

NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

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Workers face state-capitalism



Editor's note: The following column is excerpted from a presentation on a forthcoming collection of writings by Raya Dunayevskaya on the Marxist-Humanist theory of state-capitalism. (See ad on page 2.)

by Gene Ford

As a Black worker, I think there is a need to show the objectivity of Raya Dunayevskaya's state-capitalist theory as unseparated from the everyday struggle of working people for a decent wage, health benefits and a roof overhead, for daily survival. Future employment is not promised under capitalism beyond slave-labor working conditions, poverty wages, homelessness and starvation.

With the Department of Labor rate of unemployment at 7% nationwide and 23,600,000 people on food stamps, capitalism itself has run out in some ways. We know the state will take its economic shortcomings out on the backs of labor, take us back to the whipping post of slavery. Our slavemasters are reaching for an economic dictatorship, where "big" businessmen determine the "laws" of the land, while they separate economics from the human being.

STRIKE AS WEAPON AGAINST LABOR

That is reflected in how the labor unions' "greatest" weapon, the strike, has been attacked on all fronts by judges, lawyers, and state bureaucrats and politicians. If they haven't made it illegal to strike by enforcing court injunctions, they have fired striking workers, who should have a right as the majority within society, who built society, to determine their own future. The companies and the state, beginning with Reagan, have used the strike, as with PATCO, as a weapon against labor to

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Black World

ANC at the crossroads



by Lou Turner

We have seen that inside the nationalist parties, the will to break with colonialism is linked with another quite different will: that of coming to friendly agreement with it. Within these parties, the two processes will sometimes continue side by side. —Frantz Fanon

The political situation in South Africa moved into a new phase at the end of 1991 with the convening of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa, or Codesa (Dec. 20-21), while the crisis on the ground remains unchanged. The conference of 19 political parties and groupings, including the National Party government of F.W. de Klerk, the ANC and Gatsha Buthelezi's reactionary Inkatha, met to talk about future talks for a new South Africa constitution.

CRISIS OF BLACK POWER

Despite ANC president Nelson Mandela's declaration that the ANC is "not prepared to be coopted into the existing structure of government," that is precisely the process now underway. The ANC has already entered into various interim arrangements with the de Klerk government on different fronts, including Mandela's public support of the de Klerk regime against the electoral onslaught of the rival far right Conservative Party in recent by-elections. (See also the November, 1991 News & Letters lead article, "Southern Africa in the crucible of western-backed barbarism.")

The most alarming cooptation of the ANC was disclosed at the end of 1991 when it was reported that a conference on regional security is expected to take place which would include officers of the ANC's Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) army, "homeland" military commands, NATO, the Namibian government and a delegation from the notorious South African Defense Force!

Not surprisingly, the New York Times's Christopher Wren eagerly dubbed Codesa the historic beginning of Black political power in South Africa, claiming that "Until now, the country's Black majority has been excluded from political decisions" (NYT, Dec. 21, 1991). While the gullible Wren may have fallen for de Klerk's latest maneuver to hold on to power, which included his lashing out at the ANC for not dissolving its inactive

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The one-worldedness of the crisis

Does the collapse of the USSR reveal to the U.S. its own future?



Waiting for bread in Moscow

by Olga Domanski

The ramifications of the USSR's disintegration encircle the entire globe. That the world has reached a phenomenal new historic point with the long overdue collapse of that state-capitalist tyranny that called itself Communism, there is no question. The question is why are the U.S. rulers not dancing in the streets (as some pundits have put it)? Far less is there any kind of dancing by the American people at this moment when the economic morass in the West is deeper than at any time since the Depression. The one-worldedness of the crisis has never been clearer. What seems demanded, then, is a close examination of the USSR's disintegration for what it may reveal not only about that pole, but about ourselves.

COLLAPSE—AND FRAGMENTATION

What has happened since the sudden, swift, final collapse was precipitated by the overwhelming 90% vote of the long-suppressed Ukrainian people for independence? It was that vote that convinced Boris Yeltsin—who had been impelled only last August to save Mikhail Gorba-

chev and the "Soviet" Union, in the interests of his own "Great Russian chauvinism"—that he now had to go a different route. It took only a week to declare the USSR dead, a Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) born, and Russia the "rightful successor" to the now-dead central government, as Yeltsin took over all ministries and institutions of the old regime, including first and foremost the KGB.

How short-lived the CIS may be was evident from the continuously escalating fragmentation both between and within the 12 republics that followed immediately:

● In the Slavic republics, the long and deep rivalry between Russia and Ukraine took its sharpest form in the battle over who will control the substantial Baltic fleet—with Ukraine's President Kravchuk ordering the entire fleet as well as all ground forces on its soil to take an oath of loyalty to Ukraine while Yeltsin insisted the full Navy remain under Russian command as "rightful successor" to a central government. Other republics announced they might follow Ukraine's example.

● At the same time there was great anger that Yeltsin's insistence on immediate price increases for Russia was forcing all the other republics to follow suit and risk an explosive situation. Less than a week after prices were lifted came the first angry demonstrations in Russia. By the following week the protests had spread throughout the republics. In Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, six university students were killed and more than 100 wounded in the protests over prices.

● And everywhere, there is seething nationalism and pent-up resentment against the "second class" status that had been imposed on them by the rulers of the former USSR—including in the many nationalities within the Russian republic who are 18% of the population.

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On the Inside

Living in the U.S. 1992

Welfare, unemployment, minimum wages

On welfare and angry

Los Angeles, Cal.—I am a mother on welfare with three children, and one of my children is severely emotionally disturbed. As things stand now, the state of California is not even in compliance with the law when it comes to some of the required services and program policies for emotionally disturbed children.

This is very, very urgent: children are not being treated appropriately, but then after they reach a certain age, the laws don't apply. The youth are just left floundering, and they become the next generation of homeless mentally ill, or recidivist criminals.

Now Governor Wilson is proposing a budget with a 25% cut in welfare benefits—an immediate 10% cut and then a further 15% cut for "able-bodied recipients." If those cuts don't go through the legislature, he plans to put an initiative on the November ballot. His plan is "divide and conquer": he is pitting the welfare budget against the budget for schools.

I have a friend with two children. Her monthly grant is \$663 a month plus food stamps. She was recently looking for an apartment, for no more than \$500/month—and even that would leave her only \$163/month for gas, phone, electric, transportation, clothes and all non-food items for the family. But no one would rent a one-bedroom to a mother with two children and, in Los Angeles, rents are so high that you just can't get a two-bedroom for \$500, even in the worst neighborhoods.

In fact, when you're on welfare, no one wants to rent to you at all. They assume you're out to defraud them; they think that when you get your check each

month you immediately go to the racetrack, the bars, the drug dealer—every type of vice. But that is so ridiculous.

With the proposed cuts, the total grant for a woman with two children would be \$500! Wilson's spokeswoman said that the idea behind the cuts is that people will seek and find work as the benefits go down. But where are the jobs? Thousands of people are being laid off each week in this state! With such reduced benefits there is no money even for bus fare. You become more and more isolated. You spend each moment struggling to survive.

A lot of women are going to end up homeless, out on the street with their kids. I guess that will make Wilson happy: at least they won't be on welfare any more.

—Angry woman of color on welfare

Almost homeless and mad

Chicago, Ill.—Recently I moved here and became part of Chicago's unemployed. Trying to get Public Aid was just as dehumanizing as trying to find a job and both are pretty much impossible today. My caseworker told me right from the start that I'm in a no-win situation because if I qualify for cash assistance (\$165/month for any one who is single), then I'm not allowed to pay my rent which is \$350/month. The reason is if my rent exceeds the cash I would be eligible for, and if I pay it, "it is considered income which must be accounted for" even if I borrow it, in which case I'm not considered "needy" and the cash assistance would be terminated.

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Welfare means war against women

by Terry Moon

As the recession deepens with no end in sight and thousands more people are thrown onto the welfare roles, what is deepening is the brutal, punitive and almost Nazi-like mentality towards people—especially women—on welfare. Governments want to implement laws from directly controlling women's fertility to forced labor. From our right to control our own bodies to the freedom to walk the streets and to choose with whom we wish to live, our most basic human rights are under escalating attack.

While governors, crazed by cash shortages, see welfare moms, their children and those on general assistance as a popular target to make up their shortfalls, inflation alone has made life unbearable for those on "aid."

In Illinois the purchasing power of the average Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) grant is less than half of what it was in 1970; and, while the state of Illinois says that a family of three needs \$777 a month for only the barest necessities, the maximum AFDC grant is \$645, including food stamps. Yet Illinois Governor Jim Edgar now proposes cutting \$57 million from Public Aid.

WELFARE FAMILIES ATTACKED

But lack of funds alone does not explain the controlling attitude and inhuman experimentation being done on welfare families:

● Norplant, a new contraceptive for women that is implanted in the upper arm and is effective for seven years, was immediately seen by many as a way to control the fertility of poor women. Ku Klux Klanner David Duke, calling his Nazi idea "tough love," proposed paying off mothers on welfare if they use Norplant. Nor is he alone: politicians in Kansas and California want to use Norplant to control poor women's fertility.

● In New Jersey the Senate just approved cutting off additional benefits to welfare mothers who dare to have more children and to eliminate payments to those who fail to train for non-existent jobs or go to school. Governor Tommy Thompson made an end run around the Wisconsin legislature to impose his plan of forcing teenage mothers to marry and to penalize them if they have more children. California's Governor Wilson plans to let the voters be responsible for the carnage done to those on welfare by letting them vote on his proposal to cut AFDC grants. (See "Black/Red View" p. 5.)

● Trying to follow Governor Engler of Michigan who brutally cut off all General Assistance aid, Illinois Governor Edgar only pays nine months of General Assistance benefits and will cut that to six months in July, assuring a huge leap in homelessness, despair and death.

Clearly those who run this country are out of control as they take advantage of the U.S.'s blighted economy to implement their twisted notions of how poor people should act, of what they should be. What Engler has done in Michigan, what Wilson and Edgar want to do in California and Illinois will mean people will die. Oh, their bodies may not pile up in the streets, but they will die nevertheless. Edgar doesn't care. After all, he made a campaign promise not to raise taxes. If poor people become

homeless, children suffer malnutrition and some people die so he can be re-elected—so be it.

What is terrifying is that this really is still only the tip of the iceberg. Wyoming's legislature actually made a proposal to pay a woman's childbirth expenses if she would put her baby up for adoption; this is the country that jails pregnant women addicted to drugs while it denies them places in drug rehabilitation centers; this is the country that wants to penalize poor women if they have children but has just denied them the right to learn that abortion is—for now—a legal option.

BUSH BLAMES THE POOR—AGAIN!

Precisely because the economic reality spells out depression, unemployment and poverty, Bush's ideological offensive goes into high gear. Bush wants us to think that it is not this inhuman capitalist system that grows more decrepit by the minute, that throws thousands out of work—and literally into the streets—that is at fault. No, we are to blame those on welfare—mostly women and children and the disabled. We are to view them as less than human, as lazy, as promiscuous, as women who express their greed by having children, who cheat and lie and would do anything to keep from taking one of those great living wage jobs that are just out there waiting for them.

What all of them discount—don't even see—is that these human beings, who politicians from California to New Jersey want to manipulate and experiment on, not only speak elegantly for themselves, but have a passion, anger and Reason to rip this rotten society up by its roots. One such woman tells her story on page one. She signed her article: "Angry woman of color on welfare."



Women-Worldwide

by Mary Jo Grey

On Jan. 22, the anniversary of the Supreme Court decision legalizing women's right to abortion, *Roe vs. Wade*, over 450 women and men held a high spirited march through downtown Chicago, Ill. Despite a cold pouring rain and fears that *Roe vs. Wade* may be overturned by the reactionary Supreme Court, the spirit that pervaded the demonstration was: we can make a difference and "We will not go back!"

More than 100 Korean "comfort girls" (many in their 70s) and their survivors demonstrated, Jan. 14, against Japanese Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa's visit to Seoul. After 50 years, the Japanese government has finally admitted that its army forced tens of thousands of Korean women into brothels during World War II. Now, if Japan would only do something to stop their ongoing sex tours to Korea.

The problems Polish women confront were heightened when Poland's Congress of Physicians voted in December to strip medical licenses from doctors who perform abortions, except to save a woman's life or in cases of pregnancy from rape. They also pledged to lobby to end the country's 35-year-old law legalizing abortion.

Close bogus clinics!

Los Angeles, Cal.—On Saturday, Jan. 11, pro-choice activists from a variety of organizations including the National Organization for Women (NOW) and WHAM! (Women's Health Action and Mobilization) began a campaign aimed at educating the public about right-wing anti-abortion bogus "clinics" in our communities. These "clinics" parade as "pregnancy counseling centers," but give women nothing but a pregnancy test from an over the counter kit and an anti-abortion brain-washing session.

I participated in a lively protest at a bogus clinic in San Bernardino. Thirty women and men, carrying signs saying "Fraud Busters" and "Stop Telling Lies," loudly called attention to the false advertising and non-medical status of this operation. The perpetrators of this psychic violence could not directly deny our charges and had to admit to the press that they are affiliated only with the "Right-to-Life League" and not with any medical associations.

Other feminists are working on changing the Yellow Page listings and advertising guidelines in various communities. While I do have some trouble with the strategic adoption of a narrow focus on "consumer advocacy" and "truth in advertising," I still feel that this represents a proactive change in the tenor of the reproductive rights movement in Southern California.

—Jennifer

Living in the U.S.

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To qualify for this one-time cash assistance I was required to apply for unemployment compensation even though I knew I was not qualified since I left my job "voluntarily." I had to waste my time in a long line for four hours just to be rejected, but I didn't "know" that I was rejected for a month. Once the Public Aid office found that out, it took them more than ten days to issue me the measly check.

By this time I had gotten a temporary job and made more than \$165 so I was not allowed to get the money. The whole thing was a total waste of time and just a way for the government to abuse and dehumanize me. Five days after I was rejected I got a memo from Public Aid saying, "You are a mandatory Project Chance registrant. You must attend orientation and job search appointments to remain eligible...Failure to attend without good cause may result in reduction or cancellation of your assistance...An assessment to determine what program activity you can benefit from will be made."

Who says there is no government-enforced labor or ideological indoctrination under Western-style capitalism!

—Young, female and fed-up

Austin, Texas

Linen workers protest

Editor's note: Since September 1991, National Linen Service workers in Austin, Texas, most of whom are Chicanas, have been coming out of the plant on their half-hour lunch time, marching and chanting, "We want justice!" They are protesting the company's plan to either fire them or force them to relocate to another plant, losing all their seniority and starting at minimum wage. With their self-organization they have gathered widespread community support. Below we print excerpts of an interview with several of the women workers.

