

# NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end' —Marx

50¢

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## Seeking a different way of life



by John Marcotte

"The problem of all immigrant workers is fear. On my job the boss doesn't pay us overtime. Some of us called the Department of Labor, but when they came, out of fear, the workers said yes, we are paid overtime. The boss makes us sign papers stating that we are paid minimum wage and overtime to show the inspectors if they come. Nobody dares to speak." This is what a garment worker said at a meeting of Latino immigrant workers in New York.

Many spoke of fear, like one worker who said, "If I don't work, I don't eat." Those with children especially are careful not to risk losing their jobs. Yet one welder told us that on his job, where they make garbage containers, some workers went as a group to talk to the boss, since the union always said there was nothing they could do about the piece rates, and so on. There being only one toilet for 50 workers, the smog. The workers did get a few things like a bathroom and some ventilation. But he added, "We are still in a very bad situation."

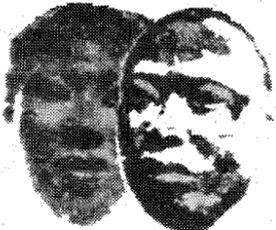
Many workers also felt a problem is that when some immigrant workers "make it," often they turn around and make life hard for the newer immigrants. Another garment worker said, "Yes, those cases do happen, but there are also many cases of solidarity. We are here now; we have an obligation to help each other as people." Another garment worker put it this way: "We have to break with these selfish attitudes. The bosses treat us like animals. The banner we raise must be that we treat each other as human beings."

A taxi driver who had been a youth community leader in his country had this to say on that subject: "The only way we've been taught to overcome is to rise above the others, as individuals. That is capitalism's own method. The question is, how are we going to overcome? Can we see that there is a new possibility to walk together as a class, as a people, those of us who are poor, dispossessed, forced to emigrate, who are marked and rejected

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## Black World

### Sudan: Black Skins, Arab Masks



Editor's note: This month, "Black World" continues with the latest in the series of articles on the Sudan by Robert Reed.

—Lou Turner

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon delves into the dialectics of Black/white consciousness. He unfolds the layers of the Black mind's inferiority complex. He says: "There are two camps: the white and the black." But Fanon did not include the third camp: the brown. What happens when the "brown" mind hates the Black? What happens when that "brown" mind is part Black or is actually Black itself?

The "brown" Arab Sudanese are conflicted and contradicted as to their African and Black identities. The crisis in Sudan is as much a crisis of identity as anything else. "One day we are Africans when conditions are right. Tomorrow, we are Arabs when we are in the Arab atmosphere... We have not set our identity." That was how Khalid Yagi, an Arab Sudanese described the problem.

The problem of Arab identity is not the Arabs alone. Southerners have fallen victim to this crisis. "Northern Sudanese...display a range of colors and physical features, but not a clear 'Arab' image....[M]ost northern Sudanese look just like any other African. Many are as black as the Nilotics of the South. Yet they consider themselves racially Arabs, not Africans, and are committed to the creation of a state that is both Arab and Islamic." The Arabic language, religion and customs are considered superior to Black or African languages, cus-

1. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1967), p.8.
2. Francis Mading Deng, *War of Visions: Conflict of Identities in the Sudan* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1995), p. 445.
3. Francis Mading Deng, "Blood Brothers," *Brookings Review*, Summer 1995, p. 14.

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## Environmental movement fights Clinton's ecology double-talk

by Franklin Dmitryev

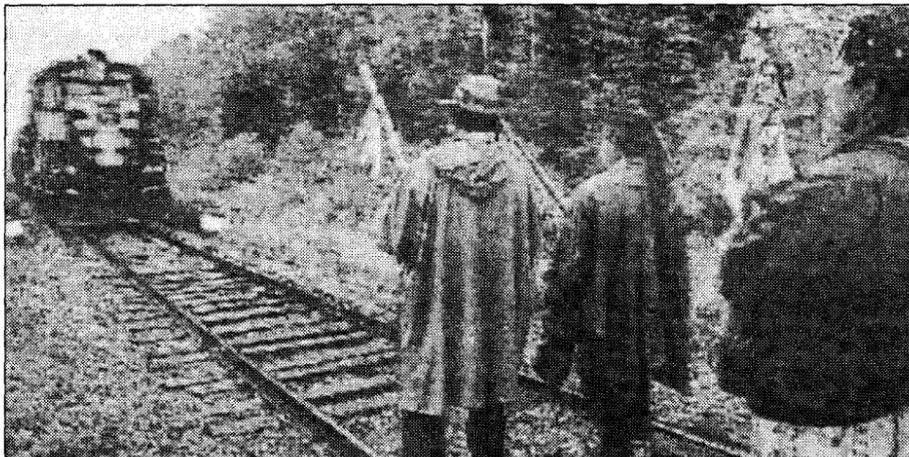
Houses in south Memphis were shaken by two explosions at a hazardous chemicals tank farm on the afternoon of Jan. 27. Fortunately, no one was killed. By coincidence, the family of Clarence McDaniel, a leader in Longview Heights residents' two-decade fight to get the Perma-Fix Environmental Services chemical recycling plant out of their neighborhood, was at McDaniel's funeral that day.

"We were just lucky we were away from home when it happened," said his son Richard. "It would have killed my mother. Those tanks are in our back yard. This neighborhood has been organized and is properly trying to fix this problem and no one listened."

The blasts were only a more dramatic aspect of the plant's everyday poisoning of the Black neighborhood. Residents are keenly aware not only of the "odor that would make a skunk sick," but the decline in health and rise in cancers that coincided with the chemical plant's growth.

The organizing in Longview Heights began in the same period of the late 1970s and early 1980s that saw the birth of grassroots struggles around environmental impact on community health from Love Canal, N.Y., to the Altgeld Gardens housing project in Chicago, to Warren County in North Carolina, where the term "environmental racism" was coined. By now such environmental organizing from below—usually led by women—has become so widespread it is part of the landscape, though not always recognized as environmental, even by the participants.

The ground was prepared by the discrediting in the 1950s of the notion that progress equals scientific advancement, when workers struck against automation in production and youth protested the atomic bomb. In 1962 Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* brought to the fore the universal spread of toxic chemicals—the "elixirs of



Chippewas block hazardous waste shipment from crossing the Bad River Reservation in Wisconsin.

death," pesticides. A new environmental movement was born into the decade of revolt unleashed by the Civil Rights Movement and its progeny, the anti-Vietnam War movement, the New Left and the Women's Liberation Movement.

Along with the other movements, two decades of environmental struggles left their imprint on minds everywhere, allowing a new stage to arise at the end of the 1970s, so that by the 1990s it is not only synthetic chemicals but a new environmental consciousness that has become so universal as to penetrate every corner of the earth.

Today's ecology movement consists not only of affluent white conservationists lobbying politicians but of poor Black and Latina mothers organizing inner city neighborhoods against toxic racism. It brings young white activists blocking clearcuts alongside Native Americans defending sacred places and ecosystems vital to cultural survival. It embraces reformers, radicals and revolutionaries.

Multidimensionality characterizes the movement as a whole. Whether fighting environmental racism or clearcuts, each sector contains contradictions and opposing tendencies; each contains both openings to the future and old answers ready to stifle the new questioning.

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## Editorial

## Deng's state-capitalist legacy

Deng Xiaoping's death on February 19 was the occasion for eulogies from Western leaders and commentators who credit him with transforming the communism of Mao Zedong into a "economic miracle" that outweighed the repeated fettering of dissent throughout Deng's 18-year rule. Demonstrators in Hong Kong, however, in the name of students and workers massacred in Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989, immediately demanded there be no eulogy for Deng.

Deng leaves an economy whose explosive growth led the world these past four years and transformed the look of coastal areas, but which is beginning to stagnate. The rulers poised to succeed him, who were frozen in place during Deng's infirmity, are the result of confrontations with mass dissent in 1986-87 and 1989 that led Deng to cast overboard Hu Yaobang and then Zhao Ziyang.

Deng himself had been removed from office in 1966 during the Cultural Revolution, and again on the eve of Mao's death in 1976. But not only was he general secretary of the Communist Party of China from 1956 when the party designated China "state-capitalist," he was Mao's chief supporter in the Anti-Rightist Campaign and in the Great Leap Forward. In power since rehabilitation in 1978, he has insisted, as Mao had, on the authority of the army and the party when bloody repression and pervasive corruption had left neither ruler with a popular mandate.

But what most firmly linked Deng to Mao, and separated both from Karl Marx, was their super-exploitation of human labor as the basis for capital accumulation, whether in the Great Leap Forward or Deng's opening to Western capitalism.

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, in her meetings with Jiang Zemin and Li Peng on the eve of the closed memorial service for Deng, raised questions about human rights within China, but most likely for effect back in the U.S. Bill Clinton's only response to a State Department report—detailing such relentless sup-

pression of opposition within China that "no dissidents were known to be active at year's end"—was to offer doubts that things would have been different if the U.S. had confronted China on human rights.

In 1992 Clinton had seized the popular issue of attacking Bush for cozying up to the butchers who had ordered the bloody massacre in Tiananmen Square in June 1989. His turnaround was not over the effectiveness of trade sanctions to stop prison-made imports, much less because of well-publicized campaign contributions from Chinese nationals.

The stated fear of isolating China seems to be instead a fear of becoming isolated from China. From the time that Mao helped Nixon off the hook in Vietnam, U.S. presidents have looked to benefit from playing the China card—Clinton himself is planning his first visit to Beijing within the year. But in this decade, capitalists have seized upon China as key to reviving a stagnant world economy.

The old idea of China as a limitless market ("If only 1.2 billion consumers would buy just one hamburger, or pack of cigarettes...") was invoked as the U.S. and China removed some trade restrictions in the renewed textile agreement in February. Although the U.S. ships China just 0.1% of the textiles that China sends here, one negotiator stated that they had "opened up China."

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## Woman as Reason

by Jennifer Pen

Maria Stewart, a free-born, working-class Black woman, arose as a forceful voice in the Abolitionist movement after Nat Turner's slave revolt was defeated in 1831. When Stewart delivered a speech to a so-called "promiscuous" audience in 1832—one that included men and women, Black and white—she became the first American-born woman to give a public talk.

Today, at a time when there is renewed attention to the lives of Black women, most notably in the new biographies of Sojourner Truth, Maria Stewart has not received the same kind of notice despite her towering importance. It is not just Stewart's position as "the first" that makes her important; far more impressive is her philosophic vision, born in the specific struggle of the abolitionists while reaching for universality.

Maria Stewart had been inspired by the writings and life of fellow Bostonian Black, David Walker, and she worked with William Lloyd Garrison, writing for his

## Sonsareya Tate's Little X

Chicago—Sonsareya Tate spoke at Women and Children First Bookstore on her new book *Little X*, an autobiography about growing up in the Nation of Islam (NOI) and how women were treated in it. Though she left the Nation well before Farrakhan's leadership, she had important insights that speak to today. Her main point was that the Nation is no different than any other fundamentalist organization in the world, especially in its sexism.

As a child, she was taught: "Black men should protect Black women; women's liberation was a white women's battle, that a Black man had a hard enough time fighting the outside world without having to fight his woman; the working woman was why the world was going to hell."

She was discouraged from seeking a career. With a growing feminist consciousness, she broke with her family and the Nation over this issue. Though Tate often seemed to reduce Women's Liberation to careerism, what came through was that her struggle with and break from the Nation was an important act of self-determination. And what Tate repeatedly stressed was the fundamentalist, mind-controlling environment that she had to fight against:

*"Since I was three years old—when I learned to read and write—I was sent to NOI schools and was indoctrinated. We looked alike, acted alike and had to think alike. All the symbolism was taken literally. Teachers were in total control and our parents supported them. You didn't get in trouble very often because the punishment for girls was to be hit with five rulers tied together.*

*"We were the few chosen people to rule the world. So we were not only set apart from the white world, but from the Black community. We were the leaders and the others were heathens."*

When asked what she thought the Million Man March meant for women's liberation, she said that she "could sort of understand how it could be empowering for men to get together, but on the other hand, I couldn't help but wonder what it would have been like if women had been there, or if there had been a million people from the human race there to begin tearing down the barriers between the races, especially now when race relations are so bad."

Tate's discussion on women and nationalism needs to be taken seriously in this day when rising fundamentalism is killing the spirits and bodies of women all over the world. Tate's story was one of individual triumph. What we came away with was the question of how this discussion could lead to the true emancipation of all women.

—Sonia Bergonzi and Maya Jhansi

## Women Worldwide

by Mary Jo Grey

Thousands of Cambodian women workers poured out of many of the country's 39 foreign-owned textile factories in January and marched on the national assembly demanding an end to \$8/month wages, unpaid overtime and 7-day work weeks. Police beat them back with water cannons and volleys from automatic weapons. Independent trade unions and political parties are still illegal in Cambodia and the regime threatens to silence demonstrations with bloodshed. At the first Trade Union Congress there, Feb. 2, labor leader Ou Mary denounced factory managers for manhandling and strip-searching young women workers, as well as regularly withholding half of their wages to pay for rotten food and broken tools.

\* \* \*

Over 437,000 Russian teachers went on strike in mid-January in 66 of the country's 89 regions. The teachers—some of whom have not been paid for nine months—vowed to keep their schools shut until salaries were paid in full. Education and science teachers demonstrated outside government offices demanding not only their pay, but also repair of schools which are in a "deplorable state." The average wage for Russia's teachers is 540,000 rubles (less than \$100) a month, compared with a national average monthly wage of 850,000 rubles.

# Maria Stewart and universality of freedom

paper, *The Liberator*. But she also extended the dialectic of freedom to include a feminist perspective, more than a decade prior to the Seneca Falls Women's Rights Convention.

Stewart never left women's liberation up to men; she encouraged women's own self-development in thought and activity. Stewart constantly extolled women to use their minds. She asked, "How long shall the fair daughters of Africa be compelled to bury their minds and talents beneath a load of iron pots and kettles?" and directly answers to them "Possess the spirit of independence....Sue for your rights....You can but die, if you make the attempt; and we shall certainly die if you do not."

We can hear Stewart's sisterhood with our late Black lesbian contemporary, Audre Lorde, who struck a similar chord: "Your silence will not protect you." Like Lorde, Stewart chose to speak instead of remaining silent, and to publish her identity as a Black woman at a time when such action was as dangerous as it was rare.

Stewart voiced a philosophic dialectic of freedom, arising at the historical turning point of 1831, starting from the particularity of opposing slavery in all its aspects, while also grasping the universality of all struggles. She applauded revolutions worldwide, but chided white Americans for their hypocrisy in celebrating their own independence while sabotaging Haiti's. She bitterly opposed the racist schemes to recolonize Blacks in Liberia, skewering those white power brokers whose "hearts are so frozen towards us, they would rather their money should be sunk in the ocean than to administer it to our relief." She also defiantly proclaimed that "the bayonet shall pierce me through...before I go...to a strange land."

Most importantly, she realized that the crux of any philosophy of freedom is the question of what it means to be human. Knowing that she and her people were "looked upon as things" Stewart assails those who set up a system in which "we have performed the labor, they have received the profits." When she spoke, in the

light of Walker's death and Turner's defeat, she exemplified an indefatigable revolutionary spirit, chiding those who talk "politics, without striving to assist...in the revolution, when the nerves and muscles of every other man forced him into the field of action."

Stewart defended women's right to speak in public against apparently intransigent critics. Like most nineteenth century feminists, this deeply religious woman had to battle biblical injunctions that seemed to prohibit women taking any role in public. But she trumped this sexism by making the struggle for freedom the central philosophic question. She boldly maintained that even the biblical authors would change their mind if they could see how wronged women and Blacks were!

Stewart condemned white men's rapes of slave women, the exploitation of labor in all its dimensions—from slavery to class divisions among free Blacks of her time—and connected the plight of the slaves to the genocide of Native Americans.

While feminist historians recovered Stewart's voice when it was hidden from history, it is up to revolutionaries to reveal how she has been hidden from philosophy. It is still her vanguard role as a public speaker that is emphasized, to the exclusion of her powerful content.

