

NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

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How to win more union elections



by S. Hamer

I read an article about a labor researcher, Kate Bronfenbrenner at Cornell University. She wanted to find out why, in this day and age, unions are losing a lot of campaigns.

She says there has been a great decline in unionizing the workplace and her explanation is that labor's official focus is on factors beyond the control of the union: labor laws; the decline in manufacturing jobs; and aggressive opposition to organizing by employers.

One factor that I feel has a great effect on the workers is the harsh mentality that employers use to brainwash employees with. Also many workers think that bosses are superior. I think this has a lot to do with why we don't get facilities organized. It's that mentality that the boss has given me a job and if I vote a union in, I'm going to lose it.

Bronfenbrenner is saying when companies show those anti-strike films and other anti-labor actions it affects the workers. And it does. I've been involved in several campaigns where 95% sign authorization cards. Then the company will start showing strike films with a lot of violence and this influences many workers. She is saying we need to educate workers on why strikes are necessary.

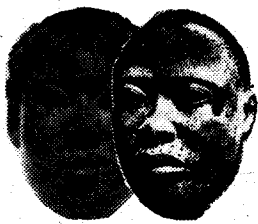
Because of this brainwashing, a person who seeks a total change in the workplace, or in society as a whole, has to be self-developed in the mind and build new concepts of what direction this society should go, and what it takes to get there.

Bronfenbrenner also says how important it is to use rank-and-file workers in campaigns and how this makes a tremendous difference in the outcome of elections. I feel this way too because no one can connect to a worker like a worker. If you come out of a plant and they won't let you use the bathroom, or they won't send you to the doctor, or they work you 12 or 14 hours a day, then the best person to talk to you about it is the person who went through this situation. A worker can understand

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Black World

Black History Month 1999



by Lou Turner

February marked the last Black History Month of the 20th century. That this year also marks the 80th anniversary of what James Weldon Johnson called the "Red Summer" of 1919 is not without significance in 1999. The color red was not only a reference to the streets running red with blood from the race war that ignited in cities, towns, and rural areas across this nation that fateful year. It referred to the emergence of the radicalism of the "New Negro" who was of a mind to fight the racist status quo in America.

Almost seven years after the 1992 Los Angeles rebellion, the racist backlash has made it clear that Black America is once again at war. Police brutality and murders like the street execution of the young West African brother, Amadou Diallo, by four New York City cops, the filling of prisons to overflowing with Black working-class youth, the railroading of Black men and women in the criminal injustice system, the campaign to abolish affirmative action, and the ongoing war on the poor are all battle fronts in this war.

Instead of the radicalism of the "New Negro," what has emerged today is a "New Afrikan" liberation movement behind the prison walls, the second act of the Civil Rights Movement in the form of Southern labor struggles led by Black women, and the mobilization of an international movement to free the Black political prisoner, Mumia Abu-Jamal.

The 1919 "Red Summer" saw 25 race rebellions, the two most prominent being the July riots in Washington, D.C. which brought out federal troops commanded by President Wilson's Military Chief of Staff, and the July-August Chicago riot.

It was in response to the pitched racial battles of Washington and Chicago that the Black radical poet

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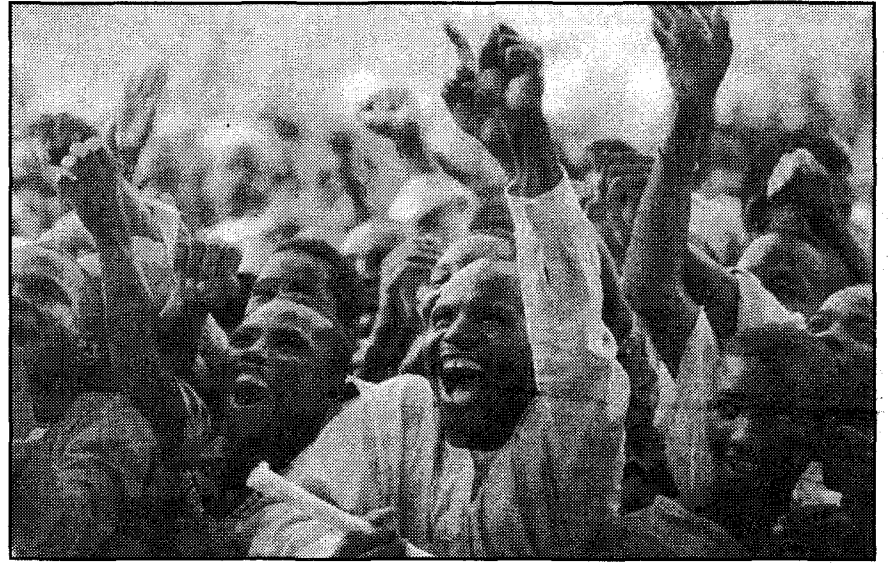
Nigerian elections reflect new upheavals on African continent

by Ba Karang

The Feb. 27 election in Nigeria, which resulted in the election of Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo as president, is being touted by the regime as proof of its "transitional program" for restoring the country to democracy. But no one should be fooled into believing that the military junta is serious about handing over power and returning to the barracks.

Obasanjo became the first elected president in 16 years by defeating Olu Falae, a former finance minister. Obasanjo served as president in the late 1970s in a military-backed government, which violently suppressed student and worker protests. After falling out with the regime of Gen. Sani Abacha in 1995, he was jailed and only secured his freedom after Abacha's death last year. Since then he has campaigned as the one candidate who can act as a "bridge" between military and civilian leaders. (See the August-September 1998 "Black World" column on Nigeria's political crisis and the rise of Obasanjo.)

Though Obasanjo's campaign has attracted some interest because of the desire for democracy, he is also distrusted by the masses because of his long ties to the military. His campaign was openly backed by a number of powerful generals who are sure to make their voices heard in any government headed by him. Despite these elections, the military will continue to rule the country, and their desire for military hegemony in the continent will remain intact.



Election rally in Engu, Nigeria.

NEW STRUGGLES IN NIGERIA

What has led the military to create the pretense of a transition to democracy is that the masses' hatred of international capital is beginning to unite the Nigerian masses in their struggle for equality and justice. The hanging several years ago of environmental activist Ken Saro-Wiwa, who led a struggle of the Ogoni people for freedom and self-determination, showed the international community that the bitter struggle of Nigerians against their military rulers and international capital had gained momentum. More recently, this year's annual

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U.S. undermines Kosova at Rambouillet

As we go to press, the Clinton administration's effort to impose a "settlement" on the crisis in Kosova is at a standstill. Two weeks of negotiations in Rambouillet, France ended in a deadlock when the Kosovars refused to agree to Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's plan to place 30,000 NATO troops in Kosova in exchange for having the Kosovars drop their demand for independence—something that has been central to them since Serbia's Slobodan Milosevic embarked upon a war of ethnic cleansing against Kosova one year ago.

Despite their rhetoric, neither the U.S. nor its NATO allies are motivated by concern for the people of Kosova. They are instead concerned about saving face for NATO. The administration feared that its plans for a summit this April on the 50th anniversary of NATO's founding, where Clinton plans to unveil a "new strategic concept" of its future responsibilities, would be dramatically undermined if full-scale warfare resumed in Kosova. The U.S. also used the Rambouillet conference to soften Russia's hostility to NATO's expansion by giving it a major role, even though as an ally of Serbia this strengthened the hand of Milosevic.

As in Bosnia earlier, so in Kosova today, what drives U.S. policy is not the demands and concerns of the victims of ethnic cleansing but rather its own geopolitical agenda for NATO.

The Rambouillet plan calls for sending 30,000 NATO troops to Kosova, including 4,000 from the U.S., for the next three years. While Kosova would be considered autonomous of Serbia during this period, the actual level of autonomy falls far short of what Kosova enjoyed before 1989, when Milosevic unilaterally annulled its autonomy. Serbia would also be allowed to retain 4,000 troops in the region.

The plan included few procedures whereby the perpetrators of ethnic cleansing against Bosnia and Kosova could be brought to justice. There was even talk behind the scenes that the U.S. would be willing to drop the charges against Milosevic currently pending before the international tribunal in The Hague if he agreed to the

NATO troop deployment.

Milosevic has yet to signal that he will agree to the NATO deployment, though he might if he feels it would help him cement control over Kosova. That this is not out of the question was shown 12 days into the conference, when the U.S. suddenly added a security annex that would force the Kosova Liberation Army (KLA) to turn in its weapons and dissolve itself during the three-year interim period. The U.S. also insisted that the KLA explicitly disavow any demand for independence. The KLA balked at this, seeing little reason why it should agree to a three-year ceasefire if at the end of it everything reverts back to Serbia's control.

After coming under intense pressure from Albright, the KLA announced that it may agree to the Rambouillet plan after consulting with its members back home. Negotiations are scheduled to resume on March 15. It is by no means clear whether the whole KLA will come on board, despite intense U.S. pressure, since several of its leaders have denounced the accords as a sell out.

Milosevic is meanwhile readying his troops for a possible offensive against the KLA. Even during the Rambouillet conference, Serbian forces continued their genocidal attacks on the Kosovars, forcing more than 10,000 from their homes.

The Rambouillet conference reproduces all the characteristics of the U.S. policy vis-a-vis Bosnia. It pretends to show concern for the victims of ethnic cleansing, while helping to strengthen Serbia's position. It threatens to initiate air strikes if Serbia does not agree to compromise, while using this as a lever to force concessions from Serbia's opponents.

As always, most of the Left remains silent on all of this or takes the administration's rhetoric at face value by acting as if the threat of air strikes means it favors the struggles of the Kosovar people. Nothing could be further from the truth, and the continued machinations by the U.S. and NATO in the coming weeks are sure to reconfirm this.

—Peter Wermuth
Feb. 27, 1999

ON THE INSIDE



Special section, pages 6-7

ROUGH NOTES ON HEGEL'S SCIENCE OF LOGIC

Second of four-part serialization of Raya Dunayevskaya's detailed commentary on Hegel's pathbreaking work.

Woman as Reason

Feminist 'Fire' in India

Clinic defense continues

by Maya Jhansi

Today, India is aflame with vicious right-wing violence, especially against the Christian minority, but also as always against women and dalits, or untouchables. In the last few months such ghastly crimes as the burning to death of an Australian Christian missionary and his two sons, the rape of a nun, as well as countless bible burnings and attacks on churches, have been perpetrated with the tacit support of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government. In conjunction with this bloody right-wing rampage, a cultural war has emerged against all forms of artistic, intellectual and political expression. It is in such a context that Deepa Mehta's thought-provoking film "Fire" met fire in India in December 1998.

"Fire" is a film that explores the emergence of a lesbian relationship between two daughters-in-law at the center of a traditional, extended Hindu family. Released in English first, it has received over 14 international awards. When it finally made it past the censors in India a year later, it attracted hundreds, especially women in urban centers all over the country.

It was not long, however, before "Fire" came under attack by right-wing Hindu thugs, who savagely attacked theaters, tore down posters and threatened movie-goers. On Dec. 7, hundreds of women, intellectuals and activists, including rarely visible lesbian and gay groups, protested in front of a New Delhi theater, preventing them from disrupting a showing of the film. Rather than cracking down on these thugs (many of whom are "respectable" politicians anyway), the government sent the film back to the censors.

"Fire" has become the center of a tug of war over the meaning of national, cultural and religious identity—with right-wingers making the expected and boring claim that "lesbianism" is not a part of "our," i.e., a Brahmanical, elitist Hindu dominated, culture. (Who cares?). Besides this, the film has also become a topic of debate between those advocating gay and lesbian rights, Leftists, and yes, even postmodernists. While the organized Indian Left has never until now been supportive of gay and lesbian rights, postmodernist subaltern studies advocates are hailing the film for depicting the pluralism inherent in Indian society, one that disrupts the hegemony of a class-based Indian culture.

Yet, even this doesn't get at the real challenge that this film poses to Indian society. It is not the depiction of lesbianism as an expression of pluralism or "alternative lifestyles" that makes this film so hot, but rather the fact that "Fire" adds fuel to a radical questioning of human relations at the center of the entrenched patriarchal Indian family. Indeed, this is revealed most clearly in the statement issued by the women's wing of the Shiv Sena, a militaristic right-wing Hindu party: "If a woman's physical needs get fulfilled through lesbian acts, the institution of marriage will collapse...reproduction of human beings will stop....A majority of the women in our society do not even know about lesbian-

ism. Why expose them to it?" This is a testament not only to the ignorance of the Shiv Sena (lesbianism is not an unknown to most Indian women), but also to their fear about the fragility of the Indian family.

Some have critiqued "Fire" for presenting lesbianism as an act of desperation by two women who aren't fulfilled by their erring husbands. This is certainly the context in which the relationship between the two women develops. In the process, however, they raise a most fundamental and radical question: what constitutes a meaningful and fulfilling human relationship? A meaningful sexual relationship? In the tension the women

feel between their own desire and their duty to family, they embody the struggle of women in India for an individuality denied by the twin demons of Indian patriarchy and Indian capitalism, both of which are personified by the two husbands in the film. The older woman's husband has given his own sexuality over to the self-denial of Hindu asceticism, while the younger woman's husband attempts to westernize himself through a racial and national self-denial.

At one point, the younger of the

women, Nita, talks about how there is no name in their language (Hindi) for what they feel. Here, the subversiveness of their relationship lies in its openness, its refusal to remain the silent and tacitly overlooked underside of compulsory heterosexuality.

The title of the film "Fire" has many sources and referents, most vivid of which is the ritualistic place of fire in Indian culture, in weddings as well as in bride burnings, in prayer as well as in violence. Throughout the film, there are references also to the Hindu epic, *Ramayana*, in which Lord Ram's wife Sita, who had been abducted by the demon king Ravana, is forced to prove her sexual purity (she might have been raped after all) by withstanding a test of fire. "Fire" likewise ends in a test of fire, an attempted bride burning, through which the older woman, Radha, must pass.

The fact that the women leave the family, disrupting its normal everyday functioning, suggests a more radical upheaval and reordering of human relations than forwarded either by the Left, jumping on the gay rights bandwagon, or the postmodernists, who contradictorily make a principle out of pluralism. If this film and the politics of its reception have shown anything, it is the ways that women and the Queer dimension in India issue a challenge, not only to the narrow nationalism of the Right, but also to the truncated vision of the Indian Left.

What feminism means to an African woman

The feminist struggle for women's rights is not new to African women; it has been ongoing since the beginning of human society. For African women, historical records show how issues like slavery and bondage and later colonialism have defined the arena of struggle over the last 500 years. Throughout our recent past, these issues have shaped our participation in struggles, thereby giving the impression that African women have been unaware or uncritical of patriarchy and sexist culture. The fact that African women had to fight first as nationalists for the right to life and freedom from colonial oppression does not invalidate the centuries of their rejection of male domination.

You will agree with me that there is no human being who likes to be oppressed and silenced. The problem of male domination, in all its forms, is a male problem, just as the problem of racism is the problem of the racist and not of the victim. One is often reminded of the sanctimonious attitude of a racist who proclaims that "some of my best friends are Blacks," or "my natives are happy; they never complain," when men say "What is your problem? Convince me that you are oppressed!" or "my wife/girlfriend was happy until she came into contact with you feminists; you are the troublemakers!" There is an unfortunate but real similarity between these two sets of views, and African men who are sexists and chauvinist had better take the gender issue very seriously.

Like all social phenomena, feminism is historically defined by the different phases of social development. Therefore as a concept it must be related to the experiences of women within specific social contexts. For example, those women who are engaged in the anti-colonial, anti-racist struggles at a time, define their feminism in the context of national liberation.

