

NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

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25¢

Buchanan's phony turn to labor



by John Marcotte

Pat Buchanan and his ideas are not going away. Since early March, Congress has been debating more repressive immigration laws. Buchanan is trying to use racism and anti-immigrant scapegoating to divide a growing labor movement awakening in this country. He must not succeed.

To understand Buchanan, we have to remember that U.S. capitalist society is divided into two, and only two, main classes: capitalists and workers. Capitalism is the right to dispose of the labor of others. There are therefore two, and only two, ways of thinking: the boss's (capitalists') way and the workers'. There is no in-between. The capitalist sees workers as things, as "variable capital" which will increase the value of his capital. The worker sees her or himself as a human being, not an object. The humanism of working people is what gave life not only to the union movement, but to the Civil Rights Movement.

The worker wants to be a full human being, not just a part of the machine. The labor struggle is not just a wages, though that material necessity is important. It is the unity of material and ideal, it is about respect, democracy, freedom, control over your job and over your life. We have to remember this to judge Buchanan's vow to shut the border to immigrants as the solution to working peoples' crisis in this country.

Immigration is a completely capitalist phenomenon, caused by the dictates and needs of capital, not human beings. Whether the immigrant is that of American workers from the Midwest "rust belt" to the South, or Mexican workers to the U.S., or peasants in China leav-

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Black World

Two indignant hearts of Black feminism



by Lou Turner

A thinking woman sleeps with monsters.

—Adrienne Rich

At the end of last year, Rosalind Cash and Toni Cade Bambara died of cancer, both at the age of 56. While a continent separated them at their deaths (Rosalind Cash in Los Angeles and Toni Cade Bambara in Philadelphia), their lives and work stemmed from the same intersection of social conditions and historic moment which often rendered creativity independent of the free sensibilities of the artists of their generation.

A stunning Black actress who had already come of age by the 1960s (as she noted in a 1986 lecture at Smith College, she was already 30 something), Rosalind Cash witnessed the many enthusiasms and disappointments of the period. The necessary outcomes of the political experiences of Black women like Cash and Bambara led to a critique of private life and personal relations.

The political experiences of the '60s inherent in their critique of private and professional life is what distinguishes the feminism of Bambara and Cash from later Black feminists. It is what evinced the warmth of life in their art and writing, and gave them their bold originality of spirit. Because she "exuded a certain intelligence and seriousness which they [Hollywood producers and directors] didn't want," Rosalind Cash leaves behind a principled body of work which escapes the Hollywood imprint of the "exotic."

In her short story "Witchbird," Bambara's protagonist Honey, who bares an uncanny resemblance to Rosalind Cash, is an actress and singer constantly fighting with directors over their "mammy fantasies." "Got to be firm about sh-- like that," Honey declares, "cause if you ain't some bronze Barbie doll type or the big 'fro murder-some militant sister, you Aunt Jemima. Not this lady. No way. Got to fight hard and all the time with the scripts and the people. Cause they'll trap you in fiction. Breath drained, heart stopped, vibrancy fixed, under arrest. Whole being entrapped, all possibility impaled, locked in some stereotype. And how you look trying to call from the box and be heard much less be understood

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Mexico: Will the civil war become total?

by Mitch Weerth

On the night of March 7 the Zapatistas came to San Cristobal de las Casas (or Jovel, as the Indians like to call it, using an ancient name) for the first time since Jan. 1, 1994 when the uprising began. Despite being unarmed, the thousands of masked women who travelled to the city surprised its inhabitants as much as the first time. They arrived in caravans of up to 11 vehicles, sending the military into a panic. They came from the far reaches of the Lacandon jungle and from the north of the state, a place called Tila that has been developing its own legacy of resistance in the past two years.

The purpose of the journey was International Women's Day. By the time the women assembled for the march they numbered near 7,000, many of them with ski masks on, some in fatigues and boots, others barefoot or in huaraches, with numerous banners flying. In the center of town they spoke. One woman, who had never spoken before publicly, said, "We are not spoken of as people, much less as women. As indigenous people we appear in no laws of this country, because for the government we do not exist."

A communique from the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) was read that spoke of the dignity of women who struggle: "As combatants and non-combatants Zapatista women struggle for their own rights as women. They also confront a macho culture that is expressed in many forms in the Zapatista men. We understand our struggle to be not against men, but it is for the rights of women. Nor are we against the mestizo (mixed ancestry), but it is for the rights of the indigenous women."

In the speeches, in the banners, the shouting and the discussions, the women's message was, above all, against the military occupation of the state. This is the tenor of Mexico today: on the one hand the lawless police and military are on a loose leash everywhere, north and south, while the reasoned voice of the nation's most oppressed has attained a permanence, a presence in daily



discourse never seen before.

Near San Cristobal, in San Andres Sacamch'en, the EZLN and a government delegation signed a first set of accords on Feb. 16 covering "Indigenous Rights and Culture" after six months of negotiations. The second round, on "Democracy and Justice," has begun but has already been stalled by the government. It refuses to discuss political reform with the rebels since they "are already discussing it with the opposition parties" and the Zapatistas "have no national standing to negotiate such a change." To which the EZLN responds: "Is the reform of the State incumbent only on the political parties or the entire society?"

To President Ernesto Zedillo's delight, the talks drag on. To his dismay, at every turn his delegation's effort to make fools of the rebels backfires. Ricardo Robles is a Jesuit priest who lived among the Tarahumara Indians of Chihuahua for 15 years and is now the chief of the EZLN's 16 advisors (there are four members of the EZLN delegation: David, Tacho, Trini and Zebedeo).

Robles reports that "the general context of all moments of the dialogue has been this: war and no peace. From the beginning the government has been violently

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Letter from idled General Motors workers

Shreveport, La.—It's been two whole weeks since GM Shreveport laid off most of its employees because of the GM Dayton strike. Since we don't get any more news than the general public, everyone knows what we do about where we stand. We still haven't heard about unemployment benefits.

Back in January and February we were talking about how the GM Shreveport plant seemed to be building a lot of jobs although they had a lot in the field and still we were working eight-and-a-half to nine hours a day and two Saturdays a month. We had a 150-day supply of trucks in the field. Usually they have a 65- to 80-day supply. Workers were asking why are we working overtime? It didn't make sense. When you work at GM for a while, a lot of things they do don't seem to make sense but, now it's March and it does make sense. With so many vehicles in the field and at dealerships, GM sits back and makes money. Even GM stock went up in value approximately \$2 a share.

But, do you realize how stupid GM really is? It only took strikes at two brake plants to paralyze all of GM's North American plants. If only all the workers who are out could see how much control we really do have. GM needs all of its workers in order to make a profit in the long term. Sure, they are making a profit now, but what about the special orders or when they run out of the supply of cars in the field?

Another thing that bothers me is that some UAW members are still working in the plants. Why is it fair that so many workers are out, maybe with unemployment benefits, and still others in skilled trades are working seven days a week, twelve-hour shifts? This is going on at the Oklahoma City plant. And they are installing new robots there to take more workers' jobs away, taking 650 jobs and reducing them to 150.

We have been talking with transfers from Tarrytown, N.Y., and so far our thoughts and ideas are the same as many others. All UAW workers should stand beside the

people on strike and all plants should strike, especially since GM is protesting unemployment benefits to the laid off people who can't work because GM can't supply the parts needed to build vehicles.

By outsourcing, GM will cut labor again. A vehicle used to be considered a luxury, but today it is a necessity, just like food, shelter and clothes. By taking more jobs out of the country, who's going to be able to buy GM's cars? If this is a preview of things to come, it doesn't look good at all!

According to UAW Solidarity, March 1996, Mexican workers are trying to form unions. We need to all stand together, no matter where we are in the world, instead of

See Editorial on worker insecurity, p. 10.

letting the capitalists divide all workers, because we do have more power than the fat cats!

Could you imagine the impact workers could have on GM, by every UAW local getting together and going to Dayton, Ohio, to support this strike? It would scare the hell out of GM because labor could shut down GM instead of GM shutting workers out!

What has happened to the strength that unions once had? It seems that we pay union dues to be represented and to negotiate with the company. But it almost seems like the unions are a part of the company. Workers need to use their minds as well as their bodies. Our thoughts and ideas are just as important as GM's or any boss's.

ON THE INSIDE

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What tools will dismantle master's house?

by Jennifer Pen

March may be Women's History Month, but this year, women are necessarily concerned with the present. The anti-feminist rhetoric of the Republican primaries, capitalist "downsizing," and attacks on affirmative action all called forth a direct confrontation with this sick society.

Attending events throughout the month, I noticed an increased cooperation among progressive groups as we struggle against the rulers who have targeted all marginalized people: women, youth, Black, queer, poor, elderly, labor, and immigrant. But philosophic questions seem lost in the mire of planning for rallies. The various dimensions of the Women's Liberation Movement cannot limit themselves to mere resistance, which is inherently a capitulation to the whirlpool gravity of the given.

Woman as Reason

Take for instance Urvashi Vaid, a South Asian-American lesbian, former head of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and author of a well-argued book on the state of the queer liberation movements, *Virtual Equality*. While she correctly critiques a narrow pragmatic emphasis on fund raising, her only corrective is to stress electoral politics (214).

Vaid explicitly describes her vision as "freedom-based" and asks "(f)or what vision of society do we fight?" (3), so her self-limitations are especially discouraging. While her rhetoric searches for transformation, her method yields only reformation.

Vaid stresses the need for reflection on philosophic issues of organization (218) and notes that the state is in league with cultural and social structures in blocking an emancipatory politics. But she reduces these insights to pragmatism—local chapters of preestablished national organization: "(our) pathway to political power...leads us to the locked, steel gate of antisexual cultural attitudes...we need...tools to dismantle this barrier...a new movement infrastructure and local organizing" (219).

While Vaid is correct in saying that women need "tools to dismantle" this sick society, her words evoke the late Black lesbian poet Audre Lorde, who admonished us that "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about authentic change."

In this spirit, there is an increase in activity among homeless, low-income, and working-class women, with an evermore precise and total analysis of the decrepit nature of capitalism. Thus Dorothea—a Black woman from the Women's Economic Agenda Project of Oakland—noted how the rulers engage in all the wrong sorts of construction projects when they "build laws against the homeless, but they won't build apartments." Her statement is a recognition of how the system dovetails abstractions and dehumanization by denying people their material needs and simultaneously enmeshing the poor in a tangled net of legal abuses.

Bleak prospects of a future ravaged by global capitalism were brought into focus for many women at last summer's conference in Beijing. During this Women's History Month, Beijing was still a living, ongoing project: almost all events I attended were focused on the conference or referenced it often.

I think the rulers are concerned about ripple effects from the conference's economic emphasis: they fear that women's persistent collective reasoning about contemporary capitalism is inherently dangerous. Women from the industrialized world learned from their Third World

Take Back the Night!

Berkeley, Cal.—In celebration of International Women's Day, several hundred students gathered in Sproul Plaza to protest violence against women and to "Take Back the Night." Several dozen individually painted T-shirts hung in front of Sproul Hall, painted by women survivors of sexual abuse. The shirts read, "I have a voice, women will not be silenced," "I am not property," and "Freedom, Equality, & Justice," to name just a few. The Clothesline Project travels around the country serving as a voice for survivors.

Women Defending Ourselves performed a women's self-defense clinic where they emphasized that a woman is much more likely to escape an attacker if she fights back. Following the defense clinic, several speakers told of their abuse. One woman said, "I want to show that it's not something we should feel ashamed of. This rally is about women's strength. I hope other women who hear me speaking out will come speak out as well." Another woman read a poem, "I am woman. I am courage. I am only one voice but I sing to all. I am a voice of liberation."

Some who spoke challenged common assumptions about "date rape" ("some women don't date men and still get raped by men they know") and how women are supposed to say "no" before an unwanted advance is considered assault.

After the scheduled speakers had concluded, women of all ages began lining up near the microphone to tell their stories. They were young, older, students, homeless women, Black, white, Asian, Latina, lesbian, bisexual, heterosexual. They were exposing their rapists, their friends, fathers, uncles, husbands, boyfriends. They were condemning the rapists who had hurt their friends, their sisters, their mothers. I was amazed at their bravery.

Chanting, "Women unite, take back the night," the protesters marched across Berkeley letting everyone know we will not be silenced, we will fight back.

—Julia Jones

sisters about "downsizing" and IMF policies. This is translating into a new consciousness—as corporate "restructuring" stings sharply, women everywhere are certain they are not thinking alone.

I believe this is what motivated Pat Buchanan's gratuitous swipe at Beijing while campaigning in Arizona. He referred to the event as a "(c)razy dingbat conference...It looked like the bar scene in 'Star Wars'" (SF Examiner 2/25/96). He thus seamlessly connected his anti-immigrant rhetoric to his homophobia: defining who the "aliens" are, then contemptuously isolating and demeaning them.

Similarly, a lesbian activist who went to Beijing described the Chinese government's daily theft of all Chinese-language materials concerning lesbian lives. Whether world leaders are "populist" or state capitalist, they don't want women to unite with each other.

To truly challenge these oppressive systems, we need what Dunayevskaya describes as the "dual rhythm of revolution: not just the overthrow of the old, but the creation of the new; not just the reorganization of objective, material foundations but the release of subjective personal freedom, creativity and talents."

Women must oppose what is, and this will require launching both marches and critiques. But revolutionary new beginnings demand more from our minds and activities. Let's not exhaust ourselves in treading water, but instead engage the exhilaration of swimming towards a new shore of freedom.

Taslina Nasreen, March 8

Editor's note: Following are brief excerpts from an article by Taslina Nasreen, the Bangladeshi feminist novelist in exile after Muslim clerics sentenced her to death for her writings. The article appeared March 8 in French in *Le Monde* (Paris).

At its birth in 1971, the state of Bangladesh recognized the principle of equal rights for men and women. Since then, the reverse has occurred: the degradation of the situation of women has only been accentuated. The reason for this situation is simple: Since independence, our country has been subjected to a deeper and deeper process of Islamicization.

The Prime Minister [Khaleda Zia] of Bangladesh has expressed her pride in having participated in the recent women's conference in Beijing. But it was by crushing underfoot the corpse of a young woman victim of men's cruelty that our eminent head of state went to Beijing to celebrate women's rights. Only a few days before the conference, this event occurred in our country: A teenage girl named Yasmine, who was working as a domestic at a home in Dhaka, returned to Dinajpur. Two police officers noticed her waiting for the bus after dark. On the pretext of escorting her home in greater safety, they had her get into their police car. They raped and then murdered her in some bushes by the roadside.

This crime aroused great outrage among the townspeople, who held a spontaneous demonstration to demand the punishment of the two police officers. In response, the police fired on the crowd, killing seven people. The day after this incident, a press release from the government claimed that Yasmine was a prostitute...as if a prostitute deserved to be raped and murdered! The same statement asserted that the rapist police officers were dedicated public servants and that the demonstrators who protested were anti-social elements.

On this International Women's Day, marches and meetings will no doubt be organized in all the corners of Bangladesh by government authorities and feminist groups led by women of the big bourgeoisie. The only ones to benefit from this operation will be the bourgeois organizations, whose members, modern ambitious women, will be able to get the attention of donor nations.

During this time, on this day, how many of us will be raped, sold, forced into prostitution, repudiated [Islamic practice of easy male-initiated divorce - Ed.], strangled, or butchered by their husbands because their parents did not pay the dowry? How many will be mistreated for having given birth to a girl? How many will be burned with acid? How many will be stoned or flogged to death by the fundamentalists? How many will commit suicide?

Religious sentiment is the greatest obstacle to the construction of a society where woman has the chance to live—in the full sense of the term—as opposed survival at the price of giving up all human dignity.

