

# NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

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25¢

## Editorial U.S. aids genocide in Bosnia

Whether or not it was intended as an "insult" when Slobodan Milosevic—the Serbian ruler who has orchestrated the 1990s fascist-style program of "ethnic cleansing" which has in one short year virtually destroyed Bosnia—contemptuously thanked President Clinton for his help, it was the stark, naked truth.

Every day since the war against the Bosnian people was started on April 6, 1992, the minute they declared their independence from what had been Yugoslavia, the Western powers, and most prominently the U.S., have shown no intention of stopping Milosevic's murderous drive to hack out a "Greater Serbia" at the expense of the 200,000 now slaughtered and the two million who are now homeless refugees.

### DESTRUCTION OF A PEOPLE

All of Clinton's rhetoric during the election campaign against George Bush for his do-nothingness while the former Yugoslavia was bleeding to death sudden, got muted once Clinton took command of U.S. imperial power himself. It took only a few months before the bloody events in Bosnia were no longer described as the destruction of an entire people and a test case for the "democracies"—and became instead nothing more than a case of ancient tribal feuds resurfacing, promptly dismissed by Secretary of State Warren Christopher as "a problem from hell" about which the rest of the world could do nothing.

Nothing more exposes the lie of this fabrication than the fact that the very first shots fired in Sarajevo on April 6, 1992 were those fired against a mass demonstration of Serb, Croat and Muslim Slavs standing together against Milosevic's designs. No less than 200,000 marched together that month shouting "We want to live together!" Nor was it only in Sarajevo that mass opposition to the war erupted. In June there were huge demonstrations—nearly half a million—against Milosevic in Belgrade itself.

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### Black World

## 'Culture and Imperialism'



by Lou Turner

Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993).

At the beginning of his prodigious-three-decades long writing on the non-capitalist "Third World," Marx, in 1853, wrote an indignant piece for the *New York Daily Tribune* (Feb. 8, 1853) on the unconscionable hypocrisy of the Duchess of Sutherland convening an anti-slavery assembly at her Stafford House palace. Marx's indignation, as he tells his readers, arose from the history of the Sutherlands' 19th century expropriation of Scotch peasant clans from the highlands and plains of Caithness after nine centuries of holding the land in common under customary law.

Marx's summary judgment of the hypocrisy of the British philanthropy, "which chooses its objects as far distant from home as possible, and rather on that than on this side of the ocean," was: "The enemy of British Wages-Slavery has a right to condemn Negro-Slavery, a Duchess of Sutherland, a Duke of Atholl, a Manchester Cotton Lord—never!"

The inextricable connection between the bourgeois civilities of English culture and the uncivilized barbarity of its imperialist mission abroad was to be found in the class embroilments unleashed by the expansion of capitalism's productive forces, in Marx's view. The conceptual integrity of that inner contradiction is set adrift in Edward Said's latest excavation of the political sites of the cultural imagination.

Adrift in a Sargasso Sea of "identitarian ambiguities," the self-fascination of: "intertwining histories,"

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## One year after the L.A. rebellion

by Gene Ford,

A Black worker living in South Los Angeles

It took the Los Angeles rebellion with its 60 dead, 2,283 injuries and 11,000 arrests, one year later, to bring back a guilty verdict for Stacy Koon and Lawrence Powell, two of the four white cops video-taped in the racist beating of Rodney King.



Los Angeles, 1992



Los Angeles, 1993

Because there are thousands of Rodney Kings who have felt the whip of street justice from police batons, the injustice of the court room and long prison terms, the Black community says the system already knew what the verdict would be. It was set up with 7,000 police officers on the streets, the possible deployment of 1,300 National Guard troops within 24 hours of the verdict, while another 600 lay in wait on immediate stand-by.

### BLACK COMMUNITY UNDER SIEGE

The politicians used the presence of a standing army on L.A.'s streets to preserve "law and order," to "protect life and property." And yet, the very root of the rebellion one year ago lay at the feet of these same forces who are sworn to "protect and serve," the very ones who rubbed and probed at the open wound of Black outrage over the acquittal of the four L.A. police officers by a Simi Valley jury in the first trial. They probed until there was no other exit than to rebel or be crushed. From the housing projects in Watts to the streets of South Central Los Angeles (SCLA), the system feeds off the misery of those at the bottom.

While many of the stores singled out for destruction a year ago were Korean because of their insensitivity to and exploitation of the Black and Latino communities, Koreatown was also hit because of the murder of Latasha Harlins by a Korean store owner, which was video-taped by a store security camera for the world to see. For this wanton murder of a young African-American woman, the Korean store owner got probation.

"Latasha's murder by Du (the Korean store owner) and Judge Karlin's giving her probation was on everybody's mind," Denise Harlins, Latasha's aunt, told me. "Everybody has told me that Latasha's murder was a

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## On the Inside

## Appeal: We Need Your Help!

At this moment the world is watching with horror the genocide in Bosnia. It has just watched the cremations at Waco wondering who are the madmen. It has watched a year go by with nothing changed in South Central Los Angeles except the readying of massive force against a potential "second edition" of the 1992 rebellion. Against all this, the striving everywhere for a new, truly human society can be seen right within the pages of this issue. It is seen in:

- the new organizations created over the past year in South Central Los Angeles.
- the demands of women's groups, from the U.S. to right within Yugoslavia itself, to end the unprecedented barbarism of the mass rapes perpetrated as war policy in Bosnia.
- the way Black working women have organized the entire catfish industry in Mississippi where traditional organizers have failed.
- the massive Gay and Lesbian march for human rights for all just conducted in Washington, D.C.

And it is seen in the serious rethinking that has emerged over the past two years from the shambles of the Left after the collapse of what called itself Communism. Never was it more important to search out and provide a forum for all the forces of revolt, nationally and internationally, unseparated from the development of a philosophy of freedom for our age, as we do in every issue of *News & Letters*. BUT WE CANNOT CONTINUE WITHOUT YOUR HELP.

In this special issue of N&L we are celebrating the 40th anniversary of the "philosophic moment" that marked the birth of Marxist-Humanism—Raya Dunayevskaya's "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes" of May, 1953. We celebrate it with the publication of two critical letters written by Dunayevskaya, the founder of Marxist-Humanism, at the end of her life, on the "dialectics of organization and philosophy," and with an essay on "spontaneity, organization and philosophy" that looks

at Dunayevskaya's letters with 1990s eyes. The new illumination these letters open up concerning how to confront the urgent problems of today's changed world, makes crucial the exciting dialogue between the special supplement and all the voices that speak for themselves in these pages. Just as crucial is a vigorous back-and-forth with all our readers around this extraordinary issue.

That is why the contributions we ask of you are two-fold. One is your financial support. The other is your contribution to the discussion this special issue has opened with all the forces of revolt.

Although we have no paid staff, every increase in our rent and in the cost of printing N&L—both of which we have just suffered—is a serious blow. Today's economic crisis has hit all of us in the most concrete way; we know it has hit your pocket as it has ours. Yet, at every such point since N&L began in 1955, we have been able to keep going with the help of our readers.

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

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

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

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

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

# Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian women speak

by Anne Jaclard and Sheila G.

Women from Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia, along with women from the Philippines, South Africa, Nicaragua, Somalia and the U.S., spoke out against rape in war, in communities and in the home, in New York City at a program called "Mother Courage II" in April. Organized by MADRE and sponsored by the Women's Action Coalition (WAC), the speakers toured the U.S. to raise money for women war victims' centers in the former Yugoslavia where more than 50,000 mostly Muslim



women and girls have been raped in the ongoing war.

Although the program's call to "address" rape in war and rape as genocide is most timely, we were disappointed that the program did not allow the speakers to describe more of their experiences with the rape victims, and to give their own ideas for a different world. The atrocities they spoke of demand, and surely have brought forth, more ideas than the articulated call for international governmental recognition of rape as a war crime and a crime against women.

## SPEAKOUT AGAINST RAPE

Here there is only space to relate what a few of the speakers said. The remarks of Ninotchka Rosca, chair of the U.S. support group for the Philippine women's organization, Gabriela Network, were the most historical and concrete, as she described the 200,000 "comfort women" from throughout Southeast Asia enslaved by the Japanese during World War II. They were actually girls, aged 12 to 17, who were given Japanese names and raped by 15 to 20 men a night for months or years. Rosca told about the U.S. bases and the 30,000 prostitutes there used for recreation by U.S. servicemen and that the 60,000 Amerasian children created by this situation have been ignored by the U.S.

Matlhogonolo Maboe, who established a rape crisis center in Capetown, South Africa, told the audience of several hundred that "violence and rape is the order of the day in my country," yet rape is not discussed publicly. Dr. Asha Samad of Somalia decried the devastation of her country as a result of five colonial powers and 17 years of U.S. supported dictatorship.

Kadra Fazlich, a Bosnian Muslim, described how six ethnic groups had previously lived in Bosnia without problems and Lepa Mladjenovic of Belgrade described the pacifist feminist group, Women in Black. Durda Kenzevic of Croatia spoke of her work with battered women before the war and her present work with wom-

en in the refugee camps.

The chair from MADRE lessened the significance of the evening by introducing the speakers as her very good friends, instead of telling us about the magnificent work they are doing. It was she who set the tone for a program that was short on actual description of their work with rape victims, and on any ideas except to demand the mainstream media, Clinton and the U.N. recognize rape as a war crime. The poet, Safiya Henderson Holmes, was the most moving presenter because her poems showed women's daily lives, women fighting back, and women dreaming of a human world.

*Editor's Note: We have abbreviated the report above, received from New York, to print the voice of a Serbian woman, which we have just received from the Bay Area, where this tour continued. We regret we do not have the space in this issue to print other voices heard there, which we will print in future issues.*

I did not choose to be Serb. My mother speaks Hungarian, German and Yiddish as well as Serb. I feel like a Yugoslav, not a Serb. One month after the war started we founded an anti-war center to help men who didn't want to fight against their friends. We encouraged 200,000 young people not to go to war! 85% of those called from Belgrade didn't go.

My organization, Women in Black, held a demonstration against the war every Wednesday in the center of Belgrade. We established an SOS hotline, which gets a lot of calls about domestic violence. The embargo, lack of food, lack of medicines, all are taken out on the women. We are starting a center for women raped in the war. We have all kinds of women raped during the war including some Serbian women raped by Serbs and by Muslims.

On March 8 we, 40 of us, demanded that the war be stopped. We don't know how. All the people who were pacifist are now for an intervention! One feminist from Sarajevo was an ardent pacifist, but now even she is for an intervention. Despite all the work of the past year things are getting worse.

Write us letters, come visit, show support! We are ashamed of what our soldiers are doing. Getting a letter from an American woman saying she felt that way about American soldiers in Vietnam meant a lot to me. We demand the stop to all rapes, we demand that all rapists be persecuted, that all women have a choice whether to abort or carry out their pregnancy.

—Serbian Feminist

## Welfare puts American civilization on trial

Los Angeles, Cal.—When I went back to read *American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard*, I started thinking about the title, and if ever a civilization needed to be on trial it certainly could be American civilization—if we dare call it a civilization.

I had to go to the welfare office two weeks ago and I talked to this woman who was having a great deal of trouble with this huge packet of forms that they had given her to fill out. She had five children with her and it appeared she was illiterate so she couldn't even read the forms in Spanish. I helped her fill out the forms and learned that she was a refugee from Guatemala. She had been here for a month and a half.

She and her husband and children fled Guatemala about two and a half years ago. Their village had been burned, almost half the residents had been shot or burned alive by the government forces because someone said there was an anti-government terrorist living there. They fled Guatemala and were in Mexico for a time. The Mexican government treats Guatemalans worse than dogs, worse than dirt. They are not allowed to do anything but beg. Somehow they were able to get over here.

One of the first questions on the food stamp form asks, "Who lives in the household, who are we providing food for?" She said, if I put down the truth they will never believe me. I am renting part of a room, a small corner area with my five children. She said that she and her five children sleep on a mattress on the floor.

She said, if I tell them there are 17 people living in this two bedroom apartment, they are never going to believe me and they won't give me anything anyway. If I lie, they are going to want proof. So she just cried because she was unable to feed her kids. Her kids were hungry and for the five of them, all she had to give them was a bag of popcorn.

I was really upset, thinking she has gone from bad in Guatemala to worse in Mexico and now to this. I mean this is supposed to be the promised land. This is supposed to be the land of opportunity. She can't get her kids in school because they have no papers. She can't get them shots. This whole thing just goes on and on and on. This is supposed to be America, the place where people can make a life for themselves. However, the way this oppressive system is set up, for the most part, you can't unless you lie, cheat and steal.

—Angela

*This presentation by Angela, a Black welfare rights activist, can be found in full in The Needed American Revolution: American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard. See ad page 10.*

## More than legal abortions

Chicago, Ill.—Anyone who really thinks about reproductive freedom knows that there is more to it than safe, legal abortions. The Speakout and March for Reproductive Freedom held here, April 17, was a testament to this.

The organizers of the event, calling themselves the Pelvic Liberation Army, brought together an assortment of women who had a lot to say about freedom in a lot of different ways. Speakers included representatives from the National Abortion Rights Action League, Chicago Legal Aid for Incarcerated Mothers, Americans for Bosnian Orphans, the Consumer Movement for Midwifery, the Greenpeace Breast Cancer Project, Chicago Sexual Assault Services Network, Illinois Pro-Choice Alliance, the National Organization for Women and Liberation Radio.

Of course abortions were still a part of the discussion as they always will be a necessary option for women. Now a parental consent law threatens all women under 18 in Illinois. This is particularly noteworthy because the "pro-choice" federal government will do nothing for these women. The national Freedom of Choice Act is expected to sacrifice poor women and young women to save the rest of womenkind. This is no bargain. We cannot afford to sacrifice any more women.

Some of the other sacrifices women are told they must suffer include humiliation and unnecessary medical procedures during childbirth in hospitals, insufficient and inhuman reproductive care in the prison system, increases in breast cancer due to synthetic chemicals and environmental racism, and rape.

The use of rape as a weapon of terror and domination was made clear from hearing women speak of the experience of sisters in Bosnia and in Chicago. It is not a distant dilemma—we are fighting this war in our streets. But nothing can compare to the systematic destruction women are facing in the former Yugoslavia. The fight brought a call to arms from Aimee in the Women's Action Coalition (WAC): "I think it's time as American feminists we got involved in international politics."

We don't have a choice. We have seen and heard of sterilizations of Native American women, contraception tested on U.S. minorities and women in other countries, and of children torn from their families as punishment for challenging the state. I was impressed with the depth and breadth covered by the speakout...and grateful. Every new fact, every lost woman and child, turns and hurts like a knife. But together the collection is like a sword—knowledge that can free us and end oppression if we use it properly.

And I want that beautiful, multi-colored, multi-ethnic 20 foot woman puppet, constructed for the event to lead the crowd as it did that cold Chicago day. —Participant

In celebration of the internationalism of May Day:

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

As we witness the carnage in the former Yugoslavia, particularly Bosnia, can history help give our response a revolutionary direction?

