

# NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

ol. 35 — No. 10

DECEMBER, 1990

25¢

olidarity  
ay demand  
oycotts



by Eugene Ford

In the past ten years the strike has often not been a weapon of choice for labor victory. However, long before Reaganism, union bureaucrats had learned to compromise the strike for the "economic progress" of capitalism. These bureaucrats often defended the capitalist use of machinery rather than defending the work-at the point of production.

Today this automated machinery of capitalist production has a death grip upon the labor movement and heart, the strike, reflecting the dehumanization in all society and workers' lack of control over their own labor.

Recently at a Farmer John meatpacking plant in Los Angeles, the union had an "obligation" to strike. Their contract expired ten months ago, and the union workers were demanding higher pay. At present there is a two-tier system in effect, with base wages of \$6 and \$10 an hour. Farmer John has offered a five-year contract and a pitiful \$500 bonus.

Rather than a strike there was an unusual protest by 400 of the Farmer John workers in East Los Angeles near a supermarket where Farmer John products are sold. The workers staged a mock trial in which the owners of Farmer John's parent firm, Dougherty Packing Co., were found guilty of unsafe working conditions and discrimination against the majority Latino work force.

Through this creative method of a symbolic trial, these union workers, from Local 770 of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union, were asking for a boycott.

(continued on page 3)

## Black World

After  
Malcolm X  
what?



by Lou Turner

"Except for all-black audiences, I liked the college audiences best...Challenges, queries, and criticism were fired at me by the usually objective and always alive and searching minds of undergraduate and graduate students..."

"It was like being on a battlefield—with intellectual and philosophical bullets. It was an exciting battling of ideas."

—The Autobiography of Malcolm X

An exciting but uneasy gathering of Black political tendencies met in New York City, Nov. 1-3, at the Borough of Manhattan Community College, to discuss the life and thought of the Black revolutionary, Malcolm X. Convened by Abdul Alkalimat, the conference, entitled, Malcolm X: Radical Tradition and a Legacy of Struggle, was attended by some 3,000 participants, mostly Black youth, over the course of the three days of plenaries, workshops and discussions.

### ALKALIMAT'S PRESCIENCE

Any assessment of this important three-day conference on radical Black thought, however, has to distinguish the whole from its parts. For in its totality the Malcolm X conference represented a very important stride in the needed dialogue on the nature and direction of revolutionary Black thought in the 1990s. And Alkalimat was quite prescient in comprehending the renewed significance of Malcolm X among a new generation of Black radical youth, in the streets, the projects, the prisons, as well as on the campuses.

Nevertheless, in its constituent parts, the Malcolm X conference has to be judged a troubled manifestation of today's radical tradition. The actual "battle of ideas" that lay just beneath the surface of the conference deliberations never emerged full-blown.

For instance, the first plenary session, "Theoretical Perspectives on Malcolm X", heard papers on the dialectics of liberation in the thought of Frantz Fanon and Malcolm X, an Afro-centric view of Malcolm X as cultural icon, an anti-Marxist economic analysis of race relations, and a summary analysis of the methodological strands that run through the thought of Malcolm X. Yet, as divergent as the tendencies represented in this

(continued on page 9)

## One year after 1989 upheavals

# East Europe and Russia in deep crisis



Waiting in front of empty meat market in Sofia, Bulgaria

by Kevin A. Barry

Today's daily headlines—food shortages in Moscow, election surprise in Poland, millions of refugees heading West, new unrest throughout Russia and East Europe—show the deepening crisis in all of the lands which once comprised the state-capitalist empire built by Stalin and maintained by his successors. One year ago, tens of millions came into the streets in a series of sudden and un-

expected mass revolts, which, at a stroke, toppled more than forty years of single-party Communist rule in East Germany, in Czechoslovakia and in Romania.

More drawn out but equally dramatic changes were also taking place in Hungary, Bulgaria, and, most importantly, Poland. The result was the sudden break-up of a whole empire, as the winds of freedom not only swept away the Berlin wall, but also much of the old ruling classes. Yet with the fall of totalitarian Communism came still newer challenges, as deep contradictions emerged within the freedom movements themselves.

Today, whether in Russia, still ruled by Gorbachev and his "reform" Communists, or in Poland, governed until recently by the technocratic "free market" regime of Tadeusz Mazowiecki, mass discontent has increased as rapidly as the conditions of life and labor of the working people have deteriorated. Where it had long been self-evident that Stalinist state-capitalism was a totally moribund system, its supposed ideological alternative, "free market" capitalism, is increasingly being seen by the East Europeans themselves as offering nothing but years of austerity, wage cuts and general decline in living standards.

### THE POLISH ELECTIONS

The first round of the Presidential elections, held on Nov. 25, gave a humiliating 18% of the vote to Mazowiecki, the candidate most identified with austerity, lay-

(continued on page 10)

## Editorial

# The time to stop Bush's drive to war is now!

No sooner did the United Nations give the green light to the U.S.'s drive for war in the Persian Gulf by endorsing (on Nov. 29) the use of armed force against Iraq's Saddam Hussein, than George Bush pulled a rabbit out of his hat by announcing he will send Secretary of State James Baker on a "peace mission" to Baghdad. Far from contradicting his determination to wage the war he has long thirsted for, Bush's decision to send Baker to Baghdad is part and parcel of his militaristic strategizing. He is trying to use the month of December to mollify the growing opposition in the U.S. to his drive for war so that his hands can be freed for embarking on outright military intervention later.

Indeed, from the very start of the Gulf crisis, Bush has shown that what he fears most is a peaceful solution. His aides have called this a "worst case scenario." Instead of encouraging negotiations or offering ideas for a non-militarist settlement, Bush has used Hussein's brutal invasion of Kuwait to push for outright military action, all as part of asserting the U.S.'s drive for single world domination that is so much a part of today's much-heralded "new world order."

This drive for single world domination underlies the three weeks of intense lobbying that led to the UN authorization of military action. Though the UN resolution was touted by Bush as proof of a "multinational consensus" for action against Iraq, most telling of all was that not a single nation voting for the resolution questioned the U.S.'s insistence on being the sole power to command and control any future combat.

Bush has stooped to the lowest of levels in seeking support for his actions from the world's rulers. Thus, Bush rolled out the red carpet for China's Foreign Minister in exchange for its agreement not to oppose the UN resolution, even though this is the same government that perpetrated the Tiananmen Massacre and which is about to execute such dissidents as Wang Juntao. Bush got Gorbachev to support the resolution in exchange for promises of new aid at the moment the peoples of the Russian empire are in near full revolt against his despotic rule. And after years of totally ignoring Africa, Bush got the dictators who run Zaire and Ethiopia to vote for the UN resolution.

### GROWING OPPOSITION AT HOME

Nothing more shows the "two worlds" in each country than the fact that at the very moment the world's rulers are lining up behind Bush, opposition from below to Bush's drive to war continues to grow, especially in the U.S. It is seen in the increasing number of servicemen and women refusing to be sent to "die for oil" in Saudi Arabia; it is seen in the new kind of anti-war rallies at campuses and army recruitment stations, ranging from Berkeley to Iowa and from Washington state to Florida; it is seen in women asking why should the U.S. go to war to defend Saudi Arabian monarchs who deny every right to women; and it is seen in the mass anti-

war sentiment of Black Americans, who are saying why fight overseas for a government that vetoes civil rights legislation here at home.

It is the sense and reason of these voices of opposition, and not that of the Congress, which Bush genuinely fears. It isn't only that Congress has proved too weak-kneed to even convene to discuss the drive to war. Congress already "voted" its approval of it during the November elections, when hardly a single candidate addressed the issue. By no accident that near-total silence on the new stage of imperial adventurism dovetailed with the ugly emergence of resurgent racism during the elections. The inseparability of racism from each new stage of imperial adventurism has indeed been a fact throughout American history.\*

Bush has reason to fear that the new anti-war protests can develop into the kind of full and broad opposition capable of stopping the drive to war in its tracks. So widespread is the opposition to war that he is sending Baker to Baghdad to give the impression he too is for "peace," all the while shipping ever more weapons of mass destruction to the Gulf to use when they are "needed."

Never has it been more important to intensify today's anti-war actions, for despite his rhetoric, Bush has not retreated an inch from his determination to wage war. In part that determination is rooted in Bush's desire to control the flow of oil. But it is also rooted in his effort to obtain what U.S. presidents have long hungered for—a permanent U.S. military outpost in the Middle East.

### THE GLOBAL SUPERPOWER

Most of all, from the moment he first sent troops to Saudi Arabia in August, what has fueled Bush's drive toward military action is his effort to bring to culmination the "changed world" that Reagan unleashed with his invasion of Grenada in 1983 and his bombing of Libya's Gulf of Sidra 1986. Bush wishes to project the U.S. as the global superpower, ready to intervene anywhere on the globe to "protect" what he considers "our vital interests."

While Hussein surely has his own militarist ambitions... (continued on page 9)

\*See American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard.

## On the Inside

- From the Writings of Raya Dunayevskaya—On the responsibility of intellectuals . . . . . p. 4
- Gulf Anti-War protests . . . . . pgs. 8, 9, 11
- Women's Liberation—Montreal Massacre, one year later . . . . . p. 2

## Woman as Reason

by Terry Moon

December 6, 1990, is one year since the horrible Montreal Massacre. A year ago a man, Marc Lepine, walked into the University of Montreal in Canada and gunned down 13 women and stabbed another to death. Six women were slaughtered in their engineering classroom when Lepine separated the women from the men and forced the men to leave the room. He yelled at the women: "You're all just a bunch of feminists," and opened fire. Before he killed himself he wounded nine other women and four men—the worst shooting massacre in Canadian history. (See January-February 1990 News & Letters.)

The fact that women were murdered for the idea of feminism, for simply studying to be engineers, is one that is always in our minds. When we heard how men in a dorm screamed, "We're going to have our own Take Back the Night and rape women!" at Loyola University students in Chicago demonstrating for safe streets after two rapes on campus, we thought of the Montreal Massacre. (See story this page.) We think of our Canadian sisters whenever we hear of another woman raped and murdered, or of a battered woman killed by a husband or so-called "lover," or women harassed for simply trying to be full human beings.

### THE MASSACRE OF WAR

On this one-year anniversary of those 14 deaths, we face the threat of a different kind of massacre of unthinkable numbers. It is the potential massacre that Bush is preparing in the Middle East. And as far away in distance as Saudi Arabia/Kuwait/Iraq are from North America, when it comes to women's oppression and our fight for total freedom for all, we are very close.

While the bourgeois media and the Bush administration have tried to portray U.S. women in the military as gung ho fighters for Bush's imperial ambitions, the truth is that most of the over 11,000 U.S. women deployed in the Middle East joined the service or the National Guard for the same reason so many Blacks did—to get an education they could not afford in any other way.

These women work in a military where two out of three report sexual harassment, five percent of which is outright rape and sexual assault. They are sent to protect an apartheid feudal kingdom and told to cover their hair and torsos so as not to "offend" those men they are ostensibly sent to protect and very possibly die for.

And when a few women in Saudi Arabia assert their hunger for freedom and autonomy by daring to drive cars, the clergy—headed by Shiek bin Bas, who is famous for proclaiming that the world is flat—sensing the passion for freedom behind this single act, denounces them as immoral, non-Islamic, stained with "secular Americanist" ideas. The Saudi women are harassed, their lives threatened and at least six are fired from their jobs.

Women are already dying in the Middle East. In Kuwait, whose hereditary emir has repeatedly denied Kuwaiti women the right to vote, hundreds of the thousands of Asian women who worked in Kuwait as domestics—many treated as practically slaves—have been murdered, raped and harassed by Iraqi soldiers as they try to flee. (See in-person report this page.) Women and children have died as well in the refugee camps as they wait for months in hot desert sands to be sent back to

## Filipinas in Kuwait

*Editor's note: Ninety thousand migrant workers from the Philippines labored in Kuwait. When Saddam Hussein's tanks rolled in on Aug. 2 rumors circulated that Filipinas, working mostly as domestics, were being singled out for rape. In the Philippines, at a house hearing on the condition of Filipina workers in the Middle East, Raul Manglapus, a Philippine nationalist, said that in a situation where rape is inevitable women should "relax and enjoy it." Below is an in-person account from a Filipina migrant worker.*

I was in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, working as a nurse the day of the invasion. The most painful thing was the plight of the Filipina. Many weren't keen about following the Islamic ways. They resisted, dressed the way they wanted and men singled them out for rape. The Philippine embassy took no stand. It just shows how rotten our government is because nearly the same thing was going on before the Iraqi invasion.

When the women go to the embassy asking for intercession, they are instead turned into prostitutes or "domestic help" at the embassy, or even sold. Domestic workers have it the worst. They are exposed to a strange culture, often they don't know the language, can't eat the food and are exposed to sexual hazards. When we go to the embassy for help they make no real efforts for us because they are exploiters themselves.

I also worked in Saudi Arabia. I organized women even though no labor organizing is allowed. For example, I wrote a letter using four different styles and had it translated into Arabic and photocopied. We said to the women, select the one you want and sign it.

We then asked the labor administrator for a meeting where we presented, and won, our demands while not appearing as a labor union. Some Filipinas brought their knowledge of labor unions to the desert, but in this situation the appearance had to be different. It wasn't long before the Egyptian women were asking us, "How did you do it?" —Putri Rankamanis

## The Montreal Massacre one year later

impoverished countries where they will find no work, many will find no homes, and all will face their own sexist culture that likewise sees women as less than human.

### 'FREEDOM NOW!' IN THE USA

As U.S. women, many of them Black, face death in the sands of Saudi Arabia so that Bush can have his longed-for permanent military base in the Middle East, I keep thinking about the Black soldiers in every war from World War One through Vietnam who, when asked to die for "freedom" in some other land, always looked back home and demanded "Freedom now!" in the USA.

We women want "Freedom now!" We want free abortion on demand and safe contraception and health care for all; we want an end to homelessness, which affects women and children so deeply; we want an end to the brutal reality that in the U.S. a

woman is raped every six minutes, that a woman battered every 15 seconds, that one woman in 10 will be sexually assaulted in her lifetime and domestic violence is the single largest cause of injury to women. If there is a war women need to fight is the one right here.

Those 14 dead Canadian women whose names appeared in feminist newspapers throughout the world our sisters and we feel that fiercely. Their deaths hurt us, again, the truth of oppression—that it is death that it affects us in the most direct way possible, in very bodies, in our skins, in our heads. If their deaths are to mean anything it is up to us. It is not only we can never forget what happened on December 6, 1989. It is that any commemoration of the death of young sisters can only mean our deepened determination to create so deep a revolution, so new a world, for all women—and thus all of humanity—become free.

### Women fight date rape



Women students at Brown University, Providence, R.I., took matters into their own hands to force indifferent university officials to adopt and enforce stronger policies against date rape and sexual harassment on campus. Lists of as many as 30 men cited as rapists have appeared on the walls of campus women's bathrooms—and reappeared as quickly as janitors scrub them off. At a student forum of 350 mainly women students, Nov. 15, one young victim charged that a university dean had responded to her complaint of date rape by attributing it to a "case of bad chemistry."

## March exposes misogyny

Chicago, Ill.—On Thursday, Nov. 1, the Loyola University Women's Center sponsored a Take Back the Night March. Over 100 people attended. The march was sparked by the recent rapes of two women students in their apartments right outside campus. Student speakers angrily talked about at least five other rapes that happened on campus and which got no attention from the University except to cover up the rapes for the sake of its image with no concern whatsoever for the safety of the women students!

The march was long and spirited and went through all parts of campus. Women, joined by an unusually large number of men, chanted, "No means no! Yes means yes. Wherever we go, however we dress!" We challenged the "Men out there to show you care." One of the favorite chants was: "What do we want? Freedom! When do we want it? Now!" This was important to me in light of the Women's Liberation Movement of the 1960s, which would not wait until later—after the revolution—but demanded "Freedom now!"