I reject totally the notion that women should respect the traditions and culture of their respective societies. An injustice committed anywhere in the world against a woman represents a defeat for all women, not limited by national borders, by [different] civilizations, or by cultural traditions. All of those who say the contrary are trying to divide women for the greater advantage of men.

Beyond Beijing teach-in

Chicago—"We have to keep moving forward. We have to fight for freedom!" insisted Beatrice Burgos, a Native American activist, at an International Women's Day teach-in here that drew some 200 women. "We cannot allow history to repeat itself. We have to stop the amnesia and anesthesia of the mind!"

Burgos, director of a battered women's shelter, attended the international women's conference in Beijing last summer with the indigenous women's caucus. She was one of eight speakers Mar. 9 at the opening plenary of "Beijing and Beyond: Women's Rights to Economic Justice" and had brought several women from her shelter to the International Women's Day march the day before.

Burgos argued that racism did not disappear with "no Blacks or Indians" but "is alive and kicking to destroy



International Women's Day march, Chicago

the humanism of you and me." Her concern with the relation between our minds and the struggle for freedom underscored the seriousness of this teach-in.

This forum sought to continue the spirit of the Beijing conference. It also represented a crucial dialogue at a time when many of us are forced to work in our own corner on dire crises—in welfare rights, reproductive justice, labor issues. The 24 workshops ranged from Bosnia to maquiladora workers and from campus sexual harassment to women farmworkers (see story, p. 10).

The main plenary session opened with comments by Dolores Brooks of the 8th Day Center for Justice on the devastating effects for women globally of U.S. economic policies. Others analyzed ramifications closer to home, whether on welfare "reform," reproductive justice, disability rights, or affirmative action.

Jeri Linas from Rainbow House, addressed the impact of current restructuring on women survivors of domestic violence. "People ask, 'Why does she stay?' instead of 'Why does he batter?'" Women stay because they are economically dependent on their abusers. This exacerbates the blow of welfare "reform."

In Illinois, a two-year cap has been placed on AFDC, yet battered women often take several years to attain independence, Linas asserted. A new requirement forces women to disclose the paternity of their children and meet the father at the Public Aid Office. Most shocking, a proposed reorganization of social services would place youth over 12 taken from their parents under the Department of Corrections.

But Shelly Bannister's speech spoke best to Burgos's concern with the "amnesia and anesthesia of the mind." Bannister's tale of fighting at the Beijing conference for lesbian rights continues into the present, since this was the first post-Beijing conference at which she had been an invited speaker. Lesbian rights had been cut from the U.N. Platform for Action in Beijing, although this had been the first international U.N. women's conference with a lesbian tent. Moreover, their Chinese language literature had been confiscated—not only by Chinese officials but by conference organizers themselves!

This forsaking of lesbian rights shows the most urgent danger feminists face. If we decide "women's unity" against the Right means curtailing our struggle for women's freedom, the Right has already won. The battle is above all a battle for the mind. —Laurie Cashdan



Women Worldwide

by Mary Jo Grey

A feminist group in Swaziland, Women and the Law Society, sharply attacked Parliament member Msweli Mdluli when he blamed the current drought on women who angered the country's ancestors because they no longer wear traditional dress nor cover their heads. The women called his remarks an insult to women and to the nation's intelligence—saying even children know how rain is caused.

Feminists in Turkey, including the women's magazine, *Pazartesi*, are waging a fight to free 19-year-old Zeynep Vludag who was convicted of murdering a man who physically attacked and sexually harassed not only her, but her mother, sister and a friend. The other women have been subjected to threats, and one was demoted in her Board of Education job after the incident.

The winner of a national Canadian design competition is a memorial by Beth Alber with 14 pink granite benches each bearing the name of one of the women students gunned down by Marc Lepine in Montreal's L'Ecole Polytechnique in 1989 as an attack on feminists. Bricks on a surrounding walkway will be inscribed with the names of thousands of donors who contributed funds for the memorial in Thornton Park in Vancouver, B.C.

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Moment of decision at American Catfish

Itta Bena, Miss.—We have a union recognition election scheduled for April 5 at American Catfish. This time the workers' drive to get a union at "American Cat" is going well; it feels very different than when we lost the election there in 1994. More than half the workers have signed UFCW Local 1529 cards and we have a great in-plant committee of about 15 workers. We have been out every night visiting people's homes, and workers are enthusiastic when we pass out handbills at the plant gate. There are about 210 workers now, nearly all Black and mostly women.

You want to know why everything is so different from 1994? In 1994 Solem Scott, the owner, told the workers that if they didn't vote for the union he would have an open-door policy to discuss any problems in the plant. He picked pro-union people to be on the committee; he thought he would head to be off from organizing again. But in two years he's only had four or five meetings, and when workers told him about problems, nothing changed.

In 1994 he promised the workers a 50¢ raise if they voted down the union, but he never gave it. But just before Christmas, when he heard the workers were organizing again, he gave a \$100 bonus. But that didn't stop us. You can't give with one hand and take with the other. Scott still makes people work "off the clock." He tells them to come in at 8 a.m., and then says there are no fish. You sit around till 10 a.m., and then he sends you home and tells you to come back at 1 p.m., but you have wasted your whole morning, and you get no pay. It's illegal, but at American Cat, they do it.

People are so sick of things that even the worker Scott picked to be the official "company observer" at the 1994 vote is now an active member of the union in-plant committee.

Ontario public strike

Toronto—The strike by over 50,000 public servants, members of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU), has dragged into its fourth week. Mike Harris's Tory Government is determined to follow the path laid out by New Jersey Republicans and privatize much of the Ontario public service. Smashing OPSEU is crucial to Harris's plan. A unionized workforce is not palatable for capitalists hoping to make quick profits by taking over public services.

The courage and tenacity of the strikers has surprised the Tories, who expected easy victory. On Mar. 18 the government's desperation created headlines across the world as heavily armed provincial police riot squads attacked peaceful picketers in front of Queen's Park (the Ontario legislature) in Toronto. OPSEU members were attempting to prevent Tory Members of Parliament from attending the opening of the new session of the legislature. Metropolitan Toronto police rushed to assist the strikers being pummeled by the rioting provincial cops.

OPSEU members are getting support from unions across the province, and another giant labor protest is scheduled for mid-April in the twin city of Kitchener-Waterloo. No one discounts the possibility this summer of a provincewide general strike. —David MacGregor

Kaiser health emergency

Oakland, Cal.—"This is about...patient care!" So said health care workers at a March 19 picket line, march and rally held at Kaiser to protest Kaiser's care to close the hospital. Based on 1995 figures the care of 167,000 patients would be threatened. This number rises dramatically if Highland General, also in Oakland, and Brookside in nearby San Pablo shut down, a Kaiser worker warned. She suggested health care "redlining" has determined which hospitals are to be targeted for closure or severe cutbacks in service: all admit indigent populations turned away by hospitals not targeted.

A speaker representing California Nurses Association wondered where 60,000 Kaiser emergency patients per year would go since ERs and CCUs in the Bay Area are already overwhelmed. Another speaker asked what would happen after a major earthquake.

A Kaiser emergency department worker reminded the crowd about the tuberculosis epidemic in Alameda County and reported a dangerous lack of TB isolation rooms in local hospitals. She also challenged Kaiser's claim of excess beds by recounting how one of her patients had to wait eight hours for a bed in CCU. Someone shouted, "They have excess greed!"

A woman from the bargaining team for Local 250 (SEIU) told the crowd Kaiser made \$800 million in profits last year, yet they have demanded from the union a three year wage freeze, erosion of seniority rights and fewer retirement benefits. Undoubtedly, Kaiser is trying to bust the unions. But, as another Kaiser worker told me, Kaiser's union-busting efforts have been helped by dissatisfaction in the rank and file. One rank-and-file worker said "management can ask for takeaways since the unions have not been able to address ordinary workers' concerns in the last few years."

Many Northern California Kaiser workers have been without a contract since October '95. A woman from Local 29 (OPEIU) may have put her finger on a real dilemma when she stressed the necessity to combine the fight for a contract with the fight to keep hospitals open. At one point she said: "We need strike action, if necessary, to keep this hospital from closing down."

The union projects a worry that a long strike would play into Kaiser's hand. A worker, on the other hand, sees "withholding of labor is a very different way of closing down. When workers strike it is not to deny care, but to go beyond the current conditions of terrible job security and deteriorating patient care." —Participant

mittee. She says: "Scott lied; I understand now why you need a written contract. I tell everyone you have to have a union or he will abuse us."

In the last week the company has started to really attack us; I think they realize they are in trouble. They are holding required meetings, six or seven workers at a time. They take you into an office room and show you an anti-union video, with lots of violence. They say this will happen at American Cat if you vote union. They even brought in a former Delta Pride supervisor to speak, saying that the union was no good at Delta Pride. April 5 can't come fast enough for me. We will let you know how the vote comes out.

—Volunteer organizer, Local 1529

Detroit news war widens



Detroit—Many new groups have formed out of the eight-month strike against the Detroit Newspaper Agency. One is W.I.L.D.—Women in Labor Disputes—who are primarily wives, other family members, and supporters of striking newspaper workers. They have picketed, raised money, and done information work on the strike. Both W.I.L.D. and women on strike had tables at the Detroit area wide International Women's Day celebration in March, and both received a lot of support.

Over 500 people demonstrated the following week on March 14 in front of the Detroit News building in downtown Detroit (pictured). The protest was organized under the community-wide group Readers United as the second in a series of civil disobedience actions. This time women blocked the drive-in entrance to the building and 67 people were arrested.

Most of the demonstrators were striking newspaper workers, but they have significant support from other unions including the UAW and teachers. A busload of Teamsters from Canada coming to join the demonstration was denied entry at the border. (Canadian newspaper workers in Windsor have walked on the picket line since the strike first began.)

While Detroit newspaper management has claimed that the strike is over, the continuing support for the striking workers is worrisome to them. Their circulation is still down at least 25% from when the strike began. Management still can't get enough carriers under their scheme to pay carriers a set fee to deliver papers, in effect cutting their pay. Undelivered papers are still being "recycled" in dumpsters.

Strikers and their supporters have canceled subscriptions to the Detroit News and Free Press; subscribed to the striker-published Sunday Journal (3100 E. Jefferson, Detroit MI 48207, \$15 for 3 months); and put pressure on advertisers. The community actions will continue with union members from all over the Midwest participating. —Strike supporters

Union sellout at Profex

Memphis, Tenn.—When the workers striking Prof Medical went to the Labor Board to file charges against Teamsters Local 984 because we felt they didn't represent us properly, they told us we didn't have enough evidence. Now we need a lawyer to pursue this, but none of us can afford one.

I think that the International sold us out the third day of the strike when Local 984 President Bratcher said to go back in. The day before that International Vice President Ron Carver, had told the stewards, you proved your point, go back in, you can work better from inside. Our stewards asked: If you knew this, why didn't you stop the strike before we went out?

That morning some said we're not going back in, we have not made our point. The boss, Mr. Scott, had not even agreed to come back to the bargaining table.

Now that the strike is over, I feel Bratcher had a part in us not being able to go back to work. He said when there was an opening, he would call the strikers back. There has never been an opening.

Mr. Scott said he would protect those who crossed the picket line. He didn't take away their sick benefits and gave them what was in the contract. But now that there is no union, he might take that away.

Some of the people who crossed our line asked why we went on strike; why didn't we just stay there and take it? What that sounds like to me is saying: you're my husband, you can beat my head all you want to and I'm supposed to stay there and let you beat me.

They still want us to belong to the union. I'm not that stupid. If you didn't do nothing for me when I was in this plant and on strike, how in the world do you think I'm going to pay you some money and still you would do nothing for me? And I don't have a job, so why do I need a union?

Things are going to be better because no one regrets the strike. We have formed our own little groups, we made a club out of all of us who were on strike: Strikers Forever. —Black woman worker

Hood stalls Local 282

Jackson, Miss.—Last month workers at Hood Furniture unanimously voted to transfer our union representation from IUE Local 797 to Local 282. Local 282 is the union we joined in the first place. This is something we have been praying for and fighting for since Local 797 was forced upon us against our will in 1993. The president of the IUE International, William Bywater, wrote a letter to Warren Hood, telling him that the representation was transferred from 797 to Local 282.

But the lawyer for Hood Furniture wrote back, saying that they refused to recognize Local 282, and our President, Willie Rudd, as our representatives. He said that Local 797 has more members in the plant than 282. This is ridiculous, because 797 members have been transferred to 282 by the vote we took. We have been running a union card sign-up, and we have about 200 members in Local 282 now. We are getting ready for a fight. The lawyer from Hood also said that the only reason people didn't join 797 was that Local 282 supporters told people not to join. We only told the truth about the slave contract they signed and the sneaky tricks they played with the company.

Now the lawyer for Hood says he won't meet with us at all. Instead, they are spreading the rumor that the plant will close if Willie Rudd is our representative. They are trying to scare people, trying to keep them from signing union cards. And it's not only the lawyer that is trying to terrorize people; it's going on in the plant.

If you get one week vacation, you can only take it the first week of July. The vacation will be closed, and you won't get holiday pay for July 4. If you get two weeks vacation, you have to use the second week between Christmas and New Year's, and you don't get those holidays, and if the plant shuts down before then, you get nothing.

This week they gave out new ID cards. If you lose your card, or show up without it, you have to get a pass from the guard at the gate. Then you have to find your supervisor before 7 a.m. If he's late, or you can't find him, you're counted as late, with ½ point against you. This is under the point terror system in the contract 797 signed.

Some of the supervisors are singling out union activists in Local 282, discriminating against them. One worker was made a line leader until they saw him organizing for 282, and they busted him back down. But we will not be intimidated. We have been fighting for justice for seven years, and we are not going to stop now.

—Hood Furniture worker

Workshop Talks

(continued from page 1)

ing the land for the cities, it is caused by capital's needs. When GM shuts its Tarrytown, N.Y., plant this year, workers will be forced to emigrate to Georgia and Maryland. It may appear to the individual as a voluntary decision, but it is not about freedom. Any way you look at it, immigration is a terrible "solution" to joblessness. No worker, least of all the immigrant, is "in favor" of emigrating anywhere to find work.

Immigration, like any phenomenon under capitalism, has a dual nature. On the one hand, immigrant workers are so much labor power, brought here by capitalism to expand the value of its labor intensive industries like agriculture, garment and restaurants. The very same politicians who yell the loudest against immigrants in Congress on March 5 that they need 250,000 more "guest workers" for agriculture—temporary workers with no rights at all, and 25% of whose pay would be withheld "until they returned to their countries!" They don't want workers with rights, just workers with no rights.

The other side of this duality is the immigrant worker who thinks his and her own thoughts. They are our sister and brother workers, who not only have the same needs we do, they bring with them a rich experience of labor struggle and new ideas to help revitalize our labor movement. This is where we cannot let ourselves think like the boss or we are defeated from the start.

As workers, we know we do not create low wages—the boss does. And bosses use repressive immigration laws to lower wages. Illegal sweatshops that openly flout labor laws have proliferated preciously since the 1986 Simpson-Mazzoli immigration law. Immigration law is labor law, and it is not intended to stop workers from coming but to strip them of their rights. The workers have to come because they have to sell their labor power to live, just as any worker does. Immigration law sets the conditions whereby they can be further exploited.

Buchanan would have us fight our fellow workers, instead of the conditions of their exploitation. He would have us accept the boss's thinking as our creed: competition between workers, instead of solidarity. We must fight to legalize all workers, so we can all stand up for our rights, unionize, and strengthen each other! An injury to one is an injury to all!

I don't buy the argument that there are too many workers. There is plenty of work to be done. Bridges are falling down, schools are understaffed, people need food and housing. GM forces its workers in Dayton, Ohio, to work seven days a week, like the sweatshops of New York. In the end, only workers taking over production and running things themselves, based on their humanism, can solve this problem of overwork for some and no work for others.

