

NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

Human Power is its own end—Marx

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Profit never enough, so GM picks fight



by Felix Martin, Labor Editor

The strike June 5 by 3,400 union workers at a General Motors' stamping plant in Flint, Michigan quickly began to be felt elsewhere, as parts shortages soon forced closure of five GM assembly plants.

It's about time the workers begin to fight before there is no one left to fight. In the 1970's GM employed 77,000 auto workers in Flint, but today there are only 33,000 left and an additional 11,000 more are expected to go the next few years. GM wants to invest more in automation in the Flint plant but will not unless the union allows work rule changes that will "improve output." That would allow GM to get rid of more jobs.

One rule GM wants to eliminate allows workers, when working harder on their own, to meet a daily production quota in less than eight hours but get paid for eight hours. In other words, good old generous motors wants a full 8 hours to get the daily quota out, so they can add more production to the quota and get rid of jobs.

By June 12, GM closed production plants in Pontiac, Mich. and Fort Wayne, Ind. where its full size Chevrolet and GMC pickup trucks are made. GM says those plants produce their bread and butter vehicles—big sellers and big profits. GM said it makes at least \$5,000 profit on each unit. I have known GM for years, if they say they are making \$5,000 profit, you can bet it's lots more.

Since I retired from GM, cars and trucks sell for more now, after GM eliminated more than a third of the jobs over the last 15 years. Remember when you could buy a GM car for \$2500 and GM told the public the reason they were so high was labor cost? How little labor cost is in each car today, but GM wants \$20,000 to \$30,000 for each car. What's driving up the cost today is profits.

On page 3, Flint workers speak for themselves.

Black World

Makings of a Black Radical Congress



by Lou Turner

...the deeper I enter into the cultures and political circles the surer I am that the great danger that threatens Africa is the absence of ideology.

—Frantz Fanon, Summer 1960

We met in Chicago for three days, June 19-21, some two thousand of us, *grounding*, as Walter Rodney would say, with our brothers and sisters, with what we called the "radical tradition," with the very idea that there was *ground* on which to meet to seriously discuss the untenable reality of being Black in late twentieth century America.

Almost two years in the making, the Black Radical Congress (BRC), or "Bric" upside the head of capitalism, was, with the help of some spontaneous media attention and a provocative website opened to an array of ongoing debates (www.blackradicalcongress.com), an important moment in post-LA rebellion Black America. In short, the Black left "represented."

In a piece in *Social Text* written right after the 1992 Los Angeles rebellion, Mike Davis asked if given the influence of the "Farrakhan view of the world, its prejudices, its emphasis on black capitalism, and so on...whether there's going to be a black left that can engage Farrakhan with any seriousness in the eyes of the home boys and girls?"

This, of course, brings us to Fanon's grave concern about the absence of ideology. It and the organization question are, and have been from the start, the most serious issue confronting the BRC. Though the two, ideology and organization, are inseparable, serious effort has gone into working out the latter in lieu of the former. At energetic workshops and caucuses at the Congress, however, there was no lack of discussion and debate of ideological issues. Indeed, by its very working existence the BRC represented an ideological response to the "Farrakhan view of the world."

Along with a sizeable and contentious youth caucus, for the first time at such a Black radical gathering significant feminist and lesbian and gay caucuses and workshops were openly formed. Even a brief list of some of the workshops gives a sense of the BRC's serious effort to represent

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Draft for Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, 1998-1999

Capitalism's new global crisis reveals the todayness of Marx

News and Letters Committees publishes the Draft of its Perspectives Thesis each year directly in the pages of *News & Letters*. As part of the preparation for our upcoming national gathering, we urge your participation in our discussion around this thesis because our age is in such total crisis that no revolutionary organization can allow any separation between theory and practice, workers and intellectuals, "inside" and "outside," philosophy and organization. We are raising questions and ask you to help in working out the answers.

Introduction: The post-Cold War nuclear peril

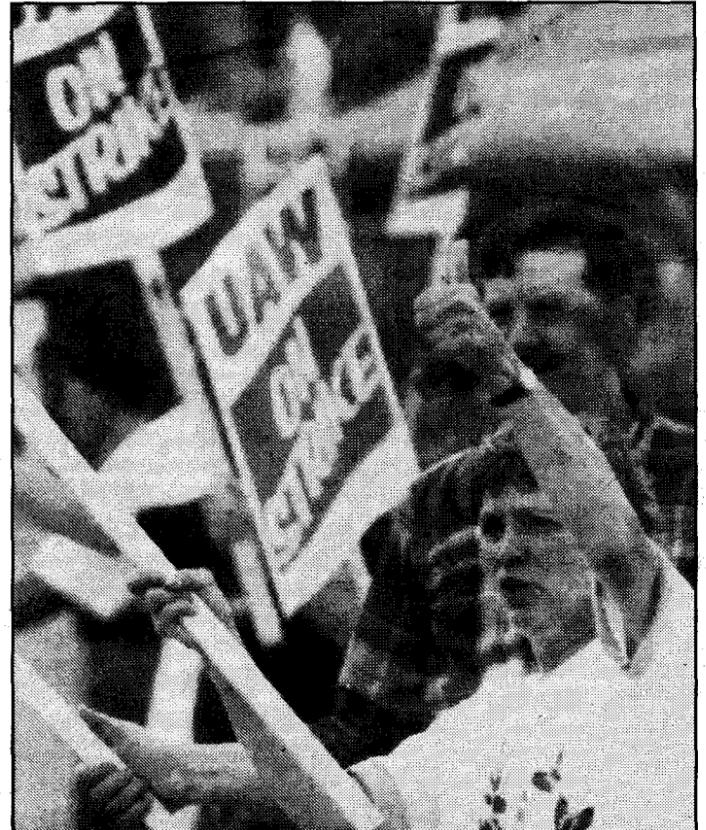
We live at a time when everything seems imbued with its opposite. At the very moment when a mass movement in Indonesia forced Asia's longest-ruling dictator from power, the detonation of nuclear tests by India and Pakistan has brought us to the brink of military conflagration. New and potentially revolutionary challenges are arising at the same time as new threats to the existence of civilization.

The India-Pakistan nuclear tests do not simply confirm old realities. In India the Hindu fundamentalist Bharatiya Juanta Party (BJP) is anxious to develop a nuclear arsenal, as well as make use of simmering conflict with Pakistan over Kashmir, as a way to broaden its shaky base of support. The opposition to the BJP was expressed in a statement by the National Alliance of People's Movements, an association of 200 grassroots and environmental movements in India, which denounced the nuclear tests on the grounds that real national "glory would have been the availability of clean drinking water, housing, employment, health services and opportunities for education."¹ Pakistan's rulers have meanwhile made it clear that they will use nuclear weapons to prevent another defeat at the hands of Indian forces should war break out over Kashmir. Over 1.5 billion people now live in an area threatened by nuclear catastrophe.

The ramifications of this go beyond India-Pakistan. India's test irritated China, which is spending vast amounts on new nuclear weapons of its own. Pakistan's test caused jitters in Iran which is sure to accelerate its effort to obtain nuclear weapons. Even more ominous developments loom in Russia, which has an increasingly unstable nuclear arsenal. Only a little over a year ago the head of a nuclear complex in Chelyabinsk, V. Nechai, killed himself because he lacked the money to pay his employees and could not assure the safety of the plant's operations.

The engine of today's nuclear proliferation, however, is the U.S. It was no secret that China supplied blueprints to Pakistan for a nuclear bomb and advice on how to make one small enough to fit on a missile. Yet the U.S. did nothing to stop this. At the same time, Clinton pushed ahead with NATO's expansion, even though it came at the cost of killing any chance of further nuclear arms agreements with Russia. Russia has not ratified the START II treaty and will surely not do so now.

1. See "India raises menace of nuclear war" by Maya Jhansi, *News & Letters*, June 1998, and her "Right-wing BJP claims power amid deepening crisis in India," in *News & Letters*, April 1998.



Workers on strike at General Motors' metal stamping plant in Flint, Mich. (See page 3 for more).

The U.S. is instead embarking on a new stage of nuclear weapons development. This was seen on March 25 when it conducted a "subcritical" nuclear test code-named Stagecoach. Though the test was supposedly to monitor the reliability of plutonium in aging warheads, it was really part of a \$45 billion program to modernize the U.S. nuclear arsenal. As one arms expert put it, "A real scientific and technical revolution is going on in nuclear weapons design."²

What drives this nuclear arms build-up? In large part, it is capital's werewolf hunger for self-expansion. The arms industry remains highly profitable and Clinton has no intention of getting in its way. This is reflected in his refusal to roll back Stagecoach and other new arms programs on the grounds that it would crimp the profits of arms contractors. This likewise defines Clinton's trip to China, which is not about curbing nuclear weapons but "furthering trade" and "opening up business opportunities" in this heartland of child labor and sweatshops.

At no time has the naked pursuit of corporate profit through the instrumentality of state power been so total a determinant of U.S. foreign policy. This has led to the growing nuclear proliferation, of which we have seen only the beginning.

Clearly, the notion that the nuclear peril came to an end with the end of the Cold War was a hollow illusion. The Cold War may be over, but the insane logic of capital accumulation which helped drive it is as alive and dangerous as ever.

Today's situation may be even more dangerous than before since the one thing the U.S. and USSR were determined not to permit during the Cold War was small or medium-sized powers deciding the timing of the nuclear holocaust for them. With only one superpower left, it now becomes harder for the U.S. to control nuclear proliferation, even if it wanted to. The post-Cold War era has also seen a proliferation of longstanding conflicts between regional powers which sends its rulers thirsting for nuclear arms. Thomas Graham, formerly of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, recently said, "We are at perhaps the most dangerous period since the beginning of the nuclear age, with the possible exception of the Cuban missile crisis."

All of this makes newly concrete the repeated emphasis placed by Raya Dunayevskaya, the founder of Marxist-Humanism, on Marx's statement, "To have one basis for life and another for science is a priori a lie."

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2. See "Virtual Nukes—When is a test not a test?" by Bill Mesler, *The Nation*, June 15/22, 1998.

Welfare rights, labor and women's liberation

by Laurie Cashdan

Dozens of welfare rights activists aboard the New Freedom Bus arrived at Chicago's Cabrini Green housing project June 16. Unlike the original Freedom Riders in 1961, they came to protest not southern racial segregation but welfare reform. This time the protests involve poor and unemployed women, many of them formerly homeless, affiliated with the Kensington Welfare Rights Union in Philadelphia, other grassroots groups around the country and long-time left activists. The women have been passionately supported by students who have left college to work in the welfare rights movement full time.

On a one-month trip across the U.S. to protest unemployment, hunger and homelessness and to gather testimony about human rights violations presented at a rally at the United Nations, the bus had just made an unscheduled stop in Flint, Mich. There, welfare activists joined striking GM workers on the picket line. This interrelation

Woman as Reason

between welfare rights activists and Flint workers starkly illuminates two poles of capitalism's restructuring: the war on the poor, and the shift away from labor in the inner cities of the northern U.S. At the same time, it spotlights the emergence of new coalescences, to which women, especially working-class women of color, are central and which move beyond the Left agendas also present.

As I learned from a Black woman on strike at Delphi East in Flint, 50% of the production workers there are women (down from 70% in the 1960s) and 50% are Black, although most skilled trades workers are white men. (See story, p. 3).

Just as GM automated its assembly plants after World War II to become more competitive, it also hired women as cheap labor in its labor-intensive parts plants. But since the 1970s, GM has sought cheaper female labor outside the U.S. Since it built its first Delphi parts plant in Ciudad Juarez in 1978, GM has shifted so much production to Mexico that Delphi has become Mexico's largest private employer, with over 50 plants and 72,000 employees.

The rejection of inner-city female and Black workers—who have militantly demanded decent working conditions by organizing unions—has thus gone hand in hand with the shift of capital to the *maquiladoras* of Mexico, where race and gender shape a new production force for GM and other U.S. companies.

This shift has left a devastating path of destruction in its wake, with the resulting unemployment, poverty and homelessness in cities like Flint intensified by the war on the poor popularly known as welfare reform. Welfare reform blames poor women, especially women of color, for the economic crises of the last two decades, while pretending that capitalist restructuring has done only good for working-class people. It pits employed and unemployed against each other, mustering all the available racist and sexist ideologies.

In this context, working-class women, both Black and white, have emerged as central to the new struggles at the end of the century. Their concerns are not only economic but embrace crucial dimensions for Women's Liberation as well.

At the Freedom Bus rally, a white welfare rights activist named Lisa with Survival, Inc., in Boston, told us about the impact the bus stop in Welch, West Virginia, had on her and others. Women there testified about mine closures and losing homes owned by their families for generations. They also described the devastating effects of these changes on Man/Woman relations. As women recounted being battered by their husbands and their difficulties in achieving independence, many from the bus broke down in tears, reminded of their own stories.

Women Worldwide

by Mary Jo Grey

International support is being organized for a woman human rights activist on trial in Turkey for distributing a flyer describing the appalling situation of Kurdish women in Turkey. Zeynep Baran, head of the Foundation for Solidarity with Kurdish Women and Women's Studies in Istanbul, is charged with "separatist propaganda" and "incitement to racism." She faces from one to three years in prison.

—Information from *Voices Rising*

National public awareness campaigns by women's groups in Russia and Poland are attacking the premise that domestic violence is "acceptable." Billboards, bus signs, posters and bumper stickers show the faces of battered women and children with captions such as "If he beats you, he loves you." Even the Russian government admits that an estimated 14,000 women die each year at the hands of their husbands and other family members. The Women's Rights Center in Warsaw, Poland cites a 33% increase in the number of reported domestic violence cases in 1995, with a steady rise since then. But women there have an uphill struggle—there are no battered women's shelters in Warsaw, and only one in Cracow. Divorce is difficult to obtain thanks to the dominance of the Catholic Church; police and prosecutors are unsympathetic, and the right wing national government says money is better spent keeping families together than helping battered women.

It became clear that while Economic Human Rights is the name of their campaign, these women are also searching for a profound change in human relations.

In a very different way, Judy, the Black woman worker I met from Flint, showed that the struggle of labor is not at all separate from the whole history of women's struggles for freedom. In fact, we met not in Flint, but in Seneca Falls, N.Y., where she was photographing exhibits at the Women's Rights National Historic Park in honor of the 150th anniversary of the 1848 Woman's Rights Convention. She plans to show them during Women's History Month for the Women's Council of her union, which has addressed such issues as breast cancer, domestic violence and sexual harassment. She also expressed support for the welfare activists, because "We are all just a paycheck away from the streets."

These are but the beginnings of new overlappings that characterize the social consciousness emerging today, especially among working-class women, in which Women's Liberation is as significant as the fight against poverty and homelessness. While it does not exhaust the new energizing principle needed for today for these movements to come to full fruition, it does show the significance of Marx's anticipation of new passions and new forces that would arise in opposition to the accumulation of capital.

Gay Pride: party or politics?

San Francisco—This year I went to both the Dyke and Pride Marches in San Francisco and was doubly inspired by the strong Queer community here in my home city. The Dyke March began as a dance party and rally in the Mission District, with speakers from a variety of political groups.

The most inspired speaker was a 16-year-old lesbian who challenged the partying crowd to think of themselves more politically. "It's really great to see you all here as a community today, but where were you when my girlfriend and I were getting harassed in the news and at school? And where will you be tomorrow?"

The Pride March was huge as usual, with queers coming in from all over the world for the festivities. Many of the March contingents were commercial, but several groups promoted political visibility and challenged the crowd. My favorite was a group called The Gay & Lesbian Insurrection who marched behind a banner which read, "Community Not Commodities!" They had the most creative chants, "Ellen is not the revolution," and "Bullshit, come off it, our pride is not for profit!" In one contingent marched participants from the first ever Chinese Queer Convention which took place in San Francisco over the weekend. We met many people fascinated to hear more about the "Queer Left Legacy and Marxist-Humanism," by Jennifer Pen from the last issue of *News and Letters*, and friends wanting more dialogue on the relation of sexuality and revolution.

