

# NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

50¢

Vol. 45 — No. 2

MARCH 2000

## Prosperity' and labor resistance



by B. Ann Lastelle

Management at one Unilever Home and Personal Care USA plant informed its workers on a Tuesday morning in late January that product sales were declining or flat and the warehouses overstocked. Because of that, hourly production and maintenance employees were to be limited to working 32 hours per week for the next eight weeks, a 20% pay cut (higher for those on 12-hour shifts or who regularly work overtime). A machine operator asked, Doesn't the company have planners and precasters? Why didn't they see this coming? Maybe their pay should be cut 20%.

Workers on 12-hour shifts went to eight-hour shifts on the following Monday. Temporary workers were eliminated. Lower seniority employees from the day shift were transferred to second and third shifts to fill empty lots. People who had responsibility for children, who were working other jobs or who were going to school, simply have had to adjust.

Production plummeted. One supervisor told us at first that the unit manager had said that they had to expect his demoralization. (Was it demoralization or resistance?) Soon, however, the pressure for production was renewed. Shift production goals had to be met; the weekly schedule had to be completed. Crews not making rate were castigated and people moved to different machines in the line. (One crew, after making rate, shut down and sat down until the end of their shift.)

People worry. If we meet the production goals, maybe the "reduction in hours" will become permanent. If we don't meet the goals and the cost of production per unit goes up, maybe the company will find a cheaper place to manufacture the products. Maybe it already has.

I drive home along Chicago's North Avenue past the

(Continued on page 3)

## Black World

## Diallo verdict: meaning and movement



by Lou Turner

Those who were shocked by the Feb. 26 acquittal of the four white New York City cops who murdered young West African immigrant Amadou Diallo the night of Feb. 4, 1999 have not fully grasped the newly scripted repressive world order now in force in cities like New York. Those who were not shocked are already intensifying their organizational efforts around such causes as Mumia Abu-Jamal, abolition of the death penalty, fighting police abuse and murders, wrongful convictions, and solidarizing with a new prisoner rights movement emerging behind the prison walls themselves. Both, however, need to consider the meaning of the verdict of a jury of eight whites and four Blacks that exonerated Amadou Diallo's murderers of "depraved indifference to human life" after unleashing a barrage of 41 bullets at him, 19 of which struck their target. We also need to consider the meaning of the actions now unfolding in response to the verdict.

The trains run on time in Rudolph Giuliani's New York. His New York will not be Seattle (1999), nor Los Angeles (1992). It will be quiet under a heavy, repressive police presence, as the 5,000 demonstrators who marched down Fifth Avenue found out the day after the verdict when it seemed that as many police as protesters showed up. No doubt that heavy police presence was itself a barely disguised NYPD support rally for their four exonerated fellow officers.

New York City is quiet. Part of it as if in mourning, like a swallowed scream; another part in "deep denial" about the extent of NYPD blues' brutalization of the city's dark communities, as *New York Times* columnist Bob Herbert observed (2/28/00); and another part rests uneasily behind Giuliani's phalanx of storm troopers in the streets.

The sacrifice of Black life is the of price paid for New York City's quiescence. It's a price that comes cheap in these raw and repressive days in America. It's a quiescence that the liberal and conservative elite alike attribute to the "finest hour" of Rev. Al Sharpton. It took

(Continued on page 8)

## Women shake up dominance of globalized capitalism

by Maya Jhansi

A new global women's movement seems to be teetering on the horizon. Women from the U.S. and from all over the world played a central role in the protests against the World Trade Organization that rocked Seattle last November. They made their presence known, not only by organizing, marching and participating in direct action, but by speaking their minds about the destruction that capitalist expansion is wreaking everywhere.

On March 8, 2000, in commemoration of International Women's Day, feminist organizations all over the world have called for a Global Women's Strike to draw attention to women's unpaid labor. In addition, women from 138 countries are organizing national actions for a World March of Women 2000, including a march on Washington in the U.S. on Oct. 15, 2000. Far from withdrawing into the dustbin of "postfeminism," the international women's movement is alive and strong.

None of this global activism should be surprising—women suffer the worst that so-called globalization has to offer. Women make up fully 70% of the world's poorest people. Although women produce 50% of the world's food, they receive only 10% of the income. Add to that the fact that 50% of women in Asia and Africa suffer from malnutrition and the irony becomes too raw to bear. Cornered by the "liberalizing" effects of capital expansion and the fundamentalism that it has spawned, women provide a unique lens on the global crisis today.



Afghan and Pakistani women protest the rule of the veil, in Islamabad on International Human Rights Day, Dec. 10.

## WHAT KIND OF LABOR?

Capital's search for cheaper and more "flexible" labor has brought more and more women into the global workforce. Women still earn 25%–50% less than men, and are assumed by corporate managers to be more docile, less prone to organize, and easier to fire for life choices like marriage and pregnancy.

Women, often teenage and younger, are supposedly more suited to repetitive, monotonous and meticulous work requiring manual dexterity. In a global economy in which contractual, part-time, seasonal and piece-rate labor is replacing long-term jobs with benefits, women are especially vulnerable to insecurity and greater exploitation because their labor is considered secondary and therefore disposable.

(Continued on page 10)

## Inside Mexico's student strike

The nine-month student strike which shut down Mexico's National Autonomous University, or UNAM, was broken up by the federal police Feb. 6. One of the leaders of the general strike council, Herendira Tellez, came to the U.S. to build support for those still in jail or in hiding, after spending two days in jail herself. Her mission brought Tellez, a student of classical literature, to the *News & Letters* office in Chicago. Translating was Jason Wallach of the Mexico Solidarity Network—Editor

What we are fighting against is the whole neo-liberal program at UNAM. We are fighting the whole media system, the curriculum, the structure of student participation at UNAM. We are fighting for what's best for the university, for the education of everybody and now for the political prisoners of conscience. All these things are happening at the same time.

On the 11th of February of last year, the president of UNAM put forth a proposal to raise the tuition at UNAM, so the students began to organize against this proposal, firstly because it was an illegal proposal. It violated the third article of the Mexican constitution which guarantees free education. We have seen that the laws of Mexico are systematically violated by the government. So school by school and department by department, the students began to act, but protests weren't effective, so each school started to work towards a strike.

The authorities never wanted to have a negotiated settlement. There was never any effort at dialogue. They just kept basically wearing the strikers down. Every time the students wanted to talk, the government rejected their efforts.

The students all this time were going out into the streets, talking to the people, asking for their support for the strike. To do this for 10 months wasn't easy. We had a whole lot of discipline and a whole lot of organization within our own ranks, and we got a lot of support from everyday people, from all aspects of the cultural sector, the other schools, the faculty.

The communities involved in the strike formed rather naturally. It was kind of natural the way everybody realized that they were fighting for the same things and it just happened that they started to work together. They had seen that after 70 years of PRI (Revolutionary Institutional Party) rule, they wanted change in whatever form they could get it.

On the 6th of February, the federal police raided the

auditorium which we had renamed Che Guevara Auditorium. There are still some 270 odd people in jail, and there are a number of people out there wanted by the police. So we are having to reorganize the strike council based on who's in jail and who's not. Because we organized this strike from inside each school—UNAM is so huge that it's divided up by different schools—each school has its own strike council, and they are having to reorganize each school.

This Monday (Feb. 15) the school student assemblies met again, but most of the students didn't come to study. They talked to people about restructuring the strike. They have a lot of support from the teachers in this because they know that students are not going to enjoy the luxury of studying while other students are political prisoners. Because of this there have been almost no classes.

The labor unions are really helping out, and even sometimes the campesino unions which is really amazing because they are so poor. Last Wednesday (Feb. 9) there was a big protest to support the strikers. There were more than 200,000 people—workers, students, campesinos.

The parents of the students have been important supporters. The majority of those parents lived through '68 when they saw many students gunned down, many of them their comrades at the time. Nobody wants to repeat that. So they are willing to support their jailed kids in this fight.

In fact, this was only the second time police have entered the university since 1968 because in 1977 there was a strike of university workers for a wage increase. After two months the police crushed it. That strike was by STUNAM, the union of support workers, secretaries,

(Continued on page 3)

## ON THE INSIDE

FROM THE MARXIST-HUMANIST ARCHIVES: THE WRITINGS OF RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA • 'Erich Fromm, Socialist Humanist'.....Page 4

New Chinese edition of *Marxism and Freedom*.....Page 5

EDITORIAL • Abolish the racist death penalty...Page 11

# Politicians vie to control women's lives

by Terry Moon

Campaign 2000: Can Bush convince the Right that he's more anti-abortion than McCain? Can Bradley persuade us that he's more pro-choice than Gore? Is anyone dumb enough to think that Pat Buchanan is not the anti-abortion "extremist" Jesse Ventura calls him? Or, is the more important question: why is women's right to own our own bodies a political football? Furthermore, we must ask: how is it that even with a pro-choice president, abortion has become so difficult to get that the number of abortions is the lowest it's been since 1978 and poor women are systematically denied their rights?

Given that reality, there is something obscene in the incessant drumbeat of male voices pontificating this way or that on what is or is not going to happen inside women's bodies. While we chant in demonstrations that it's "Our bodies! Our lives! Our right to decide!" election rhetoric shows that those who aspire to rule this country believe it is they who rule our bodies and lives.

Surprisingly, NARAL (National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League), a group that has never before endorsed a candidate during the primaries, decided to insert itself into the fray. Unfortunately, they did so, not to raise an independent feminist banner, but to support Al Gore even though Bill Bradley has the better record. NARAL's president, Kate Michelman, tried to do damage control and obscure NARAL's obvious sucking up, by sputtering about abortion being "far too important to be squandered as a wedge issue between two pro-choice candidates."

Her claim that NARAL didn't like Bradley "using the issue divisively as a weapon to divide pro-choice voters" was revealed as ludicrous when Gore instantly put out a commercial saying he has "stood up to the extreme right wing—defending a woman's right to choose. Endorsed by NARAL, America's leading pro-choice group." And while Gore is now using NARAL "as a weapon to divide pro-choice voters," you can bet that he will never say what NARAL's initials stand for because then he would actually have to use the word "abortion," rather than its unmessey euphemism "pro-choice."

While neither Gore nor Bradley may be able to stop the speedy whittling away of women's right to control our bodies—as Clinton's seven years in the White House have shown—there can be no doubt that the election of either Bush or McCain would spell disaster and more women's deaths. In South Carolina, whose Republican primary was won in February by Bush, there isn't one abortion provider in the entire state.

While Bush and Rush Limbaugh have successfully painted McCain as a liberal and soft on abortion, and many independents and disgruntled Democrats seem to agree, the truth is they are equally horrible. McCain supports school vouchers, missile defense and the death penalty, and opposes affirmative action and gun control. As for abortion, the fanatical National Right to Life Committee gave him a 100% approval rating for seven years.

And Bush, he's signed 17 Texas anti-choice bills—every one that comes across his desk. There is no question that if either Bush or McCain wins the White House, women's tenuous hold on the right to control our bodies will be even more rapidly destroyed.

## Women of East Timor

*Buibere, Voice of East Timorese Women* is a small collection of oral histories of women in occupied East Timor, compiled there by Rebecca Winters in late 1998. If you wondered how the Timorese were brave enough to stand up to the Indonesian army and vote for independence last August, when to do so meant their slaughter, you will understand their character from these women's stories. For some, telling their stories caused so much pain that they could not say the word rape, yet all were eager to let the world know the truth.

Some of the stories were collected at the first women's conference in East Timor in Dili in November 1998, where women for the first time spoke publicly about their abuse by Indonesian soldiers. Winters writes that after the conference, "Women from various villages heard I was collecting stories with a view toward publication and came to me to record their voices. The women and men who recorded and translated these stories risked their lives by doing so. If the Indonesian authorities had suspected what they were doing, these witnesses could have been arrested, tortured or killed."

Some of the women we hear from were tortured and imprisoned because they worked with the resistance, but others were tortured on the mere chance that they had some information to reveal or to further intimidate the population. Some were forced to live with Indonesian soldiers in order to have any protection at all. Winters found the women who survived the occupation to be strong and proud. She quotes Maria Gorete, who was raped many times and later killed by the Indonesian military: "My body is no longer mine, but my soul will be mine forever."

Published in Australia, the book is available from the East Timor Action Network/US, PO Box 1182, White Plains, NY 10602; etan@etan.org. ETAN remains active, working for the return of the East Timorese who were forced out of their country and to re-build that devastated land. This book is an important record of the women who suffered through the 24-year occupation.

## Woman as Reason

But while all contenders for presidential power—and the leadership of NARAL too—may view abortion as the political football they don't want to fumble, they forget at their peril that it was women who forced the Supreme Court to rule favorably for Roe v. Wade with years of agitation and tens of thousands of us marching in the streets as part of a mass movement for freedom. It is a revolutionary movement that has the potential to make changes, while what we are experiencing is the limitations of changes that come from above.

That women's right to abortion is more than a device to get more votes is clearly revealed in how young women see this question. At a pro-abortion meeting recently in New York, women went around the room saying what Roe v. Wade means to them. No one said, it means I can get an abortion if I want. They said: self-determination; choices; women's autonomy; women defined as human beings; empowerment; control of our lives; choices without men telling us what we should be; complete health care; rights for women and men versus the police state; privacy; a great step toward equality; and one woman said all those things at once when she said it means freedom.

Clearly, women are not prepared to let our right to control our own bodies be reduced to an election gambit for men who see it only as a device to help them win political office. The right to a safe, affordable, accessible abortion means—and it has always meant—our right to control our own bodies in every sphere. We cannot be free if we have no control over our bodies, and women are determined to be free.

But if that determination can not find a home in a mass movement, one guided by the necessity for revolution to be total from the start, we will end up trying to choose the lesser of two, four, or more evils, all the time knowing that that choice will never move us closer to freedom.

## International Women's Day



"On my way to the talk in celebration of International Women's Day...came the news of the most magnificent international event: tens of thousands of Iranian women were demonstrating against Khomeini, shouting "We fought for freedom and got unfreedom!" Naturally, I began the talk with a homage to those Iranian women's liberationists who had, with this act, initiated the second chapter of the Iranian revolution."

—Raya Dunayevskaya, *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future*

Celebrate International Women's Day by ordering today!

## A film from Iran

Iranian cinema has been a topic of much discussion in the past few years. Given the very severe restrictions of the Ministry of Islamic Culture, many new films have been limited to the theme of war between Iraq and Iran, the innocence of children and various aspects of village life. Only a few films have explicitly focused on women and the state of man-woman relations in Iran today. "Two Women" (1999), written and directed by Tahmineh Milani, is the most daring and explicitly advocates the liberation of women from religious and traditional bonds. It took a five year struggle for her script to pass through the Ministry of Islamic Culture. Clearly the latest upheavals in Iran contributed to the release of the script.

Throughout the film, Tahmineh Milani consistently raises the issue of a woman's identity as an independent, thinking human being who has goals and dreams which challenge the very being of the Islamic Republic and any type of religious fanaticism. One very touching scene is where Fereshteh, the main character, is standing in front of a mirror, nursing her baby and pregnant at the same time. She is saying to herself, "Is this me? This isn't what I wanted to be. I had other dreams, I had things to say. What happened to me?"

Milani's film offers an important challenge to some Iranian feminists who argue that Iranian women would only accept feminism in an Islamic cloak. In their opinion Iranian women are culturally bound to Islam and a religious outlook. Clearly, Milani's film shows that this is not true. Iranian women are hungry for ideas of women's liberation and ways of transforming the alienated and exploitative character of man-woman relationships in Iranian society.

—Sheila Fuller

## Maria W. Stewart: Black woman activist, thinker, speaker

Long before Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass or suffragists such as Susan B. Anthony, in 1832 Maria W. Stewart, a Black woman, became the first American-born woman to give a public lecture in the U.S. on political issues. Not the first Black woman, but the first American woman.

During her time period, women were forbidden to speak publicly. To be Black, female and to speak was to add insult to injury. Stewart was criticized by everyone, including Black women. In response to her opponents, Stewart would reply:

"What if I am a woman; Is not the God of ancient times the God of these modern days? Did he not raise up Deborah to be a mother and a judge in Israel [Judges 4:4]? Did not queen Esther save the lives of the Jews? And Mary Magdalene first declare the resurrection of Christ from the dead? St. Paul declared that it was a shame for a woman to speak in public, yet our Great High Priest and Advocate did not condemn women for a more notorious offense than this; neither will he condemn this worthless worm" (Richardson, p. 68).