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

Editor's Note

Raya Dunayevskaya gave a lecture on Hegel to a group of New Left activists at the end of her lecture tour of Japan during the winter of 1965-66 to engage revolutionaries in a discussion of her work-in-progress, *Philosophy and Revolution*. We are publishing it on its 30th anniversary because a serious grappling with the dialectic-proper remains crucial for any freedom movement today. The lecture is one of the readings for our classes on "Dialectics of Liberation Today." (See ad, page 5.)

Part I, in the March N&L, discussed Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind* where the uniting of history and science "becomes the transition point to Science of Logic and Philosophy of Mind," the works she discusses here in Part II. The original typescript is found in the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection: *Marxist-Humanism—a Half-Century of Its World Development* (# 9697). All footnotes have been added by the editors.

The *Phenomenology* just flowed out of Hegel under the impact of the French Revolution. The stages of Consciousness he talked of there were history in the form of the spirit of man. Now he comes to Science of Logic and begins to talk in terms not of stages of consciousness but of philosophic categories. Each category takes up a whole stage of civilization in the same manner as each stage of consciousness takes up a whole stage of civilization. Because we are hurried in time, I am not going to deal with the Doctrine of either Being or Essence, but go directly to the Doctrine of Notion or of Freedom, and especially the last section, "The Absolute Idea."

The Doctrine of the Notion or of Freedom is in actuality the objective and subjective way to get to the new society. That is what Lenin grasped in 1916. When he saw that it was Hegel himself who used the expression "or of Freedom" he was thrilled. He kept asking, "What has the Absolute Idea to do with it?" but the point is that he grasped what he did because [his age] had reached an entirely new stage of development, of economics, of politics.

He was compelled to return to the Logic because of the betrayal of his own comrades in the Social Democracy, and he began to stand in awe of thought.¹ He said, "Oh my God, look at what thought does. It actually not only reflects the world but creates it. Look at what this man had foreseen. Why didn't we see all of this?" And he began to try to break down what were the stages of Cognition, Analysis, Understanding, Reason. What were the stages of Judgment? What were the stages of Syllogism? How will the Universal of Socialism and the Particular of its appearance as a workers' state, a transitional society—as well as the individual and the totality—all merge in the revolution he wanted to explain and talk about? What hit him was the sudden realization that thought is so great that it had summed up a whole stage. For Hegel was the most materialist of all idealistic philosophers and Marx the most idealistic of all materialist ones.

I want to take up just the transformation into opposite because it is easier to understand, but actually we are talking about the Doctrine of the Notion and of Freedom. I will take up all the people who are trying to do something in an academic way and not getting anywhere precisely because they not only do not have the proletariat in mind, but also do not stand in awe of thought, even though they are philosophers.

Both Marx and Lenin stopped at the Absolute, even though Lenin went further in the Absolute Idea. Marx came to the part where Hegel says this all ends in the Absolute and, on the one hand, said it doesn't mean anything because Hegel returned to a closed system of thought. But, on the other hand, Marx saw it does mean something because he was always returning to it. In his 1844 "Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic," Marx finishes with *Phenomenology* and deals with Absolute Knowledge. He then says he will go through Hegel's whole system and reach the same point with Absolute Mind in his *Philosophy of Mind*. Then Marx quotes two paragraphs from Absolute Mind and the manuscript breaks off.² And that is the problem of our age.

One of the central points in the Absolute Idea, just before Hegel reaches what we call the "second subjectivity," is a sentence which reads, "The self-determination in which alone the Idea is, is to hear itself speak." Everybody knows what self-determination means to nations, but they don't know what self-determination means to ideas. Lenin grasped it because he was deeply immersed in the self-determination of nations as an impulse to bring on the proletarian revolution. He now saw that the self-determination of ideas also has various stages of high development and breaks into two. There is a movement from practice where the self-determination is to hear itself speak. Where it speaks elementally in the proletariat it is, so to speak, instinctive. And there is also a movement from theory which doesn't come so elementally and may have many pitfalls. At the point where the theoreticians have to listen to the masses the question

1. When Marxist leaders of the Second International decided in 1914 to support World War I, Lenin responded to the betrayal by embarking on a study of the philosophic roots of Marxism. For more on Lenin's philosophic reorganization, see Chapter Two, "The Shock of Recognition and the Philosophic Ambivalence of Lenin," in *Philosophy and Revolution: From Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao* by Raya Dunayevskaya.
2. "The Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic" in Marx's *Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* breaks off in a discussion of Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind* at paragraph 384.

Lecture on Hegel in Japan - Part II

'A summons to grasp spirit of the times'

is: how will the two unite?

Suddenly Hegel brings in a lot of jokes "in sympathy." He begins to laugh at what everybody says about the Syllogism and that in Hegel it stands for Thesis, Antithesis and Synthesis. That is a lot of nonsense; it doesn't stand for any such formal triad. Hegel begins to make jokes about people who construct mechanically and says it could be three, or four, or five. And when he gets to five, because you really do not have a beginning since every beginning is a result of some other mediation, Hegel says, "Even in the fact that the whole answer is in Subjectivity—because the unity of the theoretical and the practical idea occurs in Subjectivity alone—it really isn't your first negation of anything, it is the second negation."³

We cannot go into the details of this now, but I do want to say that in the last two pages of the chapter on "The Challenge of Mao Zedong" in *Marxism and Freedom*, instead of a conclusion I present an idea of what I am going to develop in *Philosophy and Revolution* on "two kinds of Subjectivity." There is the petty-bourgeois kind like Mao's and the real kind that comes from the proletariat. But in that chapter I have just noted it and I haven't showed how they would unite because that is the problem that I am working out in *Philosophy and Revolution*. The new, the greatness, the problem for our age is to solve how the unity resolves itself in "second subjectivity."

The approach of Marcuse and other academic Marxists is to give up at this stage, to run away. They think it makes them great materialists, but it doesn't. They say that [Hegel's concept of the] Absolute Idea is the result of the fact that he lived in a pre-technological age where mental and manual labor were so separated. They say that it was the beginning of industrialization and not the end. They say he ran back to what he was before. I completely and totally disagree with that argument, because Hegel ran back to what he was before on the question of the state, but not in the Absolute Idea.

The theoretician I consider the most serious on this question is Karl Lowith who is a Christian and said, "That is all that Hegel deserves because he wasn't, so to speak, a true Christian. He laid the foundation for Marx, he laid the foundation for atheism, he laid the foundation for all that we have suffered since. So Marx is the true inheritor of Hegel and God be with you if that is what you want."⁴

Marcuse, because he considers himself a Marxist (and academically, he is), is trying to say: 1) the Absolute Idea is pre-technology. 2) What we have to do is forget that part (about the Absolute Idea) and take reality. To Marcuse reality is that the proletariat is impotent and hasn't made the revolution for him, hasn't proved itself, didn't make the revolution Marx had predicted. And 3) he (Marcuse) does recognize "second subjectivity," but interprets it as meaning that the intellectual will do it and bring you to the new stage. It is against these three serious arguments that I want to show what I feel is the problem of the Absolute Idea.

I want to discuss it all within what we call the "historic barrier." You come to the end of all that you can say because history has now presented you with the new problems. On the other hand, why is it that certain people, who are not as great as Marx or Lenin, just by living in a different historic age, are compelled to deal with these problems? For example, whether or not Marcuse considers me a romantic, in his Introduction to *Marxism and Freedom* (which was not reproduced in the Japanese edition) he said in essence that I am great in the analysis of Marx, as Marx, and that there had been nothing original since the Lukacs period until *Marxism and Freedom*. But when it comes to the mass of material I accumulated to deal with the reality of today, he disagrees with it, and mainly it revolves around the role of the proletariat. So I am a romantic.

3. This refers to the "subjectivity" which Hegel calls the "turning point" in the effort to surmount the separation of Notion (the Idea of Freedom) and Reality: "The Negativity which has just been considered is the turning point of the movement of the Notion...for the transcendence of the opposition between the Notion and Reality, and that unity which is the truth, rest upon this subjectivity alone." See Hegel's *Science of Logic*, Johnston & Struthers trans. (New York: MacMillan, 1929) p. 477.

4. See Karl Lowith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche: The Revolution in Nineteenth Century Thought* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winson, 1964).

But the truth is that the intellectuals, including the Marxist intellectuals, had not been able to break down either the humanism of Marx or the fact that it broke off (in Marx's 1844 *Essays*) at the Absolute Idea. The new stage for the few of us who were trying to work it out came from the masses. I'm talking about the miners' strike and all the upheaval in World War II.⁵ Hegel has a word for it. He says it is only the concrete that demands a new stage in philosophic cognition. The new stage comes only when your philosophic categories just don't



Raya Dunayevskaya (second from left) in Japan, 1966.

answer what has come from below. He, the idealist, recognizes that fact while the so-called materialist Marxists, including the highest of them, Marcuse, don't recognize that fact.

So I want to end on what I began with—the need to give ear to the urgency of the times and the summons to recognize the spirit of the age by recognizing that "second subjectivity" must again be broken into two. First is what the proletariat is going to do. They are going to do it anyway, so we better begin listening. The other is what theoreticians must do. Their task isn't ended just because the impulse comes from below. They have to first begin to work it out, not just to satisfy themselves with quick political answers. And the working out of that subjectivity of the theory of our age of the Absolute Idea, in the concrete form of philosophy, and theory and politics, means that we are just beginning. There is no point in saying anything about "realizing philosophy" if we haven't done that. That is the task of our age. And that is why it is going to be the central point of *Philosophy and Revolution*.

5. See *A 1980's View: The Coal Miners General Strike of 1949-50 and the Birth of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S.* by Andy Phillips and Raya Dunayevskaya (Detroit: News & Letters, 1983).

Meyer Schapiro, 1904-1996

The death of Meyer Schapiro, one of the century's leading art historians, has received long and respectful notices in the mainstream press. Not surprisingly, his commitments to revolutionary Marxism during the 1930s and 1940s have been barely mentioned.

After 1936, Schapiro broke with the Communists in order to defend Trotsky against Stalin's Moscow Frame-Up Trials. During the late 1930s, he served for a year as the editor of the *Marxist Quarterly*, a serious but short-lived journal which tried to be an open forum for a variety of Marxist standpoints.

In the 1940s, Schapiro continued to keep in contact with revolutionary groups. In 1949, he was in touch with Raya Dunayevskaya. His letters during this period show an interest in her project of translating and publishing Lenin's *Philosophical Notebooks*.

In a letter to Raya of March 19, 1949, he wrote: "I don't share your great enthusiasm for Lenin's marginalia, but I am impressed by the fact that Lenin was able to immerse himself in Hegel during the war and to find inspiration from philosophy on the eve of the most important event in his life and perhaps in all history."

Despite his reservations about the actual content of Lenin's *Notebooks*, Schapiro thought it was important for them to appear in print, writing Raya on March 26: "I will gladly submit them to Oxford and other publishers." In this letter, he also referred to Alexandre Kojève's new book on Hegel and to Maurice Merleau-Ponty, whom he described as "a great enthusiast for dialectics and an admirer of L.T. (Leon Trotsky)."

Although nothing came of this effort in the 1940s to publish Lenin on Hegel, these letters illustrate Schapiro's serious interest in revolutionary dialectics, something which distinguished him from the other more pragmatist "New York intellectuals" of the period.

— Kevin Anderson

Bosnia's Challenge to Revolutionary Thought

Excerpts from Part I of a new, expanded edition of BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA: ACHILLES HEEL OF 'WESTERN CIVILIZATION'—off the press in April! \$5 includes postage.

by Peter Wermuth

The start of 1996 may seem to present us with little more than a requiem as far as Bosnia is concerned. The combined might of four years of Serbian and Croatian aggression, a U.S.-imposed "peace" plan that leaves the country partitioned along ethnic lines, and a Bosnian government showing increasing signs of abandoning its defense of a unified, multiethnic Bosnia have all taken their toll. And yet it is precisely now that an energetic engagement with the issue of Bosnia has taken on the greatest importance. This is not because, as those who think Bosnia's struggle has receded into history would have us believe, "the owl of Minerva only spreads her wings with the setting of dusk." It is rather because, despite the many impediments standing in its way, the struggle to achieve a multiethnic Bosnia refuses to die. Its persistence, even after all the brutalities committed by the Serbs (as well as Croats) and betrayals inflicted by the West, is testimony to the depth of an idea of freedom that no might of arms can still. So long as the Bosnian people continue to aspire to a genuinely multiethnic society, we are compelled to help achieve its realization—not just for their sake, but for our own.

We posed Bosnia as the specific form assumed by the present stage of capitalist crisis. Capitalism clearly finds itself in a deep economic morass, as seen in the absolute decline in wages suffered by 80% of U.S. workers over the past two decades. Yet the end of the Cold War has removed the option of using conflict with an external superpower to divert the masses' attention from their declining living conditions. In response the rulers are increasingly promoting racism and inter-ethnic apartheid as a way to divert the masses from facing the real source of their impoverishment. It underlies everything from the attacks on welfare to the efforts to undermine affirmative action. In a historic moment in which rulers from the U.S. to the Balkans and from the Middle East to Western Europe are using the politics of apartheid to maintain their rule, the Bosnian struggle for a multiethnic society is of enormous importance.

It would have been easy for us to limit our work on Bosnia to a mere defense of Bosnians as "victims of genocide." But this would have treated them as passive victims, as objects, without digging out what their struggle is for, that is, their role as subjects. We have therefore sought to articulate the reason embedded in their struggle for a multiethnic society. This is no easy task because the Bosnian struggle emerged in an historic context in which the Idea of Socialism had collapsed throughout the world. Unlike earlier periods when the National Question was explicitly debated as part of a socialist perspective, in Bosnia a new type of struggle for national self-determination emerged in the context of a total absence of the projection of any viable socialist alternative against state-capitalism that called itself Communism. The Bosnian struggle therefore does not speak in the language of revolution which radicals have been accustomed to hearing. It means a philosophy of liberation is needed in order to elucidate the potential revolutionary significance of their struggle.

The persistence of that struggle, even in the midst of the capitulation of Bosnia by 20,000 U.S. troops and the capitulation of the Bosnian government to the U.S. partition plan, can be seen in the Dec. 11, 1995 demonstration in Sarajevo of Muslims, Serbs and Croats affirming a multiethnic vision...

Our effort to universalize the lessons of the freedom struggle in Bosnia is proof of our perspective of opposing today's retrogression by bringing philosophy to bear on reality. Far from being only a question of Bosnia, this is the crux of our work here at home.

This is not to say that events in Bosnia are directly applicable to the experience in the U.S., which has always been characterized by the sharpest of racial divisions. Racism is indeed the Achilles heel of American society, the factor which forever gives the lie to its claim of "democracy" and "equality of opportunity." The unceasing resistance to this racism on the part of Black Americans defines their vanguard role in efforts to transform U.S. society. Precisely because the crux of U.S. society lies not in the class struggle "in general," but in the additive of color provided by the struggle of the Black masses, their

Correction: Andrew Kliman's essay, "Marx's law of the falling rate of profit today," on page 5 of the March, 1996 issue of *News & Letters* should have read as follows: The last line of the first paragraph in Part III of the essay should read, "Given constant real wages, new techniques adopted by profit-maximizing firms to raise their own profitability are so productive that they cannot, in the end, lower the general profit rate." The first two sentences of the last paragraph in Part III should read, "Today, only a handful of environmentalists would subscribe to Ricardo's view. Yet Marx's point also answers those who fetishize high tech as a solution to capitalism's economic crisis, and indeed any who lay the blame on an external Other, such as the 'underclass': 'the true barrier to capitalist production is capital itself.'" *News & Letters* regrets the errors.