M: We're out here picketing because we want to keep our same positions and money at the new plant. They wanted to take us at minimum wage and now the workers voted in the union at the new plant. They haven't told us whether they are going to take us or not. As far as we know, we'll be out of a job.

I don't think what they are doing is fair. There are people who have been working here 15, 20 years. I've only been here five or six years but I'm a single parent.

L: I'm saddened by this situation because I have to help my husband with the bills. I'm sure there's a lot of single parents working here.

It hurts us. We have feelings and we're feeling from our hearts. They told us that it was us that made the money for them so they could buy the other plant and now they tell us that's not true. That's hurting us because we work hard. Every day, Monday through Friday, we're here from 8:00 to 4:30 doing our jobs and doing the best we can.

R: In the early part of the year we had a meeting and Mr. Reinhart and Mr. Golden said we were going over to the new plant. In September they posted a letter on the board, without telling us, that said all of us were going to be terminated. The letter said they hoped it wouldn't affect our families. Which it is. How are we going to support the kids, with Christmas and people trying to buy houses and everything?

Working conditions could improve a lot. They are putting a lot on the head seamstress, tripling the work they do in the back. The company is angry because we got people to help us, like the county commissioner, Governor Ann Richards and the water commissioner—everybody's helping.

We've come out every day, in the rain, even when it's cold. Sometimes the manager gets mad and he asks, when is this all going to stop. It's not going to stop until they tell us they are going to take us all—with all our benefits—and not start at minimum wage. We'll be out here every day until we get what we need.

The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism — Selected Writings by Raya Dunayevskaya

a major new collection—off the press in March 1992

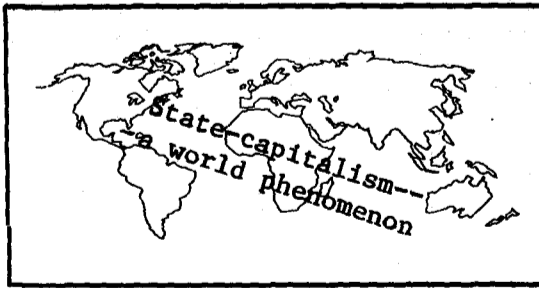
This new collection of Raya Dunayevskaya's writings spans over 40 years—from the early 1940s to the 1980s. It contains 16 documents culled from those years—many never published before. Because of the importance of grasping the meaning of the collapse of what called itself Communism in Russia and East Europe, we have issued this collection of writings on the 50th anniversary of Raya Dunayevskaya's unique theory of state-capitalism.

"The hardest thing for an intellectual to see [is] that...not a single step ahead can be taken out of the chaos and the Plan, the privacy of monopoly and the community of state power, economic crises and world wars—not a single step out of these calamities can be taken until that one thing, the mode of labor, is changed... An absolutely new form of labor would have to arise."

—From "Presentation on Form and Plan" (1950)

"Because state-capitalism is not just a Russian but a world phenomenon, it gave capitalism a new lease on life. While the first appearance of state-capitalism was via counter-revolution, transforming the workers' state into a state-capitalist society, the objective pull from world production and the world market imposed itself on the new national revolutions in the post-World War II era, as they remained in a statist framework. That absolute contradiction remains to plague us."

—From "Not by Practice Alone:
The Movement from Theory" (1984)



Includes:

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GM Xmas bonus: plant closings, lay-offs

Los Angeles, Cal.—"Generous Motors" announced on Dec. 18 it will close 21 plants for good and eliminate 74,000 jobs by 1995. The number of mental and manual workers will be cut in half compared with those who were working in 1985.

This cutback does not include jobs at the top, or cuts in their fat salaries. What got me was these top bloodsuckers did not name the plants they will close. They held this final decision until February. This was their Christmas bonus for the thousands of families. These thieves know what they are doing: pitting worker against worker, community against community and the U.S. against Canada. —GM retiree

Oklahoma City, Okla.—Since Labor Day, GM had scheduled two Saturdays of overtime per month and almost nine hours production per shift. Then came the bombshells from GM, and they went from all this overtime to cancelling overtime for December and reopening the plant a week late after the holidays.

We have even heard talk about brand new plants, including the Poletown Cadillac plant in Detroit, as possibilities for closing. Many workers came down here from Leeds in Missouri and bought houses. Now everything is up in the air. So many others came here after other plant closings. One guy has worked in six plants in four different states and hardly has ten years seniority.

Even if this plant stays open, there will be more cuts. Out of 600 total in the body shop, 100 workers on days and 100 on nights would be out.

Since 1972, when the UAW refused to support wildcats and even broke up picket lines, there is something missing from every new contract. Since the last contract you have to come up with more than "personal business" to take off for personal business. The company then can threaten with putting you on report, suspension and firing for time off. The union's idea of job security is "producing a quality product."

We might lose up to 100 white shirts in the plant. They get more agreements with the union to tighten up on workers, they don't need some of the company supervisors. —GM worker



Pension funds stolen

Los Angeles, Cal.—I am worried about the workers' pension funds. It was in the Los Angeles Times recently how Robert Maxwell stole half a billion dollars of his workers' pension funds. Of course our Republican Governor Pete Wilson made Maxwell look like a piker. Wilson took or stole \$1.9 billion from the pension funds of the state employees to try to balance the California state budget. The money Wilson stole belongs to the employees. It came from their earnings, just like the General Motors workers' pension. I have been told our GM pension fund is safe. The steelworkers and millions of other workers thought their pension funds were safe. They are in the hands of capitalist thieves. Nothing is safe from them.

Lynn Martin, Secretary of Labor, recently announced that "a number of large [pension fund] plans, steel, auto and airline industries are underfunded," and that during the year 1990 "employers terminated 11,800 pension plans." During the 1980s of Reagan and Bush more than \$22 billion of workers' pension funds were stolen by the capitalists. When investments were yielding high returns, these damned rascals would declare that the pension plan is "overfunded" and take the workers' money out, and use the money to buy out their competitors or invest overseas. This is legal!

They steal workers' production through the system of capitalist production, so I guess they think stealing pension funds is legal also. Large pension funds also attract other greedy rogues who swoop down and buy the company or corporation, then drain the pension fund for themselves, by shutting the firm down and reopening it later without a pension plan. This stealing is legal also! Another way for the capitalist to steal is to declare that the plan now only covers full-time permanent workers, and from then on all workers but his son-in-law are part-time workers. More than 40 million workers in this country are now part-time. They can't be sure of a full week's work and never a retirement fund.

Karl Marx was right on target when he saw that even making workers work 24 hours a day and live on air couldn't keep capitalism developing and growing. Marx also predicted that the failure to reproduce labor means the death of their whole system. It's high time to come up with a system that can produce necessities for people instead of needs for an industrial-military complex and an army of bureaucratic parasites who live off our sweat and misery. —Felix Martin

What is a casual?

New York, N.Y.—What is the lot of a casual in unionized freight trucking? To be used up and discarded at will. To be a member of the union, pay \$500 for your book or you can't work, pay monthly dues, but have no protection.

"Many are called but few are chosen," as the Bible says. I have seen so many drivers and dockmen pass through here. Very, very few ever make the "seniority list" (permanent employee). They work a few days here and there, or months steady, a year, then you don't see them. "That guy? He complained too much." The other? He was in the opposition in the local union; the union told the dispatcher not to use him.

Casuals work hard, do their best. They back trailers into narrow docks on narrow side streets with cars double-parked all over. How you get the freight off is your problem. The company doesn't supply you with a pallet jack, hand truck, dolly or leadbar. What they call an accident is any scratch, dent, or trouble of any kind. A chargeable accident is cause for immediate dismissal.

I saw this guy, his company shut down and he had to start all over again—at 85% pay. There are a lot like him out there, and any one of us might be there again, with the climate in unionized trucking. So he busted his backside for six or eight months, trying to make the list. He finally got on, so he's on his 30-day probation (yes, after eight months or however long as a casual, you start your probation and your 18 months to get to full pay). Well, he got fired. Backing up, a guy guiding him didn't watch the top of his trailer, he cracked a board in his back door. That's all—\$20 worth of damage to his own trailer. Chargeable accident, you're out. Eight months down the drain.

Every day you work as a casual is your first day. And could be your last. I've seen guys work through their lunch hour and breaks—for free. The union says they cannot be made to do that. But the dispatcher doesn't need to give you work tomorrow either, and if he asks you to do him a favor, get that hot pickup before they close...well, what would you do? Maybe tomorrow you'll have a small accident; maybe they'll do you a favor and overlook it if you bust your butt today...maybe. Nothing is sure.

This is what "casual abuse" means. This is one of the things Ron Carey said he would address. Now that he's the Teamsters union head, can we start to do something about this abuse? —John Marcotte

Arco: 'PIC' pitched

Carson Cal.—Members of the ARCO unit of Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 1-128 scored a victory in December against management and the Local bureaucracy. Back in October we voted to get out of the company's Partners in Change (PIC) committee (a "team concept"). Our International Reps and the Local President ruled our vote out of order, (see November 1991 News & Letters).

By November they had agreed that if we had a day-long secret ballot like that used for elections and contract votes it would be a legal vote.

A week before the vote, PIC finally did something publicly—they administered a survey of workers' attitudes towards the company. They were surprised when they found that many, as many as 15-20%, refused to even accept a copy of the survey. From what other workers who filled it out said they wrote down I doubt we'll ever hear the results.

Some of the union members in PIC (including the Local President) put out a flyer saying the opponents of PIC were "liars" and just upset they didn't get a spot on the committee. To tell us what PIC had accomplished they wrote that it took "six months just to trust each other as individuals." Six months. That's all? As one worker said, "I've been here 22 years and I wouldn't trust management in 60 years." Even foremen were going around trying to influence a union vote.

The day of the vote, discussion in the plant turned to the auto workers' experience. The fact that "team concept" and "quality circles" effectively busted the union while leaving it intact affected people a lot. They didn't want that, so on Dec. 6 it was 61% to get out of PIC.

Our victory, as important as it is, is only a start. We still have to fight for wage parity with other local refineries (as much as \$3 more an hour). Any grievance of substance has to go to arbitration. Just this past month traces of arsenic and lead were found in the drinking water system. And the bosses are constantly attacking our working conditions—as one worker put it, "If this place ever closes down, management won't have any trouble finding jobs. They need lots of wardens for the jails." —Member, OCAW Local 1-128

Workshop Talks

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break organized labor. In a sense they have attempted to turn the strike into its opposite.

How can the state and the companies, working hand in hand, just void the basic rights of a human being to a decent wage, health care and a livelihood? They have robbed us of that which is most valuable, the heart of all wealth, human labor. Bourgeois democracy, we can see, has its limits and is not enough.

The strike, to me, represents the worker's democratic right to withhold his/her labor by peaceful or nonpeaceful means to determine his/her future. The heart of the strike lies in the need—no, the demand—of labor to control production and take over the factories, which, of course, the state will never allow lawfully or peacefully.

As a weapon of labor, the strike cannot be seen as a stagnant tactic, void of philosophy. That void has left the labor unions bureaucratic, defenseless pawns in the companies' hands, and made workers the victims of the labor union attitude of compromise with the companies.

The unique theory of state-capitalism projected by Raya Dunayevskaya did not stand still—a constant development took place over 50 years—it grew out of her economic analysis of Russia in the 1940s. The most indicting voice against state-capitalism calling itself Communism was the laborer, but who was listening? Who could hear his/her voice without philosophy?

What distinguishes Raya Dunayevskaya's theory of state-capitalism from all others is its roots in the Marxism of Marx, Marx's "new humanism," the only alternative to this state-capitalist age we live in. Her concept of Marxist economics is unseparated from its philosophic root. Philosophy illuminates economic reality and goes unseparated from Raya Dunayevskaya's characterization of the 1974-75 recession as "no more economic booms" here in the U.S. and worldwide.

Central to Dunayevskaya's theory of state-capitalism is the concept of the human subject, the laborer, and Marx's vision of a society of freely associated labor. Her analysis of state-capitalism must go unseparated from "Human power is its own end," a true movement of self that calls for a New Humanism. That's why Dunayevskaya's Absolute Method, reflected in her state-capitalist theory of the 1980s, goes unseparated from the Absolute for our age, Marxist-Humanism.

Oddly enough, what attracted me to Marxist-Humanism in 1978-79 were those abstract philosophical concepts of "being," "other," "self," "movement of self." Hegel and Fanon led me on a path to Marx and Raya Dunayevskaya, because it was a new language and I wanted to understand it and help to develop it. We must continue to feel excitement about working out these ideas of freedom. That need goes unseparated from our work on the labor movement, women's struggles, the Black dimension as an ongoing movement or youth as the continuator of historic reason...the future.

Electronic surveillance

New York, N.Y.—About 40% of New York-area companies use electronic surveillance techniques to spy on their workers in order to increase productivity, according to a 1990 study. If this rate of spying exists elsewhere in the U.S., far more workers are subjected to it than the six million estimated by Congress in the mid-1980s.

In addition to electronic surveillance being "degrading," "demoralizing" and "hard on the nerves," as workers' complaints gathered by the 9 to 5 National Association of Working Women show, it also produces physical ailments, like headaches, back pain, exhaustion, soreness in wrists and shoulders and extreme anxiety.

Such attempts to increase productivity are, however, only a temporary way station in many industries, where human telephone agents are already being replaced by "automated attendants" that the caller activates by pushing buttons on the phone. Fortune magazine calls this "the hottest trend in telecommunications." —A. Anielewicz

News & Letters

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From the writings of Raya Dunayevskaya Marxist-Humanist Archives

by Raya Dunayevskaya
Founder of Marxist-Humanism

*Editor's note: On the occasion of Black History Month, we publish excerpts of Raya Dunayevskaya's speech to the "Black/Red Conference," held in Detroit, Michigan, on Jan. 12, 1969. Coming in the midst of her work on **Philosophy and Revolution: from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao**, the discussions that followed her presentation proved of crucial importance in her development of this book. The full text of the speech, plus excerpts from the discussion and her *Summation*, is available for \$1 as a pamphlet from News and Letters Committees, reissued at Dunayevskaya's request in August, 1986. See also *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, Vol. VII, microfilm #4438.*

Besides labor and thought, we have some colors that are not accidental which we should talk about today: black and red. Black and red stand for the actual movement of society.

Let's start in 1831, Nat Turner's Revolt. That was the same year some whites in New England started a paper called the *Liberator*, stimulated by the movement of the slaves in the South. The coalescence of these two forces led finally to the Civil War. But that's not why I'm choosing 1831 for today's discussion. I'm choosing it for Nat Turner's Revolt—he tried to be free and he was hanged for it—and I'm choosing it because that was the year that a man named Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel died. He was a German philosopher who dealt only with thought in ivory towers, yet what Nat Turner did and thought is related to Hegel, though they were of course quite unknown to each other....

