dialectic in Marxism and radical thought. Instead, we are in an epoch when the dominant intellectual currents all, in one way or another, reject the dialectic of Hegel and of Marx.

## THE CRUDE MATERIALISM OF WILSON

In his recent acclaimed book, *Consilience*, Edward O. Wilson, the founder of sociobiology, wants to speak of the unity of all human knowledge, albeit in a positivist sense. The example of dialectical thinking he singles out is Kant's famous statement to the effect that "there is in man a power of self-determination, independent of any coercion through sensuous impulses."

In an attack that could as easily have been made against Hegel as well, Wilson writes condescendingly that "this formulation has a comforting feel to it, but it makes no sense at all in terms of material or imaginable entities." Wilson concludes his brief treatment of German idealism by suggesting that if these thinkers had "known modern biology or experimental psychology they would not have reasoned as they did."<sup>1</sup> He here falls into what Marx, in describing Wilson's mentor, Darwin, had already called the "abstract materialism of natural science, a materialism which excludes history and its process."<sup>2</sup>

Today, Wilson's pronouncements find their echo in the evocation of a Hobbesian world of innate human aggressiveness and acquisitiveness that we receive through the mass media, whether on the need to lock up "criminals" or to allow the accumulation of wealth in the "free market" to run its course.

## BOURDIEU'S MODIFIED STRUCTURALISM

A second line of thought can be discerned, this time mainly among oppositional intellectuals. I refer to those theorists and philosophers who have opposed globalization, who have identified with the labor movement, and who have even in some cases attacked the established trade union bureaucracy and the leftist political parties as class-collaborationist.

The famous French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu is a prime example. He organized an intellectual network supporting the workers during the great 1995-96 strikes against the former conservative government, and has since then antagonized the new social democratic government of Lionel Jospin as well as the Communist Party with his pronouncements. In a recent manifesto, "For a Leftist Left,"<sup>3</sup> he and other French intellectuals have counterposed the movement of the immigrants and the unemployed in the streets to the policies of Jospin and Tony Blair, who accept the logic of the world market.

However, Bourdieu also keeps his distance from Marxism and has been extremely hostile to all forms of idealism as well. For example, listen to how he attacks Jean-Paul Sartre, who had once written, in one of his finest passages:

"For it is necessary to reverse the common opinion and acknowledge that it is not the harshness of a situation or the sufferings it imposes that lead people to conceive of another state of affairs in which things would be better for everybody. It is on the day that we are able to conceive of another state of affairs, that a new light is cast on our trouble and our suffering and we decide they are unbearable."<sup>4</sup>

Here, Sartre is arguing for the crucial importance of the idea of freedom as the pre-condition for a genuinely revolutionary transformation. In his critique, Bourdieu points correctly to the problematic nature of Sartre's concept of "choice," but then he digs himself into a hole, dismissing Sartre's entire statement as a form of idealism that is "devoid of objectivity."<sup>5</sup>

Bourdieu defines his central category, the "habitus," as "the durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations." The habitus "produces practices which tend to reproduce the regularities immanent in the objective conditions...while adjusting to the demands inscribed as objective potentialities in the situation" (p. 78). Bourdieu explicitly puts forward the habitus as an alternative to the notion of "the future conceived as an 'absolute possibility' [*absolute Möglichkeit*] in Hegel's sense" (p. 76).

The habitus is supposed to be less one-sided than Lévi-Strauss or Althusser's "structures," but really isn't as different from structuralism as Bourdieu's adherents claim it to be.<sup>6</sup> For example, even where Bourdieu does discuss dialectics, he is so dismissive of freedom, consciousness, and the human subject that the only time he can bring himself to refer to freedom is as "conditioned and conditional freedom" (p. 95). His stress is on the structures of domination, not on how to overcome them.

Bourdieu has had a growing influence in radical social thought in the 1990s, not only in France, but globally. This influence will not be lessened by the appearance in French this summer of his latest book, *Male Domination*.

Members of a third strand of theorizing, these also found on the Left, are dissatisfied with the over-emphasis on structure in Bourdieu and others. They say we need to look also at "agency," a more scientific term often used today instead of "subject" or "humanism." Recently, two American sociologists summed up some of

## 'EVERYDAY LIFE' VS. DIALECTICS

these critiques of Bourdieu when they criticized him for giving "selective attention to the role of habitus and routinized practice" and for viewing "human agency as habitual, repetitive, and taken for granted." While they say they want to focus on "the constitutive creativity of human action," the alternative they espouse is not the dialectic of Hegel or Marx, which they do not even mention. Instead, they identify with American pragmatism which, they claim, grasps human creativity by focusing on everyday life as a process of self-constitution.<sup>7</sup>

Of course, we need to remember that, alongside their belief in incremental change and pragmatic discourse rather than revolutionary ruptures, the founders of pragmatism first embraced and then broke decisively with Hegel. William James, for example, in his famous book, *A Pluralistic Universe*, singled out Hegel's Absolutes for particular attack, terming the latter's philosophy a form of "vicious intellectualism" because of Hegel's search for truth as opposed to the multiple truths of a relativistic world view. For his part, John Dewey wrote of "absolutism versus experimentalism."<sup>8</sup> In the continuing hostility today to all absolutes, including even Hegel's magnificent Absolute Idea, we can still feel the effects of these century-old arguments.

However, it should also be noted that this particularly American form of philosophy was never uncontested, any more than structuralism and post-structuralism have been uncontested in France. As Raya Dunayevskaya stated in her 1985 Wayne State University Archives lecture, in the period "of the 1930s... far from pragmatism and American thought being one and the same, Marxian dialectics was very much on the scene."<sup>9</sup>

4. The existing English translation of Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* by Hazel Barnes (NY: Washington Square Press, 1966, p. 561—in all editions, it occurs on the third page of the chapter "Being and Doing: Freedom") totally garbles this passage, and it had to be translated anew for Bourdieu's book.

5. Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977, orig. French edition 1972), p. 74.

6. For a critical discussion of Bourdieu from inside the French Left which does place him as a structuralist, see François Dosse, *History of Structuralism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

7. Mustafa Emirbayer and Anne Mische, "What Is Agency?," *American Journal of Sociology* 103:4 (January 1998), pp. 963, 969.

8. For a summary of this history, see Richard J. Bernstein, "Why Hegel Now?," *Review of Metaphysics* 31:1 (September 1977), pp. 29-60.

Nor is pragmatism as a political or philosophical alternative limited to America, where we have seen the pragmatist philosopher Richard Rorty attack the dialectic while also advocating that we support the AFL-CIO uncritically in the name of unifying the American Left.

Pragmatism has also been extensively adopted by the Critical Theorist Jürgen Habermas. Listen as well to newly elected German Social Democratic Prime Minister Gerhard Schröder, recently dubbed a "pragmatist" by the *New York Times* for accepting the "reality" of the so-called free market and the need to cut social benefits. Explicitly attacking Hegel's concept of dialectical reason in which philosophy critiques reality and anticipates new stages of freedom, he also stated: "I've had to give up the old Hegelian idea that when theory and reality clash, reality is wrong" (*NYT*, 9/4/98). Of course, if we follow Schröder down that road, we give up the notion of theory as pointing to an alternative to the world of the given.

## KOSIK'S DIALECTICAL CRITIQUE OF THE 'PSEUDOCONCRETE'

These three very different perspectives, scientific positivism, Bourdieu's modified structuralism, and pragmatism, each exemplify, albeit in different ways, what the Czech Marxist Humanist Karel Kosík once called the false world of the pseudoconcrete. All three of these currently fashionable perspectives not only avoid the specific historical circumstances of human thought and action, but also and more importantly, deny that "thought molds experience" in a liberatory manner, as Raya Dunayevskaya wrote in *Philosophy and Revolution*.<sup>10</sup>

This year, as we celebrate the 30th anniversary of Prague Spring, it is worth noting that, already in the first edition of that book in 1973, Dunayevskaya had referred to Czechoslovakia as the place where East European Marxist Humanism had reached "its most rigorous philosophic development" (p. 258). With respect to his concept of the pseudoconcrete, she once wrote:

"...so very universal is our alienated world that the brunt of Kosík's attack—the world of the pseudoconcrete (Kosík's great philosophic contribution)—is exactly the brunt also of our attack, and not only when we talk against the Left not measuring up to the challenge of the time but when we put ourselves to the test of the objective situation, and the subjective demands of Marx's new continent of thought demanding ever new concretizations."<sup>11</sup>

In the famous discussion with which he begins his book, *Dialectics of the Concrete*, Kosík calls the pseudoconcrete "the collection of phenomena that crowd the everyday environment and the routine atmosphere of human life." This is the world "of man's fetishized praxis (which is not identical with the revolutionary-critical praxis of mankind)."<sup>12</sup> Of course, Kosík is no Platonist and recognizes, as does Hegel in his discussion of "illusory being" [*Schein*] in the *Science of Logic*, that there are links between the fetishized world of the pseudoconcrete and the dialectically concrete.

However, Kosík warns us: "Dialectics is... the oppo-

*Even where Bourdieu does discuss dialectics, he is so dismissive of freedom, consciousness, and the human subject that the only time he can bring himself to refer to freedom is as "conditioned and conditional freedom." His stress is on the structures of domination, not on how to overcome them.*

site of doctrinaire systematization or romanticization of routine ideas" and that dialectics "therefore has to abolish the apparent autonomy of the world of immediate everyday contacts" (p. 6).

We cannot recover and develop such a dialectical critique of society and thought today without taking a plunge into the fullness of Hegel's dialectic, which Marx once called "the source of all dialectic."<sup>13</sup> The rejection of, or silence toward, Hegel and the dialectic in so much of contemporary thought makes it extremely difficult for oppositional movements to conceptualize an alternative to the present alienated, fetishized world of everyday life under capitalism. We need to open ourselves to the dialectic, to be unafraid to allow it to mold our experience in a critical, revolutionary manner.