"Not to be forgotten is the demonstrative way the Russian and Polish Marxists displayed their internationalism. Thus, Lenin shook the hand of the Japanese Marxist leader, Sen Katayama, in the midst of the Russo-Japanese war, to demonstrate their total opposition to their own governments." —from chapter one, "Two Turning Points—Before and After the 1905 Revolution"



Rosa Luxemburg with Japanese Socialist, Sen Katayama and Russian, Georg Plekhanov, at 1904 Amsterdam Congress of the International where they demonstrated international solidarity against the Russo-Japanese war.

Read Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution by Raya Dunayevskaya. Special May Day offer: \$10—includes postage.



## Women-Worldwide

by Mary Jo Grey

Eleven women's groups in Vancouver, British Columbia are calling on businesses not to advertise in the West End Times after that paper printed an ad during Violence Against Women Awareness Week which defended the Montreal massacre. The women threatened to boycott businesses who continue to advertise in the paper. The ad—first refused by the publisher as an editorial, then accepted when the author, Clive Cowland, paid \$600—praised Marc Lepine who murdered 14 women at the University of Montreal in 1989 because they were "a bunch of feminists."

—Information from off our backs

Both Illinois and Michigan want to force teenage girls to get parental consent for abortions. In Michigan, a judge lifted a ban which had stopped enactment of that state's parental consent law. While in Illinois the House and Senate approved a bill requiring doctors to notify parents of teenage girls seeking an abortion 48 hours before the procedure. Doctors face a \$1,000 fine and one year in jail if they do not comply.

A march planned for April 11 by 19 women's organizations in Rabat, Morocco to protest sexual harassment was banned by the government. Fired up by the March trial in Casablanca which convicted and sentenced to death the Chief Police Commissioner for multiple rape, sexual violence and abducting women, Moroccan women are protesting the lack of protection from abuses by police. They are also demanding changes in the Moudouwana, a law restricting the rights of women in their male-dominated society.

# New Mississippi voices: Black women, labor, education

## Delta Pride catfish workers speak

*Editors note: N&L recently met with Delta Pride catfish factory workers, members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1529, in Indianola and Moorhead, Mississippi. Below we print excerpts from discussions with Black women workers, veterans of a three-month-long, nationally-publicized strike in 1990, as they prepare for new struggles in 1993.*

**Sarah White:** Even though we won our first contract in 1987, Delta Pride didn't believe the union was here to stay. They kept mistreating us, firing people for B.S.; there were conflicts between management and workers every day. So management went and spent \$2 million in 1989 for machines to rip the flesh off the fish, to cut the guts out. The idea was to replace workers, but the machines kept jamming up, damaging the fish. Management wanted it to work, because it took seven people to operate the machines, and 15 people to do it manually. But it didn't work. In the end, they took all these \$2 million machines and threw them out on the back dock, and went back to the manual line. This all happened right before the strike.

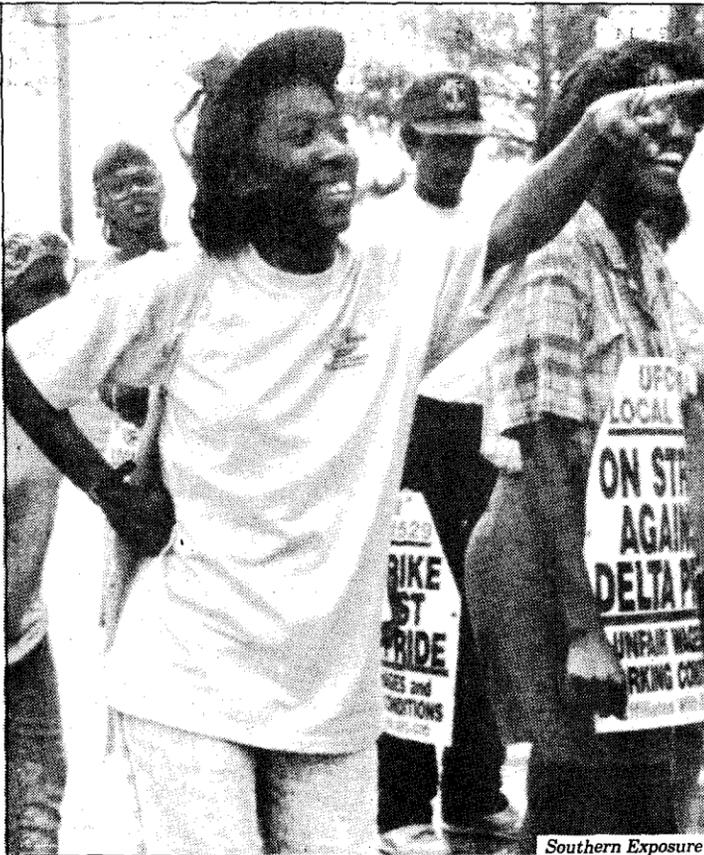
You see the machines didn't work out, and during the strike the scabs didn't work out, so Delta Pride is stuck with us. The 1990 strike changed a lot. The plantation owners who own the catfish farms also own Delta Pride, and they ran it like a plantation. But after they lost the 1990 strike, Delta Pride fired all the old management and brought in these boys from California. The new management is trying to work with us on problems in the plant.

You can see the difference even in the rules about the bathroom. It used to be that you had to get permission from the supervisor to go, and then they used a stopwatch on you. You had six minutes. If you used more than 30 minutes in a week, you got disciplined, or fired. Now it's up to you to say when you go, and use a reasonable amount of time.

The 1990 strike was something I'll never forget. In Mississippi, we were in a world of our own. We knew it should be different, but during the strike I saw how different it could be. I went to 10 states to get support for the strike. We had whole truck caravans from workers in St. Louis, bringing us clothes and food, and toys all gift-wrapped for Christmas. I'll never be the same person again. Till the day I die I'll be dedicated to help any people who want to change their lives.

**Margaret Hollins:** The 1990 strike showed Delta Pride that we are strong. There are 1,100 workers at the Indianola Delta Pride plant, the big plant. Today 947 are union members, and remember, this is a right-to-work state. We still don't have our own union hall; we meet at the Steelworkers in Indianola. Usually we have 100-200 members at union meetings. That's normal. If we put out a handbill, we get more, like during the organizing drives at Delta Pride's plants in Belzoni and Sunflower.

**Sarah White:** Since 1990 we have organized two more Delta Pride plants—Belzoni and Sunflower. Belzoni was in the spring and summer of 1992. Workers from the Indianola plant would go down to Belzoni and meet with the workers. Delta Pride shut the whole plant



Southern Exposure

### Delta Pride workers on strike, 1990

down for two days, trying to scare the workers into thinking that if the union came in they would close the plant. But it was in the heart of the Belzoni workers to join, and they did.

The one we just organized is the plant in Sunflower. About 140 people work there. Delta Pride tried to keep the union out by paying workers more than at the union plants. But on March 5, the workers voted 95 for the union to 16 for no union.

Here is how it happened. Leon Shepherd, the president of our local, had a meeting with all the stewards from all the plants. The international representatives from headquarters had come in to organize Sunflower, but they couldn't do it. So Rose Turner, the representative in Memphis who works with us, suggested that Margaret and I get jobs at the Sunflower plant to organize it. So we went on leave at Indianola, and went to work at Sunflower, on the kill line.

**Margaret Hollins:** At Sunflower, they watched us like hawks, but we did it anyway, we organized the plant. It was the first time I ever worked on the kill line. There is blood all over. You have to do 10 big fish a minute, or 17 smaller fish a minute. If you don't work there, you can't imagine how fast it is.

**Sarah White:** We got 40 union authorization cards signed the first week. We told them: you make \$5.00 an hour, but it isn't protected. There is no security if they want to change the wage tomorrow, or fire you. Even the wages were a trick. If you do hand filleting at Indianola, the union contract says you get a \$1.00 an hour premium. At Sunflower, you got nothing for it. In six years—since 1987—everything has changed. Then there was not a single catfish plant in the Delta with a union contract; now 10 of the 11 plants in the Delta have contracts—Delta Pride, ConAgra, Farm Fresh, Delta South, Simmons, Fresh Water—all of them except one in Itta Bena. It is a great story how we went from nothing to this.

When I first started at Delta Pride in 1983, we were skinning 45-50 fish a minute. Now it's 12 to 15 a minute. So many workers got carpal tunnel (CT) syndrome from the speed then; it's just a blessing that I didn't get it. They fired people every day back then. We took a lot of mess just to hold onto our jobs. But every day we were thinking, we will find a way to change this. That's why we strived so hard to organize.

The fire in Hamlet [North Carolina, in 1991] provoked people a lot. They were outspoken with supervisors and in union meetings too. If we had not organized the union, that could have been us.

**Margaret Hollins:** The problem with injuries on the job is not over at all. A lot of the problem today is with the "incentive program." This was introduced by management after the 1990 strike. You get extra money based on how many fish you do a minute. Many trimmers and filleters are still getting CT syndrome. We tell workers not to go so fast. Delta Pride management will expect everyone to go at your speed. People will get hurt and some of them will be hurt for life. But a lot of people cut fast anyway; they feel like they need that extra \$8 or \$20 or whatever in their check. If Delta Pride would just pay people properly, you wouldn't have this.

**Sarah White:** After the 1990 strike we got a better contract, but we're not where we need to be. The next contract fight will be in October this year; our contract runs out on Oct. 31. The way it is now, the starting wage in the union is \$10.00 an hour in Class VII of maintenance. There is a big battle coming up. I have been at Delta Pride 10 years, and I make \$5.30 an hour. I missed PTA meetings and my children's graduations

—Willie Rudd  
President, Local 282

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## Drew education struggle

**Drew, Sunflower County, Miss.**—Down here in Drew we're trying to get parents involved in their children's education. Education in Mississippi has taken so many steps backward that our children can't compete in this world.

In Drew, the school board isn't elected, three of the five members are appointed by the City Council. When you vote, that's where the power is. And that's what we need in order to do something about the bad conditions our schools are in. We have no library, no counseling, no physical education.

Education is the key to unlock the doors of this society. It gives you understanding and knowledge. So education is not just so you can get a job. It helps you tell when people are telling you a lie, and about who to vote for.

Right now, there's a teacher shortage here in Sunflower County because teachers are so underpaid. A teacher here in Drew makes about as much as at McDonald's. So how can you expect a young person who goes to college to be a teacher to come back to Drew to teach? That's why most of the teachers that teach in the Drew school system are substitutes.

As far as I'm concerned our children are being handicapped by this school system, just as if they had a physical handicap. And once they are handicapped by this system, they can't go back and make up that time.

You need people like me who don't have an education to tell you about the importance of education, not people who already have an education.

There are so many things you desire to do but can't when you don't have an education, so our children end up on drugs.

They complain about people being on welfare, but where else are people going to go.

They still grow cotton down here, that and soybean and catfish. Cotton is no longer picked by hand but by machine. But just the other day I was reading in the newspaper here that a white man was saying that we need to go back to picking cotton by hand as a way to get rid of unemployment! He said that back when cotton was picked by hand Black people had a "good social life," because they could be heard out in the fields singing as if they didn't have a problem in the world!

One last thing I'd like to say about education is that the same government that doesn't see the need to educate our children, still wants to send our children to war and put them in the ground. Mississippi had more young Black people in this last war (in the Persian Gulf) than any other state just because they couldn't find a job at home.

You can see, we got a long way to go down here.

—Mae Bertha Carter

## Delta Algebra Project

**Memphis, Tenn.**—At the conference held at the National Civil Rights Museum on the 25th anniversary of the Memphis sanitation workers' strike and the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a new dimension was added to the question, "Where Do We Go From Here?" That was the title of the session at which Bob Moses and Dave Dennis, civil rights organizers in Mississippi during the 1960s for SNCC and CORE, respectively, spoke about their current work on the Delta Algebra Project, and the Algebra Project nationally. Their comments sought to challenge movement activists to think concretely about what to do in this period.

Dave Dennis argued that the most serious problem we are facing today is what is happening to our children. "We have to fight for the right to first-class citizenship by attacking the tracking system in the schools. It is a system which divides 'honors' students from 'general' students, and assures that 'general' students are stuck outside the system in this age of hi-tech," he said.

"Right now sixth graders in the Mississippi Delta are circulating petitions to the government for the right to be educated," Dennis reported, "and students in Selma, Alabama led a struggle this year against tracking."

Bob Moses related the Algebra Project to the economic and technological trajectory of U.S. society, describing the evolution of "industrial technology" to a "computer technology." This development has had a profound impact on the destabilization of Black and poor communities, he argued. The current computer revolution is having an effect on the new generation today that is as fundamental as that of the Industrial Revolution, when machines took over physical labor and craftsmanship. "Quantitative literacy has to be moved to the same central place as reading and writing if our children are to survive in this new environment. The young people coming up in our cities, and in the Delta today are facing the world as a new class of serfs, unable to participate in economic or political life. What is most crucial is to achieve critical thinking," Moses said.

The Algebra Project, which Moses began in 1982 in Massachusetts, was carried to the Mississippi Delta in 1991. It has already organized programs in three counties, with plans to expand to 61 Delta schools by the 1995-96 school year.

The Delta Algebra Project has now expanded into a whole "Southern Initiative," with projects in Louisiana, Alabama, South Carolina, and even in an Appalachian community in Kentucky. The Southern Initiative of the Algebra Project can be reached at: **Positive Innovations, Inc. PO Box 20658, Jackson, MS. 39289.**

—Michael Flug

## Workshop Talks

by Felix Martin, Labor Editor

The Los Angeles Times recently reported on the U.S. auto makers' call for a national health care system because, as one spokesman said, "progress in productivity is...dissipated by health costs." It makes me mad when I hear someone say how much health care costs the capitalists. The only "cost" comes out of the hide of the workers. Health care is not a cost, but the price we pay for capitalist production.

I recently was asked to speak as a worker on a panel on health care. I talked about the experience in my lifetime at the point of production to explain what medical care means to the working class. Here are some excerpts from that talk.

### IN THE BELLY OF THE MONSTER

You need to go into the belly of the monster, General Motors, where I worked. I had fought in two wars for the capitalist system and found when I went to GM that I had fought the wrong enemy. The first thought that hit me when I went in was that the machinery was digesting human beings and transforming them into shiny products to be sold for a profit in the marketplace.

What happens to the human being on the assembly line? I've had two major operations since I retired. I have back, shoulder and hip injuries. I can tell when I look at a retired GM worker which side of the assembly line he worked on by the way he walks or gets out of his car. We knew of carpal tunnel syndrome before they had a name for it.

When I was working in the plant there were many days I could not get my hands open when I got up in

### No justice! No pizza!

Oakland, Cal.—I marched on Saturday, April 3, with about 300 fast food workers and supporters chanting, "No justice! No pizza!" We marched through a popular business district from one Roundtable Pizza franchise owned by H&H to another. As we marched, many workers from small retail and food shops came out and expressed their support.

We heard at a rally from Helen Walker, an African American who had worked at Roundtable for eight years. She said that after she had signed up to the union (AFL-CIO Local 28) her hours were cut for no reason from five days a week to one. When she wore her union button one day, she was fired for having five cents extra in her cash drawer. Minutes later the Roundtable manager drove to the Roundtable store down the street and fired Helen's son, Calvin, also on trumped up charges.

We heard from a young worker who said, "After five years you make \$4.50 an hour in that place. The managers get bonuses for understaffing and underpaying workers. They get free food. We get nothing. No breaks. No vacation. No job security. No benefits."

