

NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

Vol. 38 — No. 5

JUNE, 1993

25¢

Stealing workers' time



by John Marcotte

On my first day at work in unionized freight trucking, I saw a big sticker on the dashboard of the truck that said, "Stealing time will be cause for dismissal." I didn't know what that meant. Now I do. They make a big thing about "stealing time" in trucking, because you're on the road and the supervisor can't ride with you and breathe down your neck every damn minute. They always suspect you of "stealing their time," no matter how hard you work and even though you have to fill out a manifest and account for every minute.

Trucking is one industry where capitalism, with all of its technology, has not yet been able to remove all the skill from the worker. They've got bigger trucks, and double and triple trailers, to eliminate labor. Some companies put CB radios in the cab so the dispatcher can reach you any time. But you still operate the machine (the truck), and it's not the machine that controls you. In other industries like steel and auto, the capitalists managed long ago to remove all skill and control from the worker and put it into the machine. That, to me, is the difference between skilled and unskilled labor.

MACHINE TORTURE

In skilled labor, as bad as the job might be, you operate the machine, the machine doesn't operate you, which is torture. That makes a hell of a difference. You still don't want to come to work and still do it only for the paycheck, but time goes faster, there is just a little bit of control and even, in a way, satisfaction or pride in some aspect of your activity.

Marx showed us that all class-divided societies are built on the separation of mental and manual labor, on thinking from doing. Capitalism is where this has come to a head, because the skill is no longer just in a different person or class, but all science and human knowledge is put into the machine and all skill taken away from the worker. Far from lightening his or her load, that makes the work the most boring torture and takes

(continued on page 3)

Black World

'Transition to democracy' in S. Africa



by Lou Turner

The Groote Schuur Minute of May 4-6, 1990 which was to make recommendations on the indemnity and release of political prisoners and which remains unrealized to this day; the Pretoria Minute of August 6, 1990 that announced the ANC had suspended the armed struggle; the D.F. Malan Accord of February 12, 1991 in which the ANC agreed not to infiltrate military personnel or material into South Africa, while the government would supposedly end its violence and intimidation against mass demonstrations; the National Peace Accords between the government, the ANC and Inkatha which have been signed and broken since 1990; the convening of the multiparty CODESA (Convention for a Democratic South Africa) conference to negotiate the "transition to democracy" in South Africa; the Record of Understanding, September 26, 1992, reviving stalled talks between the government and the ANC in the wake of the Ciskei massacre; the National Unity Accords, February 12, 1993, in which the government and the ANC agreed to share power for five years following the country's first non-racial elections for a "constituent assembly," to be held in March or April, 1994; and the third round of CODESA convened in April to rubber-stamp the government/ANC National Unity Accords, following the assassination of popular ANC leader Chris Hani.

This paper trail of the ANC's collaboration with the apartheid regime of F.W. de Klerk is, we are told, what the "transition to democracy" looks like, what a "negotiated settlement" involves. And yet, what lay behind this "transition to democracy" is the destruction of the liberation movement through a state-sponsored campaign of political assassination, massacre, paramilitary terrorism, violent intimidation, and "political cleansing."

Since the ANC launched its strategy of "negotiated" (continued on page 8)

Questions for the freedom movement

Bosnia crisis exposes Achilles heel of western "civilization"

by Peter Wermuth

After weeks of deliberating on whether or not to intervene militarily in former Yugoslavia, the Clinton administration agreed on May 21 to provide U.S. air power to "protect" six UN-designated "safe havens" for Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina. This decision, which coincided with its announcement that it "no longer views the conflict as one of Serbian aggressors vs. Muslim victims," shows that the Clinton administration has dropped all pretense of standing in the way of the Serbian genocidal policy of "ethnic cleansing."

The proposal for the "safe havens" was first raised by the European Community on May 10 as a way of short-circuiting calls to arm the Bosnian Muslims. At the time, even members of the Clinton administration called the plan for "safe havens" a capitulation to the Serbian policy of "ethnic cleansing," in that it will create "ethnic ghettos" of Muslims who have been driven from their homes by Serbian attacks while doing nothing to allow the Muslims to return.

Given the choice of risking a major split with its European allies or sacrificing the Bosnian people to Serbian aggression, the Clinton administration quickly chose the latter. This decision came naturally, since the U.S. never made stopping Serbian genocide a top priority, even when outright military intervention against Serbia was being contemplated.

The crisis in the war-torn terrain of former Yugoslavia poses many questions. Why has the West, including the U.S., shown such complicity with the genocidal policies of the Serbs? How could narrow nationalism so consume the countries of the former Yugoslavia? Most of all, what can be done by those opposed to U.S. mili-

tary intervention to extend solidarity with the Bosnian people's struggle for national self-determination?

CLINTON'S CAPITULATION

After indicating some initial reservations, Clinton signed on to the UN-sponsored Vance-Owen "peace" plan soon after taking office. Though this plan, which carves Bosnia into ten pieces controlled by Serbs, Croats and Muslims, has been rejected by the Serbs, for not giving them enough, the plan dovetails with the Serbs' central war aim—to forestall a unitary Bosnian state by dividing Bosnia into distinct "ethnic" cantons.¹

The plan also gives the Croats more territory than justified by their share of Bosnia's population. The

(continued on page 10)

1. Strictly speaking, it is incorrect to refer to Croats, Serbs and Bosnian Muslims as different ethnic groups since they form a single ethnicity, their differences residing in religion and culture.

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On the Inside

—Black Chicago protest stuns City Hall—



Editor's note: On Friday, May 14, a mass rally of 5,000 mostly young residents from the African-American community on Chicago's South Side appeared without notice in front of City Hall after marching five miles to protest the closing and under-staffing of health care clinics in the Black community. Organized by the voter registration group, 21st Century VOTE, the demonstrators demanded that Mayor Daley rescind his administration's health care cutback of \$1.5 million and reopen South and West Side clinics scheduled to be closed or moved. The following is an interview with Charles Harris of 21st Century VOTE, one of the organizers of the demonstration.

Chicago, Ill.—Our protest started over the closing of the clinic at 35th and Michigan. We marched from there down to City Hall to try to talk to Mayor Daley about the closings. Over the last several months we had tried on numerous occasions to talk with Daley without success.

Actually, they're closing the clinic on 35th and Michigan and moving it ten blocks away. That's not only moving it into a whole other community, it represents a serious hardship for the elderly who already have to wait long hours because the clinic is so under-staffed.

We got involved because this and other clinic closings in the Black community needed to be addressed and no one was addressing it. A lot of our members in 21st Century VOTE come from the area of the clinic, and the closing affected their families directly. And so months

ago this was brought up at our Political Action Committee (PAC) meetings. We didn't just organize this demonstration overnight; it was developed over several months.

We know that the city of Chicago works on politics, that if this was happening in the white community people would go to their alderman and the issue would be dealt with. Well, this is the kind of political action we have to take to get things done for our community.

Now we're getting ready to deal with the issue of lead in the drinking water. The city has just spent \$3 million on brochures to educate people about the problem, but only people who get water bills get the brochure. Others, especially kids who are most affected by drinking leaded drinking water, don't get any educational material about it in the community.

21st Century VOTE is a grass-roots political organization which was started last August. We are trying to organize a 500-600-member PAC to deal with critical issues facing the Black community, especially by reaching our youth. Most people only have an image of Black youth as gangbangers, drug dealers or involved in crime. We're trying to change that image of our youth. We're also trying to show Black youth that there are alternatives to the streets. Youth should be taking responsibility for changing the conditions in their community.

Englewood, where we're located, has been labeled the (continued on page 8)

Woman as Reason

by Laurie Cashdan

While working on a talk in May on "Spontaneity, Consciousness, Organization" for a "workshop/class" held by News and Letters Committees in Chicago, the questions we were discussing kept crisscrossing in my mind with several recent writings by feminist theorists engaged in provocative rethinking. I would like to share a few impressions of recent writings and ask what readers of *News & Letters* think about this rethinking.

First, I want to mention a few questions under discussion at some recent feminist conferences which may offer a context for these writings. One is whether post-structuralist feminist theory's universal attack on universalisms has so emptied politics of any kind of vision of freedom that it has become hard to imagine any alternative. Another is whether a one-sided emphasis on "particularism" (or multicultural feminisms) has pushed us into a relativist standpoint devoid of politics.

MARXISM AND HUMANISM

Michele Barrett's article, "Words and Things: Materialism and Method in Contemporary Feminist Analysis," in an anthology she coedited, *Destabilizing Theory: Contemporary Debates*, is indicative of this rethinking. Most of it recapitulates developments in post-structuralist feminist theory—developments to which Barrett is sympathetic. Yet in its last paragraph the essay turns to the problem of feminist movements articulating what they are for. Both "classical 'scientific'" Marxism and anti-humanist post-structuralism share the problem of "stripl[ing] values from politics." "It may well be," she concludes, "that to develop a better account of subjective political motivation we shall have to reopen in new and imaginative ways the issue of humanism" (216-17). What a conclusion given her roots in structuralist Marxism and post-structuralist feminism!

Margaret Randall's new book, *Gathering Rage*, takes off from ongoing discussions among feminists in Cuba and Nicaragua and tries to face the failure of the revolutions in both countries to work out new beginnings when it came to Women's Liberation. She asks why AMNLAE (the Sandinista women's organization) became an organizing tool to wed women to the revolution rather than an organization of and for women? She argues that "the Leninist conception of the party, as implemented by successive generations of revolutionaries, was one of the major factors impeding a feminist vision of revolution" (96).

She goes, interestingly enough, to Raya Dunayevskaya's notion of Hegel's absolute negativity as a pathway forward that could avoid the pull to economic determinism because it contains a "dual movement: from practice that is itself a form of theory and from theory reaching to philosophy" (98). Revolutionary process might then be one in which new subjects don't get used—their creativity becomes the basis for revisioning revolution.

Jennifer Ring, a politics professor at the University of South Carolina, in her book, *Modern Political Theory and Contemporary Feminism: A Dialectical Analysis*, articulates an equally ardent call for rethinking.

Polish women fight back

Prague, Czech Republic—The new Polish anti-abortion law, which took three years to pass, allows abortion solely in state hospitals in cases when the life or health of the woman is in jeopardy, when the fetus is gravely damaged or the pregnancy was caused by rape or incest. A doctor who violates the law can be jailed for two years. Anyone who causes a spontaneous abortion by fraud or violence can be jailed for eight years.

Pro-choice organizations in Poland, nine of which came together in a coalition called the Federation for Women and Planned Parenthood, are trying to launch a campaign for a referendum to overturn the law. They estimate that abortion can now be legally carried out only in 5% of the cases. Last year there were at least 40,000 abortions.

An immediate response to the law was to get publicity for "abortion excursions" abroad. But the treatment costs \$950.00 in Amsterdam, and \$200.00 in the Russian town of Kaliningrad. The Czech Republic has banned abortions for anybody not living in the country and raised the cost for Czech women to \$115.00 for any reason other than the health of the woman.

There is almost a total absence of sex education in Poland. According to an instruction of the school inspectorate in Lodz—one of the biggest Polish cities, with the highest rate of unemployment—teachers should "exhort girls to avoid provocative flirtation and so enable the boys to also cultivate non-genital forms of communication. Love and marriage are two inseparable values." No mention is being made of contraception and doctors emphasize that most people are too poor to buy it.

Another phenomenon is the selling of Polish babies to foreign parents for adoption. This is seen especially in Sweden where visas are not necessary for Polish visitors. Pregnant Polish women deliver in Swedish hospitals with the future parents paying the costs of the treatment, and the journey as well as giving them some extra money.

In response to these conditions, in Cracow, Poland, a message lettered on a city wall expressed the growing sentiment among feminists organizing throughout the country: "Women, rebel."
—Stephen Steiger

Rethinking feminist theory

Ring agrees with postmodernist critiques of static, dichotomous liberal theories which cast men and women as innately different, but argues against their overly facile solutions. By simply eliminating the opposition between dichotomies, especially objectivity and subjectivity, they "surrender the possibility of confronting injustices of the past by simply 'writing them off'" (20). Her concept of "minimalist dialectics," she hopes, "will indeed prove conducive to nonhierarchical, nonauthoritarian political and intellectual outcomes that encourage progressive politics with human freedom as its agenda" (21).

MORE DISCUSSION NEEDED

"Hard struggle" between objectivity and subjectivity is "the essence of dialectic method" (124), and that is precisely what she sees as urgently needed at the centerpoint of a new feminist epistemology. This hard struggle occurs not only between oppressor and oppressed, but is most crucially a continual self-critique in relation to one's knowledge about the world and oneself.

What I find fascinating is Ring's warning about impatience to find a solution: "The true enemy of dialectical method is the inability to live with anxiety....The betrayal of a dialectical perspective always shows itself in a preference of premature closure" (145). Doesn't this relate to Randall's critique of "Leninist" organizations and to Dunayevskaya's "absolute negativity as new beginning"?

Ring's "minimalist dialectics" needs far more discussion than I can offer here, especially the limitations of her theory. She is so bent on leaving methodology untied to any "substance" which could predetermine ideas of freedom that her final pages echo the most relativist of postmodernists.

These writings by Barrett, Randall and Ring are most notable for the questions they raise and the possibilities they extend for how to think in new ways about feminist, revolutionary theory. Please do send in your thoughts on these writers or others.

A working woman's view: taking daughter to work



The way children usually come to work with their parents: a mother and her child at work on a day when child-care fell through.

New York, N.Y.—Growing up in the 1930s and 1940s in an immigrant Italian family I never for one instant thought that women did not work. My mother, my aunts, their cousins, worked in factories, the garment industry, hotels, industrial laundries, cleaning offices. You could exist no other way. The only people who I thought did not work were the rich. When my mother would take me to work she would show me exactly how she had to clean the offices on each floor and she was proud of her work.

So I found the hullabaloo in April about "Take your daughter to work" curious. What exactly was the message they wanted girls to get? One message was "you can be more than a secretary or a nurse." Did that mean that hard working secretaries, unless executive secretaries, and hard working nurses, unless head nurses, need not take their daughters to work?

It was not a call for all working mothers and fathers. It was not for today's immigrant women from Central and South America working for minimum wage, nor for the Chinese women working in sweatshops, nor for the immigrant European women cleaning offices, nor for any hard working factory worker regardless of color or nationality and it especially was not for the welfare mother or the multitude of unemployed.

It seems that the President of Barnard College whose salary, if not over \$200,000 is well over \$100,000, was in favor of such a day. Isn't that nice. Isn't it curious, when the secretaries at Barnard who average \$20,000 a year, hardly a "living wage" to make one independent here in New York City, asked for a raise, she opposed it!

And it seems that it is still in the army that a woman can be all that she can be—now she can fly a fighter jet into combat!
—Angela Terrano



Women-Worldwide

by Mary Jo Grey

Australia's first aboriginal barrister, Pat O'Shane, acquitted five women of defacing a lingerie ad billboard showing a woman in underwear being sawed in half. The ad read: "You'll always feel good in Berlei," to which the protesters added "even if you're mutilated." O'Shane charged that the real offenders were advertisers who used such disgusting images of women.

The Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights (RCAR) is fighting back against harassment and threats aimed at pro-choice fanatics. Five Nebraska churches were plastered with posters of bloody fetuses; threatening hate mail was sent to an Oklahoma clergyman who wrote a letter to the editor supporting a woman's right to choose; a synagogue in Iowa was picketed because the rabbi was involved with RCAR, and in Minnesota the homes of a minister and a clergy counselor were picketed and stalked by a thug videotaping the family's movements.
Information from RCAR Newsletter

The "new" Russia does not bode well for women. Statistics show that 70% of today's unemployed are women while in 1990 women made up more than half of the work force. Said Minister of Labor Gennady Melikyan, "Why should we employ women when men are unemployed? It's better that men work and women take care of the children." Women's groups are also fighting against a law being drafted by the Supreme Soviet on "family" issues, which tried to ban the right to abortion, as well as prevent women with children under 14 from working more than 35 hours a week.

Response to Balkan rapes

Chicago, Ill.—On May 20 I attended a meeting with 20 young feminist activists, social workers and health workers, who had gathered to become part of the newly formed Balkan Rape Trauma Response Coalition. This organization was founded by four women from Chicago and New York who had been volunteers in rape crisis centers in the U.S., and who had just returned from Croatia where they held seminars for health and social workers, volunteers and refugees on how to help women who survived the systematic rape occurring in the war in the Balkans. They had the opportunity to meet Bosnian health care workers but were not able to go to Bosnia.

What the speakers, Meghan Kennedy and Robbie Bogard, emphasized was that the war in the Balkans, which has involved the systematic rape and murder of tens of thousands of Bosnian women, is not a civil war. "It is not as if the people who live there have always hated each other. There has been such a high rate of intermarriage there and there are so many mixed families with Serb mothers, Bosnian fathers, Croatian grandparents."

They emphasized that this is a war masterminded by Milosevic, the "Yugoslav Academy of Science" and other top government officials who have been using propaganda and ideological brainwashing for several years to prop up the "idea" of a "greater Serbia."

The Balkan Rape Trauma Response Coalition is trying to help women in the Balkans by sending teams of volunteers to lead more seminars on how to help rape victims and by sending humanitarian aid including food and medical supplies.

The Balkan Rape Trauma Response Coalition, can be reached at P.O. Box 11026, Chicago, IL 60611 or call or fax (312) 649-1088.
—Sheila Fuller

Editor's note: Following are excerpts from a talk given by a Croatian woman in the Bay Area who participated in the MADRE tour.

I work with a center for women victims of war, mostly refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia and with a feminist information center in Zagreb. All of us are focusing on women. Many other organizations focus only on rape. From the beginning we realized that that focus is not fair to other women who are also victims. Our project is to re-socialize the women.

Here is how it is in the refugee camps (700,000 people are in refugee camps in Croatia): each holds a few hundred to a few thousand people, mostly Muslim women. In a "nice" camp 15 women share the same room, many have lost all of their family. In Bosnia they had houses, lived normal lives. Now they have nothing, not even any civil rights. Every three months they need to re-apply for a permit to stay in Croatia.

We started by visiting them, asking what they would want, not just things, but communication, cooperation. We want to help in their way, not as we think they ought to be helped. There are now about 40 of us, we team into twos, one from Bosnia one from Croatia, and talk to the women. We want to enable them to self-organize. We can only cover 10-15 camps but there are many, many more. We organize activities for them: to make something for their children or to sell. Having their own money is important. We try to get 10-15 to move out of the camp into a house. They can't go back to Bosnia, there is nothing there, everything is destroyed.
—Croatian feminist

Delta Pride Catfish worker on contract

Indianola, Miss.—Delta Pride Catfish postponed the original April 23 date for putting the new conveyors in the plant to May 13. So a hundred or more of us have been laid off until June 7. And we really don't know if we'll return then. The night shift still won't go back.

The lines that are out are the kill and sorting line and the skinning department. Those that are still in the plant are working real scarce hours, maybe only five hours a day.

We've been in the process of working out our contract proposals. We intend to start negotiations in August or September, before the contract is up in October.

Next week we'll have a meeting of shop stewards to get their input from all the plants on what they want to see in the contract. And we intend to hold a general membership meeting the second week in June at which we will have people fill out questionnaires on what they want to see in the contract.

Some of the things I want to see in the contract are:
 ● Take away with the interchangeability clause that says that after we have worked a full shift the company can

make us work added hours on another line if we're that line.

- We should get at least one day's pay for the three bereavement days we get off.
- We should get Good Friday off, but more importantly, the paid holidays we have now should be off days. And if they make us work on a holiday, we should get time-and-a-half.
- We should get five sick days, before the company policy of penalizing us for time off for illness kicks in.
- For all work over eight hours we should get time-and-a-half, so that we can cut out the present 40-hour policy which allows the company to work us ten and 12 hours without overtime pay. We really want to regularize hours so we can get home to our families at a reasonable hour.
- We want double-time for working Sundays.
- We want a designated place and time for shop stewards in the plant to talk to new hires during work hours.
- And what we really demand is a new pay scale. Instead of the \$5.50 we now get, we want the scale to be from \$6.50 to \$8.00 an hour.

These and other things people want are what we're working to include in our contract proposal. So along with going around to the different plants and talking with people about the contract and what is happening in other plants, this is what I've been doing since being laid off.

—Sarah White, Shop Steward

Editor's note: In the May N&L story on Delta Pride, the starting wage in the plant was stated incorrectly. It should have read: "The starting wage is \$4.30 per hour. The average wage is around \$5.40 an hour in production. The highest wage in the union is \$10.00 an hour in Class VII of maintenance after three years."

Asian women testify

Oakland, Cal.—Immigrant seamstresses and others provided testimony at a May 1 community hearing organized by Asian Immigrant Women Advocates. Two workers who spoke were among 16 laid off by Lucky Sewing Co., which closed unexpectedly last year, owing back wages to workers.

Fu Lee: I worked as a seamstress at Lucky Sewing Co. for two years. All of us worked long hours, ten to 12 hours a day and six to seven days a week. We were paid by the piece. My wage was never enough money for our family to live on. We always worried about our daughter getting sick, because we had no health insurance.

My eyes hurt from straining under poor lighting. My throat hurt because of the chemical fumes from the fabric dye. Sometimes I would wear surgical masks so I didn't have to breathe in all the dust from the fabric. My back never stopped hurting from bending over the sewing machine all day. Our boss was always pushing us to work faster. There was a sign in the shop that said, "No loud talking. You cannot go to the bathroom..."

Last year my employer closed his shop and left us holding bad paychecks. We found out that he had filed for bankruptcy. After working so hard under such horrendous conditions, we should at least get our pay.

Manufacturers use immigrant women's labor because it's cheap and no one speaks against awful working conditions. This is terrible discrimination.

May Ho: The boss keeps two sets of books—one for the government inspectors and one with our real hours and wages. We usually work ten hours a day, but the book for the government inspectors lists us as working eight hours or less. That way it looks like we are getting minimum wage for eight hours of work, but really we are getting subminimum wage for ten hours of work.

I wish I could get out of the sweatshop, but I cannot. It is strange to spend my life sewing dresses that are too expensive for me to ever buy.

Workshop Talks

(continued from page 1)

all meaning from it.

Capitalism has not been able to do this fully in trucking—yet—but the trend goes that way. A guy who's been shaping (working when work is available) at my job used to drive long distance. He had worked for Schneider, a big nonunion outfit, and the way he described it, it didn't sound bad. He said there was a lot of freedom. You took a load out, you called in, they gave you a choice of your next load, you got paid by the mile and there was no boss over you.

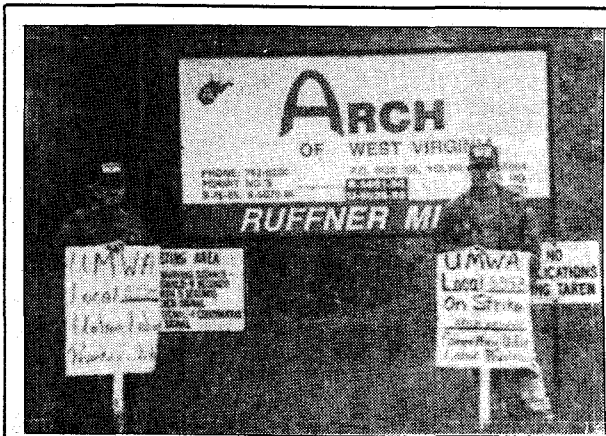
He got tired of shaping only one or two days a week, so he went back to Schneider. One week later he was back shaping. I asked him what happened. He said, "There've been too many changes since I last worked for Schneider. There are too many rules. They've got a computer right in the truck. That computer tells them exactly where you are every minute. If you go one mile off route, it's a \$75 fine. The computer prints out your instructions. You have to punch in all your information. I couldn't take it. Too many rules."

WHAT WILL BE NEXT

The boss may not be in the cab with you, but now the computer is. What will be next? Meanwhile, until they are able to take away all our skill and control, they accuse us of "stealing time." To that I want to say: How can you steal time? That is sick. It shows you how sick the values of capitalism are, how anti-human.

Marx showed through history that "Time is the space for human development." All our time should be for creating, growing, developing ourselves, helping our children—the next generation of humanity—to develop all their human capacities. You wouldn't mind growing old in such a world, because you'd be getting better all the time.

Instead they cripple our development in meaningless jobs, keep us from spending time with our children, cripple our children in meaningless schools. They steal all our time, or at least eight to ten hours a day of it. Then they say we're stealing their time because we're not producing for them every single minute. We're just trying to hang on to a bit of what was stolen from us!



Two thousand United Mine Workers members struck mines in Illinois and Indiana on May 10. The strike spread to West Virginia the following week. The issue is job security, meaning union jobs for laid-off miners in new mines opened by, and nonunion mines owned by, members of the Bituminous Coal Operators Association.

East European workers face 'restructuring'

Prague, Czech Republic—The Slovak Republic is struggling with economic difficulties more serious than its politicians had foreseen. One of the symptoms of these hardships was a demonstration in the capital, Bratislava, on April 16. It was organized by the Slovak Trade Union Confederation, which brought by buses about 5,000 of its members from all over the country in order to emphasize urgent trade union demands.

The demonstrators urged the government to stop the economic decline and to institute a wage policy that makes possible a decent living. The unions' spokeswoman said, "The government has to be aware that we are a force able to push through our interests also more radically."

The Slovak Premier Meciar, who showed up at the demonstration, declared it is the parliament that should control the government, not the trade unions. The Confederation, which has a membership of 1.7 million (out of a population of about five million), declared that

should the demonstration remain without visible consequences on the part of the government, it was ready to organize further meetings on regional and local levels.

The depth of the economic crisis can be guessed from a declaration Meciar made in the parliament. He said an acceptable limit securing "social conciliation" would be a 20% unemployment rate, a 20% difference between nominal and real wages, as well as the possibility of up to a fourth of Slovak families nearing the minimum social standard.

—Stephen Steiger

Berkeley, Cal.—Starting on April 22, the teachers of 80% to 90% of the secondary schools in Warsaw went on strike protesting the lack of funds for education in Poland's budget. Health care workers in the Mazowsze region started with a two-hour strike on April 27, demanding more money in the budget for health care. When the only response they received from the government was accusations of irresponsibility, they announced their plans for "progressive" strikes: in different regions selected hospitals would admit only emergency cases. If there was no response, the clinics would go on strike.

By May 5, 40% of all factories were struck in the Walbrzych region. The workers took over the regional government building, demanding a voice in the restructuring process. The following day they stopped cargo trains from traveling through the region for two hours.

Minister of Labor Jacek Kuron announced his willingness to talk about reforms in secondary education, but not about additional funds. Prime Minister Suchocka called for understanding the needs of the budget. She said she will not "give" more money for education, health and restructuring, because she doesn't "have" it and that "destabilizing the country is the worst solution."

By May 14, Mazowsze region Solidarity called for general strike and on May 20, 90% of factory committees in the Mazowsze region voted to support the strike. All major factories (except Ursus) did stop work for at least several hours. There were also other forms of protest, such as banners draped over entrance gates. The next day the bus drivers struck, bringing their own demands regarding restructuring and layoffs.—Urszula Wislanka

News & Letters

Vol. 38 No. 5

JUNE, 1993

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

Raya Dunayevskaya, Chairwoman,
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News & Letters
is printed in
a union shop.

From the writings of Raya Dunayevskaya Marxist-Humanist Archives

by Raya Dunayevskaya
Founder of Marxist-Humanism

Editor's note: As part of our continuing celebration of the 40th anniversary of Raya Dunayevskaya's "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes," we publish two letters she wrote to colleagues which discuss this critical breakthrough. The first takes up the new point of departure contained in her letter of May 20, 1953, on Hegel's Philosophy of Mind. The second discusses how her letters of May 12 and 20, 1953, led her to break with the prevailing attitude toward theory and organization in the Marxist movement. All footnotes are by the editors.

October 20, 1956

Because I spoke to you after I sent out the letter on the translation of Marx's Essays¹ I had a chance to tell you what I failed to include in it which makes mental telepathy between Marxists, even when dead, appear actual because the force of the objective movement is so powerful that when an age's task is set it nearly automatically works out that it begins where the previous age's task ended. Right now I feel as if Marx in person gave me the assignment to begin in Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind* exactly where I began, and here is why:

1) As you know, when I finished the letter of May 12, 1953,² in which I took issue with Lenin for ending Hegel's *Science of Logic* (that is, his analysis of the book) a paragraph ahead of the actual ending, and then I pointed out that that remained as our task, for we alone can see the Absolute Idea as concrete and as applicable not alone to thought but to life for the unity of theory and practice is a task for society itself. I then ended by asking Grace³ please to send me the *Philosophy of Mind* to which Hegel made the transition after the Absolute Idea and the *Philosophy of Nature*.

2) By May 20th of that same year, Grace had not sent me the *Philosophy of Mind* but I got hold of it and could not rest until I wrote that letter about the movement not alone from theory to practice but from practice to theory. Now I got to that conclusion by going through the *Philosophy of Mind* and seeing that when Hegel begins making Absolute Mind concrete he went to history and had that remarkable passage of not only **having freedom but being free.**⁴ That was the philosophic background to which my actual background, of course, was a combination of the events of the age and Marxism itself.

3) However, I had no conception that Marx had begun on that book also and where he had stopped at that moment (1844) since Grace, in her translation [of Marx's *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*], had given the last reference to the *Philosophy of Nature* and that is where I thought Marx had stopped. In, however, checking through everything all over again in the new translation, I found that Marx had begun already making the transition to the *Philosophy of Mind*. At the point where, toward the end of his essay on "The Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic," Marx says he will take it up in a moment but never got to taking it up, it is, to be precise, Paragraph No. 384 in the *Philosophy of Mind*.

NOW IN 1953, when I got around to taking up *Philosophy of Mind*, I said I will limit myself to certain paragraphs which I consider are most pertinent, in fact urgent, for our day. It now turns out that where I began is the very next paragraph to where Marx ended, for I began with Paragraph No. 385.