It is no surprise that such a spirited, volatile and challenging march revealed the misogyny and sexism of so many men at Loyola. As we marched past Campion Hall, an all-male dormitory, we were met with disgusting insults and a shower of garbage, aluminum cans and lit cigarette butts. Some of the men leaned out of their windows screaming, "Whores!" and "Let's have our own take back the night and rape some women."

Unbelievably, there is now a raging debate at Loyola. The men yell misogynist insults and throw things at us and yet it is supposedly a matter of "debate" because the men of Campion Hall felt they were accused of being rapists. Although many men claimed they sympathized with the "cause" of the march, they thought our approach was wrong—we were too loud, too confrontational, too challenging, too independent.

The worst part is that the debate going on among the students is about whether the marchers provoked the men rather than how to end rape. I say this is not unusual, and in fact follows logically from a society that repeatedly blames the victims. Isn't the defense of the rape precisely this: that the woman "provoked" it, was asking for it by the way she dressed, talked, walked, breathed?

The misogynist men are diverting from the real issue—violence against women and how women feel about this every day, every minute. That's what the Take Back the Night march was expressing, and that is what is being overlooked in the "debate" about who provoked whom. —Maya

## Black women challenge Malcolm X Conference

New York, N.Y.—Perhaps the most exciting session at the Nov. 1-4 conference on "Malcolm X: Radical Tradition and a Legacy of Struggle" was the one "Black Women and Black Liberation: Fighting Oppression and Building Unity." Over 300 people, most Black women, packed the room until it overflowed into the halls, and continued the dialogue for four hours. When the chairwoman finally closed one session so panelists could get their children, there was a clamor for more discussion the next day.

Each of the panelists, Fran Beale, Vernice Miller, Barbara Ransby, Maxine Alexander and Miriam Kramer, drew on their roots in the 1960s freedom movement to question the legacy of Malcolm X put forth by many speakers at the conference. As one panelist put it, "I hope this is the last conference I have to come to to hear my brothers get up and talk about how Malcolm gave them their manhood." Where are women, she asked, in that view?

Vernice Miller recalled southern Black women leaders for whom Malcolm had helped find northern platforms—Ella Baker, Fannie Lou Hamer and others. And Maxine Alexander asked why Malcolm's criticisms of sexual exploitation in the Nation of Islam had been swept aside. "If our movement cannot stand the truth," she said, "then our truth will have no movement."

Alexander began her talk by defining what she called "radical vision." If radical means "of or from the root" or "going to the center," then vision means "the power of perceiving something not actually visible to the eye." The radical vision from Malcolm she wanted to draw out is that "study, knowledge, the word, logos, has the power to transform."

(continued on page 8)



## Women write on

**Extramares:** International Magazine of Arts and Letters, Director, Cecilia Bustamante, published year \$25.00, P.O. Box 382, Austin, TX 78767.

Readers of News & Letters would be interested in a new bi-lingual feminist journal called **Extramare** (Overseas) which is published by the Peruvian poet and feminist Cecilia Bustamante. Bustamante traces her lineage to the utopian socialist Flora Tristan who first advocated an International of Working Men and Women before Karl Marx in 1843. In that tradition, Bustamante presents an international culture with articles, poems and reviews in English, French and Spanish from the United States, Europe and Latin America which speak to a vision of a different, more human society for the future. The first issue includes an essay on "The Contribution of Raya Dunayevskaya, 1910-1987: A Study in Hegelian Marxian Feminism." The annual journal is eager to receive contributions from women writers, poets, and activists. —Neda Aza

**Time Magazine Special Issue, Fall 1990, \$2.95, "Women: The Road Ahead"**

Time magazine's 82 page special issue on women greets us with a declaration that this is the "post feminist era." We learn how "young American" women "inherit a revolution that has largely been won." We are told that "the future looms with so many choices that the freedoms it promises can be frightening."

Whether or not you agree with Time's more than truncated vision of the future, many of the facts presented are startling, and we finish the issue well informed about women across the globe in politics, business, art and medicine, and about the issues confronting women in various areas of life. Unfortunately, one expects that Time would exclude coverage of working women, and in large part, it does. It leaves a stale taste in our mouths when we are expected to be cheering because "women's issues" are even "on the table." Appealing are the articles touting views on women as fashion crazed and body conscious. One has to wonder if these articles weren't commissioned by Sears, the sole sponsor for the issue. —Julia Jones

# Strike for survival at Daily News

New York, N.Y.—Workers from nine out of ten, at the New York Daily News have been on strike since Oct. 25. The night before, workers had peacefully met outside the Brooklyn printing plant to discuss a grievance over the firing of a hurt worker who refused to obey a supervisor's order to stand in front of a sit. Management was waiting for this opportunity and the workers were locked out. Within an hour, a load of scabs from other states pulled up and took their jobs at New York's "hometown" newspaper. The Daily News is owned by the intensely anti-union American Tobacco Company and management had been planning for years to precipitate a strike so that they could break the unions. In fact, after the strike in 1978 had kept the workers from getting out, management separated the printing plant and truck garages from the main 42nd Street building to divide up the work force. Now, for the first time in New York's history they trained management to put out a paper without unions. With their military in part gathered from earlier union concessions, management was confident they would win.

**UNION-AND-FILE SOLIDARITY**  
 What they didn't count on was such creative actions as the rank and file going out with their kids and talking to people door to door and at shopping centers urging them not to buy the Daily News. The striking drivers and drivers for other newspapers talked to newspaper owners on their routes about not accepting the strike until the strike is over. With circulation down, subscribers went to other papers. Nor did management appreciate the solidarity from other city unions seen in the massive rallies, one 13,000 strong. The Daily News workers themselves have also joined in solidarity with other strikers from Greyhound and Eastern Air Lines.

City-wide solidarity among working people is being led and forthcoming as the strike fund has gathered contributions not only from the Allied Printing Trades but from hospital workers, teachers, electricians, and meatpackers. Sympathy actions are coming from other unions as well. Teamster drivers refuse to bus scabs into the plant or deliver paper rolls while hotel workers protest the scabs' presence. Even Mayor Dinkins has taken police away from the strike because management refuses to come to the mediating table. The unions are demanding that management either settle with the unions or sell the paper.

A striking Daily News worker describes management actions before the strike: "We had been working with a contract trying to bargain in good faith. Then management started harassing people with 25 years experience, just because they are union, management wanted them to leave. We realized that we cannot let ourselves be treated like dirt. They offered me a promotion on the day of the strike, but I said I'm not a scab." A woman striker said, "The U.S. Constitution doesn't apply in the workplace. You can get fired for expressing yourself. There is no free speech, but women have spoken up against management abuses. Every person sued before the strike was a woman."

**MANAGEMENT LIES**

The Daily News has angered many by using the relentless, recruiting them to sell the paper. They have

## Strike bites at Delta Pride

Indianola, Miss.—Workers at Delta Pride Catfish have been on strike since Sept. 13. (See story, November N&L.) The strikers are still holding out. No more people have crossed the picket line into the plant. Of course, we talk to the people going into the plant, and the picket got hit in the head with a rock. We are issuing charges, but the police haven't picked the man yet. The police don't do anything when we call them, but they have stopped harassing us. They seldom come out anymore, just ride by and then go back. In the last month we had Winn-Dixie pull out; they stopped buying Delta Pride products. The other major grocery store chains had pulled out earlier; Winn-Dixie is the only one left. We have a negotiating meeting on Oct. 11 where I think things will be settled. Workers at Agra's Country Skillet Catfish will be making \$6.50 to \$7.00 at the end of their new contract. Delta Pride has to match that.

This strike has helped us a lot, because other companies don't want to go through this. It has hurt the fish industry, and they want the strike at Delta Pride to end so they can get back to a normal situation. The strike has also brought everybody closer together. We have met the union members, people we never met before, and got to know them. When we go back into the plant, it can only get better down through here. Everybody talks to everybody. It feels better.

—Black woman unionist



N.Y. rally in support of Daily News workers.

also tried to paint the unions as lily-white, but strikers point out that the Daily News was sued for its racist practices which forced them to hire more minorities and in fact, the first 60 workers fired in the Brooklyn plant included 29 Black, Latino, and other minorities.

Many people feel this is an important strike for labor in New York City. As one strike supporter from the New York Times told me, "This is the first time they tried to do this in New York City. These were always some of the strongest unions. It's a domino effect on all the unions. We're not going to let them win." One young worker said, "I think we are going to win the strike but what happens after? There are going to be hard cold feelings between some who didn't go out and, in that, management will have won something by dividing us."

—Ted Rosmer and Shelley

## Disabled workers exploited

Oshkosh, Wis.—At the cafeteria I work at there are several mentally and/or physically impaired people whose job is to clean the kitchen areas all day. The policy here is that none of the cleaning crew can leave at the end of the day until the managers inspect and approve the job they do. If it takes longer than their scheduled 7.5 hours a day to finish, they don't get paid for it. If they finish early and they punch out too soon, they are docked time.

I overheard the bosses say how surprised they were to see workers help each other get done sooner instead of only doing their assigned tasks, then waiting around doing nothing. Of course, who wouldn't rather finish early?

One day a couple weeks ago in the dish room there were mainly deaf students working the clean-up line. When a manager told them to speed up the line, a woman signed, "We'll work faster if we get paid more." That produced so many repeats and laughter, the workers wound up punching out almost an hour later than usual.

I used to work at a fancy restaurant where there would be four handicapped people working at a time, in the dish room, or cleaning something. I found out they were only being paid one dollar each an hour! I asked the boss how that was possible and he said it was legal, and if he were to hire someone for a full wage, he would hire a "full person." He acted like he was doing the workers a favor by exploiting them. He was really getting four jobs done for the price of one!

The bosses can justify treating disabled workers as less than human because there are unfair laws that make it legal for disabled people to get ripped off. The bosses are the ones being less than human if they think any person will take getting pushed around without fighting back!

—Woman worker

## Workshop Talks

(continued from page 1)

cott of Farmer John goods. This is part of a new form of protest coming from labor, which avoids a down-and-out strike against the company. Under Reagan/Bush's "law," the strike has cost many workers their jobs, when the company has hired permanent scab labor to replace striking union members.

In their protest, the workers of Local 770 marched down Whittier Boulevard in an attempt to rally more community support for a much-needed new union movement.

This problem of capitalism is not an economic problem alone but a crisis in thought as well, and until the capitalist mentality has been washed away we will continue to live through defeat and exploitation of labor.

There is a need to work out the concept of the strike and labor anew for today. Over 100 years ago, Karl Marx posed the concept of Labor as Subject:

"Political economy proceeds from labor as the real soul of production and nevertheless attributes nothing to labor, everything to private property....When man speaks of private property, he believes he has only to deal with a fact outside of man. When man speaks of labor, he has to deal directly with man. This new posing of the question already includes the resolution."

That needed resolution must be worked out by workers such as those at Farmer John who are demanding a new human existence, and intellectuals who are working out Marx's Humanism for today and thus find a kinship to labor's struggle against capital.

## Holidays: overwork or else at Toys-R-Us

Chicago, Ill.—This time of year has always been hard for us at Toys-R-Us. If you are able to, you put some money aside for the rest of the year by what I call super overtime. But now it has become not something to fall back on—even with super overtime, you are one problem away from financial crisis.

First off you become alienated from friends and the world because you are at work all the time. But at the same time you are isolated from yourself, because of the intensification of your labor over a long period you are too run down to think in a logical way. Then on your time off all you can do is sleep.

I remember one college youth last season who had to work these super overtime hours for money to live on at college. But halfway through the second week of doing this to himself someone had to take him home because he was almost incoherent. But we tried to laugh it off, making a game out of this, like how many hours can one person do in a week, to fool ourselves to get into these dehumanizing conditions.

This year because of the general uncertainty in the economy, the bosses have been for the most part cutting down on our hours and raising the intensity of our labor. So what do we do when told we cannot work these hours? We do something really off the wall by getting mad at the boss for not letting us do this inhuman thing to our bodies and minds. See what happens to you when you are living in the realm of necessity-survival?

Why are they acting this way to us? One co-worker hit the nail on the head by saying this was a way to balance the bosses' budget on our backs. At the same time that they are cutting down on what capital they spend on living labor, they are increasing their expenditures on dead labor. They are doubling the number of stores in the next seven years, and in one case building a state-of-the-art store in the heart of Manhattan right next to Macy's. They believe that it is this dead labor that is important for them and not the men and women who work there.

—David L. Anderson

## Latino walkout for rights

Los Angeles, Cal.—For the last four weeks we've been on strike here at Gemline, a frame-making company. We voted nearly unanimously to unionize but the company refused to negotiate, and when we walked out they hired over 100 new people. There's 150 of us. Every one of us is Latino, and the solidarity is very strong.

About half are women. Some have been around a few months like me, some for 15 years. None of this matters to the management though; they put who they want into the good positions and fire whoever they want when they want to. We have to sign a paper when we start, saying we will accept termination for whatever reason they come up with.

Seniority is important because there aren't many good positions in this factory. Almost everyone works either directly on the line or stands close by feeding it. It starts with the first person cutting the wood to length, then next on the line someone staples the pieces together, then glass goes in, followed by the paper picture, plastic wrapping, boxing, shipping. We make plastic frames too. Some of us just lift 100-pound boxes of frames all day.

There are serious injuries nearly every week, but no insurance, no vacation pay. A week before we walked out a woman strained her back real bad and they told her to go home and take a bath! Besides seniority and benefits, wages are another big problem. In fact, there's nothing that's not a problem at this place. Those that have ten years here are only making \$5.00 per hour.

I've never been in a strike before, but it wasn't hard to see what we needed to do. Only a dozen went back when we walked out. Why won't they negotiate with the union when we voted for it? I'm anxious to see what's going to happen, that's why I'm out on the picket line every day.

—Gemline worker

## News & Letters

Vol. 35 No. 10

December, 1990

News & Letters (ISSN 0028-8969) is published 10 times a year, monthly, except bi-monthly January-February and August-September for \$2.50 a year (bulk order of five or more — 15¢) by News & Letters, 59 East Van Buren, Rm. 707, Chicago, IL 60605. Telephone (312) 663-0839. Second Class postage paid at Chicago, Illinois. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to News & Letters, 59 East Van Buren, Rm. 707, Chicago, IL 60605.

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

Charles Denby, Editor (1955-1983)

Olga Domanski, Peter Wermuth, Co-National  
 Organizers, News and Letters Committees  
 Eugene Walker, Managing Editor

Mike Connolly, Marxist-Humanist Archivist  
 Felix Martin, Labor Editor

News & Letters  
 is printed in  
 a union shop.

Send a gift of revolutionary journalism—  
 a sub to  
**News & Letters**  
 Only \$2.50 a year  
 59 E. Van Buren, Rm. 707  
 Chicago, IL 60605

## From the writings of Raya Dunayevskaya Marxist-Humanist Archives

by Raya Dunayevskaya  
Founder of Marxist-Humanism

*Editor's note: The following letter to a young intellectual specializing in African Studies is reprinted from Volume 14 of The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection (microfilm #14143). It was written as Dunayevskaya was completing her book Philosophy and Revolution and just after she had undertaken a lecture tour to university campuses, where she discussed themes taken up in this new work, which was soon to be published.*

May 16, 1972

Dear McKim Steele:

The pressures of a very heavy lecture schedule which I just finished and a hot objective situation heated up to inhuman, impossible assaults by Nixon have combined to give me no breathing space to answer your question on the role of intellectuals until now. I assume, however, that you have received some of the writings I had promised you both on Africa and my new work on *Philosophy and Revolution*.