—Julia Jones

Memphis, Tenn.—Over 1,000 people marched in the Gay Pride Parade on June 20. At 96 degrees, it was no picnic, but spirits were high. Six years ago the organizers decided the march and rally were too political, so they turned it into a parade and festival.

This year, especially coming right after Senate leader Trent Lott's gaybashing remarks comparing gays to alcoholics and kleptomaniacs, we needed a lot more political response than was evident. There were participants from Lott's home state of Mississippi, but very few signs denounced him or made any political statements.

We in Women's Action Coalition got a very good response from people watching our "float" pass by when they read the sign: "We're here, we're queer, get used to it!" But have we settled for just having our own space to celebrate in, and retreated from challenging the larger society's prejudices and institutionalized oppression?

—Participant

Women and Marx's idea of Socialism

In a recent article in the *New York Times*, "Marx's Stock Resurges on a 150-Year Tip," (June 28, 1998) Paul Lewis joins a host of bourgeois journalists and ideologues in hailing the relevance of Marx's *Communist Manifesto* on its 150th anniversary, writing about the "eerie way in which its 1848 description of capitalism resembles the restless, anxious and competitive world of today's global economy."

Yet while Lewis and others have been so stunned at Marx's prescient critiques of capitalism, they have downplayed his ideas on socialism with an irritating all-too-knowing complacency, resulting in gross vulgarizations of Marx's ideas. For example, in his haste to prove that none of Marx's so-called "predictions" about the uprooting of capitalism have come true, Lewis writes that the *Manifesto*, in addition to calling for the abolition of private property and the state, advocates "the replacement of marriage by a 'community of women.'" By "community of women," Lewis seems to imply that Marx was against marriage as an expression of private property—and sought for its replacement by the communal sharing of women.

This is patently wrong and it perpetuates a common post-Marx Marxist fallacy about what Marx's vision of a new society is. In fact, Marx critiques the idea of "community of women," arguing that it is a capitalist idea to begin with.

Far from advocating a "community of women," Marx seeks to do away with the nuclear family and "with the

Mitsubishi settles

Chicago—The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and Mitsubishi Motor Manufacturing of America announced on June 12 a record \$34 million settlement in the largest sexual harassment case ever. The EEOC filed the class action suit against Mitsubishi in April 1996 for "creating a hos-



Protest at Mitsubishi dealership.

tile and abusive work environment" after investigating the claims of 29 women who had initiated a private civil suit.

Nearly 16,000 workplace sexual harassment charges were filed with the EEOC in 1997. About 90% of such disputes are settled, as with the Mitsubishi case. Specific allegations will not be heard in court, and few women choose to speak to the press for fear of retaliation or losing their jobs.

The money, capped at \$300,000 per woman for the most egregious complaints, will help. But will this settlement improve conditions in the plant for women? The decree provides for an independent three-person panel to monitor the company's handling of sexual harassment complaints and training. Will that be enough? A local activist wondered: "We are looking for a big change, a societal change. What do we do in the meantime? How do these women go to work every day?" —B. Ann Lastelle

Normal, Ill.—If they handle who gets what fairly, then I think the settlement is great. I knew we would win because of all the evidence the EEOC had. The suit didn't totally stop everything; it's still a hostile environment. The company promotes that, as far as I'm concerned.

There are still men there who degrade women. They just do it in a more discreet manner now, to where there are no witnesses. I reported to my supervisor that I was being retaliated against by a gentleman worker, and he basically said: How about if I make him say he's sorry and then that'll be okay? And that's all that was done.

Fear—fear of retaliation, fear of losing my job—kept me from joining the civil lawsuit. Being a single parent there was no way I could do that. The money and the benefits for a woman in this town are excellent. I wanted better for my children.

I see for the future they will try to put on a great big front that it's a model workplace, but it's an auto factory. Their main concern is building cars. People are numbers. There is no humanity in there.

—Mitsubishi woman worker

Editor's Note: The U.S. Supreme Court ruled on June 26 that women filing sexual harassment complaints need not have suffered "tangible job detriment." The company can be held responsible for sexual harassment violations by its employees; however, the decision increases protection for companies that have sexual harassment policies in place.

status of women as mere instruments of production." To Marx, the status and freedom of women is a real measure of how free and human a society is. The man/woman relationship, Marx wrote in the 1844 *Manuscripts*, reveals to what degree we "as a species, ha[ve] become human."

Contrary to what so many who write on feminism and Marx say, women figure centrally in Marx's concept of socialism. In the 1844 *Manuscripts*, Marx relates the notion of the "community of women" to what he calls vulgar communism, writing that "This idea of communal women expresses the secret of this quite vulgar and unthinking communism." This vulgar communism, Marx writes, "completely negates the personality of man" and "is only the logical expression of private property."

In place of this "vulgar communism" which reduces all relations to property relations, Marx defines his own philosophy as a "thoroughgoing humanism," which is the positive transcendence of private property.

Certainly, it is astounding, as Lewis notes, to what degree Marx's 1848 descriptions of capitalism seem to fit today's world of globalized capital. But, the "todayness" of Marx's *Communist Manifesto*, especially for women, is found in his concept of humanist socialism, the totality of which has eluded both the Marxist Left and the feminist movement for a century and more. It has never been more imperative for feminists to challenge this type of reductionism.

—Maya Jhansi

Flint strikers defy GM hijacking of jobs and capital

Flint, Mich.—On June 3, about 100 UAW members from throughout the Flint area blocked entrances to the Flint Metal Center plant to prevent a private company hired by General Motors from removing metal racks used to hold parts. During the Memorial Day weekend, GM had removed dies for the new Chevrolet Silverado and GMC Sierra pickups. The dies were to be shipped to Mansfield, Ohio, to stamp panels for the new pickups to be assembled in Oshawa, Ontario.

GM wants to cut 191 of the plant's 3,400 jobs. GM had earlier promised to invest \$300 million in the plant. The removal of dies and racks was the immediate impetus for the strike that began June 5, but the roots of it lie in the constant shift of production to GM plants in low wage countries. Since the advent of downsizing and shift of production in 1978, the GM hourly work force in the Flint area had been reduced from about 77,000 to 33,000, from downsizing, increased productivity, and job shifting.

Under the existing contract, the local union can strike only over health and safety, subcontracting, and production standards, and GM has threatened to sue the UAW in federal court and seek damages. However, there are more than enough problems, particularly with health and safety, to justify the strike on "legal" grounds.

On June 11, the 5,800 workers at Delphi Flint East went on strike. The official reasons are health and safety, production standards and subcontracting, but this plant is threatened with the loss of about half its jobs to subcontracting, probably for the very reason that it had played such a key role in shutting down almost all GM production in North America. This plant and a plant in Mexico produce almost all instrument clusters used in most General Motors vehicles. The plant also produces spark plugs, fuel pumps, and other small components.

According to the *Flint Journal* of June 12, an internal document, the authenticity of which GM does not dispute, says that GM vehicle production in Mexico will be increased from 300,000 in 1998 to 608,000 in 2007. General Motors can do this only by transferring work from the U.S.

Despite all the baloney from GM about raising productivity in U.S. plants, it would stop moving work to

Squeegee man shot, who next?

New York—During Rudolph Giuliani's first campaign for mayor of New York City in 1993, he made squeegee men out to be the scapegoats, the personification of all that was evil and out of control in New York. He vowed to get them, and his police did, and it was a very popular move. Nobody liked the squeegee men. Then Giuliani chased the homeless beggars off the trains, and broke up their cardboard encampments. The homeless became invisible, and that too was very popular. By now, in his second term, Giuliani has moved on to more "traditional" sectors of the working class: hospital workers, taxi drivers and food vendors. Even some who cheered him in his attacks on the squeegee men and the homeless are now beginning to wonder, how far is he going to go? Who is next?

But it all started with the demonizing of the squeegee men. On Sunday, June 14, a white off-duty police officer, Michael Meyer, shot African-American squeegee man Antoine Reid at point-blank range in the chest, with his 9 mm semi-automatic, for trying to wash his windshield after a Yankees game. By some miracle Reid survived this attempted murder. This was not some "isolated act." The white police officer has seven brutality charges against him in his six years on the force. Gunning down the Black squeegee man reveals the logic set in motion not only by Giuliani, who has built his career on demonizing the poorest and the African Americans and has unleashed the full brutality of the NYPD against Black and Latino New Yorkers, but by the modern capitalist system, of whom Giuliani is only the servant. The logic of capital as it exists in America in 1998 is revealed starkly in this one encounter of the squeegee man and the cop, this encounter that could be a parable for where we are headed.

Because I would argue that the GM strikers in Flint are on strike so that they, and their children, will not have to be squeegee men. When GM sneaked in under cover of night that Memorial Day weekend and stole away the dies to make the cars this enraged the workers, who clearly recognized this as a step towards separating them from the means of production. Was there a challenge to capitalist private property hidden in that rage? Do the dies belong to GM, or do they belong to us? The union argues this on the legal grounds of the contract, but the workers feel this is our factory. You cannot build cars with hand tools. The tool you need is the modern automated auto factory, which we built, but has been monopolized by the capitalists. If they take that tool away, we are reduced to picking up the only tool the capitalist hasn't monopolized: the squeegee, the rag, the odd job.

We are all potentially squeegee men, workfare workers, children selling gum on a street in Mexico, when capital has usurped all the means of production, of creating material wealth, the necessities of life. There can be no serious social improvement unless the working class recognizes itself as a class, from squeegee men to GM workers, overcomes divisions of race, religion and nationality, and takes back all the means of production that we have built. Only then can we end this mad race to the bottom.

—John Marcotte

Mexico only if U.S. workers accepted a drastic reduction in wages. The only thing that had prevented either such a drastic wage slashing or kept the trickle of jobs from becoming a flood is the constant threat of revolt from U.S. workers. The UAW for many years allowed itself to be painted into a corner with concessions. It accepted the notion that General Motors would stabilize at a lower level of employment and wages. It is increasingly clear that there will be no bottoming out short of Third World level wages.

As part of its restructuring, General Motors has not only moved jobs to Third World countries, but has successfully pitted local unions against each other, and the Canadian Auto Workers against the United Auto Workers, encouraging them to, in effect, bid for work.

This may not continue to work. Workers in Mansfield are expressing support for the Flint strike, although they are not prepared to walk out themselves at this point. Local Richard Shoemaker, an international UAW vice president, announced at a press conference in Flint on June 12 that some of the dies were being returned to Flint. This was after Buzz Hargrove, President of the Canadian Auto Workers, hinted that workers at the Oshawa plant might not accept panels made with the stolen dies.

The nation-wide dimension of this local strike is disguised by the ability of non-striking, but laid off GM workers to receive unemployment benefits rather than deplete the UAW strike fund.

—Dan B.

Flint, Mich.—I started at Delphi, then called AC Spark Plug, in June 1965. We're talking about losing our jobs because GM wants to downsize. They want to cut the number of employees from about 5,500 to 3,000, to make it more competitive. The union wants to keep everyone who's working, and just lose people to attrition.

In 1965 we had about 70% women here. Now there are about equal numbers of women and men in production.

Besides sending work to Mexico, they already have little companies around here that they send work to. There's one building in Flint with no name on the outside, where people receiving SSI—who have mental and physical disabilities—are packaging parts for one dollar.

There's always the issue of money, but now just keeping our jobs is the main issue. People here work paycheck to paycheck, even though we make good wages. We're just a paycheck away from the streets.

GM has lost 95% of its production because of the strike, losing at least \$65 million a day. My brother works at the Dorian plant in Georgia. They're affected by the strike, but they're not getting any compensation.

We always support other struggles. We sent a busload to the Caterpillar strike, in Peoria. Our local, 651, also went over to help the Metal Fabricating Workers, Local 659, who went out before we did here in Flint. Now were getting a lot of support from people in town, with different restaurants taking food over to the union hall. At one spot they had a band, keeping our spirits up, with people singing and dancing, but were only getting \$150 a week and those bills pile up fast.

—Black woman worker

Flint, Mich.—Waving signs declaring "UAW ON STRIKE," dozens of GM workers, men and women, young and old and Black and white, marched at the

Clean bias out of House

Washington, DC—We clean the government buildings and are suing the Architect of the Capitol because they pay women less than men for exactly the same work. (See March and April N&L.) In May we had a rally. Patricia Ireland, president of NOW, Eleanor Holmes Norton, Congressman Albert Wynn from Maryland, Josh Williams from the metropolitan area AFL-CIO, and some of the employees all spoke out. We got a very good turnout — about 75. It made us feel better. But the press seems to be anti-union. The major press and TV, none of them picked it up. And that's what we need.

The Architect of the Capitol is trying to get the case dismissed. The men workers are supporting us and are going to come out. We hope the major TV stations will cover it. We're thinking we may get a little exposure because this will be in the same building where Kenneth Starr is having his hearings.

The lawsuit demanding equal pay for us women has been going on for at least two years. Conditions have not gotten any better. Clinton talks about human rights, but what about human rights right here under his nose? We're still working like slaves.

—Hazel Dews, President, AFSCME Local 626

gates of the Delphi East auto parts plant in Flint, Mich., shouting their defiance, shooting clenched fists into the air and urging passing drivers to honk in support of their battle. The response was often deafening, as drivers laid on their horns.

The strike began on June 5 at GM's Flint metal fabricating plant, spread a week later to the Delphi auto parts plant and involved a total of some 10,000 workers. While a major concern of the workers is the threat of job-outsourcing, which has already resulted in the loss of tens of thousands of GM jobs in Flint, it is also true that they demand resolution of a massive number of worker grievances over health and safety violations—over 800 unsettled grievances at the metal fabricating plant alone.

"We had a lot of health and safety grievances at our plant too," said a Delphi picketer who works in the spark plug division. "Management didn't do a thing about them until we called in OSHA."

A woman picketer stated, "I'm a single mother with three kids, and I'm out here more for them than I am for myself. I want them to have a better life than I have, but they'll have it worse if we can't keep our jobs here so they can make a living when they grow up."

The spark plug worker also noted that management has already been reducing the work force by not hiring replacements for workers who retire. "They've been doing that with truck drivers and workers in the skilled trades, which puts that much more work load on those still working. You can do just so much in a day, but all management wants is more production and more profits."

As for GM's claim that it must get more production to be "competitive" with other auto manufacturers, it was pointed out that just in the past five years alone, GM has made a net profit of a mind-boggling \$27 billion. Clearly, more than profitability is at stake. At the heart of it is GM's demand for total dictatorial control over its work force and the opposition by the workers who are battling to preserve as much of their humanity and freedom as they can.

At this point, the strike has affected every GM plant in the U.S., as well as plants in Mexico and Brazil and other non-GM parts suppliers, with over 160,000 workers now laid off and the number growing by the day. At the recent UAW convention held in Reno, Nev., UAW President Steven Yokich reaffirmed the union's support of the striking workers, who are now receiving \$150 a week in strike pay.

GM is considering the cancellation of the workers' health care coverage and challenging state unemployment benefit payments to workers who have been laid off due to the strike. If both sides dig in where they now stand, this can become a long and bitter strike that will mark a critical turning point not only for GM and the auto workers, but also for all of American labor. In one way or another, every picket said the same thing: "We'll stay out as long as it takes to get what we need!"