Now there was another revolt that took place at the same time [as Nat Turner's], and the white rulers were sure that there had been a conspiracy. Turner denied it: "I see, sir, you doubt my word. But cannot you think the same idea which prompted me might prompt others as well as myself to this undertaking?" Here is a supposedly unintelligent man, and he recognizes that as great as is his own struggle for freedom, it is impossible that he, though he heard the voices from heaven, thought of it alone. He is absolutely sure that the Spirit, meaning the objective movement for freedom, and the people fighting for freedom are the same thing.

How these two movements—objective and subjective, idea of freedom and people fighting for freedom—function together, is what we are going to be learning today. It is called *dialectics*. We will see how they come to jam up against each other, and coalesce or not coalesce, depending on whether you win or lose. If we can find out what it was when the Greeks established it, and what it was when Hegel established it, and what it is with Marx—we will know all there is to know about philosophy.

Dialectics originally meant "dialect" or talking—and the Greeks had a very high opinion of it if it was the philosophers who were doing the talking. They had the first democracy for the citizens, but not for the slave laborers. The idea was that if you, the philosopher, talked to someone, and he had an idea that opposed yours, and you then contemplated, you would finally come up with an idea that was totally different than either one originally was. It is true that you get some movement that way, but because the talk that went on was the talk of only intellectuals, it was contemplation alone or the viewing of things, not the doing of anything.

What was different about it when Hegel got to re-establish it for our age? We had moved from 500 B.C., when there was a slave society, to 1789 when there was a French Revolution, the greatest revolution that had ever happened. And the people, the *sans-culottes*, the *enrages*, the indignant hearts—they had something to say about things. They were saying they were glad they got rid of Louis XVI, but what did they get with the overthrow of the monarchy? Why was there still a distinction between "passive citizens" and "active citizens"—especially when the so-called "passive citizens" were the ones who were doing all the work? They wanted to know why they all shouldn't be able to discuss things.

THIS FRENCH REVOLUTION was such a challenge to the people in the ivory towers, like Hegel, that he couldn't help reflecting it. So that when he began to talk about dialectic, it didn't mean only thoughts bumping up against each other, it meant action. It meant development through contradiction, the development of ideas, and of actual history, and of the class struggle. It was this development that is of the essence.

Nevertheless, since Hegel did restrict himself to ideas, even though his philosophy reflected actual history, something more was needed. When Nat Turner led his rebellion and Hegel died in 1831, Marx was 13 years old. He didn't know anything about either one of them. But 13 years later, in 1844, he created the greatest philosophy of freedom, humanism. He built it on the dialectic. But he said ideas don't float in air. There are people who have ideas. Marx included man himself, men who think, who struggle for freedom, who try to unite the idea of freedom with the actual struggle for freedom. He refused to bow either to capitalism or to communism. He said that in place of either the profit motive of capitalism, or the collective form of property of communism, the important thing was the **self-development of man**. In creating this philosophy, he heard about and col-

laborated with the Abolitionists, Black and white, in this country who were struggling against slavery. Some so-called Marxists said, well, of course, they were against slavery—but the slaves just wanted the freedom to be exploited by the capitalist. They thought they were much wiser because they wanted freedom from the capitalists, too. Marx showed them that they were crazy because freedom and thinking are always concrete. In the actual dialectic of liberation—that is, in the actual relation of thought to act, in the actual development—you have to arouse and elicit from the population many, many forces. The greatest force is labor, but there are others, such as the youth, and in America the greatest of these other forces is the Black masses. Marx told the whites who thought they were superior because they were free: Look at you, you don't even have a national labor union—and you can't organize one because labor in the white skin cannot be free while labor in the Black skin is branded. This wasn't only "dialectics" or "philosophy." This was the way it was. We finally had the Civil War in the U.S., and the first national labor union came after that.

It was by establishing labor as the center, and the unity of thought and practice as necessary, and by jamming up all these new ideas into a new philosophy of liberation that Marx was able to establish the First Workingmen's International.

Okay. Now let's get down to writing our new book, **Philosophy and Revolution**. To do that, there are two more dates, this time in the 20th century, that we have to consider before we get to the 1960s and the "Eco-



Black and white UAW workers walk out of G.M. plant to begin strike in 1946.

omic Reality and Dialectics of Liberation" we came to discuss. One of those dates is 1920; the other is 1936.

FIRST, 1920. Remember, please, that past history is also present history. All history is contemporary, because we always see past history with the eyes of today. It is important to remember that because today it is so hard to get communication started between Black and red. The Blacks who don't want to talk to the white imperialists wind up not talking to any whites. And the tragedy is that it inhibits their struggle, not the other way around—because you have to have the majority of the people to win.

Harold Cruse has just published a book called **Crisis of the Negro Intellectual**. He thinks the trouble is that the Blacks don't remember their history, the real history of the 1920s when we had the beginnings of the nationalist movement with Marcus Garvey and what was then called the "new Negro." He feels if they remembered their history, they would have their real rights. He is right and wrong at the same time. It is true you have to know your past—but the intellectuals who write today and try to tell you that W.E.B. DuBois and Garvey were great, but Marx is not, were as far removed from Garvey and the Black masses in 1920 as anyone could possibly be.

The Garvey movement was the greatest movement America had ever seen in mass numbers. Garvey organized some six million people. The Blacks who thought the South was horrible and came North, found that the North was the same thing in a different form. The Negro was supposed to be impossible to organize. Garvey showed that was a lie. (I know people don't like the word now, but it was Garvey who fought very hard to make everyone spell Negro with a capital N. They would never have won that fight without his movement.) But because they didn't have a total philosophy, and because they were so frustrated, where did it all end? "Back to Africa." It was fantastic. They were all Americans. This is where they had labored all their lives.

Speech to the "Black/Red" Conference of 1969

The Black dimension and the dialectics of liberation

What is important to remember is that the Black intellectuals didn't want to have anything to do with Garvey and his followers. The intellectuals considered them all ignorant. DuBois even went so far as to go to the State Department to demand Garvey's deportation. Who made people look at Garvey as a revolutionary? As important? As doing more to shake up capitalism in America than all of the white and Black intellectuals together? Lenin.

Lenin said it was a start. It was shaking up the regime. Not only that, he said to look around the world. He saw China and began to wonder if we could overthrow imperialism through the "National Question." So the actual movement, which was spontaneous as all great movements are, and which showed the true revolutionary role of the Black people in this country, revealed that the only people who were trying to get a discussion started between the Black masses and the Black intellectuals were a few white radicals who kept saying: For heaven's sake, talk to each other—this is the real revolution....

THE OTHER YEAR we have to consider is 1936, when the CIO was built. Today everybody knows the CIO was a great bureaucracy, but in '36 and '37 it was a great movement. The first industrial union couldn't have been built without the Black workers, and everyone knew it. That was when you had the unity of white and Black. You can't rewrite history. Being against white imperialism doesn't mean that all of white labor and the radicals are the same. What the Black nationalist leaders are forgetting is plain history. Once you have that many Blacks in the same union, you can't go around pretending you're not all in the same shop. If you're going to have a revolution, you'd better have it together, or you won't have it at all....

Now I think we have enough of history and theory...to get down to the dialectics of liberation today, in the 1960s.

Philosophy and Revolution has three parts. Part I is called "Why Hegel? Why Now?" and takes up the dialectic as the algebra of revolution, the methodology of what man has done in fighting for freedom. Once you get three things, you have the essence of it: 1) the dialectic—the actual development, through actual class struggle, through actual contradictions; 2) the right Subject—who is resolving these contradictions? Marx said it was the class force, but helped by other forces such as minorities, the Black people, and the youth; 3) how does this movement from below for freedom, from practice, unite with the movement that comes from theory? In other words, the relationship of theory to practice.

In the chapters on Marx and Lenin I take up concretely how Marx did it for his era, and how Lenin did it for his. Up to a certain stage it seemed easy, because it was only capitalism they thought they had to fight. But Lenin found, with the outbreak of World War I, that it was his co-comrades who betrayed. The fact that every unit in life has its opposite within itself, and that the counter-revolution came from within the revolution—that was the shock and the recognition that made Lenin prepare himself correctly for what was to come later. Lenin saw the aristocracy of labor as a transformation into opposite that meant a break-up within labor. But he also saw that the way to transform that into its opposite was by going lower and deeper, and uniting with the minority groups. That became the "National Question."

Part II of the book is called "Alternatives." Those that are the most dangerous are again those from within the Marxist movement. Lenin had to deal with the betrayal of the Second International. We have to deal with the betrayal of the Third. The three alternatives are Mao Tse-tung (and Castro), Leon Trotsky and Sartre. The first two are from the Marxist movement. The last from the intellectuals not connected with a party.

THE IMPORTANT POINT to keep in mind insofar as Mao and Trotsky are concerned is that they are revolutionaries. Why did they have the wrong answers nonetheless? When you meet a new problem you can either stand still and say: this is what Lenin told me, or Marx, and nothing has happened that is new—and this is what Trotsky did, what we call getting stuck in the fixed particular; or, as with Mao, you can say: we can't wait a thousand years, we're going to have to find some shortcuts, power comes from the barrel of a gun. But the shortcut has proved in life to be the longest way around. As far as Sartre is concerned, we find that what he wound up saying was that it was fine for all the workers to go into the Communist Party, but he wanted his own freedom as an intellectual—and you get the concept of the vanguard party coming from the man who didn't belong to any party.

What you have to ask yourself is how it happens that Blacks should follow Mao or Castro? Is it sufficient to hate and want to get rid of just your own specific capitalist? American imperialism is the enemy of Mao and Castro—and it is your enemy. But is that sufficient reason to join with Mao and Castro? Or do you have to do what Marx did and raise up an entirely new banner that

(continued on page 11)

Black/Red View

Inhuman 'welfare reform'

by John Alan

California is very important to me, because nowhere else has the upheaval through capitalist concentration been carried out with such haste.
—Karl Marx

The issue of so-called welfare reform is shaping up to become a bitter, grueling political fight in California as the battle over the state budget begins in Sacramento.

To the dismay of liberals, Governor Pete Wilson has joined the closing of the enormous deficit in the state's budget to drastic cuts in welfare and in education. He told the Democratic-controlled legislature that the choice is: "...between school kids and welfare mothers."

With this type of political rhetoric, Wilson hopes to polarize the state around the idea that welfare is a "social evil" gnawing away at the state's tax resources. In his words, there are only "tax givers and tax receivers."

Armed with this 18th-century vengeful concept of welfare, Wilson is demanding that the state legislature cut the Aid to Families with Dependent Children by 25%, 10% across the board and another 15% after six months. He is also asking the legislature to make the requirements for welfare stricter and limit the amount of welfare paid to migrants to what they would receive in the state they came from.

Wilson's "welfare reform" is a cruel political act, which would bash the poor for the crisis in the state's economy by taking bread from poor women and children, many of whom are recently arrived Asian and Hispanic immigrants coming from countries devastated by the interests of U.S. imperialism. This will do absolutely nothing towards solving the budget deficit. It is a well-known fiscal fact that if all welfare was totally ended, the state would still have a deficit in billions of dollars.

THE REAL PROBLEM

The real problem that Wilson faces is not the poor, but the economic crisis caused by the small growth in California's economy, especially in those industries with a high concentration of capital, such as electronics and aerospace, followed by huge banking losses. There have been major lay-offs and growing rumors of lay-offs to come. The state's unemployment stands officially at 7.7%, higher than the national average. In short, California is in deep recession like the rest of the country.

The bashing of welfare recipients by those politicians in office, and those who are out of office, is virtually a national political movement. Pete Wilson is merely get-

"Oil for Cuba"

Mexico City, Mexico—I am sending you a poster from the campaign "Oil for Cuba" organized by the "Promoting Solidarity: Go for Cuba!" This is being organized by students, housewives, unions, popular organizations and political parties such as the Revolutionary Democratic Party and the Revolutionary Party of Workers. Its object is to raise funds in order to buy oil for Cuba. The campaign has begun with success. It has been heard in Europe and Latin America.

We Mexicans have a special sympathy for the Cubans. Our intention is publicity in order to pressure the government, and thus initiate action in solidarity with Cuba. We are sending certificates contributors.

We are clear that the government of Fidel Castro is the Latin version of soviet Stalinism, of authoritarianism and of state capitalism. But Cuba internationally is a bastion of anti-imperialism. Its radical subversive reality is a fight for a definitive insertion into the world economy, a subversion of the international division of labor and the political domination imposed by the big powers.

However, I don't believe Cuba can endure against the blockade. We do not know when or how will come the North American intervention.

You can contribute to the campaign—\$10 for half a barrel, \$20 for one barrel—by sending a contribution to Promotora De Solidaridad Va Por Cuba!, c/o Liberia Gandhi, Miguel Angel de Quevedo 134, Mexico City, D.F. Mexico.

Student,
National Autonomous University of Mexico

Detroit homeless rally

Detroit, Mich.—On Dec. 27, 1991, a rally in Detroit of over 1,000 homeless and their supporters was addressed by Jesse Jackson, who promoted an electoral approach in response to the degeneration of the economy and the brutal welfare cutbacks of Governor Engler.

The somber crowd, predominantly Black, greying, work-worn, and earnestly seeking solutions, made a profound impression on me. We distributed all the copies of News & Letters we had.

A young Black homeless man said that as a child he was told to study hard. He had applied himself, but nevertheless became homeless one semester short of graduation from college. He doesn't want to go to a shelter because they are too regimented, adding that more shelters are not a real solution. In the past economics was presented to him as being about the effects of shortages on the marketplace, so he had been disinterested. Now he sees that economics is about the devastation of human lives.

Looking at N&L, he agreed that increased technology will not solve the crises, and cited the downfall of Russia as a prime example of the results of basing the economy on the military. We concluded that the most important and difficult thing was to struggle against isolation, and to keep hope of a human future alive.

—Homeless rally participant

ting on the bandwagon. Forty states have already cut or frozen benefits going to AFDC recipients and 14 states have cut a half-million people from general assistance.

Obviously these cuts make the lives of poor people more miserable and desperate and, moreover, these cuts are taking place, according to Bush's Department of Health and Human Services, at a time when welfare rolls are growing at a record level each month, thus revealing wider areas of poverty among the poor and near-poor in the population. This phenomenon of growing poverty has dismayed and confused the analysts and theoreticians at the Department of Health and Human Services. They have dug into every possible social statistic to explain it, without considering the source of this poverty as an element of the crisis in capitalist production.

These analysts search for the problem in the realm of social dislocation and social dissolution, i.e., in the statistics of the number of females who are single heads of families or in a changed attitude toward welfare. By remaining in the realm of social appearances, the floodgate is opened for spurious theories about poverty and welfare, such as that it is the benefits of welfare that attract people to it. This is nothing but a cruel form of nonsense which takes on a political drive to equate welfare itself with the cause of why people are on welfare.

