

NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

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Unemployed make capital 'competitive'



by B. Ann Lastelle

Helene Curtis on April 7 terminated 57 non-supervisory security guards. They were replaced by Pinkerton guards, who do not earn the relatively high wages nor receive the benefits Helene Curtis employees do. Management claimed this move will save one million dollars in the next year, which they will invest in the business.

The head of operations, who made the announcement at a series of employee meetings, reminded us that the key to job security is remaining competitive globally. The implied threat was that we production workers, too, could find ourselves unemployed if we didn't continue to acquire new skills and improve the production processes.

WHO IS NEXT?

The question in most people's minds was: Who is next? Business is slow, and there already are temporary workers in every department as assemblers, packers and stock handlers—the same jobs Helene Curtis employees perform. One woman told me that even during a layoff in 1984, the company continued to use day labor.

My supervisor the next morning had written at the top of our daily assignment sheet: "Work smarter, work together toward 1 common goal as a team!" The goal is production, he said at our kickoff meeting. Our priority is keeping those lines running and making rate. The whole point is that we need to improve continuously.

Whatever words corporate management, bourgeois economists or President Bill Clinton choose to use, this phenomenon is nothing more nor less than the 1990s version of what Karl Marx described in *Capital*. The development of capitalist production—the use of ever more technology and relatively fewer workers—produces an army of unemployed laborers. Once that unemployed reserve is created, the capitalists turn it to their advantage:

(Continued on page 3)

Black World

L.A. rebellion not over



by Lou Turner

Editor's note: This month I have turned my column over to Gene Ford, who spoke to a community conference in South Central Los Angeles on April 30 on the second anniversary of the 1992 Los Angeles rebellion, sponsored by the L.A. 4+ Defense Committee.

We are present today at the second anniversary celebration of the Los Angeles rebellion, a revolt which shocked and shook the governments of the world to their very foundation. It rattled the roof of the U.S. Justice Department and the White House, where even today the old cobwebs of conservative thought linger on from the Reagan-Bush era into the Clinton administration.

While the color Black continues to be revolutionary in history, the falsifiers of history have criminalized it. The government continues to push to make Black "Public Enemy #1" to take responsibility for the crisis the country is facing. The "Willie Horton" stigma has become a permanent feature haunting white America.

Six years ago the Bush campaign played upon racism and middle-class white society's fear to win the presidential election. This mystical fear has intensified with the visual image of the beating of the white trucker Reginald Denny at the corner of Florence and Normandie Ave. So that when the L.A. 4+ Defense Committee states, "Don't leave our brothers hanging," to me, it doesn't only mean hanging for what they supposedly did on April 29. Rather, it means that the system wants to use their trials to issue a death sentence on the L.A. rebellion as a whole.

This mystical fear has been transformed into a political tool of Black petty-bourgeois politicians, like Jesse Jackson, whose ideological bankruptcy has made them lose sight of the need for a mass movement. Like the white politicians who manipulate the fear of the white suburbanites, the Black politicians feed off the fear of Blacks living in the inner city—a fear of gangs, drugs and guns.

(Continued on page 8)

Mandela, ANC come to 'power' in historic election—

What next in South Africa?



Women in South Africa help a friend, too weak to walk herself, to the voting station.

by Lou Turner

"One person, one vote" has perhaps for the last time in Africa disclosed nothing short of a revolution against white domination with South Africa's (SA) first all-race elections, April 26-29. With this final act of the national independence movement envisioned by an earlier generation of men like Nelson Mandela, who will become SA's first Black president, Africa has crossed a generational rubicon. "One person, one vote" also represents the first act of a new stage of social struggle against a so-called de-racialized state.

With disciplined determination Black SA transformed a self-limiting act of bourgeois democracy, that is, casting a ballot, into an irrepressible act of freedom. Not only South Africa but the world has experienced a sea change in what we have hitherto known to be the form and substance of the modern world. For most of the twentieth century South Africa had been the quintessential bastion of white supremacy and Black degradation, a violent landscape where protest always walked in the shadow of massacre, a technologically developed outpost which still wore the visage of Hitler.

Then as if out of nowhere, and almost forgetful of the

last four years of massacres and "negotiated settlements" used by the apartheid state to forestall the inevitable, Black South Africa emerged en masse from every township and farm, from every factory and campus, from every office building and mine, from every "bantustan" and white kitchen. What had appeared over the last two decades as township marches, student demonstrations, industrial strikes and spontaneous uprisings now took on yet another organized form of resistance. When it was over and everyone returned home, the results were as undeniable as they were historic: the ANC had come to power in a government of "national unity" with a powerful electoral mandate.

POLITICAL OUTLINES OF NEW STATE

The ANC will come close to, if not exceed, the two-thirds majority needed for it to unilaterally change the provisional constitution. With the National Party (NP) of apartheid South Africa's last president, F.W. de Klerk, polling nearly a quarter of the vote, de Klerk will become one of two deputy vice-presidents under Mandela. Thabo Mbeki, South African Communist Party (SACP) politico and architect of the ANC's path to state power through "negotiated settlement" and political concessions to the Afrikaners, will likely be the ANC's choice for deputy vice-president. The most important political structure, however, will be the 27-member executive cabinet which will contain, along with the ANC and NP, representatives of any party which got at least 5% of the vote. That will include the Black right-wing Nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) of KwaZulu chief Gatsha Buthelezi, as well as the far-right Afrikaner Freedom Front, an alliance of white supremacists and neo-fascists. Mandela has also promised a cabinet seat to long-

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On the Inside

We Need Your Help To Continue!

"The most difficult of all tasks that have confronted every generation of Marxists is to work out Marx's Marxism for its age," wrote the founder of Marxist-Humanism, Raya Dunayevskaya, adding that no generation has ever faced a more difficult task than ours. Surely the contradictions have never been darker than those confronting us. The question, she said, is which kind of "darkness" will today's events prove to be—twilight or dawn?

● We confront the continuing horrors perpetrated in Bosnia that define it as the "Achilles' heel" of all of Western "civilization." We see new faces of neo-fascism arising not only in Russia and Germany but now in Italy, where the "Italian Ross Perot," business magnate Silvio Berlusconi, will for the first time include outright neo-fascists in the government. At home, we face a supposed "anti-crime" campaign that answers the problems of poverty and permanent unemployment with more and more prisons.

● Against all this, we witness a new historic moment in South Africa where the mass movement which has won the right to a vote is now striving to become the determinant for the future. We see the Zapatistas in Chiapas opening the door to a new form of worker-peasant struggle. And at home we find new battles waged by workers ranging from janitors to truck drivers. You will find all these struggles reflected in our pages.

* * *

The question is not whether the revolt will continue to upsurge from below. The question is whether that can bring the movement for freedom to daylight without us confronting the task of projecting a pathway out of today's darkness. It is that responsibility that N&L is striving to meet and that makes its survival urgent. Nowhere else can the writings of the founder of Marxist-Humanism be heard in every issue along with essays and theoretical discussions in dialogue with all the forces of revolt. Nowhere else has

any revolutionary organization responded to the myriad crises we face today by digging into a crucial study of Marx's roots in the Hegelian dialectic.

Never was it more important to keep alive and expand the circulation of a revolutionary journal like *News & Letters* where all the voices of revolt—of rank-and-file workers, women, youth, the Black dimension—can be heard unseparated from the articulation of a philosophy of revolution for our age. **BUT WE CANNOT CONTINUE WITHOUT YOUR HELP!**

* * *

We continue to have no paid staff, but our bills for rent, printing, and postage continue to soar. Today's economic crisis has hit us just as we know it has hit you. At every point since N&L began in 1955, we have been able to keep going only with the help of our readers. We turn to you again to help us pay our bills and to gain new readers:

PLEASE GIVE AS GENEROUSLY AS YOU CAN OF YOUR SUPPORT AND YOUR IDEAS! WE CANNOT CONTINUE WITHOUT THEM!

NEWS & LETTERS, 59 E. Van Buren, Room 707,
Chicago, IL 60605

Enclosed is my contribution \$_____ to help keep N&L going.

I am enclosing \$_____ for gift subscriptions (addresses enclosed).

I enclose \$_____ for the *Raya Dunayevskaya Memorial Fund* to help keep her works in print and continue the organization and presentation of her documents to *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection* at Wayne State University's Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs.

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Woman as Reason

by Terry Moon

Representatives from more than 170 countries met April 4 through 22 to ready a plan of action to be presented Sept. 5 in Cairo at the UN's third International Conference on Population and Development. What occurred there was unprecedented. Women changed the very ground of the debate from one of controlling women's fertility by any means necessary to calling for free choice in family planning, universal access to contraception, the right to safe abortion, women's equality and primary school education for all girls throughout the world.

To do this, women had to battle entrenched population experts like Princeton Professor Charles F. Westoff who warned that "a new divisive issue has surfaced: the feminist agenda." His fear was this "agenda" aimed at "making women the subjects and not the objects of population policies." Yes, exactly. And to do so women had to deepen our battle against Pope John Paul II whose allies at this conference included Islamic fundamentalists and leaders of several Latin American countries.

Women were ready. Immediately after the Vatican attacked the proposed plan of action as lacking "a clear ethical vision," of promoting abortion and of being "marked by an extremely individualistic understanding of the person and of human sexuality," a coalition of more than 25 women's groups from eight countries denounced the Vatican's "current attempts to weaken references to contraception, sterilization and abortion and to undermine women's rights both as individuals and as members and heads of households." These women rejected the Pope's sterile separation of human sexuality from the individual woman and insisted on every woman's right to control family planning, how many children to have and when, to high quality health and reproductive care and safe, affordable abortion.

Nafis Sadik of Pakistan, the executive director of the UN Population Fund and the conference secretary general, told the Pope off: "I told him there are 1 billion Catholics and 4.6 billion others in the world and the UN has to cater to all of those groups....Latin America has the highest rate of illegal abortions in the world. There is a desire to do something about fertility and they [women] are doing it any way possible....Abortion should be safe and not result in deaths." Sadik was speaking of the four million induced abortions taking place annually in Latin America, where abortion is illegal in every country but Cuba; of the 200,000 women who die every year from illegal butcher abortions and the 300,000 additional women who die each year after becoming pregnant.

It was these totally unnecessary deaths; it was the objectification of women as wombs-to-be-controlled that Westoff and his ilk call for; it was the pushing of Depo-Provera and Norplant, hormonal contraceptives that offer no protection against AIDS or other sexually transmitted diseases, and were "tested" on Third World women where follow up was often impossible, and many were coerced into taking them or simply lied to; it was these conditions that compelled women health advocates from Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, the U.S. and Western Europe to meet in September 1992 and fashion a powerful statement to help transform population policies worldwide.

The "Women's Declaration on Population Policies" was finalized by over 100 women's organizations, and over 2,000 organizations and individuals from 105 countries have signed it. Just a few sentences show the ground established by this document that helped transform the April conference: "We call for a fundamental revision in the design, structure and implementation of population policies, to foster the empowerment and well-

'New' NARAL conference

Chicago—"Reproductive Rights: A Grassroots Perspective" marked the public emergence of the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League of Illinois' (IL NARAL) educational and grassroots effort. The move to be more bottom-up rather than top-down has built over the past five years in the organization.

The topics for the conference, April 16, were chosen carefully to reinforce the expanded mission to the public at large, as well as specifically to other groups fighting battles for women's rights. Including discussion of population control politics, abuse of reproductive technologies, abortion access and lesbian parenting, the workshops reflected IL NARAL's increased work in these areas, while inviting others to the table. Malcolm X College was carefully chosen as the site to be accessible and comfortable for a wide cross section of people interested in ensuring the safety of women's health.

I cannot express enough how excited I am about the work we are doing and the foundation that is being laid that includes all women, not just those who are in circumstances that enable them to have the most safe reproductive choices. The proposal from the floor to have mini conferences already is being set in motion. The first round table is scheduled for June at the IL NARAL office at 100 E. Ohio. It will continue the excellent panel I attended on "Choosing our Families: Lesbian Parenting," an understudied and complex topic. Subsequent discussions will be held every month.

People should know that May 18 is National Call-In Day on National Health Care. Women's organizations nationwide are encouraging people to call the government. Contraception, childcare, abortion, pre- and post-natal care, PAP smears and mammograms must all be included in affordable health care for all women.

—Larra

Population debate transformed

being of all women....Women must become subjects, not objects, of any development policy and especially of population policies."¹

This movement did not begin in 1992. It began at the first International Women's Year conference in Mexico City in 1975. There, where the official delegates, one-third of them men, kept denying that women were oppressed in their countries, the important part of the conference was the unofficial body of 5,000 women who came on their own. The fruits of their determination to transform the lives of all women were seen at the UN Conference on Human Rights in 1993 where finally, after decades, women's rights were at last recognized as human rights.

What Raya Dunayevskaya wrote in 1977 of the International Women's Year conference held in Houston, Texas, singled out what was the driving force that has persisted and developed these past 20 years: "[I]t was clear that it was not what was done there at the conference that was the most important, but what remains to be done afterward. That task was recognized as the one to be done by themselves, not left to those 'above.' It was recognition of Self as social being, Women's Liberationists in action."²

1. "Women's Voices '94," Race, Poverty & the Environment, Summer 1993.
2. "TWY: where to now?" Raya Dunayevskaya, News & Letters, December 1977.

♀ Women Worldwide

by Mary Jo Grey



More than two years after Black Peruvian feminist and revolutionary activist Maria Elena Moyano was brutally murdered and then blown up in front of her children by the Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path), eight suspects have been arrested. Since Moyano's death, her supporters worked to keep her ideas alive. In late 1993, the Peruvian women's movement celebrated Latin America No Violence Against Women Day with the publication of the book, Maria Elena Moyano: In Search of Hope.

A Superior Court judge in San Diego, April 21, stopped the Center for Unplanned Pregnancy from continuing to lie to women by false advertising. The ruling bars the phony clinic from performing pregnancy tests and advertising in the yellow pages under "clinic," "abortion service provider," "birth control information" or "pregnancy options counselling." In addition, the center must tell every caller that its counselling is "from a Biblical anti-abortion perspective" and it neither performs abortions nor provides abortion referrals. Planned Parenthood hopes this ruling will trigger legal action against the more than 2,000 other bogus clinics across the country, most of whose staff have no medical training.

Iranian feminists fight fundamentalist oppression

Chicago—Shouting "Down with oppression, long live freedom!" Dr. Homa Darabi, a distinguished psychologist, set herself on fire in the streets of Tehran, Iran to protest the human rights violations of the government of the Islamic Republic (IRP), particularly those aimed at women. Darabi was fired from her teaching position at Tehran University for not observing "proper hijab" (mandatory Islamic clothing) a few years ago and her repeated requests to be reinstated were denied by the government. Darabi's death created a wave of outrage among Iranians in exile. Memorial meetings were held in a number of cities in Europe as well as in the U.S. In Chicago nearly 100 attended a memorial in which Manjeh, an Iranian feminist who was arrested and tortured by the government in the early 1980s, spoke passionately about the abuses of the IRP.

What is encouraging, however, is that in the midst of the brutal suppression by the Iranian government, a new feminist consciousness continues to grow. Shahrnush Parsipur's novel, Tuba and the Meaning of the Night (Tehran: As Asparag Press), 1989, has become the subject of tremendous interest in Iran as well as rave reviews in exile journals. The author was briefly jailed by the Is-

'Where are the women of Bosnia now?'