Before Sojourner Truth's "Ain't I A Woman?" speech in 1851 at a women's rights convention, Stewart wrote in 1831 for the Ladies Department in the *Liberator* under the logo, "Am I not a Woman and a Sister?" (Richardson, p. 12). Stewart was definitely ahead of her time.

Raised by a clergyman's family after being orphaned at age five Stewart developed an intense devotion to God, which was later reflected in her writings and speeches. She married James W. Stewart in 1826 and settled among the free Black middle class in Boston.

A contemporary of Stewart's was David Walker, author of the *Walker's Appeal* in 1829. Stewart read the *Appeal* and pushed for similar objectives in her writing. In the *Appeal*, Walker argued against Thomas Jefferson's racist assumption that Blacks were intellectually inferior, and he used religious analogies in his writings to denounce slavery (Richardson, p.6).

Stewart also worked alongside abolitionists such as William Lloyd Garrison with the *Liberator*, and attended the 1837 American Women's Anti-Slavery Convention (Smith, ed., 1084). She also opposed the Back to Africa movement to Liberia because she felt Blacks would be driven to a strange land after America enjoyed the profits of their work. Stewart also spoke out against U.S. aid to Poland, Greece and Ireland, while not providing aid to Black Americans or Haiti. She even spoke out against the middle class Blacks who didn't seek to end slavery or resented her speaking in public because she was Black and female. She said, "Look at the French in the late revolution! No traitors among them, to expose their plans to the crowned heads of Europe" (Richardson p. 53). She even cited the

American Revolution as something that Blacks could model their independence after, as well as Haiti.

She integrated her historical knowledge about great women in her speeches, such as the fact that the Jews had prophetesses, Greek women delivered the oracles, the Egyptian women made predictions, and that the Romans honored the Syblis (p. 69). She even cited the young lady of Bologne during the late Middle Ages and Renaissance, who pronounced a funeral oration in Latin at 23, received a Doctor of Laws and taught publicly (p. 23). Stewart felt that the resentment toward women began because beauty could subdue force. She felt that men could not understand this, and this led them to label the fair sex as having supernatural powers (p. 68). She ordered the "Daughters of Africa" to arise and "distinguish yourselves." She wanted Black women and men to advance themselves from servile jobs and to seek knowledge.

Like Marx, Stewart did not see women as an economic production unit. "How long," she said, "shall the fair daughters of Africa be compelled to bury their minds and talents beneath a load of iron pots and kettles?" (Collins, p. 3).

However, Stewart was prey to the values of her time. She felt that Black women should encourage Black boys more than girls to liberate the race. She also felt that "True Womanhood" consisted of piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity (Richardson p. 20). She even used white as a symbol of purity and said that Blacks should strive to the standards of white values: "Though Black your skins as shades of night/ Your hearts are pure, your souls are white" (p.13). At times this seem contradiction, but Stewart was a product of her time and heavily influenced by the Bible.

Her activities included being head housekeeper in the 1870s at the Freedmen's Hospital, a position formerly held by Truth. In 1871, she opened Sunday school for poor children. At the age of 76, she died in Washington, D.C. in 1879 (Smith, p. 1085).

Stewart felt that "resistance to oppression was the highest form of obedience to God" (1085). She interconnected racism and sexism by using biblical references to denounce the ills of her time. She felt that privilege rather than natural law placed women in a subordinate condition. Stewart's vision inspired women activists, abolitionists and the 1960's Civil Rights Movement that sprung from the church. Like King, Nat Turner, and Denmark Vesey, she used religion to acquire equality, but a Black woman did it first.

(Sources: Collins, Patricia H. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York: Routledge, 1990; Richardson, Marilyn. *America's First Black Woman Political Writer: Essays and Speeches*. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1987. Smith, Jessie, ed. *Notable Black American Women*. Detroit: Gale Research Inc. Staff, 1992.)

—Akili

## Fireball ignites Jeep wildcat strike

Toledo, Ohio—On Jan. 12, an electric arc hit a car in the paint department at the Daimler-Chrysler Jeep assembly plant in Toledo, igniting a fireball for a dozen minutes in the highly combustible environment. No safety and fire extinguishing systems came on, according to the 24 workers in the paint department, because the company feared water and fire protection chemicals would fall on the cars and destroy the electrical systems. The company doesn't use safety protection because it can't start up production easily.

Outraged, paint department workers took unauthorized strike action (wildcat) when it became clear that management was more concerned with production than with worker safety, since the electrical arc could have ignited a fire that might have destroyed the plant. Workers don't trust that management will set the safety system to actually protect them. Workers had complained for some time that the infrared sensors to detect such emergencies were defective. A plant fire had occurred in July.

Due to the company's lack of response to the paint workers' safety concerns, 24 workers walked off the job. With the paint department down, body, trim, and final assembly departments comprising some 2,500 workers were sent home. Management intimidation of paint department workers, in the end, came down to docking them for three hours' wages.

Not only were the numerous safety emergencies of their own plant on the minds of the striking workers but many recalled the Ford Rouge accident last year in which eight

men were killed.

There have been numerous unreported walkouts at Jeep. One special category of these involve the large, predominantly Black temporary part-time workforce who struck against the plant strategy of laying them off before they could get in their 120 days and become part of the permanent workforce.

This is one of the issues on which Jeep workers and the Black community are trying to establish solidarity. Another issue is the ecological damage that the Jeep plant, especially what's spewing from such departments as paint, is wreaking on Black working class communities. In the aftermath of the Seattle anti-WTO protests, new challenges to unite Black and working class interests are being worked out in communities like Toledo. —Supporter

## Kosova's Trepca miners



Miners from Stari Trg mine in Trepca, Kosova.

Prague—The Trepca mines are the biggest enterprise in all Kosova. However, its miners are prevented from working by the KFOR forces. In this case, it is the French who claim the unclear legal status of the mine as the reason. (The Serbian "owners" are in Belgrade.)

The Trepca miners describe their situation as follows: "Trepca is the rich mineral source of the region. According to the Yugoslav constitution it was 'socially owned,' which legally means it belongs to the workers (that is, managed by the government). In spite of that all the Albanian miners lost their jobs in 1990."

Bajram Mustafa, a leading member of the miners' union said in an interview with International Workers' Aid: "We did not want to get involved in politics. However, those in power forced us to do so. The constitution of 1974 gave to Kosova the rights of a republic, but within the framework of Serbia. The demand was made that Kosava should become a Yugoslav republic with all the rights."

"In 1988, the Trepca miners organized an eight-mile-long march with about 1,000 participants. (A part of the miners kept working in the mine.) The population supported us. We wanted to decide our own future. We cried Tito! Tito! Yugoslavia! Yugoslavia! We want the same rights!"

"In February 1989, 20,000 miners held a hunger strike down in the mine, 600 yards down. They asked for Kosova to be put under UN administration. The authorities pretended to give in, but as soon as the miners came up they were arrested, 5,000 of them. In March of that year the autonomy of Kosova was abolished."

"One year later, in February 1990, we founded an independent miners' union. On Aug. 8, 1990, the authorities closed the mine and prevented the miners from entering it. We went on a general strike on Sept. 3, and 170,000 Albanian workers who joined the strike were fired."

"At present the union has 1,400 members. It aims to keep the social ownership of the mine and to help miners and their families to survive. When the NATO bombardment began, we believed we could reopen the mine. However, the French troops of KFOR stationed in the region of Mitrovica do not allow that—they argue that the legal status is not clear. We cannot even find out if part of the mine is not flooded."

These are the reasons the Trepca miners appeal to the international community. They plan protests and a hunger strike in front of the mine. The miners maintain: "Our campaign for the rights of the miners and other workers concerns not only Albanians but all those employed in Trepca. Excluded are only those who committed war crimes."

Solidarity addresses can be sent to: Durham National Union of Mineworkers, P.O. Box 6, The Miners' Hall, Durham, England DH1 4BB. Fax: (+44161) 226 04 04; email: <work2@workersaid.org>.

—Stephen Steiger

I have seen many papers  
but yours is the best.  
Thanks."

"Jailhouse lawyer" in West Virginia

Subscribe to  
**News & Letters**

only \$5 per year

See literature ad on page 7

## Strikers face Overnite harassment, arrests

Memphis, Tenn.—We don't take seriously the racketeering lawsuit that Overnite filed against the Teamsters. This is just another tactic they've drummed up. They always want to file some frivolous lawsuits, so that when it comes down to settling they can say, "Okay, let's everybody drop everything. Their suits don't have merit, ours do."

For the last couple of weeks their new tactic has been to get somebody to swear out a warrant to arrest a striker. They make up something and say that this guy threw a brick at them or some ridiculous thing like that.

One guy just got out of jail. We were doing ambulatory picketing, following the trucks to set up a picket when the truck stops at a customer's dock to make a delivery or pickup. This scab driver thought he was some kind of joker. He stopped by a police car and pointed to the Teamster and accused him of something. The strikers thought they could ignore it since they weren't doing anything.

But the next day the police picked him up. The scab had sworn out a statement that the striker had thrown a bottle at him. The police know the company is out to get us, so it's ridiculous that they would accept these charges with no witnesses. The striker had three guys riding with him, and yet they took the scab's word and locked the striker up. They put him in jail all day and he's still got to go to court.

Later they hauled three more guys in for questioning because a scab told the police they tried to rob him. This scab ran into three guys that he works with in a liquor store where he was cashing his check. They said to him, "Man, you need to give us that check." He went back to the terminal and they came up with this charge that they tried to rob him. If they tried to rob him, what stopped them? There was three of them and one of him. Even the police didn't see merit in that charge. But that's Overnite's tactic now.

I'm surprised the strike has gone as long as it has considering that Overnite admits they're losing a million dollars a week, and we think it's a lot more than that. They admitted losing \$13 million, but that was at the 13-week mark. Now we're way past the 18-week mark so they've lost well over \$18 million. And the thing about it is that this is not an economic strike where they would be giving up money if they settled.

What we are asking is for the people who have been terminated and have charges still pending against them—both before and since the strike—to get their jobs back. We don't care what else they offer. These people deserve their jobs because they were fired unfairly. Overnite would have to agree to stop all unfair labor practices that's what we are asking for in the contract, not money.

We've been able to hold out by getting little part-time jobs and \$100 a week from the union. Initially Overnite's attorney boasted that within three weeks we'd be begging to come back to work. I'm sure by now he's surprised that the guys he thought wouldn't be out three weeks are still out and show no signs of going back in without contract. —Black Overnite striker

## Workshop Talks

(Continued from page 1)

temporary agencies, including the agency from which Unilever used to "order" its temporary workers. Crowds of Black and Latino men and women wait inside and outside on the sidewalk for their names to be called. Some will wait for hours and still not work that day.

The bourgeois media and the politicians trumpet the longest economic expansion in U.S. history and the greatest growth in productivity in seven years. What kind of triumph is this, when unemployment is not abolished, but transformed into underemployment? When capital demands that workers put all the hours of our lives at its disposal? When uncertainty reigns?

Karl Marx thought about expansion and productivity differently. "What characterizes Capital from beginning to end is the concern with living human beings," wrote Raya Dunayevskaya in *Marxism and Freedom*. "Marx lived in the second half of the nineteenth century when most theoreticians believed that as technology advanced, all of humanity's problems would be solved. Because Marx thought first and foremost of how the workers feel, he could anticipate the key question of our epoch: is productivity to be increased by the expansion of machinery or by the expansion of human capacities?"

"Capitalists and their ideologists," wrote Dunayevskaya, "think always of expanding productivity by more perfect machines. What happens to the worker as a result, well, that is just something that 'can't be helped.' Their governing principle is to keep their eyes on economies... At the opposite pole from these, Marx was concerned with the worker's 'own personal productivity.' That is the class line which he draws" (p. 109).

Workers hunger to freely release all of our energy, skills, talents and creativity, natural and acquired, mental and manual. Capital appropriates from us our time and only those energies and skills it deems useful for its own expansion and increased productivity, channels them, deforms them and stifles the rest. Longest economic expansion in U.S. history or not, capitalism is a mode of production absolutely antagonistic to the growth and development of working people.

## Mexico student strike

(Continued from page 1)

building cleaners, and grounds keepers.

Because we are aware that the intent of the government is to repress, to crush any ideas, any movement of the students, we have been strong. We know the reality of the situation. We are doing this to show the government that we are willing to fight to defend our rights and human rights in general. That's also why the students are calling for support of other political prisoners throughout Mexico like at Cerro Hueco, not just for the rights of students.

### SOLIDARITY WITH ZAPATISTAS, OTHERS

All of the cases of people who are fighting for freedom and justice interest us. On the 11th of December we had a march and part of that was for the freedom of Mumia Abu-Jamal. That was a big day for everybody in Mexico. On Dec. 11 we responded, 10 days after, to the Seattle events. The strikers went to the U.S. consulate. A big part of it was marching for Mumia Abu-Jamal, on behalf of him, and they were doing it in the spirit of Seattle, against the WTO.

Since '94 I have been involved with Zapatista solidarity and a lot the students in the high schools and junior high schools have supported the Zapatista movement. Before the strike started, we were always meeting, so we were some of the people that helped initiate the strike. We also helped to start the organization that eventually became the strike council.

To see the connection between the Zapatistas and UNAM, you have to look at the Mexican system of power. The government tried to avoid resolving problems both at UNAM and with the Zapatistas. In the same way they disregard the San Andres accords in Chiapas from Feb. 16, 1996, they disregard the agreements of Dec. 10 with the CGH, the strike council.

We have grown, and we have grown in ways more than if we had 10 months of classes. Now we know more about the political system in Mexico. We understand more about the other issues that are happening around Mexico, with the political prisoners, the repression against indigenous people and, of course, our own direct experience.

Our political perspective has changed a huge amount. We say that all the political parties are submerged in the political system, and that this whole system needs to be changed and these parties are not going to have an effect.

### NEW KINDS OF ORGANIZING

Since the beginning, the strikers have been conscious of the ways that the Zapatistas have organized. So it has always been everybody's equal and everybody has equal voice in the movement. It's always been more of a horizontal leadership. It's not just one person leading the movement. It's the activity of all the people who are involved.

It's not that we're all going to talk to the president to negotiate, but we're all cooking the same food together for each other. We all have to share in both the intellectual and the manual work. To do this we have had to insist on democratic forms of decision making. We don't consider whether a proposal comes from a man or from a woman. We look at what are the best ideas. That's one of the best things about the strike.

It's true that in the past there has been a lot of division between men and women in different strikes, but in this strike, we broke with that tradition. The system is organized against having democratic structures being effective. We want to demonstrate that the types of repression that the government has and its types of structures aren't necessary, that we can create something that's different than the current system.

We are here to tell the truth about what is really happening with this strike. Of course, we want our compañeros in jail to be freed—that is the real message because the international community has the ability to affect their freedom. We want to talk to everybody who believes in justice and democracy and to grab their ears

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

### Editor's Note

March marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of the Frankfurt School's Socialist Humanist Erich Fromm. In commemoration we print Raya Dunayevskaya's "In Memoriam" to Fromm. It appeared in the April 1980 *News & Letters* and can be found in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, 7059. The In Memoriam here is taken from it, and from a longer manuscript not yet in the collection. We also publish here excerpts from two of her early letters to Fromm. More of the correspondence between Dunayevskaya and Fromm from 1959 to 1978 can be found in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, 9976-10061.

by Raya Dunayevskaya  
 Founder of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S.

The many articles that poured forth in 1980 when Erich Fromm died on March 18 all praised him only as a "famous psychoanalyst." The press, by no accident at all, failed to mention that he was a Socialist Humanist. Moreover, in writing *Marx's Concept of Man* (which succeeded in introducing Marx's Humanist Essays to a wide American public), and in editing the first international symposium on *Socialist Humanism*, he did so, not as an academician, but as an activist. In inviting me to participate in that dialogue between East and West as well as North and South, he stressed that "it took quite a bit of courage on their (East Europeans) part to write something for this volume, for no matter how diplomatic the language, they were open attacks on the Soviet Union."

