

NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

25¢

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The Middle East in full disarray

Israel-Palestine eruption

by Peter Wermuth

The revolt which erupted in the West Bank and Gaza Strip on Sept. 25 by Palestinians opposing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's efforts to torpedo the peace process has created a seismic shift in the region, by revealing the chasm dividing the rulers from the ruled in the Palestinian and Israeli communities.

What precipitated the revolt was Netanyahu's insistence on opening a tourist tunnel close to Al Aksa Mosque, the most important Moslem shrine in Jerusalem. Though the thought of Jewish tourists spilling into the Moslem Quarter guarded by Israeli soldiers was surely enough of an affront to spark a major incident, the revolt was about far more than the opening of the tunnel. It rather represented a response to years of pent-up rage over hopelessly deteriorating living conditions (as seen in the 75% rate of unemployment in the Gaza Strip) and an Israeli government bent on subverting the Oslo peace accords.

To assert Israeli control over the Arab part of the city, he had earlier closed the office of a Palestinian councillor and bulldozed an Arab youth center. The tunnel was opened for the same purpose. As he brashly stated, "I do not regret that we opened the tunnel, as it expressed our sovereignty over Jerusalem."

The Palestinian masses understood that these moves were meant to kill off any move toward an eventual Palestinian state, and took immediate action. In Jerusalem, Ramallah, Nablus, Bethlehem, the Gaza Strip and other



Palestinian youth atop captured Israeli watchtower in Nablus, West Bank.

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Betrayal and confrontation in Kurdistan and Iraq

by Kevin A. Barry

Although the events in and around Jerusalem have crowded news about Iraq out of the headlines, the tragedy in Iraq will continue to have great impact on the struggle for human liberation in the Middle East as a whole. Saddam Hussein's sudden dispatch on Aug. 30 of thousands of heavily armed soldiers into Erbil, a major city inside the United Nations-protected Kurdish enclave in northern Iraq, sent thousands of Kurds and Arab oppositionists fleeing toward the Iranian and Turkish borders.

This time, as against Saddam's genocidal attacks in 1988 or 1991, the biggest shocker was that Massoud Barzani, leader of the most important and oldest Kurdish liberation movement, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), had actually invited the Iraqi army in. Barzani did so, he said, in order to undercut his rival, Jalal Talabani of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), who had been receiving aid from Iran.

Saying he was punishing Saddam's "aggression," U.S. President Bill Clinton carried out two attacks against Iraq's air defense system, launching a total of 44 cruise missiles (at a cost of \$1.2 billion apiece). But these U.S. attacks were in the South, nearer to oil-rich Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, and nowhere near Kurdistan in the North where the fighting was taking place.

Beneath the diplomatic language about "strategic" U.S. interests in the South, and merely "humanitarian" ones in the North, was a cold and brutal truth of the type which we have also witnessed in Bosnia: The world's remaining superpower will tolerate and even abet genocide so long as the perpetrators of that geno-

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Black World

Sudan: the famine of ideas



Editor's note: This month I am turning over my column to Robert Reed to continue the analysis of the crisis and contradictions in the Sudan he began in last month's N&L. We will print the rest of his essay in future issues.—Lou Turner

There is a man. He is a farmer. He is starving to death. Drought has destroyed his crops, rats have eaten his grains and thieves have pilfered his seeds. He has nothing. His stomach twists in knots. In utter desperation, he cuts off one of his own fingers and eats it. He lives a little longer. But hunger keeps clawing his insides. So he slices off another finger and a toe and devours them too. He continued to cannibalize himself, chopping and chewing—fingers, toes, a hand a foot...

This starving man is the Sudan. It teeters perilously close to the edge of extinction. A collapsing economy; forty years of war; the re-emergence of the slave trade; an Orwellian military dictatorship; messianic fundamentalists set to Islamicize "all of Africa" no matter the cost in lives; over one million Nuba forced into concentration camps called "peace villages"; and a splintered liberation movement bogged down in internecine carnage: these are the bleeding abscesses of the Sudan.

To comprehend the anemic condition of Sudan it is necessary to examine the violent contradictions within it. And that is where we turn.

The tragedy of the Sudan arises clearly from the unpreparedness of the Arab educated classes. Instead of national consciousness being the all embracing crystallization of the innermost hopes of all Sudanese, instead of being the immediate and most obvious result of the mo-

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Seven-year fight wins Hood Furniture contract

Jackson, Miss.—"Warren Hood said he would never sign a contract with Furniture Workers Local 282. He spread rumors that he would close the Hood Furniture plant down before he agreed to Willie Rudd, the president of Local 282, could be our representative. We had to fight for seven years for justice. But on Friday night, Sept. 20, at 11:00, Hood Furniture signed a one-year contract with Local 282. It was a day I will remember all my life," said Lurlee Lewis, chief steward and a production worker at Hood.

"We worked in the plant all day," Lewis said. "And then the negotiations started up again after work. The whole negotiating committee came. We had Willie Rudd and Aletha Baptist from the Local headquarters there, and many of the same workers who have been fighting this struggle for years: James Green, Jesse Jones, Andrew Miggins, Regina Sim, Melvin Gray, Fannie Williams, Barbara Hamilton, Dorothy Jackson, George Williams—I can't call all the names now, but we were all there. We voted to authorize a strike, and we told the community to be ready for a strike. But they finally signed the contract. To me, the greatest thing was that this was not a contract negotiated in Washington; it was a contract negotiated by Hood workers. They finally recognized Local 282 as the bargaining agent."

One of the longest-running struggles for union recognition ever fought in the South began in January 1989, when some 350 Hood Furniture workers, nearly all Black, voted to be represented by Local 282 of the Furniture Workers, a division of IUE. From 1989 to 1993 they tried to negotiate a contract with Warren Hood, one of the most powerful men in Mississippi and major stockholder in Deposit Guaranty Bank, the state's largest. Even a national boycott of Hood by the AFL-CIO, the NAACP and Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) didn't force Hood to negotiate in good faith.

'SLAVE CONTRACT'

Then in July 1993, Hood met in Washington, D.C. with IUE International President William Bywater and secretly negotiated what workers called a "slave contract," assigning Hood workers to a local they had never voted for, IUE Local 797. At a ratification meeting, only 14 workers voted for the contract; 250 workers were barred from the meeting for refusing to sign cards switching their membership from Local 282 to 797.

For the next three years, the rank-and-file workers' organization at Hood stood their ground. "They thought they had us beaten," Lurlee Lewis remembered. "The Jackson Advocate and News & Letters—you were the only ones writing about what we were going through. We

kept our own organization even then. We printed up T-shirts saying, 'Don't Blame Me, I Didn't Vote For It. Member of Local 282.' They never got more than 20 workers to go over to their side, out of the whole plant. Finally the IUE saw it wouldn't get any dues money unless they let us have the representation we chose."

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Management lacks grip on reality



by B. Ann Lastelle

Raya Dunayevskaya, the founder of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S., declared: "Our epoch is the epoch of the struggle for the minds of men." It is the workers' minds—not simply our technical knowledge or our problem-solving skills, but our attitude to objectivity—that the capitalist bosses seek to influence.

Our supervisors' boss, Don Reed, met with the first and second shifts together. He said that Unilever, which purchased Helene Curtis in March, is interested in only one thing—profit. (Surprise!) A Unilever analysis found that it costs Helene Curtis 22¢ more per case to bottle shampoo than it costs other Unilever facilities. A dark cloud is hanging over that unit, he said, and it's up to us to keep it from heading in our direction.

He had determined that we need to produce over 20% more canisters of anti-perspirant per shift in order to satisfy Unilever. Too many of us, he said, come to work solely for the paycheck; too many think this is just a job. A simple change in our attitude would result in an immediate 15% improvement. He knows that there are problems with the equipment, but those are being addressed. The main problem, he said, is that we have resigned ourselves to failure; we have accepted defeat.

That night the grit in the solution burst hoses and clogged nozzles on the filler. The line was down for three and a half hours. One worker joked, "Well, Don, it didn't work out quite like you said." A pin in the filler broke two days later. It was down for another two and a half hours. To think that a change in our attitude would make a difference defies both experience and logic.

When all of the machines on our automated line are (Continued on page 3)

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Ebert denounces Ludic Feminism review

Editor's note: Below we print excerpts from Teresa Ebert's response to Laurie Cashdan's critique of her recent book, Ludic Feminism and After, in the last issue of News & Letters. Cashdan's response will appear in November. We invite other readers to respond to this dialogue as well.

In her review of my book, *Ludic Feminism and After: Postmodernity, Desire and Labor in Late Capitalism* (*News & Letters*, August-September 1996, p. 2), Laurie Cashdan provides a general mapping of the contemporary theoretical and political positions and the place of *Ludic Feminism*. She also helps to clarify some of the major areas in contestation in recent theory. For example, is gender an intersubjective cultural performance (semi)autonomous from "economics" and "class" as post-al theorists claim and as she also asserts (her formal disclaimers notwithstanding)? Or is gender always an articulation of the mode of production—the "economic"—as I have argued?

In her political "evaluation" of these contestations and differences, however, she has managed to name my theory of materialism "regressive" only by resorting to some reactionary but quite familiar moves common to all bourgeois criticism of revolutionary Marxist practices. Like all bourgeois writers before her, she begins her marginalization of revolutionary Marxism by inventing multiple "Marxs" ("to which Marx will we return?").

She, thereby, produces a cultural Marx, placing "human relations"—as if these are autonomous—at the center of his work rather than the material and historical practices that structure those relations. Individuals, for Marx, always participate in all their relations inevitably as "bearers [Träger] of particular class-relations and interests" (*Capital*, Vol. 1, p. 92). But Cashdan repeats, in her review, the same rehearsed maneuvers to marginalize "economics" that, for example, Sartre performed in his own well-known essay on materialism...

Cashdan rejects revolutionary Marxism as "regressive" and produces a cultural "marxism" (through a convenient "reading" of the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, one that marginalizes *Capital* as positivistic) in order to put the "individual" at the center of social practices. The maneuver itself comes down to a displacement and a reversal: an "idea" (in Cashdan's case Hegelian and not Engelsian "dialectics") is put in place of the actuality of the "mode of production" ("economic"), and, through the magic of the subject's "creativity," a marxism without Marx is invented and a "revolution" is announced!

In her re-writing of "Marxism" as "marxism"—a theory that has at its center not the material in history (the structure of class conflicts) but a philosophical method ("dialectics")—she makes the most un-dialectical moves.

Although this maneuver is itself performed (as in all idealist dismissals of materialism) under the guise of an epistemological critique, its aim, like all ideological moves, is political: it attempts to restore the individual as the center of social practices.

Cashdan, like Sartre, does this by appealing to the innate creativity of the subject: a creativity that allows the subject to produce a world different from the one in which she is situated not through any "revolutionary praxis" but simply by an act of re-cognition—what Rorty

and other liberal pragmatists now call "redescription." Social change, in this bourgeois narrative, is not the effect of the transformation of objective world-historical practices (the exploitation of labor) by class struggle but a result of the spontaneous "self-development of subjectivity"...

Cashdan attacks my materialism as "regressive" because my book insists that, although cultural and social issues are important, putting them at the center of social practices and treating them as (semi-)autonomous (as she does) is a diversion from economic inequality—the inequality that capitalist propaganda attempts to obscure. The function of revolutionary critique is to demystify such propaganda—not to reinforce it through uncritical readings of Hegel and other idealist theorists or by sentimentalizing "human relations"...

Revisionary readings of Marxist theory are common maneuvers to marginalize the revolutionary and the materialist... Following the lessons of critics such as K. Anderson (whose book is favorably reviewed in the same issue of *News & Letters*), Cashdan claims that Lenin's reading of Hegel's *Science of Logic* is a self-revision. This is, of course, not the case: there... is no "break" between Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* and his reading of the *Science of Logic*. In fact, this obstinate consistency resists Anderson's normalizing attempts to re-write Lenin. It finally leads Anderson to declare Lenin's approach to Hegel is ambivalent and his reading of him "one-sided" because Lenin insists on historical "materialism" against Hegel's panhistorical "idealism."

Anderson is using "one-sided" here in the same way that Cashdan uses "regressive": to discredit the neces-

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Women Worldwide

by Mary Jo Grey

Clerical workers at New York's Barnard College, Sept. 16, ended one of the longest strikes at a U.S. college — five months — with support by many professors and students. Called "a nice victory for labor" by one woman striker, the new contract gives the 164 workers fully paid health care by the carrier of their choice and a 9.5% pay raise over the next three years.

Twelve hours after Sarah Balabagan flew home to the Philippines to a tumultuous welcome last August, after worldwide outrage saved her from execution for killing her rapist employer in the United Arab Emirate, another Filipina domestic worker flew home in a coffin. The body of 26-year-old Elisa Salem — covered with bruises, swellings and abrasions — arrived days after her letter to her parents describing horrible physical abuse by her Jordanian woman employer. The French organization Secours-Philippines is demanding an investigation.

—Information from *Women Living Under Muslim Laws*

In late August, women in Liberia took to the streets once again to protest the civil war in which 150,000 have died. Shouting "Women can do it," hundreds went to the airport to celebrate the appointment of Ruth Sando Perry as interim president and to call for an end to this reactionary war.

Reading Dunayevskaya in the 1990s

As we confront the current crises in U.S. feminism in our postmovement era, its consistent inability to connect, address, and represent the hopes, needs, and interests of all its constituents, it would certainly seem odd to some to return to Raya Dunayevskaya's *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution*. But I did. And I believe that all feminists and potential feminists sincerely committed to undoing retrogressive public policies which have led to the feminization of poverty, reforms in welfare that pummel the poor, and full-scale attacks on the gains of people of color and women under affirmative action will take in Dunayevskaya's analyses like breaths in fresh and revolutionary air.

The pitfalls of our postmodern feminist consciousness are manifold. By way of Sojourner Truth, Dunayevskaya characterizes them in a word: "shortminded." In our placing limits on our freedom, we have passively and gratefully accepted "gains," "improvements," and "progress" in our respective individual or class lots. In effect, this narrow vision has allowed some women to fare better than and exploit "others"—poor and working-class women whose faces are of various hues.

We have settled for reforms, rather than revolution, "revolution in permanence," as Dunayevskaya advocates. Among feminist scholars, we speak to, for, and about women. We theorize as a form of practice, rather than cogently move from "theory as practice and practice as theory." We have equally fallen prey to a vanguardism, a top down, rather than bottom up, philosophy of social, economic, and political change that marginalizes the lived experiences of our larger constituency for those of the privileged few.

And in this postmovement, postmodern era, our desire to create an exclusively feminist politics of resistance has resulted in our excision and exorcism (like demons) rather than integration of male theorists of oppression and revolution like Fanon and Marx simply because of their maleness and/or perceived "masculinist" writings.

Dunayevskaya's feminism is inclusive; it is revolutionary and integrative in its insights. As an *engage*, an ac-

Ecuadoran child support

Cuenca, Ecuador—When we go to the government office that is supposed to collect our child support, we often get nothing, and we are yelled at by the officials. The officials are paid off by the men, or are sympathetic to them, or just lazy. The central government investigated the offices in our province, Azuay, but nothing changed. We have formed an organization to fight for our rights. We want those officials fired, and we want to reform the Court for Minors. Here are our stories:

Woman 1: I was supposed to get 20,000 sucres (about \$7) a month for my child. For 15 months, I got nothing. The official collected it from the father, but I



didn't get it. Every time I went to the office, they told me the official wasn't in and that I couldn't get the money from anyone but him. I was in trouble when the child had to go to a doctor.