New York—A meeting entitled "Where are the Women of Bosnia Now?" was sponsored by Columbia University Students Against Genocide on April 6. It featured a documentary, "War Crimes Against Women," and included discussions by the film makers, a male survivor of three concentration camps, and two counselors from the Balkan Rape Crisis Response Team. While exposing the ongoing fate of thousands of raped and displaced women, the meeting also explored relationships among rape, war, violence, nationalism and feminism. Even as we spoke, we were reminded that the raping and killing continue daily.

In the film, made last year in Croatian refugee camps, women who were raped repeatedly in Serb military detention centers calmly describe the events, and then are seen interviewing other women to record their stories. The film features women who are devoting their lives to collecting evidence for a war crimes tribunal in the hopes that the truth will provoke the world to action and bring punishment to Serb leaders and soldiers. One of the two women who made the film, Karmen Jelincic, told the meeting she believes the U.S. is delaying plans for a tribunal in order to use it as a bargaining chip in its negotiations with the Serb aggressors.

In international politics, it seems, women's lives count for nothing. But the film showed that women who survived the systematic mass rapes are speaking out, no longer too ashamed, and feel compelled to fight for justice.

The other film maker, Mandy Jacobson, talked about the reason they made the movie: "Where are the voices of the women who have been raped? Why have we heard nothing in the media since the original blitz about the numbers who have been raped? The women are made to appear mute, vulnerable, nothing but victims."

THE VOICES OF RAPED WOMEN

"We asked the women there, 'What is unique about mass rape?' Each woman's experience is initially personal, but then she realizes she was raped because she is seen as the property of other men. Their own governments discuss the situation of 'our women'—property again. The women are further stigmatized and victimized by the media, who run around sticking microphones at them and asking if they were raped, and by humanitarian groups which do things like set up houses known to be for raped women only. All these things increase the distance between 'them' and 'us.'"

"Bosnian women are raising many questions," she said. "This may be the first time in history that anyone has listened to women during wartime. Women are asking, what is the connection between mass rape and violence against women in peacetime? They are struggling around issues of war and nationalism. They are organizing and working out different ways of healing themselves and getting on with their lives."

According to Rebecca of the Balkan Rape Crisis Response Team, there are 200,000-500,000 Bosnian women in Croatia alone, living in refugee camps and in relatives' overcrowded homes. They receive some care and counselling from feminist and social service organizations, but not nearly enough.

Rebecca's colleague Marie described the rapes as genocide because they destroy not only the woman but the whole community. She said most raped women lose their lovers, loathe themselves, fail to understand that their symptoms of trauma are normal, and end up isolated.

RESISTING DESPAIR

Marie deplored the fact that rape victims and the people around them, including many counselors, view rape with such despair. Other kinds of wounds, she pointed out, galvanize community support that in turn helps healing. She advised that helping women to reintegrate into their communities is the best resistance to this genocidal war. Marie blamed the international community for permitting the Bosnian genocide to persist, attributing this to its acceptance of misogyny, violence, and racism.

—Anne Jaclard

lamic Republic but continues to write and publish. Tuba deals with the lives of four generations of women in the context of 20th century Iran. Four aborted social movements form the background to the novel, beginning with the Constitutional Revolution of 1906 and ending with the guerrilla opposition movements of the 1960s and 1970s. As the country comes to grieve the lost opportunities for a more democratic and humanist society, so the women in the book have to face the reality of their unfulfilled and aborted dreams and aspirations.

A new feminist journal Zanan (Women) began publication in Tehran over a year ago, publishing moving interviews with working women, women prisoners, prostitutes and many others. The journal, which has to be very careful because of IRP censorship, has nevertheless managed to translate articles by U.S. feminist writers such as Susan Faludi. A series of articles on Islamic jurisprudence and family law attempted to present a feminist response to the mullah's conservative reading of Islamic texts. The journal even defended the rights of exiled Iranian women and has publicly asked the government why so many educated urban women have had to leave the country.

—Neda Azad

Teamster strike ends; debate begins

New York—As freight drivers returned to work Monday, May 2 after 24 days on strike, many said they didn't know much about what was in the tentative agreement. From the communication received from the International union, it seems we beat TMI (trucking management's bargaining group) on low wage part-timers. Opinions range from a Roadway driver—"There isn't much money in this agreement, but the strike wasn't over money, it was over part-timers"—to a driver from a carrier that wasn't struck—"We were sold out" (on the money, rumored to be \$1.35 over four years plus \$1.25 toward health and pension).

The International claims victory on part-timers, on TMI's "fall-back position" of \$12-an-hour casuals who currently make \$14.45, and on taking away pension and health benefits from casuals who now get them. It looks like a draw at best on the railroading of freight, another big issue in the strike. TMI currently rails 10%, wanted 35% and will get 28%. Road drivers affected must be offered a road job at another location, and only 10% of road drivers can be affected over the next four years. This is better than nothing, but it sounds like it means choosing between losing your job and uprooting your whole family to move to another state. The union also gave concessions that new hires will take longer to get to full pay, and dock casuals will be frozen at \$14.45.

A question we ask is why, if we started to win, did the union settle at this time? Could we have won more if we had stayed out longer? Why did the 400 local union leaders supposedly refuse to endorse this agreement? Some say the union settled before we lost more jobs to the non-union companies who carried the freight during the strike. One driver wondered if we settled now because after 30 days on strike they can hire scabs. Many drivers don't feel there was ever a question of scabs; there was

no way the companies could have gotten away with it.

We went into this strike knowing it would cost jobs but with no choice when faced with the demand for half-pay part-timers. In coming weeks, it is we, the members, who will vote on this agreement.

—Freight Teamster



New actions oppose lockout

Editor's note: Workers at A. E. Staley, members of Paperworkers/AIW Local 837, have been locked out since June 1993 for refusing to concede all of their rights to management. A Solidarity March for Social and Economic Justice was held on April 9, the 26th anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination while in Memphis to support striking Black sanitation workers.

Decatur, Ill.—There have always been Black workers at Staley, although not that many. Out of 760, maybe 70 are African American. A group of us got together to make the community aware of the need to stick together, get everyone involved. We do have some union members who haven't received this idea so well. They don't understand what the outreach is about. The rally showed that the purpose of our fight is not just to save unions, but for all the things we share.

Unemployment is mounting. If the union members can't find jobs and neither can their families, they are going to have to go out and find some other way to support themselves. People talk about family values, but can you afford to have family values? They talk about morals, but how moral can you afford to be if there's no money in your pocket? The 12-hour shifts Staley wants affect family life, too. The march was trying to get across how our jobs affect everything.

—Black unionist

Some new things have been happening this year with the direction of the fight against the lockout. Back in February, we blocked the gates of Staley. It was the first time we actually blocked both gates.

There was a protest against the lockout by women and children at Staley's main office building March 9. It had to do with International Women's Day. The purpose was to keep Staley in the public eye, to make people realize that our fight includes women and kids.

—Locked-out Staley worker

Vicious anti-union law

Detroit—The most vicious anti-union legislation in decades in Michigan, giving absolute dictatorial power to district school boards over teachers, was rammed through the state legislature during the latter part of April. Present Michigan law prohibits public employee strikes, but it can be enforced only if damage can be proved irreparable, thus giving teachers' unions power to negotiate contract terms. Nor does the law specify any penalties.

The new law, slated to go into effect April 1995, transforms everything and includes the following:

- Teachers will be fined a day's pay for each day on strike, and unions will be fined \$5,000 a day.
- Unions cannot even bring up for negotiation hours of work, conditions of work, length of school days, class size, non-teacher services, volunteer services, pilot programs or school academies, start or end of school years, privatization of school services, or installation of new technology.
- School boards can impose their last offer onto teachers after a 30-day period.

This last provision is so powerful that a board can set anything it wants in a contract. If teachers go on strike as a result, in a period of 30 days they'll lose some \$7,000 in wages, the union will be fined \$150,000—and they will still be forced to accept the board's last offer.

In short, the law gives each school board totalitarian control over teachers. A Detroit teacher said, "This law sends a clear message that children are expendable. There is no future for them in this society, so we should not waste money to educate them."

—Andy Phillips

Workshop Talks

(Continued from page 1)

"...[T]his surplus-population...forms a disposable industrial reserve army, that belongs to capital quite as absolutely as if the latter had bred it at its own cost. ...[I]t creates, for the changing needs of the self-expansion of capital, a mass of human material always ready for exploitation..."

"The over-work of the employed part of the working-class swells the ranks of the reserve, whilst conversely the greater pressure that the latter by its competition exerts on the former, forces these to submit to over-work and to subjugation under the dictates of capital..." Strong words! Strong words that describe exactly the cold, calculating, inhuman way capitalism operates.

SUBJUGATION MASKED

Today's industrial reserve contains many whose employment is extremely irregular and whose wages and conditions of life sink far below the average—like those day laborers who work at Helene Curtis. And the over-work of the employed, our subjugation under the dictates of capital, is masked by words like "competitiveness," "continuous improvement," "team concept," "total quality management" and "common goals."

In these oppressive and confusing times, when labor "leaders" and many workers seem intent on proving themselves essential to capital (as though capital could exist without labor), what can we do? One thing is to clear our heads about the nature of capitalism and the forms it assumes in the 1990s. Another is to search for those workers and workers' movements who are differentiating themselves from capital and from the labor "leaders," workers who are willing to declare their independence from capitalism's "common goals."

40,000 Czech trade unionists protest

by Stephen Steiger

Prague, Czech Republic—While there was a single, "united" trade union organization in the Czech Republic under the old regime, during the years following November 1989 half a dozen of them emerged—most of them without great significance because they were artificial creations of political parties. Attempts at constituting new unions, truly independent and revolutionary in spirit, out of the strike committees which played a very important role in overthrowing the Communist regime in 1989 were not successful. The "old" unions developed into a strong movement called now the Chamber of Czech and Moravian Trade Unions (CMKOS).

Three main points of contention with the parliament over amending the labor code caused a strong trade union protest: the raising of the retirement age; lifting of the ban on work agreements for a limited time period only; and allowing night work of pregnant women. A petition against the raising of the retirement age was signed by 630,000 people, yet it remained without any effect either on the lawmakers or the government.

Lobbying in the parliament proved to be both weak and ineffective. The trade unions called therefore for a massive demonstration on Prague's Old Town Square on March 22. Ridiculed by the press, the mass protest brought together about 40,000 unionists from all over the country—far more than anyone, including the unions' leaders, had expected. The parliamentarians, however, pretended the matter was wound up and could not be considered seriously any more. The demonstration can thus be held to have been only an important warning for the future.

CMKOS officials profess an "understanding" of the problems of the present period of "transformation" of the Czech society, proclaim its support of parliamentary

democracy and try to materialize the demands of the members by "peaceful" means only. Their position is weakened also by constant attacks by the media and, as any other institution that has survived the Communist regime, they have lost much of their authority with their members.

Needless to say, the newly emerging class of rapacious and ruthless businessmen is trying hard to push back the unions inside the enterprises, claiming a total "freedom" for the owner to rule his business without any restriction. Neither is the government, of course, a friend of the unions.

The CMKOS held its congress on April 8 and 9, and most of the 1,457 delegates representing 3.5 million workers were rather in a fighting mood. While none of the "radical" candidates for chairmanship was elected, the trade unions, showing their strength by mass mobilization, have unmistakably put up the sign of possible showdowns should their members feel threatened by government policy once more.

Janitors reject two-tier

Chicago—The contract between Local 25 of SEIU, which represents janitors in the downtown office buildings, and BOMA (Building Owners and Managers Association) ended April 10. The owners only want to give us a one-year contract and 25¢ raise, that's it. They want to pay newcomers only \$7 an hour. Our rate is \$10.40 now.

We just want better benefits and better working conditions. When I started working here 15 years ago, we only had to clean 2½ floors each, and now we have over four. We have to fill out reports about what time we're where and how long it takes us to do that space. I have to sit in the lobby, too, because we have to do security. Half the time I don't even have time to eat my lunch. We have to finish our work in the eight hours because they will not let us have overtime.

We pay \$75 quarterly for union dues. Some of the stewards are real idiots; they go along with the supervisors. The medical sucks and the benefits aren't too hot. It seems like every time we get a raise, the union gets a raise in dues. But if we didn't have the union, we would get pushed around a lot more and we would get less in wages. That's the only thing that's keeping me here, the money.

Local 25 is 10,000 strong. We have everybody backing us—the electricians, the elevator starters and the engineers, and from what we've heard the letter carriers will not deliver mail into the buildings if we're picketing outside. So if we do go on strike, we have all this going for us, but people are still afraid. They're afraid of losing their jobs. That's why the union is just protesting in front of the BOMA buildings right now.

—Woman janitor

Four people were laid off at a building in June of last year. It says right in the Local 25 contract that the building management isn't supposed to hire anybody new while people are still laid off. They went out anyway and hired a temporary worker for \$7 an hour. The BOMA was getting away with this even before asking us to accept it in the new contract.

I have been working 15 years in one building, but it doesn't mean anything to them. By me making \$10.40 an hour and then being laid off, they can hire someone for \$7 an hour. They want to create a stranglehold on the people.

—Janitor

Celebrate May Day the whole month

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The American Federation of Labor "was itself involved in racism with its demand for the 'Chinese Exclusion' act, not to mention racially separate locals for Negroes. Its indifference to the unskilled was to cause such isolation from the Negro that it would become impossible to organize heavy industry without breaking away from that craft union stranglehold.

"And yet in the 1880s it formed the transition from diffuse to concentrated labor struggles...it was the A.F. of L. which sent delegates to the newly formed second Marxist International and got it to approve the American suggestion for a general strike, world-wide if possible, for the eight-hour day.

"Since a similar demonstration has already been decided upon for May 1, 1889, read the International Resolution, 'this day is accepted for the international demonstration.' As we see, far from May 1 having been 'imported' from Russia, it was exported the world over by American labor."

American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard

For information on ordering this Black and labor history pamphlet, see page 7.

From the Marxist-Humanist Archives

The dialectics of labor, and the labor of dialectics

by Raya Dunayevskaya
Founder of Marxist-Humanism

August 30, 1949
Dear [Johnson],

Please forgive the disorganized form this letter will of necessity bear. I am trying to get down in rough some of the ideas which have been bobbing in my head in preparation for our discussion, and would rather it "write itself out" than wait for a logical order to give it form.

First, there are three developments in Lenin's approach to dialectics. In 1900 he is in prison where he has finished *Development of Capitalism in Russia* and he begins to read Hegel, Kant, and the "French naturalists." The result is an "organization plan" which is consummated in 1902 in *What Is To Be Done?* (This little fact ought to be worth something to us when we get down seriously into the dialectic of the party. Why did I never before note that he read philosophy just before he worked out the party?—Probably for the first time as the works "What the 'Friends of the People Are'" and *Development of Capitalism in Russia*, seem to show only a second-hand knowledge of dialectics; he mastered *Capital* and relied on Marx for his logic as well).

In 1908 he rereads and the result is *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, a certain "degeneration" you might say to have to return to elementary epistemology, but unavoidable because concretely the counter-revolution in Russia brought god-seekers right within its ranks.