Eight workers have been fired for supporting the effort to join the Hotel Employees, Restaurant Employees and Bartender's Union Local 28. Though firing workers for supporting a union drive is illegal, only two workers have received their jobs back. All but one of the fired workers are Black. Most managers are white.

Over 50% of H&H's 100 employees have signed cards asking for decent wages and benefits through a union contract. They are asking to get the word out to boycott H&H Roundtable Pizza. Judging from the reaction on the street, they will get lots of support. We're going to be back demonstrating on Friday evenings, the big pizza night.

—Pizza worker supporter

## Production costs the workers' health

the morning. Now that I am retired I have a hard time using my hands to get my checkbook out of my back pocket to pay for my high-priced groceries. You can see what I mean about the belly of the monster where 94% to 98% of all injuries and illnesses are created.

### WHAT AN INJURY IS WORTH

I took GM to court because the noise was destroying my hearing. I had been fighting them for years over the noise pollution in the plant. Again, you can tell which side of the assembly line a person worked on by which ear has the most hearing loss. I took GM to court because I wanted something for my hearing loss, and I wanted GM to do something about noise pollution for all of us workers. It took 20 years until they finally did.

When the judge was going to decide how much my hearing loss was worth, he looked into a book, like the kind you would get at a parts plant. I said, "Hell, I'm not a machine, I'm a human being." The judge said I would get more for my hearing loss if I was a musician. So you see, if you are a worker, you don't need hearing, just a strong back. The judge said all this and I under-

stood that the system says I am not a human being. I am part of the machine and a number on a badge.

I used to raise hell about the solder grinding in the body shop. I wondered what it was doing to our minds. Lead gets into your bones and joints and brain with the solder grinding in open space. Your body can't throw it off.

This environment inside the plant leads to pollution also outside the plant. The air we breathe, the water we drink, the chemicals in our foods that make us sick are caused by the production system of this country. Medical coverage should be a right and a cost to the capitalist thieves.

### THE STRUGGLE TO STAY ALIVE

It should be part of the constitution that people who produce the goods and services of the country and the world should be cared for when they are sick or injured. At least when we were chattel slaves, they had to take care of us because we were property. Now we are wage slaves and they get us for nothing.

The struggle to stay alive under capitalism is a hell of a job. If the doctors would go to the point of production and see what speedup has done to workers, they would understand why people are becoming ill. If you are not employed, that will make you sick, too. You have a family to feed and to keep a roof over your heads. I never had a threat like the young workers have today. If they lose their jobs, there are no jobs to be found. The jobs are in Mexico or overseas.

Under any national health care program—if we get anything, and I think we will get something—most people will be no better off. Those who don't have anything aren't going to get enough to really help as long as we have capitalism. Anything that is produced in this world has to make a profit for capitalism. That is what is wrong with the whole system of medical care.

Making a profit off a sickness of a human being is the most inhuman thing there is. You can see what a monster capitalism is. The only time the people of this country will have real medical care will be after workers take over the power of production and uproot capitalist relations root and branch.

## Cesar Chavez



As we go to press comes the sad news of the death, at age 66, of Cesar Chavez—the migrant worker who founded the first successful union of farm workers in the U.S. We will carry our tribute to his lifelong struggles in the next issue.

## Editorial

## U.S. aids genocide in Bosnia

(continued from page 1)

The destruction of the multinational heritage for which Bosnia was renowned was accomplished only by the conscious and deliberate campaign we have witnessed over the whole past year: the merciless shelling of every town and village Serbian missiles could reach; the starvation of thousands in besieged towns while food and medical supplies wait in trucks a few miles away; millions making forced marches to towns that might offer refuge, shelled as they walked and dying of exposure on the way; prisoner camps that match the Nazis; and the unprecedented mass rapes of tens of thousands of women as a war policy.

Through all of this all the West has done is pass an arms embargo, which resulted in preventing the Muslims from getting arms to defend themselves against the continuously well-armed Serbs; devise a so-called UN Peace Plan that would force the Muslims and Croats to accept the results of Milosevic's "ethnic cleansing"; and issue statements that it "might" impose sanctions against Yugoslavia supposedly to keep Serbia from continuing on its genocidal path.

The only thing that has not been covered with the disgusting hypocrisy that has covered everything else, but has been openly acknowledged, is that it is U.S. relations with Russia that matter far more to the Clinton Administration than genocide in what used to be Yugoslavia. That is why even a vote on whether to impose stronger sanctions against Serbia was put on hold until after the referendum in Russia on April 25. (See "Our Life and Times," p. 12.)

### DISGUSTING HYPOCRISY

The hypocrisy of the capitalist rulers is hardly news, whether it is those rulers like Clinton who throw up their hands at the "problem from hell" or those like Margaret Thatcher who wring theirs at the cowardice of the current leaders. Nobody could possibly believe that her outcry stems from any concern with human suffering, which she did so much to exacerbate during her own rule. The outcry of the Conservative Right against Serbia and the insistence that the Western powers do something about it stems from their fear that Serbia is destroying their whole campaign to make us believe that the victory of free market capitalism in the Cold War was going to bring us utopia. Indeed, the reluctance of the Western rulers to "do something" stems from the fear of their enormous crises at home, which come first.

But what can explain the disgraceful position of much of the Left, which has dared to present the events in Bosnia as if they were no more than some "battles over land among warring gangs of Serb, Croat, and Muslim forces" (as one Trotskyist journal would have it), all equally responsible for the suffering going on? Or worse, the Left which has dared to accuse women's liberationists who have cried out against the mass rapes of "giving a feminist cover" (as another put it) for an imperialist intervention in Bosnia! Nothing more reveals the total bankruptcy of such a Left in the face of today's changed world. The truth is that if it were not for the Women's Liberation Movement, there would have been scarcely any response to the events in Yugoslavia anywhere in the world.

### A 'BENIGN' IMPERIALISM

What the last three months have proved is precisely what we wrote in our January-February Editorial on the U.S. invention of a new "benign imperialism." "Like Stalin," we wrote, "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."

What Yugoslavia proves today is that World War II did not defeat fascism—nor indeed is that why that imperialist war was waged. "Free market capitalism" and state-capitalism alike have always managed to co-exist with the new forms of barbarism that they disgorge. The only alternative is the total uprooting of this degenerate barbaric society and its reconstruction on new human foundations.

April 27, 1993

## Journeys in Marxist-Humanist Archives

- What compelled Raya Dunayevskaya's continuous return to her 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes"?
- How can the study of that 1953 "philosophic moment" illuminate our tasks in the 1990s?

"We see in the Absolute, not a system, not a hierarchy, but new beginnings, new beginnings of such phenomenal importance as to become the determinant of the end—an end that will only come in the future when masses in motion become Reason."

—Raya Dunayevskaya, "Talking to Myself," Dec. 22, 1986, Microfilm #10842

### Some questions to investigate for ourselves

#### 1) Letter to Bess Gogol, Oct. 20, 1956, #12136

Marx's 1844 manuscript, "Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic," broke off soon after he began his comments on Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind*. What is involved when Dunayevskaya's May 20, 1953 Letter takes up the critique at the point where Marx left off?

#### 2) Letter to Herbert Marcuse, Jan. 12, 1961, #9945

As Dunayevskaya corresponded with Marcuse on her book-in-progress, *Philosophy and Revolution*, Marcuse asked her "why you need the Absolute Idea to say what you want to say." Find out what Dunayevskaya answered about the meaning of Hegel's Absolutes for revolutionaries facing contemporary challenges.

#### 3) "Hegel, Marx, Fanon and the Dialectics of Liberation Today," Dec. 5, 1976, #15024

In the 1970s, a new "hunger for philosophy" within Third World revolutions brought Frantz Fanon's articulation

of Hegel's Absolutes into the debate about how to overcome neo-colonialism. How did Dunayevskaya's re-examination of the three final syllogisms in Hegel's "Absolute Mind" help to push this dialogue into new terrain?

#### 4) "Talking to Myself: On 1953 as Concept vs. Experience," May 13, 1987, #10923

While working on her projected book on "Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy," Dunayevskaya returned to her 1953 Letters to see how the problem of organization was expressed in her. Join her in rethinking the final paragraph of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind*, as she insists that her new view of "organization of thought" is altogether so new and so totally an untrodden ground that it is impossible to foresee a conclusion."

The Archives are available in many public and university libraries. Guides to the Collection are available from *News & Letters* for \$4.50.

## Special supplement — Working out the Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy

# On the 40th anniversary of the philosophic moment of Marxist-Humanism

Two anniversaries converge in this special issue of *News & Letters*. One is the anniversary of the Los Angeles rebellion last Spring which once more put American civilization on trial and found it guilty. We mark it with a Lead Article (page 1) by a Black worker living in South Central Los Angeles. The other is the 40th anniversary of the philosophic moment from which flowed the development and practice of the philosophy Raya Dunayevskaya founded as Marxist-Humanism, her 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes." We mark it with two letters she wrote in 1986 as she was working out a new book on the dialectics of philosophy and organization, and with an Essay Article by Peter Wermuth, National Co-organizer of News and Letters Committees, that explores those letters with 1990s eyes. It is this inseparability of theory and practice that has marked N&L from our birth.

Dunayevskaya returned to her 1953 Letters with each of what came to be known as her "trilogy of revolution"—*Marxism and Freedom* (1958), *Philosophy and Revolution* (1973), and *Rosa*

*Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* (1982). In the last year of her life, as she was working on a new book which she had tentatively entitled "Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy: 'The Party' and Forms of Organization Born Out of Spontaneity," she returned to probe these letters again and initiated a dialogue with non-Marxist Hegel scholars. She considered it of central importance to the new book. We print below two of her letters—the first, to Louis Dupre at Yale University; the second, to George Armstrong Kelly (1932-1987) at Johns Hopkins University. The full texts of the exchange of correspondence between Dunayevskaya and these scholars are on deposit in the Supplement to the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection at Wayne State University, pp. 11216-38. Starred footnotes are by Dunayevskaya. Numbered footnotes have been added by the editors. We look forward to a vigorous back-and-forth with our readers around this special issue of *News & Letters*.

—The Resident Editorial Board

## Raya Dunayevskaya: Two letters to non-Marxist Hegel scholars

July 3, 1986

Dear Louis Dupre,

Suddenly I remembered when we first met at the University where I talked on **Philosophy and Revolution**. We continued the dialogue after the formal talk. I believe it set the ground for my paper on "Hegel's Absolute Idea as New Beginning," which was accepted for the 1974 Hegel Society of America [HSA] conference. Don't you think that in a way we have had a continuing dialogue since? At any rate, I consider you a very good friend. I hope you agree. Or do you think that the sharpness of my critique of Hegel scholars who are non-Marxists goes beyond their critique of Marxism? I seem always to get friends—Marxist as well as non-Marxist—who consider me a friendly enemy rather than a friend. That friendly enemy relationship continued, for example, with Herbert Marcuse for three long decades, and we still never agreed, specifically on the Absolutes. That's where I want to appeal to you, even though we do not have the same interpretation either.<sup>1</sup>

Along with the battle I'm currently having with myself on the Absolutes (and I've had this battle ever since 1953, when I first "defined" the Absolute as the new society)\*, I am now changing my attitude to Lenin—specifically on Chapter 2 of Section Three of the *Science of Logic*, "The Idea of Cognition." The debate I'm having with myself centers on the different ways Hegel writes on the Idea of Cognition in the *Science of Logic* (hereafter referred to as *Science*), and the way it is expressed in his *Encyclopedia* (smaller *Logic*), paragraphs 225-235, with focus on paragraphs 233-235. The fact that the smaller *Logic* does the same type of abbreviation with the Absolute Idea as it does with the Idea of Cognition, turning that magnificent and most profound chapter of the *Science* into paragraphs 236-244, and that paragraph 244 in the smaller *Logic* was the one Lenin preferred\*\* to the final paragraph of the Absolute Idea in the *Science*, has had me "debating" Lenin ever since 1953. That year may seem far away, but its essence, without the polemics, was actually given in my paper at the 1974 Hegel Society of America Conference.

Whether or not Lenin had a right to "mis-read" the difference in Hegel's two articulations in the *Science* and in the smaller *Logic*, isn't it true that Hegel, by creating the sub-section B, "Volition," which does not appear in the *Science*, left open the door for a future generation of Marxists to become so enthralled with Ch. 2, "The Idea of Cognition"—which ended with the pronouncement that Practice was higher than Theory—that they saw an identity of the two versions? These Marxists weren't Kantians believing that all contradictions will be solved by actions of "men of good will."

There is no reason, I think, for introducing a new sub-heading which lets Marxists think that now that practice is "higher" than theory, and that "Will," not as willfulness, but as action, is their province, they do not need to study Hegel further.

Please bear with me as I go through Lenin's interpretation of that chapter with focus on this sub-section, so that we know precisely what is at issue. Indeed, when I began talking to myself in 1953, objecting to Lenin's dismissal of the last half of the final paragraph of the Absolute Idea in the *Science* as "unimportant," preferring paragraph 244 of the smaller *Logic*—"go forth freely as Nature"—I explained that Lenin could have

\* I am enclosing an excerpt from my May 20, 1953 letter on Absolute Mind.

\*\* All the references to Lenin are to his Abstract of Hegel's *Science of Logic*, as included in Vol. 38 of his *Collected Works*, pp. 87-238. Concretely the subject under dispute here is on the Doctrine of the Notion, Section Three, Chaps. 2 and 3, "The Idea of Cognition" and "The Absolute Idea."

1. In the introductory paragraph of her letter to George Armstrong Kelly on this same subject, written Sept. 26, 1986, Dunayevskaya included the following two sentences: "You know me enough to know that I seem to disagree with Marxists, whether orthodox or dissident; I'm forever chasing the Self-Thinking Idea... Now then, may I delve into what is presently my problem with Hegel?"



Raya Dunayevskaya at the Univ. of Michigan during 1983 Marx Centenary Tour.

said that because he hadn't suffered through Stalinism. I was happy that there was one Marxist revolutionary who had dug into Hegel's Absolute Idea.

Now then, when Lenin seemed to have completed his Abstract, and writes "End of the *Logic*. 12/17/1914" (Vol. 38, p. 233), he doesn't really end. At the end of

that he refers you to the fact that he ended his study of the *Science* with paragraph 244 of the smaller *Logic*—and he means it. Clearly, it wasn't only the last half of a paragraph of the Absolute Idea in the *Science* that Lenin dismissed. The truth is that Lenin had begun seriously to consult the smaller *Logic* at the section on the Idea, which begins in the smaller *Logic* with paragraph 213. When Lenin completed Chapter 2, "The Idea of Cognition," he didn't really go to Chapter 3, "The Absolute Idea," but first proceeded for seven pages with his own "translation" (interpretation). This is on pp. 212-219 of Vol. 38 of his *Collected Works*.