So now I have inserted in my copy, next to #384, this is where Marx ended, 1844; and next to #385, this is where I began, 1953. Do you wonder why I feel gay as a lark and as if I had been in communication with Karl? I swear there is such a thing as communication between the ages, not only in general as each generation inherits the civilization up to it, but in particular as a class and its thought develop its problems.

February 6, 1958

Out of your letter of the 21st, the great contribution comes way at the end: "Has the concept of theory to practice and practice to theory (i.e., the constant back and forth between each and from and to each) replaced that 'transmission belt' function of the second layer between first (theory) and third (practice) of old?"⁵ There seems to me a really fundamental and quite important difference of concept in the two." There is.

1. Marx's Early Essays refers to his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. Dunayevskaya was the first to publish an English translation of two of those essays, "Private Property and Communism" and "Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic," as Appendix A of her *Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today* (New York: Bookman, 1958).

2. Raya Dunayevskaya's letters of May 12 and 20, 1953 can be read in full in *The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism: Two Historic-Philosophic Writings by Raya Dunayevskaya* (News & Letters, Chicago, 1989).

3. "Grace" refers to Grace Lee Boggs, who was co-leader of the organization Correspondence Committees from 1951 to 1955, along with C.L.R. James and Raya Dunayevskaya.

4. See paragraph 482 of Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind*, translated by William Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971): "If to be aware of the idea—to be aware, i.e., that men are aware of freedom as their essence, aim, and object—is matter of speculation, still this very idea itself is the actuality of men—not something which they have, as men, but which they are."

5. C.L.R. James developed a theory of "three layers" where the term "first layer" referred to the "intellectual leadership" of a revolutionary organization; "second layer" referred to the "experienced politicians"; "third layer" referred to the rank-and-file workers, women, Blacks and youth who were seen as representing the masses outside the group.

On the historic-philosophic originality of Marxist-Humanism

It is not so much a question of one "replacing" the other. It is a fact that both the second layer and the first can no longer be "interpreters" of third's desires. First of all the third is itself moving to theory and that does not mean to accepting the theoretician's interpretations. Secondly, and this is the reason why we find it so hard to grow up to leadership responsibility, the theoretician must be as creative as the masses themselves. Within that framework, leadership responsibility is so constantly expanding a feature, so totally new, so demanding that if one would try to circumscribe it to a "transmission belt," either from the third to the first or the first to the third and outside, one would truly be left by the forward thrust of history into its dustbin.

LET'S CONSIDER this from the point of view of Hegel, Lenin and us. Hegel was dealing with pure thought, but so strong was the historic sense and Actuality that, almost without him knowing it, Practice stood higher than abstract cognition. Now if you take his analysis in its spontaneous form in his *Phenomenology of Mind* you find both the serf having "a mind of his own" and the philosopher's mind reaching Absolute Knowledge through the organization of thought. In its more organized form in Hegel's *Science of Logic*, Activity and Practice achieve unity of theory and practice, but he is dissatisfied with stopping at Absolute Idea as the Golgotha and so sends us back to Nature and then *Philosophy of Nature* sends us back to *Philosophy of Mind*. These, are parts of the *Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences*, which contains the *Science of Logic* abbreviated. But this Smaller Logic has something new the *Science of Logic* itself did not have—those three attitudes to objectivity and the third attitude, if you wish, is "retrogression" rather than dialectics.

Hegel is saying every time you have overcome empiricism and think you are moving to the Absolute, there is someone there who gets impatient and wants to get to it like a bolt out of the blue and he is the real "reactionary" (Hegel's own word to describe Jacobi).⁶ Therefore, let us not stop with Absolute Idea but go to Absolute Mind and for the mind, which represents both history and science, freedom is of the essence and this freedom is nothing abstract but human beings being free. So the man who has dehumanized the idea and made the development of consciousness, self-consciousness, reason float in abstractions, comes back to the simple individual who must be free, so free that there is no difference between the individual and the universal.

The vision is so grand that it is impossible to conceive of the fact that Marx was so afraid of the Absolute and its mysticism, and Lenin got it comfortably down to where it meant objective, and only we could see it and embrace it rather than fear it. Now we cannot shine either Marx's or Lenin's thoughts, so how come we are so "smart"? The answer, as we know, is the maturity of

6. Friedrich H. Jacobi (1743-1819), a German idealist philosopher of intuitionism criticized by Hegel.

the age. The trouble is that once we have said it we wipe our hands from the obligations this, in turn, puts on leadership.

LEADERSHIP TO LENIN had to mean something a damned sight more concrete and, while more serious, also more limited. The Bolsheviks now were running a sixth of the world and he had to be "practical." It was a tremendous thing to say our party is not free from the degeneration that attended other rulers, nor are we immune to the centripetal forces, and within our party you will find these three great social formations—reflections of them. Now if you look at C.L.R. James' interpretation of this, you can see he was saying: never mind the world, because "since" we represent all fundamental formations, "therefore" it is all within the party. So suddenly the attitude that mattered was not to objectivity, and Stalin's death became lesser than whether I was or was not "harsh" to Grace Lee Boggs and her substitute of exchange of hamburger recipes for a political analysis of what was at stake in 1953.⁷

Now, even where I repeated what seemed to be the same thing—it is us I want to analyze, not the world outside—the truth is: 1) I kept repeating that the greatness of Lenin, his "Will,"⁸ is not the three layers, but the party being checked by the non-party masses, and 2) when I said "us," I did not, therefore, mean the dialectic of the party outside of that objective relationship, but inseparable from us. That is why I was so elated about finding the "key" to Absolute Mind as being, not the dialectic of the party as in 1948,⁹ but "new society" as in 1953 when the masses were on the verge of breaking down the totalitarian walls of Stalinism. So that while Lenin was more concrete for his period and his needs, he was just too general for us—we had to go beyond.

The beyond was the new beginnings established by the 1953 revolts¹⁰ and the breakthrough in theory. You are absolutely right—creating a basis for those greater than us to join us isn't something we "give" to others because we so lack in any egotism—it is something we expect, anticipate, work for...

7. When Stalin died, Dunayevskaya, then a co-leader of Correspondence Committees, worked out a serious Lead article for the group's paper. When she submitted it, Grace Lee Boggs felt that the Lead should not be on Stalin's death, but rather on how a few women in one factory ignored the news of his death and traded hamburger recipes. Dunayevskaya wrote elsewhere that "Such an attitude towards a world event produced such a struggle between me and Grace, that it actually affected the whole" group. For more on this see microfilm numbers 10848—10851 in Supplement to the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection, Vol. XIII.

8. For a discussion of Lenin's "Will," see Raya Dunayevskaya's *Marxism and Freedom* (Columbia University Press, New York, 1988), pp. 205-209.

9. 1948 is a reference to C.L.R. James' manuscript, first called the "Nevada Document" and later published as *Notes on Dialectics* (Westport: Lawrence Hill & Co., 1980). See *The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism*, pp. 9-12 and pp. 23-24.

10. "The 1953 revolts" refers to the first mass uprisings from within Communist totalitarianism: the June 17, 1953 East German workers' revolt, and the July 1953 uprising in the slave labor camp at Vorkuta, Russia.

On the 40th anniversary of the June 17, 1953 East German Revolt, explore
"The Beginning of the End of Russian Totalitarianism" in

Marxism and Freedom from 1776 until Today by Raya Dunayevskaya



East Germany, 1953

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"The myth that the Russian totalitarian state is invincible was suddenly and strikingly shattered. On June 17, 1953, the workers in the East German satellite took matters into their own hands on the questions of speed-up. They moved speedily, confidently, courageously and in an unprecedented manner to undermine the puppet state.... Columns of strikers charged the main government buildings where the government bureaucrats cowered. Reluctant police moved into pre-arranged positions. Youth and workers tore down the symbols of Communist power—flags, posters, pictures of Communist leaders.... The East Germans wrote a glorious page in this struggle for they answered, in an unmistakable affirmative, Can man achieve freedom out of the totalitarianism of our age?" — Pages 249-251

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Philosophic Dialogue

Philosophy, organization and revolution

On Hegel's 'Third Attitude to Objectivity'

The special supplement published in the May News & Letters, "On the 40th anniversary of the philosophic moment of Marxist-Humanism," was a welcome and needed response to a problem troubling revolutionists worldwide: why, after four decades of mass rebellions and freedom movements, and at a time when new uprisings such as Los Angeles are never far from sight, is there such a failure to project a freely associated, human society as an alternative to capitalism? Both Raya Dunayevskaya's 1986 letters and Peter Wermuth's essay engaged this question in challenging ways.

I would like to comment on one philosophic issue taken up in the supplement which shed new light on this contemporary problem for me—the discussion of Hegel's category of "Third Attitude to Objectivity," added to his *Encyclopedia Logic* only in the last years of his life. It isn't a subject often discussed, even in the world of philosophy. A professor from the Hegel-Archiv in Bochum, Germany once told me that neither Marxist nor non-Marxist Hegel scholars had written much on the "Attitudes to Objectivity." Yet Dunayevskaya was "enamored" with them, because such a compression of all history's attitudes to objectivity was possible only after Hegel had "developed Absolute Knowledge, Absolute Idea, Absolute Method." She was especially drawn—from the 1950s to the end of her life—to Hegel's examination of the "Intuitionists," the "Third Attitude to Objectivity," where "retrogression appears as translucent as progression" and is "very nearly inevitable if ever one tries to escape retrogression by mere faith."

CRITIQUE OF 'IMPATIENCE'

Though, as Wermuth points out, Lenin "was no intuitionist," Dunayevskaya's discussions of Lenin's failure to develop, within his study of Hegel's Absolute Idea, his insight on the power of cognition to transform reality are linked to her analyses of revolutionaries of our day who fall into "Third Attitude to Objectivity" through her critiques of "impatience."

In her 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes," she had cited Hegel's attack on "that impatience whose only wish is to go beyond the determinate...and to be immediately in the absolute," as the moment "where we part from Lenin," who mentioned, but never developed his aphorism, "Man's cognition not only reflects the objective world, but creates it."¹

Twenty years later, writing about the "impatient ones of our day," the revolutionary generation of the 1960s, Dunayevskaya turned to the problem of "Intuitionism," writing that "such an attitude to objectivity would always recur when, in the process of battling contradiction, the Subject becomes impatient with the seemingly endless stages of negation it must suffer through, and therefore, instead, slides backward into Intuition."²

What accounts for the different impact that "impatience" in working out the objectivity of cognition had in Lenin's day and in ours? Wermuth argues that "skipping over the objectivity of cognition in his age left Lenin on the threshold of the Absolute, whereas doing so in ours sends you reeling backward into the arms of intuitionism." In pointing to the way history makes its presence felt on philosophic categories, Wermuth is reminiscent of Hegel's view in the chapter on "Third Attitude

to Objectivity," that the intuitionism of Descartes "gave rise to the sciences of modern times," while Jacobi's intuitionism, at the beginning of the 19th century, was a "retrogression."³

MAO'S PERVERSION OF MARXISM

"Retrogression" was the concept Dunayevskaya used to describe Mao Zedong's perversion of the Marxian concept of revolution in China of the 1960s. Much in "Mao Thought" may have sounded (especially to radicals outside China) as though it endorsed the objectivity of cognition. After all, this "Thought" was considered so "objective" that it could, at one and the same time, supplant Russia as leader of the Communist bloc and industrialize China with "backyard furnaces." With the "power of revolutionary thought," radicals were urged to "dare."

Unfortunately, as Dunayevskaya showed in her chapter on Mao in *Philosophy and Revolution*, this seeming glorification of the power of revolutionary ideas to transform reality was, instead, a "modern version of the intuitionist and voluntarist alternative to dialectics" (continued on page 10)

3. Hegel, *Encyclopedia Logic*, paragraph 77. In the English translation by William Wallace, Descartes' intuitionism is contrasted to Jacobi's. In Hegel's original German Jacobi's name does not appear; Hegel contrasts Descartes to "the modern standpoint." Wallace's quite "free" translation of Hegel's text on "Third Attitude" should be read with some caution. For further discussion of this point, see *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, microfilm #11270.

We need no parties

We perceive the growth of revolutionary consciousness through a network of free organisations that, in their totality, confronts the might of capital. This confrontation will be effective if the problem is perceived in all its horror without the medium of the party or scientific guru. We do not see any difference between worker and intellectual if we don't recognise the categories.

If we are to be truly revolutionary, we should avoid off-the-shelf political forms such as the party. The most effective political movements in history have always been spontaneous and citizen based...what W.H. Auden described as "that rare phenomenon in history, the people."

Despite the many attempts and opportunities to change society, Marxists or power groups calling themselves Marxist have failed utterly. The potential of Marxism to transform or modify the 20th century state structure is revealed as worthless, resulting in mere distortions and variations and extensions of capitalist state hegemony.

MARXISM MISUNDERSTOOD

The reasons for this may be: Marxism is invalid as a world-changing philosophy, or it is totally misunderstood by its practitioners and their followers. I prefer the latter case. The origin of ersatz Marxism occurred with the adoption of Engels' view of the state and his understanding of the dialectic. The influence of Engels had a direct effect on the early German Social Democratic movement and a following effect on Lenin. We all know the result of that.

Another reason for the divergence from Marxism was the apathetic and uncritical adoption of established political forms—forms that are extant within political society and the culture of the state—such as the party.

All Marxist groups, in or out of power, tend to be hierarchical in nature. Control from the centre or the executive is for reasons of efficiency, but in these groups the real motive is to maintain hierarchies. Each group will define and confine their activities in relation to other contending Marxist groups. The behavior of emergent and divergent Trotskyist tendencies confirms this. All relationships, behavior and activity are defined through "correct" interpretation of text—the immutable holy texts of the prophets, Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. Any attempt to change the ideology of these organisations is condemned as revisionism.

Furthermore, the language of Marxists has become so opaque as to be meaningless. This justifies the illiberal use of such categories as "workers" and "intellectuals." Such categories and language define more the class nature of organisation than society itself.

GENIUS OF WORKERS IN ACTION

The basic cell of civil and political society is the citizen. The full potential of the citizen can be realised without the intrusion of class attitudes, reified parties, organisations or terminology.

We can engage the citizen in world-changing activity if we use language that is as plain as possible without the agency of Marxist grammars and the distinction of class. Do not forget that the working class of the Paris Commune educated Karl Marx in new possibilities for social change. I am constantly amazed that Marxists are always amazed by the courage and genius of the working class in action. The only intellectuals in this business are the citizenry in action.

I do not predict what eventual political structures may be; the people will decide. To impose on this activity any political structures that are gleaned from a close reading of the holy texts of Marxism will result in aborted political action. Marxism is a revolutionary philosophy of action that should expect and support new, creative lines of action.

—John Yuill, Scotland

The practical order is never absolute

Editor's note: The letter of the prominent Hegel scholar, Louis Dupre, excerpted below was written on Sept. 15, 1986 to Raya Dunayevskaya in response to her letter of July 3, 1986 on her changing attitude to Lenin's interpretation of Hegel's Science of Logic. Dunayevskaya's letter was printed as part of the special supplement—"Working out the Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy: On the 40th anniversary of the philosophic moment of Marxist-Humanism"—in News & Letters, May 1993.