It's the same story all the time: machismo. And if you don't tip the official, you don't get anything. Yet these same officials are quick to sign the papers to send children out of the country for adoption. I had to go to court to get my money. We have little chance of getting these officials fired. The courts are their accomplices. Many women are afraid even to try to get their money.

Woman 2: The court here is just as corrupt as the child support office. One woman went to court after her daughter died to get money for her grandchildren's support. She didn't get any because she couldn't pay off the officials, because she is poor. Two social workers came to her house and made her sign papers she couldn't read, which gave up her rights. She needs a lawyer, but lawyers want a lot of money. One man killed his wife by beating her, and still the court wouldn't make him pay support for his children.

Woman 3: My case is delicate: I am trying to get custody of my grandchild. His mother didn't feed him, even though I used to give her money for him, and he was put out to work at age six or seven. Several times the child called me when his mother had left him alone without food or enough clothing.

I got a lawyer and went to court. The child testified to all this and said he wanted to live with us. Psychologists examined him over three months. He hugged me when he saw me, and he ran the other way when he saw his mother. Yet the court gave the child back to her. The little boy screamed when his mother tried to take him. The judges called the police! It took a long time before we finally got him.

News & Letters was asked to bring pressure on the Ecuadoran government about these abuses. Write to *Presidente, Corte Nacional de Menores, Quito, Ecuador, demanding to reorganize the tribunal de Menores de Azuay, and to the Ministro de Bienestar Social, Quito, Ecuador, demanding they act on reports about corruption in the Azuay office. Send copies of letters to Abdala Bucaram, Presidente de la Republica, and to Vicepresidente Rosalia Arateaga, who claims she represents women, also in Quito. Please also send copies of letters and reprints of this article to News & Letters.*

—T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting

Welfare reform protests

New York—Thousands of people in 26 states demonstrated on July 21 to demand President Clinton veto the welfare repeal law, and several hundred New Yorkers turned out again in August at the opening of the Democratic campaign headquarters and the birthday fundraiser for Clinton at Radio City Music Hall. Groups organizing here include the Welfare Reform Network, the Welfare Rights Initiative, the Suffolk Welfare Warriors on Long Island, WHAM (Women's Health Action Mobilization) and ACT-UP (AIDS activists).

Terri Scofield of Suffolk Welfare Warriors describes workfare as "slavery." You can lose it—and thus be cut off welfare—at the whim of your supervisor or if you miss a day for almost any reason. One woman who could not get child care lost it for bringing her child to work. You are not even permitted time off to go for a job interview! And you can only get onto welfare now after you have attempted to get a job by making 40 job applications within 45 days.

Thus, it is remarkable that some workfare workers are trying to organize their own union through a group called WEP Workers Together. There are now 30,000 people on workfare in New York City, but the new law could raise the number to 100,000.

Five thousand students were forced to drop out of college last year due to the requirement of 26 hours a week of workfare, scheduled without regard to the hours or location of their schools. More will be forced out even if they can perform workfare because of the severe limitations on eligibility.

At a teach-in by welfare activists Sept. 26 sponsored by WHAM, we agreed that the real purpose of the law is to benefit business by forcing down wages, giving people no alternative but to work at whatever wage they can get.

One freshman Congressman, Mike Forbes of Long Island, sent out a letter saying that welfare recipients in a family of four receive the equivalent of \$41,000 a year in benefits. The Suffolk Welfare Warriors organized women in families of four to demand "fair hearings" (appeals) at which each testified about the total of her benefits and, on the basis of Forbes' letter, demanded the balance of the \$41,000 due her! Needless to say, they have all lost.

—Anne Jaclard

New from Wayne State Press
Women's Liberation and The Dialectics of Revolution
Reaching for The Future
RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

“Marx's new continent of thought and of revolution, grounded in the concept of 'revolution in permanence,' may seem unconnected to the organizational question. And the whole question of organization as non-elitist and demanding the practice of new relations between men and women was not connected by the Women's Liberationists to Marx's philosophy of 'revolution in permanence' as ground for organization... The essence of an organizing idea (with a capital "I")—that is to say, the philosophy of revolution—is that the uprooting needed cannot divide theory from practice nor philosophy from organization. There can be no new society short of abolishing the division of mental and manual labor, thereby creating the conditions needed for the self-development of a whole person” (pp.6-7).

To order, see page 7.

Control at stake in Staley shifts

Decatur, Ill.—Staley wants fast rotations in the worst way. We currently work three days on, three days off, and change shifts every 30 days. They wanted us to change to three days on nights, three days off, then three days on day shift, three days off, then three days back on nights, a fast rotation. We mustered enough forces at the August local union meeting to keep the fast rotations from happening. We stymied them because it takes a two-thirds majority local vote to countermand the motion we passed last winter to keep the contract the way it is. Their secret weapon is that there are more scabs working at Staley than us, but they only got a few over 70 people to rescind the motion, with 60 voting against. It seemed like the only people talking in favor of the motion were the scabs and the local leadership.

By pushing rotating shifts, the company is overlooking the documentation on health by countless doctors and

researchers for two reasons: greed or profit, and control. Medical studies say the rotational shifts increase cardiovascular problems, epilepsy, gastrointestinal disorders, drug abuse and alcoholism, all from sleep deprivation. The worker always feels like sleeping. Professor Moread of Harvard, who was one of the first to discover circadian rhythms, researched the shift schedules at 24-hour plants. He used computers to figure out a less harmful schedule. All the things Staley is doing undermine that.

Studies show that 3-4 a.m. is when accidents tend to occur for truckers. The brain simply isn't functioning. The same thing happens with factory workers on rotational shifts. And it's harder on older workers. When somebody goes into that slumber mode, even though they might be physically active, they can push the wrong button and the whole city of Decatur will be gone.

We work with propylene and ethylene oxide. In Desert Storm, you could see the force of 80- to 100-pound bombs with these chemicals. We have tanks with thousands of pounds of the same chemicals. We have boilers with over a thousand pounds per square inch of pressure inside. And Staley doesn't have the manpower to keep the elevators clean of dust. During the lockout, a guy loading a tanker truck was killed in a dust explosion.

—Staley worker

Sinai Kosher atrocities

Chicago—People were talking about the "Workshop Talks" story in the August-September *News & Letters* about the woman who lost her finger in a machine. It sounds just like what's been happening with us. It has happened several times here.

One of the packing machines, Multivac 7, never has enough women working on it. It goes much faster than Multivac 2. Kiran, the foreman, never does five-pound packages with enough women. A woman was working at a machine that might stop or jam up. We try to put extra hot dogs in the packets while the machine has stopped so we don't fall behind. The machine had stopped and while she was putting dogs into a packet, someone started it. A block in the machine closed on her two finger tips. One was cut off, the other was hurt badly.

All the women were crying because they had enough. It was the sixth time in as many years someone had a serious injury, including a woman who got her sleeve caught in the machine and injured her wrist; a man who lost some skin and a fingernail in a machine; a man who had the freezer door shut on his hand; and a mechanic who lost two fingers when a machine started unexpectedly.

They had the machines sanitized and then they proceeded to run hot dogs again. An hour later the plant manager, Nanu, called a meeting with all three lines. He made a diagram of the machines on a side of a box to teach us how to work them. He told us by no means are we supposed to put a hand in the machine we're working on. Then he said they needed to have us get back to work.

One of the women said it's one thing teaching us how to work. It's another thing to do the work. It's different when you're the one to work the machine. Her point was we know what we're doing. Kiran wants the line to constantly run. We are under pressure all the time.

—Sinai Kosher worker

Workshop Talks

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running well at the same time, we almost can't help but make rate. Automation is designed to overcome what Karl Marx called "certain natural obstructions in the weak bodies and the strong wills of its human attendants." We actually have to work harder when the machines aren't running well. Yet we do a "good job" in this management-by-results atmosphere only when we make rate. The contradiction is clear to everyone on the line.

Also clear to most, although they might not say it this way, is that all of our labor is forced labor. We do not work on this line out of a deep, abiding interest in the manufacture of anti-perspirant or in the future of Helene Curtis. We come here to earn a living. Our labor is a mere means to the life we have outside this plant. We hear these capitalist apologists talk of attitude from across a deep class divide.

A comrade, upon hearing this story, noted the similarity between Don Reed's tirade and aspects of the Thought of Mao Zedong which Dunayevskaya sharply critiqued. She critiqued Mao who was "forever ready to make a 'Great Leap Forward' over objective conditions, confident that will and hard work, especially hard work by 700 million souls, can achieve miracles, 'Make one day equal twenty years' (Marxism and Freedom, p. 336).

Mao had failed to revolutionize production relations. "Moving completely within the superstructure of what Marx would have considered false consciousness (national culture against class nature), Mao believed that the conflict in policies between himself and workers, peasants, and youth could be 'resolved' by the 'remolding of thought of all'" (Philosophy and Revolution, p. 179). However, those conflicts, the harsh conditions imposed, and the disparity between the ideal of socialism and the reality of China provoked the workers, peasants and youth to revolt.

U.S. capitalists are as determined as the Chinese ruling class was, and is, to maintain exploitative production relations. They preach a common interest between capital and labor. We can make that new rate and save our jobs if we just "work together" and "pay attention to our process." No one on our line believes that. However, we do not see ourselves as active opponents of capital, as the potential creators of an alternative to this degrading and abusive form of labor. That aspect of reality has yet to be developed by us.

Guess? abandons shops

Los Angeles—On Aug. 7, a group of Los Angeles garment workers filed a class action lawsuit against Guess? Inc. and 16 contractors on behalf of about 2000 workers in their sweatshops. The lawsuit includes non-payment of minimum wage and overtime, falsification of timecards and industrial homework. In response Guess? Inc. swept through the sweatshops taking everything with them, and left workers without jobs in an effort to appear clean by disassociating from those sweatshops.

Guess? Inc. had publicly threatened the workers and its own employees with no welfare, no unemployment benefits, no employment in Los Angeles ever, if they organize. Enrique, ex-worker in a sweatshop where most of the workers were of Mexican origin, said: "They think that Mexicans are stupid, that we cannot hurt them, that they could do without production for five years. They have a lot of money to buy the law."

Sandra, also recently fired, said: "We come here to work...thinking in the U.S. there was freedom, but we were fired without reason...." Now, said Raul, unemployed, workers are fighting for a contract, a decent wage so that they do not have to live month by month, and for the return of the jobs for all those that were fired: "Nosotros queremos un contrato y que nos regresen el trabajo aunque sea con sueldos caidos."

—Mary Amano

Post the truth at Dobbs

Memphis, Tenn.—The situation has gotten so bad at Dobbs International Catering, where we prepare and load food onto airplanes, that a group of workers sent the vice president, Gordon Anderson, a letter. Two people under him had a meeting with some of the employees. They said Anderson was upset, that he was out of the country and when he came back he would look into it. Anderson told them to post the letter. This is a small part of what it said:

"We, as Concerned Employees of Dobbs, are worried that things are still so bad because of Mr. Drachler and Mr. Woodard, that there is going to be a postal-like massacre at Dobbs.

"The new over-the-road driver's test should test us on things we deal with on the job. We are harassed when we miss these questions that have nothing to do with our jobs.

"Mr. Drachler is prejudiced and has been promoting racism at Dobbs by favoring less seniority Latino workers over workers who have been here many more years. Mr. Drachler wants to keep people fighting with each other, at each other's throats.

"The women who prepare the food are harassed and told they have to take any job rather than the job they bid on. The union employees are singled out for even worse treatment. If you complain to Mr. Woodard he always defends the supervisor."

General Manager Keith Drachler in response put a big picture of Martin Luther King, Jr., on the wall in the training room. Drachler might as well have said, "You're a bunch of stupid people. You say I'm racist so I'm going to hang this picture so you'll know I'm not." He hung it where only workers would see it, no visitors. This is a disgrace! It's degrading to King.

We love the letter that was posted. Even Drachler couldn't deny the truth. We were glad some people were doing something—especially since Teamsters Local 667 has been no help at all! Everyone has their spirits up and are expecting something to happen. Dobbs thinks they know who did this, but they are wrong! We've got a message for Dobbs. You don't know, and you never will.

This is not over because things are no better. In transportation several of the drivers want to bid down to loaders, which they have the right to do but management won't let them. They keep harassing workers, giving them more work than they can do, making them do work and not paying them what they should for it. The struggle at Dobbs continues, but we mean to win.

—Black workers at Dobbs

Ford pact: low-pay future

Detroit—The tentative three-year UAW-Ford contract negotiated Sept. 16 includes these provisions:

- Workers get a 3% wage increase the first year and 3% bonuses the next two years. Bonuses reduce company costs on everything based on wages, including pensions, overtime pay and vacation pay.

- Ford promises to keep 95% of its present 105,000 jobs for three years—but not if there is a serious recession.

- Ford can pay a permanently lower wage scale to employees who work in any new parts plant the company buys or builds, giving the company incentive to hire low-pay workers and get rid of those with high pay. Pensions are also increased to encourage high-pay workers to retire.

- Ford continues the two-tier wage system in all union plants whereby new employees start at about a third less in pay and other reduced benefits, and get full pay and benefits only after three years.

Present retirees, seeking a cost-of-living provision for their pensions, got nothing except the existing year-end \$600 bonus, which one Ford retiree said was "all eaten up by inflation before we get it."

On the production line, however, working conditions continue to worsen as a result of previous concessions. At the Ford Rouge plant the speed-up resulting from worker cutbacks is so bad on the new 1997 Mustang line that, as one worker said, "One day we were sent home strictly because of quality problems." Bad cars piled up so fast that they couldn't be repaired without shutting the line down for the day.

—Andy Phillips

Local 282 wins at Hood

(Continued from page 1)

This summer, Hood workers organized again, after the International turned bargaining rights back over to 282. On Aug. 3 they held a mass meeting and authorized a strike. Local leadership and the workers built a community and civil rights support coalition to put pressure on the company. Then on Sept. 11, workers held a rally in front of the plant on their lunchtime. They chanted "No raise, no work" and "No contract, no work." The workers were joined at the rally by members of the Jackson chapter of SCLC.

After the contract was signed and ratified by the Hood workers, Local 282 President Willie Rudd said that "forcing Hood to change his mind took a combined effort. Community pressure had a lot to do with it. SCLC was out in front in building the community support, especially Jim Evans and Stephanie Parker-Weaver. But the greatest factor in this victory was the determination of the workers. They just would not be satisfied with anything but Local 282, the union of their choosing."

"Because the company had lost money for several years and showed us the figures, we only wanted a one-year contract," Rudd said. "We want to get back to the table soon and get what we deserve." Hood agreed to a 15¢ across-the-board raise immediately, with a \$100 bonus at Christmas and another \$100 bonus in six months. There will also be changes in the way grievances are handled. Hood workers also have reason to believe the workforce will go back to pre-layoff size. In the last year employment fell from 350 to about 230. But now all laid-off workers are back to work.

