

NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

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Once more for labor, a world to win



by John Marcotte

This week they gave me work that pays only one cent apiece. I have to make a hundred pieces to earn one dollar! And they are not such easy pieces to sew. Working all day I'll make ten dollars! I complained to the supervisor and she said, "If you can't do it, say you can't. But if you don't want this work, there's the door."

I work five days from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., plus Saturday from 8 to 4. I make one hundred dollars some weeks, 200 sometimes, even up to 300 if the work is good. The new women are slower, they make one hundred to 120 a week. If we made just the minimum wage, with this overtime we'd be doing better.

When the Department of Labor inspector comes, we tell him we are well paid, that everything is fine, just like the boss told us to say. If I raise my voice, the others will be quiet, and I'll be out of a job. Jobs are very hard to find. And if you have no papers, it's even worse. There are no jobs.

These are the words of a Latina worker right in the heart of New York City in 1998. As we talked, I suddenly felt I was back in the England of Charles Dickens, back where this capitalist factory system started. I've been reading *Capital*, where Marx writes about the reports of the English factory inspectors and the conditions they found, and of the fight by labor for the eight hour day, of the first associations and unions of workers. Here I was talking with another peasant people, this time not from England or Ireland as in Marx's day but from South America, who had been torn off their land and herded into these hellholes called factories. It was as though we had to start all over again.

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Black World

Dr. Gates's Martian Chronicles



by Lou Turner

*"...this man was like a Martian to me."
—Henry Louis Gates,
"Two Nations of Black America"*

In the one appearance by a brother from the "forbidden zones" of this country's inner cities in his "Frontline" PBS (Public Broadcasting System) documentary, "The Two Nations of Black America," Henry Louis Gates says that from where he sits in Harvard Yard as Director of the prestigious DuBois Institute of African-American Research, this gravedigger from the "underclass" might as well be a Martian.

Dr. Gates's reference to the Black "underclass" as aliens, as Martians, is intriguing. Post Cold War, there's little doubt that the Hollywood construction of apocalyptic alien imagery has shifted from the Communist bogeyman from outer space to an "underclass" predator stalking the under-psyche of the American bourgeoisie.

The brother Gates encountered on the street was from another planet. We're no longer talking here of the social distance between classes, or even of "two nations," but of worlds. The closer the encounter is to home the more the metaphors and analogies express unbridgeable spans of space separating the elite from the oppressed. Henry Louis Gates is lost in this space.

The recent "Frontline" documentary presents Gates recycling the self-therapeutic argument that those like himself who have become successful and bourgeois need not feel guilty for that success, nor feel guilty that that success comes at a time when the so-called "underclass" has grown to an unprecedented proportion. It's a therapeutic exercise that began in 1992 with Dr. Gates's article, with the same title as the PBS documentary, for that unvarnished booster of capitalism, *Forbes* magazine. That article was republished a year later in the anthology edited by Robert Gooding-Williams on the 1992 Los Angeles rebellion, *Reading Rodney King, Reading Urban Uprising*. It got expanded into a thesis in 1996 with his and Cornel West's filiation to W.E.B. DuBois's "talented tenth," *The Future of the Race*.

The whole thing culminates this year, however, in Gates's "Frontline" breakthrough when he suddenly con-

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A radical youth movement rises to confront global retrogressive times

by Kevin Michaels

Young people have been noticeably active in both the streets and the campuses across the United States in recent months, voicing their strident opposition to the retrogressive direction in which this country is headed. The most dramatic evidence of this trend was the sizable contingent of youth who threw a wrench into the works of the Clinton administration's plan to stage a globally televised war-preparedness rally in Columbus, Ohio in February. But across the country there have been numerous, less-publicized, manifestations of a spirit counterpoised to the prevailing ideology which states that capitalism is utterly triumphant, racism is an ineradicable phenomenon and there is no alternative to existing society.

Thirty years ago an international movement of youth which was radically opposed to the racism and imperialism of the status quo reached such proportions that it shook the ruling classes the world over and was the driving force behind a near-revolution in France. Despite the tumult of that year though, its potential was not born out in the achievement of a new society.

The world we live in today and the contemporary movements we are witnessing are vastly different from those of 1968. We should, however, examine what we are experiencing for its exciting potential to become a



Some 3,000 San Francisco Bay Area high school youth converge on Concord municipal police station to protest deteriorating schools and the reactionary ballot Proposition 227 that would end bilingual education.

radical youth movement which will not be bound by contradictions of the past but instead will develop into an integral part of a challenge to capitalist society's barbarism.

Opposition to war has always been a hallmark of youth who are, of course, among those most directly affected by the decision to pursue politics by other means. When the Clinton administration decided to rattle its saber over the issue of access for United Nations weapons inspection teams in Iraq, youth across the

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Protests test Iran's ruling order

The arrest of the populist mayor of Teheran, Hassan Karbaschi, on April 4 caused such an uproar that a top-level summit of Iran's rulers had to be convened to prevent the power struggles from breaking out into major street battles. After several days of maneuvering and sending out the riot police to break up a protest demonstration by nearly 4,000 university students—"Followers of the Line of Imam" who have now thrown their support behind President Khatami—Karbaschi was released from Evin prison on bail. He is charged with embezzlement and financial fraud.

The arrest and the charges are a not-so-veiled attack on President Khatami and his powerful supporters, including Karbaschi. The so-called "religious hard-liners" exemplified by Mohammad Yazdi, the head of the judiciary, have seen their powers recede drastically ever since Khatami's ascendance to power. A recent visitor to Teheran observed that "many people support the Khatami administration because they are determined to protect the recent gains that have been made in limiting the powers of the conservative clergy and their supporters."

According to one source, the president has been trying to remove Yazdi from the post of chief judge for some time. Mayor Karbaschi's arrest was a preemptive move by Yazdi to reassert the dominance of the "conservative faction."

Karbaschi, appointed mayor in 1989, is held up as the architect and the moving force behind a major facelift of Teheran's dilapidated buildings, streets, and other public places. His administration's beautification campaign transformed scores of empty lots into public parks.

Many Iranians opposed to the regime, however, sneer at such claims. For example, one longtime opponent points to the rampant corruption so systemic in all members and factions of the regime. He explained that the "beautification" of Teheran served to hide the fact that this city of nearly 10 million people still does not have a functioning covered sewerage system. "The mayor," he points out, "is revered by major speculators and other big property owners who have made billions while avoiding compliance with health, safety, and zoning regulations." Many of the newly built high-rises in Teheran are "death traps," he believes.

At the same time, he added, "small property owners, those who often cannot afford to pay the exorbitant property taxes they owe, have seen their lands expropriated by the city using a traditional law that allows them to plant a few trees—thus the designation 'park'—

and laying claim to the property which is then sold off to the highest bidder to build more high-rises." This sentiment is shared by many, who do not want to be pulled into having to choose the lesser of two evils among ruling officials.

Iran's economy is in major disarray, and the mayor's arrest helps to focus (and divert) the blame for the deteriorating conditions of life and the state of the economy on "corrupt" elements. "Hyperinflation, recession, and unemployment are causing widespread public concern," according to a report by Agence France Press (4/12/98).

Nearly 85% of Iran's economy is controlled by the government. In the last few weeks the price of rice, the major staple of Iranians, was raised by 70%. Meat and chicken prices are so high, they are unaffordable for the general population. Price subsidies for bread were also eliminated by the government. Fuel prices increased nearly 100%. Bankrupt industries, such as the nationalized Melee shoe company, are borrowing from banks to pay their workers' salaries, according to a labor ministry official. While consumer prices have shot up, Iran's currency, the Rial, has taken another nose dive.

All eyes have been on the rapprochement between Iran and the U.S. Major developments are occurring in that front that will have important consequences for the world.

Powerful forces are shaping up inside Iran at multiple levels in society. These forces, including a totally alienated and fed-up population—are also compelling a part of the rulers to effect a major house-cleaning in their affairs. One welcome development would be for the pro-Khatami forces to cleanse the judicial system of judges and prosecutors who implement the obscene and disgusting practices of so-called "Islamic" justice, public stonings, lashings, and the arbitrary accusations of moral transgression.

But will the reformists be able to maintain their powers while effecting such changes, or will a much deeper mass movement emerge that raises the banner of total human freedom?

—Cyrus Noveen

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Seneca Falls: a 'world-historic moment'

by Laurie Cashdan

I attended an exciting session on "The Significance of Seneca Falls: 150 Years of Women's Rights" at the Organization of American Historians conference in Indianapolis, April 4. Speakers associated with the National Women's History Project, the Women's Rights National Historical Park, and the Seneca Falls Historical Society, addressed right-wing opposition they have faced in 1998 while planning anniversary celebrations, which culminate in mid-July to mark the actual date of the first Woman's Rights Convention. Historians on the panel concentrated on 1848, situating Seneca Falls in the context of revolution and counter-revolution then.

Ellen Carol DuBois, a leading scholar of the "woman suffrage" movement, discussed how the U.S. annexed California after the Mexican war. At the California Constitutional Convention, Mexican women's property rights, upheld in Mexican law, were annulled. This loss transferred the property of women married to Anglo men out of Mexican hands.

Genni McBride, historian of the Wisconsin women's rights movement, described how German women exiles from the 1848 revolution became tremendously influential in the movement. German exile Mathilde Franziska Anneke and American-born Emma Brown founded newspapers that promoted cross-fertilization between German and American radical ideas, and New England and midwestern women's rights movements.

SEVERAL FASCINATING EXCHANGES revolved around Raya Dunayevskaya's concept of 1848 as a "world-historic moment" after I introduced it into this discussion. In *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, she links Seneca Falls to the 1848 Revolutions in Europe to the "Black Dimension as Reason" seen in Abolitionists like Sojourner Truth and to Marx's philosophy of revolution.

Ellen DuBois seized on this concept, arguing that women's rhetoric during and after the Seneca Falls Convention shows its relation to revolution internationally. She drew parallels between the *Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions* by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Marx's *Communist Manifesto* published earlier in 1848. The freedom of women in the *Declaration* and of proletarians in the *Manifesto* are each viewed as universal, potentially transformative of all society. DuBois also discussed how Polish Jewish revolutionary Ernestine Rose, chairing the 1851 Women's Rights Convention, read greetings from Jeanne Deroin and Pauline Roland, jailed after the 1848 Revolution in France.

When Dunayevskaya connects Seneca Falls and the birth of women as a revolutionary force to Marx, however, she first turns not to the 1848 *Manifesto*, but to Marx's 1844 *Humanist Essays*. Marx's articulation there of a new philosophy of revolution went beyond alienation in production relations to the "infinite degradation" in Man/Woman relations in class society. Each human relationship needed to become one of "to be" rather than "to have."

Her discussion of 1844 helps us see in a new light the 1848 *Manifesto's* call for the "free development of all" through not only new production relations but the "abolition of the family." Marx's fury at those who upheld the bourgeois family, based on "capital, on private gain," at a time when proletarian families were being ripped apart as men, women and children were swept into the factory, hits home today. In 1998, sanctimonious "family values" discourse belies the further shredding of families by globalization and welfare "reform".

The bourgeois clap-trap about the family and education, about the hallowed co-relation of parent and child, becomes all the more disgusting, the more, by the action of Modern Industry, all family ties among the proletarians are torn asunder, and their children transformed into simple articles of commerce and instruments of labour.

Women Worldwide

by Mary Jo Grey

Dozens of Haitian police shot their way into a women's clinic in Port-au-Prince, April 5, demolishing the pharmacy, smashing furniture and equipment, and terrorizing the neighborhood women. City Police Chief Coles Rameau accused the women of KLINIK FANM of concealing weapons in cartons of medicine shipped from MADRE, an international women's human rights organization. With elections scheduled for Fall, right-wing forces have increased their intimidation of local community organizers. Located in one of Port-au-Prince's poorest neighborhoods, KLINIK FANM is Haiti's only women's health clinic. It was originally formed for women subjected to rape and other political oppression during the time of the 1991 military coup.

More than 100 Zimbabwean women demonstrated in Harare, April 9. Wearing slacks, shorts or miniskirts, the protesters condemned the increase in public assaults on women wearing such clothing—including attacks by police. Several days earlier, the UN Human Rights Committee criticized the Zimbabwean government for sex discrimination and the rise in violence against women—noting particularly "recent occurrences of public assaults against women because of the manner of our dress."

Within months of Marx penning these words, the Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention demanded the end to men's "absolute tyranny" over women and to women's "social and religious degradation." It would be a huge stretch to argue that the bourgeois Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the *Declaration's* author, promoted proletarian revolution. Yet just as Marx had denounced social and religious hypocrisy which presented family values as natural rather than historically rooted in class society, the *Declaration* called for women to "move in the enlarged sphere which her great Creator has assigned her" and "to promote every righteous cause by every righteous means."

This connection relates to DuBois's insistence that we view Seneca Falls as initiating a movement for freedom, rather than equality, because freedom constantly deepens through historical struggles while equality is static. When the chair of the session, Judith Wellman, challenged the idea of "world-historic moment" as "an imperialist projection" because it sees one particular historic development as a universal, DuBois disagreed, arguing that the idea of freedom in the late 1840s was like "currency," exchanged between social movements.

THIS EXCITING DISCUSSION did not extend to the other dimension of Dunayevskaya's concept of "world-historic moment," Black women as Reason, perhaps because the panel included no African Americans. Participants addressed Stanton's racism and ethnic chauvinism, but none discussed Black women thinkers.

It is unclear whether any Black women attended the Seneca Falls Convention. However, this makes it more, not less, important to analyze their crucial participation before and after Seneca Falls, whether in Sojourner Truth's women's rights talks, Maria Stewart's much earlier public speeches in 1832, or the writings and lectures of others such as Sarah Remond, Sarah Jane Woodson Early, Harriet Forten Purvis, and Margaretta Forten. Some date the movement not to 1848, but to 1837, when Black and white women together at the Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women first publicly insisted on being heard on behalf of "the oppressed in our land."*

In any case, one cannot grasp Dunayevskaya's concept of "world-historic moment" without seeing the integrality of her reach from Seneca Falls to the Black dimension seeking to "uproot oppression root and branch," as Truth put it in 1867, any more than we can grasp the full significance of the birth of a new revolutionary Subject outside of its relation to Marx's philosophy of revolution.

*See Darlene Clark Hine and Kathleen Thompson, *A Shining Thread of Hope: The History of Black Women in America* (New York, 1998), 104-113.

Woman as Reason

Chicago abortion victory

Chicago—The jury's decision in federal court, April 20, to hold the Pro-Life Action Network accountable for extortion and terrorism was a victory for all the pro-choice men and women fighting at clinic and legislative doors to preserve women's right to abortion.

