

No way to make ends meet



by John Marcotte

When I worked on a receiving platform for a direct mail shop in the Bronx in the early 1980s, these owner-drivers used to come in and talk about how they're making \$500-600 a week. Here I was in a union job making four and change an hour, and those guys seemed to have it made. What they weren't saying was, they were hustling 12 hours a day, and all their gas, repairs, van payments and insurance came out of that \$500-600.

But you would think, if back in 1981 they made that kind of money, nine years later, with the price of everything doubled and tripled, they'd be making quite a bit more. That's not so. I know, I've talked to drivers from various companies.

One driver told me: "I don't have mandatory overtime pushed on me by some sell-out union contract. Fact is, I don't even have a union. And I don't get time-and-a-half for overtime. It's all straight time. I'm an 'owner-driver.' I own a van and I make deliveries for courier companies. But I've been working six and seven days a week for some time now."

What I should have known was, if the minimum wage hasn't gone up these nine years, that's been the floor for all our wages. The 45-cent increase in the minimum wage due in April is much too little, too late. Who isn't disgusted by all those politicians who vote themselves \$35,000 a year raises but yell that a raise in the minimum would be inflationary and cost jobs, and anyway, they say, only very few Americans make the minimum, mostly teenagers. Give me a break.

WAGE FREEZE IS A PAY CUT

So you start at \$3.35, get a nickel raise and you're not counted as minimum wage. Or you start at \$4.00 an hour and stay there for years, and you're not counted as minimum wage. I know a guy who distributes circulars door to door. He's been with the company 11 years. He's been making \$4.00 an hour for at least the last six

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Black World

Thoughts on Black world view



by Lou Turner

The twin points of departure of this column represent immediate and philosophic world views of the Black dimension. The historic release of Nelson Mandela on Feb. 11, after 27 years of political incarceration, reflects not only a new stage of the political struggle in South Africa, but portends a new international dimension of the Black struggle for freedom. Indeed, we are witnessing Western and some Third World powers seeking new accommodation with the new face of apartheid offered by F.W. de Klerk.

'CHANGED WORLD'

Britain's Margaret Thatcher has unilaterally announced the lifting of sanctions, instigating a new scramble for capitalist investment in apartheid South Africa. Zaire's dictator Mobutu, who is scheduled to host the upcoming conference of the OAU (Organization of African Unity), announced on the same day as Thatcher's lifting of sanctions that he had invited de Klerk to the OAU conference. This unprecedented move would have marked the first time in history that white apartheid South Africa was given a seat in the OAU.

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Poisoning the environment has become the way of life and labor



by Franklin Dmitryev

The 400,000-gallon crude oil spill that is still polluting beaches near Los Angeles took place on Feb. 7, just one week after the state of Alaska reported that much of the oil spilled by the Exxon Valdez last March still fouls the Alaskan shoreline.

While the press focused on the cleanup efforts and the wildlife death toll, Pres. Bush's response was a shrill insistence that it would in no way affect plans for the expansion of offshore oil drilling. Evidently he has not forgotten the public outrage over the inadequacy of the "cleanups" by the federal government and the oil and shipping companies in the wake of six huge oil spills in the past year.

Only about 10% of all the oil spilled is ever recovered; the rest stays around to keep poisoning the environment. Every year the Coast Guard reports over 5,000 spills in U.S. waters, adding up to about the 11 million gallons of oil spilled by the Exxon Valdez.

All of this is just the tip of the all-pervasive pollution iceberg. What two decades of the environmental

and anti-nuclear movements have brought to light is that every aspect of the ecology is daily contaminated by a wide variety of industries—causing a large proportion of the world's cancers and other diseases—while the government scrambles to cover it up:

- The food we eat is adulterated—even milk, a necessity for children. Recent tests of milk found substantial residues of antibiotics, which can cause serious allergic reactions and foster the development of more resistant strains of bacteria, and may even cause cancer. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) hustled to the dairy industry's rescue, trotting out a test that "proved" there were no antibiotics in the milk—over the objection of their own chemist.

In an internal memo, a high-ranking FDA official revealed the real aim of the Dept. of Health and Human Services: "The H.H.S. goals are to end media interest in drug-residue tainted milk as soon as possible and avoid criticism of H.H.S. or any other Government agency."

POISONS IN THE AIR...

- The air we breathe was fouled by at least 2.4 billion (continued on page 9)

Editorial

Mandela is released! What path for South Africa?

When 71-year-old Nelson Mandela finally walked through the gates at Victor Verster Prison, the clenched fist he raised high above his head was a symbol—not only of the defiance all of Black Africa has hurled at their barbarous apartheid rulers—but of the power of the Idea of Freedom that had sustained him throughout the 27 long gruelling years of his imprisonment. Indeed, what forced the rulers to release Mandela at long last was the actualization of the power of that Idea of Freedom as it was embodied in the masses of men, women and children, who have been fighting the apartheid regime every day of their lives.

THE CEASELESS REVOLT

Despite the thousands upon thousands the rulers have slaughtered, that revolt has proved impossible to kill ever since apartheid became law in 1950. The moment Bantu education was introduced in 1953, African students went on strike at every institution of higher education throughout South Africa. Black workers' strikes more than doubled between 1954 and 1955 after they were forbidden. And so massive were the protests of the women when the regime demanded they carry passes, that Aug. 9, the day 20,000 converged on Pretoria in 1956, has been known as "Women's Day" in South Africa ever since. Even the Sharpeville massacre in 1960, the Rivonia Trial and the life prison sentences meted out to all the Black leaders could not stop the revolt.

Instead, a whole new stage arose with the 1976 Soweto uprising when Steve Biko and the concept of a revolutionary Black consciousness made the world conscious not only of the revolt but of the philosophy of revolt.

The dialectic of the revolt in South Africa has continually brought ever-broader segments of society into the struggle, including the mixed race and Indian communities as well as white students. It has involved all dimen-

sions of Black South Africa—the youth, women, and labor—finally setting in motion the founding of such massive new trade union organizations as COSATU and and NACTU. It made the freeing of Nelson Mandela an international demand by the 1980s.

These are the forces that set Mandela free. They have already given notice that they will continue to fight until freedom is made concrete for all. The very week after Mandela was released, 12,000 marched in Johannesburg as the students stayed out on strike in support of the teachers' demands for better training. Thousands of other unemployed youths in the Black ghettos have made clear that they, too, do not intend to wait patiently for change in their lives. They are raising the fundamental questions about what freedom means.

THE CONTRADICTIONS AHEAD

It is precisely because the rulers fear that the undeclared civil war that has been raging in South Africa will become the deep revolution that will uproot them and begin the creation of a new, truly human world, that de Klerk is hoping Mandela's release will permit them, instead, to "negotiate" the future. But the Black masses have no intention of allowing what trade union leader Moses Mayekiso called "negotiations in isolation" or "over the heads of the people." (See statement, p. 8.)

The counter-revolution and the contradictions which the freedom movement confronts in the days ahead are great. Even while Nelson Mandela was speaking to the massive rally in Capetown—even while the crowds were shouting "Amandla!" (Power!)—the South African police were firing rifles, shotguns and tear gas into parts of the crowd. And a few days after Mandela's rally, the far-right Conservative Party—which won nearly a third of the white vote in the September elections—organized a rally of thousands in Pretoria to demand the resignation of

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Women's Liberation and philosophy

by Terry Moon

Last month I was invited to give a talk at Loyola University in Chicago on "Women's Liberation's Marxist-Humanist Dimension" by the Women's Studies Program. While two questions sparked the most discussion—Marx's relationship to Women's Liberation and the 1953 philosophic moment of Marxist-Humanism—here I only have space to discuss the second. What makes these questions so concrete today is the urgency to transform society.

Raya in 1953 was delving into Hegel—his *Phenomenology of Mind, Science of Logic and Philosophy of Mind*. She was trying to work out what is the role of a revolutionary organization, what is the relationship of an organization to the mass of people who will be the ones to create revolution, what is the relationship of the leadership of an organization to the rank and file.

She was trying to work out the relationship between the Idea of Freedom and the self-development of human beings fighting for liberation. Ideas do live and experience self-development in the mind of the theoretician when that mind is one with the masses. Raya, like Marx, was looking for paths to freedom and she refused to confine herself to any one dimension—to limit what could be a path to liberation.

Raya considered those 1953 Letters a philosophic breakthrough because she saw a dual movement—a movement from theory, from the Idea of freedom, to the mass movement and a movement from practice that is itself a form of theory.

NOT SO QUIESCENT 1950s

While others were talking of the "quiescent 1950s" Raya saw, in the aftermath of World War II, that working women had a profound critique of the Left. She wrote then: "They were out searching for a total reorganization of society.... These radical parties failed to recognize this new concrete revolutionary force in society, but that force recognized them, for it had set up new standards by which to judge this so-called revolutionary movement."

What women did in the 1950s when the Left was found wanting on the question of Women's Liberation—when it refused to recognize a new force and Reason for freedom—was to drop out. Not so the 1960s. This is what Raya wrote in 1970, after she had experienced her "philosophic moment," when she was singling out what was "new" in today's Women's Liberation Movement: it "refuses to stop short of total freedom... [or] to wait for 'the day after' the revolution to obtain it." Raya stressed that the new movement critiqued the Left from a revolutionary perspective.

This is striking because what you witness here is the self-development of the Idea of freedom when it is connected to masses in motion. She recognized an Idea that had become a movement—and she was the one who traced out that Idea, tried to help it develop by singling it out—and by creating the category, "The Women's

No! To parental consent

Detroit, Mich.—Governor James Blanchard vetoed the bill passed by the Michigan Legislature requiring parental consent for a woman under age 18 to obtain an abortion. Thirty-five other states have already enacted such laws. Those who are for abortion rights must face the fact that nearly 80% of the public is said to favor such laws.

In the Minnesota case, now before the U.S. Supreme Court, both parents must be notified—no matter what the family circumstances—and the young woman still must wait 48 hours before getting the abortion. No judicial bypass—an option to petition the court if consent is unavailable—is permitted.

In many states when a teenager becomes a mother she is considered an "emancipated minor" and her parents no longer have a legal obligation to support her or the baby. Ann E. Levine of Choice, New Jersey wrote to the *New York Times*: "Nine years of experience in Massachusetts and five in Minnesota show that consent laws increase the risks to minors' health by driving them to unsafe procedures... support systems are needed, but they are not found in laws and courts."

The Right claims to be "strengthening family values" in demanding parental consent. Their lack of support for teen mothers and their babies proves that they don't care about "family values" but want as many restrictions to abortion as they can get. Nearly 80% of people polled favor parental consent. Yet over half of those same people are consistently found to be "pro-choice." Why the contradictions?

In the face of today's social crises, the idea of strengthening the family is very powerful, even though the family was subjected to profound critique when the Women's Liberation Movement arose in the late 1960s. The urgent need to continue that critique becomes concrete when "the family" becomes a false ideology, a fetish that is looked to for a simple solution to very complex problems that will only be fully solved in a revolutionary new society.

Serious theoretical work, rooted in a philosophic vision of human liberation is as important as any clinic defense or other campaign we may be involved in. And in trying to create new alternatives we must be sure to include young women to make sure that their ideas and needs are addressed by our combined efforts. (See "Women fight parental consent laws" page 11.)

—Susan Van Gelder

Liberation Movement as Reason and Revolutionary Force."

It was Raya's insistence on not separating the dual movement—from practice that is itself a form of theory and from theory—from a total philosophy of freedom that helps show the continuity between her philosophic moment of 1953 and what she was working out in the last years of her life but wasn't able to complete. The book she was working on when she died was tentatively titled "Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy: The 'Party' and Forms of Organization Born out of Spontaneity." We can see the direction of her thought in the work she did on her 1982 book, *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*.

WOMEN'S UNFINISHED TASKS

There she wrote of how the Women's Liberation Movement's discussion of form of organization and demand for decentralization "involves the two pivotal questions of the day... [F]irst, the totality and the depth of the necessary uprooting of this exploitative, sexist, racist society. Second, the dual rhythm of revolution: not just the overthrow of the old, but the creation of the new..."

Yet Raya was not satisfied with what the Women's Liberation Movement raised; she was following out the self-development of the Idea further. You can see a glimpse of where she was heading in a letter she wrote to the lesbian, activist, feminist poet, Adrienne Rich:

"Where in Part III of that book [*Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution*], I speak of 'Sexism, Politics and Revolution' in various parts of the world, I posed the question without answering it: 'Is There an Organizational Answer?' I deliberately didn't answer it there because I feel very strongly that without that missing link—philosophy—there is no answer to the question of organization, which of course means relationship to revolution."

Throughout their lives, Karl Marx and Raya Dunayevskaya were searching for paths to liberation. It is the self-development of that Idea of freedom unseparated from the new passions and new forces for liberation expressed in the struggle of women, Blacks and minorities, youth and labor, that is the direction for freedom and new human relations.



Women-Worldwide

by Mary Jo Grey



Hundreds of students picketed the Supreme Court in Dublin, as the court issued an injunction prohibiting 14 students from three different colleges from distributing information on abortion. The injunction had been called for by the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children. Abortion is illegal in the Republic of Ireland and since 1987 it has been illegal to give information which may aid a woman seeking an abortion. The Union of Student Unions in Ireland and Trinity College Students said they will continue to provide women (including non-students) with information on all pregnancy options.

—Information from *Troops Out*

Ten workers from the Mexican Institute of Social Security (IMSS)—the country's national health care system—have been on a hunger strike for more than 30 days protesting the mutilation of their union contract, seriously affecting health care. The contract changes would eliminate union jobs at a time when the number of patients has risen drastically—each nurse is responsible for more than 25 patients and is paid only \$30 a week! The hunger strike began after numerous marches, sit-ins and sick-ins were attacked by riot police. *You can communicate your support for union demands to: Ricardo Garcia Sainz, IMSS General Director, Paseo de la Reforma #476, Colonia Juarez, Mexico D.F. 06698 Mexico.*

Students at the University of California at Berkeley demonstrated for reproductive rights, Jan. 30, outside the auditorium where Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor was telling an audience that total separation of church and state is impossible because "this nation has accepted certain traditional practices." Chanting protesters interrupted her, carrying a banner reading: "Sandra Day you are in contempt of women."

International Women's Day

In celebration of March 8, International Women's Day, we print Raya Dunayevskaya's 1975 speech delivered to the Wayne State Women's Liberation Group, "Women's Creativity and Liberation: Nationally and Internationally," on page five. In the coming issues we will print reports of International Women's Day activities from around the world.

Montreal massacre discussed

Editor's note: Below we print excerpts from some of the many responses we received to last month's column by Terry Moon on the gunning down of 14 college women in their engineering classroom in Montreal, Canada.