The day after the contract, Local 282 and the workers turned a previously scheduled community and civil rights support rally into a mass victory celebration. Speakers included Congressman Bennie Thompson, Martin Luther King III, James Orange, and representatives from the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, SCLC, the Steelworkers, and many rank-and-file labor activists from across Mississippi. "It was a sight to see all those people backing us," said one Hood worker. "But we have a lot more work to do now, signing people up and making ourselves stronger. We will never go back to welfare wages, because we built our own union. We believe in ourselves."

—Michael Flug

Mass picket at USA Today

Port Huron, Mich.—"Somebody yelled 'sit down!' and everybody sat in the two driveways. You could hear the air brakes and the squeal of tires as this whole caravan of trucks came to a halt." "The presses were stopped several times, and they missed the early airport run."

This was how participants described the action on Sept. 22 to stop distribution of USA Today, whose owner, Gannett, also owns the Detroit News. After nearly 15 months, the strike by six unions against the Detroit Newspaper Agency is far from over. Around 200 "Friends of Labor," strikers and supporters, picketed the printing plant undisturbed by the Port Huron police all night until the St. Clair County Sheriffs arrived in full riot gear and arrested 27 strikers.

On Sept. 12 ACOSS (Action Coalition of Strikers and Supporters) was instrumental in calling a mass meeting of supporting newspaper workers. Although about 500 strikers turned out, many were turned off by the lengthy speeches by the members of the Metropolitan Council of Newspaper Workers (the official negotiating body). An open microphone for strikers was relegated to the last half hour of a four-hour program. "After 14 months they [Metropolitan Council] should have showed us more respect. We should have been first instead of last," said a member of the Typographer's Union.

Most members insist that production of the scab Detroit News and Detroit Free Press must be shut down to win a fair contract, with all strikers returned to work (no "permanent replacements"). A Guild member said, "Shut 'em down! Everything else builds towards that."

—Susan Van Gelder

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

Editor's Note: The following letter by Raya Dunayevskaya was written a few months prior to the exciting revolts in France, 1968, and offers an important critique of the influence of Althusser's "pro-Maoist" version of Marxism on the socialist movement of the time. We publish it here because it speaks poignantly to the continuing influence of Althusser on recent debates on culture and ideology in so much postmodern and post-Marx Marxist theory today.

Jan. 29, 1968

Dear A.R.:

Please forgive me for not commenting on "Contradiction and Overdetermination" by Louis Althusser, which you were kind enough to photo offset for me last summer. At first the delay was due to the fact that I had no chance to read the essay, as I was preoccupied with my new book-in-progress, *Philosophy and Revolution*. Then, when I finally did get to read it, I was so disappointed by the writings of a man who had so long been built up as an "original thinker, a new young French philosopher" that I could not get myself to write.

Two very different types of events prompt this letter. One is the fact that Louis Althusser has since become a leader of a pro-Maoist trend within the French Communist Party, or at least has scared the Central Committee with his influence over young students and the possibility that whereas an outright Maoist "party" failed to get much of a following in France, a Maoist position that has a philosophic Althusserian turn may speak "sufficiently in French" as to win a following and split their intellectual periphery. They have told him that, whereas he may continue his "speciality" (freedom in purely abstract discussions), he may not meddle in politics.*

THE SECOND, and to me, the more important reason for this note is you, that is to say, your continuing many-sided study of Marxism that is very obviously not narrowly factional. I was told about the latest material you ordered. You have been sent my "Notes for Lectures on Lenin's Philosophic Notebooks" and the *American Worker* pamphlet, and I herewith enclose my 1946-47 articles on the "Nature of the Russian Economy," but I do not have Johnson's 1941 Resolution, nor for that matter, my own of the same year, with the title "Russia is a State-Capitalist Society."

But since this is 1968, not 1941, I think it is important to move on, and if I find that you do not have my piece "Marx's Humanism Today," I will send you a copy. It is important, both objectively and "subjectively" since it also answers the question of Humanism regarding which the translator and/or editor of Althusser's article makes some snide remarks. Who was the translator—C.L.R. James?

NOW THEN, the Althusser essay, the very title of which I found intellectually abhorrent because it was vulgarly economist despite all its pretense to a non-economist approach, not to mention the fact that the word itself, overdetermination, has Freudian origins. Remember that Marx attacked not only economists and vulgar Communists but also "abstract materialists" (natural scientists)—in a word, all those who did not appreciate in full the meaning of History, as past, as present, as future; history, not as Althusser understands it as "the run of History...through the multiform world of the superstructure" (p. 32), but History in Marx's sense of people, workers shaping history, resolving contradictions in life and not only in thought, and thereby developing the multi-dimensional in Man.

Althusser, in typically intellectualist fashion, is too preoccupied with "infrastructure-superstructure complex" (p. 31) to be able to listen, much less hear, the Subject, Man himself. What he, therefore, tells the reader to grapple with is dogmatism-antidogmatism, and that only as those above interpret it, and thus he never confronts the living strata below, unless it is as something to draw out your pity. But Marx didn't speak only of "cold, hunger for his poor worker," as Althusser would have; the distinguishing distinctive mark of Marxism as against all others—socialists, communists, utopians, anarchists, syndicalists—was that the worker was a thinking human being, a creative moulder of history—"Working, thinking, fighting, bleeding Paris—almost forgetful, in its incubation of a new society, of the cannibals at its gates—radiant in the enthusiasm of its historic initiative!"

SO HEAVILY does Althusser's anti-Hegelianism weigh him down, prey upon him, that it takes 17 pages out of a 21 page article before he ever gets down to the subject-matter, much less the living subject, at issue. He then attributes to Engels (to Engels, who said that there would have been no "scientific socialism" had there been

no Hegelian philosophy!) a break not only with the "Hegelian principle of explanation by self-consciousness (ideology) but also with the Hegelian theme of phenomenon-essence-truth-of. We are definitely concerned with a new relationship between new terms." (p. 31).

Outside of the fact that a new relationship is not something that merely relates "terms" as if we were engaged in a game of words, the elevation of an 1890 letter by Engels as "the new" for our age is nothing but a subterfuge for saying that nothing has really been left us by our founders, that "experiential protocol" (whatever that means!) "largely remains to be elaborated." (p. 33).



"Who has attempted to follow up the explorations of Marx and Engels? I can only think of Gramsci." Relegated to a footnote at this point is a reference to Lukacs.

TO BE precise, it constitutes but one sentence of the footnote; it is worth, however, a whole chapter (if I had the time to spare) for it reveals the whole degradation of thought that Stalinism has brought into the movement. (Oh, naturally, it is only "philosophically" since now that Stalin is dead and the established state authority permits one to speak of his "crimes," no one except Mao is any longer a proclaimed Stalinist!) Here is that priceless sentence: "Lukacs' essays, which are limited to the history of literature and philosophy, seem to me to be contaminated with a guilty Hegelianism, as if Lukacs wanted to absolve through Hegel his upbringing by Simmel and Dilthey."

Remembrance of Bess Gogol

Bessie Spiegel Gogol was Raya Dunayevskaya's oldest and closest comrade. From girls and young women whose experience was rooted in the immediate aftermath of the great Russian Revolution, to their first days in Chicago in the 1920s discovering a hammer and sickle in a storefront window thus beginning their re-discovery of Bolshevism in America, theirs was a relationship born in sisterhood, deeply shaped and transformed by the pull of revolution from Russia and the emergence of its counterpart on American soil.

If in the late 1920s and 1930s Raya began to develop a unique understanding of the Black question in America, one that would mature to the writings we know first in the 1940s and later in *American Civilization on Trial*, then Bess was that other Bolshevik who immersed herself within that Black struggle from the 1930s, through the 1940s, into the heart of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement and to the very end of her life.

What we are writing about for the historic record, so that it does not become a forgotten dimension, is what Bess meant for Raya: 1) at the time when Marxist-Humanism was first being formed, 2) in its emergence as a separate tendency and its first projection in book form, and 3) in the development of Marxist-Humanism out of Marxist-Humanism in News and Letters Committees.

The comradeship of Bess with Raya had its most definitive stamp as Raya developed her ideas in each of these moments. Raya has written of the emergence of "a new kind of revolutionary" at the time of the Spanish Civil War. When that new kind of revolutionary went to Mexico as Russian language secretary to Trotsky, Bess came to visit. And when shortly afterwards Raya broke with Trotsky over the nature of the Russian economy, daring to challenge this man of October, Bess was one of those handful of comrades who recognized in Raya the emergence of a new tendency within Marxism. It began an outpouring of passion, energy, drive, and tenacity to put forth a developing body of ideas that all of us who have known Bess at one or another moment have witnessed. It was her passionate relationship to those ideas that stamped Bess as a most original character.

It is true that in the Johnson-Forest Tendency there was a philosophic dialogue, which can be seen in the three-way correspondence between Raya, Grace Lee Boggs and C.L.R. James. One can catch Raya's creative development of ideas in the correspondence, but this is often in spite of James' impatient rush to pigeonhole Raya's thought. When the Tendency broke up, Raya's search for co-thinkers, for collaborators in working out the Idea of Marxist-Humanism took on a new urgency. It meant having the kind of colleagues with whom you could test out your rough-hewn ideas in the making. Bess was one of those crucial people.

Bess often proclaimed that she was not intellectual.

Note, first, the little conjunction that joins very different, even opposed, fields, "literature and philosophy." These fields are opposed not just "in general" but very specifically in Lukacs since, in matters of literature, Lukacs was analyzing what others had done, whereas in philosophy he is a true original. Long before anyone, including Lukacs, had known the full extent of Marx's Hegelian roots (the Social Democracy had never bothered to publish those precious archives of Marx which they inherited), Lukacs had elaborated this relationship that, though it was written in 1923, remains unequalled to this day by any other Marxist, Gramsci included. Althusser, on the other hand, hasn't even the simple decency to refer you to that work so that the reader can check for himself.

Secondly, and crucially, note the gratuitous Stalinist amalgam-building in the reference to Lukacs' alleged "upbringing by Simmel and Dilthey." Whatever these reactionary philosophers had to do with Lukacs' "upbringing," it is a fact that they nowhere figured in Lukacs' thinking and activity over nearly half a century. That is to say, from the moment he became a Marxist, not a single grain of their philosophy is present in the matter at issue, the essays which constituted his original philosophic contribution, that were repudiated by him under Stalinist pressure when Lukacs capitulated to Stalinism, and which now are remembered, not because of his philosophic "errors," but because he dared, for a few miraculous weeks of the Hungarian Revolution, to associate himself with it.

ABOVE ALL, what is it that Althusser really means to say with his phrase "guilty Hegelianism"; he doesn't bother to explain here precisely because he isn't so much interested in attacking "Hegel" or Lukacs as he is in attacking Marx's "Hegelianism." Oh, how Hegel haunts these apologists for the State. "I shall not evade the most burning issue," concludes Althusser; "it seems to me that either the whole logic of 'sublation' must be rejected, or we must give up any attempt to explain how the proud and generous Russian people bore Stalin's crimes and repression with such resignation; how the Bolshevik Party could tolerate them; and how a Communist leader could order them." (p. 34)

Poor Hegel, he now gets blamed for Stalin's crimes! The logic of sublation, that is to say, the dialectic of transcendence, is to lead us, not to freedom, but to white-wash of Russian state-capitalism; and if it doesn't, as it surely can't and won't, then we must "drive this phantom back into the night." (p. 35) Fini. No doubt Mao will help Althusser do just that; but Marx won't.

Yours,
Raya

And yet Bess's determined belief in the ideas of Marxist-Humanism and their needed organizational expression helped to sustain them when only the smallest handful were present.

One dimension of Bess's relationship to Raya that should be recalled, is that of Bess as nurse. Raya had severe illnesses in the period before *Philosophy and Revolution* and again after *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*. In both cases Bess remained at Raya's side full time. Here, it is not possible to separate the dimensions of nurse, and of revolutionary colleague. Raya wrote of this in a short note to Bess attached to a completed draft of *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution* in December 1984:

"'Science' and 'Natural Will' may flatter themselves that 'they' brought me back to creativity. But we know the truth that it is You who did since I could not have made it if you weren't there as...Colleague, Professional, Universal call of Freedom, Creativity of Personality to articulate it—Love Love Love Raya."

What can perhaps be more fully documented is the period when the stench of McCarthyism was still in the air, Bess time and again went from department to department at university after university to create lecture tours for Raya on the West Coast. Her determination to project Raya's Marxist-Humanism was ceaseless.

All of this is not to say that Bess's great passion for the ideas of Marxist-Humanism could not have a biting edge and harsh impatience when she disagreed with how those ideas were projected, or practiced in News and Letters Committees. Her narrow impatience on occasion led to clashes with Raya.

Bess and Raya were comrades, colleagues, revolutionary sisters within the body of emancipatory ideas which have come to be known as Marxist-Humanism. That historic moment needs to be recorded.

—Judy and Eugene Gogol

P.S. We are not here writing of several other dimensions of Bess' life, including her relationship with the love of her life, Louis, and with ourselves, whose political/philosophic lives she greatly shaped. These were spoken to briefly, as well as her relation to News and Letters Committees in terms of archives, correspondence and work with other comrades, at the graveside service by ourselves and others.

POETRY SLAM fundraiser
for the New York News and Letters Committee
Sunday Oct. 20 2:30 pm
Washington Square Church
133 W. 4th Street (Parish House Parlor), Manhattan

*For the French edition of *Marxism and Freedom*, Dunayevskaya submitted the following addition:

The spectre is also haunting the French Communist-Maoist philosopher, Althusser, and precisely on the same theoretical task, the relevance of Marx's 1844 Humanist essays. None of those Communist revisionists who wish to postdate Marx's "maturity" from the mid-1840s to the late 1850s, displays greater casuistry and measureless pretension than Althusser. In his For Marx, which, more correctly, should have been entitled Against Marx, he has recourse to pseudo-psychoanalysis to express his venom against Marx's Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic as "the prodigious 'abreaction' indispensable to the liquidation of his (Marx's) 'disordered' consciousness." It takes the shameless mentality of state-capitalism calling itself communism to delude oneself to the point of thinking that so infantile an attack against the young Marx could cover over the greatness of his vision of a new world founded on a truly human basis.

Essay Article

Subjective barriers in socialization of labor today

by Ron Brokmeyer

At one stage we tried to divide socialization of labor from revolt, the former being still capitalistic, and the latter the beginning of socialism. We didn't get very far because that socialization was capitalistic but revolt liberates it from its capitalistic integument. Marx...did not make negation of the negation any more concrete...

—Raya Dunayevskaya, May 12, 1953

At the end of Capital Marx leaves no blueprint for a new society. He does, however, in chapter 32 on "The Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation" leave a concept for the birth of a new society—the dialectic of negation of the negation. Marx calls capitalist accumulation one long epoch of first negation. This is the negation of social relations of those working the land, i.e., peasantry, under pre-capitalist social relations. Through the force of the state they are expropriated, set "free" from any way to make a living.