[In] 1914-16 there come the magnificent philosophic notebooks and from then on nothing, absolutely nothing, fails to bear the stamp of Hegelian dialectic.¹

The more I read Lenin's notes the more I am led to the objective situation, or objective world-connections as he would call them. And the deeper I get into the dialectics, the softer I get to my "enemies": first it was Plekhanov who began to make sense, at least within the historic context; then I began to appreciate Luxemburg's attempt to find a fundamental economic cause for imperialism....I am even ready to forgive Trotsky his [theory of] permanent revolution. 1903 is such a damned important year! It was too abstract and definitely did nothing for him; but it was an expression of what the proletariat was preparing. Something was in the air. Lenin creates a category: the party. Trotsky creates a category: the permanent revolution. And in 1905 the Russian proletariat bursts forth. What they did is lost both upon Lenin and Trotsky, although the former, being the concrete "feeler," sees if not the soviets, at least the counter-revolution. Indeed the counter-revolution—"betrayal" of liberal bourgeoisie, establishment of bourgeois monarchy, penetration of bourgeois ideology into Marxist party—taught him more than the revolution. But here precisely is where hindsight should make us go back to this objective world-connection, with new sight.

At every stage in the development of capitalism (indeed in the development of humanity at all stages, but I am interested here only in capitalism) revolts occur. First they may be blind protests, but I doubt since the Luddite riots they ever were just blind. No, in each case the workers not only revolted but created a new "form" of how they would run society. It is defeated and little parts of the program "stolen." That is how capitalism moves on. This, in turn, defines the character of the labor movement. The capitalistic stamp of the labor movement is that of the defeated revolt.

Soviets arise in the first period, trade unions in the second. Let me put it another way. In the first period—in the period of revolt—the proletariat shows an entirely new mode of life, a truly human way of living, producing, enjoying. It smashes the old to smithereens and says, Here is how it should be done—soviets, not factory slavery; soviets, not bureaucratic hierarchy; soviets, not standing army; soviets, not monopoly of education. That is true in every period, long before the Russian proletariat in 1905 gave it its distinct form and class content.

For example, even as far back as the 1820s in America, the workers organized themselves simultaneously in unions and labor parties and demanded not simply higher wages but higher education, and then even when they had to compromise and organized unions, it was on the scale of Knights of Labor, that is, a social organization. The unions as a business organization reflected the stages of capitalistic production; that is, only after the defeats does the labor movement reflect the movement of capitalistic production, and that movement too is what the capitalists "stole" from

1. Lenin's *Abstract of Hegel's Science of Logic* (or simply *Logic*) can be found in *Collected Works*, Vol. 38. Appendix B of Dunayevskaya's *Marxism and Freedom* (1958) was the first published English translation of Lenin's philosophic notebooks.

Editor's introductory note

The three-way correspondence which developed among Raya Dunayevskaya, C.L.R. James, and Grace Lee (Boggs) from February 1949 to January 1951 is currently the subject of considerable attention by both scholars and left activists in the United States and in Europe. Some of this scrutiny has uncovered new moments in the struggle to re-create the Hegelian-Marxian dialectic for the post-World War II world.¹ Other recent discussions have served only to misrepresent the correspondence, without ever allowing readers a chance to examine it for themselves.

We are therefore proud to publish, for the first time, one of the more than 50 letters from that intense philosophic-political-organizational probing. All of these letters are included in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection* (#1595-1734 and #9209-9290), but none have been previously available in any widely circulated form. In future issues of *N&L*, we hope to publish other letters from this rich and historic correspondence.

When she summed up the "25 Years of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S." in 1980,² Dunayevskaya returned to 1949-1955, the period of Marxist-Humanism's birth, calling it "a new stage of production, a new stage of cognition, a new kind of organization." She wrote:

"Automation initiated a new stage in industrial production. And since our age refuses to keep the objective and the subjective in totally separate compartments, it was during that period that I was working on three things at one and the same time: 1) I was active in the Miners' General Strike of 1949-50 during the day and evening; 2) Late at night I was translating Lenin's 'Abstract of Hegel's Science of Logic,' sending these translations with covering letters to Johnson (C.L.R. James); 3) I was working on a book on 'Marxism and State-Capitalism.' These three activities led to a three-way correspondence between my-

1. See Kevin Anderson, "Lenin, Hegel and Western Marxism: From the 1920s to 1953," *Studies in Soviet Thought*, 44:79-129, 1992; Peter Hudis, "Introduction," *The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism*, *News & Letters*, 1992; and Lou Turner, "Epistemology, Absolutes and the Party: A Critical Examination of Philosophic Divergencies within the Johnson-Forest Tendency, 1948-53," *C.L.R. James: His Intellectual Legacies*, University of Massachusetts Press (forthcoming).

2. Raya Dunayevskaya, *25 Years of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S.: A History of Worldwide Revolutionary Developments*, *News & Letters*, 1980. See also "A 1980s View: The Coal Miners' General Strike of 1949-50 and the Birth of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S.," *News & Letters*, 1984.

self, Johnson, and Lee (Grace Lee Boggs)."

When the 1949-50 correspondence was penned, Dunayevskaya, James, and Lee were co-leaders of the "State-Capitalist Tendency," also called the "Johnson-Forest tendency" after the party names of C.L.R. James and Raya Dunayevskaya. So pivotal did that correspondence prove to be for the divergent future development of all three participants, that Dunayevskaya insisted:

"To grasp the divide within the State-Capitalist Tendency as it grappled with the Hegelian dialectic and the historic re-birth of Marx's Humanism, it is necessary to look at the three-way correspondence..."

The correspondence began with Dunayevskaya's translation of Lenin's 1914 study of Hegel's *Logic*, in February and March 1949, and the cover letters commenting on Lenin's work, which she sent to C.L.R. James. Dunayevskaya noted the marked differences between Lenin's views of the *Logic* and those outlined by James in his 1948 study, *Notes on Dialectics*. She called attention to the importance Lenin had placed on Hegel's Doctrine of the Notion, concluding that Lenin saw the Absolute "as the method of absolute cognition, and as criticism of all Marxists, including himself."

James did not respond to the stream of letters from Dunayevskaya until June 10, 1949, and in his discussions with Lee contended that "Lenin is more concerned with self-movement than he is with Notion." By then Dunayevskaya was absorbed in a study of Lenin before and after the 1914 philosophic writings, followed by a series of letters on "how the dialectic affected the varying structural changes in *Capital*, as well as the objective development of capitalist production from the end of the 19th century to the present."

Dunayevskaya's letter to James of August 30, 1949, which we publish here, is drawn from this latter period of the correspondence. Although James, Lee, and Dunayevskaya all agreed that it was necessary to continue the dialectical studies after 1951 by focusing on Hegel's Absolutes, only Dunayevskaya did so. In her book, *Philosophy and Revolution*, Dunayevskaya wrote that she considered her subsequent 1953 letters on Hegel's Absolutes "a new divide within Marxism between those who stopped at the economic analysis of Russia as state-capitalist and those who proceeded to develop the Humanism of Marxism for the state-capitalist age."

We look forward to the widest possible discussion of this and other letters from the 1949-50 correspondence.
Michael Flug, Marxist-Humanist Archivist

the workers. When the turbulent 1880s had gone and the heart-breaking 1890s sounded the full triumph of big capital—even then the workers rose not merely to ever higher heights, but to new horizons, new categories. Such a new category was 1905 when the Russian proletariat showed how society can look. Once that is defeated, the counter-revolution runs high not only in Tsarist Russia but on a world scale and...the genuinely capitalistic law of motion, unhampered by revolts, reveals itself and heads directly for World War I.

The pre-1914 Marxists thought that this law of collapse would bring the revolution automatically, and from then on no one need worry about socialism. I will not stop here to show that the "growing revolt" is what gave capitalism its movement (I believe it can easily be established in cooperation, manufacture, and machinofacture, and I will try to be prepared for that in the discussion) but wish merely to limit myself here to two things: (1) technology; (2) competition. Somewhere Marx says that technology sets the mode of production, etc., and this has often been repeated, but what has been forgotten is that the same paragraph states that a true history of technology would show it was not great men who discovered, but great masses. The names we all repeat in a bourgeois manner—from Watts to Edison, from Bessemer to Ford—built no foundation and Andrew Carnegie summarized the bourgeois attitude perfectly when he said, "Pioneering does not pay." Marx moreover points out that even after the discovery has been made (that I believe is in [Capital] Vol. 3) and "applied," it doesn't actually operate till after the workers in the factory have applied [it]...

(continued on page 5)

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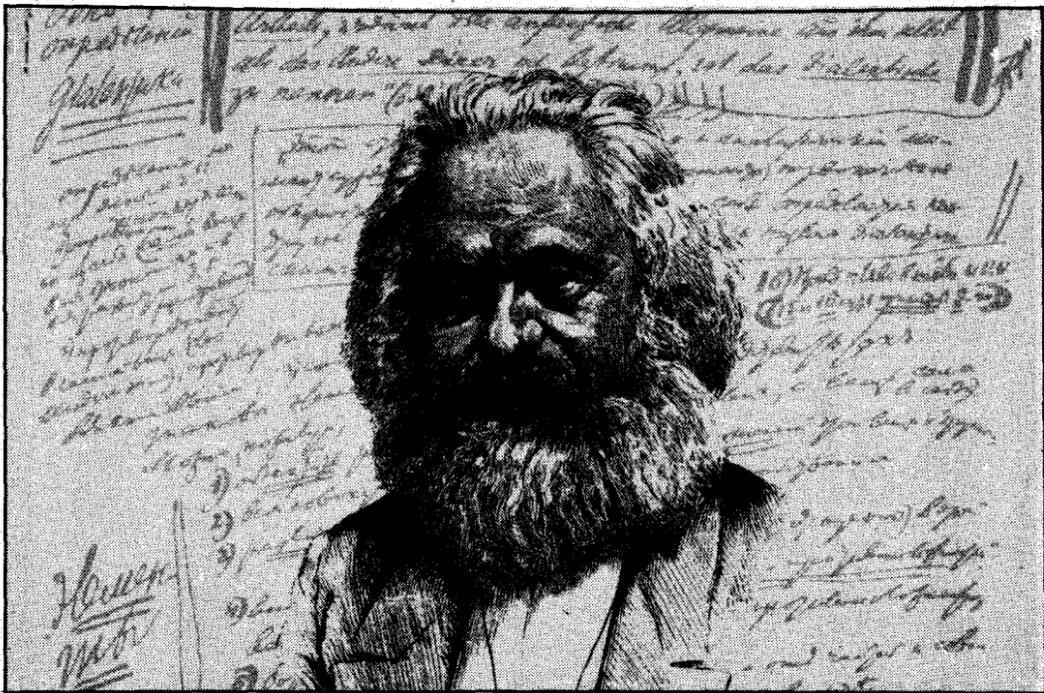
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From the Marxist-Humanist Archives

(continued from page 4)

The second thing is: When is the invention introduced? Again we have been bourgeois in our answer; we have said competition forces [the capitalist to introduce it], but Marx shows that competition is only a reflection of declining rate of profit, and it is also only a reflection of declining revolt. A labor-saving device is introduced to get rid of rebellious labor, to simplify operations so that women and children can be introduced into the factory, and meanwhile the worker is always grumbling: Why do it this stupid



way, when this way would be better....All this the great dead machine soaks up into its brain and the voice of the worker is lost. When we have worked this out completely, we will see that the growing revolt has been as much forgotten as the smashing of the state machine.

Let me add one final example in order to be able to bring in who is Marx's enemy. When capitalist production "moves on its own," it is promptly overcome by stagnation and parasitism. You see it when the Chartist movement met defeat in 1848, English production moved on to its "golden age" and sclerosis set in immediately although it did not immediately bow to "Yankee ingenuity." Now this golden age in turn corrupted the proletariat, the higher strata. Marx said they were bourgeoisified, but he ignored them and their leaders. (He went looking for lower strata instead.)

They were not the real enemy. The real enemy was Ferdinand LaSalle. Why? It is not only after the plunge to freedom that the positivist and not the reformist is the main enemy. The impatience of the calm-looking positivist to get "immediately to the absolute" means forgetting these unskilled workers and playing around with Bismarck. LaSalle saw the unions and their opportunism; he was such a "revolutionist" and abhorred [the unions] so that he even invented the theory of the iron law of wages to show they could not accomplish anything for the proletariat, while he set off to "capture" the state to bring in socialism in hot-house Bismarckian fashion. Lordy, how we keep repeating the mistakes of the past: can't you see in him Bukharin? That is the law, the law of thought and the law of activity.

I have tarried too long here and forgotten Lenin in 1914 as he moved from official Marxism to true Marxism. He clutches onto Engels's criticism of the Erfurt Program (Where were all the "loyal" Marxists in 1901 when that 1891 devastating criticism was finally published? There is something in that of the movement of capitalistic production) and especially so to the statement on concrete vs. abstract [labor]. Lenin's philosophic notebooks are permeated with that and the references are all to value and Ricardo and Hegel and Kant. Now, Marx accused Ricardo not

of being abstract, but of being "violently" so, instead of going to higher and truer abstraction. But before you can go higher, you must go lower. You must explain how the abstract theory of value works out in the concrete phenomena of the market. Don't yell: Value is the essence; price is merely the phenomenon. Show how the two unite. First, you have to introduce further distinctions into value, c/v [the proportion of constant capital to variable capital]; then you have to show that rate of surplus value and rate of profit are not identical ("violent abstraction")² but, on the contrary, the manner in which one is transformed into the other, means only value is creative of surplus value, etc. In other words, before you can explain the phenomena of the market, you must go to the higher abstraction of a theory of surplus value and you thereby have both the logical development and the concrete distinctions, opposi-

tions, and you need not "spirit away" [constant capital] but rather emphasize it. Everything lies in the how; just as how surplus value is realized showing not market but expanded reproduction, so how ratio of surplus value becomes rate of profit will show, on the one hand, [constant capital] ever expanding but producing naught, and on the other hand, value ever-shrinking but producing all that is produced.³

You say that every time you reread [Lenin's] *Imperialism* you are led to *Capital*, and every time you reread that you are led to Hegel's *Science of Logic*. Yes, and I am immensely impressed with Lenin's statement that the whole of the *Logic* must be understood before the first chapter of Marx's *Capital* can. There is movement there that not only explains the being, pre-bourgeois society; it explains the being, the essence, and notion. Marx begins [Chapter 1] with Section 1 or the dual character of commodity; then in Section 2 he deals with the essence or dual character of labor; in Section 3 he returns to being, but the forms of value are not simply cast, but rather from the elementary form of value to the universal form, he "plays" on the highly dialectical I-P-U [Individual-Particular Universal]⁴ and finally in Section 4 he deals with notion.

First he tells us that the whole fetishism arises from the form, the fantastic form which makes relations between people appear as an exchange of things. But immediately thereafter he states that the very discoverers of the theory that labor was the source of all value are as mystified by the form. Moreover, there seems to be contradiction in his materialism, a shifting of ground, when he explains Aristotle's failure to get to the common substance of all different use-values because he lived in a slave society, whereas free labor has to assume "the fixity of a popular prejudice" before you can see straight; and at the same time he says Adam Smith-David Ricardo lived in the latter type of society and still did not "understand"; only "freely associated men" can.