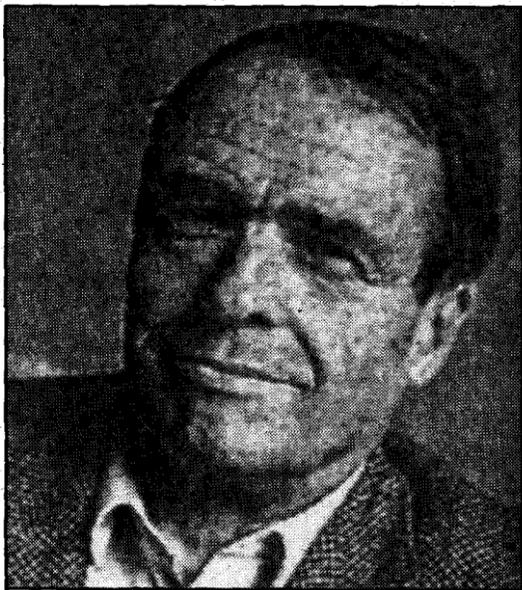
9. Raya Dunayevskaya, *The Myriad Global Crises of the 1980s and the Nuclear World Since World War II* (Chicago: News & Letters, 1986), p. 5.

10. Dunayevskaya, *Philosophy and Revolution: From Hegel to Sartre and From Marx to Mao* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989, orig. 1973), p. 9.

11. Dunayevskaya, Dear Colleagues letter of Sept. 10, 1978, p. 1.

12. Karel Kosík, *Dialectics of the Concrete*, trans. by Karel Kovanda with James Schmidt (Boston: D. Reidel, 1976, orig. Czech edition 1961), p. 2. Further pagination directly in the text.

13. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 744.



Pierre Bourdieu

1. Edward O. Wilson, (New York: Knopf, 1998), pp. 248-49.

2. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, trans. Ben Fowkes (London: Pelican, 1976), p. 494.

3. Pierre Bourdieu, "Pour une Gauche de Gauche," *Le Monde*, April 8, 1998, p. 1.



## VOICES FROM WITHIN PRISON WALLS

When I received the book *Voices from within the Prison Walls* I read it through without even going to chow. The need to develop new human relations is so great in prison and out that it demands solidarity in all aspects of life. Your paper points this out in great detail in the U.S. and the whole world. This book does the same thing within the prison walls.

Some are afraid to rock the boat to make waves. They say it can't be done and that I am only one person. But when you look at history you see it was often only one that made things happen. It started with one. One proven idea and theory. When many believe many will join. Inside and outside we all suffer dehumanization, demobilization, deliberation. This new book of *Voices from within the Prison Walls* makes you feel you are living it. It is extraordinary, remarkable insight.

**Prisoner  
Texas**

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Greetings from the bowels of a federal gulag where I am held hostage with hundreds of thousands of victims of draconian federal drug laws and the mandatory minimum their injustice entails. As a result of my enslavement, I have become increasingly disillusioned with the current political, social and economic trends of the world, and the U.S. in particular. I am reaching out for insight, support and comradeship.

**Down but not out  
Virginia**

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*Voices* is forceful writing, vivid and truthful. If the purpose is to portray a scene accurately you have done marvelously well. If you have another purpose it is not so obvious. I don't think the proselytizing at the end helped or hurt. As a whole it is something to be proud of. But the writing shows you already know that.

**Prisoner  
Texas**

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Robin Lucas won an unprecedented settlement against the federal prison system for being "offered" for rape by guards at Dublin. She spoke of the importance of that case to an audience in San Francisco. It is still impossible for her to utter the word "rape." Yet she wanted to tell us that she had spoken up, complained about the situation, which resulted in much more brutal rapes and beatings. She is willing to put herself through speaking about it because she doesn't want it to happen to any other woman.

The \$500,000 was never her goal. She wanted the rules change to make any sexual contact between a guard and a prisoner illegal. Nobody was prosecuted for raping her because there was no proof it was not "consensual."

**Urszula Wislanka  
California**

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Your center-page ad for the prisoners' pamphlet in the Aug.-Sept. issue reflected the powerful contents of the pamphlet itself: dramatic and riveting. I am pleased that I followed your suggestion and bought two of them, one for myself and one for you to send to a prisoner who would not otherwise be able to get one.

**Supporter  
Detroit**

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I concur with your position against Imperialism and Kapitalism. Being a political prisoner colonized in Indiana prisons and opposing all the contradictions existing in the conditions inside prison, I feel the social forces — the proletarian struggle outside and the struggle to expose wage slave labor on the inside — share a common dynamic. That is why it is imperative for the outside and inside to concretize an alliance with each other.

**Black Prisoner  
Indiana**

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We need to share our situation and set the stage for support in our struggle. Recently the director of the Iowa Department of Corrections stated that Iowa has a serious gang problem in its nine prisons. He named the "Mexican Mafia and biker gangs" as two of them. The director repeatedly used the term "divide and conquer" as needed to gain

control.

There is absolutely no truth to gangs running any of Iowa's prisons nor to gangs being a serious problem in the system. There has been a history of divide and conquer tactics used in Iowa prisons. Staff have staged fights between races and gangs and guards have communicated hate messages through the population. While no prison system may be completely free of some kind of conflict between prisoners, the only serious problem Iowa has had is with the unprofessional conduct of prison officials in intensifying disputes.

**Prisoner  
Iowa**

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The mother of a 28-year-old man who died at South Central Correctional Center in Clifton is suing the private management company, Corrections Corp. of America, for his death because of their penny-pinching on medical costs. A federal judge ruled that there was enough evidence to take the case to a jury. Meanwhile, the company reported \$462 million in earnings in 1997, up 58% from the previous year, and \$54 million in net income, an increase of nearly 75%. Everything D. A. Sheldon has written about the "Prison Industrial Complex" is true.

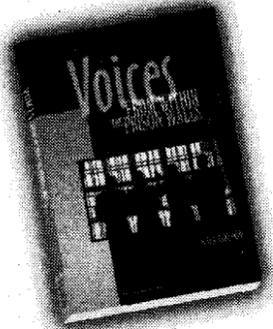
**Outraged  
Tennessee**

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Most sections of *Voices* should be well-known to anyone confined. But there was one section that made me very angry. The section on "Sexual abuse and the unique circumstances of women prisoners" was shocking to me. After 21 years of doing time, I didn't think anything could do that. But I was wrong.

It gave me a much greater understanding of the stress a friend of mine

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doing time in a Women's Facility in Texas must be facing daily. When I had got together enough money to pay for my own sub last year (even though I had been given a donor sub) I sent enough extra for a gift sub to another prisoner and had asked that it go to a woman prisoner rather than someone in a male facility. Reading this section made me realize that as soon as I can get a few extra bucks together, I will send enough for you to send her a copy of this pamphlet.

**Prisoner  
Wisconsin**

*Editor's note: Our donors' fund has been established for making both subscriptions and this pamphlet available to those who cannot pay for them. We want to thank all our readers who have made donations for both.*

\*\*\*

D.A. Sheldon made an extraordinary statement when he wrote: "We must find a middle ground of revolutionary humanist thought, wherein we show respect for the oppressed, while struggling against the oppressor." If the middle is revolutionary, than the ultimate must indeed be a new humanist society. Because "revolutionary" is unseparated from "humanist thought" he shows us the power of the idea of freedom and the vision of a new society.

**Another Marxist-Humanist  
for freedom  
Memphis**

## Readers' Views

Sheldon is speaking to what we all feel and experience but do not always have the words to say. It's important to me that women are singled out and that they speak for themselves. If this pamphlet can get into prisons it will be heard. It sparked something in me. I was sparked to do something when I first got out of prison several years ago, but life is hard and I lost some of my spark. Reading this I got my spark back. I am anxious to get more active again.

**Dana Ryan  
California**

### STRUGGLING FOR OUR RIGHTS

There was some initial conflict in the national gay and lesbian march planned for the year 2000. The Human Rights Campaign takes a conservative approach and wants to focus on issues like gays in the military or gay marriage. It's pretty top-down and concentrates on fundraising and lobbying. Those more to the left want a more grassroots, challenging approach in coalition with other movements. I myself don't see a conflict between these approaches. We need both.

**Gay activist  
Memphis**

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At the end of September, the FCC shut down Free Radio Memphis. We provided music the mainstream commercial stations didn't, as well as news concerning such topics of the Multilateral Agreement on Investments, the situation in Chiapas, radical ecological activism, labor's struggles, women's liberation and general community concerns. We never interfered with other stations and operated on a very low clean signal. The only rules we broke were those created in 1978 by the FCC at the behest of National Public Radio which made community stations broadcasting under 100 watts illegal.

Two FCC agents, backed up by three U.S. marshals, had a warrant for all equipment owned by our Constructive Interference Collective. We call it a state-ordered theft and a clear violation of our right to freedom of speech. But the airwaves of Memphis will be liberated again, on the night ghouls stir and the dead rise again.

**Down but not Out  
Memphis**

### TODAY'S LABOR MOVEMENT

When I read your article about what was and wasn't settled in the GM strike, I came to the conclusion that it didn't settle anything. The future of young and old workers alike looks bleak. The so-called union officials of the UAW have convinced me that the the AFL-CIO bureaucrats are all a bunch of labor fakers, like the ones I heard called that by the old Wobblies when I was growing up. I've been active with the unions ever since. I'd like to see changes made toward building a working class revolutionary movement on a mass scale like we were trying then. I continue to believe that there is only one race, the human race, and within the human race there is only one class working toward that, the working class.

**Still a Wobbly Revolutionary  
Minneapolis**

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GM is making another "lean and mean" move, announcing that it will close out the production of the Buick Riviera and Oldsmobile 88 by the end of the year. Some 1,400 workers at the Orion Township plant will be affected, to be added to the 2,000 at the Buick City plant in Flint also slated for closure. It's another example of the GM-UAW idea of cooperation to clear the air for "friendly" contract negotiations next year.

**Auto worker  
Detroit**

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The long-delayed Teamsters union presidential election has been approved by a Federal judge, who set Nov. 4 as the date to send out ballots and a Dec. 3 return date, for 1.4 million Teamsters' union members to choose from three can-

didates: James Hoffa, who had been defeated by Jim Carey in the 1995 election; Tom Leedham, head of the union's warehouse division; and John Metz, public employee division director. A lot of rank-and-file members are afraid Metz's candidacy could split the anti-Hoffa vote and give him the victory, which would result in a return to his past corrupt and pro-Republican practices.

**Observer  
Detroit**

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A recent NLRB decision upheld the position of the Detroit newspaper striking/locked-out workers that management was responsible for unfair labor practices and ordered the papers to rehire all the laid-off workers, even if it meant laying off replacement scabs. They were supposed to give them back pay for more than three years, when the strike began. Management appealed the decision and the NLRB could reverse the decision, but that is not expected. Meanwhile, demonstrations by the locked-out workers have increased with protests at the newspaper offices, homes of executives and other public places where they appear.

