

# NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

Vol. 38 — No. 1

JANUARY-FEBRUARY, 1993

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## Concept and reality of "union"



by John Marcotte

I was talking to a trucker the other day, and I asked him was he union. He said no. He then said he felt President Clinton would "put the unions back in power" because "that was the only way he could turn the economy around." Now I don't think the unions ever were "in power" in this country or, for that matter, that Clinton has any intention of stopping capitalism's attack on unions; but this guy made me see that we were speaking two different languages.

When he said "union," he meant an institution, a party outside the workers themselves, a so-called "special interest." I had meant: Do you have a contract? Do you have any rights on your job? Are you united? I had to think how you could mean two very different things by that one word, "union."

### IF UNIONS DISAPPEARED

A day doesn't go by on my job that we don't feel, thank God for the union. Without the union, they'd fire us all. I have spoken to non-union truckers who say, "We're non-union, but the boss pays scale. He's got to, or he knows we'd unionize." Why does Federal Express pay halfway decent? Because UPS is union, and Fed Ex wants to keep the union out. If unions disappeared tomorrow, the bottom would drop out of wages all over.

At the same time, we get really disgusted with the union. They're letting the company get away with a lot of things. One worker said, "It seems all we get for our dues dollar is the medical plan. The company can do anything they want to you." That is really true for casuals.

Another thing that got me thinking was the way a striker at the Amstar sugar refinery in Brooklyn talked about his union, International Longshoremen's Association Local 1814: "The only reason we are still here is this is a powerful union. If this was some small union,

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### Black World

## 'Felony' of being Black



by Lou Turner

Bill Clinton's promise to put 100,000 more cops on U.S. streets is, unlike his other campaign promises, one he intends to keep. The racist rally and police riot of 10,000 New York cops in September, against so mild a reform as a civilian police review board, revealed for a moment to the country the face of what New York columnist Jimmy Breslin called "armed suburban trash." It's the face that Blacks and Latinos in the inner city feel breathing down their necks all the time. It's the face of a lethal occupier responsible for scores of Black homicides and brutality.

### INSTINCTIVE RACISM OF POLICE

The Nov. 5 beating death of Malice Green in Detroit by three plainclothes cops, who joked with by-standers as Green lay in a pool of blood, is one of the more horrific casualties of the police occupation of the Black community. Pathologists testified that Green was literally bludgeoned to death by at least 14 blows to the head by heavy police flashlights.

So instinctively racist are police practices that Black cops have become victims of their white brethren. On Nov. 17, a Black undercover transit cop was shot by New York cops. In December, five white Nashville cops were involved in the beating of a Black motorist who turned out to be an undercover vice officer.

Blacks perennially constitute nearly 50% of deaths due to the use of deadly force by the police, while only making up 12% of the population. The very high arrest rate of Blacks, and the higher number of contacts between the police and the Black community, is the highly charged context which virtually assures the wanton killing of African Americans at the hands of the police.

Tensions continue to run high in Miami following the appellate court's overturning of the conviction of officer William Lozano for his wanton murder of two Black motorcyclists in January 1989. Though the court ruled that Lozano is to be retried in a different venue, the Miami police force was put on its highest alert in anticipation of the Black community's response to the court ruling. With its four years of Black urban rebellion in the

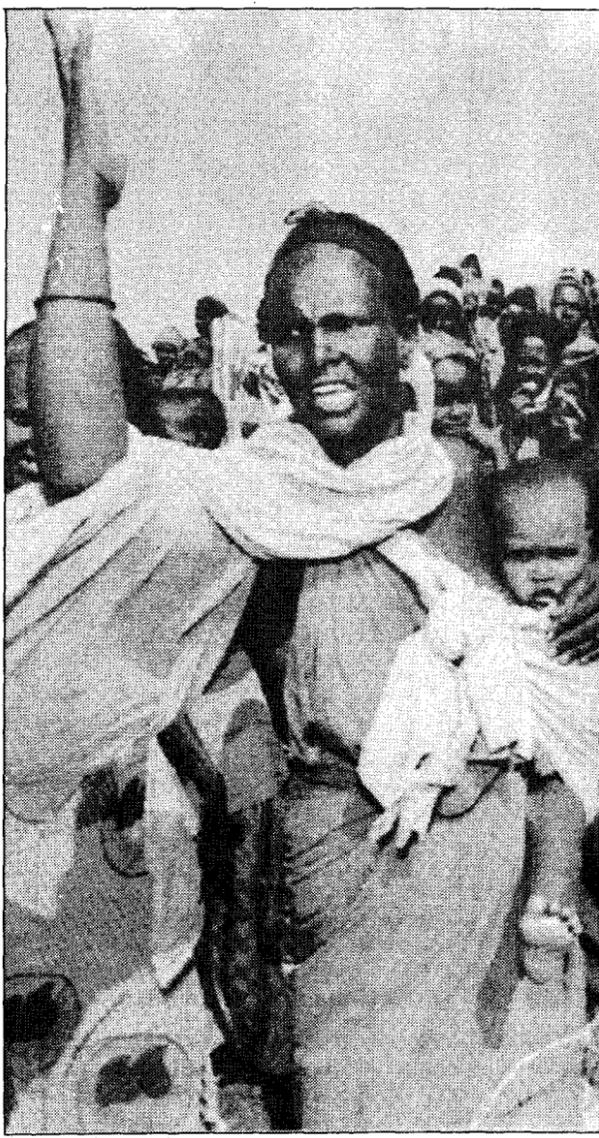
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## Editorial Article

# A host of specters, national and international, haunt Clinton

by Peter Wermuth

For all his talk of the "mystery of American renewal" in his inaugural speech of Jan. 20, Bill Clinton signaled his continuity with the Reagan-Bush approach to foreign affairs by wholeheartedly endorsing a series of three armed strikes against Iraq launched by Bush several days earlier. To further underscore his determination to continue Bush's bellicose policies in the Persian Gulf, Clinton has since warned he will take even stronger military action should Iraq refuse to bend to U.S. dic-



A Somali mother protesting lack of supplies.

tates. The specter of unresolved crises in the Middle East, which so haunted U.S. foreign policy for the past decade, thus put its mark on the Clinton administration from its first moments in office.

It was not concern with policy toward Iraq, however, which filled the air in the aftermath of Clinton's inauguration, as much as a welcome sigh of relief at the departure of Bush and hope that at least something might change under Clinton. Yet Clinton's effort to "stay the course" when it comes to dealing with a host of looming international crises will have a far greater impact on his domestic policies than some may presume. As he himself said in his inaugural address, "There is no longer a clear division between what is foreign and what is domestic."

### CONFLICT WITH IRAQ: DEJA VU OR NEW REALITY?

The series of three attacks on Iraq launched by Bush in January after it challenged the U.S.-imposed "no-fly zones" in the north and south of the country returned us to the horrid imagery of the Gulf War of two years ago. Once again the U.S. acted unilaterally, using the UN as a mere fig leaf for its intervention; once again the attacks included not only military targets but the outskirts of Baghdad, leading to a number of civilian deaths; and once again it was not Saddam Hussein, but the common people who have struggled so long against his dictatorial rule, who suffered most from the U.S. bombing.

The fact that the voices of the common people of Iraq hardly have the ear of the new administration makes it all the more important that we listen to them now. Haider Barbuti, a 24-year-old university student, had this to say about a 65-year-old woman killed when a cruise missile fell on her house in a residential neighborhood of Baghdad during the raid of Jan. 17: "I am a human being first, then an Iraqi. Don't you see that your war is against human

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## On the Inside

# Police repression in South Central L.A.

Los Angeles, Cal.—There was a police riot at Florence and Normandie in South Central L.A. on Dec. 14—although all the media totally misreported what happened.

We had called an emergency rally there for noon, to pass out leaflets relating to the defense of the "L.A. 4+," who are having the book thrown at them in cases arising out of the Los Angeles rebellion last spring. At first there were about 20 people, but momentum built as people came from around the neighborhood to help pass out the flyers. We were playing music over a loudspeaker; the police came and read the ordinance that forbids this, so we turned it off. All the later media reports falsely stated that one reason for the police order to disperse was because of the loud music.

At about 2:00 or 3:00 p.m. the police came back to say that we could not hand out flyers. There were community people involved by now and the police didn't like this. That's when they came in—and they came in very hard, pushing and shoving people. They told people to leave, but some people had cars parked behind the police lines, so they couldn't leave—and then they got arrested! The police went on to people's own property and arrested them there. If you tried to say anything at all, you were arrested. One woman kept saying that she wanted to get to her car, so she could leave, and they arrested her.

Rocks were thrown at the police only after they started arresting people. Now they're giving 30 days and three years probation for throwing a rock, whereas storeowner Soon Ja Du got five years probation for killing Latasha Harlins.

On Tuesday evening Dec. 15, we were going to have our regular weekly meeting of the Free the L.A. 4+ Committee. But the church where we've been meeting, Bethel AME, kicked us out. Everyone has buckled under this pressure. We ended up at the house of the mother of Damian Williams (one of the L.A. 4). The press was all there, and within five minutes there were ten police cars out on the street, police wagons, police helicopters with lights overhead. And we were just trying to have a meeting! It was like South Africa.

The police were everywhere outside, arresting young men, shoving them up against the walls. That's all the media showed; they didn't say anything about what was happening or why. The police told those kids: "We're going to take everything from you guys that we can. If there's the littlest thing wrong with your car, we'll impound it." The young men in the 'hood are scared. Everyone's scared. The tensions are very, very thick. You can feel it. This is real. They want to break this up for real.

—Community activist

## Woman as Reason

by Sonia Bergonzi

On Jan. 12 about 60 women attended a Women's Action Coalition (WAC) meeting for a panel discussion on censorship. What was so special about it was that it was the first meeting devoted to discussing ideas. The necessity for it came out of debates regarding tearing down anti-choice posters littering the public transportation system and a proposed action to deface a horribly sexist billboard advertising Hooters restaurant.

The four panelists' comments led to a good discussion, even though many women were disturbed by a handout of a chapter from Camille Paglia's book, *Sex, Art and American Culture*, read in preparation for the discussion, and in fact hissed at the mention of her name.

No one was for censorship as a way to end sexism, but it was defined differently by different women. One woman said tearing down signs was defacing property, not censorship. Many pointed out it is the government that censors—and that tearing down women-hating signs is about liberating ourselves, not oppressing others. Women argued that our ability to live our lives free from sexist abuse supersedes the rights of those trying to keep us down.

### ABSTRACT RIGHTS

Other women who defined tearing down signs as censorship said they don't want anyone to censor them and everyone has a "right" to their opinion. Some opposed the idea that one group's rights are more important than others because then "we'd be oppressing their right to oppress us."

I raised the point that if all ideas—including sexism—are valid, and if that is what our view of freedom is, then why have a WAC? Why are we here? I said that if we are talking about freedom of speech then we have to talk about what freedom means, not "rights."

I was concerned by these ideas because though these women did not agree with Paglia, Paglia argues that all ideas, even sexist ones (which are clearly unseparable from acts), are valid.

Camille Paglia says, "we must learn to accept limitation, duality, paradox" in the context that we must accept that women may never be safe. She continues, "all institutions would be strengthened and honored, from the sex industry, with its pornographic pagan truths, to organized religion..."

This kind of thought, taken to its logical conclusion, would mean that the anti-choice fanatics—from the Illinois Right to Life (read Lie), who put out the lying posters we tore down equating women to Nazis and slave traders, to Operation Oppress-you who harass women, bomb and blockade clinics—need to be strengthened, as if this is what freedom is all about.

But this is no more the objective truth of freedom than the "pornographic truths" Paglia wants to strengthen. That Paglia and anti-choice fanatics are about unfreedom is not just an opinion, it is very clearly objective and women fight against this unfreedom with organized clinic defense and groups like WAC, which vows to fight all forms of sexism.

### WHAT DOES FREEDOM MEAN?

How we work out what freedom is is difficult because it's not something that we can just make up out of our heads. It has to be grounded in the freedom ideas and struggles historically and presently. Don't we need to



## Women-Worldwide

by Mary Jo Grey

More than 8,000 protesters—representing a coalition of 46 women's, church and aid groups—demonstrated in over 20 cities in Switzerland last month demanding that the government loosen its refugee restrictions and grant asylum to women fleeing sexual violence in war zones such as Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Terres des Femmes (Earth of Women) is calling for international support for a Syrian woman seeking asylum in Germany to escape her violent husband. Forced into marriage at age 13, Maryam Zarazi endured her husband's beatings and affairs until her children were grown. Her husband now threatens to kill her if she goes through with a divorce. Her application for asylum in Germany faces an uncertain outcome, as the government accepts only political refugees, not women persecuted because of their sex.

—Women Living Under Muslim Laws

Negotiations by the women workers' organization, Kilusan ng Manggagawane Kababaihan, have resulted in "breakthrough gains" for women workers in numerous plants in the Philippines. These benefits include: 2,000 pesos a month for day care centers; 60-78 day maternity leaves; free ob-gyn checkups for pregnant women and transfers to lighter work.

The high court in Spain has upheld the barbaric seven-year prison sentence imposed on Dr. German Saenz de Santamaria, a gynecologist convicted by Malaga's provincial court of authorizing an abortion.

## WAC debates ideas

figure out what the highest developments have been and are today in the struggles for freedom? For freedom not to be abstract or reduced to rights, I think we have to work out a unity of the highest points reached in freedom ideas that are implicitly in the activity of masses of people fighting to be free. Not stopping there, we need to also work out the idea of freedom explicitly and develop it anew along with the new stages of struggle so that we can get to freedom and not get trapped in the logic of unfreedom.

It is this kind of method that allows us to escape the view that we have to accept limitations, whether it's the view that "this country is the best in the world" or that pluralism, diversity—regardless of content and consequence—should be embraced. But why not try to create something totally new which doesn't exist in any country, but only in the freedom struggles themselves?

One woman expressed her fear that we would all have to agree on tactics and make a WAC policy regarding censorship. She said it's a personal choice whether you want to tear something degrading down or not. Many women applauded her. And WAC didn't collapse—it's getting stronger.



To have an open debate—not for the sake of it, but for working out the idea of freedom in Women's Liberation—is necessary if we are ever going to become free, if we are ever going to build a Women's Liberation Movement with the vision of transforming this whole society; where every individual is truly free to reach full self-development without any limitation.

## WAC in Berlin

The Berlin Women's Action Coalition (WAC) did not come out of nowhere. We have been active for years in women's peace groups, connecting women's issues with opposition to militarism, with pacifism and ecology. We were independent, working with women in what was then the German Democratic Republic. In the mid-1980s we wanted not only to react to the atrocities committed against women, but we developed a women's "bill of rights" and discussed philosophy with lots of women.

With the upheaval in East Europe in 1989, our hopes for disarmament were raised and shattered when what followed was the Gulf war and the anti-foreigner actions of neo-fascists. There is a lot of frustration with the government's inaction on the issue of burning down immigrant workers' housing.

We formed Mothers Against Violence where Turkish women brought their concern that their sons might be not only victims but also perpetrators. In the Spring of 1991, just after the end of the Gulf war while the peace movement was disintegrating, we did a lot of organizing against mass rapes of women in the former Yugoslavia.

In November one of us was in New York and heard about WAC. She called together a meeting for Dec. 4. We just started right in with the description of what happened in New York and what we can do. On Dec. 10 we did a demonstration against the mass rapes in Bosnia and 500 women came!

