

# NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

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## Pushing drivers to the limit



by John Marcotte

Here's what my terminal manager thinks is a normal night's work: you load trucks for eight hours, handling heavy floor freight, then you take a truck out over the road. And you do that again the next night, and the next.

This is because of this "combination" classification garbage my company started. Instead of having drivers and dockmen, most jobs are "combination" where you're doing both jobs. This puts senior dockmen out of work. Non-union CCX (Conway Central Express), one of the Consolidated Freight's—CF's—non-union "double-breasting" operations, runs that way. They make the drivers load their truck, take it out and unload it.

And it was driver fatigue that caused the crash a few months ago, in Pennsylvania I think, where a CCX driver fell asleep and collided head-on with a Roadway truck, killing both drivers. I have read in the paper that the government's own studies show most accidents involving heavy trucks are caused by driver fatigue.

My terminal manager uses a driver as a casual, who he knows has a full-time day job, to run loads to Pennsylvania and Massachusetts at night. He'll bring this guy in four or five nights in a row. By the second night this guy looks like walking hell. He can hardly stand up, and they give him 65,000 pounds of truck to take on the highway where you and your family are driving!

My terminal manager loves anyone who will work any hours, break any rules, act like there's no union and come back for more. He tells us, "The problem is you Teamsters make too much," meaning we make some overtime and we might "book off" (take off) Friday or Monday.

He's got a big stack of applications from drivers look-  
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## Black World

## Haiti in the crucible of imperialism



by Lou Turner

The Clinton Administration has played the same order-mongering role in Haiti in the year since its invasion and return to President Jean-Bertrand Aristide that it now plays in the Bosnia crisis. That is to say, the "humanitarian" goal of U.S. intervention to halt the slaughter by paramilitary and regular military forces of civilian populations quickly becomes the strategic goal of freezing the status quo. Neo-fascist forces are legitimized as the "loyal opposition" to counterbalance the democratic forces that the U.S. fears will seek their own self-determination independent of the imperialist dictates of Washington.

So runs the logic of this new *pax Americana*; so it is in Haiti. Allan Nairn's reports for *The Nation* (10-24-94; 1-8/15-96) on the U.S.'s foreign policy to destabilize the democratic forces in Haiti in order to safeguard the dominance of Haiti's elite exposed a U.S. imperialism every bit as savagely counter-revolutionary as during its Cold War heyday. Not only was the CIA involved in the September 1991 coup against Aristide, and the subsequent campaign of disinformation against him while he was in exile, but it set up and financed the paramilitary FRAPH to terrorize and liquidate Aristide's supporters.

The latest scandal involves the demand by Haitian officials for the return of thousands of pages of documents seized by U.S. troops in the 1994 invasion which the officials say would help them prosecute human rights abuse by the deposed military junta. The clear implication behind the U.S. refusal to hand over the documents of the former regime is that they incriminate U.S. imperialism in atrocities against the Haitian people.

But if Haiti is made to undergo more political abuse at the hands of its U.S. "benefactors," it is because Haiti's dirt-poor economy is being channelized into the imperialist designs of international donor agencies and off-shore multinational corporations whose vampire-like gaze only sees Haiti as a source of cheap exploitable labor.

The neocolonial profile of U.S.-Haitian relations is the outline of its "democratic" future. Even as the IMF and World Bank clamor for the privatization of state-run in-

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## Clinton-Congress showdown exposes ailing state of union

by Jim Mills

The day after Bill Clinton's State of the Union address Jan. 23, the *Chicago Sun-Times* summed up his message in a headline: "Clinton fakes left, goes right." Republicans watched stone-faced as Clinton ran away with a theme contrary to Democratic policy, until now: "The era of big government is over."

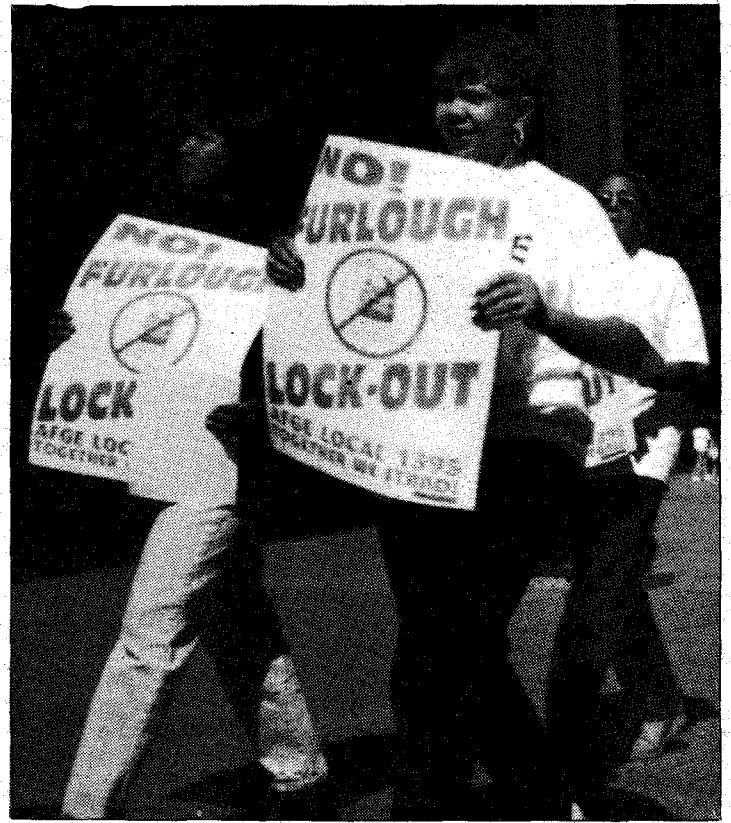
Newt Gingrich and the first-term representatives, deceitfully called "revolutionaries," fought hard to put their own name on dismantling the social support systems born out of the two great eras of struggle in this century, the 1930s and the 1960s.

However the State of the Union all but admitted that the White House has done its part to either kill programs that meet human needs or yield to Republican efforts to do so. Since taking office, Clinton's "Republicrat" causes have included "Ending welfare as we know it," rewriting labor law, curtailing worker protections, privatizing health care, vitiating affirmative action.

As last year's budget negotiations opened, he consented to fundamental cuts in all social programs. Reductions in "means test" programs (if you're poor enough, you qualify) were six times larger than those of the Reagan administration until "compromises" lowered that proportion to a little over four times.

Clinton maintained the appearance in the ensuing debate that he was defending health care benefits for the poor and elderly against a Republican tax cut for the rich. At the same time, however, he had agreed to accept the seven-year deadline for a balanced budget and to employ Congress's trickle-down economic assumptions.

Taken altogether, Clinton's concessions exposed something of a confidence game being played by the two major parties: Both White House and Congress have agreed to end the so-called welfare state. Moreover, balancing the budget serves as the means to annul what modicum of spending was left over after Reaganomics built up an unassailable \$5 trillion national debt, the interest on which has devoured vast amounts of every budget since.



Federal workers in Chicago protest shutdown.

Furthermore, the part of the budget covering defense, social security, and interest on the national debt was removed from the negotiating table at the start. Out of the remaining one quarter of the budget—dealing with health, work, and children among other needs—are supposed to come all cuts.

### SHUTDOWNS HURT

The rightward confluence of the Clinton administration with Gingrich's "Contract With America" made the

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## French strikes challenge retrogression

by Kevin Anderson

"Solidarite." Solidarity. The historic labor slogan sounds sentimental or even archaic to many amid today's corporate takeovers, massive layoffs, and austerity economics. Yet no other word explains better the recent events in France.

On December 13, after three weeks of millions-strong strikes and demonstrations had paralyzed the country, forcing millions to walk because of a lack of transport, the *staid New York Times* wrote that the workers' actions had "created a baffling sympathy among the public at large, despite the considerable discomfort the strikes have caused." It was the conservative Prime Minister, Alain Juppe, not the workers, who backed down, withdrawing most of his austerity plan. As we go to press, a follow-up round of labor demonstrations has been announced for early February.

It began on Saturday, November 24, when several hundred thousand railway workers demonstrated against Juppe's economic plan. That plan would have forced workers on the state railroads and other public employees to work longer before receiving full pensions, increased paycheck deductions for benefits, cut the number of railroad lines by nearly 20%, and raised the income tax on working people.

In the next few days, subway and bus workers joined the "cheminots," the railway workers. They then fanned out and convinced postal, electric power, and airport workers to join in. By the following week, university students, who had already been fighting budget cuts, came aboard, while truck drivers now began blocking highways outside several large cities.

At this point, the leadership of one of the big union federations, the pro-Socialist Party CFDT, broke ranks, tacitly supporting the government. This had little effect, however. The strikes continued to grow. Workers began to shut down the major seaports as well. On Tuesday, December 12, the outpouring on the streets reached 1.7 million according to the *New York Times*. Some smaller cities had almost as large a turnout as Paris. By this time, the powerful teachers unions had also joined the strike.

The next day, Juppe offered major concessions. Without waiting for the planned December 16 demonstrations, the CGT suddenly ordered its railway workers back to work. Trains and subways began to roll in Paris. Still, on December 16, there were hundreds of thousands on the streets, including 150,000 in Marseilles, more than in Paris. In a few places, such as Caen and Marseilles, the struggle continued a bit longer. In Marseilles, the transit workers held out until January 9. They had an additional demand, scrapping the two-tier wage and benefit system put in place a few years ago for new employees. They won, forcing an end to the two-tier system in Marseilles transit.

During these events, much of the bourgeois press, the politicians, and some intellectuals such as philosopher Bernard-Henri Levy or the editors of the leftist journal *Esprit*, acted as if all of this was a narrow, corporatist struggle by a "privileged" group of railway workers. Others such as sociologist Pierre Bourdieu spoke at public meetings of strikers to express their solidarity. Bourdieu and nearly 500 other leftist intellectuals, including Samir Amin, Pierre Broue, Regis Debray, Christine Delphy, Jacques Derrida, Pierre Lantz, Michael Lowy, and Pierre Vidal-Naquet then signed a December 4 "Appeal by Intellectuals in Support of the Strikers."