The serious question you raised is not something one can answer by merely pointing to our work on the question. Since you are a historian, therefore I trust you will not mind going back to "beginnings"; at least it is the beginning for Marxists who do accept that Marx discovered a new continent of thought and yet it never quite got an organizational expression that met that philosophic challenge. In a word, beginning with Engels (who certainly was loyal to Marx and tried hard till his death "to make something out of" the endless—and horribly scripted—manuscripts Marx left unfinished), we have not yet risen to that challenge. I never participated in the criticisms of Engels because they were directed, not in order to rise to the challenge, but because they were meant consciously to divert from the charted roads as if uncharted paths, by just being uncharted, are thereby "original."

At the same time it is true that Engels, especially on the dialectic, could not measure up to Marx, and Engels, as the practical man, was so concerned with organization, individual roles, specificity of the empiric concrete, that he decided not to return to dialectic origins, but instead bring Feuerbach "up to date," answer the "immediate" questions (1880s instead of 1840s). We have suffered from the vulgarization of dialectic materialism, and are yet to free ourselves of it. This was so, not because, as Existentialists and Reformists and "Scientists" alike infer, there is no dialectic in "Nature," but because the historic dialectic is so very different—gloriously, humanly so—that to search for a "common denominator" is to violate it entirely. Put differently, precisely because history is what men and women make it, because of the inseparability of the Subject as maker of history from the object (be it "matter" or Nature or "Society"), any division of Subject from Object at that point—the revolutionary transformation of society—kills the emergent new society because it kills the creativity of Subject, of the endless Movement, of what Hegel would call "Second Negativity," and Marx "the permanent revolution."

When all is said and done, subjectless motion, be it even as ceaseless and the "transforming" kind as the end of ice age or birth of nuclear age, "Nature" can still be as bleak without human nature and as barren as those planets we're "running" after or "up into." How we admire the computer and degrade the human being, the human passion that strives for freedom instead of materiality!

Now, what has all this to do with the role of the intellectual in a Marxist-Humanist organization, you might ask impatiently? Well, just consider what intellectuals have been doing this past century, so fearful of there having been "one, only one Marx," that everything from "the Party" through the "Free Individual" (even in occupied France!) to choosing between existing State Powers has achieved bringing us to the totality, absoluteness of the present world crisis.

The first Great Divide in Marxism came with the betrayal by the Second International. It took so great a catastrophe, a world holocaust, to make Lenin recognize that such organization wasn't really the answer... (I assume you do know all the changes that occurred in his concept of the party, 1903-23—Ch.XI of *Marxism and Freedom* deals extensively with the question of the relationship of spontaneity to organization.)

Yet the greatest part that Lenin has bequeathed is the philosophic return to Hegel, the revolutionary dialectic without which the revolution itself would have been endangered, and, indeed, was, even after it had succeeded but he died, and the philosophic ambivalence aided the objective situation of a new counter-revolutionary stage to gain dominance.

But if "the Party" (Trotsky, on the outside, is included here for there was not a difference in concept of party even when he was expelled) and mere opposition to bureaucratization (instead of discovering, along with a new stage in cognition, a new, live revolutionary force that was also Reason) did not lead the way out, what did independent, non-Party intellectuals do?

Well, a new epoch had opened in the 1950s from below, from practice, from leaderless masses, be it in East Europe on June 17, 1953 (preceded in "backward USA" by workers battling with automation), or Africa (Ghana, 1957-58, preceded by the Algerian Revolution) or Black Dimension in USA, and still there is greater

dearth of thought among intellectuals than ever before. It is as if thought, contrary to Nature, does like a vacuum. But I refuse to believe that, and, as I have shown in *Marxism and Freedom*, which is fully built on that movement from practice to theory and a new society, over a period of nearly two centuries, there is nothing in the thought even of genius, that has not previously been in the activity of common man.

This does not (does NOT) mean therefore there is nothing for intellectuals to do. What it means is that that is where the intellectuals' task first begins. The moments in history when he did recognize that his generalizations have helped leap ahead because practice, too, is one-sided, and only the unity of theory and practice leads to revolutionary transformation, [are those moments when] humanity did discover as great dimensions within itself as outside continents to conquer. (May I be so conceited as to ask you to read the 2 final pages of [the] first edition of *Marxism and Freedom*, pp.286-87, and write me your commentary?)

Now I will admit to one great failing: ever since giving up the "party to lead" concept, "forcing" all intellectuals to listen, listen, listen, "our" intellectuals have very nearly transformed themselves into "full fountain pens" to take down what others said rather than projecting their own ideas, once they did recognize [that] the revolutionary forces are also Reason, and wisdom comes from the counsel of many. But *Philosophy and Revolution* does, in fact, reverse the process, that is to say, begins and ends, instead, with self-development of thought itself. But we have not gotten far and now I feel very strongly intellectuals are of the essence. I was especially impressed by your questions because your interest, long before you met any of us, did begin where a revolution was going on, in Algeria, and your field remains Africa where, despite the revolutions, we are witnessing backward moves.

When you consider the bottomless theoretic void since the death of Lenin, there is hardly an end to the theoretic void that needs to be [overcome] if ever it is to catch up to the challenge from below, not to mention when it finally will make its leap at unity of the two. Nothing is more urgent these days than to work out a totally new relationship of theory to practice, and nothing [is] more needed than some original contributions that come from self-discipline as well as reading—not the monstrous "symptomale" reading of an Althusser who reads into every one, from Marx down, what his empty but "erudite" casuistry spins out of the convolutions of his gray matter, but a historic reading that does not separate the yesterday from the todayness of history. The one great original contribution to "the theory of the party" Lenin did make was the definition of what is a party member, that is to say, the denial of membership to those who would just write but not "belong," for there is no more disorganized person than an intellectual and he, he above all, needs the belonging, the discipline of a local, not "voting," much less "reading out" of members because someone on high or low declares them to be "undisciplined," but the full collec-

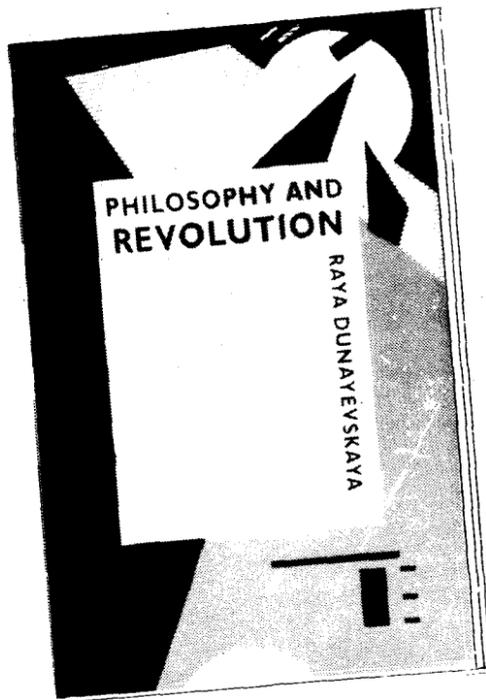
tivity in working out ideas as well as strategy and tactics. That is why, at one and the same time, News Letters Committees' Constitution has practically no discipline—you cannot be expelled except for an anti-struggle action or manifestation of racial chauvinism while daily activity is, again, very much up to the individual and not only local or national, and yet there is no way to be a Marxist-Humanist and not belong. You do not feel that the very organization of your ideas can be achieved in isolation alone. At the same time the isolation to be avoided is not only from rank and file but from the masses outside. Outside of the vote it practically is no difference between outside and inside.

Since it all is so new, you can help us work out specifications about special tasks for intellectuals. You were right when you said we have a lot to say at what intellectuals cannot do, but little of what they should. It was, and is, imperative that they recognize books as not the "source" of Reason, but realization comes spontaneously from the masses, from all forces of liberation—Women's Liberation and youth as well as the crucial Black Dimension. But after that, better dig, dig deep into books, into history, into philosophy, for without catching that single link of continuity (the lifeblood of the dialectic) with historic past, and Marxism in its origins, there is no way to single out the new and develop the original for our day as both a historic contribution of our age and the revolutionary transformation of the age.

The one thing that impressed me from the lecture tour this year is precisely the intellectuals' own realization and hunger for theory in a serious Marxist-Humanist sense. Heretofore it used to be very much students, the activists who would listen while their professors took the hour off from "non-academic responsibilities." This year the professors who did attend—in UCLA especially it was also in special colloquiums on Marxism—[heard talks on] philosophy's relationship to economics, the dialectics of liberation, as a unity of theory and practice; can Althusser be called a Marxist all? What is the Black Dimension globally? And the question of how does one project philosophy organizationally?

I'm most sorry that we got to speak so little outside of "formal" talks. I do hope that this can be the beginning of a dialogue—and I mean it orally and not only in written form. Our weakest point is the oral projection of the challenge to other tendencies and not only to state or academia or the capitalist factory; there we leave it to the proletariat who fight it day in and day out. But what do we do to counter the daily drench by the status quo, the brainwashing sans terror, the passing off of false consciousness for ideas, and, instead, elicit from those deep passions for freedom that hunger for expression but lack both the confidence and the forum? I hope you will help us and that, soon, this comradeship will become the form of reorganization of our own thoughts and life, for we must also know how to speak in future tense, not as Utopia, but as what will be this very day if, if, if.

## Newest edition of Raya Dunayevskaya's Philosophy and Revolution



"Raya Dunayevskaya has restored the unsettled, restless, intrinsically dialectical quality of Marx's thought from the deadening systematization of official Marxism...To have done so renders her the liveliest, most fiercely independent theoretician of the far left wing in contemporary Marxism. Her interpretation reflects, besides penetrating, original insight, her own lively curiosity."

Louis Dupre, author of *Marx's Social Critique of Culture*

"[T]he book vibrates with discussion and controversy. It reaches us tempered with the fire of battle. Of a battle whose resolution we cannot yet foresee...[I]t makes us think about the problems of today's world...On finishing it, we will feel distressed at the limitations of our answers and challenged by the urgent necessity of clarifying our thought for the task of achieving the true freedom of man."

Jose Emilio Gonzalez, *Sin Nombre*

"Dunayevskaya does pay attention to the question of whether Hegel's own explanation of the structure of human experience and history and the natural world is to be taken as fixed and final—the celebrated problem of the 'end of history.' She argues against this...The Absolute, come to its most mature articulation in Hegel's hands, is still a unification of opposites and thus contains within itself the seeds of its own dialectical self-transformation...However much Hegel may have thought that his own Absolute knowledge could not be superseded, in Dunayevskaya's view it is provisional, revisable and is in fact revised in the subsequent history of the struggle for freedom."

Raymond Plant, author of *Hegel*

Regularly \$14.95. For holiday season \$12.95 including postage  
order from News & Letters, 59 E. Van Buren, Chicago, Ill. 60605

Philosophic Dialogue

On Dunayevskaya's view of young Marx

Editor's note: The following are responses to "Marx's thesis as a philosophic new beginning," a 1981 letter by Charles Denby, published in the July, 1990 N&L.

From a Black activist

is Marx's view that, quoting Raya, "it is insufficient to show that Hegel accommodated himself to reality. One must discover the inadequacy of the philosophical principle which compelled that accommodation. [that] could produce an advance in knowledge." In other words, this expresses the most logical method to understand why all the schemes for a human society haven't worked, and where to look for a totally new beginning.

FOR YEARS I've wondered, just what was the inadequate principle Marx found in Hegel? Raya sees part of the answer in this: "Marx held that because Hegel's philosophy wasn't the unity of reason and reality that it had to be—the present period of crisis revealed the diremption of the two.... Reality and reason confronted each other hostilely."

How is this statement the "inadequate principle"? After a lot of thinking, I do agree with Marx that in Hegel's philosophy, reality and reason don't really come together. But what an extraordinary critique to see Hegel's whole construct of the two coming together in the Absolute Idea, where I believe they do, what's wrong is that they are separate, "hostile," all way until then. So my next question is, how could they not be confronting each other hostilely?

I conjecture that one could show how, throughout history, reason and reality affected and influenced each other. Reason discovered what was happening in reality, and reality told it what was possible to think about, and reality isn't just events occurring, as they say "for no reason." Reality likewise happens to sunder the influence of thought. That continuous interaction all along the

way wasn't in Hegel, and so Germany, which looked to him as the height of thought, by Marx's generation suffered "total diremption of the two."

IT IMPRESSES me how Marx dug for the "inadequate philosophical principle," because my first notion had been that the separation was merely because Hegel wasn't an activist. And of course it is true that Marx "both attacked philosophy and...reality."

But digging for underlying philosophic error is actually great for activism. Opposing reality can't be just shouting against what we don't like. We must go there knowing that our reason will affect that reality, and therefore project what we are for. —Wayne Carter

From a Marxist author

The topic is as fitting for Raya as it would be unusual for anyone else: not just the early Marx, the Marx of 1844 whom some people still study, but the very early Marx, the Marx of 1841, a mere 23-year-old who had not yet discovered economics or politics, writing an obscure thesis on Greek philosophy. And yet it was absolutely characteristic of Raya Dunayevskaya to focus here, on the "pre-Marxist Marx." Why? Because Raya Dunayevskaya always looked for the germ of things. "What I found most exciting about that year, 1841," she writes, "is to see the idea while it is germinating rather than when it is already a conclusion."

RAYA WAS A SEEKER of seeds, convinced that there was a transformative force in human beings, a dynamism present in all of us but concentrated and made articulate by some, world-thinkers like Hegel and Marx. One could, therefore, "read" this dynamic throughout a world-thinker's life: it would be present from the first, inchoate articulations through to the final definitive statement, though different kinds of words would be found to express it. And the very young Marx would provide a specially valuable vantage to read the dynamic, for he would then have been closer to its source. The

idea would have been moving through him rather than already fixed in discourse. And for Raya's Hegelian Marxism, the idea was just this motion as it appeared in thought, and through thought, praxis.

Raya Dunayevskaya, so far as I know, shared the hostility to religion common to the Marxist tradition. But we should remember also that Marx, that is, the Humanist Marx and the very young Marx, too, did not entirely share this hostility. As Raya writes, Marx had by 1841 "broken with religion." This is true, but it is more accurate to say that Marx rejected the external historical forms of religion while retaining an appreciation of its spiritual core—and, more significantly, of the role that core played in history. Religion was the "opium of the people," no doubt, but it was also the "spirit of spiritless conditions" and the "heart of a heartless world."

I think Raya saw in Marx what Marx saw at the center of the religious traditions: the germ of the world-transforming idea. At the center, that is, before kings, popes and repressive sex-morality laid their grim hand on the spirit. When the prophet Isaiah proclaims *The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good tidings to the poor*, he is expressing something of what Raya labored all her life to express: that there is a dynamism, a revolutionizing force in us that has to be put into words as it is activated into praxis. That is what Raya saw as Philosophy—a finding of true words to release the spirit through a confrontation with real history.

There is another New Testament passage which expresses the dialectic in a profoundly revolutionizing way. This is all the more remarkable because Paul, its author, was definitely one of the Bible's repressive villains. But he seems to have been able to get it right, too. Here is what Paul said in 1 Corinthians, 1:27-28:

But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.

I FIRST encountered these words (actually, the first paragraph) in Nicaragua, on a poster put out by one of the radical Christian groups which played so large a role in the Sandinista revolution. Graphically, the poster was quite striking, too. It showed a large, brown peasant's hand holding, gently but firmly, an agitated and wriggling comic-book figure of Superman. The main text of the poster read: "Nicaragua victoriosa. No se vende. No se rinde." Victorious Nicaragua. Does not sell out. Does not surrender.