That does not mean that the struggle against patriarchy can wait until after the war. No social problem can be shelved, especially one whose resolution is so crucial to the whole democratic process. The suggestion

The murder of Dr. Barnett Slepian in a Buffalo suburb in October once again made headlines out of the continuing struggle for women's reproductive rights. But in this struggle, there are other day-to-day battles that don't make headlines, but are just as important.

The passage of the federal Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act created a major obstacle to the efforts of Operation Rescue and similar extremist anti-choice groups to physically block entrances. But the extremists have not disappeared. Instead, they have evolved a new set of tactics which are less dramatic but perhaps more difficult to combat.

Here in New York, we have been struggling with these tactics for almost nine years. A right-wing Catholic group has developed the technique of "sidewalk counseling." Women approaching the clinic are intercepted by one of a team of "sidewalk counselors." They claim that they can help with clothes, free medical care, and financial support for the pregnancy. What is actually available to the women is old baby clothes and referral to publicly financed medical care "if you're eligible."

We rarely hear about what the patients themselves go through. Most are young and generally women of color, many of them immigrants. Not only are they confronted with the counselors, but they also must pass a large sidewalk display of "abortion is murder" posters, posters of so-called aborted babies, and plastic models of fetuses. Next to this, a larger group of demonstrators prays and sings continuously all morning. Once every few months the Bishop of the diocese leads a march and prayer vigil of several hundred in front of the clinic. The group has taught these techniques to other anti-choice groups, in the U.S. and several foreign countries.

The clinic has been unable to stop this continuous harassment of their patients. The police do almost nothing except restrict the number of "sidewalk counselors" working with patients at any one time. The clinic has also been the victim of arson, vandalism, and telephoned death threats during this period.

A major source of support for the clinic has been a grass-roots pro-choice group. We have been patient escorts at this clinic for the nine years it has been under siege. What do clinic escorts do? We intercept and greet patients approaching the clinic before the "sidewalk counselors" do. We inform patients that they do not have to listen to the demonstrators or take their materials, and walk them to the door. If we see serious problems, we call them to the attention of the police, or document them on paper for possible legal action.

Some of us are lawyers, others social workers, artists, teachers, sales clerks, and postal workers. Most of us are women, but a number of men work with us. During the week, a group of university students takes over escorting on one morning, which changes regularly.

But confronting extremists like these shows that there are wider issues at stake. What we see with our own eyes every Saturday is how the religious right's anti-choice activity combines race, class, and gender discrimination.

If clinic escorting sounds like something you would like to do, your city's NARAL or Planned Parenthood office can usually put you in touch with a local group that can use your help.

—Joanna Benjamin

International Women's Day 1999

Bessie Cohen, center, was one of the last survivors of the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Fire. She died on February 24, 1999 at the age of 107. There is still one remaining survivor.



"In spring 1908...New York garment workers declared March 8 to be Women's Day. The following year, in support of the locked-out Triangle Shirtwaist Makers, the mass outpouring became known as the 'Uprising of the 20,000'; that so inspired the German Working Women's movement that its leader, Clara Zetkin, proposed to the Marxist International that March 8 become an International Women's Day."

To learn more about women's revolutionary history and thought, order Raya Dunayevskaya's *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future now*, see page 9.

Women prisoner solidarity

In my recent visits to women's prisons in Chowchilla Cal. we were discussing ways to build solidarity among prisoners and between inside and outside. When I talked with E., she was very excited about the topic. She said, "if 3,000 of us refuse to eat the food with no nutritional value, they will change it."

For E. this was no mere wishful thinking. She felt solidarity has to be built on a strong sense of self. E. shared with me her list of things they can't have. Those include love of your higher power, relations with your family, your dignity your self-esteem, your pride, and your drive to improve yourself.

Other women prisoners recognize the importance of such a list and want to discuss it more. When I raised it with another woman prisoner, L., she told me of the time she first found out a woman prisoner died in her prison from gross medical neglect. Many women decided not to report to work the following day to show respect for the woman who died. The authorities were furious. They ordered the striking women to go back to work. Then they threatened to write 115s (guard's complaint against a prisoner, which can lead to many different forms of disciplinary action) for any woman who did not report to work immediately. While the officer was writing a 115 for L., he smirked "you will not be doing this again." L. replied that while a 115 may deprive her of some privilege, the woman who died lost a lot more. L. told me her self-respect demanded she accept their punishment to show solidarity.

—Urszula Wislanka

International Women's Day raises several problems, and prepares the ground for a more serious discussion of the gender issues surrounding the lives of both women and men in Africa. We hope that the debate initiated by this day will move to a higher level, and draw into its scope more African male participants.

The Struggle Continues!!!

—Gambian woman

Campaign for contract from Overnite

Memphis, Tenn.—I work for Overnite Transportation and am in Teamsters Local 667. We've been trying to get a union contract for the last five years. This past month Overnite pulled another dirty deal. They went back to people's files and said a lot of workers had falsified their job applications and they fired between nine and 16 workers—including one of the most active union organizers. Most of them were union activists.

They're scared because Hoffa Jr. said flat out he's going to get us a contract this year. So they are trying to get rid of us any way they can.

We had another demonstration downtown in front of the Labor Board and this time we were backed by the IBT (Teamsters), and other members from freight (See October 1998 *N&L*). There were about 40 of us protesting because they're still giving us bad decisions from one board agent, John Bowders. Ever since he's taken the Overnite cases, he's been throwing them out left and right.

The organizer from the IBT, Bob Cruiser, told the regional director that it's just real difficult to deal with somebody who calls himself "Mr. Overnite." The regional director said, "Who here calls himself that?" Then they asked Bowders if he didn't call himself that and he said, Yes. We couldn't flat out say we think Bowders is on the take, but we told him how we felt.

We've had some anti-union people try to file for a decertification election to get the union kicked out. But we're not going nowhere. Last year we threatened to strike every place that was union. After union locals had one-day walkouts in Atlanta, Cincinnati, Kansas City, and Miami over local grievances, we threatened to do it nationwide. Overnite said we'll negotiate in good faith if you don't strike. The union said, okay. Overnite did negotiate for a month and a half until October when the slow season starts up. Then they said that everything we've agreed to, we **don't** agree to. Now we are back to square one.

Time and a half is one of our big issues. They don't give us time and a half until after 45 hours. Overnite says they don't have to pay time and a half after eight hours in one day because the freight goes over the state lines. There is some

kind of loophole in the law and if they can squeeze through it, they will.

We also want a grievance procedure. Overnite just doesn't want these things. It all boils down to one thing and that's power. You come in and you don't know what time you're going home. I've come in at 6:00 a.m. and didn't leave until 5:30 in the afternoon. One year they worked us six days a week, 10 to 12 hours a day. Basically you don't have any freedom.

The only thing Overnite wants you to think of is Overnite. Then you have some fools up there who think that Overnite is such a good company. They think, this company gave me a job, they're taking care of my family. I look at them like they're crazy because they might provide for your family, but when is the last time you've had time to spend with your family?

I think people should look for something to happen this year. We all know what it is going to come down to, we just don't know when. And we don't want Overnite to know when either. They think we're going out on strike tomorrow. They've called in all their scabs from other terminals that are non-union. They've flown them down here and have them in hotels. They paid for their hotels and airline tickets, but they don't want to give us union wages or time and a half after eight. It's been a hard fight, but we're going to win one way or the other.

—Fighting union shop steward

Solidarity in Ontario

Chatham, Ont.—Anger and frustration with Tory cutbacks erupted at a mass demonstration Jan. 23 as a breakaway crowd of 500 cheering demonstrators burst into the lobby of the Best Western Wheel's Inn. The 460 members of the CAW (Canadian Auto Workers) have been on strike at the Wheel's Inn for two months, looking for a first contract. The Bradley family, which owns half of the town of Chatham, appears hell-bent on breaking the union.

In the spontaneous action, the demonstrators showed solidarity against local police who have been harassing small numbers of the young picketers seeking their first contract since their strike began Nov. 25. The action by about half of the crowd seemed to catch organizers by surprise, as the rest of the crowd of 1,500 demonstrators listened to speeches at a massive rally which closed down the central part of this southwestern Ontario town.

"This takes me back 55 years," said Manse Mathias, a retired Ford autoworker from Windsor, referring to earlier mass actions such as the Ford and Stelco strikes of the mid-1940s. "People were dropping their tools, leaving the plants, and going to the picket lines and the bosses couldn't do a damned thing. It gives you the sense of power that exists with masses of people."

Newsworkers from Detroit were front and centre in the demonstration, offering their support and solidarity, and drawing strength from the gathering. The *News* and *Free Press* workers have been on strike for 43 months, as the Gannett and Knight-Ridder chains attempt to break their union.

"All they have is their money, but we are stronger and we will win because we have each other!" a striking newsworker told the wildly cheering crowd.

Speakers included a 14-year-old young woman who was hired at the Wheel's Inn for just three weeks before the strike. She said she was hired by management who thought she would cross the picket line, but she hasn't and won't.

The workers want better pay and working conditions. While they have been on the picket lines, scabs living in the hotel have taken their jobs.

Although the Bradley family says it can't offer the workers more than pennies an hour in raises, it paid \$13 an hour and \$200 a week bonuses to scabs over the holidays in December and January.

"Why can they pay the scabs but they can't pay, us?" asked one 18-year-old striker.

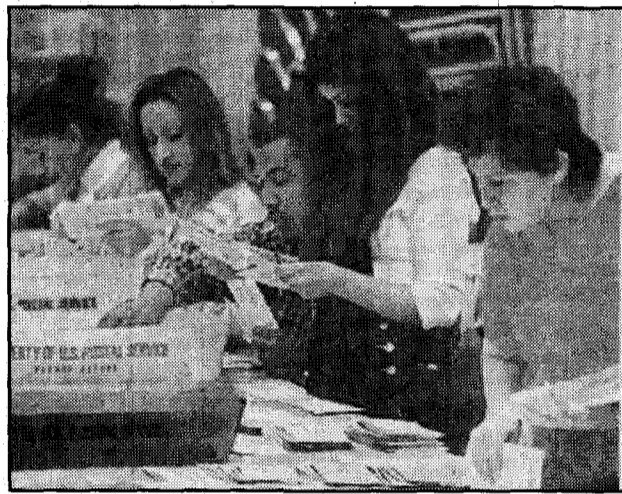
Wayne Samuelson, president of the 650,000-member Ontario Federation of Labour, called for an end to Premier Mike Harris's legislation that lets businesses hire scabs during a strike.

"I say to (Premier Mike) Harris and (Liberal Leader Dalton) McGuinty, wake up! This province should not have scabs," he shouted, to the crowd's cheers.

The CAW, Canadian Union of Public Employees, Ontario Federation of Secondary School Teachers, Ontario Federation of Labour, Public Service Alliance of Canada, Service Employees International Union of Canada, Hotel Workers (HERE) and other unions were represented.

Boycott the Best Western Hotels and the Wheel's Inn in Chatham until the strike is settled.

Home care union triumph



Home care workers in Los Angeles County, 74,000 strong, voted in the Service Employees (SEIU) in February in the single most massive organizing campaign in recent years. Home care workers provide essential services to the disabled for—until now—minimum wage without pension or medical benefits.

Pay bias battle in Capitol

Washington, D.C.—This is what is new in the struggle of us women custodians who clean the government buildings to win a union contract and equal pay for equal work. The men get \$1.10 more per hour plus overtime. We've never been allowed to get overtime on a regular basis and they don't use seniority for the women; they pick and choose.

The men work alternate Sunday nights, so each man has 88 hours each pay period while the lady custodians have 80. We asked for back pay of \$50,000 per custodian. You know what they offered us just last month? \$1,500! It was like a slap in the face.

There was a nice article about us in *The Roll Call* where Juanita Millingder McDonald from California said: "My colleagues need to look no further than their own offices to find a bona fide example of pay discrimination. Hard working cleaning crews come into our office each night. The men on those crews have the job title laborers while the women are called custodians. Based on their different job titles the women are paid less than their male counterparts despite the fact that they do equivalent work."

On another front, late last year the Office of Compliance filed a complaint that the fire protection in the House wasn't working properly. The inspector general came over to the House side of the Congress building and inspected the sprinklers, smoke detectors, and fire extinguishers and found the building to be a fire trap.

Then last month, the chief steward and I testified to the Subcommittee on Legislation Appropriations on the House side. We pointed out that it's not safe to have people in these buildings working when you don't have the proper equipment to protect them. It's not only us; they're not protected either.

We also brought up security. They are talking about contracting out our jobs. We brought up the fact that with private contractors you have a large turnover and that's going to create more work for the Capitol Hill Police. Because people are coming and going they have to keep fingerprinting and doing security checks. We're thinking of going before the Subcommittee on the Senate side with the same problem of the fire hazard and the security question.

We don't have a contract yet. It is a little better since we have the union in than before. I really did think that our struggle for equal pay would take a long time, maybe five years. They are determined that they are not going to do right. They've been doing rotten and dirty things for so long and had no one to answer to. But now they do.

—Hazel Dews, President, AFSCME Local 626

Health workers face crisis

Oakland, Cal.—Activists from a community group called "Vote Health" met with hospital workers, nurses and doctors on Jan. 20, focusing on the impending merger and acquisition of two major East Bay hospitals (Summit and Alta Bates) by giant Sutter Health and Kaiser Oakland. Kaiser Permanente still stubbornly plans to close their historic flagship hospital in Oakland and contract out hospital services for its members with Summit.

This community/worker coalition, taking its cue from the successful struggle to win back Kaiser's Richmond hospital (see December 1998 *N&L*), then met with the Oakland city council's Public Safety Committee on Feb. 9.

Don DeMoro of the Institute for Health and Socio-Economic Policy made a compelling presentation of the already rampant 'medical redlining' based on race and class in the Bay Area, of ongoing inequality in health care access even before the proposed mergers and restructuring. This is especially true for a majority Black city like Oakland, where much of its disenfranchised population rely on the emergency room as a health care provider of last resort.

Executives from Sutter, Summit, and Kaiser then made their own arguments with their so-called surveys of "patient satisfaction," daring to make the Orwellian claim that a downsized health care system actually makes for better quality and delivery.

Regarding the data on medical redlining, one Black veteran nurse at Kaiser Oakland said, "This is a good study, but what are all these new surveys and data going to do? Those of us who live in the community have always known these facts."

Her sentiments reflect the spirit of the rank-and-file nurses of California Nurses Association (CNA) who won a landmark contract providing nurses with concrete powers in determining quality of care. But the contract settlement left unresolved the issue raised by CNA during the strike: medical redlining.

Immediately after ratification, Kaiser announced that they would move all Oakland inpatient services to Summit. This effectively pulled the rug out from under the Kaiser nurses at Oakland, in their newly negotiated power over quality of care.

The current community/worker alliance represents a continuity with that CNA struggle. Redlining goes to the core of the issue of quality care.

While SEIU Local 250 participated in the Vote Health action, expressing their opposition to Sutter's growing dominance over the health care industry, their Strategic Partnership agreement with Kaiser makes them a partner to restructuring plans like Kaiser's impending alliance with Summit which in turn is applying to be a franchise of Sutter. How can a labor union be for "quality care" and yet avoid a clear and direct opposition to medical redlining?

Healthcare workers cannot afford to become partners to the ever increasing practice of withholding and commodification of healthcare. Rank-and-file vigilance can not only keep previous gains from being reversed but can also expand our concept of health care for all.

—Kaiser rank-and-filer

Workshop Talks

(Continued from page 1)

another worker's pain—the torment of a work day without a union.

Even if we have rotten labor laws, Bronfenbrenner said, you have to put resources into organizing. You have to put money into a campaign so you can educate workers about what is needed. But a lot of unions go in and won't put in the full resources needed to educate people about how a union can change your workplace, how a union can change your standard of living.