**Strike supporter  
Detroit**

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I spoke with workers here who are building all the new roads and are getting half of the prevailing wages. There's a story to this. These guys are brought up from Mexico to do these jobs in Detroit and all over the state, and the contracts are bid for \$22 an hour but they get only \$10.

**Labor activist  
Michigan**



### LIFE AND DEATH QUESTIONS IN NIGERIA

I was very impressed with Lou Turner's article on Nigeria's disastrous falling apart. I would like to see more on what any Nigerian opposition is doing. I have been reading Saro-Wiwa's detention diary. It is powerful reading. He comes across as a real multi-culturalist, for self-determination of the oppressed minority within an oppressed group as the basis of refiguring a democratic Nigeria. What is particularly interesting is his emphasis on clearing the mind as the first act of liberation. He was a successful businessman but his identification is not with the Ogoni elite but the masses. His appreciation of their thinking, despite the utter destruction of their land and culture, is remarkable. There are parts which remind me of Fanon. The ecological destruction there makes it a matter of life and death now. This is the human, living reason why radical change in Nigeria must not be put off.

**Shelley  
New York**

### BRITISH RADICALISM

At a two-day conference at the London Public Records Office on "Radicalism and Unrest in Britain 1790-1914" a lot of the research was based on government spy reports and there was an impressive talk on Chartist poetry. The spies in the pot houses, it seems, rescued some good poems that couldn't find publishers. There was also useful material for my Helen Macfarlane research. Dorothy Thompson spoke on "Labor History" and in discussion the point was made that left historians hadn't done the Red Republicans much justice. I presented Thompson with a paper I had just done on Macfarlane which she accepted graciously. She is the world's leading authority on Women and Chartism. Later I attended a conference on "Marxism, the Millennium and Beyond" to present a 5,000-word paper on Macfarlane. It was basically what *N&L* published in May 1997 plus a critique of the Gareth Stedman-Jones school of anti-history.

**Dave Black  
Britain**

**READERS LOOK AT THE WARS OF THE FUTURE**

The "war of the future" the U.S. said it was declaring after the bombing of Afghanistan and Sudan means that we now have a permanent war to go along with the permanent restructuring we have already been seeing. If terrorism is going to be the currency in the world, the U.S. is going to be the chief at that too. As the disintegration of living conditions continues all around the world, the backstabbing and double crosses are endless. Saddam becomes the enemy who is saved in the name of stability from the revolutionary opposition from below. Taliban, created as a lethal force by the CIA, is now bombed. The U.S. which just bombed Taliban then tells Iran to respect their sovereignty. It all underscores the need to project a totally new society.

**Marxist-Humanist  
Oakland, Calif.**

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The consensus today is that the war of the future is going to be things like the Oklahoma bombing. They forget that Russia has 20,000 nuclear weapons.

**Observer  
California**

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Every year tens of thousands in this country are shot down, beaten to death, suffocated, or suffer police abuse short of death. This brutality mostly targets Blacks, Latinos and other peoples of color. But as economic and social repression deepens, poor whites are also affected. I hope Oct. 22 will see large numbers coming out on marches, rallies, teach-ins and other forms of protest in cities across the U.S. Many of us will wear black in memory of the victims of police violence. In Detroit the protest will be at the City-County building downtown, at 4 PM.

**Protester  
Detroit**

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For four and a half centuries the world has been periodically disturbed by contentions between progressives seeking revolution and reactionaries seeking to restore former social relations. In the past people knew what their grievances were. Now we are in a position to know the causes.

**Progressive  
California**

Thanks for your interest in helping immigrants. We want to tell you about five Ecuadorans who drowned crossing Lake Nicaragua on their way to be smuggled into the U.S. Others are in jail or disappeared during their exodus from misery and unemployment. This neo-liberal world keeps tightening the noose around desperate people until it falls with the elemental force of blind collapse. If before then we can't unite with revolutionary consciousness, then desperation and hunger will be a certainty. I would like to know more about Raya Dunayevskaya in order to write an article about her directed to women here.

**Revolutionary feminist  
Ecuador**

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Is there any hope of fundamental change now that the rulers are planning terrorist attacks of "our own" which is bound to mean increased retaliation? The conservative patriots, flag wavers, Pentagon, CIA and weapons manufacturers are determined to create a justification for their existence. It is out of control. Where is the massive protest needed? Without it, we are increasingly threatened by fascism here and everywhere the U.S. imperialist bully is free to roam.

**Longtime socialist  
Wisconsin**

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The War Resisters League had called for a demonstration in Washington on Oct. 19 to be called "A Day Without the Pentagon" as a protest against the bloated U.S. military budget and its international and domestic costs. That was even before President Clinton's decision to use military force in Afghanistan and Sudan. We hope thousands of activists will join us at the Pentagon on Oct. 19. Readers who are interested can call 212-228-0450.

**Anti-war activist  
New York**

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I appreciated the July issue of *N&L* for the look at world economics and the poverty that is running rampant due to the U.S. having its hands in other peoples' economies. Across the world, people are pointing their fingers at the U.S. It's about time the American people, myself included, look at our own country the way the rest of world does.

**Kind Lady  
Tennessee**

At a two-day workshop here on globalization, I made good use of the Perspectives draft you published in the July *N&L*. It was appreciated even by those who are not in general agreement with our viewpoint because it has connected the process of globalization with the worldwide crisis of capitalism that has now become permanent. What is also appreciated is our standpoint that any talk of an alternative must take into account the unreformable and uncontrollable nature of capitalism.

**Arvind Ghosh  
India**



**MARKING HIROSHIMA  
DAY IN INDIA**

The Aug. 6 rally at Nagpur was a success although it was small compared to those in other cities. The rally in Calcutta was one of the liveliest in decades with more than 7,000 belonging to hundreds of organizations — anti-nuke forums, women's organizations, the people's science movement, workers groups marching and singing against the war-mongering ruling classes of India, Pakistan and the other nuclear powers. It culminated in a public meeting with anti-war poems and speeches, all charged with a revolutionary spirit.

The ruling Left parties in West Bengal had organized a separate, much bigger rally in Calcutta, where the papers reported four million participated. But despite the huge turnout it was lackluster and dull. The reason is clear, these parties have not taken a clear anti-nuclear stand. Their real objection to the nuclear testing in India is that the right-wing BJP has taken all the credit. Their opposition is only against what they call the nuclear imperialism of the

five nuclear powers. I am sending you photos taken during the Nagpur rally.

**Revolutionary  
India**

**WHO READS N&L?**

Prior to having read your material, I had never heard of Raya Dunayevskaya, but then you have probably never heard of me. At age 80, I have spent the last 50 plus years as a staunch believer in Marxian Socialism and a dedicated advocate of DeLeonist philosophy. I find your approach refreshingly different and sound. I have also found myself to be a "minority of one" almost everywhere I go, so I am inclined to participate beyond my enclosed subscription. You are not located all that far from South Bend. I want to help, and will.

**New subscriber  
Indiana**

**AN APOLOGY TO  
OUR READERS**

We greatly regret that the last lines of Raya Dunayevskaya's article on page 4 of the August-September issue were dropped in the printshop. That article, taken from our archives to mark 30 years since the invasion of Czechoslovakia, was the Editorial Statement originally written on Aug. 4, 1968, just before the invasion took place. The final lines of that article should have read: The reporter from Prague whom we print in this special issue of *News & Letters* rightly stresses that the events he describes are but the first act of a live drama whose ending cannot possibly be known in advance. Show your solidarity with Czechoslovakia!

**THE SCANDAL OF STARR**

If it is true, readers might be interested in what's circulated on the Internet about what Kenneth Starr said in 1987 on a "60 Minutes" interview with Diane Sawyer: "Public media should not contain explicit or implied descriptions of sex acts. Our society should be purged of the perverts who provide the media with pornographic material while pretending it has some redeeming social value under the public's 'right to know.'"

Oh the mellifluous tones of hypocrisy!  
**Interested bystander  
Tennessee**

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## Black/Red View

by John Alan

*Marx's concept of revolution—great masses in motion, in spontaneous forward movement—is not something that can be “made” from above.—Raya Dunayevskaya, Philosophy and Revolution*

Aaron Chapman—a veteran civil rights and labor activist and once a member of News and Letters Committees—died in August after a long period of illness. He was one of the millions of unsung heroes of the Civil Rights Movement who made it such a powerful movement. Although his family decided not to hold a public memorial service to commemorate his more than 60 years of activity in the African-American civil rights and labor struggles, those who knew him soon got on the phone to recall the many years of his unstinting activity.

Chapman didn't go South during the great moments of the Civil Rights Movement. He remained in San Francisco to fight the indigenous racism of that liberal city. This was not a deliberate personal choice on his part, but was caused both by the emerging Black revolution and the location of his large flat in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco. These two contingencies literally converted his flat into a permanent place to hold fund raising rallies to support the Civil Rights Movement in the South. Those fundraising events were compelled to confront the existing racism in San Francisco, that is, the exclusion of Black workers from certain types of jobs by employers and “lily white” trade unions.

Chapman and an informal group of friends took on the task of eliminating that type of racism. They organized and supported picket lines against the “lily white” hiring practices of the downtown department stores and Mel's Drive-In restaurants.

Personally, Chapman led a year-long picket line in front of the Woolworth's at Powell and Market streets, where every day hundreds of tourists from around the world watched as they waited to get aboard San Francisco's famous cable cars. Woolworth's finally gave in and hired Black women as sales persons and waitresses.

Breaking down the racist wall erected by the Association of Independent Cab Drivers proved to be a harder case. A colleague of Chapman's, during protest activity against that organization, was sued for five million dollars. This was a frivolous suit, later thrown out of court. Nevertheless, as a legal maneuver, it succeeded in preventing direct mass action against the cab drivers' organization. Thus no real victory over racism was achieved at that time.

Of course, the full history of Chapman's activities can't be summarized in this column. But neither can any of his activities be absolutely separated from the ideas of the many speakers who spoke in the large living room of his flat. They were also activists with an ideological perspective. Among those speakers were Robert Williams, who was for Black-armed self-defense. Williams, the author of *Negroes With Guns*, received a warm welcome. There was also William Worthy from the “Fair Play For Cuba” Committee and a group of Trinidadian labor leaders who touted the progressive social conditions of oil workers in their newly independent country. African students from newly liberated African countries were frequent visitors and speakers during the '60s. Finally, there was Leslie Alexander Lacey, a Black intellectual who was close to the Socialist Workers Party and later a Black nationalist.

## Black World

(Continued from page 1)

to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea.”