—Andy Phillips

Chicago—Bob Irminger, a member of the Inland Boatmen's Union facing a lawsuit for picketing against a ship carrying scab cargo, spoke at a meeting of the Chicago Labor Party chapter on June 11. Irminger was a leader of the San Francisco Bay Area's Committee for Victory for the Liverpool Dockers which mobilized support for 500 Liverpool longshoremen who lost their jobs as a result of a strike in 1995 against deterioration of work conditions following privatization of their port. The Committee organized a picket line in October to protest the arrival at the Port of Oakland of the Neptune Jade, a ship which had been loaded at an English port owned by a subsidiary of the company which had fired the Liverpool dockers. Longshore workers honored the picket line and forced the ship to seek another port.

The Pacific Maritime Association (PMA), the port owners' organization, sued the picketers for damages not long after the ship's departure. In a move reminiscent of McCarthyism, they pressured those named in the suit to divulge the names of all the picketers and the organizations to which they belonged. The defendants refused. In early March a judge threw out the suits against most of the picketers. Irminger, however, was among the exceptions because the judge, for reasons not entirely clear to the defendants, ruled that the PMA is "likely to prevail on the merits of the case."

Irminger said, "I'll fight this thing as long as it takes." He has the support of many Bay Area unions and looks forward to challenging the PMA on the grounds of free speech.

—Kevin Michaels

Port owners target pickets

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UAW strikers at Delphi Flint East have shut down GM production nationwide into the second month.

From the Writings of Raya Dunayevskaya
MARXIST-HUMANIST ARCHIVES

Editor's Note

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Spanish-American war—an event which signaled a new stage of imperialist intervention overseas as well as intensifying racism here in the U.S. Because the connection between new stages of capitalist expansion and intensifying racism is especially crucial to grasp in light of today's globalization of capital, we here reprint excerpts of Dunayevskaya's discussion of the rise of imperialism at the turn of the century from the pamphlet *American Civilization on Trial*. The excerpts are taken from Part III, "Imperialism and Racism." First published in 1963, *American Civilization on Trial* has undergone several new editions, the latest being in 1983. The full pamphlet is available from N&L for \$2.

The United States' plunge into imperialism in 1898 came so suddenly that Populism hardly noticed it. Although for a decade and more Populism had fought monopoly capital which gave birth to imperialism, it was not weighted down by an awareness of any connection between the two. This was not the result only of the deflection of the struggle of the people vs. monopoly into the narrower channel of free silver vs. banker. **Behind the apparent suddenness of the rise of imperialism stands the spectacular industrial development after the Civil War. The unprecedented rate of industrialization telescoped its victory over agriculture and its transformation from competitive to monopoly capital.**

Because monopoly capital had appeared first in transportation, the Mid-Western wheat belt as well as the post-Reconstruction South resented their veritable bondage to the railroads that controlled the outlet of, and thus set the prices for, their products. The agricultural population had been the first to revolt, the first to organize into a new political party, and the ones mainly responsible for getting the first anti-trust Acts of 1887 and 1890.

It was this precisely which so shook up the Southern oligarchy that it quickly gave up its resentment of Northern capital's victory over agrarianism in order to unite with its former war enemy to destroy their mutual class enemy, Populism. Together, North and South pulled out all stops—the violence of Northern capital against labor was more than matched by the Southern oligarchy's encouragement of the revival of the rule of rope and faggot against a mythical "Negro domination" inherent in Populism.

That additive of color, moreover, now had a promissory note attached to it: a veritable heaven on earth was promised the poor whites in the new white-only enterprise-textiles. So began "the great slaughter of the innocents" that will first in the late 1920s explode into the unwritten civil war of unarmed, starving textile workers against armed, well-fed Southern monopolists—the great Gastonia, North Carolina strike. But for the late 1890s the Southern monopolists—in agriculture as in industry—became so frightened over the explosive force contained in Populism, the threat to their rule, that they happily embraced the North, Northern capital.

Monopoly capital first appeared in transportation before it appeared in industry, but from the first it was built on Andrew Carnegie's principle: "Pioneering doesn't pay." Empire building through consolidations did. Swallowing up of smaller capital, destruction of cut-throat competition alongside of monopolization, not to mention cheating on top of exploitation—that was the way of all great American fortunes built by means more foul than fair during those two decisive decades. Four times as much acreage as had been taken up by homesteaders was given to railroad companies. Bourgeois historians must record what even bourgeois politicians had to admit—after the fact, of course. In *The Rise of American Civilization*, Charles A. Beard states: "The public land office of the United States was little more than a centre of the distribution of plunder; according to President Roosevelt's land commission, hardly a single great western estate had a title untainted by fraud."

Monopoly was on its way in all fields and with just as unclean hands—Rockefeller started the oil trust; Carnegie, steel; Morgan, banking; while Jay Gould, Leland Stanford, James J. Hill, Cornelius Vanderbilt first kept to railroads and then spread tentacles outward until all together they impelled the Federal Government to its imperialist path.

Long before American capital's discovery of the easy road to wealth, Marx had described European capital's birth: "The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signaled the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief momenta of primitive accumulation. On the heels treads the commercial war of the European nations, with the globe for a theater . . . Great fortunes sprung up like mushrooms in a day; primitive accumulation went on without the advance of a shilling."

The capitalist leopard couldn't change its spots in the U.S. even though its primitive accumulation had to be achieved within the confines of its own land. Direct slavery was still the method of devel-

oping Southern agriculture, wage labor that of developing industry. Despite the famous free farmer in the West and its seemingly endless frontier, free land was still more, fantastically more, at the disposal of railroad magnates than available to homesteaders, and that fact held though the "magnates" were first to become such. Here too "great fortunes sprung up like mushrooms in a day" not for every man but for those who knew how to get government to help new industrialism, hot house fashion, to blossom forth into monopoly form.

It is no historic secret that the later the bourgeois revolution against feudalism or slavery takes place, the less complete it is, due to the height of class opposition between capital and labor. The lateness in the abolition of slavery in the United States accounts for the tenacious economic survival of slavery which still exists in the country.

PLUNGE INTO IMPERIALISM

Nevertheless, as the strength of Populism and the solidarity of Black and white that it forged showed, the economic survival of slavery couldn't have persisted, much less dominated the life of the Negroes North as well as South, IF they hadn't been reinforced by the "new"



Northern capital. It was not the "psychology of Jim Crowism" that did the reinforcing. The "psychology of Jim Crowism" is itself the result, not the cause, of monopoly capital extending its tentacles into the Caribbean and the Pacific as it became transformed into imperialism, with the Spanish-American War. So great, however, was the corruption of capitalism that the muckrakers were blinded by it; that is to say, diverted by it from grasping capitalism's organic exploitative nature that would naturally transform itself into quasi-totalitarian imperialism. The result was that when the Spanish-American War broke out in 1898, it had the appearance of a sudden manifestation out of nowhere. In truth it was long building up. Latin America had known, ever since 1820, that while the Monroe Doctrine could protect it from European invasion, there was no such protection from American aggression for which the Doctrine was designed.

Were we ever to exclude the imperialistic adventure of the Mexican-American War of 1846 on the excuse that it had been instigated, not by Northern capital but by the Southern wish to expand the territory for slavery, these facts that are incontrovertible preceded the Spanish-American war:

(1) Three full decades of phenomenal industrial expansion followed the end of the Civil War; (2) three full decades of undeclared civil war were waged against labor in the North; and (3) the combined might of Northern capital and the Southern aristocracy was used against the challenge from agriculture-Populism. The removal of the Federal troops was only the first of the steps in this unholy alliance which two decades later jointly ventured into imperialism.

It could not be otherwise. The capitalistic mentality and the slavemaster mentality are not very far apart when the domination of the exploiters is challenged by the working people. Indeed, monopoly capital needed Southern racism for its plunge into empire. North and South, the thirst for empire was brilliantly white.

As America shouldered the "White Man's Burden" she took up at the same time many Southern attitudes on the subject of race. "If the stronger and cleverer race," said the editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, "is free to impose its will upon 'new-caught, sullen peoples' on the other side of the globe, why not in South Carolina and Mississippi?" . . .

Even Samuel Gompers and the A.F. of L., which began by opposing this imperialistic venture, ended by capitulating to it. Only the independent Negro movement maintained a consistent and principled opposition to this

plunge into imperialism:

" . . . in 1899 the Afro-American Council . . . demanded an end to lynching and the enforcement of the 14th and 15th Amendments. This was the year of the Spanish-American War which gave the United States the Philippines; and DuBois and other Negro intellectuals, together with a large section of the Negro press, actively supported the recently formed Anti-Imperialist League, castigated the war as unjust, and linked it to their own struggle with the demand that America should put itself in order at home before expanding overseas. This Negro campaign against American imperialism did not stop with the acquisition of the Philippines; and, in 1900 many voices—including that of the African Methodist Episcopal Church Bishop, Henry M. Turner—were raised against the use of Negro troops in the United States' effort against the Boxer Rebellion in China."

RACISM

This poison in the air from the smell of empire pervaded North as well as South even as it had already pervaded Europe when it set about carving up Africa in the previous decade. It is true that despite dollar diplomacy's "lapses" in not sticking only to the dollar profits but participating both in marine landings and the actual occupation, American imperialism was not on the level of spoliation and barbarism of Europe's conquest of Africa.

The greater truth, however, is that Theodore Roosevelt's "manifest destiny" does not fundamentally differ from Britain's jingoistic "white man's burden" or from the French "mission civilisatrice" or the German "kultur." All white civilization showed its barbarism in the conquest of the whole Afro-Asian, Latin American and Middle Eastern worlds.

The debate over whether imperialism means a search for exports and investments or imports and "consumer choice" sheds no illumination on the roots of racism and its persistence over the decades so that by now the hollowness of American democracy reverberates around the globe and makes the newly awakened giants of freedom in the economically underdeveloped world look sympathetically to the totalitarian Sino-Soviet orbit which had not directly oppressed it. Whether imperialism's exploitation was due to the need for cotton or copper, coffee or copra, cocoa or diamonds, super-profits for finance capital or "prestige" for national governments, its inhumanity to man is what assured its return home to roost on native racist as well as exploitative grounds.

The Spanish-American War was no sooner over than the United States began forcing the door open to trade in China. The 1900 election campaign was built around this imperialistic note. It was not merely out of the lips of a young senator from Indiana that we heard jubilation: "The Philippines are ours forever . . . And just beyond the Philippines are China's illimitable markets. We will not retreat from either . . . We will not renounce our part in the mission of our race . . ." When McKinley was assassinated there came to rule over this new empire from Latin America to the Philippines, and from Hawaii to some open doors in China and Japan, Theodore Roosevelt—that alleged trust buster and very real empire builder.

Racism, in the U.S. and/or abroad, helped pave the way for totalitarianism with its cult of "Aryanism" and its bestial destruction of an entire white race in the very heart of Europe. Those who wish to forget that at the root of present-day apartheid South Africa was the "civilizing mission" of the white race which meant, in fact, such horrors as the extermination of the Khoisan peoples by the Boers, of Leopold II's reduction of 20 to 40 million peaceful Congolese to 8 million—are the ones who took the extermination of the Jews in Nazi Germany "in stride"—until the Nazi search for "lebensraum" meant a challenge to their own area of exploitation.

Surely, on the 100th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation when the holocaust of World War II is still fresh within the memory of living men, it is high time to stop playing psychological games with racism. It is precisely such playing with the question as to whether the Civil War was to be limited only to the question of Union, and not extended to the abolition of slavery, which both prolonged the war and left the revolution in human relations in so unfinished a state that to this day we suffer from its state of incompleteness.

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Capitalism's new global crisis reveals the todayness of Marx

I. Globalized capital in crisis: from East Asia to the U.S.

(Continued from page 1) 'Contagion' in the global economy

The capitalists may not be ready to "agree" with Marx, that the supreme commodity, labor-power, is the only source of all value and surplus value, but they do see that there is such a decline in the rate of profit compared to what they consider necessary to keep investing for expanded production, that they are holding off—so much so that now their ideologists are saying low investment is by no means a temporary factor that the capitalists would "overcome" with the next boom. There is to be no next boom. It is this which makes them look both at the actual structural changes...as well as the world production and its interrelations.

—Raya Dunayevskaya (1977)³

What underlies today's nuclear tensions is that globalized capitalism is more unstable, precarious, and crisis-ridden than at any time since the end of the Cold War. Nothing shows this more than the impact of the East Asian economic crisis.

What is striking about the crisis there is how fast it spread from one area to another. The currency crisis in Thailand spread to Malaysia, South Korea, and then Indonesia. This shook the Suharto regime to its foundation and helped lead to the emergence of a mass movement which pushed him from power. Yet East Asia's troubles are far from over. Its depth and impact on the U.S. only truly comes into focus when we view what is happening in Japan.

Japan is suffering from six years of virtually no growth and is now deep in a recession. When Japan's "bubble economy" collapsed in the early 1990s and the return on investments there soured, it sent hundreds of billions of dollars to East Asia in the form of loans and direct investments in an effort to sustain corporate profit rates. This flood of foreign investment set off a speculative bubble in East Asia, which collapsed last summer. The East Asian economies are now unable to repay their loans from Japan, adding to a debt crisis of unprecedented proportions.

Japan's Finance Ministry admits that its banks hold bad loans to the tune of \$614 billion; in proportion to the size of the economy that is 10 times larger than the U.S.'s savings and loan disaster. Yet even this is the tip of iceberg, since hundreds of billions of dollars of additional debt never make it onto the balance sheets of government and corporations. Japan is trying to get out of this crunch by increasing exports to the U.S. Yet this is the same approach being taken by other Asian nations to dig themselves out of their economic morass. This creates pressure for each to devalue its currency to cheapen its exports which in the long run only adds to the debt which prompted the maneuvering in the first place.

This has a global impact. Russia is facing near-insolvency, in part because South Korean capital, which invested heavily there since 1991, has now pulled out. Latin America is also in trouble, as seen in currency instability in Brazil and plummeting stock markets in Mexico and Chile. Most importantly, new foreign investment in China is drying up at the very time that China is laying off millions of workers from state-owned industries. An unraveling of China's economy will have a huge impact on the world's economy.

While this is occurring, Bill Clinton acts as if all is well on the U.S. front, as he boasts of a "booming economy" that has supposedly managed to remain immune

from the crises wrecking the rest of the world. The "low" rate of U.S. unemployment, 4% rate of economic growth, and the "end" of inflation is heralded as proof that we have entered a "new economy" freed from the economic dislocations of the past.

Yet most of the growth here is also of a speculative nature, set off by capitalists pulling their investments out of East Asia and elsewhere and sending them to Wall Street. The NY and NASDAQ stock exchanges have added \$4 trillion in the last four years, while the Dow Jones average has increased four-fold since 1992. This speculative bubble has mushroomed out of all proportion to the growth of the real economy. Productivity, the key economic indicator, has risen by just over 1% a year from 1990-1998—the same as over the past two decades and a far cry from the 3% yearly increase in the 1950s and 1960s.

Moreover, this has become an increasingly two-tier economy, especially seen in the growing numbers of the working poor. One in four children live in poverty nationwide and 300,000 are illegally employed. Almost half of American families in poverty have at least one working adult. The gutting of welfare has only added to this. While 10 million have been moved off the welfare rolls, the jobs most people end up getting are without benefits, even health care.

viable mechanism to stave off such crises in the international arena. The utter failure of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank to stem the decline in East Asia is a case in point. No sooner was the globalized nature of capitalism heralded as proof of a "new stage" of capital, than globalization itself turned out to be an engine for spreading economic crises from one nation to the next.