Raya Dunayevskaya's category of "women as revolutionary force and reason" is anticipated by Stewart when she enjoins women to be scholars, philosophers, contemplatives, warriors, poets, judges, martyrs, and prophets. "Shall it any longer be said of the daughters of Africa, they have no ambition, they have no force? By no means. Let every female heart become united...that the higher branches of knowledge might be enjoyed by us."

Stewart's public career as a speaker lasted only a brief two years, but she continued to work for the Abolitionist movement and for Black educational causes until her death in 1879. Stewart lived what she preached—"knowledge is power"—not as an abstraction but as a unity of theory and activity.

## Review: Women chronicle Spanish Civil War

*Memories of Resistance: Women's Voices from the Spanish Civil War*, by Shirley Mangini (Yale, 1995); *Defying Male Civilization: Women in the Spanish Civil War*, by Mary Nash (Arden, 1995).

Sixty years later, the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) has generated more than 25,000 books; most ignore or minimize women's participation and perceptions. The extraordinary participation of Spanish women has been recorded in hundreds of works in Spanish, but few in English. Shirley Mangini's and Mary Nash's riveting books correct this deficiency.

The war began in July 1936 when General Franco and mutinous Spanish army officers launched a coup d'etat against the democratically elected Popular Front government, thus dividing Spain into two military zones: republican and fascist. The rebels' fascist allies Hitler, Mussolini and Salazar sent thousands of regular army units, mercenaries and modern war technology.

Despite the heroic resistance of the Spanish people and the 40,000 antifascist women and men volunteers of the International Brigades (including 3,000 U.S. volunteers of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion and their Medical Services), the Republic was defeated.

### REBELLION AND REPRESSION

Shirley Mangini's *Memories of Resistance* focuses on the unprecedented changes in the traditional roles of Spanish women during the volatile 1920s and 1930s. What Mangini calls "visible" and "invisible" women from various classes and political affiliations tell what they did and how their self-perceptions altered as they "awakened to rebellion," defended their human rights, and resisted in prison and exile.

Mangini quotes extensively from what she terms "memory texts" (women's oral testimonies, autobiographies, letters and semi-fictional literature). These were "outlawed," until after Franco's 1975 death.

Prior to the Second Republic (1931-1939) most Spaniards' lives meant serfdom and control by the Roman Catholic Church, the autocratic monarchy, and the wealthy elite. Then (as now), poor women suffered most. Communist leader Dolores Ibárruri speaks of poverty and "the pain-ridden thralldom that was our mother's lot."

All women were consigned to be "angel of the home...innocuous, ignorant"; those who deviated from the Madonna paradigm were deemed whores. The separation of church and state during the Second Republic meant unprecedented socioeconomic mobility for Spanish women of all classes. Women elected to the Cortes (Spanish Parliament) made laws asserting rights to education, to vote, to work outside the home with salaries equal to male coworkers, to divorce, to social support services, to birth control and abortion.

During the Civil War masses of women fought for the Republic. Teresa Pàmies, a working-class communist activist, says the war was a "revolutionary explosion that gave us all absolute freedom." Juana Doña remembers: "The necessities of war made [women] radical activists." Poverty-trapped Maruja Cuesta found opportunities:

*"I joined the Socialist Youth Group....They taught us everything—not just politics, they also prepared us culturally....We taught each other....Women were in workshops, offices, war factories, on the production line...even in the trenches."*

To the fascists, any female supporter of the Republic

was a "Red whore." More than 23,000 women spent decades in Franco's prisons suffering sexual violence, malnutrition, fatal beatings. Juana Doña remembers her eighteen year sentence:

*"Rape was daily fare; the abuse of power by men against women under those circumstances acquired dramatic proportions. The so-called 'reds' were less than nothing to the macho fascists. The rape of female prisoners had nothing to do with sexual desire; it was simply an act of power, humiliation, sadism."*

Invariably, women report solidarity and resistance strategies to preserve dignity and to survive. Paz Azati



Women defending Madrid, 1936

recalls, "Everybody studied, and [soon] there was nobody who didn't know how to read and write."

*Memories of Resistance* "conjure[s] up a past that has been erased;" above the shrill clamor of fascism, we hear voices of survivors who refuse to be silenced.

### REVOLUTION AND EMANCIPATION

Mary Nash's *Defying Male Civilization: Women in the Spanish Civil War* argues that revolution does not always challenge "male civilization." She focuses on *Mujeres Libres* (Free Women), the Anarchist women's autonomous organization, to illustrate how Spain's traditional patriarchal constructs interacted with revolutionary movements to make women's struggles for emancipation liberating, but also Sisyphean.

Women's subordination was guaranteed by law until the 1931 reforms. In 1937, Suceso Portales, dressmaker and activist member of *Mujeres Libres*, observed:

*"Two things have begun to collapse because they are unjust, class privilege based on the parasitical civilization which gave birth to the monster of war; and male privilege, which turned half of mankind into autonomous beings and the other half into slaves; a male civilization based on power which has produced moral chaos throughout the centuries."*

*Mujeres Libres* asserted that women's emancipation was indispensable to revolution and could be achieved only by women's initiative, education, and commitment to ongoing struggle. Nash shows that anarchist men often proclaimed advocacy of women's emancipation, but anarchist meetings typically tried to exclude women. Anarchist men often blocked women's access to jobs and wage parity by denying union membership.

Nash explores language and imagery as socializing agents, noting that the wartime iconography of "emanci-

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## Detroit news strikers dispute return

**Detroit**—Striking Detroit newspaper workers expressed a combination of anger, dismay and confusion following the Feb. 15 announcement by their union leadership of an "unconditional return to work" and contradictory claims by union leaders that their action was "a bold new strategy" for victory and by newspaper owners, when they accepted the offer, that "the strike was over."

**Striking Typographical Union member Armand Nevers declared, "It's a surrender, no question about it, but there is a lot of resentment in the rank and file and we won't stop now." He added that at his union meeting, where an advisory vote had been taken on the unconditional return, the rank and file**

**voted unanimously against the proposal, but was overridden by the union leaders. Nevers also noted that the rank and file of all six unions involved was surprised by their leaders' action, since throughout the 20-month strike, they would act only with membership approval.**

Trying to put a good face on a bad situation, the union leadership finally called for the national march on Detroit that the strikers have been demanding for months. The leadership also said the advertising and circulation boycotts and other demonstrations would continue.

There are many legal "ifs" that confuse the strike status. National Labor Relations Board hearings held over the past year have yet to decide if this is an Unfair Labor Practices strike.

Newspaper management insists it will keep all of its permanent replacement workers, and will rehire strikers only when openings occur. To counter this, the striking unions, now "locked out" according to the leadership, have petitioned the Labor Board to issue an injunction to force management to rehire all the strikers. Otherwise, workers would have no rights to grievance procedures or dues check-off, although they would retain their previous hours, wages, overtime and vacation provisions.

—Andy Phillips



Detroit newspaper strikers and supporters in chains "Shut Down Motown '97" on Feb. 11—even as union leaders prepared to return to work unconditionally.

unions infuriated striking workers by giving the Detroit Newspaper Agency (DNA) an offer of unconditional return to work, over 500 newspaper strikers and supporters staged a "sit-down" in a busy intersection, on Feb. 11, the 60th anniversary of victory in the historic Flint Sit-down Strike.

Some demonstrators chained themselves together and blocked traffic for two hours during the morning rush before the Detroit police were able to remove them. Even reports of the local radio and TV media, whose strike coverage has been conspicuous by its absence, conveyed the spirit and determination of the strike.

**One printer said he was sure the majority of the rank and file disagreed with the return-to-work "strategy," which had been pushed for a long time by the international leadership of the Teamsters, Typographers and Mailers. He felt that those workers who had long ceased to be active in the strike gave up because they disagreed with the union leaders' losing philosophy. On this "long, sad day," because of the leaders, "we broke our own strike."**

Other strikers placed a recorded message on the A.C.O.S.S. hotline: "...the bottom line is that whether one or many strikers are taken back, they will be working for two of the most vindictive, greedy and mean-spirited corporations in the nation without a contract, with no arbitration or grievance procedures. If even one union person has to work there without a contract, we cannot stop fighting. It continues to be a battle worth winning. Thanks brothers and sisters for hanging in there with us, and we'll continue to fight with you. No contract, no peace!" Support is still needed. For recorded updates and to leave messages, call the hotline at 810/447-2716.

—Susan Van Gelder

## Racism in driver's seat

*Editor's Note: Ralph Williams began filing racial discrimination charges with the EEOC and other government agencies against the Chattanooga Area Regional Transportation Authority (CARTA) in 1993. In retaliation, he was harassed daily at work, fired three years later, and shortly after this, his house was burned down.*  
**Chattanooga, Tenn.**—I worked for CARTA as a bus driver from 1986 to February 1996. In February of 1993 I was given three days off—suspended for failure to run a schedule on time. But 98% of the buses run a late schedule. In the whole history of CARTA no one has ever gotten time off for that. We have no control over traffic or the weather conditions, or waiting for an older person to get on the bus. White drivers even change routes, but they chose to lay me off. I filed a grievance on Feb. 12 and they gave me the three days back.

On April 7, 1993 I filed charges of racial discrimination and harassment with the EEOC. I filed not only for myself, but for the past history of mistreatment of other Black workers, charging CARTA with creating a hostile environment for Blacks to the point where you're scared of speaking out about racism in the company.

White and Black drivers get treated a whole lot differently. A Black driver was fired for failure to report an accident and a white driver was given 30 days off for the same thing.

In retaliation for filing charges with the EEOC I was followed on my routes. Driving is stressful enough without them looking for me to do something wrong.

They'd write me up for anything. If they could charge me with looking wrong, they'd have done it. Supervisors would try to provoke me into fights. One white driver friend of mine took me out of there during one incident saying, "They're just looking to fire you."

The EEOC was working with the company, so I wrote letters of complaint to the U.S. Department of Labor, the Department of Transportation, and the Department of Justice. I requested a Title VI investigation into CARTA. This was an attack on their money because if you're funded by the federal government and you're found guilty of discrimination, you lose that funding. That's what really ignited the harassment.

The government refused to investigate. I wasn't protected by the government here or in D.C. That's why they could burn my house down. I believe the company had something to do with it. It's the good ole boys network down here. This is where the KKK originated—Pulaski, Tenn.

The whole design here is to make you give up and quit. But I don't have that mentality. You have to have some morals and values in life. I'm not going to let them walk on my back.

## Gains in ConAgra pact

**Indianola, Miss.**—At Delta Pride Catfish where I work, we are still in negotiations on a new contract. Workers at Con Agra, another catfish plant, ratified their contract on Jan. 29. They only got 15 cents the first year, 15 cents the second year, and a wage re-opener the third year. It could have been more money, but they won other things, so I think it's a good contract.

They got 32 guaranteed work hours a week, and won one paid funeral day. They got a pension plan based on how many years they worked. It's only \$12 a month for each year of service, but it's one of the few catfish plants to have any pension plan at all. They also won the right to take vacation when they want to, instead of when the company tells them to. They got a three dollar break on their health insurance cost, and the probation period for new workers was cut to 30 days from 60.

The one thing I really didn't like was that the company kept the right to make workers work ten hour shifts, four days a week. Only after you work ten hours do you get time-and-a-half plus \$1.00.

At Delta Pride the company has to pay us time-and-a-half whenever we work over eight hours. All through the negotiations, they have been trying to get us to drop that protection. But this is something we fought hard to get last contract. We were sick and tired of working 10 and 12 hour shifts without any notice, and having child care problems. Most of us are women with children. The company didn't care what problems they caused us, as long as they got production. Delta Pride management is mad because ConAgra's contract lets them work ten hours at straight time, and Delta's doesn't. ConAgra makes a bundle on that ten hour shift.

Our contract negotiations have been going on since last September. Delta management wouldn't discuss anything unless we agreed to give up our overtime protection. The union stood up strong on that, and now Delta has finally given up on the ten hour deal for now. They have also hired about 50 more workers. So last month it looked like we would finally get a contract.

But now management is offering only a small bonus in each of the first two years of the contract—no wage increase at all. And their pension proposal is terrible. We are still living under poverty wages in the Mississippi Delta. We will have to take a strike vote soon, and we need to be ready to fight.

—Delta Pride worker

## Ford suppliers strike

**Detroit**—Workers at Johnson Controls have been on strike in Michigan and Ohio for three weeks after trying to get UAW union recognition for over a year. The company makes seats for Ford's popular Explorer sport utility vehicle. The UAW and other unions in the Detroit area have been supporting the Johnson Controls workers and Ford has refused to accept the outsourced scab-made seats.

But the company isn't exactly sacrificing to help the union cause. They have removed machines from outsourced shops to their own plant in Chesterfield Township where UAW members undermine their striking brothers and sisters so Ford can continue to see the trucks. As Karl Marx put it long ago, there are only two sides in the economy, labor and capital.

—Strike supporter

*Editor's note: As we go to press, Johnson Controls and the UAW have announced a tentative settlement.*

## Workshop Talks

(Continued from page 1)

by racism, by the color of our skin, by the lack of opportunity? We are the great majority to whom they don't give the possibility of living a life with dignity."

Workers were also concerned about the new immigration laws. A carpenter, who had also been a youth leader, saw the situation this way: "The concentration of capital is in imperialist countries like here, so people have to immigrate here to where the capital is to work. So no matter what kind of laws they pass, people will continue to come. These are people who can no longer live in our countries; this is the only way out. But these new laws will make labor even cheaper. Conditions of life are going to drop even more. The rebellions that are happening now in Latin America, like the millions who came out in the streets in Ecuador, are the result of the same policies that are now being applied here."

As I listened to these workers, I thought of the Hood Furniture workers, whose story we have read in *News & Letters* (November, December, January-February). I was thinking how they said, "We believe in ourselves.... We stood up for what we believed in for seven years, and we stuck together too, even when it was rough. Wherever we go, if the plant closes, we will have that..."

I think these Latino workers also have experienced their struggles what they call "compañerismo," solidarity. They too know a different way of life is possible because they have experienced it. This is the goal. This is the new society being born in the old rotten society. In the end, immigration laws, reforms and contracts come and go. They are finite. What is infinite, what lasts is the human spirit, or solidarity and new human relations.

Everyone wants to know, can we be free? What workers arrive at through their own activity the theoretical group like *News and Letters* Committees arrives at through looking at history and philosophy. When workers' own experience unites with the theoretical knowledge that we can be free, there is no power like it on earth.

## Save state overtime law

**Berkeley, Cal.**—At a time when California companies have never been so profitable, Governor Pete Wilson and his appointed Industrial Welfare Commission are being pressured to allow businesses to be even more "flexible" in the ways they can exploit labor. The Chamber of Commerce argues that 47 other states do not require time and a half after eight hours per day, so businesses threaten to move out of state—or even off shore—if the state does not deregulate down to the 60 year old national standard of time and a half after 40 hours per week.

Unions are dead set against it, for lowering the standard would go exactly opposite to the interests of the working class. The surest way to protect time and a half after eight hours per day in California is to get all of the other states to adopt it, with no exceptions for any class of worker. This would relieve a lot of us from having to work dangerously long hours, and would help spread what little work that hasn't yet been taken over by computers and technology more evenly among the class. Hearings will end in early Spring, after which a decision will be made. The IWC encourages public comments to be sent to P.O. Box 420603, San Francisco, CA 94142-0603.

—K.E.

## Fast-food worker abuse

**Vicksburg, Miss.**—My name is Sedrick Gardner. I want to tell you what's happened since my article in the June 1996 *News & Letters* on how I was abused and discriminated against at Wendy's restaurant and ended up in the hospital after taking money from the company.

The district attorney wanted to throw the book at me even though this was my first offense and I had offered to pay the money back to Wendy's. Then my lawyer gave the DA my article from *N&L*, and it made a dramatic impact. He offered a deal: after full restitution, five years probation, after which my record would be clean. If I paid court costs, no probation and no record.