The explicit reference to DuBois' formulation came out of a “debate” that arose during the first meeting of the Advisory Board for Clinton's Race Initiative between Board chairman, Duke University Black historian John Hope Franklin, and Board members Linda Chavez-Thompson, the Latina Executive Vice-President of the AFL-CIO, and Angela Oh, a noted Korean-American lawyer who served as Special Counsel to the California Assembly Special Committee on the Los Angeles Crisis (i.e., the 1992 LA rebellion).

Chavez-Thompson commented that the “classic American dilemma has now become many dilemmas of race and ethnicity,” and Angela Oh argued for the need to “go beyond” the discussion of racism affecting Blacks “because the world is about much more than that” and the Initiative must look toward “the next horizon.” To this Franklin responded: “This country cut its eye teeth on racism in the black/white sphere... [The country] learned how to [impose its racist policies on] other people at other times...because [it had] already become an expert in this area.” In fact, despite its widespread attribution to Black/white race relations, the original import of DuBois' aphorism recognized the multiracial character of the color line.

However, the more illuminating reference was Linda Chavez-Thompson's allusion to Gunnar Myrdal's historic study of American race relations, *An American Dilemma*. For it is precisely Myrdal's moralistic framework of bridging the gap between the promise of the so-called “American creed” and America's racist reality without in any fundamental way transforming the capitalist system that bred the “dilemma”, that most informs the perspectives and recommendations of the Race Initiative report.

Of course, there is no President more prone to moraliz-

## Aaron Chapman, unsung movement hero

Lacey worked with Chapman in preparing many of the fund raising events. Later it turned out that he was the polar opposite of Chapman, the activist-worker. Lacey wrote in his autobiography, *The Rise and Fall of a Proper Negro*, that “Black people are hopeless, downtrodden, the results of mass exploitation. They are alienated from themselves and their families, suspicious, materialistic, cynical, and like most other Americans, hopelessly practical. Also they are anti-intellectual, or to put it a better way, they are anti-people, against ideas and concepts they vaguely heard about but which have had little substantive effect upon their lot. When a leader, or one who wants to lead, comes to preach his brand of freedom, authentic or otherwise, he does not usually understand the faces of the men who stand before him” (p. 242).

Clearly Lacey shows that he had no respect for the thoughts or the actions of the Black masses. However, his disdain for the Black masses reveals a source of the retrogression in the Black freedom movement, that is, the inability of its middle-class leaders to understand the intrinsic revolutionary urge in Black mass revolt to create a nonracist, nonexploitative society.

Chapman, on the other hand, could be considered a pure activist; yet he did not look upon theory or philosophy as a thing outside his activity. No doubt this is why he sponsored, in his busy flat, a reading of Raya Dunayevskaya's *Philosophy and Revolution*. He brought his friends to every meeting. Some were interested in the ideas and others were hostile.

Later, Aaron Chapman did drift away from News and Letters Committees for a number of private reasons, but the original bond sealed during the struggle was never broken. He always, until his death, supported News and Letters.

## Queer perspectives on Black Radical Congress

*Editor's note: Below we print excerpts from an interview about the Black Radical Congress with Tamara Jones, a Black lesbian feminist working in New York City with the Audre Lorde Project on issues of police violence as they affect queer people of color, and with the newly founded organization, Caribbean Pride.*

I was really energized by the Black Radical Congress. It was the first time of which I am aware that a Black left organization was from the start affirming gay and lesbian identities, not just in the spirit of toleration but right in its principles of unity and at the center of its political analysis.

But it's not all a bed of roses. Even in the BRC there is a need to educate organizers about how lesbian and gay issues impact the work they're doing. There is a need to educate people about homophobia and how it expresses itself in Black communities. As a Lesbian and Gay Caucus, we're thinking about working with some of the other BRC caucuses and groups. We have to insure that the BRC is for the liberation of ALL Black people. We have a role to play in this, by pushing people to think about sexuality and its relationship to our politics.

The Congress gave us a starting point in building a left organization where the starting premise is lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender visibility and the centrality of gender and sexual identity to any political analysis

## Clinton's Race Initiative

ing rhetoric on everything from race to personal redemption than Bill Clinton. In the most Myrdalian tone, the report sonorously states that “as difficult as it may be to acknowledge the darker side of our history, we strongly acknowledge and appreciate that at every stage of the struggle to close the gap between the promise of our democratic principles and our policies and practices, Americans of every race worked side-by-side to move the Nation closer to the realization of that promise.”

What this moralizing view of race in America is meant to obscure is the darker side of our history being made today by Clinton and the right-wing Congress. In the section on “Welfare Reform and Race,” there is not the slightest criticism of Clinton and the Republic-led Congress' dismantling of welfare for the working class poor. Instead, the report sounds positively triumphant that “Welfare rolls have fallen 37 percent since the President took office in 1993 and 27 percent since the enactment of welfare reform (sic) in 1996.”

Even on the totalitarian practices of racial profiling and the racial disparities in drug sentencing in the criminal justice system, the report couldn't even muster the “moral” courage to recommend that these racist practices be unequivocally abolished.

In all, Clinton's Race Initiative report documents the progress of and barriers to a growing non-white, multi-ethnic America's achievement of the middle-class “American dream.” Questions of ghetto and barrio poverty, of economic underdevelopment of Native American reservations, of the criminalization of immigrants, and so-called welfare “reform's”—all essentially formations of punitive government policies that persist under Clinton—come down to recommending that the poor help and transform themselves rather than the power structure changing or abolishing itself. Clinton's Race Initiative, in other words, has only initiated more of the same.

## Oakland police brutality

*Oakland, Cal.*—Some 30 Oaklanders joined an equal number of organizers from PUEBLO (People United for a Better Oakland) and BACON (Bay Area Cop Observation Network) for a noontime rally on Aug. 28 in front of the Alameda County Courthouse to demand that the district attorney conduct a criminal investigation into an Aug. 21 “caught-on-tape” incident of Oakland Police brutality. The amateur video, shown on local TV news, captures an officer stomping bank robbery suspect Troy Barnes, 33, in the groin as he lay supine, bleeding from multiple gunshot wounds, surrounded by several officers. In a weak, tired voice Barnes' mother thanked demonstrators for their support and reported her son was in the intensive care unit at Highland Hospital.



OCT. 22, 1998  
WEAR BLACK!

A Black woman yelled through a bullhorn, “The image is very haunting: a mob standing over the blood-soaked body of an African-American man. The kick to the groin was meant as punishment and torture. Mobs of men like this used to castrate Black men.” A Black businessman reminded listeners that although Oakland has a Black city manager, a Black mayor, a Black police chief and Black city councilmen, Blacks continue to be abused.

As a small delegation entered the Courthouse to meet with the DA the rest of the protesters boarded a gaudy, multi-colored bus for a short ride to Mayor-elect Jerry Brown's live-work compound. While tunes such as “What's Goin' On” blared through the enhanced PA system and passengers shouted out the windows, waving picket signs showing an enlarged freeze frame of the “stomping,” the bus made its way past the OPD Administration Building and curious pedestrians along the route. Now and then horns would honk or people would raise a fist in solidarity.

—D.M.

we develop. This is why I found the tone of Angela Ard's article in the *Nation* (July 27/Aug. 3, 1998) so disappointing. It failed to capture the energy, the commitment and the radical alternative that was present at the Congress. I found it to be a one-sided story that discounted the BRC's relevance at a time when the Right is dominating public discussion.

As one of the speakers at the “Fighting Homophobia” workshop, I found that two points were especially well-received. People are hungry for ideas and concrete guidelines about how queer people of color's organizations can work with nonqueer people of color's organizations. We talk about coalitions, but we don't always know how to form or sustain them. I spoke about our successful experience at the Audre Lorde Project working as the only queer-identified group among the five grassroots organizations forming the Coalition Against Police Brutality, which organized Racial Justice Day 1998 to protest police brutality and racist/homophobic violence in communities of color. Also well-received was our analysis of police violence which sees it as attempts by the state to control the spaces in which we live, work and play. People are looking for ways to talk about these issues in ways that are accessible without losing their complexity. When you start talking about how homophobia, racism, sexism, and classism interact and reinforce each other, things can get very complicated.

I also participated in the Black Radical Congress Feminist Institute which was held one day before the official start of the Congress. Originally we thought we would be happy if 30 people attended. We found there were never fewer than 50 in the room at one time, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., with a total of about 75. Among other things, we discussed definitions of patriarchy, looking at how it expresses itself in Black organizations and in the Black community. One example is the Afrocentric idea of “complementarity,” the belief that Black men have their special role to play and that Black women have theirs. In the rhetoric of Black nationalism and Black culture, this is very Black. So if you're a feminist and queer, your Blackness is automatically questioned under this belief because you're violating your assigned sexual role.

One thing that impressed me throughout the Congress was the strong alliance that formed between the Feminist and Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgendered Caucuses. There were moments in which someone from the Feminist Caucus would address issues of gender and sexuality, followed by someone from the Lesbian and Gay Caucus addressing sexuality and gender. This was powerful because there are so few models of organizations with strong commitments to fighting both sexism AND homophobia. National feminist organizations are still scared to deal with issues of sexuality, afraid to be painted with that brush. And sexism persists in too many queer organizations, especially among gay men.

This is partly because the Right has gotten very good at shaping the public conversation, not just at the national but at the local level through their grassroots organizations. Many left organizations are just responding to the conservatives, rather than taking the lead in envisioning and enacting new ways of struggling for justice that are not built on traditional practices that support injustice within our own ranks. Too many leftists are afraid of losing mass support so they don't suggest or do anything that isn't already familiar. But we need to create a politic that reflects and responds to the many changes and new developments that have taken place in our communities over the last few decades.

# Indonesian upheaval led by students, poor

*New York*—Edwin Gozal, a leader in the Indonesian pro-democracy and student movements, spoke on tour in the U.S. in August. He began with a question posed to him recently by an East Timorese friend: Why has the military regime not yet fallen? He answered by discussing the strengths and weaknesses of the pro-democracy movement.

Its strength, he said, lies in its leadership by students and the urban poor. The students, who were instrumental in the ouster of dictator Suharto in May, continued to organize during their summer break. Many industries in Jakarta are on strike, and strikers, including the flight attendants from the national airlines, joined the democracy demonstrations. Blind people who were tricked out of the money due them by Suharto-controlled charities joined. In the countryside, poor farmers are seizing and occupying the land that was taken from them by Suharto's family. In both urban and rural areas, corrupt officials are being pushed out of office by mass protests.

