

Chinatown a J.S. labor battlefront



by John Marcotte

It is a long distance from the Midwest farm country around Decatur, Ill., where Staley, Caterpillar and Firestone workers have been on strike or locked out, to New York City's Chinatown. It is a distance of a thousand miles, and of language and culture.

But Chinatown is every bit as much a war zone as Decatur, and if the Chinese restaurant, garment and construction workers could meet the struggling workers from Staley and Cat and Firestone, I don't think language would be a big problem between them. They would speak the same language, the language of freedom from slave labor.

Back when Ronald Reagan was talking about creating jobs, but all the jobs being created were low-wage, temporary jobs, Jesse Jackson aptly said that African Americans had "full employment" under slavery, and that is not our goal. Today, it is the Chinese workers organized in their workers' center, the Chinese Staff and Workers Association (CSWA), who picket Jing Fong, Chinatown's largest and most profitable restaurant, chanting "No more slave labor!"

They are protesting wages as low as 70 cents an hour, stealing of tips by management, and 70-hour work weeks with no overtime pay. Decatur workers make I guess over ten dollars an hour. But far from Decatur and Chinatown being worlds apart, I would say Chinese immigrant workers are at the cutting edge of today's labor struggles in the U.S. They are facing today the future planned by American capitalism for all of us.

In the restructured U.S. economy, there will be plenty of jobs—if you are willing to work for low wages and no benefits or rights. There are plenty of jobs in Chinatown, that is not the issue. Slave labor conditions are the issue, conditions of life and work.

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Black World

Behind U.S. electoral screen in Haiti



by Lou Turner

The botched U.S. sanctioned June 25 elections in Haiti have taught the Haitian people at least one great lesson: U.S.-style democracy is as bankrupt exported to Haiti as it has been historically in the U.S. Indeed, the historical is indispensable to any understanding of the present moment of U.S.-Haiti relations, Sidney Mintz reminded us recently. "It is strange, but true, that Haiti has never been forgiven by the West for refusing to tolerate the social and economic structure European intentions had installed..." (See Sidney Mintz, "Can Haiti Change?", in *Foreign Affairs*, January-February 1995.)

The same U.S. imperialist intentions that imposed a military occupation on Haiti from 1915 to 1934 and set up its modern military apparatus, that engineered the overthrow of Jean-Bertrand Aristide—the country's first democratically elected president—in September 1991, that invaded Haiti in October 1994 and again made itself responsible for reorganizing the military-police apparatus, has once more made itself the guarantor of "free and fair elections" (sic) in Haiti.

The anatomy of the Haitian elections must be analyzed on two levels—the political and the economic. First, the June 25 election, which fielded some 12,000 candidates running for more than 2,000 offices, was, with its confusion and corruption, neither more nor less a fiasco than last year's "democratic" elections in Mexico, or the kind of election Chicago is renowned for running from time to time.

It is the example of Mexico, and the fact that the Zapatistas's Chiapas rebellion almost succeeded in wresting political power from the U.S.'s NAFTA ally, the PRI, that mobilized the economic democratization of Haiti's political landscape. Having boasted 90% voter registration of Haiti's 3.5 million electorate, the heavy-handed attempts of U.S. aid agencies, led by USAID, to buy the popular movement, marginalize left activists, and bolster right-wing opponents of Aristide and the popular movement, resulted in an only 25% to 50% turnout of registered voters. As the mass-based, left APN

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Supreme Court opens new racist era

by Michelle Landau

The U.S. Supreme Court closed out its 1994-95 term in June with a sweeping, retrograde attack on Black America, whose effects will be felt for years to come. The Court ruled against the legality of federal mandates for affirmative action; against efforts to improve the quality of education in segregated inner-city Black schools; and against initiatives that had succeeded in translating minority group voting rights into voting power.

All three decisions (by the same 5-4 majority of Justices Rehnquist, Kennedy, Scalia, O'Connor, and Thomas) represent reversals from the one period in the Court's existence when it responded to the progressive thrust of American history, the mid-1950s through the mid-1970s. All three decisions proclaim a "color-blind society," and insidiously use the 1950s-60s language of equality and civil rights to reduce the meaning of "rights" to what the Black anthropologist John Langston Gwaltney called in a similar context, "insubstantial generality," noting that "The rogue right Supreme Court ... diminishes human rights whether it affirms or denies them." (See the "Afterword" to the 1993 edition of his *Drylongso: A Self-Portrait of Black America*.)

THE COURT: COLOR-BLIND, OR PRESUMPTIVELY RACIST?

● On the last day of its 1994-95 term, the Court's decision in the voting rights case of *Miller v. Johnson* effectively overturned the 1982 Congressional amendment to its 1965 Voting Rights Act.

The 1965 Act had granted the federal government the authority to enforce in the states the voting rights of African Americans. In 1982, Congress had strengthened the Act, stipulating that minority group voting power was consistently dispersed in a number of different electoral districts.

Following the 1990 census, Congressional redistricting doubled the number of "majority minority" districts from 26 to 52 and the number of Blacks in Congress surged from 16 elected in 1990 to 39 elected two years later; new Latino Congresspeople were also elected, from new majority-Latino districts.

In 1993, the Supreme Court declared the unconstitutionality of North Carolina's 12th District, which had just elected that state's first African-American to Congress in the 20th century. Declaring against the district's "bizarre shape," the Court ruled that it resembled the "racial gerrymanders of the past" and "political apartheid."

The ruling in *Miller* goes even further, and threatens the existence of both the redrawn federal districts, and hundreds of state and county "majority minority" seats as well. Although the Georgia district in dispute bears no bizarre shape, the Court majority now declared any dis-

Chicago's poor reject Clinton HUD policy

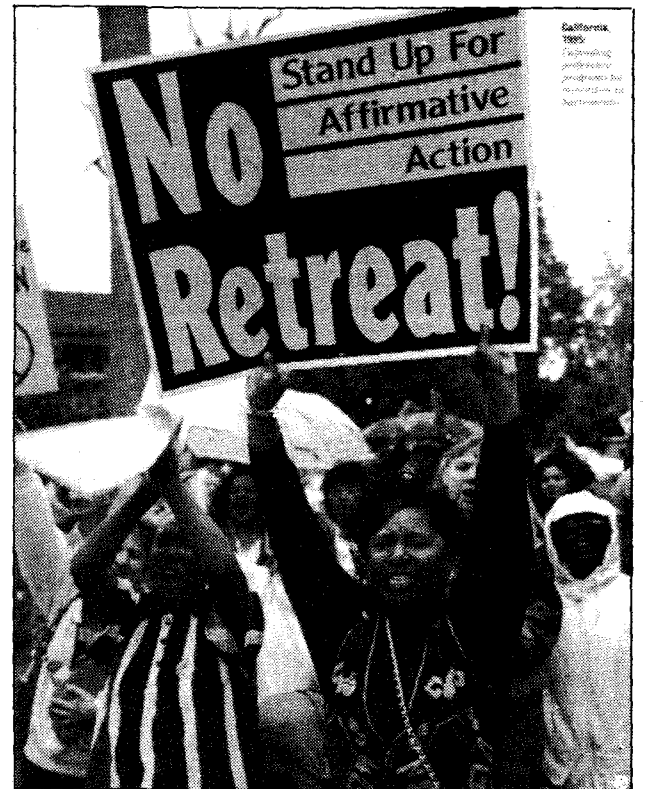
Chicago—The growing fightback against government attacks on Black and Latino working-class communities took a powerful step forward, June 26, when some 2,000 up-from-the-bottom Blacks and Latinos took it to the streets. The professionals and office workers that normally bustle around Chicago's downtown Loop in the morning had to suspend business as usual when the masses from Chicago's poorest neighborhoods suddenly showed up, fired up and demanding answers from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which had earlier in the month taken over the day-to-day operations of Chicago's Housing Authority (CHA).

The protesters, mostly youth and women, came from an assortment of community organizations. Arriving in buses, and from another protest in front of the INS building a block away, the protesters encircled the Metcalfe Federal Building while the Chicago police scurried around to make it look as though they had some kind of "presence" in the face of the mass energy surging through downtown Chicago.

Since the November 1994 elections that made Gingrich's "Contract on America" this country's new "manifest destiny," protests have been picking up. What was distinctive and new about the June 26 protest, aside from the fact that much of the Left was conspicuously absent, is that this was not only against the Gingrich Right but against the Clinton's repressive public policy that's now coming down on people.

The displacement of CHA tenants through eviction and relocation from buildings that have come under demolition orders, as well as the security "lockdown" and police sweeps of the housing projects, had already been carried out by Mayor Daley and CHA chairman, Vince Lane, going back to the Bush administration. Nothing has changed under Clinton, except that after years of corruption, HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros has chosen this moment to take over the CHA.

What brought forth the protest is that none of the old practices have desisted. On the contrary, the fear is that



Sacramento rally to defend affirmative action against governor's rollback and ballot measure.

district created with race as the predominant factor "presumptively unconstitutional." With a logic abusively negating the history of the American South, the Court held that the Georgia case demonstrated no previous violations of Black voters' rights, and thus no reason to disrupt "traditional" criteria for drawing district lines.

See John Alan's historical perspective on affirmative action, p.8

Civil rights advocates like the Voter Education Project fear that this ruling could well terminate all Black congressional districts drawn on the basis of the 1990 census. Others likened the ruling to those that ended political gains for freed slaves, following the short-lived Reconstruction period a century ago.

● In the school desegregation case, *Missouri v. Jenkins*, the Court turned the clock that far back as well. It declared illegal a Kansas City, Mo., program whose focus was state expenditures for improving the quality of education. (Continued on page 10)

HUD's 90-day plan to overhaul the CHA will intensify the dispersal of tenants in the Clinton administration's frenzy to chalk up a political "victory" for its beleaguered domestic policy.

What the protesters showed by their demands is that these most isolated people in American society see the "big picture" more clearly than the political pundits. Their chant of "No Justice, No Peace" was punctuated by the more haunting declaration—"No Housing, No Convention." This was a reference to Chicago being showcased as the 1996 site of the Democratic Party Convention. Along with references to the infamous 1968 Democratic Convention, which focused the horrified attention of the world on then Chicago Mayor Richard "Boss" Daley's unleashing of the city's mad-dog police department on demonstrators, one community flyer warned: "For you it was 1776. For us it will be 1996."

What Chicago's poor and working class see is that the HUD take-over is the opening salvo of the Clinton and Daley administrations in preempting a repeat of 1968. They're "cleaning up" Chicago for the presidential politics of the 1996 election. Indeed, Daley bungled an attempt to undermine the June 26 protest by illegally detaining Marion Stamps, the principal organizer of the protest, the weekend before.

In the meantime, the conditions in projects like near-north side Cabrini-Green continues to deteriorate. "We

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Has Women's Studies turned to activism?

by Jennifer Pen

"We are in reality: our theories should be too." This passionately expressed sentiment, spoken by feminist physicist and philosopher Karen Barad, was reflected in many ways by speakers at the 16th Annual National Women's Studies Association Conference held in Norman, Okla., in June. True to the conference's theme of "Cultural, Intellectual and Political (R)evolutions," women scholars, activists and theorists directly critiqued

Woman as Reason

capitalism, heterosexism, and the state, while proudly contrasting these to women's activity and self-development.

Attendance at the conference was not high, yet there were 200 sessions, with presentations by over 500 people. Questions of race, class, and professionalism in women's studies continue to be hotly debated within NWSA. Although the conference assembled a diverse slate of plenary speakers, representation of women of color, young women, working-class women, and women from outside of academia was discouragingly small.

THEORY AND WOMEN'S LIVES

Given the sessions I attended, I sensed that the depth of today's multiple crises was calling forth both self-examination of the Women's Liberation Movement and a sharper critique of the oppressive realities of an inhuman world. There was a turning away from empty academic virtuosity to a more serious accountability of theory to women's lives. But while capitalism was frequently attacked, there was almost no mention of Marxism in opposition to it, at least by name.

Labor scholars examined women's organizing in the past and the present. Katherine Dawson highlighted the multiracial and multilingual collective action of women in the Gallup, N.M., coalfields of the 1930s, showing the women directly understood how capitalism was attempting to debilitate their lives and their families. Similarly, focusing on the history of women in the United Steel Workers Union, Mary Margaret Fonow demonstrated how these "Women of Steel" use their union base to create multiple dimensions of their political subjectivities.

Direct action and organizing arose at the conference. Young women from Riot Grrrls and Lesbian Avengers dubbed themselves the "Third Wave" and addressed questions of visibility and survival, as well as scathingly attacked "matronizing" dismissals from their feminist elders. Women on welfare, graduate students, faculty, social workers, and undergraduates shared strategies on opposing punitive anti-welfare measures.

BEYOND SURVIVAL

Ines Hernandez-Avila, a Nez Perce and Chicana activist-scholar, saw survival as only a "holding pattern." She urged a dialectic emphasis on history, and going beyond survival by "writing our own scripts" and drawing on our "creative agency."

Rosalind Petchesky, a recent MacArthur grant recipient, gave a sharp self-critique of feminist involvement at last year's UN Cairo population conference. She said that international feminists had failed to "challenge the

basic conditions of global capital," succumbing to the market, and that alternative visions of our future are needed.

Two Black women gave the fiercest critiques of the inhumanity of capitalism. Jacqueline Alexander, a Black Caribbean lesbian and cultural theorist, reported that five Caribbean nations have passed anti-lesbian/gay legislation. She insisted that all our analyses of the state must include the ways in which it condones heterosexism as a paradigm of its kind of order.

Likewise, Black political economist Ruth Wilson Gilmore attacked California's "three strikes law" as a direct outgrowth of "de-laborization" and the state's need to control the "social chaos" it co-created with capitalism. Gilmore counterposed the subjectivity of Mothers Reclaiming Our Children (MothersROC) in Los Angeles, to this dehumanization.

White feminist-economist Prue Hyman from New Zealand also stressed how opposition to conservatism is springing from resistance and protests by indigenous Maori. Hyman and Jacqueline Alexander also suggested a more dialectic approach to questions of universal and local analyses than has been popular lately in feminist theory. Perhaps because they come from smaller nations, they forcefully insisted that multinational capital is endemic, and so our analyses cannot be limited (humbly or philosophically) to being "only" local.

The conference ended with two of the most inspiring speakers. White feminist working-class trans-gendered activist Leslie Feinberg exhorted us to build a mass movement in the knowledge that we can win. Black lesbian activist Mandy Carter extended this to say it was not a question of if but when we will win! She brought the conference to a fitting close by urging women to focus on "a vision of where we are going...not where we've been, but where we are going"—to a new society of "shared visibility, shared leadership and shared vision."

Joycelyn thunders

Chicago—NARAL (The National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League) of Illinois was proud to host former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. M. Joycelyn Elders on June 25. It was quickly clear what made her so troublesome to the Clinton administration: straight talk. Dr. Elders concretely challenged the hypocritical stand of the reactionary right. It's about power and hope, stupid!

She was formidable in releasing abortion from the vacuum in which anti-choice demagogues would like to place it. If women are barefoot and pregnant and poor, and children are kept uneducated and unhealthy, how can they be a threat? It's almost impossible to be powerful when everything is working to defeat you.

We owe it to ourselves and future generations to fight this disingenuous campaign, she said, which includes attacks on the media's supposed liberalism, "militant" feminism and, most of all, poor women—all done in the name of the children. She called the anti-choice movement's love affair with the fetus "fleeting." After the pregnancy is carried to term, anti-choice crusaders don't care about the resulting child, she said. I liked that idea—an affair. It places the whole "pro-life" movement in an appropriately unfaithful light and also felt apt to the fetishistic fervor displayed by many anti-choice zealots.