I've got over \$10,000 in medical bills Wendy's doesn't want to pay. They tried to claim I was terminated prior to going into the hospital. They kick me, spit on me, and now they're putting their foot on my neck. However, my check stub proves my case. I am filing a civil suit because the EEOC will not pursue my case. Even though a worker saw the Wendy's manager kick me, the EEOC says that's not discrimination!

I feel a calling to organize all the information I can on labor laws, employees' rights, sexual harassment and discrimination, and speak in the community. I've known workers who work off the clock and don't get paid, who don't know they can take a break after four hours.

A manager told me that they get big bonus checks for getting rid of long-term employees, like four elderly white women close to retirement I remember being verbally abused. I'm a single parent and a Church's Chicken recruitment program said the employee they prefer is the single parent — they are easy to mistreat because they have to keep that job.

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

**Editor's note**

When the following letter was written to News and Letters Committees, a study group had been organized for Dunayevskaya's recently published book, *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* (1983). In it, Dunayevskaya's response to a question posed at the study group on how to analyze major feminist thinkers becomes an overview of the central philosophical themes of her book. We publish this now to further explore this book which has a great deal to illuminate on the relationship of women's liberation to the dialectics of revolution. It is now available in a 1991 edition by University of Illinois Press. The letter can be found in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, #7814.

January 31, 1983

Dear Diane:

IF, AT YESTERDAY'S MEETING, I surprised you by showing such interest in the question that had been put to the Women's Liberation committee members by a non-member about which books to read, the truth is that, far from considering such questions minor, I consider them so essential that I am actually going to send a copy of this letter to the locals. The reason for my very nearly making a universal out of this is that little word I never stop repeating: dialectic.

Methodology, methodology, methodology. Because as Marxist-Humanists we are always stressing the quintessential, so that "dialectics" is always followed by "of liberation," (or "of revolution" or "national self-determination," and so forth and so forth), we may forget that dialectic methodology applies to all things, and not just what we consider quintessential. Without it, there is no way, in an analysis of any topic, small or large, that we can trace a process of development seriously enough to know the movement. Not knowing the movement, whether in the subjective or objective sphere, there is no way to perceive the direction. Also lacking, then, is its true origin, for, even if one knows the "facts," one would still need to know the dialectic of its evolution—that is to say, its historic origin.

Take such simple questions as:

"What books can I read on Women's Liberation? There are a lot and I don't want to waste my time. Where can I obtain the type of book that would show me the opposite point of view? When should I read these? Together with those assigned for the class or before, or after? And who is the most exciting writer on Women's Liberation?"

That no one thought about so simple a matter as looking at the footnotes in *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* [RLWLKM], which are almost as essential as the text itself, and that no one thought of looking at the bibliography—which is divided in such a way as to relate various books to different theoreticians, to different topics (from [the] Black dimension to Marx's philosophy), and to different historic periods (separating the books on the early Women's Liberation Movement and those on today's movement)—reveals a self-consciousness about what the new book truly is. (I'm using "self-consciousness" not in the dialectical sense but in the ordinary sense of a blush.) If, instead, there had been such self-confidence about how great the work they were proposing to study was—and why it related, very concretely related, to the precise subject that interested the individual who had bothered to attend a meeting on Women's Liberation no matter how informal—then the conveners of the meeting would have taken at least ten minutes to answer the question about which books to read.

Allow me to suggest the kind of introductory talk that would apply to any class on the new book, or, indeed, any one of the trilogy of revolution.\* Let's assume that the class is to be on Part II of RLWLKM. It should not be called "Part II," which would give the impression that participants will have missed something by not starting with Part I, or ending before the book ends. The dialectic of Part II would easily enough soon reveal that, in fact, Part II projects all three parts of the book. Therefore, the class would be called: "Women's Liberation—Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow." A sentence would follow that would show that it is not only a question of time as past, present and future, but time in the Marxian sense of "space for human-self-development." Moreover, it would be a good idea to follow that with the four quotations that head Part II, because everyone would then see the topic as both comprehensive and yet very personal and exciting, including Luxemburg as a great revolutionary, D.H. Lawrence as a great writer, Louise Michel as

# Women's liberation—yesterday and today

a great Communist, and Karl Marx as the philosopher of revolution.

WHETHER OR NOT you do include those quotations, you would state that you propose that the class consist of three chapters and that you consider the footnotes in each chapter so important that you propose having two reporters at each session (or take two weeks, one for the chapter and one for the footnotes), and that you are proposing this because you want other views aired.

Thus, the main reporter for the seven pages of Chapter 6 [An Overview by way of Introduction; the Black Dimension] would have a chance to speak both on the past, including a world historic event like the First Woman's Rights Convention, and on our age, contrasting Marcuse and Simone de Beauvoir, as well as on the difference between individualism (be that seen in a Rosa Luxemburg or a Sojourner Truth) and masses in motion (be that the Women's War in Africa 1929, or the Russian Revolution, 1917). At the same time, another reporter (or reporters) would take up the 21 footnotes to that chapter. Some are just a reference to another work and some add a commentary. For example, footnote 3, which refers to Chevigny's work on Margaret Fuller<sup>1</sup> contains also a quotation from Fuller's *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*: "Let it not be said wherever there is energy or creative genius, 'She has a masculine mind.'" I believe somebody would be sufficiently interested in finding out about the woman who said this in the 19th century (specifically as early as 1845) to volunteer to report on her biography. Or take such simple footnotes as footnotes 1 and 2—where the one on Nat Turner is followed by the one on Black women. Someone would surely want to report on the Black dimension, don't you think?



## ROSA LUXEMBURG, WOMEN'S LIBERATION, AND MARX'S PHILOSOPHY OF REVOLUTION

by Raya Dunayevskaya

**PART ONE:** Rosa Luxemburg as Theoretician, as Activist, as Internationalist

**PART TWO:** The Women's Liberation Movement as Revolutionary Force and Reason

**PART THREE:** Karl Marx—From Critic of Hegel to Author of *Capital* and Theorist of "Revolution in Permanence"

To order, see page 7.

Now take the next chapter (Chapter 7) [Luxemburg as Feminist; Break with Jogiches], which is also a brief one of eight pages. Yet you have there the very topic—the break-up of Luxemburg and Jogiches—which only Marxist-Humanists have explained in a way that has so inter-related the Man/Woman relationship (even where both of them are revolutionaries and very much in love with each other) to the historic period that all can see any easy answer is impossible. And it is because nobody can have a quick answer that you see women, as women, in a sharp confrontation with the right-wing Social-Democrats who are betraying. At the same time, the footnotes give us readings that include everyone from Kollontai to Nettl, who, though he has written the most comprehensive work on Luxemburg, is so sharply criticized that one sees that, far from being an easy characteristic to expose, male chauvinism lies very deep, indeed, within even those who consciously try to be "fair."

FINALLY, THE THIRD and most demanding chapter<sup>2</sup> [Chapter 8, The Task That Remains To Be Done: The Unique and Unfinished Contributions of Today's Women's Liberation Movement] is on the unfinished tasks of today. I dare say that nobody can read pages 100-101 on the new voices and not be moved by the newness that today's Women's Liberation Movement has brought, and yet be very conscious that even though Women's Liberation has moved from being an Idea to being a Movement, we are just at the very beginnings of anything that could be called success. Indeed, I believe that whether we are talking about China, or Sheila Rowbotham, or current movements from Iran to Portugal, the desire would be to spend three meetings on just that one chapter, full of anxiety to move into a study of Marx himself. Indeed, it is this chapter that makes us conscious of the need to study philosophy as action, and, seeing the Subject as revolutionary force and Reason, to study that original great revolutionary to which the first part of the work is devoted.

As for the footnotes, which begin with Kate Millet's

1. Unfortunately, the title of Chevigny's book in this footnote does not include the name of Margaret Fuller, since we followed the idiocies of the publisher's rules which do not require subtitles in footnotes, and because, again unfortunately, Chevigny included Fuller's name as a subtitle. It is correctly listed in the Bibliography.

2. I wish I could transmit to every reader, whether member or not, just how demanding that chapter is, and that by "demanding" I mean the individual responsibility for working out Marx's philosophy of revolution in such comprehensive and concrete terms on the history and development of Women's Liberation that future generations could say, "Oh, that's where they should have started."

Sexual Politics and continue through Fatima Mernissa's *Veiled Sisters*, not to mention the U.S. itself and its working women—and who would want to miss Edith Thomas' *Women Incendiaries*?—you would certainly not only want to cover each one, but be sure to point to our own books and pamphlets not only in English but in Farsi, in Japanese, in Spanish, in French, in Italian, in German, in order to show the world character of Marxist-Humanism, and especially appeal to the Third World in their own languages.

The whole point of this letter and the reason for sending it to the locals is that I feel that once we get the method of what a Marxist-Humanist class is—it is always a preparation for one type of revolution or another—it wouldn't matter whether you try to take up the book as a whole, or only a part of the book, or the whole trilogy of revolution.<sup>3</sup> What is necessary is that we should know where we're going in order to create the kind of attitude to objectivity and subjectivity which means grasping our original, fundamental, historic contributions to Marx's Marxism not as dogma, much less "orders from above," but as being able to share the joy of finding the link to so sweeping a continent of thought and of revolution that, though it is 100 years old, that is where we will find the trail to the 1980s. It is the trail to today whether that be on Women's Liberation, on Labor on the Black dimension, on the peasantry, or on Youth as the new generation of revolutionaries that was lucky enough to be born when a whole new Third World emerged, full blown not from the head of Zeus but from their own mass self-activity. This kind of inter-communication between the ages is able to create such new human relations that, though we live in the capitalist-imperialist nuclear world, we have a view not of extinction but of the future that is in the present.

Yours, Raya

3. I don't mean that the "overview" of Part II is what holds for all three books. I do mean that the methodology, which allowed me to present all of Part I in *Marxism and Freedom* as the "Movement from Practice," was due first to the new Universal that I abstracted from the actual movement from practice which made me see that was exactly what Marx did regarding such simple matters as the [Silesian] weavers' strike [of 1844], and that therefore it also applied to periods long before 1844. For example, this being an American book, it was important to note that the engines of revolution were the Committees of Correspondence. Since I couldn't prove that point without writing very nearly a whole new book, I simply noted it only as a footnote. (That is a most significant aspect of footnotes. If you study them carefully, you can get a whiff of the next book in the writer's mind. That holds true also for RLWLKM.) It took many years before M. Franki wrote the pamphlet, *America's First Unfinished Revolution*, which developed the question of the Committees of Correspondence.

As for *Philosophy and Revolution*, its development began with the Hegelian dialectic "in and for itself" (Chapter 1) and then traced its recreation in Marx (Chapter 2), followed by what it became in Lenin, as the Great Divide in Marxism (Chapter 3). *Philosophy and Revolution*, by the end, could show the dialectic's continuing, pivotal "nature" by pointing to Fanon's recreation of it for illuminating the revolutionary opposition to colonialism. In addition to studying the footnotes in *Philosophy and Revolution*, please read carefully the new Introduction to the 1982 edition, and see how I answered the academic Hegelian who accused me of "creating" an unchained dialectic. Then see how I used the phrase for the organization in my Summation at the Expanded Resident Editorial Board on Jan. 1, 1983. ["Marxist-Humanism, 1983: The Summation that is a New Beginning, Subjectively and Objectively," *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, #7629]

## Spanish Civil War

(Continued from page 1)

pated women" belied social realities. However, that incongruity does not diminish the nobility of thousands of "ordinary" Spanish women crucial to the collective endeavor to thwart fascism.

Major women's organizations, the communist-dominated Agrupación de Mujeres Antifascistas and the anarchist-dominated Mujeres Libres usually allied on basic priorities of defending the Republic, despite inter- and intra-party dissonances. Although sympathetic to Mujeres Libres, Nash deals candidly with often unresolved contradictions among various Marxist factions and the imperative of women's emancipation. She concludes that factionalism, class differences, and deeply rooted cultural values obstructed fundamental alteration in traditional gender roles.

The fascists' victory was a double tragedy for women: the loss of Spain's democratic freedoms and their hopes for emancipation. Franco's propaganda condemned women's brief freedom as "moral decadence." Franco mandated that female sexuality, education and work be regulated to conform submissively to motherhood as woman's "biological, Christian, and Spanish function."

In the 1990s, as in the 1930s, hortatory rhetoric of "family values" contradicts social reality and conceals punitive, class, racial, ethnic and gender-specific social policies. Nash argues, women's emancipation is not reform, but revolution—a social movement based on ideological principles including the overthrow of patriarchal-capitalistic value systems. This view is consonant with "revolution in permanence" of Marx and Dunayevskaya. These Spanish women's voices are "a protest rally from the past," that must be heard today.

—Francesca Patai

\*Trilogy of revolution" refers to the three foundation works of Marxist-Humanism: *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).

## Essay Article

by Olga Domanski

The appearance of the first-ever collection of feminist essays devoted exclusively to Hegelian philosophy—**Feminist Interpretations of G.W.F. Hegel** edited by Patricia Jagentowicz Mills and published last year by Penn State Press—was an event that promised to hold great importance for the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM). What holds Hegel's philosophy and women's liberation together is the transformation of reality central to Hegelian dialectics as Hegel follows out, in the abstract form of the development of "pure thought," the 2,500-year movement of humanity to freedom through overcoming seemingly endless contradictions that arise from within. It speaks loudly to what was integral to the WLM when it first erupted out of the Left at the end of the 1960s and demanded totally new human relations, not the day "after the revolution" but inseparable from the process of achieving freedom.

In short, what makes Hegel important to the WLM, whose very name signifies its revolutionary goal, is the need of every freedom force to work out the **dialectics of revolution**. That is what seems most missing in the essays collected as **Feminist Interpretations**, yet it is the central thrust of a very different kind of collection that also appeared last year in a new edition from Wayne State University Press, **Womens Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution** by Raya Dunayevskaya, the founder of Marxist-Humanism. It is important to explore the contrast between these two works.

**Feminist Interpretations of Hegel** is part of a series being edited by Nancy Tuana focused on "Re-Reading the Canon," to correct the "gender biases" in the philosophic canon by shifting attention, Tuana suggests, to how "woman is constructed within the text of philosophy," most of which have been written by men. At the same time, Mills stresses in her Introduction that there is no such thing as "the" feminist interpretation, and that she has tried to reveal the multiplicity by including both those for and those against Hegel.

Mills's Introduction sees contemporary feminist concern with Hegel as beginning with Simone de Beauvoir's appropriation of Hegel's master/slave dialectic to develop her concept of woman as Other in **The Second Sex** in 1949. Now, however, Mills sees a move away from concentration on that section of the **Phenomenology of Mind** and toward a "more comprehensive analysis of Hegel's philosophic system." She presents the pieces she has chosen as representing this "latest flowering of Hegel studies within feminist theory," explaining: "Some focus on prominent passages in his philosophy where he analyzes women and the feminine; some search in the margins of his text for references to sexual difference; and some analyze aspects of his system that are only implicitly marked by sex/gender categories."

One is left wondering how this will result in the kind of "comprehensive analysis" of Hegel we have been promised, which could show how the full thrust of his philosophy does (or does not) speak to the liberatory aims of feminist theory. The greatest disappointment is that none of the contributors look at those pages of Hegel in the revolutionary context of the journey of Self-Consciousness to "Absolute Knowledge."<sup>\*</sup>

While Mills is quite right to insist that the 13 she has chosen represent a "multiplicity" of interpretations, she has organized them into four general "themes": The first consists of five chapters on Hegel's comments on women in the **Phenomenology** and the **Philosophy of Right**; the second includes two that look at Hegel's **Aesthetics**; the third part deals with "Hegel's account of marriage, reproduction and the family"; and the fourth focuses, as Mills puts it in the Introduction, "on the relation of Hegel's philosophy to the feminist political practice of consciousness-raising."