It is outrageous that Turkish people, who are 10% of our population, cannot be citizens. Also the people who get asylum are mostly men—women and children are left behind at home. We are working together with women in Belgrade and Zagreb to organize a March 8 International Women's Day event against mass rape everywhere and to draw attention to the fact that though rape is a war crime as defined by the UN, no one does anything about it.

—WAC member, Berlin

## Choice for Polish women

New York, N.Y.—On Dec. 20 I participated, with about 45 women and men, in a demonstration opposite St. Patrick's Cathedral against Poland's move toward criminalization of abortion and for freedom of choice for Polish women. Sponsors included the Network of East/West Women, Campaign for Peace and Democracy, and No More Nice Girls.

We demonstrated when the Polish parliament was debating a bill that would criminalize abortion and punish women and doctors with prison sentences of up to ten years. The law would also ban some contraception such as IUDs and the RU 486 pill and it is already hard to get contraception of any kind in Poland since pharmacists are pressured by the church and rarely supply them.

Since our demonstration, the Polish parliament's lower house passed a bill that would not send women to prison who self abort, or doctors who abort a woman whose health is endangered or if the fetus is badly deformed or the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest.

Polish women do want freedom of choice. Over a million Polish women and men have signed a petition asking for a referendum on the legality of abortion. On Dec. 9, up to 1,000 people demonstrated in Warsaw in opposition to the Parliament debates.

—Marxist-Humanist

## Anti-choice court strikes again

### Mobs get green light

The Reagan/Bush U.S. Supreme Court gave Bush a going away present with their absurd ruling on Jan. 13 that said the anti-Ku Klux Klan act of 1871 could not be used to keep anti-abortion fanatics from blockading clinics and harassing women trying to have an abortion. Again this highly politicized right-wing court revealed its contempt not only for simple justice, but for reality.

The reactionary majority's threadbare ideology forced them to base their ruling on the ludicrous proposition that the anti-abortion movement is not really aimed at opposing women's freedom. Rather, the fanatics who bomb abortion clinics, threaten to kill doctors who perform abortions, call pregnant women "walking wombs" and scream horrendous sexist (and often racist) abuse in women's faces may actually have "common and respectable reasons for opposing" abortion.

It is this perverse reality we have to live with for decades to come that tempers our pleasure with President Clinton's reversal of five anti-choice decrees from the Reagan/Bush years, on the 20th anniversary of Roe v. Wade. With a stroke of the pen, he rescinded the gag rule that prohibited federally funded family planning clinics from discussing abortion with patients; ended the ban on abortions at overseas military hospitals if they are paid for; ordered a reassessment of the U.S. ban on the abortion bill RU 486; ended the ban on funding of UN family planning programs that provide abortion or abortion counseling; ended the ban on the use of fetal tissue for medical research.

There is no question that this barest beginning of restoring a fraction of our rights is a great relief. Yet when we see that in the last nine months there have been 43 chemical attacks on abortion clinics; that less than 23% of ob-gyn programs include abortion training for doctors; that fully 80% of U.S. counties have no abortion providers; and that the U.S. Supreme Court has just given the green light to anti-women mob action at clinic doors—seeing all of this, what is inescapable is the necessity for a strong and growing Women's Liberation Movement.

—Terry Moon

## Community stops rapist

Chicago, Ill.—Community residents took matters into their own hands after a rapist assaulted seven women and teenagers between October and December in the Austin section of Chicago, a Black neighborhood on the West side. The rapist was caught in early January after the Northwest Austin Council initiated a Stop the Rapes Campaign which made the entire neighborhood aware of the assaults. Two hundred, mostly women, poured out for the first meeting and helped plaster the neighborhood with leaflets about the rapes. When a young woman who had been raped last fall began screaming after spotting the rapist, her male friend tackled him as others rushed over to help.

One of the organizers of the campaign, Elce Redmond, described how women began to speak out about their experiences with sexual assault, which were often not from strangers but the men with whom they live. "And some of the men who used to say, that's a woman's issue, I don't have time for that, began to see that it affects them too," he said. "We also realized that we have no sexual assault services in our neighborhood, so people are dealing with these traumas alone." They have now decided to make the Stop the Rapes Campaign a permanent one.

—Feminist supporter

## Chicago honors Lorde

Chicago, Ill.—Over 300 women, Black and white, lesbian and straight, filled an auditorium at Malcolm X College on Jan. 15 for "A Burst of Light—A Celebration of Audre Lorde." Lorde died Nov. 17 of cancer (see In Memoriam, December News & Letters). She described herself as a "Black lesbian feminist warrior poet mother, still making trouble." This beautiful tribute, organized by a coalition of lesbian and Black women's community organizations called Sisters Responding, included readings of Lorde's poems and essays, videotapes of recent speeches, music, personal comments, and a film-in-progress on Lorde by Michelle Parkerson.

Lorde's own voice reached out through the readings and videotapes to challenge everyone at this celebration. "If you don't use your own power for what you say you believe in, those who oppress you will use your power against you," she said in a videotaped speech at the Third International Women's Book Fair in Quebec.

Several speakers sought to capture Lorde's ongoing impact. Nancy Lanoue, with the Lesbian Community Cancer Project, read from *The Cancer Journals*, which helped her decide to defy her doctors' insistence that she wear a prosthesis to hide her mastectomy. Breaking our own silences was central to Lorde's revolutionary vision, Lanoue said.

Mark Lovelace, a gay Black man who was a friend of Lorde's, recalled wondering the morning after Lorde's death how Chicago would respond, what was Chicago going to do? A tribute to Lorde that was only a mourning would defy her passion. She taught him that each of us have our own work in fighting oppression, which for him was fighting sexism. One could sense at this celebration that Audre Lorde was still making trouble.

—Laurie Cashdan

# Democratic Party is nowhere to go

by Felix Martin, Labor Editor

Los Angeles, Cal.—I recently read an article on Homestead, Pa. In 1986 the Homestead Works that gave the town its existence was closed. Today its stores and businesses have closed. Homestead is like many manufacturing and agricultural towns across this nation—towns with many people working two or three jobs, while millions are unemployed and homeless.

The article said that the Homestead steelworkers had voted the Republican ticket over the last three presidential elections, but in 1992 had turned back to the Democratic Party, "because they had nowhere else to go." This is where the writer of the article was wrong. Going from one party to the other party is what has kept the working people of this country tied to wage slavery the last 200 years.

I recently read again an article I wrote in October 1978 for the *Assembler*, the newspaper of Local 216 of the United Auto Workers. I was working on the assembly line at General Motors South Gate then and was responding to an article in the *Los Angeles Times*. My article speaks as loudly today as it did in 1978:

"The *Times* article states, '...efficiency and ingenuity would result in saving of time, money and materials.' We workers must say that good old 'Generous Motors' is saving on all of these! In 1978 they made more cars in less time (even with all the added attractions), pro-

duced more (with speed-up) each day, used fewer workers to do the job and continued to make larger and larger profits each year...The investment in more and more automated machines to replace live working labor has caused the cost to go so high that there is not enough surplus value being produced by live workers to be invested to create more jobs..."

The 1978 article continued to state that since the last contract General Motors had replaced 30,000 workers with automation. It certainly appears that things have not changed. Today General Motors is cutting out thousands of jobs. With or without the Democrats, we are being robbed as we have been for a long time.

The way we produce needs for people under capitalism doesn't make sense. Workers produce everything for the capitalist and then workers try to buy it back. We cannot afford capitalism any longer.

More and more workers, both mental and manual labor, are realizing they don't need the capitalist thieves to rob them of their production any longer. All labor needs to do is to replace this thinking about the need for someone else to think for them with a philosophy of Marxist-Humanism grounded in freedom. With all means of production in the hands of the people and put to work producing needs for people, we can go on to freedom, not back to the Democratic Party.

## Workshop Talks

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the company'd have broken it long ago. Anytime the mafia is behind something, you know it's going to be around for a while."

I was talking with some Teamsters in Local 707 a year ago. The federal government was throwing out the leadership for associating with organized crime, and a slate called "707 Pride" was running against them to clean up the union. Some of the Teamsters had the attitude, "They're crooks but they're our crooks," like, these guys go to bat for us against management and we don't know those new guys. (The reform slate won.)

### A FORCE OUTSIDE WORKERS?

Can't you have that attitude only when unions have become something outside the workers, an outside force to deal with management instead of you? You can think they are good, or you can think they are bad and listen to the boss who says, "We don't need outsiders, we can settle this ourselves," to keep you from unionizing. But it is all on the ground of unions as something that substitute themselves for the self-organization of ourselves. Because that's what they are.

I think also of a Black elevator worker, one of only 300 Black members of the 5,000-member Local One. He wasn't happy to be getting \$4 an hour below scale on a non-union job site, but he said if the union knew about the job, they would shut it down. They wouldn't get him and the other "minority" workers better pay and safer conditions. They would fill the job with unemployed (white) members from their bench. The union appears to Black, Latino and Asian workers as the exclusive club that shuts them out of work—because that's what it is.

The question of non-union and union is a big one, especially in trucking, where there is more and more non-union. Teamster President Carey wants to organize. Local 707 wants to organize and wants rank-and-file workers involved. The question is the subjectivity of the workers, union and non-union.

### OUR LOCAL, OUR MOVEMENT?

It's not just a question of the anti-worker NLRB (Labor Board) and how quickly you get fired if you try to organize. That is the objective side of the truth. But do any of us feel that it is our local, our movement? Is it part of our lives? Or is the union still something that's outside of us, that thinks instead of us, that acts instead of us?

In the 1930s the CIO spread like wildfire, NOT because labor laws were favorable to it, but because workers MADE IT BE; it was THEIRS. Ron Carey putting Teamster money towards paid organizing staff instead of private jets and multiple salaries for the leaders is good, but it will not solve the basic, fundamental problem of why unions are losing ground. Nor will getting Congress to pass an anti-scab law. Nor will getting Clinton appointees on the NLRB.

When workers organize a union, for a time there is a duality. The union is not only something outside of us; it is us, our shop-floor organization, our unity and struggles, our ideas, our lives—whether in a textile plant down South or Local P-9 in Austin, Minn., whether Delta Pride Catfish or a rank-and-file caucus against the union bureaucracy. The riddle only the workers can work out an answer to is: how do we hang on to that side of what union is without letting it slip from our fingers again?



## GM's retirement sham

Oklahoma City, Okla.—The early retirement offer from General Motors is for people who are 50 years old or older. I could have taken it, but because I am not 62, I would have reduced benefits. If I wanted to go to work for somebody else, I could still get my retirement check from General Motors, but I don't think there'd be a decent paying job here. People coming out of the army go to work for Circle K, a convenience store, for a little above minimum wage. Financially it would put me in a bind right now, because I still have kids in school.

The people it could really help are the people who came down from the closed Leeds plant. Most of those people live in Missouri, about 400 or 500 miles away. Some of them commute, either flying or driving, every weekend. But most of the guys coming down from Leeds are only in their middle 40s.

Two hundred people have applied for the retirement program. One foreman said that the company does not plan to replace those 200 people with people from the Jobs Bank, because they're cutting the amount of human power on the lines. You can look at it as a line speed-up or, as they say, "cost cutting" to "make us more effective in the market place."

There were 6,500 workers in the plant in 1984. There are probably 4,500 now, and they plan to do away with that by 10% in the next year. We have no car production scheduled past 1996. People who have been through a plant closing with General Motors see the same thing happening here, the same tactics. We all know it's an inhuman system, but every time you see this same thing acted out, it's really discouraging.

—Long-time GM worker

## Book review

# Decline of leisure: automated exhaustion

*The Overworked American: The Unexpected Decline of Leisure* by Juliet B. Schor (Basic Books, a division of Harper Collins, published in the U.S., 1991), 247 pages.

The very title of Juliet Schor's book touches a nerve. One woman who saw me carrying it pointed to the title and exclaimed, "That's the gospel!" We've come to experience overwork as an objective fact of life and, for a great many, as the only thing separating us from the rising tide of poverty and homelessness.

Schor's most serious contribution lies in demonstrating empirically that capitalism has increased, not decreased, human toil. Bourgeois economists have a predilection for comparing today's average working hours to those of the mid-19th century, which were nearly twice as long. She challenges this false comparison because that was a period of full-blown capitalism, whereas the proper comparison would be to pre-capitalist periods.

Drawing upon a wealth of research, she shows that the medieval workday in England was no more than eight hours and roughly one-third of the year was taken up by holidays. Thus the eight-hours movements in the late 19th century were actually workers' attempts to "recover" what their ancestors had enjoyed. "In this sense," she says, "leisure exists in spite of rather than as a result of capitalism."

### WORKING HOURS EXPANDED

Schor's analysis proves what most American workers know from direct experience, that despite the vastly increased use of automation and high tech throughout the U.S., and despite ever higher levels of unemployment and underemployment, those not yet "downsized" out of their jobs are being exhausted from a continuous expansion of working hours over the past 20 years: women are putting in about 300 more per year, and men about 100. All of this despite having more than doubled our productivity since the end of World War II.

The fact that automation has not delivered on the promise of increased leisure time is no small point. It was this promise, after all, which served as the basis for ramming automation down the workers' throats in the 1950s and 1960s. Today it is touted—along with wage concessions and other capitalist dreams—as the golden road to "making the U.S. competitive."

Despite its plusses, Schor's book embodies a host of disorienting contradictions. In her view (p. 59), the key factors that have perpetuated the capitalists' preference for long hours are: in the second half of the 19th century, increased mechanization; by the 20th century, the use of "employment rents"; and, since World War II, the increased ratio of fringe benefits relative to wages.

### NO IDLE MACHINERY

It is surely true that the "drive to use machinery intensively has been an important cause of long hours" (p. 60), inasmuch as idle machinery begets no surplus value. But this only explains why the machinery must be kept in use 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This 168-hour period can be accommodated by four people each working 42 hours or by eight working 21 hours.

Schor argues (p. 66) that because fringe benefits are paid on a per-person basis, rather than by the hour, this "bias" produces a powerful incentive to use overtime instead of hiring more workers, a bias allegedly made far more acute by the increase in the ratio of fringe benefits relative to wages since the end of World War II. Indeed, the climb has been steep: 17.0% in 1955, 30.0% in 1975, 36.2% in 1987.

However, almost the entire increase occurred during the first 20 years, when she shows working hours did not increase. Moreover, even at 36.2% the 50% overtime premium still costs a company more than paying one-third more workers at straight time. The break-even point would occur if fringe benefits were set at 50%.

### DISCIPLINE AND EXPLOITATION

Schor comes closer to the mark when she talks about "employment rents." She defines this as "the difference between income on the job and expected income if a worker is terminated" (p. 63). What she means is that workers gravitate to those jobs that either pay higher than average wages or allow workers to increase their incomes through regularly scheduled overtime.

Use of such "rents" helps a company maintain a stable, well trained, and disciplined work force—one more willing to tolerate long hours, speed-up, repetitive motions, and night shifts. Schor's emphasis, however, is not so much on how the capitalists use "rents" to discipline workers as on how they trap them in a so-called "work-and-spend cycle."

What Schor does not explain is the fundamental reason for capitalism's "preference" for overtime. Overtime hours increase the proportion of surplus value relative to the hours necessary to reproduce the worker's own subsistence. That is, nearly all of the additional value created accrues to the capitalist, whereas a new worker must first reproduce his/her own maintenance.