I think you accurately expressed the perceptions and feelings of many feminists here, particularly the younger, more radical feminists.

I'd like to add that I think the straight press—English and French—were solidly behind the feminists about the gender-specific nature of the crime and the general threat posed to women, not to mention the lousy state of male/female relations. Even the barstool columnists tried to say the right thing. But how long consciousnesses will remain raised is quite another issue. I'm not hopeful.

Recently there was another nasty incident at an engineering school in Ontario in which a female student who was critical of the annual sexist talent show was shouted off the stage ("Shoot her!" etc.)

—Women's Studies professor
Montreal, Quebec

Certainly the message you convey is clear and I also heard and reacted against the patronizing attitudes and the chauvinism in some of the media. On the other hand, what I found unusual in some of the radio talk shows especially was that other questions were raised. The next day or the day after the question on the nationwide CBC morning talk show was what does this say about relationships between men and women in our society?

—Feminist activist
Montreal, Quebec

Seeing that you are literally hundreds of miles away, you did a better job in most respects in covering the Dec. 6 shooting than most local newspapers did.

What has been happening since? The media has not yet buried the incident; however, they seem to drown play it by repeating that it was an isolated incident. The police department here even released a psychological map of the killer, from birth to death, in an attempt to down play society's responsibility.

—Concordia Women's Centre activist
Montreal, Quebec

While you are insightful in pointing out the resistance to identifying (naming) the event as a man attacking women, you overstate the general point. Lepine does not, to my mind, "lay bare exactly what it means to be a man in this society." Rather his violence is one end of a continuum of male violence against women. Just as it is important to see the connection, it is also important to acknowledge different points on the continuum.

To define maleness as congruent with violence against women is to ignore the struggle of men to reject male privilege and male violence...

White supremacists do not constitute the sum total of what it means to be white in the U.S. For our struggles to advance, it is important to focus on women's resistance, not just women's victimization. Similarly, we must acknowledge and encourage men's and white people's refusals to embrace and participate in privilege. As I read Terry Moon's piece, I felt that her appropriate anger at some individuals' refusal to admit the maleness of Lepine overwhelmed her acknowledgment of some men's struggles to reject privilege.

—Women's Studies professor
Chicago, Ill.

What is revealing about Montreal is how defensive so many men become—they actually identify with the murderer! They feel they have to produce so many justifications and mental repressions and divisions to disassociate themselves from it. That is alarming and reveals just how messed up male/female relations are.

Last year at Northwestern University there was a demonstration against date rape and the fraternity boys threw things out the windows and shouted the kinds of things Terry Moon wrote about. American society is repressively structured and at a very primitive level—it needs to be changed. Recollection is crucial in this because it brings together what is wrong with the present system and its historical forms and points out ways for breaking it up into new forms of human life.

—Eric
Northwestern University, Ill.

Correction

In the January-February *N&L*, we printed the incorrect name for the author of "Eyewitness report: El Salvador at war." That article was written by Erica Dahl-Bredine.

Pittston: mining seven days a week

Morgantown, W.Va.—The Pittston coal miners, a two-thirds majority vote on Feb. 20, approved a 1-year UMWA contract to end the nearly 11-month strike against the Pittston Coal group that began last April 5. The miners were able to maintain most of the health and pension benefits they had before the strike. There were also some concessions certain to create no serious problems.

While the press reported that the miners got 100% medical coverage, the fact is that miners will have to pay the first \$1,000 of medical expenses each year out of their own pockets. They will be reimbursed \$500 after the first six months and another \$500 at the end of the year. The company thus has \$1,000 of the affected miners' money to use for six months and \$500 for the remaining six months—which saves the company millions and penalizes the miners and their families.

Another provision is supposed to provide job security by requiring Pittston to hire four laid-off union miners of every five hired at Pittston's non-union mines and for 19 of 20 contract workers to be hired from laid-off union miners. However, if there is no work-off at a mine, Pittston can hire non-union transportation and equipment repair and maintenance workers. This means there can be non-union scabs working as coal haulers and mechanics as long as no union miners are laid off at a mine—and there are no things more divisive and destructive of rank-and-file solidarity than such a situation.

The company also refused to allow 13 strike leaders accused of picket violence to return to work. They may never get their jobs back.

But the most harmful concession is the work shift

provision giving the company the right to force miners to work a ten-hour four-day work week and a 28-day shift rotation that permits the company to work nearly around the clock. It is certain that Pittston's drive to make up for lost production and the right to force miners to work extended shifts will result in greatly increased injuries and deaths among Pittston miners.

Nevertheless, the present contract represents a definite victory for the UMW miners when compared with the union-busting concessions Pittston had demanded of the miners last April and the concessions forced upon workers in many other U.S. industries during the past decade.

—Andy Phillips, former Miner

Milwaukee, Wis.—I was excited during the Pittston strike. Here were a group of people—lots of people—who were not afraid to go against the system. This was especially true when the miners took over a coal processing plant. But, the Pittston settlement doesn't seem like a victory.

Before, there was no Sunday work in the mines. Now, the company can have shifts on Sunday. I read that the miners will be on a rotating schedule of work because the company wants to operate the mines 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

I've had experience with both questions in the plant where I work. The company said Sundays were voluntary, but when they didn't get enough workers, they changed the production schedule so that the first regular workday was on a Sunday.

I know that when the company changed shifts on me and I had to move between first and second shift, I couldn't sleep at the beginning of the switch. I felt miserable. You run the risk of a production mistake and injury when you haven't had enough sleep.

These workers are human beings. Even the lower forms of animals have a regular time schedule. Have the capitalists ever tried to get a bear out of hibernation in the winter months?

To the company everything is a dollar sign. But for coal miners, they die in the mines, or if they survive, they end up dying of black lung disease or something like that. With Sunday work they are going to be in the mines longer than ever.

Today the company has all the power, including the attorneys, the people they hire to look at all the angles. The unions today are losing members, they don't have the numbers. After ten months living on just strike pay, which doesn't go far, things looked different to the miners. I feel that the strikers were let down by some of their own union leadership. The union leadership starts to look like the company today.

It is impossible to deal with the capitalists on their level. They have won this time, and they will always win until a whole new way of thinking and a whole new way of living comes about.

—Martin Almora

Workshop Talks

(continued from page 1)

years or more. What a pay cut he's taken! What a boon for his boss, who raises his prices!

If a union truck driver still starts at \$10 an hour, that's because minimum wage is still \$3.35. If an owner-operator still makes \$500 a week before expenses only by working seven days a week to feed and clothe his kids and keep a roof over their heads, that's because minimum wage is still \$3.35 an hour. We have seen the living standard of the American working class torn down to a miserable level these past ten years, and every act of resistance has been met by police, scabs, injunctions and union-busting. We've never worked so hard or been so poor, I would guess, since the battles of the CIO.

That is life as we live it. The journalists and politicians keep talking about how the 1980s was the greatest peace-time expansion of the economy. If that is so, for whom was it so great? Not for those doing the labor.

The experts and sociologists are so fascinated with their analyses of the "social pathology" of the so-called new "underclass." Looks like old-fashioned poverty to me. Looks like this society is telling young children in no uncertain terms, from the time they're born: we don't need you.

Not only are both the woman and the man in a family now working to make ends meet but, according to the latest figures of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, seven million American workers, 6.2% of the workforce, are working two or more jobs. That's the highest level in 30 years.

As bad as things are now, I don't know if they will get worse, or how much worse. But I am sure we cannot and will not take another ten years like the ones just past. The 1990s will be a time of great struggles between labor and capital, I am sure.

Don't disarm workers

by B.A. Lastelle

Chicago, Ill.—Recent contract settlements in Chicago puzzled me because they fell so far short of workers' demands and expectations. It seems as though nothing has changed since the wave of contract concessions began in 1979 and I felt compelled to ask other workers what they thought about this situation.

Swift-Eckrich workers in Chicago in December won a contract structured to eliminate the lowest-paid tier of the three-tier wage system, but otherwise settled for \$500 annual bonuses with no improvements in working conditions. There were no reports to the union membership during negotiations; members of the negotiating committee were sworn to secrecy. Immediately before the ratification vote union leaders summarized the proposed contract but only by listing changes made in the previous contract of which no one had a copy.

Oscar Mayer workers in Chicago, following a lay-off of half the plant, accepted a 33¢ raise over three years after having no raises at all for the past ten years. One worker said, "It's not just the money. The work is worse now. It's faster and harder on most every job."

WORKERS LEFT OUT

Why do workers vote to accept contracts like these? I don't know that there was anything else we could do. It was all done when we got to the ratification meeting. We walked in there, and it was all printed up and out in the tables, signed, sealed and delivered. The union really sold us out this time," said a Black woman worker from Oscar Mayer.

Another Black worker from Oscar Mayer disagreed. People knew what they were doing when they voted for it. But people weren't together at all; and worse, they don't expect much anymore."

"Maybe it's in your mind that you're not going to win with these people. I don't know if anything we could really make a difference. The union bureaucrats are playing the same game as the company. They're the same people. They think the same way. There's no way to be a whole new way of doing things," said a Mexican worker from Eckrich.

These conversations got my mind working, and I want to suggest that what is "the same" about the thinking of the company and the union—and it also infects our thinking—is the idea that corporations have the right to make a profit by our labor. Every union contract contains an article that outlines management prerogatives and pledges the union's cooperation to increase productivity, eliminate waste, improve quality and promote business for the employer. The union has sold us out" by agreeing to look out for the company's interests at our expense!

UNION DISARMED ITSELF

During the discussion on limiting overtime at the Eckrich ratification meeting, a union official stated: "We cannot deny the company the right to operate their plant." Why not? Wouldn't the company rush to deny the right to work—through lay-offs, lock-outs, firings or plant closings—if it were in the company's interest? With this attitude the union has disarmed itself—and disarmed us.

I was so excited when I read in the last issue of *News & Letters* the Organizing Appeal issued by members of the "Initiative for Independent Unions" based in East Berlin, Germany. It stated in part: "We go forward from the principle that there exists an opposition of interests between the workers on the one side and management and the state on the other. We represent exclusively the interests of the workers."

Isn't it time for workers in the United States to clear our heads of the debris heaped there by companies and unions, to "ask some hard questions and come up with some answers about new ways to fight?"



Peace activists in Long Beach, Calif. protest a shipload of coffee from El Salvador. Longshoremen there, as well as at three other ports, refused to unload the "death squad" cargo.

Book review: Workers and Revolution in Iran

Workers and Revolution in Iran by Assef Bayat (London and New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd., 1987)

More than a decade after the Iranian Revolution, the enormous role of the Iranian workers in the revolution, their self-activity, is still almost totally dismissed by the Left. The so-called "insufficient development" of Iranian workers is still considered to be the shortcoming of the revolution.

Workers and Revolution in Iran provides a rich and detailed account of the Iranian Workers' revolutionary self-activity before and after the revolution of 1979.

Assef Bayat starts out by saying: "The working class entered the scene of struggle in the second half of summer 1978. Within the next five or six months up to February, the strike movement reached its peak, making 'all wheels stand still' (Lenin on strikes)."

Then he reports: "The revolutionary movement which had aimed to overthrow the Pahlavi regime, and which, following Bloody Friday, had forced the regime to declare Martial Law, assumed a new momentum in October. When 40,000 oil-workers, 40,000 steelworkers, 30,000 railway-workers had put down their tools within less than three weeks, the dynamism of the revolutionary process changed radically. Workers in hundreds of plants and companies were rapidly adding to the strike movement which spread to many different sectors of the economy: the state sector, industry and services."

The demands of the workers in various activities are richly documented: "by January some 85% of the demands, in form and essence, were political—that is, from going on strike to supporting strikers in other factories, from freedom of political prisoners, end to martial law, abolition of colonial contracts and the overthrow of the Pahlavi regime."

Based on in-person reports from workers, the author argues that "one of the main features of the strike movement was that its grass-roots organizational leadership was within the workplace and not from outside organizations such as political parties, unions and religious institutions."

When the revolutionary crises became more acute, spontaneous committees surfaced: "In the oil industry, for instance, a committee was responsible for the day-to-day operation of the whole industry. It enjoyed a great deal of power to maneuver and had such a flexibility that it could often neutralize the counter-measures of the military to crush the strike."

Three days after the toppling of the Shah's regime and the formation of the provisional government,

Khomeini ordered the workers to go back to work. Instead there ensued new waves of workers' struggles with even more radical demands.

The author traces the simultaneous emergence of "The Shuras" in this period, and chronicles their revolutionary activities within four separate periods. He defines the Shuras as "factory committees (or Councils) which were a particular form of workers' organization that emerged in Iranian industry following the overthrow of the Shah's dictatorship in 1979....their major concern was to achieve workers' control."

From February 1979 to the first wave of political pressure in August 1979 was the period of "the continuation of the revolutionary struggle by the working class after the revolution, waging a struggle independent from, and at times directly against, the leaders of the revolution."

During the second period, September 1979 to June-July 1981, the workers fought against the appointed "liberal managers" and later "the gradual establishment" of the Islamic associations "which eventually lead to the gradual demise" of the Shuras and a "necessary shift from offensive to defensive struggle."

After all his study of Iranian workers' self-activity, however, at the end Bayat concludes that workers' control can only be accomplished in the context of "a social organization in which the bourgeois class still exists but is subordinated to a revolutionary structure of popular political power." Bayat seems to discount the role of the vanguard party, but because he is not grounded in the Marxian dialectical philosophy of revolution, he falls into a different error. He sees workers' self-activity as insufficient to accomplish control and autonomy, and proposes to replace the vanguard party with another external force, the state!

The Iranian workers have shown that they are capable of exercising their revolutionary power through their own self-activity and self-organization, even when the movement from theory is in total disarray. What needs to be worked out is the relationship of the movement from theory to this force and Reason of revolution.

Those revolutionaries who have broken with the vanguard party to lead can revert back to other forms of the party in the form of an external force or reformist conclusions. If we are not to revert to other forms of the party, we must, together with the movement from practice, unite with the dialectics of philosophy.

—Ali Ateşh

From a Chinese woman in exile

Alternatives for China's freedom movement

I think people's hope for a democratic system in China won't die. People are watching and waiting to see what is going to happen. On campus, students are still active. It's underground, but big character posters appear from time to time. It's still an exciting period of time. The movement started in China, and then it spread out to Eastern Europe. And so I think what happened in Eastern Europe will have an impact on China, too. It definitely encourages people in China to see that it is possible to have changes.

Most of these countries are giving up the Communist monopoly, so the Chinese government is saying, "Only China can save socialism." Before, they said "only socialism can save China," but now, "only China can save socialism."