Now it seems to me that they did not understand precisely because they were men of Understanding—the old man you so masterfully revealed in the Nevada document.⁵ I was led to Hegel's Second Attitude to Objectivity, where Hegel shows that empiricism, in common with metaphysics, "elevates the facts included under sensation, feeling, perception into the form of general ideas, propositions or laws...Empiricism therefore labors under the delusion, if it supposes that, while analyzing the objects it leaves them as they were: it really transforms the concrete into abstract." And finally: "So long then as this sensible sphere is and continues to be for Empiricism a mere datum, we have a doctrine of bondage..."⁶

"The battle of reason is the struggle to break up the ri-

2. See Dunayevskaya's letter of Jan. 5, 1949 (#9210): "I have often quoted Marx's statement that Ricardo by a 'violent abstraction' transformed rate of surplus value into rate of profit. I would add that without showing how this was done meant the failure to work out the relation between the labor theory of value and the phenomena of the market, and so the labor theory of value flourished until Marx who was not inhibited by a 'bourgeois skin' showed the answer and thereby created his theory of surplus value." For Marx's discussion of this, see *Capital*, Vol I, chapter 11.

3. See Part IV, "Marxism: The Unity of Theory and Practice," *Marxism and Freedom*, pp. 79-149, for a full discussion by Dunayevskaya about Marx's *Capital*.

4. "Now that we are in the Doctrine of the Notion and meet its central categories of Universal, Particular, and Individual, these powerfully illuminate what Hegel intimated in the *Phenomenology*, when Absolute Knowledge 'announced' that these categories define the movement of the whole 'system,'" Dunayevskaya, "The Science of Logic, or Attitudes to Objectivity," *Philosophy and Revolution* (1973), p. 25.

5. "The Nevada Document" by J.R. Johnson was later published as C.L.R. James, *Notes on Dialectics*.

6. Hegel's *Logic*, *Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences*, para. 38 (should not be confused with Hegel's larger *Science of Logic*).

gidity to which the understanding has reduced everything." And "freely associated men," "consciously regulating" their production, seeing the future in the present can "break up the rigidity" and strip off the mystical veil...thus we get to the notion not only of the bourgeois but of the proletariat.

All this Lenin saw as he read Hegel and when he came to write *Imperialism*, he included his Critique, or attitudes of thought (classes) to objectivity (imperialism). Now the outline of the book (pp. 197-8 of *Notebooks on Imperialism*)⁷ reveals this:

- "IX. Critique of Imperialism
1. Critique—the general idea
2. Apologists (Fabians)
3. Petty bourgeois democrats
4. Kautsky vs. Hobson (Kautsky and Spectator, NB)
5. Forward or backward?
6. Free competition vs. duties, dumping, etc.
7. Export into dependent countries
8. Ultra- or inter-imperialism?
9. Political traits of imperialism (diplomacy) (reaction) (national oppression)..."

After the definition that he is here dealing with attitudes of classes to this phenomenon [of imperialism]—which is so overwhelming that not only small and middle but [even] very small capitalists have made a wholesale transition to the side of imperialism, and this moreover is true not only of the possessing classes but permeates also the working classes—he settles down to the 3 attitudes⁸; (1) Subjective idealists, or bourgeois scholars who defend imperialism and (a) obscure its complete domination and (b) its profound roots while (c) they emphasize only details and reforms. (2) Cynical, frank imperialists who admit absurdity of reforming. (3) Petty bourgeois critics, with which is merged Kautskyism who tells capitalism what it "ought" to be, the pious wish of those who, not "recognizing" the ground of imperialism is capitalism (trusts) itself, try to contrast imperialism with free competition and democracy as if it were a matter of choice [of policy] instead of the inevitable result of concentration [of capital]; that is, they forget the "qualities of imperialism."

Now I will not further stress the parallel to Hegel here, but I do wish to bring out that in the outline of this, as of all works following, is the unity of opposites and the fact that every single thing without exception can be transformed into its opposite, and only on the basis of a higher unity can the struggle for socialism continue concretely. Thus in these *Notebooks*, Lenin takes up also Pannekoek and even where he defends him against Kautsky he writes: "This formula (the struggle for socialism) is incorrect. The struggle for socialism consists of the unity of the struggle for immediate interests of workers (in correspondence to reforms) and struggle, revolutionary, for power, for expropriation of a bourgeoisie for overthrow of bourgeois government and of bourgeoisie."⁹

And so Lenin had left even Lenin of 1914 behind when he still wrote that socialization of labor "is bound to" lead to revolution...

7. Page numbers are from Russian language edition. English translation is in *Collected Works*, Vol. 39, p. 241.

8. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 285.

9. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 39, pp. 270-1.

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Rosa Luxemburg, *Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*

To order any of these works by Raya Dunayevskaya, see literature ad on page 7.

News & Letters

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MAY, 1994

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CELEBRATING MAY DAY, 1994, AS AN INTERNATIONAL DAY OF STRUGGLE

I have been a garment worker for 21 years. We are among the most exploited in the country. Our salaries are extremely low. We have no benefits. Our conditions are very bad. There is no place to eat, sometimes no drinking water, sometimes no toilet paper. Bosses frequently insult workers and sometimes hit them. Whenever we ask for something, they threaten to move our jobs to Mexico.

Of the 200,000 garment workers in the U.S. only perhaps 1% have a union. Our Committee of Garment Workers is trying to find an existing union to assist us or make us a part of their union. Our problems are not unusual, labor conditions are worsening everywhere. Workers are looking for alternatives to hunger and that is why groups like ours are forming.

Garment worker
California

Marxist-Humanism is more and more important for our society, especially in Mexico, where the political and social crisis has reached both the middle class and the poor population. The state party, the PRI, cannot contain the movement of the masses any longer. The great dinosaur refuses to die, but people are more and more aware of what's happening and want to participate in the struggle. They want the kind of democracy that is not just a word but what the whole nation is looking for.

Teacher
Mexico City

The article on Chiapas in the March issue of *News & Letters* showed many similarities with the problems of indigenous people here in India. Here there is not an armed struggle with the government but a "cold war" that might become an armed struggle. Pity that the leadership is very opportunistic.

Pilar
India

The problem inherent in the G7 job summit conference was its government-managerial nature. To successfully solve the problems they described they would not find themselves in the picture. To address the pattern of heavy overtime, they looked at a reduced work week to increase employment, but it was hardly at the top of their agenda. We weren't invited, but any real solution to the problems has to involve workers' self-management of industry. It requires new ways of thinking and living. It is futile to look to management or government to lead us to a new order. We have to look to ourselves and those we work with to find the answers to the problems imposed on us by capitalism.

Joseph Blough
Detroit

The extreme in capitalism which is coming to life today is prison labor, as in China. I don't mean the use of outright prison labor, but the fact that the whole country is a prison labor farm run for the benefit of the state-capitalist elite.

They know the soul of business and the global market and aren't afraid of Clinton's feeble appeal to human rights. Clinton's biggest opponents, as your April editorial on China points out, are right here in this country. The capitalists aren't about to let him interfere with their gold mine. China is a magnet for capital in the same way South Africa was in the 1970s under operation "tar baby," as the racist Nixon called it.

R. B.
Oakland, California

In the recent Italian general election the working class was the great absentee of the electoral campaign. What was discussed was statism and free trade, federalism and national unity, employment and solidarity, but never the class contradictions of this capitalist society. All contenders, Left included, tried to hide them, promising solutions that don't discuss the essence of this society—profit.

Italian workers can expect the colossal national debt to mean a reduction of the welfare state; the pressure of immigrant workers with their low salaries to lead to a cut in wages; work productivity growth to mean growth of unemployment. These are the real problems and this is the ground on which Marxists can act to re-create an internationalist class awareness that can change this society radically.

Iniziativa Comunista
Milan, Italy

The United Farmworkers of Washington (P.O. Box 200, Granger, Wa. 98932, 509/839-4903) is calling for a boycott of wines produced by the mainly Mexican American farmworkers at Chateau Ste Michelle and Columbia Crest vineyards. For five years they have fought the companies for union recognition. Real wages have fallen some 15% over the past five years and workers routinely put in 60 hour weeks with no overtime pay. Most earn less than what the government considers a poverty wage. The two companies are owned by UST Inc. (formerly U.S. Tobacco), among the most profitable of Fortune 500 corporations. In 1991 UST recorded a profit of more than \$400 million.

Farmworkers supporter
California

After reading *N&L*, we agree with your struggles against this capitalist, racist, sexist and exploitative society. We constitute a group that is trying to promote a distributive economy, where labor and income would be shared according to the needs of each one. In these times of unemployment, of squandering and of arming for wars, we have something to propose for a more equitable society.

Intersyndicaliste des GSED
Marseille, France

I am a college junior, studying political science and planning to do graduate work. In my studies I have come to realize that the current capitalist establishment causes racism, unequal justice, and

Readers' Views

exploitation of workers and our environment. I am interested in participating in your work. Please send me information about your organization.

Student
Illinois

FANON VS. FARRAKHAN

I thought of Lou Turner's column on Farrakhan (*March N&L*) when I was reading Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* and read this: "It was my philosophy professor, a native of the Antilles, who recalled... 'Whenever you hear anyone abuse the Jews, pay attention, because he is talking about you.' And I found he was universally right..." Turner's column showed both that this is true even when the anti-Semite is Black and how far, far away is the likes of Farrakhan from a Fanon who said: "Since I was not satisfied to be racialized, by a lucky turn of fate, I was humanized. I joined the Jew, my brother in misery."

Women's liberationist
Chicago



HEGEL'S PHENOMENOLOGY AND REALITY TODAY

Maya Jhansi's "Houston Baker's rap misses reality" (*April N&L*) reveals that there is a contradiction between postmodernism and the objective world, but she then dispels these contradictions by treating such phenomena as rap as "worked-out" categories—that is, only as negatively untrue knowledge. The danger of this is that it can very well excuse postmodernism as an "aberration" within and from capitalism, as only an image of commodity fetishism, and inversely, to make commodity fetishism only subjectivistic.

In the introduction to the *Phenomenology* (and in later sections), Hegel reveals that skepticism as untrue knowledge is nevertheless true, for its easy dismissal in a one-sided view is also skepticism, in that it does not apprehend the positive in the negative process of untrue consciousness. Postmodernism has its shortcomings (whether as skepticism, unhappy consciousness, etc.), but it is also true, i.e., determinate and objective, though it should not be conflated with an all-encompassing postmodernity. Simulation and pastiche are no less objective phenomena. But postmodern "incommensurability" cannot lead to the transcendence of the contradictions of capitalism (it is the very perverseness of capitalism), and is challenged in turn by actual freedom struggles.

Steven
Chicago

In reading the *Dunayevskaya Archives* column on Hegel's *Phenomenology* (*April N&L*) what hit me was where she discusses how Hegel identified a retrogression that happens in the movement for freedom: "You come to a certain point, and instead of really transforming reality, and giving your life for it, suddenly you begin to say, it's really Faith, and you go backward." To me, that sums up much of what is happening in the world, and in the U.S., today. There is a return to a submission to Faith, on many levels.

Reader
Los Angeles

I found thought-provoking the intersection of renewed national discussion of the great Black writer, Ralph Ellison (*Invisible Man*, 1952) and Raya Dunayevskaya's "From the Archives" (*April N&L*). Dunayevskaya refers to Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*, also written in 1952. Fanon, digging into the roots of Hegel's philosophy, enriched the implications of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind*, the section on the master-slave dialectic. Dunayevskaya identifies how Fanon criticized the section from the vantage point of the specificity of Black consciousness, which never received recognition. Dunayevskaya's own letters on Hegel's

Absolutes were first written in 1953. Reflecting on this allows one to see the affinity of Hegel's philosophy, Ellison's "fiction" and Fanon's "new humanism," both as world-historic and as integral to perspectives for a revolutionary future.

Victor Hart
New York

MARCHING AGAINST GENOCIDE

Last month a small group of women and men marched through downtown demanding that war crimes against the people of Bosnia—especially genocidal rape—be prosecuted. The demonstration was called by the Balkan Rape Trauma Response Coalition and the Balkan Women's Empowerment Project, whose members marched together with women from the Women's Action Coalition (WAC), News and Letters Committees and Bosnian refugees.

There was something almost unutterably sad about this demonstration. I felt this most strongly when we chanted: "What do we want? Justice! When do we want it? Now!" Whatever demonstration I've been on, I have always answered "Freedom!" to the question, "What do we want?" In a world where the most powerful governments turn their backs to genocide, where Gorazde was falling as we marched, it is only freedom, a new human society, that can bring justice for the dead.

Terry Moon
Chicago

We marched in downtown San Francisco on April 22 with about 400 mostly Bosnians and supporters including Students Against Genocide and others in the local Muslim community. The demonstration was organized the previous night, after the latest Serb onslaught on Gorazde, to protest the UN and NATO complicity in the genocide against the Bosnian people. Over 250,000 have already been killed. We asked: "65,000 wait to die. Does anybody care?" We cried out "Never Again" is happening again!" and demanded to "Lift the arms embargo now!" For whatever it matters, it was brought out that the arms embargo is in violation of the UN's own charter which gives people an absolute right to self defense.

Marxist-Humanist
Bay Area



WOMEN'S STRUGGLES TODAY

Some 3,500 women participated in the Fifth National Conference of Women here. There were 11 themes discussed in different workshops: Health and Population; Struggle for Survival and the Environment; New Economic Policy; Violence; Sexuality; Communalism; Politics of Organizing; Relationship of Women's Movement with Other Mass Movements; Women and the State; Single Women; Dalit and Tribal Women's Movements. There is a strong awakening of Dalit women (Harijan, which means without caste) and this was very strongly felt at the conference. The awakening of the Dalit women is important because for them to be free would mean a total uprooting.

Women's Liberationist
Bihar, India

Since Terry Moon wrote the column in the last issue on welfare being an attack on poor women, that attack is growing. The idea being floated is to do away with welfare altogether and use the money saved to build orphanages. This is the gist of a bill introduced by democrat Joseph Lieberman. It reveals a hatred of women so deep that he would tear poor women's children away from them to be raised by the state, rather than help them raise the children themselves. Once the children are gone, to hell with the mothers. They can become homeless or die or turn to prostitution!

Outraged
Bremerton, Wash.

NIXON'S BLOODY HISTORY — UNREVISED



Reprinted from
N&L, May 1972

MAD BOMBER

Nixon was a mass murderer. Clinton's disgusting eulogy for him highlights the continuity between the destruction of Cambodia and the genocide in Bosnia. What's more, Clinton has begun to echo the most sinister of revisionist historians—will he next ask us to judge Hitler on the basis of "his entire career?"

Fred
Chicago

"The reason for Nixon's trip to Peking is to see whether Mao cannot save the 1972 election for him, and after, by allowing what Nixon calls an "honorable" way out of the disastrous war which he has lost not only militarily, but also politically. And not only the world over, but especially in the U.S., where the indigenous anti-Vietnam war movement has helped create a whole new generation of revolutionaries. The immediate and long term enemy for Nixon is the American masses."
—Raya Dunayevskaya, "Nixon and Mao Aim To Throttle Social Revolution," Sept. 4, 1971

IMPRISONING AMERICA'S FUTURE



The caning of the kid in Singapore is a bigger issue than just punishing an 18-year-old white boy for spray painting some cars. People in the U.S. are saying we should cane people here. Beating someone with a cane is torture. The Black man got beat like that 100 years ago. It won't cut down on crime here. People who want corporal punishment here are afraid of the youth. They think we are all out to rape and kill. They say we have no feeling, no remorse. Some crimes are committed by young people. But the military killed Arab babies in the Middle East. We live in a violent world. We didn't create it but we get the blame. Adults are afraid of us because they don't want to look at themselves and say "democracy" and "free trade" don't work. We are the ones with no jobs and no future, nothing to look at and say, "I'm going to be somebody when I grow up." All we have in our future is jail.