It isn't that what Schor describes has no impact, but that these movements are subsidiary to capitalism's general law of motion, the drive to appropriate ever greater amounts of surplus value. Having thus ignored the objective pull of capital, she is reduced to tinkering with capitalism's results.

—Jan Kollwitz

## News & Letters

Vol. 38 — No. 1 JANUARY-FEBRUARY, 1993

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

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

by Raya Dunayevskaya  
Founder of Marxist-Humanism

*Editor's note: We are printing in two parts Raya Dunayevskaya's Introduction to the Fourth Expanded Edition of the pamphlet, American Civilization on Trial, Black Masses as Vanguard, (ACOT), on the 30th anniversary of the publication of its first edition. This Introduction, "A 1980s View of the Two-Way Road Between the U.S. and Africa," developed from Dunayevskaya's Marx Centenary tour in 1983, and was written in August 1983. We reprint it now in response to the new voices heard in the Los Angeles rebellion and as part of an ongoing discussion on how to work out new philosophic-historic-organizational directions in the freedom movement today. Part II will appear in the March, 1993 N&L. To obtain ACOT in full, see the ad on page 9.*

On this double 20th anniversary of the famous 1963 March on Washington and the first publication of *American Civilization on Trial*, the struggle continues. The planned August 27, 1983 March on Washington is taking place when the deep economic recession spells out Depression for the Black world, not only in terms of unemployment—especially that of the youth which is an incredible 50 percent—but in the whole field of civil rights, where that supreme artificer, President Reagan, is trying to roll back what civil rights struggles had achieved over the past two decades.

Reagan's retrogressionism makes it more imperative than ever not to leave these stark facts at the factual stage alone. Otherwise, all we could report is that the Magnolia Jungle we described in our first edition is as steaming as it was when Bull Connor unleashed the fire-hoses, vicious dogs and cattle prods against teenagers in Birmingham, Alabama and four young Black children were blown to bits in a church there—after which Schwerner, Chaney and Goodman were tortured and murdered in Mississippi, and Viola Liuzzo was gunned down and Rev. Reeb clubbed to death following the Selma to Montgomery March. Indeed, that jungle is still at such white heat that Black youth in Florida have erupted in revolt for three years in a row.

The truth is, however, first, that what was won through the last two decades was inseparable from the intense new forms of revolt. The turbulent 1960s witnessed the birth of a whole Third World, central to which was the Black Revolution both in the U.S. and in Africa. Secondly, inseparable from and simultaneous with that, was the Marxist-Humanist banner that *American Civilization on Trial* raised in the context of the whole 200-year history of the U.S., whose civilization had been put on trial and found guilty.

In a word, to separate a philosophy of liberation from the struggle for freedom is to doom us to yet one more unfinished revolution such as has characterized the U.S. from its birth, when the Declaration of Independence was meant for white only and left the Black enslaved. It was because this history, not only as past but as present, remained racist on the 100th anniversary of the "Emancipation Proclamation" that the Introduction to *American Civilization on Trial* was entitled: "Of Patriots, Scoundrels and Slave Masters."

### HISTORIC TURNING POINTS: SLAVE REVOLTS, WOMEN'S DIMENSION, ANTI-IMPERIALISM

What *American Civilization on Trial* disclosed was that, at each historic turning point of development in the U.S., it was the Black masses in motion who proved to be the vanguard. Take the question of the slave revolts leading to the birth of Abolitionism, which had created a new dimension of American character. It is not only, as we pointed out, that: "They were inter-racial and in a slave society preached and practiced Negro equality. They were distinguished as well for inspiring, aligning with and fighting for equality of women in an age when the women had neither the right to the ballot nor to property nor to divorce. They were internationalist, covering Europe with their message, and bringing back to this country the message of the Irish Freedom Fighters." It is that the vanguard nature of the Black dimension in the Abolitionist movement has much to say to us today—even when it comes to Women's Liberation.

Take so simple a matter as a name, specifically Sojourner Truth's name. Keep in mind what the question of choosing a name means in today's Women's Liberation Movement, which has discussed widely the question of not bearing one's husband's name. But did anyone other than Sojourner Truth include a whole philosophy of freedom in a chosen name? Listen to her story. She said she "talked with God," told him she refused to bear a slave name, and asked what should she do? "He" answered her as follows: Sojourn the world over and tell everyone the truth about American democracy, that it doesn't exist for Blacks. That was how she decided to call herself "Sojourner Truth."

Woman as Reason as well as Force has always been hidden from history, not to mention philosophy. Yet, as early as 1831, the very year Nat Turner led the greatest slave revolt, Maria Stewart spoke up in public—the first American-born woman, white or Black, to speak publicly. Her appeal was to:

*O ye daughters of Africa, awake! awake! arise! no longer sleep nor slumber but distinguish yourselves. Show forth to the world that ye are endowed with noble and exalted faculties . . . How long shall the fair daugh-*

*ters of Africa be compelled to bury their minds and talents beneath a load of iron pots and kettles? . . . How long shall a mean set of men flatter us with their smiles, and enrich themselves with our hard earnings: their wives' fingers sparkling with rings and they themselves laughing at our folly?*

Total deafness to women shaping history extended into the 20th century, even when it wasn't a question of the rights of any single person, but when whole masses



Logo from the Ladies Department of the abolitionist paper, *The Liberator*, where Maria Stewart's work appeared.

in motion fought—and won!

In Africa, in 1929, tens of thousands of Igbo women had self-organized against both British imperialism and their own African chiefs whom they accused of carrying out the new British edict to tax women. It took our age and a new Women's Liberation Movement to bring forth just such pages of history.<sup>1</sup>

The vanguard nature of the Black dimension is seen also in the struggle against imperialism at its earliest appearance. Take the question of the Spanish-American War, Blacks sensed its imperialist nature and became the very first force in the world outside of Latin America itself to organize an Anti-Imperialist League in 1899. In a word, whether the focus is on the Civil War in the U.S. or the world anti-imperialist struggles, the Black masses in motion showed their multi-dimensionality.

In the very same year that the Anti-Imperialist League was formed, in a different part of the world the revolutionary Marxist, Rosa Luxemburg, wrote:

*At present, Persia and Afghanistan too have been attacked by Russia and England. From that, the European antagonisms in Africa too have received new impulses; there, too, the struggle is breaking out with new force (Fashoda, Delegoa, Madagascar). It's clear that the dismemberment of Asia and Africa is the final limit beyond which European politics no longer has room to unfold. There follows then another such squeeze as has just occurred in the Eastern question, and the European powers will have no choice other than throwing themselves on one another, until the period of the final crisis sets in within politics...etc., etc.*

The birth of a whole new Third World in our age cast a new illumination both on Luxemburg's flash of genius on imperialism's rise and on the little-known page of Black history concerning its early anti-imperialist struggles. The struggles today have reached a new intensity, and they are multi-dimensional. As we witnessed in the anti-Vietnam War struggles, it was the Black youth who first articulated the defiance as "Hell, no! We won't go!" Yet it has become clear since the 1960s that even the greatest actions need the direction that comes from a total philosophy of freedom. What is needed now is to concretize such a philosophy of freedom as the reality for our age.

### EMERGENCE OF THE THIRD WORLD AS MARX FORESAW IT

What *American Civilization on Trial* reveals is both Marx's deep American roots and his Promethean vision. Take the succinct way in which Marx pinpointed the situation in the Civil War at its darkest moment, as the war dragged on and the Southern generals were winning so decisively as to produce a defeatist attitude in the North. Where others looked at the military forces, Marx looked at the forces of revolution: "A single Negro regiment would have a remarkable effect on Southern nerves . . . a war of this kind must be conducted along revolutionary lines . . ." (Letter from Marx to Engels, August 7, 1862).

From his very first break with capitalism, as he discovered a whole new continent of thought and of revolution which he called "a new Humanism," capitalism is what Marx critiqued and fought against throughout his

life. Here is how he described the origins of European capitalism:

*The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black skins, signalized the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. (Capital, Vol. 1, p. 823, Kerr edition)*

The unmasking of Western civilization's racism by its Black dimension in revolutionary moments of mass upsurge makes imperative a most serious return, on this centenary of Marx's death, to his critical, revolutionary unmasking of Western civilization's capitalist foundations. Just as in the U.S., so in Britain, Western civilization has been put on trial by the Black dimension. This became especially sharp with the April 1981 Brixton rebellion. Like the famous Kerner Commission Report following the 1967 rebellions in the U.S. and the current investigations into the Miami rebellions, the British government has produced its own Scarman Report on the Black British rebellions. While the tone of the British report is more outraged than its American counterpart at the stripping away of Britain's fetishism about its vaunted "civilization," Lord Scarman nevertheless found that "the disorders, like so many riots in British history, were a protest against society by people, deeply frustrated and deprived, who saw in a violent attack upon the forces of law and order their one opportunity of compelling public attention to their grievances." Being in the business of empire longer than the Americans, however, the British authorities are more expert in recognizing historic continuities in the new forms of revolt against their rule. Thus, in its very first paragraph, the Scarman Report observed that "the petrol bomb was now used for the first time on the streets of Britain (the idea, no doubt, copied from the disturbances in Northern Ireland)."<sup>2</sup>

Frantz Fanon was absolutely right when, in our age, he wrote: "Two centuries ago, a former European colony decided to catch up with Europe. It succeeded so well that the United States of America became a monster..." The extreme urgency of dealing with that global monster today demands that the struggles be tightly woven together with a total philosophy. As we work it out for our age, what is needed is a concentration, at one and the same time, on 1) the trail to the 1980s from Marx's last decade, and 2) revolutionary Black thought.

It was in his last decade that Marx discovered still newer paths to revolution. Present-day existing state-capitalisms calling themselves Communist, like Russia and China, have totally abandoned both the philosophy and the actuality of Marx's "revolution in permanence." Marx, on the other hand, began introducing fundamental changes in his greatest theoretical work, *Capital*, which disclosed his new perceptions of the possibility of a revolution in technologically underdeveloped lands before the technologically advanced West. Take the simple word "so-called" placed by Marx in the title of the final part of *Capital*: "The So-Called Primitive Accumulation of Capital." Though that word has been disregarded by post-Marx Marxists, it touches the burning question of our day—the relationship of technologically advanced countries to the technologically underdeveloped Third World. What Marx was saying with that word, "so-called," was that it simply wasn't true that capitalism's carving up of the Asian and African world characterized only the primitive stage of capitalism.

To further stress that technologically advanced capitalism has not at all left behind the so-called primitive stage of turning Africa into "a warren for hunting black skins" and forcing them into slavery in "civilized" countries, Marx subordinated the whole section of Part 8 and made it integral to Part 7, "Accumulation of Capital." There it reached its highest point—the concentration and centralization of capital. Thereupon, Marx added a whole new paragraph to the 1875 French edition of *Capital*, which showed that this continued outreach into imperialism "successively annexed extensive areas of the New World, Asia and Australia."<sup>3</sup>

As Marx then turned to study pre-capitalist societies—be it of the Native Americans, the Indians in Morgan's *Ancient Society*, or the Australian aborigine designated by Marx as "the intelligent Black," he hit out against anyone trying to transform his chapter, "The Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation" into a "Universal." Marx insisted that he had been describing the particular, historic stage of Western capitalism; that other societies need not follow that path. If they did, they would "lose the finest chance ever offered by history to a people and undergo all the fatal vicissitudes of the capitalist regime."<sup>4</sup>

2. Marx often singled out the deep relationship between Irish revolutionaries and all other minorities. A new projected 11-volume documentary study, covering the impact of Garveyism on the U.S., Africa and the West Indies, reveals the revolutionary relationship between Garveyism and the Irish struggles in the early part of the 20th century. Vol. I (1826-1919) and Vol. II (1919-1920) are due off the press in November, 1983, edited by Robert A. Hill (Berkeley, Cal.: Univ. of California Press). See also "British Civilization on Trial," in the May-June, 1981 issue of *Marxist-Humanism*, journal of British Marxist-Humanists, available from News & Letters.

3. This paragraph was left out of Engels' English and German editions. It is discussed in Chapter 10 of *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, "A Decade of Historic Transformation: from the Grundrisse to Capital."

4. Marx's letter to the journal which had published a critique of his work by the Russian Populist, Mikhailovsky, was written in November, 1877 but not published in Russia until 1886 after Marx's death in 1883.

1. See Judith Van Allen's "Aba Riots or Igbo Women's War" in *Ufahamu* 6: no. 1 (1975). An elaborated version also appeared in *Women in Africa*, Nancy Haffkin and Edna Bay, eds. (Stanford, Ca.: Stanford Univ. Press, 1976). See especially a global view of revolutionary women in *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, pp. 79-112.

**Essay Article**

# Spontaneity, Organization and Philosophy: Black Masses as Vanguard

by Michael Flug

I

The mass upheaval of the 1992 Los Angeles rebellion, which challenged the oppressive reality and ideological dictatorship of the Reagan-Bush era, did not spring full-blown out of nothing. Spontaneity and organization were linked from the start. What appeared as the spontaneous actions of thousands in Los Angeles was preceded by a long process of organization—an organization of thought among those “furthest down.” One could see elements of that emergent social consciousness over a year ago—in the reaction among workers in the South to the Hamlet, NC fire, and in the movement among women which followed the Clarence Thomas-Anita Hill hearings.

Such movements underline new developments in what might be called “Black Mind,” developments which have characterized liberation struggles of the Black masses against the hollow, abstract reality of American “democracy” for more than two centuries. And yet what is simultaneously emerging is a deepening crisis in Black Mind, a split in attitudes within Black America which is forcing a rethinking of many old conceptions of spontaneity, organization and philosophy.

At one and the same time, Black and Latino ghetto youth, derided as an “underclass,” forced a whole nation to listen to them this year when they rose up in Los Angeles, and yet Black conservative intellectuals gained increasing attention by asserting that judging a person by the “content of their character” means that middle-class Blacks can divorce themselves from any connection with those in the ghettos.

At one and the same time, in response to the Clarence Thomas-Anita Hill hearings, organizations like African-American Women in Defense of Ourselves sprang up, but so did an attraction in the community for elements in Malcolm X’s *Autobiography* which argue that the Black woman’s role in Black liberation struggles is a subordinate one.

At one and the same time, the movement for Afrocentric education launched an assault on the arrogance which equates European culture with all culture and European knowledge with all knowledge, and yet within that movement an illusion has been nurtured which imagines that multi-cultural spheres can be created and sustained without a fundamental uprooting of the socio-economic system.

Such profound contradictions challenge revolutionaries to find new vantage points from which to work out the relationship of spontaneity to organization and of both to a philosophy of liberation. One such vantage point may be found in Raya Dunayevskaya’s 1963 work, *American Civilization on Trial (ACOT)*<sup>1</sup>, and its central category, “Black Masses as Vanguard” of the needed American revolution. Why does that category so characterize American history, and under what conditions does even such an energizing force reach an impasse? Put differently, it is impossible to work out the relationship of spontaneity to organization and of both to philosophy, without asking “what makes a revolutionary Subject revolutionary?”

II

In *American Civilization on Trial (ACOT)*, there is a three-fold relationship that delineates the vanguard role Black masses have played throughout American history—their relationship to white workers, to Black intellectuals, and to the development of the Idea of Freedom. From the beginning, the Black Dimension has offered the most profound test of all social movements and all concepts of revolution.