The weaknesses in the movement, Gozal said, are opposing tendencies on the questions of abolishing the military in government vs. giving it some seats in parliament; whether to allow East Timor independence and possibly Aceh and Irian Jaya (West Papua); demanding only elections vs. more thorough reforms; whether there should be restrictions on the parties that can run for office; and discrimination against ethnic Chinese.

Gozal and others have strong evidence that the violence inflicted on the ethnic Chinese and urban poor

during the May rebellion was planned, instigated and orchestrated by the government. He did not discuss it further, but world-wide interest has arisen in the burning, killing and rapes of ethnic Chinese at that time. There were even protests by women's and student groups in Beijing Aug. 17—the largest demonstrations there since Tiananmen Square in 1989 and, of course, illegal. They were protesting both the horrible violence and their own government's muted response.

Recently the Indonesian government has denied that the rapes occurred and tried to discredit the international campaign against them. But numerous eyewitness accounts and victims' testimonies attest to the truth of the horrors.

Due to the Asian financial crisis, close to half the country—100 million people—will soon be living below the official poverty line. Even before the country's economic collapse, 45% of the one-year-olds were malnourished, and conditions are much worse now. The 70 multinational corporations who did business with the Suharto family remain in the country and are taking advantage of the economic collapse to buy up stock and land.

Indonesia has the fourth largest population in the world, and if its mass movements prevent the government from complying with IMF demands for greater and greater austerity measures (read: impoverization), they can trigger others to defy the IMF and spark a new global order. The East Timor Action Network/U.S. is urging people to write Congress to cut off military aid and IMF funding to Indonesia. —Anne Jaclard



Students in Jakarta, who sat in at parliament in September, shout anti-government slogans at the gate.

## Editorial

## The U.S.'s 'war of the future'

(Continued from page 1)

which spread to other cities and towns, came to a halt with the U.S. strike.

At home in the U.S. we were immediately warned by no one less than former Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger that the new "war of the future" means rethinking "our whole concept of civil liberties." The Black community lives every day knowing that they are subject to the tactics of a police state any time the authorities consider it necessary. We have now been forewarned that this is what may be in store for all the forces that get in the way—Blacks, women, and labor. The last of these has begun to flex its muscles in the many significant labor actions in recent months from headline-grabbing strikes at General Motors and Northwest Airlines to the scores of small local actions few ever read about.

### THE WARS AT HOME

Of all the deep crises that are now being buried by the putrid flood from Washington, the deepest continues to be the racism that pervades the land. It is more than a fitting metaphor to say that even the report of the President's year-long panel on race relations, released Sept. 19—the same day the Republicans won release of the videotaped testimony given to Grand Inquisitor Kenneth Starr's grand jury—was totally drowned out. While clearly inadequate to the kind of measures needed to end racism, the board did support affirmative action.

The dire need for action to prevent the Right from totally dismantling affirmative action can be seen in the effects California Regent Ward Connerly's anti-affirmative action movement is exerting in Washington State. Passage of Initiative 200 there could give momentum to more than 10 other states where such initiatives have up to now been stalled at the ballot boxes. The recent and under-publicized overturning of a Houston vote last year supporting affirmative action raises a foreboding trend by reactionary judges simply canceling elections where affirmative action proponents have won.

While the forms America's deep racism takes are countless, we have to confront the fact that even the horror committed earlier this year by three white supremacists who lynched James Byrd Jr., a Black man in Jasper, Texas, was no isolated incident. That was confirmed by the march and rally in Las Vegas, Nev., at the end of August, to protest the murder there of two anti-racist skinhead youth, one Black and one white, evidently because they were best friends in the cause against neo-fascist racism.

All of the attempts to smother these real issues come at a time when the "booming economy" we were supposedly enjoying in this country has not inspired confidence in our immunity from the contagion of the economic collapse of half the world economy. A better measure of our "booming" economy instead is its increasing two-tier nature.

Another measure of that is that two years after so-called welfare "reform," federal figures released in August show that 1.7 million recipients found jobs between 1996 and 1997, but many more than that number were dropped from the rolls. Nobody has been able to answer how they are surviving, but it has been suggest-

ed that they may account for the ever-increasing rise in people showing up at homeless shelters. Add to that the brim-full prisons across the land. In Mississippi where fewer than 2,000 were behind bars in 1972, that number is expected to reach 20,000 by 2002.

### TO THIS BARBARISM WE POSE THE NEW SOCIETY

In their vain effort to try to solve the intractable crises of capitalism all rulers resort to militarism, as witness the history of World Wars I and II. This trend offers frightening illumination of today's events, from Russia to our own land, discussed in the lead article of this month's *News & Letters*. The rapid move to the far Right in this country is a clear warning of what may lie ahead.

There is no question that the Christian Coalition has every intention of using and aiding the current sexual McCarthyite frenzy in Washington to shape our future in their image. Their agenda is clear in everything from their well-funded newspaper ad campaign attacking gays and lesbians, to their drive to make the midterm elections in November a "referendum on values," to their scathing denunciation of the "immorality" of the majority of Americans who, the polls show, do not share their conviction that Clinton should resign or be impeached.

At a time when a permanent "war of the future" has been declared on alleged foreign "terrorists" while the bombings of abortion clinics continue unabated, as in North Carolina this month—at a time when the "values" we are asked to defend include the perpetuation of the vilest racism, homelessness, and imprisonment of vast numbers of our population—we stand on the principle we established at our birth: **To the barbarism of war, we pose the new society.**

To give voice to that new society trying to be born we established *News & Letters* in the midst of McCarthyism, and spelled out in our Constitution: "*News & Letters* was created so that the voices of revolt from below could be heard not separated from the articulation of a philosophy of liberation."

It is why we ask you to help us increase our circulation of this only Marxist-Humanist journal in the land to help us help that new world come to be.

## NEWS & LETTERS

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## Whither Congo?

The revolutionary victory in the Democratic Republic of Congo was an expression of the desire of the African masses for total political, economic and social freedom. The AFDL (Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire), under the leadership of Laurent Kabila, became a product of this social movement, uniting almost all the progressive forces in the country with the aim of total liberation of the Congo from imperialism and social injustice.

The contradictions within the alliance did not wait long to surface as Mobutuism continued to challenge the revolution. It did not take long for the rotten culture of corruption and nepotism built under the rule of former dictator Mobutu to reach the bureaucracy of the AFDL. The AFDL lost contact with the people who fought for the revolution. This happened so quickly that one can argue that Kabila had a hidden agenda. Progressive forces began to demand that power be given to the people.

From day one of the Congo revolution there were signs that reminded us of the many revolutions that were fought, won and lost on the African continent. The attack on the women is unfortunately very typical of pan-Africanism. How the women should behave seems to be more important to them than how to better the lot of those hard-working women and create ground for their participation in the advancement of the revolution.

Other left forces were left aside, some of their leaders constantly harassed. At the international level the AFDL was opening contacts with state leaders whose interests were in contrast with the aspirations of the Congolese people. The relationship between the Kabila government and the Sudanese terrorist state was perhaps the most heartbreaking, not only for the Congolese forces, but for the left forces throughout the continent.

Kabila was concentrating state power in his own hands; discontent was growing within the masses. The progressive Left had no other choice but to put a challenge to the growing arrogance of Kabila. But instead of exposing the contradictions to the masses and allying with them, the opposition forces turned to Uganda and Rwanda, which were more worried about the confrontation between the AFDL and imperialist interests. Since Uganda had become a mouthpiece of international capital in the region, it was desirable that the alliance fall apart.

The difference between the alliance forces that brought Kabila to power and the present alliance against Kabila is not the leaders; the difference lies in the composition of the alliance. The forces of Mobutuism are playing a great role in the military activities. The credibility of the alliance is reduced by this fact and the interests of Uganda and Rwanda. There are also other genuine forces that are not part of this alliance, and it will be interesting to see how they will advance their struggle.

The involvement of Angolan forces is a mixture of economic and military interests. Zimbabwe, which has invested so much in Congo, has much to lose with the disappearance of Kabila. Angola has now the chance of binding the hands of the Kabila government to seriously fight against the interests of UNITA in that country.

The fighting in Congo has become very intense. In my view our stand should be directed towards the interests of the Congolese people. It is not a question of choosing between leaders. The grounding of the revolution in Congo came much faster than some of us would have believed, and this, again, happened from within the movement itself. The forces that are in this alliance betrayed the spirit of the revolution by not relying on the masses, but turning to external forces that have other interests. This is not the end of the revolution in Congo. The masses inevitably will rise again to take the affairs of their country into their hands.

—Ba Karang, Sept. 5, 1998

## 'We don't want war!'

*San Francisco*—Friday, Aug. 21, a day after the U.S. cruise missile attacks on Afghanistan and the Sudan, 300 protesters jammed the intersection of Powell and Market streets. Intermingled with the protesters were visitors waiting to catch the cable car to the city's myriad tourist traps. Many of them listened attentively as speakers of every ethnicity and age stepped up to the mike to express their outrage. Even the opposition paid attention as evinced by one man who shouted "Bullshit!" after Richard Becker of the International Action Center (IAC) reported the pharmaceutical plant destroyed in Khartoum supplied 50% of the medication used in the Sudan. Based on her recent trip to Iraq Gloria La Riva, also of the IAC, speculated on the widespread, longlasting effects of such devastation on children and the elderly.

One speaker scoffed at the Clinton administration's claim that the attacks were an act of self-defense on behalf of U.S. embassies around the world. He told the crowd, "I don't have an embassy anywhere in the world. None of them represents anything I stand for." A University of California-Berkeley law student from the Middle East responded to mainstream commentary on the cowardice of terrorists who use remote control detonators by pointing out the tactic of launching cruise missiles from a safe distance of up to 1,000 miles. He asked, "Who are the cowards? Who are the terrorists?"

The demonstration concluded with a raucous march to the *San Francisco Chronicle/Examiner* building a few blocks away. Both dailies featured articles supporting the missile strikes. If the incessant chant "We don't want your racist war!" wasn't loud enough in front, it was deafening in the alley between the two sections of the building. Surely the occupants heard us that time. —D.M.

# Russia's nose dive exposes capitalism's global turmoil

(Continued from page 1)

amount of capital flowing to developing countries quadrupled between 1988 and 1996. Yet this did nothing to either improve living conditions or enable capitalism to recover from the economic crisis of the mid-1970s.