Economic crises may force many people to join in the movement. As people can't meet their basic everyday needs, what's the good of having this government? I think at least more workers, and people in other sectors of society in the cities, will join in the movement, and will make the movement stronger. That's a possibility. There's no fear to lose anything, but if they fight, they can build a better society so people can have something. I think a lot of people share this idea with me.

ECONOMIC CRISIS

Everyday life for the majority of the Chinese is still hard. People who benefited from the economic reforms are business people. Basically they are trying to gain a monopoly on commodities, because China has such a great population, and the production can't meet the needs. In the economy, that's the basic problem.

Some people who are doing business, especially those who have private businesses, their aim is still profits—no different from here, capitalists. They buy things; they use connections. If they know people who control the materials, they buy these people off with all kinds of things, so they get materials. They then sell these materials at much higher prices.

The state-owned stores don't have many things, and you don't have many choices, especially in the smaller

cities. Clothes are so expensive and of poor quality. One-third of your monthly pay goes to buy a sweater, or a jacket. That's a lot of money. Eggs are 4 yuan for 10 eggs. 4 yuan is more than \$1. My parents worked for about 40 years. They should belong to the middle class. Now they earn about 150 yuan a month, so 4 yuan for 10 eggs is quite expensive. For younger people it's even harder.

As the economic situation becomes worse, the anti-government group will become larger and stronger. I just don't know what role the military is going to play, because the government Party knows Mao's theory, that power comes out of guns. For now, Deng Xiaoping and Yang Shangkun have control of the army.

I think that what is happening in South Africa will make people think in China. Even South Africa is trying to change, and even the "stubbornest" is changing.

The government is very careful about information, because they know the impact. About the Soviet Union—the Chinese national TV didn't mention anything about the Central Committee meeting deciding to give up the Communist monopoly on the very day they made the decision. The next day they had a brief report, and a quote from one person who said it was "too Westernized!" So there's a very careful choice of information, what to be reported, how to report that, and what should be kept out. People listen to BBC, Voice of America and at least get information from that.

AFTER EAST EUROPE

How are Eastern European countries going to establish a new system? I talked with a young woman from Hungary about the economic crisis there. Because of the economic situation, people really believe that foreign investment can save the country. I think there is a great interest in material things. It's kind of disappointing. I think people have a very vague idea about what kind of society we should have.

It's like there are two alternatives. One is a socialist kind of system, the other is capitalist. The socialist sys-

tem didn't work, so this one works. Look at their economy! Look at all they have! That must be the one should have. So people are kind of giving up. Also, think it is a kind of laziness. They don't want to look for alternatives.

If the two articles by Raya Dunayevskaya from "China in Revolt and the Idea of Freedom" are published in Chinese, and Chinese people will read them, I think that's one thing that will help them to look at China differently. This is an alternative view—state-capitalism. Before I read Raya's work, I knew nothing about the concept of state-capitalism. What I felt about China was this was not socialism, this was not communism, it was feudalism.

State-capitalism describes the system there very precisely. I think those people who believe that communism is utopian and that China should adopt a system like that in the U.S., maybe after they read this, they may do some rethinking about the system in China.

I don't get papers [from exile movement] so I don't know what they're doing in the States...There's debate in that movement. I know when they had that conference in Chicago, they debated over communism. Basically there are two groups in that movement. One group believes that communism is still a great ideal and that's the goal of human beings to achieve, to build a society like what is described by Marx. This group believes this is a great ideal. The so-called Communist government in socialist countries is not real communism. So they still think what human beings should do and what Chinese people should do is try to change their country into a communist society.

But there is another group which believes communism is just utopian. It won't work. They cite as evidence in China it didn't work and in other socialist countries the system didn't work, so this proves that communism is just utopian. It didn't work so it should just be thrown away. These two groups disagree with each other. I don't think they will ever come to agreement on this point...

—'Critical Theory': its relevance for 1990s—

Critical Theory, Marxism and Modernity, Douglas Kellner, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989) \$14.95.

This is not yet another academic study of the famous "Frankfurt School"—Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Walter Benjamin, Herbert Marcuse, Erich Fromm, Friedrich Pollock and Franz Neumann—but a theoretical-historical reconstruction of their "Critical Theory," not only for academia, but more importantly, as a vantage point for the revolutionary movements of the 1990s.

What is especially new and illuminating is Kellner's stress on the debates during the 1930s and early 1940s within Critical Theory over philosophy, politics and economics. He terms the 1930s Critical Theory of Horkheimer "a unique synthesis of materialism and idealism...closer in spirit to the early Marx...than to the positivistic materialism of Engels." He traces their debate over whether Nazi Germany represented state capitalism, stressing that Pollock's 1941 concept of state capitalism broke with Marx's view that "new forms of capitalist organization provided new forms of working-class struggle," with Pollock focusing instead "solely on mechanisms of capitalist power and domination."

This was also in sharp contrast to Raya Dunayevskaya's concept of state-capitalism, which emerged in the same period and to which Kellner refers. In that period, Horkheimer and Marcuse were to the Left of Pollock, even though they rejected the concept of state-capitalism: "Horkheimer advocates a democratic and revolutionary concept of socialism" based on a "system of workers' councils, or Soviets, where the workers themselves democratically control the workplace, community, and other forms of socio-political life."

Kellner has thus reconstructed the Critical Theory of the 1930s and early 1940s as a revolutionary Hegelian Marxism, which, even with its deeply pessimistic bent, was a far cry from the one-dimensional view of society presented by Adorno and Horkheimer in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947). It was Marcuse who, even though he later adopted much of Adorno and Horkheimer's view in his *One-Dimensional Man* (1964), remained closest to the revolutionary vision of early Critical Theory.

This is of particular importance to the readers of *News & Letters*, because Kellner has here pointed to some of the issues which brought Marcuse into a dialogue with Dunayevskaya in the 1950s: Hegelian Marxism, state-capitalism, and a vision of human self-empowerment from an alienated society.

In his *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism* (1984) Kellner was the first to discuss the Dunayevskaya-Marcuse correspondence. Here he continues that discussion, once again stressing their 1960 debates over automation: "Dunayevskaya and her colleagues offered ample documentation of how automation was increasing the oppression of the workers and how workers in turn were battling automation." He cites not only *Marxism and Freedom*, but also Charles Denby's *Workers Battle Automation* and the writings of N&L columnist Angela Terrano.

Kellner raises two important issues here. (1) He stresses that despite their disagreements, the analyses of Dunayevskaya and other Marxist-Humanists did influence the argument of *One-Dimensional Man*. (2)

Their big disagreement over automation was over Marcuse's notion that where partial automation oppresses the workers, "complete automation" could lead to a liberated society. Yet, Kellner argues in a footnote, basing himself on a little known essay by Marcuse, this was not the end of their debate: "Marcuse later revised this position...eventually coming to accept Dunayevskaya's position." Kellner is apparently referring to Marcuse's 1966 view that it is not machinery, but the self-activity of the workers taking over the means of production that would create a free society. (See Kellner's *Herbert Marcuse*, pp. 326ff.) Kellner may have bent the stick too far when he sees Marcuse "coming to accept Dunayevskaya's position," but he has raised an important issue here.

Unfortunately, this issue is not connected to the important philosophical affinity between Dunayevskaya and Marcuse based on their commitment to a Hegelian Marxism as seen in Marcuse's *Reason and Revolution* (1941) and in Dunayevskaya's subsequent work. This was at the same time their point of disagreement as can be seen in their letters debating Hegel's Absolutes.

This points to a problem in the entire study, and not only in the brief discussion of the Dunayevskaya-Marcuse dialogue. So anxious is Kellner to stress the political and revolutionary and to separate himself from the one-dimensional philosophical abstractions of the later work of Adorno and Horkheimer, such as Adorno's *Negative Dialectics*, that he ends up nearly neglecting philosophy altogether.

Thus, philosophy in the sense of a return to Hegel and Marx is not placed on the agenda for today's revolutionary theory: "...the retrieval of genuine Marxism has already taken place in such thinkers as Lukacs, Korsch and Gramsci and in Critical Theory. Consequently, there is no need to go back. It is now time to go forward." Yet, despite this problem, the book is a work of serious revolutionary-theoretical scholarship which is sure to be discussed and debated by intellectuals and activists alike.

—Kevin A. Barry

Editorial

(continued from page 1)

de Klerk, while the openly Nazi Afrikaaner Weerstandsbeweging flew their banners and carried signs demanding: "Hang Mandela!"

Yet, even more difficult for the freedom movement may be the contradictions that lie in wait within it, which will first now fully emerge. The ideological pollution and pull of Gorbachevism speaks in many tongues. None can afford to be unmindful of the state-capitalist mentality of the Communist Party, any more than we can ignore the super-power context in which the freedom struggles are taking place. What the passionate outpouring of the masses before and after Mandela's release has made clear, however, is that whatever may go on behind the scenes, they want FREEDOM NOW, and totally new, human relations.

'REVOLUTION IN PERMANENCE'

International solidarity with their struggle is more important than ever, and it depends on grasping the Reason of the mass movement, as the struggle unfolds for what Frantz Fanon called "a new humanism," the very words Karl Marx used to define his philosophy at its birth. "It is up to our age to work out his 'new Humanism,'" as Raya Dunayevskaya put it, in the expanded 1986 edition of *Frantz Fanon, Soweto and American Black Thought*.

"Too much of the old," she continued, "clings to the newly independent states—The concept of new human relations—of not stopping the revolution with the overthrow of the old society, thereby aborting what Marx called 'the revolution in permanence'—becomes the task for this generation to spell out anew for our age."

That is what demands our solidarity with the South African masses.

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From the writings of Raya Dunayevskaya Marxist-Humanist Archives

by Raya Dunayevskaya
Founder of Marxist-Humanism

Editor's note: To celebrate International Women's Day, March 8, 1990, we print below excerpts of a talk given by Raya Dunayevskaya at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan, March 7, 1975 at the invitation of the Wayne State Women's Liberation group. In the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection this document is found in Volume XIV, Section IV in the Chapter files created at the conclusion of writing "Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution"; Chapter 6; #14356.

On just such a miserable, cold, snowy day in 1917 in Russia, 50,000 women walked out of factories to celebrate International Women's Day; and that quiet 50,000 became 90,000 before the end of the day, and men joined them, and the Revolution started. I don't mean to stay in 1917, and though we will be in 1975 very soon, I do not want to start there either. Haven't you sometimes felt that you wanted to tell a story from the middle? Not because you were an existentialist and wanted to begin at a dramatic part, but because we will see that creativity is not just individual. In fact, it first comes when masses are in motion to uproot society. Therefore, Women's Liberation, no matter where it is we start, and whether or not they had an organization, is first of all current.

The three pages of history I want to begin with are: 1946 West Germany, 1929 West Africa, and 1955 Montgomery, Alabama. It was on a morning in 1946 in Germany that the miners in Ruhr got up and found no women, no wife, no sweetheart, no mother, nothing for their breakfast nor anything to take in their pails for lunch. When they got to the pits they found that the women had gone there to greet them with picket lines. It was the end of World War II and things were bad economically and socially and the miners had been talking for months about striking but never did. That was when the women decided to take matters into their own hands and closed down the mines....

In 1929 the British imperialists in Eastern Nigeria decided to tax the women who got so absolutely furious that they went on spontaneous strike (which was, of course, called a "riot"). It was not only spontaneous, it was against all the advice anyone—including the educated males—gave them; it was not only against British imperialism, but their own African chiefs who had not defended them; and they crossed all tribal lines. The combined force of British imperialism and the chiefs did not get "order" until after 40 women were killed and countless others injured.

And what happened right here in the U.S. in 1960? The wonderful North Carolina youth sat-in at a restaurant lunch counter and started the magnificent Black Revolution. But the fact is that five years before 1960, one solitary woman, Rosa Parks, a seamstress, refused to give up her seat on a bus and got arrested. The incident so aroused the youth that the entire Black population behaved in a different manner than they had ever dreamed of. They decided they would all go to the courthouse; they organized their own transportation and boycotted all the busses; they inspired Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. to be with them; and they kept all decisions in their own hands by meeting three times a week.

If you can just pick out at random in such different parts of the world and in such different years, such magnificent creativity—isn't it clear that creativity is not just a great artist but masses in motion that so uproot the old that a whole new continent of thought is born!

THERE IS ANOTHER question we should ask ourselves. Why do we celebrate International Women's Day on March 8? Why not July 19 and July 20 when the first women's convention was held right here in the U.S. in Seneca Falls in 1848? I think I can see three reasons why they are trying to forget it or put it only as a footnote.

First, you would have to admit that it was the Black dimension that inspired it. And they were slaves at that. The educated white women were brought to realize that they did not have a single right of their own by the Black women like Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman, and many others, who were the speakers and the generals of the Abolitionist Movement and had started not only the fight against slavery, but for women's rights....

The second reason revolved about the fact that the slogan of William Lloyd Garrison's paper, *Liberator*, was "The World is My Country." This internationalism was not a question of three or four countries getting together, but exposing where freedom is denied. It was at the Abolitionist convention in England, a few years before 1848, when they didn't permit the women to participate and made them sit in the gallery, that Garrison sat with the women up in the gallery.

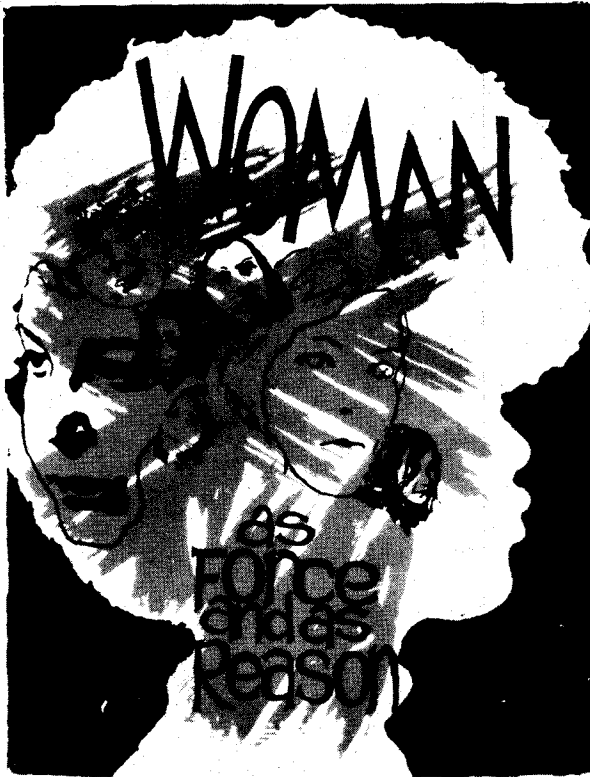
The third reason is the revolutionary age. It is certainly true that 1848 brings you face to face with Marxism. But before that you have to see that it was the 1848 revolutions throughout Europe that inspired the women's movement in this country. Revolution was everywhere in the air.... What was this revolutionary age of the 1840s? It was not only that a new challenge had been opened with Marx's *Communist Manifesto*, but that before that *Manifesto*, in breaking with bourgeois society, Marx did not break only on the economic

question, that is, overthrowing the capitalist class. He broke on the question of a totally different way of being.