Lenin there divided each page into two. One side, he called "Practice in the Theory of Knowledge"; on the other side he wrote: "Alias, Man's consciousness not only reflects the objective world, but creates it." I was so enamoured with his "Hegelianism" that I never stopped repeating it. Presently, however, I'm paying a great deal more attention to what he did in that division of the page into two, with these "translations." Thus, 1) "Notion = Man"; 2) "Otherness which is in itself = Nature independent of man"; 3) "Absolute Idea = objective truth." When Lenin reaches the final section of Chapter 2, "The Idea of the Good," he writes, "end of Ch. 2, Transition to Ch. 3, 'The Absolute Idea.'" But I consider that he is still only on the threshold of the Absolute Idea. Indeed, all that follows p. 219 in his Notes shows that to be true, and explains why Lenin proceeded on his own after the end of his Notes on the Absolute Idea, and returned to the smaller *Logic*.

Thus when Lenin writes that he had reached the end of the Absolute Idea [in the *Science*] and quotes paragraph 244 [of the smaller *Logic*] as the true end, because it is "objective," he proceeds to the smaller *Logic* and reaches paragraph 244, to which he had already referred.

Although he continued his commentaries as he was reading and quoting Absolute Idea from the *Science*, it was not either Absolute Idea or Absolute Method that  
(continued on page 6)

### A 1990s View of the 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes"

## Spontaneity, organization, philosophy

by Peter Wermuth

The publication of Raya Dunayevskaya's letters on Lenin's *Philosophic Notebooks* and "The Third Attitude to Objectivity" on the 40th anniversary of her 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes" provides a crucial opening for confronting one of the major unresolved issues of our time—the dialectical relationship between spontaneity, organization, and philosophy.

Though the issue of spontaneous freedom movements hardly dominates today's political discourse, the specter of new revolts is never far beneath the surface, as seen in the intense preparations by the rulers to prevent a "second edition" of the Los Angeles rebellion of last Spring. Yet the premonition of new spontaneous revolts brings into even sharper focus the central ideological problem of our time: the near-total breakdown in the effort to project a concept of an emancipatory alternative to capitalism. More than one commentator has spoken of how "a conspicuous absence of any new galvanizing ideas" of liberation characterizes the present historic moment.<sup>1</sup>

In light of this situation it has become especially important to rethink the whole question of organization. Our age has seen a multitude of new forms of organization arise, both "spontaneous" and "organized." So why are we confronting such a breakdown in the effort to project a concept of a new society? Is something lacking in the prevailing concepts of organization in the Left which explains this contradiction between the abundance of organizational forms and the absence of any se-

rious projection of the idea of freedom?

That the letters published here can speak to this question flows from the fact that they were written as part of Dunayevskaya's response to what she called, in 1986, a "changed world" of retrogression. The new reality signified to her that we could no longer put off working out the "untrodden path" in the revolutionary movement—the integrality of dialectics and organization. This challenge is especially spoken to in her letter of July 1986 on Lenin's *Philosophic Notebooks*.

1986 was, of course, not the first time she probed into Lenin's work on dialectics. Throughout her development of Marxist-Humanism she had focused on how Lenin's "Abstract of Hegel's *Science of Logic*" of 1914, in which he broke from his own vulgar materialist past, represented a "great divide" from all who fail to grasp Marx's deep roots in Hegel's dialectic. Yet she also had called attention to Lenin's philosophic ambivalence.<sup>2</sup> While Lenin's study of Hegel led him to reorganize his thought on an array of issues, it remained in a separate compartment from his adherence to the elitist concept of the "party to lead" and practice of vanguardism. Despite his new appreciation of Hegel's concept of dialectic  
(continued on page 7)

2. For Dunayevskaya's view of Lenin's *Philosophic Notebooks*, see "Lenin and the Dialectic: A Mind in Action" in her *Marxism and Freedom* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), pp. 168-71, and "The Shock of Recognition and the Philosophic Ambivalence of Lenin" in her *Philosophy and Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), pp. 95-122. For her critique of Lenin's separation of dialectics from organization, see her *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), pp. 156-58.

1. See Roger Cohen, "An Empty Feeling is Infecting Eastern Europe," *New York Times*, March 21, 1993.

# Raya Dunayevskaya: Two letters to non-Marxist Hegel scholars

(continued from page 5)

his 16-point definition of the dialectic ends on: "(15) the struggle of content with form and conversely. The throwing off of the form, the transformation of the content. (15 and 16 are examples of 9)." No wonder the preceding point 14 referred to absolute negativity as if it were only "the apparent return to the old (negation of the negation)."

Outside of Marx himself, the whole question of the negation of the negation was ignored by all "orthodox Marxists." Or worse, it was made into a vulgar materialism, as with Stalin, who denied that it was a fundamental law of dialectics. Here, specifically, we see the case of Lenin, who had gone back to Hegel, and had stressed that it was impossible to understand Capital, especially its first chapter, without reading the whole of the Science, and yet the whole point that Hegel was developing on unresolved contradiction, of "two worlds in opposition, one a realm of subjectivity in the pure regions of transparent thought, the other a realm of objectivity in the element of an externally manifold actuality that is an undisclosed realm of darkness" (Miller translation, p. 820), did not faze Lenin because he felt that the objective, the Practical Idea, is that resolution. Nor was he fazed by the fact that Hegel had said that "the complete elaboration of the unresolved contradiction between the absolute end and the limitation of this actuality that insuperably opposes it, has been considered in detail in the *Phenomenology of Mind*." (The reference is to pp. 611ff. of the *Phenomenology*, Baillie translation.)

Nothing, in fact, led Lenin back to the Idea of Theory and away from dependence on the Practical Idea, not even when Hegel writes: "The practical Idea still lacks the moment of the Theoretical Idea... For the practical Idea, on the contrary, this actuality, which at the same time confronts it as an insuperable limitation, ranks as something intrinsically worthless that must first receive its true determination and sole worth through the ends of the good. Hence it is only the will itself that stands in the way of the attainment of its goal, for it separates itself from cognition, and external reality for the will does not receive the form of a true being; the Idea of the good can therefore find its integration only in the Idea of the true" (Page 821, Miller translation.)

I cannot blame Hegel for what "orthodox Marxists" have done to his dialectic, but I still want to know a non-Marxist Hegelian's viewpoint on the difference of the two articulations on the Idea of Cognition and the Absolute Idea in the Science and in the smaller Logic. What is your view?

To fully follow out this question we need, in one respect, another journey back in time—to 1953 when, in the parting from Lenin on the vanguard party, I had delved into the three final syllogisms of the *Philosophy of Mind*. You may remember that in my paper to the Hegel Society of America in 1974, where I critique Adorno's *Negative Dialectics*—which I called "one-dimensionality of thought"—I said that he had substituted "a permanent critique not alone for absolute negativity, but also for 'permanent revolution' itself." I had become so enamored with Hegel's three final syllogisms that I was searching all over the "West" for dialogue on them.

Finally in the 1970s, after Reinhart Klemens Maurer had published his *Hegel und das Ende der Geschichte*, which took up those final syllogisms, I tried to get him involved, his sharp critique of Marcuse notwithstanding.

2. In her Sept. 26, 1986 letter to George Armstrong Kelly, Dunayevskaya began her following discussion of a "journey back in time" with this sentence: "What is most urgent to me now is *Philosophy of Mind* and the views of non-Marxist Hegel scholars in the 1970s and 1980s on it."

Explore how the breakthrough on Hegel's Absolutes is further developed in

## Philosophy and Revolution by Raya Dunayevskaya

Chapter One, entitled "Absolute Negativity as New Beginning—The Ceaseless Movement of Ideas and of History," discusses Hegel's major philosophic works as part of a single dialectic of philosophy and revolution. Dunayevskaya there relates her philosophic labor to the first explosions against Russian totalitarianism:

"It was on the eve of the East German uprising in June 1953 that I commented on Hegel's final three syllogisms. I considered Hegel's formulation, 'the logical principle turns to Nature and Nature to Mind,' as the movement not only from theory to practice, but also from practice to theory as well as the new society. As it turned out, this proved to be a new divide within Marxism between those who stopped at the economic analysis of Russia as state-capitalist and those who proceeded to develop the Humanism of Marxism for the state-capitalist age."

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Maurer was anxious to establish the fact, however, that he was not only non-Marxist, but not wholly "Hegelian." In any case, he clearly was not interested in any dialogue with me, and he told a young colleague of mine who went to see him that "I am not married to Hegel." But as I made clear at the 1974 HSA conference, I do not think it important whether someone has written a serious new study of those three final syllogisms because of a new stage of scholarship, or because the "movement of freedom surged up from below and was followed by new cognition studies."

The point is that as late as the late 1970s, A.V. Miller wrote me calling my attention to the fact that he had not corrected an error in Wallace's translation of paragraph 575 of *Philosophy of Mind*. He pointed out that Wallace had translated *sie* as if it were *sich*, whereas in fact it should have read "sunders" not *itself*, but *them*. That, however, was not my problem. The sundering was what was crucial to me; the fact that Nature turns out to be the mediation was certainly no problem to any "materialist"; the form of the transition which was departing from the course of necessity was the exciting part.

In introducing those three new syllogisms in 1830, Hegel first (paragraph 575) poses the structure of the *Encyclopedia* merely factually—Logic-Nature-Mind. It should have been obvious (but obviously was not) that it is not Logic but Nature which is the mediation.

Paragraph 576 was the real leap as the syllogism was the standpoint of Mind itself. In the early 1950s I had never stopped quoting the end of that paragraph: "philosophy appears as subjective cognition, of which liberty is the aim, and which is itself the way to produce it." It justified my happiness at Hegel's magnificent critique of the concept of One in the Hindu religion which he called both "featureless unity of abstract thought," and its extreme opposite, "longwinded weary story of its particular detail" (paragraph 573). In the following paragraph 574 we face Hegel's counterposition of what I consider his most profound historic concept—and by history I mean not only past, or even history-in-the-making, the present, but as future—"SELF-THINKING IDEA."

My "labor, patience, and suffering of the negative" those 33 years hasn't exactly earned me applause either from the post-Marx Marxists, or from the Hegelians, who are busy calling to my attention that the final syllogism (paragraph 577) speaks about the "eternal Idea," "eternally setting itself to work, engenders and enjoys itself as absolute Mind," fairly disregarding what is just a phrase in that sentence: "it is the nature of the fact, which causes the movement and development, yet this same movement is equally the action of cognition."

It is here that I'm in need of your commentary both on Absolute Idea in the *Science of Logic* and on Absolute Mind in the *Philosophy of Mind*. The "eternal idea" to me is not eternality, but ceaseless motion, the movement itself. Far from me "subverting" Hegel, it is Hegel who made Absolute Method the "self-thinking Idea." George Armstrong Kelly, in his book, *Hegel's Retreat from Eleusis*, said that "for the complex linkage of culture, politics and philosophy, within the matrix of the 'Absolute Idea,' Mme. Dunayevskaya proposes to substitute an unchained dialectic which she baptizes 'Absolute Method,' a method that 'becomes irresistible...because our hunger for theory arises from the totality of the present global crisis.'"

The "eternal Idea" in *Philosophy of Mind* not only reinforced my view of Absolute Method in *Science of Logic*, but now that I am digging into another subject for my new work on "Dialectics of Organization," which will take sharp issue with Lenin, both on the Idea of Cognition and on the Absolute Idea, I consider that Marx's concept of "revolution in permanence" is the "eternal Idea."

December 8, 1986

Dear George Armstrong Kelly:

Despite the acknowledged gulf between us on the Absolute Method, may I discuss with you (and may I hope for a comment from you?) my latest self-critique on Organization? On that question I also see Hegel in a new way. That is to say, the dialectical relationship of principles (in this case the Christian doctrine) and the organization (the Church) are analyzed as if they were inseparable. All this occurs, not in the context of a philosophy of religion as much as in the context of the great dividing line between himself and all other philosophers that he initiated with the *Phenomenology of Mind*, on the relationship of objectivity/subjectivity, immediacy/mediation, particular/universal, history and the "Eternal." This addition to the Logic—the Third Attitude to Objectivity—I see in a totally new way.

I can't hide, of course, that though it's not the Absolute, I'm enamored with that early section of the *Encyclopedia* outline of Logic, because it was written after Hegel had already developed Absolute Knowledge, Absolute Idea, Absolute Method.

Here history makes its presence felt, by no accident after the Absolutes both in the *Phenomenology* and in the *Science of Logic*, as well as in anticipation that he is finally developing the *Philosophy of Nature* and the *Philosophy of Mind*. Indeed, that to me is what made possible the very form of compression of those innumerable polemical observations on other philosophers and philosophies into just three attitudes to objectivity.

This time, as we know, a single attitude, the First, embraces everything preceding the modern age. Further emphasis on this compression is evident when Hegel comes to the modern age and includes both empiricism and criticism in the Second Attitude.

My attraction to the Third Attitude was not due to the fact that it was directed against those who placed faith above philosophy—the Intuitionists. (I'm not renewing our old debate, just because I'm an atheist; atheism, to me, is one more form of godliness, without God.) Rather, the attraction for me continued to be the Dialectic. Far from expressing a sequence of never-ending progression, the Hegelian dialectic lets retrogression appear as translucent as progression and indeed makes it very nearly inevitable if one ever tries to escape regression by mere faith.

Here again, history enters, this time to let Hegel create varying views of Intuitionism, depending on which historic period is at issue. Intuitionism is "progressive" in the period of Descartes because then empiricism opened the doors wide to science. On the other hand, it became regressive in the period of Jacobi.

It is here that I saw a different concept of Organization.



East German Revolt, 1953

Four decades of the movement from practice which...  
relationship between philosophy and organization.

tion when it comes to the Church than in all of Hegel's many oppositions to the clergy's dominance in academia. Do please follow my strange journeys that I identify as the self-determination of the Idea.

The Third Attitude begins (paragraph 61) with a critique of Kant whose universality was abstract so that Reason appeared hardly more than a conclusion with "the categories left out of account." Equally wrong, Hegel continues, is the "extreme theory on the opposite side, which holds thought to be an act of the particular only, and on that ground declares it incapable of apprehending the Truth."

In praising Descartes, Hegel points not only to the fact that empiricism opened the door to science, but that Descartes clearly knew that his famous "Cogito ergo sum" wasn't a syllogism, simply because it had the word "therefore" in it. This becomes important because Hegel's critique could then be directed against the one-sidedness of the Intuitionists, for equating mind to mere consciousness, and thus "what I discover in my consciousness is thus exaggerated into a fact of consciousness of all, and even passed off for the very nature of mind" (paragraph 71). That too is by no means the whole of the critique. What excited me most about this attitude to objectivity is the manner in which Hegel brings in Organization.

As early as paragraph 63 Hegel had lashed out against Jacobi's faith, in contrast to Faith: "The two things are radically distinct. Firstly, the Christian faith comprises in it an authority of the Church; but the faith of Jacobi's philosophy has no other authority than that of personal revelation." As we see, Hegel now has suddenly equated Organization to Principle, Doctrine: "And, secondly, the Christian faith is a copious body of objective truth, a system of knowledge and doctrine; while the scope of the philosophic faith is so utterly indefinite, that, while it has room for faith of the Christian, it equally admits belief in the divinity of the Dalai Lama, the ox, or the monkey..."

Hegel proceeds (paragraph 75): "And to show that in point of fact there is a knowledge which advances neither by unmixed immediacy nor unmixed mediation, we can point to the example of the Logic and the whole of philosophy."