Youth immediately saw their own struggles for education and jobs as connected to those of labor. In Toulouse on December 12, thousands of students joined workers at the morning demonstration of 120,000, then held one in the afternoon around their own demands for more funding for education.

The same was true of the feminist movement. Accord-

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# Feminism, Hegel, and political crises today

by Laurie Cashdan

Many radical feminist theorists characterize the 1990s as a crisis for feminist thought. Italian feminist Rosi Braidotti, for example, attacks the abstract, apolitical relativism about "differences" which has emerged among a plethora of radical writers.

"Difference, in the age of the disintegration of the Eastern block, is a dangerous term. As several feminist Yugoslav philosophers put it: when 'difference' is used negatively and divisively, a postmodernist attempt to redefine it positively becomes desperate and vain. Fragmentation and the reappraisal of difference in a post-structuralist mode can only be perceived at best ironically, and at worst tragically, by somebody living in Zagreb, not to speak of Dubrovnik and Sarajevo."<sup>1</sup>

"Where can [a] new theoretical and political creativity be founded?" Braidotti demands (p. 3). She asks why "has the intellectual left...been historically defeated in favor of whatever brand of neopositivism or lukewarm neoliberalism we are going through today."

However, attempts by feminist theorists to answer the question, "where can a new theoretical and political creativity be founded," have not necessarily issued a new clarion call for revolution—at least not the kind of revolution Marx called "revolution in permanence."

I found helpful in thinking through these challenges Tina Chanter's new work *Ethics of Eros: Irigaray's Rewriting of the Philosophers* (Routledge, 1995), a philosophical account of the French feminist Luce Irigaray's

challenge to Creon, because of his refusal to accord her brother a proper burial, leads to Antigone's own death and ultimately the demise of the state.

For Chanter, Irigaray's analysis illuminates nothing more than the need to "reconceptualize the civic sphere, so that the supposedly neutral (but in fact masculine-biased) social and political rights and duties that have traditionally defined this sphere, are specified further, in terms of rights and duties pertaining to sexual difference" (p. 125). Anything less results in women merely demanding rights accorded to men without developing the radical potential of women's historical difference.

Yet the new ethics elaborated by Irigaray in *Thinking the Difference: For a Peaceful Revolution* (Routledge, 1994) doesn't sound terribly new when it poses a feminist ethics based on the mother-daughter relation against patriarchal war-like values destroying society. In Irigaray's "peaceful revolution," neither the "permanent critique" of woman as Other within metaphysics, nor its abstract ethics of female values, connect to actual women in the historic dialectics of revolution.

Irigaray poses the positive of women by focusing on "multiplicity, difference, and otherness." This returns us back to Braidotti's concern with theories of difference that succumb to neopositivism or neoliberalism. To master a new concept of sex/gender while uncoupling it from the revolutionary dialectics of freedom that inheres within Hegel's dialectic, including in his discussion of Antigone, leaves us again facing a crisis within feminism.

1. Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (Columbia University, 1994), p. 146.

# Delta union drive

**Itta Bena, Miss.**—Workers at American Catfish are trying to organize their plant again. Over 50 workers have already signed union cards, and we have a rank-and-file plant committee set up to help run the campaign. There is a lot of spirit because the workers are angry over what happened to them in the last year.

Last year "American Cat" workers had a drive to sign up members in our local, UFCW Local 1529, and went all the way to holding a representation election, but they lost. I thought we were going to win last time, but in the last two weeks workers got scared and listened to promises from the owner, Solem Scott. Scott told them that if they voted against the union, he would give everyone a 50¢ an hour raise. And he made lots of other promises too. But he didn't keep any of them; there was no raise and the conditions in the plant are worse than ever. Solem's father owns Scott Petroleum, so you know there is no shortage of money in that family.

Soon after the union was voted down, American Cat began hiring. Now their work force is up to about 240 workers, nearly all Black women. They are the last major non-union catfish plant in the Delta, and it's time they were organized.

One worker said: "I hope people learned from what happened last time. Management here will lie to you, cheat you, steal from you. They can promise you anything and give you nothing. To get anything, we will have to fight for it." —Local 1529 volunteer organizer

# Clemency for Garcia

**Chicago**—Death row prisoner Guinevere Garcia, 37, was granted clemency by Gov. Jim Edgar on Jan. 16. Her sentence for the 1991 murder of her husband was commuted to life in prison without parole. He said the facts of her case did not fit the sentence, but that she should stay in prison. Garcia had resisted efforts by advocates for battered women and death penalty opponents to save her life and had waived her rights to appeal, saying she would rather die than spend life in prison.

Garcia had suffered a life of violence, sexual abuse and genital mutilation. Raped by an uncle at age 6 and gang-raped by neighborhood boys at 15, she began a life of alcoholism and prostitution while still a teenager. At 18 she smothered her infant daughter, fearing the child would be placed in the care of the uncle who had raped her and grandparents who had physically abused her.

After serving ten years for the crime, she remarried her second husband, George Garcia, a man who had already beaten and mutilated her, but left him after two weeks. During an argument in July 1991, he slammed her head into a car's dashboard until she shot him with a gun she carried that day because she was afraid of him.

Women are rarely given the death penalty in the U.S. Yet of the 47 women on Death Row today, about 20% are there for killing their spouses, as opposed to 2% of men there for the same offense. This indicates a bias against women who go against society's expectations and defend themselves. For battered women like Garcia, a life of abuse has left them ashamed and guilt-ridden. Garcia's choice to accept her fate was typical of women who have lived with continued violence. But Guinevere Garcia is still in prison. Her only chance for release is through another clemency petition. —Sharon M.

## Woman as Reason

concept of sexual difference as a positive, urgently needed dimension of society. Here I concentrate on Chanter's chapters on Hegel and Irigaray.

Chanter argues that feminist ideals of equality with man are woefully inadequate in the 1990s. Her main concern is that attempts to work out sexual differences of women as a positive dimension for politics have been thwarted by fears that such questions rely on women's supposedly inherent qualities. She argues that the radical potential of Irigaray's work becomes clear as seen in light of its philosophic underpinnings in Hegel, de Beauvoir, Heidegger, Derrida and Levinas.

Especially significant is her critique of Simone de Beauvoir's concept of woman as Other in *The Second Sex*, based on Hegel's chapter in *The Phenomenology of Mind* on "Lordship and Bondage," on the "master/slave dialectic." Chanter argues that de Beauvoir's woman starts as dependent on man and never rejects this dependency, remaining in a static duality in which the man is always transcendent and pursues his own freedom while the woman remains dependent.

For Hegel, Chanter writes, there is a reversal in the slave's self-consciousness. After undergoing a life-and-death struggle in which the slave confronts death, he or she has no illusions about freedom—unlike the master who thinks he's free but whose "freedom" is based on dependency on the slave. The slave then gains a sense of independence, a "mind of one's own," through labor.

Clearly frustrated at de Beauvoir's misinterpretation of Hegel's dialectic, and bothered by her failure to explore what might result from looking at women in this light, Chanter exclaims, "What would happen if women, rather than aspiring to the same values as men, took seriously what it means to be women?" (p. 74) Impatiently criticizing those feminists who write off Hegel, she insists, "Precisely because Hegel's confrontation with the tradition of philosophy was so dazzlingly comprehensive because he took the history of philosophy so seriously, we can learn from re-reading Hegel" (p. 122). And taking seriously what it means to be women is what she thinks Irigaray contributes.

However, what Irigaray means by women's sexual difference—"what it means to be women"—veers away from Hegelian dialectics. Indeed, Hegel's warning about stopping at independence or "a mind of one's own" seems prescient. Hegel argues that for freedom to get beyond the attitude of bondage, it must first confront objective reality. Otherwise, a mind of one's own remains "a piece of cleverness which has mastery within a certain range, but not over the universal power nor over the entire objective reality."

This problem emerges most sharply as Chanter follows out Irigaray's confrontation with Hegel's writing on Antigone in his *Phenomenology of Mind*. Chanter analyzes the cultural presuppositions about sex that underlie Hegel's discussion. She argues that Hegel so immerses Antigone in Nature and Family that she never achieves full ethical consciousness or Reason, although her chal-

## REMEMBER ROSA LUXEMBURG!

Berlin, Germany - Over 75,000 people marched Jan. 14 in honor of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, both murdered 77 years ago by the Freikorps, the precursor to the Nazis.

It is the need to throw one's whole life on the scales of destiny; it's this passion for revolution; it's the urgency to get out of prison confinement and open entirely new vistas; in a word, it's the need for what Luxemburg called 'staying human,' that characterized the whole of her vision for a new society."



Rosa Luxemburg, self-portrait

—Raya Dunayevskaya from *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*  
To order, see ad on page 7.

## 'Surface Tension': A review

I read *Surface Tension: Love, Sex, and Politics Between Lesbians and Straight Women* (1996), edited by Meg Daley, hoping to find writings which, in crossing the boundaries between lesbian and straight, create a new kind of unity among women of all sexual identities. Feminists have been divided along the lines of sexuality since the movement began, creating a gulf which not only hurts our aims of unity and freedom, but limits our views and choices regarding our own sexuality.

Ann Powers of the *Village Voice*, raises Adrienne Rich's idea of a "lesbian continuum" to show how strict views of sexuality have limited potential for new kinds of relations among women: "Through a litany of examples ranging from adolescent girl-crushes to older women's domestic companionship, we can see, in Rich's words, 'breaths of female history and psychology that have lain out of reach as a consequence of limited, mostly clinical, definitions of 'lesbianism.'"

Louise Rafkin, a lesbian, embraces a similar attitude: "[T]he delineation between straight and gay seems most bizarre; a harsh labeling that sorts us in ways that we shouldn't or perhaps needn't always be divided."

Meg Daly, the editor, concludes that "identity politics" of any kind are limiting. The writers in this collection "have written beyond boundaries of sexual orientation to further our understanding of women's intimate bonds."

Daphne Merkin, while defending her reasons for rejecting lesbianism, including offensive descriptions of lesbian sex, admits she is "contaminated by a cultural outlook that casts my own kind as somehow deficient or lesser than." Her final question, "have I chosen heterosexuality, with its impossible anxieties, or has it chosen me?" raises points of connection between sexism, heterosexism and sexual choices. If our sexuality is conditioned by society, is it possible to condition our sexuality to suit our own needs rather than those of society?