Capitalist accumulation begins and ends with the creation of proletarians who have no way to survive but to sell their ability to work, their labor power. Capitalist accumulation proceeds through the "centralization of capital" and "the entanglement of all peoples in the net of the world market, and with this, the growth of the international character of the capitalist regime." This process of centralization socializes and disciplines labor until there is a "negation of the negation," that is, when "the centralization of the means of production and the socialization of labour reach a point at which they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder."¹

Historic moments in the drive to burst the integument, such as the Paris Commune of 1871 or the Polish Solidarity movement of 1980-81, provide a glimpse of a different future based on the reorganization of society from below. The collective teamwork of the masses in the Paris Commune created, for a moment, a whole new world of social relations, which for Marx clarified precisely what it means to burst the capitalist integument.

NEW FACE OF STATE-CAPITALISM

In March of this year workers in the Gdansk shipyard, the militant birthplace of Solidarity when it took on Polish totalitarian state-capitalism, decided to accept a no strike pledge. Now most of the Gdansk shipyard is shut down altogether. What totalitarian state-capitalism couldn't do, state-capitalism as the enforcer of the global capital market has achieved with hardly a whimper.

In the U.S. in the 1930s, the birth of the CIO represented a near total challenge to the rule of capital in massive sit down strikes. Workers' subjectivity challenged the very idea of capitalism. The state interceded by passing labor laws guaranteeing the right to organize independent unions and outlawing company unions. Unions became a mediation, transcending old capitalist relations. However, to paraphrase Marx's original (1844) way of posing negation of the negation, only by transcending that mediation can positive humanism begin from itself, i.e., the full realization by workers' that their own self-activity is the ongoing determination of a non-capitalist objectivity. Without that second moment of transcendence the future is left open to the kind of retrogression we face today.

Today the catchword is "teamwork." Congress even passed a bill to overthrow the 1930s legislation and legitimize the company union, once again, in the name of "teamwork." Clinton vetoed it to keep his friends in the labor bureaucracy while issuing "waivers" for companies initiating "teamwork" programs. The unions themselves opened the door to this by embracing quality programs in the face of global competition. Today established unions will promote any kind of "strategic partnership" just to stay in the action.

In every epoch the state has been the enforcer of "reforming" social relations according to the needs of capital required for its specific stage of production. This includes everything from prison warehousing of the poor and forcing workers into sweated labor through welfare cutbacks to wholesale gutting of education and healthcare. The "teamwork" law, Clinton's waivers, and union cooperation signal the complete transformation of unionism, bringing organized labor in line with global capital's own organizing principle.

LABOR SUBJECTIVITY, "TEAM" CONCEPT

The team concept, which is all the rage among today's bosses, encapsulates capitalism's socialization of labor in a time of permanent restructuring. The capitalist re-

organization of labor is merely a tool to increase productivity or, in other words, to reduce that most capitalist of all determinants, socially necessary labor time.

In practice the way restructuring often works is that the money men decide how many jobs need to be cut for the company to stay "competitive." Then management has to figure out how to re-organize work for those who are left. The team's paramount struggle is to align itself with the new designated labor time for its product. The price of remaining in the game is each worker internalizing the phantasmagoric objectivity which Marx called



the commodity-form. It is phantasmagoric because this form of the object reflects back to the mind not a material but a purely social property, the amount of labor time incorporated "in" commodities. In this way human relations take the form of relations between things.

In place of an army of managers, organizational discipline aims, in large part, to convince workers that reducing socially necessary labor time is in their own interest. This purely subjective ideological integument drives today's vaunted decentralization, which merely transfers much centralized control from growing hierarchies to the realm of capital markets. At the same time, capital's mobility means that its power to "set free" workers from their jobs is nearly unrestricted. The state amplifies this power by breaking down trade barriers and by making sure there is no welfare state safety net.

In the Republican primary campaign, the neo-fascist Pat Buchanan tapped into the resentment against greedy corporations like AT&T, a corporation that continues to get rid of workers as they are making record profits. This resentment swept aside for a moment the much ballyhooed Republican "Contract With America" overnight. The retrogressionist character of this brand of "anti"-capitalism is the American road to fascism.

Racism, sexism, nationalism, and homophobia, raised in the name of preserving the disintegrating bourgeois family, find scapegoats for capitalist crises. Deeper retrogression is in store if we avoid facing the fundamental nature of capitalist objectivity, namely, the form that human relations take when they are phantasmagorically tied to commodities on a global scale. The way these issues appear on the political stage contrasts sharply with the fundamental contradiction workers feel in their own activity in this new stage of the socialization of labor.

A Kaiser (HMO) worker recently (January-February 1996 N&L) focused on the divide between, on the one hand, a worker's view of teamwork and cooperation and, on the other hand, teamwork which is totally constrained by the capitalist integument. Management's concept is, he wrote, "working together as a team in order to compete against the other sharks in the marketplace." This "team concept hardly points to a cooperative result—it is either vanquish or be vanquished. The threat of losing your job is present every day. You're told you're nothing if not part of our team. The company line is that 'our team means your survival.'"

In contrast, in this worker's view, the genuine idea of "team and cooperation is based on providing what is best for patients not the world of cost/benefit analysis which treats health care as overhead. Our concept is not exclusive but inclusive." In other words, for workers the goal of restructuring is distinct from the concrete and useful collective effort of keeping people healthy. Two California ballot initiatives, Prop. 214 and 216 sponsored by SEIU and the California Nurses Association, aim to make patient care the focus of health care work. The health care industry is pouring in big money to defeat these propositions, claiming they will raise the cost of health care.

The test of the principle of inclusiveness is overcoming racism which is fundamental to the structure of American capitalism. Today the color line is increasingly what separates the high paying high-tech economy from the low-tech one, dominated by sweated labor and unemployment. This is what makes the Black struggle for inclusion, which is much deeper than the fight for affirmative action, a subjectivity reaching beyond the capitalist integument.

Thus, in the newly industrialized South, Black workers, mostly women, are organizing unions, re-creating, from below, the original meaning of unionism. They are drawing on the legacy of the Civil Rights Movement. In reaction to the anti-immigrant Prop. 187, there is new life in the UFW (United Farm Workers) in California as

it is becoming more like the original community-based union it used to be among farm workers. Making so-called "illegals" into strictly "hands" with no rights, meets the requirements of California agribusiness. "Right to work" regions of the USA have become a magnet for European and Japanese capital looking for low-wage non-union labor. Low-paying manufacturing and service sector jobs provide the value producing foundation for this high-tech economy.

NEEDED: A NEW SENSE OF OBJECTIVITY

What is new today is not the collapse in productivity growth which is blamed for the deterioration of the conditions of life and labor. That story goes back to 1974. What is new is that in spite of capitalism's pitiful performance, the fetish of high tech has a more powerful hold than ever. The U.S., considered a basket case a few years ago, is now deemed "most competitive."

Production for value, or the amount of labor time "in" commodities, is a purely social property depending on the level of technology, intensity of labor, level of teamwork, etc. Within a given industry each individual commodity has a value according to the average socially necessary labor time required to produce it. A productivity increase raises the relative value expressed in commodities produced in a particular company. At the same time the total value produced is equal to the total labor time and is, therefore, lowered. All companies realize value according to the average socially necessary labor time. However, in relation to that average the company that raises productivity realizes more than the amount of labor time "in" its commodities.

When all companies either adopt the same productive methods or go out of business, the value realized is equal for all. This sets off a new round of productivity increases through more machines, etc. From the point of view of the individual capitalist organization it has to appear that more value comes from more machines, more productivity, and more teamwork when the exact opposite is true. Bourgeois economics is oriented around just this inverted sense of objectivity that aims to eliminate capitalism's value creating substance, labor power.

The catchword in corporate organizations today is that everything one does must be "value adding." The logic of this internalized discipline of capital has meant the elimination of many layers of management. The labor force is also increasingly contingent, i.e., temporary, "just-in-time," contract labor.² A contingent labor force creates nearly total flexibility for capital's needs. However, the subjective side of flexibility is that the more workers cooperate and collectively organize production on their own, the more state-capitalism's external ideological constraints become transparent. Another aspect of this subjective side is that the quickened pace of the constant revolutions in production demands a worker who is not tied to one specialized task for a lifetime, but rather is constantly learning new skills. Marx intimated that one positive aspect arising out of this process is the "totally developed individual" (p. 618).

While higher paid high-tech workers aren't actively organizing in opposition to this system, many nevertheless feel very deep alienation in the cubicle workstation world where corporate decision makers often don't have a clue as to what they actually do and feel. Scott Adams' Dilbert comic strip, which is also the focus of a popular new book, is a cultural expression of the alienation high-tech workers experience, and whose messages are the source of Scott Adams' ideas. Dilbert cartoons are displayed throughout the high-tech workplace.

Congress' "teamwork" bill represents management's realization that in the end, it is only the cooperative human factor that gives them productivity gains. While harboring the illusion that an independent workers' movement has been effectively shut down, today's ideologues hype the new push for company unions as "really about a recognition that American workers are intelligent...can make decisions for themselves [and] can contribute a powerful intellectual resource to the American company." Their exploitative goal is to "tap that resource" to "compete in a world market."³

Capital now acknowledges that it has reached the limits of its ability to raise productivity through technology alone. This exposes its absolute vulnerability. Capital is dependent on workers internalizing its idea that the objective result of workers' activity represents the amount of labor time "in" commodities, and the world market is the crucible in which commodities relate to each other as carriers of this purely social property.

All of this points to a certain ease with which the transcendence of this new stage, so dependent on workers internalizing capitalist ideology, can be envisioned. The last 20 years of low rates of productivity growth make apparent to all, the absolute contradiction within capitalism. However, recognizing that absolute contradiction alone is not enough to resolve it.

The resolution comes only when we soberly confront the forms in which this false sense of objectivity is internalized. The harder they come with their threadbare ideology, the harder they fall; and fall they will if future freedom movements wholly overcome their own internal barriers. That is at the dialectical core of Marx's philosophy of "revolution in permanence." We must concretely grasp it as Marx worked it out in Capital as the negation of the negation that bursts the capitalist integument.

I intend to take that up in a future essay.

2. See Chris Tilly, *Half a Job: Bad and Good Part-Time Jobs in a Changing Labor Market* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996), especially chapter 2, "Why Has Part-Time Employment Continued to Grow?" pp. 13-33.

3. Dan Yager of the employer Labor Policy Association on *The News Hour With Jim Lehrer*, May 14, 1996.

1. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, trans. by Ben Fowkes (New York: Vintage, 1976) p. 929.

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REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS VS. THE "REAL" WORLD

Looking at the Republican and Democratic Conventions was like looking at a non-real world. The Republicans are going to balance the budget and cut our taxes? The Democrats are going to create a million jobs for us? Who do they think they are kidding?

Retired worker
California

* * *

When I watched the Republican and Democratic conventions on TV, I felt like I never left my country. These parties are like the Communist Party. Everything is so wonderful, everyone is so excited, everyone agrees with everything and salutes at the right moment. Every single movement of people on the floor was the same, they all behave the same. All spoke in unison, all show unanimity. They believe in a future that only their leader can bring.

Russian immigrant
Chicago

* * *

The coverage of welfare in the last issue was appreciated. Terry Moon was right when she talked of all the "horror of this bill." One she didn't mention was that the bill allows the state to force women under 18 to stay at school and live with an adult. This is a prescription of misery. In Michigan 45% of young mothers who live independently have been kicked out by their parents or guardians and 1/3 are already known to child welfare workers because of abuse or neglect. These women will not go home, they will simply disappear from the system into prostitution and/or homelessness. This welfare legislation is built on ignorance and misogynist ideology. The human devastation it will cause is just beginning to be known.

Women's liberationist
Michigan

* * *

One of my friends from Central America was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, partially traced back to past torture by the military in his country. His treatment at a state hospital was what I could only call subhuman. There is specialized treatment available for his disorder at Del Amo Medical Center but he had no access to it because he doesn't have Medicare, private insurance or money, and it would be very expensive treatment. The gigantic cuts in mental health problems by the Deukmejian and Wilson administrations have left people like this limited to skeletal "care" and no therapy. His wife got him released because if he had stayed a month his SSI check would be garnished by the hospital, leaving him and his family homeless.

Correspondent
Los Angeles

* * *

We aren't that far from having a total police state here in the U.S. When we went into the Persian Gulf I laughed at George Bush making a speech and quoting Thomas Paine's saying "These are the times that test men's souls." Paine would have spit in his face. I think of the phrase "Patriotism is the last refuge of scoundrels" every time I see these politicians wrapping themselves in the flag.

Vietnam vet
New Jersey

Finally the Pentagon has admitted that thousands of troops were exposed to nerve gas when the U.S. bombed weapons plants in Iraq in 1991. The home video of soldiers lounging 500 yards from the plants billowing smoke was

chillingly reminiscent of the Pentagon's films of soldiers 50 years ago being used as guinea pigs at atom bomb tests. Now, what about the Iraqis exposed to nerve gas?

Franklin Dmitryev
Memphis

* * *

It's good to hear that young people are searching for ways to revitalize the struggle, as Maya Jhansi states in her article, "Revolutionary subjectivity in the '90s" (August-September N&L). The reason the movement of the 1960s subsided is that there were no political actions led by labor. The anti-Vietnam War movement was primarily a student protest which died down after 1973 when the draft ended. But during the Persian Gulf massacre of 1991 the protests started at the same level as they ended in 1973. The syndrome of not supporting American imperialism is very much with us, which is why the recent actions in Panama, Haiti, Somalia and Iraq were very quick. The civil rights movements of the Black community, women and the gay and lesbian communities are very much with us and have expanded to levels beyond the scope of the 1960s. Yet while social mores changed, the class struggle remains because we still have capitalism. Only when labor organizes a serious fightback do fundamental structural changes occur. That's what is needed to combat today's economic crisis.

Lee Heller
San Francisco

* * *

Choosing between voting for Clinton or Dole is like "choosing" between date rape or stranger rape. Those who would vote for Clinton would be like those who would say to a woman whose "friend" raped her that "basically he's a good guy even though he just assaulted you." You'll probably come out of a date rape alive, but with a stranger, you don't know. That choice itself is a particular form of dehumanization.

Black feminist
Chicago

* * *

John Alan's "New South Olympics" powerfully addressed the demolition of the homes of poor Black and working class people and the homeless sweeps going on. The atrocities of the "Global Corporate Agenda" against the people's struggles for justice and freedom have been chronicled in a number of publications. It is detailed in a special issue of Project South from the Atlanta Institute for the Elimination of Poverty and Genocide. Another protest booklet is Spoilsport's Guide Book to Atlanta, spotlighting the many abuses associated with mega events like the Olympics. It amplifies the infamies perpetrated on the poor by tracing the legacy of displacement from Seoul to Santo Domingo, Rio de Janeiro, and Barcelona.

Sheila
New York City

* * *

I can't understand why there is not a revolution in this country. Why do working people keep going to work with all the downsizing and sweatshop wages? I can't understand why I keep going to work each day at two jobs. Even with my two jobs, I couldn't make it if my wife wasn't also working. Why do we keep allowing this system to continue? What's wrong with our thinking?

Sweatshop worker
Indiana

Readers' Views

GOAL: BLACK LIBERATION

I am disappointed that N & L, steeped in Marx's "revolution in permanence" does not see a semblance of new forms coming about from the Million Man March. While I am not sure I completely understand Marx's theory of "revolution in permanence," I do see all around a "hunger in permanence" and Islamic groups feeding the hungry. Where African Americans are being warehoused in more and more prisons, the Nation of Islam appears to rehabilitate them. Instead of pushing drugs, they encourage healthful fruit for the body and food for thought. Possible transformations can be seen regarding Europe, Russia, Bosnia, but where Minister Louis Farrakhan says to get education, build houses, build businesses, he is seen as a menace to be avoided at all costs. That attitude seems to me like sticking one's head in the sand. Having said that, I'm enclosing a contribution to help you continue your efforts from which will come Reason.