However, many people awoke the next morning thinking they had lost their voice—they had been robbed of their freedom to speak by a federal court jury.

Or that's what you were probably led to believe by newspapers across the country. Yet in all their invocations of the "grassroots," the "Left" and "Martin Luther King, Jr.," you would be hard-pressed to find any mention of another constitutional guarantee—the right to privacy. This right, as laid out in *Roe v. Wade*, has truly been held in a chokehold by anti-choice extremists.

Joseph Scheidler and other members of the Pro-Life Action Network are not peaceful, and their activities do not constitute "free speech." The cost of their activities are evident at clinics that have been assailed with blockades and assaults. If People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and Greenpeace can't understand the difference between extortion, terrorism and free speech, I would invite them to the American Women's Medical Center in Chicago...or clinics in Florida... or in Massachusetts...

The methods of these affiliated anti-choice organizations are more than "troublesome, even infuriating" (as described in the *Chicago Tribune*, April 21) to clinic staff and women seeking access to reproductive health services. They are threatening. They are car bombs. They are children blocking clinics with their necks in U-locks against fences because juveniles can't be charged under federal Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances legislation. Clinics deserve to be reimbursed for the bullet-proof vests and security costs incurred by these extremist tactics.

The proposition of the "justifiable homicide" of clinic workers is no more protected than shouting fire in a crowded theatre. Scheidler and his co-conspirators in Operation Rescue have made their goals clear—to close clinics. Scheidler has even published and campaigned across the country about methods of closing clinics—which is why he was found guilty of racketeering.

I don't need the *Chicago Sun-Times* and *Tribune* to preach to me about my rights. I know exactly when my rights are being threatened from personal experience. And I know who is threatening my rights.

My congratulations and thanks go out to the men and women who documented these terrorist tactics and prosecuted the assailants in federal court.

—Larra

Leslie's Place founder tells story

Editor's note: Below we excerpt Leslie Brown's talk from an *International Women's Day conference workshop* organized by *News and Letters*. Brown is the African-American woman founder of *Leslie's Place*, a recovery home for women coming out of prison. Please send donations to: *Support Advocates for Women, Leslie's Place, 1014 N. Hamlin, Chicago, IL 60651*.

I'm a mother of six children. My second husband was very abusive. Now I'm widowed. I was in school for my GED and he didn't want me to go. I had to fight my way through college after I persevered for my GED. He burned my books like in the movie *The Burning Bed*.

He hit me in the head with a pipe once and tried to throw me over a third floor porch. I ran to a neighbor's house. She called the police numerous times and they didn't come. I had to call a relative to take me to the hospital. The next day I went before the judge with my head bandaged. They cut my hair, did x-rays. The judge told me, "I'm sorry there's nothing we can do. There's no police report written on this incident." I wanted to press charges for attempted murder, but they did nothing.

I packed up three times and moved with my children to another location. Right now they call it stalking. Back then it had no name. My husband would pay someone to tell him where I lived and then he would come and beg and plead that he would never hit me again, and that he "loved" me. And, of course, we as women believe it.

Finally I got tired. He started abusing my two children from a previous marriage. To me he was a psycho. However, he was never arrested. And during this time, in the late '70s and early '80s, they did not have the Domestic Violence Act. It came into law in 1982.

I told him he could have the house we just purchased. So I know material things mean nothing because we had it and yet he was still mean, full of animosity, mad, angry at the world. He put a knife around my neck, beat me in front of my kids (again); told me he would kill me first before he would let me out of that relationship.

My sister's friend came over and I was bleeding and my eyes were swollen and I was crying hysterically. I shared what my husband had done. He said, "Well, do you want me to kill him?" I said, "I don't care what you do. I just can't take anymore."

In 1982 a murder was committed. And there I sat at the Cook County Jail on a no-bond. Never being arrested in my entire life, I believed the policemen when they picked me up for questioning that they would charge me with a lesser charge if I told them what happened. With no attorney present, I told them everything. And, of course they charged me with the highest charge: conspiracy to commit murder.

The judge told me he didn't care what led up to the inci-

dent; a crime has been committed, and you're going to pay. Without going to trial, this judge told me he would give me 40 years, 60 or life. I attempted to speak in my behalf and he didn't want to hear it. He did not allow my police reports to be brought up. He did not allow expert witnesses on domestic violence—the law had come out then—to testify in my behalf.

I received a 20-year sentence and there I was in Dwight prison. At that time the population was 386. Now it's over 2,200. I served almost seven years. In 1988 I was one of the first women in Illinois to be granted clemency for that type of crime. History was made.

I made a promise to myself to come back and share with the women that I know that there's a life after prison. I had made up my mind to help empower women. I know what it's like not to have a visit, and want to see your children. I experienced starting my life all over with \$25 gate money and being told not to come back. People volunteered to assist me in taking children to visit their mothers in 1992. We'd go to Dwight and Kankakee prisons. In December of 1994 *Leslie's Place* became a reality.

Prisoner's mother protests

Detroit—I went to Jericho '98 in Washington, D.C., in March because my son, Earl White, is treated like a political prisoner.

He has been in the Michigan state prison system for six years and harassed by guards and administrators the entire time. He has been in maximum security solitary confinement in several different institutions for the last four years. Because he is in administrative segregation he cannot make phone calls and has to communicate with his family by mail. I have to travel a long way to visit him. Why can't my son call home?

Earl will not be eligible for parole until 1999, but I have sent for pardon and commutation forms because I'm worried about his health. I mean, how long is how long? Why should he suffer like this? He has scars on his leg from a restraint they used on him and he has suffered nerve damage from a shock prod they used on him.

I'm concerned with the privatization of the prison system. Governor Engler is pushing for prisons to be run privately. They can do just what they want with you in a private prison. They want to do this even though most of the things they privatize end up being failures.

I have worked with the NAACP to contact Kenneth L. McGinnis, the director of the Department of Corrections, on Earl's behalf, but he has not responded.

—Eliza Westbrook

Baptist East blames hospital workers

Memphis, Tenn.—At Baptist Memorial Hospital East, they are always changing the rules on us. Baptist can't keep nurses or certified technicians, so we have temps from across the country because Memphis workers don't like coming here.

Because of staff shortages management makes "stayover lists" and if the cases aren't finished you have to work late. You don't know until late in the day if you will have to stay over or how long it's going to be. They don't care if your child is left standing on a street corner — you're going to be here while the managers and supervisors go home. They're mostly white and the surgical technicians are mostly Black.

The surgical technologists are blamed when procedures are running late. They run late because the ICU (Intensive Care Unit) is understaffed and the patients have to stay in the Recovery Room until there's room for them in the ICU. It's so bad that patients were left in the operating room because there was no space for them in the Recovery Room! Yet we are blamed.

There are no Black supervisors and only two Black nurses in surgery. One Black woman was harassed by a white technologist and he pushed her. She reported it but management blew it off, so she called the police. He was arrested and taken out in handcuffs, but he still works here, and she was fired a month afterwards.

They assign the longest cases to Blacks. We've had people who have worked in the Instrument Sterilization Processing Department for a long time but they are constantly bringing in new white supervisors. The Blacks know the job but there is no way for them to move up.

When you're called in for an evaluation, you can be facing three people and you're by yourself. We feel we

should be able to bring someone in with us. The evaluation is supposed to be about how you do your job, but they always talk about your "attitude," and it affects our pay raises. There are rules and they change all the time, but we can't get a copy of these rules. That's crazy!

We are supposed to have a "Service First" attitude to the patients and be helpful and friendly, but the employer doesn't give us a "Service First" attitude. There is nobody you can depend on to help us, there is no listening ear, and Human Resources is a joke.

They told us we had to sign our name to something that said that if anything happened at Baptist, we would not say anything concerning the physician, the patient, or our co-workers. They want us to hide the facts if we see them doing something wrong.

If management were different, we would love this job. We like the patients and the surgeons we work with, we have lots of fun, but management sucks. Management needs an overhaul.

We want to know: What's fair to the employee and the employer and what's fair to the patient? Is it fair to have someone working on you who is so angry, who is so abused mentally, that she is like a zombie? Is it fair to have someone working here who is worried about childcare, or if they will be able to pick up their kid; or who can't attend something as simple as church choir rehearsal? What are the true rights of an employee and how much do we have to take before we do something about it? We're not living for this job. We only have one life and, by god, they're not going to live it for us!

—"Service First" employees

March for farm workers



Supporters of strawberry pickers fighting for contract representation by the United Farm Workers union marched 500-strong in Chicago on March 31, birthday of union founder, the late Cesar Chavez.

Union drivers targeted

Olive Branch, Miss.—After being in a factory, when I started working as a truck driver at Mississippi Materials, I thought it was the coolest job. It was good money in the summer because you got plenty of hours, but it was real slow in the winter because the company pours concrete at construction sites.

One weekend we didn't have but 24 hours and they wanted us to work Saturday and Sunday. They used to give time and a half on Saturday, double time on Sunday until Doug Johnson came in and said, "We can't give you time and a half. They made it mandatory to work Sunday. I have young boys and take them to church every Sunday I can."

The customer canceled and they notified the dispatchers not to show up, but they didn't notify the drivers. Then the drivers that didn't come to work Sunday got suspended. Before that, they took the time to call up drivers from the Horn Lake plant to come in and replace the Olive Branch drivers who were going to be suspended on Monday.

A lot of drivers from different plants said that wasn't right. We had a meeting to organize, and so many drivers came out. By the time we voted, it was close but we won. We got the union, Local 282 of the Furniture Workers. The company never thought a union could even get near them.

Since we got the union they try to put more hardship on the drivers. They even turn down orders, saying, "My driver's gone home." Then when we go home they bring drivers from other plants. Olive Branch had 22 drivers, more than any plant, and now we're down to eight or nine. They hired three drivers at Horn Lake since then instead of letting us move there.

The company feels, ain't no union gonna make us do anything. They are still taking it out on the drivers because we chose to stand up. A guy got fired because he wouldn't drive a truck missing safety equipment. Come raise time last month, we didn't get a raise. They lied that because the union has a raise and insurance on the table, they can't do it. But they could give us the insurance we had last year.

We didn't get a raise, but we will get it. They can pay back pay. The drivers in Jackson, Tenn., got their raise. Why should we be treated differently from anybody else? There's nothing wrong with standing up.

—Truck driver

Labour threatens welfare

Powys, Wales—Since last November the new Labour government, led by Tony Blair, has launched its "Reform of the Welfare State" policy. The objective of welfare reform, we are constantly informed, is to help the "genuinely poor and needy" and simultaneously lower the taxation burden on the middle classes. In the future, welfare will become a "helping hand, not a hand out."

The New Labour government has made a discovery, that the continued existence of poverty within a wealthy capitalist country is due to the unwillingness of the poor to work. It seems that all our social ills do not come from inequality but laziness!

Any kind of behavior that steps outside the norms of petty-bourgeois society is seen by New Labour as the worst kind of moral weakness. In the current British political jargon the poor have to be "squeaky clean," that is, to be "deserving" in the eyes of the tax-paying middle classes. The cure for all our problems will be a dose of "Welfare-to-Work," using the current welfare expenditure to revitalize British capitalism. To make the free market work, a considerable amount of state coercion will be required. Welfare payments, miserly as they are to live on, are seen as being too high. The poor, so the argument goes, are discouraged from working because of high benefits levels. The solution to these problems is to cut and restrict benefits that are paid to the sick, disabled and parents. All these arguments about the inborn laziness of poor workers spring from the early days of capitalism in Victorian England.

Sitting on top of the working poor and the disabled (in my own case) are a layer of professional spokespersons. One of them recently said, "The government policies towards the disabled are making the disabled militant." With fearless champions like that on our side, we are in little need of opponents. According to the government we all need more of the "work ethic."

In the past in Britain, rule over the workers was maintained by means of a division of labour between the Labour Party and the trade union bureaucracy. Because of a decline in trade union membership their influence has slipped. People outside the labour market in unpaid work, the long-term unemployed, lone parents, sick and disabled, have not been exposed to this particular sort of rule. The government can no longer trust lone parents to train and condition their offspring; the sick and disabled are "out of touch" with the labour market; the unemployed youth, 18-25 years old, cannot stay at home, or otherwise they might not get up in the morning.

At first sight, the emphasis on employment of the disabled appears odd. Benefits, as the previous Conservative government knew, are a lot cheaper than providing employment for the disabled. If, however, the work ethic is a panacea for all our social ills, then it must work for all sections of society, including the disabled. Another factor is the fear of an ideologically independent group, combined with an increase in disability-rights militancy that could lead to extra welfare expenditure.

Instead of a stratum of trade union bureaucrats, the disabled will have to endure a stratum of "professional" disabled persons. The functionaries who run the disability charities, and who speak for us, have a distinct material interest of careers and status in defending the new order. A new labour aristocracy will have been created: role models who glorify exploitation and constantly deny the reality of our experience.

Given the similarities between U.S. and British capitalism, it is hardly surprising that welfare expenditure is being used to restructure their respective economies. The will engender resistance. These new contour lines of resistance may not be as visible as on, say, a trade union picket line, but they will certainly exist.

—Bob Dore

Workshop Talks

(Continued from page 1)

I thought of how Marx showed how all those peasants who were forced into the factories to increase the value of capital—that early capital torn bloodily from the Indians enslaved in the silver mines and the Africans enslaved on the plantations—were transformed into a great new revolutionary force by the very process of being thrown together into those factories—the industrial workers.

We don't have to start all over again, exactly. The experience of those struggles is not altogether lost. It is preserved in minds and hearts, memory and theory. These "new proletarians" in the factories of New York have experienced to the collapse of state-capitalism calling itself Communism, most strongly in the collapse of the Nicaraguan revolution. They too want to know what happens after the revolution. After seeing a video of the Zapatista struggle in Mexico, several of these "new proletarians" wanted to discuss "how do we become Subjects of history?" One worker who had been a leader of peasant communities said, "To be subjects of history, the principal thing is to rid ourselves of this egotism, to not see our *companero* as an object." Another worker singled out that "our struggles," including Indigenous uprisings, "did not struggle through to the end."

Far from starting all over from scratch, this shows both the maturity of our age, and also another new element: the tremendous international dimension of the working class today. Precisely because of capitalism's brutal imperialist sacking of the Third World and its global lust for cheap labor, millions have been forced to migrate all over the globe in search of work. There are workers from nearly every African, Asian and Latin American country working in the U.S. and Europe. We have the opportunity or, to quote an Ecuadoran friend, the obligation to know each other, to learn from each other's experience.