I was disappointed to find Dorothy Allison, author of *Bastard Out of Carolina* (a book I loved for bringing sex and class together so creatively), projecting a limited definition of lesbianism. Writing with disdain of "political lesbians" who choose same sex relationships for philosophical reasons, Allison contends that "Real lesbians are not theoretical constructs. We have our own history,

our own issues and agendas, and complicated sex lives, completely separate from heterosexuality....I do not believe that identity is conceptual." [Emphasis mine.]

By creating a definition for "real" lesbians based solely on instinctual libido and lust, Allison bars a range of possibilities for relations among women. Cannot "political lesbianism" be one way for women to experience new relations with each other? What gives one lesbian the right to define what drives a "real" lesbian? Our desires as women aren't so simple.

Surprisingly, of the 29 feminist authors in this book, none mentions the need to transcend capitalism or patriarchy. This book, however filled with poignant prose and timely debate, leaves me with the question: we need to be united, yes, but toward what aim? —Julia Jones

## Vigil condemns lynchings

**San Francisco**—Protesting the murders of two lesbians in Oregon and a Black couple in North Carolina, over 100 people held a candlelight vigil in the Castro district on Dec. 13. This group saw a connection and linked them to the growing incidence of hate crimes in the U.S.

The murdered lesbians, Roxanne Ellis and Michelle Abdill, were domestic partners and well-known political activists in their home near Ashland, Ore. A friend of the women at the rally said they knew the risks of being out in an isolated town, "but they fought to be a model for all queers living in small towns."

The Black couple murdered near Fort Bragg, Michael James and Jackie Burden, were two innocent people walking down the street at the wrong place and time. Three white soldiers shot the couple as part of an initiation rite for their racist army gang. To receive a spider web tattoo on their necks, the soldiers had to kill a Black or gay person.

One speaker at the rally told the protesters that 72% of hate crimes are committed against people of color and 18% are committed against queers. There have been 119 hate crimes reported in the Bay Area since June 1995. Toward the end of the rally, one woman said, "Silence cannot be our main response to anti-lesbian violence." The crowd chanted, "No more silence! Stop the violence! Queers fight back!" —Participant



## Women Worldwide

by Mary Jo Grey

A coalition of 21 feminist groups in Spain is demanding the expulsion from both their offices and their parties of all politicians who beat their wives—including two already convicted of that crime. "We've known for years that certain politicians beat their spouses, but the will to end abuse just doesn't exist," said one feminist.

Twenty-two women immigrants from China—some survivors of the New York shipwreck in 1993—went on hunger strike in December in a California jail. They were protesting more than two years of detention and government threats to deport them. Ten of the women are seeking political asylum because of China's forced abortions, sterilizations and family planning laws.

## Buyout makes bitter end to Staley lockout

**Decatur, Ill.**—Once they put out the old guard in the local, I knew the contract was going to pass. In the voting, more than 286 chose to give up, and 226 voted against it.

The rank and file has to share the blame for choosing to believe the lies, the lies about how this is all there is, and there ain't no more, and the company isn't going to change their mind. In my opinion, we had Pepsi by the throat. We could have won. Even the night of the voting, people were saying Staley's contract with Pepsi is up Dec. 31. Why do you think Tate & Lyle gave Dec. 31 as the deadline for us to accept their last offer? And the price of corn is going up. Staley can't pass that on to Pepsi when they want them to renew.

For the people who voted for the settlement, the defeats at Caterpillar and Firestone did have some effect. They might have looked at the UAW and Rubberworkers internationals as big and powerful, and seen what they did not do for them. Then they say, What chance do we have against Staley?

In the bridges and buyouts, there wasn't that much. People with the "85 factor"—years worked plus age—there's not a whole lot of them. If you bridged—that was the buyout for people who didn't make the 85 factor—the multiplier dropped down to \$22 for every year you worked. If you are under 55, it's less, only a \$10 to \$12 multiplier. A lot of people were believing they were going to get severance pay and full benefits, but they refused to read the contract!

Affiliating with the UPIU in 1993 was one of the worst things to happen to this local. When it was happening, I was still in the learning process. If I would have learned more, I would have said something then. We found out later that the old regional of the AIW had made a deal. There was the appearance of democracy—they held meetings and conferences. They held two or three at the AIW hall here. It gave the appearance of independence. Later on, though, you could see it was a done deal.

When we first joined the UPIU, we were already into the corporate campaign. They said, You guys are doing the right things. As soon as the merger was done, the doors were shut and locked. They basically started to dictate what we were doing. Our people put on a fight, but in the process a lot of stuff should have come to the fore. Not every decision can come to the floor, but they should have had an open discussion about control.

I was talking to some people. There are only 300 jobs left in Staley, but less than 200 people are going back. Some of the people going back, I feel sorry for them.

They think the company is going to leave them alone. One guy needs to go back for the insurance. They will try to screw him out of his pension and severance by firing him.

I severed from Staley. I wasn't going to go back for chump change. That's what people got with ten years or less. Others got 20,000 or 30,000 dollars, just 100 or so people.

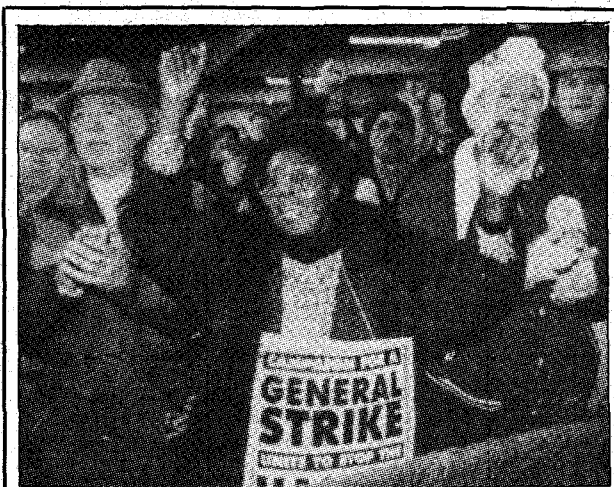
—Less-than-10-and-out

Basically it's the same agreement that we turned down in July with some enhancements. They are going to have 30-day rotations—30 days on nights, 30 days on day-shift—instead of three-day rotations. Still, they are going to have the "skill blocks" which is just another way of getting rid of people by having them take tests that Einstein couldn't pass.

It will be hell in there for the younger people. I feel sorry for them. One of my friends has two years until retirement. He said, "I'm going to try to stick it out for two years." "You won't make it if you're fired," is what I said. "Staley is going to do what it can to keep you from that pension." That's why I retired. I couldn't work with those scabs. The first time one of them got in my face, I'd knock his head off and get fired.

Caterpillar and Firestone went back under an imposed contract already. At Caterpillar, they have a recall list of 188 and 17 people were fired in the first week. These were people with a lot of time, fired just to take away their pensions. My neighbor's son says that he is not allowed to talk to any fellow employees while he's eating lunch. They have to just sit there. It's probably just to keep them from saying something to the scabs. If they catch you, they will fire you.

—New retiree



Ontario Federation of Labour workers on general strike in London, Ontario.

## Workshop Talks

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ing for work. Instead of yelling at us for taking off, let him put some men to work. When I was a casual I depended on guys booking off so I'd get a day's work. There are so many people unemployed and yet they want us to work all this overtime.

There was a terrible crash of a propane truck last year on I-287 in White Plains, N.Y. Something like 23 houses burned and six or seven people died. The investigation turned up that it was driver fatigue—the driver had gotten two-and-a-half days of sleep in the last 49 hours. The company had put the driver on the three-day work week, which seems to be the fashion now to save on overtime costs. But this is hauling propane gas! You've got to be crazy. Criminally insane.

What is the government's response to trucking safety? They deregulate the companies and regulate the drivers. This new CDL license regulates the workers. You are responsible for your log book, your equipment, the hazardous materials you are hauling, your shipping papers and so on. All the stiff fines and penalties are directed against you.

Government deregulation was and is aimed at breaking the Teamsters. It has made a big impact, with non-union trucking being the majority now. Non-union over-the-road drivers are paid pennies on the mile. They have to drive more hours than is safe just to make a living. All drivers should be on the clock like we are. That would be the biggest safety improvement right there. Would you believe drivers who deliver gasoline are paid by the load? The government won't interfere—that's "free enterprise."

The trucking companies are now lobbying (bribing) Congress to change even that DOT rule limiting us to ten hours driving in a 15-hour work day, saying that was for the old days before "comfortable" trucks and super-highways. They want to be able to legally force us to drive more than ten hours a day, instead of having the drivers fudge their log books.

What gives me some hope that we can reverse the attack of deregulation on our jobs is that workers at non-union Overnite have been winning union representation at many terminals throughout the country, and now Conway workers have started organizing in California.

Our only safety protection is our teamster contract. In my case, when the terminal manager tries to have me work the dock and drive, I just slow down. I slow down so much that it would cost them an arm and a leg in overtime to send me out often. And if I do too much overtime and I'm tired, I just book off the next day.

We have the right to refuse unsafe equipment, to refuse to drive if we are fatigued, and to book off if we just don't feel good enough to come in and drive. There is nothing they can do, and they know it.

## Dobbs workers fight back

**Memphis, Tenn.**—Dobbs International got the idea that new union people were coming in, they would do whatever they want to do and have been unilaterally going against the contract.

At Dobbs, where we prepare food for airlines, each job had a position: meat slicer, breakfast belt, prep table, dessert table, first class belt, salad belt, and each woman did a particular job. The company took away the positions and just called it "cold food."

They are saying: "When you walk in in the morning, I'll use you wherever I want to use you. If I want to make you do another job, I'll take you there and if you're job isn't finished, then you got to stay here and work."

One woman was so angry. She is 61 years old and had tendinitis and they told her she had to have a doctor's statement to prove that she couldn't dip frozen ice cream which made her arm hurt. She's been there 25 years and her job is one that specifies that she's a special meals person. She told the supervisor she was damned if she was going to bring him anything. She told him, "I pay union dues, and I'm not paying them for nothing."