Friend and supporter
Detroit

* * *

The Million Man March was significant in a symbolic sort of way but no radical African Liberation movement came out of it. Nothing came out of it in Chicago. I have problems with the idea of people looking to Farrakhan as an alternative, because he's pushing African-American capitalism and because of his positions on women and heterosexism. Women's and Queer Liberation must be part of the liberation movement. That was the problem in the 1960s, when there were major problems in the Black movement and the Left on man/woman relations. We need to recognize the many people fighting for African-American liberation outside the confines of capitalism and the Democratic Party.

Black Activist
Chicago

* * *

The goal of Black liberation is to build our humanity, to dissolve the relationship between the oppressor and oppressed which dehumanizes us. This requires conscious re-thinking on the part of revolutionaries; what are we liberating ourselves from and what are we liberating ourselves to? We need something like the Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa today in the U.S.

Black youth
Chicago

* * *



IMMIGRANTS AND REVOLUTION

I was surprised by a statement in John Marcotte's article on "New immigrants" (August-September N&L) about Latino-American workers, that "They are here now because...those forms of resistance and survival have dried up," written at the moment Ecuadorian peasants were burying themselves to their necks defending their land and source of work; in Colombia, the cocaleros were fighting in the middle of a crossfire between government, "leftist" guerrillas and the "narcos"; the landless peasants of Brazil were rallying daily, despite being massacred, for their rights not only as workers but as human beings; and in Argentina there was a 24-hour general strike in August against the government's neo-liberal "adjustments" and another one (36 hours) was confirmed for Sept. 26 and 27. It is clear that in Latin America not everybody can migrate from poverty and toward better (sic) conditions. For those who stay, resistance and survival is everyday life.

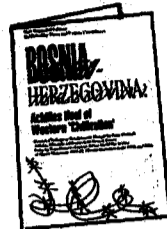
Carlos Varela
New York

* * *

Your work in N&L is very important to set free the ideas of immigrants in your country, ideas born from their reality, from their anguish and their hopes. The situation of those who remain is no

less desperate: children forced to live with people who mistreat them; people obliged to pay the migrant's debts. Many of the migrants who don't return were community leaders, people committed to the development of the community. Meeting the ideas of Marxist-Humanism helps them remain loyal to the project of building a more human and just society.

Revolutionary
South America



BOSNIA AND THE U.S.

I see the Bosnia pamphlet as an ongoing work, which needs and will have much further development, especially concerning the U.S. One of the keys is being able to recognize new Subjects. In any society the conflicts on the outside with other groups reflect conflicts within. In a war, it isn't the conflict between opposing armies but the fact that either side would send its 18-year-olds to die and kill other youth. In the case of Bosnia, the deepest contradictions may be within Serbia itself. As new subjects of revolution arise and we recognize them, we may find them right in Serbia and Croatia.

American revolutionary
Berkeley, Cal.

I'm deeply grateful for your excellent pamphlet on Bosnia. Sheila Fuller's essay on "the philosophical meaning of Bosnia's struggle" is extremely relevant to class relations here. I have problems with the attitude of Noam Chomsky, as described in the pamphlet, that Bosnia was a "white man's war." In comparing the genocidal situations in Africa and Bosnia he seems to be saying that skin pigmentation should be what determines the level of support from revolutionaries in the U.S. The same forces that created the fascist onslaught in Bosnia also brought about the present political and economic climate in Central Africa. Chomsky made an extremely reactionary statement to justify the political attitude of revolutionaries here in the U.S. toward the Bosnian struggle for a multi-ethnic society. In a sense, the Bosnian struggle is also the Achilles heel of "human civilization."

Prisoner
Colorado

WHO ARE THE PRISONERS?

The powerful expressions of humanity's search for new relations that you read in the correspondence from prisoners makes you realize that we are all prisoners today.

Teacher
Illinois

SCOTTISH RADICALISM

As N&L arrived a few days ago, I was putting the finishing touches on my new book *The Very Bastards of Creation: Scottish-International Radicalism: A Biographical History, 1868*. In the chapter on the two outstanding 20th century Scottish radical educationalists, A. S. Neill (1883-1973) and R. F. MacKenzie (1910-1987), I recall my first meeting with Bob MacKenzie in the militant mining community of Lochgelly in 1962. Introduced to him in a small tea-shop, I was astonished to find that he was reading *Marxism and Freedom*. He told me that he liked Dunayevskaya's conception of socialism as complete freedom for all human beings.

Naturally, I hope readers of N&L will read it and persuade public libraries in the U.S. to get it on their shelves. It will be published by Clydeside Press in Glasgow in mid-October. It was the so-called English radical, John Wilkes, who in 1762 insisted that "the Scots were the very bastards of creation." If radical Scots like me can now proudly acknowledge ourselves to be what Wilkes said we were, it is at least partly due to what I learned from Raya Dunayevskaya and C.L.R. James in the 1950s.

James D. Young
Scotland

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WELFARE AND THE DIALECTIC

Dunayevskaya's discussion in the June issue about the *Ethnological Notebooks* of Marx and "the negation of the negation" is not clear. If what she means is to stress the development within itself of the force and reason of revolution, I think every group could use that, and getting into specifics is on the agenda.

Here I concur with the importance of the "negation of the negation," where that means change within a subject. But just saying "negation of the negation" doesn't make it happen, any more than reading a grocery list fills your stomach. How does "the negation of the negation" and "negative self-relation" relate to what you are doing to give material (including intellectual) support to women's self-organization, youth self-organization, Black-Latino-Asian, self-organization, etc.?

New reader
California

Dunayevskaya has clearly established the necessity to ground all our discussion of women's liberation in the totality of Marxist-Humanism and its method. Look, for instance, at welfare "reform" and keep thinking of Raya writing "how total, continuous and global must the up-rooting be now?" The Republicans and their ilk want to uproot welfare too, but in order to destroy the subjects of revolution, whereas we aim to unchain people's full human development.

Susan Van Gelder
Detroit

Lou Turner's discussion in the last two issues on "what is the dialectic?" was a great contribution to overcoming the impasse in the revolutionary movement today. Working out the "freedom" you're fighting for is crucial. Or, as Turner put it, freedom "compared to what" - only to what you're opposed like the plantation mentality in the South - or the idea of freedom in absolute nega-

tivity that drives each moment of overcoming freedom?

Ironically, Clinton recently intimated the dialectic in counterrevolution that showed Turner's point. Clinton's remark to the Southern Governors Conference on turning welfare over to them revealed a deep foreboding about the consequences of the federal repeal of welfare. His commentary to them on his turning responsibility for welfare over to them was that it shows you have to "be careful what you ask for because you might get it." In other words, one has to face the consequences of capitalism as one's idea of freedom. Today's capitalist crisis is forcing us to redefine what we ask for.

Ron Brokmeyer
California

ZIMBABWE LABOR PARTY

The recent formation of the Zimbabwe Labour Party has been necessitated by lack of democracy in Zimbabwe as evidenced by rampant corruption and the widening gap between the rich and the poor. If this gap is allowed to grow wider, a violent change is inevitable.

The IMF/World Bank sponsored SAP (Structural Adjustment Programme) is doomed to failure as there is no political competition in the country to buttress this newly introduced economic competition. SAP has brought about untold suffering resulting in an increase in street kids, prostitution and crime. Opposition is stifled as the ruling Zanu (PF) controls state radio, television and daily newspapers. The minority whites, gays and lesbians, and Ndebeles are often used as scapegoats for the economic ills of the country. We are committed to correcting these anomalies. We appeal to your readers for contributions to help make us viable in defense of the economic and political interests of the workers, peasants and poor in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe Labour Party
PO Box BE 814
Belvedere, Harare
Zimbabwe

MARCH AGAINST RACISM

We are calling for a national demonstration against the racist burning of Black churches in the South. Over 75 churches have been bombed and the homes and offices of a number of activists in Chattanooga and other parts of the South attacked by arsonists this year alone. Yet there have been no major protests by either civil rights activists or church leaders, while the FBI and other agencies have been attacking the victims and threatening to arrest them, instead. We are calling on all progressives, anti-racists, church groups, human rights activists and the Black community to join us in Chattanooga, Tenn. on Saturday, Nov. 2, 1996 to send a strong message against racist violence in the South. Those interested in adding their voices can contact Lorenzo or Maxine at (423) 622-7614 for further details.

Ad Hoc Coalition Against Racism
Chattanooga, Tenn.

The North Texas town of Greenville has recently received media attention for the large number of arson fires involving churches and residences. A few months ago, a small group of Klan supporters came down from Harrison, Ark. just in order to stage a rally in the town. Most local people wished that the Klansmen had stayed home, but a few took them seriously and listened to their propaganda.

Concerned
Oklahoma

POST-MODERNISM AND POST-MARX MARXISM

I was surprised to read that Teresa Ebert has developed a critique of the "post-al" movement from a (however vulgar) Marxist perspective. As a teacher in the late '80s at Northern Illinois University, Ebert was pushing the very ideas she claims now to be against, post-modernity, post-feminism, and "post-structuralist assumptions about linguistic play, difference, and the priority of discourse." Her lateral move to an Engelsian brand of Marxism raises new questions about the theoretical ties between post-modernism and post-Marx Marxism. Both her former view and her current one deny the historic element of the "creativity of cognition." We haven't been "defeated" since the beginning of

patriarchy, but have been struggling and developing our revolutionary ideas all along.

Julia Jones
Berkeley



NEW LABOR STRUGGLES

I have an update on my piece in the August-September issue on the hotel workers strike here. When it was settled, the workers didn't get everything they wanted, but they were able to resist the introduction of piecework. Given that the hotel was trying to take away a lot of hard-won gains (with other hotels watching and eyeing their own workers conditions), it could be regarded as quite a success. Certainly it is a much better result than the recent settlement in the Irving strike in New Brunswick, where, after a 27-month strike, the workers voted to return and Irving gets to choose which strikers it takes back. Needless to say, many activists are losing their jobs.

Neil Fettes
Toronto

There are a number of issues that have to be addressed in SEIU Local 11's attempt to organize workers at the Japan-based, non-union New Otani Hotel. A number of the workers are afraid of losing their jobs and won't overtly support their pro-union co-workers. The weekly demonstrations that began last January are very conservative. I sometimes feel like a voice-less, non-thinking soldier as I hold my sign for an hour and endlessly repeat the same slogans. I would even prefer a few minutes of coordinated, silent walking to break the monotony. It's only when I become angry at people crossing our picket line and start yelling, "Boycott!" that I don't feel like part of a mechanical chorus. There is no room for any positive, spontaneous creativity.

Frustrated picket
Los Angeles

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

BY CHARLES DENBY

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

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First full-length treatment of Lenin's studies of Hegel.
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PAMPHLETS

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Black/Red View

by John Alan

To visit Memphis, Tenn. could lure the visitor into his or her own private space and time, because that city arouses many memories from the past; not only memories from personal experience, like encountering a racist white cop on Beale St. during World War II, or leaving Memphis in a segregated train when Boss Crump ruled the city, but memories from everything you have heard or read about Memphis. Undoubtedly many of the white tourists, who are filling the bars and restaurants on "deghettoized" Beale St. have in their minds images and the sounds of African-American women singing W.C. Handy's "St. Louis Blues" in a 1920s Beale St. gin mill.

It is quite obvious that it is the memories of the Civil Rights Movement and the martyrdom of Dr. Martin Luther King that bring so many people to the Lorraine Motel where Dr. King was gunned down. People don't go there alone; a visit is a shared experience, they come by pairs or in groups and take pictures of each other.

The city fathers of Memphis, of whom many are now Black, have not restricted remembrances of the past to the Civil Rights Museum, the Lorraine Motel and Beale St.; they have also placed large metal plaques on poles around Memphis with biographical and historical information about Memphis' Black citizens.

A plaque commemorating Ida B. Wells is located in a poor Black neighborhood on a lot where a Black man was lynched in the early 1890s, but the information is only minimal. It says that the murder of that man started Ms. Wells on a lifelong crusade against lynching. The story is not that simple. Wells was actually driven from Memphis by a mob that burned down the office of the newspaper she owned and edited, because she had the courage to show that the terror of lynching was the force that kept the plantation system in operation.

I found no plaque memorializing Richard Wright's sojourn in Memphis. It would be quite appropriate to have such a plaque in Memphis' downtown library, marking the spot where Wright stood with a borrowed library card and his "fool-proof" forged note: "Dear Madam: Will you please give this n---- boy some books by H.L. Mencken." Wright's sojourn in Memphis was a relatively short three or four years, but they were the years of his coming of age, like it was for his generation of African-

Memphis then and now

American Southern migrants stopping in Memphis on their way North to Chicago.

But once we leave the realm of history and personal memories, the reality of many contradictions and anomalies rush in upon you. There is a white flight from Memphis to the all-white suburbs of northern Mississippi. These Southern whites have lived with African Americans all of their lives, but they can't tolerate Black majority political rule. Memphis now has a two term Black mayor, a Black police chief and African Americans are the majority on the city council and the school board.

However, this Black political majority in no way means that it can resolve the problem of wide-spread Black poverty. Forty percent of Memphis' Black population live below the poverty line and 68% of those who live above it are employed in low-paying service positions. In other words, Memphis' Black leaders, like Black political leaders in other American cities with large populations of poor and homeless citizens, reached the limit of "Black political empowerment." As Memphis mayor W.W. Herenton put it: "The biggest challenge in Memphis is turning [Black] political empowerment into economic empowerment."

Memphis' road to Black economic empowerment is supposed to start with a coalition of Black leaders and white businessmen working together to convince firms that discrimination hurts the pocketbook. How successful this project will be in ending Black poverty is very doubtful. But such a coalition does have the power to convey an ideology that capitalism can end poverty, even when high-tech American industrial cities are producing simultaneously, commodities and human poverty. Memphis may not be a ranking high-tech city, but it is moving in that direction.

As I was departing from Memphis, I remembered that across the street from the Civil Rights Museum and the Lorraine Motel there is a large sign: "IT'S A SHAM," urging that these two Memorials be given to the homeless. Natives of Memphis are apologetic and will say that the person who placed it there is irrational, but homelessness is a real problem in Memphis and it too is irrational. Could the person who placed the sign be saying that a March on Washington for the rights of poor people should be reorganized now?

Southern Human Rights Organizing Conference

Oxford, Miss.—The Southern Human Rights Organizing Conference (SHROC) met at the University of Mississippi on Sept. 19-21. Driving through the campus past plantation-style fraternity houses and streets called "Confederate Drive" and "Rebel Road", one couldn't held but appreciate how SHROC and its primarily African-American, majority women participants challenged that white space where the very nickname of the college, "Ole Miss," is the name slaves often gave the wives of their slave masters.

Conference Coordinator Jaribu Hill framed the conference's purpose: "We have come to say that it's time to put an end to worldwide human rights abuses....Many of us are victims of human rights violations right here in America and we are here to say that the time to raise our concerns is now!" Over 150 participants came to do just that at three plenaries and 11 panels that took up capital punishment, workers' and prisoners' rights, environmental justice, and domestic terrorism.