We need to organize ourselves, even if it's in small groups like that video discussion, to consciously develop all this, to consciously bring these workers together, even to first of all translate so we can physically talk with each other. *News & Letters* was established to be that kind of space, both as paper and as organization. *News & Letters* is not a "vanguard party," and has no interest in controlling such dialogs, but helping them to be. We need many papers, many organizations. But it is because we have a vision of a classless society that we take responsibility to develop this dialog, not for reforms but because we know we can get to a classless society. We know there is a common interest among all these workers around the globe, all these different struggles.

In New York City, where workfare workers are being used to replace unionized municipal workers—40% of the Parks Department, 16% of the Sanitation, and so on. But I was reading in the papers that Idaho has kicked 77% of its people off welfare in the last year, though 95% of the population is so-called white, not "immigrants."

So we know that the conditions of the working class are very similar everywhere, and you don't have to be an "undocumented" immigrant worker in a New York hellhole to be suffering—or looking for a way out and questioning this whole society. And it falls to us, who have a vision of a classless society, whoever we are, to help build links between these communities. *N&L* is one way to do that.

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May Day's
U.S. roots

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write for
News & Letters
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Martyr's Monument
to the Haymarket
Eight, agitators for
the eight-hour day
in 1886, hanged or
imprisoned, in
Waldheim Cemetery
near Chicago



From the Writings of Raya Dunayevskaya
MARXIST-HUMANIST ARCHIVES

Editor's Note

Along with the 150th anniversary of Karl Marx's **Communist Manifesto**, this year marks also the 100th anniversary of the young Rosa Luxemburg's entrance in May, 1898 into the German arena where her challenge to one of the established leaders of the Second International, Eduard Bernstein, became the classic revolutionary answer to the theory and practice of revisionism. As part of our celebration of May Day as a revolutionary day of struggle, we print below a letter written by Raya Dunayevskaya on Aug. 9, 1978 to women's liberationists she considered her colleagues, as she undertook the study of what became **Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution**. It can be found in the **Raya Dunayevskaya Collection** (microfilm #6432-6466) together with other letters from 1978-81 on the process of writing that book. It is also included in **Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution**, pp. 227-230.

August 9, 1978

"The revolution is magnificent, and everything else is bilge."

—Rosa Luxemburg

Dear Sisters:

Because the dialectic never fails to reveal facets one has never thought of at the start of writing, I hesitate to write to you something on Rosa Luxemburg when the work on it as a book has not yet begun. But because the urgency of the very idea of a philosophy of revolution—Marx's—compels confrontation, no matter how dissatisfied I may be with my articulation of this topic when I have not worked out what is in my head, I will be brave enunciating it.

Take the quotation at the top. No doubt some of today's women theorists who refuse to grapple with Rosa's theories on the ground that she didn't write on Women's Liberation are using that magnificent quotation as "proof" of her playing down women's uniqueness, as if revolution and women were opposites! The truth is that no greater proof could be given of how total was her concept of revolution as the way, the only way, of uprooting exploitative, racist, sexist society.

Just recently I found a letter that Rosa had written to Hans Diefenbach from prison on, of all things, a review of a performance of Shakespeare's **As You Like It**. She was so enamored with the review by a Dr. Morganstern that she quoted it at length: "This is by no means the only case where Shakespeare draws this type of assured young woman: in his work, one encounters several of this sort. We do not know whether he ever met a woman like Rosalyn, Beatrice, or Portia, or whether he had models to work from, or whether he created pictures from his longing. But this we definitely know. From these characters, there speaks his own belief of woman. His conviction is that woman can be so magnificent because of her special nature. At least for a time in his life he extolled woman as few poets did. In woman he saw a force of nature working which culture could never harm..." Then Rosa comments: "Isn't this a fine analysis? If you know what an insipid, dried up, queer fish Dr. Morganstern is in private! But his psychological penetration is what I would wish for the future creator of the German essay."

Although this has nothing to do with theories of revolution and very little to do with women's "role"—nor even the question of women's suffrage for which Rosa did fight and did write about, although you wouldn't think so from women's theorists' disregard of her—I wished to call attention to it. This is not because it is one of the rare things in which she did speak of women,

since the women it speaks about are not those working class women and socialist women with whom she worked. Rather, it is about women as characters in literature by one genius of a dramatist who certainly was no "proletarian revolutionary," and the reviewer she quotes whom she considers "insipid." Why, then, did she pay attention to it, and why did I single it out? It has to do with the multidimensionality of Rosa Luxemburg, both as revolutionary and as human being, that she is concerned, in writing from prison to a young socialist, that he be concerned that "the future creator of the German essay" have "deep psychological penetration" of women as "magnificent!"

In a word, when she writes of revolution which is "magnificent, and everything else is bilge," it doesn't mean the downplaying of women. Rather, it is the totality she aspires for "future." The point, especially for us today, is not any counter-position of revolution and woman. Quite the contrary. The real point—and that's why I have changed the title of the projected book on Rosa Luxemburg and the relationship to Marx's theories, from Marx's theory of revolution to Marx's **philosophy of revolution**—is that so long as we only talk of theory, we are talking only of the immediate task of revolution, that is to say, the overthrow of capitalism. But when we talk of a philosophy of revolution, we do not mean only the overthrow of capitalism, but the creation of a new society. **Only when we have that in mind can the revolution be truly total.**

At the same time, what is most comprehensive in the projected work is that the very "taking up" of Marx's philosophy of revolution means that we have the opportunity of considering a very specific revolution, [the Russian Revolution of] 1905, in which all three great revolutionaries—Luxemburg, Lenin, Trotsky—were active. Each singled out what he/she considered the greatest achievement of that revolution and then built on that as preparation for the future revolution. It is this **building on** that we wish to break down for our age.

There is no doubt that Rosa was so enamored of the proletariat as revolutionary that she seems to subsume the woman in her concept of revolutionary. But there is equally no doubt whatsoever that she both worked closely with Clara Zetkin in all aspects of the women's movement, from suffrage to anti-imperialism. And indeed, the majority in such crucial industrial centers like Hamburg were adherents of her theories and activities in the anti-war movement. There is further no doubt that the letters she wrote to women, again especially from prison, were of such profound nature that they reveal her whole philosophy. Take the letter I have often quoted, to Mathilde Wurm:

I swear to you, let me once get out of prison and I shall hunt and disperse your company of singing toads with trumpets, whips and bloodhounds—I want to say like Penthesilea, but then, by God, you [all?—RD] are no Achilles. Had enough of my New Year's greeting? Then see to it that you remain a



Rosa Luxemburg

human being... to be human means throwing one's life "on the scales of destiny" if needs be...

That's the point, the whole point.

Marx's 1844 Essays were unknown to Rosa Luxemburg. But there is no doubt of the fact, the profound fact, that Marx's whole new continent of thought that began with revolution—so total and deep a revolution as to begin with the Man/Woman relationship as the most basic one of all that needed total reorganization—was also Rosa's concept. When Marx stressed that that relationship needed uprooting in all class societies (indeed, I am ready to say in **all previous societies**), it is proof of how total was Marx's concept of tearing society up at its roots. So totally new was his philosophy of revolution on that relationship that even under primitive communism, which he

much admired when discovered by Henry Lewis Morgan in the communal life among the Iroquois—**Ancient Society**—Marx sensed women's enslavement. He was certainly impressed with the communal life and with how much greater was woman's role there than under capitalism. Nevertheless, much more was needed in the creation of a new Man/Woman than "modernization." Marx is the one whose extensive notes Engels used the year after Marx died for his **The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State**. But, where Engels only glorified primitive communism, as if all it needed were a sort of "updating," Marx, the genius who discovered a whole new continent of thought in developing his philosophy of revolution, sensed in the family structure nothing short of elements of "slavery," of "serfdom."

(This is not the place to develop the difference between Marx and Engels and why one—Marx—is the genius who discovered a whole new continent of thought while the other—Engels—no matter how talented and how close a collaborator of Marx, was not that founder. But here, since it is also grounded on the Man/Woman relationship, the women can reach something totally new if they work it out multidimensionally and dialectically.)

Rosa's whole life as a revolutionary, as a theoretician, as a multidimensional woman, was so preoccupied with the spontaneity of revolution that, not only as against "the educated" but also revolutionary theoreticians who thought they need "to teach" revolution to the masses, she focused instead on the great truth that, as she put it, "revolution cannot be schoolmastered." Neither on the revolution's nor on spontaneity's "magnificence" was it a question of "throwing out" the need for theory. There may have been a playing down of "philosophy" as if that were "abstract," but never any playing down of theory of revolution.

What concerns us now is to see what impulses we can "catch" in the newest development of the Women's Liberation Movement of today, women who would feel emboldened to become collaborators with us in the writing, in the activities, to, at one and the same time, develop what is most immediate (be it ERA or a strike, or any single case) and, at the same time, dig so deeply both in their experiences and in our theories as to find common ground for universal as well as individual self-development...

There surely is some time in everyone's life when one wants to reach for something of the future. I do not doubt that in the present historic stage women want to reach for that total uprooting of this sexist, racist, exploitative society. Let's begin there.

Yours,
Raya

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

by Raya Dunayevskaya

Second Edition

Foreword by Adrienne Rich

"[Rosa Luxemburg] had at once to plunge into the burning debate in Germany and in the whole International; in meeting the very first challenge to Marxism from within Marxism by the original revisionist, Eduard Bernstein, she established herself as the one who delivered the most telling blow, because it was so total. She battled Bernstein on all fronts, from analysis of Marx's economic laws of capitalism leading to collapse, through the political question of the conquest of power, to the proletariat's need for the dialectic."

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see ad, p. 7.

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Essay Article Alienation and the objectivity of freedom

by David L. Anderson

My days are full of the kind of alienation one feels in the modern world. I know my day is not my own. There is a division of me from my very essence, who I am. I work with my hands, which I like to do; I come from a family of mechanically-inclined people. I should be enjoying what I do, but the nature of our society and our labor is such that I don't.

Ten years ago, I wrote an article about this called "Alienation of the Human Spirit" (*N&L*, April 1987). At first, I liked the article up to a point, but something was gnawing at me. Two weeks later, I read Raya Dunayevskaya's "Why Hegel's *Phenomenology*? Why Now?" in the May 8, 1987 *News & Letters*. In it she showed that Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind* tells you about a lot of things that go down even after you "gain a mind of your own," in other words, even after you, as a worker, realize that you are alienated. There are so many traps you still face—stoicism, skepticism, even the "unhappy consciousness." All of a sudden, I was no longer satisfied with what I had written.

I had written that article because the alienation in the lives of those around me was becoming so bad. All this came back to mind a year ago, when I received a call that a close friend of mine had taken a gun and shot himself. The shock that hit me was not only remembering him, but the recollection of who I am. I am not much different from that person.

Three years ago, another friend overdosed on drugs for the third and final time. He was no idiot; he was considered one of the "smart ones." Yet even he could find no way out of this alienated life. That is why I say the dead weigh heavily on me. The dead and the living dead need an answer. We need to spell out the objectivity and the subjectivity of the Idea of Freedom.

CAPITALISM'S MANY-SIDED ALIENATIONS

As an answer, most Leftists would give you "the plan." It's like religion—that is, as soon as you find god (in this case, revolution), everything's going to be all right. But we are still in the pre-history of humanity. Many things still need to be worked out. The religious preachers talk about people who are alienated as if they suffer from some moral deficiency, some deficiency of character. But it is the life these people live that causes their alienation, not some moral deficiency.

Another friend of mine was good with his hands, a skilled worker. In the almost 20 years since I graduated from high school, the jobs are gone. He got his foot in the door of a good paying job just long enough to get used to it. All of a sudden, those jobs are gone and the nature of the work that remains is now different and more alienating.

Marx described this process in his 1844 essay "Alienated Labor." He shows that the product is of course alienated or ripped off from the worker. But he also shows that there is a deeper problem: Your very activity of laboring is alienated—if you're "lucky" to have a job. With alienated labor you're trapped in alienation from your species-being or humanity. It becomes a question of "it's either me or someone else," since there's always 500 others to take your job. You are separated from your humanity. And once you cut yourself off from your humanity, you are cut off from others, and you are trapped.

Psychologists focus only on the last two parts: the alienation from your humanity and from others. The problem is that they never get back to the most fundamental problem—the very way in which one lives and works. There's been drugs, psychological problems, etc., in other societies and times, but it's in **this** society, and foremost in **this** society, that these problems have taken on such strength.

It is not an individual question. It's a social phenomenon. In the kind of life we live under capitalism, everything is a commodity, an object. As Raya Dunayevskaya paraphrased Marx in his 1844 essay "Private Property and Communism," you can see this even if you forget the class struggle, by just looking at the man/woman relation. If you treat even "the one you love" in an alienated manner, as an object, it means everything is an object for you. Marx is saying: Even if everything else would work right in society, if this is how we relate to each other it shows this society has to be overthrown.

The only reason I have not gone down the same road as my friends, the dead and the living dead, is that I still have a concept of the importance of others. To me, the notion of the self becomes the core and the turning point, the way one cuts oneself off from the world, and also the only way back, once you see others not as objects but as living subjects. This is why Marx called his philosophy a "Thoroughgoing Naturalism or Humanism." Your humanity can only be in relation to

others. You have to hold onto your humanity. That gives you a whole different view of life. When you do not see others or yourself as an object, you are open for infinite possibilities.

What we have to "prove" is the kind of method that can help us hold onto all hope when all hope seems to be lost—the "quest for universality" as Marx named it, in each human being, or "individuality that lets nothing interfere with its universalism, i.e., with freedom itself" as Hegel named it.



THE DIALECTIC OF SELF AND OTHERS

This brings us back to "Why Hegel's *Phenomenology*? Why now?", especially concerning what happens when a person gets "a mind of one's own." Hegel discusses this in the section in the *Phenomenology* on the master/slave dialectic. He shows that the slave stands higher than the master because in the struggle for freedom he/she gains "a mind of one's own."

"Gaining a mind of one's own" is certainly great. But Hegel gives you so many paths that lead nowhere from that point. One is skepticism. To be skeptical of the world sounds good; but Hegel shows you that it leads nowhere. Another is stoicism—the idea of "just hang tough, you can do it." Yet he shows that also leads you nowhere—or at best, to the unhappy consciousness.