The dialectical and historical connections between American slavery and American freedom, between the belief in an inferior race and the ideology of classless opportunity, have dominated this society since its birth. Summing up *ACOT* for its 1983 edition, Raya Dunayevskaya wrote, “What *ACOT* disclosed was that, at each historic turning point of development in the U.S., it was the Black masses in motion who proved to be the vanguard” (p. i). In each case, the challenge from the Black Dimension was both a challenge in the realm of organization and a challenge in the realm of thought.

Take the period of the Civil War and Reconstruction. By 1862 the war was going badly for the North, and Karl Marx’s closest colleague, Engels, wrote that “all is up,” that the North would lose. Marx answered that Engels was approaching the question from a “purely military” standpoint. “A single Negro regiment,” he argued, could change everything (p. 10).

Why did Marx think so? It returns us to the question: *What makes a revolutionary Subject revolutionary?* It wasn’t a question of numbers. It could change everything because it would set in motion a transformation of the war from one conducted “constitutionally” to one conducted “on revolutionary lines.” In short, what made the difference was the way a new revolutionary Subject shakes up all relationships. The entrance of Blacks into the army quickly developed a logic of its own, because it critiqued all the halfway houses in which Lincoln and his generals had been hiding.

From the beginning—that is to say, from his first ex-



Delegates to 1920 First International Convention of the Negro Peoples of the World organized by Marcus Garvey.

pression of his philosophy of liberation in 1844—Marx had always focused his attention on the relationship between Subject and Mind. In 1844 he singled out the workers as those who could bring down capitalism, yet insisted at the same time that the relationship between men and women is an indication of the degree to which society had become fully human. In 1867, as he was finishing *Capital*, he added: “Labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded.” Far from being rhetoric, this was the perspective for all development of the freedom movement after the Civil War. During Reconstruction, an opening emerged for a revolutionary organizational relationship between white workers and Black ex-slaves.

But what happens when the road is not taken? While white workers in the National Labor Union fought for the eight-hour day, they could not agree on what relationship they should have to the struggles of freedmen in the South, or even whether Blacks belonged as members of the union. In the late 1860s, white workers’ struggles in the North and those among Blacks in the rice and sugar industries in the South were waged separately.

In 1864 Marx had written to Lincoln that “this barrier [slavery] to progress has been swept off by the red sea of civil war.” By 1870 he had a very different view, writing that the attitude “of the poor whites to the Negroes” is similar to that of the English worker to the Irish. “The ordinary English worker,” he argued, “hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers his standard of life. In relation to the Irish worker, he feels himself a member of the ruling nation...thus strengthening their domination over himself.”<sup>2</sup>

By 1876 Federal troops were withdrawn from the South, ending Reconstruction and betraying Black aspirations. The very next year they were used to break the 1877 strikes of unionized workers in the North (pp. 12-13). Organization, even mass organization, which had not absorbed the newest impulses from the Idea of Freedom as expressed in the self-activity of ex-slaves, could not take this “second American Revolution” to completion.

In the 20th century, Marcus Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) tested the relationship of freedom ideas and organization in a very different way. Black veterans came back from World War I determined to make the U.S.’s hollow “democracy” real. They were warned about “Reds” in Russia, but what they experienced were the race riots of “Red Summer, 1919.” Blacks fought back against racist attacks, “and then they searched for an organization, a philosophy that would express not only their frustrations and profound disillusionment, but their spirit of revolt and desire for total freedom” (p. 19).

In the space of only two years the UNIA grew to an organization of some six million, determined to unite “all the Negro people of the world.” Garvey’s newspaper, circulated hand-to-hand from the Mississippi Delta to Northern ghettos, and from Latin America to South Africa, became a forum for underground news and radical ideas. Both the white radicals and the established Black leadership, the “talented tenth,” denounced Garvey as a fraud and his schemes as “pipe dreams.” But they could not explain why six million joined him while they could only watch. DuBois even helped the government deport Garvey.

Such a split in attitudes to the Black masses returns us to the question: *What makes a revolution-*

*ary Subject revolutionary?* First, the objective side. Marx wrote of the “socialization of labor” that accompanies the growth of capital into ever bigger industrial units. Workers are disciplined and organized by the capitalist process so that more production can be squeezed out of them. But at the same time, this process contains the logic of its own destruction. Workers get to know their own power and each other; they organize against the system.

What happened under the American segregation system is not unrelated. As Blacks moved to the North at the outset of the “Great Migration,” they were immediately forced into segregated housing, schools, jobs. They got to know each other in larger and larger numbers; they were forced to establish new Black institutions, since white institutions were closed. Segregation served as the organizing and disciplining agent in which Garvey’s revolutionary message could flourish. And while there is no direct relationship between the way capitalist production disciplines workers and the way segregation has disciplined the Black masses, the dialectic of events in both centers around the way new development in Mind find organizational expression. In the South of the 1960s, organization to overthrow segregation burst out of the same Black institutions shaped by its tyranny.

Second, the subjective side. Both the established Black leadership and most of the Marxists of the time misidentified skilled, educated and openly political workers as “advanced,” and derided unskilled workers, women, and new migrants from the South as “backward.” This was never Marx’s view. From the start, Marx’s humanism insisted that the greater the “fragmentation” of the human being, the greater is his or her “quest for universality,” the drive to be free to develop one’s talents and creativities “unmeasured by any previously established yardstick.”<sup>3</sup>

What happened to that “quest for universality” in the movement of the 1920s? In *Philosophy and Revolution*, Raya Dunayevskaya calls our attention to “a dialectic of thought from consciousness through culture to philosophy.”<sup>4</sup> Such a movement is the most profound “quest for universality,” but it is far from automatic; the dialectic has all too often been derailed before the creation of a full philosophy of liberation has even been placed on the agenda. The mass Black consciousness of the Garvey movement gave birth to the Black cultural explosion of the Harlem Renaissance, even if some of “the talented tenth obscured the connection.” It even gave new impetus to a nascent Black History movement, with its own organizations and institutions (p. 20).

But here the movement stopped; at the end of the 1920s it reached another “road not taken.” It was a very different dead end than the one reached after the Civil War, but it was no less crippling. Despite the great advances in Black culture and Black history, a philosophy of liberation for Black America remained out of sight.<sup>5</sup>

III

The maturity of the age—two centuries of freedom  
(continued on page 9)

1. *American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard* (Detroit: News & Letters, 1963, 1970, 1983). Issued as a “Statement of the National Editorial Board of News and Letters Committees,” the principal author was Raya Dunayevskaya. Page numbers in parentheses in the text refer to the 1983 edition.

2. Karl Marx letter to S. Meyer and A. Vogt, April 9, 1870. The letter is included in Marx, Ireland and the Irish Question (New York: International Pubs., 1975).

3. Marx, *Grundrisse* (London: Penguin, 1973), p. 488.  
4. Raya Dunayevskaya, *Philosophy and Revolution: From Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao* (New York: Dell, 1973), p. 287.  
5. What got substituted for a philosophy of liberation were contending economic-political strategies of the Socialist Party, the Communist Party and the Pan-Africanists. For Dunayevskaya’s critique of these see *ACOT*, pp. 21-25, and her 1944 essay, “Marxism and the Negro Question,” *Raya Dunayevskaya Collection (RDC), Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs*, Wayne State University, #259.

## STATE OF THE UNION/STATE OF THE WORLD AS WE BEGIN 1993

I thought the tone of your November Editorial on the elections was awfully grim. I agreed with every word, especially that "for us the struggle against the dehumanizing conditions of life in this country has just begun." But it's not insignificant that we're going to have a President who protested the Vietnam war. People I know were so ecstatic when Bush was defeated that it reminded me of Dunayevskaya writing about an incubus being lifted when Stalin died. Now is definitely the time to fight to make things better. Otherwise in four years we might get a Buchanan or a David Duke!

**Feminist  
California**

\* \* \*

I live in Chicago and my husband lives in Indiana, because we couldn't find jobs in the same city. All the crap about family values in the election campaign made me sick. Just trying to make a living tears your family apart!

**Fed-up  
Chicago, Ill.**

\* \* \*

Andrew Kliman's essay on "The new forms of appearance of state-capitalism" (December 1992 N&L) was important in showing the limitations of so-called "politics of change." Clinton acts as though job-training is a panacea—but everyone knows the only growth will be in service jobs. As *The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism* shows, the Planners all planned on increasing the standard of living of the masses, but never could.

**Mathematician  
San Diego**

\* \* \*

The Essay on state-capitalism's new appearances showed how structural are the crises of capitalism and revealed a deeper and more ominous alliance today between capitalist ideology, the state, and militarism.

**Young revolutionary  
Berkeley**

\* \* \*

At a meeting on Somalia I attended, one speaker concluded there is a new world and the UN has to take care of it. Another said the U.S. must reconstruct Somalia's infrastructure. Everything had to be done externally by those who had to rectify what they had done. The Somali speaker was even worse on this. The Left just got up and said, "U.S. out of Somalia." Nobody but ourselves spoke about the failure of the African revolutions. The U.S. will feed some people but Africa will not be rebuilt. Capitalism hasn't done it in the last 30 years. Everybody skips revolution and the subjectivity of the masses.

**Black writer  
Oakland**

\* \* \*

The U.S. intervention into Somalia is being presented as something completely "new"—the first intervention not tied to U.S. interests, supposedly solely humanitarian. But isn't it the most vital of U.S. interests, now that there is only one "superpower," to maintain the legitimacy of the status quo, which can't be done in the eyes of the world with millions of people starving to death as the U.S. stands by with its bloated military machine?

**Victor  
New York**

\* \* \*

The Youth column about students asking "Education for what?" (December 1992 N&L) will be talked about a lot now that Clinton is in. What he's talking about is a partnership between business and education. In France and England education is also being tailored to the needs of business. They want philosophy teachers now who have MBAs and experience in business. You can cut a lot of radical professors out that way. It's very important that the youth not limit their demands to just asking for scholarships. Education at Berkeley was free when the Free Speech Movement erupted.

**Radical professor  
Indiana**

\* \* \*

In 1991 N&L covered the North Carolina Imperial Chicken processing plant fire, wherein workers were trapped in the padlocked plant when a fire erupted.

Besides those wounded, 25 workers died. Corporation boss, Emmett Roe, was recently sentenced to 19 years and 11 months in prison and is expected to serve only 24 to 30 months on the 25 counts of manslaughter (read: women slaughter).

I don't believe in "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." It's the entire capitalist system committing and perpetuating this kind of horror. Yet this is a small "victory" for the Hamlet workers and community. The Imperial Food Workers for Justice became more organized and led a national movement. OSHA laws in North Carolina were improved and dire conditions of southern workers were exposed to the world. "Organize the South" is more than a slogan, and has been pushed forward.

**Sheila  
New York**

\* \* \*

Because of our struggle to survive, we workers have to keep making concessions instead of holding our ground. We're slaves to a system. If we are supposed to be one of the greatest nations, why do we see so many homeless, starving, lost people? Why don't we stop to really try to understand theory and practice?

**Working woman  
Oklahoma**

\* \* \*

During the recent election campaign, the white workers kept being told that they were middle class, no matter how poor. It was a way to divide them from the Blacks and the unemployed, I think. But *American Civilization on Trial* shows that at each turning point in history, Blacks have anticipated the next stage of development of labor. "Black masses as vanguard" is not an opinion, but the truth of American history.

**Labor writer  
New York**

\* \* \*

I can see Black as vanguard in Abolitionism, but it's not so clear today. Blacks are no longer critical to the economy, which has an impact on how people view themselves. Black intellectuals don't face the same problems as Blacks in the ghetto. The "benefit" of segregation was a certain classlessness in the Black community, a sense of solidarity and community. Black nurses and lawyers lived right down the street. With the kind of division we see today into middle class and masses, this no longer exists.

**Black minister  
Bay Area**

\* \* \*

The crisis today is global. You can't put a band-aid on it any more. We can't all operate high technology. What the Los Angeles rebellion proved was that the hi-tech plan creates inner cities with permanently unemployed armies. There is no money to rebuild South Central L.A. Black America is at the forefront of the problem. But L.A. also showed the "new passions and new forces," to reconstruct society.

**John Alan  
Bay Area**



### CAPITALISM, SEXISM, CANCER

The highest incidence of breast cancer in the New York City area occurs on Long Island with its many middle and upper middle class neighborhoods. Nestled among these communities are factories; some small, some big. Many have closed leaving behind toxic material; many still operate using toxic materials. Most of Long Island's drinking water is ground water. Long Island has dangerous toxic dumps. Scores of potato farms have been lost because the soil has become too toxic from the use of pesticides. These are just a few facts the public is aware of. The day after I received my December issue with the "Woman as Reason" column on "Breast Cancer, Capitalism and Sexism," the following newest "findings" came out: Long Island has such a high incidence of breast cancer because it has a preponderance of Jewish women and Jewish

## Readers' Views

women are prone to develop breast cancer.

Capitalism continues to poison the earth and look for statistical answers. Could it be that if they thought prostate cancer was linked to all this toxic material Long Island would be turned upside down? But then prostate cancer affects mostly old men so they probably wouldn't give a damn about that either.

**Angela Terrano  
New York**

\* \* \*

Terry Moon's article on breast cancer in the December N&L united the struggle against disease with the struggle against production for production's sake and the dehumanization of women. Above all, it exposed the deadly lie of blaming disease on "lifestyle."

**Health worker  
Detroit**



### INTERNATIONAL WORKER SOLIDARITY

I'm sending you a page from the January 8, 1993 issue of *Klassekampen* (Class Struggle) which has a large picture of Chicago Oscar Mayer workers and a story of their struggles. I thought they would like to see it. What has happened is that the owners of Oscar Mayer are lobbying to buy a chocolate factory here in Norway but the workers are fighting against it. International solidarity!

**Freedom fighter  
Norway**

### 'GOOD MORNING, REVOLUTION'

Much will be said and written about Maya Angelou's poem for the Clinton inaugural. (Even more could be said about her misguided support of Clarence Thomas.) Her allusions to the poetic images of the great African American poet and radical, Langston Hughes, especially to his famous poem, "The Negro Sings of Rivers," is another regrettable instance of mainstreaming the revolutionary dimension of Black thought to fit the pale abstractions of U.S. "democracy," now underway. Thus, instead of the African American singing of rivers of struggle, Ms. Angelou has a river singing.

Where Langston sang "Good morning, Revolution," Ms. Angelou's mainstreaming is more in keeping with "Good Morning, America." Such a sharp divergence can only be explained by the fact that Langston speaks as powerfully to the revolutionary dimension embedded in the Black condition today, as he did during the Depression when he wrote "Good morning, Revolution," confiding to his friend, "Revolution":

"You see,/The boss knows you're my friend./He sees us hangin' out together./He knows we're hungry, and ragged./And ain't got a damn thing in this world—/And are gonna do something about it."

Would that we had such a poet-revolutionary to sing of our rivers today.

**L.T.  
Chicago**

### RETHINKING SOCIALISM

Your report on the "Rethinking Marxism" conference in the December N&L was much too kind. As a veteran of many Left conferences, I had hoped that the combination of sponsors critical of "traditional" Marxism, and the fall of the Soviet Union, would really produce some "rethinking." Instead I found the same old vulgarizations of Marx and acceptance of the Soviet Union as socialist, that have impeded revolutionary thought and vision all these years.

The plenary sessions were, except for some feminists, given over by and large to "names" like Manning Marable, who said what was wrong with formerly lex-

isting "socialism" was that it needed to add "democracy." He suggested in the U.S. we "make corporate capitalism more democratic," and praised markets as efficient. In short, nothing needs much changing, except to make people more "equal."