The keynote address was given by Rev. C.T. Vivian, co-founder of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). His talk was followed by Jaribu Hill's Call to Conference and a plenary on "Framing the Issues." Sarah White's powerful talk there of her experience organizing workers in the catfish industry in the Delta was referred to at workshops and plenaries throughout the three-day meeting.

The Fannie Lou Hamer/James Chaney Freedom Awards Celebration on Friday night placed the Conference in the context of the history of struggle that shows Black masses as vanguard in U.S. history and today. This was revealed vividly when Charles Tisdale, editor of the *Jackson Advocate*, dedicated his award to his mother, Winnie Tisdale.

Mr. Tisdale told of when the Ku Klux Klan in their north Alabama town came to take his brother away for looking directly into the face of a white woman. His mother killed three Klansmen while their next-door neighbor, the sheriff, did nothing. Not another word was said until a race riot in 1945, when the KKK leader came up behind her and said, "Don't you know, we're running all the n---- out." She pulled out her pistol, stuck it in his face and said, "Run me!" and chased him several blocks. He was laughed out of town.

In the panel on domestic terrorism, John McIntyre of McComb, Miss., spoke of how his son was murdered in an Illinois courthouse holding cell. His own business and home in McComb were burned while the white firefighters watched. He spoke of how "Everyone in the Black community backed away," and no one from the county came to his fundraiser. Yet, he declared, "I can't forget. And I will fight anyone who fights me."

When Brenda and Wanda Henson, two white lesbians who started Camp Sister Spirit in Ovett, Miss., spoke, they showed the affinity between their struggles. Brenda told of how the over 100 violent acts against them by known perpetrators have never been prosecuted; how, like McIntyre, they had no local support even from gays and lesbians in Mississippi: "If not for our friends nationally, we would have been murdered." She said they had learned from the South's Black farmers, who had protected their land, so they let it be known they were not going without a fight.

Because this conference actually brought together academics, lawyers and grassroots activists, each workshop was special. At the Workers' Rights workshop, one worker spoke of his experience in what he called "the chicken plantation." His story set the ground for discussion. This was also true in the workshop on Environmental Justice, where African-American women spoke of pollution pervading their communities and killing people.

A sizable contingent at the Conference advocated Black nationalism, calling in particular for the use of the UN as a forum to advance the cause of an independent Black nation in the South, and saying that Black people can only be freed by themselves and needed the power a Black homeland would provide.

At the workshop on Domestic Terrorism, the Black nationalists were challenged by Loretta Ross from the Center for Human Rights Education in Atlanta. "We say 'no' to racism and 'no' to homophobia," she said, "but we end up in a permanently reactive mode and we're not advancing any ideas of our own." While not necessarily speaking for the majority present, she raised the need to rethink nationalism when society is more globalized than ever, and "the only thing contained by borders now is human beings, not money or commodities or ideas."

In many of the workshops, women outnumbered men four to one. Feminism became explicit at the plenary on Saturday morning titled "Down Home Blues." Towards the end of Black Workers for Justice activist Ashaki Binta's talk, after repeatedly emphasizing the need for a new strategy to deal with the racist anti-worker South, she touched a controversy in the Black community.

Binta said, "The Million Man March was important, but if there's going to be a new movement, it can't be based on male chauvinism or patriarchal relations. We need a women's movement in the South, organized and conscious of itself as women oppressed as women, if we're going to get anywhere." Her talk had been interrupted by applause, and was again at this point.

The SHROC brought together rank-and-file workers and grassroots community activists with lawyers and academics. Many who came are revolutionaries. It had plenty of contradictions, some of which were confronted. It was important and took on additional meaning because it occurred in an epoch of extreme retrogression in the middle of the deep South.

—Terry Moon and Franklin Dmitryev

Israel-Palestine eruption

(continued from page 1)

areas they poured into the streets and marched on Israeli army installations as well as the militarized outposts of Jewish settlers. Though the scale was reminiscent of the intifada of the 1980s, it soon became



clear that a very new situation was at hand. For instead of just throwing bottles and rocks at Israeli soldiers, the masses encouraged armed members of Yassir Arafat's police and security forces to fire back at the Israeli positions. In a few days, more than 50 Palestinians and close to 20 Israelis lay dead; in comparison, seven Israelis died in the first year of the intifada.

The sight of seeing armed Palestinians firing back at the Israelis sent shock waves through the government, which is now contemplating a host of repressive measures. For the first time since the 1967 war, it sent U.S.-supplied tanks and helicopter gunships into the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The revolt has for now quieted down, however, in large part due to pressure exerted by Arafat, who ordered his police and security forces to "prevent any further disturbances."

There is no question that the limitations of the Oslo accords have helped the authorities maintain control over the situation, at least for now. Providing the Palestinians with nominal control over isolated segments of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, while keeping Israeli control over strategic areas, settlements and major roads, has clearly worked against the Palestinians. Yet the Oslo accords have also introduced a new reality which threatens to take matters far beyond the confines envisioned by the rulers.

This can be seen in the instances of cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians which emerged during the revolt. At the height of the fighting, Palestinians sent an ambulance for a wounded Israeli soldier caught in the fighting in Nablus. In another incident, Palestinians rendered first aid to an Israeli soldier whose jeep had overturned near Jerusalem. Such acts would have been unthinkable just a few years ago.

What enabled them to occur is the growing recognition of the need for interethnic dialogue and cooperation between Jews and Palestinians. This was in the air even before the Oslo accords were signed, but it has gained new ground since then. It is this, even more than the Oslo accords themselves, which Netanyahu seeks to undermine and destroy.

His entire political career, like that of his mentors Menachem Begin and Yitzak Shamir, has been defined by violent opposition to the very idea of multiethnic cooperation between Jews and Palestinians. What has no doubt emboldened him to move so brazenly on this now is the setback in Bosnia, where the U.S.-brokered agreement that partitions the country along ethnic lines has sent a clear signal to the rulers of the world that destroying efforts at multiethnic cooperation is "permissible."

Netanyahu's pursuit of such policies places him in

sharp opposition, not just to the Palestinians, but to many Israelis. As one report sent to *News & Letters* from Israel on Sept. 30 put it, "Israeli peace activists are using this opportunity to rally [against] Netanyahu....The air is thick with rallies, demonstrations, petitions, vigils, marches, and newspaper ads calling for a return to the peace process. Currently, the Left is out-shouting the Right, but that can quickly shift depending on who perpetrates the next act of aggression."

The discussions now underway in Washington between Netanyahu and Arafat, under the auspices of Clinton, are clearly aimed at defusing the revolt. Arafat is of use to the rulers, and obtains the "right" to join them at the negotiating table, only insofar as he can use his authority to keep the Palestinians in line. He is an expert at doing so in the past and he will surely try to do so again.

Israel says it wants "assurances" that the Palestinians will "refrain from violence to achieve their objectives." If this pledge of non-violence is broken, Netanyahu says, Israel will feel free to renege on its past agreements. It is not hard to see where this leads. Israel's repressive actions are bound at some point to lead to a further armed response from Palestinians. When that occurs, Netanyahu will have his excuse to formally suspend the peace process, something he has wanted to do all along.

The recent events have placed Israel-Palestine in a new situation, for it has revealed the severe limitations of the peace process as envisioned thus far. Yet nothing would be more wrong than to presume that we can now return to the conceptual universe which prevailed before Oslo.

To return to the old bankrupt politics of "Israel as enemy number one," after all that has transpired over the last several years would be nothing less than retrogressive. For it would mean skipping over the new which has emerged, and which provides the ground for transcending the deadends into which both the Palestinian and Israeli Left have fallen: namely, the perspective of a multiethnic struggle for liberation that transcends the boundaries of the narrow nationalism that has disfigured the freedom struggles in this region for so long.

As Marxist-Humanists, we have long argued that just as Israel has a right to exist, so do the Palestinians have a right to national self-determination. The development of our unique position on the Arab-Israeli conflict can be followed in the collection of "Raya Dunayevskaya's Writings on the Middle-East." (See special ad, opposite page.) The key to peace in the Middle East, we have insisted, lies in forging new relations of revolutionary dialogue and struggle in which the national aspirations of both Palestinians and Jews are acknowledged and developed. Though the acts of the Israeli rulers have once again placed this vision in jeopardy, it has never been more important to concretize it for our time.

—Oct. 1, 1996

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Confrontation and tragedy in Iraq: Kurds, Saddam, and the U.S.

(Continued from page 1)

side do not interfere with its global economic or political interests.

By Sept. 10, Barzani's Iraqi-backed forces had overrun Salaimaniya, the last stronghold of Talabani's PUK. This meant that, more than at any time since the protected enclave was set up in April 1991, Saddam has a free rein in the North. Sensing this even amid the cruise missile attacks, Saddam's press began to crow: "Kurdistan will fall like ripe fruit."

THE TRAGEDY IN KURDISTAN

As Saddam's forces moved into Erbil alongside those of the KDP, Iraqi police arrested hundreds of oppositionists, concentrating especially on Communists, military deserters, and Turkmen groups. Barzani's KDP did not even give these allies of the Kurds any warning that Saddam's forces were approaching. Saddam's police have infiltrated the region, and are keeping Kurdish and other opposition figures under surveillance with the aid of computers and files seized in Erbil from the Iraqi National Congress, a coalition of opposition groups. Anyone on those lists, as well as anyone who even worked for a UN humanitarian agency after 1991, is now in mortal danger.

But the deep sense of betrayal and hopelessness which is setting in among the Kurds today is not alone due to fear of Saddam's forces. It stems as well from the sobering fact that it is one of their own, Barzani, who is now working with Saddam.

This is the same Saddam who, from his earliest days as a gunman for the Ba'ath Party in the 1950s, tortured and killed Communists, Kurds, and Shiites. This is the same Saddam who, once in power, had 300,000 Kurds murdered by poison gas and other means in his 1988 "Anfal" campaign. This is the same Saddam who, in 1991, crushed the post-Gulf War Kurdish uprising, killing another 30,000 children, women, and men.

Massoud Barzani and other members of his family have been the most important resistance leaders in Iraqi Kurdistan since the 1930s, when Massoud's father, Mustapha Barzani, fought the British, who had to send in the Royal Air Force. In 1946, with Russian backing, he declared a short-lived Kurdish Republic in the North. Then, in the days of the leftist Qassim regime in the late 1950s, Barzani was invited to help work out a form of Kurdish autonomy, something which was never allowed to come about.

Later, when Saddam's Ba'ath Party came to power, briefly in 1963 and then more permanently in 1968, the repression of the Kurds became more severe. Ba'athist ideology is a crude form of right-wing Pan-Arabism

which justifies oppression at home in the name of anti-imperialism. Despite the Ba'athists' massacre and torture of thousands of members of Iraq's Communist Party, once one of the largest CPs in the Arab world, the Ba'ath regime was by the 1970s able to ally itself with Russia.

This prompted the U.S. and the Shah of Iran to give some aid to Barzani's Kurdish movement. But after a 1975 deal with Saddam, the Shah and the U.S. cut off Barzani. It was this betrayal, and the ensuing defeats, which led Talabani and others to break away to form the more leftist PUK, accusing the KDP of too close ties to the Shah and the U.S.

Saddam's horrific repressions of 1988 and 1991 seemed to bring the two Kurdish tendencies together. The KDP, now led by Massoud Barzani, and the PUK formed a joint administration, but the two factions shared state power in a way that too often excluded even debate from below. Thus, they prevented trade unions from organizing. They also allowed a wave of so-called "honor killings" of Kurdish women to be carried out by their male relatives, even giving these horrors legal sanction.

Then, beginning in 1994, a low-level civil war broke out in northern Iraq between the KDP and the PUK. For much of the period since 1991, the KDP has leaned toward Turkey, going so far as to work out a deal with the Turkish government to undermine the Kurdish movement inside Turkey. They even agreed to Turkish military incursions into Iraqi Kurdistan in pursuit of Turkish Kurd fighters.

Talabani and the PUK have in recent years drawn closer to Iran, betraying the overall Kurdish movement by allowing Iranian troops into territory they controlled in order to attack Kurdish resistance groups from Iran. As with Turkey, the Iranian government has repeatedly invaded and staged massacres in its Kurdish regions and its agents have assassinated Kurdish leaders abroad, most recently in an incident in Berlin in 1992, for which several Iranian officials are presently on trial in absentia before the German courts.

But in working out a military pact with Saddam Hussein, Massoud Barzani, whose own family was decimated by Saddam, has carried out a betrayal so deep that it is likely to undermine the Kurdish liberation movement for years to come. His rival, Talabani, whose own hands are by no means clean, assessed the situation correctly for once when he stated recently: "We have been militarily defeated by the Iraqi army, but never before have we been subjected to such a political victory over the Kurdish people" (*Le Monde*, Sept. 7, 1996).

That victory is of course Saddam Hussein's, and it is

something for which both Kurdish factions have at least some responsibility. For despite the severe limits the U.S. placed on their enclave in the North since 1991, it was a chance for the Kurds to begin to work out ideas and organization for the type of free Kurdistan for which they have fought for so many years. That opportunity was squandered by the KDP-PUK's engaging, not in debate and dialogue among themselves and with other tendencies, but in joint authoritarian rule followed by a narrowly militaristic struggle for power.

U.S. 'VITAL INTERESTS'

Bill Clinton, like Saddam, claimed victory after their brief confrontation, saying that he had protected the U.S.'s vital interests in the region by forestalling an Iraqi move southward, even though Saddam had made no moves in that direction. One goal of the U.S. is to contain both Iran and Iraq, the two largest powers in the region, plus, as always, to stop any attempt at revolutionary change from below anywhere in the region. Let us look for a moment at what the U.S. is protecting.

Kuwait, the oil sheikhdom the U.S. wants to protect from Iraq, is a nearly absolute monarchy. It is to protect that regime that Clinton has sent 3,000 U.S. troops for border "exercises."

Saudi Arabia, the reactionary oil kingdom where women are forbidden even to drive cars, has experienced two fundamentalist terrorist attacks in the past year, the most recent of which resulted in the deaths of 19 U.S. airmen at a base in Dhahran.

Yet another example of the fragility of the U.S.-backed kingdoms and sheikhdoms which border Iraq can be seen in this summer's food riots in Jordan, a country which has no oil.

Turkey, another U.S. ally, also without any oil deposits, has suffered huge economic losses from the UN embargo on Iraq. Turkey, which has just sent 20,000 more troops to fight a rebellion in its Kurdish region, hinted that it supported Saddam's moves into Kurdistan.

Most of the U.S.'s European and Arab allies are keeping their distance at a time when the U.S. has done little to separate itself from Israel's reactionary, anti-Arab Netanyahu government.

PERMANENT CRISIS OF SADDAM'S IRAQ

Saddam Hussein has undoubtedly gained from his moves into Kurdistan. At the same time, however, the Iraqi people as a whole are suffering as never before. Their overall standard of living is below that of the 1950s. Despite the country's vast oil reserves, second only to those of Saudi Arabia, Saddam's military adventures, first the 1980-88 war with Iran, and then the 1990-91 Gulf War, have led to millions of deaths, economic sanctions, and the destruction of the economy.