Later in the *Phenomenology of Mind* he takes this up in another way in the chapter "Absolute Freedom and Terror." I think this question of absolute freedom and terror is the question of our day—more so than when Hegel wrote about it. That's because his discussion of this reminds me of revolutionaries of our day. This is what Dunayevskaya writes of that chapter in "Why Hegel's *Phenomenology*? Why Now?":

"The last section of the Spirit in Self-Estrangement that we have been dealing with, Hegel entitled 'Absolute Freedom and Terror.' It is an analysis of what happened to the French Revolution as factionalism broke up the unity of the revolution so that for 'pure personality' the world became 'absolutely its own will,' so that terror succeeded so-called absolute freedom, since, by being only negative it was 'merely the rage and fury of destruction.' In a word, Hegel considers that if you have not faced the question of reconstruction on new beginnings, but only destruction of the old, you have, therefore, reached only 'death—a death that achieves nothing, embraces nothing within its grasp; for what is negated is the unachieved, unfulfilled punctual entity of the absolutely free self.' This is where he identifies that absolutely free self with a faction. 'The victorious faction only is called the government...and its being government makes it, conversely, into a faction and hence guilty.'"

One thing that strikes me in this passage is the whole question of Hegel's critique of "pure personality." If freedom is narrowed to personal revelation, you revert back to the self that is alienated from others—what Marx speaks of in 1844 in discussing the kind of personality that becomes separate from the world

around it. Marx points out that the key here is that the world takes on the appearance of an object; everything appears as an object outside the self.

COGNITION DOESN'T JUST REFLECT REALITY

This brings me to a point made by Lenin in his *Philosophic Notebooks* on Hegel from 1914-15. Shortly before reaching the final chapter of Hegel's *Science of Logic*, "The Absolute Idea," Lenin writes:

"Alias: man's cognition not only reflects the world but creates it. The notion [=man], as subjectivity, presupposes an otherness which is in itself [= nature independent of man]. This notion [=man] is the impulse to realize itself, to give itself objectivity in the objective world through itself, and to realize [fulfill] itself...What the subject has in the fact of its determinateness in and for itself, is a certainty of its own actuality and the non-actuality of the world."^{*}

Lenin rightly sees that the existing world is an object alien to us; it is not who we are, it is an object outside ourselves. And because it is an object outside ourselves, we understand that world to be "non-actual." In recognizing this, we get both a view of what we are against and a glimpse of what the world could be for us. This provides a glimpse of the cognition which "not only reflects the world" that we oppose, but also "creates it."

That is, instead of just taking the objective world as is and being weighed down by it, we are opposed to it and develop through its contradictions. This is a step beyond just being alienated. It is a movement from and through alienation. "Man" (the human being) has a sense in the back of his/her head that this is not the world they want.

The non-actuality of the world is the one thing we get in this damn society. The question is not to leap beyond the given society, as with religion, but instead through one's own experience to struggle against alienation and gain a mind of one's own. It is not just an abstract category to me. It is through the struggle, our own activity of life, that we realize the non-actuality of the world.

In light of the limits that we still face after gaining "a mind of one's own," the question is what kind of unity of objective and subjective can get us on the path to freedom. What is needed, it seems to me, is a new unity of mental and manual, of theory and practice, of worker and intellectual, worked out as an absolute. Such a new unity would open up a

new beginning. It is the kind of unity that has the highest form of contradiction within itself, and therefore contains self-movement.

The need for the unity of object and subject, of worker and intellectual, is due to the incomplete nature of each of us. We all come to this society as individuals with different histories and thoughts. We need to work out the unity that can have us face the limits of our own selves and the contradictions we all have. We should not let the contradictions lie there, whether they be sexism, racism or heterosexism, as if they can be left till the day after revolution. We instead need a physical place, a forum, where all these voices can speak together. Just knowing we're alienated is not going to get us anywhere.

The only answer is a place where different groups of people in this society can talk to each other, where diversity and difference can come to life and speak to each other in a context set by a philosophy of liberation. Such a space—as paper, as organization—would have a dynamic to it that comes from not just quantity but quality, that is from the different qualities we bring to the idea of freedom as different people from diverse historical backgrounds.

The objectivity of this is not something we can "prove" until we make it be. Yet we can see throughout history that there have been "individuals who let nothing interfere with their universalism"—whether it was the Paris Communards of 1871, the beginning of the Russian Revolution in 1917, or the Hungarian workers' councils in 1956. No, they did not get us to the new society. But they did show that the idea of freedom manifests itself in mass struggles, and that the will to liberty has actual existence in the real world: "Cognition not only reflects the world but creates it", exists both theoretically and practically, in theory and in the life of the people.

This is what Marx saw in the Paris Commune of 1871, when he said the greatest thing about it was "its own working existence." The actions of the workers in the Paris Commune helped Marx demystify the fetishistic character of the commodity. Not only did the Paris Communards give a view of the new society, they also aided the next stage of Marx's theoretical development. This is the history of ideas as well as of people, simultaneously "speaking" to each other. It shows us what we as human beings can be. Hopefully, it will emerge in our time on an even higher level.

^{*}See Lenin's *Philosophic Notebooks* in *Collected Works*, Vol. 38 (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1961), pp. 212-13. The material in brackets is by Lenin and represents his effort to "translate" the Hegelian categories.

BATTLE OF IDEAS IN TODAY'S PRISONER STRUGGLE

After reading through and passing around the March issue of N&L, some discussion—often heated—resulted here concerning the phrase “political prisoner.” The debate over who is and isn't a political prisoner, especially from some of the youngsters, would have kicked the collective asses of a Harvard debate team. Publications such as N&L certainly add a breath of fresh air to an ember which had almost died.

**Prisoner
Waupum, Wisconsin**

I decided to come to the Jericho '98 march to free political prisoners in Washington, D.C. last month after my older brother got arrested by the police. All he did was be on the street late at night. He was stopped as he was walking home from his girlfriend's house, and the cops began harassing him. My brother is not very political so imagine what happens to those who are.

**Black youth
Washington, D.C.**

I was surprised to see the number of young students at the Jericho '98 march—it looked to me like 80% of the crowd was under 21. Many were not even born when some of these brothers and sisters were sent to jail. Something new may be brewing.

**Longtime activist
Ohio**

Most of the speakers at the Jericho '98 march tried to get the crowd all riled up, but none of them offered anything solid in the way of a direction that can go with our energy. We know that Mumia is suffering, as are others in prison. We know what's happening is wrong, we don't need someone to tell us that over and over again. I want to know what we can do now to change these conditions.

**Prison solidarity activist
Illinois**

Prison officials are welcoming companies to set up shop in prisons because it is one more way of controlling prisoners. With the tremendous overcrowding, if they didn't have something for the prisoners to do, the whole place would go up like a tinderbox. Prison labor has its own rules and control mechanisms.

**Prison support activist
Oakland, California**

America today is what I call the Fourth Reich, with its two major political parties that have been shelling out chaos through prisons that should really be called concentration camps.

**Joe Travascio
Minnesota**

Not long ago at the Robertson unit in Abilene Texas, an inmate wrote a letter to Bobby Ray Sanders of the **Fort Worth State Telegraph** newspaper, telling him he feared for his life. A week later the inmate ended up dead. Sanders got Judge Matta of Abilene County to step in and go to the coroner's office to obtain a report on the circumstances of the prisoner's death. He found out that the coroner's report has been falsified. Before he could do anything a federal judge responded by putting a gag order on any discussion of the case. What are they trying to hide?

This shows that even if you are considered “respectable” and “untouchable” the system will find a way to bring you under. But some day this will backfire on them.

**Prisoner
Amarillo, Texas**

I still don't think you get it! With the brutal murder of my tiny friend Karla Faye Tucker, the death penalty and even the overall penal issue is no longer just a “Black and poor peoples issue” as publications of your genre have been portraying for too many years, to the harm of the rest of us. Rather it is an issue for all Americans who are not part of the .5% ruling elite that controls our country and both major parties, along with the popular media, especially the “news” media.

Karla Faye Tucker was neither Black nor poor. Neither am I Black or poor. Yet I've done over 12 years in prison for a crime I didn't commit!

**Rabbi Jacob Feuerwerker
Marion, Ohio**

I am currently locked in the cages of the Arizona Prison system. N&L is a great publication which keeps me informed of struggles around the world which I would otherwise not know about given my current situation. I look forward to receiving my monthly paper which keeps my thoughts in focus on what's really important.

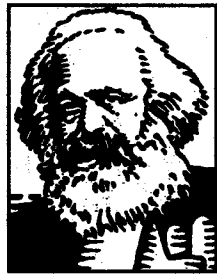
**Prisoner
Arizona**

One out of every three Black men in America is today subject to the control of the criminal justice system. It looks to me that they are just trying to sweep all of us into prison. We helped build this country with our labor, but now they don't need Black folks' labor anymore. Everything for us is going backward.

**African-American student
Chicago**

Could you give prisoners a space for networking by listing prisoner orientated organizations, groups, etc? You're doing a great job of addressing the issues of minorities.

**Prisoner
Tennessee Colony, Texas**



LEGACIES OF POST-MARX MARXISM

If you ask any Marxist how Marx's **Communist Manifesto** speaks to organization, they will point to Marx's discussion of the need for an independent political expression of the working class. Few note what Dunayevskaya stresses in “Marxism and ‘the party’” (April 1998 N&L)—that Marx places even more emphasis on the need for revolutionary organizations to be rooted in internationalism and a vision of the kind of society needed to replace capitalism.

**Student of Marxism
Illinois**

Vulgar Marxists are always allergic to the integrality of philosophy and organization that Marx practiced. If the idea of freedom does become part of the life-process of an organization, how can it even be further developed?

**Subscriber
Tennessee**

I don't understand why so many were puzzled at how well Castro got along with the Pope. Despite the difference in ideologies, they have a lot in common. Both have long been part of hierarchical, centralized organizations, in which the “chief” makes all the decisions.

**Libertarian socialist
New York**

The reference to the Pope in Cuba in one of your recent issues was too negative. I wouldn't call Cuban society state-capitalism, as you do. This is like throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

**M.S.
Forest Hills, NY**

Readers' Views

BEYOND BLACK NATIONALISM

At a recent Ocean Hill-Brownsville school district meeting called by newly installed trustees for the District 23 Board, an interesting situation arose. The meeting was called to install a new District Superintendent who happens to be a white nun. The current board, which is all Black, had refused to install her because she is white. Chancellor Rudy Crew suspended the Board and put in three trustees. The meeting was for the three trustees to appoint her as the new superintendent.

The meeting was crowded with both community and media coverage. Just after the vote Sonny Carson arrived with his supporters seeking to disrupt the meeting by shouting that the racist media should be expelled and chanting “No Justice, No Peace!” However, he was drowned out by the community people shouting “Peace! Peace! Peace!” They favored installing a white superintendent with a track record for improving reading and math scores in poor districts over just putting another Black functionary in office. It would seem that within the Black community mere nationalism is not seen as the solution to deep-seated problems.

**Ray McKay
New York**



HONORING DR. KING'S LEGACY

My family went to the Candlelight Vigil at the National Civil Rights Museum after the “Memphis Remembers Martin” march. There were at least 2,000 people waiting to take part. They took us in shifts. It was meaningful. A lot of people were in tears. It seemed like they were having the candlelight vigil but then also encouraging people to pay to go through the museum. Some people were very upset by that and didn't like the idea of the museum trying to capitalize on Dr. King's death.

**Doris Bradshaw
Memphis**

How many Black people from Memphis did you see at the march for Martin Luther King Jr.? The whole Cook Convention Center should have been packed. People told me, “Oh, I thought about it, but I had other things to do.” The march, though, was great. There were so many issues that needed to be addressed here in Memphis. This is the most racist city I've ever seen!

Everybody is divided. They have the white this and the Black that. Even the surgeons at the hospital where I work are divided—they have one association for the white surgeons and another for the Black. Hardly any Black surgeons come to Baptist East; they work at Methodist.

**Black hospital worker
Fayette County, Tennessee**

There were events all weekend commemorating the life and death of Martin Luther King Jr., here in Memphis. I was less than a year old when King was killed. I had no idea there was a sanitation workers' strike at the time. The forums very useful—I learned a lot about the Civil Rights Movement and what Dr. King was about. What's important to me was that at some events the emphasis was on making people aware that this is an ongoing struggle, and we have to take it further to make it a better society.

**Young white woman
Memphis**

It was a moving experience to visit for the first time the National Civil Rights Museum, located in the Lorraine Hotel where Dr. King was killed. But after seeing several exhibits of the role Rev. Shuttlesworth played in so many Civil Rights battles, it was quite depressing to see him shunted to the side of the rally to honor Dr. King, where he wasn't even given the chance to speak. The unfinished character of the struggle is reflected in the politicians who try to claim the movement's legacy while ignoring those who really built it.

**P.W.
Chicago**

50 YEARS OF ISRAEL

I saw the “Biladi, Biladi” episode from the controversial TV series here on Israel's 50th anniversary, and thought it was mild. They showed far many more Jewish mothers crying for their sons killed than Palestinian mothers. The grief ratio was at least five to one. I thought that was fine, a way to get Israelis to even listen to the other side. Many left-wing friends, however, felt the film was too “pro-Zionist.”

**Gila Svirsky
Jerusalem**

Fifty years ago, the UN voted for the partition of Palestine, giving the Jews the opportunity to establish their own state on Palestinian land. After the various wars, suicide bombings, terrorist acts on both sides, etc. there is a simple choice. Either try to live in peace by accepting the formula “Land for Peace,” “One Land, Two Nations” or let the fundamentalists on both sides run the show and live in endless terror and war.

**Jewish activist
Canada**

ZIMBABWE LABOUR PARTY: AN APPEAL

The Zimbabwe Labour Party, which is now about two years old, is determined to spearhead the interests of workers, rural peasants, students and the general poor who are economically marginalized. The party now enjoys a membership of 50,000. Despite our material weakness, we have for the first time contested a by-election. The main problem facing us during the campaign was violence: Mugabe's ANU (PF) used state resources and went on an orgy of violence with petrol bombs against opponents.

We appeal to you for any assistance in cash or kind to enable us to: 1) participate in future elections, 2) take our case to court over rigging and unfairness of last February's by-election, 3) build a party library.

**Langton Machoko
Zimbabwe Labour Party
PO Box BE 814 B
Belvedere, Harare, Zimbabwe**

PRIVATIZING SOCIAL SECURITY

The machinery to privatize (invest the money into stocks) Social Security is now in motion. They are laying the groundwork through their media to win over the American public prior to introducing legislation. The capitalists, in today's economic crisis, are looking for capital. Privatizing the Social Security revenues and other government institutions are a source of capital. It was the workers and unions, not the capitalists, who fought for and won Social Security in the '30's. Now the capitalists want to steal our money. What if there is a downturn or even a crash in the stock market like the 1929 incident?