I agree with Bronfenbrenner that the success of organizing an unorganized facility is to focus on what are the issues in that plant. It's more meaningful to people than if you just say we are coming in to get you organized so you can get more money. If the issue is you're not getting medical treatment when you are hurt on the job, Bronfenbrenner is saying you should target that issue.

In a lot of campaigns, Bronfenbrenner says, unions have targeted mostly the white workforce and factories with higher paying jobs and not places where Hispanics, Blacks, and women are. But these are the people who have more problems, where the harassment and injustice take a great toll. She thinks that is one reason the number of organized places has declined.

Bronfenbrenner agrees with how AFL-CIO President John Sweeney put money into organizing. I took part in Union Summer in 1996, where we went all over the U.S. and got college students to come out to different facilities and try to organize. They had some success. Bronfenbrenner says the reason there isn't more organizing is because of staff shortages and that we need more people believing in unions and going to school and studying labor laws.

Where I disagree with her is that she seems to think that we need to use more students, and I think if they used more rank-and-file workers then a hell of a lot more places would get organized. The unions are focusing on the more educated, like students coming out of college, training them. But I think the best method is to pull out the rank-and-file to organize. They are trying to educate students to do something we already know how to do.

Review: Empowering and organizing the imprisoned class

*Editor's note: The author of this review, Luis Bato Talamantez, was a prisoner in San Quentin's Adjustment Center, California's first Security Housing Unit. In 1971 the Adjustment Center was the site of a bloody prisoner uprising which took the life of three guards and several prisoners, one of them revolutionary author George Jackson who just before his death had completed his book, **Blood in My Eye**. In the aftermath of the prison rebellion, Talamantez stood trial as one of the San Quentin 6. He was acquitted and released in 1976. Ever since he has worked with prisoners and is presently general coordinator with California Prison Focus, a prison human rights group based in San Francisco. Please see the literature ad on page 9 to order the book he discusses.*

D.A. Sheldon's *Voices from within the Prison Walls* brings to my mind the crimson face of imprisonment. I found references about prison activity that are as true today as they were back when this writer was incarcerated.

I can visualize prisoner Sheldon sitting in his cell year after year, setting down his grim observations. This prisoner's 72-page testament is offered as a survivor's manual for empowering and organizing the imprisoned class. Many of the imprisoned who shall read these pages, I believe, will uplift themselves from their abject enslavement and join the growing revolutionary struggle and consciousness that will free them.

Works of this nature done by prisoners are in short supply. Only a prisoner inside his steel trap could have written this book with its heartfelt message to every other prisoner. Deliver your mind from the prison depths of despair, I read between the lines, and leave your criminality behind.

The imprisoned class, now numbering 1.8 million souls, is perceived as the leading threat to the disintegration of society. Convicted felons have become expendable and are being permanently written off. Prisoners are thrown into a violent and lawless environment where deliberate dehumanization of the indi-

Eyewitness report from Chiapas

Members of the Chiapas Media Project traveled in Chiapas, Mexico from Dec. 28, 1998 to Jan. 11, 1999. The towns we visited are two of the strongholds of the Zapatista movement, a loosely banded network of communities struggling for land, justice and democracy in the jungles and highlands of Chiapas. Contact www.chiapasproject.org or call 773/583-7728.

Dec. 30, 1998, 3 p.m.: We are in the town of Ejido Morelia, which had been invaded Jan. 3, 1997 by the Mexican army and successfully defended by Zapatista supporters when unarmed women of the town harassed the army until they broke camp and left. A stout, strong Tzeltal man tells us that we stand on reclaimed land, land owned by a rancher who paid Indians less than \$10 per week to work his fields. "We barely had enough to buy the food we needed to live," he says quietly. "We could not send our children to school. They had to work with us in the fields. We asked the landowner to let us grow some of our own food and to pay us more to grow his crops. He refused, so we asked him to leave."

Dec. 31, 1998, 7 p.m.: At the New Year's celebration in Morelia cargo trucks parked end to end snake along the dirt road leading up to the auditorium. The trucks are evidence of the many people who have come from the surrounding communities to celebrate not only the New Year, but to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the Zapatista uprising. On this night five years prior the same people were involved in quite a different gathering; a gathering intent upon making an indigenous voice heard throughout Mexico and the world. Tonight the people here will honor those who gave their lives and recognize how their lives have changed as a result of their struggle.

Jan. 1, 1999, 12:01 a.m.: The people are paying respect to relatives who gave their lives in the past five years so that no one will die from poverty. One Indian woman in a hand-embroidered blouse walks forward, melts a few drops of wax onto the stage and plants her burning candle on top. Soon others follow and the stage is awash with the light of countless candles.

Jan. 1, 1999, 7 p.m.: A white sheet, a makeshift screen, hangs before a pile of giggling kids in the auditorium. Men and women sit on benches behind them. A leader of the community says the videos to be shown tonight were made by people from the community.

They are learning video so they can tell their own stories to the rest of the world. The lights go out and the screen dances with color, candles, bandanas and people dancing. It is a reliving of the New Year's celebration shared by the whole community. When it is finished, the people applaud, hoping for more.

—J.S.

vidual is part of the administrative agenda. Prison regimes attempt to break the person to gain collaboration of the imprisoned class. Snitches and debriefers, guard controlled trustees, are made into tools and pitted against other prisoners. This prison place is a growing part of the injustice system where constitutional rights no longer apply.

Many of our children are already prison-bound because they are poor, and cannot afford to buy justice or because they are people of color assigned different standards of justice.

SURVIVAL AND STRUGGLE

Freedom, injustice, inhumanity and state power are concepts spelled out in *Voices from within the Prison Walls* from a convict's point of view. The everyday mechanics, dynamics and explosive ingredients that make prisons—particularly draconian-style lockup units of which there are now innumerable variations spread across America—horrible places within which to exist and somehow overcome are revealed.

Institutionalization has been a social and political solution in motion since the beginning of white society's establishing its social order. The American practice of locking people up so as to feel safe is an American-spawned neurosis. Today this lockup mentality dominates the administration of American justice. This deviant social practice, along with killing by the state, has its origins in racist ideology, the inherent inequality of American justice and economic exploitation similar to past slavery and indentured servitude legitimized by the law.

Few people become aware of the degrading, caged conditions until they themselves are brought into that harsh environment. *Blood*

in my Eye, a more familiar account of struggle from inside the prison walls by the slain author, George Jackson, was never truer than today in its revolutionary message calling for unity of the imprisoned class. Sheldon's work has a similar ring to it.

BUILDING CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS

Prisoners, we are told, are being relegated to a world of deliberately inflicted pain and institutional abuse because nobody cares and nobody dares to challenge the powers that be. Prisoners must be made to care about their own class condition. We must acknowledge their torment within this arena of isolation and confinement and let the world know the harm being done to them in our name. Rehabilitation is no longer allowed on the playing field. Institutional violence and the threat of violence is the only thing administered by prison staff in the name of the public good.

Voices from within the Prison Walls is a well-executed prisoner treatise, laboriously organized by a prisoner who one can tell has felt the brunt and setbacks of prison life and managed, somehow, to overcome. He now extends the benefit of his experience to those around him. A dedicated comrade to his own imprisoned class, I would say. Read and believe. Leave your criminality behind, is the message I get, and join in your own liberation.

The author has written a credible work that looks at imprisonment from inside and explains the workings of the prison architects who utilize the tools in keeping large segments of people under institutional control and fighting among themselves. What can be done to loosen one's shackles and free one's mind while in confinement? *Voices from within the Prison Walls*. Read it and believe it.

—Luis Talamantez

Defend José Solís

Chicago—Opening statements in the trial of José Solís Jordán began here March 2. Prof Solís's has been falsely accused by one Rafael Marrero, FBI informant and admitted participant, of complicity in the 1992 bombing of a military center.

Supporters are being forced to run a gauntlet of metal detectors as intimidation at the courtroom. Further, FBI agents and representatives of the district attorney's office have been interviewing Prof. Solís's former students at DePaul University here, in a gross violation of academic freedom.

"It just shows that Marrero sold them a bill of goods," Solís said. "They have a portrait of me that just doesn't fit with who I am and they are trying desperately to make it fit. All I can say is, I think we'll have some surprises for them when the trial begins."

You can extend solidarity in this trial, which is an attack on the whole Puerto Rican movement in the U.S., by contacting the Committee in Solidarity with José Solís Jordán, (773) 278-9361. Send financial support to José Solís Jordán Defense Fund, P.O. Box 577826, Chicago, IL 60657-7826.

—Gerard Emmett

'Good cause' labor exploited

Oakland, Cal.—The Feb. 1 one-day walkout of health care workers at La Clinica De La Raza in Oakland's Fruitvale district is more evidence of a disturbing trend in Bay Area grassroots, community-based nonprofit agencies. Late last year workers at Berkeley Emergency Food and Housing Project, the largest homeless shelter in Berkeley, contacted the Alameda County Grand Jury over the project's frequent failure to issue paychecks.

La Clinica, funded primarily by government and private foundation grants, serves indigent residents of a mostly Latino and Southeast Asian neighborhood. The current dispute stems from the administration's desire to take in more clients, especially immigrants rejected by other nonprofits.

Claiming there is no money for hiring, the administration has notified workers that their workweek is to be expanded from 37.5 hours to 40 hours. There will be no overtime pay as state law requires such only after 40 hours per week. Workers say 37.5 hours already translates to 45 hours of actual time on the job because of casework overload. The additional hours could mean they would work at least 48 hours per week for 40 hours' pay.

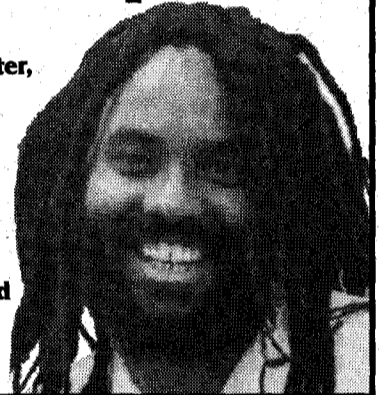
One picket said employees accept 8% to 20% less pay than industry standard for the area because they understand the service is vital and funding is limited. Personnel accept the administration's claim that money is short, but believe funding could be pursued more aggressively.

A doctor on La Clinica's picket line suggested the administration means well but "they're caught up in the web of HMO culture and figure the clinic needs to be run like one." The tragedy is that in community-based nonprofits the HMO ideology pits worker-activists not only against well-meaning administrators, but the very people both sides seek to help.

—Supporter

To Philadelphia on April 24!

Join the national demonstration to save Mumia Abu-Jamal, former Black Panther, MOVE supporter, journalist and revolutionary, from execution. He has been on death row for over 16 years, accused of killing a Philadelphia police officer and denied a fair trial. Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge is poised to sign the death warrant. Only the growing worldwide movement, which believes Mumia Abu-Jamal has been condemned for his political beliefs, can save him. Be there. Call 215/476-8812 or email mumia@aol.com.



Honduras after the hurricane

Editor's note: Following are excerpts of a report of one Honduran community's struggle after Hurricane Mitch. This account was told in Memphis by Gloria Wheeler, who visited Honduras shortly after the hurricane, to Tim Wheeler.

The 12 of February community is located in southern Honduras near the border with Nicaragua. The Christian Commission for Development first started working with the 12 of February in 1983. Later the 12 of February received goats and cows as a project for women. It was the first cooperative cattle project supported by Heifer Project through CCD in Honduras. In 1985 they received nine cows and a bull. As the herd grew to 60 or 70 animals so did the group's vision of a better future.

No one was ready for Hurricane Mitch. Who would have believed that it would rain more than a year's worth of rainfall in 24 hours? All of the other communities had reported into the CCD regional office during the days after Mitch. Three weeks later only the 12 of February had not reported in. This is the testimony of the people of the 12 of February after a crew found them: "We are still alive, and we are really glad to see you. We have been hungry for eight days. During the hurricane we moved to the place called Los Angeles. In our community we have 11 families (80 people). Out of our nine houses only three are left. We don't have any clothes. Almost everything was lost. Some of our chickens, pigs, goats, cows and horses died. We don't have one drop of clean water."

The community lost 15 cows, all 30 goats, five horses and 600 chickens. They had 8.5 acres of sugar cane, 8.5 of rice, 3.4 of beans, and 37.4 of corn. All this was lost. All of their 65 children were alive, though. Not a single person died.

Eight of the men tended the animals during the storm. They worked out a system of continually circling the animals as they moved them from the pasture to the higher ground near their houses. They swam the calves through part of the flood waters keeping their heads above water. When it rained the second time the animals were on the hill. The whole community thought that they wouldn't be able to make it, but the eight men who were with the animals said that it didn't matter if they had to die.

We found them cleaning their well, scooping out the mud and sludge that had been washed into it. They were thinking about the future, of re-establishing their crops on the desert land that they had been given. They knew it wouldn't be easy, but they were alive.

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New York protests demand end to executions by cops

New York—“There is rage in the streets—the moment is now for change.” So proclaim the flyers, speakers at the many rallies, newsletters, radio talk shows, and any Black person you talk to about the Feb. 4 execution of Amadou Diallo, a West African immigrant, by four of “New York’s finest.” The cops shot 41 bullets at him for no reason except they thought he looked like a suspected rapist, that is, he was a young Black man.

The killing has caused near-continuous demonstrations throughout the city. The first two weeks the demonstrations were almost entirely Black. The media played up Al Sharpton and Black Muslims as “spokesmen” for Diallo’s parents and wrote up the demonstrations to make whites seem unwelcome. But at a demonstration of about a thousand people at City Hall, Feb. 22, hundreds of whites, Latinos and Asians joined with Black protesters. Speakers extolled the multiethnic composition of the crowd, which was unanimous in blaming Mayor Giuliani for the killings. There were young and old people of every color, and contingents from white churches, Jewish groups, schools and left organizations. Some groups called for a shutdown of the city by strikes, boycotts, and so on.

Black/Red View

California’s new multicultural politics

by John Alan

The last November election ended two decades of Republican control of the governor’s office in California. Gray Davis, the Democratic lieutenant governor in Governor Pete Wilson’s administration, finally broke the Republican headlock on the governor’s office. Davis campaigned as a middle of the road Democrat. He is pro-choice on the issue of abortion and pro-death penalty, but was just “liberal” enough to get the overwhelming support of African-American and Latino voters.

Davis’ political victory coincided with a remarkable entrance of California’s Latino politicians into mainstream politics. Cruz Bustamante was elected lieutenant governor, the first person of Latino descent to hold a statewide political office since California was annexed by the United States in 1848. Antonio R. Villaraigosa, once a 1960s civil rights activist, became the speaker of the State Assembly.

Important political pundits believe the sudden and dramatic appearance of Latinos in high positions in California’s state government has been at the expense of African-American political power. They point to the fact that there are now 26 Latinos in the State Assembly and only six African Americans, all of them from the Los Angeles area.

Willie Brown, the African-American mayor of San Francisco and the former longtime speaker of the Assembly, doesn’t think that this is a threat to Black political interest if the African Americans now in the Assembly work in a coalition with the Latinos. But Gregory Rodriguez wrote in the Feb. 2, 1999 *Washington Post* that the new Latino politicians are no longer engaged in “minority race” oriented politics but are “assuming responsibility and leadership for the entire state.”