This situation makes newly concrete the perspectives Karl Marx outlined in his last decade (1872-83) when he turned with new eyes to developments in the technologically underdeveloped world. He incorporated many of these new perspectives in his revision of Volume 1 of *Capital* in its French edition in 1872-75. In one passage, left out of the fourth German edition by Engels, he wrote:

"But only after mechanical industry had struck root so deeply that it exerted a preponderant influence on the whole of national production; only after foreign trade began to predominate over internal trade, thanks to mechanical industry; only after the world market had successively annexed extensive areas of the New World, Asia and Australia; and finally, only after a sufficient number of industrial nations had entered the arena—only after all this had happened can one date the repeated self-perpetuating cycles, whose successive phases embrace years, and always culminate in a general crisis...we ought to conclude, on the basis of the laws of capitalist production as we have expounded them, that the duration is variable, and that the length of the cycles will gradually diminish" (*Capital*, Vol. 1, Fowkes trans., p. 786).⁴

What is new in today's globalized capital... and what is not

Today's globalized capitalism has given rise to several illusions. One is that globalization is a new feature of the post-1989 world. In fact, capital has been globalized since its inception. As Marx said in the *Grundrisse*, "The world market forms the presupposition of the whole as well as its substratum" (p. 227). Just as globalization is not new, today's level of capital movement is not unprecedented. Between 1898 and 1914 the amount of capital moving across national borders as a percentage of global Gross Domestic Product was higher than today. Moreover, capitalism assumed a new global stage in the 1930s and 1940s with the rise of state-capitalism as a world phenomenon in Stalin's Russia, Japan, the New Deal in the U.S., and elsewhere.⁵

What changed in the 1980s and 1990s was not the fact of globalization, but rather its form. Crucial in this was the 1974-75 economic recession, which revealed a worldwide decline in the rate of profit. To satisfy its inner compulsion to accumulate on an ever-expanding scale, capitalism found it necessary to force down the variable component of capital—the amount of value accruing to workers in the form of wages and social benefits.

One way to effect this is to remove barriers to the direct global competition of capital. By removing national restrictions to capital movement like trade barriers, legislation protecting workers' rights, and environmental regulations, each company is forced to directly compete against all others in the world market. As a result, the pressure to cut wages and benefits becomes irresistible; otherwise, the company loses out to those elsewhere in the world who do. This not only drives greater capital movement across national boundaries but also within them, as capital searches for new sources for low-paid sweated labor such as in the U.S. South.

Together with investing in new technologies and exerting greater flexibility and control over the labor process, globalization is used to increase the proportion of constant capital relative to variable capital. Globalization has become capital's outer expression of its inner core.

This is also what drives today's growing megamergers such as of Chrysler-Daimler and Citicorp-Traveler's. The more firms are thrown into direct global competition, the more they try to push aside and/or manage their rivals through megamergers. Globalization thus creates downward pressure on wages and benefits while accelerating the concentration and centralization of capital.

(Continued on page 6)

4. For a discussion of the significance of this passage and Marx's last decade as a whole, see Raya Dunayevskaya's *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* (Champaign-Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), chapters 10 and 12.
5. See *The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism: Selected Writings by Raya Dunayevskaya* (Chicago: News and Letters, 1992).



BY BORGMAN FOR THE CINCINNATI ENQUIRER

Meanwhile, the percentage of Americans living in poverty in the South today is the same as in 1969—23%. For the first time, the poverty rate in the Western states is as high. Since the bull market in stocks took off in 1985, the number of those going hungry each day has grown by 50%, to 30 million.

Despite the growth of the Black middle-class, most Blacks have seen no gain from the economic "miracle" touted by Clinton. The inner cities remain mired in depression conditions and Blacks suffer over twice the rate of unemployment of whites. The much-touted "surge in employment" largely reflects the growth of low-wage sweated labor.

Clinton may still imagine that the influx of foreign capital will manage to prop up the U.S. economy, especially since its labor costs in manufacturing are \$20 per hour less than Germany's and \$10 per hour less than Japan's, which has a more militant legacy of labor unrest than usually acknowledged. But as the impact of the global economic crisis ripples outward, it is only a matter of time before the speculative bubble bursts here as well. Japan remains central in this. If the crisis in Japan becomes so acute that it stops recycling its trade surpluses into U.S. treasury bonds, the U.S. economy will quickly unravel.

Bourgeois pundits have coined a phrase for this tendency of economic crises to spread quickly from one region to the next—*contagion*. What is striking about this is that whereas in the post-World War II era capitalists figured out how to prevent total financial collapses like that of 1929 through an array of state-interventionist measures in the economy, today they lack a



South Korea: Students in Seoul protest economic crisis-driven unemployment.

3. See Marx's *Capital and Today's Global Crises*, by Raya Dunayevskaya (Detroit: News and Letters, 1977), p. 10.

Draft for Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, 1998-1999: Ca

(Continued from page 5)

The force which effects this is *the state*. The state is used to open up financial markets, provide tax shelters for multinationals in low-wage enterprise zones, break trade unions, force the masses to assume the debt run up through military spending and tax breaks for businesses, and so on. The naked hand of state power has accompanied each step in the further globalization of capital. We still live in the era of state-capitalism; the restructuring of capitalism since 1974-75 has not changed that.

Of course, some of the functions of the state have changed. It no longer has "legal" title to the ownership of capital, nor does it directly plan the bulk of production as it did in the state-capitalist regimes which called themselves Communist in Russia and East Europe. Nor does it try to maintain a welfare state as it did in the West from the 1930s onward. The state has instead now become the handmaiden of direct capital accumulation by freeing up all avenues for its self-expansion.

Yet while those who skip over the role of the state in today's capitalism are in error, no less in error are those who think the importance of the state means it can be appealed to in order to rein in and control capital's destructive march over humanity. The simple fact is that capital can no longer be controlled. Capitalism's werewolf hunger for accumulation is so deep, and the tendency of the rate of profit to decline remains so constant, that capital must be "freed up" to seek the lowest level of wages and benefits in order for the system to reproduce itself on an ever-expanding scale.

The state therefore does not control capital; capital controls the state. This has always been true of state-capitalism. As Raya Dunayevskaya wrote in *Marxism and Freedom* of Russian state-capitalism, "Stalin thought he was fashioning the State in the image of the Party. Consciously, that is what he was doing. Objectively, however, the exact opposite was true. The State transformed the Party in its image, which, in turn, was but a reflection of the production process of capitalism at its ultimate stage of development" (p. 259).

The illusion that capital can be controlled without abolishing the law of value and surplus value—a notion long held by Social Democrats, Stalinists, and other leftists—is contradicted by the nature of capital itself. As Marx wrote in the *Grundrisse*, "Capital is the endless and limitless drive to go beyond its limiting barrier. Every boundary is and has to be a barrier for it. Else it would cease to be capital—money as self-reproductive. If ever it perceived a certain boundary not as a barrier, but became comfortable within it as a boundary, it would itself have declined from exchange value to use value. The barrier appears as an accident which has to be conquered" (p. 334).

Another illusion about today's globalized capital is that it makes national boundaries and nationalism obsolete. Instead, it has been accompanied by an intensification of national conflicts as rulers appeal to narrow nationalism in the face of mass unrest and declining living conditions. Nowhere is this now more evident than in Kosovo.

Serbian ruler Milosevic's genocidal attacks on the Albanian populace in Kosova is a replay of his war against Bosnia. What is also being replayed are the lies and hypocrisy of the U.S., which is threatening NATO air strikes if Milosevic continues his campaign of ethnic cleansing. The biggest lie of all is the administration's claim that air strikes can bring "peace" to the region since they supposedly did so earlier in Bosnia. The very opposite is the case. The NATO air strikes against the Serbs in 1995 occurred just as Bosnian and Croatian forces were about to inflict a military defeat on Serbian forces. The U.S. used those strikes to pressure the Bosnians to call off their advance and accept the Dayton accords which partitioned Bosnia along ethnic lines.

This gave Milosevic a new lease on life. Today's war in Kosova would never have occurred if Bosnia had been allowed to inflict a military defeat on the Serbs.

The administration's claim of being concerned with the suffering of the Kosovars is no more believable than its earlier hypocrisy in regard to the Bosnians. The U.S. opposes an independent Kosova and calls the Kosova Liberation Army "terrorist." The U.S. is acting not out of support for the national struggle of the Kosovars, but out of concern that Milosevic's actions jeopardize regional stability. Whatever action it takes will not be in the masses' interests. Globalized capital continues to collude with narrow nationalism, with genocidal consequences.

The only way out of this insane logic is to uproot the capital relation itself. At no time in history has it been

more imperative to break with the illogical logic of this dehumanized system which will stop at nothing, including nuclear war, in its endless pursuit of "production for the sake of production."

Forces of revolt as reason

It should be evident that uprooting this system cannot be achieved without a great many forces of revolution—workers, women, youth, Blacks and other minorities, gays and lesbians, indeed all who strive to transform the conditions of oppression into an existence worthy of our human nature. As against those whose minds have become so swept up into the logic of capital that they cannot even see such forces, their presence continues to make itself felt.

This is reflected in how it is not only capitalism which has become more international; so have many freedom struggles against it. This is true of the wave of strikes that have swept West Europe since 1995 against the high levels of unemployment. Cross-border organizing and multinational workers' protests remain a central part of the struggles there. In East Asia the protests against the austerity measures in Thailand helped inspire mass movements in South Korea and Indonesia. The Indonesian movement has helped breathe new life into the South Korean struggle where workers have launched strikes against layoffs and cutbacks.

Another expression of this emerged at a conference of miners in Tuzla, Bosnia, in March to oppose mine closings and other austerity measures; it brought together miners from Bosnia, Serbia, Hungary, Russia, South Africa, Greece, Turkey, Spain, and Scotland. Miners have long been in the forefront of the struggle against Milosevic, as seen in the struggles of the Kosovar miners of Trepca in the 1980s and early 1990s.

At the March conference the miners discussed not only economic issues but such political questions as opposition to the Dayton accords. One Bosnian miner said, "When Bosnia was invaded, the miners were the first to take up arms. In the Tuzla region alone 6,000 miners fought in the Bosnian army. Three hundred were killed and 600 invalidated. The first person to die on the front line was a miner. The politicians cannot ignore us. These trousers I wear are from before the war. We know who fought and who is now getting rich." It is a striking illustration of how the national struggle to preserve and extend Bosnia's multiethnic heritage, far from becoming a closed world unto itself, has led to a new expression of proletarian internationalism.

While nothing on that level has yet emerged in the U.S., new developments are arising. One is the International Workers' School scheduled to be held this October in Atlanta which aims to bring together public sector workers from five Southern states along with workers from Brazil, South Africa, Mexico, Canada, Haiti, Germany and elsewhere. Another is the way the Frente Autentico de Trabajadores of Mexico allied itself with U.S. and Canadian unions early this year to create the first North American labor coalition aimed at combating sweated labor and plant closings. While such efforts may still be on a small scale, they reflect the search for new forms of organization and struggle to combat the might of global capital.

While it is too early to tell what will emerge from these efforts, this much is clear: The reasoning of the masses constantly creates new organizational forms. This was seen in the movement that brought down Mobutu in Congo last year, which saw the emergence of revolutionary mass committees such as the *chembe chembe*. This had a galvanizing effect, not alone on Congo, but elsewhere in Africa as seen in a renewed

discussion of revolutionary ideas there. The fact that, as our African correspondent put it, "immediately after victory these committees do not only lose their influence but are put totally out of function and replaced with one-party or multi-party dictatorships"—or as in South Africa, by bourgeois democracy—does not free revolutionaries from the need to dig into the forms of consciousness and organization which emerge from below.⁶

New openings have emerged here as well. Although women's liberationists confront the loss of many hard-fought gains and face a crisis in abortion rights, women are in the forefront of fighting welfare-to-work schemes that have turned into welfare-to-homelessness for countless women and children. They are also active in support for women prisoners who suffer specific problems on top of the dehumanization of all the imprisoned. And Black women are organizing unions in the South, as in the catfish industry, which were once considered impossible to organize.

Although numerous strikes take place that go unheralded in the national press, the United Autoworkers strike that erupted on June 5 when 3,400 members of Local 659 in Flint, Mich. walked out over health and safety violations, subcontracting, and the failure of General Motors to live up to its contract, did attract attention because it is seen as a showdown on the "downsizing" occurring in all industries. The strike indicates that while capitalism may be intent on cutting back the top of its "two-tier" work force, the historic "two-tier" in workers' resistance may be breaking down. Meanwhile, there are indications that a new generation of youth may be emerging not weighted down by the failures of the past, as seen in youth activity in prisoner support campaigns, against police brutality, and against the continued sanctions against Iraq.

Yet this does not mean we can underestimate the strength of the forces of reaction. Its strength was shown in the brutal torture and murder of James Byrd Jr., a Black man in Jasper, Texas, by three white supremacists. Though the cruelty of this act is incredible, it is no isolated incident; a racist climate has been generated that allowed it to occur, seen in the "copycat" attacks on Blacks modeled on the Jasper incident which later occurred in Louisiana and Belleville, Ill.

A racist backlash is occurring all over, and its seeds are planted by completely "lawful" ballot measures. One was the approval in California of a ballot initiative to eliminate bilingual education. As one Latina educator commented, racism can be the only motivation for this proposition since no one can claim that one year of immersion in English leads to English-language proficiency. This follows the passage of Proposition 209 last year which aimed to cut the number of minorities in state universities by gutting affirmative action. In this it has succeeded—the number of minorities admitted to the University of California at Berkeley fell from 20% last year to 11% this year; the number of Blacks fell from 562 to 191.

Clearly racism is the card which U.S. capitalism continuously uses. Yet the enormous energy expended to stir up racism reflects the depth of the revolutionary challenge to American "civilization" from Black America which has continually placed it on trial. As the Los Angeles rebellion of 1992 showed, such revolutionary challenges are not far beneath the surface, and when they emerge they can have a galvanizing impact not only on Black America but also on women, youth and white labor.

Precisely because global capitalism is today more unstable, precarious, and crisis-ridden than at any time since the end of the Cold War, we must be prepared for the challenges sure to emerge from new struggles against it. As Raya Dunayevskaya wrote in the Marxist-Humanist Perspectives Thesis of 1977, "It's later, always later—except when spontaneity upsurges and you realize it is here and now, and you aren't there and ready." With this in mind we need to look at the central political-philosophic-organizational challenge facing us.

(Continued on page 7)



Germany: "Ripped off by Honecker, then by Kohl, then by ????"



U.S.: New York City's workfare displaces unionized public employees with the low-wage poor.



East Timor: Students condemn Indonesian imperial rule, demand a referendum.

6. "Africa after the fall of Mobutu," by Ba Karang, *News and Letters*, May 1997.

Capitalism's new global crisis reveals the todayness of Marx

II. The todayness of Marx's philosophy of revolution

(Continued from page 6)

Given today's realities, it is no wonder that the 150th anniversary of Marx's *Communist Manifesto* has led to new discussion of Marx's critique of capitalism. As one symposium put it, the *Manifesto's* discussion of capital's drive for self-expansion is "the best characterization of capitalism at the end of the 20th century currently available."⁷ Our organization has been a part of these discussions in conferences on the *Manifesto* in New York, Berkeley, Chicago and Detroit, as well as Paris, Oslo and Glasgow.

Yet while there is increasing awareness of the importance of Marx's critique of capitalism, there has been much less discussion of the importance of his concept of a new society. Marx's concept of revolutionary socialism is in fact often dismissed as irrelevant even by those praising the cogency of his critique of capitalism. Such claims are expressive of the spirit of the times. The collapse of most of the state-capitalist regimes which called themselves Communist, and the utter failure of any number of efforts at socialist transformation in the Third World and the West, have exposed a long-standing crisis in the effort to project a viable alternative to existing society. The explicit projection of a socialist perspective has by now virtually vanished from the historic agenda. As a result, the new struggles encounter not only the might of the rulers but also a void in the articulation of an alternative to capitalism.

Faced with this, those trying to hew a path out of today's retrogression are asking: What is needed in order to restate and recreate Marx's concept of a totally new, human society? What new theoretic ground is needed to project a comprehensive liberating alternative to existing society?