RACIST WELFARE THEORIES

The most racist of these "welfare theories" is the one that Charles Murray, of the American Enterprise Institute, projected in 1988 and is now being hailed by conservative "welfare reformers" as social truth.

Mr. Murray believes that social programs and welfare benefits promote poverty. And, according to Murray, it all began in the middle 1960s when President Johnson's social programs caused low-income Black workers to leave the job market at a higher rate than white workers. Murray mixes up his theory of welfare with a lot of statistics, but comes out with the metaphorical image of able-bodied Blacks living on welfare, a powerful image in the drive to "reform welfare."

The political rhetoric of "welfare reform" boils down to what is the lowest human minimum to which this system can reduce the cost of capitalist production.

Haitian crisis deepens

San Francisco, Cal.—U.S. Ambassador to Haiti, Alvin Adams came into the meetings of Parliament and told it they had two choices for Prime Minister—Marc Bazin or Rene Theodore. Bazin was in the despised Duvalier government, is an official in the World Bank, and ran against Aristide in the elections, getting only 14% of the vote. Theodore is the head of the Haitian Communist Party which received less than one percent of the vote. He has criticized Aristide continually, preferring to align himself with the right wing than with the masses.

From exile, Aristide himself nominated Victor Benoit after receiving a letter from the majority of the House of Representatives, a large number of whom are in hiding, asking him to choose. But Adams doesn't support that choice. The Senate was more iffy.

One representative, Astrel Charles, who was in a party that opposed Aristide in the elections, believed the president was the constitutionally elected leader and should be returned. He was killed in mid-December by the Tontons Macoutes.

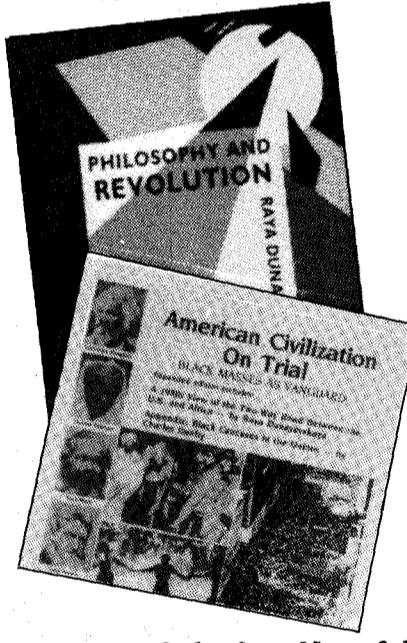
A short while after that, House of Representatives Vice-President Monde entered Parliament with two pistols in his belt and a grenade in hand while the body was debating the choices for prime minister. Right in front of the OAS negotiator, Ocampo, he threatened to blow up the room with a grenade if talk continued of confirming Benoit or of returning Aristide.

And everyone knows about Evan Spaul, the mayor of Port-au-Prince. On his way to the plane to leave the country, the Tontons Macoutes took him in front of the OAS delegation and beat him seriously.

We have a situation with Fr. Aristide nominating someone according to the constitution, and no one could come in and debate in a democratic way. The Tontons Macoutes were there, waiting for the majority party members to show up. Ironically Ocampo then promised the people of Haiti a gift—that Theodore would be the Prime Minister! After the ruckus that created, a tanker of Bahamian registry containing 164,000 gallons of diesel fuel arrived in Port-au-Prince from Cartagena, Colombia. The involvement of the two OAS members in that delivery was clearly meant as another arm-twisting tactic to us, to accept their man. Democracy is being made into a mockery!

—Haitian activist in exile

Special offer in celebration of Black History Month



PHILOSOPHY AND REVOLUTION

by Raya Dunayevskaya

Black people have always been the touchstone of American civilization precisely because they could both expose its Achilles heel—its racism—and because they were always in the vanguard of its forward movement. It was so in the struggle against slavery when they fought together with the white Abolitionists. . . And it is so now when the Black Revolution has reached the crossroads between nationalism and proletarian internationalism (p.272).

AMERICAN CIVILIZATION ON TRIAL

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Black World

(continued from page 1)

guerrilla forces, Mandela was finally compelled to drop his elder statesman decorum and inject a moment of reality into the conference in response to de Klerk.

Mandela struck back in no uncertain terms, declaring that de Klerk was unfit to head the government and that "he has very little idea of what democracy is." More to the point, he accused de Klerk of having a "double agenda" in "talking to us and at the same time conducting a war" against the liberation movement.

What has been further revealed is the ANC's pre-conference agreement with the government to drop the ANC's original insistence that conference decisions carry the weight of law, and, more importantly, the ANC agreement to give up its arms when it has a say in the government. Such retreats cannot but raise the most serious questions about the ANC's perspective of negotiating its path to power.

ON THE GROUND

It even raises questions about the ANC not distinguishing itself from the government and Inkatha on the issue of the controversial Paul Simon concert tour, in January. Simon, who has never respected the cultural boycott of apartheid South Africa ("I think the lifting of the cultural boycott has been very beneficial. I never thought that keeping people out and stopping people from leaving was helpful."), rushed in to book a concert tour before the ink was dry on the United Nations'

ANC at the crossroads

month-old resolution to lift the cultural boycott.

Whether or not one considers AZAPO's (Azanian People's Organization) opposition to the Simon tour sheer ultra-leftism, the point is: 1) Blacks did stay away, either because they agreed that it was too soon to lift the boycott or because they couldn't afford the high price of admission, leaving Simon to play to virtually a lily-white audience, which filled Ellis Park stadium in Johannesburg to less than a third of its capacity; and 2) the ANC found itself on the same side as the government and Inkatha when the regime arrested Thami Mcerwa, head of the Azanian Youth Organization, the AZAPO group which led the opposition to the Simon tour.

In the meantime, nothing has changed on the ground. Attacks on unarmed Black commuters and township residents, police repression, and the stepped up violence of neo-fascist fringe groups continue.

And when not subjected to political violence, the Black South African masses suffer from the material violence of abject poverty, particularly in the countryside where more than half of the Black population still lives. And of course, it is to the untapped political power of these "wretched of the earth" that all political parties will turn in any forthcoming elections, only to forget them on the day after.

The democracy being debated in the urban political arenas and intellectual centers with statesman-like aggrandizement will do little to fight the violence of generations of apartheid poverty. Only the revolution now in check can do that.

Philosophic Dialogue

Editor's note: Below we print four responses to our invitation to radical intellectuals and activists to discuss the new expanded edition of Raya Dunayevskaya's Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution. We did not have space to print all

of the replies received. In future issues we will be printing responses from Dave Black, Laurie Cashdan, Paresh Chattopadhyay, Fred Shelley and our correspondent in Prague. Our readers are invited to join this discussion by sending in their response to the new edition.

Expanded edition of Rosa Luxemburg,

◆ Karl Marx and Rosa Luxemburg are revolutionaries for our time ◆

by Narihiko Ito

Editor's note: Narihiko Ito has written widely on Luxemburg's economic theory, is an active member of the Internationale Rosa Luxemburg Gesellschaft, and was the main organizer of the International Rosa Luxemburg Symposium, held in Tokyo in November 1991 under the sponsorship of a number of academic and trade union groups. We are proud to publish this commentary by a Japanese revolutionary Marxist and internationalist at a time when our politicians and labor bureaucrats are engaged in an unparalleled campaign to whip up chauvinist hatred against the Japanese people in an attempt to divert us from the very home grown crisis of American capitalism.

I believe that three elements of Raya Dunayevskaya's last great work contribute to our work and to our future, elements which I would like to take up below in abbreviated form.

1. For the first time, she placed Rosa Luxemburg's life directly into the history of the women's liberation movement, and connected her thought to today's women's movement. I support completely Raya Dunayevskaya's view expressed in her introduction: "There is a need for today's Women's Liberation Movement to absorb Luxemburg's revolutionary dimension, not for history's sake, but for their demands of the day, including autonomy."

For a long time there was a misunderstanding about Rosa Luxemburg to the effect that she had no interest in the "Woman Question." But Raya Dunayevskaya showed very clearly in her book the reason why Rosa refused to be pigeonholed into the "Woman Question": it meant her refusal to follow and her protest against the "male chauvinism" of the leaders of the German Social Democratic Party at that time. In this sense, it is very important that Raya Dunayevskaya shed new light on Rosa Luxemburg's activities at the International Socialist Women's Conference in Stuttgart in 1907. It is also her unique view that the essential reason for the break with Jogiches was Luxemburg's self-development after the experiences of the Russian Revolution in 1906. Raya Dunayevskaya hit the nail on the head when she pointed out that "her greatest intellectual accomplishments occurred after the break."

2. She also shed new light on Rosa Luxemburg's relationship with the "Black Dimension" and with the liberation movement of the Third World. She indicated penetratingly that Luxemburg had already noticed the emergence of imperialism and its significance in global politics "even before the word 'imperialism' was coined by Hobson." But to my regret, Raya didn't write enough on the significance of Luxemburg's *Accumulation of Capital* for the liberation movement of the Third World. She also didn't explain the reasons why the theoreticians of the Third World have been interested in *Accumulation of Capital* since the sixties. Instead, Raya Dunayevskaya denied its significance by comparing it with Marx's *Capital*. But I believe that these two works do not oppose but rather complement each other, because capitalism develops by exploiting surplus value from wage labor as analyzed by Marx, and, as Luxemburg described, expands more and more into the non-capitalist areas, into the Third World, to get more surplus value. This process is still going on.

3. She found new meaning in Marx's last writings, the *Ethnological Notebooks* and the draft letters to Vera Zasulich. She also placed Marx into the history of the women's liberation movement as a radical thinker on the Man/Woman relationship for the creation of a new human society. Moreover, what is important is that she took up the totality of Marx's works after the Paris Commune, together with the 1872-75 French edition of *Capital* and the *Critique of the Gotha Program* (1875), and showed how revolutionary he was right up until his death.

Thus, I hold her last work in high esteem as an important theoretical contribution for the development of

Marxism. But as far as the organization problem and the national question are concerned, which Raya Dunayevskaya analyzed entirely by Lenin's yardstick (chapter 4), I have other views [see my article "Dialektik der Zentralisation und Dezentralisation" in *Marxismo democrazia e diritto dei popoli, Scritti in onore die Lelio Basso*, Milan, 1979, and my presentation at the International Conference on March 5-6, 1991 in Berlin "Was bedeuten Rosa Luxemburg's Gedanken fur unsere Zukunft?" in *Beitrage zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung*, No. 4, 1991]. I also cannot accept chapter 11 where Raya Dunayevskaya decided that Rosa Luxemburg had no concept of "permanent revolution"

because "she had not worked it out as theory, as Trotsky had." We should recall that in her 1918 manuscript written in prison Luxemburg criticized the policies of Lenin and Trotsky in the Russian Revolution from her own position of "revolution in permanence," even though she didn't use that specific word.

In any case, Raya Dunayevskaya has given new life to Karl Marx and Rosa Luxemburg as revolutionaries for our time. We need to read Raya's last words in *Rosa Luxemburg* as her message encouraging us about the future of humankind: "Only live human beings can recreate the revolutionary dialectic forever anew."

◆ On the concept 'Revolution-in-Permanence' ◆

by Frigga Haug

Editor's note: Frigga Haug, a leading Marxist and feminist theorist, has been the co-editor of the Berlin-based theoretical journal Das Argument, where this article originally appeared in German in 1983. It is published here in English for the first time. Also: In Berlin, over 50,000 people marched and rallied in honor of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht on Jan. 12. The marchers laid flowers and lit candles at their memorial.

The author, Trotsky's secretary in Mexico, would essentially like a different reading of the Marxist theory of revolution to gain acceptance: the notion of permanent revolution. Revealing Marx in a Marxist sense as a theorist of liberation was also the work of Rosa Luxemburg, the importance of whom contemporary feminists had far underestimated. Claiming a feminist inheritance from Luxemburg is an undertaking that makes one curious indeed, since we are accustomed to regarding her as an important politician and political theorist. The reason for her neglect of the cause of women might very well lie in the fact that she delegated, so to speak, this task to her contemporary, Klara Zetkin. Heinz Niggemann has [in his 1981 book on the German women's movement] investigated the parliamentary motions and their thematic contents proposed by these two politicians while in parliament and found that not a single one of Luxemburg's referred specifically to women (cf. my review in *Das Argument* 129/1980). Dunayevskaya's argument takes a different course: she examines Luxemburg's theory of organization and revolution and its usefulness to feminist politics, as well as her personality as a possible role model for liberated women. The fact that Luxemburg opposed being restricted by the party leadership to women's issues, but wanted instead to break down barriers in general on speaking and writing, the fact that she had already appeared in public at the age of 26 as a passionate speaker, and the fact that she broke off her relationship with her companion over a dispute regarding political organization, and independently lived and made judgments, made Luxemburg in Dunayevskaya's eyes a fitting model for women's liberation.

History, so she says, begins with original personalities (92). Three times in this book she quotes a sentence from Luxemburg on humanity, which should document her characteristic way of thinking and being: "See to it that you remain human. Being human means joyfully throwing your whole life on the scales of destiny, when



Rosa Luxemburg

need be, while all the while enjoying every sunny day and every beautiful cloud. Oh! I know of no formula in which I could impart to you what it means to be human." (III, 77, 83).

She rejects the interpretations of the other biographers of Luxemburg (e.g. Nettl), according to whom the years following her separation from her companion Leo Jogiches were "lost years." Instead, she indicates that it was at this very time that her most important political debates took place, that she composed her most significant writings, and that she became the sole teacher at the Party School.

In the theory of revolution, it is the notion of permanent revolution (a continual cultural reconstruction), as well as the increasingly distinct development of the spontaneity of the masses for revolution, even that of the unorganized masses, which she deems necessary for the politics of women's liberation. As historical evidence she cites the mass gatherings of women in the course of various revolutions and the beginnings of the women's liberation movement. At this point she asserts that the actual liberation began to take shape in 1831 with Maria Stewart, a Black woman, who was the first woman to speak in public. Exclusion from politics connects racial and women's causes, and, depending on the historical circumstances, it unites women against men.

The reflections in Dunayevskaya's exposition on the meaning of single actions are good and comprehensible. She recommends, for instance, that economic demands (or demands for women's suffrage) be made not as demands for concessions, but rather for the power that hides behind them. She also recommends that connections between "Generalstreik und Revolution" be made, as shown by Luxemburg. She recommends that the new feminist movement learn more from Luxemburg. She also notes critically that the failure of the new movement lies in seeing men as its enemy.

She recommends that feminists study Marx as a revolutionary and consult, in particular, his *Ethnological Notebooks* for that purpose. She draws a sharp line between Marx and Engels regarding women's issues. The conception of a "world historic defeat of the female sex" out of the transition from matriarchy to patriarchy and the establishment of connections to the "primordial division of labor between the sexes" could never be ascribed to Marx, if only on account of its closeness to biologicistic perceptions (105). Even if Marx formulates the first division of labor as based on sex (*The German Ideology*), he regards it as social and relates it to the division of labor between town and country, between head and hand, which he follows like a red thread.