Davis is using the electoral victories of Latino politicians as the ethnic key to open new economic opportunities for California below the border. Once elected, he rushed off to Mexico with Villaraigosa to meet its president and industrial leaders to work out deals on the expansion and development of California’s economic relations with Mexico. According to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Villaraigosa, as the son of a poor immigrant Mexican laborer, was magnificent in selling how great one can become north of the border. Of course, any deals Davis and Villaraigosa make in the interest of Californian and Mexican capitalism will do little to end poverty in Mexico or South Central Los Angeles where Latino poverty and Black poverty meet face to face.

Today, much is being said about the multiethnic composition of the American population and that in reality America is a multicultural civilization. Manning Marable advocates a “non-racial politics.” Maulana Karenga believes that African Americans will play a vanguard role in a new multicultural politics. At the same time he limits that vanguard role to a struggle for sharing the wealth of this society.

It is imperative for us who are struggling, both in activities and theoretically, against today’s racism, sexism, poverty and human exploitation, to recognize that those who clamor for “multicultural politics,” “non-racial politics” or “mainstream politics” support the existing society with all of its inherent anti-human characteristics. In other words, those people, both Blacks and Latinos, do not recognize that when the Black and Latino masses revolted in Los Angeles in 1992, they were revolting against a society which condoned racism, police brutality and had created decades of poverty in both the Black and Latino communities of Los Angeles.

Eight gay rights activists chained themselves together and lay down in the street, tying up traffic, and were arrested. Calvin Butts, a prominent Harlem minister, thanked the gay and lesbian movement for its support during his speech at the rally. It was an important moment of mutual support between the two movements.

Not since the cop torture of Abner Louima in 1997 has there been such an outpouring of protest. Never before have the protests been almost daily and continued for so long. The killing has brought together African-American, Caribbean and African people. Every Black person is saying “it could have been me.”

White people are discussing the killing as well, in houses of worship and in the streets, perhaps because of the unmistakable viciousness and intention of this murder. The local media even went to Guinea to cover Diallo’s funeral. Unfortunately there was no attention paid when one of the cops who shot Diallo, Kenneth Boss, shot Patrick Bailey, a 20-year-old Black man in 1997, and left him to bleed to death.

The media is stressing the fact that Diallo had no police record, but the protest movement is stressing the fact that the police hassle and arrest Black youth all the time. Having a record is no indication you are doing something for which you should be shot. At meetings and demonstrations, people are discussing the long list of Blacks and Latinos murdered by the cops in the past few years and demanding an end to the racist killings. Everyone blames Giuliani for the increase in cops killing people, since he always extolls the police.



Murder in jail ignored

Editor’s note: Below is an interview with John and Annie McIntyre of McComb, Miss., about the murder of their son.

John: Timothy McIntyre, our son, was 19 years old when he was murdered on May 18, 1993, at Will County Jail in Joliet, Ill. He went to jail for shooting at a guy who was shooting at him—his girlfriend’s brother, who was with a gang called the Black Assassins. He got in a fight with them and whipped a couple of them, so they came back and tore his car up. He called the police but they wouldn’t take action, so Tim was going to come home.

When he went to his girlfriend’s house to pick up his stuff, her brother came out shooting. Tim shot in the air and the guy kept shooting. Tim shot and some of the pellets grazed his head, but the guy wasn’t hurt.

But Tim went to jail, charged with assault with a deadly weapon. His attorney said it never should have gone to court because all he was doing was defending himself. When the jury came back, the courthouse had closed. I thought that things weren’t right, and I wanted to make a phone call. When I got up, an officer grabbed me and forced me back down into my seat. I sat there and about eight jurors said, “Guilty,” but several of them broke down in tears. I had taken about as much as I could take, so I got up. When I got out in the hall, the officers attacked me.

At that same time, Tim was murdered while in police custody in a holding cell. The police said he hanged himself, but the nurse at the hospital told us he was in a ruckus in the jail. His body was bruised, his neck looked like somebody had him in a choke hold. The police claim they don’t know what happened. We would like to know who does.

Annie: It’s like somebody took my heart and just ripped it out. Just because we’re poor, we can’t find out what happened to our son. I need to put a closure to this. I told the sheriff my son wouldn’t kill himself. He said, “That’s what all you mothers say.” They told me my son “expired,” like a tag on a car. That was my son, and I loved him. I don’t know what to do. I’m losing it.

John: We haven’t just sat back. We’ve tried, we’ve called people, but it doesn’t do any good. I don’t think too many people want to go up against the long arm of the law. That bunch of lawmen were a bunch of organized criminals. I contacted upper law enforcement and even tried to go through our congressman and still didn’t get anything done. But we’re not going to quit. We’re going to keep talking about it, making it an issue until we can get somebody to look into it.

Annie: They treat our Black sons like they’re nothing. If I were white and with money, I believe this would be different. But I’m Black and poor. I can’t hire a private investigator. My baby’s gone. I want justice. I want to know what happened to my son.

The killers were members of the elite Street Crimes Unit, which Vicente “Panama” Alba described at a meeting of the Citywide Coalition to Remove Giuliani, Feb. 16. The unit has grown from 100 to 490 cops under Giuliani’s regime. The city refuses to release the unit’s racial composition and where its members live, but, Alba said, you can bet they are 99% white and suburban. The criteria for membership is being “aggressive” and their motto is “We own the night.”

Alba describes them as young white men full of racism who come into the plantation to control the city’s minorities. He connected the killing to the periodic roundups of Black and Latino youth under the pretext of fighting gangs. “We are supposed to accept them killing people and our losing our civil liberties as a trade-off for the reduction in crime, but that is the foundation of fascism,” he said.

At the Feb. 16 meeting in Harlem, many people connected police brutality to loss of money for schools, hospitals, welfare and housing for Black people. All demanded justice from a system that is not likely to give it. Others demanded the laws be changed to put some teeth into the Civilian Review Board, to end the rule that the cops can’t be questioned for 48 hours after they shoot someone, and to take the money awarded to victims of the police out of the police department budget.

One subject of discussion at meetings and rallies is whether it is possible to change the police by removing the “rotten apples,” or whether they are an occupying army that must be gotten rid of. We hope the discussions will lead to increasing united actions against the city’s racist and anti-working class politicians and institutions.

—NY News and Letters Committee

Black World

Black History Month 1999

(Continued from page 1)

Claude McKay wrote his stirring poem, “If We Must Die.”

In Chicago, swelled by tens of thousands of Southern Blacks from the Great Migration and returning Black soldiers from World War I, the social upheaval left 25 Blacks and 15 whites dead. University of Chicago social theorists George Herbert Mead and Robert E. Park warned that the convergence of returning Black veterans and the Black rural proletariat was undermining the old social relations in Chicago as the overnight growth of the Black population broke through the established boundaries segregating Blacks and whites. But whereas the “causes” of the 1919 Chicago Riot appeared, from a sociological point of view, to be only a question of shifting demographics, sociologists were at a loss to explain the new militant consciousness of the new arrivals from the rural South.

Newly returned Black veterans who fought for “democracy” were readily viewed as the “New Negro” who had to be reckoned with. The new upwardly mobile Black middle class who had cultivated the mystique of the “Negro Renaissance” and lionized it in numerous essays and in Black literature were perceived as the “New Negro.” No one, however, recognized in the Black rural proletariat South, where the majority of Black folk lived, anything but an inert mass that needed to be “uplifted.” Chicago showed that they were of a mind to fight, and Marcus Garvey, and later in 1925 the American Negro Labor Congress (ANLC), showed that they would be organized.

Raya Dunayevskaya introduced me to the ANLC and Lovett Fort-Whiteman, its dynamic Black Marxist organizer and editor of its newspaper, the *Negro Champion*. She had worked in the offices of the *Negro Champion*, located at 34th and Indiana in the heart of Chicago’s “Bronzeville” in her youth. Fort-Whiteman, one of the founders of “Black Marxism” in the U.S., embodied the radical spirit of the times like no other American socialist.

As a member of the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World), Fort-Whiteman was active in the Pennsylvania-Ohio steel strike, was wanted by the authorities for his role in the Chicago Riot, and was a militant anti-war activist. He participated in the Fifth Communist International Congress in 1924, the first after the death of Lenin, and was the convener of the American Negro Labor Congress in Chicago, October 1925. The Congress brought together Black workers and Marxists to fight to improve the conditions of labor of Black workers and to break down the barriers of the trade union movement that barred Black workers. The Congress had a radical internationalist perspective in support of anti-imperialist struggles worldwide, especially in Africa, and from the beginning engaged in the working-class struggles of women and involved women at every level of organizational leadership.

This legacy of Black radicalism, born from spontaneous events like the 1919 Chicago Riot and from the organizational initiatives of early Black Marxists, is one we recollect at the end of this century of ongoing Black struggle and carry with us into the twenty-first century. Working out their theoretical significance for a philosophy of liberation that can truly meet the test of the times is the arduous task still left to be done.

PART 2 DOCTRINE OF BEING

Editor's note

The following consists of Part 2 of Raya Dunayevskaya's detailed commentary on Hegel's *Science of Logic*. Part 1, on the Prefaces and Introduction to the *Logic*, appeared in our January-February issue. Parts 3 and 4, on the Doctrine of Essence and the Doctrine of the Notion, will appear in the April and May issues, respectively. These notes were written in 1961 and appear in print for the first time.

The *Logic* is one of Hegel's most important works and was of great service to Marx, especially in the writing of *Capital*. It has taken on new importance in light of the need to comprehend the logic of contemporary capitalism and the struggles against it. These notes will serve as an anchor of a nationwide series of classes News and Letters Committees will soon hold on "The

Dialectic of Marx's *Capital* and Today's Global Crisis." To find out about how to participate in them, see the announcement on page 11, or contact the News and Letters Committee nearest you (see page 7).

All material in brackets as well as footnotes have been supplied by the editors. "SLI" and "SLM" refer to the text of the *Science of Logic* as translated by Johnston and Struthers, in two volumes (Macmillan, 1929); "SLM" refers to the translation by A.V. Miller (Humanities Press, 1969). The references to Lenin are to his 1914-15 commentary on Hegel's *Logic*, the first such study done by a Marxist.

Dunayevskaya's text has been slightly shortened, indicated by the use of ellipses. The original can be found in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, 2806.



By
Raya
Dunayevskaya

Founder of
Marxist-Humanism
in the U.S.

We are finally ready to begin Book One, but we better remember the broad outline of the whole *Logic* into two volumes, Objective Logic and Subjective Logic; more definitely, it has three parts, namely: 1) The Logic of Being, 2) The Logic of Essence, and 3) The Logic of the Notion.

Book One: The Doctrine of Being

Section One: Determinateness (Quality)

Chapter I: Being

There are only three short paragraphs in chapter I on Being, Nothing and Becoming, whereupon Hegel goes into no less than five Observations which stretch over 25 pages, which, in fact, cover very nearly the whole of preceding philosophies, from the Orient through the Greeks to his own time on this question of Being. Thus: *Observation One*—the Opposition of Being and Nothing in Imagination contrasts Parmenides' "pure enthusiasm of thought first comprehending itself in its absolute abstraction" to Buddhism where "Nothing or Void is the absolute principle," to Heraclitus, whose opposition to both one-sided abstractions of Being and Nothing led to the total concept of Becoming: "All things flow," which means everything is Becoming [SLI, pp. 95-96; SLM, p. 83].

But Hegel does not stop either with the Orient or with the Greeks, but proceeds to consider Spinoza, as well as the Kantian Critique. Not only that, it's quite obvious that both in philosophy and in science Hegel is the historical materialist: "What is first in science has had to show itself first too, historically" [SLI, p. 101; SLM, p. 88].

If *Observation One* dealt with the Unity of Being and Nothing as Becoming in a profound manner, Hegel hurries to criticize this, too, in *Observation Two*—The Inadequacy of the Expression "Unity" or "Identity of Being and Nothing." The point is that Unity "sounds violent and striking in proportion as the objects of which it is asserted obviously show themselves as distinct. In this respect therefore mere Unseparateness or Inseparability would be a good substitute for Unity; but these would not express the affirmative nature of the relation of the whole. The whole and true result, therefore, which has here been found, is Becoming. . ." [SLI, p. 104; SLM, p. 91].

He, therefore, proceeds to *Observation*

Three—The Isolation of these Abstractions, in order to stress that the Unity of Being and Nothing has to be considered in a relationship to a third, i.e., Becoming, and therefore, we must consider the *transition*. Otherwise, we would constantly be evading the internal contradictoriness, although Hegel admits that "It would be wasted labor to spread a net for all the twistings and objections of reflection and its reasonings, in order to cut off and render impossible all the evasions and digressions which it uses to hide from itself its own internal contradictoriness" [SLI, p. 106; SLM, p. 94].

He here hits out at his two main enemies, Fichte and Jacobi, whom he compares to the abstractions of Indian thought or the Brahma: "this torpid and vacuous consciousness, taken as consciousness, is Being" [SLI, p. 109; SLM, p. 97]. (With this should be read the section on Oriental philosophy [in] Hegel's *Philosophy of History*. It used to annoy me very much because I thought it showed German arrogance to Oriental philosophy. But it is, in fact, so objective an analysis of Hinduism that it will explain a great deal of modern India's difficulties in stamping out castes.)

Both in the observation "Incomprehensibility of the Beginning" and the next *Observation*—"The Expression to Transcend," Hegel has shifted both the actual and the philosophic, not alone from Being and Nothing to Becoming, but transcended Becoming, which is the first leap forward from an abstract being to a determinate, or specific being, with which chapter II will deal. All we need to remember at this point is that "what is transcended is also preserved" [SLI, p. 120; SLM, p. 107].

Chapter II: Determinate Being

The structure of *Logic* has now been set. We will at each point, though not in as overwhelming a manner, state a fact or proposition and then proceed to an *Observation*; in a word, the polemical movement in the *Logic* follows right alongside, and inseparably, with the affirmative statement.

You may recall that that is the form of Marx's [*Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*]. As you know, he was quite dissatisfied with the form, [and] discarded it for *Capital*. This was not only due to the fact that he decided that the polemical, as history of thought rather than *class struggle*, should all be placed together in a separate book (Book Four).¹ That much is obvious and would not have, in itself, produced such utter blindness on the part of Marxists who could quite easily see that the historical, to Marx, was not history of thought, but history of class struggle, since, as a matter of fact, Kautskyan popularizations dealt with the class struggle without much concern to thought. No, it is the dialectics, the new, the creative dialectics of the class struggle, which did not separate

1. This refers to Marx's decision, made in the mid-1860s, to place his polemics with various theoreticians in a separate volume 4 of *Capital*; it was published after his death as *Theories of Surplus Value*. See *Marxism and Freedom*, pp. 81-92.

philosophy—how long is my working day?—from the class struggle, which remain a mystery to the materialists who were so busy "opposing the mystical" in Hegel.

But the fact that the Hegelian structure could not be "copied" by Marx, but had to be re-created, does not mean that the Hegelian structure for Hegel was wrong. On the contrary, he deals with thought, and the logical form of the Universal there is the Notion.