It is poignant to recall this poster of 1985 today, nine months after the Sandinistas were defeated at the polls. They did not sell out, and they did not surrender; but they were not victorious, either. Imperialism prevailed, with its "low-intensity war" and economic terrorism. Superman broke free of the fist of the revolution. But the lesson of that poster, and of Raya Dunayevskaya—for Raya was a kind of prophet, too—is that there is to be no despairing in the wake of defeat. The Biblical prophets, Hegel and Marx, and contemporary prophets like Raya Dunayevskaya, all saw an objective motion to the world, which passes through subjectivity into praxis: a world-transforming spirit. This spirit is never extinguished, certainly not by the victories of imperialism. For these triumphs, now boasted of by Bush and his captive press, only set the stage for the next hostile confrontation between "Reality and Reason." Beneath the post cold-war scramble of empire, and the jockeying for power over oil, the masses in motion continue to drive history. The things that are not will still bring to nought the things that are. —Joel Kovel

Editor's note: Joel Kovel is the author of *White Racism (1970)* and *History and Spirit (forthcoming in 1991)*.

From an Iranian feminist

Raya Dunayevskaya's letter reminded me of the significance of the dialectical process at a time when there is such total philosophic chaos among left-wing intellectuals. Marx was concerned with the reality of his world, the Germany of the 1840s, when he argued with the Left-Hegelians that you cannot abolish a philosophy or simply adopt parts of it, you have to comprehend and transcend it as a system of thought. Likewise, throughout her life, Raya insisted that you cannot move to a higher philosophic level than that of Marx without first comprehending where Marx left off and thereby transcending it.

NOW AT a time when the world has become conscious of its interconnectedness—the universal problems of race and class, the gap that separates the rich from the poor, the destruction of nature and the human beings living in it—it seems that more than ever there should be a recognition of the Marxist-Humanist philosophy and its key concept of human self-determination.

Radical intellectuals speak either of abolishing philosophy (forget social revolution) or want to work for a small part of it. Postmodernist intellectuals, who are a fad these days on college campuses, tell us that philosophy is dead, that the Subject does not exist, that we should not think of universal ideas, but should think of small, limited and "practical" actions and ideas. Their "non-philosophy" seems to me to be the absolute expression of their alienation from the world we live in. —Neda Azad

Iraq's revolutionary history

by Cyrus Noveen

In the mad rush of the rulers of the world towards a suicidal war in the Middle East, the fate of the Iraqis hardly even mentioned. To the brain trusts who define military plans and political maneuverings, the Iraqi population is but an inert mass. But Iraq's people are also human beings with hands and heads that are connected to bodies made of flesh and blood.

It is imperative that we look at the rich revolutionary history of the Iraqi people to remember the high points that they did achieve through their struggle for freedom and to solidarize with that. This is exactly what George Bush and Saddam Hussein, and a host of others, wish to cover over.

One of the best works on the history of the Iraqis' struggle for freedom is Hanna Batatu's *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq: A Study of Iraq's Old Landed and Commercial Classes and of its Communists, Ba'athists, and Free Officers*.

Today, ten years after its publication, this work is indispensable to any serious attempt at grappling with the question of "What to do?" in confronting Saddam Hussein and George Bush's drive to cover up the indigenous revolutionary history of Iraq. Two pivotal periods in the life of the people of Iraq demand special concentration. These are: (1) the 1920s and (2) the post-World War II period.

THE ORIGINS OF MARXISM IN IRAQ

Within the Arab world, 1919 marks the beginning of mass upsurges and revolutionary activities, which were vividly seen with new eyes when the 1917 Revolution in Russia had led to the establishment of the first workers' state. In Iraq, the explosion came in 1920. It was not down in blood. But a whole new generation of revolutionaries was born.

Iraq's first organization of Marxists was born from entirely unique circumstances. In 1919 the high-school age son of an Iraqi residing in Berlin witnessed the erection of street barricades by Berlin workers during the 1919 German Revolution. This had a lasting impact on the mind of Hussein ar-Rahhal, who was to become the founder of Iraqi Marxism in the 1920s. The first Marxist group he founded concentrated its criticism on women's oppression. Their goal was to uproot the ideology of the rulers, the prevailing patriarchy, as well as the religious justification for the subjugation of women.

Hanna Batatu writes: "It was thus unheralded, unnoticed, and in feminist clothing that 'Marxism' first entered into the mental world of Iraqis." (p. 396)

BA'ATHISM VS. 1958 REVOLUTION

Just as the Russian Revolution inspired a whole new generation of youth revolutionaries and gave birth to a new stage of student and worker solidarity as well as new points of departure in thought for revolutionary Marxists, so the rise of Stalinism in Russia and the transformation of the workers' state into a state-capitalist society had its counter-revolutionary impact in the Middle East. This can be seen in the rise of the Ba'ath ideology, whose legacy Saddam Hussein embodies today.

Ba'athist ideology was not so much rooted in the masses of the national liberation struggles of the

Arab masses as it was in an "anti-imperialism" that found expression in a pro-fascist army revolt during WWII.

What Batatu shows is that this new type of reactionary anti-imperialism was articulated by its ideologues under the impact of a narrowing of the universal of freedom to an "undissipated haziness." In fact, Batatu shows that both Ba'athists and Communists "shared a common ground" in their view of "class struggle." It was precisely this "common ground," that would prove so deadly during the course of the 1958 Iraqi Revolution, with the Ba'ath and the Communists both aiming to build their organizations into the type of party structure that could best "utilize" the creative energies of the masses for their own narrow purposes.

The overthrow of the monarchical regime was accomplished, in 1958, under cover of darkness by a small part of the armed forces. But the masses carried the overthrow much further than the army had "planned." It was one of the achievements of the Revolution that Iraq was recognized as a nation of Arabs and Kurds, Sunnis and Shites. Iraq had no intention of being subsumed under Nasser's type of Arab Nationalism, nor Ba'athist "socialism."

The Iraqi leader who allied most with the aspirations of the Iraqi masses for genuine freedom was Abdul-Karim Qassim, who was born of Arab-Kurdish parents. Qassim refused to attach himself to the two contenders for power—the Communist Party and the then "united" Nasser/Ba'ath forces, i.e., the Egyptian/Syrian Union.

The freedom movement of the masses was checked in 1959. The hundreds of thousands who had joined mass organizations controlled by the Communist Party left in droves, leaving "politics" in the hands of a few. Saddam Hussein's first appearance on the Iraqi scene is in this period—with an assassination attempt against Qassim.

As the masses turned away in disgust, the horizons opened up by their revolutionary participation gradually faded from the leadership, too. The Iraq that was to be a multi-ethnic, multi-racial society with many political tendencies was now engulfed in a war with the Kurdish movement for autonomy.

In 1963, the Ba'athists staged a murderous counter-revolutionary coup. The totalitarian regime that emerged in Iraq during the years 1963-1979 never stopped its convulsions of coups and plots and purges—all under the Ba'athist banner of "Unity, Socialism, Freedom." However, as long as the rulers could point to "Zionism" and "Imperialism" as the main enemy, and as long as they bowed down to the division of the world into two camps, they could count on working out their differences with other parties. Within that context, Iraqi rulers could comfortably vie with other local powers for domination of the region while grinding their masses down.

The present mad rush to war will make the Iran-Iraq war pale by comparison. The only ones who are capable of truly confronting Saddam Hussein are the Iraqi people. It is precisely all the superpower machinations and their fanning the flames of regional rivalries that have brought us to the brink of holocaust. They will not resolve the crises. Only masses in motion, raising the banner of freedom, can. This is what we need to be working towards, and Iraq's history of revolutionary thought and activity opens many doors to us.

## THE NEEDED DRIVE TO STOP THE WAR NOW VS. BUSH'S DRIVE FOR SINGLE WORLD DOMINATION

Faculty members and students here on the Univ. of Cal. Berkeley campus participated in a large anti-war teach-in. Every hour between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. hundreds of students rotated and crammed themselves into Wheeler Hall's Maude Fife room to hear panels of speakers analyze and protest Bush's drive toward war in the Persian Gulf. Leon Wofsey, professor of immunology, said, "We have a chance before the bodybags come to stop the war." Minority panelists deplored the sending of large numbers of American minorities to fight in the Gulf. The chair of Afro-American studies, Margaret Wilkerson, pointed out that the U.S. military in the Gulf consists in large part of men and women of color who entered because the economy didn't allow them any other choice. Many agreed that the U.S. is attempting to gain world hegemony in this "post-Cold War" era.

Participant  
Berkeley

The much-touted conventional arms reduction pact signed by 22 NATO and Warsaw Pact leaders on Nov. 19 is yet another indication of the U.S. drive for single world domination. As against the 1988 levels, the U.S. will, under this "disarmament" plan, be able to increase its tanks from 5,700 to 13,300, its armored vehicles from 5,500 to 20,000, its combat aircraft from 800 to 5,150, etc. (New York Times, Nov. 20, 1990.) At the same time, Russia will dramatically reduce its forces in Europe, including inside Russia itself. The result: U.S. military hegemony in Europe.

Sociology professor  
Indiana

My son and I were talking about what he was going to do after high school and after he graduated college. He saw the choices as being either getting a job that paid \$75,000 per year or being out on the street. A friend of his is planning on joining the Army after high school, because he sees this as the only way to deal with the choices that he's up against. I talk to a lot of these kids, and they're scared. I try to talk to my son about the impending draft and I get scared. He starts to cry. He doesn't want to talk about it. When the ROTC and the Army recruiters come to school, I want New & Letters to be there too. I want them to see that there is an alternative, there is another way.

Anti-war mother  
Chicago, IL

I know I shouldn't talk about the business that pays my bills but after 30 years of hauling fuel oil, jet fuel and now propane, I wouldn't be surprised if the oil companies got together and called the president saying "Send in the troops." These companies don't give a damn if people live or die as long as the crude keeps flowing. They continue to demand the right to drill up and down the West Coast and all over Alaska. They are willing to destroy everything to keep themselves going.

Truck driver  
Los Angeles

I am somewhat dismayed by our coverage of the new anti-war opposition. In the October issue N&L reported on the 20th anniversary of the Chicano Moratorium. Having attended the march and rally in East L.A., I am concerned that the anti-war sentiments from the speaker's platform and in the crowd went unreported. In the November issue so little space was given to report four Oct. 20 rallies that important aspects were missed. For example, the large number of teenagers present in the Bay Area rally who, contrary to the organizers' desires, did not see themselves as a "new '60s"; and the resolution of support for the rally by an Oil, Chemical and Atomic workers local, that came not from Central Labor Council bureaucrats but from the local membership itself.

Stu Quinn  
California

War is not an easy issue, for it is a great injustice for the front-line troops as well as their families. The comparisons of the '60s war to the '90s shows

me that it is perhaps not that different, and now the babies of the '60s are the pawn soldiers of the '90s. Bush is communicating at the American people rather than with us, and the media doesn't tell us what is really going on. It is a bad trip.

Gloria Radlez  
Los Angeles

I was involved on my campus in planning a rally on Nov. 14 to mark the one-year anniversary of the murder of the six Jesuits and two women in El Salvador. We had a two-day sleep-in on the Quad, and held an open-mike rally, after which we invited people to write their feelings on the sidewalk with chalk—and the walkway was covered with solidarity slogans! But after all the preparation for that commemorative week it feels like there's nothing left. We need to have more discussion on where we go from here. We need to look at a broader level at what the U.S. government is doing, at what Bush is doing in the Middle East, and how we can fight it.

First-year college student  
Northridge, Cal.

In The Civil War in France, speaking of the massacre of the Paris proletariat during the suppression of the Commune, Marx said: "...the infernal deeds of the soldiery reflect the innate spirit of that civilization of which they are the mercenary vindicators. A glorious civilization, indeed, the great problem of which is how to get rid of the heaps of corpses it made after the battle was over!" This passage calls to mind not only the mass graves of Panama City—and the current role of the U.S. military in Saudi Arabia—but also the fact that, as Marx said, "The direct antithesis to the empire was the Commune." Opposition to the fascistic New World Order which Bush & Co. intend to create must not be separated from our working out of new paths to revolution here at home.

Gerard Emmet  
Chicago

Despite what the media have been trying to tell us, you can't gauge popular support for the war by the number of cookies sent to the troops!

Observer  
Los Angeles



### MARX'S MARXISM

VS.

### POST-MARX MARXISM

It is impossible to grasp Raya Dunayevskaya's article (November, 1990 N&L) on "why post-Marx Marxists didn't become continuators of Marx's Marxism" without confronting what is new, because she keeps returning to post-Marx Marxism's failure to recreate Marx's Marxism when it was faced with a new objective situation. The new today has resulted in an impending war, which tests us to meet that threat with the full Marxist-Humanist body of Ideas. State-capitalism with a globally integrated production that Gorbachev wants in on has brought not peace but the present striving of the U.S. for single world domination. Saddam's emergence is inseparable from the superpower rivalry as well as the world market and its arms production...

The new for Dunayevskaya is not out of the blue but strictly absolute method—the process and not just the results. When she turns to Marx's *Ethnological Notebooks*, it is not as Marx's discussion of a whole new phenomenon, but its remarkable continuity with 1844.

Ron Brokmeyer  
Oakland, Cal.

Dunayevskaya asks why no one was a continuator after Marx. For Marx, philosophy was essential to a revolutionary organization. Without that integrality

# Readers' Views

you lose the dialectic of the organization, and yourself.

Marxist-Humanist  
Detroit

The column "From the Writings of Raya Dunayevskaya" in the November issue of News & Letters talks about how so many people right after Marx were "followers," not his continuators, because they thought Engels and Marx were the same. They didn't see that Marx's was a whole new philosophy of revolution in permanence, which had been "his concept, his action, his vision through all of his life."

That is also true of Raya, but she made certain that all of her writings and her thinking were available in her Archives, and she made explicit her philosophic foundation, as well as her concept of organization. The part I think we're missing is how it was always concrete for Raya. This is why I think this column is so important, because she says, "It is high time...to dwell on the many 'firsts' we established with the break from Johnsonism and the establishment of News and Letters Committees." Then she goes through them one by one. We don't really grasp all the philosophic unless we see the concrete part of it.

Marxist-Humanist  
Chicago, Ill.

## THE BLACK DIMENSION

When you read the latest headlines about how drastically life expectancy for Blacks in this country has plummeted for four years in a row, you cannot help but remember the characterization that was given by Lou Turner to the health crisis of Blacks in the U.S. as a "visage of genocide," in a lead article in N&L some time ago. I seem to recall that some readers felt "genocide" was too strong a term to use then. But what can you call it when the figures are so large by now that it has brought down the overall life expectancy for all Americans, even though life expectancy rose for white men? One of the most important factors, according to the National Center for Health Statistics, is the number of babies who die in their first year. The U.S. ranks way down at 22nd place in the world on infant mortality. If that isn't "visage of genocide," what is it?

Reader  
Pennsylvania

Lou Turner, in his talk here on "Economic Realities and Political Crises in Black America Today," discussed both Frantz Fanon's concept of Black as a particular which is mediation to the universal of freedom, and the Marxist-Humanist category "Black masses as vanguard of the American revolution." I also see Black as an ideological cutting edge. Yet so many moral presuppositions interfere with our fight for freedom. For example, the Black churches ignored the effect of AIDS and drugs on our communities for so long that we need to take matters into our own hands.

Black woman activist  
New York

The plenary sessions at the Malcolm X conference here in November were disappointing. Old Black radicals dusted off failed programs from the '60s, or gave anti-Marxist diatribes in the name of something new. The youth were another story. They challenged the speakers from the floor, picking up on what Lou Turner said about Malcolm being self-critical all his life, and asking why the old radicals were not also self-critical. In numerous discussions the young people showed great curiosity about Marx and Dunayevskaya. They knew almost nothing about either, but responded eagerly to their concepts of liberation and freedom with their own ideas. These discussions were a breath of fresh air in both the conference and the outside world.

Anne Jaclard  
New York

## THE SICK U.S. ECONOMY

The construction industry's decline reflects another burgeoning crisis—the real estate market that has plummeted in the Northeast and declined in virtually every other major market, including the once immune golden market state of California. The implications of the multi-billion dollar losses (the true figure is not known because banks are not required to disclose their real estate holdings) are so economically ruinous that many analysts are predicting that the S&L bailout will pale in comparison to what it will cost U.S. taxpayers to save the banking industry from collapsing.