I have finally found the time to study the texts to which you refer in your long letter as well as your interpretation of them. Let me preface my own reflections by admitting that you know the *Logic* far more thoroughly than I do. So what I present here as my conclusions should be read with a critical mind.

1. I must confess that I had never paid much attention to the discrepancy between the end of the minor and of the major *Logic*. Yet I still do not see any conflict between the two. The "Idea of Cognition" does indeed lack the section on the will of the minor *Logic*. And in paragraph 235 Hegel does state that the practical will overcomes the one-sidedness of the theoretical. "This life which has returned to itself from the bias and finitude of cognition..." But he does not claim that the Absolute Idea consists in the achievement of the practical will; merely that it leads to the Absolute Idea. At least that is how I interpret paragraph 236: "The Idea, as unity of the subjective and objective Idea..." and "only this unity is the Absolute and all truth." Hence, neither *Logic* supports Lenin's interpretation.

2. Your own interpretation of the Absolute Spirit is a more complex issue. I do not think, though some interpreters do, that the Absolute Spirit can be so readily identified with the Absolute Idea as I thought you were willing to do. Be that as it may, I certainly agree that the "eternal Idea" is "ceaseless motion, the movement itself." But I no longer follow you when you call the eternal Idea "revolution in permanence." Your social interpretation is, in my opinion, not supported by Hegel's text. The entire concept of social revolution belongs to the practical order which itself is never absolute. I suspect that the real answer to your questions lies in the *Philosophy of Right*. In it Hegel clearly explains the full practical significance of the Idea (the State is the Idea) as well as the limitation of the practical order to the Objective Spirit. All Marxists tend to bring one into the other. But to do so requires a reduction of what Hegel places within the Absolute Spirit to a mere "ideology"—as Marx openly admitted. At that point, however, interpretation becomes transformation.

For all these reasons I would have difficulty accepting the conclusion of your letter on paragraph 577 [of *Philosophy of Mind*] as being an entrance into "the new society." I would rather read it as an entrance into philosophy...

—Louis Dupre

The crisis of the Left

Except for the specific references to Hegel, the section on Two Worlds in Opposition (in Peter Wermuth's essay, "A 1990s View of the 1953 'Letters on Hegel's Absolutes': Spontaneity, organization, philosophy," in *News & Letters*, May 1993) could have been lifted from a thousand conversations I've had. Particularly, "...if you have not faced the question of reconstruction on new beginnings, but only the destruction of the old, you have therefore reached only 'death—a death that achieves nothing, embraces nothing within its grasp.'" An excellent summary of one of the central frustrations that led me to seek out Hegel/philosophy.

Also, the explication of the ramifications of getting stuck at the Practical Idea couldn't be more accurate for targeting the crisis of the Left.

While I don't take the position of practice standing above theory, my concept of the subject is considerably informed by notions of social/material construction. So the question then becomes, is it possible to be anywhere but the threshold of the Absolute? Not that one would think the Practical Idea is where one should stop, but is it possible to think beyond, or rather within, the logic of an unrealized objectivity?

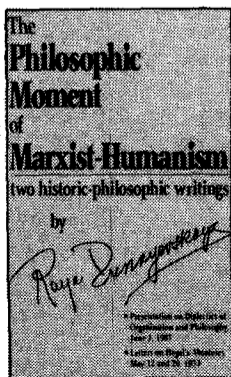
That question may be subsumed within "an objective world whose inner ground and actual persistence is the Notion," or the notion of the self-thinking idea, but whether I can be satisfied with that remains for me to work out. Maybe you could say more about that in relation to the concept of the dual motion of theory to practice and practice to theory.

So, while I am in complete agreement about the need to project (your word) a concept of human liberation and your assessment of the failings of the Left—its obsession with tactics irrespective of a philosophy of liberation—I'm not sure what the possibilities are of having a vision of a new society come through revolution unscathed, so to speak.

—Anne Zacharias-Walsh

The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism
two historic-philosophic writings
by Raya Dunayevskaya

"...I went [to Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind*], and precisely...on the question of what we called 'dialectics of the party,' specifying however, that I wasn't interested either in the mass party, which the masses will build, or in the elitist party, which we definitely oppose, but in what happens to a small group 'like us' who know that nothing can be done without the masses, and are with them, but they [small groups] are theoreticians and they always seem to be around too. So, what is the objectivity which explains their presence, as the objectivity explains the spontaneous outburst of the masses? In a word, I was looking for the objectivity of subjectivity."



—Presentation on *Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy* of June 1, 1987

Also includes *Letters on Hegel's Absolutes* of May 12 and 20, 1953

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SPONTANEITY, ORGANIZATION AND PHILOSOPHY

"Changed world" is the concept Raya Dunayevskaya used in the 1980s to describe the world of Reaganism's bombing of Libya and arming the contras in Nicaragua, as well as the counter-revolution arising from within the revolution in Grenada with the murder of Maurice Bishop that opened the door for the U.S. invasion. I have too often left these "facts" of the "changed world" just as facts, when what is needed is to see why all this compelled Raya to return to her 1953 Letters on Hegel's Absolutes. It became clear that working that out can't be separated from the history of today, ever since last year's L.A. rebellion. There's a pull in the community to deal with all the immediate problems, of police abuse, etc., and that's the reality, as I tried to show in the Lead last issue, that needs to be dealt with at the same time that we need to be working to illuminate in full the reality and the thought of our times.

Gene Ford
Los Angeles

Of special interest to me in Peter Wermuth's essay, "Spontaneity, organization, philosophy" (May N&L), is his section, "Lenin's Philosophic Notebooks Today" where he pays particular attention to what Hegel called the "insuperable contradiction" that afflicts the "Practical Idea," i.e., the separation of subject from object that is the premise of "willing" the world to become what it ought to be.

I was reminded that Hegel's critique of the intuitionists was their failure to grasp that the immediate was itself mediated. Until we grasp how the world came to be what it is, we won't change anything! That's why the essay ends with: "Our generation can rise to the challenge...when it roots itself not alone in the terrain of the present, but in those high points of past freedom struggles and thought which point a direction to the future."

Worker-intellectual
Los Angeles

A question after reading the essay in your special supplement: "A thin layer of Bolsheviks"—is that like being a little bit pregnant?

New reader
Chicago

I found the May News & Letters extremely interesting and was impressed with the contrast between the article by the Black women catfish workers and the philosophy in the supplement. It looked to me like you were trying to combine the work done along with the inroads into the philosophy behind it.

WAC member
Chicago

You can see in the 1983 Introduction to *American Civilization on Trial* that Dunayevskaya is showing the humanistic underpinnings of Black mass activity in U.S. history. Revolutionary Black thought was very important for Dunayevskaya in developing the philosophy of Marxist-Humanism. For nearly the same reasons Frantz Fanon spoke of the need for philosophy when he said: "The consciousness of self is not the closing of a door to communication. Philosophic thought teaches us, on the contrary, that is its guarantee..."

Maurice
Los Angeles

When I read the two letters Raya Dunayevskaya wrote to the non-Marxist Hegel scholars, printed in the May special supplement, I kept thinking about "leadership," even though she never used that term in those letters. By "leadership" I don't mean in the sense of "driving" others, but in the sense of working out the category that sees "masses as Reason."

If you look at Hegel's "three attitudes to objectivity" on the level of leadership, you find in the Second Attitude the vulgar materialism of would-be revolutionaries who look at people as something to move about, and at the "new society" as a given. With that attitude, when you confront a retrogressive period it rocks you off your feet. That becomes the path to what Hegel called the Third Attitude, where the revolutionary throws out method altogether. To me, that was

key to the letter where Dunayevskaya talks about Hegel's critique of Jacobi's faith which is without a body of objective truth (an organization of thought) in a physical organization. I see the need for both types of organization as organic to each other, and as an attitude to "leadership."

David Anderson
Chicago

One of Raya Dunayevskaya's most profound legacies is her critique of Lenin. Her July 3, 1986 letter presents her unique concept that Lenin, when conceptually confronted with the philosophic division of theory and practice, concluded that "practice" could resolve the separation. This, however, was no solution when the Russian Revolution was becoming transformed into its opposite. In our age, the consequences are much more extreme. But the philosophic context of this letter shows we can come to different philosophic, and hopefully historic, conclusions than did Lenin.

M. Holmes
Detroit

The object is not so immovable, but the force is irresistible; the clouds are on the horizon, and the storm is coming. Gene Ford's final paragraph in the Lead, "One year after the L.A. rebellion," challenges us to break new ground in working out Raya Dunayevskaya's visionary humanism or face the prospect of another incomplete movement. The latter, in Ford's words, would mean more oppression the day after the revolution. The whole Lead is a challenge to get it right this time or have the movement turn into its opposite.

Gabriel
Los Angeles

The city's attempt to "Rebuild L.A." is a concept to bring things back and rebuild things the way they structurally were. But nobody can address the internal problems of Blacks and Latinos which created the rebellion. To rebuild is not to change the lack of jobs, inadequate education and people's frustration with the political system.

Retired worker
Los Angeles

I have begun reading in Raya Dunayevskaya's *Marxism and Freedom and Philosophy and Revolution* and am getting a whole new perspective on history that is not part of any official history taught in the schools. Dunayevskaya's writing grips you. I was glad to see her say in P&R, about the 1960s, that it was the color Black that made that decade so exciting and to read her criticism of the racism among whites right within the movement that led to Black/white separation. She also points out that in the 1967 Detroit revolt there was the first appearance of Black and white solidarity.

I also saw for the first time Hegel's reference to the need to suffer the patience of the dialectic. That's a hard perspective to follow when one is filled with intense passion and rage; and I'm also learning about the Marxist-Humanist understanding of the limits of spontaneous rage. What distinguishes Marxist-Humanists is the depth of these ideas, but it takes time to understand the need for the patience to sit down with this philosophy, to work through why previous movements didn't make it to freedom.

African-American revolutionary
Los Angeles

POLITICAL PRISONER

Fred Hampton, Jr., has been sentenced to 18 years in prison for being who he is. Weeks ago, the prosecution was reported to have said blatantly, this man would be jailed because he is the son of Fred Hampton. But today, the radio reports the judge called Fred Hampton, Jr., "a terrorist." The trumped-up charges are an alleged fire-bombing during last year's "Bulls rebellion." Today, Fred Hampton, Jr., calls himself a "political prisoner," convicted because of his family's history.

White youth
Chicago

Readers' Views

WARSAW GHETTO UPRISING

The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising has been commemorated here in Chicago every year since the virtually defenseless Jews rose up in 1943 to fight the Nazi troops and inspired the world with their courageous revolt. The 50th commemoration on April 25, organized by the Mid-West Jewish Council, had special significance, not as an "anniversary," but because it was taking place at a time when new outbursts of anti-Semitism and racism have been seen throughout the world, and when the events in Bosnia have brought forth the visage of Hitler in still one more new form.

It was the todayness of the anniversary that News & Letters' participation in the memorial meeting sought to underline, beginning with the message we had contributed to the program booklet, which recalled that "so world-shaking had been that Uprising that Raya Dunayevskaya, writing on new revolutionary forces emerging out of World War II, titled her analysis at that time: 'All Roads Lead to Warsaw.'"

We invited all to read Rosa Luxemburg, *Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, quoting from it how Luxemburg's theory of the breakdown of capitalism came alive again when that breakdown led to the monstrosity of Nazism and "continues to come alive every time we are in a deep new crisis." The interest of the audience in that message was shown when several stopped to talk about News & Letters with us, and when the few copies of the book we had were bought from our hands.

Participants
Chicago

NEW BOOKS AND WOMEN'S LIBERATION

The book, *The Real Anita Hill*, which claims that no sexual harassment took place, is disgusting. But I'm also disturbed by Tony Morrison's book on Anita Hill and Clarence Thomas that Diane Lee reviewed in the April issue, since so much of the book is on Thomas and so little on Hill. It came out after a year in which there had been a great upsurge in women's militancy, but wasn't placed in that context. There didn't seem any relationship to the L.A. rebellion or the feminist rebellion. The real need is to hear women's voices, which is where Lee's review ended.

Graduate history student
Chicago

Thanks for alerting your readers to ask their libraries about the first-ever encyclopedia on *Black Women in America*. It really is a unique compendium. Beside being excellent for looking up questions, it seems to be the kind of encyclopedia one would want to sit down and read. I was not surprised to find Raya Dunayevskaya's name in the index. But I didn't expect to find it in the just released 5th edition of a work called *The Quotable Woman*, edited by Elaine Partnow. She includes three terrific quotes, including "The first act of liberation is to demand back our own heads."

Librarian
Detroit

GLASGOW DIALOGUE

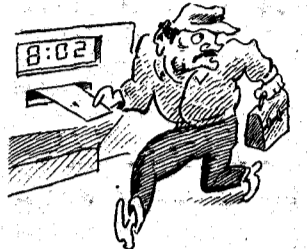
Gerard Emmett's review of my collection of lectures to the John MacLean Society (April N&L) was excellent. I especially liked his recommendation that people write to the various authors included to continue the dialogue. I also appreciated his recognition of youth today who might be drawn into anarchist circles. This is of importance here in

Glasgow, where an anarchist summer school is being organized which has drawn the attention of young anarchists worldwide.

I was puzzled, however, that he thought Tickten "rejects Hegel's (and Marx's?) concept of the relation of freedom and necessity." I thought he addressed the issue very well in the first part of his lecture under the subheading, "The Goal is Freedom." Perhaps the book would have been better if there had been a lecture on the relationship between Hegel and Marx.

Paul Smith
Glasgow

LABOR AND CAPITAL



At a recent News and Letters meeting on "Wage Labor and Capital in the 1990s," a man who had worked for McDonald's told us how the company steals what the workers call "McMinutes" from its employees. This is neither new nor isolated. Marx described this practice over 130 years ago, and just this week the courts have ordered Iowa Beef Packers to pay back wages to over 24,000 meat-packers for exactly the same thing. IBP was in the habit of making its workers walk to and from the knife room, wait to have their knives sharpened and clean the equipment at their work stations—all on their "own" time. The amount of back pay is estimated to exceed \$10 million. IBP should change its name to McPigs!

Jan Kollwitz
Chicago

I was speaking with a Black worker from a glass manufacturing place at the unemployment office. With over 20 years in the shop, she was laid off and an immigrant worker with only one year kept on the job. She was going to fight for her job; she's recording secretary of her USWA local. Except for her and the Local president, the whole shop is Latino now and none speak English. She didn't blame the workers for "taking her job" but the boss for taking advantage of the situation.

It reminded me of the article in the May issue of N&L on "Welfare puts American civilization on trial," where you see Black America's humanism reaching out to Latino America.

Labor writer
New York

On May 6 postal worker Larry Jaison walked into the Dearborn Post Office, killed one co-worker and wounded another before killing himself. An article in the Dearborn Letter Carriers' Union newsletter had warned that Dearborn was a ticking time bomb and had asked, "Management, are you listening?" The president of the National Association of Postal Supervisors had the gall to say that management was changing its style and that the killings in Dearborn and Dana Point, Calif. "were two little setbacks..." New machinery and the loss of 30,000 postal jobs in five years have created pressures that changes in "management style" won't be able to correct. But managers in other arenas of government are running scared. They have held unprecedented meetings to advise supervisors "how to talk to employees" and to identify Larry Jaison-types.