In a word, we're back at the Dialectic and it's only after that (paragraph 76) that Hegel uses the word "reactionary" in relationship to the whole school of Jacobi, that is, to the historic period, "The Recent German Philosophy." "Philosophy of course tolerates no mere assertions or conceits, and checks the free play of argumentative see-saw" (paragraph 77). Freedom and Revolution (which word I "borrowed" from Hegel's very first sentence on "The Recent German Philosophy") will hew out a new path. In this way I see the dialectic flow in the third attitude to objectivity from a critique of the one-sidedness of the Intuitionists to organizational responsibility.<sup>3</sup>

3. In a letter to Louis Dupre of Feb. 16, 1987, on the same subject, Dunayevskaya continued this paragraph as follows: "for the 'self-determination of the Idea'—as 'I' would call it, thus committing the great theft of Hegel's original category. It is this same 'self-determination of the Idea' with which I see Marx shouting down determinists and vulgar materialists—those post-Marx Marxists, beginning with Engels—as he develops 'revolution in permanence.'"  
\* "People may die, but ideas don't. I keep up communication with a number of people, and none more so than Hegel and Marx."

# A 1990s view: spontaneity, organization, philosophy

(continued from page 5)

self-movement, he never changed his position on the need for a "thin layer of Bolsheviks" as the vanguard party organization.

With her 1986 letter Dunayevskaya dug out the basis of this ambivalence by critically reexamining Lenin's **Philosophic Notebooks** at its high point—his commentary on the concluding chapters of Hegel's *Science of Logic*, "The Idea of Cognition" and "The Absolute Idea." In doing so she not only illuminated the limitations of Lenin, but pinpointed the stopping point of all post-Marx Marxists, which our generation now has the task of surpassing.

## LENIN'S PHILOSOPHIC NOTEBOOKS TODAY

"The Idea of Cognition," the next-to-last chapter of the *Science of Logic* and a focal point of



Rebellion, 1992  
e revolutionaries to work out a new rela-

Dunayevskaya's 1986 letter on Lenin, contains two sections: 1) "The Idea of the True," comprising Analytic and Synthetic Cognition, or the Theoretical Idea, and 2) "The Idea of the Good," or the Practical Idea.

The content of "The Idea of the Good" is especially cogent in light of the problems of our day. This is the realm of subjective self-certainty, where the subject wills the world to become what it ought to be. As Hegel said, "The subject is [here] a certainty of its own actuality and of the non-actuality of the world" (Hegel, *Science of Logic*, Miller trans., p. 818). Lenin translated this in his commentary on Hegel as, "i.e., the world does not satisfy man and man decides to change it by his own activity."

Thus, "The Idea of the Good" is hardly a realm that is unfamiliar to us. As revolutionaries, we know it well; in fact, we inhabit it.

The problem, however, is that with "The Idea of the Good" we are only on the **threshold** of the Absolute Idea. As Dunayevskaya notes in her letter on "The Third Attitude to Objectivity," there is no automatic sequence of forward movement in Hegel's dialectic; from the threshold one either moves forward to the full Idea of Freedom, or one **retrogresses** to an earlier standpoint.

Hegel spoke to this by focusing on the contradiction which afflicts the Practical Idea. Since the subject here strives to mold a world which seems opposed to itself into a shape conforming to its own ends, the **separation** of subject from object is the premise of this type of cognition. The more the subject relies on its will or volition to make the world what it ought to be, the more it reveals its distance from the world's objectivity. Subject and object end up in such "insuperable contradiction" that the subject attains only "a contingent, destructible existence," a "destiny that manifests itself in a number of forms" (p. 820).

To get out of this contradiction, the subject must "turn, not against an outer actuality, but against itself." That is, it must rid itself of the assumption that its free subjective activity stands opposed to the objectivity of cognition. It must embrace "an objective world whose inner ground and actual persistence is the Notion. This is the Absolute Idea" (p. 823).

In her 1986 letter on Lenin, Dunayevskaya shows that Lenin misread this transition from "The Idea of the Good" to the Absolute Idea in posing **practice** as the resolution of contradiction. What helped misdirect him, she shows, is Hegel's abbreviation of "The Idea of the Good" in the subsection on "volition" in his smaller *Logic*. This was the version Lenin preferred, as it gives the impression that Practice stands "higher" than Theory.<sup>3</sup>

It is important to note, however, that **this is not true just of Lenin**. In his commentary on "The Idea of the Good" in *The Young Hegel*, Georg Lukacs praised Lenin for singling out Practice as the resolution of contradiction, while dismissing (unlike Lenin) the chapter on the Absolute Idea as "religious."<sup>4</sup> The same is true of the other post-Marx Marxists who have commented

on this section of Hegel, such as Ernst Bloch and Henri Lefebvre.<sup>5</sup>

What pulls at even the greatest Marxists to "stop dead" at the threshold of the Absolute by posing "Practice" as the resolution of contradiction? What is the **objectivity** of this pull, and what are its concrete ramifications?

## TWO WORLDS IN OPPOSITION

Important illumination on these questions can be gained by turning to a crucial dimension of Hegel's critique of "The Idea of the Good" which Lenin paid scant attention to—Hegel's statement that the "unresolved contradiction" afflicting the Practical Idea is "considered in more detail" in a section of his *Phenomenology of Mind* entitled, "Spirit Certain of itself: Morality." This section immediately follows the chapter "Absolute Freedom and Terror."<sup>6</sup>

In her "Why Hegel's Phenomenology? Why Now?" Dunayevskaya wrote of this section: "'Absolute Freedom and Terror' is an analysis of what happened to the French Revolution as factionalism broke up the unity of the revolution so that for 'pure personality' the world became 'absolutely its own will,' so that terror succeeded so-called absolute freedom, since, by being only the negative it was 'merely the rage and fury of destruction.' In a word, Hegel considers that if you have not faced the question of reconstruction on new beginnings, but only destruction of the old, you have, therefore, reached only 'death—a death that achieves nothing, embraces nothing within its grasp; for what is negated is the unachieved, unfulfilled punctual entity of the absolutely free self.'"<sup>7</sup>

It is a formulation that speaks sharply to the revolutions of our era. How many revolutionaries, from Russia to China, and from Pol Pot's Cambodia to Grenada, spent themselves on "the rage and fury of destruction" without ever revealing what they were for? How many revolutions went under by focusing only on first negation, or the "destruction of the old," without ever reaching second negativity, or "the question of reconstruction on new beginnings"?

This has brought us to a profound crisis. For it means that despite all the revolutions, and all the creative freedom struggles, "nowhere in sight, not even in telescopic sight, is there an answer to the question, what happens after the conquest of power?"<sup>8</sup>

This took on deadly ramifications once a retrogressive "changed world" emerged in the 1980s. The very **idea** of revolution now came under sharp attack, both from the rulers and the Left. Yet even anti-Stalinist revolutionaries found themselves tongue-tied when it came to combatting this by projecting a viable concept of human liberation. The breakdown in the effort to project a concept of an emancipatory alternative to capitalism is by now a global phenomenon.

We here come face to face with the ramifications of getting stuck at the Practical Idea. For decades, the

5. This is discussed in detail in Kevin Anderson's "Lenin, Hegel and Western Marxism" in *Studies in Soviet Thought*, 44:79-129, 1992.

6. In the Johnston & Struthers translation of Hegel's *Science of Logic* (New York: MacMillan, 1929) the reference to the *Phenomenology* is to the last page of "Absolute Freedom and Terror" and the following section on Morality, whereas in the A.V. Miller translation (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977) the reference is to the beginning of the section on Morality. Similar discrepancies can be found in the various German editions.

7. See Raya Dunayevskaya, "Why Hegel's Phenomenology? Why Now?" in *News & Letters*, May 8, 1987.

8. This statement is from one of Dunayevskaya's manuscripts for her work on "Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy." See *Supplement to the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, Vol. 13, #10955.

question of how to embark on the path of revolution was left, at best, to deliberations over the "correct" tactics and strategy, as if they could be worked out irrespective of a philosophy of liberation. This characterized not only radicals who adhered to the "vanguard party," but also those who correctly opposed it in the name of spontaneous forms of organization. In holding organization in a separate compartment from philosophy, revolutionaries showed a preference for "Practice" as what resolves contradiction.

This has become **objectively** nonviable today. The crisis in articulating the concept of freedom shows how deadly the separation of organization from the dialectic of second negativity has proven to be. To move ahead, this separation must be broken down. It is this which gives new urgency to reconsidering Raya Dunayevskaya's 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes" on this, their 40th anniversary.

## THE 'PHILOSOPHIC MOMENT' OF 1953

Dunayevskaya's 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes" represent the "philosophic moment" of Marxist-Humanism. With this breakthrough she saw in Hegel's Absolute a **dual** movement—from theory to practice and from practice to theory. It provided eyes for grasping the newness of the contemporary mass struggles and the importance of restating the **philosophic** dimension of Marx's thought. She returned to this breakthrough again and again over the next three decades.

Yet in 1986-87, when she returned to these 1953 Letters once more, she saw a dimension of them that hadn't been fully singled out earlier as a determinant. She now saw in her 1953 breakthrough the "ground and roof" for working out the "untrodden path" of dialectics of organization. Let's look into these letters here, however briefly, as part of opening up new discussion on them.

Dunayevskaya's 1953 Letters were written as part of a dialogue with her co-leaders in the Johnson-Forest Tendency on what they called "dialectics of the party." To Johnson (C.L.R. James), this meant using dialectics to prove the superiority of spontaneous forms of mass organization over the elitist "vanguard party to lead." Though Dunayevskaya also opposed the "party to lead," it is clear from the start of her letter of May 12, 1953 that she had a different goal in mind than James.

As she wrote on May 12, 1953, "I am not concerned with spontaneity versus organization, nor with Stalinism which the workers will overcome. I am concerned only with the dialectic of...that type of grouping like ours...and its relationship to the mass[es]." As she later put it, she was exploring "what happens to a small group 'like us'...what is the **objectivity** which explains [its] presence, as the objectivity explains the spontaneous outburst of the masses? In a word, I was looking for the objectivity of subjectivity."<sup>9</sup>

With her letter of May 12, 1953, she probes into the final chapter of Hegel's *Science of Logic*, "The Absolute Idea," with this question of organization very much in mind. In a most exciting journey, she relates the various stages of the dialectic to relations between leaders and ranks, as well as to the masses outside the organization and those within it. She focuses directly on the heart of the dialectic, "the negation of the negation," quoting Hegel's statement that it is "the turning point of the movement of the Notion...the innermost source of

(continued on page 8)

9. Raya Dunayevskaya, "Presentation on the Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy" of June 1, 1987, in *The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism* (Chicago: News and Letters, 1989), p. 10. This work also contains her 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes."

## The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism by Raya Dunayevskaya

contains

- Presentation on Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy, June 1, 1987
- Letters on Hegel's Absolutes, May 12 and 20, 1953

"In Hegelian dialectics, the philosophic moment is a determinant; even if the person who was driven to articulate the Idea of that 'moment' was very nearly unconscious as to its depth and its ramifications, it remained the element that governed the concretization that follows the laborious birth that poured forth in a torrent nevertheless.

"Specifically and concretely, in our case the moment I'm referring to is May 12 and 20, 1953. The Idea is in demystifying the Absolute as either God or the closed ontology, as the unity I singled out, a dual movement from theory to practice, from practice as well as from theory."

Among the reviews of this work:

"...she attempts to achieve from dialectical thought a 'philosophy of freedom' which represents a humanistic Marxism opposed to a bureaucratic orthodoxy of action and thought."

—Gonzalo Portales, *Hegel-Studien*

"She was a practicing dialectician and urged those around her not to abandon theory in the midst of practice...her insight that Hegel passes beyond transition to liberation led her to read Hegel's works not as a closed system, but as a philosophic beginning vital for helping us understand the meaning of our own times."

—Patricia Altenbernd Johnson  
*Owl of Minerva*

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3. One Hegel scholar, Errol Harris, notes that "the transition from cognition to will in the [smaller *Logic*] seems unnecessarily obscure and inadequate." See his *An Interpretation of the Logic of Hegel* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1983), p. 284.

4. Georg Lukacs, *The Young Hegel* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1975), pp. 348-52.

# A 1990s view: spontaneity, organization, philosophy

(continued from page 7)

all activity, of living and spiritual self-movement." She even poses the need for "a new philosophy or party" to express this "absolute method."

A critical point is reached when she cites Hegel's critique of impatience as a "wish to go beyond the determinate...and to be immediately in the absolute." She then writes, "I am shaking all over for we have come to where we part from Lenin."

In what sense did Lenin fall into "impatience"? The point can be grasped when viewed in light of Dunayevskaya's 1986 letter on Lenin. She there showed that Lenin skipped over the determinate, the Theoretical Idea, in his commentary on "The Idea of Cognition" by posing Practice as the resolution of contradiction. We now see the same kind of skipping over the determinate in his commentary on the Absolute Idea, insofar as he is so taken with Practice that he gives short shrift to Hegel's concept of second negativity.

This is especially evident when he reaches the last paragraph of the Science of Logic, where Hegel presents the movement from Logic to Nature to Mind. Lenin, who translated Nature as Practice, got very excited about the movement from Logic to Nature, declaring that Hegel was "stretching a hand to materialism." But he dismissed the rest of the paragraph, where Hegel presented the movement from Nature to Mind, as "unimportant."

This Dunayevskaya refused to accept. For in posing the movement from Nature to Mind, Hegel was directing the reader to his Philosophy of Mind, the work which most fully projects his concept of "absolute negativity." This has become concrete for our age.

She wrote, "You see, Vladimir Ilyitch you didn't have Stalinism to overcome, when transitions, revolutions seemed sufficient to bring the new society. Now everyone looks at the totalitarian one-party state, that is the new that must be overcome by a totally new revolt in which everyone experiences 'absolute liberation.'" As she later wrote, "It is the generation that followed, our age that suffered through those three decades of Stalinism, that had to face the reality of what happens after. It is this objectivity, this concreteness that emboldened me not to stop where Lenin stopped at the approach to the Absolute Idea, but to follow Hegel to the Philosophy of Mind."<sup>10</sup>

A truly new door was thereby opened, for the working

out of the role of "a group like us" was for the first time jammed up with the dialectic of absolute negativity. It led Dunayevskaya to separate herself, not just from Lenin, but also from C.L.R. James, who likewise dismissed the Philosophy of Mind as unimportant.

The fullest expression of this breakthrough was reached with her letter of May 20, 1953 on the Philosophy of Mind. As she focuses on Hegel's concept of "full-blown liberty [as] the very essence of mind," there is no doubt we are viewing the realm of freedom. A true leap was then achieved with her commentary on the final three paragraphs of the Philosophy of Mind, which Hegel added to the work a year before his death in 1831.

With paragraph 575, Hegel presents the syllogism Logic-Nature-Mind. To Dunayevskaya, it signified that "the movement is from the logical principle or theory to nature or practice and from practice not alone to theory but to the new society which is its essence." Nature, as the middle term, indicates that "practice is 'implicitly the Idea,'" a notion that forms the basis of her view of the mass struggles for freedom as not only force, but reason.

having "a word to say" about organization at the end of the May 20th letter is precisely what opens up a new door to the dialectics of organization. For instead of posing a specific form or type of organization as the Universal, she poses a new relationship to the Idea of Freedom in concluding, "We have entered the new society." That is, instead of presenting a form of organization, or a mediator, as the determinant, she projects the need for dialectic mediation, which each generation must work out anew for itself. In developing this within the context of a discussion on the "role of a group like us," a new concept of organization is being born.