The Sarajevo String Quartet in the ruins of Bosnia's national library.

self-activity has repeatedly inspired and/or deepened the effort of other social forces—such as labor, women's liberation, and youth—to embark on a struggle for a new society. This was seen in such diverse phenomena as the birth of Abolitionism in the early 19th century and the Populist movement at the end of the century; it was seen in the labor upsurges in the period of the CIO in the 1930s and the emergence of the youth and women's liberation movements of the 1960s and 1970s. The coalescence of Black mass revolt with parallel struggles of labor, women, and youth is the key to the revolutionary transformation of U.S. society. As Raya Dunayevskaya wrote in *American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard with regard to labor and the Black Dimension*: "This parallelism is the characteristic fea-

VOICES FROM WITHIN THE PRISON WALLS

The cancer of corrections

by Carl Moss

(Conclusion)

Illinois has long been regarded as a pro-labor state. Because of this and the participation of organized labor in every stage of the corrections conundrum—from the surveys to the plans, from the construction to the staffing and even the destruction of the condemned buildings—the voters of the state have been steered away from any legislation that would limit or restrict the designs of organized labor, regardless of how self-serving (and in some instances, illegal) they appear to be.

The state's correctional officers are just about all members of AFSCME. They know that for every three or four new prisoners put into the system, they can hire another friend or relative for one of the "no-brainer" baby sitting jobs. The only requirements are a G.E.D. or high school diploma and a clean record. AFSCME has the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC), and through them the citizens of the state, in a death grip by the short hairs.

The inmate-to-staff ratio is determined primarily by the level of violence that a particular facility is able to maintain. The more violence, the more staff can be justified. Simply stated, this means the more violence, the more jobs for dues-paying union members to help support the lobby groups that influence lawmakers and pro-union legislation.

In California, the California Correctional Peace Officers Association has perfected this concept into something that is better than science fiction. Their lobby group is so powerful that virtually every suggestion that they make becomes law almost overnight. The average salary of a prison guard in California in 1994 was over \$55,000, and again the only requirements are G.E.D. or a high school diploma and a clean record.*

The evolutionary dynamic that California is now experiencing will soon be the standard across the nation. More and more funds will be diverted from education and the infrastructure and mandated for the business of incarceration. The only people that will profit from this new priority will be the few that are satisfied with the union pay scale or are in the business of supplying prisons with goods or services.

Instead of meeting the obligations written into the mission statement, the IDOC and the nation's prison systems are perpetuating themselves by not rehabilitating the men and women condemned to spend time incarcerated therein.

The taxpaying public is being dealt a double whammy by having to pay for the self-serving designs of the IDOC (currently at over \$800 million per year) and the fact that the men and women released and theoretically rehabilitated are not able to make a successful re-entry into society. They complete their court-ordered sentences and are freed, only to commit more crime because they have no other way to live and were not given the skills to be legally self-sufficient.

*"Lock-em-up Legislation Means Prisons Gain Clout" by Dan Macallair, *Christian Science Monitor*, Sept. 9, 1994.

Number of prisoners in U.S.A. March 1996

1, 1 5 0 9 3 8

ture of the American class struggle. Only when these two great movements coalesce do we reach decisive turning points in United States development."

It is therefore no accident that the present effort to keep us shackled to the power of capital centers on the effort to exacerbate and make permanent the separation between these different movements. A striking example is the 1996 Republican presidential primary campaign of Patrick Buchanan. His appeal to white workers being displaced by corporate takeovers, NAFTA, and mass unemployment through blatantly racist anti-Black, anti-woman, anti-immigrant rhetoric is (like the Wallace phenomenon of two decades ago) a deadly serious phenomenon. As deep as the divide between white labor, Latinos, and the Black Dimension is today, what the rulers fear

most of all is that the structural crisis of U.S. capitalism will give rise to new struggles in which these forces will coalesce. As much as the ruling establishment may pretend to distance themselves from Buchanan today, they will appropriate his message tomorrow if that is what it takes to ensure the permanent division between white labor and the Black Dimension. This must be fought, and fought comprehensively.

Yet this is not the only nefarious element facing us today. We also face the rise to national prominence of Louis Farrakhan, who seeks to obtain a mass base with his retrograde notion that it is possible for Black Americans to achieve "self-reliance" within the structures of actually existing U.S. capitalism—which of course does not stop him from relying on the politics of reactionary rulers like Saddam Hussein and Qaddafi. His anti-woman, anti-labor message is likewise one of the ideological forms which the present stage of capitalism is using in order to try to divide the masses.

In 1963 Dunayevskaya wrote, "Though it is impossible to stop the momentum of the Negro struggle, its forward development can be impeded if the underlying philosophy for total freedom is in any way compromised." Thirty years later, the truth of this statement for all the freedom movements should be clear. Without seriously grappling with a philosophy that can comprehensively combat the efforts to divide the labor, Black, women's liberation and youth battles, there is no way to generate the forward movement needed to make a successful American revolution.

As Dunayevskaya noted, "The elements of the new society, submerged the world over by the might of capital, are emerging in all sorts of unexpected and unrelated places. What is missing is the unity of these movements from practice with the movement from theory into an overall philosophy that can form the foundation of a totally new social order." It is here where Bosnia's struggle for a multiethnic society takes on central importance for us all—when, that is, the concept of multiethnicity is articulated and developed as part of a philosophy of "revolution-in-permanence"...It is for this reason most of all that this pamphlet ends with Dunayevskaya's essay on "A Post-World War II View of Marx's and Humanism, 1843-83; Marxist Humanism in the 1950s and 1980s."

In the decade since she wrote this analysis of our age's revolutions and counter-revolutions, we have experienced a political retrogression of unprecedented dimensions. This makes the second problem of special importance: "Are there ways for new beginnings when there is so much reaction, so many aborted revolutions, such turning of the clock backward in the most technologically advanced lands?" At issue is how to keep alive the new beginnings for freedom which continue to emerge, but which are today so quickly subsumed by reactionary ideologies and state powers. The need to confront this problem in a comprehensive manner makes it more important than ever to become firmly rooted in Marx's multilinear view of human development, both as it related to new forces of revolution and the relation between a philosophy of liberation and revolutionary organization. Bosnia's struggle for multiethnicity represents one, but by no means the only, challenge to work out Marx's concept of multilinear paths of human development for our day.

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WORKERS BATTLE WITH GLOBAL CAPITALISM

Every city has its good old boys. In Chicago, they hang out at the Union League Club, an exclusive place inhabited almost entirely by Republicans. In mid-March the League hosted a fancy dress dinner honoring two of the railroad industry's most notorious thieves, Jerry Grinstein and Rob Krebs of Burlington Northern/Santa Fe Railroad. Over the past year, no less than eight of their workers have been killed and more than 1,000 have been injured. The lunacy of honoring such "achievements" may have been lost on their look-a-likes inside the club, but it wasn't lost on the not-yet-killed. Outside the club, arriving guests were greeted by two dozen rank-and-file railroad workers whose fliers hailed the honorees as "Robber Barons of the Year" for their "outstanding achievement in putting profits before safety." Even more telling was their haunting chant — "We come to work, not to die!"

Jan Kollwitz
Chicago

More than 15,000 construction workers took Monday off late last month in order to rally in downtown Los Angeles against Governor Pete Wilson's proposed cut of the prevailing wage for construction done for public works projects. Currently the prevailing wage is based on union wages, but Governor Wilson wants to base it on non-union wages. This would take construction workers back to pre-1930s status.

It was the 1930s Little Davis-Bacon Act that made it Federal law to set prevailing wage for public works. Seeing as most construction workers work only six months out of the year, the current wage "just gets them by" as it is. One hard hat's proposed solution for Wilson's "misunderstanding" is to "have Governor Wilson come down for a month, wear the clothes we wear, work the hours we work (in the middle of August) do the work we do, then see if he still wants to do the wage cut."

Joseph S.
Los Angeles

NAFTA has hurt many people in Mexico. Many very efficient American companies came to Mexico and drove out less productive Mexican businesses that laid off all of their workers. But now the products cost more than they did before, so we pay more, and more workers don't have jobs.

Unemployed workers
Mexico

You hear one horror story after another here. Corruption, take-overs, 30% to 40% rises in the price of electricity, gas, etc. show the rampage of the multinational corporations. When they take over a company the condition for employment is no union affiliation and the usual other McJob conditions: as minimal a wage as possible with no medical or any other benefits. It augurs an official sharp right turn in Hungarian politics, as only a demagogue alternative seems plausible to the electorate, the socialists being busy implementing the draconian and reactionary conditions of the IMF, World Bank and other reactionary organizations.

Gyorgi
Budapest

Minimum wage in Mexico is \$3 a day—and that is for eight hours a day and six days a week. We were just surviving making \$12 a day, so people making \$3 a day are living in horrible poverty.

Ex-GM worker
Mexico

The historic five-week-long Oakland teachers' strike ended. There is a goal (but not a guarantee) to reduce class size, the major demand teachers made. The parents are angry with the school board, not the teachers. The school board is expected to be recalled in the next election.

Salary increases were the other major demand. There will be a "bonus" of \$2,700-\$3,200 now and an estimated 22% raise over the next few years. But school psychologists and pre-school teachers got only a 3% raise. For teachers who have not seen a pay raise in five years, this is not a bonanza.

The most significant result of the

strike may be the fact of the strike itself and the community support it received. Just as in the Safeway strike, the almost universal sympathy for the workers is helping to break the fear of fighting back that Reagan started when he fired PATCO strikers. Maybe the teachers didn't get everything they asked for, but the fight was worth fighting.

Supporters
Oakland, Cal.

The California State Assembly just approved eliminating the requirement that employers pay workers overtime for working more than eight hours in one day. Republicans said it would make it easier for businesses to draft flexible work schedules for employees, such as a four-day week of ten-hour days. Only in a great democracy like the U.S. can you imagine workers being granted the "privilege" of working a ten-hour day! And, of course, there are no limits on how many hours a boss could force employees to work in one day. It's clearly part of a national assault by business on overtime requirements.

Ready to fight
Sacramento, Cal.

The workers here are pursuing solidarity among workers, although there are still barriers toward development of a labor unity in our country. Your news and analysis regarding the situations and development of the working-class struggle in various parts of the world have helped us gain a wider perspective on our own problems.

Center for Labor Education
Manila, Philippines

Andrew Kliman's essay on "Marx's Law of the Falling Rate of Profit Today" (March N&L) has an important discussion of how "capital itself" is "the true barrier to capitalist production" and to human development. Like the economists Kliman critiques, radical economists routinely conflate value with use-value. Then they end up projecting as the movement's goal a non-industrial world, yet one in which value still operates, since value is assumed to be "natural." This is yet another way in which, as Kliman points out, the Left's failure to grasp Marx's theory makes it hard to conceive of the possibility of an alternative to capitalism.

Franklin Dmitryev
Chicago



LEFT HEGELIANISM 1996

We recently ran across the enclosed picture of G.W.F. Hegel in a biography of Marx which was written by a committee of academicians in the USSR. We immediately thought: who could make better use of this than the N&L folks? Frankly, until we started reading N&L, we were under the impression that left Hegelianism had expired with Bruno Bauer and Moses Hess and Marx and Bakunin. We're delighted with each issue to see that this is not so.

Two N&L supporters
Massachusetts

The lecture on Hegel Raya Dunayevskaya gave in Japan back in the 1960s, printed in "From the Archives" in the March N&L, speaks loudly and clearly to the working class today. I liked how she took the six stages Hegel developed from "consciousness" to "Absolute Knowledge" in his book on Phenomenology and divided them into two "departments," where the first went from slave society to the French Revolution and capitalism, and the second was after the Revolution. I liked the way Hegel showed that, in slave society, the lord could demand anything and the slaves had to produce it, but the slave turns out to be the one who gets "a mind of his or her own." Then that mind has to be developed. Where Raya talked about the alienated soul, she likened it to what we used to call "Beatniks" in the '60s, the kind of hell-raisers that end up right

Readers' Views

where they started, because you have to go further than that. But even when you get to the Revolution and think you have reached Reason, it seems you still have to go further.

When you get to the second big "department," is the "Alienated Spirit" where we are today? She said this is where you can start identifying yourself with the State or leaders or a faction. This is where I see Farrakhan and his kind as so dangerous to the freedom movements today, because most of us haven't really developed that "mind of our own." If we had, would we still be slaves to capitalism? Would we still think we need strong leaders to think for us?

Retired worker
Whittier, Cal.

TANZANIA TODAY

Having just returned from a long trip to Tanzania, I thought a few observations might interest you. Much of the legacy of Julius Nyerere, who led the struggle for independence, is admirable. Tanzania is unique in having dealt with the problems of tribalism in a manner which preserves ethnicity but avoids destructive political rivalry over control. The gap between rich and poor is much less disgusting than in Kenya, for example. Nyerere is also one of only two of post-colonial Africa's Founding Fathers to voluntarily leave office. We were able to observe a vigorous opposition press boldly attacking abuses. There is a remnant of the spirit of UJAAMA, despite corruption and commercialization.

The sad part is that all of these partial gains of the masses are being sold off at a rapid rate. The national Tobacco Trust, for example, whose capital represents the accumulated sweat of the masses, went to R.J. Reynolds while we were there, and there is much cynicism among people, for obvious reasons.

Richard Greeman
Connecticut

FIGHTING THE RIGHT

These days the Republican presidential candidates must spend a lot of time in front of a mirror asking: "Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the most reactionary of them all?" Sieg Heil, Fuhrer Buchanan! The lack of either charisma or substance of the other candidates leaves the field wide open for the Christian Coalition and other fundamentalist rightist groups to push the Republican agenda to the most extreme reactionary right, through "populist" demagogues like Pat Buchanan.

The consensus seems to be that all this is very favorable to the re-election of President Clinton, who while officially professing some kind of resistance to the overt drive to the right, de facto is implementing the reactionary Republican agenda himself, step by step. Where does all this leave the disenfranchised American voter?

Observer
Canada

As was pointed out in your report of the French strikes (January-February N&L), as against the efforts of intellectuals like Alain Touraine and Bernard-Henri Levy to support the government, a great number of French intellectuals vigorously supported the strikers. This "return" to political engagement has been building all through the 1990s. Over the last few years a number of leading intellectuals have spoken out forcefully against the genocide in Bosnia as well as a series of racist anti-immigration laws passed by the French government. Jacques Derrida is a good example. Something is definitely stirring today among both workers and intellectuals in France.

Radical professor
Illinois

There is currently a proposal on the internet that is at the CFV (call for votes) stage for the newsgroup rec.music.white-power, where anyone with a valid e-mail address may vote. "White power" racist music is not a legitimate form of music deserving of a

separate rec.music newsgroup, but a political group masquerading as a musical one. I hope we can show racists that they will not be granted a mainstream forum to promote their hate. Anyone who doesn't want a Usenet where minorities feel unwelcome and uncomfortable needs to send an e-mail message to music-vote@sub-rosa.com and vote NO in the body of the message.

Anti-racist
Chicago



VIEWS OF WOMEN'S LIBERATION

I really liked the lead on women's liberation in the March News & Letters. In particular I like the fact that Terry Moon was not at all defensive. Since women are so much under attack, and there is such a virulent attack against women on welfare, it was very important to not succumb to "defending" something. That is one way one can lose one's ground. Moon presented her ground very well, and I am happy to take this issue to the welfare lines.

Feminist activist
Bay Area

Terry Moon's lead brought out the important voices of Black women workers in the South. She notes that these women might not call themselves feminists, and I think this point could be further developed. What does "feminism" mean to them? Do they feel excluded from the term "feminist" because of the racism that's everywhere in this society? Where do those two consciousnesses—white feminist and Black working-class women—meet? The article by Sonia Bergonzi was also very good, and she shows that an organization like NOW recognizes that it does need some concept of the Black dimension.