Andy Phillip  
Detroit

The best statement I heard on the "Utter sickness of the U.S. economy" (November 1990 N&L) came from my brother-in-law, who is in the insurance industry: "In the 1980s the banks used to check up on us, now we check up on the banks." When the pinnacle industry of capitalism is going bankrupt, what does it say for the other industries?

Supporter  
Chicago

All my life I've heard how a good war can solve a depression. I'm not prepared to pay that price.

Black oil worker  
Carson, Ca

## WOMEN'S LIBERATION



As a feminist who was active in the women's movement in the 1970s, I always felt a huge gap between my political work and my "personal life." We were all saying that the personal is political, but I felt that very few of us were living it. We were also saying among other things, that the white women's movement needs to start hearing the voices of our Black sisters. However, no one seemed to know how to accomplish that except to see our selves as "leading them down the path to liberation." I feel I have found the bridge that connects the gaps. Marxist Humanism is a philosophy connecting thought and action, that binds us to the struggles for freedom going on all over the world, as well as the ones in our daily lives.

Suzanne Wool  
Chicago

I was forcefully struck by the article from the junior high school girl in Glenview, Illinois, in the November issue. I can identify with her only too well even though it is a thousand years since I was in junior high. I still remember well the feelings of hurt, frustration, even fear, and confusion. The oppression of women really smacks you in the face in junior high. It was one of the two things that made me a Socialist.

Subscriber  
New Mexico

## DETROIT'S THIRD-WORLDIZATION

The election of Engler as governor of Michigan means that conditions of life and labor can only worsen for Detroiters. He is both anti-abortion rights and in favor of the Third-Worldization of this city which he sees as fit only for becoming an "enterprise zone"—meaning tax breaks for rich investors to locate sweatshops here. The deliberate lack of any mass transit system in Detroit keeps its inhabitants from being able to seek jobs in the suburbs, even at the "better-paying" McDonalds there.

Angry  
Detroit

**WORKERS' STRUGGLES TODAY**

I am retired out of the body shop of General Motors. I am not crippled by carpal tunnel syndrome, as are the workers at Delta Pride Catfish in Indianola, Miss. (November N&L), but after being retired eight years my arms, hands and back still hurt so bad at times I can't rest or sleep. A worker in the capitalist system is used up and thrown out like any other part of the machinery after the capitalists are through with us.

The article by the workers at Delta Pride Catfish is a lot about what happens to all production workers. In fact, what they talk about shows what Karl Marx was talking about in *Capital*. Raya Dunayevskaya summed it up in *Marxism and Freedom* when she wrote about speed-up and said: "It has become a measure of the intensity of labor itself. The surplus labor or value thus extracted is related directly to wear and tear of the laborer himself."

Carpal tunnel syndrome is the measure of the intensity of producing more and more profits for Delta Pride Catfish company.

Felix Martin  
Los Angeles

\* \* \*

Johnson Controls has just announced it plans to lay off 100 of the 300 workers at its Humboldt Avenue plant in Milwaukee. This is even before the Supreme Court rules on the company's practice of excluding "fertile" women from jobs where they will be exposed to lead, supposedly to keep from endangering any potential fetuses. The only way to get into the better paying jobs is to have yourself sterilized. Many women already have. Giving up part of your own body certainly pushes us well beyond any previous notion of "concessions"—yet nothing will keep these robber barons from putting us right out on the street!

Jan Kollwitz  
Chicago

\* \* \*

New York is seeing something it hasn't seen since the mid 1970s—a power struggle going on between management and unions. The Daily News of

ment and unions. The Daily News of New York is trying to break its unions in three different plants in Brooklyn, Garden City, and New Jersey. The unions were almost pushed out the door after working without a contract for seven months. Now the Daily News is using non-union personnel to make and distribute the paper. There have been violent clashes between union and non-union. I attended a union rally at the Daily News plant where over 5,000 union workers from New York gathered to show their strength. This is important to our future because if one union falls in Manhattan, plenty more will follow. This could change the future of our generation. We could all be facing lower pay scales, harder and longer working days, and unfair labor practices.

NYT Pressman  
New York

\* \* \*

While loading a truck, my right arm kept getting weaker and at the end of five hours my speech started slurring, but I kept trying to finish the day's work because I was a new hire. Finally one of the other workers saw something was seriously wrong and got the company to call the paramedics who took me to the hospital. I was short three days of being covered by insurance so I have been billed \$35,000. This is an inhuman system our labor has produced. I'm ready for the revolution—to hell with Bush's war in the Persian Gulf. I'm 32 years old with two children and my wife works, too. We've blamed each other too long for what is wrong with our lives, instead of blaming this rotten system.

Worker  
California

**GORBACHEV'S 'COMPROMISE'**

Gorbachev, who has managed to get himself sweeping powers rivaling Stalin's, vacillated a long time between adopting the Yeltsin-Shatalin 500-Day Plan of radical decentralization and conversion to the market economy, and

the far more conservative plan of P.M. Ryzhkov. Trying as one man to hold together the Union disintegrating around him, he at last opted for a compromise plan closer to the conservative one.

Working-class spokespersons who had attacked the 500-Day Plan as putting the onus on the workers to rescue the economy, have not publicly articulated an alternative. "We pretend to work, the State pretends to pay us" will continue to define the work morale of the average Soviet citizen until such day as he/she can see tangible rewards. Who needs money when over 95% of consumer items are unavailable, meat is a rarity, and even bread has begun to disappear from shop shelves?

A. Fortunoff  
California



**LATIN AMERICA'S REALITY**

Inflation is suffocating my poor country. Where is it all going to end? The Left parties are busy trying to build up their organizations—the Communist and Socialist parties are having internal elections—and they're not paying any attention to the problems of the political prisoners and the disappeared. Only their families keep fighting. There are a few strikes, but none of the well-known Left parties take responsibility in that movement. Meanwhile, the government refuses to bring the military to justice for their murder and disappearance of civilians. Everything seems the same as it was when Pinochet was the dictator. Only the face is different.

Correspondent  
Chile

\* \* \*

On Nov. 9, a small group of American and Guatemalan women and men demonstrated outside the Guatemalan consulate in Los Angeles, as 30 American women began a 24-hour fast to draw attention to the true nature of the Nov. 11 elections in Guatemala, and to join

with grassroots organizations in Guatemala in support of a national dialogue process which would lead to genuine democracy, demilitarization, and human rights for all Guatemalans.

The massive, repressive apparatus of the Guatemalan military/government maintains the status quo, including the concentration of 65% of the land in the hands of 2% of the people, a 50% unemployment/underemployment rate, and—according to World Bank figures—such massive poverty that only 13% of Guatemala's people live above the poverty line. But the work of the popular organizations continues. This past year of 1989-90 has seen major strikes by agricultural laborers, glass workers and teachers, and protests by students and human rights groups.

Supporter  
California

**THATCHERISM AFTER THATCHER**

The fact that Britain's ruling Conservative Party has felt obliged to jettison Margaret Thatcher after 11 years as Prime Minister attests to the deep unpopularity of Tory policies—in particular, the poll tax and the shameful neglect of housing, education and health. Even if the Tories lose the next election, the Labour Party has adopted much of Thatcher's ideological ground, from the market economy to nuclear weapons to troops in the Gulf. (Britain is now sending another 12,000 to join the 14,000 already there.) Now that Britain's rulers are in considerable disarray, it is especially urgent to develop a real revolutionary and humanist alternative. Otherwise, the danger is that Thatcherism will grind on long after Thatcher has gone.

Richard Bunting  
Oxford

**HAVE YOU PUT N&L ON YOUR HOLIDAY GIFT LIST?**

**SELECTED PUBLICATIONS FROM NEWS & LETTERS**

**—BOOKS—**

- Marxism and Freedom ...from 1776 until today**  
1989 Columbia University Press edition. New 1980s introduction by author 381 pp.  
by Raya Dunayevskaya ..... \$17.50 per copy
- Philosophy and Revolution from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao**  
1989 edition. New introduction by author 372 pp.  
by Raya Dunayevskaya ..... \$14.95 per copy
- Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution** 234 pp.  
by Raya Dunayevskaya ..... \$10.95 per copy
- Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future** 294 pp.  
by Raya Dunayevskaya ..... \$15.95
- 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." 52 pp.  
\$3.00 paperback, \$10.00 hardcover
- Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal**  
1989 Wayne State University Press edition includes Afterword by Raya Dunayevskaya, "Charles Denby 1907-83" 303 pp.  
by Charles Denby ..... \$14.95

- Constitution of News & Letters Committees** ..... 25¢ postage
- Dialectics of Revolution: American Roots and World Humanist Concepts**  
Special bulletin on Marxist-Humanism as a body of ideas by Raya Dunayevskaya, Eugene Walker, Michael Connolly and Olga Domanski ..... \$1 per copy
- 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 per copy
- 25 Years of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S.**  
A History of Worldwide Revolutionary Developments by Raya Dunayevskaya ..... \$1.50 per copy
- 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 per copy
- Nationalism, Communism, Marxist-Humanism and the Afro-Asian Revolutions**  
by Raya Dunayevskaya ..... \$1.25 per copy

**—PAMPHLETS—**

- Frantz Fanon, Soweto and American Black Thought**, by Lou Turner and John Alan  
New Expanded edition contains Introduction/Overview by Raya Dunayevskaya, Lou Turner and John Alan  
Appendices by Rene Depestre and Ngugi wa Thiong'o ..... \$3 per copy
- The Fetish of High Tech and Karl Marx's Unknown Mathematical Manuscripts**  
by Ron Brokmeyer, Franklin Dmitryev, Raya Dunayevskaya ..... \$1 per copy
- Working Women for Freedom**  
by Angela Terrano, Marie Dignan and Mary Holmes ..... \$1 per copy
- Dos ensayos por Raya Dunayevskaya.**  
Spanish language pamphlet  
1989 edition ..... \$2.00 per copy

**—ARCHIVES—**

- The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection—A Half-Century of Its World Development**  
A 15,000-page microfilm collection on eight reels ..... \$160
- Guide 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

**—NEWSPAPER—**

- Subscription to News & Letters**  
Unique combination of worker and intellectual, published 10 times a year ..... \$2.50 per year
- Bound volume of News & Letters (August 1977 to May 1984)** ..... \$20.00

**MAIL ORDERS TO:**

News & Letters, 59 East Van Buren,  
Room 707, Chicago, Ill. 60605

Enclosed find \$\_\_\_\_\_ for the literature checked. (11/90)  
Please add 75¢ for each item for postage.  
Ill. residents add 8% sales tax

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

• News & Letters is available on microfilm from University Microfilms International, 300 Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.  
• News & Letters, as well as other Marxist-Humanist literature, is available on tape for the blind. For information, write to News & Letters.

## Anti-war upsurge targets U.S. imperialism

**Des Moines, Iowa**—Over 50 people, the majority students from Grinnell College, demonstrated at the U.S. Military Entrance Processing Station in West Des Moines, Nov. 29, under banners such as "No Blood for Oil" and "How Many Lives per Gallon of Gas?" As security blocked one door, we entered the building through another door and sat in.

The officer in charge asked us why we were picking on the army. We said this action was not against the recruits, but against Bush's war policy. He said they had now closed down recruiting for the day, but we refused his demand that we leave the building. At 5:00, 14 students and others were arrested for criminal trespass, while other supporters left the building to appeal to people outside.

The main purpose was to let everyone know that there are people out here opposed to Bush's war. In newspaper and TV coverage it was called Iowa's first organized attempt at civil disobedience to protest U.S. troops being sent to Saudi Arabia. It won't be the last. Oddly enough one of the arresting cops asked why we weren't disrupting Camp Dodge. Somebody said, "Maybe tomorrow." —Grinnell student

**Los Angeles, Cal.**—The anti-war rally held here Dec. 1 had a sizable crowd of some 1,500—twice the size of the previous anti-war rally, Oct. 20. The preponderance of youth, the fear, anger and hunger for discussion, for ideas, brought crowds flocking around the various rally literature tables.

A Black youth was eager to discuss a leaflet being passed out by the Campus Green Network calling for "a new Free Speech Movement on every campus in America," a high school student displayed the creative anti-militarist poster he had designed.

One Black woman who has two nieces and a nephew among the troops in Saudi Arabia bought the Marxist-Humanist statement, *American Civilization on Trial, Black Masses on Trial*, as well as Charles Denby's *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*, and Frantz Fanon, *Soweto and American Black Thought*.

The rally organizers concentrated on exhortation with a slogan "No Blood for Oil," but Vietnam veteran Ron Kovic caught something of the deep passion and Reason stirring in the crowd when he said that his response to the question "Do you think there is any war or cause worth fighting for?" is "Yes—the war we are waging now against this whole inhuman system!"

Kovic then differentiated this "war" in terms of non-violence vs. violence, invoking the legacy of the mass movements led by Gandhi and Martin Luther King.

## Black women challenge

(continued from page 2)

She looked back to the 1960s, when SNCC (Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee) women who spoke out against men controlling all the decision-making in the movement were called "agents, lesbians, mixed breeds trying to start trouble, and brainwashed by the white bitches." Today she said, this thinking is seen in the idea that "My sister is not my sister if she doesn't have a man." Female-headed households are referred to "as if that's something bad." "Gender bias," she continued, "undermines the cornerstone of self-determination."

Vernice Miller's talk on reproductive freedom drew on this same wellspring of critique. Miller showed Black women's persistent consciousness about controlling their own bodies went back to slavery days. Slave women chose abortion, infanticide and even suicide to break the bonds that made them breeders for white slavemasters.

Miller slammed the reproductive rights movement for its roots in population control theories, but also called Black male activists on the carpet for arguing that supporting reproductive freedom means supporting genocide. "The number of women dying of botched abortions far outpaces what any brothers could be thinking about as far as stopping our own nation," she said. "If women die there will be no nation."

The discussion that followed these talks began with one young woman who fought back tears as she confessed that "I get so tired sometimes of hearing men talk of their manhood. It hurts me in my gut, but I know that as a Black person I need to struggle with my Black brothers if I want liberation."

Nearly two hours later another young woman angrily spoke out against what she considered the tokenization of women at the conference itself. "On a forum on 'Black Independent Politics,' she asked, 'couldn't they have found one woman to speak on that?'" A Jamaican woman living in Canada even criticized the women's panel, asking why no international representatives were included.

When the AIDS crisis was brought up, the Black church was critiqued for going down the deadly paths of homophobia and denial. Several women demanded opposition to the criminalization of pregnant women who are substance abusers. They also discussed the case of a Black North Carolina woman jailed after her child died because she was simply too sick to get to the hospital on time when she went into early labor.

What became clear was that no issue was separate from demanding a deepening of the concept of freedom in the movement, in the conference, even in the workshop itself. This dialectic of critique is what made the session into a dialogue that everyone felt the need to continue—soon. —Laurie Cashdan

What was clear was his expression that there is a war being waged right now against the American people by its own government that compels us to fight back with both force and creativity. —Michelle Landau

**DeKalb, Ill.**—On Nov. 10, 140 anti-war protesters gathered at Hopkins Park for a "No War" rally with an open mike sponsored by the newly-formed No War Coalition, of which our News and Letters Youth Committee is a part. Although it was a cold 2½ hour demonstration, workers, high school and college students as well as working youth, feminists, mothers and other members of the community were able to warm up



Black anti-war protest at the Los Angeles military recruiting station

throughout the demonstration by gathering close together chanting, speaking, and singing songs. They denounced Bush, Hussein and all existing governments, and supported self-determination. Participants chanted, "No Blood for Oil!" and "No More Third World Lives!"