According to the UN's Human Development Report for 1998, over a billion people have been left out of the growth of the past decade. Inequities between rich and poor have worsened: 20% of the global populace accounts for 86% of its consumption. The 225 richest people on earth have a combined wealth of \$1 trillion—equal to the annual income of the poorest 47% of the world, or 2.5 billion people. Among the 4.4 billion in developing countries, three-fifths lack basic sanitation, one-third have no safe drinking water, one-quarter have inadequate housing, and one-fifth are undernourished.

Instead of resolving any of this, the free flow of capital led to a buying binge by corporate elites, who soaked up financial capital out of all proportion to what could be productively absorbed. The inflow of funds rapidly outpaced the growth in the production of value. When the resulting speculative bubble burst in East Asia, investors took their money and fled. This led to an economic meltdown, which has spread to Russia and Latin America. The default on Russia's debt so scared investors that they pulled their capital out of countries like Brazil. Between Sept. 1-4 \$6.7 billion of capital fled Brazil, leaving it with depleted foreign currency reserves, skyrocketing interest rates, and falling output.

This meltdown now threatens to engulf the U.S. and Europe. Much of the growth in corporate profits in the U.S. over the last decade came from their investments in Third World nations. With this source of profit now eroded, corporate earnings and the stock market are declining. If the stock market drops far enough, it could lead to a drop in consumer spending and a severe recession. At the Federal Reserve's annual meeting of the world's central bankers at Jackson Hole, Wyo. last month, some admitted privately that global economic conditions are the worst they've ever seen.

Financier George Soros told Congress on Sept. 14: "The global capitalist system is coming apart at the seams." Allen Sinai, a prominent economic analyst, said: "This is off the radar screens in terms of severity. It is the single most negative economic event since the Great Depression in the U.S. It is laced with every type of financial crisis and instability that has ever shown up. While there are some brilliant minds working on it, no one can deal with it."

To see how threadbare is the response of the rulers to all this, we need to focus on the land which is in the most dire straits of all—Russia.

## PRIMAKOV: RETURN OF THE OLD

Primakov became Russia's prime minister after the Communist-dominated parliament rejected Yeltsin's effort to appoint Viktor Chernomyrdin. Primakov says the state will play a greater economic role by printing rubles, propping up unprofitable industries and deferring payment on its foreign debt.

Primakov's entire career has been closely tied to a central pillar of the state apparatus—the secret police. After working as a KGB agent in the Middle East, he became an advisor to Gorbachev on Arab affairs. After the collapse of the USSR he became the head of a renewed KGB and Minister of Foreign Affairs under Yeltsin. He is close to genocidal rulers Saddam Hussein in Iraq and Milosevic in Serbia.

Primakov has appointed Yuri Maslyukov, former head of the USSR's central planning bureau, as deputy prime minister in charge of the economy, and Leonid Albalkin, Nikolai Petrakov and Oleg Bogomolov as his economic advisors. They first got to know each other when they were brought together by Yuri Andropov, Russia's leader from 1982 to 1985.

Andropov tried to combat Russia's low labor productivity by combining greater "labor discipline" with some mild market reforms. His efforts, as well as those of Gorbachev, failed to put a dent in the problem. Yeltsin proved an even greater failure. Low productivity remains the central problem afflicting Russia's economy. Having run out of ideas about what to do next, its rulers have returned full circle to figures who predominated in Andropov's era!

Though no one is proposing a return to the state-directed economy which prevailed before 1991, Primakov is abandoning the approach imposed on Russia by the U.S. and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The IMF demanded that Russia cut government spending, sell off public assets, and raise interest rates to attract foreign investors. This only contributed to a massive economic breakdown.

Since 1991, Russia's gross domestic product (GDP) has dropped by 55%—nearly double the contraction that occurred in the U.S. during the Great Depression. Three-fourths of the populace lives on less than \$100 a month, and a quarter live below subsistence levels. Half of the labor force receives its wages late, in kind, or not at all. Many workers have not been paid in years. The government owes 77 billion rubles to its employees—a third of all the money in circulation.

This is leading to growing unrest. Coal miners have camped out in Moscow demanding that wages be paid and working conditions be improved. Doctors and teachers have also gone on strike; they were last paid in February. Workers from the nuclear industry have also joined in the growing protests.

The Communists are trying to take advantage of this by calling for major protests on Oct. 7. Yet many inde-

pendent unions are refusing to participate in the protests so long as they are dominated by the Communists and their national chauvinist bedfellows—which include monarchists, anti-Semites, and outright fascists. As Andrei Isayev, a leader of an independent union, said of the Communists, "Their deputies have failed to adopt a single socially significant law in the interests of the workers."

The growth of unions independent of the government and the Communists represents a major threat to all sectors of the ruling class. In many cases its members openly denounce capitalism. They are beginning to make the idea of revolution once again thinkable in Russia.

To stem the tide, Primakov promises to print more rubles to pay workers' wages. Yet the Russian state is so fractured and crisis-ridden that it lacks the power or resources to do much about the situation.

The reason lies in the complexi-

the GLOBAL economy



ties of Russia's economy. The pundits say that workers are not being paid because the government fails to collect taxes. In fact, it collects plenty of taxes. Government revenue is equivalent to 33% of GDP, a figure higher than in the U.S. The problem is not that taxes aren't collected,

but that they are paid in kind instead of in cash. In 1997 40% of all taxes paid to the government were in nonmonetary form. Major industries report that 70% of their transactions are through barter. Most workers who do receive wages get most of them in the form of goods, which they then have to exchange for food and clothing.

The reason for this descent into a largely noncash economy is that enterprises are not creating enough value. Production has declined so much that Russia is not producing enough exports to obtain the hard-cash currency needed to run the economy on a monetary basis. Instead of producing additional value, much of industry produces less value than it uses up in the process of production. This leaves enterprises unable to pay taxes or wages.

In a word, the failure to pay wages and taxes is not the cause, but the result of a deeper problem: the productivity of labor is so low that more value is consumed in production than is created!

There is no more striking indication of this than the decline in capital investment. Capital investment fell 92% between 1991 and 1997. Net productive investment is negative. This means the amount of new capital being invested is not enough to replace worn-out plants and equipment. Deterioration of such magnitude and persistence has never occurred before in an industrial society.

To stem this downward plunge Russia would need to obtain huge amounts of hard currency through vastly increased exports, massive private loans, or Western aid on the scale of the Marshall Plan. None of this is remotely feasible given the present state of the world economy. The decline in capital investment will not only continue, but is likely to deepen even further.

## PROFIT AND LOSS IN RUSSIA

What explains this incredible process of decomposition? To answer this, we must probe into the continuities as well as discontinuities in the conditions which prevailed before and after the Communists were forced from power in 1991.

As Raya Dunayevskaya showed, Stalinist Russia was part of a new stage of capitalism which arose in the 1930s—state-capitalism. Despite the regime's claims of being "socialist," she showed through a rigorous analysis that Stalinist Russia operated according to the law of motion of capitalism. Nevertheless, she noted that some features of Russian state-capitalism were unique to it. One key difference centered on the meaning of profit.

She wrote in "The Nature of the Russian Economy," "Profit...does not at all have the same meaning in Russia as it does in classical capitalism. The light industries show greater profit not because of the greater productivity of labor, but because of the state-imposed turn-over tax which gives an entirely fictitious 'profit' to that industry." In Russia's centrally state-planned economy, she said, "capital does not migrate where it is most profitable, but where the state directs it."

Throughout the reign of Stalin and his successors, the state directed capital to the manufacturing sector. Yet because of low labor productivity this sector did not generate profit sufficient to warrant such massive investment. The result is that the growth of the manufacturing and military sector was obtained by eating up assets procured from other, more profitable sectors of the economy. That explains how Russia could emerge as such a "mighty" industrial-military power while being so backward in agriculture and basic consumer goods.

So what changed with the collapse of Communism? Central planning is gone, so the state no longer directs

capital investment to various sectors. Meanwhile, manufacturing remains an unprofitable, low-productivity industry, in part because of the exorbitant costs and risks that would be needed to modernize it. As a result, to the extent that capital can now migrate through the mechanism of the market, it does not end up in production. This helps explain the incredible decline in net capital investment in Russian industry.

All this is bad enough, but the situation is compounded by the fact that the collapse of Communism did not involve any basic change in class or production relations. The Communist ruling class simply announced its conversion to the "free market" retained its control over industry, and became heads of the "privatized" enterprises. As a result, a new financial oligarchy arose which, along with the state, controls key sectors of the economy.

Through this web of connections between the state and private oligarchs enough revenue is shifted over to manufacturing to keep factories from closing. Though workers are not being paid, most are not being laid off; unemployment remains at basically its 1991 level.

But why do they do this? In any "normal" capitalist society, unprofitable industries are simply allowed to go under. So why not in Russia?

One reason is spoken to in one of the most important insights of the Marxist-Humanist theory of state-capitalism—its contention that the low productivity of Russian labor is not a sign of the workers' "backwardness," but rather of their revolt. Because they are so exploited, whether under the Communist or the "free market" system, the Russian workers resist by holding back on production. The prospect of resistance is never far from the minds of the rulers. They fear that if they close down unprofitable industries the resulting mass unemployment will set off a social upheaval beyond their control. Therefore, the rulers continue to prop up the manufacturing sector from complete collapse—even though it consumes more value than it creates.

Fearful of revolt, but unwilling to "throw good money after bad," Russia's rulers have been buying time by gutting its fixed capital—factories, machines and the like. The value of commodities normally includes a portion that enables the capitalist to replace the fixed capital that has depreciated, worn out, in the process of production. But due to the decrepit state of Russian industry, the value of its products is commonly too low to cover their costs of production. Not enough value is being produced to replace, much less expand, the capital stock. These losses are being dealt with, and covered over in part, through the device of strip mining the productive stock of the country instead of maintaining it.

In a word, even though they operate at a loss, the rulers keep the factories running because the magnitude of capital in manufacturing is high enough to enable them to make money by effectively selling off the productive stock of the country.

Primakov can print more rubles to pay salaries, but that will only lead to hyperinflation in the absence of new production. He can crack down on criminals and the bank accounts of the rich, but that can be only a temporary solution. Without redressing the crisis in value production, the system will sink deeper and deeper into crisis. No Russian ruler from Stalin on has managed to redress this, and there is every reason to think things will only get worse under Primakov and his successors.

## FOR THE ABOLITION OF CAPITAL

Russia is in many ways a special case, as many of its conditions do not exist elsewhere. But the events there contain many lessons for us.