Black male revolutionary
Los Angeles

I've been told "people think you're just a bag lady." (Since I don't drive, I can't scatter things all over my car. I walk, hitch, or use our new bus system and carry library books, groceries, odds and ends, in a big red bag.) That brief observation says a lot about our society and how we're taught to think about things. It is automatically assumed that every person over 16 has a car. If one is not only walking but actually carrying things, it can only be because one is homeless.

The word "just" says a lot, too. It says that whatever I say, do, think, am, it doesn't matter. Not only have I the nerve to be female but I am not rich and not young and not beautiful. What right have I to be taking up space? Men have their problems, too, but one never hears the phrase "bag gentleman."

Joanne Forman
Taos, New Mexico

N&L's views are always distinctive and informative. Particularly your views on feminism.

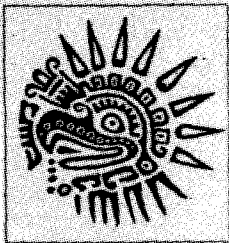
Reader
Oakland, Cal.

GETTING READY

When the news came out that the Chicago police have begun special training classes to get ready for this summer's Democratic convention, two Chicago Tribune columnists wondered whether it would include Night Sticks 101 or Advanced Tear Gassing. They seemed to consider it a joke that the cops who remember 1968 are wearing T-shirts that say: "I Kicked Your Dad's Ass. Now I'm Gonna Kick Yours." I know a lot of people who also remember 1968, and they're not laughing.

Neither am I
Chicago

THE LATINO/A DIMENSION



What outraged so many about Mike Royko's recent syndicated column on Mexican immigrants was not that they didn't understand that the bigotry was supposed to be a satire. I certainly was aware of that. But these are trying and difficult times for Mexicans and other immigrants, legal or not. Thousands of human lives are at stake and anything that reinforces racist stereotypes is wrong. My Latino students were the first to show me the article, and they were right to be angered at seeing the epithets they are all too familiar with printed in the national press.

Mexican teacher
Illinois

I have not been here long; I came as do almost all the others, as "la migra" (INS) calls us, "wetbacks." My trip here lasted two hard months, but it seems I achieved my first goal. It was not easy. I got a job in one of the many factories which exploit us and discriminate against us only because we are Hispanic.

I think I went through what we all go through: my desire, my longing to go back home was expressed in my first letters to family and friends. Now that the situation is hopeless, I remember all my good friends wishing me a safe trip; even more I remember my two daughters who are so alone in my distant and sad country. Maybe I should quote the Mexican song that says, "Though its bars are of gold, it is still a prison..."

Coming home from work on a cold winter night, I saw a human being curled up against a bus stop shelter, shivering, covered with cardboard and newspapers. I thought, "How low can we human beings fall?" Most likely this beggar found only this, instead of the happiness he or she once sought. And as for me, all I did was what we regrettably learn to do in this city: keep walking, be

selfish and go about your business. So then I asked myself, "Who in reality has fallen lower? Him or me?"

Manuel
New York

The Los Angeles media over the last month have featured instances of Black/Latino tensions erupting into fights or warfare in the county jails, in the high schools, in the streets. At the same time there are efforts—not given mainstream publicity—at forging relationships of solidarity. Take recent developments in Mothers ROC (Mothers Reclaiming Our Children) in South Central L.A. Over the years since the L.A. rebellion, the question of both Black/Latino tension and the need for solidarity have often been discussed but, although an occasional Latina would come to meetings and be warmly welcomed by the Black women there, nothing substantial developed. Now, however, a Mothers ROC chapter will soon be starting in East L.A., begun by a Latina mother who has been coming to the meetings because of her son's bogus arrest on a murder charge. This has initiated her into a journey of political activism and thought.

Michelle
Los Angeles

RWANDA AND LIBERATION

The March editorial article on Rwanda-Burundi was made much clearer to me at a second reading after reading Frantz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*. Fanon elaborates on how, after a limited liberation movement is won, the newly independent country is transformed into its opposite and becomes an oppressive tribal dictatorship.

This happens under conditions of extreme poverty and human degradation to the mass of the people brought about by colonialism in underdeveloped countries. Liberation movements will always be limited without a philosophical base (and I use the word philosophy in a Marxist-Humanist context).

Activist
Los Angeles

JAMES FORMAN APPEAL

James Forman, who was Executive Secretary of SNCC and a leader in the civil rights struggle of the 1960s, and who has continued his activity with voter registration and political education as president of UPAC—the Unemployment and Poverty Action Committee—is now having a battle with cancer. Unfortunately, civil rights work does not come with a living wage, health or disability insurance, or a retirement pension. Jim now has health insurance benefits but needs help during this time when he will not be able to maintain a normal work schedule. We want to let your readers know that they can help support Jim and his work with a contribution to the UPAC Fund at PO Box 21097, Washington, DC 20009.

Mark Levy, Karen Weissberg and
Elizabeth Sutherland Martinez
New York, Virginia and California



NATIVE AMERICAN STRUGGLES

A budget cut (so far undetermined) affecting the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Indian Health Service has led to discussions among most Indian tribes here urging greater voter participation. Partly due to a historically justified negative attitude towards the government, large numbers of potential Indian voters have not been interested in participating. Now some tribes, like the Chickasaw Nation, headquartered in Ada, Okla., have officially begun a voter registration campaign.

Contributor
Oklahoma

On March 7, the Timbisha Shoshone Tribe learned that Secretary of Interior Bruce Babbitt had decided to throw the Tribe off the last remnant of its traditional homelands in Death Valley. Pauline Esteves, Acting Tribal Chairperson

and tribal elder, observed that this latest action by the federal government is just one more attempt at "ethnic cleansing."

Since 1933, the National Park Service has done everything in its power to deny the Tribe's historical claims, pretend we do not exist, and to get us out of the Park. While only about 50 of our members managed to maintain a continuing presence in the Valley on this water-starved, sand-blown 40-acre parcel, the Park Service has treated us like dirt. Over the years, this arrogant agency has controlled our every movement, cut off our power, severed access to our sacred sites, fined us for engaging in our traditional practices and bulldozed our homes when our people vacated them to return to traditional summer camps.

To add insult to injury, this administration used the Desert Protection Act to legitimize the government's decades-long racist policy to get Indians out of national parks. This liberal act has been used by the Clinton administration as the "final solution" to its Indian problem in Death Valley. We welcome your support. Write to us c/o:

Timbisha Shoshone Tribe
PO Box 206
Death Valley, CA92328

SOCIALIST 'DEMOCRACY'

Why is the ISO so afraid of News and Letters? When we tried to sell N&L at their conference on socialism a few weeks ago—which they advertised all over New York as open to the public—they tried to chase us out of the building. The conference was in a few rooms in a huge Columbia building, and we were in the hall. They insisted we could only be outside where there was no one and threatened to seize our papers. They may have been upset because we had just taken the floor in their plenary session to talk about the need to study Marx's philosophy and to work out a new relationship between philosophy and organization. All their people were talking about the need to organize the workers in a manner that assumed ISO already had all the theory and organization anyone could ever need.

N&L members
New York

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Black/Red View

by John Alan

Recently *The San Francisco Examiner* published a revised version of an address by Professor Clayborne Carson of Stanford University entitled: "The Founding Fallacy—Is Multicultural Democracy Possible In America?"

Since Professor Carson is the director of the Martin Luther King Jr. Papers Project and was an active member of the Civil Rights Movement, one would expect that his address before the members of the elite Commonwealth Club would focus on how American capitalism has corrupted the immanent humanism of multiculturalism every time it appears as a viable alternative to ethnic strife. Unfortunately, this didn't happen.

Nevertheless, the address did contain an element of historic truth by pointing out that African-American masses have played a crucial role in breaking down the political barriers to the practice of freedom in the United States. In Carson's words: "African Americans not only have sought constitutional rights, they also have changed the prevailing conception of civil rights and the role of government in providing those rights. African-American freedom has therefore transformed the United States into a nation that differs greatly from the vision of its 'Founding Fathers.'"

But this statement has only a phantom relationship to the main theme of his address, which focuses upon the political ideals of the "Founding Fathers" as the ground for a possible multicultural democracy in America. While he notes that in practice, the Founders gave freedom and political power only to Anglo-Saxon Protestant males, he emphasizes at the same time that the virtue of their egalitarian rhetoric did provide "some values that eventually allowed some diversity within democracy."

But Carson stretches historical credibility when he finds the political ideals of the "Founding Fathers" in the activities of the African-American freedom struggles and in the thoughts of Martin Luther King Jr.

Although Carson's address is called "The Founding Fallacy," there was no serious exposition of the contradiction between the political ideals of the Founders and the actual social and economic relationships in the society they began to govern. The political ideals of the eighteenth century bourgeois revolutionaries were only abstract universals which liberated them from the decaying remnants of a feudal society. And, as a class, they became the masters of their countries and the world because the might of their economic power came from a new world market built upon the African slave trade.

A journey into this historic reality would discover that the Black freedom movements in America were not born out of the "virtue of the ideals" of the Founders but out of the contradiction between the idea of freedom and the

Carson re-animates the 'Founding Fathers'

actuality of non-freedom. Marx has pointed out that the bourgeois revolutions of the eighteenth century could not resolve the contradiction between their universal principles and the reality of class oppression and slavery without a second revolution in civil society.

Black-Latino unity now!

From a South Central L.A. flyer calling for a Black and Latino unity rally:

Los Angeles—In 1992, the Crips and Bloods in Watts made history by creating a Gang Truce. Inspired by the gang peace movement of 1974 and 1988, the truce had, and still has, national and international impacts. 1996 is the 4th Anniversary of the Los Angeles Gang Truce. The truce not only stopped the violence among the two largest gangs in Los Angeles, but also brought community members together. Together, we are building a dynamic, militant movement for social justice, jobs, housing and education.

Following the 1992 uprisings, which called attention to our community's problems, it's time to mobilize and rebuild L.A. according to our needs. In an attempt to rebuild L.A. we are calling for 10,000 African-American, Chicano, men, women, family and friends to join our rally.

The short-term purpose of the march and demonstration is to unite, encourage, and create a critical group of community members to actively engage in rebuilding our community and protest against the criminalization of our young men. This is a crucial problem since in the state of California alone, 40 in every 100 Chicano and Black young men are in jail, prison, or on probation.

This effort is a continuous one. We recognize that since the beginning of our existence in this country, African-American and Chicano people have suffered from dehumanizing conditions of racism, estrangement from society, massive unemployment, and a lack of real educational opportunities. Our communities, as well as other segments of society, are faced with the real possibility of living a sub-human existence, or even collective extinction, unless we begin to link our understanding of these issues to concrete action—NOW!

Our long-term objective is active community involvement and empowerment. Take part in the community's struggles! **Rally demonstration: Saturday, April 27 at Will Rogers Park—103rd and Central.** Time to be announced.

Professor Carson did concentrate on one revolution, the American revolution of 1776 that failed to end Black slavery. But Carson holds fast to its "egalitarian rhetoric" because it offers the possibility of a constitutional solution to inequalities, racism, ethnic fears and strife in the U.S., a country which he regards as being already objectively multicultural. Carson fears most that the constitutional or federal government solution to social problems is being threatened by today's anti-governmentism. He thinks "that the trajectory of change in the United States is toward a restrictive view of government as a protector of civil rights or as a counter force against predatory capitalism."

Carson has presented himself with a dilemma, as he thinks that there is a "rational" governmental solution to the present economic, racial and ethnic crises. At best the government can give relief and intervene as a mediator, but it can never resolve these social crises; they're caused not by a constitution or laws, but are rooted in the crisis of capitalist production itself. What is on the historic agenda today is not the revolution of 1776 but a new revolution to create a new human society.

More DCFS nightmares

Chicago—After reading last month's story, "Getting out from under horror of DCFS" [Illinois Dept. of Children and Family Services], I was shocked but not surprised. This type of situation is tragic, yet typical. It is just the kind of thing I witnessed as a social worker.

Child abuse and neglect are serious, complicated issues. Drug abuse, physical and sexual assaults, and abandonment are all valid reasons for removing children from homes. But with DCFS and the state, there are two other major factors in deciding who gets to keep their children and who doesn't: class and race.

Once a poor family is reported, they are up against several massive bureaucracies. Let me illustrate with a true story: A woman and her children had to flee an abusive husband and wound up homeless. According to DCFS she was "not providing adequate shelter." This was a "violation" and her children were taken away.

This woman was on AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children). Next came the welfare bureaucracy. They said, "You don't have your children, so we're cutting off your benefits." She was then without her children and cut off financially. This made her situation even more desperate. To get her children back she had to go to juvenile court. The court system said in essence, "You don't have adequate shelter or income so you can't have your children back."

No place: DCFS said no kids. No kids: Welfare said no AFDC. No money or place: The court said no kids. In a series of Catch 22's, she was punished for being poor.

Being poor made it that much easier for the state to control her and her children's lives. Like most poor families, hers probably couldn't afford a private attorney who could better represent their interests. More than likely they were appointed a public defender, who usually has 300 to 400 cases a year, and doesn't have much time to put into each one.

Juvenile court ends up looking like a production line at Ford. Bring in the raw materials, mostly poor Black children; process their cases in the court assembly line; and ship them out, their minds and bodies abused, like this young woman's.

Race is often the second deciding factor in who gets to keep their children and who doesn't. The young woman's parents in last month's story obviously needed counseling for alcoholism. Did the Chicago police or DCFS refer them for treatment? We can't tell from the story. But if they are typical of most Black families, they are not given counseling and help. They are given condemnation and punishment. The belief seems to be that these parents have committed a crime and are guilty even without a trial. The pervasive attitude among social workers is that "these (Black) people are dysfunctional." There are, of course, Blacks and whites who abuse their children. But when it comes to Black families, they are much more likely to be broken apart and/or not given the resources they need to get on their feet. And the situation will get worse with the "Personal Responsibility Act" which will cut back on subsidies for relatives who act as foster parents for children.

If you go to juvenile court in Chicago, most of the cases you see are of Black families. This is a result of the systematic racism in housing, jobs and education. But it is also the by-product of the racism in the police force that "interrogated" this young woman; the mostly white state's attorneys, public defenders and judges who make the decisions over Black folks' kids; the medical personnel who are almost always white who come up with clinical and psychiatric diagnoses; and unfortunately, a few Black social workers who have adopted some of the reactionary ideas circulating in this society.

The system doesn't provide enough jobs, adequate education, proper counseling for drug and alcohol abuse, therapy for abused children and so on. The system provides just enough for families to limp along not completely healed but not so little as to completely perish. For if the "underclass" were to be completely wiped out that would end all the middle-class jobs—lawyers, social workers, judges, cops, therapists—that thrive on the misery created by decaying American capitalism.

All of the material resources—education, counseling, therapy—needed by the families I described are already here under capitalism. The problem is that without a revolution, they will never get what they fully need to recover and thrive.

—Robert Reed

Black World

(continued from page 1)

long enough in get out and mean something useful and for real?"

This is not only the dilemma of the Black actor in white-controlled media with which Bambara indicts American culture, nor only a profound scripting of Cash's life; the philosophic significance of Bambara's critique extends beyond Black cultural dilemmas to the social disintegration of American civilization that they reflect. Which is why nothing could be farther from the truth than the liberal impression conveyed by C.D.B. Bryan in his review of Bambara's short story collection *Gorilla, My Love*: "Toni Cade Bambara tells me more about being black through her quiet, proud, silly, tender, hip, acute, loving stories than any amount of literary polemizing could hope to do."

Mary Helen Washington, who anthologized Bambara's work in several books, takes the exactly opposite view. Hazel's (the young Black protagonist of *Gorilla*) "rejection of the simplistic, religious message of the film ["The King of Kings"] is...conditioned by [her] family's philosophy of resistance," which also "allows Hazel to trust her own interpretation of reality." The film "is not so simple as it is stupid," Hazel finds. "Cause I realize that just anybody in my family is better than this god they always talkin about... I can just see it now, Big Brood [Hazel's older brother] up there on the cross talkin about forgive them Daddy cause they don't know what they doin. And my Mama says Get on down from there you big fool, whatcha think this is; playtime?"