She also reminded everyone that she has always maintained that she didn't mind being a lightning rod if there was thunder rolling in behind her. Her call for unity was far more uplifting than most of what can be found in what she termed as "un-Christian" Christian religions; it's time to pull the cowards from behind women and children that they are using as decoys for their self-aggrandizing efforts. I couldn't agree more. —L.C.

No RNs in Kaiser ER?

Editor's note: In Richmond, Cal., Registered Nurses from the California Nurses Association were joined by supporters from Local 250 SEIU on an information picket line at the huge HMO here to warn members of the "attack on the standard of care" in the emergency room due to management restructuring. A picketing RN told N&L the following:

What's happening here is that the emergency room is going to be run without an RN in it for four hours out of every 24. When we asked management who is going to be able to triage patients and administer streptokinase to heart attack patients, the answer was the doctors will. But the doctors are already overworked, understaffed and constantly being pushed harder.

Kaiser made \$833 million in what they called "excess income" last year. The health care industry is one of the biggest money makers. Why should patients get less care? Patients need to know that it isn't true that RNs have to be cut because we can't afford them. RNs are very cost effective. We keep the mortality, morbidity, and return rate down. We save lives because we're the ones who tell the doctor which patient to see first.

You can't have critical care patients without an RN there. The doctors are not happy with this, but they have lost control of their hospital. The insurance companies and administrators are now running the hospitals. The hospital is trying to call everybody caregivers without regard to education or the level of care a person is able to give. They say we have to be competitive, but can't you do that by giving good patient care? The money they are making isn't going to the patient but is going into big building plans and advertising.

Lesbian and gay pride



Chicago—On June 25, over 160,000 people lined the streets north of downtown to watch thousands more march in the Gay Pride parade whose theme this year was "Pride: From Silence to Celebration." Some, as the University of Iowa student in the picture, came from other states to be part of the festivities.

San Francisco—On Sunday, June 18, an estimated 300,000 people celebrated gay and lesbian pride day. After the traditional opening of the parade with Dykes on Bikes, the first marchers were a funeral procession for AIDS victims. The second group of marchers were protesting Proposition 187. Many other community service groups, nurses, and so on followed for several hours.

There was a party atmosphere, a party at which Food Not Bombs, Project Open Hand, AIDS Walk (coming up on July 16) and other serious issues, were prominent. The theme was a rainbow of colors, in the banners and costumes, embracing diversity.

—Ursula

Save L.A. County Hospital

Los Angeles—On June 19, the proposed budget plan for L.A. County was released, indicating very clearly that the lives of human beings are not the primary concern of the county government. Chief Administrative Officer Sally Reed's solution to the county's massive financial problems is to close down the huge County General Hospital (University of Southern California) Hospital, located near downtown in predominantly Latino East Los Angeles. Some 12,600 jobs under the Dept. of Health Services would be cut as compared to only 1,132 jobs under the criminal and legal departments.

Also suggested for closure were four regional health centers and 29 clinics. Thousands of the poor and indigent depend on the services of these clinics and hospitals. I used to accompany pregnant teens to the clinic in Pacoima listed for closure. Most would have had little or no prenatal care without a neighborhood clinic.

The AIDS clinic at County U.S.C. came into being a few years ago only after tireless protests by AIDS activists demanding decent services. A young Asian man employed at the blood lab said that it was impossible to imagine what would happen to all the HIV patients with little money and no insurance. The few AIDS clinics in L.A. are overwhelmed already.

On the afternoon of June 19, a protest of 1,500 took place on the steps of County U.S.C., where various speakers from the community and from local government spoke out. Activists from the Chicano-Mexican community were present, such as MECCHA, the Mothers of East L.A., and the Brown Berets. County Board member Gloria Molina spoke against hospital closure. Chinese activists spoke: the hospital serves Chinatown and the largely Asian populations of Alhambra and Monterey Park. It is the county medical facility serving the highest percentage of immigrants.

Susan, a scrub-nurse in pediatrics from Belize, said she is concerned for the babies. The hospitalized babies are virtually all on respirators, and they are many. She also worried about losing her job. "Thousands would be out of work," she said, "and where would they go? Disease would spread, and there is no way private hospitals would be able to take all the people."

On June 21, a thousand protesters marched through downtown to the Hall of Administration where the budget hearings were being held. Present were hospital workers with SEIU Local 660, the Mothers of East L.A., Lesbians, disabled individuals, and local priests.

A loudspeaker placed outside the building let us listen to the hearings. A man employed at the domestic violence shelter in Lancaster said closure of the Desert Hospital would affect the clientele he works with, since now they would have to travel further for emergency care. Public college official Gloria Romero told of how she had been the first person ever in her family to give birth in hospital because the County U.S.C. was available to her.

—Anna Maillo

♀ Women Worldwide

by Mary Jo Grey

More than 100 chanting protesters marched through Harlem in a candlelight vigil, June 19, in support of Black women who have been victims of violence. The event was initiated by the newly-formed African Americans Against Violence in opposition to the attempt to make a hero out of convicted rapist Mike Tyson with a welcome home parade and street festival. "For a long time, Black people felt that they had to stick together, through thick or thin...because racism was such an evil that we felt it was more important an issue than whether or not we were being abused emotionally and physically," said Black feminist writer Nellie McKay. "But I don't think Black women are going to put up with that anymore."

* * *

After years of protest by women demanding an apology and compensation for being forced into sex slavery by the Japanese army during World War II, the Japanese government, while ignoring their demand for an apology and offering far less money than was sought, has established the "Asian Peace and Friendship Foundation for Women." The foundation will pay compensation, medical expenses, and underwrite other projects to raise the status of women in Asia. Of an estimated 140,000 Korean, Dutch, Indonesian, Filipina and Chinese "comfort women," about 58,000 may still be alive.

* * *

A shop selling wigs to ultra-religious women in Jerusalem was burned down because the wigs were not ugly enough. Some of the wigs sold by Aliza Lifshitz were stylish, attractively colored, and actually looked nice! Recently the former chief rabbi of Israel ruled that a married woman wearing a natural-looking wig is the same as having uncovered hair—immodest. Another rabbi insisted that married women are supposed to wear ugly wigs so that men won't look at them. However, as one woman observed, "Nowhere in the Torah does it say it's admirable to go around looking dowdy."

Labor bureaucrats scramble to Decatur

Chicago—The June 25 mass rally for Labor in Decatur, Ill., showcased a section of the leadership of the FL-CIO—if not the protracted labor struggles in progress there. The presence of Rev. Jesse Jackson on the ivic Center speakers platform helped focus the spotlight on the Big Leaders. "The Staley rallies before this war used to be in the streets, not a bunch of windbags," complained a labor supporter from Chicago.

For the record, Staley workers remain locked out after 10 years (the rally marked the second anniversary). Firestone workers have returned to work without a contract after ten months on strike (see article, this page), and Caterpillar workers remain on strike after 13 months.

Why did no less than seven of the AFL-CIO's 35 executive board members make their way to this central Illinois town? Several made groundless promises that the Decatur workers would prevail. "Where have you been for the last two years!" was one of the many catcalls during the speech of AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Tom Donahue. "He hasn't gotten his hands dirty, we have," rumbled a Firestone worker about Rubberworkers Union President Ken Coss. "Donahue was only here to get brownie points to get Kirkland's job," said a Staley worker in disgust.

The array of Big Leaders was meant to sell the hope of a post-Kirkland administration—he retires as AFL-CIO president this year—could mean a new direction for labor. It's in an unprecedented crisis. The Republican, anti-labor sweep into both houses of Congress in November bodes ominous for labor law itself. A Staley worker nailed the traditional union-Democratic alliance: We saw the Democrats—when they had both houses and the presidency—turn their backs on the working class. That's why they lost the elections in November."

The globalization of the restructured economy poses a new challenge to working-class organization too. Here a Roman worker, who has supported the Decatur movement for years, exposed the problem with the status quoaders: "Racism beat the Firestone people." The implication is that the only glue holding the strike together as racist Japan-bashing, hardly a program to convince hundreds of members not to cross lines.

And the union rank-and-file is connecting the union bureaucrats' appetite for contract concessions with the era of Reaganism. They are ready to chuck both. In this case, too, a Firestone worker leveled a shot: "Why do we have to fight our own leaders, at the same time we have to fight our government and the corporations?"

"All of them negotiated contract concessions, but the way I look at it, the rank and file has to wake up and tell them they are not going to accept give-backs any more," declared one of the Staley "Roadwarriors" (who have been criss-crossing the country soliciting help). Indeed, out of the hot air is coming a move to throw the scoundrels out. In that atmosphere, the post-Kirkland administration could spell a new direction. Or it could be the Big Lie preceding some rotten compromises in the Decatur union struggles.

—Jim Mills



News & Letters

Decatur rally participants marched from union halls of embattled Staley, Caterpillar and Firestone workers to a mass rally inside the Civic Center.

Firestone strike folds

Decatur, Ill.—We were on strike against Firestone since July 12 of last year, but we voted to return to work May 7 because we thought the replacements were going to decertify the local union.

Right now, we have 180 people in there who were recalled because we voted to go back. They are in there working with scabs. It's awful. They can't talk to anybody. They are watched constantly. The replacements do everything they can to start a confrontation. One of our people who was recalled already quit. He couldn't stand it.

In tire building, they put a couple of guys on a job with a scab who didn't know what he was doing. When a tire jammed in a machine, the scab tried to get it off the machine but he couldn't. So one of the recalled guys walked up to the machine and made the tire pop off. It took 30 seconds altogether. Then the scab went to the supervisor and reported that the two guys were laughing at him. The supervisor gave the one experienced worker a day off.

In all I don't feel the international prepared the locals for the strike. I don't think they thought it would be so long, and they also didn't believe Firestone would do all the tricks it did.

Everything we have won with struggle, way back when we started the unions. I know one boy who is 20 years old who got in at Firestone while his dad was on strike there. And there are a lot of people working at Staley who have relatives locked out. It has made it rough to live in this town. The scabs just didn't have the education about unionism they needed. That's why I say my kids will have that education.

—Firestone worker

Czech strikes loom to challenge government

Prague, Czech Republic—Until now an undeclared peace was the rule on the labor front. With the exception of a few strikes in the private sector no serious labor conflict "endangered" the process of transforming the Communist-ruled society into a capitalist one.

So it seemed to come out of the blue when in the last few weeks three important branches of the government services came forward with demands concerning their salaries and also demanding important changes in the structure of these services. As negotiations with the government continued to be protracted and without results all three of them threatened to go on strike.

It is the railwaymen that seem most serious. They already called for an unlimited strike starting June 21 after their negotiations first with the railways management and then with the minister of transport proved fruitless. Prime Minister Klaus, refusing at first to meet the trade union representatives under the pretext of not negotiating under pressure, made a last-minute compromise promising to start negotiations. At the moment of this writing the situation is still undecided.

The railwaymen trade unionists pointed out that the wages on the railways—now being privatized—are 600 crowns lower than the country average. They also complained about the growing number of "white collar" employees with declining overall number of workers.

The other sector with serious salary demands was that of education, especially elementary school teachers. At the beginning of the year their representatives brought

Italy's 'anti-trade union'

Milan, Italy—COBAS stands for COmitato di BASE, or "rank-and-file committee," and represents the initial cell of a new way to face the problems and work out answers for what we call workers' self-organization.

Inside COBAS no one delegates anything to anyone, and each member appropriates the powers that others have alienated from them. In its practice COBAS tries to overcome the social division of labor which reigns in left organizations and parties. Everyone is required to give what they can, and is put in a position to develop their innate abilities as part of an effort to enrich everyone's humanity. COBAS generates an irreducible antagonism to any reification of humanity from his/her internal life.

We think the forces between classes are decided in the factory, without forgetting that capital has multiple figures and places of production and exploitation. SLAI[Sindacato Lavoratori Autorganizzati Inter-categoriale]/COBAS isn't another trade union: to be provocative we call it the anti-trade union, the trade union without trade unionism. It doesn't aim to acquire the workers' passive agreement by asking them to delegate their powers to a caste of leaders who are purer and harder than those who cheated them. SLAI/COBAS instead sends back to workers the direct responsibility to become trade unionists. It represents a trend which is widespread within the masses.

The official trade unions (CGIL-CISL-UIL) choose to accept the capitalist system and its rulers in exchange for acceptance within its institutions. This has provoked a withdrawal on their part from the working class and a set of political proposals rooted in emptiness. There is therefore a crisis of representation of the working classes. SLAI/COBAS aims at the revival of a class and anti-capitalist workers' movement.

SLAI/COBAS took part in elections of union representatives in many factories and offices. Its representatives were elected and in some places our list had the largest number of votes. This happened, for example, in Fiat Alfa Romeo of Arese (Milan), in Fiat Auto of Pomigliano (Naples) and Alcatel Face of Milan.

Our program revolves around the following objectives:

- Democracy—Current laws give the official trade unions control of all negotiations with management. SLAI/COBAS fights to obtain negotiations under the workers' control through their direct representatives, democratically elected on the basis of "one person, one vote." (At the present the CGIL-CISSIL-UIL can directly nominate one-third of the representatives in workers' committees.)

- Salary—Thanks to the increase in unemployment and the compromising politics of the trade unions with capital, the purchasing power of workers' salaries in Italy has decreased for years. SLAI/COBAS fights for a strong wage recovery.

- Working-hours reduction at parity of salary—This is the only way to try to stop unemployment from increasing; working-hours reduction should become an international fight and could become an important step in the direction of working class liberation.

- Public pension defense—SLAI/COBAS opposes those who want a reduction of public pensions or who wish to initiate private social insurance.

- Social services defense—SLAI/COBAS opposes the reduction of the welfare state, which means a worsening of social conditions for many workers.

- Defend free public schools—This is important especially for employees and unemployed persons.

- Against increase of exploitation—Capital wants greater flexibility using labor and this means an increase of exploitation, industrial accidents, and insecurity for most workers.

- Equal rights for immigrant workers—The working class is international and SLAI/COBAS fights to obtain economic and contractual parity rights for all workers, regardless of their origin.

—SLAI/COBAS, Via Festa del perdono, 6, Milano, Italy

Workshop Talks

(Continued from page 1)

Isn't this the essence of the struggle at Staley, Cat and Firestone too: the unilateral imposition by management of 12-hour shifts, no weekends off, lower wages and benefits, fewer rights on the job? This is what Marx in Capital called the "despotic" plan of capital. Can anybody with eyes in their head not see this clearly today?

Unemployment comes not only from automation but that the boss threatens you with if you dare to resist his despotic plan, locking you out, replacing you with scabs, or shutting down. This is exactly what is happening in Chinatown.

The only unionized restaurant in Chinatown, the Silver Palace, where workers had a successful seven-month strike last year, is now threatening to close. The boss is emboldened and supported in this by the whole power structure of Chinatown: the Chinese Restaurant Association, the bosses, organized crime, politicians and police, that the CSWA calls the "unholy alliance." This reminds me of what Decatur workers have said, "It is our solidarity vs. their solidarity."

The CSWA is a workers' center, which tries to bring together workers across trade and industry lines, and in their community, not just where they work. Isn't this in sense what makes Decatur a war zone, a community in struggle? Because Staley, Cat and Firestone all have plants in that one place, Decatur became more than a place, but a name for labor struggle today.

Now the Chinese workers are up against something very particular as well: they face racist stereotyping. That "unholy alliance" has a big partner in the media, who do their best to portray Chinese workers as "different": that they are happy to work long hours for low pay, that this is their "culture." Therefore, the bosses and their media argue, labor laws should not be enforced in Chinatown.

I can report from being on their picket lines that Chinese workers do not enjoy working long hours for low pay, and they are trying to do something about it.