Susan Van Gelder
Detroit

BIGGEST L.A. GANG

The politician's attempt to demand "peace in the hood" when the Rodney King verdict came down rings hollow when these same politicians treated the gang truce between the Bloods and the Crips as if it was an evil that threatened the police department, which is the biggest and most ruthless gang in the city.

Black worker
Los Angeles

BOSNIA: QUESTIONS FOR THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT

The Editorial in the May issue was right about U.S. policy aiding the genocide in Bosnia. And it was right about the Women's Liberation Movement's insistence on defending the war victims of rape and naming it as a category of genocide, linking the atrocities in Bosnia today to the 200,000 "comfort women" in the Asian theater of World War II.

Women's liberationist Detroit

Because different empires occupied us at different times, we are Muslim, Serbs and Catholic. The conquerors came and went, but the people never changed.

Bosnian New York

Europe is basically a racist continent. They have been "ethnically cleansing" since the fall of the Roman Empire: Jews, Gypsies, and now Muslims.

Bosnian New York City

What I appreciated most in the Editorial on Bosnia was the last paragraph where you made clear not only that World War II didn't defeat fascism but that that isn't why that imperialist war was waged. And I completely agree that the only alternative to the barbarism we keep witnessing is the total uprooting of this society.

World War II generation New York

I know that News and Letters Committees are totally opposed to U.S. imperialism and its agenda for a capitalist world order. That's why I was disturbed, on reading your Editorial on

Bosnia in the last issue, at a possible misinterpretation that you may be calling for U.S. intervention there. I think its important that this possible misconception be clarified.

Andy Phillips Detroit

I was a Yugoslavian all my life and want these nations to co-exist in a confederation, but not under the hegemony of one over others. Bosnia had no choice but to declare independence. I am a Croat, but we are all Bosnians, just as the Danes said to Hitler, "we are all Jews."

Croat Historian New York



'YOU CAN'T KILL AN IDEA'

June 4 marks the commemoration of the bloody massacres at Tiananmen Square in 1989, when Deng Xiaoping attempted to behead the mass movement for democracy and freedom. But daring people are proving every day that it was not killed. While Beijing has released some well-known political prisoners, they have continued to hold and convict more. Despite this, a number of organizations continue to post leaflets or put out underground papers.

What might frighten Deng Xiaoping more than anything else are reports of revived discussions among dissidents within and without China, trying to reconnect with the Marxism of Marx. That remains revolutionary, in the U.S. as much as in China.

Student of China Illinois

NEW MISSISSIPPI VOICES

The report on the workers at Delta Pride in Mississippi was beautiful. I can't get over how they have 100 or 200 members to union meetings on a regular basis, even without flyers. The membership is obviously involved on a totally different level than anything I have seen. Our local is about the same size as the Delta Pride local, yet we usually have 20 members at our meetings.

AFSCME steward Chicago

I was very glad to see the article on the Delta Algebra Project. Bob Moses was my high school math teacher before he went South with SNCC, and years later I went to law school at U. of Michigan with Dave Dennis. I felt that what

they are doing must be very important politically, even if it seems like it's just "math"—those two people wouldn't be involved otherwise. Dave Dennis had a thriving law practice in New Orleans, and he gave it up to move back to Mississippi for this. I hope you have more Mississippi stories in N&L.

Lawyer Detroit

The part I like the best about the catfish workers' story was the way they left their jobs and went to work in another plant and successfully organized it, when the men from the international union couldn't. Those are tough sisters! If you are from Mississippi, you are often disrespected in the North. But the fact is that some of the best achievement, creativity and courage ever seen in this country has come from that state.

Ex-Mississippian Chicago

WHO SUPPORTS NEWS & LETTERS AND WHY

I think N&L may be the only periodical I read in its entirety, and my contact with it has provided an impetus to genuine thought—even while the rest of the past year has been mired in reformist and retrograde actions.

Professor Claremont, Cal.

Although I might not agree with or even understand everything in your paper, it is a valuable publication because of its truthfulness and loyalty to the theory and practice of Marxist-Humanism. I'm fascinated by Marxism but am still very ignorant of it, not having read any of the books you offer. But I think that your support of the working class is much needed, and your perspective, from the poor and working class around the world, is unique and much appreciated.

writing this I realize how valuable your publication is! Keep on printing! Being both poor and working class, we spend much of our time trying to keep our heads above water, with not much extra of anything to dedicate to your (our) cause. But here is my renewal and an extra \$10 to help you keep going.

Supporters Belleville, IL

News & Letters is the only paper that tells the truth!

Black welfare mother South Central Los Angeles

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Black/Red View

by John Alan

This June the New Jersey Educational Commissioner, Mary Fitzgerald, will take control of the Malcolm X Shabazz High School and the rest of the Newark, N.J. school system. Last spring the Oakland, Cal. School Board consented to the Latino community's demand that the curriculum of two middle schools be focused on Latino culture and history. Several years ago, African-American parents compelled Detroit's Board of Education to open three experimental African-centered schools.

What connects these three school districts together is the general knowledge that the public school systems of the inner cities are failing to educate Black and Latino students. The New Jersey officials have chosen to see this as a management problem, while Black and Latino parents see it as a cultural identity problem. Implicitly, what African Americans and Latinos are saying is that the crisis in their children's education is related to their own alienated condition as non-whites in the American society.

LEVELS OF THE PROBLEM

Mary G. Bennett, the principal of the Malcolm X Shabazz High School, caught the relationship between society and the crisis in Black education when she told the *New York Times* (5-5-93): "We're talking levels of a problem. One level is at school. The other level is community and society."

Ms. Bennett speaks from experience: she knows that it's very difficult to get Black students in an inner city slum school to take seriously science and math, or any other subject, when they bring into the classroom a myriad of raw realities created by poverty and racism.

The very existence of de facto segregated schools in inner city slums is in itself the consequence of the prevalence of Black poverty and the hostile nature of racial divisions in this country. The Urban League predicted in its annual report on *The State of Black America 1992* that between 1994 and 1995 the majority of African-American children will attend schools that are predominantly minority. In Illinois, 82.2% of Black students go to de facto segregated schools.

We know that these segregated schools are poor

Black Chicago protest

(continued from page 1)

murder capital of Chicago. However, it was only with the "United In Peace" gang truce that we have been able to go out here door to door to register people to vote, take people to vote and offer voter education.

It's time for our people to get real voter education. Over in Calumet City, where there's 80% Black voter registration, people don't turn out to vote. And yet, the police are hanging their kids at the police department. We have to educate our people on the power of the vote to change that kind of situation.

So, I don't understand what Sheila Lyne [Chicago city health commissioner and one of the targets of the protest] meant when she charged that the demonstration was "political." Anytime the city tries to sweep these things under the rug, it's political; and anytime we hold them accountable, it's political. This city works on politics.

This is the only country where people have to pay for health care. People have been 'buked all this time, and now they're opening their eyes and want their problems addressed. So, now when they demonstrate they see other things that are wrong with this society.

I came up during the '60s and was in a lot of demonstrations. People were intense and serious then, as they are now. That's what you saw down at City Hall on Friday. And we will have more demonstrations down there if we don't get a response from Daley, and so far we haven't. Another demonstration is imminent. We are not going to allow them to sweep this under the rug. The next time we go down there, there will be more density, more organization and more intensity.

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How is Black education related to freedom

schools; less money is spent on students per capita. For example in California, where the state is bound by both its constitution and law to provide equity in spending per pupil, regardless of the race or the wealth of a community, in Baldwin Park, a Black community near Los Angeles, \$595 is spent per pupil, while Beverly Hills spends \$1,244 per pupil. Jonathan Kozol called this a system of "Savage Inequality." Black Americans are getting an "education" which opens up no vision in the human spirit or an objective pathway out of poverty.

AFROCENTRIC ALTERNATIVE?

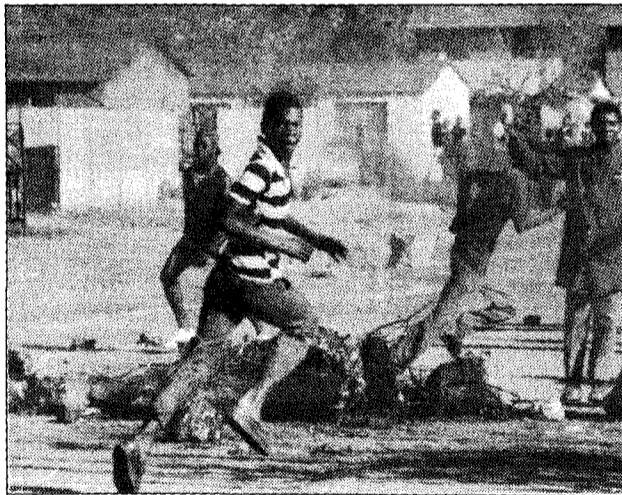
The question is: can Afrocentric schools, with their emphasis on cultural identity as the motivation to encourage Black youth to concentrate on mathematics and science, offer a valid alternative to the crisis in Black education? Put another way, can these schools, as many claim, provide the pathway out of poverty and economically regenerate the decaying inner cities by turning a new generation of Black youth on to mathematics and science?

First of all, the advocates of Afrocentric education fail to catch the central contradiction in their concept of Black public education, when the object of Afrocentrism becomes science. In their concept "science," and not the subjectivity of African "cultural identity," becomes the force of transformation.

There is nothing wrong in encouraging Black youth to study math and science, but to project it as the magic language that will open new economic doors for African Americans in a capitalist high-tech society creates an illusion. It fails to understand that the growth of technology in the production of commodities reduces the amount of human labor power needed and, at the same time, the rate of capital accumulation. This creates permanent unemployment and a constant hunger for capital. Marx called this the general law of capitalist accumulation.

The general law of capitalist accumulation is the true source of African-American poverty and social dislocation in the inner cities, which is a permanent reality of life for many Black youth. The Los Angeles revolt last year had its deepest origins in that reality. It was a revolt against that reality. Every Black mass revolt contains within it an element of the "absolute," i.e., it wants an absolute change in class and race relationships in this country, including education. At this moment, we have arrived at a new crossroads in the meaning of Black education. It is no longer an issue of integration, which didn't happen, or even curriculum. The question is: how is education to be fundamentally related to Black freedom?

'Transition to democracy' in South Africa



Youth in Katlehong township flee police.

(continued from page 1)

settlement," in 1989, it has been the de Klerk government, not the ANC, that has held the initiative. The long list of agreements, minutes, accords, etc., has merely served as a political screen for the government to stall and entrench itself, while destabilizing the liberation movement. It has also had the effect of feeding the illusions of the leadership of the ANC that state power lies just within its reach.

TWO STRATEGIES IN DISARRAY

The ANC's call for a "constituent assembly," a political chimera in which such Left parties as Neville Alexander's Worker's Organization for Socialist Action have also taken frenzied indulgence, was critically assessed in *African Affairs* only last year:

"The argument that a constituent assembly would ensure democracy because delegates would be democratically elected was untenable given the existing conditions of violence and destabilization. No fair elections could be held under such conditions. It was also far from certain the elected delegates would represent the will of the people in drafting the constitution. The Namibian experience demonstrated that elections did not ensure grassroots democracy. While national elections legitimized the Namibian constituent assembly, the elected delegates operated much like an all-party conference, often behind closed doors without much contact with the electorate." (See Rantete and Giliomee, "Transition to De-

Remember Latasha Harlins!

Los Angeles, Cal.—My involvement in the movement is new. It only started after my niece Latasha was murdered. I've found that a lot of politicians and organizations that came out at first for this case have exploited the issue of Latasha Harlins; they've exploited her death. They didn't do the right thing in regards to the people or to Latasha's family. We've been lied to, robbed, exploited, confused. Then you turn on the news and see that L.A. Police Chief Willie Williams is spending over \$1 million to fund new riot gear, new weapons—taser guns, bullets.

In his State of the Union speech, President Clinton said he wants 100,000 more police on the streets, and all the mayors now are talking about wanting more police officers. But what about jobs? People are being laid off, companies are closing down. Clinton also talked about the "crime wave" and separating the "hardened criminals" from those with no records. Well, Soon Ja Du [the store owner who killed Latasha Harlins] had no previous criminal record. But she said she would do the same thing again, and Judge Karlin just ignored that.

The court treated Rodney King and Latasha like they were the criminals. A man recently received one year in prison for stomping on some poor cat, but Latasha's murderer got no time. Black life is so devalued. Latasha was not involved in gang activities as they said after her murder. She was active in the community; she was a counselor to her peers; she was involved with the church; she had dreams to become an attorney. She knew her history very well and could communicate with others. But they continue to put forth these racist stereotypes about Blacks.

And I have to say that our own leadership has not come through. The churches collect big-time dollar bills, but they have not put that money back into the community for counseling, for recreation centers.

To deal with Latasha's case is to deal with a can of worms. Our phones are tapped. People have tried to infiltrate our group and have put false ads in the newspaper, pretending to be us. I've been offered money to sit back and not do anything.

But we'll continue with the struggle. We're initiating another recall of Judge Karlin. We need 270,000 signatures. And we want to bring in a foundation in the name of Latasha and set up a community center that would have entrepreneurial programs and programs to deal with cultural conflicts. That's what "Rebuild L.A." should be about, creating community-based centers for the youth. There is nothing for the youth in the community. Clinton proposed some minimum wage jobs, but that won't do a lot.

These problems come from what the judiciary, the politicians, the police, the preachers, and the media created. But I'd say we have to give ourselves some blame, too, because for too long we've let them get away with what they do.

—Denise Harlins

mocracy through Transaction?: Bilateral Negotiations Between the ANC and NP [National Party] in South Africa," *African Affairs* 91, 1992, pp. 531-32.)

What has also met with dismal failure is the South African Communist Party's (SACP) strategy of "transition through regime collapse," or the so-called "Leipzig option," which believes that getting millions of demonstrators out in the streets will topple a shaky government, as occurred with the collapse of communism in East Germany. This is what SACP's Ronnie Kasrill tried to engineer in the so-called "independent homeland" (sic) of Ciskei last fall with such disastrous consequences when the South African-backed puppet regime of Brig. Oupa Gqozo opened fire on marchers.

Following its historical role of playing both sides of the street and the alley too, the SACP is a principal player in the strategy of "negotiated settlement" (the Stalinist doyen Joe Slovo being the acknowledged master of compromise in the ANC's collaboration with the government), while at the same time playing its usual misleadership role within the liberation movement.

UNDECLARED CIVIL WAR

However, where the ANC has had little success in putting the de Klerk regime on the defensive, the government's own internal contradictions, between the architects of "reform" and those too entrenched in the military-state apparatus to countenance even the slightest reform, have opened significant fissures in the power structure. Some of the major players in the government have resigned recently, key among them Barend du Plessis, the finance minister, and Gerrit Viljoen, the NP's chief ideologue and head of constitutional affairs.