16-year-old Black youth
Oakland, California

I recently had to appear before a judge because I was convicted for carrying a concealed weapon. I was carrying this gun because my life had been threatened several times and I felt I had to defend myself. All of this was due to my active defending of the brothers arrested after the L.A. rebellion of April 29, 1992. The judge was going to put me in jail because I had not yet started the community service my conviction required, since you have to pay \$50 just to start your community service.

I haven't held down a paying job since July of 1992 when my brother was arrested. I've spent full time on the defense of the brothers arrested after the rebellion. I used to try to work for the establishment but they never wanted me. Now I can't imagine going to work for the white establishment. My whole

life has changed since the rebellion. I think differently. I want different things for my life, real freedom and justice for all oppressed people. (By the way the judge did waive the fee so I've started my community service.)

Active Participant
South Central, L.A.

Jim Mills' lead in the April issue on "Clinton's criminal code imprisons America's future" correctly called the Clinton administration "Reaganism's 'New Democrats.'" It could be seen clearly at an event at Cal State-L.A. Billed as a "Town Hall" meeting, the event featured Attorney General Janet Reno, Senator Diane Feinstein, and nearly 20 other police chiefs and district attorneys, trying to sell Clinton's crime bill. The audience was not allowed to speak.

Student protesters carried banners saying "Reno gambles with our lives," and "Congress is the real gang of criminals," and held their own rally outside. Several students spoke up against building more jails, and against community policing as totalitarianism. When campus police rushed in to stop the rally by confiscating the sound system, the students began marching around the campus.

Cyrus Noveen
Los Angeles

My son was recently picked up by the Los Angeles Police and charged with murder. They are trying to frame him for something he had nothing to do with. He's never been in trouble before, but now they're trying to label him a gang member. Before this happened, I didn't realize how often this goes on. Now I'm seeing how broad the scope is. You realize it's not just your own personal problem. It's an epidemic. This battle is much larger than I ever imagined. In the situation today, the police don't belong to us, the people, but we belong to the police, and are totally under their control.

African-American mother
Los Angeles

In general, I thought the analyses of both the anti-crime campaign and welfare "reform" in the April N&L were excellent. But both articles neglected to

consider the government's attack on the "underclass" as part of its attack on the working class as a whole. The ideological campaign to turn the "underclass" into villains stems not only from capitalism's inability to solve its social crises, but also from a strategy to divide the "working class" and the "underclass" and thus conquer both. It is our responsibility to let employed, white, and male workers know that the attack is against them, too, and so they had better not buy into it.

Professor
New York

SPEAKING AND BEING 'OUT'

On the self-aggrandizing nature of the white, mainstream, Gay and Lesbian movement: One of the things that people didn't understand in that movement is that being "out" is not simply a statement of self-righteousness. It should be a statement of solidarity, a connection to other people. That got lost somewhere in the shuffle. In fact, solidarity in general has been lost in the shuffle. That's one of the problems that we're facing right now.

Jennifer R.
California

In Mississippi, terrorism is going on against people who speak out and against the lesbians at Camp Sister Spirit. Recently someone shot five shots over my head. Another man who shot at us was charged only with harassment, because women's lives aren't worth anything there. The purpose of the camp is to teach women's studies and organizing, but the neighbors are suing to shut us down. They say we'll cause divorces! We're securing the camp and we're going to protect it. You are all invited to visit.

A.G.
Mississippi

ENVIRONMENTALISM'S DEBATES

What I found most important in Franklin Dmitryev's essay on debates within the environmental movement (April N&L) is that he disclosed why so many environmentalists say we need to live within nature-imposed limits. It is not because they've actually identified

any fixed barriers we cannot transcend, but because they equate human power with its present alienated form—the power of capital—and cannot envision a non-destructive-but-human relation to nature. They would therefore substitute, for the present domination of things over people, a different form of the same thing.

This debate has an important parallel in Marx's analysis of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall. Against Ricardo's contention that the falling rate is due to a natural limit (falling productivity stemming from the diminishing fertility of the soil), Marx demonstrated that under capitalism the rate of profit tends to fall despite, and because of, rising labor productivity. Many of today's environmentalists fail to see that the power of capital is not only self-expanding, but self-limiting and self-destructive.

A. Anielewicz
New York

MULTICULTURALISM

It was unfortunate that John Alan entitled his recent column "Multiculturalism excuses status quo." The only evidence offered in defense of this extreme position was the work of Jerry Herron, who critiques assembly line production, not for the way it disciplines workers but rather for its tendency to repress the expression of ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity on the part of workers. But in what sense can the particular views of Herron be generalized into a critique of "multiculturalism"? Would N&L look kindly on those who generalize the failings of particular Marxists into an attack on "Marxism"?

Alan is correct that "neither culture nor racism are autonomous social phenomena, but are 'spiritual' manifestations of America's commodity-producing society." Clearly, the nature of commodity production is to homogenize cultural differences by reducing the varied expressions of concrete labor to its total opposite—abstract labor. In this sense, would it not be just as correct to say that criticism of "multiculturalism" excuses the status quo?

Revolutionary Marxist
Chicago

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Black/Red View

West's murky intellectualism

by John Alan

Race Matters, a collection of essays by Cornel West on race, originally published in small liberal/left periodicals, became a best seller when it was published in hard cover in 1993. It has achieved instant notoriety because of the favorable reception it got from President Clinton and Pat Robertson, the "Moral Majority" religious leader. This year Vintage Books published a paperback edition of **Race Matters** with a new epilogue by West.

PITFALLS OF 'MORAL REASONING'

Why do so many middle-class white and Black Americans share an easy identification with West's thoughts on the nature of racism, poverty and social dislocation in this country? On these burning issues West has nothing fundamentally new to say, nor does he ever get to the essence of these problems. A partial answer to this question is that the basic concern of the book is how to harmonize all race and class antagonisms through what West calls "moral reasoning."

Henry Louis Gates Jr. was correct when he characterized Cornel West as "our Black Jeremiah." **Race Matters** is indeed a sermon. West wants to save the democratic ideal of the U.S. as a multicultural society from the imminent threat of "nihilism in Black America." So his sermon to middle-class America is: Black nihilism is created by America's "...market-inspired way of life over all others and thereby edge out non-market values—love, care, service to others..." And it is "the predominance of this way of life among those living in poverty-ridden conditions, with limited capacity to ward off self-contempt and self-hatred, that results in the possible triumph of the nihilistic threat in black America."

West depicts the masses of poor Black people in the inner city slums as being a mass of humanity living in the "murky waters of despair and dread that now flood the streets of black America." They are a people filled with self-hatred because they have lost their culture in a market driven economy.

When West's hopeless humanity rebels, as they did in Los Angeles, he describes the event as a "multi-racial, trans-class" event with elements of an "adolescent carnival" and "barbaric behavior." West, the self-conscious moralist, understands Black urban protest as simply an emotional event lacking conscious reasoning. He thus separates himself from the historic and ongoing African-American struggles for freedom in this country.

Cornel West's "moral reasoning," that is, his moral view of racism in the U.S., places him outside these struggles and at the same time in a position where he can equally blame liberals, conservatives and Black leaders for "concealing the nihilism in black America." No doubt, this moral view has a powerful attraction in a country like the U.S., where race is a violable social division. It places the responsibility for "nihilism in Black America" upon everyone and not on the capitalist nature of U.S. society.

THREAT OF INTELLECTUAL NIHILISM

Why on earth did Cornel West create such a phantom category as "Nihilism in Black America" and offer as its opposite the category "moral reasoning"? We don't know for sure, but he did project an abstract image of "good and evil."

West writes: "Nihilism is to be understood here not as philosophic doctrine that there are no rational grounds for legitimate standards of authority; it is far more, the lived experience of coping with a life of horrifying meaninglessness, hopelessness and (most important) lovelessness" (pp. 22-23).

Here West could be speaking about the absolute alienation of Blacks from U.S. society or their absurd exist-

Aristide hits U.S. Haiti policy

Berkeley, Cal.—Sunday, April 17 the Graduate Theological Union at Cal-Berkeley hosted the legally elected Haitian President, Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Several thousand people came, completely overwhelming the capacity of the church. Before Aristide spoke, we heard from different people: a survivor of the Tontons Macoutes, a U.S. woman who went to Haiti to be a witness, and others who have been working with Haitian refugees. There were repeated appeals to get active again on this issue. Aristide spoke on "Spirituality and politics in Haiti." He sharply criticized President Clinton for breaking his promise to change Bush's policy, which candidate Clinton called "criminal" during his campaign.

Aristide presented his election on Dec. 16, 1990 in Haiti as people saying "no" to politicians who lied. From February 1991 to September 1991, while he was in power, the military had to show respect for human rights and people were flocking back to Haiti! On Aug. 19, 1991 he signed a treaty with Dan Quayle to fight drug trafficking. Within a month he was overthrown. Since the coup, five million tons of drugs per year pass through Haiti on their way to the U.S.

Aristide said, "We are not rich. We were moving from misery to poverty with dignity." You don't want to welcome Haitian refugees in Miami? Great! Help restore democracy in Haiti and people will go back! He described the situation in Haiti now as a "house on fire," with the Coast Guard surrounding it, sending people back into the fire. It is a crime! Haiti helped the U.S. fight for its independence. In the same way Haiti would welcome help to free it again. The spirit of the whole talk was that Aristide sees as his allies not governments, but the thousands of people like those who came to support him here.

—Participant

tence within it. However, there is no ambiguity about "nihilism" in the U.S. middle-class mind; they have long had an ideological conception of nihilism as an active doctrine of destruction and terror. This was the image in the mind of suburban America at the time of the Los Angeles rebellion. West can't remove that image by saying that the rebellion had nothing to do with race or class.

West's moral view of the race crisis in the U.S. is built on what Hegel, quoting Kant, called "a whole nest of thoughtless contradictions." These contradictions come into being, writes Hegel, because moral consciousness "places the object outside of itself as a beyond of itself." An example is West's critique of the "racial reasoning" on the part of Black leadership during the Clarence Thomas/Anita Hill hearings. The Black leadership practiced "racial reasoning" instead of "moral reasoning" when they failed to view both Thomas and Hill as "two black Republican conservative supporters of some of the most vicious policies to besiege black working and poor communities since Jim and Jane Crow segregation."

This lumping together Thomas and Hill escapes all objectivity because moral consciousness really has no object of its own.

Black World

(Continued from page 1)

Jesse Jackson has turned snitch with his tailending of Bill Clinton's crime policy: "Up with hope, down with dope," and support your local murderous police department. This is not going to change the social and economic conditions which brought forth the rebellion with its flames and bricks, which also exposed the self-destructive mentality of some of our people. Our consciousness was split open and laid bare.

For that concept of who we are to change there must be a movement toward a new consciousness of self, a movement toward a new humanity, a new reality. That is why, as a Marxist-Humanist, I would call for a philosophy of revolution so that the thought and reason of the masses can fully develop.

While rage alone can be suppressed one way or another by the standing army, the consciousness within Black rage should reflect not alone what must be destroyed under capitalism, but also the creative side of the human being actively fighting for freedom.

Where does our creative side blow up, expand, demand to be heard? Has the voice of the L.A. rebellion been heard, or smothered? In other words, today's forum should be a forum for those voices to be heard.

After the L.A. rebellion, the state has offered only the raw rifle butt and the police baton as the solutions to social problems it thinks can be locked up forever. The actions of politicians, Black and white, leads to the conclusion that they are out to criminalize the whole Black community. More police is their "final solution."

So when we search for the meaning of the L.A. rebellion, we have to dig deep into the roots of the cause of the rebellion itself; listen to the voice of those who fought with the passion of self-destructive rage and creative energy over those three days of revolt.

Many say the rebellion was sparked by the 1992 acquittal of the four L.A. police officers charged in the beating of Rodney King. There was no one cause of the rebellion, but many, including the whole social upheaval of Black youth. At the beginning of the rebellion there were many who did not even know of the verdict in the Rodney King beating case. It was police abuse which instigated the rebellion and the hunger for recognition by Black youth.

The LAPD was not able to suppress the rebellion at its beginning because there were so many Florence-and-Normandies happening over the city simultaneously. The rebellion was not on one street corner alone.

It reminds me of the slave revolts of the 1830s that were thought to be inspired by Nat Turner's 1831 insurrection. After his capture, Nat Turner was asked how he had carried out slave rebellions in slave states far from his state of Virginia. He answered that he had no prior knowledge of the revolts, but felt that the same idea of freedom that he felt was transmitted not just through him but affected many others trapped in the Black skin of slavery.

The spirit of rebellion is not a planned out event but takes on a natural organizational form which captures the mood of the times and becomes a historic moment when it does capture the new by which history is made. We can characterize these revolts in the way that Nat Turner's South Hampton slave revolt was characterized: the "touch of the rock which called the water forth" producing the American Civil War.

I think the meaning of the L.A. rebellion is that a flood is coming—it ain't over yet. But the problem lies not in the rebelliousness of the masses but in the fact that the masses cannot shoulder the whole burden alone of actively working out the theory of the rebellion. Those of us who call ourselves revolutionaries must help.

—Gene Ford



Ralph Ellison (1914-1994)

Ralph Ellison, the African-American novelist and essayist, died on April 16. He was the author of **Invisible Man** and many essays on African-American culture and its complex interrelationship with the general U.S. culture. Ellison's place, in the context of Black writers like James Baldwin, comes after Richard Wright and before the present generation of Black men and women writers who are now exploring the anguish and alienation of African Americans either during the post-Reconstruction period or in the present urban Black ghettos.

When **Invisible Man** appeared in print in 1952, Ellison was immediately acclaimed by critics to be a major American novelist for bringing into the U.S. novel a unique and daring theme on the nature of U.S. racism as it appears in the experience and consciousness of an unnamed Black character. The sole purpose of Ellison's hero was to maintain the shaky independence of his humanity against those who would make an object of it by subjecting it to the interests, goals and ideas antithetical to its reality.

Ellison's character encounters many moments of truth in the experience of his endangered humanity. Some are terrifying and vicious, as when the character endures the wrath and betrayal of the Black president of the college he attends, because he had unintentionally revealed to a white philanthropist the ugly reality of the Black poverty and social dissolution surrounding the college. Other moments are complex and confusing, as when the character becomes a respected member of the BROTHERHOOD, a "multiracial rainbow organization" where Black reality is treated as a subversive topic.

Although Ellison's non-hero retreats to an existential hole in the ground to speculate about his alienated existence and the possibility of transcending it, he does send from that hole a powerful message that Black consciousness of self, in the midst of the deteriorating reality of inner city life, can be the beginning of a human America. Because of this message, today's Black and white Americans should hasten to read **Invisible Man!** —John Alan

Fight for prisoners' rights

New York—Andrea Gibbs, a former deputy sheriff who blew the whistle on prison conditions in Mississippi, spoke recently at WAC (Women's Action Coalition). Gibbs was fired two years ago for protesting the mistreatment of prisoners; WAC ran a letter-writing campaign to help bring attention to her cause. Today she works for prisoners' rights with a group called Victim's Voice. The following are excerpts from her remarks:

"Last year when Ben Chaney and I organized public hearings on the large number of so-called suicides in the Mississippi jails, I was able to bring mothers and fathers of the victims to speak. Now Attorney General Janet Reno has sent nine investigators to Mississippi. They have closed eight out of 18 jails as unfit and ordered reforms in the others. All the prisons had to discontinue the 'hole,' which was just that, a torture chamber. But I don't have any illusions that the federal government will stop all the problems.