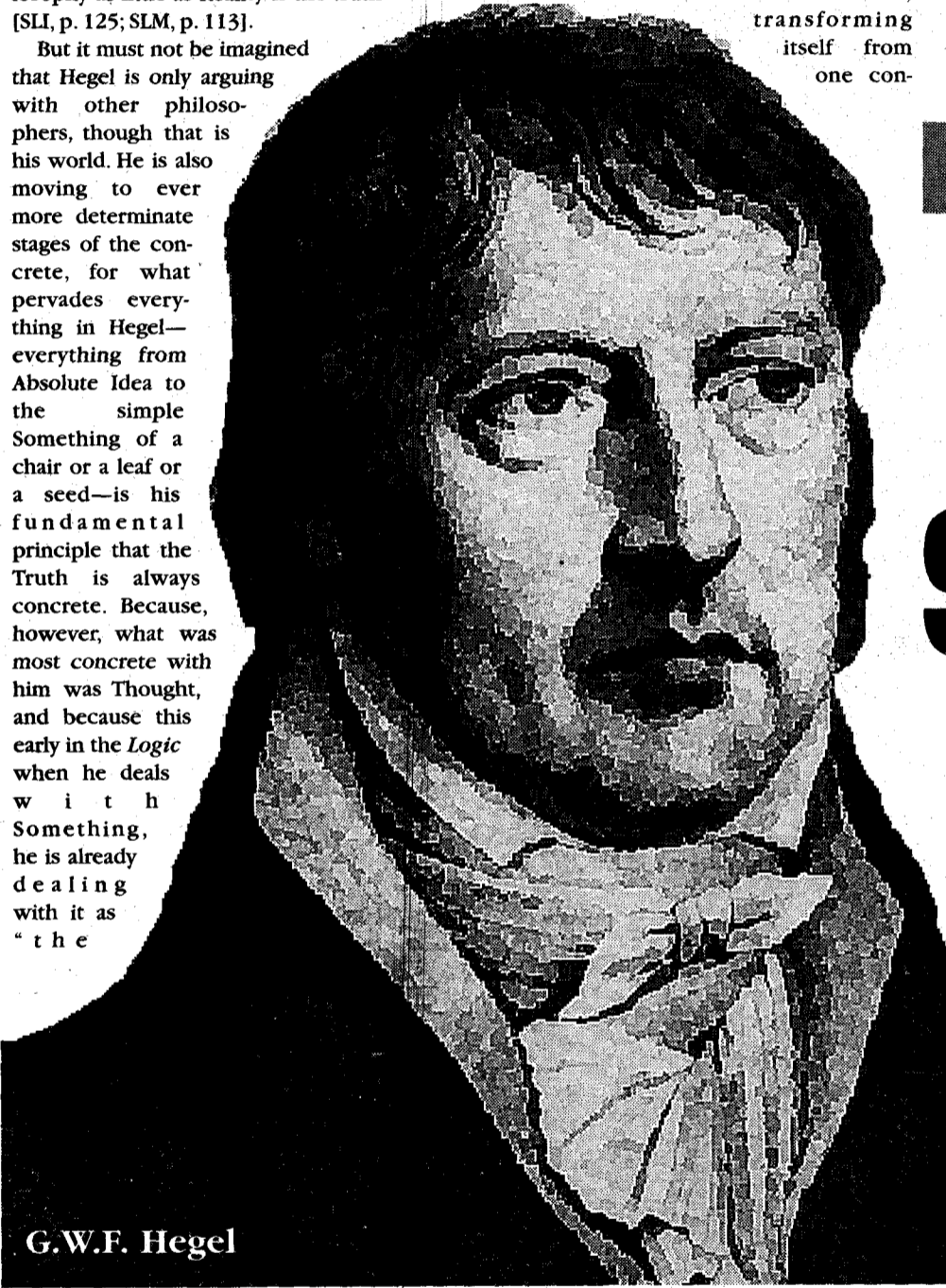
We have moved from the Universal, General, Abstract Being to a definite Being or Something, but this assumption of a definitive quality immediately moves Hegel to an observation—"Quality and Negation." "Determinateness is negation posited affirmatively, is the meaning of Spinoza's *omnis determinatio est negatio* [every determination is a negation], a proposition of infinite importance; only, negation as such is formless abstraction. Speculative philosophy must not be accused of making negation, or Nothing, its end: Nothing is the end of philosophy as little as Reality is the truth" [SLI, p. 125; SLM, p. 113].

But it must not be imagined that Hegel is only arguing with other philosophers, though that is his world. He is also moving to ever more determinate stages of the concrete, for what pervades everything in Hegel—everything from Absolute Idea to the simple Something of a chair or a leaf or a seed—is his fundamental principle that the Truth is always concrete. Because, however, what was most concrete with him was Thought, and because this early in the *Logic* when he deals with it as "the

reading] Hegel. . ." [LCW 38, p. 109]. This, mind you, is said not in Book Three on Notion, nor even in Book Two on Essence, nor even in Section Three of Book Two on Measure where we are "practically" ready to jump into Essence, but in the very first section of Book One, chapter II.

At this point Hegel comments that in the question of determination the chief point is "to distinguish what is still *in itself* and what is *posited* . . . and being-for-other. This distinction is proper only to dialectical development and is unknown to the metaphysical (which includes the Critical) philosophy" [SLI, p. 135; SLM, p. 122]. It is here that Lenin has his first definition of dialectic as the doctrine of the identity of opposites, before which generalization, he writes: "This is very profound; the thing-in-itself and its transformation into the thing-for-other (cf. Engels). The thing-in-itself, *in general*, is an empty, lifeless abstraction. In life in the movement all and everything is *used to*

being both 'in itself' and 'for other' in relation to Other, transforming itself from one con-



G.W.F. Hegel

first negation of the negation," Lenin gets furious with him at this point and returns to a warm feeling toward Engels by referring to the quotation about "abstract and abstruse Hegelianism" [LCW 38, p. 108].

And yet it is only a few short pages beyond this when dealing with finitude and against the Kantian thing-in-itself. . . [that] Lenin remarks that this whole attack on the Thing-in-itself is "very profound" and again "sehr gut!!" [very good, LCW 38, pp. 110-11]. Lenin straightaway makes that conclusion of the essence of the dialectic which he is going to repeat throughout his reading and which will indeed become the basis of all his writings from there on from *Imperialism to the Will*.

Thus, it is near Hegel's remark against the critical philosophy, i.e., Kant [SLI, p. 135, SLM, p. 122] that Lenin writes: "Dialectic is the doctrine of the *identity of opposites*—how they can be and how they become identical, transforming one into another—why the mind of man must not take these opposites for dead, blocked (*zastyvatiye*), but for living, conditioned, mobile, transforming one into the other. *En lisant* [in

dition (*sostoyaniye*) to another" [LCW 38, p. 109].

Hegel proceeds next to analyze Finitude and Ought. The Ought in turn is followed by an *Observation* where he tangles with Leibniz [SLI, p. 148; SLM, p. 135] and with Kant and Fichte [SLI, p. 149; SLM, p. 136] who, he insists, have the standpoint, precisely because they get stuck in Ought, "where they persist in Finitude, and (which is the same thing) in contradiction."

Lenin is again moved here to speak about the profound analysis Hegel makes of the Finite, saying "The Finite? that means *movement* has come to an end! Something? that means *not what Other* is. Being, in general? that means such indeterminateness that Being=Not-Being. All-sided, universal flexibility of concepts—flexibility reaching to the identity of opposites" [LCW 38, p. 110].

In the section which follows on Infinity, the critical point is transition: "Ideality² may be called the Quality of Infinity; but, as it is

2. In German the paired terms idealism and ideality are used more frequently than in English, in a sense parallel to realism and reality.

essentially the process of Becoming, it is a Transition, like that of Becoming in Determinate Being, and it must now be indicated" [SLI, p. 163; SLM, p. 150]. Two other observations followed this one, one on "Infinite Progress": "Bad Infinity,"³ says Hegel, like progress to infinity, is really no different than Ought, "the expression of a contradiction, which pretends to be the solution and the ultimate" [SLI, p. 164; SLM, p. 150]. The second observation is on "Idealism," where he contrasts Subjective and Objective Idealism, and which brings us to Chapter III, "Being-For-Self."

Somewhere in this chapter—in fact, in the first Observation—ideality is taken up both as it applies to Leibniz's Monads,⁴ as well as Eleatic Being,⁵ and also the Atomistic philosophy,⁶ and again, there are many observations ending with the one on Kant's "Attraction and Repulsion." Now on the one hand, Lenin is very specific in his interpretation here, calling attention to the fact that "the idea of the transformation of the ideal into the real is profound; very important for history. . . against vulgar materialism" [LCW 38, p. 114], and yet the whole chapter on Being-For-Self, when Lenin first approaches it, is considered by him to be "dark waters" [LCW 38, p. 114]. At this point here, during the correspondence with [C.L.R. James] and

many of the conditions which we will meet in the Absolute Idea shows that you can, in fact, not make sharp divisions even in those most sharply pointed to by Hegel himself—Being, Essence, Notion—as is shown over and over again by the fact that he deals with Kant who was the greatest philosopher before him in this very section.

Indeed, Lenin here notes (evidently it struck him for the first time) that the self-development of the concept in Hegel is related to the entire history of philosophy. In any case, in the Observation on the Unity of the One and the Many, [Hegel] deals also with the dialectic of Plato in the *Parmenides*. What is true is Hegel's very

"The fact that the Hegelian structure could not be 'copied' by Marx, but had to be re-created, does not mean that the Hegelian structure for Hegel was wrong. On the contrary, he deals with thought, and the logical form of the Universal there is the Notion."

Discreteness and Continuity, but also the idea that Kant had of four antinomies, as if that number exhausts contradiction instead of the fact that every single concept is in fact an antinomy. In attacking Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, the attack is on Kant for being "apagogic" [SLI, p. 207; SLM, p. 193], that is to say, assuming what is to be proved and thus repeating the assumption in the conclusion. Hegel protests that Kant's proofs are "a forced and useless tortuosity," "an advocate's proof" [SLI, p. 208; SLM, p. 194], which sounds exactly as if it says he is a "Philadelphia lawyer." He considers the dialectic example of the old Eleatic school of thought as superior to Kant, despite the fact that so much of actual history had occurred since that period, which certainly should have

led to a more profound conception of dialectic.

Discreteness, like Continuity, is a moment of Quantity and in fact it is only both moments, their unity that is, that produces Quantum. At the same time, both in this chapter and in chapter II on "Quantum," we sense Hegel's sharp distaste for mathematical proof as being unworthy of philosophy, even though at its start, in the theorems of Pythagoras, they were of the essence, and there is no doubt also of their importance, and in fact necessity, to Newtonian science and differential and integral calculus. Although I know next to nothing of this, and I am sure that modern mathematics which has reached into economics, automation, and space science, that in essence all that Hegel says here is inescapably true as is all that he says on "Bad Infinity," and I dare say that any infinity that is not human is bad....

Section Three: Measure

With the very first statement, "Abstractly the statement may be made that in Measure, Quality and Quantity are united" [SLI, p. 345; SLM, p. 327], Lenin once again becomes excited and at the end of it, he makes all those observations—Leaps! LEAPS! LEAPS! [LCW 38, p. 123]. The observation on Nodal Lines Lenin copies out nearly in full. There is no doubt whatever that a transition from Quality into Quantity as a leap, in opposition to the concept of any gradual emergence, is the transition point for Lenin himself, breaking with the old Lenin, not because the old Lenin was ever a "gradualist," but because the *objectivity* of these leaps in *all* aspects of life is not anything merely quantitative or merely qualitative, or as Hegel puts it: "The gradualness of arising is based upon the ideas that that which arises is already, sensibly or otherwise, *actually there*, and is imperceptible only on account of its smallness. . . Understanding prefers to fancy identity and change to be of that indifferent and external kind which applies to the quantitative" [SLI, p. 390; SLM, p. 370].

To sharpen his own very different concept, Hegel goes over to this question of gradual transition of Quantity to Quality in Ethics, and says, "A more or less suffices to transgress the limit of levity, where something quite different, namely, crime, appears; and thus right passes over into wrong, and virtue into vice" [SLI, p. 390; SLM, p. 371].

The third chapter of this section is called "The Becoming of Essence" and is the transition, therefore, to the Second Book [The Doctrine of Essence].

7. In Hegel continuous magnitude is a quantity which "propagates itself without negation...a context which remains at one in itself" [SLI, p. 214; SLM, p. 200]. Discrete magnitude is a quantity that is noncontinuous or interrupted; it breaks up into "a multitude of ones." The unity of both constitutes the concept of quantity.

ough Notes on HEGEL'S SCIENCE OF LOGIC

[Grace Lee] in 1949, Grace [Lee] developed her thoughts on this chapter as one dealing with the developing

subject as it first arose, 500 B.C., to the Absolute Idea, or the conditions for universality of the modern proletariat. She seemed to think that Being-For-One coming from Being-For-Self was unclear to Lenin because he did not understand abstract labor as we did. I doubt that was the reason since in the Doctrine of Being, we are, comparatively, at a low stage of development in Hegelian thought.

The fact, however, that [Hegel] can at this "low stage" be so profound and point to so

sharp opposition to so-called independence in the One: "Independence having reached its quintessence in the One which is for itself, is abstract and formal, destroying itself; it is the highest and most stubborn error, which takes itself for highest truth; appearing, more concretely, as abstract freedom, pure ego, and further as Evil. It is freedom which goes so far astray as to place its essence in this abstraction, flattering itself that, being thus by itself, it possesses itself in its purity" [SLI, p. 185; SLM, p. 172].

Section Two: Magnitude (Quantity)

We have first now reached the transformation of Quality or Determinateness into Quantity, Being-For-Self having concluded Section One, and having in turn been divided into three—Being-For-Self as such, the One and the Many, and Repulsion and Attraction.

In the first observation on Pure Quantity, as well as in the second observation on Kant's "Antinomy of the Indivisibility and Infinite Divisibility of Time, Space and Matter," the concept that we are approaching is that of Continuous and Discrete magnitude.⁷ But before he deals with these concepts, Hegel feels he must attack not only the concept of Quantity as simple unity of

3. "Bad" or "spurious" infinity refers to the condition in which a finite thing, in reaching for infinity, becomes another finite thing, *ad infinitum*, without ever reaching true universality.

4. Irreducible, fundamental substances of the universe according to Leibniz, of which the prime monad is God.

5. The Eleatics were a school founded by Parmenides who upheld a doctrine of monism wherein reality is one, motionless, undifferentiated, and unchanging.

6. The chief ancient Greek atomists were Democritus and Epicurus, who held that reality is composed of indeterminate particles called atoms, which acquire determinacies such as color and shape only through their interaction with human sense organs.

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PERMANENT WARS AT HOME AND ABROAD

Your lead on "Right-wing coup at home, permanent war abroad" by Olga Domanski was helpful in seeing how we are being prepared for war here and everywhere. They "expect" it because they are manufacturing it. The question is whether the human race will get through this period of its history with any semblance of a society, much less a truly civilized one. The tendency is toward fascism as society crumbles unless there can somehow be a mass awakening. What will be the alarm that awakens us from our denial and from our path toward barbarism?

I have read Part I of the "Rough Notes on Hegel's *Science of Logic*" in the same issue and would appreciate getting a copy of the syllabus for the six classes you will be holding. How much has been kept from us to help us truly grasp the meaning of our lives.

**Longtime supporter
Wisconsin**

As a musician, I consider Clinton to be a "virtuoso" politician, who can sound progressive even when implementing some of the most reactionary political aims of the far right. The three-ring circus of impeachment would be the laughing stock of any sensible person if it were not so tragic to realize the kind of people holding the reins of power not only in the U.S. but the whole world. I admired your analysis of the objective situation in the January-February issue. Unfortunately we are much closer to fascism than most people realize.

**Veteran of Hungary 1956
Canada**

American imperialism doesn't know how to make peace but only how to make war. In spite of the disagreements and contradictions, the other imperialist governments, hypocritically called "international community," are fully Clinton's accomplices. Beyond formal claims of distance they haven't done anything to stop the attacks on the Iraqi people, and never will. The assembly of the Great Powers is uncertain and divided but must submit to the destructive actions of the White House. Worldwide chaos is getting worse and the destructive nature of U.S. imperialism is among its main causes.