He said that the most fundamental of all relations is that of man to woman. Unless we solve that, we will not have a new society. The reason he called his philosophy "Humanism" was to stress that he was against capitalism but did not think that that negation, overthrowing private property, was more than the very beginning of creating a new society and totally new human relations.

We women in 1975 have not even got to the level of Sojourner Truth. She was born a slave. Her name was Isabel. She ran away twice and she spoke to God. God, she said, told her to travel—sojourn—and tell the truth of slavery. That's how she got her name. One single name had her entire philosophy, and not only for her life, but for ours. Why shouldn't that which comes from practice, from below, become the basis for the reorganization of our thought and philosophy and actual revolution?

Instead of revolution, today we are finding counter-revolution everywhere.... What did we do in the 1960s that the counter-revolution is here in the 1970s?



We took our bodies back. Then we said we wanted our heads back too. The activity wasn't going to stop at just being against the bourgeois exploiters, but was turned to our comrades in the Left and we wanted to know why it was always they who made the decisions while the women cranked out the leaflets. It was the first time the women questioned what was being practiced right in their own organizations.

When you had all this activity going, how could you have such a backward movement? It was because we didn't have a philosophy of liberation along with the activity of liberation. The minute you separate theory and practice you end up in a reverse movement.

The expose' of male chauvinism is just one of the tasks that has to be done. We have to get to a criticism of ourselves. That is why I want to take up some of the women theorists to see what they have achieved—outside of the expose'—and what they didn't.

Take *The Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir. What did she get all the credit for in the 1960s? She was exposing certain things, not only in economics, and making sexuality a discussable subject. But her conclusion was that since men did all these things to us, it was the man's problem and they had to free us. A Black woman worker in New York told me that was crazy—she never knew of anybody who got freedom without fighting for it. But it is de Beauvoir's existentialist philosophy that defines "Other" as the enemy—why should woman be "Other"?

She says of Rosa Luxemburg, the greatest theoretician we had, that she was "ugly" and that's why she didn't have to worry, that is, that's why she could really develop herself. Isn't that fantastic? Luxemburg had such great presence that once she was on a platform—if there were 10,000 people in the hall—nobody could look at anything else or hear anything but what came out of her mouth....

Meanwhile de Beauvoir doesn't have to take up Luxemburg's views. As if that isn't bad enough she says that Luxemburg was brave and was alongside Karl Leibknecht. There isn't anybody who doesn't know that it was always Luxemburg and Leibknecht, not the other way around. Luxemburg was the theoretician. But that fact didn't fit into de Beauvoir's style.

WE DON'T HAVE MUCH time to deal in depth with the Existentialists, but take the one who is supposed to be a revolutionary socialist, Sheila Rowbotham. She writes a book that starts in the 17th century. What does she say? The revolutions have all been male defined and that's what's wrong with them. Outside of doing away with women's role as important, she winds

up with vanguardism.

Take 1917 where we started tonight. The action was started by the women—nobody else. In fact, everybody told them not to go on strike, even the Bolsheviks, because they were afraid they'd be mowed down. Trotsky, in his *History of the Russian Revolution*, writes of how great they were. It's true he says that they didn't know what they were doing, but in five days Czarism—the most reactionary system in the world at that time—was overthrown.

Now you would think that if this was a male-defined revolution, and that's what's wrong with the Marxist movement—that you would have a different interpretation. But what Rowbotham says is that they didn't know—it was only spontaneous—and apparently nothing is important until some intellectual leaders tell you what has happened. If you are burdened with the concept that the masses are backward, it doesn't matter if you are male or not.

The only time Rowbotham comes out against Marx is when she says that since Marx gave the correct interpretation of the exploitation of the worker by the capitalist, it was only economics. It isn't true. He named his philosophy "Humanism" to stress he was against capitalism, against Communism, and for new human relations. Not only did Marx help organize many women's movements, wrote 100 pages on women and child labor in *Capital*, but he practiced what he felt. He had Madam Harriet Law as part of the General Council of the First International Workingman's Association.

Rowbotham has to disregard Humanism, disregard the dialectics of liberation—which has entered into each part of the struggle—all in order to say that supposedly Feminism and Marxism will come home to roost when she makes Women's Liberation a precondition for revolution. Now it's one thing to say that we have to practice, not the day after, but the day of and the day before revolution. But who can make "preconditions"? Does anyone know what will happen?...

AS AGAINST THAT non-understanding of what the Dialectics of Liberation means, let us look at Maria Barreno, one of the "Three Marias" who wrote *New Portuguese Letters*. She gave a talk in the U.S. and made three main points: 1) The greatness of collectivity. It's the fact that three women in fascist Portugal just decided to sit down and talk together about a 17th century nun and what life was like today in Portugal. The first collectivity was a form of individual development and gave them strength.

2) Sexuality is political. Barreno said what was worse than even the prison was the liberals coming to interview them and asking, "Is it just a feminist book or is it political?" She said unless politics was a new way of relationships, a new culture, and a new way of doing things, there was no point to it. Sexuality was a political question and the worst thing was that it was hidden.

3) The third thing was finding and associating Marxism with feminism. Barreno said she was for feminism because it was the only hope she had for changing this society. The Trotskyists, who had given her a platform, were very unhappy with the answer she gave when they said it was the revolution in Portugal that freed the Three Marias from prison. She said she was glad there was the revolution, but what freed them was the international movement of women who sent mass protests from throughout the world.

It is because you have to have that sort of feeling for creativity that comes out of liberation, for the new continent of thought that came with Marx, for knowing that the "leadership" these women were talking about doesn't mean one more vanguard party. They mean the unity of theory and practice. If you get the philosophy of liberation as that unity of theory and practice, then you won't be so worried about the philosopher—is he man or is she woman? You will pay attention to what is the philosophy—and whether that really means to change all the relations.

At this stage, when we are functioning under the whip of the counter-revolution whether in Boston or right here, it is important to see that we do not have just "mindless" activity, or even great activity—but activity together with a philosophy of liberation.

I want to end with a quote from my *Philosophy and Revolution*...

"Ours is the age that can meet the challenge of the times when we work out so new a relationship of theory to practice that the proof of the unity is in the Subject's own self-development. Philosophy and revolution will first liberate the innate talents of men and women who will become whole. Whether or not we recognize that this is the task history has 'assigned' to our epoch, it is a task that remains to be done."

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THE REVOLUTIONARY BLACK DIMENSION AS ONGOING

After reading "World View of Black Dimension" by Raya Dunayevskaya in the January-February issue of *News & Letters*, I sat back and wondered why I wasn't taught more Black History when I was in school. Black Americans have had a strong impact on American life and culture. They have been the dominant influence in almost all types of American music. Even the great Czech composer Dvorak was influenced by the rhythms and songs of the Black American when he visited the U.S. in the late 1800s.

What I really want to know is why isn't this knowledge more accessible? When we are taught U.S. history why don't we hear the names of Crispus Attucks, Peter Salem, Salem Moore at the same time we are hearing about Washington, Jefferson, Franklin and other "heroes" of our unfinished revolution? When we are learning about the history of Western Civilization and names like Anglo-Saxons, Franks, and Romans come up why not learn about African civilization and names like Yoruba, Ewe, and the ancient kingdom of Benin? After centuries of oppression it is now time to give the Black dimension its rightful part in the history of the U.S. and indeed the whole world. They have long ago paid their dues.

Martin Almora
Milwaukee, Wis.

It was so moving to watch all the events surrounding the release of Nelson Mandela. I kept returning again and again to the television. I have always wanted to go to Africa, to see where my people came from. Now with Mandela's release it made me feel that someday I really will do so.

Black woman
Chicago

I was intrigued a few days after Mandela's release when I heard Winnie Mandela admit it was difficult to adjust again to the role of wife to a "traditional African man." It made me think of how that ongoing movement has continually developed, and especially the emergence of women as an independent force demanding that their rights and concerns not wait until after freedom is achieved—including Mandela's youngest daughter, Zinzi, who calls herself a staunch feminist. I hope he listens to those young revolutionaries.

Feminist
Michigan

I can't see how anyone can give de Klerk or the South African government any kind of credit for releasing Mandela. They kept this man locked up for 27 years, took away the best years of his life, and let him out when he was a very old man. What that government has done is shameful. They have played politics with this man's life.

Veteran Black activist
Chicago

I attended a meeting held in the Black community to protest the killing of a young man, Oliver Beasley, by a L.A. county sheriff's deputy. Beasley was a member of the Nation of Islam, and although the meeting was in an AME Church, the Nation of Islam dominated everything. The Nation tries to act like they speak for all Black people, but I don't agree with their sexism, their racism against whites, and they don't at all like lesbians and gay men. What was most upsetting of all to me at the meeting, was the way they were exploiting the young brother's death. Their attitude was, let's use this to get all the fame and publicity we can.

Black lesbian
Los Angeles

I liked John Alan's article on H.L. Mencken. When I got out of the Navy after World War II, I was briefly interested in Mencken. He attacked lynching at a time when not everyone was calling attention to it. But he was elitist. He thought he was more intelligent than poor white Southerners, than racists. At first he seemed interesting to me but then he just sounded strident.

Musician
New York

Journalists now patiently inform us about the "low education levels" of the

residents of townships from Crossroads to Soweto, which accounts, they say, for the supposed "naivete" of the Black masses who imagine that Mandela's release really means that Freedom's dawn has broken over South Africa. The journalists have got one thing right. The crowds are demonstrating for FREEDOM NOW, for an end to apartheid now, for a new human society NOW. It is, however, neither naivete nor rhetoric. In insisting that what they want is not "reforms" but total human freedom, they have brought to the fore what Frantz Fanon called the "untidy affirmation of an original idea propounded as an absolute."

Michael Connolly
Chicago

Sure, they released Mandela,
but real revolutionaries
would not negotiate
'til the day they
can bring back Biko too

White student
Illinois

It isn't that often that workers in my plant discuss what is going on in other countries around the world, but most everyone was talking about Mandela. The press may call him a "symbol" but it's more than that: here is a man who came out of 27 years of jail with his revolutionary commitment and principles unbroken. It touched almost everyone.

Meatpacker
Illinois



FEMINISM
AND
HUMANISM

As a Salvadoran woman, I feel solidarity with the women's liberation struggles here in the U.S. In El Salvador, women's liberation has not been the first priority in the liberation movement, because of the concentration on the fight to achieve democracy and against the death squads and army. But as women involved in the movement, we have learned and grown as feminists. We see contradictions within the FMLN, where women are combatants but are still the ones who do the laundry. If a woman gets pregnant—well, that is her problem. But at least there is now education within the FMLN on birth control, on women's rights.

As women, we are all linked together, all over the world. We know that no woman, anywhere, is liberated, if somewhere there are women being beaten or suffering repression. We have a lot to learn from each other.

Salvadoran woman in exile
Los Angeles

I appreciate N&L for giving me a different perspective on news events, such as the January-February article on the Montreal Massacre. It sickens me to read about such blatantly sexist behavior; what is even more sickening is to see it in my own life. What saddens me the most, however, is to see women giving up the fight, working for new relations. I do not want to hear that feminist has come to be known as the "f-word." Now more than ever, as the anti-woman sentiment grows, we must continue the struggle.

C. Marie
De Kalb, Ill

The recent massacre at the University of Montreal brings up a lot of disturbing questions about today's Quebec and Canada. When the shootings took place, it took from 10-20 minutes for anyone to sound the alarm. None of the men intervened to stop the killer. When the police finally arrived, they cowered behind their cars with their guns drawn for 20 minutes before timidly entering the building. They have never done this during a bank hold-up!

In the aftermath, a whole anti-feminist element has come out of the woodwork. In Montreal it has taken the form of traditionalist French-Canadian women blaming the victims and Right-wing

Readers' Views

Catholic "moralizing." In other parts of Canada there has been direct terrorism and threats against women by Right-wing groups and religious organizations. This certainly reveals the anti-woman violence which lies beneath the surface of today's Quebec society.

Former Montrealer
Berkeley, California

It is admirable that you think of the women of the Montreal massacre as your sisters, and equate those shootings with abuse to all women. But shouldn't you consider that the five young Asian children that were brutally killed in a California schoolyard also as your brothers and sisters? Shouldn't this shooting be equated to violence against Asian immigrants? Or what about the many postal workers who were killed as a result of a shooting rampage by their fellow worker? Shouldn't society adopt legislation not only to protect women, but also Asians, Latinos, and postal workers?

A.P.
Windsor

FREE
ADAM
KELLER!



On Feb. 4, Adam Keller—editor of *The Other Israel*—was sentenced to 28 days imprisonment, after he arrived at his military unit and declared his refusal to perform reserve military service. Once in prison he was forced to wear the Israeli Defense Force uniform and was put in isolation. On Feb. 5 he started a hunger strike.

During his trial Adam stated, "The IDF was founded as the Israeli Defense Forces, but it has become the Israeli Occupation Forces, an instrument to oppress another people. I refuse to be a smoothly working cog in that machinery." Letters of protest can be sent to: Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Kirya, Tel-Aviv (copy to POB 956, Tel Aviv 61008); Letters of support can be sent to: Adam Keller, #2213693, Military postal code 03734, Israel.

The Other Israel
Tel Aviv, Israel

THE GREATEST ENEMY IS ALWAYS AT HOME

If social-economic-political revolution happens next where the need is greatest, it will be in the U.S. and England. Economic inequalities, class and racial injustices are worse there than even in Europe, though the rest of West Europe and the "advanced" first world are filled with problems. History is far from over—it is beginning to pick up where they thought they had it solved.

Correspondent
East Germany

I have come to be critical of the whole grievance system in union contracts. When you get represented by a union contract, at the same time that you gain something, you have to give up some rights, like the right to strike while the contract is in force. In our last months of work before we were forced out on strike against Eastern Airlines, we were being constantly harassed by management. For example, sometimes we had no lunch break. When we complained, we were told, "Grieve it." Eastern had so many grievances, it would take two years for you to get any action. So what could you do, if you needed to keep your job?

Striking Eastern Airlines machinist
Los Angeles

One thing I have against this government is the way they're putting so much supposedly towards stopping the drug situation. But they're not getting to the root of the problem, and they're making everything worse because they're forgetting about the lives that poor people have to live every day. As far as I'm concerned, Ronald Reagan is still president. Bush is just a continuation. They say the economy is improving, but there are more unemployed and homeless than ever. In downtown L.A., there are people sleeping on the streets,

including people with children. It's pitiful. It used to be, people could think about next week or next month. Now all you can do is take care of today.