The importance of this 1953 breakthrough cannot be overestimated. Our age has witnessed an abundance of forms of organization, both "spontaneous" and "organized." Yet by the 1990s it is evident that none has succeeded in breaking through to the new. It isn't just the vanguardist forms of organization which have ended up capitulating to existing society. That is also true of so creative a form of workers' self-organization as Solidarity in Poland. What remains unworked out is the role of an organization of revolutionaries opposed to the elitist parties and for spontaneous mass struggles but which recognizes that a philosophy of new human relations is needed to change the world. This is what makes the 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes" our contemporary.

## RETROGRESSION, OR NEW BEGINNINGS?

The implication of Dunayevskaya's second letter we have printed here, her 1986 letter on "The Third Attitude to Objectivity," is that we face the risk of retrogression if we do not work out such a new relationship between philosophy and organization.

In Hegel, "The Third Attitude to Objectivity" refers to immediate knowledge, or intuitionism. The essence of the Third Attitude is the view that "belief" and "insight" are sufficient, i.e., that ideas do not have to be proved. In focusing on how Hegel's critique of the Third Attitude speaks to the question of organization, Dunayevskaya is pointing to the importance of manifesting proof of the objectivity of cognition. It isn't organization "as such" that's at issue as much as the labor of giving organizational expression to the dialectic of negativity.

As we can see from Dunayevskaya's letter on Lenin, however, he did not manifest proof of the objectivity of cognition in his commentary on "The Idea of Cognition" and "The Absolute Idea." Though he wrote of how "cognition not only reflects the objective world, but creates it," he didn't concretize it. When he did single out "objectivity" he referred not to the objectivity of cognition but rather to "objective world connections," i.e., materialism.

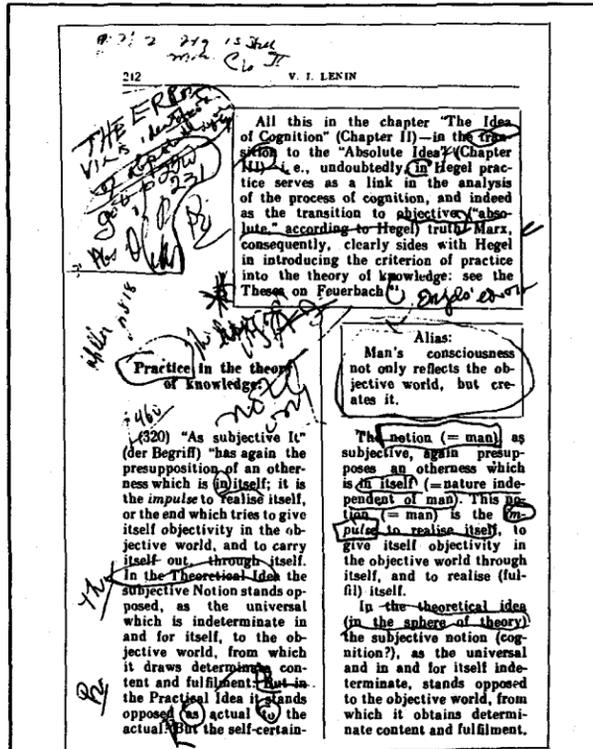
Nevertheless, it is not easy to see how Lenin relates to the letter on the Third Attitude. After all, he was no intuitionist. What these letters seem to indicate, however, is that skipping over the objectivity of cognition in his age left Lenin on the threshold of the Absolute, whereas doing so in ours sends you reeling backward into the arms of intuitionism.

The realities of our time may help explain the difference. Our age has witnessed an array of revolutions and freedom struggles, but it has also seen one revolution after another remain unfinished or transform into its opposite, often by counter-revolution from within. This historic period has thus provided proof that Practice alone cannot surmount the contradiction between the idea of freedom and its actualization.

But what happens when history proves that the goal cannot be reached by Practice alone at a moment when revolutionaries haven't yet manifested proof of the objectivity of a philosophy of liberation? The result is a void in which all sorts of nefarious elements appear.

That is why we insist: to combat the retrogressive character of this period, far more than a "regroupment" of existing forces is in order. What is instead needed is a serious rearticulation of what freedom is about, what the antithesis of capitalism and established "Communism" is, and what new human relations we are for. Given the way the concept of revolution has been perverted by one tyrannical regime after another, we cannot presume a forward movement to the future without this hard organizational-philosophic labor.

Our generation can rise to the challenge of such an organization of thought when it roots itself not alone in the terrain of the present, but in those high points of past freedom struggles and thought which point a direction to the future. It is in this spirit that we look forward to an intense back-and-forth with our readers on the meaning of the 40th anniversary of Raya Dunayevskaya's 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes."



Pg. 212 from Vol 38 of Lenin's *Collected Works* with marginalia by Raya Dunayevskaya. This is the page of Lenin's *Philosophic Notebooks* Dunayevskaya discusses in detail in her July 3, 1986 letter to Louis Dupre.

With paragraph 576, Hegel presents the syllogism Nature-Mind-Logic. Mind, as the middle term, indicates that the theoretic-form here reaches philosophy. It forms the basis for a view of Marxism as a philosophy of liberation.

With paragraph 577, Hegel breaks with the syllogistic form by throwing out Logic altogether. He instead presents us with the "Self-Thinking Idea," as the unity of Nature and Mind. This unity however, is no mere "quietly persisting identity," but rather a ceaseless movement that opens up the path to freedom.<sup>11</sup>

In commenting on the conclusion of this May 20th letter, Dunayevskaya later said, "It becomes necessary to stress here, over and over again, that I had not a single word to say then about the Party or the Soviets or any form of organization. On the contrary. Here is what I then concluded: 'We have entered the new society.'"<sup>12</sup>

It may well sound contradictory. Has not this entire journey been in order to help work out the question of organization? So why does she say she had "not a word to say" on organization with the end of the letter?

Contradictory as it sounds, it seems to me that not

11. See Hegel's smaller *Logic*, paragraph 215: "The Idea is essentially process, because its identity is only the absolute and free identity of the Concept, because this identity is the absolute negativity and hence dialectical."

12. Raya Dunayevskaya, "On the Battle of Ideas" (1982) in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection: Marxist-Humanism—a Half Century of its World Development*, Vol. 11, #7486.

10. Raya Dunayevskaya, "Talking to Myself" of Jan. 21, 1987, in *Supplement to the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, Vol. 13, #10848-51.

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**HOLOCAUST OF WACO**

As the politicians and media show, it's hard to keep one's reason in face of the horror in Waco. They all but attribute some supernatural power to David Koresh in order to explain the behavior of his followers. But pull back a moment and it becomes obvious that the "madman in Waco" is an artifact who expressed the true logic of this degenerate society, the unfreedom of his theology reflecting the unfreedom of life under capitalism.

One newscaster wondered how so many people could allow themselves to be incinerated. I wanted to ask her whether she had ever joined a protest against nuclear weapons. From Hiroshima to Auschwitz, Bosnia to Waco, the truths of capitalism find expression as holocaust.

G.E  
Chicago

**BREAST  
CANCER  
AND  
THE WLM**



Terry Moon's column on breast cancer (December 1992 N&L) coincided with a series on that question in Science. The example in Moon's column of the research being done on tainted breast milk without apparent concern for the tainted breast the milk was coming from was quite apt. Women have been historically invisible to science both as scientists and as subject. In the '70s Dr. Estelle Ramey campaigned against a medical textbook that used "cheesecake" photos of bare breasted women to liven up the text. Her contemporary, Dr. Adelaide Hackett, told me women's breasts were never discussed in medical school, just regarded as a fat pad.

It has taken 20 years of the women's movement and an ever-increasing death rate for science to begin to budge. Most research has been by women in isolation without a lot of funding...We are going to have to stay on top of this research, its funding, direction and interpretation, while tackling capitalism at the same time. No easy task.

Scientist and feminist  
Berkeley

"Jacobson's peddles Pain and Misery: the 160 women workers who were 'permanently replaced' now have no health insurance to pay for breast cancer screening, or care," workers from Teamster Local 64 told 6,000 people who "Raced for the Cure" April 17 in Detroit. I heard a lot of shock and anger at these words—Jacobson's was a sponsor of the race!

In the midst of a chilling snowstorm, spirits were high. Even though many marchers wore hand-made signs in memory of a mother, an aunt, a friend, a daughter, others proclaimed, "I'm a survivor." It made me feel that Audre Lorde, like Joe Hill, "never died."

Participant  
Detroit

**WORKERS' VOICES**

I wrote a letter to President Clinton telling him the investment tax credit for business was a bad idea because it would give a tax break for investing in machinery, not in labor. I also said the deficit was caused by military spending, the S&L bailout and waste. I'm afraid the investment tax credit will be like the S&L bailout and we'll have to pay for it. But I doubt they listen to our letters.

Unemployed white worker  
New York City

The "Workshop Talks" column in the April N&L hit home more than anything I have read in a long time. It shows how management in some shops has been able to transform some workers into policing themselves, with this so-called "team concept." This is workers doing away with their own self—this is suicide! That workers today could accept this shows how far backward we went under Reagan and Bush.

Retired auto worker  
California

**Readers' Views**

**'PRACTICING DIALECTICS' IN TODAY'S CHANGED WORLD**

The letter on "Practicing Dialectics" chosen for the Archives column in the April issue was written in May 1968—at the height of the '60s movements—but it still speaks to today, because we have not yet gone beyond that highpoint. If we are able to work out the full meaning of the Los Angeles rebellion that happened a year ago, we may be able to go beyond. We have to be able to grasp a highpoint that happens in life, in order to help it to develop.

Black revolutionary  
Los Angeles

What I found compelling in Raya Dunayevskaya's "Practicing Dialectics," was where she quoted Hegel on how "Every beginning must be made from the Absolute," and related it to "the plunge into freedom that a generalization gives you." That "plunge" describes the most exhilarating moment in life when one recognizes that a new world is possible. I see that kind of moment in one of the new paragraphs she added to *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*: "If we are to achieve success in the new revolutions, we have to see that the uprooting of the old is total from the start." That means starting from the Absolute. It was what Women's Liberationists wanted and a plunge into freedom that created a movement. The question is, how to develop that? She tells us "that, in turn, depends on women practicing the immediate problems inseparable from the philosophic context."

Terry Moon  
Chicago

To me, "Every beginning must be made from the Absolute" speaks to the need to counter those involved in labor struggles who think that the only thing we need to do is to fight on the practical questions at hand. But pragmatism like that won't get us to a new society! You can focus on one particular—but there are ten other ones that you're not dealing with! A comprehensive philosophic approach has to be part of the work, otherwise the total uprooting of capitalism that we need won't ever happen.

Worker and thinker  
California

Twenty-five years ago I had just started working for the Illinois Department of Public Aid as a caseworker and had just gotten back from boot camp as a member of the Illinois National Guard. On April 4, 1968, the ass Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated, my unit was activated, during which time the office where I worked was torched. That summer we were activated again for the Democratic National Convention held in Chicago.

Raya Dunayevskaya's "Practicing Dialectics" started my mind wandering back in time to the chain of events that had such a profound effect on how I started to practice thinking. The Black revolt, the anti-Vietnam war movement, the student rebellion, the continuation of the Boss and Black relationship in the welfare system—I knew there had to be a better way for the self-creativity of the individual and started on a journey towards Marxist-Humanism.

Jerry  
Chicago

I was talking to a young feminist about the special workshop/classes that News and Letters Committees are having this spring on *The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism* and how what is central is trying to work out the relationship between philosophy, spontaneity and organization. She said that reading *Emma Goldman* had frustrated her because *Goldman* had such great critiques of the Russian Revolution, but never had any answers. I told her that *Dunayevskaya* had said that the new book she was working on, "Dialectics of Philosophy and Organization...." was not going to have the "answer" in it,

but could provide the ground for working it out. She started talking about the need to move beyond knee-jerk reactions to things, like a list of set answers from the brain; or the opposite, gut-feeling responses from the heart. She wants to work out both mind and heart together in a new way.

Women's liberationist  
Illinois

**THE ARTIFICER TODAY**

I was really fascinated with Lou Turner's essay on "Nationalism, the Artificer and Afrocentricity." His return to Raya Dunayevskaya's exploration of "the Artificer" in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind* illuminated, in so many ways, the rise of rabid nationalism on a global scale today. You couldn't read Hegel's characterization of "a host of separate, antagonistic national Spirits who hate and fight each other to the death" and not think of the genocidal Serbian nationalism which is killing the people of Bosnia.

Graduate philosophy student  
Chicago

Turner's analysis of both the self-confining logic of Asante's *Afrocentric Idea*, and the objectivity of its appeal, especially to Black youth today, was enormously illuminating. Arguing that Asante "spirits away the revolutionary nature of the Black dimension," turning it into a "rhetorical device, and artifice," he asks whether the "revolution" has replaced its actuality. But Turner doesn't stop there. Conversely, he asks whether "Afrocentricity, given the objectivity of its appeal in the African-American community, presages new openings, new beginnings toward working out a genuine philosophy of revolution? Or, can it be both?"

The phrase, "or can it be both," reminded me of Dunayevskaya's question, in Chap. 1 of *Philosophy and Revolution*, about whether Marx is right that it is a "delusion" to think that the Idea of Freedom can "absorb" objectivity, or whether it is the "ideal toward which man aims, and can it be both?" Posing Turner's and Dunayevskaya's questions together opens a whole new line of thought for me.

Mordechai Mucamel  
Chicago

To see how universal is the problem of the artificer reducing self-determination to self-existence, look at how Modzelewski now views Poland in the latest issue of *New Politics*. Before, when Solidarity was a mass movement, he said self-determination unfolded in new forms of genuine democracy. Now it has become an abstract symbol allied with the Church and the mythic identity in the retrogressive idea of the "true" (i.e., Catholic) Pole. Liberals on social policy who believe in reactionary economics of global capital to discipline workers are allied with the Church that still mouths pro-worker rhetoric along with its reactionary social policy. What moves forward in this national existence is the worst of both. Marx is needed to complete the movement from national consciousness to humanism.

R. B.  
Oakland, Cal.

**'SOCIALIST SCHOLARS'**

As a newcomer and independent radical, I have to say that the West Coast Socialist Scholars Conference, April 17, seemed to take place in the vacuum. It was the same day as the verdict in the Rodney King civil rights trial, but most speakers made no reference at all to the trial, the verdict and the massive police presence throughout the city. Their mindset seemed set in stone. At one workshop on "Socialism at the End of the 20th Century," most of the discussion was about socialism at the beginning of the 20th century! It took a Marxist-Humanist and myself to drag the discussion up to 1993!

Gabriel C.  
Los Angeles

At the West Coast Socialist Scholars Conference here, I attended a panel on organizing garment workers in Los Angeles and spoke about my own experience in the 1930s. We cannot think about organizing in the same way today, I said. Back then, we organized our bodies, the leadership became our heads and the CIO got transformed into its opposite. Now workers have to get their heads and not just their bodies organized. Everyone there seemed to want to talk more about that idea.