"When we say stop slave labor, we mean the government won't enforce labor law in the whole community," CSWA organizer said. "They treat Chinese workers like they are a completely different category of labor that doesn't deserve the protection of labor law. In that sense, it is a political struggle because it's about the government's attitude to a whole group of workers."

But while it is worse, is it so different in its essence from what all American labor faces? Is the labor law of the NLRB and OSHA really enforced for workers? I see a difference in degree of exploitation, but not in the essence of what the struggle is about. We can't get a strike-replacement law passed. And the NLRB laws on the books about the right to have a union are openly violated at the time.

That's why I feel strongly that Chinese immigrant workers are not "different." Yes, they face obstacles of racism and immigration law that not all of labor faces. But their struggle is at the cutting edge of labor struggle in the U.S. when they fight to end slave labor, that despotism of restructured capital, which is what we all face. Their fight is our fight.

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

Editor's note

Our celebration of the 40th anniversary of *News & Letters* continues this month with the publication of excerpts of Raya Dunayevskaya's essay "Marxist-Humanism" which first appeared in the journal *Presence Africaine* in 1963. This essay, which discusses the indigeneness of Marxist-Humanism to the African revolutions, was written shortly after Dunayevskaya's trip to West Africa in 1962. It provides an overview of the "two-way road" of freedom struggles and ideas between the U.S. and Africa, which has been a central theme of *News & Letters* since our birth. The full essay can be found in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, microfilm #9622. *News & Letters* published excerpts under the title "Marxist-Humanism: African, American: Why Not a New International?" in April 1963 (#6703), and a letter by Dunayevskaya on Sept. 25, 1962 presented a draft for the essay because "sometimes rough notes are more stimulating than the 'finished product'" (#9614).

The indigeneness of the roots of African and American Marxist-Humanism is questioned by everyone. The African Revolutions, having written the most exciting pages of post-war history, have indeed given African Socialism an advantage over American Socialism and have secured the recognition of its philosophy. Independence has made the views of African spokesmen for Socialism "official." In capitalist America, on the other hand, Marxism—not only in its Communist transformation, but in its original form which Marx called "a thoroughgoing Naturalism or Humanism"—is treated as a "foreign doctrine."

Unfortunately, until recently, even among Socialists, both the Humanist and the American roots of Marxism were the least known parts of that great theory of liberation. Precisely because we cannot live in the past, nor behave as if the one world we live in can level all countries to using the same "program," it is imperative that we master the Marxist dialectic method of approach to the specific problems of our day. Marx found, for example, that he had to separate himself from the self-styled Marxists in the U.S. who tried to evade the whole issue of the Civil War by saying they were opposed to "all slavery, wage and chattel." Marx was actively and unashamedly on the side of the North, because he recognized the world importance of the Civil War and because he found there the human forces that would compel the transformation of that war from one for Union to one for the abolition of slavery. These forces were: the Negroes, en masse, as they carried on the slave revolts and the daily activities of organization and thought; and the white Abolitionists.

What is critical in this crossing of the paths of Marx and the Negro and white Abolitionists is that, despite the dissimilarity of organization and guiding philosophy between the International Working Men's Association, headed by Karl Marx and standing for a new world classless society, and the Abolitionists who were concentrating on the immediate need to abolish slavery in the U.S., there were these overriding similarities: a) the spontaneous feeling for the idea of immediate freedom; b) the independent working-out of the problem in a specific country so that the freedom of labor and the freedom of a minority coincided (or, as Marx put it, "Labor in the white skin cannot be free so long as labor in the black skin is branded").

One basic reason that makes the history of Marxism in the U.S. sad reading after the death of Marx is its incapacity to face the reality of "the Negro Question." Thus, in 1922, the great Negro poet Claude McKay travelled to Moscow to explain how the American Communists and Socialists "fought very shy of it (the Negro Question) because it is a great element of prejudice." Yet, he added: "When in 1920 the American Government started to investigate and to suppress radical propaganda among Negroes, the small radical Negro groups in America retaliated by publishing the fact that the Socialists stood for the emancipation of the Negroes and that reformist America could do nothing for them. Then, I think, for the first time in American history, the American Negroes found that Karl Marx had been interested in their emancipation, and had fought valiantly for it."

Two decades later—when Nazi Germany invaded Soviet Russia in June 1941—the American Communists did worse than not face the Negro Question: they turned their back on it. "Hitler is the main enemy," wrote the *Daily Worker*, "and the foes of Negro rights in this country should be considered as secondary." The Communist New York Councilman, Benjamin A. Davis, appeared on the same platform with Mayor LaGuardia during the 1943 riots and asked the Negroes to go home...No wonder the Negroes who had joined the Communists in their thousands during the Depression, and such famous people as the Scottsboro Boys, now tore up their cards, never to return. The result was that by the 1950s, during the dangerous McCarthy period, the American Communists were so isolated both from white American labor and the Negroes, that the government could attack them with impunity.

In 1956, the year of the Hungarian Revolution, the American Negro opened a new page in his long struggle for full freedom directly in the South itself—the Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott. By 1960, when the African Revolutions culminated in the creation of new inde-

An essay from *Presence Africaine***Marxist-Humanism and the African Revolutions**

pendent states, the American Negroes developed their struggle by "sit-ins" throughout the South. Coincidentally, there is a division in the actual contact between Negro-Americans and Africans who come here either as guests of the government, a university, or even the labor movement. They still remain as far removed from the Negro worker as if they were still on their own continent and neither the white nor the Negro worker has the money to go to Africa. There is practically no possible people-to-people relationship through any international organization.

My recent trip to West Africa was, in great part, motivated by this state of affairs. The question concerning the link between African Socialism and Marxist-Humanism does not relate to the fact that it is hard to hear the voice of the "Second" America over the atomic din of the established authorities, but rather because of the contradictory statements made by African Socialists themselves. I do not mean that the voice of American Socialism is one voice; very far from it. Here, differences are shouted, emphasized and over-emphasized, while in Africa contradictory statements are made simultaneously with affirmations of pan-Africanism and a unity which is supposed to exist, although there are now two blocs among the independent countries. Although there are sharp divisions between Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and the Nigerian Youth Congress in Nigeria, between Ghana and



Nigeria, Senegal and Guinea, Mali and Togo, all insist that they are for pan-African Socialism. Unfortunately, this only means that pan-Africanism, far from illuminating what African Socialism is, helps to confuse friends more than enemies.

What is African Socialism? I asked this although I was not unacquainted with the writings of African leaders—Azikiwe, Keita, Nyerere, Nkrumah, Senghor, Toure...Long before my trip to Africa I was acquainted not only with their writings but with their aspirations and some of them were known to me personally in past associations long before their victories reshaped the map of the world. Nor did I ask this question because I considered that Western Socialism has any "superiority" over "newcomers." Quite the contrary. In two respects I agree with Professor Pierre Alexandre's article on "Marxism and the African Cultural Traditions" (Survey, August 1962):

a) that there "are some points of resemblance, not so much between classical Marxism and traditional cosmologies as between the modern African interpretations of remnants of such cosmologies and Marxism as reinterpreted by Africans";

b) that it is not altogether unlikely that Africans would succeed in achieving a new synthesis of idealism and materialism "africanizing them into an original whole."

I disagree that there is any advantage, absolute or relative, in having met Marx and Mao at the same time and having known Russia long after the Revolution had achieved the first workers' state in history. Even if Africans do not believe, with me, that Russia has by now been transformed into its total opposite—a state-capitalist society—the fact still remains that Soviet Russia and the Chinese Republic are world powers rather than world philosophies, and ruling ideologies is not what Marx had in mind when he first elaborated his Humanist philosophy. This is precisely what he warned against when he wrote: "We should especially avoid re-establishing society, as an abstraction, opposed to the individual. The individual is the social entity...Communism is the necessary form and the energizing principle of the immediate future. But Communism, as such, is not the goal of human development, the form of human society."

The point of affinity between African and American Marxist-Humanism is the present as it is related to the future—world developments and the unfinished revolutions to be brought to a conclusion on an international scale. It is for this reason I travelled to Africa, and not only to hear in person the views of the leaders, but to get to know the thoughts of the man in the street and in the bush, at this critical juncture of history...

To this writer, who is a Marxist-Humanist, the trouble-

with President Senghor's Humanism is that it is general and abstract where it should be concrete and specific. The fundamental difference between Senegalese Socialism and that envisaged by Marx does not reside in the difference between "spiritualism" and "materialism" but that between theory and practice. To me, the tragedy of the African Revolutions appears to stem from the fact that its leaders are so weighed down by the awareness of the lack of technology and the need to industrialize rapidly that they turn for aid almost exclusively to the powers-that-be in the technologically advanced countries, instead of to the proletariat in those lands. Let me make clear at once that I am not in the least opposed to a African country accepting aid from any source whatever be it from de Gaulle's France, Kennedy's America, Khrushchev's Russia. Western imperialism has plundered Africa for centuries, plundered it both of its manpower and its natural resources and it is high time for at least some of this African wealth to return to the countries of its origin. This, however, is not the main issue for Socialists; the point at issue is firstly the relationship to one's own people, the very ones who made independence possible; secondly, to the underlying philosophy of freedom which is not to be degraded to a changing tactic dependent on the relationship of forces with the enemy; thirdly, and, above all, to the world proletariat which is equally desirous as Africa to put an end to the crisis-ridden, capitalist world which is at present hell-bent for nuclear destruction.

Of all the African Socialists, Sekou Toure is the one who appeals most both to the Left in Africa and in the United States because of the historic sweep of his deeds and the passion of his views...

[But] this great African leader excludes all "foreign ideologies: 'Africa cannot agree, without detriment to the respect for her personality, her civilization and her proper structure, to become an organic structure of a system of states or ideologies whatsoever.'" As if Marxism were not the unity of theory and practice, President Toure maintains that "philosophy does not interest us. We have concrete needs."

In a word, particularism, rather than humanism or internationalism, predominates in Toure's "full re-Africanization." The ideology of "Freedom NOW," which elicited the elemental creativity of the masses that reshaped Africa, and thus the world, in less than a decade will surely need a more international content for the forward movement of humanity...

After Marx's death, American Socialism followed a path which, both through sectarianism and opportunism, has brought it to its present state of theoretical and organizational weakness. Nevertheless, the exciting period of Negro struggles, begun in 1956 and still going on, and their world impact as well as the inspiration they draw from the African freedom movements, could open a new page in world relations. A new international, even though at first it may have to be limited to international correspondence, is of prime importance. The dynamics of the ideas emanating from the African Revolutions are an excellent beginning, but for it to become the threshold of a new universalism, for an age and not only for the continent, it cannot separate practice from theory, the particular from the universal. Precisely because Lenin was preparing not only for the Russian Revolution but for a new world stage of consciousness, his rewriting of Marx's Civil War in France as *State and Revolution* achieved a new concrete universalism: that the popu-

(Continued on page 8)

**Selected Marxist-Humanist writings on
the African Revolutions**

Available from *News & Letters* (see page 7)

- **Nationalism, Communism, Marxist-Humanism and the Afro-Asian Revolutions** (1959, 1961, 1984)
- **Frantz Fanon, Soweto and American Black Thought, "Introduction/Overview"** (1986)
- **Philosophy and Revolution, "The African Revolutions and the World Economy"** (1973, 1982, 1989)

From the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection

- "In the Gambia during elections... It's a long hard road to independence," July 1962 • "Ghana: Out of Colonization, into the Fire," Dec. 1962 • "Socialismes africains et problèmes négres," 1962
- 1960s • Reports on Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal and the Gambia • Leaflets, reports on protest meetings and demonstrations • Discussions with Nnamdi Azikiwe and Leopold Senghor, and others
- Writings on the murder of Patrice Lumumba
- "The African Revolutions at the Crossroads: Role of Labor, The Single Party, Neo-Colonialism, State-Capitalism, and Africa, Africa, Africa," May 28, 1966
- "Henry Kissinger's African Safari: Pressuring Rhodesia while Bolstering Apartheid South Africa," Oct. 1976
- 1970s • "The UN Resolution on Zionism - and Ideological Obfuscation Also on the Left," January 24, 1976.
- 1980s • "International Women's Conferences in Kenya," Marxist-Humanist Perspectives 1985-86

Philosophic Dialogue

The recent translation of Theodor Adorno's *Hegel: Three Studies* (MIT, 1993) gives us an opportunity to reconsider Adorno's essay, included in this volume, called "Aspects of Hegel's Philosophy," written in 1957.

In contrast to his recently translated essays on literature and aesthetics, this work by one of the founders of Critical Theory, has had little discussion. One reason, perhaps, is the dominance of the view that Adorno is a post-structuralist *avant la lettre* [before the fact] (see Martin Jay, Mark Poster). This view is repeated by the translators' introduction which, though rightly pointing out that Adorno considered Hegel a revolutionary thinker, argues that what was at stake for Adorno in Hegel is "dialectic of resistance" founded on the "non-identical...beyond the domination of reason." (p. xii) The essays are thus viewed as mere prolegomena for Adorno's *Negative Dialectics*.

Raya Dunayevskaya cited Adorno's essay in her speech *Hegel's Absolute as New Beginning*.¹ She pointed out that in the essay Adorno almost defended subject-object identity, quoting his statement, "Subject-object cannot be dismissed as mere extravagance of logical absolutism. In seeing through the latter as mere subjectivity, we have already passed beyond Speculative idealism....Cognition, if it is to be genuine, and more than simple duplication of the subjective, must be the subject's objectivity."

How then, Dunayevskaya asks, can Adorno reduce absolute negativity so vulgarly in his *Negative Dialectics*, where he writes: "Genocide is the absolute integration...Auschwitz confirmed the philosopheme of pure identity as death"? Dunayevskaya answers that "When you give up Subject, when one does not listen to the voices from below...the next point is irresistible—the substitution of permanent critique for...permanent revolution" itself.

Nevertheless, Adorno's "Aspects" is a serious engagement with Hegel's philosophy. It by no means allows us to regard Adorno as a simplistic critic of Hegel. Indeed, he refuses to reduce Hegel to positivism or intellectual history but praises the dialectic as "incompatible with any advocacy of moderation": "In Hegel the dialectic accomplishes...the permanent in frontation of the object with its concept...Dialectic is the unswerving effort to unjoin reason's critical consciousness of itself and the critical experience of objects." (pp. 9-10)

Adorno also indicates an unwillingness to do away with thinking based on the "domination of reason" and defends Hegel: "The real can be considered rational only insofar as the idea of freedom, that is human beings' genuine self-determination, shines through it." (p. 4)

Despite Adorno's recognition that "the Hegelian subject-object is subject," and is "realized...as the life of the absolute spirit," he argues that "the Hegelian dialectic finds its ultimate truth" in "its own impossibility." (p. 3) In other words, Hegel's philosophy, Adorno contends, is "untrue when measured against its own concept." He insists that any analysis of the "absolute subject" would have to acknowledge the "indissolubility of an empirical, non-identical moment in it." (p. 17) His analysis of identity then proceeds to a long discussion of Hegel's concept of labor, which he argues is where one must begin to measure Hegel's philosophy against his own concept.

By translating Hegel's concept of spirit as social labor Adorno reduces subject/object identity to the equivalent social labor in capitalism—in other words, to abstract labor. (p. 20) Akin to Rousseau's social contract, Adorno argues, identity in Hegel is a result of a "brutality of coercion" and is always "accompanied by the moment of violent exertion." (pp. 20-21)

Adorno considers it one of the Hegel's great accomplishments to have had, before its time, the conception of a "world integrated by production, through the exchange relationship." At the same time, he praises Hegel's critique of the resulting pauperism (pp. 27-9) of the poorer.² Yet, while Adorno notes that Hegel's philosophy cannot be reduced to "bourgeois civility" (p. 47), he turns to Hegel's most political philosophy, *The Philosophy of Right*, to make his most damning critique of Hegel's concept of subject/object identity. Thus despite his insight into the crucial aspect of negativity in the Hegelian dialectic and despite his insistence that the Absolute itself must "disintegrate," he denies any possible development, any possible negativity, or even openness, asso-

¹This speech, first delivered to a meeting of the Hegel Society in America in 1974, was reprinted in the October 1994 issue of *News & Letters*.