Woman on Welfare
Los Angeles

Recently I helped organize a slide show on El Salvador for the Latin American Students' Organization at my school. When I went to several of the university departments to publicize the event and talk with professors about it, one professor told me he defended the murder of the six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her young daughter in El Salvador, because they were "Communists." I was shocked and told him: look, we are not talking about Communism. This is a question of basic human rights here. This experience makes me see what this system of education really wants to teach you: to defend the status quo.

Jose
Chicago

My brother-in-law works at the airport in food services. He's been there three years. His rent is \$660 plus utilities, and it will only go up. His wife is home with the two babies, they can't afford daycare or a babysitter, that's a hundred dollars a week. So he works full-time nights at the airport for six dollars an hour, full-time days for four dollars an hour delivering circulars. You survive that kind of schedule by cutting corners, rushing and getting your job done early so sometimes a friend can punch you out later. I know at least three more workers off hand who are working two jobs like that. How long can a human being do that?

Worker
New York

I thought you would be interested in the following statement issued by the Initiative for Independent Labour Unions in East Germany: "Unless something basically changes in the position of the working people in the production process the DDR does not have the slightest chance of surviving economically. We will fall into the hands of international big capital—only to be squeezed empty like a lemon or a Third World country."

Observer
East Germany

OUR SUBSCRIBERS RESPOND

What I like about *News & Letters* is your emphasis on philosophy, a vision of the future, a theoretical analysis of events. I miss that in the rest of the Left.

Student of philosophy
Chicago

Being a subscriber to N&L is like a breath of fresh air. Capitalism needs all the disinformation and distortions to keep the masses down. For each person that supports N&L now, may two more take it up in the next year.

A.F.
Reseda, California

I enjoy reading the paper. The analysis is what I am hungry for, when reading of events around the world. Keep up the educational work.

Subscriber
Toronto, Canada

Personally, my efforts and dreams for the future are directed towards reversing the destruction we are causing to the natural environment of this planet. Your paper shows a similar destruction of our human-ness that not only strengthens my convictions but also widens my awareness of what is happening here and what needs to be done. For that I thank you and offer my meager financial support. Your revealing articles on human relations and important world events is much appreciated in these dark days of cover-ups and blindness.

Subscriber
Santa Cruz, Cal.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF TODAY'S THEORETICAL VOID

The pity in East Europe now is that the Communists have discredited the very term of Marxism in the eyes of many people who would otherwise be receptive to its ideas.

Correspondent Czechoslovakia

Can't you people say anything nice about Gorbachev? He has probably done more to free people from brutal dictatorship than any other single person in history.

Reader Michigan

The Left in East Germany suffers from a theoretical void—this is partly connected with an inability to totally separate the ideas of Marx from the system of repression, Communism, which ruled in the name of Marx and the people.

Traveler East Europe

The East European countries equated state ownership with changing human relations. But workers there work as

hard as they could and just get bare sustenance. This gets back to the social condition. Marx's idea that what has to be changed is the division between mental and manual labor is the hardest part for me to understand.

Student New York

I recently attended a meeting with Ivan Havel, brother of Czechoslovakia's new president, and Martin Palous, a political philosopher. Their discussion of "Democracy and Civic Forum in Czechoslovakia" reminded me of Marx's "On the Jewish Question."

Fred Shelley New York

U.S. capitalists are going to East Europe like flies, to exploit cheap labor there. That to me shows that Western capitalism is no better than Eastern state-capitalism.

Latina Chicago

I am interested in Marx breaking from both idealism and materialism. When I was in the Communist Workers Party we were taught that Marxism is "scientific materialism."

American history student New York University

Since the publication of Raya Dunayevskaya's 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes" in The Philosophic Moment of

Marxist-Humanism the struggle for freedom has erupted worldwide, from China, June 1989 to East Europe, November 1989 to South Africa, February 1990. I'd like to think that what can have a positive influence on events like these is how the 1953 philosophic breakthrough opens doors to grasping the philosophical foundations of Marxist-Humanism.

Jerry K. Chicago



ON THE "CREATIVITY OF COGNITION"

Having just read a bunch of articles and book chapters on Lukacs, I was especially interested in Peter Wermuth's article on Dunayevskaya's critique of his thought. After reading the article three times, I found that Dunayevskaya's views on Erinnerung and so forth were more or less my own.

Boeing machinist Seattle

The most important part of Wermuth's essay was when he said "it surely is possible to grasp the centrality of Subjects of revolution—i.e., workers, women, youth, Blacks and other minorities—without grasping the power of the Idea."

power of philosophy, even when you do appreciate the forces of revolution.

Philosophy student Chicago

The key point to me was that Dunayevskaya's unchaining of the dialectic took not only inserting humanity into the dialectic, but being rooted in absolute negativity. I think that is the point Wermuth was making when he said, "it is surely possible to grasp the centrality of Subjects of revolution...without grasping the power of the Idea itself."

Cynthia Los Angeles

AN APPEAL FROM POLAND

News has just reached us that Zuzanna Dabrowska, a member of the National Council of the Polish Socialist Party (Democratic Revolution) has been refused a passport for foreign travel by the Polish authorities.

We therefore appeal to the international labour movement and to everyone who supports democratic rights, to protest against this decision and demand that Zuzanna is given a passport forthwith. Please write in protest personally and immediately to the appropriate Polish embassy (The Polish Mission to the UN is 9 E. 66th St., New York, NY) with copies to Zuzanna at: ul. Czerniakowska 201a/29, Warsaw)

Dave Holland England

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Black/Red View

The meaning of Glory

by John Alan

"Glory" may not be the greatest war film Hollywood ever produced, but it has the distinction of being the first film, among Hollywood's many epics on the Civil War, to break the long-standing taboo against showing that Black Americans thought about and fought against slavery in the United States. The director and the writers of "Glory" did not deal with this in any specific way, but they did show the underlying tension that existed between the unshakable will of the Black soldiers to fight for their freedom and the equivocations and cynicism of many whites.

"Glory" is a departure from the accepted stereotypic image of the Civil War as a "national tragedy," borne stoically by gallant Confederate officers and their families with the solicitous help of their loyal Black slaves, an illusion that has dominated the American screen since David Ward Griffith filmed the "Birth of a Nation."

DID NOT AVOID ALL STEREOTYPES

The producers of "Glory" did not avoid all stereotypes. It lapsed into the most dreadful one when it treated the "contrabands," runaway slaves following the Union army, as happy-go-lucky clowns out for a lark. It was these self-emancipated slaves, dubbed by General B.F. Butler as "contrabands" in order to avoid using the word "emancipation," who were the very people that changed the Northern goal of the War from maintaining the Union to liberation of the slaves. Their act of self-emancipation, as W.E.B. DuBois points out, caused the United States government "with perplexed and laggard steps" to follow "in the footsteps of the Black slaves."

Another bothersome feature of "Glory" is the meaning of the character "Thomas," the only Black intellectual in the 54th Regiment and a school chum of the Regiment's white Colonel, Robert Gould Shaw. Why was "Thomas" so mercilessly ridiculed by the runaway slave soldier (played by Denzel Washington) for reading books and talking like white folks?

Focusing on this alleged tension between literate and non-literate Black soldiers helped obscure the major struggle between the Black soldiers and Lincoln's War Department which stubbornly refused to give officers' ranks to Blacks on the ground that Blacks lack the literacy to hold such positions.

Excluding Blacks from the officers' ranks and giving them a lower rate of pay was the major internal racial battle line in the Northern Army. Joseph T. Glatthar in his recent book, *Forged in Battle*, an excellent history of the relationship of Black soldiers and white officers during the Civil War, shows that there were a number of Blacks within the 54th Regiment who could have been capable officers. He singles out Sgt. Maj. Louis Douglass, one of Frederick Douglass' two sons serving in the 54th, as a man whose literacy and leadership quality was equal to and above many of the white officers serving in the Union Army.

DOUGLASS AND THE WAR

"Glory" does not portray the character of Sgt. Maj. Louis Douglass. And it's highly doubtful that Morgan Freeman's role as the Black Sergeant Major is a composite of Louis Douglass. But this omission is minor compared to the small role, hardly more than a walk-on part, that was given to Frederick Douglass. Douglass

was one of the prime movers in getting Lincoln to permit Blacks to serve in the Union Army as combatants, and was the primary recruiting agent for the 54th and 55th Massachusetts (colored) Regiments.

From the beginning of the Civil War Douglass argued that it was not wholly a "white man's war," that "liberty won by white men would lose half its luster." "Who would be free must strike the blow." He urged Lincoln to unchain the powerful Black hand against the foe (see *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*)

After the 54th's assault on Fort Wagner, Douglass went to Washington to protest directly to the President the reluctance of the War Department to put Black soldiers on equal footing with white soldiers. He not only raised the issue of unequal pay, but why had the Government remained silent and done absolutely nothing when Black soldiers captured at Fort Wagner by the Confederacy were slain in cold blood, mutilated or sold into slavery? When Lincoln gave only abstract answers about the possibility of punishing innocent Confederate soldiers if the government acted rashly, Douglass temporarily suspended his recruiting activities.

What the film did not express, but what Blacks and Abolitionists knew well, was the threatening political possibility that Lincoln's "tenderness" toward Southern sensibilities was opening the pathway toward a negotiated peace—a peace that would leave slavery intact. The answer to this type of retrogressionism was to turn the Civil War concretely into an anti-slavery war by arming Blacks to fight for their own liberation. This was the major political issue in the North prior to 1863. Today, bourgeois historians have acknowledged that the formation of Black regiments meant the transformation of the Civil War into a revolution to overthrow the old order.

At Fort Wagner on July 18, 1863, Black troops of the 54th delivered a fatal blow to the old order, even though they did not win in a military sense. At the very moment of their "Glory" a "new order" of racism arose in New York City with lynchings of Black people and the burning of a Black orphanage—the New York City (sic) Draft Riots.



2,500 Detroiters celebrated in the streets after Nelson Mandela's release from prison. Celebrations were held in cities throughout the U.S.

Black World

(continued from page 1)

The immediacy of the unfolding internationalization of the Black struggle in South Africa, however, is not unrelated to the historic-philosophic world view of the Black dimension published in the January-February *News & Letters* in the column, "From the Writings of Raya Dunayevskaya." In that column Dunayevskaya insisted that "It is of the essence to show that there has never been any separation between past and present and future on the question of the Black Dimension. And that holds both for the U.S. and for Africa."

The reason she gave for maintaining the integrality of history as past, present and future in the U.S. and Africa was that "in the 1950s...I considered so important was the coming birth of a Third World as a new stage, both historically and philosophically, that Nationalism, Communism, Marxist-Humanism and the Afro-Asian Revolutions needed to be made a category along with Marxism and Freedom—a category directed against the administrative mentality which was the new enemy within the revolutionary movement. Nor was it an accident that it came precisely at the time when I didn't consider West Europe and the U.S. and all the 'advanced' countries advanced philosophically, ideologically, or even culturally."

Thus, what we have called a world view of the Black dimension is no mere geopolitical designation. On the contrary, the "changed world" that we have confronted ever since counter-revolution emerged from within the Grenada Revolution, in October 1983, to open the door to Reagan's imperialist invasion, has exercised an objective compulsion to dig philosophically into the Marxist-Humanist world view of the Black dimension. The imperative to dig deep philosophically also arises from need to see the absolute opposite of today's myriad crises, political retrogressions and counter-revolutions, namely, "the revolutionary Black dimension as ongoing"

While Nelson Mandela's walk from Victor Verster prison

evoked the recollection of South Africa's generations of resistance, at the opposite end of the world, in capitalist America, we confront an "American apartheid" of poverty, "underclass" despair, virulent racism from campus to community, as well as its opposite, Black mass revolt. The dissolution of American capitalist society begins here, in the interminable poverty of the Black masses. For as Marx said, such "new passions and new forces" bred by capitalist impoverishment constituted the absolute law of motion of capitalist society, culminating in the negation of the negation. In his political writings Marx spelled it out as **revolution in permanence.**

IDEOLOGY, ORGANIZATION, PHILOSOPHY

The ideological mask of bourgeois "democracy" is not the only artifice that hides this revolutionary dimension. It also assumes the form of a narrow vanguardism or administrative mentality which calls for discipline in the ranks of the movement while it "organizes" the results of the struggle because it sees no further need for dialectical development.

In opposition to this, Dunayevskaya's concept of philosophy and revolution has us confront Hegel's absolute method as the way the mind of a people forms a concrete idea of their freedom and experiences its self-determination as a drive toward liberation. "The mind of a people," wrote Hegel, "in its richness is an organization...directed to one end (freedom)."

Today's African and Third World revolutions remain unfinished, due in large part to the substitutionism of false alternatives for Marx's philosophy of revolution in permanence. However, if we are to overcome the barriers to comprehending the world view of the Black dimension as revolutionary and ongoing, we will have to begin by grasping the absolute movement of the dialectic of philosophy and organization. What Raya Dunayevskaya came to view as Black masses as vanguard is not only the content but the method of that dialectic. The further concretization of that method is the philosophic challenge of the Black world.

Direct from South Africa

Mayekiso: On negotiations

The following excerpts of a speech by Moses Mayekiso were recently printed in *Umtapo Focus*.

How do Margaret Thatcher and F.W. de Klerk want to negotiate? They want negotiations to take place over the heads of the people. They would really like to be able to negotiate without the people or the organisations of the people at all.

The Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) has been discussing this seriously. There are some people who see negotiations as an end in themselves. We are not opposed to a negotiated political settlement but we do not see negotiations in isolation. At present, we would not be negotiating from a position of strength.

What do we need to do to change this? At our third Congress of South African Trade Unions congress we set ourselves two main tasks: to smash the Labour Relations Act and the attack on the working class which we are now facing, thereby showing that the organised working class is a force which cannot be ignored in deciding the future of South Africa, and to strengthen and rebuild where necessary the democratic structures in the community and in the factories, mines and shops.

The MDM, in fact most organisations working for liberation, have been facing very seriously the urgent need to establish structures at all levels which allow the full involvement of all the people in the struggle against repression and exploitation, in structures which ensure democratic involvement in decision-making through accountability, mandates and reporting back.

These structures must also ensure that the society which results will be a truly democratic society.

What do we want? We do not want only a civil rights movement. Most of the workers in our unions believe that only democratic socialism can resolve the fundamental problem of creating and distributing the wealth needed to give everyone in this country a decent life.

Our millions of allies in other countries must not let up on the pressure of sanctions now, or de Klerk and imperialism will try to negotiate a settlement which excludes the masses from the negotiating process, which does not give any power to the masses, which does not end exploitation and which safeguards only the interests of imperialism.