When a Marxist-Humanist asked at a plenary why there was no discussion of the Los Angeles rebellion at the conference, and called for a new relation of theory to practice, he was told that conferences are places for theoreticians to talk to each other. The speakers seemed to have no idea that ideas might come from others than themselves.

**Anne Jaclard  
New York**

\* \* \*

Many left-wing intellectuals are searching for a new way out after the fall of Communism in East Europe. A number of graduate students and a few professors here share my criticisms of capitalism. The critical point is how to turn theory into practice. A Korean student I talked with showed me I am not alone when he said: We need a revolution.

**Chinese exile  
Ontario**

\* \* \*

I was in the Puerto Rican Independence Movement several years ago and had to be in the closet as a lesbian. It seemed we lost some of our humanity in the movement. The way they would treat our lesbians was terrible. It also bothered me that it was supposed to be about equality, but there were people who did the thinking and people who did the work. There was no interaction other than political work, and heaven forbid you would do something else in your life, or that you couldn't make it to do typesetting because your kid was sick. If an equal society was what we were for, then why were women doing all the work while men were sitting around supposedly doing the thinking?

**Puerto Rican lesbian  
Chicago**

### FIGHTING AGAINST MILITARISM



The hopes for a new world after the Cold War ended have unraveled before our eyes—with 100,000 slaughtered in the Persian Gulf War, the horrors in Bosnia, the starvation in Somalia—all because the forces of the old world are still in place. The U.S. military is still signing up 250,000 young people every year, and the Pentagon has requested funding for an increase in the number of junior ROTC units. By 1994, when the cutbacks are ended, the U.S. military will be an elite force. We are reorganizing our efforts to reach young people with material on Conscientious Objectors. Readers can write us for information.

**CCCO  
2208 South St.  
Philadelphia, Pa. 19146**

\* \* \*

It was surprising to read in your book review "Batling homophobia in the military" (and in bold face at that) that WWII was a "war against fascism" as a statement of fact and equally surprising to find such a benign attitude towards the military and its ROTC, as if what is needed is reform. There is a long history of struggles within the military against its horrendous discriminatory policies and it is important to learn of gay and lesbian struggles.

Shouldn't the "new generation of youth" be fighting (and perhaps they are) not only the homophobic policies of ROTC but the whole concept of ROTC, as did the generation of youth who tried to stop its first appearance on school grounds and campuses? The question still remains: reform or revolution?

**Reader  
New York**

**HEGEL'S LOGIC AND STAGES OF FREEDOM**

I found very challenging Dunayevskaya's formulation, in the 1969 Thesis printed in the December issue ("Logic as Stages of Freedom, Stages of Freedom as Logic, or the Needed American Revolution"), that Lenin's statement "to a man" was too general. Lenin's perspective, that after the revolution "production and the state" had to be run by the whole population, "to a man, woman, and child," was not an idle slogan of his, but one that he did attempt to practice, with Workers' Councils, trade unions, etc. So what does Dunayevskaya mean, "too general"?

Then she goes on to criticize her own formulation in *Marxism and Freedom* on two kinds of subjectivity—the egoistic subjectivity of the Leader, e.g., Mao, vs. the revolutionary subjectivity of the masses—as, again, "not concrete enough." Following which, she immediately says, "Let's turn to Hegel"—and quotes Hegel's ending from his *Science of Logic*. That hardly seems "concrete" in our usual usage of that term! The quote deals with the need to go beyond the Absolute Idea in Hegel's *Logic* into the full concretization of Idea as Mind.

There is much to think deeply about in this column, written in the moment of the "endings" of the movements of the 1960s, and the search for new beginnings—a moment we are still living within today.

M.L.  
Los Angeles

freedom, and prevents the freedom movements from becoming the "negation of the negation," or creators of a new basis for life and liberty.

Susan Van Gelder  
Detroit

On Raya Dunayevskaya's writing in the December N&L: While recently reading Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind* I saw some of the same philosophic issues she develops with regard to his *Science of Logic*. Each stage in the *Phenomenology* has its own form and content, but the particular is always where the individual and universal meet. As you follow Hegel you see all three are stages, but they mean something completely new when they are conceived together. In fact, the movement shows what really is, and what is not.

Latino activist  
New York, N.Y.

Raya is helping us to grasp the human dialectic which is the ceaseless struggle to be free through this hell-on-earth. We are asking ourselves, "What to do?" and she is demonstrating that this historic period is a "particular, determinant mediation," which, as we move through it, is somehow changed. It is the reason why, "with activity and without, the theoretic preparation for revolution never stops."

Young revolutionary  
Chicago

The Archives column in the December N&L, to me, was about both Dunayevskaya's book *Philosophy and Revolution*, as well as *American Civilization on Trial*. The column brought them together. I saw how Black Masses as Vanguard became a category for Dunayevskaya, as giving voice to both past and future movements. In this 1969 thesis she also shows the beginnings of the breaking down of racism within white labor, how the struggle at the point of production breaks down those divisions between Black/white/Latino.

Black worker  
California



Narahiko Ito's comments on the new edition of Dunayevskaya's *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* (December N&L) were profound, and revealing. The Japanese Luxemburg scholar says that when he read the 1982 edition, he did not grasp her relationship to women's liberation. Today he greatly appreciates Dunayevskaya's feminist insights into Luxemburg's revolutionary/intellectual development, and the lessons Dunayevskaya draws for our women's movement—Luxemburg's independence from male so-called Marxists, her emphasis on mass spontaneity, and her relationship to Marx's concept of "revolution in permanence."

Ito credits the "clarity" of the new edition to the addition of Dunayevskaya's presentation, "Marxist Humanism's Challenge to All Post-Marx Marxists," in which she highlights the inadequacy of Lenin and Trotsky's legacies for our age. But strong critiques of them and of Luxemburg—the best of the "post-Marx Marxists"—appear in the book itself, which is not changed. I would guess that Ito's new reading of it has something to do with changes in his understanding of feminism over the years, perhaps aided by Adrienne Rich's new foreword, which bursts with enthusiasm for the feminism inherent in Dunayevskaya's philosophy.

Women's Liberationist  
New York

**THE BRITISH SCENE**

Despite the shock of the Spring Tory re-election, the Conservatives are now totally in disarray. If Labour had any guts whatsoever they could have rallied enough support to bring the government down. As it is, any major strike would almost certainly escalate and the Tories would collapse, as many East Eu-

ropean regimes did. Labour, of course, hasn't the guts, so much so that it is running round the place pleading with the leadership of any union that shows signs of fighting, to back down. The call for Trade Union Congress (TUC) "days of action," which the TUC leadership advanced, have been quietly forgotten. Nevertheless, there is so little support, anywhere, for the government, that any struggle, however small, that flared up could ignite a nationwide movement.

Laurens Otter  
England

At the moment the troubles of the monarchy are only a side-show. The only logical argument that supporters of the monarchy now put up for its retention is that it encourages the tourist trade. As no doubt this trade would benefit enormously from an annual re-enactment of the execution of Charles I, with reigning kings/queens regularly dispatched in Whitehall, it can only be a matter of time before some entrepreneur catches on to the idea.

Correspondent  
Britain

**WHO SUPPORTS N&L?**

N&L keeps me informed about the things happening in other parts of the hemisphere. The basic ideas behind freedom struggle are the same everywhere. But how can we make sure the struggle does not turn into a terrorist movement such as is taking place in many parts of our country? We must find the way to a humanist outlook.

Philosophy professor  
India

Your first-person reports of struggles from below are excellent and your goal of integrating workers and intellectuals is very important. But your concept of philosophy still separates thought from action when you use "highbrow" language.

Supporter  
Baltimore

Whatever else it is, N&L is always interesting. Here's my renewal.

Reader  
Kentucky

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## Black/Red View

by John Alan

For some time "Multiculturalism" and "Afrocentrism" have been offered as new, exciting theories which would advance the struggles of Black Americans in the 21st century.

Last year *The Black Scholar* published the papers of prominent proponents of the theories of "Multiculturalism" and "Afrocentrism"—Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Manning Marable and Molefi Asante—in its June 20th issue, one month after the Los Angeles rebellion.\*

This column will focus primarily on the theory of "multiculturalism" as presented by Gates, because Gates gives a fuller description of the logic of "multiculturalism."

The subjective/objective premise of the "multicultural theory" is two-fold. First, according to Gates, we are in "the midst of a renaissance of Black scholarship. More women and Blacks are tenured than ever before and more occupy tenure-track positions." And, at the same time, the research work that's being done by scholars in Black Studies is monumental in scope.

The second premise is that by the middle of the 21st century half of the population of the U.S. will consist of people of color. Such a radical demographic change, according to Gates and Marable, will compel the nation to rethink its attitude to race and culture.

The logic of this story ends in a hypothetical society where all cultures and ethnic traditions are practiced equally with the now dominant so-called Greco-Roman, Judeo-Christian culture.

It is hard to believe that a prominent group of African American intellectuals would present such a ready made theory for Black liberation based on demographic projections and their own cloistered research into Black history and literature. What we have is not a leap in theory, but a serious retrogression in thought which presupposes that revolutionary transitions in history happen without conscious mass human activity.

However, the primary concern of the multiculturalist is not the process of revolutionary transition, but cultural equality within the existing realities of capitalism. Theoretically, they see no organic connection between cultures and the existing mode of production and the social division of labor it creates. Thus, they are oblivious to the alienating character of all existing cultures and the contradictions of class and sex they contain.

Multiculturalism attempts to shut itself out of the dialectic of history, especially recent history. All that Frantz Fanon has said about the pitfalls of national cultures and narrow nationalism, at a great moment of revolutionary leaps in human thought and activity, is ignored and blanked out of history by the multiculturalist. Indeed, the theory of multiculturalism is their theory of the "end of history."

Whereas the logic of multiculturalism would end Black history in an absolute of an abstract society of

\* Those papers were given at the Wisconsin Conference on Afro-American Studies, April 18-20, 1991.

## Clinton betrays Haitians

New York, N.Y.—Clinton gave a pre-inaugural blow to the Haitians fleeing that island for their lives, when he announced he would break his campaign promise and continue Bush's policy of intercepting their boats and forcing them back to Haiti. This pirate action is supposed to stop the flood of refugees whom no country will accept, but it has not worked, and has only added to the political deaths and repression in Haiti.

In the year following the military overthrow of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in Sept. 1991, approximately 37,000 Haitians were picked up by the U.S. and imprisoned while their applications for political asylum were initially processed. About 10,000 were eventually permitted to live in the U.S. during the next stage of their applications, while the rest were returned to Haiti.

Meanwhile, 276 people who tested positive for HIV have remained imprisoned at the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo under barbaric conditions for many months. They are all people who otherwise qualify to come to the U.S. at once, but are being excluded under the U.S. policy of forbidding entry to anyone who is HIV positive. The rule is not applied to Cubans, however.

Lawyers and the press were recently admitted to the camp for the first time in months. They saw the shacks with leaky roofs, snakes and scorpions, the razor wire fences, the poor food, medical care and sanitary conditions. People who most need it are not getting medical treatment and are crowded together making it easy for infections to spread. One baby has died and several refugees have attempted suicide. Demonstrations by the Haitians have been broken up by tanks and dogs.

People who become too sick to be treated there are flown to the U.S. and imprisoned here, in spite of the fact that they have done nothing wrong and qualify to live here. A few have been released after demonstrations and publicity.

At a meeting sponsored by the Emergency Coalition for Haitian Refugees in December, witnesses and relatives of a prisoner described their ordeal and called for pressure on Clinton to close the camp. A speaker from ACT-UP/Americas related their plight to that of sick undocumented people in this country, demanding we "fight AIDS, not immigrants." —Anne Jaclard

## Logic of multiculturalism

equal cultures, Carter G. Woodson, the pioneering Black historian, more than three quarters of a century ago helped to create a great new moment in Black history by founding The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. The goal of the Association was to investigate both the African and Black American past history, while promoting the concept of Black History.

The impulse for Woodson to begin his work in 1915 was not solely personal. He was responding to the birth of a new self-consciousness among the thousands of African Americans who migrated to the cities during World War I. The new migrants of the "New Negro" movement, as they were called then, had a tremendous need to know their past history as they demanded the right to fully participate in U.S. society. It would be correct to say that the Universal Negro Improvement Association (the Garvey Movement) and Woodson's Association for the Study of Negro Life and History were reciprocal movements of theory and practice. This is not to say that Woodson and Garvey practiced this unity consciously, but rather it was a unity imposed internally by the subject—Black masses in motion.

When we get to the theory of multiculturalism, there is no revolutionary subject, only cultural diversity as a measure of reality. Thus, Andrew Young can say on the McNeil/Lehrer program that the "American army is inherently diverse" and, therefore, it's appropriate to send it to Somalia.

## Remember Latasha Harlins!

Los Angeles, Cal.—On New Year's Day, 1993, South Central L.A. community residents gathered at the murder site of Latasha Harlins for a candlelight vigil in honor of what would have been her 16th birthday.

Latasha was assassinated last March by Korean grocer, Soon Ja Du, who accused her of attempting to steal a bottle of orange juice.

The celebration, organized by the Latasha Harlins Justice Committee, was to let the world know that African American Los Angeles residents intend to fight for justice in 1993 as we had in 1992.

Young Black men and women sporting Malcolm X t-shirts and caps, spoke of their outrage towards U.S. racism and police brutality. Along with Latasha's murder were references to the Rodney King beating and the L. A. rebellion. Intuitively the crowd engaged in the popular chant, "No Justice! No Peace!"

The Latasha Harlins Justice Committee announced new efforts to recall Judge Joyce Karlin, who last year gave Du probation and no prison sentence after a jury convicted her of voluntary manslaughter! Last year's efforts to recall Judge Karlin did not succeed and Karlin was re-elected to preside on the juvenile court bench.

The committee currently is raising funds to buy the liquor market where Latasha was shot and convert it into the Latasha Harlins Foundation, a community center dedicated to the development of the neighborhood and its youth.

Donations to the Latasha Harlins Justice Committee can be sent to: The Latasha Harlins Justice Committee, 4041 Marlton #220D, Los Angeles, California 90008.

—Maurice Miller

## Black World

(continued from page 1)

early 1980s, Miami reminds us that police brutality, and government complicity in legitimizing it, is often the precursor to violence, social and state.

That is what occurred in Teaneck, New Jersey after an all-white jury acquitted a white cop, Feb. 13, 1992, in the shooting death of 16-year-old Phillip Pannell, in April 1990. Even though medical experts testified that Phillip's hands were raised when he was shot, the jury acquitted the officer in the trial. Black youth in Teaneck revolted the night following the acquittal.

Black youth, in particular, have become the target of police brutality and use of deadly force. In Chicago, known torturer, police commander Jon Burge, has been named recently in a civil rights lawsuit involving the torture of 13-year-old Marcus Wiggins by police officers under Burge's command. The youth was one of three Black youths subjected to electroshock by cops trying to force false confessions from them in the case of the murder of a Latino youth in September 1991.

"They (the police) took me in a room and closed the door and asked me to tell what happened," Marcus said. "I told them I don't know, and they started hitting me and punching me, and I told them I don't know. Then they brought in a box—it was silver—they put it on my hands. They turned it on, and I remember it burning my hands and my head went back."

Marcus now receives treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder at the Kovler Center for International Victims of Torture. The lawsuit against Burge also names Black former Police Supt. LeRoy Martin, who was Burge's immediate superior at the time.