Erich Fromm was an original. In attempting to fuse Marx and Freud, it wasn't so much the audaciousness of such a move in the 1920s that needs to be stressed, but the fact that even when he was a most orthodox Freudian, it was social psychology that interested him; his use of psychoanalytic mechanisms were as a sort of mediating concept between the individual and the social. In any case, as he moved away from orthodox Freudianism to elaborate his own version, it was clear that he was breaking not only with Freud but with the famous Frankfurt School and its "Critical Theory," and that, not because he was moving away from Marxism, but coming closer to it. Here is how he put it in his intellectual autobiography:

I consider Marx, the thinker, as being of much greater depth and scope than Freud....But even when all of this is said, it would be naive to ignore Freud's importance....his discovery of unconscious processes and of the dynamic nature of character traits is a unique contribution to the science of man which has altered the picture of man for all time to come (*Beyond the Chains of Illusion: My Encounter with Marx and Freud*).

On Fromm's initiative (and to my great surprise since I kept far away from any psychoanalysts even when they laid claim to Marxism), I received a congratulatory letter from him on the publication in 1958 of my *Marxism and Freedom*. The period of the 1950s was a most difficult one for Marxists, what with McCarthyism as well as nuclear bomb development permeating the land. Dr. Fromm had helped organize the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy in 1957, but that was not what he wrote to me about. Rather, the subject that then aroused his passionate interest was the restoration of Marxism in its original form of "a new humanism," cleansed of the perversion of Russian and Chinese Communism. So magnificently an objective human being was he that he refused to be deterred either by the fact that I let my hostility to psychoanalysts show by telling him that workers in Detroit shops referred to them as "head shrinks," or even by the fact that I criticized his own essay on "Marx's Concept of Man" as abstract. Here is what he answered me:

As to your criticism of my essay that it is too abstract and does not discuss the humanism of Marxism concretely, I cannot offer any argument....As to the substance of the points you make about the concrete nature of Marx's humanism, I naturally entirely agree with you. Also about what you write of the role of the plant psychoanalyst and Daniel Bell's position.<sup>1</sup>

Our correspondence continued for two decades. It also gave me rare glimpses into the whole subject of the famous Frankfurt School, of which he was, after all, one of its most famous personages, the one who influenced them all on the "integration" of psychoanalysis into Marxism. The lengthy unabating, sharp debate with

1. In another letter Fromm wrote: "My relations with Commentary are not good. Years ago Mr. Podhoretz rejected something I had written because it contradicted the majority opinion of American Jews. I wrote him a sharp letter about his concept of freedom...."

Herbert Marcuse in the pages of *Dissent* over 1955 and 1956 was not the main issue. He retained too much regard for Herbert Marcuse's *Reason and Revolution* as the seminal work it was. No, what did arouse his ire most was the duality of Adorno's and Horkheimer's departure from Marxism on the one hand, and the attraction that that held for the "New Left." Here is how he summed it up in a letter to me dated Nov. 25, 1976:

I get quite a few questions from various people who study the history of the Frankfurt School. It's really a funny story: Horkheimer is now quoted as the creator of the critical theory and people write about the critical theory as if it were a new concept discovered by Horkheimer. As far as I know, the whole thing is a hoax, because Horkheimer was frightened...of speaking about Marx's theory. He used general Aesopian language and spoke of critical theory in order not to say Marx's theory. I believe that that is all behind this discovery of critical theory by Horkheimer and Adorno.

As against the movement away from Marx that he sensed in the Frankfurt School, he himself tried in every possible way to disseminate Marxist-Humanism into all fields, including his own—psychoanalysis. Consider his attempt to convince me—who was in no way involved in psychology—to write a piece for a psychoanalytical journal. That suggestion came after I had told him the story about Susan E. Blow—a Hegelian and one of the very first women educators—who was a patient of Dr. James Jackson Putnam, an American pioneer of Freudian psychoanalysis. She aroused Putnam's interest in Hegelian philosophy to such a great extent that he, in turn, tried to interest Freud. Freud, on the other hand, was so opposed to introducing philosophy into psychoanalysis that he criticized any attempt to place psychoanalysis, as he put it, "in the service of a particular philosophical outlook on the world."<sup>2</sup>

Here is what Dr. Fromm wrote me:

What you wrote about Dr. Putnam who became interested in Hegelian dialectics through his patient I did not know,

and find it of considerable historical interest, and Freud's reaction to Putnam's philosophical remarks [are] also an interesting historical footnote to Freud and the history of the psychoanalytic movement. Why don't you write a note on this and publish it somewhere? I have no connections with psychoanalytical journals except *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, which is published in New York. I am sure they would be glad to publish a note on this historical datum, and it should at the same time be published in the Spanish psychoanalytic journal, *Revista*, of which I am still formally the director. If you would be inclined to do this, I would be happy to send it myself to the New York and the Spanish journals. I shall also look up Freud's letters to find the remark in which he comments on Putnam's letter, or do you know to whom Freud wrote this remark about Putnam?

Fromm's eyes always were on the future and a new class-less society on truly human foundations. Least known of his multi-dimensional concerns was the relationship of Man/Woman and by no means on just a psychological scale. Rather it was the need for totally new human relations in the Marxian sense: a global vision of the future meant also a look back into the past. Thus, he found Bachofen's studies into matriarchal society very congenial, not because he believed in the existence of matriarchal society, but because it, at least, allowed one a vision of an alternative society to this patriarchal, class, alienating society in which we live. In relating patriarchy to class domination, he had invented the magnificent phrase for it: "patricentric-acquisitive."

Far from remembrance of things past being a question merely of memory, it brings into view the unity of Man/Woman; the human being as a totality, being not just a quantitative measure but something dialectical, showing movement, a movement forward. It was what Fromm stressed when, in creating an international forum for his *Socialist Humanism*, he emphasized that Humanism was not just an idea, but a movement against what is, a glimpse into the future. Listen to what he wrote me when he heard I was relating *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*:

I feel that the male Social Democrats never could understand Rosa Luxemburg, nor could she acquire the influence for which she had the potential because she was a woman; and the men could not become full revolutionaries because they did not emancipate themselves from their male, patriarchal, and hence dominating, character structure. After all, the original exploitation is that of women by men and there is no social liberation so long as

2. Nathan G. Hale, editor, *James Jackson Putnam and Psychoanalysis* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 43.

there is no revolution in the sex war ending in full equality....Unfortunately I have known nobody who still knows her personally. What a bad break between the generations.

That letter was written on Oct. 26, 1977. It is now March 19, 1980, and Fromm is dead. And I say, dear Youth, let's not let another "bad break between generations" occur. To prepare for the future one must know the revolutionary past. Getting to know Fromm as a Socialist Humanist is a good way to begin.

### Dunayevskaya to Fromm on the Humanism of Marx

Oct. 11, 1961

What matters is...the need to discuss the Humanism of Marxism concretely. I do not mean to reduce philosophy to what Trotsky used to call "the small coin of concrete questions." I mean the discussion must be in terms of what Marx called the "abolition" of philosophy through its "realization," that is to say, by putting an end to the division between life and philosophy, work and life, and the different intellectual disciplines and work as the activity of man, the whole of man, the man with heart, brain and physical power, including the sensitivity and the genius of the arts. It is this which Marx literally pounds at in the [1844 Humanist] Essays both when he deals with the five senses and when he deals with the limits of psychology which excludes "industry," or the workshop where a worker wastes most of his time but also gains from it the spirit and cohesiveness of revolt.

### Dunayevskaya to Fromm on

### Marcuse and Hegel's Absolute Idea

July 21, 1964

While he [Herbert Marcuse] attacks the status quo, he himself has very nearly given in to technology by attributing to it truly phenomenal powers. Feeling that this may be true, he tries for a way out, to find "absolute negativity," but since he has turned his back on the proletariat as the revolutionary force, he looks elsewhere; very nearly on the last page [of Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man*] he finds the third underdeveloped world to modify his overwhelming pessimism.

Now, in his previous discussion on Hegel's Absolute Idea, which he rejected, he stated that it was no more than the proof of the separation of mental and manual labor in the pre-technological stage of history.<sup>3</sup> If this is so, if Hegel, after all his valiant striving to extricate philosophy from theology, retreated from concrete history to abstract absolutes not because he was, as a person, an opportunist; or, as a visionary, lacked the belief that the human embodiment of that keystone of his dialectic—"absolute negativity"—could possibly be that "one-dimensional man" working a single operation in a factory but that Hegel's historic barrier was the pre-technological state of society, then how can HM maintain that this is our fate? If the pre-technology and the forcible leisure needed for intellectual thought sends you back to abstractions, then how could it also have achieved the highest stage of human thought[,] for HM does believe that Hegelian dialectics and Marxian revolutionary philosophy are the very modes of thought we now lack, and were achieved at a less than advanced industrial pace?

My contention had been that, irrespective of what retreat Hegel consciously hankered for, when confronted with the contradictions in his society making havoc of his beloved field of philosophy and philosophic chairs, the objective compulsion to thought came from the French Revolution, not from pre-technology or post-technology, and the logic of this, just this, revealed the pull of the future, the new society which Hegel named "Absolute Idea" but which we first can understand in its material and most profound implications and therefore our age must work out that absolute.

3. This refers to Marcuse's letter to Dunayevskaya, Dec. 22, 1960; see *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, 13822.

## NEWS & LETTERS

Vol. 45, No. 2

March 2000

News & Letters (ISSN 0028-8969) is published 10 times a year, monthly, except bi-monthly January-February and August-September for \$5.00 a year (bulk order or 5 or more, 25¢ each) by News & Letters, 36 S. Wabash, Room 1440, Chicago, IL 60603. Telephone (312) 236-0799. Fax (312) 236-0725. Second Class postage paid at Chicago, Illinois. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to News & Letters, 36 S. Wabash, Room 1440, Chicago, IL 60603. Articles may be reprinted verbatim if credited to "News & Letters."

Raya Dunayevskaya

Chairwoman, National Editorial Board (1955-1987)

Charles Denby

Editor (1955-1983)

Olga Domanski, Peter Wermuth, Co-National Organizers, News and Letters Committees. Lou Turner, Managing Editor. Felix Martin, Labor Editor (1983-1999).

News & Letters is printed in a union shop.

759-C

## Essay Article Preface to Chinese edition of *Marxism and Freedom*

**Editor's note:** We are proud to publish the Preface by Wang Ruoshui to the Chinese edition of *Raya Dunayevskaya's Marxism and Freedom*, translated by Fu Xiaoping. Wang is an important Chinese philosopher who was part a major debate in China in the 1980s over the question, "Does alienation still exist under 'socialism.'"

by Wang Ruoshui

Russia's October Revolution and the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the socialist countries of Eastern Europe are among the most important events of the 20th century. To the Chinese, the disintegration was completely unexpected, and it hit us hard. Why did the world's first and strongest socialist country collapse in such a short period? What lesson does this event have for us?

The Chinese media's reaction to this important event was very subdued; there were no detailed reports, and no fierce debate ensued. But a few journal articles did appear, and among them was the following opinion: The leaders of the Soviet Union took the road of revisionism and brought about a capitalist restoration, finally causing the socialist system to fail.

This opinion is certainly not new. During the Sino-Soviet debates of the 1960s we criticized Khrushchev in this way. But how did practice bear out this opinion? We shouldn't forget that during this time, under the slogan of "oppose revisionism," we launched the Cultural Revolution and brought 10 years of calamity to the Chinese people. Was the "revolutionary" China of that period better or worse than the "revisionist" Soviet Union?

Bad events become the foreshadowing of good events. It was precisely the calamity of the Cultural Revolution that taught us a lesson and liberated our thinking: We could not continue along the same road, we had to change our ways; thus only since 1978 have we taken the path of reform and opening up, and thus the advent of "socialism with Chinese characteristics."

It's precisely those things that we formerly criticized as "revisionist" that we have adopted now, and we have made great progress economically. There are still people in China today who attack the line of reform and opening up. But isn't it because we have adopted the reforms that our lives are now much better than Russia's?

We now no longer maintain that our criticisms of the Soviet Union were correct. Therefore, we again return to the old question: what lesson are we to learn from the changes in the Soviet Union?

The Soviet Union's problems didn't begin during the Khrushchev era, but they were already apparent during the Stalin era. In the 1950s, after the exposure of the problems of Stalin, this kind of criticism reached a peak. Western capitalists and politicians alike used this example to demonstrate the error of Marxism. Brzezinski in his book *The Great Defeat* written in 1988 is representative of this viewpoint. In his book he was already predicting the disintegration of the socialist system of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. But there is yet another critique, to hold that there is nothing wrong with Marxism, just the betrayal of Marxism by the leadership of Soviet communism; *Marxism and Freedom* is the latter kind.

In certain ways, the author's viewpoint is similar to the viewpoint we upheld in the 1960s: they both stand on the side of Marxism, and they both criticize the Soviet Union for practicing capitalism. But on a closer look we see that the two viewpoints have many more differences than similarities. During the 1960s we had adopted the Russian version of orthodox Marxism—I say "orthodox" because it held the ruling position. At that time we directed our criticisms toward Khrushchev. This book gives a new interpretation of Marxism; from this standpoint it not only criticizes Khrushchev but even more severely criticizes Stalin and others.

As Dunayevskaya herself admitted, the degeneration of the first socialist state was the motivation to write this book: "We ask ourselves: how did the first workers' state turn into its own opposite? Is workers' freedom possible?"

In order to answer this question, the author found new intellectual resources in Marx's 1844 *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, and on this foundation carried out a reevaluation of Marxism. In America, she was one of the first scholars to recognize the value of these Manuscripts, and the earliest to introduce the 1844 Manuscripts to American readers. When this book was published in 1958, the author's translation of the Manuscripts was included as an appendix.

In the 1844 Manuscripts, the young Marx expressed that his philosophy was "a thoroughgoing naturalism or humanism, not the same as idealism, and not the same as materialism, but at the same time the principle of the combination of the two."

(Here the German translation of "humanism" [rendaozhuyi] is *Humanismus*. The moral and ethical connotations of the Chinese word *rendaozhuyi* are too strong. Its use here does not entirely convey Marx's original meaning, and may easily be misunderstood.... Although Marx later dropped this terminology, Dunayevskaya continued to use it. Sometimes she referred to it as "new humanism," or "Marxism-Humanism.")

Dunayevskaya believed that from the beginning Marx's philosophy was inseparable from his political and economic thought. The analysis of

the alienation of labor was the central part of the 1844 Manuscripts. Here "alienation" is a philosophical concept and also an economic concept.

The author does not agree with the idea that "alienation" was just the young Marx's temporary adoption of Hegelian terminology dropped at a later date. She emphatically points out that within Hegel's "dialectic of negativity" alienation is a fundamental concept, taken on and reformulated by Marx not only in his early works but likewise in *Capital*. In the mature Marx, alienation is one of the keys. In the capitalist system, the relations of exchange between people take on the form of relations between things. This obscures its true nature. Marx changed political economy from a science of the relation-

ship between things (commodities, money, wages, profits) into an analysis of people's mutual relations in the process of production. She also points out that humanism runs like a red thread throughout the whole of *Capital*; this kind of humanism makes the work profound, and also gives it power and direction.

This kind of new explanation links Marx's philosophy with his fundamental principles for a new society. Thus "the development of freedom for each individual is the condition for the development of freedom for all people." As the author says, "Marx struggled for the principle of the freedom of mankind, thus the most appropriate name for Marx's philosophy is new humanism."

Dunayevskaya believed that one only need criticize Hegel's idealistic aspects, and then one can unite Hegel's "Absolute" with Marx's future society, because both connote the achievement of complete freedom.

People often quote Marx's famous line "man's fundamental nature is the sum of his social relations." But we should realize that social relations also become alienated, and become things that stand in opposition to man and place themselves over man. Of course, people cannot extricate themselves from society; those who extricate themselves from society become abstract individuals. But it is true that likewise society cannot extricate itself from individuals; a society that extricates itself from individuals is an abstract society. Dunayevskaya cited Marx as evidence: "We should especially avoid treating society as an abstraction; the individual is the social entity."

In this light, the main problem is to overcome alienation. Dunayevskaya believed that equating private property to capitalism and state property to socialism is a distortion of Marxism. "To Marx, private property is the power over other people's labor. This is why Marx firmly believed that to make 'society' the owner preserves the alienation of labor, and only serves to transform society into an 'abstract capitalist.'" Only "a free association of individuals," not an abstract "society," is the goal of socializing the means of production; casting aside private property connotes a new way of living, a new socialized humanity. I think that this is why the author used the term "new humanism" and not some other term. At the same time, this is also the reason why the author said that the Soviet Union practiced state-capitalism.

Dunayevskaya spent three years collecting first-hand materials on the Soviet Union's three five-year plans, and from this drew the conclusion that what the Soviet Union practiced was state-capitalism. This "state-capitalism" is of course not that which Lenin envisaged.