"The phony suicides continue to take place. This summer is the 30th anniversary of Mississippi Freedom Summer, and Black people are still being hanged, only today they are hanged from steel bars instead of trees. The problem is not only in Mississippi; I get calls from mothers all over the country who have lost children in jail. We help families get autopsies, we videotape the doctors as they do them, and we help pay for funerals.

"Mississippi practices economic terrorism too. If you are not a white man, you are limited in everything you can do. I think the Civil Rights Movement can be born again. You can't keep people down so long without their fighting back. The more the authorities tried to stop me from speaking out, the madder I got, and I tried everything I could until I got heard.

"I'd like the whole world to find out about prison conditions in this country. They are not so different from conditions in El Salvador. Why are we building more prisons and ignoring rehabilitation? The good people in law enforcement are run out and the bad ones have the power. People don't know what is going on until the papers publish it, and then people say, how can they treat human beings this way?"

—WAC member

Spark of L.A. rebellion

South Central, Los Angeles—I think it's very important for people to understand what really started the blowup at Florence and Normandie. What began the anger was that many Los Angeles Police Department cars came to 71st and Normandie (one block from Florence) at about 3:30 p.m. on the 29th of April, 1992. The police began harassing all the young men at the corner. They began to beat up one young man and his mother, and many neighbors ran over to try to stop the beating.

The police then arrested three of the men including my older son Damian. After this horrible experience everyone in the neighborhood was running around crying and saying, "They beat Rodney King and got off and now they're over here doing the same thing."

This is what sparked Florence and Normandie, the injustice of it all, including the murder of Latasha Harlins. The justice system has no justice in it. The whole community, both Black and Latin, were just fed up with this system. It still is. It's time for the community to work together to change this world.

—Georgianna Williams, Co-founder, LA4+ Defense Committee

Editorial

The West's studied disregard for Bosnia

The collective response by the U.S., the UN and NATO toward the murderous Serbian siege of Gorazde over the past month has once again shown that the only "principle" governing their response to events in Bosnia is the effort to maintain the "credibility" of the Western alliance. The actual struggles and sufferings of the Bosnian people count for little or nothing in their eyes.

Indeed, despite the threats of military intervention and talk of a negotiated settlement, recent events confirm that the Western powers long ago resigned themselves to a Serbian victory in Bosnia.

U.S. GREEN LIGHT TO SERB AGGRESSION

That sentiment was openly voiced in early April, when Secretary of Defense William Perry stated that the U.S. would not prevent the Serbs from overrunning Gorazde. As if on cue, the Serbian forces intensified their murderous attacks on the city, as part of their effort to "cleanse" Eastern Bosnia of its remaining Muslims.

In an effort to calm the embarrassment caused by so brazenly giving the green light to Serbian-induced genocide, Clinton soon afterward ordered a limited NATO air strike on Serbian positions. When the Serbs responded by intensifying their attack on Gorazde, Clinton found himself having to answer why "the world's most powerful alliance" could not stop Serbia. If the Serbs could so thumb their noses at U.S. military might, many asked, what would prevent more serious adversaries elsewhere from doing so? The very credibility of the Western alliance was called into question.

In response, Clinton got the European powers and Russia to threaten a massive aerial attack on Serbian positions unless their forces withdrew from Gorazde. He also called for Gorazde, as well as the besieged towns of

Srebrenica, Tuzla, Zupa and Bihac, to come under the same UN pledge of "protection" that Sarajevo received back in February. The Serbs have gone along with the plan for now and withdrawn from Gorazde, though they continue to attack areas like Brcko and Maglaj.

Yet the U.S./UN plan to extend the Sarajevo "solution" to cities such as Gorazde hardly poses a serious challenge to the Serbs. Serbian forces still surround these cities, preventing movement in and out of them. The UN insists that the Bosnians must not attack the Serbian positions; if they do, the UN will consider them "aggressors." The present situation thus brings us back full circle to what the West proposed a year ago: the UN will "protect" some "safe havens" in which the Muslim victims of "ethnic cleansing" will be ghettoized, thus allowing the Serbs to secure their basic war aim—the destruction of Bosnia's multi-ethnic heritage.

A statement of one resident of Sarajevo (recently quoted by Bosnian journalist Zlatko Dizdarevic) exposed the nature of these "safe havens": "I don't know myself what to do with all this 'freedom.' I've been liberated from my job, I'm liberated from food and drink, I'm liberated from traveling, I've even been liberated from the hope that things will ever change."

'CREDIBILITY' OF WESTERN ALLIANCE

The truth is that throughout this crisis the Western powers have acceded to the fundamental aim of the Serbs. After slapping an arms embargo on the Bosnians and ignoring the cries of the victims of genocide, they turned their attention to Bosnia only after events there called into question the credibility of the Western alliance. Yet even after his recent threat to use military force, Clinton insisted his aim is not to roll back the

gains made by Serbian aggression.

The West's attitude was summed up by the UN commander in Bosnia, Michael Rose, who criticized the Bosnian government for "exaggerating" the extent of the Serb attacks on Gorazde. In May the UN took the unconscionable step of providing safe passage through Sarajevo to Serbian tanks en-route to another war front.

That the U.S. and other state powers do not see their role as stopping Serbian genocide should come as no surprise. The U.S. waged a vicious war against Iraq, but allowed Saddam Hussein to exterminate tens of thousands of Marsh Arabs. It invaded Panama to get rid of Noriega, but it has done nothing to aid the Haitian masses. Whether it be the period of World War II or today, capitalist states never act out of deference to the victims of genocide. To expect otherwise of them now is sheer illusion.

Yet it is a surprise that opponents of capitalism from the Left have been so silent and inactive on the issue of Bosnia. This has allowed the right wing to set the ground of discussion on Bosnia, with war-hawks like Jean Kirkpatrick and George Shultz calling for U.S. military intervention. These architects of genocidal policies in El Salvador, East Timor and elsewhere may feign interest in Bosnia, but their real agenda is the reassertion of U.S. imperial might overseas.

In opposing U.S. policy on this issue, we long ago called for lifting the arms embargo on Bosnia. But we did not limit ourselves to that. We also called for the development of independent grassroots initiatives to aid the Bosnian people and the creation of a dialogue on ideas of freedom that could help break through the "mind-forged manacles" which have led so many to remain silent on this issue. This has become only more important today.

May 2, 1994

What next for South Africa as Mandela, ANC come to 'power'?

(Continued from page 1)

time ANC's nationalist rival Pan-African Congress (PAC).

The 400 seat Constituent Assembly was elected on the national level, while regional provinces were elected on a separate ballot. The separate provincial ballot was a concession the ANC made to the far right in a bid to get them to participate in the elections. At the local level, the interim constitution reserves 30% of local council seats for existing white authority, while a Feb. 22 amendment to the constitution (endorsing the principle of "self-determination" for whites that provides them a statutory *volkstaatsraad* or homeland council) allows the far right to pursue a *volkstaat* after the election.

Several such concessions were made to Buthelezi's IFP, along with assuring the KwaZulu bureaucracy that it would remain intact after the election. From ANC concessions and assurances made before the election, we know then that 1) the far-right Freedom Front will have a cabinet seat, with possibly 20 seats in the Assembly and autonomous *volkstaatsraads* in right-wing strongholds like Transvaal and the Orange Free State; 2) Mandela has assured the IFP a senior seat in the Cabinet, and it can expect autonomous status in Natal Province, with more than 20 seats in the Assembly; and 3) most importantly, de Klerk's NP will probably hold Cabinet portfolios for the all-important finance, agriculture, mining and security ministries.

SA'S RESTRUCTURED ECONOMY

Though these factors will play a significant role in the future development of post-election SA, they do not constitute its major contradictions. To comprehend these there are three primary areas we need to examine: 1) the restructuring of the South African economy now underway; 2) the present state and disposition of those social forces that made up the "mass democratic movement" over the last two decades; and 3) the current disorientation of the Left.

Judge Johann Kriegler, the head of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), mused enthusiastically on the eve of the election that SA stood on the verge of finally realizing its historic mission of being the "economic engine-house of Africa." Fantastic as it sounds coming from the mouth of a white Afrikaner, the notion of a liberated South Africa becoming the economic engine of independent Africa had long been a unifying force within the continent-wide movement for African unity. That the Afrikaner elite now see it as its mission intimates not only how changed the world really is, but reveals in no uncertain terms exactly who will control the commanding heights of the economy, both state and private.

What Mandela described to a group of businessmen in western Transvaal earlier in the year, namely, that the economy is in a mess, with no economic growth since 1991, with foreign investments constantly declining, with some 18 million people living below the poverty line, and 48% unemployed, is probably what prompts the ANC to entertain the neoliberal illusion that SA's economy can be "democratized." No doubt that is what led Tokyo Sexwale, chairman of the ANC's most powerful Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging (PWV) region, to make the fantastic assertion that "The struggle has been to liberate the market!"

FROM RESISTANCE TO 'RECONSTRUCTION'

The last four years of restructuring have produced two contradictory phenomena within SA's Black labor force. First, a new high and permanent stage of unemployment has exacerbated the already wrenching social dislocations within the Black townships. In the steel and engi-

neering industry alone the number of jobs have fallen from 450,000 to the current low of 180,000 in the last decade.

The second consequence of the restructuring of the SA economy is the new bureaucratization of significant sectors of organized labor, especially key trade union affiliates of COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions), which has 1.2 million members. It is this crucial sector of the economy which has economic analysts and ANC planners blissful about SA's future prospects. As one such enthusiast extolled, the prospects of SA's economic recovery can be measured by its "booming stock exchange, and a 4.5% increase in gross domestic fixed investment," as well as a drop in corporate taxes and a fall in real wages and real interest rates.

The new economic structural reality finds SA's trade union movement, both COSATU and NACTU (National Council of Trade Union [with 335,000 members]), in the midst of a historic and strategic shift "from resistance to economic reconstruction." This shift to so-called "strategic unionism" is supposed to signify that "unions, like managements, make production an imperative, on the understanding that improved economic viability is better for their membership. But this takes the unions into areas of decision-making which would pit them against the short-term needs of their members, in the belief (it is not a certainty) that they are implementing strategies with long-term benefits" (Southern Africa Report, April 8, 1994, p. 8).

The new tripartite structure of labor, capital and the state has made shopfloor leadership uneasy about COSATU's "concurrence with the ANC on the need to achieve 'macro-economic balance.' It fears that workers in the new SA will find their wage and work condition demands stymied on the grounds that they are upsetting macro-economic balances" (p. 8). As two COSATU left dissidents explained, regarding the ANC/COSATU "Reconstruction and Development Program" (RDP): "The political arithmetic, when it comes to paying for the RDP, is clear.

"Wage restraints + strict monetary policies + eternal co-operative partnership between capital and labor + achieve higher levels of profitability + government expenditure within existing constraints = the workers will pay" (SA Labour Bulletin, September-October, 1993, p. 86).

The greatest organizational problem stemming from the new economic restructuring is that the trend toward "strategic unionism" centralized bargaining and the provisions of the RDP restricting workers' right to strike for the sole purpose of collective bargaining have opened up a gap between union leadership and the rank-and-file. Should that gap continue to widen (and there's no reason to assume that it won't), then Mandela's advice to a COSATU Congress back in September may become a self-fulfilling prophecy: "How many times has a labor movement supported a liberation movement, only to find itself betrayed on the day of liberation? There are many examples of this in Africa. If the ANC government does not deliver the goods you must do to it what you did to the apartheid regime" (SA Labour Bulletin, p. 19).

WHERE IS THE LEFT?

Black youth are the one social force in SA sure to act on Mandela's advice. The mass unemployment, the education crisis, the social violence which is incredibly more pervasive than the political violence on which the media is so fixated, and the mass disillusionment over the direction in which the ANC has taken the liberation movement have all contributed to the creation of a so-called "lost" generation of Black youth.

Face-to-face with this new tripartite reality of social dislocation, economic restructuring and Black political state power, where finally is the Left to be found? Despite the questions raised by such independent socialist thinkers as Colin Bundy and Neville Alexander about the role of the Left in the wake of the collapse of what Bundy calls "actually-existing Stalinism," the single crucial question that pertains to the contradictory character of SA's "mass democratic struggle" of the last four years seems to have been avoided.

More than any other arena of social struggle of the last 20 years, SA has disclosed the problematic of the "dialectics of organization and philosophy" for the revolutionary movement. For nowhere has mass creativity in organizing civil society along revolutionary democratic lines been so extensive; nowhere have the social forces held power in their hands through making civil society "ungovernable" and building new social and political structures; nowhere have the masses more fully embodied the Marxist-Humanist idea of "masses as reason" both by the new society they sought at the same time as they searched for a philosophy of revolution through Steve Biko's theory of Black Consciousness.

And yet...the retreat to the ANC's politics of "negotiated settlement," it must be admitted, was more a result than the cause of the fact that the masses were not so much taken over by the political party they looked to be taken over by it. Now, the ANC has state power and Marxist intellectuals like Neville Alexander continue to labor under the false notion that somehow "the more radical the democratic project can be within the limits of capitalism...the better for us, the better for the nation-building and the socialist project. Because when we have a strong civil society where the working class gains hegemony, then clearly the very practices that came into being will eventually impact even on the policies of the capitalist state" (Work In Progress, November 1993, p. 17).

What Alexander wishes to ignore is that over the last two decades of mass struggle in every sector of society, the masses have created "radical democracy" on the ground. Moreover, so-called "working class hegemony" has shown a steady, if at times difficult, growth to the point where the Black working class now stands, more than any other force, as the human factor in determining the course of development of the new SA.

One wonders then just what further "hegemony" Alexander expects the working class to gain before he judges it ready to go beyond transitional democracy to the revolutionary uprooting of the "economic remains" of apartheid state-capitalism.

The crisis of the Left is the most telling sign that there is a philosophic void at the center of the movement and in its leadership circles, in and out of power. Which is why it is fitting at this historic moment to recall what Frantz Fanon lamented at the beginning of the African revolutions against white domination:

"Colonialism and its derivatives do not, as a matter of fact, constitute the present enemies of Africa... For my part, the deeper I enter into the cultures and the political circles the surer I am that the great danger that threatens Africa is the absence of ideology" (Toward the African Revolution, p. 186).

In the coming period we will examine other dimensions of the new South Africa, hear the voices from the new stage of struggle about to unfold, and intervene in the new battle of ideas which is sure to emerge around the "dialectics of organization and philosophy."

May 5, 1994

'Every worker an organizer' on UFW march

Sacramento, Cal.—The United Farm Workers (UFW) of California's 24-day, 330-mile march from Delano to Sacramento ended on April 24 with a rally at the State Capitol. Over 1,500 farmworkers and supporters started the trek, in commemoration of Cesar Chavez's death one year ago, and 10,000 finished it. Many more participated in the event, as thousands marched for a day or a few hours along the route, and every evening there were festivities in the towns where the marchers spent the night. Those events were some of the most important, as more than 10,000 union authorization cards were turned in as a result of the fraternizing with local farmworkers.