**Reader
Los Angeles**

SUPPORT THE STRUGGLE OF ABDUL SHAKUR!

We have just learned that Abdul Shakur, a New Afrikan Political Prisoner whose writings have been quoted in N&L, is not being allowed to receive any outside correspondence. Shakur, who is housed in one of the most repressive hell-holes in America, the SHU Unit of Pelican Bay California, is confronting an orchestrated attempt by the authorities to further isolate him from any exchange of ideas and information. As a recent press release by friends of Shakur in the George Jackson Grassroots Foundation stated, “If Pelican Bay state prison can get away with banning all outside correspon-

dence with Abdul and there is no public outcry, you can rest assured that all political prisoners or politically active prisoners will be subjected and exposed to the same fascist abuse.”

What is needed is 1) sign a petition in your area to protest these latest acts, 2) call the warden at Pelican Bay to demand that Shakur's outside correspondence be restored immediately, and 3) send as many letters as possible addressed to Shakur at Pelican Bay State Prison. His address is: Abdul Olugbala Shakur, D-10-216, #C-48884 (SHU), PO Box 7500 Crescent City, CA 95532.

LABOR'S GLOBAL CONDITIONS AND STRUGGLES

Just as we anticipated in our story covering the Kaiser nurses' victory in the April issue of N&L, the day after the settlement was signed Kaiser announced it will close its flagship hospital in order to save money. They will continue to get members' dues but will provide only clinic care (no overnight hospital stays!). It makes it so clear that no victory can be a "resting" place.

Urszula Wislanka
Oakland

The dissident Roy Commer was overwhelmingly elected the new president of Local 375 of the Technical Guild of District Council 37 of AFSCME. Local 375 is one of the five largest of the 58 unions in DC 37. DC 37 comprises the entire New York City public workforce.

Dissatisfaction with the no-raise clause for two years in the recent five year contract may have been one of the deciding factors in the election. Others are surely the current criminal and economic investigations of DC 37 itself. To date, two presidents of the five largest locals have been removed from office by AFSCME International, for mishandling millions of dollars of local union funds. The financial records of DC 37 are now under review by the District Attorney's office. Also at issue was the fact that the former union presidents' salaries were in excess of \$220,000 a year, while the salaries of the workers in the locals ranged from \$20,000 to \$60,000.

Disgruntled City Employee
New York

We have declared May the month of Campaign Against Child Labor Abuse. We plan to host several rallies the week of May 11-17 at all state conventions of the American Postal Workers Union. We have been working on this for a couple of years now. We have a class for kids at the national convention to illustrate the importance of labor unions in preventing this.

Postal worker
Colorado

Nike epitomizes what is wrong with today's global economy. The North American Free Trade Agreement opened the door for greedy companies like Nike to roam the world searching for countries with non-existent or weak labor unions and oppressive governments to set up sweatshops to manufacture their products. Two Hong Kong human rights research groups revealed in a recent study that in China Nike factory workers are paid \$1.20 a day—seventy cents less than China's daily minimum wage. Nike also forces their Chinese factory workers to pay a deposit when they are hired so they will not quit once they discover the inhumane working conditions.

Student
De Kalb, Illinois

At a recent session at the Socialist Scholars' Conference in New York, one panelist said that China shouldn't be sharply criticized for supplying cheap labor to factories being run by the multinationals, because as bad as the working conditions are it's an improvement over what the workers and peasants who once lived in the countryside had before. How very interesting, I thought. That's exactly what the capitalist ideologues said in response to Marx's critique of capitalist industrialization over a century ago.

Radical with a memory
Chicago

BOYCOTT USA TODAY!

I want to remind all N&L readers that the locked-out Detroit newspaper workers have called for a boycott of Gannett Corporation's biggest money-maker, USA Today. Like the working poor taxpayers described in a Readers' View which quotes USA Today as its source, somebody has to pay for Gannett's profits. In this case it is the 2,200 unionized Detroit newspaper workers, many of whom are still locked out, or called back to work alongside scabs. They have been without a contract since July 13, 1995. USA TODAY—NO WAY!

Susan Van Gelder
Detroit



ISSUES IN FEMINISM TODAY

It burns me up to hear men say that "feminism" is what has destroyed the Black family. Does he think "feminism" is why we have so many single-women families today? It made me think of how many times, when I had a job driving a truck, some man would ask me, angrily, "Why are you doing a man's job?" My answer always was, "Because my kids have to eat just like yours do."

Tiombe
Chicago

In all the obituaries I read for Bella Abzug—including the one in The New York Times—none mentioned her most important work. She was co-founder and president of one of the most militant and effective NGO's (Non-Governmental Organizations) in the world, the Women's Environmental and Development Organization, known around the world by its acronym, WEDO. It was only after she left those putrid, compromising, male-dominated halls of Congress, that she could really fly. Women in WEDO have vowed to carry on Abzug's "brand of passionate politics, fighting for social justice, human rights, peace and a healthy environment." In the last part of her life she was finally able to put all these concerns together in one organization and she did it, as she did everything, with passion.

Terry Moon
Memphis

I was very angry to see that a magazine interviewed the leader of a campus group in Colorado called Lesbians for Life. She said that "pro-life" fits in "with my veganism"! Some people see things so simplistically.

Young feminist
Tennessee

Begun in 1994, the Tubman/ Anthony Women's Self-Help Center operates as a neighborhood center and safe place for children and women. Children from the east side of Springfield have few options for after-school activities. The community surrounding the Center works together to maintain the meagerly furnished home, where classes, seminars and workshops for teenagers are held. Last year, the Center fed over 100 families on a monthly basis, made referrals for HIV/AIDS, and awarded three scholarships to local women. To support our Center, write us at: 813 S. 13th St., Springfield IL 62703.

Faith Logan
Springfield, Illinois

IMAGES OF AMERICAN RADICALISM

A new visual history of American radicalism has appeared, Images of American Radicalism by Paul Buhle and Edmund Sullivan. It is available from Christopher Publishing House, at 24 Rockland St., Hanover, MA 02339, for \$66.00



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Black/Red View The Communist Manifesto speaks to today's struggle

by John Alan

A hundred and fifty years ago the 1848 Revolution suddenly erupted in Europe, a few weeks after Karl Marx's **Communist Manifesto** was published in Germany.

According to the historian Eric Hobsbawm, the revolution began in Paris on 24 February and "within a matter of weeks no government was left standing in an area of Europe which is today occupied [by] all or part of ten states."

These events, the 1848 Revolution and the publication of Marx's **Communist Manifesto**, are joined together in history, not because they happened at the same time, but rather because they represent an historic unity of theory and practice, that is, a revolution in practice and a revolution in thought. It's precisely because of that unity that Marx's **Communist Manifesto** speaks to freedom struggles today, whether they be the struggles of workers against alienation in production and cutbacks in the labor force, oppressed minorities fighting for freedom and self-determination or theoreticians who are concerned with today's failed or incomplete revolutions.

Marx, both as a philosopher and as an activist in pre-1848 Paris, brought to the 1848 Revolution his discovery of Historical Materialism that revealed the masses are not just objects determined by history, but the creators of history.

As Marx put it in the **Manifesto**: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of the class struggles. A history where ... oppressor and oppressed stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended either in the revolutionary reconstruction of society, or in the common ruin of contending classes." And "the modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones."

In the **Communist Manifesto** Marx singled out the working class as the revolutionary class in capitalist society since it is the only class which is essential in "the formation and the augmentation of capital" and is organized in factories to carry out that task. Thus, as Marx wrote: "the bourgeoisie therefore produces, above all, its own grave diggers."

Reading the 1848 **Communist Manifesto**, with

today in mind, reveals that Marx's analysis of mid-19th century capitalist production had uncovered the crucial, inherent and unchangeable characteristics of capitalist production. For example, Marx wrote in the **Manifesto** that "the bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relationships of production, and with them the whole relation of society."

Today, the constant "revolutionizing of the instruments of production" takes the form of the constant introduction of new technology in production and the numerical reduction of the workers. This has created permanent unemployment for a very large section of the African-American working class and consequently a myriad of social problems in African-American communities. These social problems, along with the American middle-class belief that people are poor because they're lazy, has generated a politics of "welfare reform" which is a hidden form of racism and a version of the 19th century hatred for the poor.

The **Manifesto** also analyzes the birth of the world market and the correlating concept of free competition as natural developments of the bourgeois revolution in production and exchange, that is, how that class uses machinery and science to increase the production of commodities. Marx wrote in the **Manifesto**: "The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created the more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together."

Although Marx didn't specifically point out in the **Manifesto** that Black slave labor was an essential dimension of those "colossal productive forces," he clearly understood that it was. He wrote in a letter to Pavel Vassilyevich (Brussels, Dec. 28, 1846), less than a year before he was commissioned by the Communist League to write a draft of the **Communist Manifesto**, that "direct slavery is the pivot of our industrialism today as much as machinery, credit, etc. Without slavery, you have no cotton, without cotton you have no modern industry. It is slavery that has given value to the colonies; it was the colonies that created world trade; it is world trade that is the necessary condition for large-scale machine industry. Also before the slave trade in Negroes, the colonies supplied the old world with but very few products and did not visibly change the face of the earth. ...Modern nations have known how to disguise the slavery in their own countries and how to import it openly into the New World."

The **Communist Manifesto** revealed that all histo-

ry is the history of class contradiction and thus the ground for man's freedom is in the historicity of the world. The African masses throughout the history of this country have struggled against race and class oppression. They have changed the forms of that oppression without it being totally eliminated. The answer to the riddle is not simply in activity, but rather in bringing to consciousness the idea of the new society underlying that activity.

Demonstrators demand: Free Nigeria!

Oakland— "We have decided to fight for freedom. No turning back!" "Abacha must go!" With these shouts, a few dozen Nigerians plus supporters of the Nigerian struggle against the dictator Sani Abacha demonstrated in front of the Federal Building on April 22.

We condemned the Abacha regime for their most recent outrage, mowing down in cold blood people demonstrating in Ibadan on April 15, killing at least 20. Shell Oil, responsible for the judicial murder of Ken Saro Wiwa in 1995, Chevron and Mobil are all complicit in the latest murders.

The **News & Letters** article in the April issue on Clinton's trip to Africa was very well received. Speakers vehemently exposed his double-talk in support of Abacha while pretending to support democracy in the form of Abacha-proposed elections. People of Nigeria had elections in 1993. They elected Moshood Abiola. The dictator Abacha took power from Abiola, imprisoning him and murdering his wife for nothing more than asking for her husband's release. Abacha cannot be allowed to pretend that he will stand for elections now, when political parties nominating him are clearly a sham.

The demonstrators reminded the audience of the recent history of Haiti. Their president-elect Aristide was returned to power peacefully by pressure from within and from outside the country. The Nigerian movement for democracy is asking for no more than "permanency of democracy."

Another face of the universal struggle for democracy was presented by Wole Soyinka, the Nigerian Nobel laureate. The theme of his talk at U. C. Berkeley a few days before was the way in which culture is used to sustain power as well as challenge it.

He stated that most human conflict is between power and freedom. The withdrawal into culture aids the retrogression of "I'm right, you're wrong" into "I'm right, you're dead." Where is the willingness to examine the given, he asked.

He put dictatorship at the top of crimes against humanity in contemporary society, with dictators wrapping in the moth-eaten, rotten cloth of culture their ugly nakedness. He urged the audience to take up the project of the witches and heretics from previous eras. Ken Saro Wiwa was such a modern-day heretic who as a journalist telling the truth had similar power over the population.

For more information about Free Nigeria Movement write P.O. Box 441395, Indianapolis, IN 46244

Black World

(Continued from page 1)

fronts the sublimated object of his denial of guilt, namely, the brother from another planet, the "underclass," the oppressed Karl Marx called the gravediggers of capitalism.

But just as Dr. Gates's breakthrough close encounter with the (br)other resolved his guilt, or his denial of guilt, because now he could, once and for all, re-bury his denial and the object of his denial, so Dr. Gates believes he is well enough to drive the spectre of Marx back into the shadows as well.

Even as PBS was preparing to air his docu-drama, Gates told left feminist and labor activist Jane Slaughter in an interview for the **Detroit Metro Times** (Jan. 7-13) that:

I think Marx got some stuff greatly right, got some stuff magnificently wrong. There's not gonna be a socialist revolution. OK, how do you humanize capitalism? How do you de-race it, de-sex it, how do you overcome centuries of sexism and centuries of racism, in the process of humanizing a global, highly technological, multinational corporate capitalism, which is here to stay? That's the challenge.

Finally, as a follow-up spin on the PBS special, Dr. Gates returns to the scene of the crime, as it were, to play the academic trickster in an essay for the **New York Times** (April 4) on the future of Black Studies. Having transported the "underclass" to Mars, rolled back the final frontier of race, and driven Marx into the ideological shadows between social revolution and an oxymoron called "humanized capitalism," Dr. Gates is now ready to talk the talk on "class."

Dr. Gates is playing the Derridean "on the one hand," "on the other hand" game. On the one hand, there supposedly is the so-called "socialist tradition" of work on the political economy of Black America that "urges us to rethink the basic institutions of Western liberal democracy." On the other hand, there is the "conservative vein" of such scholars as Thomas Sowell and Walter Williams who allegedly argue that the Black problem must be addressed "through voluntarist means."

In fact, the former left "hand" relies on the controlling hand of the state, while the latter right hand counts on the "visible hand" of the market to address the "Black problem." And what of Dr. Gates? What hand does he play?

His is a crying game. That is to say, while he decries the fact that "our conventional traditional modes of analysis simply fail to engage the vexing nature of...class differentials" in the Black America, he eclectically gathers together conflicting policies he previously decried as insufficient. He bemoans, along with his mentor William Julius Wilson, that the problem is structural and pathological, and contends that the "solutions" must be statist and voluntarist. However, where he thinks he has created an eclectic solution, his thinking is an eclectic error.

It doesn't take rocket science to realize that "the vexing

nature of the class differentials" in capitalist America is inseparable from the vexing nature of its racial differentials that have always put "American civilization" on trial and found it guilty. The chronicle of that history has not been a Martian Chronicle which places intellectuals and the working class on different planets.

It is instead one which caught the dialectical inseparability of the two, as when Dr. Gates's predecessor, Dr. Ewart Guinier, 20 years ago, having lost the battle to keep the DuBois Institute in Black hands, bitterly concluded that "The treatment Blacks receive at Harvard today [1978] parallels their treatment in American life. [It] is no more elevated than...the local police force." He accused Harvard of nothing less than "the academic lynching of Black students." No doubt, for Gates, Dr. Guinier's words come from a galaxy far, far away.