Martin tried to suppress his department's own internal report that Burge's South Side Area 2 headquarters had, for 12 years, "systematically" brutalized Black suspects. In the period covered in the report, Martin had commanded Area 2 headquarters, and Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley had been state's attorney.

## Somali women oppose war

The intensification of inter- and intra-clan fighting following the overthrow of Mohammed Siad Barre, the U.S.-supported dictator, in Somalia, has made the work of the women's development agency, IIDA, more urgent than ever. Barre had nominally supported women's rights but in truth barred any women's organization other than the official one headed by his cousin.

IIDA was founded in 1991, after Barre's ouster. Its projects of organizing relief and work programs for low-income Somali women and their children also contain a Women's Liberation dimension. It is Somali women and their children who have suffered the most devastating effects of the famine (men, as part of fighting units, have been more able to obtain food for themselves at gun point). It is Somali women who have emerged as the leadership and mainstay of families and economy—including the distribution of food relief during the two years of civil war.

Zahra Mohammed Nur, project manager of IIDA in Mogadishu said, "We have nothing to do with the war. We don't have any hatred among the clans. A Somali woman could have four children from four different tribes. So she doesn't want anything to do with it. It is the men leaders who want the fighting."

Dahabo Isse, 27 years old, directs some 140 food kitchens in Mogadishu, feeding more than 200,000 people daily and employing 3,000 Somali women. "The women are stronger than the men," she says. "Now the women finally understand the weakness of the men: they always depend on clans; we are neutral and that is why we are strong."

Another founder of IIDA, Halima Ismail Ibrahim, says: "You can find every tribe in our organization. We do not believe in the war of the tribes." Nur says: "Women are the largest clan." IIDA also focuses on life-and-death women's issues such as rape: Somali women who have been raped, including in the course of the war, are regarded as impure and made into pariahs even by members of their own families.

One activist, Saida Mohammed Ali, has stated publicly that she has refused to submit her daughters to the horrendously dangerous, painful, degrading and deforming—to mind and spirit, as well as body—"traditional" practice of female genital mutilation, or clitoridectomy, the removal of the clitoris. Clitoridectomy is sometimes combined with the practice of infibulation, the sewing shut of the vulva (the lips of the vagina) until marriage.

While Somali women are intent on moving forward, they are aware of the growing threat and power of Islamic fundamentalism, well-funded in Somalia by the governments of Saudi Arabia and Sudan. "We are afraid of these militant fundamentalists," says Ibrahim. "They want to put me in the house and not allow me to go out and I can't do that. I want to help my people. I am a human being. I have intelligence and knowledge." "We will fight against fundamentalism," says Nur. "No one can ever tell us again to stay at home and not work. There will be another war."

The women activists are critical of the U.S.-led reconciliation efforts that focus only on the male clan leaders, ignoring entirely the inter-clan networks of cooperation existing among the women. Members of IIDA are considering creating a women's political party. "We must try ourselves," Ibrahim states. "We can't depend on the men to give us a chair at the palace."

—Michelle Landau

Given its history, then, it comes as no surprise that Chicago should be the first U.S. city to be cited by Amnesty International for police torture when it issued its report on the systematic use of police brutality in Chicago, in December 1990. The forms of torture carried out by the Chicago police department—all against Black men—include electroshock of suspects' ears, lips and genitals; suffocating suspects with plastic bags until they lost consciousness; simulating Russian roulette and sticking the barrel of guns in the mouths of suspects; handcuffing naked suspects to hot radiators; burning them with cigarettes; and beating the testicles and the bottoms of the feet of suspects.

According to a U.S. Commission on Civil Rights report on police practices, "Evidence...suggests that police abuse of minority citizens comes close to being an organized practice in some departments." The same Civil Rights Commission report states that most victims of police shootings are "classified as 'fleeing felons' by the police," though there are few instances when "a known felony [has] been committed prior to police pursuit of the victim" (*Who Is Guarding the Guardians: A Report on Police Practices*, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, October 1981, p. 40).

The inner city remains the only place in U.S. society where a modern police force maintains the 19th century frontier attitude of "applying summary justice on the spot." The government, the courts and criminal justice system constitute the legal and ideological bulwark for this habit of inflicting deadly force in Black and Latino communities with the common law "fleeing felon" rule. This law gives the police "justification in using deadly force against any person suspected of committing any felony in order to make an arrest" (*Ibid.*, p. 149).

The inescapable conclusion to be drawn from the statistical picture of the overwhelming disproportion of Black men shot and/or killed by the police use of deadly force is that being a Black man in the U.S. is a potential "felony." A Black man running or refusing to allow himself to be disrespected and abused by the police turns that potentiality into a deadly actuality.

# Organization, spontaneity and philosophy

(continued from page 5)

struggles and battles of ideas—today places myriad expressions of one central question on the agenda in locales as different as catfish processing plants in Mississippi and Black women's defense groups in Chicago: how to create the kind of organization for liberation that is a full and concrete expression of the highest organization of thought, the Idea of Freedom?

The revolutionary 19th century German philosopher, Hegel, traced the two-way movement of the Idea of Freedom through categories he called Universal, Particular and Individual.<sup>6</sup> On the one hand, the greatest abstract Universal still lacks something—the concreteness in which it can be expressed by and for the Individual. Black Americans have ceaselessly tested the abstract Universals of "American Civilization" and found them wanting, precisely because, as Marx put it in his 1844 Humanist Essays, "the Individual is the social entity."

On the other hand there is a movement in the other direction, from the Individual through the Particular to the Universal. It is this movement which manifests itself as the "quest for universality," the drive of the individual to develop all of his or her faculties and talents, challenging all barriers, to become whole. This two-way movement, far from floating abstractly above reality, characterizes many of the greatest works of African-American literature because it reflects and intensifies the Black experience in this country. Hegel summed it up very well when he called that two-way movement, "Individualism which lets nothing interfere with its Universalism, i.e., Freedom itself."<sup>7</sup>

The key, however, is in the middle term, the "Particular," and especially when the "Particular" is organization. How to remove all the barriers to the free expression of creativity, when the forms with which we fight against the division of mental and manual labor, against racism and sexism, are so permeated with the pull of the old society? Unless the "Particular" of organization, can truly become inseparable from the Idea of Freedom, we will forever keep finding American Civilization guilty, yet continue living under one or another form of its rule.

The great Caribbean-African revolutionary, Frantz Fanon, scathingly criticized the form of organization which became associated with most Marxism since Marx—the vanguard party. Calling it the creation of an "elite," he charged that "the fetish of organization will often take precedence over a reasoned study of colonial society. The notion of the party," he argued, "is a notion imported from the mother country."

In the U.S., none of the vanguard parties calling themselves socialist ever grew deep roots in the Black community. The Black experience during World War II, when the Communist Party attacked A. Philip Randolph's March on Washington Movement as "subversive," explaining their actions on the grounds that defending Russia came first, left a bitter taste (pp. 24-25).

Forms of organization born out of the spontaneity of struggle, however, have sprung up throughout the history of Black struggle, from the Underground Railroad to the committees of the Civil Rights Movement. Not only have such forms been less elitist, but they have often been more conscious of the power of the Freedom Idea to transform reality. It wasn't necessary to convince anyone who worked in the Civil Rights Movement that the Idea could be a material force. How else could you explain what happened when the Movement came into a town where Jim Crow ruled for decades, where the first meeting drew maybe 10 people, and a month later 5,000 marched? It wasn't organization alone; neither had material circumstances changed. It was the igniting force of "Freedom Now!" which suddenly liberated talents that were there all along.

And yet, when the Civil Rights Movement faced different challenges—from ghetto rebellions, from the Vietnam War, from women's liberation—it became clear that organization alone, practical activity alone, could not suffice. The movement did not have a deep enough grounding in a philosophy of freedom to avoid what followed—the disintegration and cooptation of its organizations and the ideological pollution of its legacy. As Dunayevskaya put it in her Introduction to the 1983 edition of ACOT: "It has become clear since the 1960s that even the greatest actions need the direction that comes from a total philosophy of freedom. What is needed now is to concretize such a philosophy of freedom as the reality for our age" (p. ii).

A "hunger for philosophy" was indeed felt in both the U.S. and Africa in the 1960s and 1970s, but the new directions indicated by such thinkers as Martin Luther King and Malcolm X in the U.S. and Frantz Fanon and Amilcar Cabral in Africa were not followed through. Concepts of organization and philosophies of liberation remained in separate compartments. Deep retrogression characterized the 1980s, as exemplified by the counter-revolution from within the revolution that led to Reagan's imperialist invasion of Grenada.

In the last weeks of her life, Raya Dunayevskaya was probing why all the new organizations born of spontaneity end up being swallowed by forms of the "old" so-

ciety. "What have the various forms of spontaneity achieved," she asked. "And why, when they did come close to power, was it the political organizations that didn't take them over so much, as that they themselves looked to be taken over?"<sup>8</sup>

During this same period Dunayevskaya was also probing why Lenin—who was hardly an "activist" hostile to theory, and who was engaged in a study of Hegel's Logic at the outbreak of World War I—nevertheless barely ventured into the final chapter of that book, the chapter on the Absolute Idea. It is in that final chapter that Hegel discusses perspectives for organizationally uniting theory and practice. What stopped Lenin on the threshold of the chapter on the Absolute Idea (in "The Idea of the Good"), according to Dunayevskaya, was that he got caught up in a new appreciation of the "Practical Idea," of revolutionary action, so much so that he considered Practice to be the "resolution" of the contradiction between freedom ideas and the objective world. Consequently, he never got to develop what has become pivotal in our age, the "power of cognition" to transform reality.<sup>9</sup>

Naturally, the "organization" Hegel was writing about was the organization of thought, and the circumstances of Lenin's study are very different than those facing organizations born out of spontaneity in our time. Nevertheless, it may help us to ask whether there is any connection between the two. What is the pull, the attraction, from the "Practical Idea," that appears to "solve" things, and yet ends by blocking the path to full freedom?

Can it be that there is such a formidable historic barrier to working out a full unity of theory and practice that it extends from the 19th century to the threshold of the 21st, and encompasses both serious revolutionary theoreticians like Lenin and working men and women who are members of organizations engaged in freedom struggles? And if there is an "organizational answer" that may help overcome such a barrier, what is its connection to the question, "what makes a revolutionary Subject revolutionary?"

In the Preface to the 1963 edition of ACOT, Dunayevskaya warned that the "forward development" of the Freedom Now movement "can be impeded if the underlying philosophy is in any way compromised." "In this situation," she continued, "a small organization like ours has a pivotal role to play both as a catalyst and a propellant" (p. 3). Dunayevskaya revisited this question in one of her last writings, her June 1, 1987 presentation on the dialectics of organization and philosophy. There she asked: "what is the objectivity which explains the presence [of a small group like us], as the objectivity explains the spontaneous outburst of the masses?" She was seeking, she said, "the objectivity of subjectivity."

This is the focus as well of the final section of ACOT. Entitled "What We Stand For—And Who We Are," this practical organizational conclusion begins with a quote from Hegel: "The self-determination therefore in which alone the Idea is, is to hear itself speak." There has surely never been another revolutionary group which defined its tasks by stressing the inseparability of organization from the "self-determination of the Idea" (p. 32).

In this brief section, what is traced is how the idea of Marxist-Humanist developed in the dialogue among members of News and Letters Committees, between Black and white, workers and intellectuals, women and

8. Dunayevskaya, "Talking to Myself" document, written May 1987. Included in RDC, #10955.

9. Dunayevskaya's 1986-87 critiques of Lenin's reading of Hegel's Logic are included in Vol. 13 of the RDC. See especially #10848 and #11228.

men—and between the "dialectic proper" and its organizational expression.

In a period when spontaneous mass movements from practice barely begin to express themselves before they are absorbed or crushed, it may be that a different "objectivity of subjectivity" is needed. If new revolutionary developments are today blocked without a new leap in the realm of Mind, the "small group" as "catalyst and propellant," may be necessary to help make revolutionary Subjects fully revolutionary, to re-animate movements for, and concepts of, liberation.

Perhaps it was this idea that ACOT was articulating when, 30 years ago, it concluded: "the turning point for the reconstruction of society occurs when theory and practice finally evolve a unified organizational form. We have reached the turning point" (p. 34).

## American Presidents Turn Dreams into Nightmares

Perhaps Martin was born in the wrong time of year when the pomp of Presidential ceremonies drown out the cries from Port au Prince

Let me leave,  
let me leave,  
sing the crashing waves.  
January is a cruel month.

They decided to bomb Baghdad.  
It looked better on TV  
than the "tit for tat"  
100 plane operation.

Yesterday, the yellow traces across  
the Arabian Night,  
the tearing of human bodies  
out of the camera's sight

Today, ready the Networks  
for the barrage  
Cut through the daybreak  
of Martin's message.

In the wreckage of the ancients' monuments  
Bombay, Baghdad, Bosnia  
where other wars found their religious sacraments  
we watch the inaugural ball  
to a quick step  
or perhaps the legacy of a forced march  
To wars.

At the hotel  
they watch the sky open to a video screen  
splintered again  
shards of glass crash through the lobby.

Switching channels—there's nothing on TV.

Today I went to celebrate Audre,  
who was born a month after Martin  
A new spelling of her name - Gamba Adisa -  
warrior - she who makes her meaning known.

For every tear today,  
they rained bombs on this day  
today and two years ago:  
On Martin's day.

They might try to take this day,  
but we shall make our\* meanings known  
tomorrow.  
Tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow,  
like (a) phoenix is today.

F. Shelley (Jan. 19, 1993)

\* And Martin's

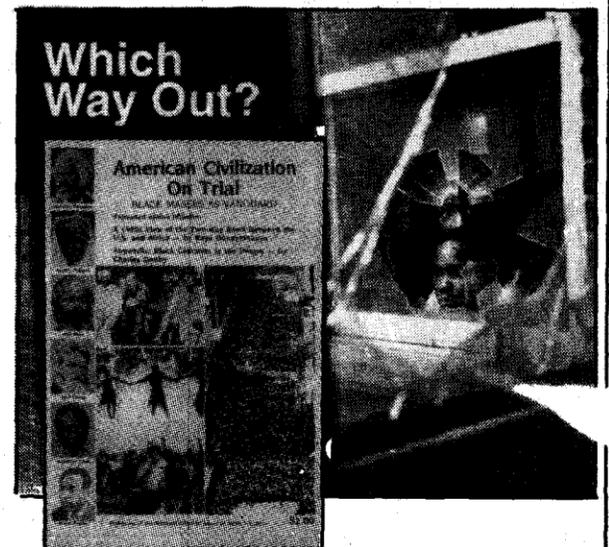
## Just out for African American History Month!

### The Needed American Revolution: American Civilization On Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard

A Special News & Letters Bulletin of a series of Presentations and Discussions on American Civilization on Trial in response to the continuing challenge of the Los Angeles rebellion

#### Includes special appendix:

- From the Archives, by Raya Dunayevskaya "Economic Roots of the Negro Problem" (excerpts from her 1944 thesis, "Marxism and the Negro Problem")
- "What Is the Meaning of the Los Angeles Rebellion?" (Editorial article, June, 1993 News & Letters, by Lou Turner)



● To order Special Bulletin on The Needed American Revolution, send \$2 + \$1.05 postage to News & Letters, 59 E. Van Buren, Rm. 707, Chicago, IL 60605

● Special offer! Order Bulletin and receive a copy of American Civilization on Trial, plus a year's subscription of News & Letters—a value of \$6.50, for only \$5.