While it is impossible in the space of this review to look at all 13, it is possible to take a brief look at two which reveal the kind of pitfalls feminist theory has contended with in its struggles over the past 30 years.

### HEGEL'S ANTIGONE

A simple glance at the abundant entries on "Antigone" in the index will give some idea of the exceptional interest in Hegel's relationship to that heroine in this collection of essays. While it includes essays by everyone from Luce Irigaray to Seyla Benhabib, none have dealt with Hegel's interpretation of Sophocles' great play in more detail and over as many years as Mills, whose essay is titled simply "Hegel's Antigone" and who has chosen as its epigram a quote from Hegel's **Aesthetics**: "The Antigone (is) one of the most sublime and in every respect most excellent works of art of all time."

It is a complex story both in Sophocles and in the way

# Hegel, Feminism and Revolution

Hegel uses it. In Sophocles' play, Antigone is sentenced to be buried alive for defying the orders of the ruler, Creon, not to bury her brother, Polyneices, whom Creon wants to punish for fighting for the throne by leaving his body to be eaten by wild beasts. Antigone insists that the ancient "divine laws" that require a sister to bury her brother override the new "human laws" Creon is mandating, and goes to her death.

As Mills points out, Hegel was deeply impacted by the play and discussed it at length both in his **Phenomenology** and his **Philosophy of Right**.

In the **Phenomenology** Hegel does not simply retell Sophocles' play. He "uses" and even "bends" it to show what he sees as great in a woman who is defying authority. In the pages he titles "Reason as Testing Laws," Hegel quotes Antigone's view of the inviolability of the ancient law: "Not now, indeed, nor yesterday, but for aye it lives, and no man knows what time it came" (Baillie 452). It is the quote Dunayevskaya, in a talk to a Women's Liberation audience in 1977, interpreted as showing that what Hegel here saw in Antigone was "not just a great individual, but the integrity of a free people—'individualism that lets nothing interfere with its universalism, i.e. freedom'" (as Hegel expressed it in his **Philosophy of Mind**).

Unfortunately, he also says some quite reactionary things about women, relegating them to "the family" and making them subordinate—which is where almost all the feminist theorists stop and there-by miss the actual dialectic Hegel is working out, despite his totally wrong "politics." None of these political positions are "proved" by (or rather, flow from) his philosophy. What is proved, and demands thinking through, is why he is "for"—that is, so admires—Antigone in her battle with Creon, when she represents the past, instead of being "for" Creon, as would be expected, since he supposedly represents the future.

What does Mills see in Hegel's discussion of Antigone? Through a painstaking look at the whole section, and the original play, she dwells endlessly on the way Hegel confines woman inside the family as against the way Antigone actually "leaves the family to risk her life in the polis," concluding that Antigone thus "transcends the limitations of womanhood set down by Hegel." But, inasmuch as this is the Antigone Hegel is "for," doesn't it show that his dialectic carries him in a far different direction than all his reactionary "political" positions on "woman"? Why would one not want to figure out what that contradiction proves about the power of the revolutionary dialectic that Hegel was working out—instead of spending all one's energy to supposedly expose the "aspects of Sophocles' Antigone that are overlooked by Hegel." The considerable labor she has expended is all to insist that Hegel "disregards the sister-sister relationship" in his choice of the sister-brother relationship as what, in theory, could pose the female as equal with the male. Or that he "refuses to discuss Antigone's suicide" because, "she refuses to fit neatly into the Hegelian enterprise in which universality ultimately dominates."

While passages such as this reveal Mills' hostility to the Hegelian concept of Universal, the key is her hostility to the Hegelian concept of "negation of negation," which pours out when she situates her entire critique within Theodor Adorno's **Negative Dialectics**. Far from leading to a "closed system" as Mills contends, the "absolute negativity" of Hegel's "negation of the negation" opens the road to a revolutionary future. That is the dialectic we must catch if we are to find how it speaks to the actual struggles women are waging today. As Dunayevskaya put it in her critique of Adorno, and the Frankfurt school, which he headed, in her talk at the Hegel Society of America on "Hegel's Absolute as New Beginning": Once you fail to "listen to the voices from below" and reduce your purpose instead to what Adorno called "discussing key concepts of philosophic disciplines and centrally intervening in those disciplines," your next step becomes "the substitution of a permanent critique, not alone for absolute negativity, but also for 'permanent revolution.'" It is a pitfall many theorists share.

### CARLA LONZI AND MARXISM

The fact that there is such little discussion of Marxism in this collection, despite the fact that Marx is widely recognized as having rooted himself in Hegel, makes it especially important to look at one contribution that does touch on that relation. If we can get ourselves past the title of her essay, "Let's Spit on Hegel," the late Italian feminist Carla Lonzi can show us the perhaps greatest pitfall that has confronted the WLM since its beginning—the rejection of Marxism as being limited to "class struggle" and having nothing to say to women fighting for liberation. The essay is a new translation of a document written in 1970 and celebrated by European feminists as laying the ground for "autocoscienza" (roughly equivalent to "consciousness-raising" in the U.S.).

What is different from other rejections of Marxism by the WLM is not Lonzi's erroneous identification of it with "Marxist-Leninist ideology." It is that she lays Marx's alleged failure to include woman at the feet of Hegel and his master-slave dialectic. Lonzi sees Hegel's master-

slave as a relationship "internal to the male world" that is solved by elimination of one or the other through the "seizure of power," noting that there is no such "solution" possible in the man-woman relationship. Lonzi concludes that for Hegel "the conflict of woman versus man is not perceived as a dilemma: no solution is foreseen for it insofar as patriarchal culture does not consider it a human problem, but a natural phenomenon."

From this critique of Hegel she moves to critique Marx: "Marxism dealt with the master-slave dialectic as the fundamental contradiction in the development of bourgeois society, and articulated this dialectic in terms of class struggle. But the dictatorship of the proletariat has sufficiently demonstrated that it is not the bearer of the dissolution of social roles."

In place of a Marxism which she thinks is only about "class struggle," she ends her "Manifesto" with this declaration: "The woman question is in and of itself both the means and the end of the substantive changes of human kind. It needs no future. It makes no distinctions between proletariat, bourgeoisie, tribe, clan, race, age, or culture. It does not come from above, or from below, from the elite or from the masses. It is not to be directed, organized, diffused or publicized. A new subject pronounces a new word and in that pronouncement is confident of its diffusion. Action becomes simple and elementary. There is no goal, only the present. We are the dark past of the world. We are accomplishing the present." In short, the WLM simply is and doesn't need any philosophy at all.

Lonzi's manifesto so completely tears woman out of the revolutionary dialectic, not only of Hegel and Marx but of life, that it demands that we look at both the revolution in philosophy that Hegel achieved, and the philosophy of revolution that Marx created, rooted in his profound 1844 **Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic**—if we are ever to discover how that revolutionary dialectic can be re-created for today.

Hegel's revolution in philosophy was that he drew history into philosophy. For every stage in the development of "pure thought" there was a corresponding stage in the development of world history. Thus, the importance of the "master-slave" dialectic he saw in the journey of Self-Consciousness on its way to Absolute Knowledge was that once one "gains a mind of one's own," the question becomes what you do with that mind.

It is also necessary to see that "master-slave" (much less "class struggle") is far from all that Marx took from Hegel. What grounded his whole philosophy of revolution was how he unchained Hegel's dialectic by demystifying his concept of "negation of negation" as "revolution," which does not stop at just the first negation of uprooting the old, but moves to the second negation of creating the new. What distinguishes Marx's Marxism from all others is that concept alone—as he established it at its birth in his now-famous 1844 Manuscripts, declaring that, far from "vulgar communism," the goal of his philosophy was a new Humanism based on the unification of mental and manual labor, in each human being.

### DIALECTICS OF REVOLUTION

As against any failure to include woman in his philosophy, it is crucial to grasp how integral to Marx's concept of "absolute negativity" was his view in those same 1844 Manuscripts of the Man/Woman relationship as showing how deep the uprooting of the old has to be from the start, if we are ever to get to a truly new society. The question that has confronted the WLM from its birth is whether the dialectics of revolution can be worked out for today without being rooted in just such a profound philosophy of revolution.

That kind of rootedness is what marks the contrast between the anthology of **Feminist Interpretations** and the 32 writings on women over 35 years by Dunayevskaya, who founded Marxist-Humanism as a re-statement of Marx's Marxism. It was a founding grounded in a second demystification of Hegel—the penetration of Hegel's Absolute Idea, in which she unchained the dialectic in seeing a dual movement in the Absolute Idea—both a "movement from practice that is itself a form of theory" and a "movement from theory that is itself a form of philosophy."

Throughout **Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution** we become witness to what happens when the theoretician's eyes and ears are so attuned to the new impulses from the "movement from practice" that new "categories" are created and become a step forward in philosophic cognition.

Thus the actual dialectics of revolution can be seen in a multitude of ways throughout the first three parts. We find that Dunayevskaya's category, "Woman as Reason and as Revolutionary Force," could be created only after Hegel's logic had been worked out for our age in her 1953 breakthrough on the Absolute Idea and the new revolutionary force of the WLM emerged in 1969. That category could then be seen in labor and in the Black dimension, in the role of women in revolutions from Russia 1917 to Portugal 1976 to Iran 1979 to the unfinished Latin American revolutions, in masses in motion and in great theoreticians like Rosa Luxemburg.

But the concept of dialectics of revolution is most profoundly deepened in Part IV of the collection, which projects philosophy as the "Missing Link" in relation to revolutions, both in theory and in fact. Whether that philosophy is grasped in the Hegelian terms of "absolute negativity" or as "absolute movement of becoming," or as what Marx called "revolution in permanence," that is what we are being challenged to recreate for today.

## Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution

Reaching for the Future

RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA



See page 7 to order

\*For some of the theorists who do, see Susan M. Easton, "Hegel and Feminism," **Hegel and Modern Philosophy**, edited by David Lamb (New York: Croon Helm, 1987); Patricia Altenbernd Johnson's discussion of Raya Dunayevskaya's work on Hegel's Absolutes in **Quarterly Journal of Ideology**, Vol. 13, No. 4, 1989; and Stuart Swindle's "Why Feminists Should take the Phenomenology of Spirit Seriously" in **The Owl of Minerva**, 24, 1 (Fall 1992).

**TODAY'S REALITY IN A PHILOSOPHIC CONTEXT**

The main point of Dunayevskaya's speech about Little Rock (see "From the Archives," January-February N&L) seems to be how much U.S. history has been determined by the unfinished nature of the revolution we call the Civil War. If Eisenhower shared Lincoln's conciliatory politics of "catering to the border states," doesn't Bill Clinton just take it to the extreme, talking liberal and surrendering the keys to the far right? So the Abolitionists are truly contemporary, with their devotion to what Dunayevskaya called "fighting for the pure idea," and pushing to bring about that revolution in the first place and then, though unsuccessfully, to propel it to its logical finish.

**Environmental activist  
Memphis**

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After hearing a brief talk on your pamphlet **American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard**, I would say we are living the same reality today. Before, Blacks were enslaved. Now it is the immigrants who are blamed for all the economic ills. It is a way to divide us.

**Latina worker  
New York**

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The way Dunayevskaya stressed the Populist movement in the archives column in the last issue reminded me of her critique of Engels on the world historic defeat of the female sex. Marx never considered any defeat historic, there was always one more revolution to make. The populist movement wasn't a success, yet we don't file it away as a defeat.

**J.P.  
California**

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The historic process is very beautiful, because whatever city or country we are from, we are living through the same things: the capitalist system, imperialism, monopoly and political processes which are different but have the same pattern.

My country, Ecuador, is a reflection of the government of the U.S. Like here, we are a mix of ideas, a mix of races; and like here, the struggle is to achieve a life with dignity, to value life. The most important thing is to organize ourselves.

**Greta  
New York**

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I think the dialectic needs to be more explicit in N&L. When I look at what is happening in South Korea, I don't see new human relations but a struggle for better conditions as they continue working for Hyundai. I wish I could believe they are fighting for a new society. That's what happens when the facts are just laid out there. Some will see the dialectic, some won't.

**David M.  
Oakland Cal.**

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The "Workshop Talks" column in the last issue on workers needing control over hours of work relates to struggles here in California over the attempt to take away the eight hour day. Workers may not know explicitly about the hunger for surplus value. We have to be out there explaining it. The weight of dead generations is a nightmare on the living; without a liberating banner of new human relations, competition for scarce jobs is driving the race to the bottom. If all could realize that, it would help move us toward new human relations.

**Ken E.  
Berkeley, California**

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I was reading Raya Dunayevskaya's **Marxism and Freedom**, where she talks of abstract labor and socially necessary labor time. It made me think of working in the catfish plants in the Mississippi Delta. The company doesn't appreciate how some of us worked for decades to get the fish out and came in every day on time. The company doesn't look at it as dedication. They just replace you.

They want you to work faster and faster. It used to take 30 minutes to run a load of fish. They paid thousands to build conveyer belts to run the fish off the trucks and now we do the job in 15 minutes. Anything they can do to run it faster, they do. You can't keep up with the machines and they are taking our jobs. There are more machines and they run faster. You get adjusted to a certain

speed, and then they turn it up. **Marxism and Freedom** has a lot in it that speaks to my life.

**Black woman worker  
Mississippi**



**TUPAC SHAKUR  
AND  
REVOLUTIONARY  
DIALECTICS**

The article on Tupac Shakur (see January-February N&L) reveals the authors engagement in Marxist-Humanist dialectics. Other writers do not capture the whole of the problem in so few words. The Black struggle for freedom at the deepest level, if it has a developing consciousness, is universal, and all those that are exploited and enslaved, as well as those of relative comfort and privilege, can relate to it, if they have a developing consciousness.

**Subscriber  
California**

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I spent a day with Tupac Shakur about a year ago during a rally in South Central Los Angeles. He was a nice young man. Unfortunately he was connected to a group of rotten people.

**Georgiana Williams  
Los Angeles**

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Gene Ford's article on Tupac Shakur powerfully discussed the stigmatizing and categorizing of Black youth, while bringing up Mumia Abu-Jamal's critique of Tupac for not being revolutionary enough. It reminded me of Raya Dunayevskaya saying of George Jackson that the dialectic continued to be the attraction for revolutionaries even in the San Quentin hell-hole.

The same was true for Peter Wermuth's article on Serbia. In his article on the recent protest demonstrations in Serbia he warns of the attitude expressed toward the recent past of history and philosophy. It is wrong to begin with a tabula rasa just because things may look hopeful. Retrogressionism has many faces. What is important is to make sure that the dialectic is the attraction for us, otherwise we will return to the old dualities.

**Steven J.  
Los Angeles**

**EDUCATION AND FREEDOM**

In the January-February N&L there were two excellent articles on education: "Black parents combat the Christian Coalition" and "Mario Savio, Freedom Schools and Berkeley '64." It would be instructive in any analysis of U.S. educational institutions to examine more closely its early history. Such an analysis will reveal a grounding in the educational system of 19th century Prussia, a system designed to produce obedient soldiers and workers. Our current system of indoctrination and social control is no accident.

If we are going to continue the struggle for a free society, we should create a space for people to learn in a non-authoritarian way. Such a way would be social-ecological, humanistic, community-based, and perhaps most importantly, student-directed. Such a change would allow for the proactive and creative self-actualization we so desperately need.

**Denny  
Memphis**

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Kevin Michaels' article on the Free Speech Movement shows how important was the connection between the Free Speech Movement and the Mississippi freedom struggles. I also heard the victory speech that Mario Savio gave when they won the right to engage in political activity on college campuses. He spoke about the responsibility that comes with free speech. I think the responsibility is to build on the high points achieved in the freedom struggle thus far.

**Subscriber  
Los Angeles**

**Readers' Views**

Not long ago I was on a train in southern Florida and overheard a discussion between a leader of the Christian Coalition and a woman he was interviewing for a position in their regional office. He spoke of the need to "instill principles of discipline and respect for authority in our young people" and added: "When the family doesn't do this, the state has to take over that responsibility. That's what happened in Nazi Germany. Now we don't want to go that far, but that's what will happen if we don't make sure the disciplining starts at home."