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Adorno and the dialectic of labor

ciated with the Absolute:

"The non-identity of subject and object, concept and thing, idea and society, emerges, unapacifiable, in his philosophy; in that it ultimately disintegrates in absolute negativity.... In the last analysis, even in Hegel the quiescence of movement, the "absolute, means simply the reconciled life." (p. 32)

Adorno's "translations" of the Absolute as both the "reconciled life" and as an "unreconcilable violence" (p.

ty" critiqued by Hegel in the section of his *Phenomenology of Mind* entitled "Absolute Freedom and Terror" (see *N&L*, December 1994). What Adorno intimates in "Aspects" is the exhaustion of absolute negativity in subject/object identity. And thus it is not surprising that he turns not to the further explication of Hegel's Absolute but to *The Philosophy of Right*, which was an attempt by Hegel to find a resolution to the French revolution in a philosophy of the state.



Anton Refregier, San Francisco Waterfront Strike, 1934, Silkscreen.

27) are reductive. Peter Wermuth noted in an earlier "Philosophic Dialogue" that Adorno reduces absolute negativity in *Negative Dialectics* to the "pure negativity"

2. This is reminiscent of Marx's statement in his 1844 *Manuscripts* that Hegel's standpoint is that of modern political economy. There are many other places where Adorno's analysis is reminiscent of Marx's critique of the latent positivism in Hegel. However we should also be aware that Adorno is specifically criticizing Lukacs' conception of the proletariat as subject/object and as totality. Additionally, despite Moishe Postone's critique of the Frankfurt School, Adorno's conceptions in this essay are close to his. Adorno would no doubt agree with Postone's identification of the subject/object identity and "the Absolute," with the category of capital (cf. Postone *Time, Labor, and Social Domination* pp. 156-7).

More importantly, if Adorno was able, as Dunayevskaya put it, to "give up Subject" when the voices from below "were loud, clear and demanding," it must be a lot more difficult to find the concept "Subject" today when those voices appear dissipated. In other words what Adorno's essay points to is the need not to simply repeat a belief in the vitality of the forces of revolt, but the necessity to work through, and to grasp, what the dialectical character of absolute negativity as well beginning actually entails. It is from there that one can begin to engage with Adorno's disbelief—that is, how absolute negativity can be both Absolute and dialectical.

—F. Shelley

Marx's method in *Capital* reexamined

Marx's Method in "Capital": A Reexamination. Edited by Fred Moseley. New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1993.

The main currents in "Marxian economics" have either dismissed dialectics and tried to read Marx's *Capital* positivistically, or embraced a Stalinist-style "dialectical materialism" no less hostile to Hegel. Most contributors to the Moseley collection, in keeping with an emerging counter trend, hold that an understanding of *Capital* requires an understanding of dialectics, Hegel's dialectics in particular. This collection is the product of an intensive conference of four economists and four philosophers—also a break from tradition.

Fred Moseley and Guglielmo Carchedi treat the transformation of commodity values into production prices from a methodological standpoint. They argue in different ways that Marx's value theory has been wrongly held to be self-contradictory because the methodology of the transformation of values into prices has not been understood. The type of reinvestigation they and others are pursuing is an important one, since Marx's alleged internal contradictions have long been used as a pretext for dismissing, revising, and "correcting" him.

Patrick Murray's piece goes a long way toward clarifying why, and as what, money is necessary in a capitalist economy. He draws out the link between Marx's theory of money (in which money represents abstract labor) and Hegel's doctrine that essence must appear as something other than itself.

The main issue discussed in the other contributions is whether the method of *Capital* is "systematic dialectics." As against "historical" dialectics (a development of categories that parallels chronological developments), the "systematic" dialectics advocated by Geert Reuten and Christopher J. Arthur is an ordering of categories, from abstract to concrete, driven by the need to resolve the contradictoriness of the more abstract category. Tony Smith advances a different "systematic dialectics" in which the advance is impelled by "necessary structural tendencies."

I was not convinced by Smith's or Arthur's attempts to explicate the structure of *Capital* in such terms. In seeking to systematize the whole of it, Smith is compelled to argue that commodity circulation necessarily leads to the circuit of capital and thus to capitalist production. As the original conclusion to Volume I of *Capital* indicates, however, Marx regarded circulation as merely a "premise" of capital, which instead develops on the basis of a historical singularity—the commodification of labor-power. Similarly, Arthur's attempt to ground the development of the value-form in

an "inner logic of exchange" runs up against Marx's distinction (in *Capital* I, Chapter 2) between the logic of use-value exchange and the logic of commodity exchange, as well as Marx's contention that the latter develops on the basis of production for the purpose of exchange.

Reuten also casts doubt on the applicability of "systematic dialectics" to the whole of *Capital*, showing that the method of presentation in the opening pages is analytical, not systematic-developmental.

Finally, Paul Mattick Jr. demonstrates that, although the forward movement in Marx's discussion of the forms of value flows from the insufficiency of the less developed forms of value, this insufficiency "is not logical but practical and material." This does cast additional doubt on whether Marx's dialectic was "systematic"—that is, a self-contained logic of concepts—but Mattick goes too far in arguing that it shows Marx's method wasn't dialectical at all. As Smith points out, "Hegelian dialectical logic... should be read as a method for the reconstruction in thought of a given realm, not as a priori creation of thought out of itself."

Yet if Marx's method of presentation is not logical-systematic, and not "historical" (chronological), in what way can it be dialectical? It seems to me that the systematic/historical dichotomy framing this debate is an untenable one. It neglects an alternative notion of historical dialectics, in which history is presented not as chronology, but in a conceptual form that make intelligible its "real movement... the life of the subject-matter"—as Marx put it in the *Postface* to the second edition of *Capital*. He regarded this as a break, not from Hegel's dialectic of negativity, but from Hegel's mystification of that dialectic: "negation of the negation (is) the abstract, logical and speculative expression for the movement of history... (its) moving and creating principle."*

Lacking this recognition that the dialectic emerges from real history and expresses its specificity, "systematic dialectics" treats method as an epistemological tool to be applied to an external content. It is therefore no accident that none of the contributors to this volume comes to grips with the *Humanism of Capital*, the dialectic of transcendence which Marx created out of the working-class struggles of his time.

— Andrew Kliman

*Marx, "Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic." This conception of the Hegelian-Marxian dialectic, and the interpretation of *Capital* in light of it, has been developed especially in the works of Raya Dunayevskaya.

ON THE FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF NEWS & LETTERS

The 40th anniversary is certainly something to be proud of—keeping alive a vital and creative vein of Marxist thinking and in constant dialogue with representatives of the forces of liberation, the “movement from practice.”

If at times the perspectives for world change have perhaps been overestimated, this “optimism” is certainly more creative than the pessimism of so many who have simply withdrawn or joined the bourgeoisie. I share with you the sense of urgency and of the challenge of our age of retrogression that more than ever demands new beginnings.

Richard Greeman
Connecticut

* * *

Raya Dunayevskaya did a good job of showing the world who the true Marx is. But for the most part, the world hasn't paid any attention and is still enamored with the mirage of the Bolshevik's portrait of Marx. Also workers have lost faith in themselves and their cause as a result of recent setbacks in the labor struggle. This is the challenge for Marxist-Humanism and N&L.

Black historian
Pennsylvania

* * *

Raya Dunayevskaya's two articles on why a paper like News & Letters were very helpful, especially in our age of computer communications. The two “historic matters” she said were involved in such a question were Lenin's emphasis on the need for a paper as a meeting place to bring the forces of revolt together, and the Committees of Correspondence of the American Revolution. They helped get me thinking about how the paper functions today.

Jennifer
California

* * *

N&L has undergone a tremendous, multidimensional development from its beginning. The major development in “working the matter out”—the Hegelian concept Dunayevskaya discussed in her 1955 letter at N&L's birth—was the development of a philosophic dimension. That development did not come easily, though the principle was there from the beginning. The challenge of the 40th anniversary is the needed continual working out and deepening of that tremendous ground.

Lou Turner
Chicago

* * *

Seeing the 40 year history of East European struggle is crucial in dealing with the new contradictions today. How horrendous when the only alternative you think you have is between “free market” capitalism and totalitarianism! The June Lead showed there has been protest—but the situation becomes even worse when protest is fraught with the worst kind of contradictions. That contradiction is not only the virulent anti-Semitism that appeared in the Ursus workers' demonstration, but the justification of it by a former KOR activist. How deep the anti-Semitism is continued to be revealed, most recently when Walesa refused to criticize him. How frightening it becomes when we see this kind of collapse of the Left right here as well, in the justification of the white supremacist militia by some of the Left.

Women's liberationist
Chicago

* * *

The development of the former “socialist” countries between 1955 and 1995 can be summed up as from fledgling boom to a total decline. Attempts at changing the system were only half-promising. With the exception of Hungary 1956, every other attempt was aiming at a change within the system, not at replacing it. This was caused, among other things, both by the fact that masses still believed in the possibility of socialism (at least until the 1960s) and by the fact that no alternative could be seen. Creeping admiration for the consumerist side of capitalism was not strong enough, as it was in the 1980s, to make the masses “believe” in it.

Stalinism succeeded in depriving the working class of its revolutionary driving force, on the one hand by terror and mass indoctrination, and on the other by

constantly corrupting its possible leaders. Whatever the attempts at uprisings and revolts, up to 1968 they found only a half-hearted support in the West and its left intellectual circles. The revolts of 1989 changed the situation so fast and in such a way that both possible revolutionary subjects and their theory face an unprecedented situation: some of the political and economic phenomena remind one of early capitalist developments, yet the means of battling them in theory as well as in practice have yet to be found.

S. Steiger
Czech Republic

* * *

We have always been a modest organization, but sometimes I think we are too modest. Our 40th anniversary issue is a case in point, inasmuch as the only indications of our 40 years publishing News & Letters were the brief (and, again, modest) blurbs in the front page box, the small heading of the Dunayevskaya's archives article, and the editor's note.

Our longevity is no small achievement, especially when compared with other left publications that have come and gone with all too much regularity. We have consistently maintained our revolutionary principles and philosophic confidence that history continues to objectively confirm.

A. Phillips
Detroit

* * *

It's important that N&L was born at a time of retrogression, in the midst of McCarthyism. You could think that with a big workers' movement then everything was easier. Workers in the coal mines when Automation was being introduced were asking, “What kind of labor should people do?” The philosopher Herbert Marcuse didn't see they were asking a philosophic question. What's the point of philosophy if you're going to disregard human beings? It was Dunayevskaya's relation to the miners and her philosophic digging that allowed her to see what nobody else saw.

Julia
Berkeley, Cal.

* * *

Philosophy demands patience. It can't be reduced to formulae. It takes time and has to be worked out with other people. Today we face not only impatience with philosophy but an out and out invalidation of philosophy.

J. Pen
San Jose, Cal.

* * *

The 40 years since N&L began show in retrospect that on both sides of the Iron Curtain there was a masquerade. State-capitalism was masquerading as Communism and private capitalism as democracy. But who could believe that such mind-forged manacles could be put on people as we are seeing today?

Black retiree
Chicago

TODAY'S BLACK REALITY

Because 90% of us are Black where I work, our freedom of voice and our opinion is not heard in negotiating a contract. We had a Black representative. But the company went all the way to Washington to the head of the IUE. They made up a contract in three days that was sent to us to accept. We're working under a contract never agreed upon by the employees.

We say this is a democratic world we live in. Martin Luther King, Jr. gave up his life for that, but we're still waiting for our freedom. We want better pay and we want our voice to be heard. I was born in the South and I'm not going anywhere. I'm going to stay here and fight for my people.

Black worker
Mississippi

* * *

There has always been a working class or “lower class” among African Americans. What is new about the “Black underclass” phenomenon today is that it is larger and more deeply rooted in the Black community. Whereas 30 years ago, sons of Black automobile factory workers like myself could realistically choose factory work as a vocation, today's Black

Readers' Views

youngsters don't have that option for the most part.

I am constantly amazed at the depth of despair common among youth. But when I realize that all of the accomplishments won by the masses like civil rights, affirmative action, and educational opportunity, are being abolished by politicians, I begin to understand these young people's feelings. The recent leadership crisis in the NAACP is just one example of how important it is, to quote Raya Dunayevskaya, “to listen to the voices from below.”

Black intellectual
Pennsylvania

FIGHTING THE RIGHT



You are giving the congressional elections more importance than they deserve when you say the growth of the militias has to be seen in light of the climate Nov. 8 created. The growth of the militia movement began long before November and is the product of social changes far more lasting than any that might result from last November's elections.

However you were right to draw a parallel between America's militias and the groups performing “ethnic cleansing” in the former Yugoslavia. Christopher Hitchen's comparison of the militias with Germany's Freikorps in *The Nation* was also to the point. The Freikorps were ex-soldiers who felt they had won World War I on the battlefield but been defeated by Germany's civilian government. The American equivalent originated with embittered veterans of the Vietnam War, and recently acquired fresh reinforcements in the form of Gulf War veterans.

The New Socialist
Warren, Mich.

In her 1970 article reprinted in the May issue of N&L, Raya Dunayevskaya caught the moment when creeping totalitarianism began to gallop under the leadership of President Nixon and Vice-President Agnew. The November 1994 elections show how far fascism has galloped by today.

I keep thinking of how Hitler took over Germany. He was “voted in” by the good people of Germany, the same kind of people that voted in the Nov. 8 election here. Today's militias are deep-rooted in the right-wing extremist movement that gave birth to the John Birch Society in the early 1960s. Today, when the white racist and anti-Semitic groups don't have Communism to squirt their venom of hate at, they are squirting it at the poor. These right-wing know-nothings blame everything but capitalism for what is making them unhappy. Right-wing types have plagued the world ever since the French Revolution and so have the left-wing intellectuals who struggle with them only to see which ones will have the power to rule over the working people and keep them in line while capitalism continues to rob us of our production.

Felix Martin
California

Many in the militias believe LA street gangs are being recruited by the government to take away their guns. I suspect this is because the LA Rebellion was as defining a moment for them as for the rest of us. The multiethnic vision within it horrified them to the marrow of their white bones. Since the stated reason for the militia's existence is to shoot down those who would take away their guns, this view is no less a warrant for the genocide of inner-city Black and Latino youth than the “Protocols of Zion” were and are for the genocide of Jews.

G. Emmett
Chicago

There are more jailhouses being built now than schools. In Alabama they've started using the ball and chain again. If what's happening here with the militias is not turned around, it will be like Germany in the 1930s. This system pits us against each other with racism. It begins

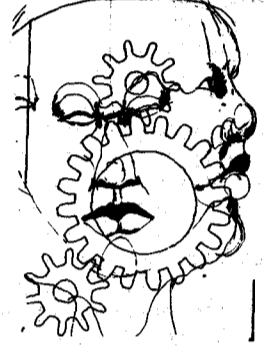
with pitting mental against manual labor. We have to work out in our own minds what are our feelings and wants. News and Letters is the organization of our thinking.

Retired worker
California

CONSCIOUSNESS SPEED-UP

Strikes by small groups of workers continue to erupt. They remind me of the fate of Native Americans. They put up great fights, but are ultimately defeated militarily by the government. However, back then, communications were slow. Today, the situation is different. I read once that Lenin said the Russian working class during the revolution had gained more in class consciousness in the space of a few months than the entire previous generation. With the advent of the computer and modern telecommunications, maybe Lenin's few months can be reduced to a few weeks, or even days. What is needed is a spark, and we can be sure that the stinking capitalist system will provide plenty.