**Socialismo Rivoluzionario
Italy**

The stories in *N&L* on the small protests around the country against the bombings and sanctions on Iraq have been very helpful to those of us here whose weekly vigil is also very small, because when we read about the other small demonstrations we know we're not so alone. It means something to take a stand, even if there are not hundreds of thousands in the streets right now trying to stop the madness.

The January-February lead article suggested that the far Right's attacks on Clinton had shifted the focus of attention from his acts of genocide to the insanity of Christian fundamentalism, making it hard for a movement against the bombing to generate steam. It began

to make sense when the lead reminded us of what Nixon's attempts to set up a one-party rule in the U.S. really meant. But if it's true that the bombings and sanctions which have killed so many thousands and destroyed "normal" life for millions could become a secondary issue when the ruling class began to feast on itself, then we are in more trouble than we had thought.

**Mitch
Bay Area**

The January-February lead-editorial article made the point that the power of the far Right has been underestimated. I'm afraid that, far from bringing that point home, the impeachment has reinforced the underestimation because he was acquitted and everyone expects the Democrats to rebound in the next election. Meanwhile our local paper is full of letters from rightists in a lather about the country's "immorality," and conservatives like Paul Weyrich are declaring that "there is no longer a moral majority." Will we now see them make a "logical conclusion" to all this that what is needed is a stern dictatorship of the religious right's "morally" superior minority?

**Subscriber
Tennessee**

I applaud the formerly blacklisted writers, their families and supporters who are protesting the plan to give Elia Kazan an honorary Oscar at this year's Academy Awards. Kazan sold out at least eight "friends" in the 1950s by "naming their names" to Joe McCarthy's House Un-American Activities Committee. Not only has he never apologized, but has said he would do it again. McCarthy's witch-hunt, and all who contributed to it, destroyed many lives and cannot be washed away just because the perpetrators are now old men. We must not forget this travesty, especially now that the far Right again reaches out to control our lives.

**M.J. Grey
Chicago**

BOYCOTTING RACISM AND NEO-NAZISM



Your readers in the Chicago area might want to know that "Record Breakers" on the Northside sells white power music which not only serves as a major recruitment tool for organized racism but is also a chief fundraiser for them. We need to tell our friends and neighbors that when they patronize "Record Breakers" they are supporting the "white power movement" and the worst cults kids can get sucked into. The Anti-Racist Action group is trying to get distributors to cut off the dissemination of these recruitment tapes for hate groups.

**Boycotter
Illinois**

MISSISSIPPI'S NEW RIGHTS CENTER DIRECTOR

A large, enthusiastic crowd assembled at the Mace Atrium in Greenville on Feb. 7 to welcome Jaribu Hill as the new regional director of the Center for Constitutional Rights. Jaribu is well known to all of us who have been fighting for civil rights, workers rights and women's rights in Mississippi. In a powerful speech during the ceremony she recalled the work of Fannie Lou Hamer as what had inspired her to stay on the battlefield, after she came to work with poor people in the Mississippi Delta while she was still a law student.

The Center for Constitutional Rights needed a new director in Greenville because its previous director, a fighter for civil rights and voting rights, Margaret Carey, was elected as a judge last November. That election was a great victory for us in Washington and Sunflower counties.

Jaribu Hill is the key person behind the Southern Human Rights Organizing Conference. This is the coalition which began in Oxford, Miss. in 1996 and brought together more than 150

activists representing human rights organizations and labor unions, as well as civil rights and women's rights groups, from all over the South. I have been part of that from the beginning. We came from different movements, talked with each other about our struggles and problems, and are committed to working for a new beginning and a new society with justice for all in the South.

Jaribu also started the Mississippi Workers Center for Human Rights, an independent organization to help workers with all kinds of problems and struggles. She inspired us as women working in the Delta Pride catfish plant because she supported our struggle and helped make it known everywhere. Anyone who wants to contact the Center for Constitutional Rights or the Mississippi Workers Center for Human Rights, can get in touch with Jaribu Hill by calling her at (601) 334-1416 or writing P.O. Box 1223, Greenville, MS 38701. We are very glad she is now in the Delta to stay.

**S. Hamer
Mississippi**

Readers' Views

THE SCENE IN DETROIT

Michigan Governor John Engler and Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer are pushing for legislation to take over the Detroit Public Schools by removing the elected school board and appointing their own. What an African-American science teacher told me is worth repeating: "I don't like them taking away my right to choose the Board, even though the Board we have is not worth defending. There is no quick fix. They blame the teachers but most of us are dedicated people who just can't do everything the children need. We need a radically new attitude: teachers, parents, children and community all working together. It truly does take a village." In the meantime, the children are the ones hurt most by all the wrangling.

**S. Van Gelder
Detroit**

An hour after a judge ruled that the city of Detroit had a right to clear city-owned property, a fleet of city trucks began removing thousands of art objects that formed "Heidelberg Project," a collage of discarded items which artist Tyree Guyton had been developing on a block lined with vacant lots, small abandoned houses, and several residences. A vocal minority of the neighborhood has opposed the project but, beside the 200,000 people from 75 countries who have signed the guest book, people all over the city supported Tyree's work.

Much of the Heidelberg Project remains on privately-owned property on the block. One aspect of the project began when Tyree's grandfather's home was painted with large polka-dots in a rainbow of colors. Now project artists and friends paint pie-plate-sized polka-dots on blighted and abandoned buildings all over the city. Tyree has vowed to polka-dot the whole damn city.

**Dan and Susan
Detroit**

LETTER FROM MOROCCO

I appreciate your work and struggle against capitalism in the U.S. I am one of the militants of the Moroccan revolutionary movement struggling against dictatorship and dependant capitalism and for true democracy and socialism in Morocco. This movement has been much repressed. Most of its activists and almost all its leaders have been jailed for many years. This severe repression during the '70s and '80s did not stop the struggle. Prisons became very active fields of struggle, especially against human rights violations and for a real democracy in Morocco.

Since the beginning of the '90s, many victories have been won, most of the political prisoners have been released, political exiles could return to Morocco. But this does not mean that the nature of the regime has changed. Although there are elections, despotism continues. The constitution legalized the sacred nature of the king who holds the real power. Elections are rigged. The government has no real power.

We are anxious to read your books and will be sending you copies of our paper, *La Voie Democratique*, which is active in many struggles, from the trade unions to human rights, women's liberation and the jobless.

**Revolutionary Marxist
Morocco**

STOKELY CARMICHAEL

Your obit for Stokely (Kwame Ture) repeated the quote attributed to him that the best position for women in the movement was "prone." He may have meant "supine," but prone is the best position for firing a rifle.

More worrying was his statement I witnessed at a rally of 15,000 people at the LA sports arena three decades ago: "One billion Chinese people need one man to bow down to, and half a billion Africans need one man to bow down to." It is not only an absurd formula, but I assumed he meant himself. With "leaders" like this, who needed demagogues?

**Observer
Los Angeles**

NEO-COLONIALISM IN THE PHILIPPINES

The neo-colonial status of the Philippines is about to be deepened through a military arrangement with the U.S. known as the Visiting Forces Agreement. As Defense Secretary William Cohen put it at a meeting of Southeast Asian and U.S. political and business personalities, there could not be a more opportune time to re-commit the U.S. to the region than now when "the current Asian financial crisis heightens the need for the U.S. to maintain and bolster its military presence."

All this is being done regardless of strong Filipino nationalist opposition, and of Constitutional provisions upholding Philippine sovereignty and territorial integrity, restricting the entry of foreign troops and prohibiting nuclear weapons as well as establishment of foreign military bases within Philippine territory. This onerous agreement is rendering the Philippines captive once again to U.S. military designs for hegemony both regionally and globally.

**T. Rosmer and K. Bauzon
New York**

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS STRUGGLES



Striking mineworkers in Sonora, Mexico have been fanning out across Northern Mexico to get support for their struggle. At the conference against NAFTA which they held in 1994 with workers and trades union officials in various industries, they warned precisely about the onslaught of privatization that has created ghost towns by now. In recent months the assault has escalated, beginning with violations by the company of the collective-bargaining agreement. It then moved on to closing down the treatment plant where the industrial waste from the processing plant was treated before flowing into the local river. All this was in the name of cost-cutting, and led the workers to go out on strike on Nov. 18, 1998. The state authorities are now arresting the union leaders and terrorizing the population which has supported the strike.

The strikers are asking workers everywhere to support them by raising the question in their trade unions and faxing statements of support to Manuel Ernesto Romero Reyes, General Secretary, Section 65 of the Mineworkers Union of the Mexican Republic at fax number 011-663-66-73-92.

**Alan Benjamin,
San Francisco Labor Council
California**

At least 28,500 farm workers and their families in the San Joaquin Valley have been affected by the freeze that hit the California citrus industry in December. With most of the oranges, lemons and some vegetable crops lost, thousands of workers who have been out of work for two months already now face nine more months of unemployment. They are in desperate need of food, and some face the loss of their homes and need utility assistance. The National Farm Worker Ministry is working with the UFW to obtain both in-kind donations of food and financial contributions. Especially needed are rice, pinto beans, canned meat, oil, and other staples. More information on how to help can be learned by calling Ron Patterson at 941-208-8247 or Virginia Nesmith at 314-726-6470.

**UFW supporter
Illinois**

S. Hamer's article in the January-February issue about the way the Wayne Farms chicken processing plant has been bringing in workers directly from Mexico makes you wonder if they are bringing them in illegally just so they can exploit them as undocumented workers. A lot of conservative people I've talked with are worried about immigrants coming here and taking their jobs, but don't know what the companies are doing. It's something people need to be told about.

**Young working woman
Memphis**



THE CRIMINAL INJUSTICE SYSTEM

The criminal injustice system around the whole world serves the dictates of the State. In the U.S. it serves to get rid of unemployed African-American youth at the same time it lets the capitalists bring factory work into the prisons at abysmally low wages. In Kosovo it serves to criminalize the population as a whole and demoralize it. Of 11 people recently arrested, two died in police custody. Lawyers are not allowed to speak with prisoners before their court appearances. Under their Criminal Code #136 people can be convicted under suspicion of constituting a group intending to endanger the authority of the State. You don't have to belong to the KLA. All Albanians are suspect because they are suspected of favoring independence.

**Observer
Prague**

The criminal case around Geronimo Pratt has been part of the LA legal landscape for more than 30 years. Geronimo spent 27 years behind bars (eight of them in solitary confinement) and was finally released in June 1997 after it was revealed that prosecutors at his 1972 murder trial had concealed evidence that would have led to an acquittal. But District Attorney Gil Garcetti refused to drop the case until right now. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure out that it's because he wants to enter the next primary election without the specter of the Pratt case hanging over the campaign. What is outrageous is that he is now trying to claim credit for his office in supposedly turning up key evidence that led to Pratt's release. The truth is that the only reason that evidence was finally turned over to Pratt's lawyers was because one of the investigators refused to hide it.

**Disgusted
Bay Area**

The article, "Inside Texas death factory" in the January-February issue, powerfully depicted the inhumanity of the state machine intent on executing prisoners. The lone voice of humanity was that of the prisoner telling the story. It was his voice that pointed out that the dehuman-

ized brutality of the people who run the death machine is measured in the way "we are all diminished a little more each time one of these atrocities is carried out." The only thing that makes sense when you read an article like that is to tear down the prison walls. **Ready to help Memphis**

American capitalism has always had a love affair with slavery. Never acquiescing to the abolitionists, they have fought tooth-and-nail through the centuries to keep some form of slave labor available for maximum exploitation. In the years since the Civil War, prison slaves have largely filled and satisfied this most disgusting aspect of capitalism.

In an essay I have written, "All Slaves Must be Freed!" I challenge the American people to rise above the historical bigotry which allows the slave industry to continue unabated under the guise of "criminal justice." I'm a staunch abolitionist, not only of prison slavery but also the system of wage slavery. My current incarceration may seem to lend bias to my writing. However, I see it as an awakening to the real America.

**Ronald Young
Huntsville, Texas**

Editor's note: The size and frequency of N&L prevents us from being able to print many of the important articles and manuscripts we have received from prisoners around the country. We will try to share excerpts as space permits in coming issues.

As someone interested in systemic, permanent change of this system I appreciate *News & Letters*'s philosophic perspective. It is rare, and I find it helps me think about issues in new ways.

**Woman prisoner
Chowchilla, CA**

ON C.L.R. JAMES

My new book, *The World of C.L.R. James: The Unfragmented Vision*, which will be published by Clydeside Press, Glasgow, in March, contains new material on James, Raya Dunayevskaya, socialist-humanism and world socialism. As a critical Marxist, I don't think the Left needs hagiography. The book is critical of a whole range of socialist figures, including James and Dunayevskaya, though it focuses on the positive contribution made by all practitioners of libertarian social-

ism since the 1930s. Your readers can order a copy from me for \$21 by writing to me at 8 Tarbert Place, Polmont, Falkirk, FK20YX, Stirlingshire, Scotland. Above all, I hope they will do everything they can to get the book into public and university libraries. **James D. Young
Scotland**

PALESTINIANS AND ISRAELIS

We strongly oppose President Weisman's decision to reduce the sentence of five Jews who murdered Palestinians, especially considering Israel's zealous objection to the release of Palestinians "with blood on their hands." It isn't the first time he has reduced a sentence imposed on Jewish murderers solely because they are Jewish. It is even more objectionable in light of the existing inequality between Palestinians and Israelis before the law. Since the intifada, of the 113 cases where Israeli civilians killed Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, only two were convicted and given life imprisonment. Of the 91 cases in which Palestinians killed Israeli civilians, 24 were convicted and all received life sentences. This discrimination does not enjoy public support; 87% of the Israeli public believes a Palestinian and a Jew convicted of the same offense should receive the same punishment.

**B'Tselem
Jerusalem**

SCHOOL OF ASSASSINS: CLOSE IT DOWN!

It was great to see the standing ovation given to Father Roy Bourgeois after his talk at St. Scholastica High School here in Chicago, describing how he began the grassroots movement to shut down the U.S. Army school that has trained 60,000 Latin American soldiers in torture techniques against anyone working for the rights of the poor in those countries. I doubt that many in the nearly 400 primarily middle-aged folks who crowded into the auditorium to hear him have been in any "protest" movement before. But it was impossible to remain unmoved by his description of the reality of Latin America, which he showed lies both in the poverty and oppression and in the resistance against it.

When he described how he had got onto the base at Ft. Benning, Ga., 15 years ago; climbed a tall tree outside the barracks where the Salvadoran soldiers being trained would be sleeping; waited for dark, and then turned on the boom box he had taken with him to blast out the voice of Archbishop Romero giving the cathedral speech he had delivered the night before he was murdered, you could see, almost as if you had been there yourself, the shock of the soldiers who ran out looking skyward in panic.

The 15 years since then may seem slow progress toward shutting the SOA down, but it seems clear the number of protests has finally begun to grow substantially and reach new audiences. What a great new dimension it would give to May Day this year if the White House rally and civil disobedience at the Pentagon being planned for May 1-4 actually succeeds in shutting it down.

**Participant
Chicago**

ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM

I've been living across from Dunn Field, the most polluted part of the Defense Depot, for 47 years. When they first started the project they said they would clean up the polluted underground water but didn't begin the effort until the Depot closed in 1997. There are huge hills of polluted material in Dunn Field that are supposed to be covered over but are still open. The dust covers our cars and has got into our homes. We have called about it but got no response. They tell us it's not harmful to our health but we think it is. If the dust gets in your nose, you can hardly breathe.

**Black woman
Memphis**

HANDS OFF TINKY WINKY!

Jerry Falwell's attack on the lavender, purse-toting Teletubbie is silly and sinister at the same time. The same conservatives who used to make a career out of targeting "reds," and saw communists behind every bush, are now on a lavender witch-hunt. Falwell is whipping up a dangerous climate of bigotry that leads precisely to incidents such as the murder of gay college student Matthew Shepard in Wyoming. It's well past time to put a stop to this campaign of cultural-cleansing!