Accordingly, the fundamental Marxist thinking on women's issues, as well as the organization of family and marriage, are to be found within the proposed analysis of the man/woman relation. Whereas Engels pursues a simplified linear analysis of the relations between the sexes, in which there is a succession of women's domination of men, their overthrow, and, finally, their oppression by men, Marx finds the elements of the oppression of women by men in primitive societies, with the beginning of the first leadership roles and the consequent economic interests.

Lastly, she recommends that the issues facing women's liberation today—for example, organization: the problem of decentralization or centralization, or bureaucracy and representation, of separation of leaders and followers—be pursued in the spirit of Luxemburg. That means perceiving revolution as a two-stage process, not only as the overcoming of the old but also the construction of the new. This requires the diverse efforts of all, their personal involvement in politics.

The book's third part is an attempt to emphasize the Marxian transformation of Hegel into a theory of permanent revolution and to reverse the Leninist influence on Marxism. These sections are worth reading, if only because they deal with current problems, above all questions concerning the Third World and China.

In the appendix there is a ten-page bibliography on Luxemburg, on the history of the women's movement, especially on the role of Black women to this day, and lastly on interpretations of Marx, highlighting cultural and philosophical aspects.

Marxist-Humanism's Challenge to All Post-Marx Marxists

"When I said I was opposed to all post-Marx Marxists beginning with Engels, I didn't mean only the gap between Marx's *Ethnological Notebooks* and Engels' reductionism in *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. I am challenging Engels also on nearly all of his interpretations of the dialectic, not because he betrayed; he didn't. He did the best he possibly could. That's the trouble.

The best he could wasn't good enough. You have to begin seeing what it means to be a great genius, a 'thought-diver' like Marx. And if you don't grasp the uniqueness of that, loving Marx won't help. All you would do, as Engels did, would be to popularize him."

—Raya Dunayevskaya, from the Introduction to the new edition

To obtain a copy of the new edition of *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* which also contains a Foreword by Adrienne Rich, send \$12.95 (plus \$1.50 postage) to

News & Letters, 59 E. Van Buren, # 707, Chicago, IL 60605

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

◆ The todayness of Marx's *Ethnological Notebooks* ◆

by David N. Smith

Editor's note: David N. Smith is co-author of Marx's Capital for Beginners (1983) and is the editor of a forthcoming English language edition of Marx's Ethnological Notebooks.

I'm glad to see that Raya Dunayevskaya's invaluable book on Marx, Luxemburg, and women's liberation has appeared in a new edition. Raya was a phenomenon. In an age of great and often unsettling change, when almost all branches of organized Marxism proved incapable of creatively applying and extending Marx's theory, Raya showed a keen appreciation of the living relevance of this theory.

Above all, Raya understood—and shared—Marx's profoundly democratic and emancipatory vision. In contrast to the heirs of the Leninist and Social Democratic traditions (for whom Marx was, in one way or another, an advocate of state power over the working class), Raya grasped and defended the truly democratic kernel of Marx's thinking. Marx was, in a nutshell, far more radical and humanitarian than the large majority of his erstwhile "disciples." Raya Dunayevskaya understood this perfectly and explained it tirelessly.

Raya was also very much alive to the promise of the various popular movements that crystallized in her lifetime. She showed a salutary willingness to learn from the new movements—of women, oppressed minorities and others—that "orthodox Marxists" typically tried to dominate. This sensitivity to the potential of unfolding new forces gave Raya an exceptional responsiveness to radical undercurrents in the classical Marxist theories. One of the most notable examples of this is Raya's stress, in the book on Marxism and women's liberation,

on Marx's little-known *Ethnological Notebooks*.

In Marx's notes on ethnological subjects, which were first published by Prof. Lawrence Krader of the Free University of Berlin in a multilingual transcription in 1972 and which will shortly appear in an all-English edition, Marx probed the character of premodern societies with characteristic insight and determination. These notes were written in the final years of Marx's life (1879-1882) and inspired Engels to write the exceedingly popular *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884).

Raya Dunayevskaya is one of the very few scholars to look beyond Engels to Marx, and she shows a very clear-eyed appreciation of the strengths of Marx's outlook. She justly observes that, despite his goodwill, Engels did not truly do justice to Marx's notes. Engels treated Marx's intensive inquiry into clan society as an exercise in antiquarian research, a study of the presumed "origin" of class society in far-distant antiquity. Engels also bathed clan society in a rose-colored light, portraying it as an era of communal harmony prior to the emergence of class and gender hierarchy.

Raya effectively shows that both of these suppositions are in error. For Marx, clan societies were less ancient than contemporary—indeed, the majority of the world's population in 1880 was still organized on a more-or-less communal foundation. Marx hoped to understand the likely character of future collisions between class and clan societies. And Marx, although he expressed great sympathy for many of the communal cultures imperilled by capital, did not idealize the non-capitalist world. As he showed, especially in his extensive notes on premodern Ireland, Marx was deeply interested in the

spontaneous tendency of clan society to give rise to stratification and despotism. Marx was well aware of the degree to which freedom has been limited in all previous and existing forms of society, and Dunayevskaya is right to emphasize that Marx sought a fundamental break with despotism in every form. A classless society of the future would not be (as Engels wrote) a new and higher form of "primitive communism," but something truly new—a society of genuine and voluntary solidarity.

My only caveat about Raya's book concerns her sharp criticism of Luxemburg's theory of imperialism, which I consider ill-advised. Raya says, in brief, that Luxemburg was seriously in error to try to extend Marx's analysis of the expanded reproduction of capital to the interaction of capitalist and non-capitalist societies. Marx's analysis (in Vol. 2 of *Capital*) was limited to an ideal and isolated capitalist society, subsisting in autarkic separation from the rest of the world—and rightly so, Raya argues. According to Raya, Luxemburg was mistaken to view the unfinished manuscript of Vol. 2 as the fragmentary beginning of a fuller theory, the first approximation of a theory which would ultimately explain far more. Raya contends, in fact, that Vol. 2 contains Marx's essential view of the expanded reproduction of capital; that capital does not need the non-capitalist world as a source of markets, labor-power and means of production; and that Marx's schemes of reproduction are for all intents and purposes finished and adequate. This, in my opinion, is a major error.

To begin with, Vol. 2 of *Capital* is clearly far from finished—and there are innumerable facts of developed capital accumulation that Marx's framework would have to be extended to encompass. Raya tends to celebrate the magnificent virtues of Marx's work without giving equal attention to the problems that Marx himself considered to be incompletely solved.

Luxemburg, in my view, was acting wholly in Marx's spirit when she tried to pick up the pen that he had dropped at his death. Her effort to extend Marx's theory of capital accumulation to the non-capitalist world was also wholly in keeping with Marx's aims. It is more than likely that Marx was seeking to do exactly this in his ostensibly "ethnological" research. It is a significant coincidence, in my opinion, that Luxemburg turned to several of the same ethnological studies that Marx read in the last years of his life when she sought to document and explain imperialist penetration of the non-Western world (e.g., Kovalevsky and Maine). Marx, too, was seeking to finish Vol. 2, and Marx, too, was concerned with the rise of nascent capitalist imperialism.

Capital and the *Ethnological Notebooks* have a remarkable, continuing power to shed light on our world—a power Raya Dunayevskaya had a great capacity to evoke. I believe that at times she exaggerates the degree to which Marx provides full answers for us (I cannot agree, for example, that the ethnological notebooks "contain nothing short of...a pre-history of humanity" [p. 187], but her enthusiasm about Marx's contribution is not misplaced. The problems he posed remain to be solved and the framework he provided for their solution retains enormous power and resiliency.

Was Marx "Eurocentered"?

Karl Marx, in his Ethnological Notebooks (1881), excerpted a passage from John Lubbock's The Origin of Civilization, putting his own comments in parenthesis:

D. Reverend Lang in his *The Aborigines of Australia* had a friend, the which friend "tried long and patiently to make a very intelligent Australian understand (should be called make him believe) his existence without a body, but the black never would keep his countenance...for a long time he could not believe." ("he" is the intelligent black.)

Raya Dunayevskaya, in "New Thoughts on Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution" (included in the 1991 expanded edition of that work), discusses Marx and the Black dimension:

With this dialectical circle of circles, Marx's reference in the *Ethnological Notebooks* to the Australian aborigine as "the intelligent black," brought to a conclusion the dialectic he had unchained when he first broke from bourgeois society in the 1840s and objected to the use of the word, "Negro," as if it were synonymous with the word, "slave." By the 1850s, in the *Grundrisse*, he extended that sensitivity to the whole pre-capitalist world. By the 1860s, the Black dimension became, at one and the same time, not only pivotal to the abolition of slavery and victory of the North in the Civil War, but also to the restructuring of *Capital* itself. In a word, the often-quoted sentence: "Labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black skin it is branded," far from being rhetoric, was the actual reality and the perspective for overcoming that reality. Marx reached, at every historic turning point, for a concluding point, not as an end but as a new jumping off point, a new beginning, a new vision.

◆ Raya Dunayevskaya and Women's Liberation ◆

by Joel Kovel

Editor's note: Joel Kovel, who has written widely on Marxism, Critical Theory and theology of liberation, is the author of White Racism: A Psychohistory (second edition, 1984) and History and Spirit (1991).

Archimedes claimed that there existed in space a fulcrum where a simple lever could be made to move the entire earth. I think of Raya Dunayevskaya as an Archimedes of modern revolutionary theory. Her mission was to locate that point around which revolutionary process takes place, becomes manifested in the particular forms taken by radical movements, and, most critically, becomes total and permanent: "revolution in permanence," in the phrase she draws from Marx. Raya was of course no armchair theoretician, but passionately engaged in struggle. She worked all her life to make concrete revolution happen, but she realized that one could only do so by grasping the underlying motion through which the transformation of society took place. This combination, of activist and theoretician, makes her message specially apposite as at the end of the millennium we encounter new circumstances which appear to redefine the nature of the revolutionary process itself. The twentieth century has been an epoch when mighty radical movements, taking their point of departure from the French Revolution and the concentration of power in industrialism, gathered themselves and hurled their forces against the established order like waves which crash against a seawall and then dissipate. The order of things yielded in places, but it did not crack, and today, as never before in our lifetime (or that of Raya Dunayevskaya), it seems uncontested. Yet the destructive instability of the capitalist-patriarchal world system continues, with mounting misery and the inevitability of new uprisings.

The question, to adopt a slightly different terminology still compatible with Dunayevskaya's vision, is to identify the revolutionary subject of those uprisings and to foster its development. It is here that Raya Dunayevskaya's work on Luxemburg, Marx, and women's liberation comes into focus once more. Of the major forms taken by radical movements in the twentieth century, that for and by women seems to be most strategically placed for the struggles to come. This is not to suggest that women's movements have been wildly successful in reaching their goals. To the contrary, a tremendous backlash in recent years has them in retreat nearly everywhere.

But that is only one side of the dialectic. More deeply, a sea change in the fundamental notions of gender creates the basis for struggle to come. The fact remains—in confirmation of Dunayevskaya's observation that women are Reason as well as force—that conceptions of the sexual, intellectual and practical inferiority of women are inexorably becoming as "unthinkable" as the idea of slavery. This transformation of the realm of thought is not mere "idealism"; it signifies, rather, a movement at the base of society, brought about by struggle and uprising. One does not have to subscribe to the myth of Progress to realize that notions of fundamental human rights, including, here, the essential rights of women to full human status, cannot be dislodged, no matter how much they are battered.

But the conservative tide of recent years has caused the notion of women's rights to become detached from the goal of emancipation and confined to that of mere



Asian women's conference

equality. Here is where Raya Dunayevskaya's uncompromising insistence on total revolution becomes indispensable, as a way of seeing women's rights as **Women's Liberation**, and through this, human liberation and the liberation of the earth itself. Bourgeois feminism would have women share the existing pie, which is to say, make men and women equal at the level of wage slaves; while various movements of feminist separatism strive to develop some uniquely female essence as a refuge from a brutal society and a search for authenticity. The vision of Dunayevskaya goes much further, indeed, contains within itself the insight of why other forms of feminism are self-limiting, even defeatist. Only if the liberation of women is recognized as integral to the complete transformation of society can it be true to itself.

Such a possibility seems now to be ripening and could well become the central emancipatory motion of the century before us, just as workers' movements proved to be the dynamic force during much of the twentieth century. The reason, in my opinion, lies in the conjunction, Woman = Nature, which may be said to provide the linkage between capitalism and patriarchy, and is becoming undone as a result of the ecological crisis. Capital has managed to beat back or co-opt workers' movements, and to ghettoize peoples of color. But it cannot escape the trap set by its degradation of the earth as a way of exteriorizing its costs. Nor can this crisis be managed through the usual technocratic means. Here is where capitalism and patriarchy have to be attacked and overcome together.

In radical ecological politics the issue of "revolution in permanence" is now being drawn. Ecofeminism is one of its manifestations; it makes necessary connections between the domination of women and that of nature, but needs to be extended. Now Women's Liberation comes into its own in the form developed by Raya Dunayevskaya, building on Marx, and also by other radical movements such as the Left Green Network: Woman not as the civil equal of men, nor as the reincarnation of the Goddess and Earth Mother, but as that place in the unfolding historical dialectic where what had been split off is reclaimed and becomes generative of a new society.

CAPITALIST PRODUCTION/ALIENATED LABOR VS. MARXIST-HUMANISM'S PHILOSOPHY OF LIBERATION

The capitalists' desire to "uncouple" labor from production that Dunayevskaya writes about, in her article on "Capitalist Production/Alienated Labor" (December N&L), is the reality we face today. This capitalist system is surviving by grinding us up. Everybody's life is connected to machines, and when we lose that connection, we end up unemployed, homeless, hungry. But our true hunger is for freedom. We need a revolution: that is the only way we will be able to see the light of day.

**Revolutionary Black worker
Los Angeles**

Dunayevskaya discussed "uncoupling" in terms of how the bourgeoisie wants to separate labor from production. But when the stock market goes up the way it has at a time like this, that is really "uncoupled"—from sanity.

**Stu Quinn
California**

In the December, N&L, a New York nurse reports on a conference of Local 1199, the health care workers' union. From her description it is clear the nurse and the labor leader she discusses were on totally different tracks. He thinks that higher salaries are the solution to all the nurses' problems. The nurse realizes that the goal of wellness requires concern for the whole person and the efforts to achieve it are hampered at every turn by bureaucracy. It isn't surprising that in Raya Dunayevskaya's writing on "Capitalist Production/Alienated Labor" in the same issue, there is a statement that speaks directly to the plight of these nurses: her discussion of the actual struggles against alienated labor as "the positive in the negative." The nurse represents just that in her passion for human relations.