6. Hegel's categories of Universal, Particular and Individual permeate the Doctrine of the Notion in his Science of Logic and weave through all three volumes of his Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences. For Dunayevskaya's discussion of these categories in the context of the contemporary United States see her 1969 thesis, "The Needed American Revolution," included in the RDC, #4385.

7. Hegel, Philosophy of Mind (Oxford: Oxford U. Press, 1971), #481.

# A host of specters, national and international, haunt Clinton

(continued from page 1)

beings? There are no military targets here. Really, if Bush wanted to hit military targets, there are a million military ways to do it. You don't just program a missile and push a button from far away. It's only a machine, these cruise missiles, and machines make mistakes.\*\*

Destructive as they were, the recent bombings may presage far more devastating attacks, given Clinton's statement that he will meet any "Iraqi provocation" with a massive military response. He is thereby signaling that the U.S. drive for single world mastery, which proved such an impetus behind the Gulf War of 1991, will not be abandoned simply because of a change of administration in Washington. As Clinton put it in his inaugural address, "America must continue to lead the world we did so much to make."

At the same time, today's situation is quite different from that of 1991, as seen by the response of the U.S.'s allies to the attacks on Iraq. Though it fully participated in the Gulf War, France openly criticized the cruise missile assault on Baghdad; Russia broke ranks by calling it "counter-productive" and said the UN Security Council, not the U.S., should be the one to decide on any future action; and regional powers such as Syria, Turkey and even Egypt questioned the wisdom of attacking Iraq.

These underlying tensions between the allies have for the moment made it harder to unleash the full-scale military assault some have thirsted for. As the New York Times noted on Jan. 19, "Bush did not believe that he had the domestic mandate or the international backing to wage a large-scale war at a time when many Muslims are upset at Western inaction toward Israel and the progress of attempts to save Bosnia's Muslims."

Clinton has now inherited the problem of how to maintain U.S. hegemony in world affairs in light of this situation. He has already stated he will initiate a major departure from Bush by placing the "highest priority" on changing the image of U.S. inaction on Bosnia-Herzegovina, where Serbian-induced genocide has left 1.5 million homeless, 100,000 dead, and as many as 50,000 women raped. The options being considered range from U.S. enforcement of the no-fly zone over Bosnia to initiating a major shipment of "humanitarian" aid to besieged Sarajevo under the aegis of military intervention.

Though these options would represent a departure from the do-nothingness of the Bush administration on the question of Bosnia, Bush did leave an ominous precedent for it—the U.S. intervention in Somalia. In many respects, it sets the tone not only for Bosnia, but for the image U.S. imperialism is striving for as a whole in this period.

## A 'BENIGN' IMPERIALISM?

The U.S. intervention in Somalia, which began in early December, in many respects marks a new development. It is the first time U.S. troops have been employed on such a scale in sub-Saharan Africa, and it is the first time an international "peacekeeping" force has been deployed in Africa without the consent of any local authority. And unlike prior U.S. interventions in Grenada, Panama, and Iraq, the purpose at least appears to be the needed delivery of food, instead of outright military destruction.

Yet many questions remain to be asked about this intervention. If the U.S.'s concern is the welfare of the Somali people, why did it wait for 300,000 to die of starvation before taking any action? And if the U.S. is motivated by concern with feeding a starving populace, why is there no discussion of similar relief operations for areas like the Sudan or Mozambique, where mass starvation is also widespread?

Though there is every reason to doubt that the U.S. intervention is motivated simply by altruism, it also hardly hits the mark to view it as a plot to take over the country. Though the U.S. troops will remain in Somalia considerably past the Jan. 20 deadline initially set for their departure, the U.S. shows little interest in making this a prolonged stay. The reason for the U.S. intervention becomes clearer, however, when it is viewed in relation to a crucial world event which occurred the very month the Siad Barre dictatorship was overthrown in January 1991—the Gulf War against Iraq.

## THE MIRROR OF KURDISTAN

When the end of the Gulf War was followed, in March 1991, by a massive revolt of the long-oppressed Shiites in the south and the Kurds in the north of Iraq, Bush refused to support them on the grounds that Iraq instead needed "stability." In the face of Hussein's genocidal counter-offensive, 1.8 million Kurds fled toward the Turkish and Iranian borders. The ensuing world outrage at Bush's complicity with Hussein's genocide moved the U.S. to cover its actions under the veneer of a more benign imperialism, by establishing a no-fly zone for Iraqi aircraft in the north and a "safe haven" for the starving refugees under the care and protection of U.S. and UN troops.

The use of such "peacekeeping" missions as a way to deflect criticism of U.S. imperialism's global reach has since then proved quite an asset to the U.S., and not only in the Middle East.

It has not, however, proved to be much of an asset for the Kurds, even though the U.S. enforcement of the "safe havens" in northern Iraq fostered illusions that the U.S. would serve as the guarantor of Kurdish autonomy. This became an especially critical issue by the time a nascent independent state of Iraqi Kurdistan arose last Fall. Kurdish leaders such as Jalal al-Talabani

and Massoud Barzani, convinced that the security of Iraqi Kurdistan depends on U.S. protection, decided to come to an understanding with Turkey, a close U.S. ally which has long opposed the Kurds. As a way to ingratiate themselves with Turkey, Talabani and Barzani decided to wage war against a Turkish Kurdish group, the PKK, which had been battling Turkey from bases inside northern Iraq.

Turkey responded, however, not by coming to an understanding with the Kurds but by sending 20,000 troops into Iraqi Kurdistan, where they not only finished off what was left of the PKK inside Iraq but then proceeded to harass Iraqi Kurds. One Kurdish activist



Protest in Chicago against U.S. bombing of Iraq

stated, "We have reason to believe this may turn into a permanent Turkish presence on our side of the border."\*\*\*

The Iraqi Kurds thus now find themselves squeezed on one side by Turkey and by Saddam Hussein on the other. Needless to say, the U.S. has done nothing to stop this. The Kurds count for much less to the U.S. than its alliance with Turkey, especially since it uses Turkey's Incirlik air base for missions against Iraq.

## THE POWER OF IDEOLOGY

The two years since the end of the Gulf War thus manifest the emergence of a new ideological veneer with which to promote the U.S. drive for single world domination—the image of a "benign" imperialism. It had its origins in the way Bush presented himself as a "protector" of the Kurds, after having first condemned them to Hussein's genocide. It had its further development in the ongoing U.S. intervention in Somalia, which has generated a considerable degree of sympathy for the supposedly "humanitarian" mission of the U.S. military. And it may well find a renewed expression through U.S. intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

And yet it is right there, in Bosnia, that the inhumanity of the "benign imperialism" becomes evident. For though the Western countries have begun to talk of doing something about the holocaust there, their passivity has already allowed the Serbs to largely win.

Until recently, much of Bosnia, and especially cities such as Sarajevo, were multinational communities where Muslim, Bosnian Croat and Serb lived together and shared a common heritage. The Serbian revanchists who attacked Bosnia in the name of "ethnic cleansing" made a conscious attempt to destroy this multinational heritage. Their brutal massacres, mutilation of bodies, and mass rapes of Muslim women are all intended to create a situation wherein ethnic hatred would run so deep that it would become impossible for Muslim, Serb and Croat to ever live together again. (See article, p. 12)

The tragedy is that they have already largely succeeded, regardless of the amount of territory they ultimately are allowed to control.

That the West should allow the situation to reach this point is hardly out of character. Bush came to the aid of the Kurds only after their revolt as well as that of the southern Shiites was crushed by Hussein's troops. The U.S. managed to come to the aid of Somalia only after some 300,000 had already died of starvation and thousands had been killed by the arms which the U.S. pumped into that country for the past decade.

Like Stalin who stood outside the gates of Warsaw in 1944 while Hitler slaughtered a mass uprising, U.S. imperialism manages to come to the "aid" of suffering peoples only after they have been decimated by the forces arrayed against them. The "benign imperialism" offers humanity its "freedom" only on the day of its

burial.

## 'THE ECONOMY, STUPID'

The effort to subsume the retrogressive nature of U.S. imperialism under new ideological fixtures is sure to exert a greater pull than ever, now that we have a new President with a "fresh" face, in the White House. However, this does not mean the U.S. drive for single world mastery has a clear field before it. On the contrary, what threatens to impede it is the crisis in the economy.

The decrepit state of the U.S. economy has yet to be fully acknowledged, despite the attention it received during the election campaign. Though the minimal economic growth in the U.S. has moved some pundits to declare the end of the recession, no one denies the lag in employment growth. Indeed, one in four U.S. companies plans significant layoffs over the course of the next year. The structural nature of this economic morass is reflected in the fact that while U.S. productivity in private businesses grew 2.9% annually from 1948 to 1973, it has grown less than 1% annually since then. The resulting shortage of capital for investing in ever-expanding cycles of production has hardly been helped by the federal budget deficit, which is eating up vast sums needed for productive investment.

What makes this even more serious is the fact that the U.S. cannot count on economic powerhouses like Germany and Japan to pull it out of recession. Burdened by the cost of rebuilding former East Germany, Germany's economy is expected to contract by 1% this year. Japan is experiencing its first recession since 1974, and has suffered a 50% decline in stock and land values over the past three years. As a result, it is no longer in a position to serve as the world's banker.

Taken together with a number of other factors, the resulting global shortage of capital hems in the options of U.S. policy overseas. It is hard to imagine the U.S.'s allies doing today what they did in 1991, when they paid out \$53.7 billion of the estimated \$61.1 billion cost of the Gulf War.

Even more significantly, the growing realization that the U.S. is not in a position to offer much in the way of economic assistance to other countries is helping to fragment some of the alliances forged during the Gulf War, the most important being the U.S.'s relations with Russia. Russia's decision to distance itself from the latest attacks on Iraq can be viewed as a tactical move on Russian President Boris Yeltsin's part to appease the growing power of the Russian nationalist right. But the growing power of the Russian right also has solid economic roots. After all, there is hardly anyone who now entertains illusions that the U.S. will supply Russia with massive amounts of economic aid so long as it abides by U.S. dictates.

Indeed, the global capital shortage is so severe that even Germany (which has supplied close to three-fourths of all the capital Russia has received from the West since 1989) has said it will not be able to supply Russia with much additional aid. Coming at a moment when the Russian economy is near total collapse, with industrial production plummeting by 25% a year, this is not exactly news which its rulers find endearing.

Thus, despite the much-vaunted nuclear arms pact between the U.S. and Russia, which calls for significant cuts in the nuclear arsenals of both powers, total Russian support for U.S. policy initiatives can hardly be taken for granted, regardless of whether or not Yeltsin remains in power.

The economic roots of the current tensions underlying the U.S.'s relations with its allies cannot be expected to go away just because of the election of a new President. The irony is that just when global economic interdependence has reached an historic peak, the emergence of inter-capitalist rivalries has reached new intensity. This is at least in part due to the inability of any pole of world capitalism to supply the capital needed to spur global economic development. In this sense, the increasingly fragmented state of world politics derives as much from the internal limits reached by modern capitalism as it does from the resurgence of "ancient feuds and rivalries."

## THE ROAD AHEAD

Inter-capitalist rivalries, however, never serve as the ground of opposition to war. The opposition to war begins with the masses within each country. And the present saber-rattling against Iraq certainly calls for actions opposed to the threat of renewed hostilities.

However, given the context of the present threat against Iraq, characterized as it is by the effort to provide an ideological gloss over U.S. actions by draping it under the mantle of a "benign imperialism," the need to join action with the liberating power of thought that breaks through the limits of the given has taken on the greatest of urgency.

The ground for meeting this challenge resides a much within the inner core of today's reality as does the ideological pollution which strives to obfuscate it. A crucial aspect of this is the mass excitement that has been generated by the departure of Bush from the White House. This cannot simply be greeted with that "all-too-knowing look" that sabbys his successor is fated to do none better. For embedded in the mass excitement of the departure of Bush is a realization of the non-viability of this system and a hunger to reach a totally different one.

The question is, will revolutionaries meet this hunger for change with the projection of a concept of human liberation that masses of people will come to see as the own?

\*Quoted in New York Newsday, Jan. 19, 1993.

\*\* See The Christian Science Monitor, Nov. 9, 1992.

**Youth**

**Idea of freedom needed to fight neo-Nazism**

by Jim Guthrie

The horrifying rise in neo-Nazi violence by racist youth in Germany in recent months cannot allow us to lose sight of what is happening in the U.S. American civilization has its own homegrown totalitarianism rooted in its beginnings in slavery, and we are caught in the same global economic crisis of state-capitalism that grips Germany. Though the numbers of youth involved and scope of violence here don't compare to Germany, three developments in December in Illinois alone compel a closer look.

On Dec. 6, five Asian students at Southern Illinois University were killed by an arson fire in their off-campus apartment building of international students. No one has been charged with the crime. This fatal attack in rural Carbondale, where over 2,200 foreign nationals, mostly Asians, come each year to study, may have been inspired by the Nazi attacks on foreign asylum seekers and fire bombings of immigrants in Germany. Carbondale Police Chief Don Strom, however, ruled out racial hatred as a possible motive immediately after his initial inspection of the crime scene. Asian students and faculty at universities across Illinois have been exchanging updates between campuses, and are demanding proof that the attack wasn't a hate crime.

On Dec. 3, in a wealthy suburb of Chicago, three seniors were suspended for ten days from Libertyville High School for organizing a "KKK" group that signed up 30 members. They distributed four newsletters with appeals to join and pay dues which would reward those who "kick the s--t out of freaks and n-----s." They managed to carry on this type of recruiting for a month before anyone reported them. Libertyville Police Chief Daniel McCormick decided not to charge them because they had no previous record.

The denial on the part of police and government officials gives the public the perception that racist violence will not be taken seriously. This is especially dangerous in a period when the ultra-right wing of the Republican Party won control of the National Convention, allowing Pat Buchanan to sanction white supremacist attitudes. This combination of official denial and racist ideology could open the flood gates of fascism as it has in Germany.

On Dec. 26, 19-year-old Joseph Cadieux and two other self-proclaimed white supremacist skinheads assailed a young Latino and a young Black man with racial slurs at a pizza place in suburban Niles. In the three on two fight that ensued, Cadieux stabbed Hernan Martinez. Martinez was hospitalized in critical condition, and Cadieux was charged with attempted murder. Cadieux's

**Cabrini youth speaks**

*Editor's note: Below we reprint a statement from an 18-year-old resident of the Cabrini Green housing project in Chicago on the killing of seven-year-old Dantrell Davis by a sniper, and the on-going gang peace treaty which followed it. This originally appeared with a photo essay by the author in the youth paper, New Expressions.*

Dantrell Davis is dead—but his death was not in vain. Head gang leaders at Cabrini Green worked together and came up with a peace treaty. Gang members now walk together, play together, even go to school together.

Cabrini Green residents no longer fear the nighttime. They aren't afraid to let their little ones run up and down the block. The gun shots have ceased. **The only threat I see to stopping the peace is the police. They roll through the 'hood, banging up people. If you are in a crowd or even by yourself, they stop to check you, to insult you, tell you that you're a piece of s--t. They will provoke you, make you angry, make you hate.**

Some of the elders think that the cease-fire can't last long, but I don't think it's up to them to decide. It's the youth who must decide if they want peace or if they want separation and violence.

case shows that white supremacism is no idle threat.