That some rulers now talk of capital controls, state intervention, and even international Keynesianism after all the hoopla about free markets and open borders should come as no surprise, since the underlying state-capitalist character of the world economy has not changed over the past decade. Capitalism has often turned to the state to try to resolve its problems, and will surely do so again.

The danger is that those opposing capitalism will mistake the turn back to the state as a "progressive" one. We now see this in some leftists who are quietly rejoicing over the chaos in Russia on the grounds that it proves the emptiness of the free market.

That the free market is empty there is no doubt. But what many fail to notice is that those promoting a state-directed policy are even more reactionary than the free marketeers. Free market advocates in Russia like Gaidar are pretty awful, but the Communists, generals, and outright fascists waiting to take over are even more reactionary. The same is true of those promoting national-capitalist solutions in the U.S., as seen in the likes of Pat Buchanan.

As Rohini Hensman said at a recent meeting on globalization in India, "Given the current degree of integration of the world economy, delinking it in order to pursue a path of national capitalist development would only be achievable, if at all, by a terrifyingly authoritarian state subscribing to all the jingoistic jargon of the far right." Of course, as Pinochet's Chile showed, the "free market" is also no stranger to an authoritarian state.

Given that the far Right in Russia will have access to 20,000 nuclear warheads, this is no time to fall for the illusion that statism is an alternative to the market. Instead of arguing over whether capital should be distributed through the market or the state, it is high time to project perspectives for the abolition of capital. That is not only the one way to get out of the crisis, it is the only way to ensure the survival of the planet.

## Youth

**New York**—Mayor Giuliani violently attacked the Black community of New York before, during and after the Million Youth March Sept. 5, and protests against his racist and illegal imposition of a police state in Harlem are still going on.

The mayor declared war on Black self-determination by denying a permit to hold the event in Harlem, and when a federal court said he could not, he had 6,000 cops "lock down" Harlem that day. Those people he had not scared into staying away by his predictions of violence had difficulty reaching the rally. The closest subway stops were closed, and the streets were barricaded from 116th to 125th streets. The police misdirected people as to which streets were open, forcing them to walk long distances to get to the rally and preventing some from getting there at all. In the end, perhaps 20,000 attended.

Then the police buzzed the rally with dangerously low-flying helicopters and finally rushed the stage before the legal time for the rally to end. The leaders fled in cars, but many people were prevented from leaving by the cops, who were obviously trying to provoke a wider melee.

The next day, a whole neighborhood of Brooklyn was "locked down" by 100 cops while they arrested an organizer of the event for "inciting violence" at the end of the rally, when the cops attacked the stage.

By using so much power of the state to try to stop the march, the mayor gave a lot of publicity to Khalid Abdul Muhammad, the anti-Jewish, anti-white hatemonger who initiated the event. Capitalism's ideologues want to



make us choose between Giuliani's racism and Muhammad's, but many at the march refused such false alternatives.

One Black woman told *N&L*: "I went to the march just to give out flyers about the Haiti/Disney anti-sweatshop campaign. I wouldn't stay because I don't support those racists. I heard later that Khalid Abdul Muhammad made a very racist speech. At the end he told the crowd to go home and treat each other with love. He also said if the police attack, take their guns and shoot them, ram their sticks up them (a reference to the police assault on Abner Louima). But when the police attacked the people, the speakers left in Mercedes Benzes. I heard there was no provocation for the police to attack people.

"I won't put up with attacks on Jews; if one group is attacked, then always the next one will be too. I know a lot about racism from experience. It is not one

group, but many, who are responsible for racism."

Another Black activist reported, "It was difficult to get there, to say the least. The march itself was only a few blocks long. The number of cops was overwhelming. I believe there were more people than the official count. It was a very beautiful day in terms of the people who showed up, many mothers and kids.

"I was there for four hours and heard about 30 speakers. Most were careful in what they said because no one wanted the situation to blow up. Many Black politicians and people running for office were there, but most of them were from out of town. Rev. Al Sharpton stated

## Roberto Clemente High School under attack

**Chicago**—An ad hoc committee of educational and community activists convened a daylong community hearing on Sept. 18 to combat the false charges that Roberto Clemente High School misused state Chapter I education funds to indoctrinate students with "anti-American ideas" and to promote "Puerto Rican terrorists."

This anti-Puerto Rican hysteria was first whipped up by a series of sensationalist articles in the *Chicago Sun-Times* in February 1997 based on the statements of FBI informant Rafael Marrero.

Following these articles state representative Edgar Lopez convened McCarthy-type special hearings to investigate the Local School Council's (LSC) use of Chapter I funds and to attack the LSC's new multicultural curriculum. These hearings relied on the testimony from Marrero and on no testimony from the students and teachers who participated in the cultural enrichment programs that were under attack.

In this climate the Board of Education has seized control of the school from the LSC, forced out ten Puerto Rican teachers and wiped out all references to Puerto Rican culture in a school that is in the heart of the Puerto Rican community. This action was taken despite Illinois State Board of Education audits that showed that neither the LSC nor the school staff had any irregularities or misappropriations in their Chapter I expenditures.

At the community hearings speakers defended the use of Chapter I money for student cultural immersion trips to Puerto Rico and Mexico, student-painted murals of Puerto Rican national heroes and outside speakers on Puerto Rican culture and politics. They argued that this was an appropriate use of Chapter I money and highly effective at motivating Latino youth to be invested in the school. In fact between 1990 and 1995 under the deposed LSC's multicultural curriculum the number of students who dropped out fell from a staggering 66.1% to 56.3%.

While professors of education spoke eloquently about the importance of culturally relevant curriculum and extra-curricular activities, the most moving speakers were the former teachers and students who made those

programs come alive. Axel Massol, the former teacher who organized the Puerto Rico trip, described how he and his students would wake up every morning at 6:30 to begin their tours of historic sites on the island.

Students expressed outrage at the mainstream press and the state hearings for suggesting that they were being brainwashed. "If teaching us about our history and culture is brainwashing, then the public schools have brainwashed us for years because they only teach us about their history and culture," one young woman declared.

—Jim Guthrie

## Boycott Nike!

**Memphis, Tenn.**—Shouting "Some people work for a living. Some people are parasites!" and "Portland didn't want you and neither do we!" a lively group of demonstrators confronted Nike stockholders as they walked into their annual meeting on Sept. 23 at the Orpheum Theater downtown. Nike had moved their annual meeting from Portland, Ore., where they had encountered huge demonstrations, to Memphis, thinking they could avoid resistance. Phil Knight, Nike's CEO, has been everywhere on the TV here giving away playgrounds and other goodies to try to win the hearts of Memphians.

With TV news cameras rolling, we pointed out that those playgrounds didn't come from Nike, but off the backs of teenage girls in Vietnam, Malaysia, and Indonesia who work for \$1.60 a day, making shoes that Nike sells to youth for \$80 and up. Several demonstrators were barefoot and carried signs saying "I'd rather go barefoot than wear Nikes!" The demonstration was sponsored by an ad hoc group of people and organizations that included the Women's Action Coalition, News and Letters Committees, Memphis Anarchist Collective, the deCleyre Co-op and the Memphis Industrial Workers of the World. We wanted to show Nike that they can't hide in Memphis, and we did.

—Marxist-Humanist demonstrator

that he was neither homophobic nor anti-Semitic. A Native American speaker expressed unity with Black people reaching back to slavery time, when Native Americans harbored escaped slaves.

"The turn-around came when Khalid Abdul Muhammad spoke. The cops started to close in, and when a helicopter flew over, people began to get upset. There is a new paradigm, in that young people are not about nonviolence any more. The chopper set people off against the police-state conditions and the storm troopers raiding the stage. People had been leaving before then, but when that happened they went back."

The outcry against this police-state terror has been loud and is not limited to the Black community. In response, the mayor put out three different versions of why the police rushed the stage, and he refused even to meet with Black elected officials to discuss it. But Giuliani is feeling the heat; he had to promise to fire three cops and a fire fighter who participated in a racist prank in the Broad Channel, Queens, volunteer fire department Labor Day parade. They were part of a float and skit in black face that mocked the dragging death of James Byrd in Texas. These same men had participated for years, as a standard part of that parade, in parodies that attacked Jews, Asians and others, and nothing was ever done to them before.

Several groups are now calling for a Working People's Tribunal to publicly indict the mayor and police chief "for their illegal imposition of martial law by a racist police-state army of occupation."

—Ray McKay and Anne Jaclard

## Gay Memphis organizes

**Memphis, Tenn.**—Memphis has a lot of gay and lesbian social groups, even churches, but no political organization. Yet the religious Right is so organized. There has been no organizing going on in the gay and lesbian community, collectively working on issues, educating Memphians about gays and lesbians and presenting a political voice. There's been a vacuum here for over five years.

There was a "pro-family" rally in Memphis recently, with all these right-wing wackos like Phyllis Schlafly and Gary Bauer and some Republican candidates like John Ashcroft. I thought there should be some picketing to counter them and did some calling around, but nobody would join me. I ended up picketing by myself and it made me realize we need organization. I wrote an article in the *Triangle Journal*, the gay newspaper in Memphis, and got several responses. A lot of people felt the need for a political group.

Then we hooked up with a group in Nashville, the Lesbian and Gay Coalition for Justice (LGCJ), which is affiliated with the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and wants to be statewide. We decided to form a chapter of LGCJ in Memphis. They're working with groups across the country to have statewide "Equality Begins at Home" marches next March. LGCJ wants to work in coalition with women's, Black and other groups fighting for social justice.

There's always a conflict in any movement: one side wants to assimilate, and on the other hand there are liberationist groups that want to raise hell, challenge and change the system. I think both can work together. You have to have a movement from the ground up.

I want to see an organization that's inclusive of all points of view, that will present gay and lesbian equality and civil rights to Memphis, make our voice known politically and try to fight the right-wing drift that's going on right now. We want gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people to have a voice like everyone else. We will have an organizational meeting Saturday, Oct. 17, at 2 p.m. at First Congregational Church, 234 S. Watkins.

—Jim Maynard (jmaynard2@earthlink.net)

From the Writings of Raya Dunayevskaya

## MARXIST-HUMANIST ARCHIVES

## Marx's new moments and those in our age

(Continued from page 4)

tion worker [Charles Denby] became the editor.

News and Letters Committees at the same time assigned the completion of the first major theoretical work, *Marxism and Freedom*, and that it be done by submitting the draft for discussion with workers and Youth. (See especially Chapter 16, "Automation and the New Humanism" as well as the Introduction.) In a word, the combination of worker and intellectual was not limited to the journalistic form, but was for all our major theoretical works in process.