Those who remain within the confines of post-Marx Marxism are completely ill-equipped to answer these questions. This is largely because of their failure to grasp mass revolts not just as force, but as *Reason*. Again and again workers' struggles have raised new questions about the content of a new society by asking "what kind of labor should man perform." This search for new human relations has also been voiced by women's liberationists questioning the alienating form of man/woman relations, by national minorities opposing racism, and by gays and lesbians questioning the nature of sexuality. Yet many radicals continue to give scant attention to the forms of consciousness and organization arising from below, in remaining trapped either in economic determinism or political voluntarism wherein the subjective factor is reduced to "the party." Such skipping over the *mind* of the oppressed loses sight of the ground for working out a vision of the future.

But while the concept of a new society cannot be worked out if the mind of the oppressed is skipped over, neither can it be worked out on the basis of spontaneous consciousness alone. The ability of masses of people to spontaneously come to socialist consciousness, proven over and over in this century, is not the same as saying that so total a concept of socialism as is spelled out in Marx's philosophy of revolution can be reached spontaneously. Marx, after all, was not simply one among many other socialists; his philosophy was distinct, and contained a distinct concept of the new society. Grasping and restating that concept does not come spontaneously, but demands hard, serious, *organized* labor.

The power of negativity

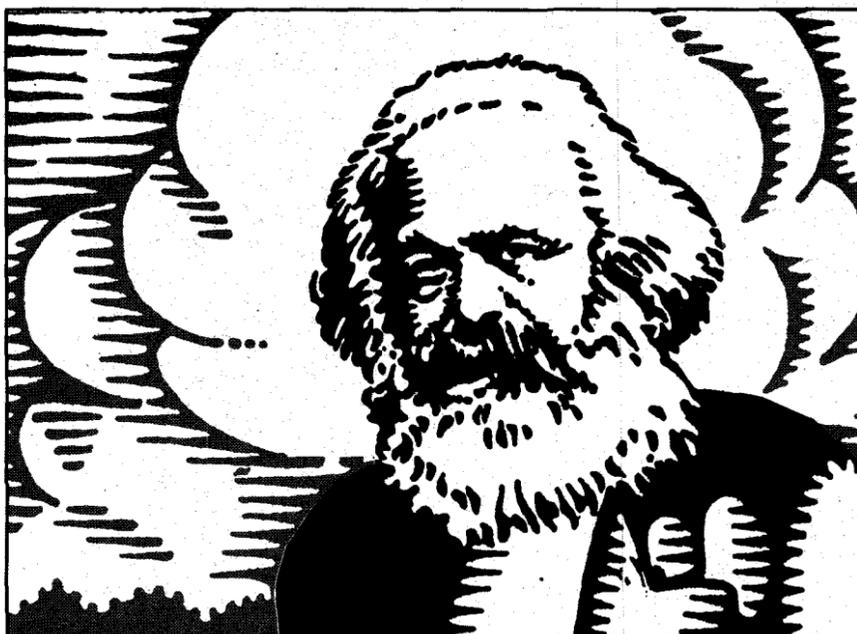
There is no philosophy better equipped to meet this challenge than Marxist-Humanism. That is because Raya Dunayevskaya's founding and development of this philosophy centered on a restatement of Marx's revolutionary vision through a new and creative return to Hegel's dialectic.

She showed that Marx arrived at his concept of a new society not only by closely studying the history of workers' movements and keeping his ears attuned to ongoing struggles, but also through a direct engagement with Hegel's philosophy. Of foremost importance to Marx was Hegel's concept of self-movement through absolute negativity. In Hegel, all forward movement proceeds through the power of negativity, the negation of obstacles to the subject's self-development. The transcendence of these obstacles is reached, not simply through the negation of their immediate forms of appearance (what he calls first negation), but through a second negation. This movement through the negation of the negation, or absolute negativity, is what produces the *positive*, the transcendence of alienation.

In his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* of 1844, Marx appropriated this concept of transcendence of alienation through second negativity to express the process by which capitalism can be abolished. The first negation, he says, is the abolition of private property. Yet this negation by no means ensures liberation. To

reach true liberation the communist negation of private property must itself be negated. Only then, Marx says, will there arise "positive Humanism, beginning from itself."

This projection of the new society as not simply the nationalization of property or abolition of the market but rather the creation of new human relations in production, between men and women and in society as a whole, became the basis of the concept of "revolution in



permanence" which he spent the next 40 years concretizing. Marx's concept of revolution involved a total uprooting of class society. That concept of socialism could not have emerged without his transformation of Hegel's revolution in philosophy into a philosophy of revolution.

Marx's rootedness in Hegel's dialectic is also seen in *Capital* where he based his chapter on "The General Law of Capitalist Accumulation" on Hegel's Absolute Idea. Just as the Absolute Idea in the *Science of Logic* contains "the highest contradiction within itself," Marx showed that the ultimate logic of capitalist production contains an internal, irreconcilable, *absolute* contradiction—the accumulation of capital at one pole and the emergence of "new passions and new forces" striving to uproot it on the other.

In response to today's crises, there is a reaching out for new philosophic ground with which to rearm the radical movement. This is leading some to look anew at the dialectic in Hegel and Marx. Yet the question which often gets posed to us, by workers and intellectuals alike, is "Why do you need the Absolute Idea to express this vision of a new society? Why is it important to return to Hegel's concept of absolute negativity for today?"

The context in which these questions are asked is one in which the predominant view is that Hegel's Absolutes express capital's drive to universalize itself. This has been argued with particular force by István Mészáros in *Beyond Capital*. He writes, "The question is: are we really destined to live forever under the spell of capital's global system glorified in its Hegelian conceptualization, resigned...to the tyrannical exploitative order of his World Spirit?"⁸ For Mészáros, as for others, the need to free ourselves from the notion that there is no alternative requires breaking from the Hegelian dialectic itself. The problem with this position is that the philosophic ground from which Marx drew his very concept of liberation—the notion of self-movement through absolute negativity—is jettisoned. The philosophic void in projecting a comprehensive vision of a liberating alternative therefore persists, even among those trying to hew a path out of today's retrogression.

As against this, Dunayevskaya saw that in light of the realities of our age, defined by counter-revolution emerging from *within* revolution, it became imperative to achieve continuity with Marx's concept of a total uprooting by directly returning to Hegel's Absolutes. In first doing so in a series of letters written in May 1953, she discovered that Hegel's Absolutes express, in abstract form, the vision of the new society itself. As she put it in the first work of her "trilogy of revolution," *Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today*, "Nothing changed Marx's social vision: the vision of the future which Hegel called the Absolute and which Marx first called 'real Humanism' and later 'communism.' The road to both is by way of 'the negation of the negation'" (p. 66).

Her struggle to make this vision of liberation explicit led her, by 1973, to publish *Philosophy and Revolution, from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao*, in which she projected a new philosophic category—Absolute Negativity as New Beginning.

She there showed that the concept of absolute nega-

tivity expresses the quest by masses of people to not simply negate existing economic and political structures, but to create *totally new human relations* as well. In situating the concept of absolute negativity in the struggles of workers, women, youth, Blacks and other minorities, she opened new doors to appropriating and projecting this concept *philosophically*. Once the dialectic of second negativity is seen as intrinsic to the human subject, it becomes possible to grasp and project the idea of second negativity as a *new beginning*, as a veritable force of liberation. This concept of Absolute Negativity as New Beginning provides a new basis for working out a vision of the future—of totally new human relations, of an end to the division between mental and manual labor and of alienated gender relations—which can animate and give direction to the freedom struggles of our time.

The role of our organization as a catalyst and propellant in the freedom struggles hinges on assuming organizational responsibility for projecting and developing these conceptions. Yet achieving this calls for a fundamental reorganization on our part. This is because internalizing and projecting the central concept in *Philosophy and Revolution*—Absolute Negativity as New Beginning—has been a missed moment in the history of our organization. This is not because of any outright hostility to Hegelian dialectics. It is because we were all so excited at how absolute negativity is embodied in live forces of liberation, that we shied away from the *philosophic* projection of the concept of absolute negativity itself.

Dunayevskaya spoke to this in her "Presentation on the Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy" of June 1, 1987: "We were so enamored of the movement from practice that we were hardly as enthusiastic or as concrete about the movement from theory, if not actually forgetting it."

Since the measure of all our work consists in overcoming this, we need to take a closer look at the problem of assuming organizational responsibility for philosophy, as it has shown itself in even the greatest Marxists.

Rosa Luxemburg and the problem of organization

Few Marxists were greater than Rosa Luxemburg. Today, on the 100th anniversary of her famous debate with Eduard Bernstein on "Reform or Revolution," we still have much to learn from her contributions as well as limitations.

Luxemburg made an original contribution in 1898 in subjecting the new stage of monopoly capitalism-imperialism to a devastating critique and exposing the reformism of those within the radical movement who had accommodated themselves to it. She showed that monopoly capitalism and imperialism did not negate Marx's concept of revolution, but made it more imperative. And in opposition to Bernstein's call to "remove the dialectical scaffolding from Marxism," she wrote that "the dialectic is the intellectual arm of the proletariat...when [Bernstein] directs his keenest arrows against our dialectical system, he is really attacking

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The Communist Manifesto, as discussed in three works by RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

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

"The first decade after his break with bourgeois society saw not only the concretization of Marx's Promethean vision in the Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic and the *Communist Manifesto* but the projection of 'revolution in permanence' (121).

Philosophy and Revolution

"Just as this historic *class* Manifesto did not 'forget' the individual—'The free development of each is the condition for the free development of all'—neither did its *theory* of the economic interpretation of history depart for a single instance from actual live battles: 'The history of all society that has existed hitherto is the history of class struggles.' And it continued its ideological differentiation from all other sociality tendencies" (60).

Marxism and Freedom

"As far back as the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx showed that the capitalists are unable to grasp the truth that capitalism is a transitional social order because they and their ideologists transform 'into eternal laws of nature and reason the social forms springing from the present mode of production.' Because they do not see the future, the next social order, they cannot understand the present. Proletarian knowledge, on the other hand, grasps the truth of the present. Because it is not a passive, but an active force, it at the same time restores the unity of theory and practice" (111).

To order these books, see page 12.

7. This statement by Hans Magnus Enzensberger is from a symposium on the Manifesto in The Los Angeles Times of Feb. 1, 1998.

8. István Mészáros, *Beyond Capital* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1995), p. 12. For a critique of Mészáros' book, see "Envisioning the New Society" by Peter Hudis, News & Letters, May 1997.

Capitalism's new global crisis reveals the todayness of Marx

(Continued from page 7)

the specific mode of thought employed by the conscious proletariat in its struggle for liberation."

And yet, as Dunayevskaya shows in *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, Luxemburg's defense of the dialectic did not lead her to delve into the dialectic of negativity itself. Unlike Lenin, who in 1914 turned to Hegel as part of reorganizing his own thinking after the collapse of the Second International, Luxemburg kept her distance from philosophy. Perhaps as a consequence, she never rethought her objection to considering national struggles as revolutionary. She opposed imperialism and national oppression and singled out the sufferings inflicted on the Africans, Asians and Latin Americans. But she never accepted the national struggles as a subject of revolution.

But while she rejected the national question, she did understand the importance of spontaneous class struggles. Perhaps more than anyone in the Marxist movement, she made a category out of revolutionary mass consciousness born from spontaneity. The mind of the oppressed was no abstraction to Rosa Luxemburg, but the very essence of revolution. For this reason, she critiqued many Marxists, including Lenin with whom she worked closely on many matters, for over-emphasizing centralism and "leadership" over the masses. For her, Marxism was the only theory to recognize the independent self-movement of the working class. The masses do not have to be schoolmastered, she said; their self-movement generates not only practical struggle but also the consciousness of the new society itself.

Her emphasis on mass consciousness, however, also contained a duality. It is addressed in *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*: "Luxemburg was absolutely right in her emphasis that the Marxist movement was the 'first in the history of class societies which, in all its moments, in its entire course, reckons on the organization and the independent, direct action of the masses.' However, she is not right in holding that, very nearly automatically, it means so total a conception of socialism that a philosophy of Marx's concept of revolution could likewise be left to spontaneous action. Far from it. Nowhere is this seen more clearly than in the 1905 Revolution, where spontaneity was absolutely the greatest, but failed to achieve its goal. The question of class con-

sciousness does not exhaust the question of cognition, of Marx's philosophy of revolution" (p. 60).

By treating Marx's philosophy as virtually identical with the consciousness generated by spontaneous struggles, Luxemburg failed to single out the philosophic and organizational labor needed to restate Marx's concept of a new society. It isn't that she didn't see the importance of theory. She knew that theory and organization were crucial. But by acting as if cognition, Marxism, were synonymous with mass consciousness, she failed to see that the "historic reason to exist" for a Marxist organization hinges on philosophically restating Marx's Marxism for one's time. She instead held to another concept



Rosa Luxemburg

of organization—the elitist vanguard party—even while espousing spontaneity.

Dunayevskaya's critique of Luxemburg was no mere look into the past. It was part of projecting direction for overcoming the barriers to working out the inseparability of philosophy and organization in the present. We can especially see this in terms of a figure closer in time to our own who also focused on spontaneous freedom struggles—C.L.R. James, the co-leader along with Dunayevskaya of the Johnson-Forest Tendency of the 1940s and early 1950s.

James considered spontaneous mass consciousness as of such importance that he made a veritable category out of it. He also turned directly to Hegelian dialectics, as seen in his 1948 *Notes on Dialectics*. Indeed, he even went so far as to pose the need to explore Hegel's Absolutes in light of the realities of the age of state-capitalism. Yet James ultimately recoiled from posing a new relation between philosophy and revolution, as seen in his 1950 statement, "There is no longer any purely philosophical answer to all this. These philosophical questions, Marxism says, can be solved only by the revolu-

tionary action of the proletariat and the masses."⁹

It is true that a new stage of cognition can arise only when there is a leap to freedom by the masses. It is also true that the proletariat's activity is not just muscle, but Reason. But working out a restatement of Marx's Marxism for one's time takes hard, prolonged theoretical labor. This cannot be done in isolation but requires a philosophic nucleus of practicing revolutionaries. James, however, refrained from working out any new relation between philosophy and organization. The defect that Dunayevskaya pinpointed in Luxemburg—acting as if mass consciousness exhausts the question of cognition, of Marx's philosophy of revolution—has surfaced again and again in even the best revolutionaries of our time.

What flowed from the critique of Luxemburg in *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* was the need to work out the inseparability of organization and philosophy, of a body of ideas, of the self-determination of the Idea itself. This cannot be achieved without the forces of liberation. But it also requires seeing that no single force contains the Idea in the fullness of its expression. As Dunayevskaya wrote on the final page of that work, "It is not a question only of meeting the challenge from practice, but of being able to meet the challenge from the self-development of the Idea, and of deepening theory to the point where it reaches Marx's concept of the philosophy of 'revolution in permanence.'"

This was at the heart of what she called "the dialectics of organization and philosophy." She added, "At the point when the theoretic form reaches philosophy, the challenge demands that we synthesize not only the new relations of theory to practice, and all the forces of revolution, but philosophy's 'suffering, patience, and labor of the negative,' i.e., experiencing absolute negativity. Then and only then will we succeed in a revolution that will achieve a classless, non-racist, non-sexist, truly human, truly new society."¹⁰

9. C.L.R. James, *State-Capitalism and World Revolution* (Chicago: Charles Kerr & Co.), pp. 128-29.

10. Dunayevskaya wrote this as an added paragraph to *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* shortly after its publication. It appears on p. xxxvii of the book's 1991 edition. She returned to this passage in her "Presentation on the Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy" of June 1, 1987. See *The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism* (Chicago: News and Letters, 1989).