**Radical Women
Seattle**

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BOOKS

By RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

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1988 edition. New author's introduction\$17.50
- Philosophy and Revolution: from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao**
1989 edition. New author's introduction\$14.95
- Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution**
1991 edition. New author's introduction. Foreword by Adrienne Rich\$12.95
- Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future** (1996 edition)\$15.95
- The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism: Selected Writings by Raya Dunayevskaya**\$8.50
- The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism: Two Historic-Philosophic Writings by Raya Dunayevskaya** Contains "Presentation on Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy of June 1, 1987," and 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes."\$3 paperback, \$10 hardcover

By CHARLES DENBY

- Indignant Heart. A Black Worker's Journal**
1989 edition includes Afterword by Raya Dunayevskaya\$14.95

By KEVIN ANDERSON

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Nigerian elections reflect new upheavals on African continent

(Continued from page 1)

convention of the National Association of Nigerian Students declared its support for the struggle of ethnic nationalities and for environmental justice, and promised to campaign for the restoration of democracy in government institutions

Another recent development is that the youth from the Ogoni, Ijaw and other ethnic groups living in the delta region (where most of the oil is extracted) have asked the federal government to redress the terrible injustice and abuse of human and environmental rights.

Most recently, workers of Ekiti State and Plateau State have joined in industrial actions and strikes in demand of a minimum wage. These workers are demanding that their wages be tripled in response to the terrible decline in living conditions and wages that they have been subjected to throughout the last decade of military rule.

These and other grassroots struggles, and not the parading of a "transitional program" of a return to civilian rule by the military, will define the future political situation of the country. An oil producing nation like Nigeria which has failed to provide even basic fuel supplies to its own people, where corruption and regionalism is endemic, and where national development is at the mercy of international capital is clearly a nation that is running out of time.

The Nigerian junta's struggle for military hegemony on the continent also continues unabated, even though the economic realities in the country speak against such activities. The high levels of unemployment, the lack of clean water, the environmental disasters and the increasing poverty of the masses are not opening the eyes of the junta to reality.

CIVIL WAR IN SIERRA LEONE

Today a quarter of Nigeria's army is involved in conflicts in neighboring African countries. The West African peace keeping force ECOMOG is a tool of the Nigerian military junta. It has greatly lost credibility since it intervened in Liberia several years ago. The ECOMOG forces fought a bitter war with the forces of present Liberian President Charles Taylor who is said to be a strong defender of rebel forces fighting in Sierra Leone.

Of the 15,000 ECOMOG troops now in Sierra Leone, 12,000 are Nigerian. The war in Sierra Leone has claimed more than 20,000 lives since it started in 1991. The Revolutionary United Front (RUF), whose leader, Foday Sankoh, is currently detained in Nigeria, at first enjoyed much support from the ordinary people. By May 1997 it joined with the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) to remove president Ahmad Tejan Kabbah from office.

Kabbah was reinstated by the Nigerian-led ECOMOG forces in February 1998. He promised to bring peace to the country by talking to the RUF. This was welcome news for all Sierra Leonians. But he soon did the opposite. Under his rule 24 soldiers were executed, 43 were given the death sentence and 1,200 were detained for political reasons. Instead of the promised peace talks, he announced a death sentence against Foday Sankoh.

However, the record of the AFRC and RUF is no better. Their recent victory in Freetown, when they briefly took control of the capital, showed the true nature of their brutality. Thousands were murdered and made homeless. According to the UN mission that returned from Freetown, over 150,000 people were displaced and 1,000 men, women and children abducted by the rebels.

This alone proves that despite their claims to be "revolutionary," the RUF and AFRC are incapable of convincing anybody that they will bring about a genuine change to the country.

The ECOMOG forces are also guilty of abuses. They have carried out summary executions of suspected rebels and civilians, including children. But this does not apparently impress the U.S. According to Susan Rice, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, the Clinton administration will ask Congress to provide \$4 million in logistical support to ECOMOG.

The U.S. and Britain have long given military training to the forces of Kabbah. The French are said to be on the side of the RUF and AFRC. The so-called end of the Cold War is clearly a nightmare for the African continent, as shown in the day to day reality of its people.

THE AFRICAN ECONOMY

What underlines the political situation in places like Nigeria and Sierra Leone is a continental economic crisis. After more than three decades of political independence, economic development for the African continent is a dream in the far distance.

The colonial economy was aimed at aiding the industrial development and economy of the colonial masters. It was never meant to achieve economic development in the interests of the colonized nation. The dependence of the colonial economy was blessed by the African middle class, which was more concerned with building an alliance with either of the two world superpowers, the U.S. and Russia, than with breaking from its dependency.

Certainly, as Frantz Fanon argued, most of them lacked the basic understanding of the nature of their national economies. In such a situation it became a matter of choosing sides and not basing themselves on the creativity of the African masses.

As Raya Dunayevskaya wrote in the chapter on "The African Revolutions and the World Economy" in *Philosophy and Revolution*, "The tragedy of the African revolutions began so soon after revolution had succeeded

because leaders were so weighed down with the consciousness of technological backwardness that they turned to one of the two poles of world capital. The isolation from the masses deepened so that the new rulers began to look at them as mere labor power."

The colonial economies were designed for the maximum exploitation of surplus value, and technological transfer or capital investment from the West or the East was only a political statement to contain the freedom struggles. The simple fact is that neither the West nor the East have enough capital for itself, let alone to export to Africa.

Africa is in fact falling further behind than ever. In 1993 its share of world trade was 2.4%; in 1996 it was 2%; and in 1997 it fell to 1.9%. In the 1960s the annual capital growth rate of GDP was 1.3%. It fell to 0.8% in 1975 and zero by 1986.

Since then, even oil producing nations such as Nigeria have seen their GDP growth decline, from 4.2% in 1996 to 3.6% in 1997. The non oil-producing nations are experiencing a decline in world market prices for agricultural export goods. In these nations GDP growth declined from 3.7% in 1996 to 2.3% in 1997. In the least developed countries GDP growth declined from 4.9% in 1996 to 2.4% in 1997.

The fall in agricultural growth follows the same trend. Though the amount of cultivated land increases, yield per hectare has declined seriously. Moreover, less than 2% of cultivated land in Africa is irrigated.

The problem is not that poor farmers are irresponsible but that agriculture still "remains monoculture, the price of their one crop buffeted by the price structure of the world market, and whether they plan or do not plan has little effect on the neocolonialist structure" (*Philosophy and Revolution*, p. 225).

All of this has led to a massive debt burden. The debt which African countries owe the West totaled \$301 billion in 1993, then went up to \$312 billion in 1994 and to \$349 billion in 1997. This accounts for 67% of the continent's total GDP. The service of this debt represents a massive transfer of capital from the continent to Europe and the U.S. Furthermore, new tax systems and so-called new trade liberalization policies promoted by the IMF and World Bank are accelerating the rate of capital export from Africa to rich Europe. Neither the West nor the East can claim any statistical proof that they are committed to the development of the continent.

Editorial Under the whip of the punitive state

So intense was mass hatred against the religious Right orchestrating an attempted coup that the Senate backed down from removing Clinton from office. While far Right mouthpieces like William Bennett complained about the public's low morals, the truth is that people recognized the threat to freedom for all if morality can be dictated by a few self-appointed sex police.

However the punitive state which the right wing has shaped and which mounted a grand inquisition against Clinton is still in the business of stealing freedom. For as different as Clinton is from the working people in the U.S., the same punitive state which prosecuted Clinton for most of 1998 has been instilling fear into the lives of many of lesser means for a lot longer. And notwithstanding the prosecution he was subjected to, Clinton was the victim of a crusade of his own making, having contributed to the atmosphere of punishment as an advocate of the death penalty and as an architect of this country's prison gulag. That atmosphere has been reinforced by the punishment meted out by sanctions on the Iraqi masses, forgotten during the spectacle of impeachment and the Senate trial.

The current incarnation of the punitive state took on the face of Kenneth Starr when he was hired to investigate the Whitewater land deal and he has been investigating Clinton ever since. The special prosecutor law under which he was appointed originally was passed by Congress two decades ago to insulate the special prosecutor from political firings of the kind Nixon attempted during the investigation into the Watergate scandal and his grab for single-party rule. When it was to the advantage of the far Right, the special prosecutor law has been a conduit for appointee Kenneth Starr to exercise unlimited powers and help the religious Right stage a power grab of its own.

The House body that impeached Clinton is well-practiced in punishing the accused regardless of civil liberties. It includes 65 former prosecutors including all the House managers in the Senate trial. Thus the path to political success is littered with the ruined lives of many.

VICTIMS OF STATE AGGRESSION

In an unprecedented break from unquestioned state authority, DuPage County (Illinois) prosecutors and sheriffs will be tried for cheating to get two innocent men, Rolando Cruz and Alejandro Hernandez, convicted for murder. Pretrial hearings opened just as the *Chicago Tribune* exposed a national scandal, namely that prosecutors routinely cheat, often knowingly putting innocent people on Death Rows across the country. Known cases amount to 381.

The rule of unjust law prevails though. Best known as one whom the punitive state wants to make an example is Mumia Abu-Jamal. A revolutionary and political prisoner, he was framed for killing a Philadelphia cop in 1981 and sentenced to death. The very same Judge Sabo who presided over the original trial presided over subsequent

CONTRADICTIONS FROM WITHIN

The economic deterioration has created a climate of political tension throughout Africa. In countries like Zimbabwe, the fascist character of the leadership has become so open that one now begins to wonder if it can survive any longer.

Angola, which along with Zimbabwe has sent troops to the Congo to defend Kabila's government from an insurgency, is now facing serious military problems at home. The rebel forces of UNITA, led by Jonas Savimbi, have intensified their offensive. The UN, which was supposed to monitor the peace process, was reduced to an onlooker by allowing UNITA to rearm and mobilize their forces.

Thousands of Angolans are being forced to move to safer towns. The food crisis in the country is likely to get out of hand in a very short period of time. The question is whether the government will survive this time without the help of the Cubans who have more problems to look after than sending soldiers to Angola.

Perhaps most disheartening is the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The ruling parties of these two nations fought side by side against the Stalinist government in Ethiopia in the 1970s. Yet today they are dropping bombs on hospitals, destroying water storage facilities and schools, and killing men, women and children in order to secure a "military victory." If former revolutionaries can only manage to address each other through a conflict that was created by the very forces which they fought and died against, then we must recognize that the spirit of the revolution has been betrayed.

I have no reason to believe that these failures will be the model of the coming African revolutions. The coming revolutions have the advantage of witnessing the grounding of revolution from within the revolutionary movement itself. They can therefore learn the lessons of the past and start on a much higher level than previously.

As the ongoing struggles in Nigeria show, the African masses continue to search for new paths to liberation, despite the enormous barriers facing them from international capital and internal crises. As Dunayevskaya wrote in *Philosophy and Revolution*, "The whole point seems to be to hold onto the principle of creativity, and the contradictory process by which creativity develops."

appeals and has ruled out new evidence in Mumia's favor, honoring every prerogative of the prosecutors. No sitting judge has sentenced more people to death than Sabo.

At least two U.S. mayors who were once prosecutors have built their political careers on law-and-order policies. When Anthony Porter was released in February after 16 years on the Illinois death row, one of the first things we were reminded was that the prosecutor at the time, Richard M. Daley, used any means necessary to win a conviction and contributed to the atmosphere of wrongful convictions that now has resulted in 11 being released from the Illinois Death Row.

The atmosphere of punishment has become a policy of fascism in New York thanks to paramilitary death squads roaming the streets, commissioned by Mayor "Adoph" Giuliani. One of these squads picked out a Black immigrant, Amadou Diallo, and mowed him down in front of his home. It was a wrongful execution where justice was not manipulated, but rather dispensed with altogether.

RESISTING THE LORD HIGH PROSECUTORS

Thanks to community movements in solidarity with the wrongfully convicted and political prisoners, the punitive dictates of prosecutors are meeting resistance. Socially conscious journalism students discovered evidence that exonerated Porter, and daily protests are taking place in New York City over the Diallo execution.

At the three-day National Conference on Wrongful Convictions and The Death Penalty in November in Chicago, living testimony to the need to smash the punitive state was presented in one poignant session. One after another, Rolando Cruz and 27 others among the country's 73 men and two women released from Death Rows introduced themselves. They stated the dates of their wrongful convictions and confinements, and concluded, "If the state of Illinois had its way, I would be dead now," or Florida, or Texas, and so on.

The most striking aspect of the conference was the growing challenge to the prerogative of those self-appointed to kill. It could be seen most strongly in the participation of those, like Louva G. Bell, mother of Ronald Kitchen whose tortured confession at the hands of infamous Chicago cop Jon Burge led to a wrongful murder conviction. Nine other of Burge's victims languish on death row. It was recently reported that prosecutors covered up evidence of forced confessions.

In light of the Senate vote not to remove Clinton, some have waxed nauseatingly about the Constitution's protections against single-party dictates. Meanwhile the death penalty, adjudged constitutional after a brief moratorium in the 1970s, is imposed without care on the innocent and carried out disproportionately on the poor, Black and Latino. Taking that prerogative away from an ever more punitive state is the goal of a growing mass movement.

Youth New queer generation gathers to question all

Madison, Wis.—The sixth annual Midwest Bisexual, Lesbian, Gay and Transgender College Conference, held in February, demonstrated the passion and reason of queer youth. With over 1,500 people in attendance, the energy was palpable. Elders and advisors attempted to “educate” the youth with sessions featuring assimilationist figures like Candace Gingrich. They also encouraged strategies

of working “inside” reformist organizations. The only leftist session at the conference was a lively discussion led by Jennifer Rycenga on Marxist-Humanism and revolutionary queer history. Youth flocked to this session and raised profound questions on the need for radical changes, a more inclusive movement, and the need to build a totally new society.

A critique of their parents’ generation—the radicals of the ‘60s—was made with a decisively revolutionary twist. Fritze, a young lesbian, described how her mother had tried to talk her out of taking any direct political action by saying that “the ‘60s had failed and were dead.” Fritze retorted, “Your failure does not mean revolution is impossible!”

Another gay college student, Adam, cogently pointed out that the ‘60s generation might be the first revolutionary movement which unequivocally knew it had failed, and that they were trying to impose their defeatism on the next generation.

The question that the students—including high school students—were explicitly and repeatedly raising was “what happens after the revolution?” Unlike their parents’ generation, and perhaps because they are queer and know how repressive those regimes were to sexual minorities, the queer youth showed no desire to tail end state powers that called themselves socialist, whether that be Cuba or the former Soviet Union.

Instead they felt free to ask the difficult questions of how we could re-create the dialectic without having revolutions turn into their opposite, a question explicitly raised by a 14-year-old gay youth.

As *N&L* reported in relation to queer movement activity in October and November of 1998, the vicious lynching of Matthew Shepard appears to have galvanized rather than cowed student activism. It was heartening to see radical straight students willing, indeed eager, to identify with queers. Opposition to police violence, support for Mumia’s cause, feminist alliances, and attention to racism revealed this as a multiple issue queer youth movement. While the reformist and assimilationist trends were quite visible, they do not represent the liveliest segments of queer youth, who

are ready to undertake their historic responsibility to “re-create the dialectic anew.”

—Jennifer, Maya, and Suzanne

Queer Notions III: Even More Thoughts on the Relation between Sexuality and Revolution, has just been published. Get it for \$3 from *News & Letters*.