Memphis Remembers King



Memphis, Tenn.— On a cold April 4, well over 4,000 people, 80 to 90% of them African Americans, marched in the Memphis Remembers Martin parade, following the same path that Martin Luther King, Jr., trod as he marched with striking sanitation workers in 1968. The excitement grew as busloads of people kept arriving, and people began crowding the space in front of Clayborn Temple, starting point of the '68 march. Busloads of people came from Texas, New York, Philadelphia, Illinois. There was even a choir from Germany.

Talking to many who had come, it was clear that they felt this was historic. Some of the people from Memphis were angry that more Memphians didn't take part, while others were glad to see so many people from all over the country. Most moving was to see some of the older people who had been at the 1968 march with King. There were several of the original picket signs from the sanitation strike carried by the children of those strikers or the strikers themselves. These cardboard signs had been carefully kept by the families for 30 years.

At the conclusion of the march we were supposed to flow into the Cook Convention Center for a "rally." But hundreds of people, perhaps anticipating what was coming, didn't go into the hall. Many who did were not only disappointed but angered. As Doris Bradshaw, president of the environmental justice organization, Defense Depot Memphis, Tennessee-Concerned Citizens Committee (DDMT-CCC) put it:

I listened to some of the speakers and felt that I wanted to leave the room. Everyone jumps on the bandwagon as if they had done so much. Some of these people are the major ones trying to exploit people. I'm still upset with Memphis Mayor Herenton for ordering his police to attack the anti-Ku Klux Klan rally. (See N&L, January-February 1998.) Then he can stand up at the rally and talk of how good he's been for the movement!

Rev. Shuttlesworth was sitting in the back of the crowd on the stage but he wasn't one of the speakers. He was beaten severely by the police in the 1960s. You never see the ones actually involved in the true movement but you see these clowns getting the glory for what they never did.

Kenneth Bradshaw, also with DDMT-CCC, said: *The main thing missing from the march was the Black and white youth who were at the anti-KKK rally in January, which was more spontaneous. The mayor didn't want people to come to the anti-KKK rally. I met Shuttlesworth. He doesn't advertise himself. He was so important when those four little girls were killed in the church bombing in Birmingham, Ala. You have two kinds of persons, those who do the work and those who take the credit. The people who were not active, not supportive, didn't take risks, didn't jeopardize their future, they have good jobs because of people like Shuttlesworth who actually did something.*

I was at that 1968 march. Two workers were killed in the back of a sanitation truck, crushed because they couldn't come in out of the rain. King was in Memphis because of humble people.

—Marxist-Humanist participants

Editorial

Capitalism's merger mania

The most spectacular of the financial sector mergers that made headlines last month was the one between Citicorp and the Travelers group. The \$70 billion merger is the largest in finance ever, and the new Citigroup will be the world's largest financial institution. Yet what makes this merger spectacular is not only its size, but also its brazen flouting of the law.

The merger violates two laws, one dating back to the Great Depression, which separate commercial banking from investment banking and insurance underwriting. Only if Congress repeals these laws can the merger become permanent. Yet, despite continuous repeal efforts over the last 20 years, the laws remain in effect. They protect the public against some shady practices—banks cannot hard-sell their own insurance policies to loan applicants, or dump bad securities they have underwritten into their customers' portfolios.

PROTECTIVE LAWS IGNORED

This, however, is far from the reason these laws remain in effect. Congress, and especially the members of its banking committees, are certainly beholden to a finance and real estate industry that has given nearly \$50 million in campaign contributions since the 1996 elections. Rather, the laws remain in effect simply because the different parts of the financial industry, which each seek the right to invade the others' turf while shielding their own turf from competition, have fought each other to a standstill. Citicorp and Travelers are confident that their power and the power of their campaign contributions, \$1.3 million since the 1996 elections, will finally break the logjam.

The financial industry invokes the mantra of "competition" in support of such mergers. Yet studies have found that neither cost reductions nor lower prices to consumers result from medium-sized banks becoming big or big banks becoming bigger, or from financial companies selling a wider range of products.

More importantly, despite the mantra of "competition," the government's guarantee of deposit insurance makes the banking industry one of the prime recipients of state-capitalist largess, and the Citicorp-Travelers merger threatens to extend the subsidy to other financial industries as well, which together comprise 18% of the U.S. economy. Due to the ever-present fear that the financial system may collapse, the government's "too big to fail" doctrine protects big banks from going under and thereby setting off a chain reaction. Faced with an imminent bankruptcy of, say, the insurance arm of Citigroup or another of the conglomerates-to-come, the government is now likely to bail it out in order to prevent the conglomerate's banking

arm from failing as well. The result could make the savings and loan crisis look like peanuts.

Other gargantuan banking mergers, worth \$60 billion and \$30 billion, came on the heels of the Citicorp-Travelers deal, as did other financial sector mergers worth "only" \$8.6 billion and \$7 billion. Yet the merger mania is certainly not limited to the financial industry. Mergers and acquisitions reached a record \$957 billion last year, a figure nearly three times the previous record. This year, if the current pace continues, the value of mergers will top \$1.5 trillion. Obsession with globalization notwithstanding, it is also on the national level that Marx's law of the concentration and centralization of capitals is alive and kicking as never before.

In part, the merger wave is both cause and consequence of the run-up of stock prices. The mergers tend to inflate stock prices and inflated stock portfolios provide a cheap means by which to finance new mergers. Despite the economic crisis in East Asia and mediocre profits at home—and despite a Japanese economy which is mired in sluggishness and, if Sony's chairman is to be believed, is "on the verge of collapse"—U.S. stock markets continue to boom.

FORBES PREDICTION

On Wall Street, a popular explanation of this anomaly is that stock prices will remain permanently higher, because globalization and high-tech have ushered in a new era of faster growth and increased profitability. Likewise, pointing to stock price and profit rate data, some Marxist economists argue that the slump in the world economy has ended, and that we have entered a new "long swing" expansion. We read predictions like those in *Forbes*, trumpeting the onset of "a new industrial era in this country. We are making progress industrially and economically...on a perfectly heroic scale."

Unfortunately for *Forbes*, this particular forecast appeared in its **June 1929** issue, only four months before the stock market crashed and the world economy plummeted into the Great Depression. Thus, side-by-side with the triumphalism come sober cautions even from decidedly non-Marxist quarters. The International Monetary Fund's chief economist, for instance, recently voiced concern over the prospect of a sharp plunge in the U.S. stock and bond markets. And in its April 18 cover story, "America's Bubble Economy," *The Economist* warned that the bursting of the bubble "poses a bigger and more imminent threat to the global economy" than either the slump in Japan or the financial fragility that brought down East Asia.

Irish political activist freed from prison

New York—A jubilant crowd of 400 supporters greeted Bernadette Devlin McAliskey at a meeting, April 17, to celebrate the release of her daughter, Roisin McAliskey, from British prisons after nearly 16 tortuous months of detention. Devlin McAliskey, a Northern Irish civil rights and peace crusader since the 1960s, spoke about abusive police powers and political prisoners in both Northern Ireland and the U.S., and also analyzed the recent Northern Ireland Nationalist-Unionist peace agreement, concluded April 10.

Roisin was "lifted" without charge and held in prison under the Emergency Powers that Britain imposed on Northern Ireland. She was never charged with a crime or brought before a court, but was threatened with deportation to Germany which had accused her of terrorism. Julia Hall of Human Rights Watch, which was instrumental in the campaign that led to Roisin's release, called Roisin's experience a "case study in Northern Ireland's human rights violations over the past 30 years."

Roisin, who was pregnant and ill when arrested, was subjected to psychological torture in the notorious Castlereagh interrogation center, then housed in a men's prison, and finally kept in Holloway Prison. She received inadequate health care and was constantly strip searched even though, as a "high risk" prisoner, she was not permitted any physical contact with other people. Only world-wide protests made Britain change its plan for Roisin to give birth in prison, shackled to her bed. She gave birth in a hospital, and was finally released March 9.

Bernadette Devlin McAliskey thanked the American movement for its work to free Roisin, but pointed out that the 16-month campaign had produced only that one victory. Another Irish woman political prisoner, Josephine Hayden, remains in jail as do, in this country, Leonard Peltier—the Native American activist who has been in prison for 30 years—and Mumia Abu-Jamal. "Every major victory in the Irish movement has come about with the support of Black, Puerto Rican, Native American and human rights groups in the U.S.," she said, "and it is time for us to pay them back." She urged everyone who had worked on Roisin's campaign to work now for U.S. political prisoners.

She also spoke of the harm to women and children caused by imprisoning women, not only political women. "Roisin received support because she was a

frail young woman who could be seen," Devlin McAliskey pointed out. "But the world's prisons are full of women like her. Since women bear the brunt of child care, imprisoning women both hurts children and traumatizes women. We need to take a fundamental human rights position and to fight against the mechanisms that keep women in jail."

She also reminded us that everything Britain did to Roisin was legal and not an "abuse" of the law. Regarding Britain's efforts to keep hold of Northern Ireland, she asked, "Britain has no constitution and continuously violates human rights, so why should we join its 'democracy'?"

Speaking about the new peace accords, Julia Hall explained that the proposal contains good language about human rights, but lacks any mechanisms to assure their implementation. Devlin McAliskey ridiculed its provision to create a Department of Equality, saying that one would expect equality to be the foundation stone of Northern Irish peace, not just a department.

Devlin McAliskey attacked the propaganda campaign that is posing the accords as the only alternative to warfare. The government has been waging war on Northern Ireland all along, she said, and can stop anytime. She strongly supports peace, but believes the relative peace since Sinn Fein declared a cease fire four years ago can continue, while the population takes time to think about what kind of society it wants to build. "We don't want to drift into a racist, sectarian society," she said. "Where do gays, minimum-wage workers, women fit into this agreement?"

She sees the agreement as a realignment of prominent nationalist and unionist tendencies, as those are defined by outsiders, for the purpose of regulating them. Rather than creating a pluralist and equitable society for all, she said, the purpose of the accords seems to be to bolster the economy of the Republic of Ireland and to maintain a stable, cheap work force in order to attract foreign investment into the North. The accords do not insure that the people, rather than government leaders, will decide what happens next.

Hall condemned the way the accords are being marketed: as if Protestants and Catholics were warring tribes who cannot get along any other way. "There is a third actor who is key to the violence," she said, "the U.K."

—A.J. and A.K.

(See "Irish settlement: new historic juncture?," p. 12.)

Teach-in on Kosova

Berkeley, Cal.—About 100 people came to a teach-in on Kosova, April 14, sponsored by the Peaceworkers organization, including six members who recently returned from a Kosova jail. The meeting gave a sense of urgency to the situation which may explode again at any time.

The teach-in opened with a short but powerful video, "Kosova and the death of Yugoslavia." It chronicled the over six years of non-violent resistance of the 90% Albanian population to the Serbian government's pro-



gram of "quiet ethnic cleansing." It described the random house searches used to terrorize people. It showed the alternative schools in private houses with no heat, but lots of fear, where the director of the school and his son were brutally beaten by the police. Very graphic were the scenes of repeated brutality against peaceful demonstrators by the 60,000 troops enforcing martial law.

The video told the story of Kosova's miners who went on strike demanding restoration of autonomy. The Serb government made promises, but when they consolidated power all the miners were fired and lost their homes. They are now among the poorest in a population that gets 800 calories per day on average. Serbian refugees from other parts of the former Yugoslavia are forcibly moved into Albanian houses. All human rights observers were expelled in 1993.

The Peaceworkers described their trip and the wonderful reception they received from those they visited. They were truly inspired by Kosova's resistance. They noted that their presence, and the presence of their cameras, did restrain some of the worst Serb atrocities in the demonstrations in which they participated. They focused on this being the last chance for the international community to resolve this conflict non-violently.

Although the Peaceworkers do not support the Albanian's decision to take up arms in self-defense, they nevertheless made a contribution by going there and opening a discussion about Kosova with a wider audience.

—Participant

Toxic dump coverup

Memphis, Tenn.—Community activists long ago warned that the methods to clean up the Defense Depot, a Superfund site in the heart of Black South Memphis, will do more harm than good. The latest shocking event was the discovery of thousands of vials buried underground. An official said, "We don't know what it is. We know what it's not—it's not hazardous."

I want to nominate someone for the Nobel prize for this amazing feat. I thought you had to know what something was before you know if it could harm people—unless you experimented on live human beings. In flagrant violation of the rules for Superfund cleanups, officials sent the vials to a dump without ever knowing what was in them.

However, some activists recognized that the type of container is one commonly used for chemical warfare materials. Our group, the Defense Depot of Memphis, Tennessee-Concerned Citizens Committee, has been saying all along that chemical weapons were manufactured and tested at the Depot and the government has just been covering it up. It's a known fact that they had a chemical warfare unit at the Depot in its early years, but we're supposed to believe that all they did was receive German chemical weapons and bury them.

The discovery of these vials shoots down the whole justification for the way the "cleanup" is being done. They won't test for anything unless some document says that substance was spilled or buried in that area. Besides the fact that we don't know what documents they've gotten rid of—since the only cleanup they've done was to clean out their files—why should we trust the Army's records?

This is the same Army that first denied any soldiers were exposed to chemical weapons in Iraq, then said it was 25,000, then 50,000, then admitted 100,000. Now they've found thousands of vials they didn't have records of, they call them safe and send them away before their contents can be identified. What it shows is we can't trust their records, we can't trust their testing, we can't trust what they say, and we can't trust their "cleanup." The only thing we can trust them to do is to cover up.

—Environmental justice activist

Reply from inside the Gulag to Jericho '98: 'Who is a political prisoner?'

One of the concerns that some prisoners had when they heard about the stated goals of Jericho '98, was that it would be so singularly defined that it would ignore the thousands of the other prisoners in the system who are as much political prisoners as the focus group of the Jericho '98 organizers. (Jericho '98 is a national project originally dedicated to supporting those who have been incarcerated as a result of their political activism and beliefs but not those who adopted liberatory views while in prison—Ed.)

No one takes away from the injustices enacted upon Mumia Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier or the comrades of the Puerto Rican independistas. In fact, their struggles are as well known and revered inside the walls as they are in the world.

Yet in a time of "truth in sentencing"; in an age when eleven- and twelve-year-olds are incarcerated for the rest of their lives after being certified as adults; in a time when animals are given more rights and dignity than incarcerated human beings; and in a time when control unit prisons are being designed to be living coffins for those men and women who have the capacity to guide fellow prisoners in political discourse—such a narrow focus can be dangerous to those who fight political battles inside prisons on a daily basis.