III. Philosophic-organizational tasks for 1998-1999

In the past decade we have had to work out how to continue Marxist-Humanism in a changed world defined by the collapse of state-capitalism that called itself Communism, on the one hand, and the emergence of a global stage of retrogression, on the other. In the face of this, we did not, as did so many others, retreat from the projection of Marxian principles of revolution. Nor did we succumb to the ideological pollution which declared that the subjects of revolt had become "absorbed" by high-tech capitalism. We instead dug into new voices from below, as seen in our creation of a new local of News and Letters Committees in Memphis-Mississippi, our activity with prisoners, our work on the subjectivity of sexuality, and activity with other forces of revolt. At no time have we allowed today's retrogression to define our thinking. Yet we have not fully confronted or worked through the untrodden path in post-Marx Marxism—the relation of dialectics and organization.

What provides a new opening for meeting this challenge is our work on a new collection of Dunayevskaya's

writings on the dialectic in Hegel and Marx, entitled "The Power of Negativity." In containing a wide range of her writings on the dialectic proper—such as her 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes," summaries of Hegel's major works, correspondence with such figures as Herbert Marcuse, Erich Fromm, and Charles Denby, and lectures on her major philosophic works—it will allow for a fuller appreciation of the importance of her philosophic contribution. When taken together with her "trilogy of revolution," it can provide ground for rethinking and redeveloping the fullness of Marx's concept of socialism as a liberating project.

The question which faces us now, as we prepare for new struggles that are sure to emerge against the crises of globalized capitalism, is this: Will our projection of Marxist-Humanism's contributions on the dialectic become the energizing principle for developing our organization as a tendency within today's freedom movements? Will our effort to assume organizational responsibility for the philosophic projection of Absolute Negativity as New Beginning spur greater outreach to the forces of liberation? Will it lead to extending the contributions to and the distribution of *News & Letters*, our newspaper? Will it lead to the organizational growth needed for us to become a recognized and viable tendency in the world of freedom struggles and ideas? It is not simply that in addition to philosophy we need action and organization; it is that the energizing principle for organization must come from assuming responsibility for the dialectic in philosophy. We therefore project the following tasks for 1998-1999:

1) There is no task more important for this organization than ensuring that the major works of Marxist-Humanism remain in print. This involves finding a publisher for "The Power of Negativity," but also making sure that the trilogy of revolution, including *Marxism and Freedom* and *Philosophy and Revolution*, are again in print.

2) We have continued to make the archives of Marxist-Humanism available by donating additional volumes of Dunayevskaya's papers to the Wayne State University Archives. Yet more than a decade after her death, many letters remain to be donated. We aim to complete this work in the coming period.

3) Because *News & Letters* is the ongoing publication through which we can meet the challenge of philosophically projecting Marxist-Humanism in the battle of ideas unseparated from the voices of revolt, it becomes critical to reach new readers who become contributors to its development. For this reason we aim to initiate a circulation drive that will invite the energies of all readers in finding both new subscribers, bookstore and newsstand outlets, and more discussion around our unique combination of theory/practice.

4) The uniqueness of News and Letters Committees will be manifested this year in two new publications. One is a Marxist-Humanist Statement on the Black Dimension which will be completed by the end of this year for publication in 1999. The other is a pamphlet written by a prisoner who became a Marxist-Humanist through the process of writing *Voices from Within the Prison Walls*. It is due out this year.

5) As in all our work, the finances needed to continue our paper, pay for new publications, and expand our activity rests on the inseparability of outreach and inreach. We have never failed to receive creative help from our readers at each critical point since our founding for the goals we establish for ourselves in a sustaining fund. The barest minimum we need this year will be \$45,000.

6) Most of all, the way to demonstrate our organizational responsibility for the Idea of Marxist-Humanism is our greatly needed organizational growth. It remains a crucial measure of what Marxist-Humanism means by practicing dialectics.

The challenge projected by the founder of Marxist-Humanism in the Draft for Perspectives for 1985-1986 remains as true as ever: "As practicing dialecticians, the need is to demonstrate that total freedom requires putting an end to the division between mental and manual labor. There is no other road to establishing new human relations. In these nuclear times, when the very question of the survival of civilization is at stake, this ultimate problem has put an end to the division between ultimate and immediate. The immediate, the practical, the revolutionary goal is the daily practice."

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Readers' Views

LABOR'S STRUGGLES AGAINST GLOBALIZED CAPITALISM TODAY

Auto workers of Flint helped forge the modern labor movement and build the American standard of living. Today's UAW workers insist that their livelihoods and working standards must not be sacrificed in a multinational corporate scramble for cheap wages and sweated labor. We salute them and support their struggle. The stock market does not measure the social and moral character of our society.

**Scholars, Artists and Writers for Social Justice
Amherst, Mass.**

There is an active media campaign to tell the GM workers they can't win because the real force to contend with is international competition. They would have said the same thing at the founding of the UAW—that they would just drive GM out of business and lose their jobs. But this strike, just as the one then, could be the beginning of something that spreads.

**Labor Supporter
Tennessee**

The workers at the Han Young *maquiladora*, despite concerted attempts by the company and the Mexican government to destroy their union, have won a federal court order suspending the local labor board's decision to declare their strike illegal. They also achieved a majority in yet a third election over "protection contract unionism." U.S. and Asian-based corporations have gone to great lengths to continue this system whereby they pay government-affiliated unions for "contracts" that workers never see, to block legitimate worker representation.

Your solidarity has been a valuable asset in our battle to forge a platform of international solidarity in favor of the right to organize in Mexico's *maquiladora* sector.

**Mary Tong
San Diego**

I don't agree with the implication in your June editorial that California Proposition 226, which would have required union members to give written consent to use union funds in political election campaigns, was a simple progressive/worker vs. regressive/boss struggle. Did you know that the AFL-CIO gathered signatures for another initiative that would have made it illegal for corporations to contribute to political campaigns without getting the same permission from individual shareholders? But instead of letting it go on the ballot, they held it back and made a gentleman's agreement with big business here. The agreement was that businesses wouldn't pour a lot of money into a pro-226 campaign and labor wouldn't put their initiative on the ballot. It appears to have worked. But my point is that their whole world now is political brokering at a stage where workers are going to lose in a world where global capital tells the state what to do. I don't think we've been hard enough against them.

**Ron
California**

ner "English only = Cultural Genocide" matched "English only = Racism." Another appropriate banner was "Alaska will not become Chiapas." This important march was just a beginning of uniting minorities and native peoples.

**Ruth Sheridan
Alaska**

'GUT GIRLS'

The Chicago News and Letters Committee could not have picked a finer play for a fund-raiser than "Gut Girls," written by Sarah Daniels and produced by an innovative group here called Mary-Arrchie Theatre. Set in the English Victorian era in the late 1800s, when industrialism began to push workers out of trades and into larger factories, "Gut Girls" is about the women who worked in the slaughter houses removing the entrails and preparing meat for shipment to butcher shops. Though the costumes, language and set design reflected a time gone by, the message related directly to today. It was sobering to see the play was addressing all the major issues still confronting women: rape, domestic violence and abuse, single mothers, teenage pregnancy, wage dis-

I asked a young UPS delivery man if his working conditions had improved since the strike last year. He said that although he's seen a dollar an hour raise (the first of five stages to a \$3 an hour raise), the working conditions are as bad as ever. They're talking about raising the 150 pound limit to 200 pounds, have a daily rush schedule as tiring as before, and many of the original part-time workers are no longer there. At this point, he doesn't think the union represented him well.

**Activist
Los Angeles**

In the March issue of *N&L*, Felix Martin wrote an article called "Unhealthy to rely on GM promises" about GM's cutting off retiree health care benefits. In it, he asked, "Does anyone want to bet whose side the U.S. Supreme Court will be on when the white collar retirees appeal the Federal Appeals Court decision?" On June 8, the Supreme Court refused to consider the white collar workers appeal. The 84,000 retirees will have to pay for their health coverage out of their own pockets or go without. The question is whether this ruling will open the floodgates for all the other corporations to take back the white collar retiree health benefits.

**Reader
Orange County, California**

I just read that a new Supreme Court decision will deprive many families and survivors of coal miners of their health care benefits. The court ruled that companies that had once mined coal and had been required to pay lifetime health care benefits to miners and their families need not continue to provide them, ruling that such retroactive payments are unconstitutional. This will be a serious blow to the many mining families which had suffered through many strikes to win those benefits. One more proof, as if any is needed, that capitalist courts exist to serve capitalists, not the people.

**Ex-miner
Detroit**

The Texas prison union you reported in the June issue is news to me. I'm glad something like that is going on. Texas is home to many privatized prisons which escape even the rules state-run prisons must follow. Why are so many young people being funneled into prisons now? For labor. The 13th amendment banned slavery with the exception of incarcerated people. They can still be slaves.

**New reader
Chicago**

I'm a welder and the company I work for was bought out by a larger one. Soon after that, we began working on a new job. It looked like we would be welding on some type of door, but they didn't look like any kind of door I had seen before. I asked a fellow worker what they were and it turned out that they were doors to be used in prison cells.

**Young Black worker
Chicago**

crimination, union campaigning, the liberal social worker mentality which tries to help and does more harm than good.

At the same time, you couldn't help being reminded that Marx was alive and writing at the time this play was supposed to take place. When one woman is threatened with being thrown into an asylum for speaking out against her assigned upper-class station, it brought to mind how Marx came to the support of Lady Bulwer-Lytton who had dared not only to differ with the views of her conservative aristocratic-politician husband but to make her views public. Her husband and son threw her into a lunatic asylum. The play held so much for any women's liberationist today, that we gave copies of our *Working Women for Freedom* to all the women in the excellent cast.

**Erica Rae
Chicago**

ROSA LUXEMBURG, AS REVOLUTIONARY, AS FEMINIST

The philosophic dialogue on "Luxemburg Today" (June *N&L*) is a first-rate summation of the tripartite composition of *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's*

Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution and its relevance to the today-ness of the three anniversaries we are celebrating this year. While, in a sense, Raya revealed her own belated recognition of Luxemburg's concern with the "Woman Question," she definitely compensated for it by pointing out to the Women's Liberation Movement where their disregard of Luxemburg's revolutionary dimension as theoretician and activist, internationalist and feminist, would lead.

**Book editor
New York**

The quote from Luxemburg, "The revolution is magnificent, and everything else is bilge," is such a powerful and wonderful statement that it makes me mad that other feminists don't see what revolution really means. We have to stop looking at only the women's dimension and see that this society needs to be torn up by its racist, sexist, heterosexist, and classist roots, not just its sexist roots, to actually get somewhere.

**Jennifer Linden
Iowa City, Iowa**



SANCTIONS AND THE NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST

The article "India raises menace of nuclear war" in the June issue omits one disturbing aspect. The U.S.-led sanctions against that nation and later Pakistan are a replay of the sanctions policy directed at Iraq. Those policies have led to the deaths of at least 500,000 of Iraq's most destitute without in any way altering the oppressive nature of that state's leadership. Sanctions punish the people least responsible for the policies of their leaders, the poor, the unemployed, women, children, the old and sick.

**Kelly Tyler
Louisiana**

I was shocked to read Alexander Cockburn's cavalier defense in *The Nation* of India's recent nuclear bomb test, and more shocked to learn he is not alone. A visitor at one of our meetings presented the same "anti-imperialist" defense as Cockburn, and another defended the blast by saying it would shake things up! It does no good to tailend India's neofascist regime or fantasize that its retrogression can be the pathway to something other than nuclear holocaust.

**A. Anielewicz
New York**

Nowhere is there a better example of this world's priorities than nuclear weapons being detonated underground mere miles away from a civilization where electricity and running water are considered luxuries. Untold billions were spent on a technology that will ultimately destroy its creators. Even more ironic are the economic sanctions placed on India and Pakistan by the world's nuclear leader—a country that refused to sign a treaty banning land mines.

**Peter B.
Memphis**

THE SCENE IN MALTA

For the past half year I have been on the tiny island of Malta in the Mediterranean. From the outside everything seems staunchly Catholic and heavily touristy. But within I found people fighting for environmental sustainability, women's rights, and economic equity. These impulses for freedom are real. While no revolution appears to be on Malta's horizon, the seeds are here and I hope they flourish.

**Kind Lady
Malta**

'SHINING THREAD OF HOPE'

Thank you for the excellent and heartfelt review of *A Shining Thread of Hope* in the June issue of *News & Letters*. I have long admired this publication and am proud to have my book reviewed in it.

**Darlene Clark Hine
Michigan**

CHINA, U.S. & HUMAN RIGHTS

Bob McGuire's lead on China broadens the whole scope of the discussion, heightened by Clinton's visit, by bringing in the literature of the revolutionary writer Lu Xun as well as the history of the U.S.'s own Palmer Raids. It is key to reveal the hypocrisy of the U.S., which acts horrified at China's brutal enforcement of its one-child policy, while conveniently ignoring its own inhuman history of the sterilization of a huge percentage of Puerto Rican women without their knowledge or consent, a practice which continues on Black and Latina women in big city hospitals even today.

**Women's liberationist
Tennessee**

It was laughable to hear Clinton telling the Chinese people that the U.S. stands up for human rights when we have more political prisoners in this country than anywhere else in the world. Everybody knows that Clinton didn't go to China to talk about human rights. He went to talk about economic relationships.

**Black youth
Illinois**



QUEER LEFT LEGACY

The juxtaposition of the Marxist-Humanist archives column and Jennifer Pen's essay on the queer left legacy (June *N&L*) was thought-provoking. Pen's discussion of queers living the "dialectic of passion and silence" even within radical movements echoed Dunayevskaya's critique of Bukharin not seeing "the dialectics of the many varied forces" as well as her discussion of the founding of movements and tendencies as not accidental or arbitrary. While critical of the queer left legacy, Pen sees its incompleteness as an opportunity and a responsibility.

**B. Ann Lastelle
Chicago**

I object to the use, within your June essay, and even its title, of a taunt from our enemies as a name for gays and lesbians. It would be like the Black movement now raising a banner of "colored power."

**Gay reader
Madison, Wisconsin**

Critically studying and developing lesbi, gay thought within a Marxist-Humanist philosophy of revolution has been integral to the serious work of the "Subjectivity of Sexuality Group" in the Bay Area, particularly with their "Queer Notions" publications. The ultimate unity of Marxist-Humanist analysis together with queer left legacy was sharpened by Jennifer Pen's essay.

**Sheila G.
New York**

GOODBYE SUHARTO

Goodbye Suharto. You could kill one million people as you did when you took over the reins of Indonesia (with U.S. help). You could kill two hundred thousand as in East Timor. But it is difficult to kill the whole population in Indonesia or a billion on the global scale. You can't turn the whole world into Tiananmen Square to save a bankrupt global corporate empire. The radical "cures" imposed by the IMF through various lackeys on the people of Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, South Korea (or for that matter Hungary and Rumania) will eventually lead to the kind of uprisings no U.S. tanks and machine guns can stop. Marx had it right: "Human power is its own end."

**Giorgissimo
Vancouver**

ALASKA'S NATIVE AMERICANS

When 4,000 Alaskans marched downtown in Anchorage and then gathered on the Park Strip on May 7, it was the largest political demonstration ever held in Alaska. "We the People, Alaska Tribes, Standing our Ground" was organized by the Native American Rights Foundation. Tribes from all over the state were represented: Aleut, Athabaskan, Cupik, Eyak, Haida, Inupiat, Tlingit, Tshimshian, Siberian Yupik, Sugpuiak and Yupit peoples stood together as one nation.

Among the co-sponsors were Hispanic Organized Leaders of Alaska, the NAACP, some labor unions and church groups. To illustrate how well Hispanics and Alaska natives complement one another, the ban-

Black/Red View

by John Alan

The brutal lynching of James Byrd, a middle-aged Black man, in Jasper, Texas, last month has awakened in the memory of many African Americans who were active in the 1950s the barbaric lynching of the 14-year-old Black youth Emmett Till in Mississippi. Emmett Till was accused of having "wolf whistled" at a white woman. He was kidnapped from his grandfather's home in the middle of the night by his white murderers, pistol whipped, stripped naked and shot in the head, barbed wired to a cotton gin fan until his body became a mutilated hunk of flesh and dumped into the Tallahatchie River.