These three Illinois events look more ominous when we consider them alongside developments this past year in Birmingham, Ala. Birmingham was in the heart of the 1950s and '60s Civil Rights Movement, and has been targeted by white supremacist organizations who promise to "take back the city." The most horrifying event was the murder of a Black homeless man on April 18. Four youths, male and female, ages 17 to 21, have been charged with murder. At an Aryan National Front march in Birmingham in June, Skinhead demonstrators claimed the four as their own.

**INHUMAN SYSTEM BREEDS NEO-NAZISM**

This type of neo-Nazism does not emerge from "youth rebelliousness" but from this degenerate inhuman system at a time when more and more workers are replaced by increasingly high tech production. The deeper the crisis gets, the sharper the contradictions get.



A youth raises a banner declaring, "Against Nazis," at a rock concert against racism on Dec. 13 in Frankfurt, Germany, that drew over 150,000 to protest right-wing violence. On the same day 250,000 gathered to protest racism in Hamburg.

Raya Dunayevskaya in the 1950s developed a unique concept of youth as revolutionary force for freedom in the historic period of automated production after World War II. She also made it clear that we must not overlook the objective counter-revolutionary pull on the minds of many white petty-bourgeois youth in a retrogressive climate when a philosophy of revolution has

**Damming the Danube**

Slovak, Hungarian, Czech and Austrian demonstrators marched recently on the site where a huge dam was being built on the Danube River on the Slovakia-Hungary border, and at least once managed to get past the heavy guard onto the construction site. They were protesting the severe ecological damage the dam is expected to cause.

Desperate for an energy source—both for foreign exchange from electricity sales and to add to its precarious energy base of coal and nuclear power—the Slovakian government went ahead and finished the dam anyway. A 20-mile stretch of the Danube quickly dwindled to a narrow band of water. The local water table dropped sharply. Thousands of fish died and wells that people depend on began drying up.

The Hungarian government denounced the activation of the dam, warning of an "acute ecological emergency." (Originally, Hungary and Czechoslovakia had planned the dam together in 1977, but after the Communist government fell, environmentalists pressured Hungary into backing out of the deal.)

Environmental groups say the dam will destroy wildlife, flood valuable land and pollute one of Europe's largest underground water supplies, which provides drinking water for five million people.

—Franklin Dmitryev

not been worked out. In 1964 she commented on the vigorous support of Barry Goldwater's neo-fascistic bid for the presidency among some student youth. "They have no time to reflect on the new barbarism, be that of automated production or possible nuclear holocaust. They are in too great of a hurry to align themselves with the new barbarism."

In our period, this rush to "align themselves with the new barbarism" may appear as "youth rebelliousness." It is at its heart a counter-revolutionary rebellion aligned with the most retrograde element of the world's most powerful military state-power. It is allied with the military suppression of the spontaneous uprising of the lowest and deepest layers of oppressed youth in South Central Los Angeles. These youth in L.A., because of their social position, are striving to completely uproot oppressive social relations. This is why Duke-Buchanan-Bush tried to demonize Black youth as gang bangers, drug dealers, and welfare cheats.

All youth can see that a future of capitalism means no future for us. The unpleasant fact that this reality is having a counter-revolutionary pull on some who have not broken with this society's racism drives home that our philosophy of revolution has to be total from the start. It is necessary but not sufficient to show that the rulers love it when we fight amongst ourselves. We have to show that racist youth are thinking the thoughts of their own oppressors. What is needed is for all youth, Black, Latino, Asian and white to align ourselves with the freedom struggle whose tocsin sounded in South Central Los Angeles.

**Deadly Austin streets**

Austin, Tex.—After this past year's serious crises with my multiple disabilities and trying to survive in what I can only call a survival of the fittest world, I almost became another one of Austin's death statistics—one of the homeless who died on the streets of Austin. I have been on the streets before in better economic times because of the serious problems with my disabilities. The economic crisis last year only made my vulnerability to being on the streets more stark and terrifying.

The only reason I have survived this past year was because some caring people chose to reach out to help me when either my own acceptance of society's stigma about being poor, or the realities of my disabilities simply made it impossible to ask for help.

The deaths of 45 homeless persons who have died on the streets of Austin since 1990 have made me very angry. The painful hours I have spent listening to and attempting to challenge some persons' dismissals of these tragic deaths with their idea that persons choose to be homeless, have simply left me with a numb sadness.

Both my anger and sadness are meshed with a serious concern about Austin's failure to remember a part of the Nazi Germany atrocities—that homeless persons, disabled persons and war veterans were also systematically murdered in Nazi Germany. The murder of these people did not occur out of nowhere but because of a gradual change of Germany's attitudes towards dependent persons. My concern is that some of these same attitudes are prevalent in Austin. Like many persons in Austin, Germany wanted homeless persons away from its commercial areas because aesthetics had become more important than human life.

As the joyous holidays arrived this past year, each day that I was able to do so I played one of my piano compositions, "Wordless Prayer to a Cruel World." I wrote this composition for the Memorial March to mourn the 45 homeless persons who have lost their lives on the streets of Austin since 1990. I hope that next year I am also able to write and play another composition called "A Prayer of Thanks to a Kinder World," for a kinder world where no person is relegated to a cruel death on the streets.

—J.A.K.

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 —from "The Nature of the Russian Economy" (1946)

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## Our Life and Times

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

Enisa, a 16-year-old Bosnian woman survivor of the Serbian government's "ethnic cleansing" campaign, gave this testimony:

*The massacre after the attack on my village had been the greatest tragedy of my life. I did not know then that destiny had something even worse in store for me... One of the [Serbian soldiers] ordered me to follow him into a house in my village... He ordered me to undress... I was dying, my entire being was murdered. I closed my eyes... He hit me... I cried, twisted my body convulsively, bled... I didn't even know when they left. I don't know how long I stayed there, lying on the floor alone, in a pool of blood.*

There is no question that the systematic, organized mass rape of primarily Muslim women in Bosnia is a calculated act of the Serbian government's genocidal policy of "ethnic cleansing." The testimony pouring out from hundreds of women who survived the death/rape camps tells of six-year-old girls repeatedly raped; of rapes committed by neighbors and known attackers; of girls being raped in front of their families; of women deliberately impregnated and forced to give birth.

Most chilling are the reports of countless women who were raped and then murdered by their attackers. Although it is now estimated that as many as 50,000 women have been raped, the actual number will never be known.

The mass rape of Bosnian women has gone hand-in-hand with the Serbian killing of over 200,000 people since last spring—nearly one-tenth of all Bosnian Mus-

lims. Intellectuals were singled out for the death camps in an effort at "decapitation" of a people" (*Christian Science Monitor*, Dec. 31, 1992). Tens of thousands more Bosnians are expected to die this winter from cold, hunger and disease.

While the world was looking in horror last year at the skeletal prisoners in Serbian concentration camps, it has only recently paid attention to the women victims of "ethnic cleansing." Unfortunately, a number of journalists and politicians have characterized rape as an expected by-product of all wars, instead of recognizing the specificity of mass rape in the case of Bosnia, where it is being used under Serbian government authorization not only to drive Bosnians from the land, but to eradicate their very existence. Enisa closed the testimony of her rape this way:

*It seemed as if I were in a state of nonexistence, simultaneously dead and alive, on the thin line between consciousness and madness...*

Many of the Bosnian women are shunned by traditional male Muslim society because they are no longer virgins. They cannot get abortions in Bosnia because the war has disrupted all social services, or in Croatia because it is dominated by the Catholic Church. Psychological counseling is nearly non-existent, although a Croatian women's group, Tresnjeva, is trying to set up some support for the rape victims.

In the U.S., the Ad Hoc Women's Coalition Against War Crimes was formed to pressure international law to bring the rapists to justice as war criminals. Over 1,000 women protested the rapes at the UN in New York, Jan. 23, in a demonstration organized by WAC (Women's Ac-

tion Coalition). European Community investigators and independent journalists have documented the mass rapes. Women's liberation groups internationally are demanding that the mass rapes in Bosnia be treated as war crimes, that the attacks against women and the genocidal "ethnic cleansing" campaign be stopped, and that survivors of the mass rapes receive full support and care.

## El Salvador agreement

The civil war in El Salvador "formally" ended Dec. 15 under an agreement between the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) and the right-wing U.S.-supported government of President Alfredo Cristiani. On that day, the FMLN supposedly ceased to be a military force and became a legal political party.

Two of the central conflicts of the civil war—the struggle for land, and against the brutal death-squad army—have not been resolved in any fundamental way. An agrarian reform plan reached last October doesn't have the means to be put into effect, and Cristiani has not complied with his agreement to purge the military of personnel involved in the torture and killing of civilians.

The five groups which comprise the FMLN do not completely agree on what should be the attitude towards the Cristiani government. But there is a startling acceptance by a number of FMLN leaders of U.S. imperialism's self-designated role as peace enforcer.

One FMLN official recently urged cooperation with Cristiani despite his opposition to purging the military: "...it is well known that the Congress of the U.S. has assigned funds to support the peace process... But it has said those funds are conditioned on full compliance."

While the outgoing Bush administration cancelled a paltry \$456 million in non-military loan debts to El Salvador, this type of aid was dwarfed by the massive sums which Reagan-Bush pumped into the Salvadoran military throughout the 1980s. President Clinton has said he will continue what Reagan-Bush began.

## Tajikistan: Massacre by ex-Communists

The face of the new compromise between Russian President Boris Yeltsin and the industrial and military bureaucrats who long for the old order has begun already to show itself in Central Asia. This has had some very destructive results in tiny Persian-speaking Tajikistan, population five million, which has been wracked by civil war pitting old guard Communists against liberal and Islamic parties since last May.

In late 1992, forces composed of old-line Communists, so reactionary that many of them had been purged by Gorbachev as early as 1985, retook Dushanbe, the capital, in a bloody coup. They were aided at least tacitly by Russian troops still stationed there under a 1992 post-independence security treaty.

Since this latest coup, leaders of the main opposition groups, the Democratic Party and the Islamic Renewal Party, who had briefly held power last fall, have been assassinated in the streets. Sometimes dodging bullets, over 100,000 of their supporters have fled, many into Afghanistan. Although the ex-Communists charge that the opposition is dominated by Islamic fundamentalists, the latter deny this vociferously, claiming that they favor a secular democracy. There is some evidence of this in the very different position of women among the Tajik refugees in Afghanistan vis-a-vis Afghani women. For their part, the coup leaders state openly that they intend to "cleanse" Tajikistan of all "democratic filth."

Yeltsin, supported by the Russian military and the ex-



Residents flee violence.

Communist bureaucrats who control most of the other newly independent Central Asian countries, has not hesitated to continue Russian domination of this vast and strategic region bordering Iran, Afghanistan, and China.

## Fundamentalism in India

The destruction of a 16th century mosque (masjid) in India last month by Hindu fundamentalists occasioned waves of Hindu-Muslim or "communal" violence all over the subcontinent and in some cities abroad with South Asian enclaves. Since 1986 Hindu fundamentalist groups, led by the political party known as the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party), have sought to mobilize popular support for the razing of the Babri Masjid (mosque) in Ayodhya in order that a Hindu temple be erected in its place, where, they have argued, the Hindu god Ram was born.

They have supported their claims by citing historical and archeological evidence and when this has failed (and it has failed in good measure) they have argued that faith is sufficient—that since the majority of Hindus believed that Ram was born there, there needn't be any burden of historical proof. To put it bluntly, the presence of the temple for the BJP is a non-negotiable issue—the mosque had to be destroyed at any cost.

The BJP, no doubt, has enjoyed great mass support, moving from under 10% of the popular vote in the mid 1980s to 21% last year and even managing to become the ruling party in Uttar Pradesh, the state where Ayodhya is located. Complex reasons account for this support. We can see, however, a persistent ideological stereotyping of the Muslims as a dirty, fast growing minority population that has been given too many concessions by political parties to gain electoral constituencies.

This policy of "minority appeasement" has been especially pernicious, in their opinion, with regard to the position of Hindus, whom they claim have become second class citizens in "their own" country. Underlying these BJP arguments, which sound frighteningly similar to ideologies in this country that oppose the rights of "special interest groups," however, is the assumption that Muslims are not "authentically Indian" but represent the infiltration of an alien culture to the subcontinent.

The ruling Congress I party (as well as a coalition of opposition parties), especially in the recent past, has certainly been guilty of a policy of "appeasement" but not in the sense that the BJP and its allies have argued. They have instead granted concessions to numerous groups of religious chauvinists in an attempt to "cover all their (electoral) bases" and make everyone happy. All the while they have claimed that they are trying to maintain a "neutral stance" and a "balance of power" between the competing chauvinist factions. These groups have in turn resorted to aggressive games of one upmanship while the government sheepishly tries to keep peace.

For example, it is no coincidence that the gates to the area housing the Babri Masjid, which had previously been locked on account of disputes surrounding it since 1949, were thrown open with great fanfare in 1986. This followed immediately after the then ruling party had satisfied Muslim religious chauvinists by overturning the decision of the Indian supreme court granting alimony to a divorced Muslim woman in the Shanbanoo case. Having pleased Muslim interests, the government was pressured to make concessions to the BJP. It is in this fashion that the BJP has, step by step, removed every legal and physical barrier protecting the mosque in the last five years.

—Wajid Ali

## Who We Are and What We Stand For

News and Letters Committees is an organization of Marxist-Humanists that stands for the abolition of capitalism, whether in its private property form as in the U.S., or its state property form, as in Russia or China. We stand for the development of new human relations, what Marx first called a new Humanism.

News & Letters was founded in 1955, the year of the Detroit wildcat strikes against Automation and the Montgomery Bus Boycott against segregation—activities which signaled a new movement from practice that was itself a form of theory. News & Letters was created so that the voices of revolt from below could be heard unseparated from the articulation of a philosophy of liberation. We have organized ourselves into a committee form of organization rather than any elitist party "to lead."

Raya Dunayevskaya (1910-87), founder of the body of ideas of Marxist-Humanism, became Chairwoman of the National Editorial Board and National Chairwoman of the Committees from its founding to 1987. Charles Denby (1907-83), a Black production worker, author of *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*, became editor of the paper from 1955 to 1983. Dunayevskaya's works *Marxism and Freedom... from 1776 until Today* (1958); *Philosophy and Revolution: from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao* (1973), and *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* (1982) spell out the philosophic ground of Marx's Humanism internationally, as *American Civilization on Trial* concretizes it on the American scene and shows the two-way road between the U.S. and Africa. These works challenge post-Marx Marxists to return to Marx's Marxism.

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

rooted in her rediscovery of Marx's Marxism in its original form as a "new Humanism" and in her re-creation of that philosophy for our age as "Marxist-Humanism." The development of the Marxist-Humanism of Dunayevskaya is recorded in the documents on microfilm and open to all under the title *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection-Marxist-Humanism: A Half Century of Its World Development*, on deposit at the Wayne State University Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs in Detroit, Michigan.

Dunayevskaya's philosophic comprehension of her creation and development of Marxist-Humanism, especially as expressed in her 1980s writings, presents the vantage point for re-creating her ideas anew. Seeking to grasp that vantage point for ourselves and make it available to all who struggle for freedom, we have published Dunayevskaya's original 1953 philosophic breakthrough and her final 1987 Presentation on the Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy in *The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism* (1989), and have donated new supplementary volumes to the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection. News and Letters Committees aims at developing and concretizing this body of ideas for our time.

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