POLITICAL BATTLES INSIDE PRISONS

In reading the article on the Jericho '98 march in the April *News & Letters*, it was heartening to see that it went beyond the stated boundaries. Since state and federal legislatures, the judiciary, and the mainstream press have acted in concert to demonize prisoners to such an extent that reforms gained in the 1960s and 1970s are being swept away at an alarming rate, political activism in prison has become the only recourse for change.

Retrogression in New York, 'Rudy Giuliani' be thy name



New York—City University of New York students paraded an effigy of Mayor Rudolph Giuliani in front of CUNY administration offices April 23 to protest curtailment of remedial education in the university system, effectively ending open admissions and hitting poor and minority students hardest.

New York—Mayor Rudy Giuliani has national political ambitions that all should be warned about. I would like to report a few comments made by Black callers to a New York radio station, WBAI, after Giuliani apologized to the Crown Heights, Brooklyn Hasidic community for what he said was the "inadequate police response" under former (Black) Mayor David Dinkins to the 1991 "riot," because those comments catch so sharply what is going on.

The four days of rebellion happened after seven-year-old Gavin Cato was killed and his cousin seriously injured by a car driven at high speed through a red light as part of the Lubavicher Hasidic leader's motorcade. There was great anger that the (Hasidic) ambulance that responded was more concerned with spiriting away the driver of the car (who ended up in Israel and has never stood trial) than with saving the Black children. In the rebellion, Yankel Rosenbaum, an Hasidic scholar, was knifed to death. Following are a few comments:

"Not only did Giuliani not apologize to Gavin Cato's family, nobody talked about how his father was being beaten by the police and called a 'n—' while trying to pull the car off his son." The night of Giuliani's press conference, "Crown Heights had police on every corner. Police cars would follow you one block.

"They stopped every other car coming in. Giuliani is itching for a confrontation, so he can say he knows how to deal with these 'n—s'."

Callers were of the opinion that Giuliani does not want peace, he wants to stir up the Black and Hasidic communities against each other so he can brutally put down a riot. That's his ticket to national Republican office.

Another caller said, "I have been reading *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*. The Brown Shirts remind me of what Giuliani is doing, training his police troops to deal solely with America's scapegoat—Blacks." Even One Hundred Blacks in Law Enforcement expressed outrage over Giuliani's claim that police under Dinkins were ordered not to make arrests during the rebellion.

I just wanted to warn the rest of the country about this Giuliani, since he wants to go national. —J.M.

Not since slavery have so many disenfranchised people been subjected to the forced servitude and state-supported violence found in prisons, and the suspension of fundamental rights simply because they belong to a particular socioeconomic or cultural group.

With the growing popularity of corporate involvement in U.S. penal policy (such as the Nashville-based Corrections Corporation of America, or CCA), the fundamental human rights concepts of the U.S. Constitution have been countermanded to make it relatively easy to arrest, try, convict and incarcerate the disenfranchised and to enhance the body count for CCA and Wall Street accountants.

Prisoners are kidnapped from their home states and sent across state lines to CCA-operated facilities where corporate shareholders and profit-margins are more important than prisoner well-being. In one of those facilities in Ohio, this mentality resulted in 19 stabbings and two killings in less than a year.

Revolts occur in prisons around the country every day,

Chicago, Jakarta linked by East Timor struggle



Jakarta, Indonesia—East Timorese youth demonstrated for outside the British consulate here on April 3 at the start of the Asia-Europe Summit in London. They reminded the world that East Timor remains under the brutal control of Indonesian rule.

Chicago—Young activists from across the midwest traveled to Chicago the weekend of April 3 to attend a conference sponsored by the East Timor Action Network. Featured speakers were activist-journalist Allan Nairn, who was recently deported from Indonesia for holding a press conference which exposed ongoing U.S. training for repressive Indonesian special forces troops, and Constancio Pinto, a representative from the National Council of Maubere Resistance, the umbrella group for East Timorese organizations resisting the occupation of their country by Indonesia. Sidhawati, an Indonesian democracy activist, spoke as well.

The weekend conference included a public talk at Northwestern University as well as informational and tactical sessions for activists.

Sidhawati, recently returned from a fact-finding trip to Indonesia, offered details of the ongoing and large-scale student demonstrations against the troubled Suharto regime. She said that activity has continued despite successive waves of arrests of student leaders and that the demonstrations were not limited to the island of Java, but were in fact taking place on Sumatra and Sulawesi as well. She also related news of a dramatic demonstration of East Timorese youths in front of the British embassy in Jakarta timed to coincide with the April 3 start of the Asia-Europe Summit in London.

—Marxist-Humanist supporter

Chicago police publish internet hit list

Chicago—The Jeremiah Mearday case has become a rallying point here for anti-police brutality sentiment and protest. The firing of two white cops, Comito and Thiel, was a victory in this regard while the rearrest of Mearday himself on trumped-up charges shows that the racist cops don't intend to give up without a fight. Mayor Daley and new Police Superintendent Hillard showed where they stand by supporting this latest arrest.

The unprecedented, fascist-style demonstration by 200 white officers at Mearday's court appearance in December was not just spontaneous, but showed a political movement within the police department itself to justify the assault on him and to lay the groundwork for further attacks.

This movement now has a mouthpiece in the form of an internet website called the *Police Officers' Network*, "designed, maintained, and contributed to by sworn members of the Chicago Police Department, for members of the Chicago Police Department."

This site is a vicious mixture of stereotypes about people who the police network says "would rather sit on their butts and live on welfare in a government funded housing complex...than to get out and get a job." Visitors to the website will find the crudest kind of right-wing demonizing of the poor and sob stories about the hard lives of white cops.

yet the mainstream press chooses to ignore them because they do not fit within the neatly packaged propaganda which they are trying to sell to the average U.S. citizen, namely that everything is well with the current policy of the U.S. penal system.

PRISONER TO PRESIDENT

We sing the praises of the South African people who elected a former political prisoner as president. Yet we forget the fact that apartheid has existed in this hemisphere ever since Columbus got lost and stumbled into the Caribbean.

We never question why that former so-called "enemy of the state" can become president in his country yet why those incarcerated in the U.S., political and apolitical alike, forfeit all rights and privileges of citizenship—even when they are released from this nation's new plantations.

Women in Texas facilities are forced to prostitute themselves—in a manner—simply to get a few extra Tylenols. In other states, prisoners are forced to build components for homes that they will never be able to live in, yet are denied all processes which empower a person while confined—education, religious freedom, respect and dignity—simply because they do not fit within the terminology which is used to define prisoners.

We are all political prisoners of those select few who dictate policy in this country, those legislatures who burn the candle at both ends, and those corporations who ignore the well-being of their workforce to enhance their profits.

Those who organized and supported Jericho '98 were not taken in by the mind-numbing aspects of the American press, judiciary, or the legislature in defining the truths which they seek. They should take pride in being called "radical."

Yet they should be careful in limiting themselves to such a narrow focus when dealing with the system which oppresses Mumia, the MOVE 9, Leonard Peltier or the comrades of the Puerto Rican independistas, for that same system oppresses them as well simply because they choose to ask the question "why."

UNLIMITED OPPRESSION, REVOLT

That same system oppresses every man, woman and child confined in the state-run plantations around the country, and supports other countries who are equally oppressive to their people in the name of the national interest.

If we have learned nothing else from the history of the United States, let us learn not to have events like Jericho '98 be solitary affairs. The names of Mumia Abu-Jamal, the martyrs and oppressed of MOVE, Leonard Peltier, and the comrades of the Puerto Rican independistas should be shouted from the rooftops until their freedom is secured.

Do not forget the brothers and sisters who—due to their radical beliefs—will find themselves in places like Tamm, Marion, Pelican Bay, Florence, or the soon-to-be-opened Wisconsin version of state-sanctioned torture at Boscobel, simply because they can inspire others.

But do not forget the others. Do not forget the brothers and sisters still inspired by George Jackson, and who are as equally inspired when they read Mumia's *Live from Death Row*.

Do not forget that politics, racism, depersonalization and dehumanization of a populace makes a political prisoner. If the history of the United States is any guide—when threatened with undeniable truths—politicians, courts and the mainstream media react in ways which disable the doctrines of the constitution as effectively as they would incapacitate those who would dare to challenge the status quo.

When that happens, people find themselves quickly imprisoned in U.S. Gulags. When that happens, one would hope that someone back in the world would think enough to place their names on a sign, and remember who they are.

—R.T.

Even more sinister is the site's naming of individuals as enemies, or "not friends," of the police. Of course, Jeremiah Mearday is so listed, and the site's charges against him so closely parallel the circumstances of his rearrest that, anything the police say about him should be inadmissible in court. There are also attacks on Mearday supporters such as the Rev. Paul Jakes who has emerged as a spokesman in the Black community against police brutality.

Under the heading "Officers: These People Are Not Your Friends," there is a list of the endorsers of the Oct. 22 National Day of Protest to Stop Police Brutality, Repression, and the Criminalization of a Generation. Both local and national endorsers are listed but, almost comically, it is claimed as "the truth" that the national endorsers were all in Chicago for the demonstration Oct. 22. The *Police Officers' Network* asserts that "they came here on October 22nd to fan the flames of hate and racism." The truth is that hundreds of Black and Latino youth as well as the families of police brutality victims in Chicago demonstrated that day.

The real truth this site lays out is the paranoid mentality of racist white cops. As they say, "Does anyone remember the Rodney King incident in L.A.?" People remember it all too well for the cops' taste, and they are running scared—scared and dangerous.

—Gerard Emmett

A radical youth movement rises to confront global retrogressive times

(Continued from page 1)

country played an enormous role in organizing hundreds of demonstrations which for the most part went unreported by the mainstream press.

Much effort went into attempts to play down the impact of the demonstration at the Columbus war rally by attributing it to the sectarian left. But the reality is that an organization of students and recent graduates from across the Midwest had come together in a very short span of time to create the Columbus Coalition for a Democratic Foreign Policy. These students, from Ohio State University, Antioch College, Earlham College and other schools, communicated by telephone and electronic mail to bring together voices in opposition to a "racist war," as they declared in their chant at Ohio State University's St. John Arena.

Other organized forms of opposition to the possibility of war took place elsewhere. At the University of Minnesota, a boisterous student demonstration prevented United Nations ambassador Bill Richards from delivering the Clinton administration's line on the issue. And at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, a Marxist-Humanist student group was forced to challenge the school's policy against posting "position statements" on university kiosks in order to exercise their right to free speech in the form of a flyer denouncing U.S. war moves. San Francisco, New York City and Memphis, Tenn., were the sites of other demonstrations. Many activists continue to maintain contact, anticipating the possibility that the United States could again use the inspection issue as a pretext for hostilities.

Students have also been engaged in a wide variety of issues across the country in organizations such as the Free Burma Coalition, the East Timor Action Network, the Student Environmental Action Coalition and the Student Labor Action Coalition. Much of this activity, such as the efforts to get universities to divest from companies with ties to the repressive regimes in Burma and Indonesia, represents a continuity with campus anti-apartheid divestment campaigns of the 1980s. But the increasing affinity with the organized labor movement that has been in evidence represents a new and exciting dimension. Student solidarity with striking clerical and maintenance workers at Yale and Barnard College in 1996 is just one example.

Another new and important phenomenon is the large anti-sweatshop labor movement, proof of the size of which was evident in the large turnouts for the April 18 national mobilization to target Nike stores. Student activists have directed embarrassing questions at university administrators about the justifiability of signing million-dollar athletic endorsement contracts with a company that allows Asian contractors to operate factories in which workers, predominantly young women, are subjected to abuse and hazardous conditions in exchange for wages insufficient even for mere subsistence.

Their work is paying off. The University of California-Irvine has agreed to drop its endorsement contracts, and Duke University introduced an anti-sweatshop pledge.

Campuses are not the only places where youth are meeting with success. The young residents of the Edenwald Gun Hill Houses, a Bronx public housing project, have been involved in a campaign mobilize the youth of other public housing projects to give back their Nike footwear as a protest against the corporation's intense use of the image of Black athletes to sell apparel to youth while limiting all production to Asian countries. The publicity garnered by their visits to Manhattan's Fifth Avenue Niketown convinced the company to dispatch a public relations person to the hous-

ing project last year to try to dissuade the young activists.

A further new dimension to youth activity is the truly sizable increase in anti-police brutality and prison solidarity work. Two successive national mobilizations on October 22 as well as March's Jericho '98 rallies in Washington, D.C., Los Angeles and Oakland, Cal., brought out large numbers of high school and community youth to protest the everyday savagery by



Young workers at a Macedonia, Ohio McDonalds walked out over abusive treatment from a manager on April 16. They're working to organize their store.

police forces which do not reflect the racial and ethnic makeup of the neighborhoods they lord over. Youth are also increasingly active in community organizations, often led by Black mothers whose children have been victims of police frame-ups or other abuse, who are rallying against brutal cops and the racist courts which are warehousing an entire generation in an explosively burgeoning prison system.

This diverse range of youth activity is taking place against a backdrop of dire retrogression. The severity of the recently announced statistical results of the success of California's Proposition 209 ballot initiative to scrap affirmative action programs in college admissions took many by surprise. The University of California system's flagship school, Berkeley, announced that only 255 Black students have been accepted for the fall semester, down from 598 last year. Latino students admitted will total 852, down from 1,411.

Similarly, a federal court ruling in Texas which declared affirmative action in admissions illegal has had a drastic effect on minority admissions to the cream of the state school system. The chilling message sent by the ruling has even affected applications to the University of Texas's law school in Austin, which dropped to only 111 Black students this year, down from last year's 225. Of the number who were admitted last year, only four chose to actually enroll in such a

Midwest turnout against Nike

DeKalb, Ill.—The Marxist Humanist Forum of Northern Illinois University celebrated the second International Nike Mobilization in the form of a protest outside the Student Center, on Thursday, April 17. Our group rapidly tripled in size as interested students joined in the action, distributing flyers, and chanting phrases like "Hey! Ho! Nike's got to go!" (twisting the words of a chant you may hear at a Bull's game). The purpose of the protest was to educate the campus community about abuses that occur within the 12 sweatshops owned by Nike, located in Indonesia, Vietnam, and China.

Unjust labor practices have been verified through the 1997 study performed by two Asian human rights committees. The study reports "thousands of young women, most under the age of 25, laboring 10½ hours a day, six days a week, in excessive heat and noise and in foul air, for slightly more than \$10 a week." This is slightly less than the mere cost of food in Vietnam, \$15 a week.

We, the Marxist Humanist Forum, implore you to boycott goods made under these conditions. Consumers must not tolerate such corporate manipulations.