People often quote Marx's famous line "man's fundamental nature is the sum of his social relations." But we should realize that social relations also become alienated, and become things that stand in opposition to man and place themselves over man. Of course, people cannot extricate themselves from society; those who extricate themselves from society become abstract individuals. But it is true that likewise society cannot extricate itself from individuals; a society that extricates itself from individuals is an abstract society. Dunayevskaya cited Marx as evidence: "We should especially avoid treating society as an abstraction; the individual is the social entity."

In this light, the main problem is to overcome alienation. Dunayevskaya believed that equating private property to capitalism and state property to socialism is a distortion of Marxism. "To Marx, private property is the power over other people's labor. This is why Marx firmly believed that to make 'society' the owner preserves the alienation of labor, and only serves to transform society into an 'abstract capitalist.'" Only "a free association of individuals," not an abstract "society," is the goal of socializing the means of production; casting aside private property connotes a new way of living, a new socialized humanity. I think that this is why the author used the term "new humanism" and not some other term. At the same time, this is also the reason why the author said that the Soviet Union practiced state-capitalism.

Dunayevskaya spent three years collecting first-hand materials on the Soviet Union's three five-year plans, and from this drew the conclusion that what the Soviet Union practiced was state-capitalism. This "state-capitalism" is of course not that which Lenin envisaged.

People often quote Marx's famous line "man's fundamental nature is the sum of his social relations." But we should realize that social relations also become alienated, and become things that stand in opposition to man and place themselves over man. Of course, people cannot extricate themselves from society; those who extricate themselves from society become abstract individuals. But it is true that likewise society cannot extricate itself from individuals; a society that extricates itself from individuals is an abstract society. Dunayevskaya cited Marx as evidence: "We should especially avoid treating society as an abstraction; the individual is the social entity."

In this light, the main problem is to overcome alienation. Dunayevskaya believed that equating private property to capitalism and state property to socialism is a distortion of Marxism. "To Marx, private property is the power over other people's labor. This is why Marx firmly believed that to make 'society' the owner preserves the alienation of labor, and only serves to transform society into an 'abstract capitalist.'" Only "a free association of individuals," not an abstract "society," is the goal of socializing the means of production; casting aside private property connotes a new way of living, a new socialized humanity. I think that this is why the author used the term "new humanism" and not some other term. At the same time, this is also the reason why the author said that the Soviet Union practiced state-capitalism.

Dunayevskaya spent three years collecting first-hand materials on the Soviet Union's three five-year plans, and from this drew the conclusion that what the Soviet Union practiced was state-capitalism. This "state-capitalism" is of course not that which Lenin envisaged.

People often quote Marx's famous line "man's fundamental nature is the sum of his social relations." But we should realize that social relations also become alienated, and become things that stand in opposition to man and place themselves over man. Of course, people cannot extricate themselves from society; those who extricate themselves from society become abstract individuals. But it is true that likewise society cannot extricate itself from individuals; a society that extricates itself from individuals is an abstract society. Dunayevskaya cited Marx as evidence: "We should especially avoid treating society as an abstraction; the individual is the social entity."

In this light, the main problem is to overcome alienation. Dunayevskaya believed that equating private property to capitalism and state property to socialism is a distortion of Marxism. "To Marx, private property is the power over other people's labor. This is why Marx firmly believed that to make 'society' the owner preserves the alienation of labor, and only serves to transform society into an 'abstract capitalist.'" Only "a free association of individuals," not an abstract "society," is the goal of socializing the means of production; casting aside private property connotes a new way of living, a new socialized humanity. I think that this is why the author used the term "new humanism" and not some other term. At the same time, this is also the reason why the author said that the Soviet Union practiced state-capitalism.

Dunayevskaya spent three years collecting first-hand materials on the Soviet Union's three five-year plans, and from this drew the conclusion that what the Soviet Union practiced was state-capitalism. This "state-capitalism" is of course not that which Lenin envisaged.

People often quote Marx's famous line "man's fundamental nature is the sum of his social relations." But we should realize that social relations also become alienated, and become things that stand in opposition to man and place themselves over man. Of course, people cannot extricate themselves from society; those who extricate themselves from society become abstract individuals. But it is true that likewise society cannot extricate itself from individuals; a society that extricates itself from individuals is an abstract society. Dunayevskaya cited Marx as evidence: "We should especially avoid treating society as an abstraction; the individual is the social entity."

In this light, the main problem is to overcome alienation. Dunayevskaya believed that equating private property to capitalism and state property to socialism is a distortion of Marxism. "To Marx, private property is the power over other people's labor. This is why Marx firmly believed that to make 'society' the owner preserves the alienation of labor, and only serves to transform society into an 'abstract capitalist.'" Only "a free association of individuals," not an abstract "society," is the goal of socializing the means of production; casting aside private property connotes a new way of living, a new socialized humanity. I think that this is why the author used the term "new humanism" and not some other term. At the same time, this is also the reason why the author said that the Soviet Union practiced state-capitalism.

Dunayevskaya spent three years collecting first-hand materials on the Soviet Union's three five-year plans, and from this drew the conclusion that what the Soviet Union practiced was state-capitalism. This "state-capitalism" is of course not that which Lenin envisaged.

# 马克思主义 与自由

ship between things (commodities, money, wages, profits) into an analysis of people's mutual relations in the process of production. She also points out that humanism runs like a red thread throughout the whole of *Capital*; this kind of humanism makes the work profound, and also gives it power and direction.

This kind of new explanation links Marx's philosophy with his fundamental principles for a new society. Thus "the development of freedom for each individual is the condition for the development of freedom for all people." As the author says, "Marx struggled for the principle of the freedom of mankind, thus the most appropriate name for Marx's philosophy is new humanism."

Dunayevskaya believed that one only need criticize Hegel's idealistic aspects, and then one can unite Hegel's "Absolute" with Marx's future society, because both connote the achievement of complete freedom.

People often quote Marx's famous line "man's fundamental nature is the sum of his social relations." But we should realize that social relations also become alienated, and become things that stand in opposition to man and place themselves over man. Of course, people cannot extricate themselves from society; those who extricate themselves from society become abstract individuals. But it is true that likewise society cannot extricate itself from individuals; a society that extricates itself from individuals is an abstract society. Dunayevskaya cited Marx as evidence: "We should especially avoid treating society as an abstraction; the individual is the social entity."

In this light, the main problem is to overcome alienation. Dunayevskaya believed that equating private property to capitalism and state property to socialism is a distortion of Marxism. "To Marx, private property is the power over other people's labor. This is why Marx firmly believed that to make 'society' the owner preserves the alienation of labor, and only serves to transform society into an 'abstract capitalist.'" Only "a free association of individuals," not an abstract "society," is the goal of socializing the means of production; casting aside private property connotes a new way of living, a new socialized humanity. I think that this is why the author used the term "new humanism" and not some other term. At the same time, this is also the reason why the author said that the Soviet Union practiced state-capitalism.

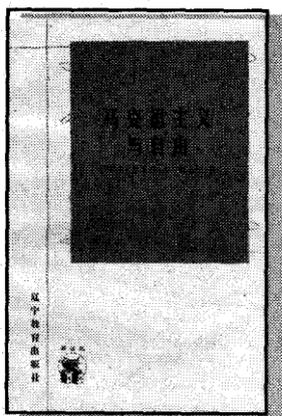
Dunayevskaya spent three years collecting first-hand materials on the Soviet Union's three five-year plans, and from this drew the conclusion that what the Soviet Union practiced was state-capitalism. This "state-capitalism" is of course not that which Lenin envisaged.

## Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 Until Today...

by Raya Dunayevskaya

First published with a Preface by Herbert Marcuse in 1957, this classic work on the American roots and world humanist concepts of Marx's Marxism has undergone six different editions in English (1958, 1964, 1971, 1975, 1983, and 2000 [forthcoming]), and has been published in Italian, Japanese, French, and Spanish; sections have also been published in Farsi.

To obtain a copy of the new Chinese-language edition of this pathbreaking work, send \$10 to: News & Letters, 36 S. Wabash, Room 1440, Chicago IL 60603.



### ACQUITTAL OF DIALLO'S KILLERS PUTS U.S. ON TRIAL

The rally held in New York on Feb. 26 to protest the acquittal of the four officers who killed Amadou Diallo clearly showed the "two worlds" in this country. Over 5,000 marched from 59th St. to City Hall—more than four miles. It was a spontaneous outpouring—almost all the signs held up were homemade, and chants were invented on the spot. About 60% of the marchers were Black; the crowd was quite young. The police presence was incredible.

They would not allow us to march in the street, and 80 were arrested. The cops used the method of segmentation—that is, breaking up the march into smaller segments of 500 or so by forcing us to stop for traffic. When we got to City Hall, it was surrounded by thousands of cops standing shoulder to shoulder. The cops were totally decked out in riot gear and were itching to use it. The battle lines have been drawn.

**A.K.  
New York**

\*\*\*

Those who exulted in the victory over the World Trade Organization in the Seattle protest at the end of last year now need to think real hard about the Diallo verdict. We're up against a system which isn't going to cave into us so easily again.

**Environmentalist  
Chicago**

\*\*\*

The first thing that crossed my mind when the news came over the radio was what this means for Mumia Abu-Jamal. He is scheduled to appear for a court hearing in April; the judge could rule on his request for an evidentiary hearing as early as then. If there isn't an uproar over the acquittal of the cops who killed Diallo, will the judge feel he has carte blanche to deny Mumia a new trial?

**Concerned  
Illinois**

\*\*\*

I found it ironic that the same week in which Diallo's killers were let free the number of people in U.S. prisons and jails surpassed two million. The TV news reported that the officers were acquitted because "trials are weighted in favor of the defendants." If that's the

case how come two million Americans are in jail?

**Outraged  
Washington, DC**

\*\*\*

For the past two days the main thing the brothers have been discussing inside this prison has been the Diallo trial. Everyone is real pissed off at the outcome—but no one is really surprised. Maybe the rest of America will now see how deep is the injustice we live with every day.

**Prisoner  
Pendleton, Indiana**

\*\*\*

I was attending a conference in Los Angeles on women prisoners when the verdict was announced. Everyone was terribly upset. Nothing has changed since Los Angeles 1992, except that the prison system and police abuse have become even more widespread. We have to focus on the ideas of the grassroots activists that came out from the 1992 rebellion in order to see what to do about this latest outrage.

**Judy  
Los Angeles**



### THE BATTLE OF SEATTLE

N&L's coverage of the anti-WTO protest in Seattle was good, but it seems to me that a category is being made out of direct action. Direct action is fine, but it doesn't make it without a philosophic ground. If we don't project such a ground then it will be the anarchists who will be able to take credit for this new movement.

**Black worker  
Los Angeles**

\*\*\*

Ron Brokmeyer's article on Seattle (January-February 1999 N&L) quoted a protester as saying: "Every worker has an immediate face for the undemocratic character of the WTO in the person of their boss." That so resonated with what Charles Denby told Raya Dunayevskaya

# Readers' Views

about what the workers in the auto shops were saying when they heard the news of Stalin's death in 1953: "I've got just the person to take his place—my foreman."

**Terry Moon  
Memphis**

### LABOR'S SILENT CIVIL WAR

It's a sad day in Battle Creek—they don't make corn flakes here any more. The latest round of cuts at Kellogg's totalled 550 jobs. Originally the cuts were to come in December 1999, but Kellogg's laid off hundreds a month earlier, supposedly because of "decreased market demand." In fact, the layoffs occurred after rumors of workers' action began circulating. Workers held a "Kellogg's severed survivors and retirees all-shift wake party for the death of the plant" on Nov. 13. A Kellogg's worker, dressed as the grim reaper, waved to passing cars outside the plant.

**C.R.  
Michigan**

### THE IRRATIONALITY OF CAPITALIST TECHNOLOGY

Contrary to your January-February 2000 editorial, the Y2K bug can hardly be blamed on "a technological brain so limited that it loomed as a barrier to progress itself." It has more to do with capitalism's drive for production, always pushing programmers and other workers to cut corners. People who don't see it from the inside probably don't realize just how chaotic and poorly planned most information systems development shops are. But don't worry, they're still working on automating more of that and de-skilling our jobs too.

**Information Systems Developer  
Tennessee**



### WOMEN'S LIBERATION HAS MANY DIMENSIONS

Outrage and protest greeted the choice in January of five male finalists, from a field of 49 entrants of which half were women, to design a bronze statue of civil rights activist and abolitionist Sojourner Truth. By February, the Sojourner Truth Memorial Statue Committee selected ten new finalists—five of them women. "We wanted to do something powerful to combat racism that was not a onetime event," one committee member said. "Sojourner Truth is a local hero (Northampton, Mass.) and she needs to be honored with a statue in our community."

**Mary Jo Grey  
Chicago**

\*\*\*

I appreciate Van Gelder's critique of Barbara Ehrenreich and her admonition that Ehrenreich needs to ask what she could learn from working-class women and women of color. But when she paints a monolithic "women's movement," which, as a movement, ignored working-class women and women of color, she does a disservice to the diverse nature of the movement and rewrites its history.

Parts of the Women's Liberation Movement did indeed include working-class, Black, Hispanic and Asian women, who might be surprised to find themselves written out of history. Look through the pages of N&L and you will see how Union Wage fought for protective legislation to be extended to men, how the Women's Liberation Coalition of Michigan in the early 1970s had a vibrant working women's committee, and how women came together around welfare rights, etc.

**Women's Liberationist  
Memphis**

\*\*\*

I wonder why Barbara Ehrenreich thinks that the feminist movement failed to oppose the 1996 welfare so-called reform act. After all, the National

Organization for Women—the group that everyone confuses with the women's movement as a whole—did strongly oppose it. That we weren't successful in stopping the gutting of welfare doesn't mean we didn't try.

**NOW member  
Tennessee**



### RACE AND CLASS

Raya Dunayevskaya's article "Race and Class" (January-February 2000 N&L) made me think of the positions taken by organization who have tried to reverse the injustices done to Blacks. How do people think we're going to turn this thing around if we don't pull the good from what happened in the past? Many Blacks are focused on how whites have mistreated them. But if you're fighting for justice, how can you have that hard view when there's a lot of white people out there who have supported Blacks and have been a part of changes? This philosophy of Marxism that I'm part of developing is about people as people. There are different races and different struggles that we're fighting for; what I've seen in N&L is a combination of struggles.

**Sarah Hamer  
Mississippi**

\*\*\*

Dunayevskaya's critique of DuBois' concept of "the talented tenth," in her piece in the January-February issue, went further than usual in showing that the logic of DuBois' notion was to fall into what Hegel called "self-determination applied externally."

**Archivist  
Detroit**

### NORTHERN IRELAND'S IMPASSE

Two recent killings in Northern Ireland suggest that loyalists have as much to fear from internal feuds and divisions as the nationalists. The stalled peace process suggests that the Unionist veto remains as strong as ever and while civil war is not likely to break out, the feeling of tension and uncertainty is likely to grow. Labour's honeymoon is over with the electorate. The dealings in Scotland, Wales, defections from the government and the dispute with Ken Livingstone over who will represent Labour in the London mayoral campaign suggests that something is in the air.

**Pat Duffy  
England**

### FREE LORI BERENSON

Efforts are continuing in the Los Angeles area and elsewhere regarding the effort to free Lori Berenson, who is in a maximum security prison in Peru and is suffering from inhumane and life threatening conditions. Lori was targeted because she was doing research as a journalist on the issues of women's rights and poverty in Peru. The Peruvian military alleged that she was a leader of the Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru, which she has termed preposterous.

**Basho  
Los Angeles**

### THANKS FOR CONTRIBUTING TO OUR EMERGENCY APPEAL!

We want to thank all those who responded to our emergency appeal in the last issue. For those who have not yet done so please send in your contribution today! It is of crucial importance in keeping N&L going.