**Nurses' teacher
Illinois**

It's refreshing to read articles that explore the roots of the many ills of our society boldly. The key to Raya Dunayevskaya's philosophy to me is its Humanism. "Masses" has always seemed a faceless word to me, evoking a boulder ready to crush what stood in its way. Today, more than ever, it is necessary to keep in touch with our humanity whose essence itself is threatened by the brutal and indifferent logic of capitalism.

**New subscriber
Texas**

The articles from Raya Dunayevskaya's archives seem to always take up the latest thing. Drucker was just quoted on the front page of the *New York Times*, in the wake of the GM layoffs, saying all the problems can be handled, as if management just needs to reorganize itself. Contrast that to how Raya

takes up Hegel, Marx and the unrecorded revolt as what we have to look at.

**Revolutionary lawyer
New York**

The Chinese feminist who wrote her "Thoughts on the collapse of Russian Communism" (December N&L) offers hope for breaking the totality of "capitalism" and the surrender to "totalitarianism" if we return to Marxism. But when she says Marxism has been deliberately distorted by those who call themselves "liberals" I wondered if there was a misconception. Liberals are reformists, non-believers in total uprooting, non-revolutionaries in theory and practice. It is the people who call themselves "radicals" who have been the primary distorters of Marx.

**Sheila G.
New York**

The gulf between Marxist-Humanism's theory of state-capitalism and others' was evident this week at UC Berkeley, where the Maoists and Trotskyists held a meeting to argue over when Russia became state-capitalist. For Raya Dunayevskaya, the point was always how deep the uprooting had to be, which is what Marx was talking about in his essay on "Alienated Labor."

**Youth activist
Berkeley, Cal.**

I recently discussed Marx's fetishism of commodities with a follower of Sartre. Sartre has the concept of practico-inert, that everything created has a subjective source but becomes fixed, external. What Sartre never caught was that the fetishism of commodities is capitalism's specific form. Its very nature is that what you do becomes something outside of you with a life of its own. The message of the fetish is the inseparability of the dialectic from actual history, something Raya developed through her life all the way up to *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*. Without catching that, you are really lost.

**Ex-Sartre follower
Oakland, Cal.**

PEARL HARBOR AND JINGOISM

I liked in particular the discussion of Pearl Harbor in the December "workshop talks" column. It was an interesting insight into all the fervor and jingoism. As the Russians are no longer our enemies, now we're casting around for new enemies, whether it be the drug lords or the Japanese. A phrase I always find ironic is the phrase "predatory capitalism," which I'm hearing to the Japanese. Has capitalism ever been anything other than predatory?

**Reader
Chicago**

FROM RUSSIA: 'I CONSIDER MYSELF A MARXIST HUMANIST'

I was present for the two days of freedom in Moscow Square in August. The Anarchist-Syndicalist-Socialists impressed me the most. They were overwhelmingly the first to defend Yeltsin at the barricades and set the direction. In Russia, "democratic" usually equals "free market economy." The "Left" is like the "Right" in the U.S. and the "Right" more like the "Left." The black banner of the Anarchists was flying and people had red bands on their arms. They wanted to defend genuine democracy against any return to Stalinism. That's why they rushed to the square. Only later did the big shots, the professors and journalists show up. I didn't read anything about this in the Russian press.

One year ago I was a member of the Russian Socialist Party but now I am an independent and not a member of any party. I consider myself a Marxist humanist and was raised on the ideas of Erich Fromm. I see a trend to "pluralism" in a good sense, a diffusion of power into their own hands. People want to be self-governed. Life will show the method of organization. The party can

be a sectarian prison. It did a lot of bad things to Russia. Many of my friends agree with me.

Many things critical of the government were discussed in the socialist underground before Gorbachev. They tried to work out state capitalist theory. If they had Raya Dunayevskaya's work it would have helped. In my city, the underground tried to learn Trotsky's ideas. The secret police got them. They got higher prison terms than the usual dissidents. They were more dangerous to the bureaucracy. The Nomenklatura came to work sites. They tried to convince people to be disciplined, to work hard or else be punished. It was a capitalist dictatorship.

In the Eastern bloc Djilas was the first to write about socialist bureaucracy. In the Soviet Union we had knowledge only through Trotsky. It will be important to translate Dunayevskaya, do digests of her books, to get response from workers' circles. Her work relates to the general liberation of Russia.

**Intellectual
Russia**

Readers' Views

CRISES IN LABOR TODAY

The article "Crises in labor and Black movements compel new philosophic beginnings" (December N&L) gave us a perspective because it was rooted in *American Civilization on Trial*. Labor is in disarray but the leadership of three or four major unions have been kicked out in the past year. *Labor Notes* stresses the "willingness to fight" as the key, but this article says that much more is needed for a real new beginning. What makes N&L different is holding together the need for organizing with the need for new ways of thinking. Most important was that the article couldn't talk about labor without Black or Black without labor.

**Labor columnist
New York**

The Teamsters election did mean something. The drivers I talk to still lack any information about the changes but all wanted to get their union back for themselves from a bureaucracy that had turned into murderers simply killing off the opposition.

**Refinery worker
California**

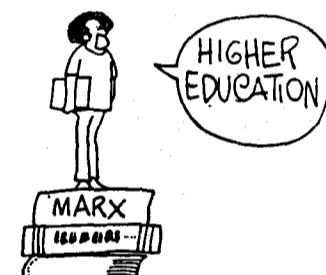
Why did the federal government get involved in the Teamsters and hold democratic elections? Maybe for the same reason they got rid of Duvalier, Marcos and Pinochet: get rid of the dictator to save the system from rebellion, give the illusion of reform. As in these countries, only the rank and file can keep it from stopping at that.

**John Marcotte
New York**

Everybody got sick and tired of Durham, Shea, the same old thing, the mob. That's why Carey won so easy.

**Teamster for 30 years
New York**

'EDUCATION' AND MIND



Many articles in the December N&L seemed to revolve around the theme of Mind and education. There's the quote in the Lead article on Malcolm X changing minds; there's a section in "Readers' Views" on "The Crisis in Education"; there's the discussion of Fanon's critique of "the unpreparedness of the educated classes, the lack of practical links between them and the mass of the people, their laziness ..." All this says something about the activity of Mind, vs. education as a system. The use of Mind, as a philosophic category, means something that can't be controlled by a system. The rulers attempt the opposite, i.e., control. The whole media portrayal of the collapse of the Soviet Union is designed as "Since this obviously shows the superiority of the West ...": they are attempting to destroy the idea of any real change occurring.

**Radical professor
California**

Many workers have found what N&L publishes on the philosophy of revolution very difficult. Although many college students have said it's difficult even for them, I feel it is the deliberate suppression of knowledge that makes it hard for workers. We find the vocabulary so hard some give up trying to dig into it. I am slowly picking up on it, and have found once I get past the vocabulary, it is not as difficult as I had thought. I hope other workers will find the same thing. In the meantime, can the philosophy be brought to workers in terms that do not dilute or deform it so workers can understand and add their input to this philosophy?

**Martin Almora
Chicago**

You never get the real history of labor in school. It is very exciting to learn in *Marxism and Freedom* that textile workers in England acted to keep the

British government from entering the Civil War in the U.S. on the side of the South to protect their textile industry that depended on the cotton from South USA. The British workers really helped the American workers. That was a tremendous expression of international labor solidarity.

**Student
Grand Rapids, Mich.**

Too many of the "best educated" women in this country accept the male ethic and think they are liberated just because they made it in a corporate law office. Are they really free human beings with dignity or just well-paid slaves?

**Women's liberationist
Texas**

YOUTH UNDER PRESSURE

Two of my daughters are depressed over David Duke. Before, the KKK and Nazism seemed far away. Even reading a bourgeois paper which had youth "speaking for themselves" you could see what a tough time this is for youth. They are under a lot of pressure.

**Concerned father
New York**

I was involved in the anti-war movement last year as a student activist. I agree with you that activity by itself cannot fight this system. We need to talk about our goals and what we are for. But students are under so much pressure, going to school and working to pay for our rent and food. It's a luxury to have time for serious thinking, and much easier to go to a demonstration which makes you feel you are doing something immediate. We have to figure out how to make time for serious thinking.

**Christopher
Chicago**

TWO LETTERS FROM BRITAIN

The political prospects are not rosy here. Although there has been an upsurge of student sit-ins, everything seems to be hanging fire as people wait for the elections, knowing full well that Kinnock will not be noticeably different, but not wanting to give the Tories fuel for propaganda. The economy is collapsing, of course. For six months the government denied there was a recession, then for 12 told us it was bottoming out and recovery had started, while the numbers of unemployed and firms going bankrupt steadily increase. With the end of the Cold War they lost the main support for the economy. The recession does not yet seem to have impacted on the political consciousness of the population, however. Some who have gone broke may be having second thoughts about their Thatcherism, and some may move politically, but it's uncertain whether they would go to Labour, or turn fascist, or whether some monster will yet arise from the decaying corpse of Stalinism. Still—though not rosy, prospects do seem better than for a year or two, maybe even since the end of the miners' strike.

**Laurens Otter
Britain**

The mysterious death of Robert Maxwell, who fell off his private yacht in the Canary Islands, followed by the revelation that he had taken hundreds of millions of pounds out of his employees' pension funds, and the collapse of his business empire, have made headlines worldwide. Maxwell, who lived in Oxford, ruled his businesses with despotic power but this did not prevent him from claiming to be a "socialist" and remaining a member of the Labour Party. After his death, thousands of employees are left wondering what is going to happen to their jobs and pensions. He was a bully and a fraud on a grand scale. The real scandal, though, is this capitalist system which allows individuals like him to have so much power and control over other people.

**Richard Bunting
Oxford, England**

FRANTZ FANON, MARX AND MARXIST-HUMANISM

In his article on "The Marxist Humanist Legacy of Frantz Fanon" in the December N&L, Lou Turner brings forth the indispensability of rethinking Marx's dialectic, that Fanon was creatively able to achieve. He quotes Raya Dunayevskaya on Marxist "orthodoxy" as not being "a question of whether Marx could or could not be wrong It (is) a question of dialectics, of the methodology of approaching opposites." It is this that I would like to direct specifically towards Black youth today.

**Black student
Los Angeles**

* * *

Lou Turner's essay raised some interesting points on the relationship of Frantz Fanon to Marxist-Humanism. Unfortunately, however, he created a near-identity between Marx and Fanon, ignoring their differences. At one point, Turner writes that Fanon "recapitulated Marx's category," and at another, that he "presupposed Marx's conceptualization of pre-capitalist formulations."

When he gets to comparing Fanon and the Marxist theorist Rosa Luxemburg on the national question, Turner concludes: "As against Luxemburg, there is no counterposing of class struggles to national self-determination in Fanon." This statement is problematic for two reasons. First, in the context of Turner's near-identity between Fanon and Marx, it implies that Fanon identified fully with Marx's concept of the class struggle. This is highly questionable. Although Fanon wrote perceptively on class divisions inside the colonial world, he tended to dismiss the conflict between labor and capital inside the developed world, going so far as to write in the conclusion to *Wretched of the Earth* of the class struggle in Europe as a "motionless movement where gradually dialectic is changing into the logic of equilibrium."

Secondly, while it is true that Luxemburg failed to grasp the dialectics of national liberation, she wrote before the birth of the Third World revolutions. As

Dunayevskaya notes in her critique of Luxemburg on the national question: "The birth of the Third World in our era has made it easy not to fall into the trap of counterposing 'internationalism' and 'nationalism,' as if they were at all times irreconcilable absolutes." Turner quotes, but does not develop, this point.

What is much harder today, for example, is avoiding the counterposing of national and class struggles to women's liberation. There Fanon, while to be sure holding to a better position than some of his Algerian co-leaders, was hardly a model for us in the 1990s. That is why it is so important not to dismiss Rosa Luxemburg, and especially what Dunayevskaya uncovered, her revolutionary feminist dimension.

**Kevin A. Barry
Chicago**

* * *

While I might agree with Lou Turner's view in his essay on the legacy of Frantz Fanon, that Samir Amin has a unilinear notion of Marx's conception of materialist historical development, a reading of Amin's *Euro-Centrism* shows that Amin himself has a multilinear conception of historical developments. Amin's argument is that the development of civilization cannot be confined to either Europe or capitalism. The multilinear and multicultural development of civilization has been subsumed by Western imperialist hegemony, and the ideological fight against it is one of the major fronts of our ongoing battle to move the Black liberation movement forward.

**Abdul Alkalimat
Chicago**

* * *

The essay on Fanon was very new. I never knew all the direct relations of Fanon to Marx and his going "lower and deeper." What I'd like to know now is whether Raya Dunayevskaya had a critique of Fanon? That would be important to look at.

**Black worker
Los Angeles**



**EL SALVADOR'S
PEACE PLAN**

The peace accord being signed today in Chapultepec Park (Mexico City) is hard to be optimistic about. There is virtually no point in it that has been resolved and left unambiguous. The crucial question of reducing the armed forces is a good example. How, when, and how many troops are to be slashed has so far been left unanswered. The government claims to have 63,000 soldiers, which the required 50% reduction would bring down to 31,000. The FMLN laughs at this number, putting their ranks at no more than 35,000.

There is also the matter of the "shake-up" of the military that we've been hearing about. It seems that many of the hard-core criminals that occupy high posts are being promoted rather than demoted, such as Col. Oscar Leon Linares, who is being moved from his top post in the rebel stronghold of Morazan to the equally contested province of Chalatenango.

Clearly the leaders of the FMLN as well as the government (which is taking severe criticism from the entrenched Right) are trying to make the most of a "free-for-all" type accord, where each side takes credit for a victory and scrambles at the same time to win the many concessions as yet unspoken for. And where are the masses in all of this?

**Solidarity Activist
San Francisco**

* * *

- I will trust this agreement when I see:
- Left groups expressing their beliefs without fear of torture and death.
 - Electoral reforms to allow participation by many parties.
 - The military treating people with respect.
 - Agrarian reforms allowing the many poor to develop and harvest the land, currently owned and controlled by a tiny group of rich.
 - Ways for the poor to purchase low-interest land and materials to build their homes.

- Laws to respect workers' rights.
 - Improved rights and status of women.
- Many good people joined the FMLN because there were no alternatives for those who wanted revolution even though there were different tendencies within the FMLN. Although I'm sure this accord is not the answer, the situation we're in now is going nowhere.

**Former FMLN member
Los Angeles**

* * *

I'm not saying I trust the Right in El Salvador, but I feel relief at the peace settlement. After twelve years of civil war, this settlement may well mark a step forward. I don't think it necessarily means the revolution has come to an end, because guerrilla warfare was never the panacea for social transformation some made it out to be. Very few revolutions have come to power through guerrilla warfare; more often than not, they fail. After twelve years of a struggle that did not lead to a social revolution, maybe the peace settlement will provide some space for the Salvadoran people to work out some new pathways to liberation.