I was with the marchers as they arrived in south Sacramento two days before the big rally. Despite the fact that 19½ miles were covered that day the rally at Maple

Elementary School was very animated. Cesar Chavez's brother Ricardo spoke, as did Sacramento's first Chicano mayor, Joe Serna. A prayer that Chavez penned was read and emphasis was placed throughout the march on the need to get back to Chavez's idea of what the union meant. This is why the UFW, headed now by Arturo Rodriguez, created a theme for the march: "Every worker an organizer."

At the rally that evening many Blacks were there, along with Latinos/as of every age. You know something is going on when you see women and men in their 70s who have worked all their lives in the Central Valley walking over ten miles a day with smiles on their faces! Whole families participated. You could see who "farmworkers" are, both historically and today; they're not just one ethnicity nor just from one country—certainly not just men! Due to media portrayals many people don't know that the historic grape strike that started in 1965

Flag of shared misery

Dominican Republic—After 150 years of misery, Dominican national chauvinists emerge who raise a recycled national flag against the defenseless Haitian people, against our suffering brothers.

On Feb. 27, 1844 was born, so they say, the most solid "national independence," and today it commemorates and celebrates its 150 years. Upon the majority of the houses, one could see a flag. We have seen millions of flags; we have seen people rushing to be the first to place the flag in front of their houses; and we have seen many Dominicans denigrate Haitians who reside in this country. We have seen a religious nationalism and a nationalist religiosity; millions of recycled flags whose emblem preaches "God, Fatherland and Liberty."

This new modality of Dominican religion, so-called "nationalism," produces flags in industrial quantities made of cloth, plastic or paper; recycled flags of all types, that is, all types of garbage transformed into "public utility." But this industry, this garbage factory, does not stop here. The different Dominican governments since 1844 have promoted a Dominican nationalism that is not anti-Spanish, nor anti-French, nor anti-U.S. government—but specifically anti-Haitian, taking as scapegoats those who have defended with blood and tears the liberty of that heroic homeland.

It seems that these nationalist snipers are conscious that the perpetuity of a Dominican-Haitian border results in a major guarantee for their interests, because in the last 150 years of "border," the Dominican and Haitian governments have been nothing more than appendages of the U.S. and France.

Therefore, while the strategists of "nationalism," Haitian and Dominican, go around in the same jet and are of the same emblem, the sadly oppressed population of our humiliated homelands raises two pieces of flags; two pieces of misery that in the end are nothing more than 150 years of shared misery. As the saying goes, "Divide and Conquer."

—Monchy



News & Letters photo

Participants in the historic UFW march from Delano to Sacramento, California.

was begun by Filipino/a workers who came to the National Farm Workers Association (precursor to the UFW) to get their support.

One woman who has worked in the fields for years told me, "We usually get water to drink now when we're out in the 100-degree heat, and sometimes there are portable toilets, things it took much struggle to win. But that isn't good enough, it's not freedom." The angriest discussions were about Governor Wilson, who is trying to get re-elected on the current wave of anti-immigrant racist sentiment in California. "Chavez si, Wilson no!" was the chant of choice throughout the month-long march.

—Mitch Weerth

Mothers of Plaza de Mayo

New York—On April 11, the Madres de Plaza de Mayo came here for the first time from Argentina to speak, invited by the Women's Studies Program of Hunter College. Every Thursday for the past 17 years these women have marched around the Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires in front of the Presidential Palace, demanding that the Argentinian state (dictatorships or "democracies") stop denying their responsibility in the disappearance of over 30,000 people who didn't think the way the system wanted and wants. They are demanding not only justice, an explanation for what happened to their children and for this not to happen ever again, but also fighting for a new human society.

In the talk of Mercedes and Juanita, the two Mothers representing the movement, their philosophy and their incredible experiences were evident. They showed a strength that no party of today's "Left" can approach, especially in the Mothers' belief that any struggle for real change has to come always from below. For that reason, for the Mothers, political parties cannot make any real change. Real change cannot come from within this system. "That which has no base falls," one of the Mothers said. Their struggle, the constant risking of their lives for a new beginning "where workers don't have to work anymore as they do today," blossoms with happiness for they are free. Nobody and nothing can stop them.

The Mothers just came from organizing an encounter in Paris with Mothers' organizations from all over the world, none of them affiliated with any political party. Among others, Mothers of "street kids" assassinated by paramilitary forces in Brazil and Mothers of conscientious objectors from Iraq, Spain, Israel and Serbia against obligatory military service wrote a document committing themselves to fight the inhuman capitalist system which they already see falling.

After their presentation, Mercedes told us that until her daughter disappeared she knew nothing. Her 31-year-old revolutionary daughter gave "birth" to her courage in thought and passion. Their disappeared daughters and sons gave the Mothers "life," they were reborn, left their tears aside and took to the streets in the struggle for total liberation, for and with everyone.

There is no doubt that it has been years since such powerful voices were heard in this city where today, to be poor, especially a young Black or Latina/o, is to be a criminal: abused, prosecuted, imperiled and tortured by the repressive apparatus of the capitalist state. We hear Mercedes and Juanita's voices constantly resounding in our hearts. We think of the Zapatistas, of the Black and Latino youth rebelling in Los Angeles—the ceaseless self-movement of becoming.

To write to the Mothers: Asociacion Madres de Plaza de Mayo, Hipolito Yrigoyen 1442, (1089) Buenos Aires, Argentina.

—Marxist-Humanist Latinas/os in New York City

The maids of Ecuador

On a recent trip home to Ecuador, I was struck by how much the gulf between middle-class and poor people has grown. Only middle-class men and women have access to decent jobs, and they "need" two incomes in the family to satisfy their desire for luxury goods. Their life styles are made possible by having live-in maids.

The maid performs all the work involved in keeping the family functioning, no matter how many members of the family there are. She works until the work is done, often 18 hours a day. She gets up before the family, works all day and cleans up after their dinner. She probably ate her dinner standing up in the kitchen. Then she is supposed to feel like part of the family if she is allowed to watch television with them at night, but she will do the ironing while she watches. If she is babysitting she may not even have her hours of sleep to herself.

The average wage for a maid is \$30 a month. Out of this she can rent a room with a dirt floor and no bathroom (usually there is one bathroom that never works serving many families) for \$15. If she buys a quart of milk and a loaf of bread it will cost \$1 a day.

In order to hold her job, a live-in maid has to abandon her children with relatives in the countryside. This leads to child abuse. A live-in maid often gets off only a half-day a week, and she may spend that traveling four hours each way to see her children, arriving back at her employer's on Monday morning without having slept.

There are probably 20,000 maids—a tenth of the population—in my city alone, yet they have no organization.

—Ecuadoran woman

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Review: Latin America and the fall of Communism

Utopia Unarmed: The Latin American Left After the Cold War by Jorge G. Castaneda (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), 498 pages.

The rebellion in Chiapas was a warning from deep within the bowels of Mexico. Directly shaking the Salinas regime, Chiapas' tremors could be felt north of the Rio Grande and south of the Isthmus of Panama. It has rekindled discussion of ideas of social equality and liberation, speaking to the Left in Mexico and Latin America at a time when many are questioning the very idea of a revolution in our future.

It is this Left that is the subject of Jorge Castaneda's *Utopia Unarmed: The Latin American Left After the Cold War*. With the important exception of Cuba, the collapse of Communism has had little material impact upon Latin America. However, the ideological impact has been immense, particularly upon the Left.

THE HISTORY OF THE LEFT

Before examining that impact, Castaneda traces the recent history of the Left in several chapters that include "The Cuban Crucible" on the revolution and its influence in Latin America, "The Second Coming" on the revolutionary movements in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua, as well as the guerrilla group M-19 in Colombia and the terrorism of Shining Path in Peru, and "Squaring the Circle: Reforming Revolution" on reformism in Latin America.

The main difficulty with these chapters is that with a brevity of presentation comes a superficiality of analysis. One gets a series of stories, often of revolutionary personalities in different countries, and while sometimes entertaining, it is unclear how much one has learned about the various Left movements, their limitations and failures.

From here Castaneda examines both Latin American intellectuals and "The Grass Roots Explosion." The range of movements—from Christian base communities in Brazil to shantytown organizing in Lima, Peru to women's movements in a number of countries—speaks to how activities and ideas of social liberation are so indigenous to Latin America today.

THE 'SENSE OF DEFEAT'

The end of the Cold War has ended neither the desperate conditions of poverty and inequality that characterize vast areas of Latin America, nor the quest on the

part of millions for different conditions of life and labor. It is when Castaneda takes up "The Latin American Left and the Fall of Communism" that he is most illuminating:

"...The most damaging effect of the Cold War's conclusion on the Latin American Left lies in the generalized perception of defeat...This sense of defeat is derived from the Left's perceived or real connection with existing socialism...the idea of revolution itself, central to Latin American radical thought for decades, has lost its meaning...But the idea of revolution has withered and virtually died because its outcome has become either unwanted or unimaginable...Under these new conditions, revolutionaries can hardly survive. But without revolutionaries, the vision of revolution vanishes or is condemned to endure only under extreme circumstances...People do not die, go to prison, resist torture or devote years of their lives to fighting for something that cannot be visualized or thought of in concrete terms, something that is not definitive. This hypothetical end of revolution does not imply an end to history, but what could be called the end of a certain idea of history, of the future...The only thing left to fight for is a future that is simply the present, plus more of the same."

Castaneda has here caught the grave contradiction of the Left not only in Latin America but globally. The collapse of Communism has freed us from having so-called Marxism practiced by those state-capitalist ideological policemen calling themselves Communists, who had all the weapons of totalitarian state power in their hands. How are we on the Left to forge a new vision of the future rooted in the idea of freedom as Marx expressed it?

Castaneda does not help us here, for though he perceptively sees the quandary of a Latin American Left without a vision of the future, he devotes the rest of his book to working out his solution sans the kind of theoretical/philosophical probing needed. Rather, he chooses to explore the possibility of a truncated future for Latin America, one based on reformulating nationalism, rethinking democracy and a redistribution of wealth. Questions worth exploring, but Castaneda chooses to do so all within the confines of the existing system. Is this not an illusory veil upon "a future that is simply the present, plus more of the same?"

—Eugene Walker

Students battle racism

...of the Fordice case

Jackson, Miss.—More than 15,000 Black Americans, mostly students, turned out to express our feelings about the Ayers vs. Fordice case in Jackson on Saturday, April 30. The march from Jackson State University to the capitol three miles away was organized to show our support for HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) which are being threatened by the Ayers vs. Fordice case (Fordice is the Governor of Mississippi).

The march and rally at the capitol really had a diverse group of students from all over the country. There were students from Howard, Spelman and Morehouse, Alcorn Valley, Alabama State, Pine Bluff, just to name a few.

We met at 10 a.m. at Jackson State and marched from there at noon to the capitol to hear a number of speakers: students, faculty, legislators, and NAACP director Ben Chavis, who was our keynote speaker.

Student speakers from Alcorn Valley and Jackson State expressed their feelings about the Ayers vs. Fordice case. They noted that our generation needed to assume leadership for the challenges we face today. They also made the point that we as a people need to progress further with our education by expanding not retarding the role of the HBCUs, and through equity in funding for them. If Governor Fordice wins the Ayers case, it would mean that HBCUs would either be closed down or would have to merge with historically white schools.

As a native of Jackson, I agree that it would really hurt us if we lose the Ayers case, because so many Black Americans fought and died to have the right to an education. Closing and merging HBCUs won't help us or education in this country. Our universities are just as good as historically white schools.

We have already begun to meet to take up further goals of our struggle and to plan further actions. We will definitely be present in full force at the trial in Oxford, Miss. when it begins on May 9.

—Woman, Jackson State



...on the campus

Chicago—A rally against racism at Loyola University called by the Students Organized Against Racism (SOAR) came after a series of incidents including "White Pride" stickers being put on the dorm room doors of Black students, the Black Cultural Center receiving bomb threats, a biology professor who is active in the anti-racism movement receiving hate mail, and fliers of progressive groups being defaced with racist slogans.

SOAR has researched discrimination at Loyola by the university itself. The university does not keep accurate minority retention records, so SOAR could not find the true extent of the problem. They did, however, find the "adjustment of the affirmative action policy" to be of some consequence. Ten years ago the African-American enrollment at Loyola was 10%, four years ago it dropped to 7% and it is now down to 4%.

When SOAR inquired into the extent of minority faculty employment, they couldn't get any figures. Loyola keeps its bigotry well hidden. A senior said that in his four years here, he had seen a total of two African-American teachers between all of Loyola's campuses.

While Loyola may have a good academic reputation, its reputation for equality and encouraging cultural diversity is a facade.

—Loyola student

Stop Hydro-Quebec!



News & Letters photo

Protests in downtown Chicago, above, and around the world April 14 denounced the two-decade-long project to flood and despoil Cree and Inuit lands. Vast tracts have already been flooded by Hydro-Quebec, a power utility owned by the provincial government of Quebec. Known as the James Bay project, the system of dams and dikes, though sited in Canada, will provide energy for export to the U.S. and possibly Mexico as well as for domestic use.

...of the klan

Indianapolis—The Ku Klux Klan has been increasingly active in the Midwest rallying on the steps of government buildings. Their small rallies are always opposed by crowds many times their size, but it is no less scary to see fascists in uniform coming through the doors of government buildings with Nazi salutes.

Once again on April 2 at the Indiana state capital, the police were present in great force, protecting the Klan's rally against anti-racist demonstrators. There were more than a hundred Black and white anti-Klan protesters; our ages ranged from high school students on up.

As we arrived, 10 to 15 police cars pulled up with four cops in riot gear in each car. Around the corner, cops were deployed all over the ground as well as on walls and towers of another government building with binoculars, cameras, and note pads. A group of interested passers-by, on their way home from a Greyhound bus station, were asked to show ID's, were thoroughly interrogated and had their bags searched. We went through checkpoints into an area enclosed completely by heavily armed police—who were there to keep tabs on us!

We must show our strong opposition to the rise of fascism and to these demonstrations that symbolize the coupling of Klan and state violence. The KKK and Nazis do not just speak racial hatred; white supremacist attacks continue in the same old brutal tradition throughout the country. Upcoming Klan rallies include: May 7—Illinois State House in Springfield; and June 11—Rockford, Ill. We must not allow the Klan to rally unopposed.

—Univ. of Illinois student

City hall sleep-in

San Francisco—Homeless activists and homeless people slept on the steps of San Francisco's City Hall in early April to protest Mayor Frank Jordan's Matrix program. Matrix criminalizes homelessness by imposing \$76 fines and jail sentences for such "crimes" as sleeping or eating in public, and panhandling.

The protest, organized by the Coalition on Homelessness and a network of religious organizations, drew about 300 for a rally followed by a march through the Civic Center Plaza, an area where the crackdown has been particularly intense. Over half the demonstrators stayed to sleep on the steps.

One man, who held a sign reading "End Matrix Now—Save Human Lives!" said, "Jordan came into office saying he would do something about the homeless problem. His solution was to make our very existence illegal. If all these people that got homes knew how easy it was to lose them, then they'd do something about Matrix. But the middle class just thinks 'it can't happen to me.' What they don't know is that if we let Jordan get away with this discrimination, it can happen, and it will to some."

—Lynn Halley

French youth revolt

In the aftermath of the mass student protests in March against a lowered minimum wage for youth, new issues and problems have come to the fore. One of these was the case of two Algerian immigrant youth, Abdel Hakim Youbi and Mouloud Madaci, who were arrested during the large demonstrations in Lyon on March 21. Three days later, without even a hearing, the rightist government deported them to Algeria on the grounds that they were not French citizens. These types of horrors are now allowed under France's new draconian "zero immigration" laws.