Felix Martin  
Los Angeles

John Marcotte, "Workshop Talks" columnist, made quite an intervention at our panel on "Labor and Politics" at the Socialist Scholars Conference here. (It was done in such a modest way, I don't even know if he realized the stir he caused.) Some union representatives were talking as though there was nothing controversial about working with management to improve "productivity." Marcotte identified himself as a columnist for N&L, saying that he and other workers he knew were tired and didn't want to offer any more "productivity" for capitalism. What he said set the room buzzing and seemed to change the direction of the discussion.

Professor, Sociology  
and Labor Studies  
New York City



**THE  
L.A.P.D.  
TRIAL**

The media shows Blacks who are happy with the verdict. Ask more Blacks what they think and you'll find they are not at all happy. All four cops are guilty. The tapes show it.

Black student  
Manhattan

On the day of the verdict, San Francisco was quiet but alert. Storefronts along Mission were covered and police were everywhere—on the streets, rooftops, even the sewers. Storeowners were warned of violent riots and advised to close their stores. At 4 PM there was a demonstration organized by Roots Against War and Police Brutality. About 175 marched from 24th and Mission to Laguna and Turk where they were joined by 50 others, and marched through the projects to Jefferson Park where there was a rally. A middle-aged Black janitor spoke for many others there when he said, "All 27 pigs were guilty and should go to jail. They're trying to pacify us by convicting two of them. We don't need peace, we need justice."

White youth  
San Francisco

We were invited to spend an evening at the home of a couple who were also entertaining friends from Los Angeles. The LA couple were bragging about their son, a member of the LAPD. They were so happy he had finally, "got his n-----." He had killed a man and was now fully accepted by his peers. They thought it was wonderful, and so did their hosts. We left as soon as we could. This incident happened 19 years ago. "Civilized world" is still an oxymoron.

Supporter  
Hawaii

**NEWS & LETTERS**

**WHY SUPPORT N&L?**

Here is \$2.50 for a gift sub for my friend's birthday. I started to tell her about N&L—theory/practice, intellectuals/workers, readers/writers and the breaking down of these barriers. Better yet, I thought, let her read it and get involved for herself. I'd like to challenge all readers of N&L to give a gift sub to a friend each year. Let's get the ball rolling.

Student/Teacher  
San Francisco

# One year after the Los Angeles rebellion

(continued from page 1)

big part of what the 1992 rebellion was all about. And now this so-called Black leadership is crying and screaming on TV that we have a victory with this verdict and that we have peace in the hood. It's ridiculous. We have not received justice."

As a brother from the Imperial Courts housing projects by the name of Heavy D told the *Los Angeles Times* (April 18, 1993): "You know how it goes, they give up one or two to make everything seem right... They needed something to pacify the public tension. But ain't nothing changed. We'd do better walking through a cage of hungry lions with a double-breasted pork-chop suit on than get a fair shake in court."

The feeling in the Black community was that this system must go, or be taught a lesson that without justice there will be no peace. If Black life can be so expendable as to be beaten or killed in full view of the world and that is endorsed by the same system that claims to represent "democracy" for the whole world to follow, then that same great white lie would be made into a nightmare that would keep white America awake at night in fear of Black mass revolt, self-organized and out of control of the sell-out Black politicians and preachers.

This white fear has made it open hunting season on Black life nationwide. This white fear intensified with the approach of the King verdict, as plans for police-state rule by curfew, rifle butts and road blocks in the Black community were prepared.

White America's illusion that a Black man being beaten by four L.A.P.D. officers, while many more looked on, is actually a threat to the lives of armed policemen, has been exposed for what it really is—racism. In other words, much of white America approves of this form of state terror as a necessary evil to preserve its middle-class lifestyle. This same racist attitude preserved the segregated South for 100 years after it took a civil war to abolish chattel slavery. Do we need another Civil War to finish the first one which left Black and white labor chained?

Today, there are many mini-wars being fought nationwide daily. Even some of L.A.'s largest corporations, such as ARCO, prepared for an outbreak of violence in response to the King verdict by informing its 1,500 employees of its security measures:

"We don't anticipate a riot. We are not telling employees there will be a riot," stated ARCO spokesman Al Greenstein. "We are simply telling employees the steps we are taking to ensure their safety. It is simply emergency planning just as we do with earthquakes or other emergencies."

Compared to a natural disaster, nothing could be more "natural" than the human search and hunger for freedom. When it is masses reaching for it all at once it does produce an earthquake-like rumble that's heard around the world, just as the L.A. rebellion was one year ago.

That rebellion in 1992 showed the depth of Black frustration with this unjust system, its racism and poverty, as well as the masses' recognition that they have strength in numbers and in motion against the police who can only attempt to divide to conquer. Supposedly they were ready for the next rebellion, with Black Police Chief Willie Williams riding the white horse to the rescue.

## WHERE ARE WE ONE YEAR LATER?

While only time will tell how last year's rebellion will develop, we cannot leave the question wide open. Where does the one year anniversary of the 1992 L.A. rebellion find the multicultural L.A. community in the wake of the second King verdict?

Many in the Black community say that we have to give the new Police Chief a chance, now that Daryl Gates is out. Many in the African-American established leadership criticized the L.A.P.D. while Gates was in office. Once he was forced to resign, that criticism disappeared and the police force was endorsed with a silence that provided the ground for the establishment to call for 1,000 more police on L.A. streets.

Police Chief Willie Williams is a "new force" for law and order in the Black community. In Philadelphia, May 1985, when Black Mayor Wilson Goode gave approval to the Philadelphia Police to drop a bomb on the MOVE compound, burning down the Black community along Osage Ave., Willie Williams was a high-ranking officer under Goode. The explosion killed 11 people, including several children.

It is as if the Black community is a foreign country with no protection under the law. That is how one Black youth characterized it when he stated to a KFI Radio talk show host: "Don't treat South Central like a foreign country. Jobs are needed down here in South Central."

Many today within the ranks of the unemployed are Black youth who see very few ways to earn a livelihood beyond the underground economy of the street, which means an early death for many.

## NEW ORGANIZATIONAL BEGINNINGS

On the other hand new forms of organizations have developed in the year since the L.A. rebellion in re-

sponse to the objective conditions that existed before and after the rebellion. The activities of these organizations have illuminated our new passion for justice in the Black community, an objective need that the elected African-American politicians were not meeting. These politicians continue to manipulate any true movement so as not to allow it to reach its full potential and threaten the status quo.

Many of these new organizations have been meeting in a SCLA church in a town-hall style forum. Discussion has centered around the two trials—Rodney King and the four Black youth charged in the beating of white trucker Reginald Denny. These organizations, such as the L.A. 4+ Committee, Latasha Harlins Justice Com-

## 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.



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mittee, Hands Across Watts, and Mothers ROC grew out of the rebellion, or were seeds planted before, in anticipation of the coming storm.

One leaflet for an upcoming South Central forum stated, "We want justice. What is justice? Together we will define the meaning of justice and organize to obtain it. This is only the beginning!"

While it is only a beginning, it is a good and concrete concept to hold onto in order to develop new and original concepts from below to shake up the very structure of the system that treats Black youth, in particular, as felons. As one youth described at a meeting recently, when we drive around outside or inside the Black community three or four deep, it is like asking to be stopped, searched and forced to lay out on the cold concrete sidewalk.

While an organization like Hands Across Watts developed out of the gang truce between the Bloods and the Crips, they concentrate on Black-on-Black self-help to counterpose to the bombardment from the media, politicians and police that gang members are only perpetrators of Black-on-Black crime. This organization has asked for help to teach English and the 3 Rs to a "colonized people." They also represent an "element within the Black community ready to defend itself" against life-threatening abuse.

Most of these new organizations grew out of personal experiences and tragedies that people have turned into political action and consciousness. Mothers ROC, which stands for "Mothers to Reclaim Our Children, attempt to save and free the next generation of today's youth from imprisonment: "We say there's NO justice. The United States imprisons more people than any other country in the world. There is NO meaningful employment. If we understand that it is the system that is failing us all, especially our young and not the other way around, we will group together and fight. We will build and grow, we will overcome."

The L.A. 4+ face charges that could put them away for natural life, while the two cops convicted in the Rodney King case face a maximum of only 10 years in prison. This double standard is a slap in the face of the Black community whose drive to uproot this system we have not seen the last of.

## SELF-LIMITING BLACK LEADERSHIP

Local and national Black leadership have swarmed over L.A.'s Black community in the wake of the second Rodney King verdict with calls for calm and peace. These established leaders, from Jesse Jackson and Maxine Waters to Tom Bradley and Patricia Moore, act as if justice has been served with the two guilty verdicts of Koon and Powell.

These "old" politicians are caught up in the self-limiting concepts of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, which ended with the Black elite getting elected to political office. This has not served the urban Black ghetto's quest for real equality, nor has electing Blacks to office

destroyed institutional racism and segregation. Blacks still have poor education, no jobs and not the faintest glimpse of justice under a system these politicians are lost in.

At a conference in Memphis recently, commemorating the 25th anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King, the *Los Angeles Times* (April 5, 1993) quoted Lou Turner on the need to work out the meaning of the end of the 1960s. How do we work out the historical meaning of the firestorm of urban rebellion back then in relationship to urban rebellion today? "The defining moment that we've lived through in the last few years is Los Angeles," Turner said. And it has illuminated the "exhaustion of the ideas of the previous age."

In reality, wrote Raya Dunayevskaya in 1955, "any generalization no matter how good, becomes its own opposite when it doesn't change along with the constantly changing concrete... You cannot live by the truths of another era. That is the activity of theory and practice. You have to constantly reinterpret" (Theoretical and Practical Perspectives: Where to Begin)?

The Black masses have been at the forefront of the needed American revolution throughout this country's history. Being looked upon as the weak link in the capitalist chain, we find ourselves in a compromising position. However, it is the additive of color in American capitalism's army of the unemployed, many of whom are youth, that intensifies the rebellious nature of the American scene.

On the 250th anniversary of the birth of Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence, we must take another look at David Walker's Appeal, which holds true even more today. David Walker confronted Thomas Jefferson for his statement about Black being an "unfortunate" color.

That same unfortunate tone can be heard in the voice of his namesake William Jefferson Clinton when speaking of the unemployed. David Walker shouted, "My color will yet root some of you out of the very face of the earth. America is more our country that it is the white, we have enriched it with our blood and tears."

That needed uprooting is on the horizon, but the question is: how do we guarantee that it becomes a complete movement for full freedom, and not more oppression the day after the rebellion?

## Delta Pride workers

(continued from page 3)

to work for them. It's time we got a wage to live on.

**Katie Knight:** Classes I to III are production. I'm in Class I, and I've been at Delta Pride eight years, and still only get \$5.15 an hour. It should be at least \$7.50.

**Sharon Smith:** Maintenance is Classes IV to VII. No women are allowed in maintenance. There are mostly Black men and a few white men. Production is nearly all Black women. They say women aren't qualified for maintenance; they don't even consider their applications. They say women aren't strong enough to move heavy tables and machines. But there should be two people to move heavy things anyway.

**Linda Hoskins:** It's also the hours that are a problem. I work on the kill line. They cut our hours back real bad about three weeks ago; we are only getting about 20 hours a week. It's very hard to live on that; you can't budget. First they work you overtime any day they like. Then they turn around and give you hardly any hours, and you have to figure out how to live on that.

**Sharon Smith:** You never know what time you will get off. If you leave at any time after your eight hours, you can be disciplined, with what they call an "unauthorized tardy." You can be there 12 hours, and tell them that you have to go home because your babysitter is leaving, and they will give you an "unauthorized tardy." If you get six in a year, you are terminated. They say rules should be "within reason," but some of their rules are not.

**Sarah White:** In October, we will see that we get what we need. No one will negotiate without us. It won't be people from Delta Pride management and the international off by themselves; it won't be two or three people in a room somewhere. We will have a negotiating committee with workers from each of the plants. Everyone will know what is going on, and be a part of it. I try to teach my children about history, about Martin Luther King and all the struggles, about how hard it was. Once we did not feel good about ourselves. They tried to make us feel we were stupid and illiterate. But they didn't know we were smarter than they were.

## Marxism and Freedom

by Raya Dunayevskaya

"The reexamination of Marxian theory is one of the most urgent tasks for comprehending the contemporary situation... Raya Dunayevskaya's book... tries to recapture the integral unity of Marxian theory at its very foundation: in the humanistic philosophy."

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## Youth

## Youth today face the deep crisis in state-capitalism

by Jim Guthrie

I would like to make my contribution to what I hope will be an ongoing discussion of the meaning for youth today of **The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism (MHTSC)**, a collection of 17 writings from Raya Dunayevskaya's Archives that range from her original analysis of Russia as a state-capitalist society in 1941 through four decades of her projection of the meaning of state-capitalism as a global phenomenon.

MHTSC does not contain an in-depth discussion of youth problems and struggles, yet I believe it gives us a basis to deepen our understanding of youth as a philosophic-revolutionary category by focusing on the way in which the Marxist-Humanist theory of state-capitalism gives us a new understanding of today. We live in a very different period from the 1960s because of the fall of Communism in Russia and Eastern Europe, but also because of the total crisis in the global economy.

In my experience I've seen the impact this crisis has had on both student youth and inner-city youth. After leaving a campus where technocrats were openly transforming the university into a high-tech training ground for big capital, and much of the Left believed we were in a "post-industrial age" in which the working class was irrelevant, I've gone on to work in an elementary school on Chicago's Black economically desolated Westside.

Images of successful Black doctors, lawyers, and an astronaut are held up as "role models" by teachers who say, "You can be whatever you want to be, if you believe in yourself and try hard enough." But few make it to fifth grade before realizing that in this society that just ain't so. Thirteen-year-olds have told me bitterly how both of their parents have to work 12 hours a day. The reality many of the kids grow up with was brought home to me by one young mother who volunteers at the school: "My goal is to get a job before I'm forty."

In the 1977 essay "Today's Epigones Who Try to Truncate Marx's Capital" Dunayevskaya shows how with the 1975 world economic crisis bourgeois ideologies began quoting from Marx's Capital on the de-

cline in the rate of profit as endemic to capitalism because they had no other way to explain the global crisis. Their own official data showed that, although there were high net profits at the end of 1976, "there is such a decline in the rate of profit compared to what they consider necessary to keep investing for expanded production, they are holding off." The resulting low rate of growth, Dunayevskaya concludes is by no means a temporary situation to be overcome with the next economic boom because, "There is to be no next boom" (p. 124).

In the 1986 essay, "Capitalist Production/Alienated Labor: This Nuclear World and its Political Crises," Dunayevskaya explains that during the Great Depression in the 1930s the accepted bourgeois theory was



that the only way to get out of the crisis was to couple production with employment, so the capitalists made a fetish out of creating a state plan to achieve that end. Today it is clear that even the most controlling state plan cannot stop capitalism's law of motion towards collapse, so the fetishism of the Plan is being replaced by another Grand Illusion: uncoupling employment from production, the belief that greater productivity can come out of robotized production and computers.