The point is that objectively the new passions and new forces of revolution—whether they be rank-and-file labor, Black, Youth, women's liberation, peasant—are present both as force and as Reason, all aiming to see that the new revolutions are not aborted but create the ground for new human relations.

This is exactly what we are aiming at with what we call organizational responsibility for Marxist-Humanism. The doors are open, wide open.

April 22, 1986 (Lenin's birthday)

## Voices From Within The Prison Walls

Do prison administrators care that hepatitis is rampant among inmates? Guards who have day-to-day contact with inmates certainly should care. The high incidence of hepatitis puts the guards and their families at risk. We have the makings of a full-scale epidemic here. Nevertheless, no one calls in county health inspectors to check the situation. Why not? Why the cover-up? Have they all gone mad?

Hepatitis is a viral, blood-borne communicable disease. With 10% to 15% or more of the prison population infected, why don't prison administrators take steps to contain the epidemic? If the facts were disclosed, one would learn that the prison administrators' policies work to exacerbate the situation, not control it. Their policies obstruct inmates' access to first aid and health care measures that would prevent the spread of blood-borne pathogens.

The twisted logic of prison officials makes it a disciplinary offense for an inmate to commit an "unsafe act," a category which includes anything that could result in a cut, scrape, bruise or abrasion. Thus, any inmate who

## Prisoncrats ignore hepatitis threat

cuts himself while working as a carpenter, plumber, meat cutter, potato peeler or sewing machine operator conceals the injury (and the bleeding) for fear of being punished. The wounded inmate leaves a trail of blood—and hepatitis virus—rather than go to the clinic for some first aid and a disciplinary action.

A section of the health services policy dictates the procedure and frequency for examining food service workers with a view to stopping the spread of diseases. The policy is there; why don't food service managers abide by it? Prison staff members take their meals at the prison, they handle soiled laundry, they have physical contact with the inmates. In each of these instances, they are placed at risk of contamination by infected inmates. Staff become infected, they take the virus home, they spread it to family and neighbors. Everyone in town turns yellow.

A prisoner from another state wrote to me that a recent examination of inmate kitchen workers there discloses over 60 cases of infectious hepatitis. Deliberate indifference? You bet!

—Texas inmate

# Our Life and Times Serb war against Kosovars escalates

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

The military onslaught in Kosova directed by Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic began as a campaign against the Kosova Liberation Army (KLA) but soon phased into a terrorist war against the Albanian civilian population. Unable to defeat the KLA with arms, Milosevic's military machines turned on the KLA's base of support in the Kosovar people.

Since July, Milosevic has ordered a scorched earth campaign through wide swaths of Kosova. Serbian planes and artillery have bombarded towns and other population centers which clearly have no military value. The residents have been forced to flee, after which their homes, farms and shops have been looted and burned by the occupying Serbian forces.

It is estimated that by the end of September, well over a thousand people, mainly Kosovar civilians, have been killed. At least 250,000 more have been driven out of their towns. Some have escaped into Albania and Montenegro.

## Protests in Cambodia

Protesters filled the streets of the Cambodian capital, Phnom Penh, to protest a July election in which Communist strongman Hun Sen won a narrow victory amid reports of intimidation, especially in rural areas.

By early September, thousands had begun camping in what they dubbed "Democracy Square," a tent city outside Parliament. Opposition leader Sam Rainsy, a bourgeois democrat, made fiery speeches to the crowds attacking the government as authoritarian, also accusing it of being dominated by Vietnam which had installed the present regime after toppling the genocidal Pol Pot in 1979.

However, the movement for democracy was seriously marred when Rainsy used ethnic slurs to designate Vietnamese people. Soon after, rampaging crowds lynched five Vietnamese civilians.

A week later, Hun Sen's forces dismantled Democracy Square and Rainsy took sanctuary at a UN agency after he was threatened with arrest. Still, tens of thousands came spontaneously into the streets on Sept. 10, calling for peace in a clear demonstration that the masses, at least in the capital, had had their fill of Hun Sen.

No matter what the outcome will be in Parliament, as Hun Sen negotiates secretly for a power-sharing arrangement with Prince Norodom Ranariddh's royalist party, a new force has emerged on the Cambodian scene, the urban masses.

## Politics of China's floods

The floods along the Yangtze River and its tributaries that devastated parts of China in August have destroyed at least eight million homes and billions of dollars worth of agriculture and property. The official death count is not yet known, but it will be in the thousands. Thousands of poor families are living on the tops of dikes surrounded by contaminated floodwaters.

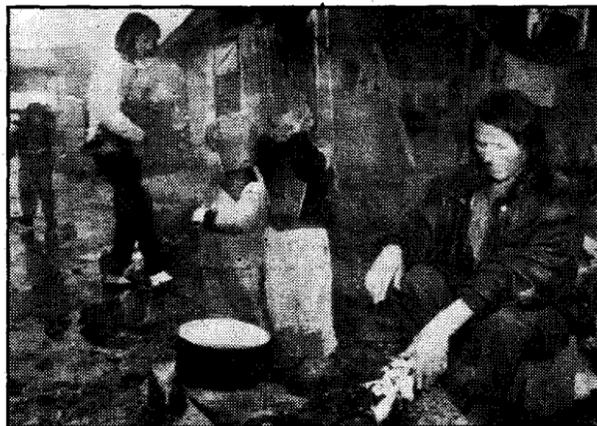
The Chinese government has been criticized for exacerbating this tragedy. It used unsettled areas of the river basin as a "safety valve" for thousands of peasant families left unemployed after rural "free market" restructuring. They have deforested large areas of the Yangtze headwaters, and drained wetlands and storage ponds on the floodplain in order to farm. These ecological changes contributed to the size and the intensity of the flooding.

Instead of maintaining dikes and other flood controls, the government has sunk vast amounts of capital into the Three Gorges Dam project now under construction, despite earlier studies which indicated that the proposed dam could contain only a small portion of the kind of flooding that occurred.

But an estimated 100,000 refugees, mostly women, children and the elderly, are hiding out in remote areas of Kosova without food, shelter or medical assistance.

Milosevic is repeating in Kosova the genocidal campaign of ethnic cleansing he succeeded with in Bosnia. And once more, the U.S. and West European leaders are standing by and watching the nightmare rerun. The Clinton administration rejects the Kosovar demand for full independence.

Instead, the U.S. and West Europe are scrambling unsuccessfully to find support in Kosova for a settlement based on "autonomy." However, "autonomy" within Serbia is exactly the political status which Milosevic assaulted in 1989, setting up instead an apartheid-type system in which Albanians were stripped of their jobs, their schools, their language, and any meaningful political control. The KLA and the majority of Kosovars reject anything less than full self-determination, much less a



Kosova refugees living in an abandoned plant.

settlement that may be brokered with those who have collaborated with the Milosevic regime over the past decade.

The de facto impunity granted by the U.S.-West Europe to Milosevic to execute his bloody campaign in

## Chilean coup remembered

Twenty-five years ago, on Sept. 11, 1973, the Chilean military attacked the presidential palace, ending three years of rule by Salvador Allende, Latin America's first democratically elected Marxist president. Declassified U.S. government documents collected by the National Security Archives reveal that the CIA—on orders from President Nixon—spent \$8 million undermining Allende and encouraging coup plans, including providing heavy weapons.

Once firmly in power, the military dismantled the reforms of the Allende era, which had included distributing land to the peasants, new rights for urban and rural workers, and attempts to overcome the domination of the economy by ITT and other large international firms.

The new regime of General Augusto Pinochet began its rule with an orgy of torture and murder that gave the world a new and ominous noun, "the disappeared." However, the newness of what happened in Chile was not confined to fascist brutality. The military also embarked upon a program of economic austerity, based on "free market" ideology as espoused by U.S. economists like Milton Friedman. This involved lowering taxes, gutting the standard of living of workers, and opening up more than ever to global capitalist penetration. Pinochet's Chile became a laboratory for capitalism in which policies were tried that later went global in the 1980s, the era of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher.

Kosova also signalled his faction in Bosnia to openly retake power in the Serbian-dominated entity. It is obscene to talk about any kind of "democracy" in this safe zone for genocidal butchers, also known as the Serb Republic. However, the political party of Milosevic-Mladic-Karadzic retook power in the September elections, defeating the faction which the Clinton administration tried to make more palatable and propped up with over \$1 billion in aid. This is the latest rotten harvest from the Dayton accords.

Kosovars have no illusions about the U.S. or West Europe intervening on their side against Milosevic. As one Kosovar human rights activist said earlier, "They have given the green light to everything the Serbs are doing. That you are witnessing this tragedy at the end of the 20th century in the center of Europe is absurd. But we will not give up. We have nowhere else to go."

U.S. and West Europe leaders may wring their hands in false anguish when winter sets in and thousands of Kosovars are faced with death, or may turn their backs if some status quo is reached with Milosevic. It is more urgent than ever for us to condemn the Milosevic regime, demand the pullout of Serbian occupying forces, reject any sellout of self-determination for Kosova, and extend full practical and theoretical solidarity to the Kosovar people.

## German voters oust conservatives

On Sept. 27, German voters resoundingly rejected conservative Chancellor Helmut Kohl, in power for 16 years, giving his Christian Democratic coalition a mere 35% of the vote. With this election, Western Europe's three largest countries—Britain, France and Germany—have each repudiated long-entrenched conservative rule.

A clear majority of German voters went for left of center parties, mainly the Social Democrats (41%), but also the Greens (7%) and the former Communists (5%). The neo-Nazis fared poorly, and won no seats in parliament. These elections may represent more of a tilt leftward than those last year in France, where the Left won power with only 44% of the vote, against a Right divided between conservatives and neo-fascists.

Germany's Social Democratic Chancellor-designate, Gerhard Schröder, is clearly on the right wing of his party, as is seen in his many overtures to big business and his distancing of himself from labor. However, the core slogan of his campaign, with the jobless rate at 10.6%, was that Kohl was the "Chancellor of unemployment." In addition, Schröder, unlike Bill Clinton or Britain's Tony Blair, has not succeeded in remolding his party in a rightward direction.

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## NEWS AND LETTERS COMMITTEES

### Who We Are And What We Stand For

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

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

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

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

This body of ideas challenges all those desiring freedom to transcend the limitations of post-Marx Marxism, beginning with Engels. In light of the crises of our nuclear 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.