A most revealing commentary on the mentality of our "moral activists."

**Anti-fascist  
Illinois**

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That was an important article you had about Black parents in the South fighting the Christian Coalition. I hadn't known that they were taking over the schools there. It's good to see that all different kinds of people are resisting them.

**Sustaining Subscriber  
Hawaii**

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**THE  
DEBATE  
OVER  
EBONICS**

John Alan wrote (see January-February N&L) that "no side seems to understand that it is not Ebonics vs. standard English, but Black students verses the school system and American society." Well, almost no one. The parents and students in decaying inner-city school systems are keenly aware that the Ebonics Debate is a war of words between the white establishment and upper-crust Blacks attempting to redefine Black Reality. Working-class Black parents are aware that the real debate is over the racist underpinnings of American pedagogy and school funding in terms of whose children get it.

**Civil Rights Activist  
Oakland, California**

John Alan's essay on Ebonics didn't add much to the flood of Op-Eds which have heaped ridicule on the Oakland proposal. Decades away from the classroom, this writer would like, for a change, a scientific approach. Obscured is the kernel of the debate: treating Ebonics as a legit language opens up the chance for ghetto kids to get as much care in the teaching of English as do Latino immigrants.

Instead of all the piling on, including Jesse Jackson's knee-jerk and flip-flop, a scientist would just give it a year's trial. Forget the abstractions — does it work?

**A. Fortunoff  
Los Angeles**

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As John Alan shows, the Ebonics controversy is not about language, but about power. The dominant culture defines what is "standard" language. There is no such thing as standard English, or we'd all be talking like Shakespeare. When you have state power and a flag, then your "dialect" is a language, like Creole in Haiti. If African-Americans had power, then Ebonics would be accepted like any other dialect of English.

**John Marcotte  
New York**

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In his article John Alan plays down the issue of language in the education of Black youth, yet he calls for a "new pedagogical philosophy" based upon a human relationship between teachers, students and community. I see this as a contradiction. If such a pedagogical philosophy is to end a system where "the

student is a mere object to be 'educated' for some predetermined purpose," then the issue of language, by necessity, is central. While teaching language in communities where Black English predominates, I've found it is the "educators who need to be educated." How can students become the subjects of their own education if the difference of their language with the language of their school is overlooked?

**Jim Guthrie  
Chicago**

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As Alan pointed out, "In an estranged society, sharply divided by class and race, an 'estranged' language will emerge to express that estrangement." Gene Ford poignantly illustrated that estrangement in the inner-city rap of Tupac Shakur.

**Htun Lin  
Oakland, California**

**AFRICA TODAY**

Sudan is on fire and the fascist state will have problems in containing the situation. They have been troubling their neighbors without any reason and have isolated themselves in the name of Islamisation of the region. The hostilities will intensify and the regime will go. At the same time it will take a miracle for the Mobutu regime to survive. Will all these events lead to a revolution? Even if not, I think they will contribute to it.

**Ba Karang  
The Gambia**

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I recently attended a lecture by Ben Chavis at Northwestern University, in which he restated his uncritical support for Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam (NOI). When he said that his alliance with them had "strengthened the global struggle of Black people," I took the floor to say his refusal to criticize Farrakhan's embrace of the rulers of Sudan, who are involved in a genocidal war against the Black populace of the South, proves that unity among Black "leaders" has become more important to Chavis than defending the idea of freedom. His response was to deny any repression of the Black populace of Sudan and explain away any problems there as a legacy of colonialism.

Just 24 hours earlier, Khalid Muhammad delivered a stridently anti-semitic speech at the same university, which Chavis defended. Both that and Chavis' gross insensitivity to the plight of the southern Sudanese proves Frantz Fanon's point that narrow nationalists who cavort with anti-semitism are not just "anti-white"—they are also anti-Black.

**Peter Wermuth  
Chicago**

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Until recently I knew little about the Nuba people of Sudan. Their struggle against the government, which crosses tribal and religious lines, shows the African liberation struggle is very much alive. Why do we hear so little about it in the U.S.?

**Solidarity activist  
Illinois**

**HAWAIIAN SOVEREIGNTY**

Here in Hawaii, the Native Hawaiians had a big meeting to work out their differences and decide what "sovereignty" will really mean. I worry that if they decide sovereignty means secession from the U.S., they will be taken over by someone else. Nor do I think the U.S. will let them secede. A lot of the problems stem from the State of Hawaii which governs the Hawaiian Home Lands. They are supposed to be giving the land out to Native Hawaiians. But they don't. What they do is rent it out to rich clients. In Hilo, they rent it to the airport or to farmers while Native Hawaiians die of old age waiting to be given their land. Then those who run the Hawaiian Home Lands give themselves huge salaries.

**Maggie Soleil  
Kauai Hawaii**

**THE MEANING OF THE PROTESTS IN SERBIA**

Reading Peter Wermuth's article on Serbia in the January-February issue provided me with a better way of looking at the Democracy Movement and simmering ethnic wars in my land of birth—Burma. The students and citizens of Burma have been marching for democracy for the past eight years, compared to Belgrade's eleven weeks. The "cleansing" of Burma's roughly a dozen ethnic minorities also been going on for well over 50 years.

The Zajedno's and Aung San Suu-Kyi's of the world get great amounts of attention when the masses of the disaffected spill into the streets, but their unwillingness to ponder the possibility of "absolute freedom" for all renders their "pro-democracy" stances Sisyphean. Wermuth's question "Will the Serbian protests confront the legacy of ethnic cleansing" crystallizes for us the central problem of this age which revolutionaries everywhere have to face.

T.G.  
California

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Wermuth's article on Serbia and Kevin Anderson's essay on Marx's unpublished writings together present a convincing case that only a deeper penetration of theory is capable of explaining, and therefore overcoming, today's internal barriers to revolution. The lead on Serbia catches the particularity of the first massive, spontaneous movement in the Balkans in the shadow of the genocide in Bosnia. But Wermuth also indicates that the protests' failure so far to confront ethnic cleansing may not be driven by particularities alone.

Anderson's essay, related to this question of particular and universal, shows that many of Marx's long-unpublished writings have to do with his search for multiethnic, multilinear potentialities of non-capitalist human self-development—a legacy too precious to ignore any longer, when a theoretical void swallows revolution almost before it can identify itself.

Victor Hart  
New York

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The article on Serbia reminded me of Mitch Weerth's lead article on Mexico last year, because you feel like you are there. The informative articles on sweatshops, environment, battle with Marxists, the sisterhood in Hebron, all helps to enrich the way we can convey how Marxist-Humanism is coming from real human beings.

Sharon Cannery  
Berkeley, California

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I found the January-February issue of N&L extremely well done. I was especially impressed with the in-depth analysis of the very complicated situation in Bosnia. My congratulations and thanks.

Hungarian dissident from 1956  
Canada



**THE LOGIC OF REVOLUTIONARY FEMINISM**

The evocation of Meridel LeSueur, "A lifetime of 'ripening' in the December issue, was simply splendid, one of the two or three best on her anywhere. I met her around 1978. She was a giant, in her way.

Paul Buhle  
New York

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In beginning to read *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution* by Raya Dunayevskaya, I realized that I did not believe in an objective truth of freedom. I believe that we are to be free but I don't have the foundation for it yet. I have worked in the feminist movement since I was 14. Now I'm 20. I never wanted to talk about freedom in terms of logic because I felt it would be too narrow, too concrete. But the more I read of these concepts, the more I see that freedom must be a concrete, universal truth, or else we are constantly going

to be asking ourselves, "What exactly are we fighting for?"

New Reader  
Memphis

**TOUGH TIMES FOR LABOR**

One of the Detroit newspaper strikers writing in N&L that we need laws against hiring replacement workers, and a Labor Party "would be important to get this kind of legislation." Relying on the law is looking at the problem backwards; if the labor movement were strong, we wouldn't need such a law. Strikes used to be won because the workers, and sometimes the whole city, kept out replacement workers. The great union movement of the 1930s forced the government to pass labor laws, including the right to unionize, but first workers organized in spite of laws against it. This issue has recently come up for the workfare workers in New York who are organizing against their terrible exploitation. It is illegal for them to form unions, but they are trying to do it anyway.

Anne Jaclard  
New York

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I disagree with the conclusion in the Editorial in the last issue that organized labor hasn't spoken out. They have spoken out and their message is capitulation. We all know Clinton is Reagan II and that he forced the American Airlines pilots back to work, but the AFL-CIO said their members are all over the map on this issue and we aren't going to take a position. The militancy and solidarity in South Korea contrast with American workers who are so divided between different unions and jurisdictions.

Subscriber  
California

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Adam Smith, the "patron saint of free enterprise," is often quoted to support giving free reign to the international corporations and the co-called free market. Those who are now busy attacking the social safety net for the poor should be reminded of what else Adam Smith has to say in his *Wealth of Nations*

more than 200 years ago: "Our merchants and master-manufacturers complain of the bad effects of high wages in raising the price and thereby lessening the sale of their goods both at home and abroad. They say nothing about the effects of high profits. They are silent with regard to the pernicious effects of their own gains. They complain only of those of other people."

He could have been describing the arguments of today against raising the minimum wage of the poor while corporate executives earn hundreds of millions of dollars a year.

Correspondent  
British Columbia

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Texas

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Prisoner  
California

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## Black/Red View Biko and today's South Africa

by John Alan

According to recent news reports, there has been passionate revival of interest in Stephen Bantu Biko in a new generation of South African Blacks. The voluntary confessions of five former security policemen revealed how they had tortured and murdered him. They are asking amnesty from the post-apartheid government's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Although these news reports have not given any other reason than the confessions of the apartheid regime security officers for the sudden passionate remembrances of Biko, one can be quite sure that the cause isn't simply their confessions. Rather this generation of Black South Africans are reacting to the "here and now" social and economic conditions of South Africa. Thus we also find that the details of Biko's murder have created a controversy over the nature of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, i.e., whether it "offers any more truth than the lies and alibis always told by apartheid-era security officials." (*Chicago Tribune*, Feb. 9, 1997)

To challenge the effectiveness of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, is indeed a challenge to the political policy of Nelson Mandela's government. Mandela's policy attempts to reconcile all of the inherent contradictions between race, class and ethnicities in a political balancing act without resolving their fundamental contradictions.

Although Mandela's government marks the end of the apartheid system of labor in South Africa, Black labor still remains the object of capitalist exploitation. The hegemonic control, i.e., the organization of production which exploits Black labor, still remains in the hands of a white minority who have connections with the world market.

This white minority still lives in isolated luxury in their suburbs, while Black masses still live in poverty in their old apartheid townships. In reality a truly new human society is yet to be created in South Africa and this is undoubtedly why Biko is now remembered so passionately by a generation of Blacks who were not born when he was murdered more than 20 years ago.

Steve Biko entered the struggle against apartheid at the end of the 1960s when he was a young medical student in his early twenties. At that time the South African government succeeded in smashing open Black opposition to apartheid. Nelson Mandela was imprisoned and Robert Sobukwe of the Pan-African Congress was banned. For a number of years there was no recognized leadership.

At this low point of the movement, Biko projected, among Black students, the idea that the source of the regeneration of the movement was in the consciousness of the Black masses. He firmly believed that Blacks had to disconnect their struggle from the politics of white lib-

eralism and must organize themselves separately. He was not opposed to real multiracialism but within the context of race relations in South Africa it was necessary to make "Black consciousness imminent in our own eyes."

By this Biko meant that the Black mind had to liberate itself from its past indoctrination by "white oriented standards" because Blacks have values and standards "which are bound to be different from whites simply because whites enjoy the privileges of which Blacks are robbed."



Steve Biko

For Biko the aim of Black consciousness in South Africa was to "TO BE" its own potential and no longer "could we afford be led and dominated by non-whites."

Steve Biko did, indeed, work out a concept of self emancipation during the darkest days of apartheid repression which later found an expression in the Black People's Convention (BPC). He thought that the Soweto Revolt was a manifestation of Black consciousness. Thus it's quite natural for a new generation of Black South Africans, who are not living in a colorless non-exploitative society, to turn to Steve Biko. However, they should ask the question, whether self-consciousness alone can create that new society with a human face that Steve Biko was seeking without the reasoning of a revolutionary philosophy founded on activity.

## Black World

(Continued from page 1)

toms, or beliefs by Arab elites. And they impress these ideas upon the lower class Arabs and non-Arabs alike.

But who are the Arabs? The Arab elites' conception of race/ethnicity is a paradigm of male and cultural chauvinism. A child by an Arab man and an African woman is considered Arab. If this is repeated generation after generation, let us say for 1,000 years as in the Sudan, then the children will still be considered Arab. No matter if they are 1/2, 1/4, 1/8, 1/16, 1/32, 1/64, or 1/1024 Arab. In the Sudan, they still cling tenaciously to tenuous Arab descent and culture.

The paradox is that the so-called Arabs are in fact Africans. They are the descendants of over one thousand years of race mixing between Arabs and Nubas, Fur, Dinka, Nuer, Shilluk, Uduk, Ingessana and untold numbers of other African tribes. As a result, Sudanese run in skin color from tan to black. But an Arab would never describe himself as Black. Black is the color of *abeed*, slaves. The equivalent of "n— —." If an Arab is jet black, he is referred to as "blue." A little lighter tone is called "green." Next are "brown" and "red." Then finally come the colors "yellow" and "white."

Northern Arabs' racial pride and prejudice "focuses on the right [light] brown color of skin." Too light a tone is considered a "*Khawaja*" (European), a Middle Eastern Arab, or worse, a *Halabi*, a Gypsy [is] considered the lowest of the light skinned races."<sup>4</sup> The other extreme is Black, referred to as *abid* (singular), the Arabic word for slave.

Who are the Sudanese? The Sudan has over 400 ethnic groups. Claims to being an Arab country are obviously spurious. The insidious color/caste system prevailing in Sudan is the result of the slave trade. During the 1800s the Turko-Egyptians colonized Sudan in order to acquire Black slaves. They used the Baggara Arabs as raiders against their Black and pagan neighbors. Egyptians, Syrians and Turks, all lighter and whiter, became the middlemen and transporters of slaves. Slave became synonymous with "Black." What present day Sudanese Arabs deny is their slave ancestry, which is Black. Ironically, an ancestor or relative who was a free Dinka or Nuer is looked upon favorably.

One million Nuba have been forced into concentration camps by the government. These camps represent the deadly culmination of 200 years of development of racist thought. The camps "translate one of the [Northern Sudanese Arab's] deepest impulses into action. It expresses the will of the [Arab Sudanese] people as a whole."

The Nuba face genocide because of their support for the SPLM/A (Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army). They face such extreme violence because of the tenacious nature with which they are holding onto their own cultures and languages. Many, mainly Christians but animists too, refuse to convert to Islam or speak Arabic. This is viewed with scorn by Arab Sudanese because this is happening in the Nuba mountains, considered part of the North. They are also under siege for the valuable farmland they occupy. But finally, and most horribly, they face genocide because of the blackness of their skins.

The genocide is not just to wipe out the Blacks of the Nuba mountains and the South, but to wipe out the hated blackness within the Sudanese Arab self, to cover the Black face completely and irrevocably with the Arab mask.

In Sudan, black is the color of the slave and black is becoming the color of death.

—Robert Reed

4. Deng, *War of Visions*, p. 5.

## Criminal (in)justice

This is a plea to the public to look into what has been coined as the answer to the overcrowding situation that the Missouri Department of Corrections (MDOC) claims presently exists. On behalf of the inmates within the MDOC, I am letting it be known that the MDOC is forcing inmates to occupy the leased cell space that it has acquired within the state of Texas.

In other words, Missouri is "kidnapping" inmates and forcing them to relinquish their personal properties, including pending legal actions, clothing, appliances, even family ties. This is being done in order to satisfy Missouri's need to shuffle paperwork, and inmates, in order to continue to receive federal moneys for the MDOC.