Negotiations are not a game of chess. They are part of a struggle for power. We cannot let the balance of power be in favour of de Klerk and his allies. It must be in favour of the masses.

Down with Police Barricades

Los Angeles, CA—Residents in a 40-square-block area of Black and Latino South-Central LA have been the objects of the latest strategy in the "war on drugs"—police barricades. At every intersection along the perimeter of the neighborhood, there are heavy wooden easels with metal signs declaring, "narcotics enforcement area; entrance to residents only." The neighborhood is now constantly patrolled by police—on foot, in cars, and even mini-vans, who enforce the rule of the barricade by stopping anyone they choose and demanding to see proof that they are residents.

The chief of police claims that this enclave of martial law is keeping the "outsider" drug dealers out of the area, but residents are said that that's not all it's doing. And to add insult to injury is the LAPD's propaganda blitz, designed to sell this program of oppression to its victims. Their survey claims that 598 out of 600 residents questioned want the barricade, but activists point out that residents were asked before the barricade went up and people found out what it really means.

About 50 residents and community activists gathered to discuss the reality of the barricade. One woman from the area said, "No, I don't like it. I feel like I'm in jail. We can't even visit our neighbors without being questioned!"

While there haven't yet been any violent confrontations in the barricaded area, this latest police muscle-flexing is occurring against the backdrop of a long wave of city and county-wide police brutality. This year the LAPD have beaten up dozens of youth, and a LA county sheriff's deputy murdered the unarmed 27-year-old Nation of Islam member Oliver Beasley—according to one witness, as he knelt crying "don't shoot!" "Routine" traffic stops are ending in routine deaths when fed-up young men resist the police's humiliating commands to "lie face down on the sidewalk."

Because of all of this, the 50 people at the first community meeting are determined that the whole police state must come down. They have already exerted enough pressure that the police chief now says, "...if the community says they don't want the barricades, they will come down." So the work that lies ahead is to make a platform for the real voice of the community, and to overcome the brainwashing that has affected some residents. Participants plan to do their own survey. They will ask if residents approve of the barricade.

Far from making "anti-barricade" the political focus, this coalition is driven by deeper questions that may have far-reaching ramifications. Why must we always only react defensively to attack? Can we transform this into a movement for the kind of community we want? What does Black unity mean? Can we transcend uniting "just because we're all Black," and find an idea that will truly hold us together?

—Karl Armstrong

Students sit-in, boycott Selma schools

Editor's note: March, 1990 marks the 25th anniversary of the Selma to Montgomery civil rights march with its vicious police attack on marchers on the Edmund Pettus bridge. Commemorations will be taking place along the route of the march. The struggle continues in Selma today with a school sit-in and an economic boycott sparked by the firing of the first Black Superintendent of Schools in Selma, Dr. Norward Rousell. Below we print excerpts from an interview with an activist in the current protest.

Selma, Ala.—The students began boycotting the schools when the school board fired the Superintendent of Schools, refusing to renew his contract. When Dr. Rousell came in there were so many things that needed changing. We didn't realize that the school didn't even have a curriculum. The school board for years was all-white. It is only recently that Black people got on the school board. It has now reached six whites and five Blacks. But the schools are 70% Black.

They had been planning to fire him ever since he attacked the "leveling" system. It is that leveling system which really took away the self-esteem of Blacks. We called it racial tracking. The kids reported to their parents that there were some subjects that they wanted to take like algebra, biology and maybe a foreign language. Of course they would be told that it is not on your level. All the Black kids would be told that.

The students decided to sit-in inside the school. They were joined by some of the parents. The governor sent troops into the schools. The troops are still there even though the sit-in is over.

During the sit-in there were no classes at the school. The Black community organized a committee to walk guard at night at the school to protect the students. They didn't trust the police. All the students in the sit-in were Black. While the students took over the school, the Black community was having marches. One Saturday, Dr. Joseph Lowery from SCLC came. We marched to the school. We had speeches, left there and went to the Mayor's house, where we sang and prayed. Then we marched to the home of one of our leaders who was ill, Rose Sanders, and serenaded her. Then we went to Wal-Mart department store, which is one of the places that is on our list for an economic boycott.



It is now 25 years after the Selma to Montgomery march and that whole struggle. And yet they are trying to take us back to the old days. If we don't stand up and stand strong we will go back. The anniversary march is going to have a lot of meaning for today. There will be a lot of people from all over this nation.

After the students went back to school they went into the cafeteria and started singing a freedom song. The students were suspended and given a choice of being out of school for three days or going to an alternative school and not remaining at Selma High.

We are not giving up. You know this inferior education, we have experienced that going back for 100 years and more. It seems like the white man, he wants to just keep it that way.

We have been having meetings daily and nightly here. We are having an economic boycott. We are making an appeal to the people to do no buying for Easter. At the same time we are all preparing for the 25th anniversary in Selma.

—Activist yesterday and today

Poisoning the environment has become the way of life

(continued from page 1)

pounds of 320 toxic substances in 1987, if we are to trust industry's own reports. Incomplete as these reports are, it took years of agitation by workers and the environmental movement to achieve the right-to-know laws we do have on workplace chemicals.

Only eight of the 320 chemicals are regulated by the EPA. As is typical, one of the eight—benzene, the contaminant that forced the recent Perrier recall—is known to be hazardous just because so many of the millions of workers exposed to it have experienced some poisoning of their bone marrow and developed aplastic anemia or fatal leukemia.

• Each link in the nuclear chain—from uranium mining (see "U.S. Let Uranium Miners Dig and Then Die," January-February N&L) and milling to power plants to bomb production—exposes workers to cancer-causing radiation and generates deadly radioactive waste. Aside from what has already leaked out, all of that material is now stored in containers that can last only a tiny fraction of the time the waste will.

The Department of Energy is trying to convince the public that its proposed sites near a volcano in Nevada and in a salt dome in New Mexico can safely store the waste for the hundreds of thousands of years it will remain lethal. But since no one can even predict longterm changes in climate and geology, the truth is no one knows how much waste will leak out, or when.

Clearly it is not just a question of the residue of what is produced. It is the way science and technology are directed, not toward human needs but toward warfare and production. More, it is the very manner in which capitalist society produces—in the factory or in the field.

...IN THE FACTORIES

An Eckrich meatpacking worker in Chicago told N&L: "The chemicals they use at Eckrich burn you if they get on you. That goes into the sewer—and how much stays on the meat? Twice a year the water discharge is sampled. Once Eckrich was fined \$10,000 for the water pollution—that's nothing to them!"

"They smoke meat there. They say the smoke was tested and is safe. Your eyes tear up and you can't breathe; they're saying that's natural. Eventually someone will die from it. They don't care. Who pays for their studies? Are they giving us truth or lies? Capitalism destroys the quality of life just by the way it works."

...IN THE FIELDS

In the fields, capitalist factory-style agribusiness doses farmworkers, along with food, with deadly pesticides. Worldwide, one million people are poisoned by pesticides each year, and 20,000 die. In the U.S., grape pickers are often sprayed with pesticides without warning, and they have no place even to wash their hands before eating. To fight these inhuman conditions, the United Farm Workers are carrying on a grape boycott.

Long ago, Marx saw such conditions as the nature of human life—of workers' lives—under capitalism: "For the worker even the need for fresh air ceases to be a need. Man returns to the cave dwelling again, but it is now poisoned by the pestilential breath of civiliza-

tion.... Filth, this corruption and putrefaction which runs in the sewers of civilization (this is to be taken literally) becomes the element in which he lives." (Humanist Essays, 1844)

The world has long known of catastrophic localized consequences of pollution. We are now approaching global catastrophe. One element of that, global warming due to the greenhouse effect, has been researched by the government since the 1970s.

BUSH PONTIFICATES

But to this day Bush is calling for more research, and no action. At an international conference in November, Bush was joined by Japan and Russia in endorsing a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions but torpedoing any deadline for doing so.

The vehicle that was supposed to establish Bush as "the environmentalist president" was his 1991 budget proposal. What is "new" in his pathetic "America the Beautiful" program boils down to a \$175 million tree-planting program. At the same time as Bush pontificates about planting trees, \$40 million will be spent to subsidize clear-cut logging that is now destroying the unique old-growth Tongass National Forest in Alaska.

The global reach of capitalism's ecological devastation can be seen in the growing export of dangerous industries and substances to debt-laden Third World lands. Multinational corporations combine superexploitation of labor with unregulated pollution, as in Union Carbide's pesticide plant in Bhopal, India, which killed thousands of people and crippled thousands more in 1984 by spewing 30 tons of methyl isocyanate into the air.

In addition, tens of thousands of tons of toxic wastes from Western Europe and North America are shipped yearly to the Third World, where safety regulations are even less adequate and thus less costly. In just one instance, an Italian waste broker rented a backyard in Koko, Nigeria, for \$100 a month, without telling the owner that he was receiving 4,000 tons of lethal PCBs and other toxins, which began to leach into the soil.

MOVEMENTS IN EAST EUROPE

Western Europe sends even more of its hazardous waste to Eastern Europe than to Africa. In January, 150 people from East and West Germany converged at the Schoenberg dump in the East to protest dumping of West German waste, which had already leaked into water supplies, killing fish and threatening human health.

Especially since the Chernobyl nuclear reactor explosion in the Ukraine in 1986, ecology has been a top concern for East Europeans, who live with some of the world's worst smog, acid rain, dead lakes and rivers and contaminated soil, all of which cause high rates of cancer and other diseases. Now more than ever, the demonstrations are sweeping those countries, especially Czechoslovakia and East Germany.

The East Germans have had to fight the status of environmental data as a state secret. In truth, movements in every country have to confront another form of pollution: a steady flow of virulent deception, lies and secrecy from state and industry bureaucracies.

The rulers treat the spread of the truth as a crime

Hal Draper, 1914-1990

Hal Draper's life as a Marxist writer and political activist stretched from student organizing for the Young People's Socialist League in the 1930s, through becoming a Trotskyist active in the Workers Party in the 1940s, to chronicler of the Free Speech Movement in the 1960s, and author of the multi-volume *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution* and founder of the Center for Socialist History in the 1980s.

Within the Trotskyist movement his path crossed that of Raya Dunayevskaya in the 1940s. Both opposed any designation of Russia as a workers' state, but Draper believed Russia to be a "bureaucratic collectivist" society as opposed to Dunayevskaya's analysis of Russia as state-capitalist.

Calling himself an independent socialist, Draper was associated with a number of the young radicals who were at the center of the Free Speech Movement in Berkeley in the 1960s. His *Berkeley, The New Student Revolt* was a most important history of that movement. It was in this same period that Dunayevskaya wrote her own analysis of the Free Speech Movement, seeing its relation with the ongoing Black struggle, and challenging the young activists of the 1960s to establish a continuity with the Humanism of Marx.

It was that dimension of the Humanism of Marx, particularly as it spoke to the Women's Liberation Movement, that became a sharp point of differentiation between Draper and Dunayevskaya. Draper's "Marx and Engels on Women's Liberation" sought to make an amalgam of Marx's and Engels' views. Dunayevskaya responded that Draper had misconstrued Marx's view, both in dismissing Marx's *Humanist Essays* as "lucubrations of this newfledged socialist," and in ignoring Marx's *Ethnological Notebooks* which sharply diverged from Engels' *The Origin of the Family*. In 1979 Dunayevskaya sharply critiqued Draper's method of analysis, limiting himself to "excavation" of Marx's writings.

Nonetheless Dunayevskaya was appreciative of much of Draper's research into Marx's writings on many subjects. It is in that sense that Draper's three-volume *Marx-Engels Cyclopedia* will remain a valuable research source for Marx scholars and activists for many decades to come.

—Eugene Walker

or disease: "Chernobyl Syndrome" is the Russian Communists' name for the near-universal resistance to nukes in the USSR. In the U.S. it is called "NIM-BY" (not in my backyard).

The movement in the U.S. has taken on a new character in recent years, as grassroots groups targeting local industrial polluters have mushroomed. Hundreds of groups have been organized—many by women—in working-class communities and regularly receive reports from workers in the plants. Last July, for instance, the Baytown (Texas) Citizens Against Pollution revealed a memo written by a public relations officer at Exxon, who complained that the group learned of two accidents in the Baytown plant before the P.R. department did.

YOUTH AND THE CREATION OF A NEW SOCIETY

Since the 1960s, the core of environmental movements has been youth who saw what kind of earth they would inherit and saw the need for a very new kind of society, like the youths in DeKalb, Ill., who produced buttons reading, "Save the earth; stop capitalist production!" As a 15-year-old woman said at a recent abortion rights rally in Chicago, "Young people are the future. But when we look at this world, we feel that our future is being destroyed."

Not only the youth, but 80% of U.S. adults in a poll last year felt that "protecting the environment is so important that requirements and standards cannot be too high, and continuing environmental improvements must be made regardless of cost."

In striking contrast, what's important to Bush is not protecting the environment, but "economic growth and free market." Thus he has backpedaled on everything from the greenhouse effect and the Clean Air Act to wetlands preservation. Bush must have been laughing up his sleeve last month when the criticism of eight environmental groups was diverted to his lightning rod—chief of staff John Sununu—instead of Bush himself, whom they applaud because he gives them "access."

Such "access"—or begging for scraps at the rulers' table—is the only alternative left to those who want to solve the environmental problems but see the workers only as victims, not as subjects whose creativity can uproot capitalist society, which can only persist, as Marx wrote, "by simultaneously undermining the original sources of all wealth—the soil and the worker."

The simmering outrage over the despoliation of the earth could at any moment explode into a mass movement here, as it has at other times and places. To truly make a new beginning towards a human society in a healthy world, the movement will have to go beyond technological "solutions" to challenge capitalist control of science and technology; and it will have to see the opposite of capitalist production in the workers' and other freedom movements at home and abroad.

When Marx wrote nearly 150 years ago that to "have one basis for life and another for science is a priori a lie" he was pointing the way toward a new society where science has a human direction and where life will mean new human relations. That still remains the human endeavor.

Direct from Czechoslovakia

Some reflections on East Europe

Prague, Czechoslovakia—The East European revolutions are probably the most spontaneous peoples' movement in Europe during the last 100 years. There is no wonder that the slogan "We are the people" was one of the most repeated ones last autumn: first during the mass demonstrations that took place in Leipzig, Dresden and East Berlin that led to the fall of Honecker and his regime in the German Democratic Republic; later also in Czechoslovakia and Romania. The demonstrators wished to underline two facts: 1) the people's sovereignty. It was the demonstrators, not those who pretended to speak for them, who the constitution declared had the power; 2) their dignity. It was confronted with all the apparatus and power that had humiliated them.