One of the most moving speeches was given by a working youth who said, "I'm only 18 and I don't want to die. My parents kicked me out of the house because I reject everything they stand for: America and God. I rejected them trying to turn me into a Nazi. It's time to call a war on all those things that are oppressive—wife beating, child beating, and anti-drug wars."

The radical opposition to war and the need for a new human society was very empowering. —Participant

## Network racism exposed

**Detroit, Mich.**—The furious outrage of Detroiters at the ABC "Prime Time Live" segment aired on Nov. 8 resulted not only from the negative one-sidedness of the program, which the nation witnessed. It resulted more so from ABC's misrepresentations and selective editing revealed in a follow-up local hour-long TV interview involving Detroit Mayor Coleman Young's press secretary, a few prominent Black Detroiters and the show's reporter and producer, which the rest of the country did not see.

That hour-long interview exposed the following:

- Mayor Young's statements, laced with profanity during the four minutes he was featured, were selected from a 90-minute interview. The interview was granted on the assurances that no questions would be asked about pending investigations into city corruption, and that the program would seek to counter the negative impressions given in the recent book, *Devil's Night: And Other True Tales of Detroit*, that had been excerpted in a recent New York Times Magazine article. Only after long questioning of negative aspects of Detroit, and then unexpected inquiries into the corruption charges, did Young explode with his profanity.

- The Black youth with an arsenal of guns displayed on his front porch for the TV camera was all staged for the program, and claimed to be necessary for survival in Detroit.

- The heart-rending scenes of the mother whose teenage son had been shot and killed, and whose poignant words gripped one's soul were obtained under the pretense that a program was being prepared to help prevent such senseless killing.

- The scenes of burning houses on Devil's Night were all too true, but not a word was said about thousands of Detroiters who mobilized to curtail the burning.

In short, it was not that the scenes depicted were so false as much as the gross misrepresentation they reflected. As one retired Black school teacher noted, "I can show ABC many things much worse than what they had on that program. That's not the point. They weren't only one-sided in emphasizing the bad aspects of Detroit, they even misrepresented what they did show."

For all of the justifiable criticism of "Detroit bashers" as being racist and negative, the inescapable fact is that Detroit, like virtually every large urban area in the U.S., is undergoing an irreversible trend of decay and decline. Equally clear is that none of the so-called reforms—better schools, neighborhood development, economic diversification, downtown revival—are realistic. The revenue and investment required are simply not available—neither now nor in the foreseeable future.

No reforms can even halt, let alone reverse, these destructive tendencies. The only realistic solution to these deepening crises is a total uprooting of this dehumanizing capitalist society. —A. Phillips

## U.S. debt crisis

Andy Phillips did a good job of making sense of the most recent facts and figures in the November lead article in *News & Letters* on the economy. The real strengths of his analysis come out most sharply; I believe, when it is contrasted with the contradictions of Leonard Silk, the nation's foremost economics writer, in the Nov. 11 New York Times. Silk retains the Keynesian faith that fiscal and monetary policies "can be used to maintain the overall level of national income and prevent even the most severe financial shock from bringing the economy down."

In practice, these policies amount to an expansion of government, business and consumer debt in an attempt to keep the economy afloat. Yet Silk himself notes, on the other hand, that "[T]he most serious problem hanging over the United States economy remains the huge debt burden...a steep recession...could create a huge wave of defaults that would threaten to wreck the financial structure." Blind faith is what blinds Silk to this gaping contradiction in his analysis.

In the past 15 years, total debt in the U.S. has increased more than sixfold. Reagan's massive deficits sent the public debt soaring from 34% of the nation's income when he took office to over 54% when he left it. The debt of the average family is now 90% of its after-tax income, as against 77% only nine years ago. U.S. capitalists now must use half of all their profits simply to meet their interest payments.

More than 500 banks have failed in the last three years. Chase Manhattan, the second largest bank in the U.S., is saddled with bad loans and negative profits, but stays afloat for now by borrowing at the junk-bond rate of 13%. Business writer Edward Jay Epstein, writing in the December *Spy*, asks the crucial question: "What happens when the U.S. finally, officially goes into a deep recession and these banks begin to fail like the S&Ls?"

In 1986, Raya Dunayevskaya called this debt the "basis" of the U.S. economy, underscoring that underneath it the real basis was crumbling. What is different today is that the big suppliers of this lifeline of credit throughout the 1980s—foreign capitalists—are now dashing out of the U.S.

To the extent that Keynesian policies do "counteract" recession and depression, they merely replace the quick-purging destruction of capital (as in the 1930s) with the stretched-out destruction of capital working people have been suffering with for 20 years.

Populists and social democrats are now dusting off their old "soak the rich" tax schemes that would, they say, help finance the S&L bailout, slash the federal deficit, bail New York City out of its own fiscal crisis and so forth. Yet even if the top income tax rate were raised from 28% to 50%, this would bring in less than \$20 billion nationwide. The gap between rich and poor is, it is true, obscene, and getting worse, but the funds needed to make a dent in these interrelated financial crises simply don't exist. Thus, Phillips is completely right in stressing the objective reasons why capitalism has had to try to squeeze working people harder than ever to stay in business. —A. Anielewicz

## Racist prof protested

**Berkeley, Cal.**—Seventy-five students organized last month to take over the lecture hall during a class taught by Physical Anthropology Professor Vincent Sarich. On Nov. 7 we paraded into the class en masse and went directly to the stage. We passed out the fliers we had made which broke down some of Sarich's racist and sexist, anti-gay themes.

We used specific quotes from his lectures, and compared them with Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and Nazi sociologists. Sarich has stated that "unfortunately, the levels of qualifications, preparation, or motivation are not randomly distributed with respect to race and ethnicity," and "human males have larger brains than the human females...the correlation between brain size and performance on standardized tests is a positive one."

While there are several professors on campus teaching racist and sexist or homophobic ideologies, our specific outcry is against Sarich. His class is particularly disgusting as it is a freshman introductory course. This means that it has an enormous audience of about 500 students. Moreover the course is mandatory for anyone interested in anthropology as their major field of study. I myself took the class as a nervous freshman. At that time, I kept my mouth shut at his racist spewage. Now, I and others are speaking out!

We tried to make a statement about our views, our problems with the course and with Sarich, and hoped students from the class would stand up and go with us to the Anthro Department with a strongly worded attack and list of demands including dumping Sarich and hiring more Third World and women faculty.

To our horror, most in the class shouted at us to get off the stage before we could even tell them why we were there. As one of our members tried to shout out our position, somebody in the class interrupted with "People as stupid as you deserve to be colonized!" A shouting match followed during which Sarich called the police.

We marched off the stage chanting "Open it up (the university), or shut it down!" We gathered at the foot of the stage, sitting, and chanting "bulls..." under our breaths as Sarich tried to continue with the lecture. Finally, he gave up and cancelled the class for the day. He left quickly and the room was ours to carry on heated discussions with the students in the class. —R.T.

# Black South opposition to Bush's war

A unique form of protest has once again originated in the South. Beginning in mid-October, a 14-vehicle caravan carrying some 50 people travelled from Huntsville, Ala. through Mississippi to Baton Rouge, La., and held protests at housing projects, military bases, oil refineries, gasoline stations, and at the Chemical Waste Management toxic landfill in Emelle, Ala.—the largest toxic waste site in the U.S., constructed next to a poor Black community.

The eight-day moving protest was organized by the Gulf Coast Tenant Organization in New Orleans and called the Southern Justice Caravan. The aim of the Justice Caravan was to demand U.S. troops out of the Persian Gulf, roll back oil prices, cut U.S. military spending by 50%, fund quality education, health care, build affordable housing and clean up the environment. Toward that end, the Caravan travelled to over 30 cities in Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana holding picket lines and pray-ins at gas stations.

Local environmentalists, civil rights activists, community organizers and members of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives participated in the protests. While praying at an Exxon gas station, 16 protesters were arrested in Baton Rouge, home of the largest Exxon refinery in the country. All except one of the protesters were released the following day.

Rev. Avery Alexander, an 80-year-old Louisiana state representative and veteran civil rights and labor activists was held in jail when he refused to be fingerprinted. Instead Rev. Alexander issued a statement from his jail cell, which read in part:

"From my jail cell in the East Baton Rouge Parish Prison, I am writing to call upon leaders of civil rights, religious, environmental and community based organizations to link up our struggles and turn back a decade of Reagan and Bush repression and depression...

"Just at the moment when we were expecting to receive a 'peace dividend' after years of military build-ups; when the Berlin wall was falling and peace between the super-powers seemed to be a reality, President Bush, an oil and CIA trained veteran, plunged us into a new military adventure to protect the oil com-

panies' pipelines in the Persian Gulf. Bush has sent thousands of black, brown, red and white boys and girls to fight an almost private war for the oil companies.

"On the very day we were arrested for praying at the gas pumps, Bush announced he would veto the Civil Rights Act of 1990. Why must we have affirmative action in the desert of Arabia while we cannot have it at home?...We must link-up our struggles and swing back the decade long pendulum of oppression."

Finally, in Baton Rouge, the Caravan travelled through the rural cane area, and stayed at the poor Black Sunrise community, in East Baton Rouge Parish. Sunrise is surrounded by oil refineries on two sides and backed by the Mississippi River. The community meeting at Sunrise was a fitting conclusion to the week-long Southern Justice Caravan, for it revealed both the powerful political and economic forces of American imperialism which weigh on the Black community, as well as the power of Black self-determination to fight it.

(Information, thanks to Gwen Patton.)



**South Africa**  
One of the Black South African youth who have clashed with police in the Transvaal town of Atteridgeville over the government shut-off of electricity to the Black community.

## Editorial

# Stop U.S. war drive

(continued from page 1)

tions, as seen in his brutal invasion of Kuwait and his attacks on the Kurds and on Iran, his imperial ambitions are regional. Bush's imperial designs are even more threatening and ominous, precisely because they are global in character.

But the reality of military preparedness leading to war is not the only reality before us. There is another reality—the passion for a totally new way of life, often expressed though rarely heard, but always present. The aspirations of masses of people in this country who do not wish to see this nation senselessly plunged into war make the idea of a freedom-filled future part of reality, as well. It is what we must build upon as we intensify the opposition to Bush's drive to war.

There is still time to stop this drive to war, and thereby begin to seriously challenge the "changed world" into which the Reagan-Bush retrogression has plunged not only this country, but this world, over the last decade. The time for both thought and action is now.

—December 1, 1990

# After Malcolm X

(continued from page 1)

plenary session were, they never came into dialectical opposition. Instead, it was the Black youth, speaking from the floor, who were challenging in their criticism of any attempt to "deify" Malcolm, and who wanted to probe beneath the image to comprehend the dialectics of revolution in his thought.

Moreover, one saw reflected in the division between the youth who articulated this critical dimension of Black thought and those who espoused a narrow cultural nationalism, the ideological divisions among the conference speakers, most of them former '60s radicals. Significantly, the Black radicals who adhered to the Marxist perspective came mostly from Africa, the Caribbean and Europe, while most American Black radicals were distinguished by an anti-Marxist narrow nationalism.

Indeed, the perennial debate over race and class was, in almost every instance, nearly subsumed by Black nationalist ideologues in favor of a purely nationalist appeal to "race first." The underlying causes of this ideological shift in radical Black thought must be seen in its international context though, a context which was also quite evident at the conference.

## IDEOLOGICAL SHIFT

The "collapse" of state-capitalism calling itself "communism" in Russia and East Europe was not only seen as signaling the abandonment of Africa and the Third World, but viewed as a return of the Eastern Bloc to Western white civilization. At the same time, Africa and the Third World were seen as the poor inheritors of the Marxist legacy, heirs who can no longer look toward the East, or rely on the super-power rivalry to play one imperialism off another.

Given this new world view of the Black dimension, it seemed all the more contradictory to find anti-Marxism so prominent at the conference. What made it even more ironic was 1) the elitism of a number of Black Marxist academics who opted to ignore the conference, and 2) the fact that at the end of his life, following his historic break with Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam, Malcolm X became interested in Marxism.

If the spirit of the whole and contradiction of the parts of the Malcolm conference are not to indifferently subsist side-by-side, but find their real meaning and determination within each other, the Black radical tradition that Malcolm X represented has to return to the theoretical high point he had reached himself, in the last year of his life.

Otherwise, retrogressive nationalism, which seems to have more in common with the West's current anti-Marxism than with the revolutionary Black dimension as ongoing, will succeed in obscuring the compelling question that lay at the core of the Malcolm X conference, namely: After Malcolm X what?

From the discussions with many at the conference, and in the days after, I would argue that the answer is—Marx.

## Black/Red View

# Race and retrogression

by John Alan

The Content of Our Character by Shelby Steele, a Black professor at San Jose State University, has been called by critics the most provocative commentary on current Black and white relations in the country. The book, they say, "refuses to see things in black and white." The Content of Our Character is now a best-seller and Shelby Steele is nationally famous.

Recently Steele spoke at a posh bookstore in the San Francisco Bay area before a mainly white middle class audience with a few Black and brown faces here and there among them. He began his talk by reading a passage from his book. It was a poignant story of his emotional state of mind as he stood at an airport in Texas in a line waited on by a white saleswoman. Her Southern accent irritated him, causing him to remember wrenching racist incidents he experienced. He was expecting this woman to be rude towards him; but when it was his turn, her smile was polite in serving him. And, above all, she passed a non-racist acid test by placing his change in his hand and not on the counter.

The moral of this story is: Black Americans are too involved in the memory of racism. Steele calls this state of the Black mind a "battle with memory, the pull of the dark past," which is responsible for much of the "racial politics" of today, a kind of "power relationship that is now set in stone, where whites have to walk a fine line or they will be castigated as racist."

Thus, Steele believes that Black Americans have created a state of "hoag" for themselves, because of their fixation on victimization which has magnified oppression and prevents them from accepting challenges and taking responsibility.

This is Steele's message and it is clearly the message of a new neo-conservative Black intellectual. It does not deviate in content from the message of other Black neo-conservatives; it reveals no new social truth, it is simply Steele's own unmediated response towards the crisis which is tearing at Black America. For Steele the source of the crisis is in Black psychology, that is in the fixation on a memory of oppression. He never ventures to tell us why this fixation is such a permanent feature of the Black mind, even though he insists he wants a new vision of race relations.

Steele's talk generated a clash of opinions. A white teacher took the floor and told him that his Black students are "pissed-off" when they read his book.

A sharper disagreement was expressed by a Black man who thought what Steele had to say was lot of "bull" and he challenged him to take responsibility. The man said: "those who have not taken responsibility are the Black intellectuals like Shelby Steele."

There is no question about the fundamental contradiction between Steele's concept of racism and the nature of Black reality in this country. The objective conditions of that reality are bound to the very nature of American capitalist production, which has turned cities, formerly thriving, into industrial wastelands. This created high unemployment rates among Blacks, a surplus of Black workers called the underclass. This economic disaster is also racial. It penetrates far deeper into the

Black mind than racial rudeness anticipated from a white clerk.

Steele cannot face this, nor can he even think of taking the responsibility for changing that reality. Thus, in his small book he packages all the old clichés about self-reliance and upward mobility as the gateway out of racism. He thinks that the "idea of race" is misplaced energy. Therefore he opposes affirmative action programs, because they invite racial tension and imply that Blacks are inferior.

While Steele is not original in his blame-the-victim thesis, he nevertheless provides a new kind of grist for the mills of racial reactionaries. He does not bring to his middle class readers the social theory and economics, that neo-conservatives do. He brings his own personal experiences, presents his own factual immediacy as the universal story of racism and the Black mind. Hence he shines as a far more spectacular decline of Black thought in this retrogressive age than his fellow ideologists.

## Is this the 'new' S. Africa?

Chicago, Ill.—I recently attended a meeting between Black South African and Black American business people, sponsored by Chicago Renaissance Communications at Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT), called "African American/Black South African Business Exchange Forum."