They have completely forgotten that Alienated Labor is the creator of all values and surplus values. Introducing greater technology in order to extract more unpaid labor from workers at the point of production cannot, in the long run, solve the crisis in the rate of profit. Instead it creates ever greater unemployment.

This unemployment has had its heaviest concentration among Black and Latino youth. As the production jobs dry up the alienation the worker experienced in production is transformed into the general social alienation experienced by youth who are forced to live in a racist society which no longer has a place for them. It was this unemployed army Karl Marx called "grave diggers of capitalism."

Dunayevskaya counters the fetish of high-tech by stressing that only revolution can abolish the illusion that even some Marxists have that this new form of production is the new Universal. Revolutionaries, she argues, must never be deluded that "Alienated Labor under capitalism is the human activity, much less that science is the human activity." (p. 152) Rather, it is the complete rejection of this inhuman alienating system by youth today which emerged most starkly in the Los Angeles rebellion, that shows the urgency of revolution.

With working-class youth being demonized as gangbangers and teenage mother welfare cheats, and student activists being told that "the working class no longer exists" by the so-called most radical professor on campus, we need to understand the real source of the urban crisis—and the source of its resolution—by listening to those who have had the closest look at all its horrors.

## Lesbian and Gay march

Washington, D.C.—Organizers estimate that over one million people participated in the March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay and Bi Equal Rights and Liberation on April 25. The outpouring of pride, commitment and support was intended to send a strong message on issues like AIDS, Civil Rights laws and the military ban. But beyond the particular issues, there was a real feeling of having made history.

Downtown Washington had become a place where, for once, Lesbians and Gays could walk hand-in-hand with their lovers without fear. This sense of freedom was especially evident in the Dyke March which took place on Saturday night. Tens of thousands of beautiful women (and a few men) took to the streets in "a celebration of struggle, survival and resistance." It was truly inspiring, even though some remarks by Gay men in the crowd showed the awful ubiquity of sexism in this society.

Also disturbing was the use in this march (in signs and slogans) of words which are normally used by men to insult various parts of womens' bodies. At a time like this, when sexism has turned into outright murder of women everywhere, it seems inappropriate to use this kind of objectifying language. How can you "reclaim" words which are meant to kill you? The most powerful images were the pictures of Lesbians who were victims of hate killings.

The next day's rally and march on Washington was a joyful expression of the human spirit. Particularly notable were the large number of youth, and the turnout of African Americans and other people of color. The line of marchers and crowds of onlookers stretched for blocks, and it was nice, for once, to see the few crazed fundamentalists hiding behind more police than were protecting the White House itself.

Despite Clinton's message of support, there was much criticism of him for not being there. He was also criticized strongly by ACT-UP's Larry Kramer, among others, for his failure to take any action on AIDS.

—Suzanne Rose and Gerard Emmett

## Black World

(continued from page 1)

and rhetoric of "oppositional tropes," Said tours the imperialist peripheries of bygone empires and emergent "new world orders" in search of "actuality," one to serve as ground base for his cultural harmonics.

That imperialist ideological frameworks inhere in the Western literary canon is not in itself novel, nor is the need to requisition the submerged subjectivities of colonial and postcolonial texts and discourse. However, mapping the imperialist terrain of the capitalist order through its literary productions runs the same risk of stumbling into the pitfalls of underconsumptionism, a kind of phenomenology of imperialism, as any post-Marx Marxist political economy which de-links imperialism from its state monopoly inner core.

Said's phenomenological imperialism is at once a construction of literary imagination and the ideological hegemony of what Marx called the "order-mongering" powers of Western capitalism. Unfortunately, we don't engage the oppositional consciousness of the "wretched of the earth" against imperialist reality, but that of the national petty bourgeoisie. We never get a sense of the class and gender contradictions indigenous to Third World cultures, only Said's preoccupation with the border logic of nationalism's "warring essences" (p. 311).

How are we to take, for instance, the following estimation of E.M. Forster's benign imperialist tale **A Passage to India**: "Forster was a novelist, not a political officer or theorist or prophet. Yet he found a way to use the mechanism of the novel to elaborate on the already existing structure of attitude and reference without changing it" (p. 205) Does Said expect Forster's imaginary account to "change" the "already existing structure of attitude and reference" of British imperialism other than by transforming imperialism into an imaginary construct?

In other words, there seems to be a mythical impulse at work in Said's representation of the imperialist imagination. For he interrogates literary texts suspected of harboring an imperialist "structure of attitude and reference" as if the texts represent an oracle to be deciphered for the meaning it might supply the identity of the postcolonial intellectual.

And yet, at the level of representation Said does glimpse crucial fragments of the powerful forces contending at the ideological core of the imperialist-nationalist struggle. Citing Edward Thompson's searing 1926 critique of the British Raj in India, Said writes: "Thompson notes the imbalance between the two misrepresentations [that the British and the Indians have of each other], that one representation has all the power of modern technology and diffusion to back it—from the army to the **Oxford History of India**—whereas the other relies on the pamphlet and the mobilizing rejectionist sentiments of an oppressed people" (p. 206).

The infusions of national ardor and consciousness in Indian self-determination dating back to the 1856 Sepoy Mutiny that Marx analyzed is what made "the pamphlet and the mobilizing rejectionist sentiments of an oppressed people" the historical equivalent of the "power of modern technology and diffusion to back it."

The national revolution against imperialism, which has always been a protracted struggle covering generations and articulated in various stages, is the untidy dissonance Said wants to modulate in his cultural harmonics. His tone-deafness to that revolution Fanon called "an original idea propounded as an absolute," i.e., a new humanism, makes it more likely that one will find the **Oxford History of India** than the nationalist pamphlet in the "structure of attitude and reference" of Edward Said's **Culture and Imperialism**.

Thus, while **Culture and Imperialism** stands between the defining moments of the Persian Gulf War and the Los Angeles rebellion, only the former has meaning for Said, so inordinate is the weight he places on the engagements of the postcolonial literary imagination.

The logic of ignoring the inner contradiction of the imperialist home front is that it easily enough becomes an excuse to appeal, not to the "wretched of the earth" within the West, but to its structures of power.

## Cops beat Black student

Chicago, Ill.—Students at Chicago State University (CSU) are wearing yellow ribbons and calling for justice for their ex-fellow student Kevin Scott who was severely beaten by a Chicago State cop in the campus library. On Nov. 12, 1992, a group of Black students were sitting at a library table when white officer Steve Holman began a verbal argument with one of them (not Scott). Holman left, returned with back-up support, then selected Kevin Scott, and viciously beat him, repeatedly hitting his face, kicking his groin, and smashed Scott's head through a library wall. This 10-minute beating sent Kevin, who has epilepsy, into a seizure. He was then dragged to the police station and, while in a grand mal seizure, strip-searched. Scott was charged with disorderly conduct.

Kevin Scott, a soft-spoken Black man who walks with a cane, said with incredulity, the police accused him of having "super-human strength...just like Rodney King." From the physical and emotional strain of the beating and charges, Kevin has suffered daily epileptic seizures and had to withdraw from his classes.

Questions about why the Student Government Association has not supported Scott's case lead us to wonder whose interests they serve? The University administration's threats and rumors about consequences of demonstrations at the hearings, especially for students on financial aid, have scared some people from getting involved with building community support for Scott.

A CSU student eyewitness to the beating, who was questioned by an investigation committee, said they made him feel "uncomfortable and intimidated." He had to remind the questioners, "Hey, I'm not on trial for anything...I deserve respect." What needs to be put on trial is this American civilization that tolerates and institutionalizes this state practice.

—M. Leber

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## Our Life and Times

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

The April 10 murder by a white neo-fascist with the apparent collusion of Conservative Party officials, of key African National Congress (ANC) leader Chris Hani, who was also the head of the South African Communist Party (CP), has touched off a new wave of self-mobilization by the Black masses. On April 14, most of the country's six million Black workers answered the ANC's call for a general strike, effectively shutting down the economy.

Despite ANC calls for nonviolence and restraint, however, crowds in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Durban clashed with police and looted and burned white-owned stores and businesses. At least five demonstrators were killed by police. All across the country, ANC leaders were met with opposition when they urged restraint on angry crowds of Black

## France rightist victory

In a stunning defeat, France's Socialist Party, in power for most of the time since 1981, was routed at the polls in March by a coalition of two big conservative parties. The new National Assembly will have 487 rightist deputies, 67 Socialists and 23 Communists, making it the most conservative parliament in this century. While Socialist President Francois Mitterrand's term does not end until 1995, he will now "cohabit" with a rightist Prime Minister, Eduard Balladur, who will have the power to set domestic policy.

The vote was in large part a response to the country's deepening economic crisis, with the unemployment rate having climbed to 10.6%, a trend that the reformist social democratic policies of Mitterrand were unable to stop.

Somewhat fewer votes (12%) went to the neo-fascist National Front (FN) than in previous elections, but this was because the two main rightist parties themselves embraced most of the FN's program, blaming rising crime and unemployment on France's several million nonwhite immigrant workers and their families, and promising to end the right of legal immigrants to bring over any family members to join them.

France's notoriously racist police wasted no time in responding to the Right's "take off the gloves" message. Within days of the election, police intensified their sweeps of immigrant neighborhoods, harassing and detaining hundreds of youths. They were following Balladur's call to move "without delay" to take up "the problems of nationality, immigration and public security."

Ten days after the election, in early April, a French police inspector murdered Makome M'Bowole, a 17-year-old Black youth originally from Zaire, while interrogating him at a police station. According to the leading newspaper *Le Monde*, "the gun, a 9 millimeter revolver, was placed against the head of the youth" at the time it was fired.

In the days following this outrage, several hundred immigrants and civil rights activists held demonstrations. For several nights afterwards, groups of youths threw paving stones and bottles at police and looted stores. Few on the streets seemed to believe the new government's promises of a thorough investigation, while some warned of an explosion if the police continued their racist crackdown.

## Contradictions deepen in South Africa

demonstrators.

Even the ANC's most popular leader, Nelson Mandela, was stunned when his speech memorializing Hani to a crowd of over 10,000 in Soweto was interrupted by hecklers. This had not happened at any time since his release from prison three years ago. "We can all see that he's too old and he doesn't want to fight," one member of the crowd, Raseleti Komame, told the *New York Times*.

A few days later, Hani was buried before a crowd of 80,000 at an ANC ceremony. For the first time ever, the national television and radio broadcasted to the whole country the speeches of the ANC leadership.

Hani, the head of the ANC's military wing, enjoyed a reputation for militancy and was considered to be the ANC's second most popular leader, after Mandela. He was particularly popular among the township youth and other elements who feel that, in agreeing to a five-year transition period to majority rule, senior ANC leaders



South African youth rally near Johannesburg after the murder of Chris Hani.

## Brazil's famine and unrest

The impeachment last year on corruption charges of Brazil's millionaire playboy president, Fernando Collor de Mello, has done nothing to change the horrific conditions facing the masses. The world economic crisis has now led to outright starvation in the impoverished Northeast.

Faced with drought, residents of the Northeast have found it impossible to survive, as in years past, by sending members of their families south to work in the country's industrial centers. That route is closed off this year, when unemployment stands at 15% in an industrial center like Sao Paulo.

Instead, they have begun to move against the government itself. On March 29, 1,000 sugar cane workers occupied a government office in Pernambuco, demanding more emergency aid. This action followed smaller ones a few weeks earlier. More than 100 rural markets and food warehouses have been looted by desperate people. The situation is like a tinderbox, as the drought continues. More than ten million people are now threatened by starvation in the Northeast.

## 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 recreation 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*.

such as Mandela have made far too many concessions to the white rulers.

Most of the time, Hani went along with official ANC and CP policy, which was for negotiations rather than confrontation at all costs. In so doing, he often helped head off dissension from the ANC's left wing, and kept many in the ANC, who might otherwise have split off, from forming more revolutionary groups.

Hani's death was one among over 9,000 Blacks killed since Mandela was released in 1990, most of them in attacks by the government-armed Inkatha movement, which the police allow to operate with near impunity in the townships. Only days before Hani's death, ten ANC members were massacred in a night attack on their home in Durban.

With Hani's death, the struggle for Black self-emancipation has reached a turning point. If assassins can get to Hani then no one, not even Mandela, is really safe. How could a known Communist and ANC leader, undoubtedly shadowed 24 hours a day by the security police, have been killed in broad daylight in front of his own home without the police being able to prevent it? This has called the whole process of negotiations into question.

Never before has the ANC leadership's hold on the masses seemed so tenuous. With the sometimes cooperation of the government, they are seeking to turn Hani's death into support for continued negotiations. So far this argument has been a very hard sell in the Black community.

## Russia's referendum

The April 25 referendum in Russia produced a narrow margin for President Boris Yeltsin. As we go to press, it is estimated that 58% of those voting endorsed his presidency, a razor thin majority of 53% endorsed immediate new elections for the Russian Congress, whose leaders are Yeltsin's greatest political rivals.

Yeltsin came into the election fortified by a U.S.-Russia summit only three weeks earlier. He also benefitted from the politics of referendums, which give a great advantage to the head of state. Most importantly, there was the widespread suspicion that the leaders of the Congress were more closely tied to the policies of the old totalitarian apparatus. Although the working people of Russia have seen their conditions of life and labor deteriorate under Yeltsin's "free market" economics, the prospect of a return, even a partial one, to totalitarian Communism seemed an even greater danger to most.

Thus, the vote was more a negative one, against the old apparatus, than a positive endorsement of Yeltsin's policies. As a teacher in a poor and isolated village south of Moscow told a Western reporter; "I don't much like Yeltsin or what he's done, but the Congress is a horror, a national disgrace" (*New York Times*). In regions populated by ethnic minorities, many of whom wish to secede from the Russian Federation, many people voted for Yeltsin because his opponents seemed even more imbued with Great Russian chauvinism.

Yet Yeltsin himself is hardly free of authoritarianism and chauvinism. A former Communist apparatchik who began his career in the administration of labor camps, he has not taken the trouble to found or join a political party since coming to power, preferring to rule by decree and to approach the masses at the local level through the so-called Yeltsin Foundation. Also, he has not hesitated to sound chauvinist notes from time to time, most recently in his delaying tactics at the UN in favor of Russia's Serbian "Slav brothers."

## Togolese challenge rulers

In late March, a group apparently composed of dissident elements within the military was repelled after an attack on the residence of General Gnassingbe Eyadema, the country's military dictator. In the aftermath of the attack, which left 50 dead, dozens of soldiers suspected of opposition have been executed. This was no ordinary coup attempt, but a new stage in deeply rooted mass movement against the dictatorship.

In power since the early 1960s, the regime is now in a virtual state of war with most of the small West African country's 3.5 million people. Supported for decades militarily and economically by French imperialism, in 1992 Eyadema's army called off what had been a plan to move toward multi-party democracy.

The response was not long in coming. By November, a total general strike was declared, one which persists to today. On Jan. 25, police opened fire on demonstrators in the capital, Lome, killing at least 50 people. Barricades then went up in the working class districts of Lome, supervised by youths wearing the red bandannas of the "Movement of October 5."

Knowing Eyadema's penchant for brutality all too well, fully 300,000 people, including half the population of Lome, have fled to neighboring Ghana or Benin. The Collective for Democratic Opposition waits for its moment as the general strike enters its seventh month.

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