Missouri defines kidnapping in this way: "A person commits the crime of kidnapping if he unlawfully removes another without his consent from the place where he is found or unlawfully confines another without his consent for a substantial period..."

The MDOC is also hiding behind the fact that they have in place the **Interstate Corrections Compact**. However, what the taxpaying citizens of this state, who are footing the bill for Texas, don't know is that within the state statute (or law), it reads: "All inmates who may be confined in an institution pursuant to the provisions of this compact shall be treated in a reasonable and humane manner and shall be treated equally with such similar inmates of the receiving state as may be confined in the same institution of the sending state."

The fact of the matter is that inmates from Missouri are being denied any legal rights that they had while being held here. They are being denied adequate facilities in Texas. A county jail is not equal to a Correctional Center here in Missouri. Being locked up 23 hours per day is not equal to being a minimum custody level inmate here in Missouri. Not being allowed to practice your religious beliefs is not equal to what the Missouri inmate has been given, thanks to the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment.

We inmates are asking for the general public to pose these questions to the lawmakers and politicians of the state. If any of your loved ones have been affected by this, then I am most certain you know that Missouri is dead wrong.

Please question the following individual: Gary Allan, Coordinator, Cell Lease Program, Division of Adult Institutions, Missouri Department of Corrections, P.O. Box 236, Jefferson City, MO 65102

Please help!

—A Missouri prisoner

We all know the perils of the criminal justice system. Our communities have become consumed by this monstrous, overwhelming "system." When will it end? How do we stop it? We all become victims, and we sometimes fail to understand the system as a whole. When we view each part as its own entity, we do not see the cumulative connections.

Here is how it works in San Francisco. The police are the initial contact when they arrest you. They take you to the Sheriff for housing in jail, and report the charges to the District Attorney. The D.A. determines the charges to present to the Court. The Municipal Court decides how your case will proceed. You can be charged with either a misdemeanor or felony. If you should be so unlucky as to be charged with a felony, and found guilty in the Superior Court, you will ultimately be sentenced there. Your sentence could be either probation, or prison, or whatever scarce alternative is available. If you get probation, you return to the community and must report to a probation officer. If you go to prison and return to the community you have then been placed on parole, and report to your Parole Agent.

Law enforcement and judiciary, better known as "law and order," have been the basic parts, until now. We vote (or don't vote, as the case may be), on legislation that drives the justice "system." The dynamic of the three instead of two, and the resulting "three strikes and you're out," has added more force to the oppression. While it speaks of public safety, we know the system is "out-of-order."

This is just a brief synopsis of the criminal "just us" system. Let us not be confused. This has become the new public housing, the new educational system, and the new system of non-existent health care. It's the new slavery.

—Joyce Jams, community activist

## Tennessee land grab

**Fayette County, Tenn.**—Government funds that were supposed to be used to upgrade the schools are being spent on roads and housing to attract white people from Memphis-Shelby County area. They are trying to get the whites to move into Fayette County and the Blacks out. The County Commissioner tried to pass a bill that said if you didn't own five acres of land then you can't build anything on your property. An acre of land costs over \$35,000. Who can buy five acres who works a minimum wage job? It didn't pass. But after a year they can put it on the table again.

They were rushing to pass this bill and one of the Black commissioners asked why. That's how he caught them. Most of the commissioners are not concerned about what's going on. They can almost get anything passed they want. There's not too many people who are going to cross Tennessee's Lieutenant Governor John Wilder.

Wilder knows what companies are coming. He has prepared himself to take over all the land. Once Fayette County voted against widening Highway 64. But after the whites started moving here they knew they wouldn't be able to attract and keep white people if they couldn't keep their high-paying jobs. They invested money in that highway so the whites could have a safer and quicker way to get back and forth to their jobs in Memphis.

A lot of the whites keep their \$50,000 to \$100,000 jobs in Memphis and open small businesses in Fayette County where they tell their workforce, "All I can afford to pay you is \$4.25 an hour." A lot of Blacks who had small businesses and built their own buildings were told by the county that if they wanted to stay in business they had to go through the planning commission and upgrade their buildings. They got the permits and the licenses and did everything legal and were set to open when the county executive, Jim Voss, said: "Y'all better not open these places or we'll have y'all arrested."

Now they are boycotting the courthouse and letting people know that Jim Voss is pressuring them because they are Black people.

John Wilder owns a lot of land there. He even has his own real estate agency. We've got a John Wilder in every little town. They start out as big farmers, then go into real estate, then into politics, and then you got trouble.

Wilder promised that this would be his last term. A few months ago the paper announced he had decided to run again. The reason is to keep out the younger independent Black people who he doesn't control. He figures they might get past someone else, but they wouldn't get past him. But Wilder can't last forever. He's on his way out!

—Candice

## NEWS & LETTERS

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# Roots of Scottish radicalism

*The Very Bastards of Creation: Scottish International Radicalism, 1707-1995, by James Young (Glasgow: Clydeside Press, 1996)*

At a moment when so many have become disoriented by the retrogressive character of our times, it is a refreshing experience to encounter a work which argues that a new beginning can be made in the revolutionary movement by absorbing the greatest accomplishments of socialist thinkers and activists who have preceded us. This work by James Young addresses this by focusing on the nearly forgotten legacy of Scottish radicals who embraced a perspective of Scottish nationalism.

As against the increasingly common view that all forms of nationalism are reactionary, Young argues that "it remains essential to make distinctions between different types of nationalism." And as against those who have ignored or belittled those on the Left who advocated some form of Scottish nationalism, Young shows that in many cases the advocates of Scottish self-determination developed a far more radical critique of existing society than their English counterparts.

## CLAN COMMUNALISM AND SOCIALISM

Young begins his biographical study with the 18th century, the period of the much-heralded "Scottish Enlightenment," led by figures such as David Hume and Adam Smith. Both enthusiastically supported union with England and opposed Scottish national self-identity. Yet Young shows that the Scottish Enlightenment intellectuals' enthusiasm for English ways was not shared by the "lower orders."

One intellectual who heard these sentiments from below was James Thomson Callendar (1758-1803), who combined a defense of Scottish culture and national identity with support for the French Revolution. He was fiercely opposed to colonialism both at home and overseas, and denounced slavery and the oppression of non-white peoples in Africa and Asia. Though nearly forgotten today, Callendar marks the first of a long line of figures who elicited the radical and progressive content of the efforts to resist the destruction of Scotland's political and cultural independence.

## Queer politics and Marxism

Historically, the "Marxist Left" has had a less than noble relationship with the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Movements. Despite the radical beginnings of gay rights first in the Stonewall Riots of 1969, followed soon after by groups like the Gay Liberation Front who spoke of changing society on revolutionary grounds, and the journal Gay Left which called specifically for socialism, "socialist" parties and organizations in the mostly heterosexual (or closeted) Left rejected gay and lesbian rights as bourgeois.

In his pamphlet, "With Friends Like These: Marxism and Gay Politics," Simon Edge, a gay British former Trotskyist, takes up an historic relationship between queer politics and British Marxism. Edge shows how in the early years following Stonewall, around the same time as the Women's Liberation Movement was beginning, large radical contingents of LGBT activists took to the streets demanding freedom. Growing from thousands in the early '70s, to tens of thousands later on, to over 100,000 in the '80s, these movements were changing society's views of sexuality. Still, many calling themselves Marxist held onto the position homosexuality was a "bourgeois disease" that will wither away with the end of capitalism, while gay rights was a bourgeois deviation from the more important "class struggle."

In the early to mid '80s when activist groups like Act-Up began sprouting up all over the country, and their "in your face" attitudes pushed the closet of radical activism wide open to LGBT politics, Left parties began to change their tune. Dropping the old "bourgeois disease" rap, Left parties began to make it clear that they opposed homophobia and gay bashing, then developed claims that Marxism was the true historic torch-holder for gay and lesbian rights.

Citing the Russian Revolution as the one true liberator of homosexuals because the Bolsheviks eliminated the Tsarist laws against homosexual sex, several Trotskyist groups like Britain's SWP suddenly began to lay claim to the history of gay rights, chiding gay theorists for ignoring their "Marxist beginnings."

Though the truth of what really happened regarding gay rights in the period following the Russian Revolution is muddled by conflicting and scattered records, what can be said for sure is that the Trotskyist movement which had previously denied gay rights as anything but a diversion were now suddenly laying claim to its history, evidently to recruit radical queers out of the LGBT movement and into the "class struggle."

After his cutting analysis, Edge advises that revolutionary queers leave the Left parties and radicalize the queer movements instead. As a Marxist-Humanist, I agree with Edge's critique of Post-Marx Marxism's treatment of revolutionary subjects, however I wouldn't advise a retreat from Marxism altogether. Rather, a collective effort to root out and develop the new revolutionary ideas coming from queers involved in all freedom struggles may be the most vital activity which can assure us that the transformation of society will not settle for the recreation of a heterosexist world.

—Julia Jones

Young shows that such ideas had deep roots in Scottish society. "Despite its 'backwardness,'" he says, "there were strong egalitarian and collective features woven into the fabric of Scottish social life." He quotes W.F. Skene as saying back in 1888: "Yet though the conscious socialist movement be but a century old, the [Scottish] labouring folk all down the ages have clung to communist practices and customs, partly the inheritance and instinct from the group and clan life of our forefathers and partly because the customs were the only barrier to poverty; without them, life was impossible."

Young's discussion of this potentially opens up a fascinating window on Marx's still-undigested writings on technologically underdeveloped societies. Instead of advocating the dissolution of traditional communal formations, in writings such as the *Grundrisse* and *Ethnological Notebooks* Marx held that in certain cases they could serve as the basis for a socialist future. It is therefore unfortunate that Young critiques Marx for being insensitive or even racist toward minorities, by way of identifying him with a series of articles written by Engels which denounced Scots and others as "unhistoric peoples." Though Young briefly mentions the very different position projected by Marx in his last decade, the point gets subsumed by a tendency to treat Marx and Engels as one.

## A GLORIOUS HISTORY

Despite this shortcoming, Young marshals an impressive historic arsenal to bring to light a series of figures for whom the struggle for socialism and national self-determination coalesced. We meet Alexander Roger (1784-1846), an opponent of the highland clearances who also supported the Black slave revolt in Haiti; John Murdoch (1818-1903), a follower of Henry George who opposed attacks on the Scottish peasantry; Alexander Robertson (1825-93), a leading socialist and associate of Keir Hardie who supported Scottish and Irish nationalism; and John MacLean, the leader of the 1919 Clydeside revolt whose embrace of revolutionary Marxism prior to World War I fused with support for Scottish national self-determination shortly afterward.

In discussing these figures as well as others closer to our time (such as Lewis Grassie Gibbon, James Barke, A.S. Neill and R.F. Mackenzie), Young shows that Scottish radicals had to combat the chauvinism and insensitivity of their fellow English socialists just as much as the bourgeoisie. He shows that MacLean, for instance, fully shared Claude McKay's critique of the imperialist attitudes of the English communists.

Young's discussion of MacLean is perhaps the most exciting part of the book. But it is also quite sobering, for he notes that MacLean struggled to develop his view of the inseparability of socialism and Scottish national liberation without even knowing of the existence of many of his forebears discussed in this book. One wonders what MacLean might have been able to achieve had he not had to work out his views in such intellectual isolation.

This relates not just to MacLean's generation, but to our own. The task of reconstituting the Idea of revolutionary socialism for today is simply too awesome to be achieved without the fullest internalization of the highpoints of past freedom struggles and thought. In his own way, James Young has performed an admirable task in pointing us toward that end. —Peter Hudis

## Immigrant workers view Ecuador's crisis

"All three 'presidents' belong to the same ruling class, and none of them will do anything for the masses of people, who are getting poorer and poorer," agreed a group of Ecuadoran workers in the U.S. They were discussing the comic opera going on at home.

The press here in the U.S. concentrated on the drama of Ecuador's Congress removing elected President Abdala Bucaram on phony grounds of "mental incapacity" and electing one of their own congressmen in his place. Meanwhile Vice President Rosalia Arteaga asserted her constitutional right to succeed to the presidency, so that for a few days Ecuador had three people claiming to be president.

But the real drama was the mass strikes and demonstrations against Bucaram's policies that precipitated Congress' action. On Feb. 5, 2.2 million people—a full fifth of the population—were in the streets protesting the government's economic policies and corruption. There was a general strike of workers, and housewives beat on pots. The date had been set by the Patriotic Front, a coalition of labor unions, indigenous organizations and others. It was one of the largest strikes in the history of the country, and the largest in 50 years.

"Bucaram and Congress have no shame—they are all thieves," one worker here explained. "All of them are privatizing industry and giving it to their friends, like in Peru. Now all they want to do is silence the masses. They take and take from the people."

Bucaram took office just six months ago after having campaigned as a "populist" who opposed the oligarchy and promised to end neo-liberal policies. But as soon as he was elected, he acted just like his predecessors, moving to weaken labor laws and raise prices of consumer goods. Recent huge increases in cooking gas, electricity, telephone and public transportation caused the weeks of demonstrations that led to his removal by Congress Feb. 6.

In addition to strikes, students and peasants demon-

## Editorial

(Continued from page 1)

The other 99.9% explains why China is a beacon for U.S. capitalists. The \$36 billion trade deficit with China includes goods from Nike, Fruit of the Loom, and a host of other U.S. companies returning home. China's economy is ever more export-driven as wages, losing ground to inflation, put limits on the domestic market and unsold goods pile up. The army of unemployed is mobile and 100-million-strong, forced to sell their labor at as low as \$30 to \$50 a month, and disciplined by the state.

This makes U.S. capitalists partners in the repression that China's rulers have focused on the working class. The swiftest and most certain punishment has come down on organizers or advocates of unions independent of the All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU). Dozens of workers who organized autonomous unions in Beijing, Shanghai, Hunan province and elsewhere have been jailed since the Spring of 1989—those that had escaped summary execution. In Shenzhen, largest of the export-processing zones, three members of the Workers' Federation, organizing migrant workers in the city's factories, have been held since 1994.

Workers in many of these foreign-owned factories are excluded even from the ACFTU and allowed to be held in prison-like conditions of private security. Some factories have opposed high turnover by forcing workers to post bond or locking them in, even instances of workers shot trying to escape. The right to strike had already been removed from the constitution back in 1982 after dissidents of the Democracy Wall had greeted Deng Xiaoping's return to power with multifaceted debates on the conditions of life and labor, democracy and freedom.

China has attacked the hypocrisy of states weakly criticizing its human rights record. The U.S. in particular is slammed for its racism at home. When its appointees repealed 25 laws in the Hong Kong bill of rights in preparation for Hong Kong's return to Chinese control on July 1, they had only to restore the repressive provisions by which Britain had ruled Hong Kong for 150 years.

Such conditions are brought home in the Presidential commission deciding what is not a sweatshop. Garment manufacturers on the commission actually got the agreement of union representatives that hiring workers aged 15, in some cases 14, would not be called child labor. They also want to be able to slap a "No Sweat!" label on their garments, and escape the stigma of sweatshop production that has hit famous names like The Gap, even if they force workers to put in 60-hour weeks, and even if they are paying minimum wage in countries where that minimum wage is even farther below subsistence than in the U.S.

Within China, merciless incarceration has not stopped two generations of dissidents from publicly challenging the regime, for example forcing Wang Dan back to prison and Wang Xizhe to escape the country. A new generation is being formed, as in Yiyang, Sichuan, where a Feb. 3 rebellion of Uighurs had echoes for Americans of the 1992 Los Angeles Rebellion.

The solidarity that Chinese dissidents need will not come from politicians in Washington or a changing of the guard in Beijing, but must come from the people whose fate is intertwined with that of the Chinese masses. Working against the vision of universal minimum slave-wage labor, the shared vision of Clinton and the Republicans, is part of that solidarity.

strated all over the country. High school girls marched on Congress and threatened to sit in, forcing the removal of the Minister of Education. At least one 18-year old was killed in the demonstrations.