In the Black woman writer, this represents nothing less than the "indignant consciousness" that Hegel and Marx found so powerfully elaborated in Diderot's novel *Rameau's Nephew*. In 1869, when Marx sent a copy of *Rameau to Engels*, with excerpts from the account of Diderot's depiction of the "indignant consciousness" from Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind*, it was out of Marx's appreciation of the revolutionary nature of literary satire.

Heard in this form of literary expression is "The mocking laughter at existence, at the confusion of the whole and at itself, [for it] is the disintegrated consciousness, aware of itself and expressing itself, and is at the same time the last audible echo of all this confusion... It is the self-disintegrating nature of all relations and their conscious disintegration... In this aspect... the indignant consciousness is aware of its own disintegration and by that knowledge has immediately transcended it." This is

the "philosophy of resistance" that Mary Helen Washington finds in the consciousness and character of the young Black girl that Bambara creates to issue her critique of religion and the adult world.

What makes the work of a writer like Bambara "the last audible echo of all this confusion" of our disintegrated social existence is not only that her characters constitute the conscious self-disintegration of the Black community's patriarchal relations. It is that, unlike other Black literary writers, Bambara was also a Black feminist who theorized the original contribution of Black feminism to Women's Liberation and Black Liberation.

She published the first anthology of Black feminist thought in 1970, *The Black Woman: An Anthology*. This collection of prose, poetry, fiction, and theory was like most early intellectual works from the Women's Liberation and Black Studies movements. But while its overtly political nature set it apart from today's academic Black feminist works, *The Black Woman* anthology carried all the contradictions and ideological baggage of the period.

However, what Bambara does in the preface to *Black Woman* with the meaning of "basic" is quite dialectical in capturing the disintegrating consciousness that Hegel pinpoints. She first makes it the criterion of liberation: "If we women are to get basic, then surely the first job is to find what liberation for ourselves means." Next she scathingly counterposes this liberatory concept of basic to its usage by psychiatrists interpreting the "basic" personality traits and behavior of women, by the commercial psychologists studying the "basic" consumer habits of women, by biologists theorizing about the "basic" instincts of women, and by biochemists who prop up the metaphysical sexism of the Freudian proposition that anatomy is destiny.

This indignant, or disintegrating, feminist consciousness did not stop at a critique of white male dominated society and thought, but extended to a critique of the unenforceable patriarchal order of the Black community that Black men nevertheless try to uphold. In her award-winning 1980 novel *The Salt Eaters*, Bambara gives the following satirical description of the hollow charisma and public appeal of the modern Black leader: "Some leader. He looked a bit like King, had a delivery similar to Malcolm's, dressed like Stokely, had glasses like Rap, but she'd never heard him say anything useful or offensive. But what a voice. And what a good press agent. And the people bought him. What a disaster. But what a voice."

The lives and work of Toni Cade Bambara and Rosalind Cash show us that if we are to move beyond the hollow voice of today's Black leaders and get basic about dismantling the master's house with ours, not his, tools, we need to re-think what the dialectics of liberation mean in the movement from consciousness, through culture, to philosophy.



Will Mexico's civil war become total?

(continued from page 1)

evicting peasants from land in several states, even right down the road from San Andres. They fly overhead in their helicopters, hold press conferences where they paint themselves as the victim...[T]hey're in the negotiations with the same attitude as their military detachments and their jails where they continue to hold supposed Zapatistas as political prisoners. It's one of the diverse forms of their low intensity warfare."

One of the government negotiators, Jorge del Valle, is an ex-leftist well versed in the language of rebellion. In the talks he has openly declared his intention is "to humble" the EZLN. From all appearances, however, it is the PRI government and its shaky ideological edifice that is being humbled. With every provocation in the talks the EZLN responds with a plainly worded, moving response that appears in the next day's newspapers. With every crime committed by the police, every assassination and rape, there are renewed efforts to fight back.

On March 9 the EZLN issued a communique to publicize the ongoing repression in the municipality of Tila, in northern Chiapas. The area is dominated by military camps, but this doesn't stop the bands of "white guards" (composed of ruling party thugs and landowners) of breaking into houses and beating up the inhabitants. The Army watches this, the national newspapers report it, and it continues. The EZLN communique states, in part: "These acts make it clear that the government is determined to continue its war against the people, despite its words of dialogue and negotiation."

Many leftists, especially outside Mexico, have been quick to denounce the talks with the government, "from which nothing has come and nothing will come." This ignores the fact that at every turn the rebels have been pushing them along, criticizing and exposing the tricks of the government. The first agreement states that the rights of indigenous peoples should be included in the Constitution, that it is necessary to widen their political representation, to guarantee their access to justice and education. These are just words, of course, and even changing the Constitution in Mexico doesn't mean much because the government violates it daily anyway.

But what is the first thing the EZLN wants to do after signing the papers? They demand to travel to the Legislative Palace in Mexico City to witness the conversion of the accords into law. To Zedillo, this smells of precisely the thing he fears most: seeing the civil war in the rural areas spread to the cities. The mere thought of hooded Zapatistas in the capital—imagine, walking right in without even a pistol in their hands!—provokes terror in the ruling class. Zedillo has said no, you cannot come here, "it is impossible to guarantee your security." (No doubt about that.) Still, they want to go.

SPECTER OF PEASANT-WORKER UNITY

Clearly, every move the rebels make is guided by the thought: what kind of solidarity can we foment between all sectors of the country's oppressed? We can see this even in the recent proposal of the EZLN to transform itself into the FZLN, or Zapatista Front for National Liberation. According to the IV Declaration from the Lacandon Jungle and recent communiques, its members "will not seek either elected nor appointed posts in the government," since the democracy being fought for "must be something more than electoral democracy."

It is the specter of solidarity between a peasant rebellion and a (largely unemployed) working class that most haunts not only the Mexican government, but the U.S. too. Divisions between peasants and workers have always formed the Achilles heel of the Latin American revolutions. Since 1994 we have seen in Mexico a very new kind of indigenous peasant revolt, one that speaks

New Otani Hotel boycott

Los Angeles—Rank-and-file low-wage workers, mostly Latinos, and Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union Local 11 members are in the midst of a boycott campaign against the Japan-based non-union New Otani Hotel.

The international boycott was launched on Jan. 24 after a more than two-year union organizing effort. During that period management used many intimidation tactics including the firing of three Latina housekeeping workers in February 1995, the firing of over 20 security and firewatchers in June 1995, and sexual harassment of female workers. One of the workers fired for her effort to unionize the hotel was making \$7 an hour after 16 years of service, out of which she had to pay \$100/month for medical insurance.

Kajima Corp., a Japanese construction conglomerate, owns controlling interest in the hotel's parent company. Its past war crimes of enslaving and killing Chinese laborers during World War II have recently come to light.

A twice-weekly picket is maintained by workers, students and community activists, mostly Asians, as well as Local 11 staff members and president Maria Elena Durazo. According to union spokespersons, there have been some successes. Some groups have rescheduled gatherings to union hotels, including the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra and Asian Pacific American Women Leadership Institute.

The courts recently canceled a previous order prohibiting union supporters from visiting the homes of hotel workers. President Durazo declared the ruling a victory for free speech. International endorsements of support for the boycott have come from around the world including Australia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, England, Egypt, Ghana, Israel, Japan, Mauritius, Norway, Spain and Zimbabwe.

—Boycott supporter

of women's rights, of a new concept of "leader," one that rejects not only the power of governments but the kind of power-grabbing the Third World revolutions have degenerated into as well.

It arose at a moment two years ago specifically to challenge the hegemony of the so-called neoliberal project, of "integrating" Mexico into the "free market reforms" of the world market. Given all of this, it ought to raise for us the question: haven't we been witnessing the appear-



ance of some of the very objective conditions necessary to go beyond the limitations of the unfinished Latin American revolutions? And what can we do to help move it ahead further?

When the EZLN-organized National Forum on Indigenous Rights was held in San Cristobal in January, President Zedillo felt the need to launch his own appeal to the nation's peasantry. He travelled to Veracruz where his party rounded up a thousand people to hear him. After the mariachis and the local officials had their say, Zedillo began to explain the depth of the ruling party's commitment to indigenous people, "a problem for us all." "We have the will and the instruments to attend to the demands and the necessities of the 'indigenas' in a sustained manner," he said. That was all the crowd needed to hear, as they began to file out of the stadium. By the time the police noticed the exodus, half the crowd had disappeared, and a few minutes later the order came down to lock the gates so the President of the Republic might at least have a small audience.

The fact that the current PRI government has so timidly tried to convince the masses of its "moral imperative" exposes the seriousness of the situation. The only sector of society with less confidence in the State is the State itself. It is tempting to say that the only confidence remaining is in the rule of might, as there undoubtedly exists in Mexico today an unprecedented reign of terror on the part of the Army and police.

Never have there been more assassinations, rapes, and beatings. The state of Guerrero is competing with Chiapas in its persecution of peasants, as over 100 have been killed there in the past year. Last June's massacre of 17 peasants on their way to an anti-government rally, 70 miles from Acapulco, has finally resulted in the resignation of Zedillo's friend Ruben Figueroa, the state governor. He is stepping down now only because a video was released in February showing the police planting weapons on the victims after they murdered them.

The increasing police repression is without a doubt one reason the Mexican working class, whether fully employed or otherwise, has found it difficult to develop a movement of its own. At the same time, there exists the double threat of losing your job if you organize for better conditions, a situation U.S. workers know too well. Consider the experience of Mexico City's bus drivers (the Ruta 100 company). When the system was privatized over a year ago more than 10,000 union jobs were lost, and today the workers who led the opposition to the move are still in jail. Now the Pemex (state oil monopoly) workers are fearing the worst as privatization plans of that industry go forward.

A year ago we travelled to Mexico City and reported in these pages that none of the workers we talked to had any hope of the economic crisis improving. Today the only thing that has changed in this regard is that the government is no longer trying to convince the workers of brighter days ahead. There has been a 50% drop in consumption in the past 12 months alone, and neither

Death in the Philippines

Ferdinand Reyes, 33, a Filipino human rights lawyer, activist, and journalist-publisher of the newspaper Press Freedom, was gunned down Feb. 12, inside his office-residence in Dipolog City, 440 miles south of Manila. He was known for his hard-hitting column, "Vision and Revision," and for his weekly radio newscast, "Direct to the Point," both crusading against human rights abuses and government corruption.

Reyes was the 53rd journalist killed in the Philippines since 1978. About 23 of those were from the southern Philippines. The funeral procession closed down the city with 8,000 mourners. One person who desperately wanted to be there was his mother, but due to U.S. immigration policies she was prevented from attending.

She is like millions of other immigrants who are either in the U.S. legally and have stayed past their visa expiration dates or are here illegally in the first place. They are really prisoners without voices because to speak out would mean a one-way ticket back to their point of origin. If you're lucky enough to find work you remain silent.

—Observer

industry nor the government is speculating on how the downward spiral can be stemmed.

This system, whether you call it state-capitalism, neoliberalism, or the world market, has no future. The ongoing rural rebellion has never deceived itself in this regard; it does not aim to check capitalism's decline but rather to deal it a deathblow, to open new perspectives for a very different future. Recently Mexico's Secretary of Commerce signed further GATT agreements to kill remaining subsidies on agrarian products. Two years ago the Zapatistas made it clear that such developments were precisely why they took up arms, for they represent their annihilation, a form of genocide. Should we now conclude that the revolt has not been successful, since it has not been possible to stem the militarization of the country nor sway the hand of those willing to allow foreign capital to determine the future?

SIGNS OF CHANGE

We would be smarter to consider how closely related are the sentiments of Mexico's urban poor—employed and unemployed—with the ideas expressed in the ongoing rural civil war. The working class is, on the whole, in retreat before the might of "restructured" state-capitalism. There are signs, however, that this may be changing. Sporadic and intense labor battles always seem to be present, but it is the kind of new thinking that comes from facing new conditions that can bring a new kind of movement about.

Recently, workers from the Ford plant in Puebla visited Chicago to meet workers there and talk about what they face in production since NAFTA went into effect. They spoke about robotics on the line causing speed-up, "Quality Circles" (team concept) where they are exposed to controlling absenteeism. They told of their daily form of protest, "working with less enthusiasm."

One of the workers said: "There's a new language in work relations. They want you to see the person standing next to you not as a comrade... They want to abolish our collectivity, to isolate us. That's what they fear most, so they want to make us feel alone."

Doesn't this sound like the same thinking that has come from the Zapatista revolt? At the closing of the National Indigenous Forum in January Adelfo Regino said, "When we have the opportunity to share our thoughts, what we carry within us after so many years of struggle, we breathe deeply and we are moved, because we are all mirrors of the realities of each other." These words are not abstractions, but rather come from the experience of rebelling against this new world order at a specific moment of its decline. As such, they have much to teach us.

Mexican workers picket GM

Detroit—A group of Mexican workers and their supporters demonstrated in front of the General Motors headquarters building here, March 22, carrying placards and banners protesting GM's closing of its assembly plant in Mexico City. GM is not just closing its Mexico City assembly plant where workers are paid \$12 a day, it is moving this work to another Mexican state where the pay is \$5 a day.

At a meeting held earlier at GM UAW Local Union 22, two laid-off workers from the Mexico City plant, Amada Guzman Frias and Ricardo Espinosa Roman, described the workers' opposition to the plant closing, the collusion of the Mexican government with GM's efforts to intimidate the opposition and GM's failure to live up to its contract provisions.

Roman, who had worked at the plant for 18 years, served on the local union executive committee but resigned when a majority of the committee failed to oppose the closing. He was fired a year ago as a "troublemaker" and now is organizing opposition to GM at home and abroad, exposing GM's contract and safety violations and appealing for working-class solidarity and support. Mexican law, Roman noted, is directly involved because it is supposed to guarantee that worker contracts are observed, and one glaring example of its failure to act involves severance pay provisions that are based on seniority and retroactivity. GM offered to pay only 20% of what the contract calls for, and neither the local union nor government has protected the workers' rights.

Frias said GM's "retraining" program proved to be a farce. She described a machine shop, supposed to prepare laid-off workers for other jobs, which used outmoded and obsolete machinery; a cosmetology course for women was derided as, "We were supposed to learn how to be beautiful so we could get a man and not have to work," and a small business course was simply laughed at since none of the laid-off and destitute workers could even imagine opening any kind of business.

Both Frias and Roman have been blacklisted and cannot find employment anywhere. Frias noted that of the plant's 1,800 workers, there were 100 women in production and that she had been among the first to work on the line when they made their breakthrough in 1988. Most of the women in production, like Frias, first started to work in the GM plant kitchen. Roman said he had also started in the kitchen.

There is increasing support from both students and intellectuals, Roman stated, pointing especially to the massive Mexico City demonstration on March 18, the anniversary of the 1938 oil nationalization, that took five hours to pass.

Aid to help the protesting Mexican workers can be sent to Sindicato de General Motors de Mexico, Lomas de Cartagena, Tultitlan 54900, Estado de Mexico; Fax: 915-881-2380.

—Andy Phillips

Editorial

GM strike shows resistance to 'economic anxiety'

As stories about the growing "economic anxiety" in the U.S. showed up in newspapers and on television in March, along came the 18-day strike at two General Motors plants in Dayton, Ohio, grabbing the attention of anyone dependent on a paycheck. At the same time, headlines and sound bites were filled with Patrick Buchanan trying to exploit labor's distrust of capitalist leaders.