Even in its earliest days in the 1960s, the Ba'ath regime had an extremely narrow social base, mainly among the Sunni Arab middle classes and military officers. Excluding the Kurds (24% of the population) and the Shiite Arabs (over 50%) from real power, the Ba'athists have always ruled through terror and torture. Saddam has by now narrowed the regime's base to such an extent that most of the top leaders are his close relatives.

As did the Kurds, the mainly Shiite Arab population of the South staged an uprising in 1991, which was crushed brutally by Saddam as the U.S. and its allies watched. Since then, Saddam has committed outright genocide against the Shiite Marsh Arabs of the river delta region.

As much as the U.S. talks of getting rid of Saddam Hussein, however, it and its allies would rather have him weakened but still in power than overthrown by leftists or by any process which would allow the Shiites of the South or the Kurds of the North to develop real autonomy. Kurdish autonomy would threaten Turkey; Shiite autonomy would destabilize the oil sheikhdoms and kingdoms, while a mass revolution would destabilize the entire region!

That is why the Gulf War allies allowed Saddam to crush the 1991 uprising. At that time, the worldwide movement against the Gulf War also remained largely silent on Saddam's repression, and except for some small tendencies such as *News and Letters Committees*, refused to organize support for the revolutionary uprisings of 1991.

Since those 1991 events and the more recent ones in Bosnia and Haiti, we have seen the limits of an anti-interventionism which, bereft of a philosophy of liberation, separates the issue of anti-imperialism from that of support for those who resist class, national or gender oppression. Those limitations continue to impact attempts by emancipatory forces the world over to challenge today's retrogressive reality.

Oct. 1, 1996

Black World

(Continued from page 1)

bilization of the people, it has turned out to be an empty shell, a crude travesty of war, famine, disease and ignorance. The Arab bourgeoisie has passed over the nation for the race and has given the tribe the rule of the state.¹

At independence from Britain in 1956 the Arab bourgeoisie comprised the commercial traders, educated politicians, colonial officers and leaders of Sufist Islamic sects like the Khatimiyya and Samaniyya. As a class they were conservative, nationalistic and underdeveloped. Their conservatism came from Islamic teachings. This was reinforced by their positions as religious leaders within Arab and Muslim communities. Their narrow nationalism was limited to the Arabs in Khartoum and the major cities. They recognized but looked down on the nomadic Arab tribes. They had virtually no contacts with the South. It was contemptuously thought of as heathen, pagan, and black. The South was a reservoir for slaves and ripe for salvation through Islam. Its underdeveloped status stemmed from the British stifling of most aspirations beyond petty trades and small scale agriculture.

The Arab bourgeoisie never reoriented the economy away from its colonial path. It simply "took exclusive control of social and political power."² Of 800 positions vacated by the British only 8 went to Southerners.

Over the past forty years both private and state-capitalism have advanced as ceaselessly as the Sahara Desert. Mechanized farms controlled by wealthy landowners have increased dramatically. The results have been the constant expropriation of fertile lands from peasant farmers, pastoralists, and nomads. The war has sped up this process of capital accumulation.

Much of the financing for expansion has come from Islamic banks. This has helped bring about the rise of a class of financial capitalists cloaked in Islamic ideology.

But the primary capitalist expropriating wealth and dominating the Sudanese people is the state. The state regulates the prices of commodities, controls farms such as the 2 million acre Gezira scheme and governs the financial sector. It has formed neo-colonial joint ventures with foreign capital to extract raw materials. It has aided the private agricultural capitalist sector by intensifying the pace of Mechanized Farming Schemes in rural areas. Sales from its two cash crops, cotton and gum arabic, have fallen drastically from \$450 million in the 1980's to \$53 million in 1993-94.³ At the same time it has, over the past 20 years, greedily swallowed the \$16 billion wad

Sudan: famine of ideas

of debt it now chokes on.

The massive debt and the state's mad scramble to get out of hock and sustain itself are contributing mightily to the misery at the bottom. The state is fighting desperately to hold onto the reported 400 million barrels of oil exploited by Chevron in Bentiu in the South. It needs the water potential for state run farms from the Jonglei canal, also in the South. Under the misguidance of the IMF it has devalued the Sudanese pound, deflating the already meager living standards of ordinary Sudanese. It has resorted to using slave labor on its plantations to extract the maximum in surplus value.

The state is under the iron fist of the military. Officially, military-owned companies operate in transport, commerce and industry. They are well financed and are given import licenses and tax holidays.⁴

Military men have found opportunities in financing slave raids. Besides satisfying their violent urges by raping women caught in slave raids, soldiers and *murahalin* (militia men) have found slave raids quite lucrative. Dinka women and children are typically ransomed back to their families for about \$500. Or they can be sold to wealthier Arabs for about the same price. With the annual pay for soldiers at about \$500, is it any surprise that they encourage raids in which 100 to 200 or more Southerners are captured? Many of these slaves are channeled onto state run farms.

Forty years of Arab bourgeois rule has left hideous marks on the body of Sudanese society: an infant mortality rate of 100 per 1000 births; 1 doctor for every 10,000 people; only 48% of the population with access to safe drinking water; 57% of adult males and 88% of adult females illiterate; over 90% of people living in poverty; oil shortages; food shortages; official unemployment of 30%; and inflation of 150% annually.⁵ It has left a war costing \$2 million a day. This is in a land with an annual per capita income of \$310. This is in a country in which 10 million desperate souls have to depend on the state's \$3.60 monthly support. This is in a land where 80% of the people are subsistence agriculturalists.

This class has manipulated the twin ideologies of Arabism and Islam to throttle the national identity. Arabic language, literature and culture are promoted over all other cultures and languages. Islam is cynically used as a means to advance social and economic status. In short, these two ideologies are tools for riveting down the Arab bourgeoisie's grip on wealth and power.

—Robert Reed

1. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1965), p. 148.

2. Tony Barnett and Abbas Abdelkarim, eds., *Sudan: State, Capital and Transformation* (London: Croom Helm, 1988), seminar held at the School of Development Studies, University of East Anglia, Norwich, England, July 1984, p. 3.

3. Sudan Update, Internet, Vol. 6 No. 14 [09/12/95] from Peter Verney Sudan Update @GN.APC.ORG

4. Alex de Waal, "Starving Out the South," in M.W. Daly and Ahmad Alawawd Sikainga, eds., *Civil war in the Sudan* (London: British Academic Press, 1993), p. 169.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 170.

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Editorial

'Defense of Marriage': election year fraud

The craven nature of election year politics in the U.S. revealed its anti-human ideological depths last month, when the punitive immigration bills and the scrapping of even a semblance of welfare, coincided with a double-barreled Senatorial assault on gay and lesbian lives. The overwhelming passage of the "Defense of Marriage Act" (DOMA), which defines marriage as being for heterosexuals only, was joined with the defeat of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), which means lesbian and gay employees can still be fired for sexual orientation in over 40 states.

The shameful nature of this legislation was obvious even to the shallow Bill Clinton. He returned from a four-day campaign tour to sign DOMA into law under cover of the deepest night. It could not be more obvious: The rulers are telling us that gay and lesbian people should live their lives in the shadows of the closet, in the shadows of death from inadequate health care, and in the shadows of a society which refuses full participation to people because of who they love.

Pat Buchanan was roundly criticized in the press for his "cultural war" against homosexuality in the last presidential election year. Dole's slick Republican Convention attempted to muzzle Buchanan's stridency. But apparently what was really being criticized by Dole and others was Buchanan's too transparent tone, not the war itself, for the battle he declared is now fully engaged (See "War on lesbians," page 11).

Thus, Buchanan's proclamation that "in a healthy society, homosexuality will be contained, segregated, controlled, and stigmatized" seems to underlie all aspects of the 1996 campaign. DOMA's vicious scapegoating is meant to "contain, segregate, control, and stigmatize" lesbians and gays, but the same string of words defines what is happening to the poor, the immigrants, the prisoners, the welfare recipients, and communities of color. Increasingly, the most intimate relationships come under the prying eyes of legislative disapproval, while capitalism's tyrannical hold over workers' lives regulates us by the "invisible" sharp talons of economic coercion.

The draconian welfare bill, for instance, encodes the retrogressionism of the religious Right, giving \$400 million to states that teach abstinence as the exclusive mode of birth control. The welfare bill also promotes an invidious competition, awarding \$20 million each to the five states that most sharply reduce "illegitimate" births without increasing abortion rates. This language of "illegitimacy" is insulting to all mothers and children caught

Activist history of Ecuadoran immigrants

We are immigrants who, moved by economic necessity, came to this large and distant country from a land of people who are simple, supportive of each other, and concerned with the struggle for survival. In a foreign land, we try to get together and support each other, to share sorrows, joys and hopes, so as not to lose our bearings. We try to continue being ourselves without getting absorbed by the dominant culture, which leads to anonymity and makes us lose consciousness of who we are, where we came from, and where we are going.

For a number of years, where we came from life permitted us to work for new ideals of justice and equality within the Union of Peasant Communities, a new mass organization which brought together about 70 communities. Ours is a town of 40,000 farmers, artisans, laborers and industrial workers. Remembering the history of our organization raises our spirits, and sharing that history makes us feel stronger and more firmly that we are going in the right direction.

Enlightened by the Gospel of the poor, we analyzed the reality in which we lived: divided, exploited, impoverished. We, therefore, decided to organize ourselves, and started with community stores and youth groups; then with women's groups and weaving and sewing collectives; later with day care centers and agricultural, sports and communications committees.

Our development was made possible by the support of the parish church and some non-governmental organizations. The idea was to move forward based on two pillars: faith and organization, theory and practice. We realized that we ourselves could express our thoughts and feelings. Coordinated by the communications committee, we developed murals, journals, writing workshops, and radio programs.

For the first time we held marches, such as on May Day, and other demonstrations and protests against exploitative situations such as hoarding of foodstuffs, alcoholism, loan sharking, and making people "disappear." We also struggled at a broader level as members of regional organizations.

Our reflecting on our activities and on the question of which way forward for an organized people, and the knowledge we gained of the struggles of other people, helped us to form a critical consciousness. In this way we went ahead firmly and motivated, and overcame difficulties for over a decade.

There are many causes, both internal and external, which provoked crises or got us stuck. We do not say the organization died, because thanks to the constant dedication of companions, the union continues on its path. We point out some causes of the crises: the former Social Democratic government's policy of weakening the mass movements; rise in the cost of living; divisiveness caused by Left political parties; actions of religious sects; immigration to the U.S. of active members; lack of Marxist philosophy to guide us on what to do organizationally.

in the vise of its reproach. It also reinforces racism and sexism, and is in tune with DOMA, under which no child of a gay or lesbian couple could ever be "legitimate."

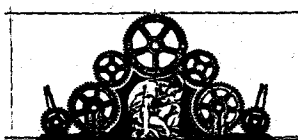
One should not be fooled by this desire for abstinence and "legitimacy": the "lawmakers" want children as future expendable "resources" for industry and militarism, and as targets for the indoctrination of capitalist ideology.

One sign of this is the rulers' willingness to capitulate to their religious allies. Groups like the Christian Coalition eagerly supply ideological justifications for cementing social inequities, and blame the poor and gays and lesbians for all ills of society. Thus, election rhetoric about giving public money to private religious schools is not only an abandonment of the inner cities, but a way to encourage authoritarian "virtues" while attempting to inure the young to propaganda.

The *Communist Manifesto* still rings loudly almost 150 years later: "The bourgeois claptrap about the family and education, about the hallowed co-relation of parent and child, becomes all the more disgusting, the more, by the action of modern industry, all family ties among the proletarians are torn asunder, and their children transformed into simple articles of commerce and instruments of labor."

The rhetoric behind defeating ENDA is more "bourgeois claptrap," denying the humanity of gay and lesbian people and attempting to keep them cowed and silenced. This is the industrial equivalent of the infamous military "compromise" of "Don't ask, don't tell." But the lack of any large-scale response to this congressional and presidential electioneering with human lives also reveals some of the contradictions in the freedom movements.

Why have lesbian and gay community leaders consis-



by Dave Black

Editor's note: Over the summer and into September, British workers have staged a series of 24-hour and 48-hour strikes, rattling both the Tory government and the now Clintonized Labor Party. Workers have repeatedly shut down the London Underground (subway) and occasionally parts of the national railways. At issue is the government's refusal to implement a promised decrease in the work week from 38.5 to 37.5 hours.

Postal workers have gone out again and again to protest a plan to privatize the Royal Mail, and in opposition to Alan Johnson, their sellout union leader. Prime Minister John Major has responded to the strikes with typical arrogance, calling the workers "dinosaurs" for failing to recognize economic "reality." In the following article Dave Black in Britain critiques the new Socialist Labour Party which seeks to build upon new labor stirrings.

Now that the British Labour Party has ditched its "commitment" to "common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange," a breakaway party has been launched by the president of the National Union of Miners, Arthur Scargill. He argues that his warnings back in 1984 that the Tories' plan to destroy the coal industry went unheeded by the leadership of the labour movement resulting in the sell-offs of public utilities and assaults on organized labour and civil liberties.

Scargill wants to galvanize the surviving warriors of the "Good Old Cause" with a pragmatic strategy: use the coming general election campaign to argue for "socialist policies" (and maybe stand candidates in safe labour seats), and recruit say 10,000 members to provide "leadership" to workers whose current leaders are sitting on discontent.

Scargill may in fact be onto something here. The bureaucrats and the established labour left don't want anyone rocking Labor Party head Tony Blair's election bandwagon with militancy inspired by workers in France and Germany, and London Underground drivers and postal workers are already hitting out with one-day strikes.

Scargill's Socialist Labour Party (SLP) was launched with just 1,250 members, and the composition of the party is mostly of seasoned militants: Left labour people; Trotskyists who can't find a home in 'New Labour'; Stalinists who fondly recall Scargill's support for the Communist crackdown on Solidarnosc in Poland; and anarcho-syndicalists who see in the SLP the possible revival of the tradition of the pre-World War I DeLeonist party of the same name. The SLP leadership, for its part, considers itself "in step" with similar European parties, including the left breakaways from Eurocommunism, in a "Three-and-a-half International."

Militants from the "new social movements" are conspicuous by their absence. Black membership is less than 2% and there is hardly anyone in the party under 25. The SLP does not ignore the new social movements of environmentalists and feminists, but patronizingly offers them "political leadership" while labeling them as "single issue" campaigners. In fact, groups such as Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and the Freedom Network, have mobilized mass campaigns and take on a wide range of issues. Furthermore, the Green Party, whose policies are miles to the left of Tony Blair, have more members and vote-pulling power than the SLP. Scargill, however, has launched a rival left extra-parliamentary party without even trying to find common ground with the left-wing of the Greens. This betrays a

tently placed so much faith in Clinton, or the court system, or other reformist means? A misplaced confidence in mild reformism and social gradualism, coupled with the limitations of electoral politics, often means the loss of militancy and resignation to the "lesser of two evils."

The struggles for immigration rights, welfare rights, and les/bi/gay rights don't seem to recognize their commonalities. Why isn't there a consistent outcry about the inhumanity of attacks on welfare and immigration from the gay and lesbian community?