**Longtime Solidarity activist
Chicago**

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**Supporter
Reseda, Cal.**

* * *

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**Prisoner
Illinois**

* * *

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**Steady reader
Ghana**

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Does collapse of USSR reveal U.S.'s future?

(continued from page 1)

But nowhere is that resentment felt more sharply than in the six Central Asian republics—Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Azerbaijan—whose peoples had long been ignored not only by their own rulers but by the West, as well. What is now changing that is not only that Kazakhstan is one of the four republics of the former USSR to have nuclear weapons, and that some of the Central Asian republics have significant gas and oil reserves, but that 90% of the 60 million people of this region are Muslims.

GEO-POLITICAL RAMIFICATIONS

Indeed, nothing better shows the global ramifications of the disintegration of the USSR than the sudden great attention that the U.S. is giving these six republics, hoping to swing them away from fundamentalism and to the West. A veritable battle is now raging between Turkey, which is trying to pull these lands to the U.S. "model," and Iran, whose Foreign Minister, Ali Akbar Velayati, rushed to tour all six republics in December. That everyone sees the region as "up for grabs" is evident from the fact that PLO chief Yasser Arafat was also one of the first to visit; while Israel rushed to set up diplomatic offices and offer advice on everything from defense to agriculture.

Most of all, it is evident in the speed with which the U.S.—while trying to keep a low profile and work through others—has opened up embassies in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and quietly increased training of foreign service operatives in the Turkic languages of the area after Secretary of State Baker's tour to all the republics in the wake of the USSR's collapse.

It is not only the frantic maneuvering in Central Asia and the Middle East that was set loose when one of the two superpowers was taken out of world affairs. All international relations have been impacted as all the powers seek to fill the vacuum. Thus, Germany has suddenly seized the leadership of the European Community, flexing its economic power to exert its political will in a way it had not dared to do since World War II ended, and challenging the U.S. as undisputed leader of the Western alliance. Thus also, China startled the world by making a visit to India for the first discussions between those two lands since the violent border dispute three decades ago. Everywhere, from Europe to the Pacific and from Latin America to Africa, the collapse of the USSR has brought a crucial change in the geo-political scene.

WHAT DOES "FREE MARKET" CHANGE?

What changed in the daily lives of the people in what is now called the CIS? When the euphemistically termed "liberalization" of prices was unleashed the day after New Year's—that is, when state control was lifted on everything except the most basic necessities such as bread, salt, gas, coal, which were allowed to rise "only" three or four times their former prices, while other prices were expected to soar beyond any sight at all—the Russian people were told by Yegor Gaidar, Yeltsin's chief economist, that the increases are an unavoidable sacrifice on the road to a "free market." With 80% of the average Russian's income already spent on basic sustenance, more and more are now expected to be pushed below the poverty line.

They are also being told that the higher prices will "shake out" food supplies that are being held back. It is more likely that the prices will set off an uncontrolled inflation that some fear could rival that of the 1920s in Germany, while food shortages could threaten actual starvation in the big cities. The road to the "free market" is marked in human terms by the number of people standing on street corners trying to sell some personal belongings to raise enough for bare necessities.

How could anyone expect a change in market prices to affect anything when nothing fundamental has been changed in production, which is where the crisis is rooted? Even the much-heralded "privatization" has as yet reached only a handful of the more than a million legal entities that make up the Russian economy. As for the grand plans to privatize agriculture, the Communist Party offices that used to direct the collective and state

farms are now closed, as they are everywhere, but the former Party apparachiks still function as the new directors (just as they do in the handful of enterprises that have been privatized). Few of the farmers have jumped at the chance to hazard the uncertainties of private farming. The youth have simply been leaving. Even for those who would like to privatize, there is no machinery they could use. All the equipment is for the giant collective farms, part of the legacy of Stalin's ruthless forced collectivization.

That does not mean that when and if "privatization" does take place it would do any better than "privatization" has done in the somewhat healthier economy of Czechoslovakia, where a so-called "shock therapy" has been in place for a year, and has brought about a 22%



Over three days, more than 9,000 people stood in line in Chicago's bitter January cold to interview for 1,000 entry-level hotel jobs. Most had been out of work for more than a year.

decrease in industrial out-put; an increase in unemployment from 2.5 to 8.5% and an annual inflation rate of 58% and rising. In Poland, where the "therapy" began half a year earlier, the lowering of living standards has been even greater. It may be a harbinger of what lies ahead for Yeltsin that the Polish people have already changed their government three times since 1989.

ONE-WORLDEDNESS OF THE CRISIS

The truth is that what is new in terms of today's economic reality, is that the USSR's collapse is forcing the world to confront the one-worldedness of the crisis today—and that it is rooted in production. That one-worldedness was dramatically demonstrated when, simultaneously with the rapid final collapse of the USSR, came GM's sudden announcement just before Christmas that it would be closing no less than 11 plants and throwing 70,000 more men and women into the ever-growing unemployed army. No longer was there any pretense that these jobs would ever return.

For more than a decade we have been told that we had reached a "post-industrial society" and that the "service economy" would supplant it. What cannot be hidden any longer is that, without a fundamental change in the relations at the point of production, the kind of growth needed to meet the demands of humanity is impossible.

Instead the economic and human crisis only grows deeper. We have seen nearly two million manufacturing jobs permanently wiped out in the U.S. in the 1980s; Black, Hispanic and women workers, as the last hired and first fired, forced into lower and lower paying jobs; enormous numbers of young workers thrown into unemployment, as is reflected in the ever-greater numbers of children living in poverty—officially more than 13 million last year.

The completely decrepit state of the U.S. economy can also be measured by the 34 million Americans with no health insurance, or the unprecedented increase in those relying on Food Stamps to keep on eating—fully three million more than anyone "expected" poured onto those rolls last year because of the recession. Most of all, it is measured in the homelessness which has become a permanent feature of U.S. life, and which new studies have pegged directly to the shift in the economy from manufacturing to service jobs, as well as the governmental policies which have become more and more vicious against the poor.

Indeed, so deep is the crisis by now that it raises the question of whether it is the decrepit state of the U.S. economy here that shows Russia the face of its future—or the complete collapse of that state-capitalist economy there that shows us the face of our future.

IDEOLOGICAL CONJURING

It is the insoluble crisis in production that has driven capitalism at both poles to try to save itself by offering the ideological blinders of the "free market" to hide its insoluble nature. The relative ease with which so many Communist bureaucrats were converted from "communism" to "free market capitalism"—while they preserved their roles as the managers of production—is rooted in the fact that there was no fundamental class difference between the state-capitalism that called itself Communism, in one orbit, and the so-called private capitalism, in the other. What ruled in both was, and remains, what Marx traced out in *Capital* as the law of value which pays the workers the minimum while extracting from them the maximum. What made undeniable how inescapable was the law of motion of capital Marx had worked out was the deep economic crisis that engulfed world capitalism in 1974-75 from which it has never recovered.

Because labor power is the only source of all value and surplus value, the overwhelming preponderance of machinery over the living labor employed in production

— which had ever-more intensified in the two decades since automation was introduced — had brought about profound structural changes in capitalism by the mid 1970s. It was impossible to overcome the ever-increasing decline in the rate of profit, which capitalism demands to keep producing. It became clear by 1974-75 that even "planned production" and even massive state intervention in the economy (both East and West), could not stop that decline.

State and private capitalism alike only accelerated their drive to extract ever more unpaid hours of labor through newer and newer "high technologies" and old-fashioned speed-up as well. The "restructuring" Reaganism unleashed on the West, as we know, was spelled out by Gorbachev for the East as "perestroika."

Unfortunately for him, what proved Gorbachev's final undoing was that he clung to the idea that the USSR could still claim to be "socialist" while Yeltsin, once he saw the Ukrainian vote, had no trouble in dispensing with any such claim—and with Gorbachev.

GREATEST CRISIS—CRISIS OF THE MIND

Every day the crises deepen. How, then, can today's rulers get away with the ideological blinders they want humanity to wear—claiming that the "free market" is the wave of the future and that "Marxism is dead?" The answer lies in the same crisis of the mind that confronted us one year ago, when the USSR's crisis at home allowed George Bush the "green light" he needed then to pursue his drive for single world mastery. It is not that there was not plenty of opposition to Bush's genocidal war on Iraq, but that it could not sustain itself without being rooted in a philosophy of revolution that would spell out not only what it was against but what it was for. To the barbarism of war, what had to be posed was a new, truly human society—the kind of world that was the goal of Marx's Marxism.

That goal was not a mere change in the form of property, but totally new human relations that could release tremendous new human energies through what Marx called "freely associated labor" which would finally unite mental and manual labor in each human being. There is no other solution to the production, or any other, crisis. Marx's "new Humanism" was what post-Marx Marxism failed totally to grasp. In perverting Marx's Marxism to their own threadbare ideology, they have left the world unarmed to fight the rulers determined to destroy the very Idea that a new society is possible.

There is no question that there will be deep opposition to the worsening conditions of life and labor that are being imposed on the masses everywhere. All eyes at this moment are focused on Russia where the food riots the new rulers warned they would have to "handle" have already erupted everywhere. They may fear that they could be transformed into actual revolution. Yet the threat from the Right remains very real, and has many dimensions.

Thus, none can know what the deeply discontented four million-strong Army will do, or even whether the threat of a military coup is in the offing. Nor can anyone know what the deep anti-semitism within the republics will bring. And while an open fascist like Vladimir Zhirinovskiy (who won six million votes in the Russian election that gave Yeltsin his presidency) is not a "real" threat at this moment — and neither are David Duke or Pat Buchanan here — all are symptoms of the dangerous stage of capitalism we confront.

At the same time, the miners, who supported Yeltsin last August, are now discussing a strike against him. Ever since the massive strikes last Spring the miners have let the new rulers know, "We have rebel blood." But post-Marx Marxism has made the task of the total uprooting of the old and creation of the new immeasurably more difficult. New beginnings cannot easily be found without the pull of a philosophy of revolution.

That is why Marxist-Humanism's Theory of State-Capitalism speaks so profoundly to the task all revolutionaries confront today.* Grounded both in Marx's *Capital* and in his humanist philosophy, the theory Raya Dunayevskaya hewed out 50 years ago led to the philosophic new beginnings that were needed for our age—the restatement of Marx's Marxism as Marxist-Humanism. Nothing else both reveals how the USSR's collapse has focused the spotlight on the one-worldedness of the crisis—and gives humanity a direction for the way out.

Jan. 17, 1992

* See announcement, p. 2.

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Youth

One Dimensional Man in the '90s?

by Jim Guthrie

The new edition of Herbert Marcuse's 1964 book *One Dimensional Man* (ODM), from Beacon Press in 1991, contains an introduction by Douglas Kellner aimed at our generation of youth who have become conscious and radicalized by the many monstrosities of the Reagan-Bush era from the invasion of Grenada to the Persian Gulf War. With the ideological confusion that led to and followed the collapse of the anti-Gulf War movement a year ago, Kellner's assertion that ODM is now "more relevant than ever" poses a serious theoretical challenge.

ODM had a powerful influence over the student youth of the 1960s, who were attracted to its critique of "one dimensional thinking." According to Marcuse, one dimensional thought was the result of the "mechanics of conformity" that had spread throughout our society because the technological restructuring of capitalism undermined the rationality of the individual. This led Marcuse to go so far as to revise Karl Marx's concept of the proletariat, saying that workers in the new highly automated factories could no longer be considered a revolutionary class, but "one dimensional men."

Kellner's introduction makes the case that this theory is key for unlocking the difficult problems of our own retrogressive period. He says that "Reagan and Reaganism exemplified one-dimensional 'positive thinking' to an extreme degree," and that the Persian Gulf war "amply confirmed" Marcuse's fear that the "more sophisticated technologies would 'instrumentalize' war and produce ever more brutal forms of destruction."

It is true that after the horrible spectacle of the Gulf war, with its "surgical bombings" that caused "collateral damage," Marcuse's statement, "People who speak and accept such language seem immune to everything—and susceptible to everything," seems up to date.

MARCUSE, A DIALECTICAL ALTERNATIVE

College students will easily recognize a number of their professors in Marcuse's critiques of the "one dimensional thought" of vulgar empiricism and positivism. My favorite is his critique of two professors who did a study to see if elections in the U.S. were truly democratic, but their "operational definition" of democracy was a description of how elections are run in the U.S., so they concluded that, yes, U.S. elections were indeed democratic. This method of "proclaiming the existing social reality its own norm" sums up the depth of many "poli sci" professors I've known.

ODM is not merely an expose of alienation and conservative hegemony in the modern world, but an attempt to pose a dialectical alternative to the uncritical thought that dominates the universities, the media and the government. Marcuse's concept of the dialectic is what we have to get at if we are to consider Kellner's contention that ODM "is more relevant than ever."

Marcuse is important because he understands that the dialectical transcendence of the existing reality cannot occur in our heads only. The relation of the subject (the human being) to the object (the existing reality of unfreedom) has to be worked out concretely as part of a historical process. This relationship of the subject to the object, however, is what is problematic in ODM.

Marcuse's theoretical point of departure is that the workers have been "integrated" into the capitalist system. He says, "society takes care of the need for liberation by satisfying the needs which make servitude palatable and perhaps even unnoticeable, and it accomplishes this fact in the process of production itself." The proletariat was a revolutionary subject in Marx's day, he claims, but automation has changed that. The objectivity of high-tech capitalism has absorbed workers' subjectivity, their desire and ability to envision a new society of freely associated labor.

WORKERS THINK OWN THOUGHTS

Despite Marcuse's rallying cry against bureaucracy, on the question of automation, he chooses to listen to the union bureaucrats and ignore the voices of rank-and-file workers. He cites the Marxist-Humanist pam-

'Return to the source'

Portland, Maine—As reported by Tom Parsons in his Youth column (November, 1991 N&L), youth are trying to "work out the connectedness of the environmental movement within all freedom movements." This is of particular importance, insofar as when the connection is established between all oppressions—whether of sexism, classism, racism, or oppressive manifestations within state bureaucracy which reinforce these three, leading to genocidal militarism, whether of police state variety or of a more benign variety within Western democracies cloaked in the respectability of legalism, pragmatism and politics and business as usual within our patriarchal society—when the interconnectedness of oppressions is acknowledged, a humanism is pointing a return to the source.

Certainly part of making connections is the realization that the environmentalism of today is a focal point to bring freedom movements together for common strategizing as well as interacting with each other to build a humanist philosophic base, while acknowledging the need to keep the earth whole for all life.