They discharged one man after giving him a drug test. One result was negative and the other was so low it could have been caused by taking cold medication, which he was doing. They are going after the people who were the most militant.

They've started harassing the women, asking them, "Haven't you finished yet? Aren't you through yet? You got to speed up." A few weeks ago the women started fighting back. Most of the new people they have hired are signing union cards because they see just how rough it is. We'll get there. Everyone is pulling together. With this change over, we are feeling we might get burned, but if we get burned, we're going to be fighting!

—Black woman unionist

Marx's  
CAPITAL  
and  
Today's  
Global  
Crisis

BY RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

To order, see page 7.



## Somerville flees union

**Somerville, Tenn.**—Somerville Mills closed their plant on Jan. 30, and moved this operation to Mexico. In our eight-year struggle to get a union (United Furniture Workers Local 282), the company played every card and every one was a bad decision. They had to give us a contract or move to Mexico.

They are offering management some jobs in plants 30 miles from here, but not the union activists. They feel if they offer some workers jobs, they will have to do it for all the employees and if they do that we will carry the union with us.

A lot of the workers feel if the company won't do right, then it's best they move on. They won't give us anything. We accrued a week of vacation in 1995, but the company is offering only 2½ days pay and no severance pay.

A new highway has meant a lot of jobs began moving to Fayette County. But the county executive is saying those companies should make the jobs all minimum wage and keep high wage jobs out because existing factories all pay minimum and would lose their workers. They want to keep all wages at the minimum. That's been key all along.

They say we are unskilled, but the jobs take a lot of skill: you have to focus, learn the job, maintain quality and production at the same time. They don't know what unskilled is. We sew, inspect, and ship the clothes. Sewing is the most skilled. The first thing they tell you is this isn't like sewing at home. Unskilled is what they say to pay you minimum wages.

Some people worked at Somerville Mills for 10 or 11 years and now are saying they don't ever want to go back to factory work. A lot of us have carpel tunnel syndrome and many aren't getting medical care. That will put them in a financial bind because they'll be responsible for those medical bills later.

If I had to do this struggle again I would. Until the people in the communities stand up and fight these companies, they will continue to search out areas like Fayette County and say these people are unskilled, they have no education, they have nothing and this is an opportunity for us to make a fortune. The union is going to be the only way the workers in the sweatshops are going to have a voice.

—Black working woman

## Kaiser contract battle

**Oakland, Cal.**—There was a lot of expectation and discussion at Kaiser among workers in Local 250 (SEIU) and Local 29 (OPEIU) as our contracts approached expiration at the end of October. Now everything seems surreal. We're asking each other every day, as a joke, "What is happening with the contract?" and the reply is "What contract?" Since negotiations broke off, there's been a silence on the death of the fundamental principle of no contract, no work.

It's like management is saying go ahead, keep your logo, keep your slogans and your shell of an organization, we like it this way because we get to implement what we want and you can still say you have a union. Kaiser management now admits they have been negotiating with three local hospitals to contract out Kaiser inpatient hospital care beginning with their East Bay hospitals which they intend to close.

Management talks up their own form of "solidarity" based on us working together as a team in order to compete against the other sharks in the marketplace. Their whole team concept hardly points to a cooperative result—it is either vanquish or be vanquished: "Our team means your survival."

Management's concept of the team is that you're the mule, he's the driver, and everyone else on the road must be crushed. The labor leader's concept is that you're the soldiers, he's the general, and all the unemployed are just collateral damage. What is our concept of team? Our concept of team and cooperation is based on providing what is best for patients, not the world of cost-benefit analysis which treats health care as overhead.

Rank-and-files question the direction the union is taking in this time of permanent restructuring. I have heard that Local 250 wants to recommend "alternative labor relations models" with a "Joint Training Institute on Union-Management Relations." I am trembling at the thought that this may be the beginning of dismantling seniority as we know it, basic historical rights of union workers. If the basic union prerogative of striking is out the window forever, what are we left with?

—Kaiser worker

## Strikers' Detroit Journal

**Detroit**—A variety of actions by strikers from The Detroit News and Free Press and their supporters has continued in the six-month-old strike: massing to block distribution of the Sunday editions, leafletting car dealers and other major advertisers and calling for a boycott of companies like K Mart who do advertise with the Detroit Newspaper Agency, and selling and distributing the Detroit Sunday Journal, produced by strikers.

Meanwhile, the National Labor Relations Board has brokered an "agreement" under pressure from the Detroit Newspapers Agency that the unions "refrain from violence." The unions hope to bring the company before the board because negotiations have been at a standstill for months because of the company's refusal to bargain.

For information on how to support the strike, contact strike headquarters at (810) 268-4036, or the Detroit Sunday Journal at (313) 567-9898, 3100 E. Jefferson, Detroit MI 48207.

—N&L Committee Member

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

**Editor's note**

African-American History Month 1996 finds Black America at a significant crossroad and the American Left in unprecedented disarray. Because 1995-96 marks the 40th anniversary of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, this month we reprint excerpts from Raya Dunayevskaya's *Marxism and Freedom* (1958)—the section titled "Toward a New Unity of Theory and Practice in the Abolitionist and Marxist Tradition." She was first to see in the Montgomery Bus Boycott the birth of a new kind of Black social movement in the U.S., which she held represented a movement from practice which was itself a form of theory. Along with raising the significance of the Boycott to the level of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, and pointing to the two-way road between the U.S. and the African Revolution that the Boycott opened up, Dunayevskaya dug into the philosophic meaning of the organizational form and development of the Boycott. To read this section of *Marxism and Freedom* in its full context, see chapter 16, "Automation and the New Humanism," pp. 266-287

The American intellectual has one trait in common with all intellectuals: he looks down upon the native working class as "backward." But while the Communist Party of the United States took over the American intellectual bodily, emotionally and financially, it remained without serious roots among the American working class. The intellectuals have left the Communist Party and its many fronts since then (not always for the most principled reasons). But they expose themselves currently as still rudderless on the one question where American politics has always been expressed in its sharpest form—the Negro question.

1956 opened a new stage in the Negro struggle for freedom. The fight down South was proceeding along two fronts: (1) school integration; and (2) the bus boycotts. Immediately, the "cultured" South asked for "understanding." *Life* magazine, so busy selling "the American way of life" abroad, responded by leading the battle of the "Northern" magazines to sell "the Southern way of life." The novelist, William Faulkner, struck the first and most telling blow by announcing that he would be willing to spill Negro blood to maintain the "Southern way of life."<sup>1</sup>

Oppression has ever worn a white face down South, and now, so does the degeneration of its "culture." Where, in this, are the intellectuals, North or South, who oppose this cultured blood-brother of Senator Eastland, the Nobel prize winner, William Faulkner? No doubt there are many. Where they do not keep quiet, however, they write for little journals read by radicals who need no convincing. Despite the shabby role of the American Communists on the Negro Question,<sup>2</sup> these intellectuals are ready to be sucked into another popular front. Yet it is not for want of American tradition. One of the most glorious pages in American history was written by the white intellectual, precisely on the Negro Question, in that very critical period preceding the Civil War.

The Abolitionists arose in America and out of America, out of its genius, with no assistance from any foreign tradition. At the same time, the masthead of William Lloyd Garrison's *Liberator* read: "The World Is My Country." The Abolitionists added a dimension to the very concept of intellectual by consciously choosing to be the means by which a social movement—the movement of the slaves for freedom—expressed itself. The intellectuals of today are busy telling us how the Communists pervert history, which is true enough. But wherein is the difference between Russians leaving out the role of Trotsky in the 1917 [Russian] Revolution, and the American textbooks which do not even mention Wendell Phillips?<sup>3</sup> Where a Faulkner today does a lot of double-talking about being "morally" against segregation but being non-hesitant to spill the blood to preserve the alleged "underdog"—"the Southern way of life"—here is

1. Mr. Faulkner's later denial that he had said "if I had to choose between the United States and Mississippi, I would choose Mississippi even to going out and shooting Negroes in the street" is even more barbaric than his original statement. "Of course I didn't say that," reads the U.P. dispatch of March 16, 1956 from Oxford, Miss., "because I don't believe it's come to that." But just in order to make sure where he will be when it does "come to that," he used all his fictional skill to rewrite history and make "that white embattled minority who are our blood and kin" appear as the "underdog." It appears that after centuries of being the oppressors as well as the provocateurs of a Civil War these "underdogs" must be allowed to work their way out "morally." (See the original interview Faulkner gave Russell Warren Howe, New York correspondent for the *London Sunday Times*, Feb. 21, 1956, published in *The Reporter*, March 22, 1956; then his statement of being "grossly misquoted" to the U. P., March 16, 1956; both reprinted in *The Montgomery Advertiser*, Montgomery, Ala., March 17, 1956. Also "A Letter to the North" by William Faulkner in *Life*, March 5, 1956).

2. Nothing is more ludicrous in this shabby role than their veering between the two extremes, depending on which wind blows from the Kremlin: (1) of reducing the Negro question to the absurdity of demanding "for" the Negroes' "Self-Determination in the Black Belt;" and (2) asking the Negroes to forget their fight for democratic rights the minute Russia became an ally of America during World War II.

3. 1958 finally saw the publication of a biography of Phillips. *Prophet of Liberty: the Life and Times of Wendell Phillips*, by Oscar Sherwin, Bookman Associates, New York.