Some of the sponsors of the Forum and the group of Black South African business people touring the U.S. included such corporations as Ameritech Bell, Illinois Bell, Chicago Mercantile Exchange and Soft Sheen Products. The South African group toured six American cities and met prominent corporate and political leaders such as Percy Sutton and Mayor David Dinkins in New York and Ed Gardner of Soft Sheen in Chicago.

These South Africans were here as part of the African National Congress' (ANC) and Nelson Mandela's vision of the future, non-racial, capitalist South Africa. For as Mandela stated in one of the Forum brochures: "This mission should be perceived as preparing black business persons for a more meaningful role in a post-apartheid South Africa."

Meeting only two blocks from one of Chicago's most segregated and poverty-ridden housing projects, Stateway Gardens, Forum participants spoke abstractly about the similarity of problems faced by Blacks in South Africa and the U.S. The consensus was that capitalism was the answer to racism and Black economic deprivation. And the political empowerment of the Black bourgeoisie was promoted as the answer to Black disenfranchisement.

Although there were many expressions of this Black capitalist viewpoint, the statement of Michael Mohohlo characterized it best when he said: "Capitalism is looked upon as something bad. We have to change this opinion in people's (Black South African's) minds."

After a decade-and-a-half of Black South Africa's life and death struggle against capitalist apartheid, can this be the future of the "new" South Africa, or the continuation of the old in blackface? —Robert Reed

## Marxist-Humanist works on the Black Dimension



American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard

Frantz Fanon, Soweto and American Black Thought

2 for price of 1  
Only \$3, regularly \$5

News & Letters  
59 E. Van Buren  
Chicago, Ill. 60605

# East Europe and Russia face deep crisis

(continued from page 1)

offs and privatization. Even Solidarity founder Lech Walesa, who promised to continue Mazowiecki's economic plan with a few unspecified "corrections," received only 40% of the vote. The biggest shock was that no less than 23% voted for the completely unknown eccentric emigre businessman, Stanislaw Tyminski, in an apparent protest vote against austerity.

Solidarity membership has plunged from 10 million in 1981 to less than 2 million today, and more recently the union and the political movement built around it have splintered. Walesa's camp has drawn to itself most of Poland's anti-Semitic vote, using subtle public appeals which stop just short of open anti-Semitism. Walesa's willingness to stoke the fires of a latent but deeply rooted anti-Semitism is a chilling harbinger of the future, and not only for Poland. The tragic irony here is that it was Walesa who in the early 1980s hit out against all forms of anti-Semitism, and who included Jews such as Adam Michnik among his close colleagues. Today he has fallen so low as to allow anti-Semitic attacks from the floor at his own campaign meetings to go unanswered.

Despite these grave contradictions within Solidarity, the Polish masses are far from quiescent in their ceaseless struggle for freedom. In November 70 of the country's 74 hard-coal mines went out on strike against austerity measures. Youth have demonstrated against the planned opening of Poland's first ever nuclear power plant in Zarnow, a plant which has the same design as the one in Chernobyl. Over the summer, a trash-burning incinerator, an environmentally dangerous joint venture by Austrian and German capital, was built at a military base in western Poland. But the day before it was to go into operation, 500 farmers from the area drove onto the base in their tractors, and completely destroyed the new incinerator.

## RUSSIA ON THE BRINK

Inside Gorbachev's crumbling empire, with winter approaching, actual famine looms. For the first time since World War II, food rationing may be instituted in Leningrad, with the following near-starvation quotas per person, per month: 3.3 pounds of meat, 1.1 pound of butter, 10 eggs.

Every major ethnic and national group is demanding self-determination or even independence after seven decades of iron rule under what Lenin warned against on his deathbed: "Great-Russian chauvinism." He said it was represented by the Stalin wing of the Party. It continues today in a different form. On Nov. 27, in response to the ethnic unrest throughout the system, Defense Minister Dmitri Yazov ordered the military to use force to "protect" itself in the various regions, up to and including seizure of local political power.

In recent months, workers across the Soviet Union have formed a wide variety of independent unions, newspapers and strike committees. Intense debates are taking place over the future direction of the labor movement. Some of the workers' groups advocate a "market" economy while others stand for workers' control of economic institutions. All are disillusioned with the present system.

Take the small Siberian industrial city of Sterlitamak, a center of the chemical industry. Pollution levels are so great that lung, viral, blood and kidney diseases, as well as birth defects, are widespread. There is new awareness that the future under economic privatization will be just as bad.

Mayor Spartak Akhmetov, elected as a strong environmentalist with a mandate to change conditions, stated recently: "From the standpoint of pollution the market will be no kinder than the old command system. Profit is the top priority, and the environment is considered an investment with no return." (New York Times, 11/26/90)

## ECONOMIC STAGNATION

The stagnation of the world capitalist system will hardly provide sufficient capital for the rapid technological development of the small East European countries, let alone the vastness of Russia. Even for the former

East Germany, despite its absorption by "prosperous" West Germany, the prospects are actually quite bleak, despite facile comparisons to the rapid expansion of the West German economy in the 1950s.

First, in the 1950s, interest rates were 30-50% below what they are in today's stagnant world economy. Second, in the 1950s West Germany's capital stock was relatively modern, while eastern Germany's is today much further behind that of the most technologically advanced lands. Third, all through the 1980s, West Germany has failed to dent the economic stagnation of whole regions like the steel and coal industries of the Ruhr, or the coastal shipyards. In these regions, unemployment has remained 20-80% above the national average, despite billions of dollars in annual government subsidies.

How, then, will West German capitalism be able to do in eastern Germany what it has not accomplished in whole regions of West Germany? As for East Europe, the U.S. has allocated the paltry sum of \$270 million in



Women factory workers in Romania

economic aid for the entire region, while at the same time spending billions of dollars for its military build-up in Saudi Arabia.

## TODAY'S SELF-LIMITING REVOLUTIONS

East Europe is a region which has produced the 1953 East German workers' uprising with its slogan "bread and freedom," the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 with its workers' councils, the Prague Spring of 1968 with its debates over socialist and Marxist humanism, and Poland's Solidarity labor movement of 1980-81 which made the issue of workers' control central. A new society different from either Western capitalism or Russian Communism was posed by elements within each of these movements.

But in 1980 something new ideologically was raised in Poland, "the self-limiting revolution," the notion that if they limited themselves to a union movement, then the Russian overlords might allow them to exist. This left the movement unprepared for martial law. Also, as an outgrowth of the concept of self-limiting revolution, the very idea of creating a new human society began to recede, and not only in Poland. Today, there is the danger of being swept into a private capitalism of the Reagan-Thatcher variety, as self-limiting revolution has developed into the notion that there is no third way between capitalism and Communism.

In East Germany, scene of mass upheaval in October and November 1989, and where some then raised the

notion of a different kind of socialism, today, after German unification, the independent Left has been marginalized, and the rightist Helmut Kohl has won the December all-German elections by a large margin. On the other hand, tens of thousands of railway workers have recently gone on strike in eastern Germany, protesting anticipated layoffs.

In Czechoslovakia, a large, nonviolent mass protest movement toppled the Communist regime and brought the vastly popular Civic Forum to power last year. Yet today, politics have turned so far to the right that the government has backed the U.S. drive to war in the Middle East, as seen in Bush's November visit to Prague. Racist incidents against foreign workers and students are occurring with sickening regularity, often sparked by neo-fascist skinheads. At the same time, however, small groups of youth and intellectuals are debating revolutionary ideas—from Trotskyism to anarchism to Marxist-Humanism. For example, Polarita, the newspaper of the group *Left Alternative*, has begun running a series of articles on Raya Dunayevskaya's *Marxism and Freedom*.

In Romania, the mass insurrection which toppled the murderous Ceausescu regime was hijacked by Ion Iliescu and his clique of former Party and Army officials. Their National Salvation Front, to a great extent merely a renamed Communist Party, managed to win the May 1989 elections, but has faced student revolt and, most recently, worker unrest. In September, dock workers went on strike for a week in Constanta, the main port, in order to gain the dismissal of their corrupt union leadership. By November, mass protests broke out against the regime's austerity measures, which include drastic price hikes for basic commodities.

## WOMEN IN EAST EUROPE TODAY

Perhaps the most telling way to grasp the self-limiting character of the East European upheavals is to look at the position of women one year later. As the young Karl Marx wrote in his "Private Property and Communism" (1844), in viewing the "relationship of man to woman...we can judge to what degree [the human] species has become human."

In Poland, it is expected that the national parliament will soon ban abortion completely, a move demanded by the Catholic Church and supported by both Walesa and Mazowiecki, despite polls which show overwhelming support for abortion rights. "So many women were in the underground, were part of the fight for freedom. And now it seems that freedom, that victory, is not for women," stated Jolanta Plakwicz of the newly formed Polish Feminist Alliance. (New York Times, 11/6/90)

In Czechoslovakia, there is pressure for women to go back into the home, and open pornography everywhere is considered part of the new "freedom," while at the same time the Civic Forum refuses to take a position on abortion rights.

In the former East Germany, unification may mean eventual curtailment of the right to abortion, in accordance with paragraph 218 of the West German constitution. The right to abortion was temporarily saved at the last minute after persistent protests during unification negotiations.

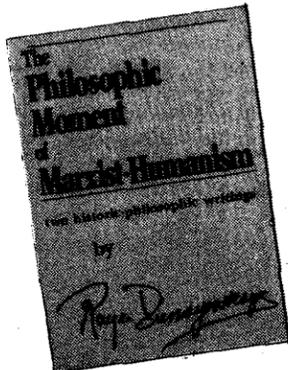
The East European upheavals of 1989-90 have certainly created freedom of expression and organization, necessary first steps toward human liberation. Yet, overall, the labor, women's and youth movements have been placed very much on the defensive, not to speak of the even more hostile ideological climate facing any who try to discuss Marx's Marxism. Even though creative activities from below continue one year after the 1989 upheavals, new exploitative ruling classes are rapidly consolidating their power.

## The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism

Explore the inseparability of the Idea of Freedom and the Self-Bringing Forth of Liberty in Raya Dunayevskaya's philosophic journey into Hegel's Absolutes.

"There truly is no separation between theory and practice, and this indeed was shown as our unique characteristic from the original 1953 breakthrough on the Absolute Idea as comprising the unity of both the movement from practice that is itself a form of theory and the movement from theory that is itself a form of philosophy and revolution."

—Raya Dunayevskaya, letter of Jan. 13, 1987



"It appears to me when objective and subjective are so interpenetrated that the preoccupation of the theoreticians and the men on the street is can we be free when what has arisen is the one-party state, the assertion of freedom, 'personal and free' and full liberation takes precedence over economics, politics, philosophy, or rather refuses to be rent asunder into three and wants to be one, the knowledge that you can be free."

—Letter of May 12, 1953

"The May 20, 1953 Letter then goes into Philosophy of Mind, where Hegel goes from the objective situation where 'freedom presents itself under the shape of necessity' in the 'form of reality' (objective world). By the time Hegel reaches the Mind Absolute, I write 'The movement is from the logical principle or theory to nature or practice and from practice not alone to theory but to the new society which is its essence.' I conclude the commentary on the paragraph #575, 576, 577 [of the Philosophy of Mind] with the declarative sentence: 'We have entered the new society.'"

—Presentation of December 29, 1985

The *Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism* contains two historic-philosophic writings by Raya Dunayevskaya: Presentation on Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy, June 1, 1987; Letters on Hegel's Absolutes, May 12 and 20, 1953.

**\$3 (hardcover \$10) + 75¢ postage**

Order from News & Letters, 59 E. Van Buren, Chicago, IL 60605

### HOW TO CONTACT NEWS & LETTERS

**CHICAGO:** 59 E. Van Buren, Rm. 707  
Chicago, IL 60605 (312-663-0839)  
Meetings held Sundays, 6:30 p.m.

**DETROIT:** P.O. Box 27205  
Detroit, MI 48227  
Thursdays, 7:00 P.M.-Central Methodist Church,  
Woodward and Adams

**OAKLAND:** P.O. Box 3345  
Oakland, CA 94609 (415-658-1448)  
Sundays, 7:00 P.M.  
3120 Shattuck Ave. (rear) Berkeley

**LOS ANGELES:** P.O. Box 29194  
Los Angeles, CA 90029  
Sundays, 6:00 P.M.-Echo Park United Methodist  
Church, 1226 N. Alvarado (north of Sunset)

**NEW YORK:** P.O. Box 196  
Grand Central Station  
New York, NY 10163 (212-663-3631)  
Sundays, 7 p.m.  
Washington Square Church  
135 W. 4th St. (East door) Manhattan

**FLINT:** P.O. Box 3384  
Flint, MI 48502

## Youth

Working youth speak out  
against 'crazy' war

by Jim Guthrie

I'll never forget a conversation among workers in a tachometer factory in the small town of Sycamore, Illinois a couple months before Saddam Hussein's tanks rolled into Kuwait and George Bush deployed his massive military build up in Saudi Arabia. An 18-year-old Latina worker was telling us that she hated working in the factory so much she was thinking of joining the army because she heard they could pay for her to go to college. Hearing this, a 21-year-old turned from his work and said adamantly, "I would never, ever, join the army." He thought for a moment then added, "It's not that I'm afraid of fighting and dying—but not for my country."

On the day after Bush dispatched troops to the Persian Gulf, I was working long hours in a salmon cannery on an Alaskan island, where we could only buy day old newspapers. By the 10 a.m. break a rumor had spread through the plant that U.S. troops were engaged in combat with Iraqi troops. The younger workers began immediately speaking out against what we thought was an actual war. Both the college students from the lower 48 states and the local working-class youth were saying that they had no intention of dying in a war over oil. By the end of the 15 minute break we were debating if it was better to avoid a possible draft by going into exile, or if you should stay home and fight against the war.

Since these two incidents I've had countless conversations with high school students, college students and young workers who tell me basically the same thing: they see no reason why they, or any other human being, should die in a war over whether Bush or Hussein controls the production of oil in the Persian Gulf. Period. A young auto mechanic told me his friends who did support the war "had to be crazy."

## THE GREATEST SOURCE OF ENERGY

How can the philosophic implications of what youth are saying against the war be made more explicit?

In the October issue of *News & Letters*, the column from Raya Dunayevskaya's Archives, "To the barbarism of war we pose the new society," singles out the leadership of the youth who are "uninhibited by traditions of old.... The youth, from their vantage point, see what the workers see on the inhuman production line: That the greatest source of energy is not technical but human."

I believe Raya has put her finger on something very profound that our generation cannot afford to ignore because it points us to a revolutionary path. By bringing out the humanism of our struggle against war and its technology, she connects us to the workers' struggle against alienated production relationships where the dead labor of machinery dominates living human beings who are forced to do repetitive, mindless, manual labor.

## CRITIQUE OF THE LEFT

This perspective also gives us the ground to critique the division between mental and manual labor within the movement. For example, at a recent city-wide anti-war coalition meeting in Chicago, when some young

people and I objected to the heavy handed undemocratic way things were being run, we were forced to listen to endless condescending speeches about "unity" and "leaving our agendas at the door."

This division between leaders (misleaders, actually) and ranks "for the sake of unity" became unbearable when we were told that any debate over who would have a chance to speak at the rally was unnecessary, and was ruled out of order because the coalition had already decided to unite around the slogan, "No blood for oil."

That a slogan as beautiful as "No blood for oil" could be dragged to such a low political ground compels us to work out the revolutionary ground needed for anti-war work. In the *News & Letters* Committees Constitution we write that opposition to war must be "based upon a vision of a new society in which they (the workers) to a man, woman, and child control their own lives. Any opposition to war which is based on less than this, must end in capitulation to the war mongers."