Students contribute to ‘thunderclap of freedom’

by Kevin Michaels

Feb. 3 saw an event take place which has dramatically discredited the already embattled institution of the criminal justice system of the state of Illinois. On that date the doors of the state’s death row opened wide and Anthony Porter, a Black man who had come within several days of being executed for a 1983 double murder which took place in a park on Chicago’s South Side, walked out free on bond. A headline in the *Chicago Tribune* described this event, which followed a dramatic revelation that Porter had been wrongfully convicted, as a “thunderclap of freedom.”

Integral to the unfolding of this dramatic event were four students of Northwestern University journalism professor David Protesch. Protesch, along with investigative reporter Rob Warden, have a distinguished record of involving students in cases which have exposed the capricious and racist nature of the justice system.

FINDING TRUTH OUTSIDE SYSTEM

In 1994, four Black men known collectively as the Ford Heights Four were released from prison and pardoned by the governor as a result of exposure generated by investigative work of several of Protesch’s students. The Four had been convicted of a 1978 double murder as a result of gross prosecutorial misconduct. Two of them had been sentenced to die.

This time around, Protesch assigned four of his students to work on Porter’s case. They examined the documentation from the trial and even visited the park in which the murders took place to re-enact the crime as described by the prosecution’s sole witness. The discrepancies in the witness’s story the students uncovered during this experience convinced them of Porter’s innocence.

Events moved quickly from that point onward. The students tracked down and interviewed the witness who recanted the testimony he said the police coerced out of him. Before long, they had located a man living in Milwaukee whom the police had interviewed the morning after the murder. Their visit resulted in the man confessing that he, not Anthony Porter, was responsible for the killings. Porter had simply been a convenient figure whom the police had wished to remove from the streets.

HONOR ROLL OF THE RELEASED

Porter was released and has begun the process of adjusting to life on the outside after almost 16 years on death row. A public meeting held at a restaurant on Chicago’s north side on Feb. 11 raised money for Porter’s new life and gave him and his family a chance to speak out against the grave injustice they had been made to suffer.

Porter is the tenth man to be released from death row in Illinois since the reinstatement of the death penalty. In addition to two of the Ford Heights Four, this number also includes the recently released Rolando Cruz.

At least ten others currently sitting on death row have been identified as having been convicted as a result of police or prosecutorial misconduct, including—in the case of Aaron Patterson—torture at the hands of former Chicago police lieutenant Jon Burge. As one of David Protesch’s students told the *Washington Post*, “I think there are a lot of Anthony Porters out there.”

The commitment and energy of these students has led directly to a powerful indictment of the racist death penalty. Their effort has contributed greatly to a growing movement for a moratorium on executions in Illinois. Hopefully this momentum will have national ramifications and help to curb the increasingly retributive nature of the criminal justice system in the U.S.

NY gays condemn police reaction

New York—Gay rights activists rallied Feb. 17 at police headquarters to protest police brutality at the Matthew Shepard memorial march last October. The Oct. 19th Coalition, formed in response to mass arrests, beatings and mistreatment of peaceful demonstrators, held this event to publicize its filing a wave of complaints with the Civilian Complaint Review Board.

The coalition has gathered enough information to file close to 60 charges of police brutality or misconduct against over 50 officers by name or badge number. Its investigations are continuing. Its findings include the police charging on horseback into groups, seriously injuring three people; the arrests of 136 peaceful marchers (the NYPD disputes the number); excessive use of night sticks; punching and shoving; anti-gay and lesbian shouts such as “Get back, faggot”; holding those arrested in jail for 18 to 27 hours, and the denial to some of vital medications, food, or access to bathrooms and water.

The first two arrestees to go to trial were acquitted. In one case, the arresting officer’s lies were documented on video. The coalition demands that all charges be dropped, that the police and their commanders who instigated the illegal tactics be punished, and that the U.S. Justice Department investigate.

Richard Spedale, a representative of the coalition, said at the rally, “Last October we assembled to mourn the death of Matthew Shepard when the NYPD committed numerous acts of brutality against peaceful vigil participants. We continue to mourn the tragic death of Matthew Shepard and we stand in solidarity with those New Yorkers who are outraged at the police killing of Amadou Diallo in the Bronx. We will not tolerate police misconduct in any form; police brutality must end now.”

After some dancing around the police who were trying to box us in with barricades, the group at Police Plaza vowed to continue its campaign against police brutality by participating in the Feb. 22 demonstrations over the police murder of Amadou Diallo and other actions.

—Participants

Youth fight sanctions



Members of Humanitarian Action Collective unfurl banner against sanctions killing thousands in Iraq.

Memphis, Tenn.—Five members of the Humanitarian Action Collective brought seven relief boxes into the post office on Feb. 18. In one of these boxes was a book on first aid; in the others were children’s aspirin, children’s non aspirin analgesic, band-aid strips and children’s Robitussin. After filling out the customs declarations, we brought to the postal clerk these desperately needed resources to deliver to a country in a state of complete infrastructural disintegration. The post office could not accept our packages; yet every rule was followed, and every appropriate form was filled out.

Why were we not permitted to send our relief boxes? Is there a special kind of suffering and disease not painful or tragic enough for Tylenol? Lack of such simple medicines is directly responsible for the deaths of well over 5,000 children every month in this decaying country. According to the post office, the packages were too heavy, but the heaviest weighed fewer than five pounds and contained at most four items of medicine.

Our government says that, in this special case, saving innocent lives must occur no more than one bottle of chewable children’s aspirin at a time. Could it be that the U.S. government does not want us to help the sick in this one country? Is it a matter of foreign policy to keep these people sick and dying? It is if those getting sick and dying are sick and dying in Iraq.

Maybe the Iraqis do not need American medicine, but it’s the least we could give them. In the 1980s we gave them chemical weapons, then satellite support to use those weapons. In the 1990s we gave them Desert Shield, Desert Storm and Desert Fox. Most of all, we have given the Iraqis eight years of intense decay under the most comprehensive economic sanctions ever imposed upon another nation.

As American citizens and as humans, we must do our own part. And now we should give these sanctions a pledge of defiance; now we should give the American people the truth that our television news and government officials will not.

—Ceylon

Announcing a discussion series starting in March...

The Dialectic of Marx’s Capital and Today’s Global Crisis

The economic meltdown in such areas as East Asia, Russia, and parts of Latin America and the possibility that it might spread to the entire world economy has helped impel new interest in Marx’s *Capital*. At the same time, a new generation of thinkers and activists have come of age who are searching for an alternative to both “free market” capitalism and the state-capitalism that once called itself Communism. This series speaks to these questions and concerns by exploring what Marxist-Humanism has contributed to the understanding of Marx’s greatest theoretical work.

As Lenin once said, “It is impossible to understand Marx’s *Capital*, and especially its first chapter, unless one has understood the whole of Hegel’s *Logic*.” For this reason, the core readings will be selections from Marx’s *Capital*, writings on *Capital* from the Archives of Marxist-Humanism, and Raya Dunayevskaya’s “Rough Notes on Hegel’s *Science of Logic*.”

For a syllabus and a schedule of classes, contact the News and Letters Committee nearest to you. See the directory on page 7.

Class 1

The Origin and Scope of Capital: Marx’s Re-creation of Hegel’s Dialectic

Class 2

The Phenomenon of Capitalism: The Commodity-Form

Class 3

The Essence of Capitalism (I): The Labor Process

Class 4

The Essence of Capitalism (II): The Labor Process and the Transformation of the Value of Labor Power into Wages

Class 5

The Notion of Capitalism: The Absolute General Law of Capitalist Accumulation

Class 6

The Logic of Capitalist Crisis: Overproduction, “Underconsumption,” or the Decline in the Rate of Profit?

Our Life and Times

U.S. war on Iraq, death of King Hussein

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

The permanent U.S. war on Iraq and the response to the death of Jordan's King Hussein both demonstrate that we live in an era of U.S. imperial arrogance, nowhere more than in the Middle East. "Not since the Persian Gulf War in 1991—and before that, Vietnam—have American forces engaged in such routine combat in such a sustained way over such a prolonged period," wrote the *New York Times* on Feb. 21.

As against March 1998 when massive opposition at home and abroad forced the U.S. to call off planned air

Terror in East Timor

Paramilitary gangs armed, financed and politically supported by the Indonesian military have stepped up their terror campaign in East Timor over the last two months, driving thousands of people from their villages to seek refuge along the southern coast and in the capital Dili. In this context, the Indonesian government's announcement that it "may" grant independence to East Timor if its own restrictively-defined plan for "autonomy" is rejected by the East Timorese people is highly suspect.

The post-Suharto Habibie government has also rejected outright any status referendum in East Timor, undoubtedly because such a vote would demonstrate the depth of support for full independence. This includes a new generation of youth born after Indonesia's violent occupation and annexation of East Timor in 1976. Many pro-independence supporters view the growing paramilitary threat as an Indonesia-orchestrated plan to intimidate East Timorese into accepting the government-military's "autonomy" proposal, which means, ultimately, remaining within Indonesia.

Opponents, including Nobel peace awardee José Ramos Horta, have rejected the government's pronouncements as a ploy aimed to deflect international pressure away from criticism of reality in East Timor where, he said, "people are being slaughtered, where women are still raped, and torture is rampant." He has called for the Habibie government to first release all East Timorese political prisoners and withdraw its 20,000-strong army of occupation.

The release of the guerrilla leader Xanana Gusmao to house arrest in Jakarta may also be aimed, at least indirectly, at buttressing Indonesia's immediate aims. Gusmao has called for a cease fire and transitional period, for up to ten years, leading to a referendum on East Timor's independence.

Pope in Mexico

The Papal visit to Mexico marked the 20th anniversary of Cardinal Wojtyla's first crusade abroad as newly-chosen Pope John Paul II when in 1979 he first engaged in Puebla, Mexico, with the vocal and vigorous advocates of liberation theology and began his own unrelenting campaign against the alliance within the Catholic Church of clergy and lay workers with Marxists.

In 1999, the Pope visited a purged Catholic establishment in Mexico, presided over by Cardinal Rivera, who had been promoted by the Pope after Rivera closed down a liberation theology oriented seminary in 1995. Reportedly, now only 2 of 117 Mexican bishops are identified with liberation theology. One is undoubtedly Samuel Ruiz in Chiapas, where 40 Catholic churches supporting the indigenous struggle have been shut forcibly by paramilitary squads. The word Chiapas did not cross the Pope's public lips.

strikes on Iraq, the war of winter 1998-99 is not even being debated, let alone seriously opposed. Liberal and Black politicians have given Clinton a pass on Iraq because of the far Right's impeachment coup attempt.

Establishment newspapers have relegated the attacks on Iraq to the inside pages, even after the U.S. admitted that a missile had hit a civilian neighborhood near Basra. Antiwar groups and the Left have verbally opposed the bombing, but since December have not tried to organize substantial protests.

Virtually unreported by the corporate media is the fact that eight years of U.S.-UN economic sanctions continue to strangle the Iraqi people at a cost of up to 500,000 lives to date. The U.S., which stood by as the Iraqi peoples' uprising of 1991 was crushed, now claims that it will aid the opposition to the brutal regime of Saddam Hussein. As we go to press, his forces appear to have assassinated another prominent Shiite cleric, also crushing the protests that ensued.

The media circus over the death of Jordan's King Hussein was in sharp contrast to the silence over Iraq.

Kurds protest kidnapping

Swooping thousands of miles into Kenya with the aid of U.S. spy agencies, Turkish agents kidnapped Kurdish guerrilla leader Abdullah Ocalan, Feb. 15, spiriting him back to Turkey. News of this touched off several days of militant protest in Europe among Kurdish immigrants and their supporters. Protesters targeted not only Turkish embassies and consulates, but also those of Greece. This was because Ocalan had been under the protection of Greek diplomats in Kenya, who unconsciously allowed him to fall into Turkish government hands. Kurds and their supporters also



Kurdish children protest in Kiev, Ukraine

blame the other European governments such as Italy, France and Germany, all of whom claim to support the Kurdish cause within Turkey, yet none of whom had the courage to defy the U.S. by offering Ocalan asylum.

Ocalan now faces what the Turkish and U.S. governments dare to call a "fair trial" before a semi-military court. The government has already barred international observers and is holding Ocalan in solitary on a remote island. Turkey already has thousands of political prisoners, some of them journalists jailed simply for writing about the Kurds.

U.S.-based Kurdish human rights activist Vera Beaudin Saeedpour stated: "While the U.S. is attacking Iraq almost daily in its self-declared 'no-fly zone,' saying that it does so because it cares about the Kurds, it is backing Turkey in its attacks on the Kurds. They deny or punish any manifestation of Kurdish identity, yet Clinton has called Turkey a 'shining example to the world of cultural diversity.' Turkey and the U.S. insisted that Ocalan face justice in Turkey; but there isn't any justice for a Kurd in Turkey."

Every major and minor world ruler paid their respects at the funeral, while even a left-liberal journal like *The Nation* editorialized that "he was the greatest Arab leader of our age" (March 1, 1999).

It is true that Hussein was willing to make peace with Israel and that his rule was not as brutal as that of the present governments of neighboring Iraq, Saudi Arabia, or Syria. But will he truly be remembered as greater than Egypt's Nasser who helped to liberate his country from British domination? Or than Iraq's Qasim, who overthrew Hussein's British-installed cousin in 1958, distributed land to the peasantry and reached out to both the Shiites and the Kurds, only to be overthrown in a CIA-backed coup by Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath Party?

The truth be told, Jordan's King Hussein, for many years also on the CIA payroll, ruled over an impoverished nation whose unemployment rate stands today at 27%. So little has been done to promote women's rights that even Hussein's widow was not allowed to attend the all-male funeral.

Although the monarchy and the army are based among the Bedouins, fully 60% of the population is Palestinian. They have not forgotten Black September in 1970 when the royal army killed thousands of Palestinians. Economic and political problems have deepened in the 1990s due to the embargo on Iraq, Jordan's largest trading partner, and to the massive expulsion of Jordanian Palestinians from the Gulf States in 1991.

Due to intransigence by Israel's Netanyahu, no tangible benefits have accrued from the 1994 peace treaty with Israel. Like the oil sheikdoms of the Gulf or Saudi Arabia, but without even the oil, it would seem that the new King Abdullah has a far more precarious hold on power than Jordan's boosters are willing to acknowledge.

German state elections

On Feb. 7, elections in Germany's state of Hesse, which includes Frankfurt, returned the Christian Democrats to power, ousting a Social Democrat-Green state government. As a result, the conservatives have also gained control of the upper house of the national parliament, putting them in position to block legislation from the national Social Democrat-Green government elected last fall.

This stunning and bitter defeat for the Left after only 100 days in power was not predicted by pre-election opinion polls. The Right had chosen its issues carefully, however, concentrating on stirring up racist anxiety over immigration. They organized a demagogic petition campaign against plans to liberalize citizenship laws. These plans, which include fairly generous rights to dual citizenship, would allow up to four million immigrants, many of them Turks, to gain German citizenship.

After the Hesse election, the Christian Democrats seem determined to block any serious change in immigration laws, hoping to ride anti-immigrant sentiment back to power. The pragmatist Social Democrats seem ready to abandon plans to liberalize immigration in any significant way.

On the labor front, however, working people have just scored important gains. I. G. Metall, at 3.5 million members the country's largest union, signed a preliminary contract Feb. 18 for a 3.5% to 4.2% raise over 14 months. Capitalists had bitterly opposed a big raise, but workers staged a series of warning strikes and were preparing to shut down auto and steel plants completely. Employers are still threatening to resist nationwide implementation of the settlement despite record corporate profits.

NEWS AND LETTERS COMMITTEES

Who We Are And What We Stand For

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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