Postal worker
Michigan



SCIENCE AND LIFE

When someone pointed out to me that one source of Gingrich's ideology is the rightwing militarism of the science fiction writers who are his friends and collaborators, I had a “shock of recognition.” This strain of militarism is not really new. When I was reading sci-fi during the Vietnam War, there were all these militaristic stories and you could tell the writers were pro-war. Sci-fi always reflects the contradictions in society. Then sci-fi was following Nixon, whereas now Gingrich is following sci-fi.

Computer analyst
Chicago

When the Delta Pride worker (June N&L) asked, “If you can spend money on machines and cameras that are not necessary (the camera was to spy on the employees) why not spent it on people?” it reminded me of the section in *Marxism and Freedom*, where Raya Dunayevskaya points out the Soviet Union could build a nuclear weapons system capable of destroying the world several times over, but was incapable of improving the lot of their people.

Reader
Bay Area, Cal.

I recently witnessed a demonstration of high tech that sent shivers down my spine. A public utility now has a program operating that enables one person sitting behind a computer to observe what every employee working on telephones is doing for every second on the job. Not only can you see what everyone is doing, but after every 24-hour period, there is a print-out of the full record. Big Brother is not coming...Big Brother is here. And the company is open about why it is installing this program into an entire region of this country...to see how many workers it can lay-off by speeding up everyone on the job.

Retiree
Detroit

The youth page article on the environment (June N&L) is on the crisis in the movement itself. The need to question society has been subsumed by those who accept the limits of capitalism and the abstraction that “people,” not capitalism, pollute. They have given up examining social relations. Even those in the environmental movement who see capitalism as the enemy are clueless as to how to attack capital. A social solution would give us a basis for living rationally with our environment.

Concerned
Berkeley, Cal.

WEALTHFARE VS. WELFARE: CUTS AND LIES

We're incensed with the punitive attack on welfare recipients while billions in "wealth-fare" subsidies to corporations and our nation's rich go unscrutinized. Here are a few examples of where over \$200 billion in subsidies is going: \$10 billion a year to subsidize mansions; \$110 billion a year to advertise McDonalds, Sunkist and other major U.S. food products in foreign countries. Meanwhile, big mining companies pay peanuts to use our public lands and extract billions in minerals, and all those wonderful commercials and ads we see are 100% tax deductible business expenses. A short list of special interest tax loopholes would be pages long. Let's organize to demand the end to this "wealth-fare" and to stop the hateful attack on "welfare."

Share the Wealth
37 Temple Place, 35rd fl.
Boston, MA 02111

A Latina mother told me that bus services for the after school programs are being cut. In her neighborhood this is an essential service because "if you cross the street, you're in a different gang area. It's too dangerous to walk."

Because of this, many Latina mothers who are involved in Parents of Humboldt Park After School Program (PHPASP) will be pulling their children from the program, regretfully leaving them alone at home while they are at work without things to keep their minds and bodies active and developing.

Speaking of the cuts and lies spewed by those that create and line up behind these policies, she said, "They say mothers in communities with gangs and drugs don't care about their children. But this is not true! We care: We have solutions, but they tell us there is no money. We need community organizations because others shouldn't be allowed to make decisions for our kids who they don't even know."

Sonia
Chicago

The crisis in state government due to underfunding (taxes too low) has resulted in a deterioration of essential govern-

ment functions. The latest announcement affects inner-city residents in North Tulsa, many of whom have no car. In order to obtain their driver's license or photo ID cards they will have to leave the city limits and travel to the surrounding cities of Jenks, Sapulpa or Claremore. This is due to the motor vehicles department being unable to afford the rent on their only Tulsa office.

Meanwhile, politicians continue to nickel-and-dime over school funding, welfare benefits and turnpike tolls. The discrepancy between the desire to maintain a low-tax environment and the expectation of services such as drivers' license tests, school lunches and rural road maintenance has led to political tension between the new Republican governor and the Dixiecratic legislature. It seems inevitable that the crisis will only worsen, causing a further stagnation and decline in both urban and rural areas.

Concerned
Oklahoma City



FIGHTING PROPOSITION 187

The Latino Workers' Center is an independent organization dedicated to supporting those organizing for better working and living conditions. One of our principal goals is to promote the self-organization and leadership of the Center's membership, which includes restaurant, garment, homecare, domestic, cleaning, and maintenance workers, day laborers, and unemployed persons.

We began the Campaign for Jobs, Respect and Dignity to mobilize our members, their friends, co-workers, and neighbors to protest the anti-immigrant legislation being proposed in New York, the budget cuts, and non-enforcement of labor laws.

From now through September we will be giving presentations in churches, adult education classes, community centers, parks, and festivals throughout the

city. If you would like more information about the campaign or how to get involved please call Monica Santana, Juan Jimenez or Ana Rodriguez at (212) 473-3936. Our mailing address is Latino Workers Center, P.O. Box 20329, New York, NY 10009.

Black Dominican worker
New York

Proposition 187 claims that the people of California have suffered economic hardships and personal injury caused by "illegal aliens," and denies any medical and educational benefits to them. This is wrong. A human being is a human being. Many families come into the U.S. illegally with hopes of finding better jobs because they cannot survive in their countries. Proposition 187 is only the first step of the Republican Contract's assault on children, people of color, the homeless, the unemployed and women. We must stop Prop. 187 and the contract if we want a better future.

Latina high school student
Chicago

EAST EUROPE TODAY

The forces of the Left are rather on the defensive at the present in East Europe. They accommodated to the situation. They are neither able nor willing to search for an alternative to the "new" capitalist order. Whatever their names are, "spiritually" they are all social-democrats. Small groups, Trotskyites or anarchists, enliven the left part of the political spectrum but they do not offer, basically, anything other than their old, pre-war slogans.

The organizations of working women and men such as the trade unions, permanently under attacks by the right, are far weaker than their West European counterparts. However, it is they who keep up the fighting spirits of their members as they have to fight for their basic needs.

Correspondent
Prague

INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION

There is a great hunger among thinking people for the kind of approach N&L represents. I have been discussing Raya

Dunayevskaya's ideas with a number of revolutionaries in Mexico who are deep in the crisis there and eager for broad, humanistic perspectives that go beyond the pettiness and old formulas that pass for Latin American "leftism."

Intellectual supporter
Hartford

News & Letters continues to be of great use in our work here to rebuild the Left. We value it highly.

Democratic Action Committee
Nigeria

In today's China, a communist country, very few people are still interested in Marxism, especially not the young people. But to find through you that in America, the most capitalist country, young people read Marx—that is dialectics.

Scholar
China

While the struggle in Bosnia is to defend a multicultural society that is under brutal attack, in Northern Ireland the need is to transform a sectarian society into a multicultural one. That seems sure to be a long and difficult transformation, but the prospects are much better now that the guerrilla war has halted.

Correspondent
Oxford, England

I am glad to send the enclosed contribution to your Appeal. N&L is the only publication worldwide that is currently really trying to keep alive Marx's ideas. The retrogression which we are facing all over the world is so strong that without N&L you would start to think that no one in the whole world thinks like you do. Thanks to N&L each month I am relieved to learn that I am not alone at this very complicated historical moment.

Supporter
Bogota, Columbia

OUR THANKS TO ALL WHO HAVE ANSWERED OUR APPEAL TO HELP KEEP N&L GOING!

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BY CHARLES DENBY

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Black/Red View

by John Alan

The recent decisions of the Supreme Court threw a dark shadow of doubt on the constitutionality of affirmative action programs. The Court has now found a "legal" reason to support the burgeoning growth of a new wave of racism in this country.

Before the Court's decisions many opinion polls indicated that a majority of white Americans are against affirmative action because supposedly it gives preference to poorly qualified Blacks over qualified whites.

Whatever the accuracy of these opinion polls, it is more than obvious that African Americans are now being attacked by racist ideological forces, inside and outside of government, with the purpose of preventing any concrete realization of African-American civil rights.

The present anti-African-American ideological war is actually a culmination of Ronald Reagan's old political efforts to subvert the realization of the freedoms promised by the Civil Rights Movement. If you don't remember Reagan, take a look at the National Urban League's 1983 annual report on the State of Black America. In that report John E. Jacob criticizes Reagan for "abandoning people-serving programs" by cutting Medicaid, aid to education, food stamps, and so on with the help of a "compliant Congress." The report also said that Reagan had retreated from "well-established bipartisan civil rights policy" of past administrations by attempting to subvert the use of busing to desegregate schools, and was giving legal support to the court case of white Boston fire fighters who were claiming that affirmative action was reverse racism.

Schools under siege

Editor's note: On June 24, Local 46 of the Public Service Employees Union in Chicago held a meeting to protest Illinois' new school reform bill. Below are the comments of a child welfare attendant who participated in that meeting.

Chicago—Bill 206 School Reform was signed by Governor Jim Edgar on May 30 and went into effect on June 30. It replaced the Board of Education with a Board of Trustees appointed by the Mayor of Chicago, Richard Daley. One of our concerns is that the new Board can privatize schools wherever they deem necessary. With a 14-day notice they can lay off someone with 25 years of seniority and keep someone who has worked for only two months. The union cannot bargain on behalf of people being laid off; it cannot bargain concerning how the Board contracts out work and its impact on union employees.

If someone has a grievance against the Board of Education, the Board is not required to submit to a binding process to deal with the resolution of disputes. A principal can schedule staff hours and the work schedule and appoint employees per board rules. In the majority of schools, 90% of the staff does not get along with the principal. If the principal has the authority to hire and fire there will be total chaos. Who wants to work, knowing that at any given moment, if the principal does not like you, you can be terminated? Job security has gone out the window. Who will be in the classrooms? The children are the ones who will suffer. There is no guarantee that qualified personnel will teach our children. There will be even more nepotism in the schools.

The legislators are picking on Chicago because the racial make-up of the city schools is Black and Latino. The Board of Trustees can now go into a low-income school where the reading level is below average, lay off every employee in that school—from the teachers to the janitors—and hire new employees.

Bill 206 takes away employees' right to strike as of January 1997 when the Republicans think they will have a Republican president in office. But even now you can strike and be out of a job. The Board does not have to bargain with any union. What they have to realize is that Illinois is a union state and Chicago has a history of union struggles.

Pretty soon the federal government is going to take over state-funded education. We have seen a federal takeover of the Chicago Housing Authority. Will we soon have a federal takeover of the school system?

Explore Black consciousness in capitalist U.S.A.

Philosophy and Revolution

From Hegel to Sartre, and from Marx to Mao

"[S]o deeply grounded is the Black dimension in 'absolute negativity,' in the desire for new beginnings through the 'syllogistic' resolution of alienation, that George Jackson's discovery of the dialectic of liberation in that hellhole, San Quentin Prison, can by no means be brushed aside ... For good and sufficient reason the Hegelian dialectic has been called 'the algebra of revolution.'" (xxiii)

American Civilization on Trial

Black Masses as Vanguard

"Under [pressure from the March on Washington Movement] President Roosevelt issued Executive Order No. 8802 which barred discrimination in war industries ... [I]t did not stop the movement as an organization which then proceeded to transform itself into a Committee to End Jim Crow in the Army ... Again, the winning of some of his demands only sharpened the Negro's sense of lacking all rights." (24)

To order, see page 7.

Affirmative action in perspective

The Newt Gingrichs, who now control the House and who are clearly the dominant reactionary force in Congress, have not only continued and developed this old Reaganism. They're a more arrogant and powerful force than Reaganism, and more brutal in their determination to curtail the social needs of a human society, as well as those rights African Americans gained during the Civil Rights Revolution. When reactionaries in Congress move to abolish or limit affirmative action, they're eliminating one of the oldest concrete civil rights that African Americans were able to force from federal administrations in this century.

In the last week of June 1941, President Franklin Roosevelt signed the now famous executive order outlawing racial discrimination in defense production and creating the Fair Employment Practices Committee to oversee its desegregation. Politically, this was a prudent thing for Roosevelt because in exchange Roosevelt got A. Philip Randolph, Walter White and other Black leaders of the "Negro March on Washington Committee" to cancel a planned protest march of 50,000 Blacks on Washington, D.C., to protest racial discrimination in hiring, at the very moment U.S. industry was gearing up for a war to free Europe from Nazism.

The ease by which Randolph cancelled the march should not be construed to mean that the march had no mass support. In fact it was the great support of the African-American masses that gave Randolph the power to confront Roosevelt. The *Amsterdam-Star News* at that time described the feeling of Blacks: "Where there was once tolerance and acceptance of a position believed to be gradually changing for the better, now the Negro is showing a 'democratic upsurge of rebellion' bordering on open hostility."

The idea of a Fair Employment Practices Committee grew out of this "democratic upsurge of rebellion" which was later expanded, due to the upsurge of the Civil Rights Movement. The Kennedy Administration left its

own political stamp on race relations by calling fair employment practices "affirmative action."

Affirmative action has to be defended against the retrogressive policy of reactionary politicians who are pushing the clock of history back to the 19th century in the hope of saving a moribund capitalist system. At the same time, affirmative action is not a universal answer to racism or the permanent poverty existing in many African-American communities. Most of its help has gone to the Black middle class. The principle is: racism and discrimination in all of its forms must be opposed.

The African revolutions

(Continued from page 4)

tion "to a man" must run production and the state, or there would be a "return backwards to capitalism." This is exactly what did happen: the failure to extend the Russian Revolution from below, first to Berlin and then to Peking and the colonial world, doomed the Russian Revolution itself. Four decades have gone by since then, and a new stage of world consciousness has been reached which not only combines politics and economics but also philosophy, for it reaches down to humanity.

What tiny Guinea accomplished with its daring "No" was to re-establish the human factor as decisive. This, and nothing else, was new in action and new in thought. This is the Humanism of Marxism, translated in our epoch first by the Hungarian Revolution, then in the Afro-Asian and Latin-American worlds, and finally among the Negro-Americans. This is the reason why the politically "backward" American worker, who has no mass labor party like his European brethren, is battling automation at the point of production itself. The American wildcat striker who demands human and not automatized production is ready for that same new dimension which is essential if we are to avoid the nuclear holocaust which is threatening us.

Despite the Russian Communist attack on Hegel's mysticism, that mystic, under the impact of the French Revolution and with his encyclopedic mind full of thousands of years of history which he defined as the "progress of consciousness to freedom," anticipated the concrete reality of today when he wrote: "The self-determination in which alone the Idea is, is to hear itself speak."

Speak, then, independent Africa, untainted by two world power-blocs fighting for world domination. You have gained your political self-determination, are struggling for economic independence, and are also free to express the self-determination of the Idea because the accumulated thought of centuries has been fructified by the elemental creativity of the masses and today's revolutions. Just as the fight for freedom on the part of the Hungarian revolutionaries (who had been raised on Marxian theory only to be betrayed by its usurpers) has made them theoretical Marxist-Humanists, the plunge into freedom has made the African revolutionaries the activist Marxist-Humanists of today. The Marxist-Humanists of other lands are ready to listen and, with your help to establish that new international which will be free from state control and will aspire to reconstruct the world.

Chicago's poor fight HUD

(Continued from page 1)

need a new playground, the building needs a new paint job, the cabinets are falling off the walls, the floors need new tiles, and the apartments need new toilets," complained one mother from Cabrini. A South Side resident added that things have gotten even worse, now that the state of Illinois has sent out letters to welfare recipients informing them that their benefits will be drastically cut back starting in July.

The multitude of human survival issues on the minds of Chicago's poor was more powerfully illustrated in the various hand-painted slogans carried on picket signs. The sign of one young Black girl pleaded, "Don't let strangers decide my future," while a group of older youth exchanged chants among themselves declaring their identification with the legacy of the Black Panther Party.