Although they had denied all along that their movement was leftist or even political, the French students of 1994 rose to meet the challenge hurled down by a racist government. On March 25, hundreds of mainly high school [lycee] youths crowded the corridors of the courthouse in Lyon, successfully pressuring that court to reverse the deportations. However, the government indicated that it would not obey the local court's decision.

In Lyon, leftist students took the floor at a general assembly and called for continued demonstrations "to denounce police violence, to demand the return of the two deportees and the release of all those arrested." Everywhere, it seemed, the case of "Mouloud and Abdel" had become a rallying point in the continuing demonstrations against the lowered minimum wage. The message got through to a nervous government, and within a week or so, Mouloud and Abdel were readmitted to France. However, they now face trial along with their comrades from the March 21 demonstration and are thus not entirely out of danger.

How was this "apolitical" youth movement able so easily to broaden its focus beyond the single issue that all had seemed to insist was its sole focus? Part of the answer is that French students today include more people of color, plus this student movement was rooted more in high schools and technical institutes in working-class and immigrant areas than in universities.

Another factor may spring from the very nature of youth movements in contemporary society. Whether in the massive revolts of the 1960s or the smaller ones in the retrogressionist 1980s, youth movements have again and again shown a capacity to move quickly beyond immediate, particular issues to more global and universalistic ones.

The well-known sociologist Alain Touraine caught some of this when he published an article in the midst of the demonstrations on the need for French intellectuals to come to terms with the crisis of today's youth, where a whole generation faces mass unemployment. He argued that radical intellectuals should be addressing these issues, but complained they had not yet "awakened from their long post-structuralist slumber" (Le Monde 3/30/94).

—Kevin A. Barry

Direct Instruction: boot camp for the mind

I work at a public elementary school in one of Chicago's most desolated South Side Black neighborhoods, but it wasn't until I received training in the Direct Instruction (DI) method of teaching that I realized how totally the little rhyme some schools have kids recite every morning defines the vision of the school: "I only got a minute/ Only 60 seconds in it/ I didn't choose it/ Can't refuse it/ But it's up to me to use it! Do it now! Do it now! Do it now!" DI is a behaviorist method of teaching reading, writing and math designed to bring remedial students up to grade level on standardized tests.

At my school, teachers, most of whom are Black women, objected to DI because they were offended by the demand that they literally recite 40-minute-long lessons word for word out of a script. The president of the Local School Council, a Black lawyer, responded by saying that he knew that teachers "couldn't walk and chew gum at the same time" and DI would force them to teach the students to read. The principal told anyone who didn't like it to start job hunting.

"CORRECT ALL MISTAKES," say "consultants" from the company that publishes the books. They say, "It is our job to teach these children to speak properly because people will not give them jobs because they can't speak properly." They stress that we have to correct students if they drop the consonant sounds off the end of the words like the "g" in "fishing" and not to allow students to use the double negative.

For vocabulary the teacher walks around the room reading the script and banging on desks with a ruler as a signal. The teacher reads: "Effort. Effort is another word for 'strength.' What would be another way to say, 'It doesn't take much strength to move that table?'" Bang! The students respond, "It doesn't take much effort to move that table." If someone says, "It doesn't take a lot of effort to move that table," that is incorrect, so everyone starts over. The goal is absolute uniformity.

When the students finally begin reading, each student can read two or three sentences with interruptions from the teacher asking scripted questions. Student: "The cat sat on the window sill." Teacher: "Everyone, where did the cat sit?" Bang! "On the window sill."

The students are expected to perform this regimen for three or four subjects a day every day from first grade until eighth grade. A complex system awards points to students who conform to the routine. Teachers are instructed to reinforce "on-task" behavior and ignore "off-task" behavior. "Oh, Kiesha did a great job of opening her book and finding Part A!" Teachers are constantly reminded to keep the pace moving because the lessons are so boring that the students will fool around if they

are not rushed. In math do not wait for the slower half of the class to solve the problem before moving on.

One teacher told me that the social studies curriculum includes the impact of the Civil Rights Movement and the women's movement on society, but she never has a chance to get to it because the administration avidly monitors how many DI lessons she completes each week. According to the all-knowing standardized test, the majority of the students in her class were at grade level or above, yet the whole program assumes the poor Black children are remedial students by definition.

DI's proponents see it as a panacea which will save a fraction of the coming generation of the "underclass" from joblessness by transforming them into bourgeois individuals who "speak properly" and receive high enough test scores to be admitted to college. (Never mind that college enrollment for minorities has been declining steadily over the past 14 years due to rising tuition costs.)

Far from preparing a future generation of Black entrepreneurs, to me DI is actually a reappearance of the old accommodationism of Booker T. Washington's "Negro Education," or "Industrial Education," that aimed to create a docile work force. This old attitude, however, has been reformulated for our age of high-tech production, massive unemployment, and retrogression in thought.

SINCE THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION, education for working-class children has been modeled after the discipline of the capitalist production line. In our period of massive unemployment the demand is for a docile unemployed work force. Factory discipline in education has not disappeared with the factories. The mental regimentation is becoming more total than ever.

DI is a boot camp for the mind where conformity and industriousness alone are rewarded. "Good" youth get the one right answer. The petty rewards for cooperating with the mental regimen are always handed out in the shadow of the youth correctional center. In the capitalist U.S. neither the "good" youth nor the "bad" can enjoy the freedom of self-development.

DI's opponents fear that we are training a generation of robots. If DI actually can increase an individual's scores on a standardized test, that only shows how inhuman the concept of a standardized test is. No behaviorist method of teaching, however, can have so total an impact on the human mind; most thirteen-year-olds who have been through DI can tell you as much. When youth ridicule this system, they challenge the notion that their minds are objects for adult society to manipulate.

—Disgusted Teacher

Our Life and Times

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

The horrific massacres by the Rwandan army and vigilante groups have reached genocidal proportions, claiming more than 200,000 lives in April. Almost all of the victims were civilians, many of them children or people cowering in refugee centers. The perpetrators tended to be members of the majority Hutu ethnic group, often spurred on by rightist and militarist parties, while the victims were usually from either the minority Tutsi group or from other Hutu groups favoring compromise with the Tutsi. Why are such horrors taking place now in this tiny Central African land?

By the tone of its coverage, the white-dominated media implied that there was some sort of inherent African "savagery" at work. A fitting response to such idiocies was given by a French newspaper whose cartoon showed a Rwandan soldier telling a white TV reporter: "I believe that in the developed countries you call this 'ethnic cleansing'" (*Le Monde*, April 9, 1994).

The immediate incident precipitating the massacres was the mysterious April 6 murders, as their plane was shot down, of Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana and Burundian President Cyprien Ntaryamira, both of whom were Hutu.

In the pre-colonial and colonial eras, the Tutsi minority (about 15% of the population of the area) ruled over the Hutu majority in a brutal fashion in Rwanda and Burundi. German colonialists deepened this class and ethnic division by requiring the population to carry identity cards listing whether they were Tutsi or Hutu. These ID cards were maintained by the later Belgian colonial rulers and by the post-independence regimes.

In 1959, as independence neared and as the Belgians began to lean more toward the Hutu majority, a Hutu

Haiti's plight

In recent days, Haiti's exiled leftist President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who won a landslide victory in 1990 with 67% of the vote in an 11-candidate field, has begun to speak out publicly against U.S. betrayals of the Haitian people. He has announced plans to rescind Haitian government support for the U.S. policy of using the Coast Guard to send back Haitian refugees rather than allowing them to apply for political asylum here. He has also termed Clinton's overall policy of compromise with the military who overthrew him as "racist."

All of this is part of changes on the ground in both Haiti and the U.S. In Haiti, the regime has stepped up its brutal repression. On April 25, soldiers massacred 23 fishermen in a pro-Aristide neighborhood in Gonaives, a town which has long been a center of grassroots revolutionary movements. This latest outrage brings the death toll to nearly 3,000 since the 1991 military coup.

Haitian peasant organizations have also begun openly to denounce Clinton's compromises. Peasant activist Chavannes Jean-Baptiste rejected even the term "ambiguous" to describe Clinton's policies: "His position is very clear. It's consistent with a policy that does not want the restoration of democracy."

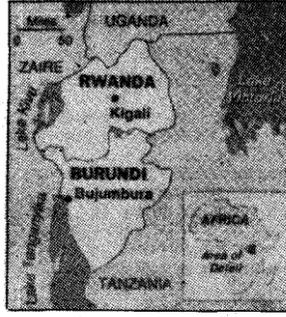
In the U.S., the Black community is also beginning to move. In April several prominent Black activists including Randall Robinson of TransAfrica and liberal politicians had themselves arrested in Washington to protest Clinton's policies.

Rwanda: the legacy of divide and rule

uprising dislodged Tutsi power in Rwanda. Massacres and expropriations of land caused thousands of members of the Tutsi aristocracy to flee to neighboring countries, and a series of Hutu-led governments then came to power after independence.

In Rwanda last year, the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front, armed by neighboring Uganda, seized a large swath of land in the North, prompting 700,000 Hutu refugees to flee southward into the capital, Kigali. In recent months, both Rwanda and Burundi have simmered with ethnic tension, yet at least in Rwanda, a compromise seemed to have been worked out.

President Habyarimana, in power for over two decades, agreed to share power with the Democratic Republican Movement, the latter an oppositional coalition including Hutu parties opposed to a narrow ethnic politics, an ethnically mixed party, and the Rwandan Patriotic Front. Habyarimana, who had for



Lessons of the Italian elections

On April 25, in the wake of the March elections which brought to power a rightist coalition including the neo-fascist party, hundreds of thousands of labor, leftist and women's liberation activists gathered all across Italy to commemorate the anniversary of the 1945 mass uprising against Mussolini which resulted in his death by hanging on April 28, 1945. In 1994 the biggest turnout, 200,000 people, was in Milan, the place where Mussolini was caught, tried and then faced revolutionary justice for his 23 years of murder, torture and militarism.

This year's commemoration was a challenge to the current state of Italian politics and society. For on March 27-28, Italian voters gave a landslide victory (44% of the vote) to the rightist so-called Freedom Pole, and only 35% to its main opponent, the leftist Progressive Pole. The neo-fascist National Alliance, part of the Freedom Pole, received its highest totals ever, over 12%, and is slated to obtain some posts in the new government.

The key player in the Freedom Pole is Silvio Berlusconi, whose Perot-like campaign against the "system" mushroomed from nothing to electoral victory in only three months. In January, Berlusconi was only the owner of a debt-ridden media empire controlling half of Italy's TV channels, but by March, he had saturated the media (especially those he owned) with carefully crafted demagogic appeals for "freedom" versus the Left, promises to create "one million new jobs" without ever saying how, etc. The third member of Freedom Pole was the subtly racist Northern League, which wants the more affluent North to secede from the rest of Italy.

How could this happen, a vote for a coalition which includes out-and-out fascists, whose leader praised Mussolini as a "great statesman" only days after the election? How can the world media run articles like "Italy's Neo-Fascists: Have They Shed Their Past" (*The New York Times* March 31, 1994), which deliberately obfuscate the issue by asking if the neo-fascists "have shed their anti-Semitism" when anti-socialist, anti-Marxist, anti-demo-

many years propped up his dictatorial rule via demagogic attacks on the remaining Tutsi minority, now incurred the wrath of Hutu ultras in the army and elsewhere.

Many now believe that it was Hutu ultras in the Rwandan army, outraged by Habyarimana's ethnic "compromises," who shot down the plane.

The responsibility for the 200,000 deaths in Rwanda and the even greater number massacred in Burundi in recent years needs to be laid at the door not of some type of "inherent" ethnic conflict, but at two types of historical developments: On the one hand, there were the divide and rule policies of Western colonialism, which, as in India, Ireland and elsewhere, deliberately fanned ethnic tensions to a fever pitch in order to maintain power.

On the other hand, the failure of the African independence movements of the 1960s to realize their universalizing, humanist, and revolutionary aspirations, paved the way for military men like Habyarimana to seize power, and then to hold power by appeals to the narrowest sort of ethnic chauvinism. It should also be pointed out that the modern arms used by the armies of both Rwanda and Burundi were brought in by outside powers seeking influence, the same powers who now stand back and watch the bloodshed as if they had nothing to do with it.

cratic and anti-labor positions were always the hallmarks of Mussolini's fascism far more than was anti-Semitism? How can it be forgotten that Mussolini popularized the word "totalitarian," an adjective he applied proudly to his regime?

Over the past year, the postwar structure of Italian politics crumbled as the Christian Democrats and the Socialist Party, the twin pillars of most post-1945 coalition governments, saw most of their key leaders face trial in a huge corruption scandal. Last fall, it appeared that the Left would benefit, but by March it was instead Berlusconi's coalition which was swept to power.

The defeat of the Left is not only an Italian defeat, for the Italian Left has over the past decade done just about everything that the dominant worldwide trends among left intellectuals and theoreticians have proposed. Whether in journals like *New Left Review*, or in the post-structuralist debate, or from among the followers of Habermas, one hears again and again almost like an incantation that the Left needs to cut its ties to labor, needs to embrace the market as well as "democracy and civil society," and above all, needs to renounce both revolution and all "utopian" visions of a society beyond capitalism.

This is precisely what the Italian Communist Party did when it changed its name to the Party of Democratic Socialism some years ago, and during the past year, when its leader, Ochille Ochetto, spent more time as head of the Progressive Pole working to calm the fears of bankers and businessmen than offering any solutions to the dilemmas facing the Italian masses.

Each time the Right attacked Marxism and socialism as "outdated" notions, the Left responded by saying we're not really that way any more, we're also a "normal" part of the capitalist order. In its failure to offer a real challenge to the ideas of the Right, in its failure to pose any vision of a liberated society, the Italian Left's losing campaign is symptomatic of the international Left's failure to come to grips with the post-1989 world. It will take far more than a single demonstration to break this impasse.

Mexico awakens

Indians, peasants, students and many others rallied in Mexico City on April 10 to mark the anniversary of the death of the revolutionary leader Emiliano Zapata, who was assassinated 75 years ago. The march began in Chiapas and proceeded nearly 500 miles to the capital.

The 50,000 people who participated focused on the struggles of the present: support for the goals of the Chiapas uprising and demands that the Salinas government revoke Article 27, which two years ago wiped out what was left of constitutionally guaranteed land reform dating back to the struggles of Zapata in the 1910 Mexican Revolution.

Two events are now happening in Chiapas. On the one hand, Indian peasants who for decades futilely petitioned to reclaim their land have been occupying it outright, in the thousands of acres, since the Jan. 1 Chiapas uprising. They have been confronted with a growing reaction by landowners who organize armed gangs to kidnap, torture and murder anyone they suspect to be a peasant leader or supporter.

On the other hand, the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) has suggested it will resume peace talks with the Salinas government. The EZLN had suspended contact with the government and discussion of government proposals in the Chiapas Indian communities after the March assassination of Luis Colosio, presidential candidate of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), fearing that Salinas would make the crisis into a pretext for launching a military repression in Chiapas.

Even though the government has said the assassination was not an organized conspiracy, the very fact that it happened has shown how much the PRI's unassailable rule for over six decades has come unglued. The genuine determinant in Mexico now is not going to be limited to the arena of electoral politics, but the ongoing events in Chiapas and the new spirit through Mexico the revolt has awakened.

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