The ANC has entered its fourth year of negotiations with the apartheid regime of F.W. de Klerk. It has concluded a vague agreement for multi-ethnic elections sometime in March or April of 1994. It has bargained for state power at the high price of massacre, assassination and the political disillusionment of the people. It has watched as apartheid assumed a new guise and has had to confess to the masses that there are no prospects of ending their economic suffering in the foreseeable future. It has negotiated a "transition to democracy" that has been bloodier than any previous period in the history of the liberation movement, than even the genocidal policy of "ethnic cleansing" now underway in Bosnia.

The ANC has entered the fourth year of an undeclared civil war that it has done more to deny exists than to fight.

Editorial

Clinton, environmentalist — not!

The dramatic arrest of 50 people in front of the White House, May 17, as they stopped traffic to protest the WTI incinerator in East Liverpool, Ohio, shatters any illusions that President Clinton's promise of "the most ambitious environmental cleanup...of our time" meant anything. It came at the end of a nationwide bus protest-tour and a March sit-in inside the White House.

Under the Bush administration, the Environmental Protection Agency illegally issued a permit for the facility, which will likely be emitting dioxin, mercury, lead and other poisons, and sits in a flood plain just a few hundred yards from numerous homes and a school.

After being elected Vice President, Al Gore promised to block its opening, but once in office the Clinton-Gore administration failed to take any action. As Terri Swearingen, one of the protest organizers, asked, "Where is the change? There is no difference between Bush and Clinton."

Why is it so seemingly impossible for the administration to fulfill its promises on the environment, even one as simple as suspending an illegal permit? Part of the answer lies in the rulers' fear before the weakness of the economy.

CAPITALIST PRODUCTION SAPS ECOLOGY

While Clinton-Gore argued during the campaign that a healthy environment is an indispensable basis for a sound economy, their actions in office reflect the Reagan-Bush doctrine that environmental protection is an obstruction, a cost, which must be reduced to the minimum. The drive of capitalist society is towards ever expanding production, and its tendency is to destroy any barrier to that. Even with "Ozone Man" in office, for every dimension of the ecology that is protected, a hundred more go by the wayside.

The number of environmental problems that just keep festering is enormous. Take just the single question of waste. Protests against incinerators are growing not only in East Liverpool but across the country. What the protests have now achieved is an 18-month freeze on new hazardous-waste incinerators, though not on municipal or medical-waste burners. But incinerators are still a prime part of the master plan for dealing with toxic waste.

Ever since the story of Love Canal broke in the 1970s, politicians have been scrambling to give the impression that toxic waste is being handled. They have trotted out scientists with dubious evidence that the waste really isn't so dangerous, and at the same time tried to sell us their latest panacea. The panacea of the day is incineration, combined with covering up some sites with dirt.

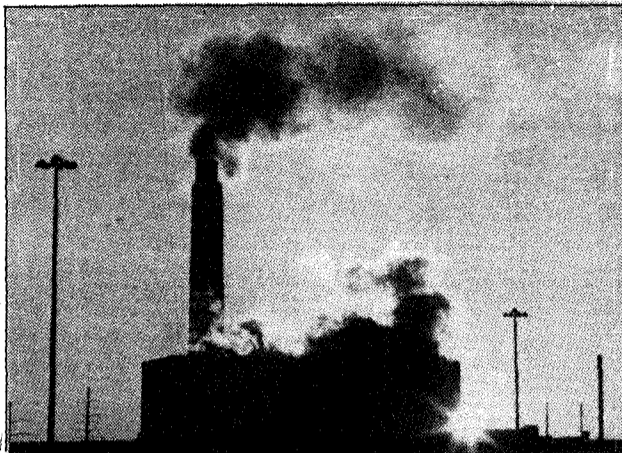
TOXIC WASTE AND TOXIC RACISM

The goal is always to appear to have the problems under control. Meanwhile, there are thousands of toxic waste sites across the land, many of them abandoned, where the waste is left sitting—and leaching into the soil, air and groundwater. Where these dumps are shown that decisions on waste disposal are not based on

"objective" science: the main determinant of their locations is the proportion of Blacks, Latinos, Asian Americans and Native Americans living nearby.

This is not only true of the older dumping grounds such as Emelle, Ala., and the south side of Chicago. The favored target of waste management companies currently is Native American reservations, like Dilkon, Ariz., where the Navajo turned down an offer of \$100,000 plus a hospital in exchange for allowing a toxic waste incinerator to be built there.

The approach to nuclear waste is similar: out of sight



Detroit's waste incinerator - the world's largest.

out of mind, get it in the ground where no one can see it, so we won't think about it—so what if one of the government's own top scientists demolishes its claims that the Yucca Mountain burial site is safe?

That is how capitalism deals with these problems: the point is to get on with the business of production. And no matter how many times we are told that it is our "consumerism" that is totally responsible for the burgeoning waste, over 98% of all the waste comes, not from our households, but from factories, mines, mills, oil and gas wells, power plants and cement kilns. It is the protests that reveal the human response, the rage and the rethinking:

How can you ask us to accept these poisons in the midst of our homes and schools? Do you really expect us to trust the same people and institutions that told us not to worry about atomic bomb testing, about nuclear power, about asbestos? Why must it always be a question of accepting these hazards and finding the least lethal, or just easiest, way to handle them, rather than rejecting a kind of society that only lives by destroying life on our planet, including human life?

There is no technological solution to the poisonous effects of production for production's sake. The irrationality of a system that lives by destroying the basis of life can only be overcome through revolutionary change that creates new human relations so that production is determined by human needs, not the other way around.

Multiculturalism—the debate continues

I like much of what I read in N&L and appreciate the clear commitment to building a better and just social world. I belong to Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), and believe that we share not only fundamental values, but also overlapping views of imperialism, racism, and the many forms of impoverishment that capitalism imposes. Of course there are differences too.

I know you will agree that it is important for us to understand perspectives other than our own accurately. I want to discuss one instance of misunderstanding.

The article I have in mind is "Black/Red View: Logic of Multiculturalism," which appeared in the January/February 1993 issue of N&L. The author has obviously thought a lot about this matter, and some of his points are well taken. The meanings of multiculturalism are many and complex. At its best, multiculturalism affirms the value of diverse cultural traditions, capable of enriching us all—an ideal that is quite in keeping with an internally contradictory, forever-unfolding Hegelian reality of differences. These utopian prospects of multiculturalism are overlooked in the article mentioned above, which, it seems to me, oversimplifies and misrepresents its subject.

The author refers to recent articles by Gates, Marable, and Asante in *The Black Scholar* and adds that he will focus on Gates, "because Gates gives a fuller description of the logic of multiculturalism." The problem with this is, first of all, that it is false; Marable deals with multiculturalism as explicitly and extensively as does Gates. Second, in concentrating on the Gates article, the author considers arguments that are not representative of the spectrum of multiculturalist views.

The author of the N&L article claims that "Theoretically, they [the multiculturalists] see no organic connection between cultures and the existing mode of production and the social division of labor it creates. Thus, they are oblivious to the alienating character of all existing cultures and the contradictions of class and sex they contain." Again, this is mistaken. Marable, for instance, in his article on multiculturalism, argues that "The moral poverty in contemporary American society is found, in part, in the vast chasm which separates the conditions of material well-being, power and privilege of some vs. others. The evil in our world is politically and socially engineered, and its products are poverty, homelessness, illiteracy, political subservience, race and gender domination." Nor do all multiculturalists fail to see

shortcomings in their own cultures of origin. In an article in the same issue of *The Black Scholar* that the N&L author discusses, Darlene Hine, for instance, criticizes the male-oriented "androcentric bias in Black history."

The Gates article itself is not characterized accurately by the N&L author, who asserts that "multicultural theory" rests on two premises, first that Black scholarship is thriving on college campuses, and second that "by the middle of the 21st century half of the population of the U.S. will consist of people of color. Such a radical demographic change, according to Gates and Marable, will compel the nation to rethink its attitude to race and culture. The logic of this story ends in a hypothetical society where all cultures and ethnic traditions are practiced equally with the now dominant so-called Greco-Roman, Judeo-Christian culture."

This reading of Gates' argument is problematic on several counts. First, neither Gates nor Marable suggest that demographic change could compel the nation to change. The careful reader of their texts will find that the claims they make are considerably less sweeping than this. Second, Gates himself balances his optimistic remarks about the success of Black studies in the academy with a review of negative trends, including the increasing frequency of racial incidents on college campuses, the decline in black enrollment, and the high attrition rate of black students. Omitting all of this, as well as other complexities that Gates acknowledges and discusses, the author of the N&L article distorts Gates' argument beyond recognition.

All of us sometimes misunderstand and might even vilify those with whom we disagree. Freud explained this partly in terms of a "narcissism of small differences," whereby members of a group affirm their boundaries and identity by stressing the uniqueness of their beliefs and practices. If we look at the wide spectrum of political belief in this country, we can see that N&L and DSA are neighbors—which might incline us all the more to misunderstand one another and to make sure that the barriers separating us remain firmly in place. I hope that we can at least recognize, if not overcome, this logic. Does not the left-Hegelian tradition value the ongoing evolution and communication of diverse cultural and political identities? That is what multiculturalism means to me.

Raymond Barglow
Berkeley, Cal.

Elections in Paraguay

Paraguay, the last South American country to attempt a transition from a military regime to democracy, experienced its first presidential elections May 9 under an ominous cloud of state intervention. Despite repeated assurances from outgoing president General Andres Rodriguez that the elections would be clean and fair, the ruling Colorado Party, in power since 1947, took steps to preserve its rule through 1998. Their efforts were rewarded as Juan Carlos Wasmosy, a "Colorado" who was not favored to win, got more than 40% of the vote.

The sense of euphoria at finally being able to elect a civilian president was shattered a day before the elections as the military invoked a virtual state of siege by closing the borders with Argentina and Brazil and shutting down the international airport in the capital, Asuncion. More than 500,000 Paraguayans live in Argentina alone, and it was the Colorados' fear that many would return on election day and vote for the opposition. Apparently their paranoia was not unfounded, as thousands of citizens were reported to be standing in front of the massive deployment of troops shouting: Queremos votar, queremos votar! (We want to vote!)

AT THE HEAD OF THIS maneuver to maintain military power over the Executive stands General Lino Oviedo, who occupies a top post formerly held by Andres Rodriguez before he led the 1989 coup against the former dictator Stroessner. Lino Oviedo recently spoke of co-government "for centuries" with the Colorado Party.

In addition to the blockade at the borders, the Colorados prohibited the participation of the "guardians of democracy" (volunteer citizens organized by the press to observe the voting process) and refused journalists permission to interview voters as they left the ballot box. Both restrictions were sanctioned by the Church. An opposition radio/TV station in the capital was bombed the morning of the vote, and the main computer system for tallying votes mysteriously lost its power during the day. About the only thing that wasn't tampered with was Jimmy Carter, who, ignoring the above, declared the elections to be clean, as he witnessed over 90% of voting places to be "operating normally!"

THE CLIMATE OF FEAR created by the ruling party for the elections was carefully cultivated. For months the country had been bombarded with warnings of possible coups, primarily from the ruling party itself, if the Colorados weren't victorious. These threats, together with the recent state of siege, were "necessary" on the government's part for two reasons: the unpopularity of Wasmosy, and the frontrunner Guillermo Caballero Vargas' opposition to the military.

Wasmosy is one of the wealthiest businessmen in the country, having made a fortune off the construction of the Itaipu dam, the world's largest hydroelectric plant, which set off some of the largest land dislocations and peasant revolts in recent Paraguayan history. Caballero Vargas, the social democrat who favors neoliberal reform, has spoken of the need for the military to "return to their barracks" to allow a transition to democracy.

The fact that the transition has clearly aborted is not the worst news; it is the fig leaf of democracy that the Colorados are now holding, together with the silence on the part of the U.S. in face of such blatant militarizing of "free" elections, that portends a troubling next five years.

—Mitch Weerth

Argentina's anti-labor laws

Despite the repression suffered from the dictatorship trying to annihilate it, and the "nationalization" of the trade unions during Peron's government in order to co-opt it, the labor movement in Argentina has achieved through its struggles some of the most progressive labor legislation in the Americas.

Today, the historic achievements of Argentinian workers are again threatened by the aggressive neoliberal economic policies of the Peronist government headed by Menem. The new labor "reform" (labor "flexibility"), which was sent to Congress on May 1, is so reactionary that even the union bureaucrats of the General Confederation of Labor are calling for a general strike.

Among the amendments to the current Labor Contract Laws is the creation of transitory three-year contracts (previously the duration of the contract was indefinite) to lower the cost of firing employees, following the model imposed by Spain's social-democratic government (today, the unemployment rate in Spain is the highest in Western Europe: 18%).

Another point in the new law is the flexibility of working hours. The workers must work up to ten hours a day if the employer deems it necessary. During periods when there is less activity in the business cycle, company workers will work fewer hours. In this manner, the effective annual labor-time will, at the end, be reduced (while the worker will be exploited more) to decrease the cost of labor for the companies.

Vacation days will be determined by companies without taking into account seniority. The companies will determine when workers can take vacations.

Because of the necessity of increasing productivity and reducing its cost, the transnational "Argentinian" capitalists, and the guardian of their interests, Menem's Peronist government, exploit and repress the masses of workers and their organizations more and more. On May 1, Worker's Day, the national government decided to "celebrate" by justifying the layoff of 15,000 rail workers and 1,000 subway workers. Argentinian capitalism is only digging its own grave.

—Carlos

Bosnia crisis exposes Achilles heel of western "civilization"

(continued from page 1)

Croats responded by unleashing their own "ethnic cleansing" of Muslims in the area of Mostar to make sure they obtain the areas promised them under Vance-Owen.

As one reporter in the field noted, "The warring parties, particularly the Serbs and Croats, interpret the [Vance-Owen] peace plan, and the map of Bosnia that breaks the country into 10 powerful provinces, as a license for ethnic cleansing."²

Indeed, throughout this crisis the UN has taken the ground of Serbian aggression, as seen with its response to the Serbian siege of Srebrenica. Instead of breaking the siege, the UN is evacuating its residents to other areas—precisely what the Serbs want, as part of ridding eastern Bosnia of its Muslim residents.

Those who call for more UN intervention in Bosnia would be well advised to pay closer attention to how this "den of thieves" has managed to take actions which dove-tail with the genocidal policy of ethnic cleansing.

The same can also be said of the U.S. In early May Clinton said he favored arming the Bosnians and initiating air strikes against Serbian positions. By the end of May, Clinton showed less interest in this and admitted that the U.S. does not aim to roll back Serbian aggression. The U.S. will instead send a small contingent of troops to patrol the Serbia-Macedonia border to help "contain" Serbia.

Clinton's position, in part, flows from Russian resistance to military action against Serbia. Yeltsin has repeatedly tried to soften the impact of UN sanctions against Serbia and does not favor U.S. military intervention. On May 20, Clinton agreed to a Russian request that Serbs not be pressured to withdraw from the parts of Bosnia which they conquered from Croats and Muslims over the past year.