## GET YOUR COPY NOW!

A history of worldwide developments in the 1990s- in politics, in economics, and in the development of ideas of freedom

## Bound Volume of News & Letters



containing issues from  
June 1994 to December 1999

To obtain your copy of the new bound volume of *News & Letters*, and experience with new eyes the developments over the past decade in global capitalism, forces of liberation, and battles of ideas in the radical movement, send \$30 (includes postage) to:

*News & Letters*  
36 S. Wabash, Room 1440  
Chicago, IL 60603

- *Los Angeles rebellion*
- *Chiapas*
- *UPS Strike*
- *Bosnia's struggle for multiethnicity*
- *China's economic boom*
- *Delco strike*
- *Chechnya*
- *Delta Pride*
- *Voices from within the prison walls*
- *Overthrow of Mobutu*
- *Million Woman March*
- *Quest for freedom in Amazonia*
- *Mumia Abu-Jamal*
- *Suharto's overthrow*
- *Women in Pakistan*
- *Clinic defense*
- *Quebec nurses strike*
- *Queer left legacy*
- *New student movement in Iran*
- *Immigrant labor organizes*
- *Two wars in Kosovo*
- *Marx's Capital reconsidered*
- *Notes on Hegel's Science of Logic*
- *Unknown writings of Marx on women*
- *Revolutionary history of Chartism*
- *Lenin, Hegel and Western Marxism*
- *Dialectics of Organization in the work of Raya Dunayevskaya*
- *Critiques of Teresa Ebert, István Mészáros, Julia Kristeva, Carla Lonzi, C.L.R. James, Pierre Bourdieu, Manning Marable, Mario Miolo, Louis Althusser, Toni Morrison, Nancy Hartsock, Moishe Postone, Noam Chomsky and many others.*

**VOICES THAT THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN DOESN'T HEAR**

Anyone can twist the Bible to justify oppressing others, and Christianity has at times been a persecuting religion. George W. Bush is using religion in that way now. We have nearly 500 people on death row in Texas! All of them are poor and the percentage of Blacks and Hispanics on death row far exceeds their percentage of the population. You can't just blame it on drug. Let's be clear, a lot of Black youth who are out selling drugs are doing what the system channels them into doing because there aren't jobs and the future seems so unpromising. We still have slavery today, as seen in what is happening in these prisons. However, the liberated mind is the greatest weapon we have against this exploitative system. It's very important that we listen to the voices of liberation arising from prisoners.

**Njeri Shakur  
Texas**

\*\*\*

George W. Bush's victory in the South Carolina primary was real scary, because it showed how powerful the Christian Right remains. It may have suffered a setback in the effort to impeach Clinton, but the Christian Right hasn't lost a beat in trying to get a firm hold on the presidency. They're doing it stealth style, through the medium of Bush's campaign.

**P.W.  
Chicago**

\*\*\*

New Yorkers are saddened by the city's destruction of Esperanza Garden, a community project on a former vacant lot on the Lower East Side. The people in the area, mainly Dominicans, had cleared the lot and grown flowers and vegetables on it for 18 years. The police raid in the middle of the night resulted in the arrest of 31 local people who were guarding it, some of whom chained themselves to concrete structures built for that purpose. The bulldozers followed immediately, before a court might have stopped it. Mayor Giuliani is trying to sell off hundreds of such community gardens to developers. Esperanza ("hope") is slated to be sold to one of his big campaign contributors. This is no surprise; the history of New York City is the history of big real estate. But Giuliani relished the vicious eviction of people who had resisted his

plan, saying sarcastically, "of course it would be nice to have gardens everywhere, but that's not practical."

**Flowerless  
New York**

\*\*\*

It's that time of the year! Many taxpayers are unaware of the 39% of the federal budget allotted to past, present, and future military expenditures. We are paying for a murderous arsenal rather than providing for health care, housing, and a myriad of other needs. A crucial option is to protest by the withholding of taxes.

**Sheila  
New York**



**LETTERS  
FROM  
RUSSIA**

As far as acting president Vladimir Putin is concerned, I hate the KGB from which he came. You can never trust such people. They have no principles at all and they seek only power. They are not against having money either. One reason for all this meanness of the war in Chechnya may be money. We are still a militarized country and the new era has led to new ways to steal money. (You need to wait a long time to see the first results of the market reforms.) To declare war, to open such a chauvinistic campaign in this multinational country, to frighten the not very well educated part of the population, and to send young and poorly trained men to their deaths is a way of holding onto power forever. That was the great Yeltsin's idea. And I think Putin continues on this road.

**Artist  
Moscow**

\*\*\*

The war in Chechnya from 1994-96 was one of popular resistance—especially by the petty-bourgeois and semi-proletarianized masses of Chechnya—against the forces of Russian imperialism. But today, it seems, such popular resistance is absent. The Chechen people do not wage

war, but flee from it—as seen in the refugees flooding into Ingushetia. Why is this? Because the Chechen bourgeois independent state, like any bourgeois state, failed to improve the situation of the common people. We must strongly oppose the rule of Russian gangsters without supporting small gangsters like Chechnya's Basaev.

**A.S.  
Saransk, Russia**

**DEBATE ON CHECHNYA**

I am 100% opposed to socialists who advocate the use of one imperialist force against another, such as Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes suggest in their January-February 2000 article "Crisis in Russia In Wake of Chechen War," when they lament the Western powers' lack of support for the Chechen rebels. Marxist-Humanists must support the development of an international revolutionary socialist movement instead of falling into the trap of nationalistic geopolitics. In the case of Chechnya, the rebellion leadership is more rooted in Islamic fundamentalism than in anything even remotely socialist or revolutionary. While autonomous self-determination must be supported, we must do so under the auspices of socialist internationalism instead of supporting one authoritarian group vs. another. Anarchists and socialists in Chechnya are the ones we must rally behind, providing the means for the Chechen people to liberate themselves not just from the grip of Russian imperialism but from all forms of authoritarianism, whether it be nationalism, religious fundamentalism, or other types of hierarchical power structures.

**Ronald Young  
Texas**

\*\*\*

*Editor's note: We have invited Kevin A. Barry to reply:*

The reader supports "autonomous self-determination" of nations but leaves this at an abstract level, calling for support not of the actual, living Chechen resistance, but of largely mythical groups of "anarchists and socialists in Chechnya." From the days of Marx and Bakunin to today, revolutionaries have supported the Chechen people's struggle for independence. This was true during their fight against Tsarism in the 1850s, their

deportation and death under Stalin in 1944, or their independence struggle since 1994. This support has never been uncritical, however. In our November issue, for example, we referred to "Muslim extremists" among the Chechens. At no time have we supported U.S. intervention in Chechnya. In fact, we have opposed the type of Western intervention that exists today, with imperialists bankrolling and diplomatically supporting the Yeltsin-Putin regime. If Western nations were to drop this support and instead to offer assistance to the Chechens, which they have not, we could not advise them to turn that down in their hour of need, any more than we advised the African liberation fighters in Angola in the 1970s to turn down aid from state-capitalist Russia or Cuba at a time when they were facing the murderous UNITA movement.

**Kevin A. Barry  
Chicago**

**MARXISM  
VS.  
STATE-CAPITALISM**

N&L is one of the most compelling readings that I have had the opportunity to see over the years. The most notable thing about it has been to define Marxism in a manner which separates it from the misstated and misguided thoughts which equate Marxism with Communism, something which political leaders in the West have been quick to capitalize on to keep people from discovering the realities and viable alternatives to capitalistic forms of government—be it individually-orientated capitalism or the state-capitalism of the former Soviet union.

**Prisoner  
Tennessee**

\*\*\*

Wouldn't any real Marxist be, ipso facto, a humanist? I think of a Humanist as one who rejects the conventional ideas of religions for a more logical belief in Reason. So I could easily imagine a non-Marxist Humanist, but I have a harder time envisioning a non-Humanist Marxist.

**K.L.  
Huntsville, Tex.**

**SELECTED PUBLICATIONS FROM NEWS & LETTERS**

**BOOKS**

By RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

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

By CHARLES DENBY

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

By KEVIN ANDERSON

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

**PAMPHLETS**

- American Civilization on Trial, Black Masses as Vanguard**  
Statement of the National Editorial Board. Includes "A 1980s View of the Two-Way Road Between the U.S. and Africa" by Raya Dunayevskaya, and "Black Caucuses in the Unions" by Charles Denby .....\$2

- NEW! Voices from within the Prison Walls**  
by D. A. Sheldon. Prisoners' views of (in)justice system and organizing from within .....\$8  
For pamphlet plus donor copy for a prisoner .....\$16
- Harry McShane and the Scottish Roots of Marxist-Humanism** by Peter Hudis .....\$3
- Bosnia-Herzegovina: Achilles Heel of Western 'Civilization'** (Expanded edition) .....\$5
- NEW! Kosova: Writings from News & Letters**  
1998-1999 .....\$3.50
- Marx's Capital and Today's Global Crisis**  
Includes critiques of Ernest Mandel and Tony Cliff .....\$2
- The Coal Miners' General Strike of 1949-50 and the Birth of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S.**  
by Andy Phillips and Raya Dunayevskaya .....\$2
- 25 Years of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S.: A History of Worldwide Revolutionary Developments**  
by Raya Dunayevskaya .....\$1.50
- Myriad Global Crises of the 1980s and the Nuclear World Since World War II**  
by Raya Dunayevskaya .....\$2
- Theory and Practice, by Rosa Luxemburg**  
First English translation .....\$2
- Nationalism, Communism, Marxist-Humanism and the Afro-Asian Revolutions**  
by Raya Dunayevskaya .....\$1.25
- Frantz Fanon, Soweto, and American Black Thought**  
by Lou Turner and John Alan .....\$3
- Working Women for Freedom**  
by Angela Terrano, Marie Dignan, and Mary Holmes .....\$2
- Dos ensayos por Raya Dunayevskaya** .....\$2
- News and Letters Committees Constitution**  
.....33¢ postage

- Marxist-Humanist Literature Catalog**  
A full list of publications (includes many not listed here) available from News and Letters Committees....55¢ postage

**ARCHIVES**

- Guides to Collection and Supplement to the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection: Marxist-Humanism: A Half Century of Its World Development**  
Full description of 15,000-page microfilm collection...\$4.50
- The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection-Marxist-Humanism: A Half Century of Its World Development**  
A 15,000-page microfilm collection on 8 reels available from Wayne State University, Detroit, MI 48202 .....\$165

**NEWSPAPER**

- News & Letters subscription**  
Unique combination of worker and intellectual published 10 times a year. (Request information about gift subscriptions) .....\$5/year
- Bound Volumes of News & Letters**  
1970-77, 1977-84, 1984-87, 1987-94, 1994-99 .....\$30 each  
N&L is also available on microfilm from University Microfilms International, 300 Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106. N&L as well as other Marxist-Humanist literature is available on audio tape.

**Mail orders to:**

News & Letters, 36 S. Wabash, Room 1440, Chicago, IL 60603, Phone (312) 236-0799

Enclosed find \$\_\_\_\_\_ for the literature checked. Please add \$1 for each item for postage. Illinois residents add 7% sales tax.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

# Organizing in Albany: Justice for Diallo

**Editor's note:** When the trial of the police officers who murdered Amadou Diallo was moved from New York City to Albany, N.Y., activists in Albany immediately organized. Barbara Smith, Black lesbian-feminist writer, thinker, socialist and revolutionary, has been involved in the Capital Region Justice for Diallo Committee. In the days before and after the shocking verdict, Feb. 25, exonerating the four New York City cops who murdered Amadou Diallo, she reflected on the meaning of the trial, the verdict, and the organizing around it.

The verdict makes me feel like, once again, my life as a Black person isn't worth anything in this society. There are two parallel worlds in America: the world of clueless white people, and the world of Black people. The murder of Amadou Diallo is about race, but not the way the press said the case was "racialized." The white power structure is absolutely oblivious to the racial nature of this case. The true race content is that the police consider every Black person a dangerous criminal, and that Black people are right to fear for their lives in this society. I think Amadou Diallo was terrified that night. But the police couldn't even read that as a possibility: they just saw his race, assumed he was dangerous, and started shooting.

"If police can shoot an unarmed person 41 times and it's not murder, then what is murder? From the change of venue, to the unbelievably inadequate prosecution, to the judge's rulings limiting the evidence—the entire criminal justice system came together to protect these officers from answering for their crime. When you look at how quick that same system is to put young people of color in prison, we are convinced there is a double standard by race in this country." That's what Vickie Smith, a spokesperson for Capital Region Justice for Diallo Committee, said in our press release.

The positive in the picture is in our organizing here in Albany around the case, which provides a dynamic example of lesbian-feminists of color—who virtually invented multi-issue political organizing in the late 20th century—putting our politics into practice. The fact is that there has been lesbian-of-color leadership around this issue. Vickie Smith was one of the first to get word of the change of venue from lesbians and gays of color who were active around the Diallo case in New York; we immediately helped form the coalition, Capital Region Justice for Diallo Committee.

It marks a new day in some ways that we as lesbians of color are being recognized as proactive on an issue—police brutality—that is not driven solely by sexuality or gender. Every Diallo rally has had speakers making connections between issues that concern lgbt (lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender) people of color and people of color in general. These mark real and practical challenges around homophobia, because we are there on the ground doing the work on an issue that matters to everybody.

This is creating a real context for dialogue in the Black community here around issues of sexuality. This doesn't

mean there has been no homophobia in the organizing; there has been, and we've been the targets. But I'm pleased that we've been able to expand the definitions of what lgbt work looks like. We also had a youth day with participation from the Audre Lorde Project in Brooklyn (a center for lgbt people of color).

What does all this mean? Police brutality is the leading edge of repression, showing us where white supremacy is and what crimes it is capable of. Every community I've visited lately, and all across the country, I notice more and more police brutality being reported. The gunning down of an unarmed 14-year-old in Hartford is ruled "justifiable homicide." In Providence, an off-duty Black police officer went to help other officers who were in pursuit of suspects; his "fellow" officers, including one who had been in the same cadet class with him, shot him dead. All they saw was his race, and his race meant to them that he was a dangerous criminal. This is what a recent issue of the excellent magazine *Color Lines* referred to as "domestic militarization" of communities of color.

I'm struck by how pandemic it is. Activists in Seattle have been trying to get a civilian police review board. We are trying to do the same thing in Albany. We've had people dying "mysteriously" in custody and many examples of police misconduct and brutality. The fight against police brutality is a cutting edge issue for all communities that are fighting racism.

The question now, after the verdict, is: what do we do next? Here in Albany, we did an excellent job of organizing in the Capital Region Justice for Diallo Committee. We brought people and communities together who had never worked together before. The struggle continues.

—Barbara Smith



Mass demonstration down New York City's Fifth Avenue the day after verdict in Diallo murder trial.

# Youth Terminating Pollution

**Memphis, Tenn.**—Youth Terminating Pollution was formed by young people with plenty of stories about health effects to their families from the Defense Depot: ten girls from three different high schools near the Depot and one boy whose mother worked at the Depot for 24 years. Some of us have health problems from the Depot's toxic contamination. One girl was diagnosed with uterine cancer when she was 14. Two girls had cysts removed from their breasts.

There was a protest in September 1997 demanding that they clean up the Depot before they closed it down. They didn't. Eight of my friends from the community and I joined the protest. That's when our group began. We decided to make other people aware of how much environmental pollution affects everyone and to fight to get clean air, clean water, clean soil and a clean earth for future generations. We had a very positive response.

Members of YTP visited Washington, D.C. for four days in February along with members of other environmental justice groups participating in People of Color and Disenfranchised Communities, a coordinating committee comprised of environmental justice activists from communities near federal facilities involved with nuclear warfare and chemical warfare operations. We were to meet with President Clinton on the sixth anniversary of his executive order on environmental justice, but he cancelled the meeting.

We met with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. What they did was argue for a whole hour and a half about who would pay to clean up the Defense Depot and who would do the testing, when that's not our question. We know something is wrong over there, and we know it's affecting us, so the question is, who is going to help us? This is our question to ATSDR, to the president, to EPA, and we want it answered.

—Teenage activist

## Black World

(Continued from page 1)

more than "Can't we all get along?" Sharpton immediately admonished demonstrators after the verdict: "Let not one rock be thrown!"

The whole scripted process that unfolded, from the murder of Amadou Diallo by one of New York's legalized "death squads" called the "Street Crimes Unit," to the acquittal of Diallo's murderers, through the days of rage a year ago in which celebrities and public intellectuals got ceremoniously arrested protesting the Diallo murder, reflects the new repressive reality to which all are supposed to accommodate themselves. After all, the trains run on time.

In this this newly scripted repressive world, the pathos and moral suffering that gets prime time coverage is not that of the oppressed but the oppressor—crying cops whose lives and "careers" have been tragically wasted by a young Black man "acting suspiciously." Suspicion is written all over the forces at work in the Diallo tragedy, but in the end the jury found, under instructions from New York Supreme Court Judge Joseph Teresi, that young, unarmed Diallo is where the suspicion lay. The jury and the people of New York City were told by Judge Teresi and Mayor Giuliani not to put themselves in the shoes of the "suspicious acting" immigrant, but in the shoes of his armed-to-the-teeth, bullet-proof vested murderers.