# Montgomery Bus Boycott and the American Roots of Marxism



Harvey Dinnerstein, 1956

what Phillips had to say of the Southern way of life:

*And by the South I mean likewise a principle, and not a locality, an element of civil life, in fourteen rebellious states. I mean an element which, like the days of Queen Mary and the Inquisition, cannot tolerate free speech, and punishes it with the stake. I mean the aristocracy of the skin, which considers the Declaration of Independence a sham and democracy a snare—which believes that one third of the race is born booted and spurred, and the other two thirds ready saddled for that third to ride. I mean a civilization which prohibits the Bible by statute to every sixth man of its community, and puts a matron in a felon's cell for teaching a black sister to read. I mean the intellectual, social aristocratic South—the thing that manifests itself by barbarism and the Bowie-knife, by bullying and lynch-law, by ignorance and idleness, by the claim of one man to own his brother, by statutes making it penal for the State of Massachusetts to bring an action in her courts, by statutes, standing on the books of Georgia today, offering five thousand dollars for the head of William Lloyd Garrison. That South is to be annihilated. (Loud applause.) The totality of my common sense—or whatever you may call it—is this, all summed up in one word: This country will never know peace nor union until the South (using the word in the sense I have described) is annihilated, and the North is spread over it...Our struggle therefore is between barbarism and civilization.*

The struggle for the minds of men today cannot be won by hollow slogans for democracy. The Europeans have seen too much of life since 1914. They aren't buying the Voice of America culture, and for good reason. They know the Negro—not only his great contributions to American culture, from jazz to historical writing. They know what he is doing presently. There is the forceful voice of the Alabama Negroes who have taken the matter of their freedom into their own hands and have never let go in all these months.

Because the spontaneity of the walkout and the organization of their forces to keep up the boycott was a simultaneous action it is here that we can see what is truly historic and contains our future. Just watch how they have never let anything slip out of their hands during the boycott:

(1) They have been in continuous session: daily there are small meetings; three times weekly, mass meetings; at all times the new relationships.

(2) The decision is always their own. When the State Supreme Court handed down its decision against segregated buses and the bus company, hungry for their profits, hung up notices they would obey decisions, the Negroes said: We also asked for Negro bus drivers. To the city fathers, who proclaim segregation as the "Southern way of life," they, as Southerners, said that if they never ride the buses it will be soon enough.

(3) The organization of their own transportation, without either boss or political supervision, is a model.

Clearly, the greatest thing of all in this Montgomery, Alabama, spontaneous organization was its own working existence.

When Faulkner is the man whom Eisenhower asks to form a new organization of intellectuals to tell Europeans about American democracy and the other American intellectuals bear this silently, Europeans know that courage does not come out of thin air but out of conviction that you are part of and represent the wave of the future—as the Negro struggle for freedom does and the "Southern way of life" does not. Under such circumstances the American intellectual struggle to win the mind of man can only be presumptuous.<sup>4</sup> Thus in society as a whole, as in production, the crisis is total.

Our point of departure has always been production only because to see the crisis in production means to un-

derstand it everywhere else. Failure to see it in production means inability to understand the crisis anywhere. This does not mean that the crisis of our age is "limited" to production. Our age has rightly been characterized as the crisis of the mind. It is precisely the totality of the crisis that compels philosophy, a total outlook. But the American intellectual has failed signally to grasp such a total outlook. He is a man divided a dozen ways and is furthest removed from reality...

Intellectual growth will first begin when new ground is broken. The elements of the new society present in the old are everywhere in evidence in the thoughts and lives of the working class. Where the workers think their own thoughts, there must be the intellectual to absorb the new impulses. Outside of that there can be no serious theory. Philosophy springs from the empirical sciences and actual life, but incorporation of these laws and generalizations into philosophy, Hegel showed, "implies a compulsion of thought itself to proceed to these concrete truths." Hegel knew whereof he spoke when he told the intellectuals of his day that "the sense of bondage springs from inability to surmount the antithesis, and from looking at what is and what happens as contradictory to what ought to be and happen."<sup>5</sup>

The modern intellectuals will lose their sense of guilt and bondage when they will react to "the compulsion of thought to proceed to these concrete truths"—the actions of the Negro school children in Little Rock, Arkansas, to break down segregation, the wildcats in Detroit for a different kind of labor than that under present-day Automation, the struggles the world over for freedom. The alignment precisely with such struggles in the days of the Abolitionists and of Marx is what gave these intellectuals that extra dimension as theoreticians and as human beings which enabled them to become part of the new society. It will do so again. Once the intellectual accepts the challenge of the times, then the ideal and the real are seen to be not far apart. The worker is right when he demands that work be "completely different, and not separated from life itself," and that "thinking and doing be united." Once the theoretician has caught this, just this impulse from the worker, his work does not end. It first then begins. A new unity of theory and practice can evolve only when the movement from theory to practice meets the movement from practice to theory. The totality of the world crisis has a new form—fear at the "beep-beep" from the new man-made moon. The American rush "to catch up" with the sputnik, like the Russian determination to be the first to launch the satellite, is not in the interest of "pure science" but for the purpose of total war. Launching satellites into outer space cannot solve the problems of this earth. The challenge of our times is not to machines, but to men. Intercontinental missiles can destroy mankind, they cannot solve its human relations. The creation of a new society remains the human endeavor. The totality of the crisis demands, and will create, a total solution. It can be nothing short of a New Humanism.

5. Hegel's [Smaller] *Logic*, paragraph 147, p. 269.

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**Essay Article**

by Sheila Fuller

At a time when capitalism is deflecting attention from its deep structural crises by scapegoating people of color and people of minority ethnicities as "the Other," the legacy of the struggle in Bosnia which sought to defend the idea of a multicultural existence demands to be comprehended. This struggle may not have spoken a revolutionary language, but it does have revolutionary implications which have to be drawn out and developed. I would argue that it had revolutionary implications that went beyond pluralism and thus challenged those in solidarity with Bosnia to develop a philosophic framework for comprehending what was new in the Bosnian struggle.

It is toward this aim that I would like to take up two thinkers who have tried to address the question of what is new in the Bosnian struggle and, have raised critical questions about the concepts of identity, difference and otherness, in search of a philosophic conception that does not annihilate "the Other."

**MULTICULTURALISM AND FREEDOM**

Dzevad Karahasan has written *Sarajevo: Exodus of a City*,<sup>1</sup> a beautiful festament to the multicultural character of Bosnia and its bringing together of the East and the West, represented in integrated relationships and living arrangements as well as in Bosnia's history and architecture. In a moving passage in which he responds to the question of a U.S. reporter about why the people of Sarajevo did not accept the partition of Bosnia along religious and cultural lines, he writes:

"I replied that I agreed wholeheartedly if he could only propose the way to divide Bosnia and Sarajevo. As my neighbors were taking shelter in the basement (shells literally pouring down around the building), I could concretely demonstrate to the American a sample of the ethnic structure of Bosnia and Sarajevo within our building. Pointing my fellow tenants out, one by one, I showed that only one out of ten married couples occupying the ten apartments in the building is of the same ethnicity (I myself noticed that fact only then). How could you possibly divide that I asked. If Sarajevo were to be divided, I could not have a bath because the tub would remain in the Serb province of my wife; my Serb wife could not wash her face, though, because the washbasin would remain in my province. The same goes for nine out of ten apartments in our building. I'm afraid that that could be complicated even for such an able divider as Mr. Cyrus Vance." (pp. 46-47)

Karahasan, a prominent literary critic and drama professor, situates this multicultural element in a postmodernist theoretical framework which he counterposes to what he calls a dialectical concept of culture. He considers the Bosnian cultural system a "dramatic" system in which "the fundamental relationship between the elements of the system is oppositional tension, which means that its elements are poised against one another, and mutually bound by that opposition, wherein they define each other. These elements enter the system—which is the totality of a higher order—without losing their primordial nature or relinquishing any of the properties they possess independently. The fundamental property of this kind of cultural system is pluralism." (pp. 5-7)

He contrasts this system to his understanding of a dialectical system which he contends is "a monistic cultural system...mutual devouring or the containment of the lower within the higher, or the weaker within the stronger. Every member of a dramatic cultural system needs the Other as proof of his or her own identity, because one's own particularity is being proven and articulated in relationship to the particularities of the Other. But within a dialectical system an Other is only seemingly the Other, while it is actually the masked I." (pp. 6-7)

Another scholar who has tried to explore the new questions that the struggle against genocide in Bosnia has raised, is Mujeeb Khan, a political scientist. In his paper, "Accounting for Genocide in Europe at the 'End of History': Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Crisis of Western Liberalism and the End of the 'New World Order,'" (1995) he argues that Bosnian Muslims occupy a position similar to European Jews. They are Europeans, blonde, blue-eyed, secular, and only different from Serbs to the extent that their heritage represents a coming together of the East and the West, the Bogomil or radical Christian influence, the Ottoman and the Austro-Hungarian influence.

Precisely because the Bosnian Muslims are so much like Bosnian Serbs they undermine the distinction between self and Other which is necessary for a campaign to create an ethnically pure state. That is why, he argues, there has been a planned effort by Serbian nationalists to annihilate Bosnian people of Muslim origin.

He tries to shed light on the Serbian government's campaign of ethnic cleansing against people of Muslim origin by exploring a very famous section of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind*: "Lordship and Bondage." In this section Hegel begins by arguing that self-consciousness is only possible when the self is acknowledged or "recognized" by another self-consciousness. Hence dialectics is inherently about recognition.

Hegel demonstrates the process of arriving at this recognition by beginning with the bare level of life. At this stage, each individual consciousness views the Other as an unessential object. Each aims at the destruction and death of the Other and risks her life in a life and death struggle, in order to gain certainty of being for self. Killing the Other, however, would end the possibility for the self to gain certainty of itself and recognition from the

1. Dzevad Karahasan, *Sarajevo: Exodus of a City* (New York: Kodansha International, 1994)

**The philosophic meaning of Bosnia's struggle**

Other. Hence this life and death struggle results in an independent consciousness whose essential nature is to be for itself, and a dependent consciousness whose essence is life or existence for another. The former is the master, the latter is the bondsman. A form of recognition has arisen that is one-sided and unequal.

Hegel demonstrates the process of transcendence of this unequal relationship by showing how the slave who is supposed to be the inferior consciousness actually



Rally in Sarajevo on Dec. 11 of Muslims, Serbs and Croats for a multiethnic Bosnia. The banner reads "This is the city for all peoples who want to live in it."

**Editorial**

**U.S. troops aid partition of Bosnia**

Nothing more starkly reveals the nature of the ongoing U.S. troop deployment to Bosnia than the refusal of U.S. and NATO commanders to lift a finger against the perpetrators of "ethnic cleansing." Although over 20,000 U.S. troops have now taken up positions in Bosnia, the Clinton administration refuses to take action against Serbian leaders and militiamen who massacred tens of thousands of Bosnians over the last four years.