WAVES OF REVOLUTION

As the waves of revolution extended also to the dictatorships of Bulgaria and Romania, "We are the people" turned out to mean as well an uprising against the two superpowers. The smaller countries that lie between the Soviet and the West German borders aspire to have as much freedom in their external relations as they are introducing internally.

Both the speed and divergence of the political scenery in these countries is conditioned by the differing weight of those social groups who were leading the revolution.

Let's start with the youth. There were no youth representatives at the round table in Warsaw last year, at the conference which broke the Communist Party (CP) dominance. In Czechoslovakia, it was the students who spearheaded the uprising last November. The youths' part in the Romanian rebellion was also relatively prominent. In Bulgaria the youth is not much more than one element of the opposition. In the USSR it seems to be only latent. In East Germany (GDR), the youth had no outstanding role. This is the case in Hungary as well.

ROLE OF THE WORKERS

As far as the workers are concerned, they joined the beginning of the revolution in Czechoslovakia with the general strike, i.e. within the first ten days. Since the Hungarian evolution away from Communism was a creeping one—it could well be said to be "the oldest" in East Europe—the Hungarian workers let it pass "over their heads," and are mostly concerned with keeping their living standards. In Poland, Solidarity is the strongest political force in the country. We cannot go into details here, but let us state that Solidarity is not a coherent movement any more, and the workers' support of it is waning.

No clear picture emerges in Romania concerning the role of workers in the changing political structures. The same is true in Bulgaria. Besides, these two countries have hardly a democratic tradition, not in the pre-Communist days, nor after the war. Independent workers' organizations defending their rights, both political and social, can be expected to appear in the near future.

The situation is different in Czechoslovakia. The umbrella organization of the Civil Forum found some outspoken worker representatives in the strike committees

of many production enterprises. The workers were also capable of organizing independent trade unions against the official trade unions.

THE INTELLIGENTSIA

There remains one group too important not to be mentioned here—the intelligentsia. The writers, especially in the case of Czechoslovakia, as well as the actors, the singers, be it pop or folk or jazz, prepared the ground for the revolutionary changes, especially since 1968, by telling the people (by artistic means of course) the truth about the regime, thus sharpening the people's awareness against the deafening Communist indoctrination. Czechoslovakia may be the clearest case in this respect, having found its expression in the election of a dramatist as the country's president.

But a similar role was played by many East German writers. Neither can the activities of the underground publishing houses in Poland, during the emergency years following Jaruzelski's 1981 coup, be underestimated. Of lesser importance were the activities of the intelligentsia in Romania and Bulgaria. This was so because of the stifling dictatorship and its all-embracing security forces. Hungary lived through changing periods of suppression and liberalization ever since 1956, so its political atmosphere was not as depressive as in the other countries of East Europe. It did not "need" that degree of spiritual preparation for its rebellion.

What unites all these different countries in their struggle is the quest for freedom: externally from Soviet domination, internally from the Communist rule. Otherwise, each of them finds itself in a different situation, at a different moment of its development. There is, in this writer's opinion, not enough common ground for any kind of united action, even for such goals which all of them are trying to reach—some kind of association with the European communities. Each East European country has to arrive at such a goal in its own way.

With the Comecon virtually having fallen apart, and the Warsaw Pact but formally in existence, there is nothing even on the outside that could draw these countries together. The governments may sympathize with each other, the nations may overcome historical antipathies, but East Europe is becoming for the next decade at least, a zone of small independent states competing for the favors of the European Community, and leaving behind the USSR more and more. Their strike for freedom cannot be halted, not even by the superpowers in the name of "balance" or "disarmament." The immense movement of these nations is a major proof of its spontaneous power.

With the growing shadow of a united Germany looming ahead, the West may look upon this part of "the European house" as being occupied by unruly neighbors. How much freedom they will gain for themselves will depend also on forces we have tried to sketch here. Sharp class conflicts and clashes may come into the open now that the iron fist of Communist totalitarianism has opened. We have to watch these societies and the coming class fights to see if the newly won freedom is to stay.

In-person report

What kind of E. Germany?

Erfurt, East Germany—In January and February there were again massive demonstrations in Berlin, Leipzig and Erfurt. The main immediate issue was Prime Minister Modrow's call to reform the officially disbanded but still operative state security apparatus.

In Leipzig and Erfurt, where I was, the masses chanted "Stasi Raus," [secret police out] and "never again with the SED," [the ruling party], waving the red, gold and black flag. In Erfurt, leaders of the opposition and ordinary people got up to speak against the 40 years of tyranny; many spoke of 55 years of tyranny, linking the Nazis and the Communists.

When Modrow says "Neo-Nazism," the people shout "We'll take care of the Nazis!"; when Modrow says "Remember Karl and Rosa" (Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg) the people shout back, "That's exactly what we are doing!" After 40 years of indoctrination the people remember the real heritage of Karl and Rosa. These are the historical figures of German history that appeal to them the most.

The opposition parties are the SPD, Democratic Call, Democracy Now, and Democratic Bridge. New Forum does not call itself a party, but a forum for discussion and advocacy. All these parties are, in varying degrees, for a social-democratic program, against any coalition with the old forces and for reunification. Some say this should not be on "any terms"—i.e., those that would make East Germany an economic and political dependency of the West.

The opposition is vibrant, fluid and participatory: nurses, factory workers, farmers, shopworkers, ordinary people find themselves facing Modrow and speaking at demonstrations. The microphone is free to any who want to speak, and I found this amazing because in the U.S. only "experts" and party hacks ever get to speak.

The struggle now in East Germany is to keep the Stasi down and prepare for the elections. In the Weimar district on the 12th of January they had a half-day general strike to show their determination to get the government to move on issues such as the shortage of housing and the poor quality of living conditions. Modrow found that he couldn't reinstate his hated Stasi (the secret police) and backed down — if he didn't there would have been a nationwide general strike.

Later at the "Red Town Hall" farmers from all over the country rallied for better housing—an important demand outside the comfort of East Berlin, as people live in decaying, unreconstructed apartment complexes and in shacks.

The election is the next crucial point and it will show whether the new forms of organization shown by the opposition, the people, continue once members of the opposition takes power. "One Germany in one Europe" is the demand that almost everyone now voices. But it still remains a question: on what terms and what kind of democracy East Germany will become. One thing is clear—it must have institutional controls against the abuse and concentration of power in a small group, and it must keep self-determination and the value of the people discovered in this non-violent revolution alive.

—Eric

—Marxist-Humanism and the East European Revolts—

Can you help us pay for and send this Polish translation of Raya Dunayevskaya's "State-Capitalism and the East European Revolts" into Poland?

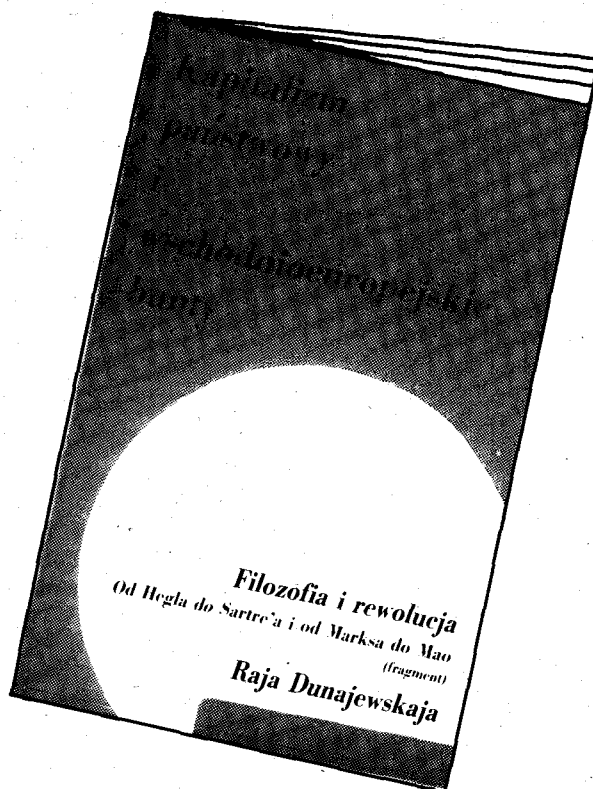
From the Preface

East Europe's struggle over the last three and a half decades against totalitarian state-capitalism, which calls itself "Communism," has been inseparable from the development of the philosophy of Marxist-Humanism—the restatement for our age of what Marx had called "a new Humanism." From its birth in the 1950s, that global philosophy, founded in the U.S. by Raya Dunayevskaya, has stood in total opposition to both poles of world capital—whether in its "private" form as in the U.S., or its state-capitalist form, as in Russia and China.

This first-ever Polish translation of "State Capitalism and the East European Revolts"—Chapter 8 from Raya Dunayevskaya's *Philosophy and Revolution, from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao* (1973)—is being published at a time when events in Poland seem to be very different from those taking place when the work was first written. The Polish workers' revolt of 1970-71 had just erupted, and Dunayevskaya saw in that revolt, which begins this chapter, proof of the new epoch of freedom struggles that began with the historic East German workers' uprising on June 17, 1953....

What makes the study of this chapter so crucial today is not that the situation is the same as when it was written, but that the dialectic projected here speaks powerfully to Poland now and confronts the pulls that are forever diverting the movement for freedom onto dead-end paths.

In her ceaseless development and deepening of the philosophy of Marxist-Humanism that was born in 1953, Dunayevskaya participated in freedom struggles and dialogue with thinkers and revolutionaries world-wide. Her three-decade-long dialogue with East Europe was woven into the very fabric of her unique body of ideas....



In her 1982 Introduction to an expanded edition of *Philosophy and Revolution* she wrote: "I am especially proud of the fact that the very first paragraph of Chapter 8 begins with the spontaneous upsurges of 1970 in Gdansk and Szczecin, since they set the foundation for what is happening in the 1980s. That East European dissidents helped to write that chapter played no small part in the result that it still sounds so current."

Selected Writings on East Europe and Russia by Raya Dunayevskaya

Raya Dunayevskaya wrote extensively on East Europe over a period of four decades. Below are a few of those many writings.

- "A Post-World War II View of Marx's Humanism, 1843-83; Marxist Humanism, 1950-1980s". Published in *Praxis International* (Vol. 8 No.3. Oct., 1988.) Available in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, microfilm #11588
- "In Memoriam of the Hungarian Revolution: Spontaneity of Action and Organization of Thought" *Weekly Political Letter* September 17, 1961 microfilm #2954
- *Czechoslovakia: Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, Oct. 1968, microfilm # 3940
- "Russia as State-Capitalist Society," the original historical analysis Microfilm # 4760
- "Poland: Counter-revolution drives the revolution underground; the resistance continues" *N&L* Jan.-Feb. 1982 microfilm # 7406
- "Twenty-five years of East European revolt and of the re-creation of Marx's Marxism" *N&L* March, 1982. Microfilm # 7409

— Enclosed is \$ _____ to help pay for and send the Polish translation of Dunayevskaya's chapter on East Europe into Poland.

Please send me the following Microfilm #s of Dunayevskaya's writings on East Europe: _____,

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Youth Women fight parental consent laws

by Sheila Fuller

"As a woman, I have a mind. Because I'm a youth, it does not mean that I have less of a mind than anyone else. My body is my own. I know what's good for my body and what is not. Parental consent for abortion is not good for my mind or body. It cheats me of my intelligence, my right as a woman and as a human being. The thought of having parental consent robs young women of having control of their own bodies and puts it into the hands of their parents. This is not right. And I will fight this to the very end."

These are the words of a 15-year-old high school student who spoke at a rally for women's reproductive rights in January in Chicago. At this rally of 300 mainly young women, many high school students took the floor at an open microphone session and spoke passionately of their opposition to parental consent laws, their struggle against oppressive relations between parents and children, between men and women in this society, and their struggle to be recognized as independent thinking human beings.

This rally was another manifestation of a new phenomenon—the large presence of young teenage women at women's liberation and anti-war rallies over the last few years. In various cities across the U.S., young women have been organizing groups in their high schools and neighborhoods.

As young women, we have faced a barrage of attacks from the Bush and Reagan administrations which are taking away our right to decide on any aspect of our lives. Presently, the U.S. Supreme Court is deciding on two cases from Ohio and Minnesota, where pro-choice activists are appealing laws which force teenagers to notify their parents before an abortion. At the same time, following the Supreme Court's virtual overturning of a woman's right to a legal abortion last July, state legislatures have been passing parental consent laws and bills in Wisconsin, Michigan and Iowa. (See article, pg. 2) Many other states are now enforcing their previously unenforced parental consent laws.

These attacks have been accompanied by a whole host of bills and studies trying to restrict young women and men's lives. In the state of Washington, the legislature passed a bill which made it a crime for youth under age 18 to have sex. In Chicago, bills have been proposed to ban sex education in high schools. In New Orleans, a new study, backed by the Bush administration, had the gall to claim that pregnancy is beneficial for teenagers—especially working class teenagers—because working class women "give birth to healthier babies when they are young." Nothing shows more clearly, the degeneracy of the mentality behind this study. For those who support it, women are nothing but mindless baby machines and bodies to exploit—as women and as workers.

Young women are dying in the U.S. today from self-induced abortions. Two years ago, a 17-year-old woman, Rebecca Bell, died from a self-induced abortion in Indianapolis because she was afraid to tell her parents that she was pregnant and wanted an abortion. Her tragic

Avoid 'empty utopianism'

De Kalb, Ill.—I'm beginning to see the objectivity of Peter Wermuth's essay article, "Dunayevskaya vs. Lukacs on the creativity of cognition—Paths to internalizing the Idea of Freedom," in the January-February issue of *News & Letters*, especially what he says about the need to internalize the philosophy if we are going to have new beginnings. I was struck by the following paragraph:

"Lukacs never reached this vision of a totally new society that 'transcends' both private capitalism and 'vulgar communism.' But today's Marxist-Humanists who 'accept' this vision must not skip over the process by which Marx comes to it. He gets there, first by projecting the inseparability of History from the dialectic, and second by plunging deeply into the dialectic of absolute negativity itself. In Marx's hands the dialectic thereby not only reflects History, but also anticipates the future."

Among the Marxist-Humanist youth in *De Kalb* what I see as the first problem that arises when we simply "accept" Marx's vision of a new society, without projecting the inseparability of History from the dialectic, and then plunging into the dialectic of absolute negativity, is that our dialogue with other youth suffers greatly. The reason for this is that without the dialectic of absolute negativity, Marx's vision of a new society can be very easily reduced to an empty utopianism.

From my experience in the youth movement, I've found that most of the youth of the Reagan-Bush era are very skeptical, if not outright hostile, to anything that smacks of empty utopianism. This skepticism does not necessarily come from conservatism, as it might first appear, but it more often comes from dissatisfaction with the existing society and an awareness of the ultimate failure of the Russian Revolution and the mass movements of the 1960s.