Now, forty three years later James Byrd, a Black man who was accused of nothing, was beaten by three white racists, chained to a pickup truck and dragged over a country road until his head and limbs were dismembered. Byrd's unfortunate encounter with white racists proves, once again, Ida B. Wells' old contention that Blacks in America can still be "lynched for anything or nothing."

The lynching of African Americans has always indicated the power of racism inherent in the American society, racism that was not purged either by the Civil War or the Civil Rights Movement. Today, with the lynching of James Byrd, history seems to be attempting to repeat itself; there still lurks in the American society both subjective and objective forces which can resurrect this kind of racist terror. As Guy James Gray, the District Attorney in Jasper, Texas, so candidly admits, racism is very much alive in Jasper, Texas, as a thing of "lingering resentment and hurtful words." Obviously, that "lingering resentment" materialized itself in the lynching of James Byrd.

In other words, the lynching of James Byrd, like the recent unprovoked attempted murder of a harmless Black "squeegee man" in New York City by an off-duty policeman (see p.3), are not simply individual acts of hatred. The same week in "liberal" San Francisco a Black couple with a baby was severely beaten by 15 white thugs. Those acts spring from the underlying discontent in many areas of poor and lower middle-class white America. These are people who are constantly told by right-wing political moralists that the legal changes in race relations since the Civil Rights Movement are threatening their perceived economic security and their status as the privileged race in this country.

The Civil Rights Movement did demolish the legal barrier standing in the way of African-American freedom, with the hope that it was the first step toward opening a new pathway to real, concrete human freedom, where the full development of human potentiality would be allowed without hindrance. But this did not happen. The Civil Rights Movement did not demolish American society's class structure or even challenge capitalism, with all its inherent necessity to exploit masses of people and with a tendency to have periodic devastating economic crises, all of which have historically provided the fertile ground for racism to grow and flourish.

Long ago Frederick Douglass saw it this way: "Now where rests the responsibility for the lynch law prevalent in the South? It is evident that it is not entirely with the ignorant mob. The men who break open the jails and with bloody hands destroy human life are not alone responsible. These are not the men who make public sentiment. They are simply the hangman, not the court, judge, or jury. They simply obey the public sentiment of the South

Free Ana Gelabert!

Ana Lucia Gelabert is a political prisoner and was recently transferred to the Gatesville Riverside Unit in Gatesville, Texas. She is a class-conscious fight-back prisoner and as a result of those positive attributes has been systematically harassed by guards, prisoncrats and their lumpen prisoner lackies.

Her transfer is part of this harassment and was brought about by a false rumor leaked to the administration that Ana was guard assaultive. Once she arrived at the new location, prison hacks began running her through a perpetual Catch 22.

Ana is 60 years old and has no business performing hard labor in the fields. In fact, medical guidelines preclude anyone over age 55 from being forced to perform grueling field duty. Yet Ana Lucia has been assigned to a hoe squad.

All of Ana's sister workers in the hoe squad are under 40 and Ana is not able to keep pace with these younger prisoners. She runs the very real risk of being shot to death by some fascist guard for trying to escape if she lags behind and cannot keep pace with the rest of her squad.

On her first day she was disciplined for lagging eight to ten feet behind the rest of her squad. Texas field bosses have a long history of murdering prisoners in cold blood under any pretext.

In December Ana Gelabert was found guilty in a prison kangaroo court of refusing to work and given 30 days of cell restriction which is worse than solitary because it lasts twice as long and because prisoncrats can assign a cellmate with the purpose of harassing or assaulting her. As a last resort she went on a hunger strike that ended Jan. 10.

Ana was released from cell restriction in March and is still being harassed by the same people and in the same situation. Please help! Write to: Ana Lucia Gelabert #384484, Riverside Unit, 1401 State School Rd., Gatesville, TX 76599. Please write or call on Ana's behalf to: Warden Mouton, at the same address; phone: 254/865-8431.

Jasper lynching shows racism's grip on U.S.

— the sentiment created by wealth and respectability, by the press and the pulpit." (*Christian Recorder*, August 11, 1892).

The "wealth and respectability" Douglass was referring to at that time, were the former Southern slave owners who reorganized themselves into a new ruling class of merchants and landlords. With generous help of Northern capitalism, these former slave owners crushed the united efforts of Black and white Populists who attempted to build a new kind of society in the South. They created a racist atmosphere and promoted attacks on Blacks by raising the bogus fear of Black domination and calling for white supremacy.

Black fury in wake of Jasper, Texas barbarism

Los Angeles — What the world witnessed in Jasper, Texas was not just another racist white-on-Black crime and mutilation-death by dragging a Black man behind the back of a redneck's pickup truck. This act takes us back 50 years. Laws have changed over the last 50 years and segregation has been abolished. But in the back of "their minds," white America's system is killing us—Black Americans—by law.

You never see the police get on TV and deny the guilt or gang affiliation of a Black ex-con or parolee. Yet, the redneck Sheriff of Jasper quickly got on national television to deny that the three accused murderers (two recently released from prison) were organized and involved in the Klan or Aryan Brotherhood — a prison gang of Nazis. This denial is the direct opposite of the treatment Black youth receive. They are given a gang jacket (police file) that follows them even out of prison, while they are on parole. Their parole can be violated upon any association with another "gang member" or another parolee. That double standard is all too obvious in Los Angeles six years after the L.A. rebellion where a lot of new reactionary laws have been implemented by a vote of confidence from "the public" against the poor Black and Brown population of the inner city.

A friend who was out on parole after being incarcerated for eight years, was recently rearrested after being out for one year. His parole violation was not for gang activity or any new crime, but for taking another parolee to court in the city of Compton. In Compton they check IDs before allowing you in the court-house. They run your name through a computer and if it comes up for a warrant or for any other reason, they report it. My friend was reported for this violation-by-way-of-association, and arrested a week later when he reported to his parole officer. He will probably do a year for driving a friend to court.

This form of state control and harassment is going to blow up in the face of the police, who are the frontline defense for the rich, corporate State. They will first feel the pissed-off fury of the Black-Brown community.

—Gene Ford

Black World

(Continued from page 1)

on the cutting edge issues facing the Black community: State Terrorism, Police Brutality, and the Prison Industrial Complex; Welfare Reform: The Assault on Black Women and Children; Economic Justice, Employment and Unemployment; We Demand Reparations; Feminism and the Black Liberation Agenda; The Struggle for Quality, Accessible Education; Civil Rights, Affirmative Action and the California Initiative; Global Issues are Black Issues; Organizing the South; Black Radicalism, Black Workers, and Today's Labor Movement; Youth and Student Organizing; Fighting Homophobia—Lesbian and Gay Rights; Health Care and AIDS; African-American Empowerment and Alternative Electoral Strategies; Media Fighting Back; International Human Rights and Radical Lawyering; Black Studies in the 21st Century: A Computer Lab Internet Workshop.

These and the plenary sessions are naturally no substitute for living practice and social consciousness of the Black working-class masses. Nor are they a substitute for forging the kind of theoretical and political weapons with which to cut a path through the barbaric jungle of American capitalism. For that reason, and notwithstanding the impressive list of workshop discussions, there is a theoretic void at the core of the BRC that must be filled, not in an absolute or formal manner but *dialectically*. Dialectics is the most concrete need of the moment, and is surely the defining characteristic of what it means to be *radical* in today's changed world.

For instance, where historically the state may have been the object of Black demands for justice and democracy, the situation has wholly changed. Since the triumph of Reaganism, the so-called welfare state has become the most punitive adversary of Black interests. Where historically the movement oscillated between the integrationist politics of Black and white "coalitions of conscience" and the separatist politics of "Black power" nationalism, the situation has changed. In every sphere of working-class organization and struggle, Blacks are part of a low-wage multiethnic work force whose majority are women. Capitalism, at the same time, has exuded a "new urban poverty" over the last 25 years in this country's inner city "forbidden zones" which is overwhelmingly Black and rebellious. Thus, Black working-class politics in the first instance are multiethnic and women's liberationist; in the second they are the politics of Black urban revolt.

According to Ida B. Wells, over 100 Blacks were hanged, tortured and burned to death each year between 1877 and 1900. Today African Americans certainly are not being lynched by forces of a counter-revolution that happened more than a hundred years ago. But the impact of that counter-revolution has reached to us through the unfinished nature of the Civil Rights Revolution. African Americans may not be lynched by the hundreds; they're instead beaten by the police for little or no reason, and unprecedented numbers of them are crammed in prisons and live in poverty. Thus what is on the historic agenda is not a Clinton-type dialogue on race but a revolutionary transformation of American society.

Los Angeles — Driving on the Interstate 110 freeway, my car radio on KNX, I couldn't believe what I was hearing. A Black man in Jasper, Texas had been beaten and dragged behind a truck and his body torn apart. I said, "No, this can't be true, this is 1998." I was shocked. I had heard my grandmother talk about this kind of thing when I was a kid on a plantation in the hills of Mississippi. I thought all of Jim Crow was dead and in hell, because when I go down South everyone appears to be getting along.

When I got to work I was just sick, I wanted to scream. I couldn't wait for the news to come on. While I waited for the four o'clock news all sorts of things went through my mind. When the news came on, I expected to see the Chief of Police (in Jasper, Texas), hundreds of FBI officers and local police officers and the media calling these white men all kinds of nasty names. I was sure they would have a lot of charges against them. None of this happened, I began to cry. Again I was seeing unequal justice.

On May 19, 1992, my son Damien Williams was arrested and accused of hitting Reginald Denny in the head with a brick. He was charged with warfare, aggravated mayhem, pre-meditated attempted murder. The L.A. Chief of Police, hundreds of police and FBI officers arrested him, and the media and the Mayor called him all kinds of names describing him as if he wasn't human. I expected to hear and see the same treatment for the three white men in Texas. I haven't seen or heard anyone describe those men the way my son was described.

During my son's trial people called me crazy, but I knew if someone white harmed a Black person they would be treated differently. Now the world can see there are two justices, one Black and one white. I remember what happened to Emmett Till and Medgar Evers. Will it ever stop? We didn't ask to come to this country, we were forced. Since you forced us to be here, why do you hate us?

—Georgianna Williams

Where formerly there existed a commonality of interests across class lines in the Black community, the dual growth of the Black bourgeoisie and the so-called "underclass" has polarized class interests to an unprecedented degree. Where the closeting of sexual issues in the Black community was an expression of the hegemony of a conservative Black church, the vocal demands of Black lesbians and gays for rights and recognition are increasing. In each instance, and many others, the world has changed, redefining the meaning of Black radicalism. Which is why radicalism can only be understood in a *dialectical*, not absolute, manner.

However, beneath these discontinuities runs an even deeper continuity of relentless Black working-class struggles. The only time the passion and reason of these class struggles were heard by the whole Congress was when Sarah White brought word from the Mississippi Delta of a new labor movement composed of and led by militant Black working women, and when Tyree Scott, a worker militant from the Pacific Northwest, gave a compelling exposé of capitalist globalization.

The struggles and reason of the Black working class, and revolutionary events like the LA rebellion, also reveal to what extent "American civilization" may be democratic in form and authoritarian in content. Which is why we cannot become so preoccupied with the formal side of American democracy that we ignore its authoritarian content, imagining somehow that "radical democracy" within a capitalist society can express anything other than the dominant interests of the bourgeoisie.

And yet, at no time has the empowerment of the Black working class been considered whether in regard to the leadership of the Black community or its political institutions, including so-called radical ones. Those who proclaim the most that "radical democracy" is the antidote to the disempowerment of the Black working class do the least to ensure the empowerment of the Black working class in the leadership of radical organizations. The question is whether the Black working class and its politics will be empowered in more than a token manner in the BRC.

In the end, the struggle for social reforms and radical democracy serves only to convince the working class of the impossibility of accomplishing fundamental social change except through social revolution and a socialist vision of the future. The Black Radical Congress stands on the threshold of that future. Indeed, it says its purpose is to "set a Black liberation agenda for the 21st century." The question is: if doesn't work out the dialectics of Black liberation, will it, as Fanon put it, "fulfill its mission or betray it?"

Voices against California's Proposition 227

Editor's Note: A series of angry student walkouts and teachers' protests in Los Angeles immediately followed the passage of Proposition 227 in California, giving the lie to the claims that it is supported by the public at large. Despite its passage, the new anti-bilingual education law is still being vigorously debated and opposed by many. Its implementation is still not clear until litigation runs its course. Below we print excerpts from presentations by a panel of students, teachers, and parents opposed to Prop 227 speaking at the Los Angeles News and Letters Committee meeting on June 28.

Paul T. (Teacher, Independent Study Program for Teen Mothers): The preamble to Proposition 227 is a flag waving statement that declares English to be the national language, saying it is our "moral duty" to train our children for "the American dream." What is really at issue here is whether or not fear will be the primary way for students to learn. I don't know if it is effective. I believe that giving support, building self-esteem, confidence, is the way to assure students' success.

There is still going to be a bilingual education program but it is going to be very limited. The way a student can get into it is by parents obtaining a waiver. The parent must talk to a counselor, and if there is a physical or psychological impairment, then the counselor will sign the waiver. This will go to the Principal and the Superintendent, who have to sign off too. It makes it almost impossible for the parents to put their child into a bilingual program.

It is ridiculous to expect immigrant students who don't know English, to be immersed in language study and then be expected after one year to get into mainstream English-only classes.

It takes \$50 million to run the bilingual education program at the Los Angeles Unified School District. They intend to take this money out of the public schools and put it into Adult Education, where parents can learn English and then come back and teach English to their children. It is absurd. It takes children about five years to really learn English fully. It will take 20 years for an adult to do that.

The proposition is supposed to go into effect in 60 days. It is going to be chaotic if it is implemented. There are around 5,000 bilingual teachers whose programs will be ended. Teachers going back in September will find their assignments are going to be teaching in English-only, no matter what subject. This will be challenged in court and the litigation will take a long time before it is enforced.

Susan M. (Graduate of a bilingual education program, presently a mother and teachers aid): When I came here from Guatemala at the age of 13, I had no clue what English was. I was in the bilingual education program for one year and after that I started going to English-only classes. If I didn't have that chance to make a transition to English-only, I would not have graduated from high school as early as I did. It is like a bridge that helps you to go on to English-only.

I don't agree with Proposition 227. I have three children. If 227 is implemented, a lot of students are going to be forced to take classes where they have no idea what it's about. As a result gangs are going to go up, teen pregnancy is going to go up, and students are going to be frustrated and just drop out. This is not right. Right now the drop-out rate for Spanish-speaking students has increased by 22%. I feel that a year or two into this Proposition that rate is probably going to double.

A lot of girls who are bilingual are trying to get into our Independent Study program. Many of them drop out because they have no idea what they are studying. As bilingual educators we are able to help them finish their studies and go to college, which is what a lot of us dream about. I know that is my goal, to be able to finish college



Latina Belmont High School students protest Prop. 227 at Los Angeles City Hall.

as a single mother of three.

Having the parents go to school to learn English, and then turn around and come back to teach the children, is not going to really help. Most parents work one or two full time jobs to support their kids. They have no time. Childcare is very expensive.

Gene Ford (Black worker and theoretician): Proposition 227 was passed by 22.1% of 38.1% of those registered to vote. This bill will create a "one size must fit all children" theory. Untested as well as unproven, 227 mixes children of all ages together in a single classroom for one year and then dumps them into the mainstream classrooms.