And yet the inner universality of Amadou Diallo's life is also the outward reflection of Black and immigrant communities from Paris, Vienna and London to New York and Los Angeles. To America's Black urban landscape has been added the "suspicious acting" immigrant.

This newly scripted repressive world is that of civil society and its public good, "served and protected" by Giuliani's NYPD; it is a civil society that wants the trains to run on time and its streets safe, apparently at any cost. "Public service" in the name of civil society lends nobility to the NYPD; it is what substitutes the pathos and moral suffering of four murderous cops for the tragic death of a young African man who had his whole life before him. "Public service" is what impelled Judge Teresi to instruct the jury to put itself in the shoes of Giuliani's "death squads" instead of the shoes of Amadou Diallo.

The meaning of the Diallo verdict is simply this: Behind the show of public service to civil society is the public authority of the state which renders obedient service in its, not society's, interest. It reverses itself not the society it claims to serve. Thus, Rudolph Giuliani's public hubris—"The verdict makes me proud to be an American."

There is likewise a social consciousness that doesn't follow the script of Black leaders or "public servants," however. Instead it harbors a deep and abiding hatred for this "new world order," and, as Hegel declares, "stands ever ready to burst out in rebellion." It is then that the meaning of the Diallo verdict becomes a revolutionary movement.

The wanton murder of another young Black man by the NYPD five days after the Diallo verdict, only three blocks from the spot Amadou Diallo was killed, is evidence that the verdict has increased the repression. That the young brother shot down had only days before been arrested protesting the verdict is also evidence of what stands ready to burst out.

## Black/Red View Freedom essence of Black history

by John Alan

Last February the nation observed African-American History Month. This event, like other celebrations, has cleansed its consciousness of major internal, national contradictions. Thus, this nation observed in the same month the birthday of a president who was a slave owner, the birthday of another who emancipated the slaves and the history of a people who are still engaged in a long, historic struggle to concretize the idea of freedom.

Jamming together the celebration of George Washington's birthday and Abraham Lincoln's birthday with the observation of African-American History Month figuratively brings together three great contending forces: slaveholding Southern planters vs. a new, growing class of industrial and finance capitalists, and the African-American masses opposing both of those dehumanizing forms of the social organization of labor.

### FREEDOM UNDERLYING HISTORY

There were no public observations of African-American history that came near to revealing that the underlying essence of that history is the development of a consciousness of freedom in the minds of masses of African Americans. Instead the public got stories and documentaries on the tremendous, creative role African Americans played in the development of American culture, biographies of African Americans successful in the competitive world of American capitalism and the highly touted soap opera of President Thomas Jefferson's love affair with his slave Sally Hemings.

Americans read nothing in the large newspapers and saw nothing on television about those African Americans who rebelled against slavery, such as Nat Turner and Denmark Vesey. Neither did television nor the press pay any attention to David Walker's famous 1829 Appeal to end the abomination of slavery.

Walker's appeal reached the hands of hundreds of free and enslaved African Americans in the South and raised the specter of revolt in the minds of the white slave masters, causing them to make frantic appeals for arms from the U.S. Secretary of War, John Eaton. Southern slaveholders were well aware that the idea of freedom was the paramount idea in the minds of their slaves.

A significant section of David Walker's "One Continual Cry" is devoted to a sharp critique of Thomas Jefferson's philosophy of race. Walker called upon the brethren to take note that Jefferson defended slavery by projecting the concept "that Blacks, whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind. ...[W]ill not a lover of natural history, then, one who

views the gradations in all races of animals with the eye of philosophy, excuse an effort to keep those in the department of Man as distinct as nature had formed them?"

Walker wrote that Jefferson's philosophy of racism, his claim that the social division between Blacks and whites was beyond human control, could only be overcome by Black mass action. Being a religious man, he saw this activity as the will of God. Walker's religious doctrine of salvation was a dialectic of self-emancipation through the absolute activity of enslaved African Americans.

Not only did Walker's Appeal challenge the racist nature of American democracy, it proposed the absolute negation of a society founded upon slavery by a second American revolution. He wrote: "My color will yet root some of you out of the face of the earth! You may doubt it if you please. I know that thousands will doubt—they think that they have us so well secured in wretchedness...that it is impossible for such a thing to occur."

### HISTORIANS AND MASS MIGRATION

What is African-American history? Should every recorded event in which an African American appears be considered? For example, can Thomas Jefferson's affair with a slave be seen as African-American history? A television network thought so. While the Jefferson-Hemings affair should not be hidden, it has nothing to do with the reason in African-American history.

Today's celebration of African-American history came out of the dramatic unity of African-American historians with the great migration of African-American masses to northern cities during World War I. This unity marked the birth of a new self-consciousness. As Alain Locke said, "A new Negro appeared, a new race consciousness asserted race pride and was digging into its past."

Arthur A. Schomburg said that "the American Negro must remake his past in order to make his future. Though it is orthodox to think of America as one country where it's unnecessary to have a past, what is a luxury for a nation as a whole becomes a prime social necessity for the Negro." Carter G. Woodson, the father of the idea that we should celebrate Negro history week, added that without the discovery of the African-American past we would become a "negligible factor in the thought of the world."

This desire to discover Black history was not just for history's sake, but to combat the idea, projected by white historians, that Blacks were a history-less people who were hardly more than children. This battle was fought up to the Civil Rights Movement which established Black studies programs in universities across this country. The whole struggle was to make African Americans a Subject of history, not just Substance of history.

# Freedom movement strengthens as Aceh crisis deepens

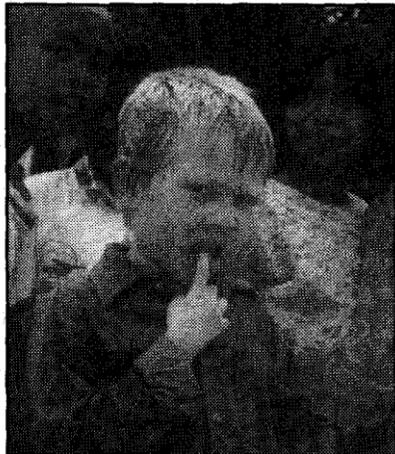
Acehnese student groups, religious scholars, and civil society have joined forces to call for a non-violent dialogue to find a solution to the deepening crisis in this resource-rich province seeking independence from Indonesia. The growing movement for peace and democratization emerges even as the situation in Aceh deteriorates rapidly.

Violence has erupted since the end of the holy month of Ramadan in early January, with killing, tortures and disappearances occurring on a daily basis. At least 191 people have been confirmed killed since the beginning of the year, threatening to quickly surpass last year's total death count of 293. While a small percentage of those killed in the province are Indonesian police and military officers, the overwhelming majority of victims are civilians, including an alarming number of women and children. Besides those killed, thousands have been tortured, traumatized and dislocated, while thousands more remain unaccounted for.

Thousands of student activists, local NGOs (non-governmental organizations), youth and civilians held demonstrations in Aceh's capital on Jan. 30, calling for a cease-fire among all armed parties in the troubled province, including the Free Aceh Movement, the province's armed guerrilla group. Representatives from Non-Violence International, an NGO based in Washington, D.C., were in Aceh last month to provide nonviolence training to 21 student leaders at the request of student activist groups.

Michael Beer, Director of Training at the organization's international office, was deeply impressed by the expanding civil movement in Aceh. "Although we played a catalytic role, the movement for nonviolence in Aceh was really initiated by the students themselves," says Beer. "We came because we were invited by student groups here. There is enormous mobilization for change." There are presently 110 organizations in the formal NGO coalition in Aceh, and new ones are being formed constantly as the population experiences an awakening of social and political self-consciousness.

The Support Committee for Human Rights in Aceh



Children among the 1,500 refugees from the Simpang Kramat, Lhok Seumawe camp, whose homes were burned down by the military seven months ago.

(SCHRA) held a two-day conference in Banda Aceh in mid-January. The conference was attended by some 70 people, including many foreign representatives from NGOs such as International Forum for Aceh, U.S. Committee for Refugees, Asian Human Rights Commission, Non-violence International, and Asian Network for Democracy in Indonesia.

After the conference, 12 SCHRA delegates embarked on an observer mission to Pidie, North Aceh, and East Aceh, areas which have been afflicted with the worst poverty and slaughter. As the team neared their destination the military launched an attack on a Free Aceh Movement base in Pidie, halting the SCHRA bus at a checkpoint and directing it to a police station. After two hours of interrogation the team was released and allowed to continue on condition that they not disembark the vehicle and not make any stops and were accompanied thereafter by two military trucks. At the border of North Aceh, in a display of hostility, military officers fired shots from their machine guns into the air. The SCHRA team was also restricted from providing humanitarian assistance in the form of food to displaced and malnourished Acehnese at a refugee camp near Lhoksumawe, North Aceh. Systematically conducted repression, which is increasingly being directed against activists and humanitarian workers, has become routine in Aceh.

In a surprise move last week, Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid (popularly known as Gus Dur) suspended the nation's chief of armed forces, General Wiranto, after the latter was named in a report about human rights abuses in East Timor. While Wahid's attempts at reform draw support from international human rights groups and governments alike, some fear that the country's ongoing conflicts will be obscured.

"The situation is very deceiving," says Jafar Siddiq Hamzah, chairman of the New York-based International Forum for Aceh. "Gus Dur's sacking of Wiranto has the international community now believing that human rights is a central concern of the new Indonesian government. Meanwhile the atrocities continue day after day in Aceh, as well as other regions of the archipelago, without admonishment from the outside world. We Acehnese feel very sad that the United States has allowed this to happen so easily." Indeed, this month the U.S. Defense Department has quietly resumed training Indonesian military officers in

## Reactionaries lose in Iran

Mass participation characterized the parliamentary elections in Iran on Feb. 18. Thirty-two million people came out to vote—80% of the eligible voters. The vote was a major blow to conservatives and reactionaries, and indicates that the Iranian people want change and they want it now.

The huge turnout in the election does not mean it amounted to a public endorsement of the Islamic system, as Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, "supreme leader," claimed in a post-election statement. In fact, in most people's eyes this was not an election; it was rather a referendum to say no to hard-line conservatives and the "supreme leader," Khamenei himself. It is true that some have illusions about reformers in the government, but this will change and will give rise to revolutionary developments as people lose their illusions about the system.

The voters clearly rejected Fallahian, a former intelligence minister who has been accused of knowing in advance of the assassinations of prominent liberals two years ago. The people also repudiated Ahmad Rasouli-Nejad, a parliamentarian from Damavand in northern Iran, who played a role in the 1998 impeachment of Interior Minister Abdollah Nouri.

The vote was not only a statement against right-wing conservatives and the "supreme leader," but also one for social freedom. It reflected a demand for freedom of speech, the press and basic human rights, especially women's rights. The success of reformist candidates also marks a victory in the undeclared contest between Iran's outspoken newspaper press and its tightly controlled broadcast media counterpart, which is under the jurisdiction of Khamenei.

Although the voting was generally peaceful, there were demonstrations in Shush, Shadegan, Dasht-e-Azadegan and Izeh. In Shush, hundreds took to the streets to accuse the winning right-wing coalition candidate, Hassan Sobhani, of bribing the electorate. Crowds attacked government buildings and banks and hurled stones at policemen. Police fired at the demonstrators and 15 people are reported to have been injured and five killed. In Dasht-e-Azadegan, three teenagers were killed and 10 injured when police fired at demonstrators trying to get into the governor's office.

This election was the first relatively free parliamentary election in the 20 years of the Islamic Republic. Ali Akbar Nateg-Nouri, the conservative speaker of the outgoing parliament who did not seek a new term, said, "The losers were those who tried to separate the people from the system." There is good reason for him to worry about the system, since half of Iran's 62 million are under 25 and Iran suffers from 20% unemployment and high inflation.

—Ali Reza Ardebili

The U.S. suspended its training of Indonesian soldiers after the East Timor bloodbaths last year, in which the Indonesian military played an instrumental role.

In Aceh, however, the call for self-determination continues to swell. Throughout the province people are experiencing an extraordinary surge of consciousness in their Acehnese identity. For a people whose identity was crushed by a repressive Jakarta regime for decades, this cultural reclamation is both liberating and profoundly empowering.

February saw the publication of *Su Aceh* (meaning "Voice of Aceh"), the first ever Acehnese-language newspaper. The first 3,000 copies of the paper's first issue sold out quickly, drawing thousands of demands for more copies, while another 1,000 copies were ordered by neighboring Malaysia. The bimonthly newspaper provides investigative reports and includes a two-page section in English. Along with providing analysis on current local issues, *Su Aceh* intends to print stories and correspondence from around the world.

The paper is currently working on translating a number of articles on the Zapatista movement in Chiapas, Mexico. "We want to build solidarity with movements and individuals around the world," says Jafar, who is one of the founders of the newspaper. "It is important that we realize that our struggles for a better world are not isolated. There is so much that we can learn from each other." The Acehnese are realizing that their struggle for freedom is not just regional, but of global significance as well.

—Lilianne Fan  
Feb. 20, 2000

International Forum for Aceh<acehforum@aol.com>  
Student Coalition for Aceh<studentsforaceh@hotmail.com>

## Ecuador's military coup

In Ecuador, mass demonstrations by the indigenous movement against widespread poverty and corruption culminated Jan. 21 in a coup by a section of the military, forcing President Mahuad from office and suspending congress. A three-man junta declared itself in power for two days. One of the three was the head of the Confederation of Indigenous Nations (CONAIE). But then Vice President Noboa took over as president and congress returned, and now the oligarchy is governing again as if nothing had happened. It is proceeding with plans for an Economic Transformation Law that includes dollarization and yet more austerity for the poor.

The country's main union federation, the Unitary Workers Front (FUT), held protests against the proposed law the week of Feb. 21. CONAIE continues to demand the dissolution of congress and the judicial system in favor of a Peoples Parliament and elected judges, but it may have lost some of its popular support as a result of its role in the failed coup.

One Ecuadorian writes: "Our poor country will probably have a very authoritarian government now. In other countries where neo-liberalism was applied, the use of force was indispensable. I hope the indigenous movement will do things better next time they try to make a change in the government. Hopefully they will use their power to get more space for democratization and participation, rather than falling for the trickery of the military like they did this time. The military wants an excuse to repress them; some people even think the military planned for the coup to fail. The indigenous movement has lost support as a result. Some people are even saying the government should have killed some of them. I don't want to tell the indigenous movement what to do, but they are in a strong position to pressure the government and should not let themselves be tricked out of their power."

Ecuador's coup sounds an echo of Latin America in the 1950s–1980s, when military dictatorships repressed, tortured and killed workers and revolutionaries all over the continent. What is remarkable in the year 2000 is the indigenous movement's alliance with the military. Just three years ago, the Ecuadorian masses forced out another president who was corrupt and imposing worse and worse austerity. That time, Congress selected a new president from among its ranks (ignoring the woman vice-president), and nothing changed. What were the indigenous leaders thinking this time, that military dictatorship is the "lesser evil" (don't they remember their own military dictatorship in the 1960s?), and that a few million dollars thrown their way could change the economic condition of the millions of indigenous people living in dire poverty? Where was the Left during the mass protests, and did it present an alternative to a military takeover?

In Austria, Nazi-admirer Joerg Haider's anti-immigration party recently won enough votes to enter the government by promising to shake up the corrupt and undemocratic coalition that has ruled that country for three decades. Some people are calling him "a breath of fresh air." As different as these countries and events are, they put front and center the question, what alternative is there to the way society is organized now, and what kind of overthrow of this society is needed to get us there?

Whereas U.S. government ideologists want us to believe there is no alternative to existing society, people around the world never stop fighting for change. What is scary about the Ecuador and Austria events is that they suggest the only alternatives to capitalism are military dictatorship or fascism. It seems we are in grave danger of losing the concept of a socialist alternative altogether.

—Anne Jaclard

## Toxic spill in Romania

The Jan. 30 spill of 22 million gallons of contaminated water in Romania sent shock waves across Central Europe as the Tisza River, previously one of Europe's cleanest, was carpeted by hundreds of tons of dead fish.