This despite the fact that in mid-January John C. Shattuck, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, personally toured the killing fields of Glogova, where 5,000 Bosnians were buried following a brutal massacre by Serbs after their capture of the nearby town of Srebrenica. U.S. military commanders responded to Shattuck's tour by announcing that U.S. troops would not guarantee security for those investigating the massacre, let alone arrest those responsible for it.

The U.S. troop deployment actually rewards the Serbs for the massacre—which it knew about at the time through satellite imagery—since the area around Srebrenica was given to the Serbs by the Dayton accords (Srebrenica was two-thirds Muslim before the war).

It was also reported in mid-January that Serbian soldiers were hiding the remains of thousands of Bosnians killed in other massacres in an open pit mine in Ljubija. U.S. and NATO commanders found neither the time nor the inclination to stop this atrocity, even though British soldiers have a regional headquarters in Ljubija. As Lt. Col. Benjamin Barry put it, "Investigating mass grave sites is not our job." (*The New York Times*, Jan. 14.)

The U.S. "job" in Bosnia is instead defined by the "single mandate" of enforcing a line of separation between Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian troops. U.S. and NATO troops occupy a demilitarized zone of three kilometers between the contending forces and patrol a strand of land 20 kilometers alongside of it.

While the Clinton administration is touting this as an example of the U.S.'s "peacekeeping" role, this rewards Serbian aggression by dividing the country into three distinct "ethnic" enclaves. The Serbs have been given 49% of the country, with the rest going to the Bosnians and Croats.

The U.S. imposed this "peace plan" just as the Serbs were about to be handed a major military defeat. Bosnian and Croatian troops were about to liberate 75% of the country when the U.S. demanded that their assault on Banja Luka be called off. Even Serbian Gen. Ratko Mladic later stated that the Serbs were on the verge of being totally routed. No wonder the U.S. is now called "Serbia's greatest friend" by the Serbian government and its state-controlled press.

The fact that the Bosnian government, under heavy U.S. pressure, signed onto the Dayton accords in no way means that Bosnia's struggle is compatible with U.S. interests. Although, as Roy Gutman recently observed, "The Bosnian government, which appeared on the verge of a military victory, let itself be treated as a vanquished land," the U.S.-guided effort to partition the country is being actively opposed by many Bosnians.

One sign of this is that many Bosnians are demanding that the international troops be deployed behind rather than on the cease-fire lines, so that partition is not allowed to become an automatic process. Another is that Bosnians are working with a group of Serbs from the Sarajevo suburb of Ilidza who have broken from their reac-

gains an independent consciousness because she shapes and fashions things through her activity of laboring and is engaged in a more genuine overcoming of material externality.

Mujeeb Khan situates the present genocide of the people of Muslim origin in Bosnia within the earlier stage of the master-slave dialectic before recognition is reached. This is how Khan expresses it: "The 'Other' in Hegel's dialectic of recognition was enslaved and not annihilated because his existence was necessary for recognizing the Master. However, if this 'Other' transgresses definitional boundaries and undermines the Master's certainty of 'Self,' recognition is muddled and he must either be expelled to a distance or eliminated. This has especially been the case where distinct minorities like European Jews and Muslims find themselves stranded across clearly demarcated frontiers such as the Mediterranean separating 'self' from 'other' and 'orient' from 'occident' and thereby seem to undermine the cohesiveness and ideological viability of the self-identity held by the dominant group...as Zygmunt Bauman notes in discussing the modern Jewish Question, 'In short, they undermined the very difference between hosts and guests, the native and the foreign. And as nationhood became the paramount basis of group self-constitution, they came to undermine the most basic of differences; the difference between 'us' and 'them' '" (p. 13).

This profound analysis sheds light on why people of multicultural origin are being annihilated in Bosnia and why this campaign of ethnic cleansing has included the use of rape camps by the Serbian government. It is not only Bosnian Muslims who undermine the distinction between self and Other in the former Yugoslavia. Any multicultural person in Bosnia has faced extinction precisely because her or his mixed heritage undermines the notion of a "pure" Serbian identity.

**BEYOND PLURALISM**

Karahasan and Khan raise some very important questions about the notions of identity, difference and other-

(continued on page 10)

tionary leaders who were trying to get them to leave the area once it comes under Bosnian government control.

The depth of the sentiment for a truly multiethnic Bosnia was especially reflected in a demonstration in Sarajevo on Dec. 11 of Bosnian Muslims, Serbs and Croats opposing efforts to partition the country.

The ruling powers, on the other hand, are concerned with Bosnia only insofar as it can be used for their own narrow geopolitical purposes. As a result of the Dayton accords and the troop deployment, France has rejoined the military command of NATO for the first time since 1966, 1,600 Russian troops in Bosnia are being commanded by an American general; and Hungary, only six years ago a member of the Warsaw Pact, is a staging area for the biggest NATO operation since World War II. Far from being aimed to aid Bosnia, the Dayton accords are an effort to refurbish NATO through military intervention.

As against the machinations of the rulers, we must keep our eyes and ears turned to the voice and reason of the struggle for a truly multiethnic society. This can be heard even in areas where "ethnic strife" has been rife—such as Mostar, where Croatian troops are trying to solidify the partition of the city into ethnic units. As Alija Behram reports in "Living in the Ghetto," "Despite the tragic memories, people are ready to live together again with their former neighbors. They feel this way because they want a unified Bosnia, and know that any other option will leave open the possibility of renewed conflict." (*War Report*, November/December 1995)

This is the sense and reason that the U.S. and NATO are trying to subvert with the Dayton accords and their troop deployment. We must continue to stand with the Bosnian people in their struggle for a unified Bosnia.

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BOSNIA: ACHILLES HEEL OF WESTERN 'CIVILIZATION'

The extent and content of the coverage of international news in the December issue is impressive.

Young intellectual San Francisco

The Peace Committee I am currently active with has begun to study the issue of Bosnia.

Activist California

The shallowness of the "moral concern" expressed by President Clinton for those suffering in Bosnia is revealed in the way it apparently does not extend to the victims of ethnic chauvinism in Chechnya, East Timor and the Kurdish regions of Iran, Iraq and Turkey.

Revolutionary Chicago

The articles that have appeared in &L for the past four years on Bosnia are a powerful inducement to read N&L on an ongoing basis.

of the "ethnic cleansing" that has taken place. But to understand it, you need that ongoing Marxist-Humanist analysis.

Librarian Detroit



FIGHTING ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM

Environmental racism is real. It means introducing polluting substances into a community that has no political clout but a lot of social problems.

We are talking about environmental justice. Every level of government has deliberately neglected communities that have environmental problems.

Cheryl Johnson People for Community Recovery 13116 S. Ellis Chicago, IL 60627

It wasn't widely publicized, but in his first two years of office, President Clinton was making the tiniest little baby steps toward adopting some rules for environmental equity in the actions of the federal government.

Environmentalist Chicago

Marx and Engels had a lot to say about the environmental degradation in the communities where industrialism arose.

Library worker Chicago

THE BRITISH SCENE

For a socialist British resident looking across the channel at the exciting events in France in December and then back here—where the House of Windsor and the Major government still apparently survive; and where Labour instead of attacking the establishment is engaged in trying to outflank the Tories—it all looks a bit mournful.

Laurens Otter England



THE PRISON CONDITION

Here is a quote from Little Turtle, Master General of the Miami Indians, 1791, which I want to use as a "frontispiece" for this letter: "If our people fight one tribe at a time, all will be killed. They can cut off our fingers one by one, but if we join together, we will make a powerful fist."

We are trying to help ourselves so we can live behind these walls in "peace." Most of the camp gangs or organizations here have openly stated they will not cut, kill or fight another inmate other than in an act of self-defense.

I also want you to know that I have been passing some of the books you have sent to me around to other inmates who wanted something good to read.

Prisoner Illinois

Conditions in overcrowded state prisons remain disgraceful. Recently a group of county sheriffs threatened to dump state prisoners they were being forced to keep.

Steady reader Oklahoma

I can't put into words all that I think your organizing efforts for Mumia Abu-Jamal signifies. The state is powerless in its efforts to silence the truth of capitalism's racism, greed and utter contempt for life when masses of people fight for justice.

Longtime subscriber Illinois

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## Black/Red View

by John Alan

O, yes,  
I say it plain,  
America never was America to me,  
And yet I swear this oath—  
America will be!

—Langston Hughes, 1922

February is the month in which we celebrate African-American history. That celebration tries to fill a need African Americans have to tell their own history as an act of self-determination. The first definitive expression of this was George Washington Williams' 1883 *History of the Negro Race From 1619 to 1880: Negro As Slave, Soldier, And as Citizen*.

In this century, during the great migration of Blacks from the South to the northern cities, the desire for historic self-determination found its expression in the work of Carter G. Woodson. In the 1920s, Woodson conceived and projected the idea that Black history should be publicly celebrated and taught in public schools.

In the 1930s, when the Black masses were beginning to integrate the union movement against the advice of their Black leadership, W.E.B. DuBois' *Black Reconstruction In America* broke with all traditional concepts of Blacks in American history. DuBois had made the startling discovery that Black masses in motion (slaves) were a self-determining force crucial to winning the Civil War.

In our historical period, after almost a generation of Black mass protest and urban revolts, came Vincent Harding's valiant announcement (in 1970) that a new "Black History" was going to break with "Negro History" and face the chaos of Western civilization. Yet nothing comparable to the work of Williams, Woodson and DuBois emerged. Instead, we have seen African-American historians trekking toward academia and along with their white colleagues publishing dozens of books a year filled with interesting facts about African-American history and culture. What these post-Civil Rights Black Power Movement historians have not discovered is a new subjective transforming dimension in African-American

## Carter G. Woodson's historical absolute

mass thinking, which the Czech philosopher Karel Kosik calls the "universally human in every epoch" that "devalues facticity."