There is a propaganda campaign to eliminate the sight and sound of immigrant labor, especially when the immigrant is Brown in color and Spanish-speaking. They must remain invisible to the naked eye of white society, while this same racism creates a barrier between Black and Brown. For many Black Americans it appears that "Mexicans" have taken "our jobs," while Blacks are hired only when the threat of an Immigration and Naturalization Service raid is on the horizon. But in reality the corporations have excluded Black young labor and Chicanos as much as possible because of a history of rebellion in this country. But immigrant labor has built this country, from Black slave labor to the Irish, Italian and Chinese, all took the same route from exploitation to rebellion. Today it is the Latino worker who is being treated with so much contempt.

While I think education is key to the future, the real education comes through struggle. That is what these Spanish-only speaking Latino youth are going through today. The classroom is a battleground where wars are waged for the minds of humanity. Discrimination is not easily forgotten by a child, and the seed of freedom ideas is planted within the mind.

Growing up in Alabama and attending a segregated school from the first to the fifth grade, then going through integration in the sixth, where as a Black minority we were forced to take special speech and reading classes to communicate more fully in the classroom, we were miles behind in the education that would help us to assimilate into white society, but light years ahead of the racist mind when it came to being human.

Only the freedom movement teaches that. The task becomes to work out the meaning of today's challenge against reactionary laws that have taken the high ground against any new-found movement. We must break the mental chains that give exploitation a clear voice as if it was reason, "the voice of God," while the exploited is never heard or felt except only through the fire of a Watts '65 or LA '92.

Youth

First Nations struggle in Canada

by Kevin Michaels

Most people who are familiar with the struggles of the late 1960s and early 1970s are aware that one of the forces which arose during that period to demand justice and dignity was the native people of the United States. One of the concrete expressions of this force was the American Indian Movement (AIM), an organization many are familiar with because of its role in the dramatic 1975 confrontation against the federal government at the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. One AIM leader, Leonard Peltier, is still imprisoned as a result of an FBI provocation which took place shortly before the Pine Ridge siege.

The creativity of that movement succeeded for a brief time in breaching the wall of isolation which separates native peoples from the attention of the rest of the U.S. population. The native peoples of Canada, called the First Nations, are similarly isolated. But a recent event in the province of British Columbia has succeeded in playing a role not unlike the Pine Ridge event in drawing attention to the problems which confront the First Nations in Canadian society.

In many instances the First Nations of British Columbia were never legally displaced by encroaching settlers by means of treaties. Squatting and use of force prevailed instead. As a result, many of these unceded lands are the focal points of contemporary disputes.

One such dispute began in the summer of 1995 as a group of Sushwap people built a few shelters and a fence to protect a traditionally sacred location near Gustafsen Lake, which they call Ts'peten. The Sushwap had been holding annual Sundance rituals at the lake for some time. The camp, however, happened to be on land used by a U.S. citizen and rancher, Lyle James, to graze his livestock and soon he and some local ranchers began armed harassment of the Sushwap.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) were soon called onto the scene to protect James's interests. They initiated what can only be described as a paramilitary siege of the Sushwap camp, replete with armored vehicles on loan from the Canadian army, automatic

weapons and land mines. The RCMP began filming all of their maneuvers to produce a documentary record for training purposes.

An exchange of gunfire took place on Aug. 27 during which two RCMP officers claimed to have been hit, but not injured because of their bulletproof vests. On Sept. 11, another gun battle took place after a truck driven by two Sushwap camp defenders on their way to a well struck a land mine. A dog accompanying them was killed by RCMP fire. Not long after, the camp defenders gained what they and their supporters across Canada had been working for: a peaceful and negotiated end to the siege. Fourteen were arrested after they left the camp.

The lengthy trial of the Sushwap led to some disclosure of the aggressive tactics of the RCMP. The agency's testimony revealed that it had coordinated a "smear and disinformation" campaign with the media. It also expressed its readiness to conduct a similar siege if another confrontation with a First Nations group should arise. In fact, another native man was killed by police during a confrontation in Ipperwash Provincial Park, Ontario, at the same time as the Gustafsen Lake incident. The Ipperwash dispute was over access to burial grounds.

The sentences for the Sushwap camp defenders were heavy. Twelve of them were convicted on a variety of charges on July 30, 1997. Almost all received prison time. William James Ignace, also known as Wolverine, a 66-year-old leader in the confrontation, was handed a sentence of eight years in prison.

The Sushwap camp defenders say the judge in the case ignored the fact that the confrontation, took place on unceded land and thus the court had no jurisdiction to try them. They are calling for an impartial public inquiry into the matter which they feel may result in the justice they were denied as well as drawing attention to the condition of all of Canada's First Nations people.

One group coordinating support for Wolverine and his fellow Sushwap is Settlers in Support of Indigenous Sovereignty. They can be contacted at P.O. Box 8673, Victoria BC, Canada V8X 352.

Where is Marx in the conferences on the 'Communist Manifesto'?

One of the many signs that Marx's critique of capitalism is coming under renewed reexamination are the numerous international conferences held in the last several months on the 150th anniversary of the *Communist Manifesto*. Two such conferences were held in mid-May in Paris and Glasgow.

The Paris conference was sponsored by *Espaces Marx*, linked to the French Communist Party. Though the French CP obviously viewed the conference as a way to regain some of the support it had lost among intellectuals, it was no in-house affair. Several hundred papers were submitted, and its 2,000 attendees included Trotskyists, anarchists, independent Marxists and others long opposed to Stalinism and Eurocommunism.

The conference hardly lived up to its sponsor's promise of a wide-ranging exploration of Marx's legacy. First, many who submitted papers were not allowed to present them, on the grounds that too many were sent in. This stricture did not seem to apply to those close to the CP, who dominated many of the sessions. Second, most sessions allowed 15 minutes for presentations with no time for discussion from the floor.

Third and most important, there seemed to be such an effort to avoid discussing matters that could divide the conference that important political and theoretical issues were evaded. For instance, at a concluding ple-

nary none of the speakers (which included such independent Marxists as Michael Lowy and Enrique Dussel) bothered to mention the disastrous legacy of the state-capitalist regimes which called themselves "Communist."

The most disappointing talk was given at an earlier session by Boris Kagarlitsky of Russia. He argued that the Left has lost its fighting nerve and needed to regain the offensive against capital. Yet to do so, he said, the Left has to re-emphasize its support for nationalized property. He even tried to hang this ludicrous idea onto Marx, by saying that Marx considered nationalized property the sole goal of all workers' struggles!

Although Marx's concept of a new human society—which centers on transforming alienated conditions of labor and extends to all sectors of society, including the Man/Woman relation—was barely heard, we met a number of people, especially from Latin America, West Africa and the Middle East, who were anxious to learn of an alternative such as found in Marxist-Humanism.

A week later, *Critique* magazine (edited by Hillel Ticktin) held its conference in Glasgow. Though much smaller than the Paris Conference, it did have some important theoretical discussion.

Savas Michael-Matsas of Greece presented a powerful critique of the globalization of capital, arguing that it

corresponds to what Marx saw as the ultimate logic of capitalism. Werner Bonefeld of *Common Sense* presented a cogent critique of former structuralist Marxists like J. Hirsch, who have become so overwhelmed by today's globalized capitalism that they pose capital as a totalizing force incapable of being uprooted by human agency. There was also a fine discussion at a session where Alan Horn spoke on Marx's concept of the dual character of labor and I spoke on the dialectical structure of Marx's concept of revolution-in-permanence.

An important exchange occurred in a concluding debate between Bertell Ollman and Ticktin. Ollman pointed to the growing number of articles in the mainstream press which contend that while Marx was right about the deficiencies of capitalism, he was wrong to pose socialism as the solution. Ollman responded that Marx's concept of socialism is so integral to his critique of capitalism, that if he got one wrong he had to have gotten the other wrong as well. He proceeded to argue that the strength of Marx's critique of capitalism lies in the continued validity of his concept of socialism.

Unfortunately, much of the other discussion at the conference suffered from a rehash of various forms of economic determinism. What also marred both of these conferences was a near-total absence of any feminist dimension.

—Peter Hudis

Our Life and Times

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

The recently concluded trip by U.S. President Bill Clinton to the China of Pres. Jiang Zemin could best be characterized by Clinton's (in)famous campaign slogan: "It's the economy, stupid." Thus, the two leaders of nuclear-armed and still economically viable state powers agreed to get the "human rights question" out of the way at the beginning of Clinton's trip. The issues of anti-government dissidents and the 1989 government massacre of protesters in Tiananmen Square were boiled down to the innocuous abstract level of both rulers "agreeing to disagree."

The June 4, 1989 anniversary was commemorated openly by 10,000 demonstrators in Hong Kong who held a vigil. It was also raised in a letter to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) chiefs, critical of them, by Zhao Ziyang who was General Secretary of the CCP when he was ousted in May 1989 for sympathizing with the students in Tiananmen Square. Whether or not Zhao's motives were pure in 1989, or 1998, his demand that the

East Timorese protests

In a daring demonstration in front of the foreign ministry in Jakarta, over 1,000 East Timorese rallied on June 12 for independence from Indonesia, forcing the post-Suharto government of President Habibie to address the self-determination struggle. Other demonstrations took place in Dili, capital of East Timor. Support for East Timor and other self-determination struggles was noticeably lacking in recent student and other anti-government protests over the past six months.

Habibie released a dozen East Timorese political prisoners and claimed that the 40,000 Indonesian troops now occupying East Timor would be pulled out in exchange for international recognition of Indonesia's sovereignty over East Timor. Habibie proposed a vague "special status" for the former Portuguese colony which upon winning independence was occupied and then annexed by Indonesia in 1976. Habibie's proposal was preceded by his appointment of Gen. Panjaitau as a senior military advisor. Panjaitau oversaw the massacre on more than 270 East Timorese during a demonstration in 1991.

Since the tumultuous days which ended in Suharto's downfall in May, human rights activists and independent women's organizations have documented the rape, and in some cases, murder of ethnic Chinese women during the urban rebellion in Jakarta and other major cities. Evidence points to military-supported groups which methodically torched Chinese businesses and homes. While the military denied any involvement, they have in the past used nationalism and ethnic tensions to short circuit any kind of mass revolt against themselves.

Almighty dollar rules Clinton in China

CCP admit its errors points to the larger ideological struggle of those who want to take over the legacy and define the meaning of Tiananmen Square—ranging from Chinese workers and students who continue the struggle, to their opposite in the most reactionary elements of the U.S. ruling class who are still waging a "cold war" with China.

In this context, Jiang knew how to give Clinton latitude at their much-touted press conference, so that both rulers could state their positions on 1989, and then move on to their more crucial points of "engagement." The immediate U.S. concern is that China not follow the other debt-burdened Asian countries which have devalued their currency. Jiang assured Clinton that China would not devalue, for now.

The U.S. is also concerned with the accelerating trade deficit with China—\$60 billion, over \$1 billion each week. Yet the Clinton trip resulted in a paltry \$1.6 billion in new trade and investment agreements. Many of the deals had either already been announced during Jiang's trip to the U.S. last year, or were inflated to the high end of speculative investment proposals.

China's rulers have resisted lowering trade restrictions down to the current world "standard" of globalized capital. While they are in the business of "downsizing" unprofitable state enterprises and deflating bloated state bureaucracies from the command economy days, they are leary of being vulnerable to any further jolts from relaxed market restrictions that would exacerbate the unrest among the growing number of jobless people. And while Clinton pontificated abstractly about individual liberties in China, he said nothing critical

against the exploitation of workers, which is fueling China's economic boom.

Nigeria in turmoil

The July 7, sudden and mysterious death of Moshood Abiola, Nigeria's most popular political figure, while meeting with an American delegation headed by the shadowy U.S. envoy Thomas Pickering and Nigerian authorities regarding the terms of his release from four years of confinement, has plunged the West African nation into a new round of turmoil and rebellion. Word of Abiola's death on the eve of his release sparked a revolt in Lagos which was bloodily suppressed, leaving more than 20 dead.

The sudden death of General Sani Abacha, the latest and most brutal in a long line of military dictators, came only a month earlier. Abacha took power in 1993, shortly after the military annulled the election victory of Moshood Abiola. All along, Abacha faced persistent opposition both at home and abroad. He responded by jailing and killing his opponents, most notably the barbaric 1995 hanging of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni freedom fighters.

Abacha's successor, General Abdulsalam Abubakar, has released a few prominent political prisoners, but also broke up June 12 opposition demonstrations.

From abroad, Nigerian freedom fighters such as writer Wole Soyinka have warned that Abubakar's changes are likely mere window dressing, stating Abacha too began his rule with the release of a few prisoners.

Kosovars fight Serb genocide

Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic has launched a new offensive in Kosova, where ethnic Albanian rebels had gained control of some 40% of the territory. Serb forces are 50,000 strong, composed both of police and heavily armed troops.

They include the dreaded Yugoslav Special Operations Unit (JSO) who are driving around in an armored personnel carrier ceded to them by Dutch UN peacekeepers in Srebrenica in 1995, just before the JSO and other Serb forces massacred 8,000 people while the Dutch watched and did nothing.

Already, Serb forces have massacred over 300 ethnic Albanians and driven 85,000 more out of their villages, in many cases into neighboring Albania. "It's ethnic cleansing and it's done the same way as in Bosnia," stated one refugee (*New York Times*, June 3, 1998).

Also as in Bosnia, the U.S. and its European allies talk a lot about opposing Serb genocide, but in their actions abet it. For example, on May 27, U.S. envoy Richard Holbrooke, who negotiated the 1995 Dayton

Accords which legalized the "ethnic cleansing" of Bosnia, agreed to lift sanctions on Serbia as an "incentive" for Milosevic to negotiate with the Kosovars.

Four days later, on June 1, Holbrooke got his answer when Milosevic's troops launched another offensive. NATO waited two weeks, and then "warned" the Serbs with a fly-over so far away that the planes could be neither



Ethnic Albanians flee Kosova.

seen nor heard in the war zone.

Thousands of Kosovar Albanians, who comprise over 90% of the province's population, are flocking to join the Kosova Liberation Army (UCK). Western military experts say the UCK stands no chance because of poor weapons and tactics. Holbrooke finally met with them, told them the same, and asked them to lay down their arms. They refused.

In fact, Milosevic may be weaker than he seems. He faces mounting opposition inside Serbia. In neighboring Montenegro, an anti-Milosevic candidate was voted into power by a mainly Serb electorate. The multiethnic Bosnian government is also eager to retake the war-criminal-infested Bosnian Serb entity.

What the region really needs is a Serb defeat on the battlefield, one decisive enough to disabuse its people of the racist dream of a "Greater Serbia." That is why what is at stake in Kosova is so important for the whole region, in fact for people everywhere struggling against racism and genocide.

Israeli occupation

Editor's Note: As the Netanyahu government continued its provocative stance designed to scuttle the Oslo Peace Accords by expanding its control of Jerusalem, we received the following from a correspondent in Israel on "the 31st anniversary of the occupation by Israel of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and the Golan Heights."

Jerusalem—Israel continues to be in sole control of 73% of the West Bank and 44% of the Gaza Strip, even though Jewish settlers comprise only 7% of the population of the territories. Israel continues to confiscate thousands of acres from the Palestinians in order to expand settlements.

Since March 1993, closure (sealing the occupied territories) has never fully been lifted, although there are periods during which it is eased. Approximately 29% of the Palestinian labor force in the territories is unemployed. During closure, unemployment soars to 50% or more in the West Bank and an astounding 70% in Gaza. Thousands of Palestinian students cannot attend university because of Israel's failure to comply with the Oslo agreement to provide passage between the West Bank and Gaza.

Occupation is wrong. It is also counterproductive. Peace will come only when Israel recognizes the right of the Palestinian people to their own sovereign state, and both sides sign an agreement based on justice and mutual respect.

—Gila Svirsky

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