Of even greater importance in shaping U.S. policy has been the "advice" of the European allies, who oppose air strikes and lifting the arms embargo on the Muslims. One French official put it, "We aren't going to accept an Afghanistan on the border of Italy." As Thomas Friedman reported in the *New York Times* of May 9, "If given a choice between widening the conflict by lifting the arms embargo and engaging in air strikes, or simply letting the Serbs win, the Europeans would probably quietly prefer a Serbian victory. They just do not want to say that out loud."

In signing on to the "safe haven" proposal, Clinton has endorsed precisely this approach. The U.S. will now present itself as a "protector" of refugees while doing nothing to stand in the way of the Serbian effort to extend its "living space" in Bosnia.³

As a result, the multi-ethnic character of Bosnia, wherein Serbs, Croats and Muslims lived together and shared a common heritage for decades, now verges on destruction. The annihilation of an entire people, the Muslims of Bosnia, is now a real possibility.

HITLER'S VISAGE

How could such a situation possibly arise? The crucial moment leading to today's events is 1986-87, when Slobodan Milosevic, longtime Communist and future leader of Serbia, moved to stir up nationalist sentiment by arguing for the abolition of the autonomous status of Kosovo, 90% of whose inhabitants are Albanian. This effort to stoke up narrow nationalism from the top as part of a conscious ploy by the Communists to maintain their hold on power in the face of the total discrediting of Communism was continuous from 1986-87 to today.

This needs special emphasis given the false notion that the current crisis is rooted in "ancient tribal feuds and animosities." While there is an historic basis for Serb-Croat hostility, it is hardly "ancient," dating primarily to World War II. Yet that event hardly explains the reason for today's crisis.

As one analyst noted, today's conflict is "not driven by irreducible historical or ethnic differences. Rather it was ignited by nationalist ideologues who turned the narcissism of minor difference into the monstrous fable that the people on the other side were monstrous killers...consciousness of ethnic differences only turned into nationalist chauvinism when a discredited Communist elite began manipulating nationalist emotions in order to cling to power."⁴

The resurgence of narrow nationalism thus hardly came "naturally" to the countries of the former Yugoslavia. It took four years of continuous work by the former Communist rulers to stoke up the narrow nationalism which so much defines the landscape of the area today.

In a word, it is a specific expression of the "changed world" which emerged from the collapse of Communism.

The collapse of Communism did not take the same form in Yugoslavia as elsewhere in East Europe, as the Communists were not removed from power by a popular movement (as in East Germany or Czechoslovakia) nor was there the instant collapse of the Communist Party as occurred in Russia in 1991. Yet as in the rest of East

Europe and Russia, Yugoslav Communism encountered a profound economic-political crisis in the 1980s.

The depth of this crisis forced the Communists to embark on a change of ideology. The ability of the former Communists to maintain their hold on power through this change of ideology resulted from: 1) the fact that no uprooting of the class relations underlying their rule emerged, and 2) the collapse of Communism corresponded with a breakdown in the effort to project an emancipatory alternative to Communism from the Left. The resulting void left an open field for Serbian and some Croatian rulers to promote the basest forms of narrow nationalism.

As Drago Roksandic has argued, "The most important aspect of the explanation of Yugoslavia's collapse is this: Yugoslavia is above all the victim of the lack of a common vision of the future....There must be an authentic, humanist alternative to the collapse of the communist paradigm. The huge responsibility for that is both ours and yours."⁵

One writer has described where this has led: "The



Bosnians and supporters demonstrating at U.N.

war is reducing us to one dimension. Before, I was defined by my education, my job, my ideas, my character—and yes, my nationality too—now I feel stripped of all that....The ideology of nationhood has been turned into something like an ill-fitting shirt—you might not like it, but there is nothing else to wear....Before this war started, there was perhaps a chance for Croats to be persons and citizens first, then afterward Croats. The last twelve months have taken away that possibility."⁶

WESTERN CIVILIZATION ON TRIAL

Given the carnage in former Yugoslavia, why has the West shown such complicity in Serbian genocide? Much is explained by its fear of today's economic crisis. Germany's economy is in near free-fall, Britain is experiencing near-record levels of unemployment, and France is in deep recession. The depth of the economic crisis in the U.S. is likewise no secret.

Given their effort to get their own economic houses in order, the rulers of West Europe and the U.S. are in no rush to get involved in extensive military operations in Bosnia—especially if it's "just" for the sake of saving a multi-ethnic society from destruction. The multi-ethnic character of Bosnia has never held the attention or concern of the Western powers, precisely because it does not fit the mold of the narrow nationalist politics upon which each of them is based.

In a word, state-capitalist imperialism takes the same ground as Hitler's visage, even when it claims to pose itself in opposition to it. Which is why we never take calls for U.S. military intervention as our ground of opposition to genocide, just as we do not evade the issue of genocide with empty slogans like "all hands off Yugoslavia." We instead root ourselves in a very different ground, one provided by the forces of freedom and the idea of freedom.

IS THERE A WAY OUT?

There are forces of opposition residing within today's Bosnian tragedy to build on. They can be found in the way the international women's liberation movement has brought out the horrifying reality of mass rape in Bosnia and mobilized actions against it; in the Bosnian peoples struggle for national independence, which is in dire need of material support, including military; in the emergence of anti-war groups in Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia. And they can be found in the effort to combat the destruction of the multi-ethnic character of Bosnia.

As Mary Kaldor reports, "There are many people within the former Yugoslavia and in the refugee camps who still want to live in multi-ethnic communities." This was expressed at the Citizens and Municipal Peace Conference last November in Ohrid, Macedonia, which called for "the creation of international protectorates, or protected zones, for multi-ethnic communities." This proposal "goes well beyond the deployment of peace-keeping troops; it implies international involvement of different kinds, for example, in hospitals, schools, and workplaces...in order to prevent ethnic discrimination and to reconstruct a normal environment so that refugees can return to their homes."⁷ Needless to say, the West has ignored such efforts, as seen in its very different idea of "safe havens" which preserve the results of Serbian "ethnic cleansing."

All the more reason, then, for us to listen to these

voices. In addition to major cities like Sarajevo and Tuzla, Bosnian towns like Trebinje have a multi-ethnic peace movement "which has received no news coverage or other recognition." Even in Banja Luka, capital of Serbian-controlled Bosnia, "a small multi-ethnic group has formed to pursue the idea of peaceful coexistence." Instead of acting as if the Bosnian struggle for national self-determination is no different than Serbian narrow nationalism, we need to seek out and support such efforts. As Vensa Pestic, director of the Center for Anti-war Action in Belgrade said, "How many troops did Havel command during his period of imprisonment? Who is going to build democracy if our words are both silenced by our regimes and ignored by the outside democratic world?"⁸

Despite such voices, the pathway out of the current crisis is not easy to discern, precisely because the Serbs are already so close to winning. This no doubt explains why many are pulled toward U.S. military intervention as a "solution." It also explains why many trying to resist this have a hard time projecting an alternative path out of the crisis.

Yet instead of fleeing from it, staring this difficulty in the face can tell us much about how to respond to today's "changed world." For the crisis in Bosnia represents an extreme demonstration of how difficult it is to concretely project a revolutionary alternative when the void in articulating a concept of human liberation remains so unfilled.

Far from allowing this to lead to quiescence, our actions in solidarity with Bosnia need to intensify at the same time as we become participants in trying to fill that philosophic void. The importance of this was recently brought out in a discussion on "The Break-up of Czechoslovakia" at the University of California, Berkeley, where one participant asked:

"Given the failure of even independent Marxism to root itself in the masses, and given the ability of narrow nationalism to percolate through all layers of the populace in Eastern Europe, how can the effort to reconstitute a critical, humanist Marxism pose a pole of attraction against today's narrow nationalism?"

The crisis in Bosnia calls on us to intensify the kind of dialogue which can probe into the many unresolved questions presented to us by the present historic moment.

—May 22, 1993

8. See Richard Caplan's column in the *Christian Science Monitor*, May 4, 1993, and "Centuries-old ethnic hatreds in former Yugoslavia are a myth" by Erik Gordy, in *The Oakland Tribune*, March 16, 1993.

Hegel and objectivity

(continued from page 5)

transform reality was, instead, a "modern version of the intuitionist and voluntarist alternative to dialectics" which "led down a retrogressionist path of primitive accumulation of capital." Dunayevskaya directly linked Mao's perversion of Marxism to Hegel's category of "Third Attitude to Objectivity."⁴

A reading of *Philosophy and Revolution* together with the supplement in last month's *News & Letters* underlines, at least for me, the all-too-easy slide that even the most committed revolutionaries can take, from what sounds like "singling out the power of cognition" to falling into a voluntarist expression of Third Attitude to Objectivity. It may therefore be not only insufficient, but potentially disastrous, to hold up Lenin's expression, "Cognition not only reflects the world, but creates it" without, as Wermuth put it, "manifesting proof of the objectivity of cognition." The most difficult, and urgent, question therefore becomes: how to manifest such proof?

PRINCIPLES AND ORGANIZATION

Wermuth argues, in what is for me the most thought-provoking comment in the essay, that "It isn't organization 'as such' that's at issue as much as the labor of giving organizational expression to the dialectic of negativity." In Dunayevskaya's 1986 letter on "Third Attitude to Objectivity," she said that she saw in Hegel something she had not seen before on organization: "The dialectical relationship of principles (in this case the Christian doctrine) and the organization (the Church) are analyzed as if they were inseparable."

Naturally, Dunayevskaya wasn't interested in "the Church," but in the relationship between "organization" and "principles" as Hegel posed it from his vantage point and as Marx posed it from a very different perspective in his *Critique of the Gotha Program*. From our vantage point today, facing a profoundly "change world" ideologically as well as economically, the question of "what form of organization" can help us move to human liberation becomes a sort of halfway house. It isn't an irrelevant question, of course. New, non-elitist forms of organization continue to arise in opposition to oppression.

But Dunayevskaya's 1986 letter and Wermuth's essay both suggest to me that given the present period of philosophic and organizational disarray, working out the "inseparability" of philosophy and organization now requires something new. They suggest that further development of Mind toward the free release of all our talents, and further development of Organization toward their concrete expression, cannot be achieved apart from one another. That may seem like a self-evident point, but it is surely a perspective never tried in the Marxist movement before.

—Michael Connolly

4. Dunayevskaya, *Philosophy and Revolution*, pp. 151, 162.

2. Ian Traynor, in *The Guardian* (London), April 22, 1993.

3. General Zivota Panic, Yugoslav Army Chief of Staff, recently said in an interview in *Der Spiegel*, "The West wants to take away our living space [Lebensraum] in Bosnia." For an excellent critique of Serbian "ethnic cleansing" and the West's complicity with it, see Anthony Borden and Zoran Pajic, "Short of a policy and far from a vision," in *The Guardian* (London), April 27, 1993.

4. Michael Ignatieff, "The Balkan Tragedy," in *The New York Review of Books*, May 13, 1993.

5. See Roksandic's "A Letter from the Former Yugoslavia" in *Center for Slavic and East European Studies Update* (University of California, Berkeley), April-May, 1993.

6. See Slavenka Drakulic, *The Balkan Express* (New York: Norton, 1993).

7. Mary Kaldor, "Protect Bosnia," in *The Nation*, March 22, 1993.

Youth

'Can we be free' from today's new horrors?

by Gerard Emmett

As long as I can remember, I was always dissatisfied with this society. Too many possibilities seemed closed off, and very little of what was offered made any sense at all—it just didn't seem real. But what definitely brought things to a head for me was Reaganism—everything that was wrong had a face and name, and it became clear how all this misery was related.

The brutality that was visited upon Southern Africa, Central America, Libya, was also present in the attack on the standard of living here at home—including in my own neighborhood, where for the first time I saw people evicted from their homes and freezing to death in the wintertime—as well as in the vicious racism which was seen at its worst in the MOVE bombing in Philadelphia.

All this changed my consciousness forever, and thinking it through, I began to see the struggles of all people as being connected to my own desire for freedom, and I started reading a lot, looking for ideas to clarify my thinking. That was how I became politically active.

It was also the first opportunity to see how far from any kind of new beginning the established Left itself was. Most of the supposed revolutionaries on the scene seemed not at all desirous of a total change in society, much less of simple freedom, but chose one or another existing state power to apologize for.

It has to be clear by now—at least it is to me—that the Left offers no real way out of this stifling, degenerate society. And in realizing this, you begin again to search for new ideas. Here, for me, is where Raya Dunayevskaya's 1953 letters become critical. Uniquely, they do give a basis for beginning anew in the vision of freedom.

HISTORY AND HEGEL'S ABSOLUTES

To see how this is true, it is instructive to compare Dunayevskaya's work with that of so great a Hegelian Marxist as Georg Lukacs. In his own return to Hegel, Lukacs rejected Hegel's Absolutes as being "religious" or mythological. Even in his greatest work, *History and Class Consciousness*, he writes that they represent the supposed "end of history." And so without seeing the history contained in Hegel's Absolutes, or the "fully developed 'social individual'" as Dunayevskaya put it (quoting Marx) in *Philosophy and Revolution*, Lukacs

Gay/les/bi youth won't stand for reformism

San Francisco, Cal.—On April 25, over 1.1 million gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, trans-gendered, and questioning people stormed Washington D.C., marching to the capital demanding equal rights and liberation. I had been really excited about my first opportunity to go to a march on Washington. I even spent the last five months planning with the Bay Area Youth Contingent. What really stands out for me when I think about the march now is how everywhere I went, as far as 1 1/2 hours from the capital, the streets were filled with queers, and I felt totally safe.

However, there were many limitations in the official focus of the march which disappointed me immensely. I could tell the focus of the march was narrowing a few months ago when Lift the Ban, a mainstream organization formed to fight the ban on gays in the military, came to a youth meeting advising us to wear their t-shirts and buttons though we had our own already. (Our shirts read "Queer Youth, D.C. '93.") The "official" march committee had already declared lifting the ban on gays in the military one of the major priorities, claiming this issue and Colorado's amendment to be the primary focus for the march.

Many of the youth thought this was o.k., but most of the women and people of color believed that Lift the Ban's agenda is too narrow. For instance, one woman spoke about how leaders in the "gay community" are, "limiting their sights to just one piece of the pie when what we want is the whole pie." She said, "we're not begging for our rights, we're demanding our liberation."

Within our group, many of us were annoyed with the simplistic and reformist arguments of some of the gay men who were pushing for concentration on the military ban. We argued that we don't even want a military because it represents the very oppression that we're fighting.

After many long discussions, our contingent decided against promoting the official focus on lifting the military ban. Instead, we decided to represent the diversity of human freedom and the continuing struggle.

The conservatism of the march was revealed most sharply when they played the national anthem and almost everybody stood. As far as I could see, only members of our contingent refused to stand. For me, it seemed that a line was drawn at that moment, between those of us who really want change, and those who want just reform.

—Lynn

I believe, sacrificed the power of abstraction needed for new beginnings.

Lukacs' view in fact precludes any such working out of new beginnings on that basis, and if you base yourself on his work, then probably the closest you can come to that is seen in an inheritor of his like the Situationist Guy Debord. But that is really just a return to the spontaneity of Lukacs' own roots in Rosa Luxemburg. It is a proper rejection of the vanguard party to lead, but is still caught up in what Dunayevskaya points out in her July 3, 1986 letter to Louis Dupre as the Idea of the good, the stopping point of all Post-Marx Marxists. Of this Hegel says: "...it is only the will that stands in the way of the attainment of its goal, for it separates itself from cognition, and external reality for the will does not receive the form of a true being; the Idea of the good can therefore find its integration only in the Idea of the true."