What was "universally human" for both Williams and Woodson was African-American self-identity, i.e., the recognition of their history by the other, the rest of the nation. John Hope Franklin tells us in his biography that George Washington Williams, even before he wrote his history, let it be known in an oration that he thought it was wrong for historians to neglect the role of Blacks in the American revolution. Williams said: "To take the Negro out of the history of the Revolution is to rob it of one of its most attractive and indispensable elements; it is to impoverish it by the withdrawal of some of its wealthy and enduring facts. In short, the Negro is an integral part of revolutionary history."

Williams saw Blacks as the true measure of freedom in the U. S., even among the abolitionists. He wrote that the writings of Black abolitionists "expose the true character of slavery, inform the public mind, stimulate healthy thought, and touch the heart of two continents with a sympathy almost divine."

Years later, Carter G. Woodson took on the task of lifting Black history out of its then marginal status directly into the American mind, especially the African-American mind. If this were accomplished, Woodson thought, it would reveal: "...that we are not an inferior people, but simply a people whose progress had been impeded." Thus Black history could be the foundation upon which African Americans could "claim the right to share in the blessings of democracy."

Today, we can easily say that Woodson's historical absolute, i.e., that getting the consciousness of the other to recognize the historical greatness of Black people will end racism and open a path to real democracy, is rather naive and one-sided. Frantz Fanon has shown that the dialectical process of recognition has to be mutual, or it is nothing. But we should not hasten to condemn Woodson as being totally wrong. His subject was Black people

and Black consciousness, and his purpose was to prevent the race from becoming a "negligible factor in the thought of the world."

We don't know how Woodson would have specifically developed that idea, but his ability to see African-American history as a function of thought at the time of the "great migration" remains his undeveloped legacy in African-American thought. It's a legacy based upon historic reason and life, which can determine the way we celebrate African-American history month in 1996.

## 'East Texas Hot Links'

Chicago—The story of the transit of Black slaves from Africa to the Americas was known as the Middle Passage. As with all stories of bondage and liberation, it cannot be told without describing the treachery of Africans who assisted the white slave traders. The Onyx Theater production of "East Texas Hot Links" updates this story, here told in the setting of the 'Top o' the Hill Cafe in 1955 Texas, located somewhere along a future highway between Houston and Dallas.

The coming interstate excites the tensions between the frequenters of 'Top o' the Hill and is the motif for the plot which unfolds with an inevitability of its own. In the telling of this tragedy lies the importance of "Hot Links." For instead of the ethos of No Exit, the life in this cafe exudes a humanism not to be vanquished.

Intent on making his way in the white world, XL Dancer (Michael Williams) is cagey, then defensive about serving as a recruiter of Black labor for the white contractor, even if it means delivering Black men who end up dead. He is the Traitor. As his treachery unfolds, the deep and fast dialogue is a dance into which all enter. Playwright Eugene Lee draws wholly believable and compelling figures.

Columbus Frye (Alfred H. Wilson) is the landlord of the unsavory XL. As the paternal judge, he moves from sheltering XL to ultimately casting the traitor out, at least out of his apartment. Roy Moore (Trent Harrison Smith) is of good looks and big talk and a good time. Boochie Reed (Greg Hollimon) is a gambler whose towering presence and booming voice lend authority to his mystical predictions of crises. He is the Seer. Buckshot (Freeman Coffey) leaves the farm long enough to visit the bar to satisfy his large appetite. His warm and straight-spoken passion help us see the kind of people who came off the land to give life to the southern civil rights struggles.

Delmus Green (Craig Boyd) is Youth, whose idealism places him in harm's way for having taken up with precisely the wrong woman. Delivering an existential view of Black folks' place in the world, though with humor and charm, is the blind Philosopher Adolph (Willie B. Goodson). Coming from a mind suitable for a life of letters, his satirical commentary is so funny that he must believe that better things are possible.

The owner of the bar, Charletta Simpkins (Marsha Estell), is a woman of dreams for maintaining this communal space, and a woman of action for helping Youth and Philosophy escape the climactic vigilante attack on the 'Top o' the Hill Cafe and to see another day.

Often Klan repression is considered ignorant if not regressive. But truer to fact, in "Hot Links" the neo-slavers are leading progress, not human progress but rather technological development. In its face, "East Texas Hot Links" and the Onyx Theater Players show us a crucible for human progress.

—Jim Mill

## 30th anniversary of the Maryland Freedom Union

On Feb. 9, 1966, some 20 Black women, working as nurses' aides, housekeepers and kitchen staff, walked off their jobs at Lincoln Nursing Home in Baltimore, Maryland. They called field secretaries from the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) with whom they had met the previous week and told them that Lincoln was "on strike," and that the CORE organizers had better come down to Lincoln to show the workers "how to run a proper picket line." The workers, who made as little as 35¢ an hour and worked up to 72 hours a week, became the nucleus of what they called "a new kind of union," the Maryland Freedom Union (MFU).

For more than a year, the MFU shook up the poverty-wage job scene in the ghettos of Baltimore, organizing hospitals and nursing homes, retail and food stores, and a print shop. Merging strikes and Black consumer boycotts, the MFU's initial organizing drives stunned inner-city merchants and aroused opposition from traditional AFL-CIO unions. MFU members created a union study group on Black and labor history, reading *American Civilization on Trial* and inviting its author, Raya Dunayevskaya, to lecture at the MFU's Freedom House. Dunayevskaya's suggestion that workers view themselves as "self-developing thinkers" made an impact.

While it flourished, the MFU's membership, many of them recently arrived from the rural South, created a union quite different from the typical AFL-CIO affiliate. What drew so many to the MFU was that this organization called itself a freedom union, and sought to organize low-wage workplaces as an integral part of a movement to transform the whole of American society. As a forerunner of both the Black caucuses within established



Button design by MFU president Vivian Jones, a nursing home nurses' aide.

unions and Black feminist critiques of civil rights organizations, the Maryland Freedom Union was a unique learning experience. Thirty years later, that "new kind of union" is needed more than ever. —Michael Flug

*Editor's note: For more on the significance of the MFU, see The Maryland Freedom Union: Black Working Women Doing and Thinking (Detroit: News and Letters, 1966); and Michael Flug, "Organized Labor and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s; the Case of the Maryland Freedom Union," in Labor History 31(3), Summer 1990, pp. 322-346.*

## Black World

(continued from page 1)

dustries, under their structural adjustment policies, international investors make the insidious demand that Haiti first borrow millions of dollars to upgrade these state industries before they are sold to private corporate interests.

The Haitian masses are thereby made to subsidize international capitalist interests, as well as those of Haiti's private sector. By this means will the private sector, in concert with international finance capital, lower the production costs of Haiti's miserable assembly zones (also called "zones for slavery").

With labor costs in the assembly zones at an all-time low of 15 gourdes (US \$1) per day, or 12 cents an hour, the imperialist still demand that, if Haiti's sweatshop industries are to be competitive, its port, transport, and utility facilities be upgraded by subsidies squeezed from the masses through taxes, and diverting development aid. This is a more miserable version of Clinton's NAFTA policy, for it calls for the drastic reduction of tariffs and fees charged to U.S. enterprises, on the one hand, while it pits pitifully poor Haiti workers against poor sweated labor in the U.S.

Major U.S. corporations, like Sears, Wal-Mart and the Walt Disney Company, have contracted out to U.S. and

## Haiti resists imperialist future

Haitian garment companies. At these firms, Haitian women workers may work as many as 50 days straight and up to 70 hours a week without a day off. And while on average Haiti's urban working class requires \$24 a week for food, shelter and education, workers make less than 60% of a family's basic needs.

Nevertheless, Haiti remains a society in revolt against the subservient status imposed upon it by its ruling class and international imperialism. Haitian police along with UN troops have clashed with peasants who have occupied land in rural towns in the North. In the northern city of Cap Haitien, peasants have occupied a tobacco plantation belonging to Komiflo, the state cigarette company. Land occupations by peasants have spread throughout the countryside, especially in the North where peasant resistance never ceased, even during the military junta.

Haiti's congested urban slum in Port-au-Prince, Cite Soleil, is also the site of clashes between the police backed by the occupation forces and protesting workers demanding jobs. Armed exchanges between the police and youth in Cite Soleil have led to reports of a "Red Army" operating in the underground.

Hence, we see that the very conditions bred by imperialism in Haiti are no less conditions in which revolt arises to transform them.

What workers are saying about

## American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard

From an airport service worker  
Memphis, Tennessee

"What Marx was talking about in the 19th century is so true today. He goes back to Africa and the idea of using Black skins for production, bringing them as slaves to America for cheap labor. He also saw how leaders can sell people out and how the struggle has to come from the people."

From a food processing plant worker  
Indianola, Mississippi

"American Civilization on Trial shows Black masses in the vanguard in the 'unmasking of Western civilization's racism' and it shows how women have fought to have a voice. I learned about how Sojourner Truth, a great Black revolutionary, went about getting her name. And I learned about how Maria Stewart in 1831 told Black women to 'wake up!' She looked at all of that cooking we did and said we are capable of more than that."

To order, see lit ad, page 7.





# The philosophic meaning of Bosnia's struggle

(continued from page 5)

...ss in dialectics in order to understand the life and death issues of multiculturalism and the struggle against "ethnic cleansing." Both Karahasan and Khan are searching for a philosophic conception in which the relation of the self to "the Other" is characterized by mutual recognition. Khan argues that Hegelian dialectics is inherently about recognition. Karahasan, however, believes that Hegelian dialectics is about the domination of "the Other" and the rejection of recognition.

We need to look at Hegel himself to depict the importance of these issues. One place to examine Hegel's treatment of identity and difference is the "Doctrine of Essence" in his *Science of Logic*.<sup>2</sup> At stake in this section is Hegel's challenge to "external reflection" and the "abstraction" which holds identity and difference apart from each other. Hegel writes, "The Notion of identity is simple self-related negativity...whereas on the contrary that identity that is aloof from difference, and difference that is aloof from identity are products of external reflection and abstraction which arbitrarily clings to this point of indifferent difference."

For Hegel "truth is complete only in the unity of identity with difference." Which is why Hegel moves from a critique of "abstract identity" to a critique of the category of "diversity." Hegel is critical of the category of "diversity" because in it the moments of identity and difference are "indifferent to one another." This relationship of "mutual indifference" is at the same time a transition

from diversity to "polar opposition" and finally to "contradiction." For Hegel contradiction is "the root of all movement and life."