The discussants here agreed that the previous president had trouble from the workers and students too, so he started a war with Peru and that got everyone to stop demonstrating against him. "Bucaram tried to distract people from their hunger by paying a famous Argentine soccer player a million dollars to come play for Ecuador," one worker said, "but that only made the poor people madder."

"Each of the 'presidents' says the other one is a dictator," another worker said, "but this time the masses spoke—from their hunger."

**"A paper that is not just 'for' workers but by the workers, that aims to be a weapon in the class struggle...not only as readers, but writers, editors, distributors, financiers. It must be their weapon, and their total outlook in opposition to that of the capitalists, the labor bureaucrats, the planners, the leaders, totally theirs and interested in everything."**

—RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA  
News and Letters Committees founding conference, 1955

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# Environmental radicals fight Clinton's ecology double-talk

(Continued from page 1)

When angry citizens confronted Memphis Mayor W.W. Herenton about the Perma-Fix plant, he failed to placate them with words against environmental racism. Not even the mayor's lip service, however, can hold a candle to the artistry of the Clinton-Gore administration. One of Clinton's first acts in office was to sign an executive order that he proclaimed would guarantee environmental justice in all the dealings of his administration. His agencies have ignored it ever since.

## 'BROWNFIELDS' SHELL GAME

There is no clearer example than the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Brownfields Initiative, whose ostensible aim is to help poor urban areas by encouraging "redevelopment" of "brownfields," contaminated industrial and commercial sites no longer in operation. They are disproportionately in areas populated by people of color and the poor.

The EPA's approach is selective deregulation. It removed 25,000 sites from the list of 38,000 brownfields it was tracking, then proposed "adjustments in enforcement"—in other words, a double standard for cleanup—so that developers wouldn't be scared away by the costs of cleanup.

Environmental justice activists were furious that the EPA didn't follow Clinton's executive order by making a place for activists and residents of impacted communities in the discussions and decisions. Instead, it foisted on them an initiative catering to developers and bankers. Nevertheless, there is a danger of environmental justice activists being co-opted as "representatives" in "development" projects. Some activists are attracted to the initiative, since partial cleanup seems better than no cleanup and no economic development.

Whatever adjustments the EPA makes now to give an appearance of community representation, it will not change the basic fact that the Brownfields Initiative is a substitute for doing a full cleanup in poor areas. Once again, community health is sacrificed at the altar of economic development.

Environmental justice faces a contradiction between the need for jobs to live and the fact that these jobs are killing us in various ways. In challenging this dilemma, these struggles implicitly raise a question involving the depth of social transformation needed: What kind of labor should a human being do?

Nothing shocked the environmental movement more than Clinton's signing of the 1995 Salvage Logging Rider, allowing the Forest Service to doom national forests to logging while suspending all environmental laws and the public's right to challenge it in court. Clinton later called it a "mistake," and Gore thundered they would stop bad logging sales, but the administration never used the legal powers it has to block the sales, not even in the most egregious cases.

The Salvage Rider sparked new activity from Arkansas to Alaska, and especially in the Pacific Northwest. Dozens of protests were held in many states, with over 2,000 people arrested. Ancient Forest Week, with over 50 events nationally, was followed by a week of protest at Enola Hill, Ore., organized mainly by Native Americans who set up a Peace Camp to protect this mountain they hold sacred. The revolt includes what participants call a "direct action uprising" involving actual blockades to prevent or delay logging. (See "Defending the Forest," page 11.)

## NEW QUESTIONING

The Salvage Rider exposed divisions within the movement as well. Over the opposition of Sierra Club leaders, its membership passed by a 2-1 margin the Zero Cut policy calling for a halt to logging on public lands. And a storm erupted in 1996 when several national environmental groups endorsed Clinton. While opposed to Bob Dole, who threatened to complete what the Republican Congress could not, many environmentalists were disgusted by the support offered Clinton-Gore without one word of criticism.

Many rank-and-file members of the mainstream groups are fed up with old approaches that sow endless compromises: forming "partnerships" with corporations that greenwash their images; flirting with free-market "solutions" such as saleable pollution allowances; spending millions of dollars to support a few Democratic candidates. Moreover, even when successful in their narrow aims, the environmental laws of the past 30 years have not stopped capitalism's basic momentum, pointed out 130 years ago by Karl Marx: "Capitalist production, therefore, develops technology...only by sapping the original sources of all wealth—the soil and the laborer."

Today's new car may have cleaner emissions than one of the 1960s, but global warming is underway with vast, unclear consequences and no end in sight. We may have vanquished flaming rivers, but extinctions continue apace as habitat is destroyed by logging, road-building and suburban sprawl.

This is not to say the reforms achieved are useless. But some of the more radical in the movement have concluded that "the regulatory system serves the interests of the corporate polluters because it is a system

they define. [It] will NEVER bring toxic technologies under control" (Dec. 19, 1996, *Rachel's Environment and Health Weekly*).

Clearly, the fact that the ecology movement generally does not speak the language of revolution does not exclude important openings for dialogue. The *Earth First! Journal* (EFJ) recently contained a debate over whether to advocate radical reforms of corporations (as "a tactic") or to raise the banner of abolishing "the system."

One of the most serious barriers is one that has always plagued the ecology movement: the pull to rely on activity alone. Matthew Haun expressed this attitude in a letter to EFJ: "Do you want an Earth First! theory? Here it is: No plan, no theory, no society is going to work if the biosphere is not intact. That doesn't



answer any questions about what the good society should be, but it's enough to take action. Now."

The implication is that militance and will alone can solve the problem. In an age when revolutions have transformed into their opposite, into totalitarian state-capitalism, it should be clear that discarding theory is a road to failure. The position that eco-militants are through with revolution evades the need to abolish the capitalist system that develops only by destroying nature and humanity.

Eco-radicals often reject Marx's Humanism, not acknowledging his fierce critiques of capitalism's destructiveness to nature. Instead they wrongly claim he uncritically celebrated technological progress. In this, today's movement has bowed to post-Marx Marxism's perversion of Marx's Marxism into an ideology of rapid industrialization in Russia, China and so on. They thus deprive themselves of his analysis of capitalism's "exploitation and squandering of the powers of the earth"—and of how to transcend it.

Yet is it not the momentum of capital as seen today—its drive to commodify every aspect of life—that has helped open up new dimensions of the ecology movement met by revolt against its all-embracing oppressiveness? Even life itself, in the forms of the gene and of the genetically engineered species, has become a commodity.

The opposite to this "system of universal exploitation of natural and human qualities" (as Marx put it) is the multidimensionality of the revolt that characterizes today's environmental movement, and the many forms of the participants' quest for universality—their drive to be whole human beings no longer alienated from nature. That is what underlies the search for alternatives. What has been missing is projection of an alternative that develops that liberatory universality into a comprehensive vision of transcending capitalism and its alienating culture. Other ideologies lie in wait that would stunt the movement's self-development.

## GREEN POWER WITHOUT RED

One of the many alternatives being tested is the political organization called the Greens. So widespread is the growing sense that both main parties are a dead weight that a presidential campaign in which Ralph Nader was drafted (but hardly ran) under the Green banner garnered over 4% of the vote in Oregon, 3.5% in California, and close to 3% in Hawaii and Washington. Greens also did well in a number of local races.

At the same time many activists are aware that the German Greens, who started out declaring themselves a "non-party movement," later capitulated to parliamentarianism. Nor are the U.S. Greens free from contradictions. While they oppose corporate exploitation, they have not articulated an explicit challenge to capitalism.

Their call for a "community-based economic system" with "true-cost pricing" begs the question of how an economic system based on the law of value can avoid what Marx showed to be its consequence: the law of surplus-value, or exploitation. Debates are going on within the Greens over whether to dissociate themselves from socialism or to address the links of the economic system and the environment.

Some are becoming disaffected with supposed solutions of building an alternative society next to the existing one. A certain segment of the environmental movement has long been attracted to that approach, which cuts itself off from the grassroots urban Black, Latino and working-class struggles. Linked to that is a segment following Murray Bookchin, who advocates building an alternative power structure based on rewriting municipal charters, as if that would not be crushed if it ever managed to impinge on the power of the capitalists and their state.

Either kind of "building the new society" is subject to the warning Marx and Engels issued in the *Communist*

*Manifesto* about utopians who want to build socialism in isolation from the movements of the masses. They hold fast to their own blueprints for reorganizing society and "therefore violently oppose all political action on the part of the working class." Bookchin, for instance, wrote that "workers' movements of all kinds are today becoming mute or irascibly 'perverted'" (*The Modern Crisis*).

Some movement away from a utopian approach may be reflected in what an Oregonian active in Native American solidarity and forest defense told N&L:

"Some in Earth First! think they're in a battle with the rest of society [but] Earth First! is evolving the idea that you can't just be out there on a self-righteous platform. People are just going to be reactive. Corporations manipulate that. They pit workers against environmentalists. A lot of environmentalists have come to realize we've got to start building some bridges with people who have similar interests against those who would just destroy us all for the sake of maximizing profits on a short-term basis."

If some tendencies are approaching, or trying to develop, a perspective that accents the need for capitalism's total uprooting, another question arises: Are they living up to the challenge posed by the movement's very diversity? That is, at a moment when new inner city environmental movements are arising, do they relate to these movements, grasping them both as force and as reason? Is there a consciousness, not only of the militant character of grassroots environmental struggles of people of color but of the ideas implicit in those struggles that question the very nature of labor and human relations in this society? What is needed is the kind of total perspective for which each sector of the environmental movement hungers in its own way.

The overriding point here is that the ideological situation in the environmental movement is very fluid and open. A variety of people are questioning old approaches and seeking new paths. What is urgent is to continue the intense activities and at the same time to have a vigorous exchange of ideas that does not shy away from revolutionary ideas and liberatory philosophy.

For the three key links of the different strands of this diverse movement are the pervasiveness of capitalism's ecological impact, the diffusion of an environmental consciousness to all layers of the population and the underlying quest for universality of all the forces of revolt in this alienated, exploitative land. Let us build on the rethinking in the movement and help it release the full potential of the underlying drive for a total, revolutionary, humanist solution.

## Mayans fight logging

*Punta Gorda, Belize*—On my third visit to the tiny Central American country of Belize, I am dismayed to learn the government has finally sold enough concessions to logging companies that total devastation of the Mayan communal lands is now possible. The latest concession, sold to Malaysian timber giant Atlantic Industries, covers an area of rainforest occupied by half the country's Mayan population. Geographically the concessions extend beyond the communal lands and threaten the survival of the greater rainforest as well.

Located on the lower Yucatan peninsula on the Caribbean Sea, Belize is home to roughly 200,000 people primarily of East Indian and African descent. Of the nation's 14,000 indigenous people, 10,000 live among 34 Mayan villages in the nation's southernmost quarter, the Toledo district. Most of the rest are more or less assimilated and live in northern Belize.

The self-governance of the southern Maya people can be seen in the tradition of democratically electing an alcalde (mayor) in each village and in the formation of organizations like the Toledo Alcaldes Association (TAA) and the Toledo Maya Cultural Council (TMCC). According to Julian Cho, chairman of TMCC, the government never consulted any of the Mayan organizations about the logging concessions. Such arrogance comes as no surprise to Cho who noted the Maya have no rights to public land that hold sway over "national interests." Nor could he think of one Mayan person who owned private property. And although they have suffrage in government sanctioned elections, at 7% of the population the Mayans are not the most imposing voting bloc.

But the government is not completely at ease. Lucio Bol, a Mayan tour guide who works out of Toledo's principal town, Punta Gorda, stated bluntly, "The government is afraid of us." Mayan people often manage to anticipate a logging action and show up in force before loggers arrive, no mean feat when one considers that in addition to Atlantic Industries there are fifteen other concession holders. Currently the major direct action is seizure of a two-mile section of the Southern Highway (actually a dirt and gravel road) where the big logging companies want to begin construction of a modern superhighway able to accommodate heavy equipment and freight trucks.

So far the resistance has been nonviolent. There have been demonstrations in Punta Gorda, and Julian Cho is in the process of coordinating a massive march on Belmopan, the nation's capital. But then there's Lucio Bol who warns that the Mayan are prepared for confrontation, though that is not their goal. "We are a peaceful people," he observes softly, "but look at what happened in Guatemala and Chiapas."

— David M.

## Youth

by Kevin Michaels

One of the few high points of the retrogressive 1980s was the attempt by the people of Burma to rid themselves of the brutal military regime they have been subject to since a coup in 1962. Students played a leading role in the movement, encouraging workers and members of Burma's national minorities, which make up 40% of the country's population, to come together in a near-revolution on Aug. 8, 1988 (see "Burmese masses struggle to uproot ruling military regime," *News & Letters*, October 1988).

The government crushed the uprising, murdering three thousand in the ensuing reaction. Since 1988, a circle of officers called the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) has run the country. Forced labor, corruption and political arrests have been only some of the features of SLORC rule.

In the aftermath of the uprising schools were closed, student organizations were banned and activists were jailed. Many students went underground, traveling to the countryside to join guerrillas fighting the government. The revolutionary creativity of a generation was forced to submerge itself under the government's authoritarian rule.

But that creativity has manifested itself recently, forcing us to look at Burma and its freedom movement. An event in October of last year in which three students were beaten by police after an argument in a cafe touched off latent dissatisfaction with the authorities. Protests followed and by early December, indignation at police conduct turned into organized demonstrations demanding the release of arrested students and for the re-formation of an independent student union. Several marches were held in which students carried signs which read "We want freedom."

Reaction from the government, which doubtless remembers that the 1988 events originated in student protest, has been to temporarily close universities and carry out mass arrests. But if the reaction seems to have been relatively restrained, perhaps it is because of the



Burmese students in Tokyo protest outside their country's embassy in December.

course of development of popular opposition since 1988, that is, the growth of Aung San Suu Kyi's reformist party, the National League for Democracy (NLD).

San Suu Kyi's persistence has garnered her a worldwide reputation as leader in the resistance to the military's rule. Since 1988, hundreds of NLD members have been harassed, arrested and disappeared. Substantial NLD parliamentary victories in a 1990 election were annulled by the government and San Suu Kyi, who won a Nobel Peace Prize in 1991, herself underwent a six-year-long house arrest which was only lifted in 1995.

International criticism of the repression has stymied SLORC's efforts to reverse the longstanding government-imposed isolation and open up the country to tourism and foreign investment. Negotiations are underway for Burma's admission to the Association of South East Asia Nations, the regional trade and defense organization and SLORC is eager for the strategic weight membership will provide. But activists have called for increased isolation for Burma, arguing for divestment tactics similar to those employed against apartheid-era South Africa. Corporations with large investments in Burma, like the U.S. oil giant Unocal, however, counter with "constructive engagement" schemes.

Those corporations, and their governments, have much to fear from the aspirations for freedom of the Burmese people and the country's ethnic minorities, which make up 40% of the population. Burma borders India, China and Thailand and is viewed by the West as a heretofore unpenetrated Asian market. The prospect of the Burmese masses taking the fate of their country

into their own hands is clearly unacceptable to the imperialist powers—the U.S. as well as China, SLORC's biggest supporter and source of arms.

Since gaining its independence from Britain in 1948, the Burmese people have seen its leaders try to chart an independent path in the world while at the same time keeping power from the workers and peasants. Raya Dunayevskaya's Nov. 13, 1961 Weekly Political Letter "Israel, Burma, Outer Mongolia and the Cold War" details the efforts of the leader U Nu to negotiate the attractions of Russia, the U.S. and China. The civilian U Nu lost power to General Ne Win in the 1962 coup. Ne Win's tactic was to isolate Burma from outside influences, but since coming to power in 1988, SLORC has attempted to open up the country while maintaining domestic repression.

In addition to the urban repression of the students and the NLD, the government has kept up its grip on the countryside. The Karen National Union continues a war for self determination for the Karen people it has waged since independence from the British. Armed groups representing other national minorities have been forced to sign agreements with the government.