High levels of cyanide in the water eradicated all life for 250 miles of the river, from bacteria and algae up to waterbirds. Some of the 19 protected species of fish that lived in the Tisza could be gone forever. The drinking water of 2.5 million people has been contaminated. Meanwhile, augmented by a second spill on Feb. 6, the cyanide has moved into the Danube, flowing through five countries before entering the Black Sea.

The biocide was so total that ecological recovery could take over ten years. Some 15,000 fishermen may be out of work. In addition, the World Health Organization warned that heavy metals such as lead and cadmium have probably escaped into the water, posing a potentially far greater health threat. The metals could persist in the river bottom for years, poisoning the whole food chain.

The source of the disaster was a gold processing operation near Baia Mare, Romania, run by a company largely owned by Esmeralda Exploration, an Australian mining company, and the Romanian state. The company was fined all of \$163 for waiting 24 hours before reporting the leak. Since the overflow from the company's reservoir holding chemical waste came after heavy rain and snowfalls, Romania's foreign minister blamed the weather. For its part, Esmeralda was still brazenly claiming on Feb. 16, over two weeks after the spill, that there had been no "failure of the structural integrity of the dam nor any negligence."

The Baia Mare accident is one strand in the web of exploitation and destruction that proves the incompleteness of the 1989 revolutions against Russian domination and state-capitalist totalitarianism. While mass opposition to environmental destruction was one of the forces that led up to the 1989 revolutions, the environment is little cleaner in Central and Eastern Europe than a decade ago, mainly because everything became subordinated to trading the "command economy" for the "free market." Like Romania, Hungary too has attracted multinational corporations looking for cheap labor and lax environmental, health and safety standards. Parts of these countries have become the kind of toxic sacrifice zones that are, in the U.S., foisted on poor and minority communities.

Far from a cleanup, what the "free market" has meant for Baia Mare is that Esmeralda's toxic emissions can mingle with those of homegrown metal plants that have spewed so much lead and sulfur dioxide into the air that chronic respiratory diseases are endemic and often fatal, and children have high deposits of lead in their bones and teeth. Romania is also one of the favorite illegal dumping grounds for toxic waste from Western Europe.

—Franklin Dmitryev

# Women shake up dominance of globalized capitalism

(Continued from page 1)

Ninety four percent of women work in the informal or unorganized sector, so they have less social and legal protection and less access to labor rights organizations. In the Philippines, women make up 70% to 73% of the work force in the economic zones where workplace conditions have sunk to an all-time low.

Likewise in the U.S. immigrant women make up the dominant workforce in such labor-intensive industries as the garment industry. Recently, the fashion designer DKNY was targeted for "creating conditions of forced labor" by the Center for Economic and Social Rights.

Another important trend in the globalization process is outsourcing and subcontracting which pushes more women workers into the unorganized sector, in jobs at smaller workshops or even at home producing goods for transnational companies. Working at home leaves women under the whip of patriarchal family structures.

Greater numbers of women now make up the migrant labor pool. In the Philippines, for example, over 60,000 women domestic workers are "exported" to Hong Kong alone for over a billion dollars annually. Others leave the country to join the burgeoning sex industry, an industry that is drawing girls as young as eight years into prostitution due to men's fear of AIDS.

Many feminists have called the "feminization of employment" a "double-edged sword." On the one hand, the ability to earn outside income and to move to urban centers has provided opportunities for women's independence and self-direction. However what has become reinforced in the last two years since the Asian economic meltdown is that such independence is fleeting at best, prey to the fickle, crisis-ridden nature of capitalism.

Women have been hardest hit by the Asian economic crisis. In Thailand, for example, women workers in the export-oriented garment, furniture and low-end plastics industries were the first to be laid off. In the Philippines, the unemployment rate for women shot up from 12.3% in 1997 to 15.2% one year later (overall the rate is 13.3%). In South Korea, 5,000 workers are estimated to be losing their jobs daily, many from the service sector which is dominated by women (Information from *Women in Action*, No. 2, 1999).

Large numbers of previously employed women have become a part of the Indonesian landscape as well. Unemployed women who left rural areas for work face great hardship. They cannot return to villages devastated by globalization, and structural adjustment has destroyed what few safety nets might have been available to them, like unemployment benefits or welfare.

## UNWAGED LABOR

What accompanies "liberalization" are cuts in public sector spending, such as in welfare, healthcare and education, release of price controls, and reduction in food subsidies. This has shifted the burden of providing social necessities almost completely onto the shoulders of women, resulting in one overall gender specific trend: the growth of women's unwaged labor.

Far from technologically advanced capitalism reduc-

## 'Cradle Will Rock'

Tim Robbins' new film, "Cradle Will Rock," is a story about artistic freedom set in the 1930s. This was a time when, for many artists, art and revolution were "the same thing," as Diego Rivera (played by Ruben Blades) puts it.

The film weaves several notable battles into one story. Nelson Rockefeller commissions Rivera to paint a mural for Rockefeller Center, then moves to destroy it when Rivera refuses to paint over the portrait of Lenin it contains. The House Un-American Activities Committee begins its witchhunt by trying to close down the government-funded Federal Theater Project.

Among the productions threatened are Marc Blitzstein's "The Cradle Will Rock," the story of a steel strike, and "Revolt of the Beavers," an educational children's play. And Margherita Sarfatti (Susan Sarandon), with the help of William Randolph Hearst, courts captains of finance and industry in order to raise funds and support for Mussolini.

A memorable moment—one among very many—occurs near the film's end, when Hearst and a steel magnate talk with the then-youthful Rockefeller about how to prevent a recurrence of the Rivera episode. They advise him to fund art that celebrates color and form: portraits, countrysides, men on horses, sunsets, nudes.

Whether or not this conversation actually took place, it does explain a lot about the subsequent history of art in America. This is why the film is billed as "A (mostly) true story."

Although capitalists have largely succeeded in controlling the direction of art by controlling the purse-strings, works such as "Cradle Will Rock" are still being made. They deserve our support, especially when they are good or, like this film, excellent.

—A. Anielewicz

ing the amount of time women spend on such things as housework, water and firewood gathering, it has in many cases increased it. In northern India, for example, women are spending more time gathering firewood because of the devastation of surrounding forests due to "development." As one woman, Mohini Devi, told *Isis International*, "Getting fuelwood and grass just required a short walk. Now we have to walk for an hour or more for fuelwood and we are usually fatigued" (*Women in Action*, No. 2, 1999).

Because more women are working for outside income,



Indigenous women in Quito, Ecuador demonstrate against impoverishment and unemployment in January.

girls are often forced to perform unwaged labor at younger and younger ages, a reality not reflected in child labor statistics which count only waged labor. This leads to more young girls being kept out of school. In India, there are 54 million girls who are not in school, as compared to 21 million boys. The overall literacy rate for women in India is 39.4%, whereas for men it is 63.8%. The literacy rate for women drops to an appalling 4% in the state of Rajasthan and 9% in Andhra Pradesh.

In a world increasingly defined by the market, the unwaged work that women do is further devalued and often goes unrecognized. That is why the Global Strike for Women planned for March 8, 2000 and originally called by women in Ireland has gained support from women in so many different countries, including Spain, Australia, Chile, Peru, Mexico, Kurdistan, Netherlands, Puerto Rico, the Philippines and others.

In Peru, indigenous women and domestic workers are using their radio program "Soncco Warmi" (Heart of Woman in Quechua) to lobby for recognition of their work. They state: "Women of the Andes contribute more than 50% of the family income through agriculture—women sow, weed, harvest, take care of the animals—but the state doesn't take into account that we grow and prepare food. Our work is not included in the national budget. Women also take care of the children and do the housework, but this is not valued. We are the main producers and keepers of life and culture in the rural areas, and our economic and social contribution is ignored."

Cross-border alliances and organizing between women's, labor and environmental groups are exactly what global capital seeks to destroy through "free market" and "free trade" agreements. It is the drive of capitalism to extract greater and greater unpaid labor from workers. The "costless" transfer of social services from the "productive" economy to women in the "non-productive" economy is but another way of extracting more unpaid labor from women.

That the horrible working conditions of waged labor are coupled with the extension of women's traditional work, such as housework and care for elderly, children, and the sick, shows that capital domination seeks to undercut the potential for women's self-determination that inheres in the "new" global economy.

The central position of women in the global economy has opened up space for creative resistance. An important new element in the international women's movement are Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Though many are funded and controlled by the World Bank, others do important work organizing women workers and fighting for reproductive and other women's rights that are being eroded by structural adjustment policies enforced by the World Bank.

Outside of NGOs, women are taking the lead in important grassroots movements around the world, from environmental to labor and indigenous rights movements. In the U.S. women lead the fight against the draconian welfare "reform." In New York recently, women from the Kensington Welfare Rights Union and other grassroots organizations around the world joined forces for the March of the Americas.

## THE OTHER FACE OF GLOBALIZATION

It is precisely the potential for and struggles of women for self-determination that are being targeted by religious fundamentalists around the world. In reaction to the destabilizing trend of neo-liberalism, especially in

gender relations, fundamentalists promise to restore the mythical order of tradition, often on the backs of women. Far from narrow nationalism being superseded by the borderless world promised by globalization, fundamentalism and right-wing nationalism are on the rise and often merely the mask designed to obfuscate neoliberalist policies.

Nowhere is the violence of this more horrifying than in Afghanistan where the Taliban regime has instituted an absolute gender apartheid on the 80% of Afghanistan that it controls. Not only are women required to cover themselves from head to toe in public, but they are forbidden to walk on the streets unaccompanied by a male relative. Women are categorically denied education, healthcare and the right to work.

The exiled women's group, the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) is planning a rally of about 1,000 women in Pakistan on International Women's Day. Recently Women in Black wrote a letter of support to RAWA, and women around the world, including the liberal Feminist Majority in the U.S., have organized to bring the plight of Afghan women to light. This is another example of the important cross-border feminist organizing going on.

The importance of NGOs in the women's movement can be gauged in part by the reaction against them by right-wing governments. Pakistan, for example, de-registered close to 2,000 NGOs, including an important feminist group called Shirkat Gah. The current military regime continues the attack on women that deposed Prime Minister

Nawaz Sharif had unleashed.

Recently, the parliament there refused to pass a resolution against "honor" killings, the murder of women by family members accusing them of "dishonor." Human rights groups say at least 286 women were killed last year in the name of "honor." Such vicious acts of murder carry little or no legal penalty.

In Austria, women's NGOs are calling for support because the newly formed coalition government, which includes the fascist, Nazi-sympathizer Freedom Party, has decided to abolish the Ministry for Women's Affairs that funds many of the feminist NGOs. They write: "We urge you to support the women's NGOs in their struggle to survive and all Austrians who are strictly against allowing racists and neo-fascists to govern a country in the European Union."

In India, fundamentalism attacks women in less obvious ways. Women around the world are rallying around the feminist filmmaker, Deepa Mehta, whose attempt to shoot her new film "Water" on the plight of widows in the holy Hindu city of Varanasi (Kashi) was thwarted by fundamentalist thugs. The government has kept an unprincipled silence on the issue, though the exiled Bangladeshi feminist writer Taslima Nasreen wrote a ripping condemnation of Indian politics in support of Mehta.

These are just a few examples of the growing force and reason of women around the world who are in the vanguard of struggles against globalized capital. Even under the threat of death and mutilation, women continue to make their voices for a more human world heard. The question is: will these new global acts of solidarity become an opening and starting point for a global revolutionary movement?

How to contact	
NEWS & LETTERS COMMITTEES	
<b>CHICAGO</b> 36 S. Wabash, Room 1440 Chicago, IL 60603 Phone 312 236-0799 Fax 312 236-0725 <b>MEETINGS</b> Call for information	<b>NEW YORK</b> P.O. Box 196 Grand Central Station New York, NY 10163 212 663 3631 <b>MEETINGS</b> Sundays, 6:30 p.m. Washington Square Church 133 W. 4th St. (Parish House parlor), Manhattan
<b>DETROIT</b> P.O. Box 27205 Detroit MI 48227 <b>MEETINGS</b> Tuesdays, 6 p.m. Central Methodist Church Woodward and Adams	<b>OAKLAND</b> P.O. Box 3345 Oakland, CA 94609 510 658 1448 <b>MEETINGS</b> Sundays, 6:30 p.m. 2015 Center St. (at Milvia) Berkeley
<b>LOS ANGELES</b> 4475 Sunset Drive-Box 181 Los Angeles, CA 90027 <b>MEETINGS</b> Sundays, 5:30 p.m. Echo Park United Methodist Church 1226 N. Alvarado (North of Sunset, side door)	<b>MEMPHIS &amp; MISSISSIPPI</b> 1910 Madison Ave, PMB 59 Memphis, TN 38104
<b>FLINT, MI</b> P.O. Box 3384, Flint, MI 48502	
<b>INTERNET</b>	
<b>Email</b> nand@igc.org	<b>WORLD WIDE WEB</b> www.newsandletters.org
<b>INTERNATIONAL MARXIST-HUMANISTS</b>	
<b>ENGLAND</b> BCM Box 3514, London, England WC1N 3XX <a href="http://members.aol.com/THEHOBGOBL/index.html">http://members.aol.com/THEHOBGOBL/index.html</a>	

## Editorial Abolish the racist death penalty

Illinois Governor George Ryan, a Republican who favors the death penalty, stunned political commentators with an announcement on Jan. 31 that he was proclaiming a temporary halt to executions in the state. No other state in which the death penalty prevails has undertaken such a move. Illinois has executed 12 men since the U.S. Supreme Court gave the states a green light to resume capital punishment in 1976, but what precipitated Ryan's action was not a reversal of his position on the death penalty itself, but instead a devastating string of releases of prisoners—13 in all—who had been wrongly convicted and sentenced to die. The 13 released men reflected the national Death Row population in that most of them were Black.

While some noted that Ryan's action coincided with an increase in intensity of a Federal investigation into financial corruption in his gubernatorial campaign, in all likelihood it was the need for an attempt at damage control in the face of the near-total discrediting of the criminal justice system in Illinois which motivated him.

The Illinois moratorium announcement had a slow but sure impact outside the borders of the state. President Clinton announced on Feb. 4 that Ryan's action had provoked him into considering a similar move which would cover those under Federal death sentence, but almost as quickly decided against it. Like Ryan, Clinton does not oppose the death penalty and even signed a death warrant for a mentally retarded man in his last days as Governor of Arkansas.

In addition to whatever may have briefly taken place in Clinton's conscience, the Illinois moratorium will continue to affect national politics in this presidential election year. Texas Governor George W. Bush has already had to defend what can only be described as the assembly line pace of executions—7 in this year alone—in his home state. He has, however, remained adamant in defense of the death penalty as an institution and refused to halt the Feb. 24 execution of a woman convicted of killing her husband. This was the second woman put to death in Texas since 1976.

Ryan's action and the national reaction it garnered show the growing impetus of the small, but significant, anti-death penalty movement. It is highly unlikely that Ryan would have taken the action he did without the grassroots pressure of the supporters and family members of the wrongly condemned men and the tireless activity of those who, like the Northwestern University journalism students who exposed the discrepancies which existed in the case of Anthony Porter, released from Death Row in February of 1999, aided in the overturning of the convictions in the 13 cases.

Activity from within the prison walls has played a part as well, as much publicity of the cases of the Death Row 10—Chicago men convicted with the help of confessions tortured out of them by police officers—has been gained by the self-organizing they have undertaken in their own defense.

While a moratorium is not an unconditional victory, it is a significant development

in a positive direction. There is every possibility that the inquiry Ryan proposes to launch into the death penalty in Illinois may result in some recommendations for reforms and a resumption of executions. But it does present an opportunity for further efforts toward anti-capital punishment education and agitation.

Despite what is generally recognized as a national predominance of public support, or at least tolerance of, the death penalty, there are signs that things may be changing. Five states currently have moratorium bills pending in their legislatures and a number of city councils, including Philadelphia, the home town of journalist and Pennsylvania Death Row inmate Mumia Abu-Jamal, have gone on record in support of moratorium bills.

Furthermore, the moratorium permits those opposed to the death penalty to reflect on the concept of abolitionism itself, a term increasingly used by the movement to describe itself and its goal. The nineteenth-century American abolitionists were characterized by nothing if not their unflinching devotion to their cause and an absolute refusal to compromise it. If the movement is to measure itself against that historical yardstick, then indeed a model exists for a campaign which will welcome the respite a moratorium represents, but will in turn use it to push forward towards the building of a real movement against the racist American institution of the death penalty.