DOMA, by setting states' marriage regulations against each other, may do what the sham of states' rights always does: it multiplies the sites of the legal battles, creating too many fronts on which to exhaust the resources of those who are struggling for the crumbs of reform.

The welfare bill, the immigration bill, DOMA and ENDA define the ideology of 1996: contempt for human beings is held in higher esteem than love. The rulers' attempts to domesticate ecstasy must be met with a philosophy of revolution that upends the "traditional values" of exploitation and brutality.

The regulation of marriage—and the hypocrisy around it—is becoming total. DOMA defines marriage as "one man and one woman," basing this on biblical language. Lesbians can't marry, women on welfare are practically forced by the state to marry men, legal immigrants can only afford to bring their spouse if they are among the bourgeoisie, while gay men cannot use their relationships as a basis for citizenship. While the conservatives may try to remove any semblance of human content from human relations, simultaneously launching cynical election year hatred against the poor and the immigrant, it is incumbent on people to raise their voices, action and thought for a genuine alternative.

'Socialist labor' — a step backward

deep malaise in the old and not-so-old left: the absence in the "Changed World" of any new philosophy for new times which could also be a continuity with those traditions in our history which need renewing.

One of those traditions was the relationship between Karl Marx and the English Chartists in the mid-19th century. The Chartist Program of 1851 was in many respects far more radical than anything the 20th Century British Left have since dreamt of: abolition of taxation (!); expropriation of big landowners and capitalists; replacement of the standing army by a people's militia; state funding of workers co-ops, and much more.

But the program had nothing on struggles within the workplace and couldn't stop the Chartists from falling apart. For 1851, the year of celebration for industry and empire at the Great Exhibition, was not 1848, the year of Revolutions throughout Europe. Capitalism was entering a new stage; therefore, new thought and new forms of struggle and organization were needed.

A major split within Chartism took place over the question of trade unions and co-operatives. The issue was whether they could play a role in revolutionary transformation.

By all accounts, Marx in 1851 wasn't sure, but in 1854 he did tell a Chartist revival initiative that he thought English workers, having created the "productive powers of modern industry," now had to "free those wealth-producing shackles of monopoly, and subject them to the joint control of the producers, who, till now, allowed the very products of their hands to turn against them and be transformed into as many instruments of their own subjugation."

Over the following decade, Marx's perspective was transformed by the experience of a growing workers movement from practice as well as freedom struggles such as the American Civil War. Addressing the International Workingmen's Association in 1864, Marx praised the English workers for inspiring the world by carrying through the Ten Hours Bill. It was "the first time that in broad daylight the political economy of the middle class succumbed to the political economy of the working class."

On workers co-ops, Marx appraised the "great social experiments" of the utopians which had "shown that production on a large scale, and in accord with the behests of modern science, may be carried out without the existence of a class of masters employing a class of hands." In the light of the 1848-64 experience workers needed to be able to arrest the capitalist monopoly of productive forces to achieve freedom.

Today, following both the collapse of state-capitalist Communism and social democracy's universal embrace of neo-liberalism, there is no new stage of capitalism on the horizon, despite the talk of a "post-industrial" age driven by information technology. Nor, in the current context of "globalization," is there much mileage in Arthur Scargill's call to "re-open the mines and steel works" of 1960s Keynesian state-capitalism to put British history back on the "Road to Socialism."

That a phenomenon such as the SLP can be taken seriously shows how strong the pull of practice without theory is. The much-needed regroupment of oppositional forces will only come when leftists realize that, as News & Letters labour editor Felix Martin has put it, "We need to take our heads back."

History's battles are also fought in the realm of ideas. The alliance between would-be revolutionaries, who seem to have forgotten such "practical" lessons as the Spanish Revolution, and unreconstructed Stalinists shows how thoroughly that battle needs waging.

Youth

Bosnian youths' world

by Kevin Michaels

"There is one thing you must understand about our generation. We are destroyed." Emir Ganibegovic, 23, a Bosnian Muslim.

The Sept. 8 *New York Times Magazine* article "Lost Generation" provides a remarkable view into the lives of three Sarajevans, two young Muslim men and one young Catholic Croat woman. The lives of middle class comfort they led before the war, along with the assumptions they held about their country and the world at large have been swept away. What remains for them and their generation is to try and find a new beginning amidst the bitter shards of ethnic chauvinism.

The author of the article remarks that the shock of betrayal colors much of what the three friends, Emir, Ines and Nedim now say and do. From a nervous stutter to the chilling suspicion that a close friend, a Serb, knew that the war was approaching but fled Sarajevo without warning anyone, the conflict has had a most profound impact on their lives. Nothing was untouched; their education was disrupted, their homes shelled and damaged and friends volunteered to fight on the opposing side. Perhaps most poignant though, is the division amongst the three that the war's eruption into their lives has brought about. Emir served in the Bosnian army defending Sarajevo, while Nedim left the city for safety in Germany. An unspoken tension now exists between Nedim and his veteran friend.

The three's sense of betrayal extends to Europe itself. The visits to the West they enjoyed and Yugoslavia's autonomous position in relation to the Eastern bloc developed in them a sense of European solidarity. They felt that other European nations would stand by their multiethnic society. Yet they were rudely awakened to the fact that countries like France, which engages in racist harassment of its African immigrants, and Germany, which turns a blind eye to neo-Nazi violence against Turkish immigrants, would only offer lip service to their cause. This trust, like the trust the friends had in the bureaucratic political leaders of their country, proved to be an unfounded one.

The future of Emir, Ines and Nedim is uncertain, just as their attitude to the future of Bosnia is ambivalent. They are "openly contemptuous of the nationalist parties" which predominated in the recent elections, but only one of the three, Emir, expresses a desire to remain at home. The others want to emigrate.

By characterizing the three friends' attitudes as "contempt," however, the author seems to obscure any differences they may see in the three main parties. We don't know if the parties are indeed viewed in the same light, if some sympathy remains towards Itzebegovic's party, which, despite that it may have discarded the idea of a multiethnic society it once held, can't simply be lumped in with the Croat and Serb chauvinists. How the three felt about the smaller parties which still strongly champion multiethnicity and met with some success in the election despite official harassment is also left unsaid.

The new beginnings the friends are looking for in whatever they choose to do formed a question in my mind as I read these young people's story: who is Marx for them? Surely, in a state which identified itself as

Communist, Marx was taught in the classroom. Yet did they learn Marx's concept of the liberating, positive nationalism which he saw present in the 1848 revolutions, in the struggles of the Irish people against British colonialism and the fight for Polish national self-determination? Or was a version of Marx taught to them that the leaders could somehow reconcile with the nationalism used to stoke up the hatred which exploded across the Balkans in the 1990s? A new beginning for the nations of ex-Yugoslavia exists in Marx's Marxism.

Emir is right in saying that his generation is destroyed. But perhaps the struggle for a multiethnic society which he participated in, and which he and his two friends still hope for, is a new beginning which can transcend that destruction. That struggle was a new kind of nationalism which was, almost without exception, overlooked or dismissed by the West. The relationship between the Bosnian struggle for multiethnicity and Marx's vision of a liberatory nationalism is there for us to explore. It contains something for the three young Sarajevans and their generation to build on, to reconstruct a world out of the ashes of the national chauvinism that destroyed everything they knew.

Youth in Revolt



At Cal State University-Northridge, students and activists protested against former Klansman David Duke's presence on campus. Duke was paid \$4,000 to participate in a debate on affirmative action. Several students attempted to shut down the event and were beaten and teargassed by police.

* * *

An hour away from the U.S.-Mexican border, in the tourist town of Ensenada, a group of youth and young workers calling themselves Fuente Ecologista Juventud Conciente (Ecological Resource Conscious Youth) have been protesting for five years against the industrial dumping of waste into the ocean. People live in makeshift housing adjacent to the toxic creek into which the waste pours amidst a numbing stench. As the group stated: "Thirty years of trash, enough! We cannot wait one more year."

War against lesbians

The anti-woman "pro-family" movement reared its heterosexist face with new-found vigor this past month, waging a virtual war against people in same-sex relationships, especially lesbians, revealing the depth of the misogyny at the head of the "pro-family" table.

It is no wonder the Human Rights Campaign survey

Ebert denounces review

(Continued from page 2)

sary insistence on historical materialism. Postulating "breaks"...is itself part of this by now quite common strategy of marginalizing the "economic" in favor of the "cultural": think also of Raya Dunayevskaya's "Great Divide in Marxism," whom Cashdan follows, and Althusser's "epistemological break". It is only through such narratives of breaks...and the displacement of objective reality that it is possible to say that "Lenin's encounter with Hegel...paved the way for the November 1917 Russian revolution"...(*News & Letters*, p.5).

Social transformation, as I have argued, is not a matter of changing personal relations or of expressions of "creativity" and other individualistic practices. It does not depend on or derive from the autonomous subject and her personal freedom. Social transformation is rather the effect of fundamental changes in the structures of economic relations in history, that is, the structure of class contestations...

The consequences of Cashdan's feminism—and the politics of her calling my book "dangerous"—"Become aware in the highlighting bar-line of the article: "Woman as Reason." As far as Cashdan is concerned, woman is "un-reason"—a spontaneous flow of emotions and sentiment, a nurturing that is an extension of nature. This is the kind of reactionary feminism that I have critiqued in my book. In the name of empowering women, it renders them helpless, uncritical creatures, who, at best, can simply narrate their sentiments in the anecdotes of personal relations and are unable to analyze and understand their situation as part of the historical series of class conflicts over material resources.

—Teresa L. Ebert

released last month showed a heightened concern among lesbians about hate crimes. From the court rooms, to the streets, to the home, lesbians have increasingly been the victims of sexism and "gay bashing," and the consequences are often deadly.

In southern Illinois, Teena Mueller was forced to watch as her ex-husband murdered her lesbian partner, "Fellie" Worlds. She then suffered homophobic press coverage and remarks in her community. Police arriving after the murder immediately believed claims made by the murderer that his lesbian ex-wife shot Worlds and tried to kill him. Teena spent the night in jail before her ex-husband was finally arrested and subsequently sentenced to 45 years in prison for the murder.

According to Chicago queer paper *Outlines*, a Carlyle, Ill. newspaper columnist suggested that the couple's lesbianism was to blame for the death. "More and more, people are deeply involved in what used to be called sin and perversion. When the consequences of their actions blow up in their faces, it's the sad task of the police to sweep up the wreckage." At the sentencing, Teena told the court, "Fellie and I loved each other. That shouldn't be punishable by death."

Later that month in Tallahassee, Fla. a judge denied lesbian mother Mary Ward custody of her daughter, Cassie, in favor of the father who had been convicted of murdering his first wife 22 years ago. The father stated that since living with her mother, 12-year-old Cassie had "exhibited inappropriate behavior including poor hygiene, bad table manners and a preference for men's cologne," and this warranted the change in custody. This flimsy patriarchal posturing doesn't hide the truth that in Tallahassee you're considered a better parent for killing women rather than for loving them.

This lesbian bashing reveals a renewed drive to limit options available to women for equal, loving human relationships. Recognizing a common ground in fighting misogyny and heterosexism is a necessary first step to showing the "pro-family" daddies that we will not build our futures based on their definitions of what we ought to be.

—Julia Jones

Panthers fight cop abuse

Chicago—My son was locked up for first degree murder three months ago when the police came to my house at 3 a.m. My son is 17-years-old, a senior at Tilden High School, and has a job downtown making pizzas.

The police came banging on my door and window saying that they wanted to talk to my son Tommy about one of his friends. When we let them in the house they said that they wanted to take him down to the station for questioning. Despite our demanding that they talk to him here, they searched him and took him to the station.

They questioned him about a gang murder. I told them that he was with me at the time that they said the murder took place, and they released him. Two days later they came back to pick him up again. This time they put him in a line up, though his lawyer told them not to, and some gang-bangers I.D.ed him.

My son was afraid that the police would beat him down at the station because they have a bad reputation of beating people. His trial date is Oct. 7.

This has happened to many young Black men in our neighborhood. But it increased in the months just leading up to the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. One young Black man, Levert, was charged with a drive-by shooting that he didn't do. The police pulled guns and rifles on another young man, claiming that he had killed someone. Marshall, another young Black man, was framed for murder by these same police; he's in jail now. Another one, Fred, has gone to court for first degree murder on false charges. Edward was framed up on false charges when the police planted cocaine on him.

As soon as they released Levert, they picked him up and charged him again. Young Black men in our neighborhood can't walk down the street without being stopped, slammed up against the car, punched in the stomach, and taken to jail.

The area that I live in is in the 9th District, or Canaryville. But it's 7th in district police who come into the 9th District to beat up these young men. One white woman cop, called Blondie, hides her badge and messes with them the worst. The cops mess with young people on the basketball court. Sheriffs from Cook County come in here to harass them.

The police in the district are only 30% Black. When the shift changes at 6 p.m., the white Irish cops come out. They say that "all the n-----s are asleep during the day" when the Black cops are on duty. On the night shift, the white cops stop and search young people, male and female. They make them take off their shoes, even in the snow, to search to see if they're carrying drugs.

Why are they doing this? Because they're racist white cops. That's why me and other parents are organizing with the Black Panther Party to do something about it.

—Black mother against the criminalization of Black youth

Prisoners reach out

Chowchilla, Cal.—On Aug. 16, Alice Quihuis (known as "Shorty Kiwis") died in Valley State Prison for Women of total kidney failure. She was 38 years old. She was in on a drug-related charge, i.e., a nonviolent crime, and was due to be released in November. She was a minimum security risk. She worked in the canteen until she got a gate pass and they put her on outside yard crew. She really enjoyed working.

She started having health problems. She thought the heat was causing problems with her blood pressure because she was swelling all over. She tried and tried to get help from the Medically Trained Assistants and was met with "elevate your feet when you get off work." She could barely walk because of the swelling, but was told to go to work.

She kept going to sick call, but they thought she was trying to get out of work. They kept writing her up because she couldn't get out of bed to go to work. After a while her feet swelled up and turned black. On Aug. 16, she collapsed in her room and was finally rushed to the hospital—where she died of kidney failure, a complete renal failure! She died!!

Dying from an altercation is one thing, but dying because you were completely neglected for something preventable is criminal! Its hard enough to hear about this kind of thing, but when it's someone I knew, it really to often and lived in the same "house" with, it really hits hard. It makes me angrier than ever!!! Alice's 21-year-old daughter just had a baby. Alice never saw her.

Why was her treatable condition ignored? Who are the criminals? Who will answer for this crime?

San Francisco—On Sep. 21 several hundred people of all ages and races gathered in Dolores Park to draw attention to the criminal injustice system. Called by the "kNOw INJUSTICE" coalition, the 5-hour program focused on all aspects of criminal "justice."

Speakers included a spokesperson for disabled prisoners, who announced a recent victory when the California court declared that prisoners are human beings and accessibility laws apply to them. Former prisoners spoke about the importance of community support for prisoners' rights.

Much was said about the money spent on prisons: that it comes directly from education budgets, that there are better, cheaper alternatives, and that the money does not go for taking care of prisoners but for prisons as institutions. Angela Davis spoke about the prison-industrial system.

California Coalition for Women Prisoners made a huge impact, both on the stage and at the literature table. An often asked question was what are the differences between women's and men's prisons.

—Dana Ryan and Ursula Wislanka