I would be very interested in hearing from youth on how you think we can build an anti-war movement which doesn't separate what we think from what we do; that doesn't separate our opposition to the war from the ideas we have about the kind of life we want to live, and allows us to speak for ourselves. Listening to our classmates and co-workers will be a good beginning.

## Sit-in against racism



Chicago, Ill.—As we go to press a coalition of Black, Latino and other minority students at U. of Illinois, Chicago has maintained an ongoing movement, including rallies and an all-night sit-in to protest institutional racism and sexism. Students at U. of I., Urbana, as an act of solidarity and to fight racism and sexism at their own campus, also staged a sit-in.

## Students resist racism

Oakland, Cal.—The area around San Leandro High School is old world and conservative and it doesn't like kids coming into the neighborhood. On one day in October some white students left school to go out into the neighborhood to have lunch, jaywalking as they crossed the street. When Black students went out, police ticketed them for jaywalking in an effort to prevent them from leaving the school.

Some of the students, mostly Black, but also white and Latino, surrounded a police officer to stop him from ticketing one person. Instead the cops arrested him and put him in the car, telling the others, "Don't meddle."

A white student threw a bottle at the cop and instantly 25 police cars from San Leandro and other areas showed up, and immediately cops began swinging clubs and going after Black students. Twenty-five students wound up in the hospital. Parents were upset at the way things were handled. They insisted that no police be in or around the school on Monday. The principal, Bob Oates, had called police in the first place. The parents wanted to meet with him, but he refused. Then he decided only groups of five to eight parents could meet with him, as if they were the ones needing disciplining.

I learned about the fight from some of my friends from Berkeley who are in Direct Action Against Racism. We went down to the high school on Friday thinking we were going to hand out flyers and organize the students. But when we showed up, there was a mass of students who already organized themselves. It was a sight. They were chanting and rallying in front of the school. When they saw us, they started cheering. We had stickers that said, "Stop racist police violence!" Students were sticking them on bodies, hats, themselves, everywhere. All together, including the parents, the rally forced Oates to agree to a public meeting.

We went back on Saturday for a parents meeting with the NAACP to see if we could help. They talked about investigating the principal and even suing the principal, superintendent and the police department.

—Black recent grad

## El Salvador rally

Los Angeles, Cal.—On Nov. 16 some friends and I from Cal. State participated in a march and rally at the Federal building downtown, marking a year since six Jesuit priests, their cook and her daughter, were murdered by the Salvadoran military. We closed down the building for several hours and 113 were arrested. Newspapers have said there were 400 there but there was lot more.

After a march from a nearby park, we gathered in front of the building at 8:30 a.m. and put on a skit. The murders were acted out for all to see, then the U.S. government was found guilty and everybody cheered and began to get very excited. As the skit ended, we began moving closer to the building. That's when the police told us all to move back out to the sidewalk. Even though the police had bullhorns, very few people could hear them because everyone was shouting "U.S. out of El Salvador!" at the top of their lungs. The police had riot gear on, and I remember wondering when we first got there if they were going to provoke something.

The group that was going to do civil disobedience was near me in the front of the crowd. The police put a ribbon around the doors to keep us all away, and since that had the effect we were after—closing the building—everyone moved to the side. Then they pulled the ribbon down, so we moved back in front of the doors. This happened about four times, until the police got tired of it and started arresting people. Since there were so many who were willing to get arrested, we had the building closed for three hours.

One thing I especially liked about the event was there were more Salvadorans there than usual. There seems to have been some growth in the Solidarity movement lately, due I think to the worsening conditions in El Salvador and right here. I just got involved in these activities and there are others like me. Before I left El Salvador in 1975 there was talk about all the things that are discussed today by more people interested in Central America, but I don't think anyone expected things to get as bad as they are now.

—Young Salvadoran feminist

## French H.S. students

Hundreds of thousands of high school students have taken to the streets in Paris and throughout France in a movement demanding changes in the education system—a movement which in barely four weeks has posed the government of President Mitterrand with its most serious challenge in years. The protests began in late October after a 15-year-old student was raped in a school bathroom in a working class suburb of Paris. The first protests began there and in nearby communities as students demanded more security guards.

These students later began calling for newer schools, proclaiming that schools in wealthier communities were more modern. The demands broadened and the movement developed nationwide, continuing to be composed of many working-class and immigrant students. Now, along with the material demands for smaller classes and vastly increased educational spending, students demanded freedom of speech in the schools, a greater say in how the schools are run, the right to assembly and the right to form organizations.

After the protests had gained momentum in October, Mitterrand made an offer to add about 4,000 more jobs within the schools, which the students rejected as not nearly going far enough. Not allowing these paltry measures to halt their movement, the students continued to take to the streets daily in ever increasing numbers.

The current wave of protests appears to have culminated on Nov. 8, when up to 200,000 gathered at the Place de la Bastille to march through Paris chanting slogans and carrying banners including "Money for Education, Not For War in the Gulf." About 150,000 students marched in dozens of other French towns and cities.

Though Mitterrand has attempted to appease the students, meeting with 20 student leaders and announcing a new "emergency plan," many of these leaders say they are still waiting for guarantees. Calls have been made for further demonstrations. However, it remains to be seen whether this new upsurge has already reached its highpoint or whether it will continue to develop.

—Tom Parsons

U. of Michigan protest on  
war threats, social code

Ann Arbor, Mich.—In mid-November, 25 years after the first teach-in against the Vietnam War at the University of Michigan, our campus exploded against the war in the Persian Gulf and the university's decision to deputize and arm campus security guards. The administration also imposed a code restricting social gatherings which has been enforced against Black students and not white.

The first protest was organized by Student Rights Committee, the Lesbian and Gay Rights Organizing Committee and ACT-UP. About 24 students occupied the President's office on Nov. 14. The next day there was a big rally with about 1000 people.

At one point about 100 students pushed their way into the administration lobby. When a busload of police in riot gear drove up, about 50 students surrounded the bus and sat down. The police decided to book the students occupying the President's office inside so they didn't have to carry them out into the crowd.

After the students were released, a few hundred of us spontaneously marched to the President's house and camped out. We decided to have a mass meeting the next day to hold a democratic vote, since the point of this whole movement was to promote campus democracy.

Well over 1500 came to the mass meeting, held in the street by the student union. We decided unanimously to support campus democracy in which both students and workers would have representation in administrative policy making. We also decided to hold a teach-in on the issues of deputization of security guards and campus democracy. Then there was a march through campus of 2500 people.

A teach-in sponsored by the faculty on the Persian Gulf took place Sunday, and our own teach-in was the following afternoon. Hundreds of students attended. Students had bought all the railroad chalk in town, and covered the campus all week with our slogans of, "No cops, no guns, no code."

The sessions involved everything from militarization, workers relationship to the movement for students' rights, cops harassment of women and the homeless, and the whole issue of safety. The administration said the deputization was for our safety, but guns don't stop crime. One slogan was "Guns don't stop rape," because most of the sexual assaults on campus are acquaintance rapes.

The real issue is what one university official called the need to "sanitize the diag." The diag is a center for student activism, and there are a number of shanties there that Regents call an eyesore. It's also a place where a number of homeless people hang out.

The University, trying to establish order through its own police, is the same as the U.S. trying to establish order with its military around the world. Since the teach-in, an anti-war coalition has formed and is planning future actions.

—Randall Demmon

## Our Life and Times

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

*Editor's note: As President Bush and Mexican President Salinas prepared to negotiate a free trade agreement in December, N&L received a report from a Mexican university student about the real conditions of life in Mexico today. Below we print excerpts.*

I would like to give you an idea of what has been happening lately in our Mexico. There are certain factors that reduce Mexico to an "institutional totalitarianism" giving the appearance of democracy. These factors include the following:

1) Political, economic and cultural centralism—all power is in the hands of a small group who direct the country from the capital, rather than the local representatives.

2) Institutional authoritarianism—we are made to believe, through grants, patronage and other "generous gestures," that democracy is in force. The truth is there is no such democracy. The proof of this is in the manipulation of the "Mass media" which attempts at all cost to legitimize the activities of the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party). Not one TV channel expresses freely any disagreement with the PRI without being forced to stop.

3) Presidentialism—major economic and political decisions are made exclusively by the president.

## Elections in Guatemala



Street march in Guatemala City

The November elections in Guatemala represented a contest between right-wing and ultra-right-wing candidates. The two front runners for President—Carpio and Serrano—will contend in a January run-off. Meanwhile, the military continues to be the actual power in "civilian" Guatemala.

The butcher, ex-self-proclaimed-president and retired General Rios Montt, was also a candidate until the Guatemalan courts ruled that he was ineligible because the constitution bars from office those who came to power in a coup! The U.S. is praising the elections as "democracy."

All the candidates proposed amnesty for those responsible for the 100,000 killed and the 40,000 "missing" in the Guatemalan undeclared civil war, that is, amnesty for the military and the death squads. Not a single military figure has been charged for any of these past crimes. This year alone estimates have ranged from 400 to 1,000 killed or disappeared.

An estimated 40-50% of Guatemalans did not vote.

## Mexico's 'institutional totalitarianism'

4) Associationism—although this is already falling apart, it has spent 40 years undermining any authentic democracy, which hasn't yet existed in Mexico. The PRI and its associates have cornered the market on the majority of the population, to pay tribute to the party in power.

**NONETHELESS, TODAY** there is a movement of clear discontent with the PRI on the part of some members of its associates and even some PRI affiliates. On Nov. 1, President Salinas de Gortari was interrupted 28 times during his "report from the Government" press conference, and critics later pointed out that it had been a "sudden and inadequate" attempt at securing votes for the upcoming elections. They claimed that his new Free Trade plans represent further wealth for big business, and that in the long run the country will only sink deeper in debt and the poor will get poorer.

The daily minimum wage is ridiculous—between 10,000 and 11,000 pesos (2,700 pesos equals one dollar). The newspaper, *Uno mas uno*, suggested the other day that one would have to make at least 76,000 pesos a day in order to support the most basic needs of a family! What a disparity!

Regarding the Nov. 11 elections in the state of Mexico, people have been noticeably concerned about electoral fraud—and for good reason. A few days ago fraud was detected in the elections in the state of Oahuila.

**IT'S IMPORTANT TO POINT** out that there are small groups springing up from independent unions, religious "base communities," groups which defend human rights, and neighborhood coalitions along with political opposition parties, etc., which are developing an important critical awareness of the political and economic situation in Mexico.

Those four factors generate two monsters which paralyze the economy and sterilize any potentially positive decisions.

Corruption, of which there are various kinds—the big bureaucrats who live in luxury at the expense of their subordinates, the sharing of goods and power between cronies, the pyramidal distribution of corruption throughout the system, functional corruption and bribes.

Constant inflation results from the careless decisions of businessmen, the over-caution of investors and the mythology against exportation. Mexico needs to export in order to have the currency to pay our external debt, which has already surpassed 105 billion dollars.

**SO WE ARE VERY** much politically and economically stagnant as a result of the horrendous administration and from the negative support of the United States which in every instance seeks only to satisfy its own economic interest.

The many steps necessary to create a genuine democracy are barely beginning to take place, but we are moving forward very slowly.

## Coalition government toppled in India

A spectre of renewed mass-scale killing among Hindus and Moslems in India was the immediate factor to topple the coalition government led by V.P. Singh. It was precipitated by the march of over 100,000 Hindu fundamentalists wanting to build a temple in Ayodhya, at what they rather dubiously claim is the birthplace of the Hindu Lord Ram, and which is now the site of an abandoned Moslem mosque.

Singh's successor, Chandra Shekhar, pulled off a split in the ruling Janata Dal party as the crisis in India grew.

Perhaps even more damaging to Singh was his decree in August which would have reserved 27% of government jobs for "socially and educationally backward classes." This plan would have added to the 22.5% of jobs and educational berths which are already constitutionally held out for "untouchables."

It caused a reaction from the "upper castes," mainly among students. At least 60 students had reportedly set fire to themselves in successful suicide attempts to protest this plan, which is now sitting under review in India's Supreme Court.

This period in India has also seen vicious attacks on "lower castes," minorities, tribal peoples and so-called untouchables. Right-wing Hindu fundamentalism is one part of this retrogressionism which has been able to siphon off youth protesters among the many jobless in states like Uttar Pradesh—site of the Ayodha conflict and among the poorest states in India.

Neither Singh's plan nor earlier reforms have touched the lives of millions who live under the yoke of the archaic, exploitative caste system. The 10% of Indians in the three "upper castes" have always ruled over the working people most of whom live in rural areas, where the majority are landless. A large number work as "bonded labor," a form of legal slavery.

Shekhar has recommended a course of austerity measures to cure India's economic ills. The International Monetary Fund for its part has responded by promising a preliminary loan of up to \$450 million to ease the problems of rising oil prices and shortages caused by the Middle East crisis. But it is doubtful that any amount of money can calm the explosive roots of "instability" and unrest in India.

## Ireland elects feminist

Mary Robinson was elected President of Ireland standing on a platform which champions women's rights against the political-Church establishment. She won office Nov. 9, defeating the candidate of the ruling Fianna Fail party.

While running on the left Labor Party-Workers Party ticket, Robinson is a member of neither. She has fought as a lawyer to legalize both contraception and divorce in Ireland. Women voted across party lines to elect her, including women from traditionally conservative rural districts.

Robinson proclaimed in a speech after she won that she would continue to fight for the rights of the old, the sick and the homeless, and especially the rights of women: "I congratulate the women of Ireland who instead of rocking the cradle, rocked the system."

## Dominican general strike

During a three-day general strike in the Dominican Republic in November, the workers shut down all the factories, businesses and offices throughout the whole country. This went beyond the previous recent general strike in August, which was concentrated in the large cities. (See October N&L.) This time workers went out everywhere. Some government offices tried to stay open, but there was no transportation and they had to close too. The whole nation was shut down.

The strike was organized by the unions, especially the transportation union. People went to the streets to protest against poverty, demanding that the government reduce the price of the commodities and that the president, Joaquin Balaguer, resign. Some people were hurt in the street demonstrations and some were sent to jail.

The prices of the main commodities have jumped so rapidly that most of the people are only eating one meal per day, or every other day. Many workers complain that they spend their whole salary on just two small bags of groceries.

The price of gasoline has jumped to 20 pesos/gallon, whereas the average wages of the Dominican worker are about 50 pesos/week, and the Haitian workers on the Dominican sugar plantations earn only 100 pesos per month.

The public transportation system, which is both state and privately owned, has virtually vanished, or rather, it has been transformed into a network of motorcycles which carry two and three passengers in the back seat (which is very unsafe), and many workers cannot afford even this.

Many Dominicans who live and work in the USA and then travel home to the island to see their families and bring money for them, are being forced at the airport to declare the total amount of dollars that they have brought into the country. These dollars are then converted into pesos by the government official at whatever exchange rate the thieves of the reserve bank desire to establish. A Dominican who doesn't turn over all his American money can be sent to jail.

While all this is happening, the so-called Leftist groups are talking about reformist solutions, vanguardism and forming coalitions to take control of the state and become simple state administrators. But the Dominican masses are showing their own self-organization and struggles, and they are reaching for a life beyond the imposed administrative solutions of the Leftist and union bureaucrats.

—Dominican revolutionary

## Who We Are and What We Stand For

News and Letters Committees is an organization of Marxist-Humanists that stands for the abolition of capitalism, whether in its private property form as in the U.S., or its state property form, as in Russia or 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. We have organized ourselves into a committee form of organization rather than any elitist party "to lead."

Raya Dunayevskaya (1910-87), 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. These works challenge post-Marx Marxists to return to Marx's Marxism.

The new visions of the future that Dunayevskaya left us in her work from the 1940s to the 1980s are

rooted in her rediscovery 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." The development of the Marxist-Humanism of Dunayevskaya 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*, on deposit at the Wayne State University Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs in Detroit, Michigan.

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 have 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, exploitative society, 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.