The small victory conceded to the movement against capital punishment by the disorganized criminal justice system in Illinois is to be welcomed. It should redouble the efforts of all those opposed to executions carried out by the state power of a monumentally inequitable social system.

## Youth protest 'anti-gang' law

Chicago—Hundreds of angry youth packed the main corridor outside city hall on Wednesday Feb. 23 to loudly denounce Mayor Richard M. Daley and his aldermen as they passed a new "gang loitering" ordinance. The city council was simultaneously planning to eliminate a summer jobs program that employs 15,000 youths between the ages of 14 and 21.

As one Black youth, whom everyone calls Machiavelli because of his ability to break down the power relations on the street put it, "All the gang loitering law is for is to lock more youth up for doing nothing at all. They are cutting 15,000 summer jobs to make you stand out on the corner with nothing to do but hang out."

The new ordinance is a rewrite of an old anti-youth law that allowed the police to arrest someone for simply standing in a public place with a person whom the police believed to be a "gang member." Of the 41,740 people arrested under the old ordinance less than 1% were found guilty of committing any crime.

Machiavelli told *News & Letters* how under the old ordinance "an Asian brother, a Hispanic brother, and one other Black brother" were arrested for simply going to a store several blocks from his house to buy a pop. "The police" he said, "asked me, 'What the f--- are you doing around here in this neighborhood?' I said, 'I'm going to the store.' They told me I'm not supposed to go to the store outside of my neighborhood. I'm only supposed to go to stores in my neighborhood."

Last year the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the original ordinance because suspects had no reasonable way of knowing that they were doing anything illegal before being placed under arrest. The Court, however, gave Daley specific instructions on how to rewrite his law so that it would withstand judicial scrutiny.

The young protestors have no doubt that the new law will be used by the cops just like the old one: to harass and control their every move. As Machiavelli broke it down, "Basically they just want me to stay within my four corners. I asked the cops how I was supposed to go places. They said that I am not."

"But if all I do is walk around on my block then they'll say, 'Oh, we've seen him a couple times on these blocks right here, so let's lock him up and charge him with this gang loitering and mess his record up.' There are consequences to it. It makes people scared to come out of their homes. They want to tame you, to keep you in one area so that you don't know much. Because the more you know the more it might affect them. If you know information about the government and the police, they try to take you out. They don't want people to come out their houses; they don't want people to vote. And if more people come out to protests, it would make more of a difference."

—Jim Guthrie

## Anti-sweatshop protests



At a rally on the Madison campus of the University of Wisconsin, protesters denounced the Feb. 20 arrests of 54 anti-sweatshop student activists who had occupied the office of the chancellor. Clothing bearing the school logo, which garners royalties for the university, is produced under exploitative conditions in foreign sweatshops. A similar occupation recently took place at the University of Michigan. The students' demands that the university adhere to labor standards were met on both campuses.

## National gathering to free Mumia Abu-Jamal

New York—An Emergency National Conference to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal Feb. 19 brought together 600 activists from all over the U.S. and delegations from Europe and Japan. The plenary hall was adorned with multi-language banners, posters and t-shirts from the past few years of the campaign to free Mumia, the Black revolutionary and journalist on death row following an unfair trial in Philadelphia. The participants planned and networked in an attempt to reach the public about Mumia's case, which has attracted world-wide criticism of the U.S. justice system.

The conference was called by a new coalition of many community, Left and student groups for Mumia and was endorsed by such organizations as Amnesty International, American Friends Service Committee, National Council of Churches, National Conference of Black Lawyers, and some union locals. Mumia has recently received statements of support from Rubin "Hurricane" Carter and Martin Luther King III.

Many people at the conference expressed the hope that we can build on growing anti-death penalty sentiment in the country to save Mumia's life. They point to the film "Hurricane" and to publicity over DNA tests proving some death-row inmates to be innocent, resulting in the recent moratorium on executions in Illinois. Mumia's legal situation, however, is dire, and what happens in the next 90 days of his case will probably determine whether he lives or dies.

The conference participants were heavily white youth, many of them new to campus activism. In his welcome to the conference, Ossie Davis quoted Mumia telling him that youth have so many distractions these days, it may be hard for them to find the truth. Davis added that "we cannot free the youth without freeing ourselves."

Mumia's head lawyer, Leonard Weinglass, explained that the federal judge who is hearing Mumia's case for a new trial has so little power due to the Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996, that he may not be able to order a new state trial even if he wants to. He might first have to

declare that law unconstitutional, not an easy thing for judges to do. Weinglass decried the return to right-wing "states rights" law that is facilitating the executions of the 3,600 people on death rows around the country.

The conference featured workshops where people could share experiences and coordinate for the future. 150 youth from 15 states met all afternoon, deciding that all will hold campus activities April 5 and a day of action on May 1. A civil disobedience workshop discussed the demonstrations Feb. 28 in Washington, San Francisco and Japan, which are to feature civil disobedience (see box). A workshop on moratoriums discussed whether they help or compromise the movement to abolish the death penalty, generally agreeing on "moratorium now, abolition later." At many places in the conference people took up the need to confront the Democratic presidential candidates on the moratorium question without going into electoral politics or losing sight of Mumia.

Other workshops included teachers sharing how to present Mumia to high school classes without getting in trouble themselves; lesbian/gay/ bi/trans activists discussing how to mobilize their communities by making the connection to their own persecution and inability to get a trial of their peers; labor, with various union members describing campaigns to get union endorsements and resources for the campaign; the religious community; the legal community; grass roots organizing in Philadelphia, and more. The Philadelphians were particularly concerned over recent government aggression against members of MOVE, a radical group to which Mumia is close. May 13 marks the fifteenth anniversary of Philadelphia's bombing of MOVE houses.

Upcoming events in the Free Mumia campaign include a program at Madison Square Garden, May 7, a national labor conference and march in San Francisco, May 12-13, and publication of full-page newspaper ads.

—Anne Jaclard

## Rage against Prop. 21

Oakland, Cal.—As 42 adult activists, mostly women of color, were held in Oakland city jail for blocking the entrance to the Oakland Police Department headquarters on February 21 in protest of Proposition 21, over 500 youth gyrated at a hip hop rally a few blocks away. The rally at city hall kicked off a "Week of Rage" against Propositions 21 and 22.

Proposition 21 would eliminate in the juvenile court system in determining if youth as young as 14 charged with "serious felonies" should be tried in adult court. Sixteen-year-olds convicted in adult court would have to be sentenced to the Dept. of Corrections instead of the Youth Authority. Prop. 22 would force California to only recognize marriage between a man and a woman.

A young Berkeley High School teacher said one long-term effect of Proposition 21 would be loss of diversity in public schools since youth of color, especially Blacks and Latinos, are most vulnerable to the legislation. She sees the proposition as part of an ongoing campaign to re-segregate schools and ultimately society. Another young woman who teaches writing in juvenile detention centers said one of her students wrote, "They feed us poison and condemn us for being toxic."

As evening approached, the crowd marched to city jail chanting, "Ain't no power like the power of youth cuz the power of youth don't stop." Those were not empty words as one protester attested upon his release from jail. He said when the cops inside heard that hundreds of demonstrators had clogged the intersection outside the jail they suddenly began rushing to process the detainees out. Within minutes all but a handful filed out to a cheering, multiethnic throng of high school students and community activists.

—D.M.

## Mass arrests for Mumia

Close to 400 activists were arrested during acts of civil disobedience held on Feb. 28 in Washington, D.C. and San Francisco to draw attention to the case of imprisoned Black journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal. Demonstrators targeted the U.S. Supreme Court building and a federal court building in San Francisco.

## Our Life and Times

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

In a shocking betrayal of even the minimal standards of bourgeois democracy, the conservative Austrian Peoples Party has brought the neo-fascist so-called Freedom Party (FPO) into the government, sparking worldwide protests. Anti-fascist demonstrations involving tens of thousands have taken place in Paris, Amsterdam and other cities. At the level of bourgeois politics, the European Union and Israel have begun a partial diplomatic boycott.

Inside Austria itself, labor and left groups have held several large demonstrations, while smaller ones involving thousands occur almost daily in Vienna. One on Feb. 19 drew over 200,000 workers and youth onto

## South African labor unrest

In a coincidence of timing, South African President Mbeki delivered his first state of the nation address, Feb. 4, as over 1,400 auto workers were being fired for their two-week wildcat strike at the Uitenhage Volkswagen plant. The strike began Jan. 21 when over 300 VW workers protested the suspension, by their own union, of 13 shop stewards.

Mbeki, speaking as much to foreign capital investors as to the home audience, berated the trade union movement as "elements pursuing selfish and antisocial purposes." COSATU, the main trade union federation and ANC partner in bringing down apartheid, began a series of protests in February against the most egregious government policies, including privatization and layoffs in the public sector. However, COSATU, along with the Communist Party, joined Mbeki in denouncing the VW strikers and "illegal labor actions."

The ANC has set government policy on a direct course of making South Africa a safe haven for international capital investment. That is why Mbeki wants a docile labor force. Recently he stated that many laws won in the 1990s, which overturned exploitative labor codes from the apartheid era, are now placing "unreasonable" burdens on business. However, workers are not meekly giving back gains won over the last decade. In 1999, strikes increased nearly 35% over the year before.

## Turkey death squads

Recently, there have been numerous revelations concerning Hezbollah, a shadowy armed group that has carried out hundreds of assassinations of real or perceived regime opponents. In Istanbul and other cities, clandestine prisons have been unearthed, complete with videotaped recordings of dozens of Hezbollah's victims being slowly tortured to death. Most appear to have been Kurdish community leaders suspected of supporting the resistance movement in eastern Turkey.

However, one body unearthed was that of Konca Kuris, a prominent Muslim feminist who had challenged orthodox interpretations before being kidnapped in 1998. As recorded on videos made over several weeks, her torturers accused Kuris of trying to become a Turkish Salman Rushdie or Taslima Nasreen. (These internationally prominent writers have been condemned to death by Islamic fundamentalists.) Hezbollah is also thought to have been behind the riot and fire that killed 36 secular intellectuals at Sivas in 1993.

Although Hezbollah advocates a form of Islamic fundamentalism, it appears to have been supported and armed by the officially secular Turkish military and police as part of a campaign of repression by the state against Kurdish freedom fighters. That state is armed and supported by the United States.

# Neo-fascists join Austrian government

the streets of Vienna, including many delegations from abroad. Among the posters were ones connecting Joerg Haider and Slobodan Milosevic. The large turnout led many immigrants to express the idea that they no longer felt so alone and would be more confident about speaking out and joining demonstrations against Haider.

Repeatedly, Austria has shown itself a society that has yet to acknowledge its history of complicity with Nazism. In 1986, Austrians elected Kurt Waldheim president, even after his role as a Nazi officer in massacres of resistance fighters in Greece and Yugoslavia was revealed.

The anti-immigrant and racist FPO has claimed that Austria is today a victim again, this time of what it blatantly refers to as "overforeignization" [Ueberfremdung]. Telegenic FPO leader Joerg Haider regularly attacks people of color, but he has also referred to Poles as "car thieves," people from the Balkans as "burglary experts," and Russians as "experts in blackmail and mugging." At the same time, Haider has praised Nazi veterans as well as Hitler's labor policies.

This racist demagogue has not yet formed a muscular cadre-type organization complete with violent fascist skinheads to attack opponents, as, for example, has France's National Front. But Haider is clearing the pathway for such a development by making neo-fascist ideology part of the "normal" political process. His Feb. 28 resignation as FPO leader will not change this.

## Vote in Venezuela

Since becoming president of Venezuela in February 1999, Hugo Chavez has consolidated power on his announced timetable to gut the country's 1961 constitution and politically destroy the former ruling elite. Stating his goal to "prevent neo-liberal projects from taking root" while introducing a "market economy social democracy," Chavez identified himself with a new constitution which will shift state power to the president and military.

Chavez, a leader of a failed coup in 1992, has risen to power through a political coalition comprised of the military, leftist parties and mass support among Venezuela's poor majority. His backers voted Dec. 15 overwhelmingly to approve the constitution. It is supposed to lead to universal social security and health care, a reduced work week, higher minimum public sector wages, and more formal rights for women and indigenous peoples. It also prohibits privatization of the state-owned oil industry and claims all "strategic" economic sectors to the state.

Tragically, Dec. 15 was also the beginning of floods which led to massive mudslides in which at least 30,000 people were killed. Reports later surfaced that the military carried out beatings and executions against looters, and that the government focused on the referendum while ignoring local warnings about the rising water.

Chavez for now is posing as an alternative to the corruption, brutality and poverty in which well over half of Venezuelans live, in the world's third largest oil exporter. His grandiose statements concerning "Bolivarism or chaos" boil down to populist-type palliatives to salve the worst aspects of global capitalism. In Chavez's own words, "Venezuela is a time bomb...It is our task, through the power of the vote, to defuse it now, while there is still time."

Even before the FPO joined the government, Austria was hardly tolerant toward immigrants. Unlike those in many other European countries, immigrants in Austria do not have any voting rights, not even within labor unions. Last year, Amnesty International and anti-racist activists protested the police murder of Marcus Omofuma, a Nigerian asylum seeker forcibly expelled from Austria last May. When Omofuma made verbal protests as they were putting him on a flight out of the country, police bound and gagged him with tape. He suffocated to death during that flight.

Today in Austria, long-fought gains by labor and women are now endangered. The government ministry dealing with women's issues is to be transformed into one dealing with the family. The conservative-FPO coalition also advocates Thatcherite policies toward labor. Most dangerous of all is its plan to increase police repression of immigrants and minorities, as part of a supposed crackdown on crime, which is in fact minimal.

At the very moment that the FPO was joining the Austrian government, racist mobs attacked immigrant workers in Spain's Costa del Sol region for three days running before police intervened. New agribusiness enterprises in the region employ thousands of low-wage immigrant workers. In response to the attacks, the immigrant-based Moroccan Workers Association called a week-long strike, resulting in massive losses to agribusiness. The growers had to agree to improve worker housing and to pay for all damaged property. Workers Association leader Abdel Hamid Bayuki also criticized the mainstream labor movement: "We want Spanish labor unions to take up our cause. As far as Moroccan workers are concerned, the unions here seem to be in a coma."

## Russia levels Grozny

In the first week of February, the Russian army occupied what remained of the Chechen capital, Grozny, after reducing it to a pile of rubble. Most Chechen fighters escaped a Russian blockade of the city. The civilians who managed to survive the bombs, artillery and missiles then had to face looting, rape and executions, carried out by Russian soldiers.

After two weeks, Russian commanders decreed that all civilians leave Grozny in order to seal off the city. So tenuous is the Russian military "victory" that they fear a reinfiltration by Chechen commandos. In a city that once numbered half a million, fewer than 9,000 civilians remained by Feb. 21. Meanwhile, hundreds of male civilians have been locked in Chernokozovo and other prison camps where they are routinely beaten and tortured.

The U.S. and Europe, which claimed so-called "humanitarian grounds" for intervening in Kosova, have muted any meaningful criticism of Russian atrocities in Chechnya. While Russian planes bombed rebel areas in the southern mountains, acting Russian president Vladimir Putin, who expects to win the March 26 election based on his militarist-nationalist stance in Chechnya, rewarded military officials responsible for turning Grozny into a wasteland.

## NEWS AND LETTERS COMMITTEES

# Who We Are And What We Stand For

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

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

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

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

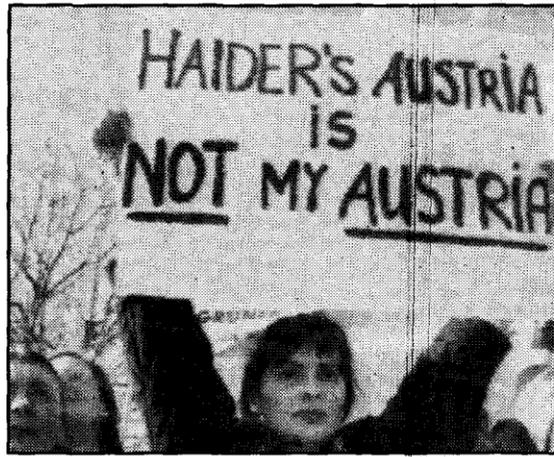
This body of ideas challenges all those desiring freedom to transcend the limitations of post-Marx Marxism, beginning with Engels. In light of the crises of our nuclearly armed world, it becomes imperative not only to reject

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

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

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

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



One of thousands of protesters against Austria's new neo-fascist government.