Who or what will indeed decide the future remains to be seen. That things have begun to heat up in Chicago, however, is becoming more evident with each demonstration.

— Lou Turner

Black World

(Continued from page 1)

(National Popular Assembly), which had organized a national campaign to abstain from the election, summarized the results: "On June 25 more than 70% of those of voting age stayed home."

This too shows how much Haiti's elections have in common with U.S. elections, which are mostly marked by the indifference they engender in the U.S. electorate.

Haiti's elections—not only the June 25 fiasco but the upcoming July 23 run-off elections and the December presidential election—are really the screen behind which U.S. imperialism seeks to demobilize Haiti's massive and highly organized, left grassroots opposition, and restructure the Haitian economy to function in the U.S. new world economic order. And with a vicious circularity and arrogance that is only found among imperialist policy makers, those same elections that served as a political screen to hide the U.S.'s economic bolstering of Haiti's right-wing bourgeoisie are also made to legitimize this imperialism lite.

The U.S., both with governmental and non-governmental agencies, intervened heavily and heavily-handedly in the run-up to the June 25 elections with so-called "democracy enhancement projects," or what has euphemistically been called "low intensity democracy." These come with economic development dollars aimed at undermining the grassroots movement and its indigenous participatory democracy.

The ground for this edifice was laid even before Aristide's return last October when his economic advisors met in Paris last August with IMF-World Bank officials and agreed to a structural adjustment program (SAP) as a precondition for the U.S. return of Aristide to "power." Clinton then cynically moved to cauterize Haiti's bloody political hemorrhaging, and commence the present stage of pacification and channelizing of Haiti's historical function as a super-cheap labor supply for Western capitalism into its new world order.

Haiti is being democratized into sustainable poverty. Which means destroying its grassroots participatory de-

Haiti's electoral screen

mocracy, in part, through the commodification of U.S. electoral democracy, paid for by U.S. tax dollars. To add insult to injury, after accepting the SAP of the IMF-World Bank, the development funds and \$600 million allocated for "democracy enhancement" remain largely in U.S. control, to be disbursed to right-wing candidates and organizations.

One of the illicit liaisons that has historically characterized Western imperialism's incursions into the Third World is the intellectual linkage between social scientists and order-mongering imperialist governments. In a throwback to the West's imperialist heyday, it turns out that a key player to watch in the coming period is the U.S. anthropologist Ira Lowenthal, whose U.S. funded and founded Programme Integre pour le Renforcement de la Democratie (PIRED) is a major dispenser of "democracy enhancement" funding to popular organizations, labor unions, peasant groups, and human rights groups linked to political leaders and parties.

PIRED has been instrumental in creating a database of some 60,000 grassroots activists for use by the U.S. government. With its influence and money PIREED has turned labor unions and neighborhood organizations from being militant critics of U.S. imperialism into promoters of President Clinton and reconciliation with Haiti's reactionary elite. Lowenthal has been the Clinton administration's man on the ground, bolstering Port-au-Prince Mayor Evans Paul as Aristide's successor, and as the key proponent of creating a political center through bolstering right-wing groups and brokering power sharing arrangements with remnants of the military regime.

Whether this would-be governor-general succeeds in reconciling Haiti's class antagonisms, or whether the grassroots mass movement is able to realize its long-standing demand for justice, will not be determined by elections. That many organizations chose to reject U.S. funding, rather than reconcile themselves with the puppets of U.S. imperialism is a sign of the Haitian masses' revolutionary resolve that calls out for our uncompromising support. For just as the West never forgave revolutionary Haiti, so we must never forget.

Essay Article

by Franklin Dmitryev

Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality, by Robert D. Bullard (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994).

Confronting Environmental Racism: Voices from the Grassroots, ed. Robert D. Bullard (Boston: South End Press, 1993).

Toxic Struggles: The Theory and Practice of Environmental Justice, ed. Richard Hofrichter (Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1993).

The concept of environmental racism emerged on the national scene out of the 1982 struggle to keep toxic waste from being buried in Warren County, N.C., which is mostly Black and poor. The struggle led to government and independent studies concluding that people of color are disproportionately exposed to hazardous waste sites.

In 1990, the Gulf Coast Tenants Organization and the Southwest Organizing Project sent an open letter to the Big Ten mainstream environmental groups, accusing them of racism and elitism. The concept had been extended from racism in environmental policymaking, enforcement and business decisions to that in the environmental movement itself.

It wasn't that people of color had suddenly begun fighting back against the discrimination they had long experienced in exposure to environmental hazards.* What was new was that environmental racism had become a category of thought, providing a new impetus and a new vantage point for both the Black freedom movement and the environmental movement. The new category was quickly applied to struggles of Native Americans and Latinos as well, and the term "environmental justice" was created to recognize not only oppression but the movement against it.

This movement, begun in the Black community and mainly organized by women at the grassroots level, issued the first radical challenge to abstract environmentalism that forced the mainstream movement to respond. Its critique of the uneven distribution of environmental risk exposed the hollowess of the attitude that reforms could be achieved through appeals to those in power, since even they must breathe the air and drink the water.

BREAKING THE JOBS-TOXICS DILEMMA

Recent years have seen a spate of books inspired by the new category. One of the most important of these books is Robert D. Bullard's *Dumping in Dixie*, first published in 1990, and now in a revised edition. While the other two books reviewed here are collections of articles—on issues from lead poisoning to neocolonialism's environmental devastation in the Third World, from the activism of blue-collar women to farmworkers' organizing—*Dumping in Dixie* is a full-length study on race and environmental equity in the South.

Bullard explores what he calls "the environment-development dialectic" in the South. The region's industrial growth in the 1970s and 1980s combined with its "plantation-economy legacy" to produce "uneven development" with a Southern flavor. On the one hand, industries with the best paying and typically cleaner jobs steer clear of Blacks, women and rural areas. The flip side is that the most undesirable businesses target mainly Black areas to exploit their desperation for jobs and tax revenues, waste facilities ranking among the worst.

As a result, the environmental justice movement must face directly an issue mainstream environmentalists often gloss over: environmental blackmail. Having "to choose between jobs or the environment is inherently unfair," Bullard points out, but it is a real dilemma, whose only solution "lies in making workplaces safe for workers."

The unstated implication is the need to radically transform a society where obtaining the means of life requires risking one's health and the community's health. As opposed to what is typical in environmentalism—centering on limits on the scale and technology of production—the question hangs in the air, and demands to be spoken aloud: What kind of labor should a human being do?

Aside from disregarding the impact of environmental reforms on jobs, environmentalism is seen as elitist for (1) the predominance of white middle-class activists, leaders and professionals, and (2) narrow ideology, with issues chosen without input from people of color. The mainstream, Bullard reports, continues to emphasize wilderness preservation far more than environmental

Rising community struggles fight toxic environmental racism

quality in segregated inner cities and hazardous industrial workplaces.

Though it is often left implicit, even in these three books, the power of criticizing the mainstream movement's narrowness in ideas is that it deepens the meaning of environmentalism, showing concretely that it too is subject to questions of social justice and social transformation. That is why many of the authors in these books aim their sharpest critiques of the mainstream movement precisely at its inadequate vision, notwithstanding some groups' efforts at inclusiveness. Bullard's concluding essay in *Confronting Environmental Racism* declares, "We must be visionary as well as militant."



Protesters block trucks loaded with toxic, PCB-tainted dirt bound for dumping in their community, mostly Black Warren County, N.C. in 1982.

Along these lines Dorceta E. Taylor's essay "Environmentalism and the Politics of Inclusion" in *Confronting Environmental Racism* sees the environmental justice movement as more inclusive not only in terms of race and class composition but "ideologically." It "integrates both social and ecological concerns [and] thus represents a revolution within the history of U.S. environmentalism."

Yet even when some activists speak of the "grassroots" as the source of new

militance, this approach can disregard the specificity of the contribution of people of color, at the same time it evades the challenge in thought.

Laura Pulido's "Sustainable Development at Ganados del Valle," also in *Confronting Environmental Racism*, is one of several case studies that illuminate these themes. Ganados del Valle is a sheep-ranching and weaving cooperative in rural New Mexico, formed by local people known as Hispanos. Unable to buy enough grazing land, they tried for several years to get state permission to graze their sheep on a wildlife preserve. Though admitting that, unlike the destructive practices of ordinary commercial ranchers, the Ganados plan would not be an ecological threat—in fact it would limit land development and improve the local economy—environmentalists cited by Pulido supported the state's refusal.

Pulido blames their abstract "approach to preservation," which "does not incorporate environmentalism into everyday living." Conversely the best side of "sustainable development" shown here seeks not only ecological sustainability but livable wages and "the development of each worker's skills and personality while building on diverse cultural backgrounds." This is one way that the environmental justice movement has challenged prevailing notions of "development" as too narrow.

WHO DEFINES ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE?

That challenge vitally links the movement in the U.S. with those in the Third World, as can be seen in Chris Kiefer and Medea Benjamin's "Solidarity with the Third World: Building an International Environmental-Justice Movement" in *Toxic Struggles*. They credit the "failure of top-down development" with leading to "increasingly vigorous opposition from the poor themselves," and to "a holistic notion of sustainable development."

Kiefer and Benjamin report the sharp Third World critique of Northern environmental groups. A coalition of Amazonian indigenous peoples blasted the practice of "debt-for-nature swaps" for dealing with nation-states rather than recognizing indigenous peoples' sovereignty and stewardship over their own lands. They also point out that largely white, middle- and upper-class Northern groups fail "to identify with poor people of color—be they in the Mississippi Delta or the Brazilian Amazon."

Why then does their article focus on the relationship of those groups—and not the homegrown environmental justice movement—with Third World movements? Especially when Vernice D. Miller's article in the same book finds great promise in the latter relationship as an emerging "global movement"?

This is one of the weaknesses of *Toxic Struggles*. While it aims to broaden the meaning of "environmental justice" to include the struggles of women, workers, farmers and anti-militarists as well as people of color, a number of the articles stray so far from the original movement against environmental racism as to forget its existence, or just use it as the latest example to prove pre-existing conceptions.

In *Dumping in Dixie*, on the other hand, Bullard sticks to this movement, correctly analyzing it as both "a 'new' environmental movement," and "an extension of the civil rights movement." However, he is more conscious of the latter's strengths—its radicalism, militance and openness to "the disenfranchised"—than its weaknesses. The looming question is: How can the environmental justice movement avoid the morass of accommodationism and disarray into which the civil rights movement has fallen?

Consider the subtitle of *Toxic Struggles*, namely, *The*

Theory and Practice of Environmental Justice. While the movement from practice is expansive, implicitly pointing to the need for a new society, most articles in both anthologies end up putting theoretical restraints on this movement from below by jumping too quickly to political demands within existing society.

Among the most radical views presented in these books are those of Cynthia Hamilton's "Coping with Industrial Exploitation" in *Confronting Environmental Racism* (and a similar article by her, "Environmental Consequences of Urban Growth and Blight" in *Toxic Struggles*). Hamilton sees as crucial "the way we conceptualize economic development....Industrial development, has not only produced its opposite, underdevelopment, but is itself self-destructive." She provides an important historical sketch linking environmental racism with class conflict, noting that it was after the labor organizing of the 1930s that industry discovered the advantages of relocating to the suburbs or to the Sunbelt, leaving the inner cities with the toxic residue of production.

Though her historical sketch implicates capitalism itself in the rise of environmental racism, her conclusions retreat to blaming "industrialism," a more abstract notion favored by radical ecologists. In *Toxic Struggles* she states that urban transformations like deindustrialization have "been propelled not by technological development alone but by the need to reproduce existing class relations in the capital accumulation process."

GREEN POLITICS OMIT REVOLUTION

What is it in Hamilton's philosophy that underlies this contradiction? In *Confronting Environmental Racism* she criticizes not only liberalism and conservatism but Marxism for "its defense of industrial growth and development," a well-worn Green excuse for replacing Marxism with criticism of "Western thought," as if it were the cause of domination, independent of the mode of production. Hamilton thereby adopts the Green impatience with the seemingly overwhelming task of social revolution.

The power of criticizing the mainstream movement's narrowness in ideas is that it deepens the meaning of environmentalism.

Hamilton's conclusion is to call for "ecological democracy [which] must also recognize the class interests"—a far cry from ending class divisions.

Could it be that the writers are yet weighed down by the contradiction between the need for work and the toxic forms that work takes? No theory that merely synthesizes already existing elements can go beyond the contradiction since the human beings involved are then theorized as being dependent on the very toxic work that they are fighting. Only a philosophy that comprehends freedom—that is, a dialectical philosophy of revolution—can grasp the future in the present and thereby lift theory out of this rut.

The traps laid by theory kept in chains are epitomized by the strange trajectory of the Rev. Ben Chavis, who wrote a foreword to *Confronting Environmental Racism* declaring that the environmental justice movement "has the potential to transform the political landscape."

Chavis was active in the 1982 Warren County protests and is credited with coining the term "environmental racism." He headed the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice when it produced the landmark 1987 study documenting environmental racism and sponsored the 1991 National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit.

Yet suddenly, on becoming head of the NAACP in 1993, the very issue that no doubt clinched his election almost dropped from sight, taking a back seat to forging unity among African-American "leaders," even—especially—Louis Farrakhan. At the same time, Chavis became chairman of a lobbying group financed by insurance, oil and manufacturing companies seeking to weaken the Superfund law requiring toxic waste cleanups.

What unites Chavis' leadership group is a willingness to use movements such as environmental justice as tools to advance their political agendas, defined by the political and economic bounds of existing society. The duality, between the logic of environmental justice and the drive to harness it to agendas existing within the limits of the given, sets the stage for the demotion of environmental justice to a vehicle for state-oriented reforms and opportunism. Chavis' turnabout on toxic waste is only a particularly bad manifestation of that duality's power to suck would-be leaders into the state-corporate arena against which the movement is fighting.

In the shadow of Gingrich's virulent rollback of regulations, including all the legal tools used in the fight against environmental racism, the legislative-administrative strategies advocated by numerous writers in these books fade into pure fantasy. Some suggest forging strategic alliances. Paramount, however, is the need for a unifying philosophy that can bring the movement from theory alongside the movement from practice and thus form the foundation of a totally new social order.

These three books are valuable contributions to our knowledge of the environmental justice movement. Nevertheless, the task left to the reader is to trek through the ideological pollution that would limit the profound challenges issued by this movement to environmentalism and to the whole society.

* As early as the 1940s, Black workers wildcatted against discriminatory exposure to chemical fumes, as described in Charles Denby's *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), pp. 88-93.

Editorial

Sarajevo under renewed fascist bombardment

The fascist Serb shell that smashed into the Sarajevo television studio on June 28 was an effort to black out more than just the images of suffering that the world has become accustomed to since the siege of that city began. It was as well an attempt to douse the blazing light of truth that the renewed struggle to break that siege has shone upon the hypocritical rulers of the West.

Shackled by a criminal arms embargo which has left it at a severe disadvantage in heavy weaponry, the Bosnian army has nevertheless managed to raise a force of 15,000 troops against the Serb siege and to conduct the "most mature, most complex and most ambitious" offensive of the war, in the words of U.N. spokesman Gary Coward. (U.S. News & World Report, July 3, 1995.)

The Serbs have responded in character, with the mass murder of innocents which has marked the genocidal policy of Karadzic and Mladic from the beginning. The intention of their renewed brutal assault can be read in the double-S license plate on Karadzic's car—for "Serbian Sarajevo." The shelling of Sarajevo and other U.N. "safe zones" comes in response to some real advances by the Bosnian army which, given time, could roll back all of the political and territorial gains of Serb fascist "ethnic cleansing."