The shutdown by 2,700 members of the United Auto Workers Local 696 who make brakes, brake parts and engine bearings for GM idled some 177,000 GM workers at 26 plants in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, and thousands of workers at other companies. This auto strike had the most far-reaching consequences of any in 25 years with \$500 million in lost production.

The strike was meant to stop GM from breaking a promise not to contract out work to suppliers like Bosch which pays well below the union wages and benefits of Local 696 members. But the result of the strike could hardly be called a victory, for GM will continue to buy parts from non-union suppliers. GM's hard line in March—and possibly in national contract bargaining this summer—joins efforts by other companies to cut costs by buying goods and services from non-union suppliers. This forces employees to work for the same substandard wages paid by those suppliers, or see their jobs eliminated altogether. This strategy is called "outsourcing," but it's just another name for runaway shops.

Idled GM workers in non-striking locals, expressed solidarity with the Local 696 members because outsourcing threatens all who earn decent wages. They are worried about the permanence of hard times and a bleak future for their children. One economist, Lawrence Mishel of the Economic Policy Institute, further captured what's eating at the country's workers in the face of layoffs, falling wages, and impoverishment of working families: "If everyone is afraid that the job they now have is the best job they can get, because if they lose it they go to a worse job, then no one...is able to put any pressure on the employer."

Defeats at Staley, Caterpillar and Bridgestone/Firestone remind us that the government and corporations have attempted to take away the strike as a weapon. And although the GM shutdown reminded workers of the power of a strike, the settlement also shows that striking alone can't solve the problem of "outsourcing" and economic insecurity. The job of organizing the unorganized must be done.

WHO'S LISTENING?

New AFL-CIO President John Sweeney last fall committed \$20 million of federation funds to do just that. How the money is now being spent, though, raises questions as to whether he's substituting a hollow program for real organizing. He wants to satisfy the militant new members entering the union, many of them immigrants, Blacks, and women in service industries. Yet a program that brings new blood and new ideas to locals and work sites may not be controllable.

Thus, for the coming "Union Summer," student youth and even union members are to be recruited for all too brief three-week assignments where union organizing is taking place, then sent home. Such a tactic can hardly summon the creativity of young people who identify with unions, or that of the union members who will participate. Furthermore, a union organizer in Mississippi, which "Union Summer" is supposed to target, complained, "No one has asked us anything about what we think or told us what the plans are."

On the other hand, whether it's organizing or fighting givebacks, the rank and file knows what to do. The Mississippi organizer explained, "We are involved in organizing all the time in catfish and poultry plants, and we have a program where union rank-and-file workers take a leave from the plant to organize non-union plants. We also believe in building up an in-plant committee in places where we are organizing. Many times those are the workers who started the uprising anyway."

In the pivotal New York building cleaners strike by SEIU Local 32B-32J, which Sweeney once headed, local members got together to stop service deliveries and close offices. However, union officials stepped in to stifle their efforts, and the strike, against two-tier wages, failed.

When asked about "Union Summer," a Chicago building cleaner in SEIU laughed, "Hell, you already have non-union people working in organized buildings! They get paid three dollars an hour less than union people, and Local 25 ignores it. They should be in the union."

VYING FOR LABOR'S ALLEGIANCE

At the same time more and more workers distrust the labor bureaucrats and weigh what to do about a system that is broken beyond repair, the bourgeois politicians are trying to convince them reformism is possible, with rhetoric about equality in the Republican Flat Tax and about a safety net in Bill Clinton's health care budget.

However, the most dangerous use of ideology in order to sidle up to workers belongs to Patrick Buchanan. He

openly supported the GM strikers and marched in the Chicago South Side St. Patrick's Day parade in an all-white contingent of crane operators and other construction skilled unionists. His denunciation of foreign trade agreements (tinged with jingoism) has been as effective as organized labor's anti-NAFTA efforts. So strong have been Buchanan's denunciations of corporate America that John Sweeney spoke up to condemn Buchanan's racism and anti-semitism—and to reassert the AFL-CIO's own claim to speak for labor.

But while many along the St. Patrick's Day parade route cheered Buchanan, many cursed him out and his retrograde views on immigrants, Blacks, gays, and women. A veritable battle of ideas, and fists, took place that day. That kind of struggle—and the self-organization, actions, and ideas about stopping outsourcing and organizing the unorganized—has the potential not only to forge an alternative to Buchanan's manipulations and Sweeney's substitutionism, but a way out of capitalism's permanent economic crises.

Arab-Israeli time of terror

Tel Aviv, Israel—Feb. 24 was a clear and sunny weekend day, also on the political scene. The Israeli general elections had been set for May 29. In all opinion polls, Prime Minister Shimon Peres kept a strong and steady lead over Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu; his victory seemed a foregone conclusion. Israeli-Palestinian relations seemed to be moving smoothly along, following Yasser Arafat's success in the Palestinian elections. The way seemed clear to further stages: revocation of the Palestinian Covenant, an outdated symbol of Palestinian intransigence; Israeli withdrawal from Hebron, the only major West Bank city still under occupation.

Under the calm surface, however, a fuse was burning, lit with the assassination of senior Hamas member Yihya Ayash by Israeli undercover agents at Gaza on Jan. 5. In giving them the go-ahead to kill Ayash, Rabin's successor Shimon Peres made one of the worst blunders of his long career. The Ayash assassination shattered the de facto ceasefire which Hamas had maintained since August 1995. It tipped the balance inside Hamas against the relatively pragmatic internal leadership, which aims to become a political party. In the aftermath the lead among the radical Muslims was seized by the exiled leadership which seeks to continue at all costs and by all means the struggle against Israel.

Arafat tried to stem the tide, holding extensive negotiations with the Hamas leadership to stop them from taking revenge against Israel which, he knew would entail an Israeli crackdown. But a group of Hamas militants was already preparing for the series of suicide attacks. Jan. 25, second anniversary of the massacre perpetrated in Hebron by the fanatic settler Baruch Goldstein, was the date selected by Goldstein's Palestinian equivalents to begin their campaign.

POLLS TAKEN in the days following the first attack indicated that Peres lost most of his lead. He now seemed to run almost neck-and-neck with Netanyahu. Meanwhile, the government took the almost automatic step of imposing a closure on the Palestinian territories, supposedly in order to prevent the entry of further bombers, and incidentally depriving tens of thousands of workers of their livelihood. For its part, the Hamas leadership released a statement calling for a ceasefire with Israel, and setting March 8 as a deadline for Israeli response, until which date no further action would be taken. The offer was officially rejected by the Peres government—yet it was taken quite seriously by several mainstream politicians and commentators.

However, the band of bombers seemed bent on discrediting their own movement's leadership and showing that, in spite of the closure and of all security precautions they could strike again, on the same hour of the same day in the week, on the same Jerusalem bus line.

(It was Line 18, serving mainly the most impoverished of the Jerusalem slums.)

ON THE NIGHT of the second bombing, the cabinet held an emergency meeting in an atmosphere of panic magnified by the exaggerated media coverage of the shouting mobs. Some ministers actually proposed reconquering all the towns recently handed over to the Palestinians which would have meant a total confrontation with the Palestinians and a bloodbath of staggering proportions.

The cabinet's actual decisions were draconian enough: a virtual siege of the Palestinian self-governing territories; an effective brutal reconquest of the West Bank villages, left in the Oslo-2 agreement as an ambiguous no-man's-land between the Israeli and Palestinian jurisdictions; and a campaign of house demolitions and arrests of the suicide bombers' family members.

Activists gathered in front of Peres' home in north Tel Aviv to protect it from the mobs and urge the Prime Minister to preserve what was left of the peace process. An increasing number of peace demonstrators, organized by a variety of groups from the center to the left of the political spectrum, took to the streets of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem to express their determination not to let the chance for peace be snatched away.

There was also an enormous mobilization by Israel's Arab citizens, with "Yes to Peace, No to Terrorism" demonstrations and vigils taking place at practically every significant Arab town in Israel and at many of the smaller villages, supported by all parts of the Arab political spectrum. On the other side of the border, there were for the first time big peace rallies in the Gaza and at several of the West Bank cities, in spite of their difficult situation under virtual siege by the Israeli army. There seemed to be quite a genuine revulsion against the suicide bombers at the Palestinian grassroots though it remains to be seen whether that would deter the bombers, now seen to be a small fanatical breakaway group, oblivious even to Hamas' own political leadership.

For the more radical of us, the mobilization around Peres and against the right-wing onslaught left little space for confronting Peres from the other direction. Only a few isolated placards in the demonstrations took up the collective punishments and gross human rights violations in the Palestinian territories which the army's brutal actions in the past few days have shown to be still very much under occupation.

The peace which seems to be taking shape will be a cold and harsh thing, a far cry from the open symbiosis and open borders which we always dreamed about. Yet if it will provide an end to violence and a time for both peoples to heal their wounds, it may soften in time.

—Adam Keller

Farm workers fight agribusiness

Chicago—What I most want people to hear about now is what just happened with the Quincy Mushroom workers in Quincy, Fla., near Tallahassee. They picketed during lunch March 14, and the grower called for the police. It became really violent. One hundred fifty of the farmworkers were fired and 40 were arrested for no justification but the picket line.

It all started in late October when the Quincy Mushroom workers heard that the UFW (United Farm Workers) was coming to organize in Florida. On their own, with no organizers, they went on strike. Then they called UFW and said we need you. They went on strike because of human rights as well as wages. One man had an accident with pesticides — they went into his eyes. The supervisor, instead of sending him to a clinic, said that if there was another accident, he would fire him.

The workers are Mexicans and African Americans. A lot of women and young teenagers work in the mushroom plant. Many have developed fungus disease because they have to work in wet conditions with no protection other than their own shoes. Chemicals are often spread while workers are there.

Many women state that there is a lot of harassment because supervisors assume these women are undocumented, and docile and shy. A lot of women are afraid to speak out, but others express very clearly what the situation is. One woman cut her hand and went to the office. The supervisor, instead of sending her to the nurse, started to touch her. She told him to stop and he responded that she could get fired. This was one of the

women who called the union.

In December the Quincy Mushroom owners met with UFW but decided not to negotiate for union recognition. Quincy Farms gave a small increase in wages, so farmworkers returned to work. But they were organizing to sign cards for union recognition. We had started a corporate campaign, to have supporters buy shares from Sylvan Inc., the company that owns Quincy Mushrooms. They sign proxies to farmworkers, so for the May board meeting, farmworkers can ask them to negotiate for a union contract. Meanwhile, workers had returned to work and there were many abuses, so they organized this picket.

Clinton just signed into law a bill call HR2. It makes it legal for growers to bring farmworkers from Mexico. These farmworkers will have a special permit as a way of controlling them. Agribusiness is putting a hand into this issue of immigration.

The activity of dividing people is so prevalent right now. The farmworker unions have been very involved in fighting the anti-immigration initiatives that have started in Florida, Oregon, and California, especially. In Florida, there are five anti-immigrant initiatives. Our staff is part of a coalition, Fair for All Florida. Farmworker Association of Florida and FLOC (Farm Labor Organizing Committee) are on the steering committee. They are doing a lot to bring consciousness of the importance of voting against these initiatives.

—Veronica Meneses

National Farmworker Ministry

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Youth Marx vs. capitalist culture industry

[This month I am turning over the youth column to Lawrence W., an undergraduate at Northern Illinois University—Maya Jhansi]

Throughout history, America has been dubbed the land of opportunity. The American dream is based on the self-made man, starting with nothing and creating a financial empire of unlimited growth. Deeply rooted in the American dream lies capitalism. Unfortunately, the American dream of prosperity does not happen for everyone. In Marx's depiction of reality the American dream is just that...a dream.

Marx wanted to go beyond the limits of a given society. According to Plato, most people view the world as if in a darkened cave. Only when we venture outside of this dark womb can we see the world as it actually is. It is easier to describe the existing world by moving beyond our present situation to encompass new reformist ideas. Marx's views continue the cave allegory tradition. He urged the world to develop new ways to look at itself.

To Marx, it is the unique characteristic of the human species to be creative. It is what unites us and makes us different from other species which rely solely on instinctual drives. A man relates to himself as a universal and, therefore, free being. In the factory we are denied this freedom of expression and alienated from our essence. We are no longer individuals, no longer intelligent, no longer human, but nameless, faceless creatures acting as the extension of the industrial machine. We became alienated from ourselves.

The relationship between the consumer and laborer is hidden within capitalism's elaborate social networks. We seldom see the factory worker who assembles the products we purchase in the store (for example, our shoes or furniture). Though these products obviously required manual production from someone, our communication takes place with the products of labor.

In this sense the life essence that we receive comes from the products themselves, not the creators of the

products. It is as if the inanimate objects are living and the humans that produce them are the objects. According to Marx this "fetishism of commodities" creates "material relations between persons and social relations between things." Marx believed that after capitalism ends, the veil of fetishism would be stripped away. Production would become the work of freely associated men.

Today, television has become our culture's icon. TV shows and advertising show the riches of the world and entice viewers to "go out there and get it." According to Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, the ruling class creates our ideology and the culture industry incorporates the values of the upper class and transmits them to the masses: "Under a monopoly, all mass culture is iden-



Deadbeat uncle.

tical... Movies and radio need no longer pretend to be art. The truth that they are just business is made into an ideology in order to justify the rubbish they deliberately produce" (The Dialectic of Enlightenment p. 121).

The culture industry's motivation is to uphold the pre-existing corporate forces which perpetuate its own existence. The quality of the product is sacrificed in order to appeal to a broader audience. In so doing the artist must decide between commercial success or individualistic expression. The culture industry is obedient to the norms of the social hierarchy.

Consumers are led to believe that we get what we want, although we have no say in what the culture industry produces. We act as objects, not subjects. We are passive, silent participants in a unilinear relationship which conveys the illusion of individuality, while (in fact) maintaining the status quo. We are manipulated into believing we are free thinking individuals.

Although in Marx's day the revolutionary force was the worker, as the times change, so does the focus of the revolutionary. Today, revolutionary groups might include young intellectuals, the women's movement, the minority rights movement, and environmental organizations. Though we would like to think of ourselves as free thinking individuals, much of what we believe is the result of morals and behavioral guidelines. Our culture is so centered on material possessions that capitalism is accepted as the best form of economic maturity.

Once the capitalist lifestyle becomes part of our way of thinking, it is difficult to look beyond the immediate to a time where life is not governed by the almighty dollar. We run the risk of committing the naturalistic fallacy: that the way that things are is the way that things should be. In order to escape the exploitive relationships our society accepts as normal business relations, a new system would need to be uprooted the current one. As Dunayevskaya said, "The creation of a new society remains the human endeavor."

Campus rallies to save affirmative action

Berkeley, Cal.—Over 1,500 students, joined by faculty and staff, celebrated March 14 as National Day of Action for Affirmative Action on the UC Berkeley campus. The noon rally and march was followed by a concert in the evening. Among the many speakers were members of the Theological School, who said "The religious right is wrong, the religious left is right," faculty who refused to abandon affirmative action, and staff who stressed how important affirmative action has been not just as means to be fairer to women and minorities, but in helping to teach the primarily white students and staff what racism is.

Several lessons were learned from last October's "day of action." One is that national mobilization really can happen. We heard from dozens of other campuses where events were taking place or were planned. Another was that we need more than one day of activity. We need to make it a sustained effort. Many vowed to organize against the California Civil "Wrongs" Initiative which would prohibit use of affirmative action in the whole state of California and which will be on the ballot in November. We are starting publication of an affirmative action journal. The Berkeley Staff Coalition for Affirmative Action is planning other forums for the spring and into the summer.

The UC regents have not had a quiet meeting since their decision to ban affirmative action. Their every meeting has been disrupted by angry students. At the last one, on March 14, we handed the very silent regents a petition from around 1,200 UCB staff who called on the regents to reverse their decision. When there was no response, others disrupted their meeting to the point that the regents had to adjourn early. The continuous opposition to the regents' decision made regent Ward Connerly back down from his further attack on UC's outreach programs.