The history of the people of Burma has been one of ongoing struggle—against colonialism, against Japanese occupation and against the oppression of its own ruling class. Students, from as early as the founding of the Rangoon University Students' Union in 1931, have always been in the forefront. Their opposition to the military regimes since 1962 has had an explicitly revolutionary character, one that, like that of the students of Tiananmen Square, for whom the Burmese students expressed solidarity, has had to contend with devastating state repression. Perhaps now we are beginning to see this character resurface. Aung San Suu Kyi has been cautious in expressing direct sympathy for the students, but their activity may signal a new stage of revolt against the government which the NLD may have to face.

Revolution is always a matter of life or death for humanity, and the people of Burma desperately need a revolution in order to chart their own path to lives of freedom. Only time will tell if the Burmese masses will surpass both the near-revolution of 1988 and the half-revolutions which countries like the Philippines and South Africa have undergone.

## Activists confront assault on environment, pollution

### South Prescott protest

**Oakland, Cal.**—On Jan. 28 about 30 Oakland residents, donning paper skull and crossbones patches, filed into city council chambers after marching and chanting in front of city hall for an hour. At issue was the presence of the carcinogen vinyl chloride in South Prescott, a low-income Black and Latino neighborhood in West Oakland.

Community pressure forced the California Dept. of Transportation (CalTrans) to stop freeway construction work at the site of an abandoned chemical plant where vinyl chloride was discovered in 1989.

Several months ago the State Dept. of Toxic Substance Control (SDTC) ordered the halt so it could look into the matter. Over the Christmas holidays the SDTC decided that property owners Southern Pacific and Union Pacific need not remove the vinyl chloride since the land in question is zoned for industrial rather than residential use.

However, as South Prescott locals point out, the contaminated site is only across the street from a residential zone and the chemical has been found in groundwater. Addressing the probability that there was leakage into the larger area, a representative of the Women's Cancer Resource Center told the city council of studies showing that cancer rates in West Oakland are higher than in North Richmond, a Black and Southeast Asian community 11 miles away notorious for toxic air and ground pollution.

The charge of environmental racism gained more credibility when a West Oakland man reminded the council that a similar situation in the nearby city of San Leandro resulted in the state suing a private firm for \$14 million and then making it clean up toxic waste in a white neighborhood. He noted that in the present case South Prescott couldn't even get the city on its side as Oakland police went out in full force to "protect" CalTrans workers when construction resumed just before Christmas.

—David M.

### No Ward Valley dump

**Los Angeles**—There was an emergency meeting called at the end of January at Needles, Cal. to demonstrate against U.S. Ecology, a private corporation with an atrocious record of leaking nuclear and hazardous dumps across the country. Public comments against the dump site were given to the Southwest Compact Commission, a committee of seven members appointed by Governor Wilson and the governors of Arizona and North and South Dakota.

Though there were stirring testimonies against the dump given by young and elderly Indians and whites, the question is did their words fall on deaf ears made so by money interests? There were also two days of information output, discussions and dialogs between the various peace and ecology group members and the five local

Indian tribes who have resisted the opening of the dump for ten years.

The emergency call was in response to Governor Wilson's letters to the Department of Interior (DOI) and Senator Feinstein, stating that a lawsuit will be filed to force DOI to transfer Ward Valley to California and also have the feds remove our encampment from the site. These are legal maneuvers which if successful will hopefully result in massive civil disobedience.

Seventeen states have applied to dump their nuclear wastes in Ward Valley. As access to Ward Valley is via Highway 40 and there were three truck accidents between Jan. 19–26 on Highway 40 near Needles, the issue of the safety of transporting nuclear waste becomes paramount.

Millions of southern Californians, Arizonans, Mexicans and many farms get their drinking water from the Colorado River (18 miles from Ward Valley). Cancer causing nuclear waste would reach the river via an aquifer directly below the proposed dump site.

A spring gathering is called for at Ward Valley on April 25–27. Call Save Ward Valley for information at (619) 326-6267.

—Activist

### Defending the forest

**Warner Creek, Ore.**—We see ourselves as one finger in a fist: our struggle is linked to the struggles of all people fighting corporate exploitation and fighting to control our own communities and land, from the Zapatistas' struggle in Mexico to animal rights. I'm active in all kinds of social justice. It really affects everything we do. My heart is in the forests.

In the last 10 or 15 years there's been a great push by corporations to eat up the last old growth forests in the Northwest. The Salvage Logging Rider, passed by Congress and signed by "Clearcut" Clinton in 1995, allowed corporations to go in and log forests without any citizen input on how and where logging was done in public lands. It spurred a lot of dissent and anger among ordinary people, which is a new thing.

Since then there's been what we call a big direct action uprising in the Northwest. We of the Earth First! direct action community are not interested in compromise. We value the earth and biodiversity and oppose corporate greed. The mainstream environmental people only come along part way, but it's been people from all different levels working together, radical to mainstream. Native Americans have been making a lot of connections with forest activists. We have a huge amount in common. They've helped inspire us and keep us motivated.

In the Warner Creek area near Eugene, Ore., there was a forest fire and it was proved arson. The U.S. Forest Service immediately put the land up for sale for logging. They claimed the damaged and dead trees were a threat to forest health. But fire is a natural part of the

ecosystem. We won a permanent injunction against the sale in Spring 1995. Right after that the Salvage Logging Rider was passed. It nullified years of struggle, opening up the forest again to logging and leaving us no recourse. People were really furious.

When there's logging of a public forest, they close it to the public. They say it's for public safety, even when there's no logging going on yet. Its actual purpose is to keep activists away from the logging sites. Right away people started blockading roads into forests.

A blockade would begin with one person making a trench in the road and chaining herself or himself there. At Warner Creek it lasted 11 months and grew every day. People stayed for the whole winter with eight-foot snow drifts. They built a camp with a stockade, watchtower, etc. People built a community of resistance right there in the middle of the war zone and called it Cascadia Free State. Cascadia is our name for the bioregion.

It was the summer of free states. In south Oregon at the China Left timber sale was the Sucker Creek Free State. In Idaho was the Wild Rockies Free State. All three blockades were busted in the same week by Forest Service agents brought in from states all over the West. In the end the Warner Creek timber sale was cancelled.

—Participant

### How to contact

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##### MEETINGS

Call for information

##### DETROIT

P.O. Box 27205  
Detroit MI 48227

##### MEETINGS

Thursdays, 7 p.m.  
Central Methodist Church  
Woodward and Adams

##### LOS ANGELES

P.O. Box 29194  
Los Angeles, CA 90229  
213 960 5607

##### MEETINGS

Sundays, 5:30 p.m.  
Echo Park United  
Methodist Church

1226 N. Alvarado

(North of Sunset, side door)

##### NEW YORK

P.O. Box 196  
Grand Central Station  
New York, NY 10163

##### MEETINGS

Sundays, 2:30 p.m.  
(Call for meeting times)

Washington Square Church  
133 W. 4th St. (Parish House  
parlor), Manhattan

##### OAKLAND

P.O. Box 3345  
Oakland, Ca 94609  
510 658 1448

##### MEETINGS

Sundays, 6:30 p.m.  
2015 Center St. (at Milvia)  
Berkeley

##### MEMPHIS

1725B Madison Ave, #59  
Memphis, TN 38104

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## Our Life and Times

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

From Serbia to Bulgaria to Albania, we are witnessing in the Balkans a wave of pro-democracy movements not seen since 1989. Yet 1997 is not 1989, and the contradictions today are far deeper, most notably in the failure by Serbian democrats to confront the genocide in Bosnia.

In February, Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic bowed to nearly three months of mass protests, finally agreeing to abide by last fall's elections in which members of the Zajedno (Together) coalition won control of the country's 14 largest cities. While Zajedno and its student allies were able to mobilize tens of thousands daily since November, with especially the students using some very creative forms of protest, at no time did the working people come out *en masse* to join them, as happened in East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Romania in 1989.

Instead, the opposition's partial victory came after some elements of the military and the ruling Socialist

## South African amnesty

The police who killed Steve Biko have been flushed out 20 years later by the promise of amnesty by South Africa's "Truth and Reconciliation Commission." At least five former police officers have come forward and claimed responsibility for the torture and beatings which caused Steve Biko to die.

By September 1977, when he was murdered, Biko was the eloquent leader and theorist of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) which was charting a new course in the struggle against apartheid and for freedom. The BCM was even more hated and feared by the apartheid regime than the ANC, particularly because the ideas of Black Consciousness appealed so much to the youth following the 1976 Soweto uprising.

The Commission has released information indicating that the killers of nine other prominent anti-apartheid activists have petitioned for amnesty. The family of Biko and many others who oppose the granting of amnesty reportedly will seek to prosecute the killers. There never was any doubt at the time of Biko's death that the agents of apartheid had murdered him. Twenty years after, in post-apartheid South Africa, they are intent on getting away with it.

## Guatemalan accord

The "Accord for a Firm and Lasting Peace," signed at the end of December between the Guatemalan government and leaders of the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG) guerrilla army, is riddled with questions. It was preceded by an amnesty law passed in mid-December which "extinguishes criminal responsibility" for acts of murder, torture and disappearance during Guatemala's 37-year civil war.

Many thousands of indigenous civilians were killed and they had been outspoken in opposing the peace terms. Genara Lopez, a woman and indigenous leader whose brother was killed said, "There can be no real peace without justice, and this is an illegitimate act and a huge injustice. We must punish the murderers who massacred so many people." Rigoberta Menchu opposes the amnesty law, the basis of the peace accords: "I am against a general amnesty. I think peace without justice is only a symbolic peace."

The URNG is now a tiny guerrilla force; they have stated they will transform themselves into a political party. It is clear they do not speak for the masses who oppose the amnesty. The contradictions within Guatemala have been politically salvaged but in no way actually solved.

## Movements for democracy in the Balkans

(ex-Communist) Party tacitly supported them. Crucially, in the days before Milosevic gave in, the powerful and reactionary Serbian Orthodox Church hierarchy had come out very publicly against Milosevic.

The limits of the Serbian democratic movement with regard to Bosnia can perhaps be seen best not by quoting its two ultra-nationalist leaders Zoran Djindjic or Vuk Draskovic, but in a statement by Vesna Pesic, who of the three Zajedno leaders has done the most to oppose Serbian chauvinism.

Asked by a reporter about the notorious Srebrenica massacre of 1995, in which over 10,000 were killed by Serb militias, she responded evasively: "But even that's



Albanians protest ripoff pyramid schemes.

## Zairian rebels advance

As we go to press, Alliance of Democratic Forces rebels have been closing in on Kisangani, Zaire's second largest city. Kisangani is full of recently hired mercenaries, some of them Serb war criminals fresh from Bosnia, and massive amounts of military equipment, including fighter jets sent from Yugoslavia which are making bombing runs against the rebels.

What is almost missing is the Zairian army itself, whose role so far in this war has been to flee as soon as the rebels approach, pillaging and looting as it goes, thus turning ever more people to the rebel cause. This recently happened in Kisangani. The only real fight the rebels have encountered so far has been from pockets of the former Rwandan army and militia, who were driven out of their own country by the Rwanda Patriotic Front after carrying out the 1994 genocide against Tutsi and non-racist Hutu.

It would be a delicious irony indeed if some Serb war criminals, the sort NATO claims it can't find under its very nose in Bosnia, were to be captured by African liberation fighters and turned over to the Hague Tribunal on genocide for prosecution.

**Zaire's President Mobutu Sese Seko has been rebuffed by Morocco and Egypt, which sent troops to bail him out in 1977-78. One possibility now on the horizon is that mass uprisings will take place in Kisangani, Lubumbashi, or other large cities, even before the rebels get there.**

Mobutu has long survived by stoking ethnic hatred, whether against Tutsi or against natives of Kasai (Patrice Lumumba's birthplace). Thousands have been attacked in these pogroms organized from the top, including those against Tutsi in Kinshasa last fall.

But that type of ethnic chauvinism seems for the moment to be fading, as the Zairian masses sense the approach of the post-Mobutu order. So far, however, the rebels, who are backed by the Rwandan and Ugandan governments, and who are headed by an old leftist from the 1960s generation, Laurent Kabila, have not said much about their perspectives for the future.

not clear. After all that digging, what have the investigators uncovered? A few hundred bodies. Who knows what actually happened?" (See Lawrence Wechsler, "Aristotle in Belgrade," *The New Yorker*, Feb. 10, 1997).

**On the other hand, if the opposition can succeed in establishing real freedom of speech, assembly and association, also cracking Milosevic's hold over the media, perhaps ... perhaps, a real debate on Bosnia can begin to take place in Serbia. Only such a facing up to history can lay the ground for a genuine forward movement.**

Inside Bosnia, ethnic cleansing continues openly, despite the presence of NATO peacekeepers. War criminal Radovan Karadzic's threats once again made the West back down, this time ceding "ethnically cleansed" Brcko to the Bosnian Serbs for another year. In Mostar, Croat reactionaries opened fire on a group celebrating Ramadan, and then expelled one hundred Muslims from their homes. While welcoming the protests in Belgrade, Bosnian leaders committed to multiethnicity, such as Mayor Selim Beslagic of Tuzla, have also expressed concern at the chauvinistic nationalism within the Serbian opposition.

Inspired in part by the protests in Serbia, tens of thousands have rallied in Bulgaria since early January. They finally forced the ruling former Communists, who have looted the country in the name of privatizing the economy, to agree to new elections sooner rather than later.

Albania has seen its biggest mass protests since the fall of Communism in 1991. Millions have taken to the streets to protest a vast pyramid investment scheme which, tacitly sanctioned by the government, has fleeced a third of the population out of its life savings or even its land.

The Albanian government, which stole the elections last spring in the name of anti-Communism, still uses police state tactics against opponents. Today, alongside the spontaneous street protests, it is facing the Forum for Democracy, a coalition modeled on Serbia's Zajedno and composed of groups ranging from ex-Communists to former political prisoners under the old Communist regime.

## French transport strikes

In the wake of the truck drivers strike in France last November, which won full retirement at age 55, other sectors of labor also began to demand retirement at 55. The rumblings, which came from below, sent union leaders scurrying to catch up.

On Jan. 24, tens of thousands of bus and tram drivers in urban centers answered union calls for a one day strike. In Marseilles, the strike was especially solid, while in Toulouse, workers also blockaded the city's two main transit yards. Some also raised the demand for a 35 hour week.

A week later, strikers tied up the national railway system for a day, while on Feb. 6, tram and bus drivers renewed their strike. Workers, especially those raising the demand for both retirement at 55 and the 35 hour week, made clear that one of their major goals was to force employers to create jobs in a country where the official unemployment rate stands today at 12.8%.

Anti-racist actions continue, such as the over 20,000-strong Feb. 22 demonstrations in Paris, but these have yet to dent the growing popularity of the fascist and anti-immigrant National Front (FN), which in February won a mayoralty race in Vitrolles, a suburb of Marseilles. The FN now controls four towns and cities, including Toulon, population 168,000. In one of these towns, Orange, they have ordered the library to stop buying books on North African culture.

## NEWS AND LETTERS COMMITTEES

### Who We Are And What We Stand For

News and Letters Committees is an organization of Marxist-Humanists that since its birth has stood for the abolition of capitalism, both in its private property form as in the U.S., and its state property form, as it has historically appeared in state-capitalist regimes calling themselves Communist as in Russia and 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.

Raya Dunayevskaya (1910-1987), 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.

This body of ideas challenges all those desiring freedom to transcend the limitations of post-Marx Marxism, beginning with Engels. In light of the crises of our nuclearly armed world, it becomes imperative not only to reject

what is, but to reveal and further develop the revolutionary Humanist future inherent in the present. The new visions of the future which Dunayevskaya left us in her work from the 1940s to the 1980s are rooted in her discovery of Marx's Marxism in its original form as a new Humanism and in her re-creation of that philosophy for our age as Marxist-Humanism. This 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*.

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 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, heterosexist, class-ridden society, we have organized ourselves into a committee form of organization rather than any elitist party "to lead." 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*.