This is a moment when the most profound solidarity with the struggle of the Bosnian people is called for, both material and political. Pressure must be applied to end the criminal arms embargo at long last, and grassroots solidarity must be established both to provide material aid and to bring out the universality of the vision of a multiethnic society which so many thousands of Bosnian Muslims, Croats and Serbs have suffered and died to

preserve.

The renewed Bosnian struggle posed this question to the rulers of "Western Civilization" at the recent G-7 summit in Halifax, Nova Scotia. President Clinton and the others, who shortly before were celebrating their "victory over fascism" in observing the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, became at once the most abject of pacifists when faced with the possibility that the Bosnians might cease waiting for "diplomacy to work"—as if human beings deprived of food, water, electricity and medicine, at the mercy of shells and snipers, had all the time in the world.

The same hypocrisy was revealed in another way in these Western rulers' embrace of Boris Yeltsin at Halifax. Not only has Yeltsin, at the behest of the Russian fascist Right, been a primary supporter of Serbian fascism, but at that very moment, the Russian military, which has waged its own genocidal war in Chechnya, was brutally turning its fire on Chechen gunmen and Russian hostages alike in Budyonovsk (see page 12). These "anti-fascist" rulers stood naked to the world in those few days in Halifax, as did also the hollow triumphalism of their 50-year commemorations of their World War II victory and the founding of the U.N.

However, it isn't only the rulers who have defined themselves by their response to the Bosnian struggle. Barry Romo of Vietnam Veterans Against the War, arguing in support of Bosnia, once asked, "How would you feel if you could possibly have saved the prisoners in the Nazi death camps and you failed to try?" Both the Right and much of the Left have now to answer this question.

From the Right this failure was to be expected. Despite the rhetoric of someone like Sen. Bob Dole, he

hasn't made any serious effort to force the lifting of the arms embargo, even from his newfound position of power. He only becomes less forceful as the Bosnians become more self-reliant. This is because his real "principle" is to rise to power in an American political landscape remarkably similar to that of Milosevic's Serbia, by embracing everything from the ethnic cleansing posed by Proposition 187 in California to every kind of attack on the workers, women and the poor.

For that part of the Left which has failed to stand in solidarity with Bosnia, by missing the essence of the struggle and destroying internationalism by an abstract resort to "class struggle" which sees genocidalists and their victims as equally at fault, all that is left is for them to wallow in their degradation. Whether Right or Left, in power or aspiring to it, those who fail to support the Bosnians now do more than stand aside. They stand in history along with the guards and torturers of the Nazi death camps.

For those of us who do stand with Bosnia, it becomes imperative to work out the implications of that solidarity. For instance, how can the human content of the struggle for a multiethnic society there illuminate the needed response to our own retrogressive political climate in which many of the same features are appearing, including armed neo-fascist militias? And how can dialogue be opened with those Bosnians, like Sarajevo poet Abdullah Sidran, who said, "I am in a state of permanent disappointment with the West. There is a quality of evil here that has to be seen. Bosnia is like planet Earth. If Bosnia is senseless, then the planet is senseless too." (The New York Times, June 28, 1995.)

Supreme Court rulings open new racist era

(Continued from page 1)

cation in city schools attended by African-American children, to bring those schools up to a par with ones in neighboring white suburbia. Thus, in effect, the Court ruled for the constitutionality of the continuing existence of separate and unequal proximate schools for Black and white children, an implicit reversal of the historic 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision.

Wittingly or unwittingly, the lone Black (and ultra-conservative) Supreme Court Justice, Clarence Thomas, echoed the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* "separate but equal" ruling that *Brown* had overturned. Ninety-nine years ago, in laying the legal framework for legal segregation in the U.S., the Court ruled that "We consider the underlying fallacy of the plaintiff's argument to consist in the assumption that the enforced separation of the two races stamps the colored race with a badge of inferiority." In 1995, arguing that the state of Missouri could spend no more money to ameliorate the achievement level of Black inner-city students, Thomas wrote: "It never ceases to amaze me that the courts are so willing to assume that anything that is predominantly black must be inferior."

● In the affirmative action case, *Adarand Constructors v. Peña*, the Court again reached beyond the particular issue at hand. In ruling against the legality of federal government contract "set-asides" designed to foster minority businesses, it declared virtually all federal affirmative action initiatives unconstitutional as well.

"All racial classifications" by government agencies are "inherently suspect and presumptively invalid," the Court argued, because, the Justices soberly maintained, only the most stringent and searching judicial inquiry could possibly discern the difference between "remedial" uses of racial classifications, and those "motivated by illegitimate notions of racial inferiority."

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION: MYTH AND REALITY

These three decisions, taken singly and together, have far-reaching implications, and the Court's reiteration of the supposed standard of a "color-blind society" spells out the new language with which segregation, discrimination, and disempowerment will now be justified.

Indeed, well before the Court's ruling in *Adarand Constructors v. Peña*, "affirmative action" was facing just such bruising attacks, and those campaigns offer a foretaste of what lies ahead.

Thus, it was not the negligible remedies of affirmative action programs, as implemented by government, businesses, and universities, that was being assaulted, but an ideological entity constructed to foster a notion of minority "privilege." Called, interchangeably, "affirmative action" and "preferential quotas for minorities," this fabled entity was/is portrayed as spreading racial polarization across the land, as it shuts the door of opportunity against decent, hard-working white men.

The widespread existence of such "reverse discrimination" has been so widely referred to, by both right-wingers and "liberals," that its actuality is rarely questioned. The facts, however, tell a different story.

Cathleen Decker, summarizing recent labor market surveys for the *Los Angeles Times*, concluded: "What seems undeniable is that white males have not suffered widespread insult....Although affirmative action has helped integrate police and fire departments and blue-collar unions, it has had less effect elsewhere....Although animosity about affirmative action has increased, its impact in the workplace has been underwhelming."

That underwhelming reality is reflected in the reaction of one Black worker in Los Angeles to the Supreme



Some 200 demonstrators march through the predominantly Latino Pilsen neighborhood to protest the Clinton administration's immigration raids of workplaces in the Chicago area that have resulted in the arrest of more than 800 immigrants.

Court affirmative action decision: "When they talk about affirmative action now, they're not talking about Black folks getting jobs, or Latinos, or women. They're talking about Black businesses getting money, getting contracts. How many of us have businesses anyway? When they talked about affirmative action from the beginning, it was about the basic necessity of having a job. But today in L.A., Blacks don't have jobs, young people especially."

On the other hand, a young Latina, a participant in the vibrant student demonstrations against the proposed abolition of affirmative action in admissions to the University of California, spoke a different yet equal truth. One of ten children raised by a garment worker mother, she told *News & Letters*: "I feel that affirmative action has just opened a crack, and we have to support the idea." Another activist commented: "Although the hope and dream of what affirmative action would mean has been whittled down—still, keeping it is crucial. It is a marker of what direction this country is going in."

HOLY WAR AGAINST IMMIGRANTS

The question of what direction this country is going in grows more urgent every day.

The latest Labor Dept. reports show that wages of American workers are falling; continuing mass layoffs translate into a panorama of devastated human lives.

This wreckage is wrought by the structural crisis of state-capitalism, as government budgets are slashed and businesses shutter and move to the Third World. Politicians pawn off responsibility on easy targets—low-wage undocumented immigrants, a handful of Blacks and Latinos who benefit from affirmative action programs, women on welfare.

In California, a pair of disgruntled Republican white men, Tom Wood and Glynn Custred, have started a campaign to place on the state ballot their so-called "California Civil Rights Initiative" (CCRI), a constitutional amendment outlawing any type of affirmative action effort. Backing CCRI are many of the same reactionary forces that successfully canvassed for the anti-immigrant Proposition 187 in 1994, even as Prop. 187 proponents have taken nationwide their California-based crusade against the "dirty alien hordes" who are supposedly sucking our country's resources dry.

Indeed, the holy war against immigrants has intensi-

fied on every front, from a bill proposed by Sen. Alan Simpson that would outlaw public assistance to naturalized U.S. citizens, to the Clinton/Reno Justice Department's accelerated campaign of large-scale and sudden deportations of "illegals." Chicago-area Mexican-Americans have been one of the initial target communities (see June N&L), and have responded with weekly protest demonstrations at the Immigration office.

IDEOLOGICAL POLLUTION

The offensive from the politicians is bound to grow uglier in the period ahead, as the long stretch towards the 1996 Presidential campaign begins in earnest. The recent Supreme Court decisions have fortified institutionalized racism, and intensified the pollution of ideas; both of these outcomes will make the battle against the swirling racist poisons even harder.

The various right-wing campaigns—on immigration, affirmative action, and "three strikes and you're out" laws—are all targeted to elicit maximum racial divisions. Nor is it an accident that all have used California as a prime testing ground: this is the state that witnessed, three years ago, the Los Angeles rebellion.

However, the L.A. rebellion proved as disorienting to Black Civil Rights leaders and the Left as this last session of Supreme Court rulings and the nationalistic ideology Justice Clarence Thomas used to rationalize his neo-segregationist opinions in support of maintaining separate school systems, striking down Black voting rights, and undermining affirmative action.

Which is why we cannot limit ourselves to the contention of California Congresswoman Maxine Waters that "Our job is in the streets organizing. Conferences, rallies, protests. We've got to put the numbers together." We are long past the need for a most massive and unprecedented opposition to the present right-wing retrogression in this country. There is little chance of that developing if we do not confront the fact that today's retrogression flows not just from the actions of the Right but from the profound impasse reached in the revolutionary movements themselves.

There is nothing abstract about the "vision" Newt Gingrich and his fellow Georgian Clarence Thomas have of American society. What is abstract is the assumption of those in a rush to get to the streets, in the 11th hour, that organizing such a mass, sustainable movement can succeed without clarifying the philosophical principles of the kind of new, truly human society we are fighting for.

The task of working out a liberatory vision of the future cannot be put off to the 11th hour, anymore than fighting the Right. What Marxist-Humanism has articulated as *American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard* is the kind of restatement of Marxism for the American scene that allows us to see the Black dimension as revolutionary and ongoing, especially at the moment when one of the recognizable faces leading the retrogression is also Black.

Youth

Beware of American dreamers

by Maya Jhansi

This month I am turning over the youth column to a speech given at a meeting on "Youth leading the fight against the Right" in Los Angeles by a young Latina activist, Olga. — M.J.

While Newt Gingrich, Bill Clinton, and other politicians have their political love-in, youth all over the nation resist being scapegoats to a faltering economy. With massive cuts to education, the reality of education's expendability becomes evident. In an assembly line educational system whose main purpose seems to be the production of pieces and parts for the Great American Machine, these prospective machine parts hold fast to their Humanity in various forms of revolt.

Although New York seems to be the forefront with dozens of protests, the outcry against the "Contract with America" is sounding out everywhere. Student hunger strikes in Ohio, Atlanta and Illinois, protests and marches in Hawaii and Michigan, as well as walkouts and sit-ins in New Jersey and here in California. As Linton Kwesi Johnson said, "It is no mystery we're making history."

These mere statistics of "the Youth Market" weaned on MTV where, as they advertised, "the revolution will be televised," are perhaps realizing the value of the X in Generation X. But what happens with these "Reagan babies" now that the "revolution" has been televised?

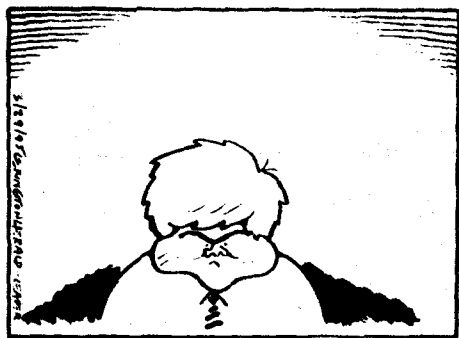
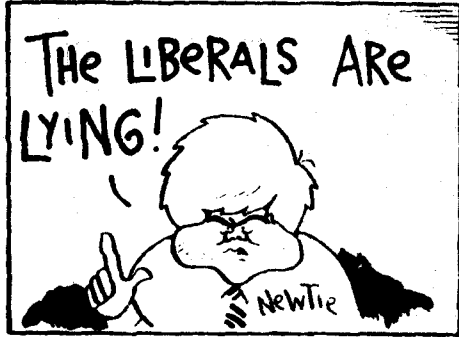
Here in a nation that spends 2% of its budget on Human Welfare and 50% on Human Warfare; where the abolition of affirmative action "is another important step in our journey toward equal opportunity and a color blind society," perhaps the only color to be seen in this "color blind society" will be white. Those undesirables who fail this blinding white color blind test can find a home in newly built Institutions of Corrections, built to compensate for the newly closed Institutions of Learning. The equation: no education, no job; no job, go to jail.

Pragmatists and reformists on the Left and the Right reevaluate, and try to understand what it is to be a true American. Anything to keep alive the American dream which historically since its birth has been the American nightmare. When listening to a speech given by ex-Black Panther Eldridge Cleaver, he proudly spoke of his patri-

tism and pride in being an American. One student from the audience asked, "Why can't we consider ourselves human beings instead of just Americans?"

Eldridge Cleaver reiterated by stressing the need for practicality where you can strive to be all you can be. As Eldridge pointed out, Colin Powell, who strived to be the best soldier, thus became the best soldier. In this toxic environment where literally and figuratively one cannot even breathe at one's full capacity, one's thinking can get muddled.

When "practicality" is equal to the immediate paradigm only, then any challenge to that "practicality"



seems impractical. So, this means that looking at one's self and others as human beings and working on understanding what this means individually and universally, is impractical. The philosophy of capitalism with its exploitation and ruination is known well by all who have an intimate relationship with it on a day to day basis. The living and thinking machine parts, a.k.a. workers, keep this backward system moving. The modern day slave is the wage earner. This destructive relationship must be fully realized for today's slaves to break their chains.

So as we resist this slave system, what kind of new society can we imagine while still imprisoned by the old? We humans with our feet on earth, who conceived the idea of God must ask ourselves the question News and Letters Committees is seriously asking: "What happens after the revolution?" When revolution means forging towards new human relations and freedom, then this question directly challenges notions old and new. This speculative, argumentative and controversial question where nothing is a given is practical and theoretical. If "new" means new and "freedom" means freedom then we cannot just rely on intuition to give it birth.

Labor challenges Newt

Chicago—On June 17 well over 1,000 people, most of them trade union workers, marched, rallied and demonstrated against the "Contract on America" and for jobs and justice. Marchers beginning from three different locations converged at Union Park on the West Side of Chicago in a poor, predominantly Black neighborhood. One march drew largely from the Latino neighborhood where it started. The largest march, however, was made up of people from many union locals, predominantly from AFSCME, SEIU, and the Teamsters.

At Union Park neighborhood residents joined with union workers to listen to several speakers, including the Rev. Jesse Jackson, speak about the injustice of the Contract, of Newt Gingrich and the Republican-controlled legislature, and of privatization. While going along with the militance of the crowd, most speakers tried to channel it into getting out the vote.

This event may have signaled a change in the response to the right-wing attacks. Rather than just a handful of Leftists, this demonstration represented the poor and working population of Chicago. It was Black, white and Chicano, and there were many women. Youth were there, many with working parents, some protesting school cuts. There were the homeless as well as union workers—and there was an angry realization of how deadly the Republicans' Contract is and a bedrock determination to stop it cold. —Participants

Racist school closings

Chicago—Hundreds of mostly Black school children, parents and teachers crowded into the Healy Elementary School auditorium in Chicago on June 8 for a face-off with Mayor Daley over his decision to close eight public schools. Several of these schools have important historic meaning to the African-American community, such as Lindblom Tech High School. Others represent crucial institutions for impoverished, struggling neighborhoods.