—Urszula Wislanka

Free Andre Ester!

Chicago—My son, Andre Ester, has been in the Department of Corrections at 26th and California, charged with a murder, waiting to go to trial. It has been almost two years since he has been incarcerated there.

All of this happened June 19, 1994, when I answered my door to two detectives who indicated that they wanted to speak with my son. They told me they were just going to take him down for questioning. One of the detectives asked how old Andre was; I said 17. He said, "Well he's considered grown anyway. But don't worry, he'll be home in a couple of hours." They had no warrant to get my son, and they refused me the right to escort my son to the police station, or even meet them there. This happened at 5:45 in the morning.

From the time they picked him up until 3:30 that afternoon, I didn't know why they had my son. So I called and the detective indicated I needed to call in a couple of hours; so I called back around 5:30. This time I was told, "Miss Ester, we're holding your son. You can appear at 26th and California, Branch 66, tomorrow morning and you can find out why we have your son."

When I appeared at 26th and California at 9 a.m. and heard the charges against my son (I had to wait for hours), I could not believe it was murder. A murder? No, My thought was something is wrong. Why couldn't the detectives have told me that when they came to my house?

I understand that Andre had requested several times to call home and even to have a lawyer. He was told that if he didn't cooperate that he could not call. The detectives had told him, "Man, go on and just sign this statement so you can go home. Don't you want to see your mother? Don't you want to go home?" And my son signed that statement, not because he did it, but because he believed them.

In the meantime, what I have done is pretty much form a group, trying to substantiate the facts of my son's case. I started getting police reports. I have actual witness statements and affidavits from people who can substantiate that my son was with me when the murder happened.

If someone just took the time and went through the discovery data, they would see exactly what I'm saying, but I was told that, being a mother or a parent, I'm not allowed to say anything to the judge. Why should my son have to spend two years incarcerated and go through a trial when we have evidence to show he is not guilty?

In speaking in different places, every time someone always comes up and says, "My story is the same as yours," or "When I listened to your story, I thought I was listening to my own." I know that I have talked to several people like that. You can't open your door to the law enforcement people and not feel you are going to be railroaded. To support everyone who must fight this, that's why groups out there like mine are forming, or Mothers Reclaiming Our Children and the LA 4+ Committee.

If I have to take it to the people and let the people be the decision-makers, then that's what I'm going to do. I have met so many people now who are fighting for the same cause. It's not just Black. It's white. It's Hispanic. It's Asian. We're the majority being locked up in these prisons, so Black and Hispanic need to get involved. We need to start being heard ourselves. We need to start organizing our communities. WE need to start doing something.

—Susan Ester

For donations and other information, contact the Andre Ester Defense Fund, P.O. Box 436925, Chicago, IL 60643 - 6925. Telephone: (312) 298-0055.

Corvallis, Ore.—Today, Wednesday, March 13, the Black students of Oregon State University organized a one-day all-OSU boycott. The boycott was in response to a number of racial incidents that have occurred on our campus during the last month and a half. Anita Hill posters were defaced with racial slurs, and a Black student was urinated on from a residence hall balcony to name a few.

Prior to the racial incidents a coalition of 21 student organizations called TEAM (Together Everyone Accomplishes More) pushed through a proposal to the OSU President's cabinet for the creation of three new offices for recruitment and retention of students of color. Officially they are called Black, Latino/Chicano, and Asian Education offices. To push those through we pulled off a rally of about 300 students.

Today's march and demonstration dwarfed that. The racial incidents were a backlash to all of the success we were having around the recruitment and retention of students of color, and all of the incidents were targeted at the Black community.

We have a total of only 172 Black students at OSU, and they came together to organize the boycott, march and demonstration. The national news is reporting 1,400, but there were upwards of 2,000 students and faculty in attendance. The march was silent and went around campus, through the administration building, the bookstore (one of the most racist parts of campus) our student union and into the large quad on campus.

At the demonstration students of color, particularly Black students, told their stories about racist incidents they have all faced. This was the second largest demonstration in the history of Oregon State University! All the credit goes to the United Black Student Association, the Black Cultural Center and, in particular, April Waddy, Coordinator of the Black Cultural Center.

—Jon Isasacs

Eco immigrant-bashing

Chicago—Beware the toxic waste of racism spewing from this presidential campaign season! The environmental movement itself is in danger from the poisonous immigrant-bashing, where Buehanan is the loudest but is copied by all the rest. The danger is not that the bashers are the same ones who bash environmentalists—or, like Clinton, lull them while helping Congress undo protective laws. It is the attitude to immigrants that is one of the divisive weak points of the movement.

The main point of immigrant-bashing is to use scapegoats to divert attention from the role of the capitalist system in driving down the quality of life while undermining any sense of economic security. Shockingly, a large part of the ecology movement is drawn to this type of politics. The reason is not only the whiteness of the mainstream movement, but its acceptance of capitalist ideology in its view of the causes of pollution.

The environmentalist argument is that Third World immigrants greatly increase their impact on the environment just by moving from a poor country to the U.S. Why? Because the average energy consumption, carbon dioxide production, waste production, and so on per person is ten times or more higher in the U.S. than in Mexico, India, Brazil.

A little knowledge of the living conditions of many immigrants is enough to show that their lifestyles cannot be assumed to be "average." But more telling is the assumption that pollution is directly related to the size of the population. This is "scientifically" formulated in Paul Ehrlich's (author of The Population Bomb) equation: amount of pollution equals the number of people times the level of technology per person times the polluting effect per unit of technology.

To tie pollution to the number of people reduces all economic activity to consumption. But people do not consume crude oil and uranium ore. Immigrant families do not produce toxic waste. These are inputs and outputs of the process of production. As an example, less than 2% of solid waste is municipal waste. The rest comes from factories, mines, the military, utilities, cement kilns.

In other words, the main determinant of pollution is not individual consumption but capital accumulation. The reason this is so often overlooked is that the activity of capital is assumed to be the natural and necessary form of human activity.

As a result, activists put too much stress on getting people to consume less. They hold that all economic activity—and therefore all its environmental impact—is just the end result of consumer demand. This illusion, together with the racism persisting in the movement, has landed some groups in bed with right-wingers who have their own racist reasons to agitate for keeping out the Third World poor, thwarting efforts to understand why the mass of capital keeps growing and growing out of all proportion to consumption.

The opposite of capitalism's race to destruction is not to slow consumption but to get off the treacherous track of production for its own sake. Only a fundamental social transformation can accomplish that.

—Franklin Dmitryev

Correction: The article "The Tragedy of Nikolai Bukharin" in the March N&L contained the sentence: "Bukharin's rejection of this non-capitalist revolutionary dimension Lenin called 'socialist economism.'" The sentence, which was not written by the author, was added inadvertently.

Our Life and Times

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

On March 23, Taiwan's President Lee Teng-hui won re-election by a landslide. While the overtly pro-independence party won only 21% of the vote, the vote as a whole showed that pro-independence sentiment on the island has not been weakened by military threats from the mainland Chinese government in Beijing.

In the weeks preceding the election, China conducted a series of intimidating military exercises in the 200-mile Taiwan straits separating the island from the mainland. Missile tests less than 50 miles from Taiwan's main port city amounted to a de facto naval blockade.

The U.S., long allied with Taiwan, although less so since relations with Beijing were normalized in the 1970s, soon responded by sending two giant nuclear-armed aircraft carriers into the area. Bellicose statements of a type not seen in years were issued by U.S. and Chinese authorities.

U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry bragged publicly that "America has the best damn navy in the world," and could pass through the straits should it be ordered to do so, while an editorial in a pro-Beijing Hong Kong newspaper threatened: "With a concentrated fire of

Serb fires in Bosnia

During the past few weeks, the Bosnian Serb forces have turned their fascistic notion of "ethnic cleansing" on those Serbs in the suburbs of Sarajevo who did not share completely their racist ideology. In March, these suburbs, which in 1992 had been "cleansed" of Muslims and Croats, were turned back to the multiethnic Bosnian government as part of the Dayton accords.

During the transition period, the Serbian fascists stopped at nothing—including setting fires in inhabited buildings—in their efforts to force all Serbs to leave the area rather than live under the Bosnian government. NATO once again cooperated with ethnic cleansing by standing by and doing nothing. In one especially ludicrous case, Italian "peacekeepers" arrested a few of the arsonists, but then, following NATO rules, turned them over to the designated civilian authorities, the Bosnian Serb police, who promptly released them!

Croat chauvinists have also been fighting tooth and nail for a segregated society. In Mostar in 1993, Croat militias drove all Muslims out of the western part of the city, and then even destroyed an architectural wonder, the Turkish-built bridge over the Neretva River which had joined the two parts of the city for centuries. A few weeks ago, some very brave Muslim civilians tried to cross into the "Croat" side of the city, now that Mostar is part of the U.S.-brokered Muslim-Croat federation. In broad daylight, as UN police watched and did nothing, an armed gang of Croat skinheads, one of whom wore a Hitler mask and a swastika, drove the Muslims back into the eastern part of the city. Those same gangs intimidate any Croats who favor reunification of the city.

Former Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic has finally broken openly with the more religious-oriented politics of Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic. Silajdzic plans to build a multiethnic political party. With regard to the specter of a narrow, Islam-based nationalism, he declared: "It's like a sickness. I want to fight this sickness with the view that Bosnia must remain one country based on respect for otherness."

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 1957. Charles Denby (1907-83), a Black production worker, author of *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*, became editor of the paper from 1955 to 1983. Dunayevskaya's works *Marxism and Freedom...from 1776 until Today* (1958), *Philosophy and Revolution: from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao* (1973), and *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* (1982) spell out the philosophic ground of Marx's Humanism internationally, as *American Civilization on Trial* concretizes it on the American scene and shows the two-way road between the U.S. and Africa. These works challenge post-Marx Marxists to return to Marx's Marxism.

The new visions of the future that Dunayevskaya left us in her work from the 1940s to the 1980s are

guided missiles the Peoples Liberation Army can bury an enemy intruder in a sea of fire."

Why has the issue of Taiwan, which has not been ruled from the mainland since Nationalist Chinese forces took refuge there in the wake of the Communist Revolution of 1949, suddenly become a focus of confrontation in 1996? This is not 1958, when the Taiwan straits became a point of confrontation between China and Russia on the one hand, and a U.S. government threatening to use nuclear weapons to defend Taiwan.

Until 1987, Taiwan was as totalitarian as mainland China, with a single party state led by remnants of the

Bangladesh protest



Students stormed police headquarters in Dhaka, Bangladesh, March 14, to protest the deaths of 34 people at the hands of police, while a general strike reached four days in an attempt to oust Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

South Korea fraud trials

The unprecedented trials of two former South Korean military dictators—Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae Woo—opened in March. They are charged with financial corruption and more importantly, with staging the 1979 coup and the bloody repression in May 1980 of the liberation uprising in Kwangju.

Chun led the 1979 coup and took over as dictator-president from 1980-88. Roh had a "lesser" role in the coup, but later served as "president" after repressing any opposition, from 1988-93. Roh is charged with taking in over \$300 million in bribes during his reign.

The Chun-Roh regime had the full backing of the Reagan administration for the slaughter in Kwangju of those, especially youth, who rose up against the Chun coup. Chun and Roh presided over a decade of explosive state-capitalist growth in South Korea, and their legal indictment is one manifestation of the opposition, especially among workers, to the political-military-business alliance which constitutes state-capitalism.

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

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.

China, U.S., Taiwan: a test for war?

pre-Communist mainland Nationalist regime ruling over a population that was 80% Taiwanese though Chinese in origin. Mandarin Chinese was the official language and Taiwanese political activists were jailed and even murdered. Many also remembered 1947, when the government massacred over 20,000 to crush a pro-independence uprising shortly after Japan's defeat in World War II returned the island to Chinese rule for the first time since 1895.

But ever since 1989, when the Tiananmen massacre crushed China's democratic movement, the movement for democracy and independence in Taiwan has gained strength. By the 1990s, the pro-independence and once illegal Democratic Progressive Party began to receive a large share of the vote, winning the mayoralty of Taipei, the capital, in 1994. Today, Taiwan is a functioning bourgeois democracy with a rapidly growing capitalist economy. President Lee, himself a native Taiwanese, knew he could win re-election only if he too courted independence sentiment.

These developments are a grave threat to the totalitarian state-capitalist regime on the mainland, which in addition to worrying about the example of greater democracy in Taiwan, has also reiterated its promise to go to war immediately should Taiwan declare independence.

In addition, the military, always a greater factor in Chinese Communism, may be maneuvering for the post-Deng Xiaoping succession. Its saber-rattling has certainly played to nationalist resentment over centuries of Western and Japanese imperialist inroads into China.

In recent years, China has grown into an economic giant and a possible emerging superpower. Contrary to those who have suggested that market capitalism would replace military conflict with economic competition, it has been flexing its muscles throughout the region. It is poised to take over Hong Kong in 1997, even though this will be a net economic loss in the short run.

Australia moves right

The March 2 elections were a landslide victory for a conservative coalition comprising the Liberal and National Parties, as the Labor Party was ousted after 13 years in power in Australia. The new Prime Minister, John Howard, immediately put a rabidly anti-union politician, Peter Reith, in charge of labor relations. The conservatives plan a series of anti-worker "reforms" of the labor laws. They also opposed the Labor government's slight turn to multiculturalism and toward Asia, and intend a renewed emphasis on Australia's ties to Britain.

But on one central point, the conservatives will simply continue and deepen policies already pioneered by labor: austerity and "free market" economics. This explains in no small way why, with unemployment at 8%, thousands of workers refused to vote for Labor this time around.

Socialist loss in Spain

It was no surprise that the Socialist Party of Spain (PSOE) was voted out in March, after 13 years in power. PSOE Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez was defeated by crises ranging from unemployment—at 22%, the highest in Europe—to renewed violence in the Basque independence movement.

Gonzalez and PSOE were voted into power in December 1982. The victory of social democracy then, seven years after the death of dictator Francisco Franco, showed a deeper spirit which had not been quenched after 35 years of Franco's outright fascist repression, which dated back to the defeat of revolution within the Spanish Civil War.

Despite his "personal" popularity, Gonzalez' policies to integrate Spain into "free market capitalism" via the European Union removed him from his initial base of support. Together with a growing docket of cases of corruption among his officials, social democracy showed its bankruptcy in the 1990s.

Jose Maria Anzar's rightist Popular Party (PP) won the election but not a governing majority. The PP emerged, by name change, from the Popular Alliance established by former Franco minister Manuel Franga after the dictator's death. Anzar succeeded narrowly in winning this time, after past years of defeat, by supposedly driving Franco's shadow into the background, and instead appealing to the youth vote.

At least a quarter of Spain's electorate grew up with no direct memory of fascism under Franco. Among youth 20-25 years old, the unemployment rate is a staggering 42%. Anzar, a former tax collector, has promised a reduction in the term of obligatory military service and an increase in jobs for youth. He is now dealing to win a parliamentary majority.

Among the final blows to PSOE rule were revelations that high ranking government officials carried out a clandestine "dirty war" in the 1980s against Basque separatists in ETA (the nationalist paramilitary organization) hiding in France. Not unlike the situation in Ireland, the historic movement for independence in the Basque Country is an issue which Anzar—and every Madrid ruler—must address. Anzar has railed against ETA, but the national question within Spain, including also Catalonia and Galicia as well as other regions, is not reducible to politics alone.

In February, a huge march in Madrid of from 500,000 up to a million people was held to protest two assassinations carried out by Basque separatists. On the eve of elections, Gonzalez and Anzar both marched. But many who came took up the chant "Basques yes, ETA no!"