It is from this common ground that we have to approach our dialogue with other youth, if we hope to express the concrete universality of our vision of a new society. Sometimes we have a tendency to try to simplify the ideas when talking to someone who is new in the hope that this will make the philosophy easier to grasp. Actually the opposite is true. It makes the philosophy harder to grasp.

—Jim Guthrie

death has become known because her parents have now become active opponents of parental consent laws. But many other deaths remain unreported. Daily, young women get beaten, abused and thrown out of their homes for becoming pregnant. Many others give birth to unwanted children and continue to face abuse by their parents and boyfriends.

One high school student who is very concerned about parental consent laws told me: "Most of us don't talk to our parents about anything. If you tell your parents you are pregnant, within a minute you can get kicked out of the house. Adults are so terrified of losing control over their kids because they never build a relationship based on trust with their kids. Parents think that if mandatory laws such as parental consent are passed, then their kids would confide in them. But laws won't force kids to talk with their parents. They will just alienate us more."

She is raising a deep question about the state of human relationships in this society, and how alienated they are. Another high school student told me: "This society thinks we are ignorant. It degrades the young mind and tells us to believe what we are told. But young minds aren't closed. We want to be able to think for ourselves." Young women today want to develop our minds in opposition to the retrogressionism we face daily.

To me, this is why the concept of "Woman as Reason and as revolutionary force," which the founder of Marxist-Humanism, Raya Dunayevskaya developed becomes so urgent. (See "From the Writings of Raya Dunayevskaya," p. 5). Tracing out her concept and practice of woman as Reason, can enable us to develop our minds in our battles for women's liberation and human liberation.

Youth in Revolt

by Franklin Dmitryev

Shouting "asesino" and "murderer," more than 150 people in the Bushwick section of Brooklyn, N.Y., Feb. 3, protested the killings of two unarmed teenagers by police. Youth hissed and booed the more than 300 police in riot gear lining the streets, and chanted "Hey, hey, 83rd (precinct), how many kids have you killed today!" Police claim they shot 14-year-old Jose Luis Lebron and 17-year-old Louis Liranso because they thought they were drawing concealed weapons.

Of the more than 600 Palestinians killed by Israelis during the first two years of the intifada, 130 were under 16, according to the Israel Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Areas. The centrality of youth revolt is reflected in the army's stepped-up attacks: more shooting at young people, causing rising numbers of deaths and injuries; more punishment of their parents, by seizing their property or blowing up their houses.

In Cotonou, Benin, West Africa, 20,000 demonstrators mostly young people, demanded the resignation of President Mathieu Kerekou. "Kerekou resign—power to the people!" was their answer to his attempts to head off the protests by officially renouncing so-called "Marxism-Leninism." Many workers joined the youths, shutting down government offices and shops.

CIA off campus!



About 75 students faced a dozen well-armed riot police, Feb. 14, as they protested CIA recruiters on Northwestern University campus in Evanston, Ill. As plainclothes police videotaped the protest, one student said, "The people of East Europe have spent the last year throwing out the secret police—they'd be surprised to discover the kind of totalitarianism that exists here."

NYU Black grievances

New York, N.Y.—Black New York University (NYU) students and administrators debated their situation at a viewing of "Black By Popular Demand" on Feb. 13. The video, made by Iowa State University student G. Thomas Ferguson, focused on the problems of Black students at the predominantly-white school. The event was sponsored by the Office of African-American Student Services.

The video was mostly interviews with Black students and administrators, white administrators and faculty. The Black students talked about feeling alone and financially strapped and that Iowa State didn't make an effort to retain them. Black administrators diluted the students' claims saying that while there was some truth to them, the students had to be more assertive and responsible. A white professor focused on the unpreparedness of the Black students to be at Iowa State in the first place. Most of the audience took offense at this professor's remark.

The University's President said that as costs go up Iowa State would take less risk on Black students, especially those labelled "at risk."

Black students talked of the need for more unity and agitation as a solution. The video's maker even said "I'm sick and tired of people sitting around." In the discussion that followed, many of the NYU students said that Iowa State's situation was like NYU's.

Many grievances were voiced but the most powerful was that "...NYU students aren't unified," according to a Black NYU administrator. Students talked about: the lack of an Africana Studies major; the level of advising; the 160% increase in tuition since 1980; lackluster financial aid; the admission and retention of Black students, and student apathy.

I had to agree with the complaints of apathy and disunity because they are, in my mind, the biggest problems, and allow the administration at large to take advantage of us. Students also talked about the small number of Black faculty. One of the first things we did was to draw up petitions to protest education budget cuts in Albany. One brother summed up the right frame of mind when he said, "Somehow, somehow we've got to get together."

—Anthony M. Thompson

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These classes are also being held in New York, Detroit, Los Angeles and the San Francisco-Bay Area. Contact the locals listed in the directory (p.4) for dates of the meetings, as well as for the class syllabus and reading material.

Our Life and Times

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

As Russia lurches from one crisis to another, some orchestrated from above, it is becoming increasingly difficult for even the master politician Mikhail Gorbachev to control the situation.

Currently, the biggest crisis is in Azerbaijan, where Gorbachev sent thousands of troops in the dead of night on Jan. 20. The stated purpose was to prevent further anti-Armenian pogroms in Baku and elsewhere, pogroms which had claimed 60 lives and created thousands of refugees in the days following Jan. 13. The pogroms were well-organized, with addresses of Armenian families being passed out at rallies on Jan. 13 to Azeri militants, many of them refugees from anti-Azeri violence in neighboring Armenia.

The mainly Muslim Azerbaijanis have been persecuting and attacking Armenians for over two years, in an attempt to block the self-determination of the Armenian enclave Nagorno-Karabakh, located inside Azerbaijan. This has included even blocking earthquake relief to beleaguered Armenia. Over a year ago, the late Andrei Sakharov called for government protection of the Armenians against these pogroms, but nothing was done.

Thus, when Gorbachev dispatched the troops on Jan. 20, it was not mainly to protect Armenians. As he himself stated openly, the intervention was against "secessionist forces" in Azerbaijan. Not only that. Still more

important, as admitted a few days later, was the imminent collapse of the Communist Party in Azerbaijan.

The Russian masses caught his meaning very well, and held demonstrations against sending their sons into another Afghanistan-type war. As the weeks of occupation went by, still more sinister explanations came to the fore. The local KGB and CP, it seems, had for months encouraged the most reactionary and racist forces in the Azeri community, undermining the more progressive and secular forces. It was unclear to what extent they were either following or defying Gorbachev, however. This served two purposes: (1) a continuation of the Stalinist policy of ruling over the oppressed nationalities by keeping them at each other's throats, (2) a complete discrediting of the Azeri nationalists in the eyes of the world, thus justifying intervention.

While the murderous ethnic hostility toward Armenians is certainly evident and needs to be condemned in the strongest terms, it has been asked recently who besides the CP or the KGB would have had actual address lists of Armenians to give out? Who allowed the arms to flow so easily into the hands of the crowds?

It was, after all, Stalin, not Lenin, who transformed the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics into a totalitarian empire ruled by Great Russian chauvinists, swallowing up the Baltic countries in 1939, the very ones that the 1917 Revolution had freed from the Czarist yoke, and who are struggling for independence again today. It

was Stalin, and it is now Gorbachev, who allowed the anti-Semitic Russian Orthodox Church to increase its power as a way of propping up an unpopular regime. Today it and other Russian chauvinist groups openly threaten Jews with pogroms and yet nothing is done about it by Gorbachev.

At all costs, Gorbachev is trying to avoid what the masses yearn for, genuine self-determination up to and including independence for the various nationalities. Yet that is the only solution to the murderous ethnic tension between groups, as Lenin maintained in 1917.

But Gorbachev's biggest problem is that of the economy. Neither glasnost nor perestroika, neither promises of a multi-party system nor its corollary of increased powers for the President (i.e. Gorbachev)—none of these twists and turns can improve the miserable lot of the working people. On Feb. 9, it was announced that meat supplies will be reduced even further, due to the lack of grain to feed cattle. In Moscow, social services and food supplies have deteriorated even below that of a few years ago. It is far worse outside the capital. In the coalfields, scene of mass strikes in 1989, the workers threaten new strikes because none of the promises for improved food supplies and goods have been met.

None of the moves and counter-moves from the top have stemmed the ever-deepening crisis at the heart of the whole rotten state-capitalist state that Stalin built, that Khrushchev and Brezhnev maintained, and that Gorbachev now seeks to save via reforms.

Dissent in Mongolia

Ever since December, when thousands of people braved subzero temperatures to hold a series of rallies for reforms, Communist Mongolia has experienced signs of a popular awakening in the face of decades of Stalinist rule in their country. Demonstrators have called for an end to one-party rule; reduction of the work week from six to five days; an end to special privileges for officials; freedom of the press; an end to police-state rule, and withdrawal of the 50,000 Russian troops stationed in Mongolia.

Grouped in a broad coalition called the Democratic Association, the movement involves Gorbachev-style reformers, Buddhist monks, and Mongolian nationalists. At least tacitly welcomed by Gorbachev, the movement has set off waves of apprehension in the Chinese leadership. A substantial number of Mongolians live in Chinese-controlled Inner Mongolia where, like other minorities in China, they are denied all political and cultural rights. Recently Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng, one of those who ordered the Beijing massacre of June 4, warned all Chinese minorities against challenging central government authority.

Mexican auto workers occupy Ford plant

Nearly 3,800 auto workers at the Ford Motor Company plant in Cuautitlan, Mexico, began a strike and factory occupation at the start of January, after being denied their annual Christmas bonus. They demanded the removal of the Ford union head, Hector Uriarte, who did nothing to help them.

Three days after the workers went on strike, several hundred thugs wearing company badges drove up to the plant in Mexican Workers' Federation (CTM) buses. They entered the plant, shooting and beating workers. One worker was killed and many more injured. The workers had no doubt that Uriarte instigated the attack. Later, authorities issued a warrant for his arrest.

A leader of the Cuautitlan auto workers said that the strike at Ford was "not a question of profits. The

Italian students



Students occupying eight buildings at the University of Rome protested government plans to reshape the educational system for the needs of big corporations. Under a proposed new law, university administrators could make deals with corporations to fund university-sponsored research.

basic problem is democratic life in the union. We want a representative union."

Other Mexican workers, most recently school teachers and musicians, have been fighting for "democratic life in the union." They are fighting to break the longstanding stranglehold on Mexican workers that was formed by the alliance between the CTM-controlled unions and the ruling Mexican party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party.

Ford gave workers at the Cuautitlan plant a Feb. 1 deadline to return to their jobs, and then began mass firings when they stayed out. Ford workers at the Chihuahua engine plant walked out Feb. 1 when their contract expired, but Ford settled quickly. The contract for workers at Ford's Hermosillo plant expired Feb. 28.

Who We Are and What We Stand For

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

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

Raya Dunayevskaya (1910-87), founder of the body of ideas of Marxist-Humanism, became Chairwoman of the National Editorial Board and National Chairwoman of the Committees from its founding to 1987. Charles Denby (1907-83), a Black production worker, author of *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*, became editor of the paper from 1955 to 1983. Dunayevskaya's works *Marxism and Freedom...from 1776 until Today*; *Philosophy and Revolution: from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao and Rosa Luxemburg*; *Women's Liberation*, and *Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* spell out the philosophic

ground of Marx's Humanism internationally, as *American Civilization on Trial* concretizes it on the American scene and shows the two-way road between the U.S. and Africa. These works challenge post-Marx Marxists to return to Marx's Marxism.

The new visions of the future that Dunayevskaya left us in her work from the 1940s to the 1980s are rooted in her rediscovery of Marx's Marxism in its original form as a "new Humanism" and in her re-creation of that philosophy for our age as "Marxist-Humanism." The development of the Marxist-Humanism of Dunayevskaya is recorded in the documents on microfilm and open to all under the title *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection—Marxist-Humanism: A Half Century of its World Development*, on deposit at the Wayne State University Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs in Detroit, Michigan.

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

Phony 'anti-drug' summit

For the February "anti-drug" summit, Cartagena, Colombia, was turned into a military camp. Over 5,000 soldiers and police, frogmen and bomb-sniffing dogs, squads of helicopter gunships and fighter-bombers, and 17 naval warships and patrol craft shut down the area for the six-hour meeting that was attended by President Bush from the U.S. and the presidents of Colombia, Bolivia and Peru.

Bush pledged that the three Andean countries will be sent \$2.2 billion over the next four years, to be used for drug interdiction and the eradication of coca crops. This type of foreign aid supports the police and the military, who repress social revolt more than combat the drug trade.

By some estimates, the cocaine trade in the three Andean countries comes to around \$4 billion annually, with at least one million people directly dependent on the illegal cocaine "industry" for their living. But none of the U.S. government aid goes for long-term alternative economic development in the region.

Despite President Barco's declaration of war against Colombia's drug lords last August, which has since cost at least 200 Colombian lives, the production and flow of cocaine into the U.S. is still close to 80% of its former level. And while giving lip-service to the campaign to "curtail demand" in the U.S., the Bush administration continues to use "drug wars" for promoting and expanding the U.S. military's role in Latin America.

The U.S. has begun basing AWACS surveillance planes in Puerto Rico, and the Coast Guard continues to stop and search vessels in international waters. Still exhilarated by the invasion of Panama, the Bush administration resuscitated, only days before the Cartagena summit, a plan to station U.S. Navy warships off the coast of South America.

But the U.S. invasion of Panama continues to be so abhorrent throughout Latin America, even to its rulers, that Bush didn't bring this plan up again at the summit.

The "purpose" for the invasion of Panama—the ouster of Noriega in the "war on drugs"—has given U.S. imperialism yet another ideological "rationale" for political-economic subversion and outright military domination in Latin America.

Eritrean war continues

In recent weeks, the leftist Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (EPLF) has taken most of Massawa, which is the key seaport for both Eritrea and Ethiopia itself. Having struggled to free themselves from Ethiopian rule for 30 long years, the Eritreans seem closer than ever to victory. Last May, reformist officers seeking to negotiate with the EPLF nearly toppled the Stalinist Ethiopian regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam.

By 1990, even Russian and Cuban support has waned. To some extent, however, this outside support has been replaced by that of Israel, which has sent cluster bombs, hundreds of military advisers, and other forms of aid. This is because Israel is in the business of supporting any anti-Arab regime, no matter how reactionary or brutal, and the Ethiopians are perceived to be anti-Arab.

Nicaragua

As we go to press, the results of the Nicaraguan elections have sent shockwaves through the Solidarity movements everywhere. We will deal with the internal and external factors that permitted Reaganism to win this battle in its ten-year counter-revolution there in our next issue.