According to the noted Hegel scholar, J.N. Findlay, "Hegel's real motive in passing from mere Diversity to Polar Opposition lies in his dissatisfaction with connections that do not delve deep into the nature of their terms, which depend upon arbitrary external points of view which are not in the last resort real connections at all...Against this the aim of philosophy is to banish indifference and to recognize the necessity of things."<sup>3</sup>

This critique of diversity raises a very important question about Bosnia. Was Bosnian multiculturalism a unity of people of different cultures who simply lived in a pluralistic society in which the relations between the various peoples were external and characterized by indifference? Or was it characterized by deeper connections between the different cultures? Dzevad Karahasan refers to Bosnia's multiculturalism as a pluralism, but his testimony about the deep and inseparable connections between people of diverse cultures gives us a very different picture. Hegel's critique of diversity goes beyond simple pluralism and thereby sheds illumination on the very unique character of multiculturalism in Bosnia.

However, in order to further explore Hegel's treatment of identity, difference and otherness, we need to look at how he develops them in the final chapter of his *Science of Logic*, the "Absolute Idea." Here Hegel distinguishes his concept of dialectics from formal logic, by

taking up the way in which the contradiction between a universal first and its Other is transcended. He emphasizes that in dialectics, the Other is not just the negation of the first term that it is an Other of. It includes the first term and is a further development of it.

Furthermore, he emphasizes that the contradiction between the first term and the Other is not transcended through a synthesis in which the contradictory determinations lie side by side. "[F]ormal thinking makes identity its law, and allows the contradictory content before it to sink into ordinary conception, into space and time, in which the contradictories are held asunder in juxtaposition and temporal succession and so come before consciousness without reciprocal contact." (p. 835) Dialectical cognition however thinks through the contradiction. Hegel's emphasis here is on the concept of "absolute negativity," a deeper development of the idea of freedom through its confrontation with contradiction, otherness, difference, and the creation of a newer, deeper and more differentiated idea of freedom.

It is precisely this concept of absolute negativity which Marx praised in his 1844 "Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic" as the "moving and creating principle." Marx wrote: "Hegel comprehends the self-production of the human being as a process, regards objectification as contra-position, as externalization and as the transcendence of this externalization...The true, active relating of the human being to himself as species-essence, that is as human essence, is possible only because the human being actually produces all the capacities of his species—and this again is only possible thanks to the collective activity of human beings, is possible only as a result of history."<sup>4</sup>

Marx argued further that once the Hegelian dialectic is freed of its abstract character, the revolutionary kernel of absolute negativity could be released as the idea of a "new Humanism," the idea of a total uprooting of this racist, sexist, class divided society.

Marx's reappropriation of the Hegelian dialectic of "absolute negativity" was reinterpreted by Marxist-Humanism in the post-World War II period not as an idea of synthesis or as a drive for the domination of the Other but as the development of a philosophy of revolution on the basis of the new challenges that multiple subjectivities from peoples of color to women's liberation have issued to the idea of revolutionary transformation.

This concept of the dialectics of negativity speaks directly to Karahasan's and Khan's search for a philosophic conception in which difference and Otherness are not subsumed under the category of identity. It also challenges conceptions which limit multiculturalism to pluralism within the confines of the existing alienated capitalist, racist, sexist and homophobic society.

The heroic struggle for the preservation of a multicultural society in Bosnia over the past four years, demonstrated in a unique way the kind of existence in which difference and otherness is not treated with hostility, or indifference. Instead it represented the enrichment of various cultures in their interactions, and the development of a new identity which was not defined in chauvinistic nationalist terms. The idea implicit in that struggle demands to be developed even as we witness its tragic destruction in Bosnia.

In an age when capitalism is making every effort to divert attention from its deep crises by making our consciousness define life along the contours of racism, ethnic hatred, misogyny and homophobia, the idea raised by the Bosnian struggle is a serious challenge to the system.

The majority of the Left did its best to aid the westerly powers in suffocating this liberation struggle and in branding it a narrow nationalist movement. As against that, responsibility for reconstituting a humanist Marxism is inextricably tied to solidarity with Bosnia.

Our responsibility to Bosnia demands recalling Karl Marx's response to the Paris Commune of 1871. He exuberantly solidarized with it during its brief existence and did not consider it dead even after the French army crushed the Commune by slaughtering 30,000 Communards, and sending many more into exile. He instead wrote about the challenge of the Paris Commune and developed its idea of "freely associated labor" in the French edition of *Capital* (1872-75).

Today, the struggle against the globalization of "ethnic cleansing" and narrow nationalism demands the articulation of a philosophic concept that can not only comprehend what was new in Bosnia's struggle for multiculturalism, but develop its revolutionary implications further.

4. Raya Dunayevskaya, *Marxism and Freedom* (New York: Bookman, 1958), p.309

2. G.W.F. Hegel, *Science of Logic* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1976)

3. J.N. Findlay, *Hegel: A Re-examination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), p.192.

## View from 'The Other Israel'

*Editor's note: We received the following letter from Adam Keller, editor of The Other Israel and longtime Israeli peace activist, in response to the lead article by Peter Wermuth on "Rabin's assassination lifts veil on emerging ethnic apartheid" in our December 1995 issue.*

Your article is well-written and shows much familiarity with the Israeli situation and the positions of left-wing groups here. Nevertheless, there are several important comments I would like to make.

Nowhere does your article mention the fact that the two Oslo agreements so far signed are interim agreements, valid for a maximum of five years, and that negotiations on the definite status of the territories are due to open in May 1996 and conclude in May 1999. Certainly, powerful forces inside the Israeli establishment would like to see these negotiations end with "a Palestinian entity which is less than a state" or with a Palestinian state within very limited borders, far less than the 1967 borders. Yet before the Intifada and the upheaval it caused inside Israeli society, the Israeli establishment did not intend to give the Palestinians what they got now, either.

Though the state of Israel has enormous military, political and economic advantage over the Palestinians, their very weakness gives them one enormous advantage: in popular motivation. Practically all Palestinians want to have complete independence, and very many of them are willing to make enormous sacrifices to gain that independence. On the other hand, only a dwindling minority of Israelis are willing to make any serious sacrifice in order to deny the Palestinians the right to have their own state.

This leaves the settlers and the extreme Right, which try to revive the idealism of the early Zionist pioneers, increasingly isolated and cut off from the mainstream of Israeli society. Indeed, the settlers themselves—who are far from being a homogenous mass—are increasingly feeling this, and they have intensive debates among themselves, with some wishing to get government compensations and leave the territories while others start talking of making their own compromise with the Palestinians (though the proposals made so far by some settler leaders fall far short of what the Palestinians can

live with).

Altogether, I feel that a blanket condemnation of Oslo is wrong. The agreements contain the potential both for a truly independent Palestinian state and for a more sophisticated perpetuation of the Israeli domination; which it will finally depend to great degree on the struggle, both by the Palestinians themselves and by peace forces in Israel and internationally.

Among other things, should the Israeli position at some stage prove manifestly intransigent, the Palestinians have the option of declaring unilateral independence. Such a move will undoubtedly have massive popular support from across the Palestinian political spectrum, and—if the timing is chosen carefully—could get widespread international diplomatic recognition, for example from the European Community. After all, the basic criteria in International Law for recognizing a state is effective control of a territory, and now the Palestinians have this to a considerable degree (certainly much more than, for example, the Lithuanians had when they declared independence from the Soviet Union).

Outside critics of Oslo should also take notice of the enormous enthusiasm displayed by the Palestinian masses at every town evacuated by the Israeli army, manifested in enormous rallies of welcome to Arafat. It would hardly be possible to fake such massive enthusiasm. The Palestinians are well aware of the limited and partial nature of what they gained—but nevertheless most of them regard these as very real and tangible achievements, the first concrete results of all the suffering and sacrifices of the Intifada.

On the Israeli side you mentioned the peace demonstrations and rallies—but made no specific mention of the thousands of youths who sat for a whole week around lighted candles at the scene of the assassination and in other public places. In my view, the most significant feature of this phenomenon is precisely the fact that many of them had not been involved in politics before, and that it was a very genuine upswelling from below, not politically articulated with clear programs but nevertheless with a strong commitment to the idea of peace. "Rabin dreamed of peace and we will make his dream come true," in the words of the graffiti scrawled on the Tel-Aviv Town Hall, near the scene of the murder. Whatever Rabin may have been in life, the myth created around him is the myth of a martyred peacemaker, which is an enormous asset to the peace movement.

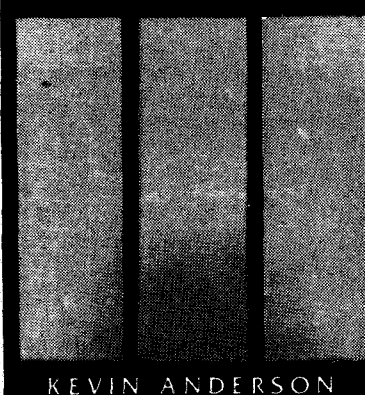
As to what Rabin really was, I would like to refer to one point you mention very briefly: Rabin was the very first Israeli Prime Minister willing to rely for his majority on Arab Members of the Israeli Parliament. This was, in my view, an action far more radical than shaking Arafat's hand, since it broke a firm taboo which all previous governments (and Rabin himself in his earlier career) adhered to: an Israeli government must have not only a majority among all Israelis but also and especially among Jewish Israelis.

One more remark: Arafat is far from being a democrat and occasionally does not scruple to resort to various acts violating human rights. Nevertheless, Palestinian political life is far more pluralistic than in most other Arab societies, and substantial forces among the Palestinians want their state to be truly democratic; and Arafat's own inclination is to try to reach a consensus, rather than to try to break his opponents by brute force. He is very unlikely, for example, to adopt the kind of attitude taken by the Algerian establishment which led to the civil war there. In any case, it is misleading to write about the size of the Palestinian Police to the population. Most of it is in fact the Palestinian army, which is not allowed to be called that by Israel but in fact has military structures and tasks. The genuine policemen are only a small part of it.

—Adam Keller

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