Dunayevskaya is writing in this 1986 letter of Lenin, but compare Lukacs and Debord and it becomes obvious that this applies to all Post-Marx Marxists, whether for the vanguard party or spontaneity. The answer is always practice or the will—more effort, more exemplary action, better strategy, more efficient organization, and so on endlessly. And as we see from the Left today, as reliance on sheer will power increases, objective reality becomes more distant—that is, that objective reality which contains live, struggling human beings.

Youth in Revolt

by Tom Parsons



Korean students in Seoul mark the 13th anniversary of the May 18, 1980 Kwangju Massacre by trying to force their way through a police line set up to block their march on the homes of former presidents Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae Woo. The 4,000 students who gathered at Yonsei University held Chun and Roh responsible for the military crackdown on the pro-democracy movement in the southern city of Kwangju which left 200 dead and 2,000 wounded.

* * *

One thousand youth demonstrated in Warsaw, Poland on May 16 against fascism and nationalist skinheads. Police arrived to break up the demonstration, which had been organized by an anarchist group. Apparently these youth place little faith in the assurances by the Catholic church in Poland that there is no need to worry about right-wing nationalism in Poland.

* * *

Outraged at the latest racist issue of *The Dartmouth Review*, Black students at Dartmouth College swept through dormitory hallways on three consecutive Fridays removing thousands of copies. The confiscations began after *The Review* ran an article about a Black student who had been charged with assault. It was accompanied by a photo to the student with a mock police mug identification number superimposed on his chest and a caption, "Dartmouth's newest quotas." *The Review* is one of many right-wing campus papers which emerged during the Reagan '80s and continue to receive funding from outside conservative groups.

Chicanos sieze UCLA building, 99 arrested

Los Angeles, Cal.—On May 11, UCLA students learned that their Chicano Studies library would close as part of the administration's cost-cutting strategy. Already struggling with rising registration costs—which have gone from \$575 in 1989 to \$1,200—and the refusal of the administration to allow full departmental status to Chicano Studies, a number of students demonstrated at the faculty center.

Windows were broken by two students and 89 then entered the center interrupting a faculty activity and "taking over," causing an alleged \$40,000 worth of damage. Ninety-nine people were arrested by 210 riot-trained LAPD officers as well as campus police from Santa Barbara, Irvine, and Riverside.

The next day over 500 Chicano students and supporters protested outside of Royce Hall and responded energetically to student, faculty and alumni speakers who expressed indignation at the slap in the face of the Chicano-Mexicano people of Southern California, days after the death of Cesar Chavez.

A woman representing a Korean student organization spoke in Spanish and English to show solidarity and to call upon all students of color and progressive whites not to allow systematic disrespect and marginalization of non-white people to continue. African-American, Viet-

So rather than sheer will, it is necessary as Hegel shows to move to the Absolute Idea, "an objective world whose inner ground and actual persistence is the Notion."

What makes Dunayevskaya's May 12 letter so epochal is that this is what it achieves for the revolutionary movement, as she states right off: "...I brazenly shout that in the dialectic of the Absolute Idea is the dialectic of the party..." Rather than spontaneity versus vanguardism, she subjects the "party" itself to the dialectic of Absolute Negativity, or the power of abstraction. Isn't this the going beyond the Idea of the good that is necessary for new beginnings in our time?

Dunayevskaya works out the Absolute Idea as the dialectic of bourgeois society as well as the party, including the General Absolute Law of the accumulation of capital. It is like a further integration of Marx's great works of 1875, the French edition of *Capital* and the "Critique of the Gotha Program."

PERSONAL AND FREE

Now, once again in terms of what I was speaking about in my own life experience, I want to single out this passage in the next-to-last paragraph: "It appears to me when objective and subjective are so interpenetrated that the preoccupations of the theoreticians of the man on the street is can we be free when what has arisen is the one-party state, the assertion of freedom, 'personal and free' and full liberation takes precedence over economics, politics, philosophy, or rather refuses to be rent asunder into three and wants to be one, the knowledge that you can be free."

If the one-party state is somewhat in abeyance today, there is yet no shortage of new horrors to make us question whether we can be free—nobody who has watched the world's rulers bargain and debate over the genocide in Bosnia can doubt that. On this reading of the May 12 letter, at the capitalized passage on PERSONAL AND FREE, I didn't feel the sense of uplift or release that it's tempting to feel there—but rather a new sense of urgency. That PERSONAL AND FREE seems directed at all the oppressions of the world, and I was tempted to translate it as "taking responsibility for the Idea of freedom."

ADAPT demonstrations

Editor's note: On May 11, ADAPT (Americans Disabled for Attendant Programs Today) completed a week of protests in Washington, D.C. The following are excerpts from a report of these demonstrations sent to News & Letters.

Washington D.C.—The ADAPT demonstration on the steps of the Capitol Building, May 9, was the largest I have seen so far. There must have been 2,000 people, including representatives of ACT-UP, the gay rights group, and a lot of people in wheel chairs.

After two hours of speeches, we marched down Pennsylvania Avenue to the White House where we placed some 300 little wooden crosses on the White House lawn—white ones to represent people who have died in nursing homes, red ones to represent people who are going to die.

The next day we marched again on the Capitol, getting in the hallways and chanting: "Free Our People!" "Up With Attendant Care!" "Down With Nursing Homes!" After about an hour, police began arresting people.

On May 11, we marched on the American Health Care Association (AHCA) shouting chants and presenting to a cardboard effigy of the Association's head a series of plaques commemorating the ten worst nursing homes in the nation. They were called the "Certain Death Awards" and on each one was written the name of a nursing home which was notorious for such offenses as over-medication, neglect, retaliatory abuse, etc. The AHCA people refused to come out.

We are planning to go back into action again in September in Nashville, Tenn.

—Bill Scarborough

name, and white students were also present and spoke in solidarity. A South African student spoke stressing the importance of continuous struggle.

About 100 Janitors for Justice, mostly recent immigrants from Mexico and Central America, were present to show their support and their commitment to all branches of El Movimiento.

Students demanded a reduction of the \$10,000 bail for those arrested the day before. They argued that the current interdepartmental Chicano Studies Program does not give students and faculty the power to make curriculum and staffing decisions, and it does not reflect the growing population of Latinos in Los Angeles. The closing of the Chicano Studies library would mean both a real and symbolic closing off of knowledge. The working costs of the library amount to \$11,000 per year while the university president makes \$150,000 with his rent paid by UCLA.

On May 13 California state senators moved to put on hold a plan to spend \$338,000 on a law school addition to UCLA while university budgeting priorities are disputed, and the UCLA authorities requested that protesters be released without bail and charges reduced. The closing of the library will be reconsidered as well as the departmental status of Chicano Studies. La Lucha Continua!

—Anna Maillon

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Our Life and Times

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

Strikes involving tens of thousands of steel and electronics workers broke out on May 3 in eastern Germany. Workers' anger and sense of betrayal by employers and politicians runs very deep, because the strikes were sparked by an outrageous decision earlier this year by the employers to break a contract they had agreed to in 1991. The 1991 contract had guaranteed that the wages of eastern German metal workers would reach 80% of those of their western German counterparts by April 1, 1993.

At the last minute, the employers announced that they could not live up to the contract. Instead of a promised 26% raise that would have raised the eastern metal workers to 80% of western pay scales, the workers were offered a paltry 9%. The employers also threatened the elimination of up to 100,000 jobs if the workers dared to strike.

This historic conflict is the first legal strike in eastern

Deadly fire in Thailand kills over 200 workers

The death toll has reached over 240 in the toy factory fire which on May 10, swept through Kadar Industrial's sweatshop outside Bangkok, Thailand. The workers, almost entirely young women, reported that guards regularly locked the doors. One worker said the inferno was the fourth fire to break out in eight months at the factory which was built five years ago with few exits and no alarms. Over 520 workers were injured, and many face permanent disability after jumping from high floors.

Far from being an isolated and ghastly factory accident, the fire is symptomatic of conditions which workers are fighting across Southeast Asia:

- In Indonesia, workers gained protective laws, including \$1 a day minimum wage, which are never obeyed. For their part, the U.S. and other countries never enforce their own laws which restrict imports from countries which don't meet basic labor rights requirements.

- In Bangladesh, workers struck in May for a raise in the minimum wage from \$14.35 to \$23 a month. The

Voting results in Russia

As reports come in from outlying areas, it has become clearer that Boris Yeltsin's referendum victory was not as unanimous as first suggested. While he got a majority among ethnic Russians, voters from non-Russian ethnic groups were far less supportive. In Bashkiria, Tatarstan and Chuvashia, all in the Volga region, "no" votes won. In Ingushia in the Caucasus, where Russian troops have sided with the horrific "ethnic cleansing" campaign by the Ossetians against the Ingush, Yeltsin got only 2% of the vote. In several areas of Siberia, including Amur and Altai, Yeltsin also lost.

But even where Yeltsin "won," local rulers have increasingly begun acting on their own since, with the collapse of the all-powerful Communist Party, there is now no effective mechanism with which he can enforce his policies. This problem is the real source of the reports of his "inaction" and failure to take "more initiative" which one finds in the press.

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

The new visions of the future that Dunayevskaya

Germany in 60 years. Since 1933, eastern German workers have lived under two different forms of totalitarianism, Nazi and then Communist, each of which forbade strikes or even unions independent of state control. The 1993 strikes are also the first major labor battle in the east since German unification.

Much more is at stake here than a simple wage increase. Bernd Thiele, a strike leader in a plant outside Berlin, spoke of three broken promises made to the working people since 1989, when the East German masses toppled Communism. First, he noted, conservative West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl promised that "no one would be worse off" if the two Germanys immediately unified. Secondly, Kohl and German capitalists promised that economic "restructuring" of eastern German industry would create new jobs.

Instead, workers have seen a plunge in their standard of living and massive unemployment, officially at 14%, but some estimates which include involuntary part-timers and early retirees put the actual figure at 40%.

Thiele concluded: "Then they broke the wage contract. That was simply too much for a lot of people. It made them furious."

Street demonstrations by civil rights and labor groups have been rekindled in Leipzig, the center of the 1989 movement which toppled Communism. In recent weeks, several thousand gathered there to protest the mass unemployment which has followed unification. Veteran dissident Jochen Lossig told the crowd: "We thought we had achieved so much with our peaceful revolution of 1989. We believed too easily."

Fully aware that lower wages in eastern Germany are being used by employers to undercut jobs, pay scales and working conditions in western Germany, tens of thousands of western German workers have taken to the streets to express their solidarity with the eastern metalworkers. They have also engaged in some brief solidarity strikes, including one by 20,000 auto workers at Volkswagen's Wolfsburg plant.

I.G. Metall, the metalworkers union, is one of the most powerful labor organizations in the world. But it is also a giant bureaucracy, one which hardly seeks the self-mobilization of labor. Many are questioning whether such an organization, with such a philosophy of mediation and conciliationism, is really capable of confronting an employers' association which is brazen enough to scrap a major set of previously agreed upon labor contracts.

(As we go to press, it appears that the union leadership has accepted a compromise whereby full wage parity will be delayed until April, 1996 rather than 1994, and some firms will be able to avoid giving the promised 1993 raises, if they can "prove" financial hardship.)

Middle East talks

Middle East peace negotiations broke up in Washington, on May 13, after Israel and the Palestinian representatives failed to adopt a U.S.-proposed plan for some very gradual steps toward Palestinian self-rule in the occupied territories. Recent weeks have seen several contradictory developments.

On the one hand, Israel has put the Gaza strip under a total lockdown, preventing 120,000 Arab workers from going to their jobs in Israel. This came in the wake of a series of attacks by Palestinian fundamentalists. The Yitzhak Rabin government has also refused to budge on its deportation to the Lebanese border of 400 fundamentalists, after even the U.S. objected.

On the other hand, Israel has agreed for the first time to let a Jerusalem Palestinian leader, Faisal Husseini, represent the Palestinian side in the negotiations, thus implicitly putting the status of Jerusalem on the agenda. It has also allowed 30 pro-PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) and Communist Arab leaders, expelled in the 1970s and 1980s, to return to their homes in the West Bank and Gaza. In addition, it has announced that 5,000 Palestinians will be allowed to return home to live with their relatives.

What seems to be happening is that the Rabin government, terrified of the fundamentalists, is now giving some concessions to the more secular PLO. Having for years tacitly supported the fundamentalists as a way of undermining the PLO, Israel now seems to be moving grudgingly in the other direction.

Angola carnage continues

Since March, when the rightist National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) captured the city of Huambo in a fierce battle, it has extended its power to where it now controls three quarters of the territory of this southern African country. UNITA now holds the country's diamond mines, and it can market them directly through its friends in the corrupt neighboring regime in Zaire.

At least 15,000 people, many of them civilians, were killed in the battle for Huambo. UNITA slaughtered nearly 10,000 government troops in the battle. Obviously most who surrendered were massacred, since UNITA admits to holding only 300 prisoners. UNITA has also engaged in a policy of executing any civilian said to be a government sympathizer.

Jonas Savimbi, UNITA's leader, has been feted by U.S. presidents and congressional leaders, and given hundreds of millions of dollars in financial and military aid by both the U.S. and South Africa. This is because, since 1975, Angola has been ruled by a leftist regime, one which for a period called in Cuban troops to defend itself against South Africa. Yet, President Clinton changed almost 20 years of U.S. policy, May 19, by recognizing Angola's government.

In the last few years, the U.S. government has distanced itself from Savimbi but, armed to the teeth, UNITA has decided to take by force what it could not gain in last year's UN-sponsored elections. The result is a continuation of the agony which the Angolan masses have suffered in nearly two decades of UNITA-instigated civil war, a war in which up to a half million of Angola's ten million people are estimated to have died. The danger now is that UNITA, a brutal, fascist movement, one which openly brags that it will kill all Marxists and mixed race people (who it demagogically says are one and the same group), now stands poised to take state power. The silence of the world media and political leaders is deafening.



Bodies lined up in front of collapsed toy factory.

World Bank has intervened to warn against any raise.

- In Sri Lanka, workers have suffered ear and lung damage in Nestle plants, which are now being investigated by the government.

- In China, workers have been forced to take unskilled jobs from other parts of Asia where workers' living conditions have risen relatively. In China, some reports indicate that over 15,000 workers died last year in industrial accidents.

In Thailand itself, one labor activist reported that over 90,000 work-related injuries have occurred. And a women's rights activist stated that "Many Thai women are unskilled, impoverished and illiterate. They are simply fodder for the factory owners."

The deadly fire in May is being called the worst factory fire in world history, and is being compared to the 1911 U.S. Triangle Shirtwaist fire which killed 146 young women. Out of that tragedy, however, came the "uprising of the 20,000" which not only formed a powerful union of garment workers, but reverberated throughout U.S. labor for years to come. In Thailand, it remains to be seen what new struggles will arise.

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

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

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