Instead of a forum for their concerns, however, they found an agenda carefully engineered to avoid their participation. Representatives from the Chicago Association of Local School Councils (CALSC) asked preprinted questions about Daley's plans for overhauling the Chicago public school system, none of which had anything to do with the closings.

Only when dozens of people leaped to their feet with hands raised near the end of the program did one of CALSC reps, Joseph Cole, finally ask about the closings.

Students, parents, teachers, and alumni united in a new coalition, Concerned Citizens of Schools Targeted (CCOST). CCOST has won assurance that the final decision will wait until the new Board is in place in July; however, the Board will be picked by the mayor.

—Laurie Cashdan

Keep Lindblom open!

Lindblom opened in 1919. Last year we celebrated our 75th anniversary. If we transfer somewhere else, where will we find our pride in our school? We took our picture outside our school in September. Where will our pictures go? Where will all our awards and music trophies go?

Lindblom is a magnet school with a curriculum designed for college preparation. In most of our classes we use computers. We have humanities classes like British literature that we can't take anywhere else. We have expository writing and we can't take that anywhere else. Most of our students go on to college. We have about 97% African-American students.

It's a small school, but teachers are able to pay more attention to us than at other schools. Daley said he wanted smaller schools, so why would he close Lindblom? They just spent \$4.6 million remodeling Lindblom. Why are they taking the Black students out?

They say we have to transfer to Harlan. It's far away. There's gang violence around there, and we would cross gang territories. But they can't fit all our teachers at Harlan. They can't even fit all the students. On the last day of school they were telling us to fill out transfers saying where we would go if not to Harlan.

The Lindblom program would go to Harlan in September, but after three years it would not exist. Since we are a college preparatory high school, why can't they keep us going? We have elevators there now, so why can't they bring us disabled students?

The new board will look into this matter after July 1. But the parents are saying they will keep us out of school if they decide to transfer us to another school. We have to pull people together to make the city hear what we have to say. Why do they wait until the very end of the year, so the students, the parents, the teachers won't have anything to say?

If I go to Harlan, at least I will graduate from the Lindblom curriculum. But what about younger children? My seven-year-old brother wants to go there. I have a lot of kinfolks who want to go. I hope they keep it open and give African-American students a chance to experience it. —Lindblom Tech H.S. juniors

Join the struggle to free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

Chicago—On Monday, June 5, about 200 people rallied at the State of Illinois Building here to protest the racist and unjust scheduled execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal. Mumia, a political prisoner, has been sentenced to death as a result of being framed for the murder of a policeman in Philadelphia in December 1981.

Mumia was driving a cab and pulled over to help a Black man he saw who was being beaten by police. Mumia was then shot in the stomach and another policeman was killed. Mumia was left laying there until after the other police officer had been taken to the morgue. He is a victim of the crime also, as he was shot and then unjustly framed for the murder of the police officer.

There was anger in the voices of the people who spoke at the rally, expressing their disgust at a racist (in)justice system that the United States espouses as the answer to its problems. One of the chants was, "Free Mumia, Free Free Mumia."

During the trial, Mumia was asked many questions concerning his involvement in the Black Panther Party, and other left organizations. He was asked to justify statements such as, "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun." He responded that America's political power did grow out of a gun because America seized power from the Indians by using the barrel of a gun.

The reason he is on death row is not because they say he murdered someone. He is on death row because of his political beliefs. There are many national and international campaigns to save Mumia from being executed, with the date set for Aug. 17. If everyone joins in the struggle to save Mumia, we may succeed at giving him back his life. If we stay silent, the result is death.

Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, P.O. Box 19709, Philadelphia, PA 19143; Tel. (215) 476-8812.

Equal Justice U.S.A., A Project of the Quixote Center, P.O. Box 5206, Hyattsville, MD 20782; Tel. (301) 699-0042.

—Jennifer Linden

What it means to be human

New York—Who am I? I'm a human being. A young female, one who is part of the beings called the human race. Therefore, if I'm part of the human race, then I'm part of the history: a part from the past and a part of the future.

To be a human means to feel the universal feelings others have, to share the earth and share history and ancestors. To understand what we must do for the future. To be human means to share victories and tragedies; to be part of the same cycle of love, birth and death; to ask the same questions humans have been asking for centuries. Each generation experiences different events than their ancestors yet still have the same experience. As a human I ask the universal questions: "Who am I?" and "What is my purpose?" and "I wonder how I am part of this world?" Some of us may never know and some will have different views.

To be human means to be part of something individual and at the same time part of something bigger. To be human is to be the past, the present, and the future.

— 17-year-old high school student

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CHICAGO 59 E. Van Buren, Room 707 Chicago, IL 60605 Phone 312 663 0839 Fax 312 663 9069 MEETINGS Call for meeting information	NEW YORK P.O. Box 196 Grand Central Station New York, NY 10163 212 663 3631 MEETINGS Sundays, 6:30 p.m. Washington Square Church 133 W. 4th St. (Parish House)
OAKLAND P.O. Box 3345 Oakland, CA 94609 510 658 1448 MEETINGS Sundays, 5:30 p.m. 2015 Center St. (at Milvia)	LOS ANGELES P.O. Box 29194 Los Angeles, CA 90029 213 960 5607 MEETINGS Sundays, 5:30 p.m. Echo Park United Methodist Church 1226 N. Alvarado (North of Sunset, slide door)
DETROIT P.O. Box 27205 Detroit MI 48227 MEETINGS Thursdays, 7 p.m. Central Methodist Church Woodward and Adams	FLINT, MI P.O. Box 3384, Flint, MI 48502

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Our Life and Times

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

In mid-June, even as the Yeltsin government and its Western supporters had begun to consider the war in Chechnya nearly over, the Chechen resistance suddenly staged a daring attack on the Russian city of Budyonnovsk. This city of 100,000 is 70 miles northwest of Chechnya, and not too far from Stavropol, where Mikhail Gorbachev was born.

The attack began after a large, armed body of Chechen fighters, led by top-ranking commander Shamil Basayev, made their way out of Chechnya by bribing soldiers at Russian checkpoints. Once they ran out of bribe money, they invaded Budyonnovsk, took hundreds of hostages, and then holed up in the local hospital, demanding that Russia withdraw from Chechnya. Two poorly organized attempts by demoralized Russian troops to dislodge them failed.

If Yeltsin, who by then was at the economic summit in Halifax, Nova Scotia, had grossly underestimated both the continuing capacity of the Chechen resistance and the disarray of his own military, he was now in for a sec-

India's communal tensions

Religious and ethnic tensions continue to grow in India. Several months ago, the neo-fascist Shiv Sena movement won elections in Maharashtra, the state which includes India's most technologically modern city, Bombay. Shiv Sena leader Bal Thackeray has long advocated the expulsion of Muslims from India and has also expressed open admiration for Hitler. Two years ago, Shiv Sena gangs led the mobs which attacked and killed hundreds of Muslims in Bombay during Hindu-Muslim riots.

In May of this year, in the disputed Kashmir region, the town of Charar-i-Sharief was burned to the ground during an attempt by the Indian military to dislodge Muslim separatist militants from an historic mosque they had occupied. The people of Kashmir, a predominantly Muslim region, have been seeking a referendum on questions such as autonomy or links with Pakistan ever since the 1947 partition of the region into two states, India and Pakistan. This latest outrage by the Indian government has strengthened the local Islamic fundamentalists.

Many of India's leftist, labor, and feminist groups have tried to resist the rising tide of communalism (the Indian term for inter-religious and inter-ethnic hostility), but this has often seemed to be a losing battle in recent years. This does not mean, however, that this varied and multicultural land, whose population now stands at nearly a billion people, is entirely in the grip of fundamentalists and chauvinists.

One small sign of the mass yearning for an end to communalism is the totally unanticipated record-breaking attendance for the new film, "Bombay," directed by Mani Ratnam. Released in late April, it portrays the 1992-93 Bombay riots through the eyes of two youths, twin brothers born of a marriage between a Hindu and a Muslim. In one widely discussed scene, the two brothers are almost killed by a Hindu mob which demands to know if they are Hindu or Muslim, something which they cannot answer.

Chechens strike back, Yeltsin falters

ond shock. The local Russian population, instead of blaming the Chechen attackers, lashed out at Yeltsin and company, linking their imperialist invasion of Chechnya to the deaths of their friends and relatives.

One typical response was that of a Budyonnovsk man who shouted to Western reporters at the scene: "You should take a picture of Yeltsin with these bodies" (*New York Times*, June 17, 1995). One of the Russian hostages, Yelena Kapran, said: "Of course, they're no angels, but they treated us pretty well, and they didn't try to kill us, like the Russians."

Then, an angry and possibly drunk Yeltsin staged a boorish Khrushchev-style shouting match with reporters in Halifax, as an embarrassed Bill Clinton looked on. Yeltsin refused any blame for the brutal war which has killed up to 60,000 civilians so far, terming Chechnya "the center of world terrorism" and referring repeatedly to "my friend Bill" (*New York Times*, June 18, 1995).

The next day, Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, acting in Yeltsin's absence, negotiated a settlement whereby the Chechen fighters were given safe passage home, the Russian army ordered a cease-fire in Chechnya, and negotiations to end the war were

to begin.

Whether the Russian government will seriously negotiate or just play for time is unclear, but three things are clear. One, the corrupt and increasingly authoritarian Yeltsin regime is on the ropes. Two, the Russian people are sick of this war. Three, the Chechen people will keep on fighting.

The fate of Shamil Basayev's family is one example of why this is so. In the mountain town of Vedeno, taken by Russian forces in early June, stand the ruins of Basayev's home. Eleven of his relatives were killed there by a Russian bomb. In a racist humiliation sure to be remembered for generations, a latrine for Russian troops has since been erected in the ruins of Basayev's home.

Austria's Nazi past

After four years of debate, the Austrian parliament, in June, voted for the first time ever to give economic compensation to Austrian victims of Nazism. There are an estimated 33,000 survivors, who include Jews, Roma (gypsies), lesbians and gays, and political opponents. The law was passed so belatedly and so stingily, however—as seen in a provision that compensation should go only to those survivors whose current economic position puts them "in need of social welfare aid"—that it was supported by the Right but opposed by the leftist and anti-racist Green Party.

The Greens termed it yet "another insult to the victims of Nazism to compensate them in the form of charity." This debate took place in a country which elected the former Nazi officer Kurt Waldheim to the presidency, and where, despite the tumultuous acclamation by the population of Hitler's 1938 annexation, public opinion still holds that Austria was Nazism's "first victim."

In Brief...

Brazil—The last of Brazil's 50,000 oil workers returned to work in June, their four-week strike against opening the nationalized oil industry to foreign investment crushed. A former Marxist, President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, is being praised by the bourgeois media and middle class public opinion for his Thatcher-like "firmness" toward the strikers. With hundreds of workers fired and still more facing dismissal, the Brazilian legislature has now begun the process of changing the constitution to permit Cardoso's privatization measures.

Britain—An anti-police rebellion broke out June 9, in Bradford, a small Yorkshire city populated heavily by Asians (the British term for immigrants and citizens originating from the Indian subcontinent). Long the target of racist attacks by both police and skinheads, and living in a community where youth unemployment stands at over 50%, Asian youth struck back forcefully in response to racist insults by police. Several stores were burned down as the youths battled police. Up to now, Britain's Asian community has been considered by many to be less militant in its response to racism than the Black community, but that now appears to be changing with the new generation of Asian youth.

Iranian Mujahedeen deals

On June 13, the German government barred Maryam Rajavi, a leader of the Iranian opposition group, Mujahedeen, from entering Germany to address a demonstration of Mujahedeen supporters in Dortmund. The demonstration, which by various estimates included 5,000 to 15,000 people, had been scheduled to defend the Clinton administration's recent embargo on Iran.

The German government prevented Maryam Rajavi from entering the country after the Iranian government threatened to stop paying its loans to Germany and halt their mutual business deals. Germany has a history of good trade and political relations with Iran, while the Mujahedeen have had their own history of unprincipled political alliances in their opposition to the Iranian government.

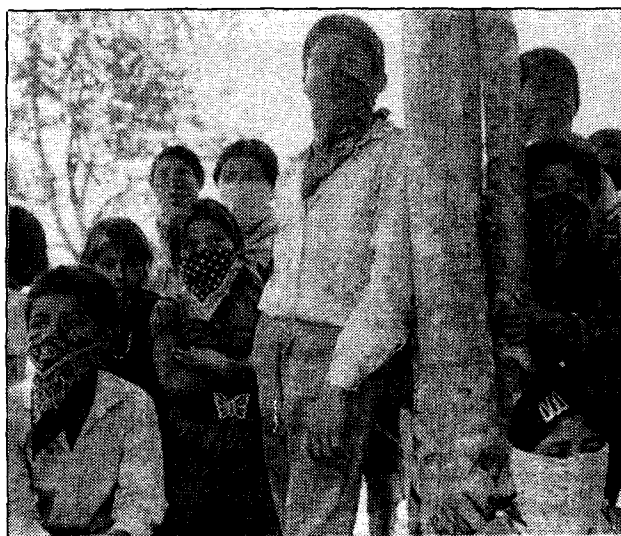
Recently the Mujahedeen have tried to establish strong relations with the Clinton administration and the Republican Congress. This month 202 members of the House of Representatives signed a Mujahedeen-sponsored letter asking Clinton to take a harsher line on Iran and to recognize the Mujahedeen-sponsored "National Council of Resistance," led by Massud Rajavi, as the democratic alternative to the Islamic Republic.

Clearly the Clinton administration and the Republican Congress's actions on Iran are not motivated by the desire to support a genuine opposition to Iran's counter-revolutionary regime. The U.S. is instead eager to vie with the Russian and Chinese governments, which have been engaging in nuclear deals with Iran. Russia has gone ahead with its plan to build \$800 million worth of nuclear technology in Iran. China has been selling transcontinental missiles to Iran. Other European countries have been competing to take the place of the U.S.-owned Conoco Company in a \$600 million deal to engage in oil and gas exploration in the Siri Islands.

The Mujahedeen may be happy that they have now received recognition from the U.S. Congress. But they have long ago rejected the fundamental principle needed for any genuine revolutionary solidarity with the Iranian masses: a banner of liberation independent of all state powers.

—Sheila Fuller

Negotiations in Chiapas



Residents from a community in Chiapas listened to proposals issued from negotiations between the EZLN and the Mexican government in June. The EZLN has demanded certain basic guarantees including freedom of movement, safety of EZLN supporters, and no future military attacks by the government. In negotiations begun June 7, the government proposed regrouping troops on both sides, and reportedly was ready to cede some territory to EZLN control. But it still occupies huge areas in Chiapas following the Feb. 9 invasion.

In a provocative move at the end of June, government officials expelled three Catholic priests whom it accused of fomenting unrest in Chiapas, including Fr. Loren Riebe, who was ousted from Yajalon. One of the priests stated that "It is becoming clear that what the government really wants is more conflict." In the meantime, proposals from the June talks have been taken back to the indigenous communities for discussion. Negotiations are set to resume this month.

Who We Are and What We Stand For

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

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

Raya Dunayevskaya (1910-87), founder of the body of ideas of Marxist-Humanism, became Chairwoman of the National Editorial Board and National Chairwoman of the Committees from its founding to 1987. Charles Denby (1907-83), a Black production worker, author of *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*, became editor of the paper from 1955 to 1983. Dunayevskaya's works *Marxism and Freedom...from 1776 until Today* (1958), *Philosophy and Revolution: from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao* (1973), and *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* (1982) spell out the philosophic ground of Marx's Humanism internationally, as *American Civilization on Trial* concretizes it on the American scene and shows the two-way road between the U.S. and Africa. These works challenge post-Marx Marxists to return to Marx's Marxism.

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

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

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

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