The task before us requires a return to the source of humanism, to hypothesize a time and a society without oppressions and to lend historic credence to a faith that the future society builds toward may be oppression-free—free of the exploitation inherent under unequal relations within state society expressed as sexism, classism, racism and militarism!

—Reader

phlet *Workers Battle Automation*, but doesn't mention one of its main points: that the workers who toil in those automated factories are diametrically opposed to their union leadership's support of automation.

Could the worker, maimed with carpal tunnel syndrome from the repetitive motion of an automated production line, desire freedom any less than her great grandmother who slaved in a low tech cotton mill?

This is not simply a practical question because it involves Marcuse's whole philosophic conception of the dialectic, which allows the objectivity of advanced technology to "absorb" the thinking of a living human subject. This leads to Marcuse substituting his own subjectivity for the subjectivity of workers and youth.

It's this type of substitutionism on the part of intellectuals that allows the rulers to contain our struggles, because the voices of workers in revolt are not met with a movement from theory. What is appealing about ODM is Marcuse's critique of the forces of reaction, and there is an objective need for that. But it would be a mistake for us to develop a theory of retrogression rather than a philosophy of liberation.

Youth in Revolt

by Tom Parsons

"We will not have this university lead the way in re-investing in South Africa," said Pete Mutharika, member of Tufts University committee for divestment, as universities across the country are reversing their policies of no investment in companies that do business in the apartheid state. Students are vowing to rebuild the massive divestment movement of the late '70s and '80s which forced universities to divest originally.

Over a thousand youth protested George Bush's visit to Australia. Student unions, ACT-UP, and anti-militarism groups clashed with police in what was described in an Australian paper as "the most militant demonstration in years."

Jody Anderson was convicted of assault and "exhorting others to join him in defiance," resulting from his defense of Daniel Gillis while Daniel was physically resisting attempts to place him on transport to the Gulf War. As Daniel stated, "An officer put my hands in plastic ties and ordered four marines to force me on to the bus...Since all of the marines attacking me were white, several African-American marines came to my defense. There followed a brawl..."

—Information from *Anti-Warrior*

Thousands in Berlin protested and mourned the death of Mete Eksi, a well-known Turkish anti-fascist activist, Nov. 11. Eksi was severely beaten by racists in Adenaurplatz and died after three weeks in a coma. When the march which took place the same day Eksi died, reached its rallying point, hundreds of riot police attacked the mourners and beat them savagely, preventing any kind of assembly.

—Information from *Wind Chill Factor*

From the writings of Raya Dunayevskaya

(continued from page 4)

will say: No, I'm not only opposed to American imperialism, but also to Russian Communism and Chinese Communism—I want an entirely new society.

Now Part III of *Philosophy and Revolution* is the section that isn't yet written. It is to be called "Economic Reality and the Dialectics of Liberation" and it is on two levels. One is the world level, which takes up the relationship between the advanced countries and the technologically underdeveloped countries. You see that here it is in the 1960s and never has America been so rich and powerful—in fact, the whole world is divided into two great nuclear powers, so that we may all get blown up. And here are the African Revolutions. They didn't have arms, let alone nuclear arms; they didn't have power, not even industrial power. But they dared and they won....

But we don't have to go to Africa to see another great form of the dialectics of liberation...Between 1960 and 1965 the spontaneous movement of the Black youth particularly, and some labor, was the moving force. It really all started with the Montgomery Bus Boycott—and again we were the only ones who recognized it at that time, just as we were the only ones who recognized what the Mau Mau in Africa represented in the 1950s. We printed *People of Kenya Speak for Themselves* in 1955 because we recognized that in the Blacks in Africa starting to throw out the white imperialists, they had started a new page in history that would reshape the world entirely, which it did, and in the shortest period of time at that. In 1957, in *Marxism and Freedom*, we said the two greatest forces in the world for liberation were the Hungarian Revolution and the Montgomery Bus Boycott in Alabama. There was a great deal of ridicule at that time for the plane on which we had placed the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Nobody laughs at it now.

After the spontaneous movement of the Black students between 1960 and 1965, there was not only a great deal of movement on the part of white students

Environmental Justice

(The following is from a talk given by Magdalena Avila, born and raised in Kettleman City in a farm worker family. She is a northern California support organizer for the Kettleman City battle against a toxic incinerator there and a leader in the Environmental Justice movement.)

For people of color and poor working class people environmentalism involves any aspect of the environment that affects the quality of our lives and endangers the health of our communities. Unlike the major environmental organizations, for us, the struggle to stop toxic contamination of our home, workplace and community environments cannot be separated from fights for decent affordable housing, or control of land or resources in our communities, or the struggle for fair and livable employment opportunities.

Environmental activists of color have brought about a new consciousness drawn from our long struggles in the civil rights and labor movements, migrant farmworkers, Native American land rights, and the Asian immigration struggles. Rather than being seen as on the vanguard of environmentalism, however, people of color have been identified as being only "cause oriented" by one of the major environmental groups.

Environmentalism has often been viewed, and more recently criticized as a predominantly white, upper-middle-class movement that is more sensitive to wildlife and the wilderness than to human needs. In the 1960s and 70s, that movement gave little or no attention to the Not In My Backyard phenomenon, so waste generated by society's wealth ended up more often than not in poor, powerless people of color communities. The 1987 study, "Toxics, Waste and Race in the U.S." (the Commission for Racial Justice, Charles Lee) found the racial composition of a community to be the single variable best able to explain the existence of a commercial hazardous waste facility in that area. The following examples show this tragic reality: The nation's largest hazardous waste landfill is located in predominantly African-American and poor Sumter County in the heart of Alabama's "Black Belt."

The predominantly African-American and Latino South side of Chicago has the greatest concentration of hazardous waste sites in the nation. Currently a battle is being fought there against Chem Waste by Haze Jonson among others. Pesticide exposure among farmworkers, predominantly Latino, causes more than 300,000 pesticide related illnesses a year. Navajo Indians were used as the primary work force for the mining of uranium ore, leading to alarming lung cancer mortality rates.

In the steel mills, an overwhelming number of African American workers have disproportionately been placed in the most hazardous areas of the plant. Semiconductor workers, predominantly Asian and Latina immigrant women, experience occupational illness at three times the rate of workers in general manufacturing.

The building of a critical mass of people of color—organizers, workers, intellectuals, and others, is taking place. Knowledge does not only come from the university and the ivory towers. We have to recognize that knowledge comes from many different sources and has different forms, if we are to work at an individual and collective level toward environmental justice.



Our Life and Times

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

The shocking landslide victory at the polls on Dec. 26 of the fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was followed by a slow-motion coup by the pro-National Liberation Front (FLN) military and the cancellation of the second round of those elections. The FIS won 188 seats out of a possible 430 in round one of the first multi-party elections to be held since 1962, when Algeria won its independence from France in a revolutionary war led by the FLN.

The fundamentalist FIS had been poised to win a big majority in the second round, scheduled for Jan. 16, but now cancelled. The FLN, in power continuously since 1962, won only 16 seats, while the more independent leftist Front for Socialist Forces (FFS), based mainly among the one-fourth of Algerians who are Berbers, won 20 seats.

As we go to press, the military, led by general Khalid Nazir, appears to have the upper hand, but it is doubtful that the discredited FLN can hold power too much longer, especially in the face of the extremely severe economic depression that has gripped the country since the late 1980s. By last autumn, Algeria's official unemployment rate was a staggering 30%, with 1.5 million people out of work and 200,000 more entering the labor force each year. Poor and working-class young men, many of whom form a militant core of support for the FIS, are especially hard hit by the crisis.

The big electoral victory for fundamentalist forces in

Death still stalks Iraq

One year after Bush unleashed the U.S. military to rain death over Iraq, a report has concluded that the so-called "smart bombs" used in the air war did not defeat the Iraqi military but did contribute to the death of at least 70,000 civilians after the war was over.

These "smart bombs," centerpieces of the news media, destroyed nearly all of Iraq's electrical system, its water system, sewage treatment, health care facilities and refrigeration units. In effect, these bombs unleashed a public health war against Iraqi civilians. Against the Iraqi military, the U.S. relied on conventional bombs, dropping more than 100 million pounds on soldiers.

The children of Iraq are bearing the brunt of the U.S. war and sanctions. Deaths among children have escalated four times since the war; nearly a million suffer from malnutrition, and 100,000 are close to risk of death from starvation. Polio and measles—easily preventable childhood diseases—are reappearing. The mortality rate among children has gone up a horrific 380%. No one has yet been able to estimate the mental damage done to children.

The Bush administration has claimed all along that it wasn't the war or sanctions that were hurting the Iraqi people, but Saddam Hussein. And one year later, the Bush administration has not refuted the reports of civilian suffering in Iraq but has instead, in effect, blamed the Iraqi population for not overthrowing Hussein!

As Bush is saber-rattling against Iraq again, it should be remembered that this administration kept the butcher Saddam Hussein in power by allowing the Iraqi military to slaughter the uprisings by Kurds and Iraqis which erupted after Iraq's defeat.

Fundamentalist retrogression in Algeria

Algeria will impact not only North Africa, but the entire Arab-Muslim world. For example, unlike Iran's Shiite fundamentalists, the FIS is rooted in the more widespread, mainly Arab-based Sunni tradition.

The FIS blames the economic and political crisis facing Algeria on a supposed decline in "morals" among the youth. One of its slogans calls for "austerity, abstinence, and rejection of the Western world" while another states "Islam is the light; democracy is darkness."

Women in particular face attack. The FIS proposes to drive back into the home even those few women who have entered the work force, wants to re-veil the entire female population, and has already begun to implement these policies through pervasive street harassment of unveiled women. Many women opposed to the fundamentalists were thus intimidated even from voting, while pro-fundamentalist women voted in large numbers, usually accompanied by male escorts, who in some

cases filled out the ballots for them.

Secular and left forces have taken to the streets in large numbers since Dec. 26 to oppose the possibility of a fundamentalist takeover. On Jan. 2, up to 300,000 people demonstrated in Algiers against the FIS, in a demonstration organized by a large number of political, trade union and women's groups. On Jan. 9, several thousand fist-waving women also took to the streets to oppose the FIS. One of the speakers, women's activist Khalida Messaoudi, told the crowd: "We must fight!" In an attempt to appeal to women, Hocine Ait-Ahmed, a leader of the independent Left FFS, began in January to address rallies accompanied by the FFS's only woman candidate, who was also the only woman still left on the ballot at all.

While the fundamentalist victory at the polls is a very great setback indeed, it is also important to note that more than 40% of the eligible voters did not vote at all. However, the greater truth is that FIS was able to obtain three million votes despite the fact that the FLN controlled the electoral apparatus, the police, the military and most of the mass media.

The FLN, a supposedly secular and socialist party, has done little since coming to power in 1962 to concretize the revolutionary aspirations unleashed by the war for independence. But on the crucial issue of women's liberation, even the original revolution had an ambiguous position, based in part on cultural and religious nationalism. In 1959 the FLN newspaper proclaimed: "The Algerian woman is already free because she participates in the liberation of her country."

But as the Arab feminist Mai Ghousseub observed a few years ago: "The much greater radicalism of the revolutionary experience in Algeria might have been expected to produce a more advanced social situation for women after Independence than in the neighboring states. Ironically, however, the result was rather to be the reverse."

The Algerian revolution did not include much in the way of social and legal changes aimed specifically at enhancing the position of women. This major contradiction in the history of the Algerian revolution is one which the fundamentalists have been able to exploit, with their rhetoric blaming the small numbers of women working outside the home for today's massive unemployment.

Ethnic war in Somalia

The world media, based mainly in Europe and North America, have tended to ignore the carnage taking place in Somalia, on the Horn of Africa, where at least 20,000 people have been killed since renewed fighting broke out on Nov. 17. Over ten times that number have become refugees, in a country whose entire population is only six million.

The fighting is between rival clans of the Hawiye ethnic group, which are vying for control of the ruling party, the United Somali Congress. Somalia has been locked in ethnic and clan conflict ever since January, 1991, when the war to oust longtime dictator Mohamed Siad Barre ended. But since the victorious opposition leaders had no positive goals or philosophy other than power-grabbing for themselves, the result has been a continuation of the war in a different form.

Attack on Mexican peasants

The Mexican government in December overturned articles in its 1917 Constitution, forged in the Mexican Revolution, which restricted the legal rights of the



Church. While giving scant more political influence to the Catholic Church, the move was certainly intended to add one more overt ally to the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party).

The Mexican government of Salinas de Gortari, forged in the capitalist entrepreneurial spirit of the Reaganite 1980s, has been moving to privatize an array of Mexican industries, from the telephone system to the historically important oil industry.

Now Salinas has set his sights on Mexican agriculture, intent to overturn the land tenure system of ejidos which broke up large landholding estates and was central to the Mexican Revolution. Land now owned by peasants through land reform redistribution can be sold or rented to outside interests, including foreign capitalists.

The Mexican government began strangling the ejidos long before the 1990s, by drying up economic credits which the communal farms needed. The attempt to break up the ejidos is not simply an attack on a property form, however. It is an attack on the Mexican peasantry as a Subject of revolution, whom the state dreams it has eliminated.

Who We Are and What We Stand For

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

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

Raya Dunayevskaya (1910-87), founder of the body of ideas of Marxist-Humanism, became Chairwoman of the National Editorial Board and National Chairwoman of the Committees from its founding to 1987. Charles Denby (1907-83), a Black production worker, author of *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*, became editor of the paper from 1955 to 1983. Dunayevskaya's works *Marxism and Freedom...from 1776 until Today* (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 philosophical ground of Marx's Humanism internationally, as *American Civilization on Trial* concretizes it on the American scene and shows the two-way road between the U.S. and Africa. These works challenge post-Marx Marxists to return to Marx's Marxism.

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

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

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

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

Recession hits Canada

The world recession has hit hard in Canada. The unemployment rate is over 10%—more than 1½ million people. According to official statistics, more than a million Canadian children live in poverty.

Many Canadians, while recognizing a world recession, are also pointing to the effects of the Free Trade Agreement with the U.S. It is estimated that over 400,000 Canadian manufacturing jobs have been eliminated since the FTA was agreed to in 1989. That is nearly 20% of the total manufacturing jobs.

Trade agreements, by themselves, are not levers of wealth or employment. While Bush was in Japan, he of course asserted that Japanese auto market shares were robbing U.S. jobs. But this is the same way that U.S. capitalism is robbing jobs from Canada under the FTA.

In Canada, the shutdowns of companies that are either closing, or leaving Canada, account for twice as many jobs lost as during the 1982 recession. The loss of 61,000 jobs in 1991 amounted to nearly a 3% cut in manufacturing jobs. Many multi-national companies have shut down because they refuse to provide the Canadian workers' demands for decent wages and working conditions. While the FTA is not the cause of this economic crisis in Canada, it surely has exacerbated it.

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