Exercise your control over the market economy: Boycott Nike!

—Marc Rittle, The Marxist Humanist Forum, NIU

Chicago—As many as 200 demonstrators crowded the sidewalk in front of the Michigan Avenue Niketown on April 18 to protest the ruthless conditions of production in Nike's Asian factories. The crowd, the biggest yet for any Chicago anti-Nike event, included members of the Vietnamese community, members of the University of Chicago Students Against Sweatshops and representatives from the Coalition of Labor Union Women. Many of the demonstrators were young. The organizers of the event kept its focus limited to "free" vs. "fair" trade and even saw fit to invite an anti-choice Democratic candidate for governor, Glenn Poshard, to speak, but otherwise, it was a positive event.

—Participant

polarized and hostile environment.

Although proponents of Proposition 209 such as Ward Connerly argue that its results are simply a "correction" of preference shown to minorities, in reality it serves as an outright racially exclusionary measure.

A new reactionary ballot initiative aimed at the elimination of bilingual education programs, Proposition 227, was challenged by a huge youth march in Concord, Cal., on April 22. High school youth travelled from the Bay Area to not only protest Prop. 227, but also the subordination of educational needs to the criminalization of youth. Concord has a new jail, while Bay Area public schools are deteriorating.

California and Texas have been the vanguard in the campaign against affirmative action, but powerful racist forces in other states are biding their time. Residents of Washington State will weigh in on a ballot initiative to kill affirmative action this November.

This retrogressive trend to slam the doors of higher education in the faces of even the highest-achieving Black youth coincides with a disheartening statistical trend. The *Chicago Reporter* published a story in February of 1996 that stated that while Black males between 20 and 34 years of age take their own lives at a rate less than white males of the same age group, the rate of suicide for young Black men has risen in the last 15 years. In Chicago, Black male youth commit suicides at a rate of 16.7 per 10,000, a higher rate than either whites at 12.9 or Latinos at 9.4. While it is difficult to draw solid conclusions from these figures, it can be said that they reflect a population under an enormous amount of social stress.

The criminalization of an entire generation of poor, Black and Latino youth is perhaps the most salient and repugnant feature of this retrogressive period. State legislatures across the country have debated lowering ages at which children can be tried as adults. The United States senate will debate a piece of legislation sometime this spring which can truly be called draconian. Titled the Violent and Repeat Offender Act of 1997, the bill, which has been passed by the House of Representatives, mandates the jailing of youth in adult facilities. The Children's Defense Fund is lobbying against the bill.

The diverse range of youth activity, with its elements of labor, international and anti-racist solidarity, has enormous potential to develop into a movement which can challenge existing society. The youth movement of 30 years ago, which fired the imaginations of many because of its sheer scale and momentum, did not mature to carry through such a challenge because of its internal contradictions—sexism and hostility to the development of theory among them.

It is of the utmost importance to begin asking tough questions of today's movement at this very moment—when we are not even sure if such a movement exists—to ensure that the lessons of the '60, '70 and '80s to become internal to its activist-theoreticians.

We must ask if anti-sweatshop activity can develop into a challenge to a system in which the human activity of labor can be commodified. We must ask if the activity of those opposing the repressive regimes in Indonesia and Burma can take the ground of a revolutionary solidarity which will not be satisfied with merely bringing those countries into the circle of liberal democracies. And we must ask if anti-police brutality and prison solidarity work in the United States can develop into the deep and profound integrated anti-racist movement which is surely the prerequisite for revolutionary change in North America. In short, we must challenge the movement we may be seeing the beginning of to undertake the task of developing a philosophy of revolution.

Racial Justice Day

New York—The chants "No justice, No peace" and "The people united will never be defeated" opened the Racial Justice Day rally at City Hall on March 31. Close to 400 people offered vociferous support for the event which was sponsored by the Coalition Against Police Brutality. My spirit was buoyed by conversations with several high school contingents and their receptivity to *News & Letters*, as well as their intelligence and passion for "social change and justice," a theme of the day.

Racial Justice Day was established by the National Congress for Puerto Rican Rights in response to the brutal murder of a Dominican college student by a white racist gang in 1991. It is a day of solidarity with the message that police brutality is racist violence.

The coalition's brochure states: "The most frequently brutalized are poor, young, gays, lesbians, transgenders and immigrants. Harassment and murder are more frequently perpetrated on those who fall into more than one category." Giuliani's "quality of life" is deciphered, in the statement, as the destruction of the livelihood of communities of color in order to "preserve the image of a safer and prosperous city for a privileged few."

In stark contrast to the verbalized and written consciousness of a corrupt and rotten society, their direct demands are essentially Band-Aid reformist legislative and legal measures.

—Sheila G.

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DETROIT	OAKLAND
P.O. Box 27205 Detroit MI 48227	P.O. Box 3345 Oakland, CA 94609 510 658 1448
MEETINGS Thursdays, 6 p.m. Central Methodist Church Woodward and Adams	MEETINGS Sundays, 6:30 p.m. 2015 Center St. (at Milvia) Berkeley
LOS ANGELES	MEMPHIS
P.O. Box 29194 Los Angeles, CA 90029 213 960 5607	1725B Madison Ave, #59 Memphis, TN 38104
MEETINGS Sundays, 5:30 p.m. Echo Park United Methodist Church 1226 N. Alvarado (North of Sunset, side door)	FLINT, MI P.O. Box 3384, Flint, MI 48502
INTERNATIONAL MARXIST-HUMANISTS	
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Our Life and Times

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

As the all-party talks on the future of Northern Ireland ended with a tentative agreement on April 10, it appeared that a historic juncture had been reached. For the first time since the 1920s, Irish nationalists had gained some concessions from both the British government and the Protestant Loyalist parties which have dominated the British-ruled enclave of Northern Ireland for more than 70 years.

At the same time, however, the primarily Catholic nationalist parties, including the underground Irish Republican Army (IRA) and its legal political wing, Sinn Fein, have implicitly accepted the idea that a united Ireland is a goal that must be delayed for now, just as it was in the 1920s.

At present, the entire island has a population of some six million, of whom one million, concentrated in Northern Ireland, are Protestant. This minority was

Cambodia's Pol Potism

Pol Pot, who died under questionable circumstances at a Khmer Rouge camp on the Thai border April 15, will never be held accountable for the crimes committed by his genocidal regime. But "Pol Potism," a fundamentalist Maoism, will always be identified with the killing fields in which one million people were tortured, executed, starved, worked to death or succumbed to disease, in the name of forced labor to build a "pure" agrarian society. Although Pol Pot was finally driven from power when Vietnam invaded Cambodia in 1979, different elements of the Khmer Rouge have held power at various times since then.

A week before Pol Pot's death, the Clinton administration announced its willingness to arrange for an international tribunal to prosecute him. By this time, the Khmer Rouge army had largely disintegrated and Pol Pot's co-leaders had turned against him. This gave rise to speculation that Pol Pot's former "comrades" had hastened his death in order to silence him from incriminating them.

Others are complicit in the Cambodian atrocities. Successive U.S. presidents, beginning with the "human rights" advocate Jimmy Carter, either shielded Pol Pot or looked the other way as the U.S. aligned with China/Pol Pot against Russia/Vietnam in the aftermath of the Vietnam War. It is therefore "convenient" for many rulers that Pol Pot died without being put on trial. However, the experience of Pol Potism is stamped indelibly in the minds of the Cambodian people.

Brazil land occupations

Over 4,000 demonstrators from the Landless Rural Workers Movement (MST) took over government offices in Brazil during March, as they moved their occupations from the countryside to the seats of state power. They were demanding that the government of Pres. Fernando Cardoso accelerate distribution of land, and increase the size of loans to individual peasants who need the credit to get started.

Over the last three years, the MST has led over 279 land occupations and, in the face of threats and murders by wealthy landowners, set up organized communities on the land. Many MST participants are unemployed workers driven from urban industrial areas after their jobs were eliminated under "neo-liberal" economic policies. Most are among the 4 million peasants who are demanding the release of 1.1 billion acres of farmland estimated to lie idle in Brazil. Protesters ended the building occupations after the government agreed to begin negotiations.

Irish settlement: new historic juncture?

long favored by the British, who ruled Ireland for 700 years. In 1922, at the time that the Irish people won their independence, Britain kept control of the industrialized and heavily Protestant North, which continued as a British province.

Today, some 60% of Northern Ireland's 1.6 million people remain Protestant. The dominant Protestant parties are extremely reactionary, often expressing open religious bigotry toward Catholics, who suffer very severe

discrimination, comparable to that against Blacks in the U.S. For example, the main police force is virtually 100% Protestant.

Last year's British election, in which the Conservatives, the Loyalists' strongest supporters, were turned out by a landslide, was one factor in getting an agreement through. Another was the changing demography of the province, with Catholics projected as a majority in coming decades. A third factor was the exhaustion of terrorist tactics by the IRA which had not achieved liberation but had alienated mass opinion throughout Ireland. At the same time, however, recent mass mobilizations on the streets as well as election returns have shown a tilting to the Left, toward the Sinn Fein and away from the Catholic Social Democratic and Labor Party.

The April 10 agreement, which must still be ratified by a May 22 referendum in the whole of Ireland, has four main parts: (1) returning Northern Ireland to parliamentary rule, including a promise of proportional representation for the Catholic minority, (2) a ministerial council to deal with issues such as the environment, tourism, and transportation, to be composed of leaders from the whole of Ireland, (3) a council of the Isles to include representatives from the British and Irish parliaments plus the regional parliaments of Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, and (4) a pledge by the Republic of Ireland to give up its territorial claim on the North.

One immediate question, if the agreement is ratified, will be whether the most blatant forms of discrimination against Catholics in the North can be quickly ended. This will undoubtedly require grassroots pressure from below to overcome the resistance which is sure to emerge from the most reactionary Protestant quarters such as the Orange Order. The goal of a united Ireland, which the vast majority of the island's population still supports, will surely require many more years of struggle, including the winning over of at least a sector of the Protestant working class.

French ferment continues

The period of unrest in France that started with the 1995 mass strikes still continues. Several times this spring, high school students from Seine-Saint-Denis, a working class Paris suburb, have demonstrated, thousands strong, against the lack of funds for education.

The March 15 regional elections also illustrated the deep discontent of some sectors of the population, with nearly a million votes going to Trotskyists and other openly revolutionary and anti-Stalinist parties. At the



Seine-Saint-Denis students protest.

same time, however, the neo-fascist National Front (FN) received over 3 million votes, some 15.5% of the total, while traditional conservatives received 36%, slightly less than the Socialist-Communist-Ecologist alliance.

So far, despite a shared racism—as seen in conservative President Jacques Chirac's statement a few years ago that the "odor and noise" of immigrants bothered him—Chirac's Gaullist party has refused to go along with efforts by some local conservatives to gain power by allying with the FN. A conservative-FN alliance remains a danger for the future.

Together with the labor unions and the Left, the anti-racist movement has held a series of large anti-FN demonstrations. They continued, without success, to pressure the Socialist-Communist-Ecologist government to legalize thousands of immigrants living for years in France.

Other moves against racism, anti-Semitism, and fascism have come in the courts. Maurice Papon, who sent many Jews to their deaths while working in the pro-Nazi Vichy regime and who later covered up his past and became a high Gaullist official, was convicted of crimes against humanity. Also, FN leader Jean-Marie Le Pen was deprived of the right to hold political office for two years for assaulting a leftist opponent outside one of his rallies. Finally, the former Communist philosopher Roger Garaudy, who now flirts with fascism in writings denying the Holocaust, was fined \$20,000 for those writings under France's anti-racist laws.

China: exile of Wang Dan

Wang Dan, a 29-year-old former student leader who has already served seven years in prison, was released and exiled to the U.S., paving the way for Clinton's June visit to China. Wang, one of the most prominent and courageous leaders of the 1989 democracy movement, was first arrested in the summer of 1989. Upon his release in 1993, he refused exile and continued to press publicly for democratization of the single-party state. For his 1993-95 writings, he was sentenced to another 11 years.

In recent months, the post-Deng Xiaoping leadership has attempted to clean up its image abroad without changing anything fundamental by (1) moving more slowly than anticipated in strangling all free expression in Hong Kong, and (2) exiling prominent imprisoned dissidents, Wei Jingsheng last fall and now Wang Dan.

At the same time, the state-capitalist regime quietly holds hundreds of thousands of political prisoners in the most inhuman conditions. Among them is labor activist Liu Nianchung. Recently, the prominent activist Xu Wenli, whose activity dates to the 1980 Democracy Wall Movement, was arrested once again.

Zhu Rongli, the new Prime Minister, says he will modernize China. He is committed to painful economic restructuring, however, and plans to end subsidized housing for workers and to close state enterprises, throwing millions onto the streets. It is surely no accident that Xu Wenli's most recent arrest came after he attacked government treatment of laid-off workers and called for the legalization of independent unions.

NEWS AND LETTERS COMMITTEES

Who We Are And What We Stand For

News and Letters Committees is an organization of Marxist-Humanists that since its birth has stood for the abolition of capitalism, both in its private property form as in the U.S., and its state property form, as it has historically appeared in state-capitalist regimes calling themselves Communist as in Russia and China. We stand for the development of new human relations, what Marx first called a new Humanism.

News & Letters was founded in 1955, the year of the Detroit wildcat strikes against Automation and the Montgomery Bus Boycott against segregation—activities which signaled a new movement from practice that was itself a form of theory. News & Letters was created so that the voices of revolt from below could be heard unseparated from the articulation of a philosophy of liberation.

Raya Dunayevskaya (1910-1987), founder of the body of ideas of Marxist-Humanism, became Chairwoman of the

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

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

what is, but to reveal and further develop the revolutionary Humanist future inherent in the present. The new visions of the future which Dunayevskaya left us in her work from the 1940s to the 1980s are rooted in her discovery of Marx's Marxism in its original form as a new Humanism and in her re-creation of that philosophy for our age as Marxist-Humanism. This is recorded in the documents on microfilm and open to all under the title *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection—Marxist-Humanism: A Half-Century of Its World Development*.

Dunayevskaya's philosophic comprehension of her creation and development of Marxist-Humanism, especially as expressed in her 1980s writings, presents the vantage point for re-creating her ideas anew. Seeking to grasp that vantage point for ourselves and make it available to all who struggle for freedom, we have published Dunayevskaya's original 1953 philosophic breakthrough and her final 1987

Presentation on the Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy in *The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism* (1989), and donated new supplementary volumes to the *Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*. News and Letters Committees aims at developing and concretizing this body of ideas for our time.

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