

NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

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What is human power?



The "Workshop Talks" column this issue reprints a March 1976 article by Felix Martin, *News & Letters'* Labor Editor, who died last April. We intend to publish soon a pamphlet containing a selection of his writings. Felix Martin was in 1976 a General Motors worker and West Coast Editor of this newspaper. The masthead of *News & Letters* then as now contained the words, "Human power is its own end." This article demonstrates exquisitely one form of "Workshop Talks" column—expanding on a conversation between workers on the job—and addresses a question which must concern us all: What is Marxist-Humanism?

—B. Ann Lastelle, "Workshop Talks" co-columnist

by Felix Martin

A group of workers was sitting around while the line was shut down at break time, and one worker was looking at a copy of *News & Letters*. He asked, "What does the masthead slogan 'Human Power is its own end' mean?"

One worker said it meant that everything we produce is bringing us closer to the end of time. Another said everything that is produced for defense will be used in the next war and that will be the end of all human beings.

Those six words kept coming back to me, and I started thinking about them. Either of those two workers could be right about what the phrase means if this society isn't changed, because now our human power really is being used to oppress us. We build machines which end up running us, and our human power builds weapons of war which could end up destroying all of us.

But to me those six words should mean the opposite of that. They come from Karl Marx. What I believe he meant is that the creative power of human beings striving to be free is the greatest power on earth.

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Black World

Julius Nyerere, African socialist



I have turned "Black World" over to Kevin Anderson this month for the following in memoriam to former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere who died in October.

—Lou Turner

by Kevin Anderson

With the death of Julius Nyerere, the world has lost one of the foremost proponents of African Socialism. Nyerere's humanist vision known as *Ujamaa* influenced several generations of Africans as well as many throughout the world concerned with African liberation.

In the 1960s, as president of Tanzania, a federation of the former colonies Tanganyika and Zanzibar, Nyerere developed a creative view of African Socialism: "In socialist Tanzania, our agricultural organization would be predominantly that of co-operative living and working for the good of all. This means that most of our farming would be done by groups of people who live as a community and work as a community. A nation of such village communities would be a socialist nation" (*Ujamaa: Essays on Socialism* [1968], p. 124).

This was the basis of what was called the *ujamaa* village. In so doing, Nyerere attempted to build upon pre-colonial communal traditions: "All land now belongs to the nation. But this was not an affront to our people; communal ownership of land is traditional in our country—it was the concept of freehold which had been foreign to them. In tribal tradition an individual or family secured rights in land for as long as they were using it. It became the family land when it was cleared and planted; for the rest of the time it was tribal land, and it reverted to tribal land if the family stopped working it"

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Accidents, revolt arise from drive for global nuclear domination

by Franklin Dmitryev

The U.S. Senate's arrogant rejection last month of a limited nuclear weapons test ban sent a shock wave around the world. Coming on top of President Clinton's Republican-supported push to build a national missile defense system, the defeat of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty sounded like the battle cry for an ominous new stage of nuclear buildup. Clinton has gone so far as to ask Russia to dump the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty limiting missile defense, thus dispelling any illusion that the dangers of nuclear war have disappeared with the end of the Cold War.

At the same time that the specter of a new generation of nuclear weaponry looms, the nuclear industry continues to exact death and debilitation in the here and now, as it did recently in Tokai, Japan. Played down at the time and virtually ignored by the establishment media ever since, Japan's Sept. 30 accident was one of the most serious nuclear accidents ever, comparable to those at Three Mile Island, Pennsylvania, in 1979 and Chernobyl, Ukraine, in 1986.

An eerie blue flash was the first sign that something had gone terribly wrong on the morning of Sept. 30. Before long, three workers at the JCO uranium processing plant in Tokai, Japan, were taken to a hospital—two in critical condition, having absorbed lethal doses of radiation. The solution they were pouring set off a nuclear chain reaction that would not be stopped until the next day.

Radiation bombarded the plant and everything around it while radioactive gas streamed out of the building, much of it falling with the rain on houses, soil and people. The deadly chain reaction manifested the true nature of capital's drive for ever-greater production and, at the same time, gave new impetus to its opposite, revolt, in the anti-nuclear movements around the world:

• On Oct. 4, 22 workers were exposed to radiation at a nuclear power plant in South Korea, sparking a street protest. Declaring "The accident in Japan is likely to happen here," the group Green Korea United demanded



Students evacuated in Tokai, Japan following nuclear facility accident nearby.

removal of all nuclear reactors from the country.

• On Oct. 7, Mohawks pledged to use "human resistance" to stop the shipment of plutonium from Russia through Native territory by Atomic Energy of Canada.

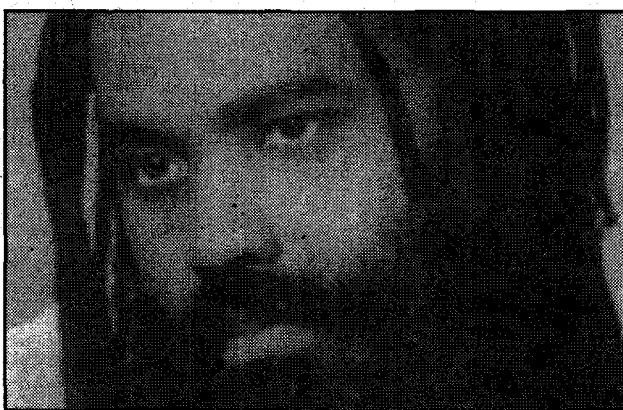
• On Oct. 11, South Africans protested the decision to build a nuclear power plant near Capetown.

• In Raynesway, Britain, workers blasted the veil of secrecy off their Rolls-Royce plant. Neighbors had never known it was processing uranium like the Tokai plant. Reporting that there were no off-site emergency plans and no radiation containment facility at the factory, the workers alerted the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

The Japanese anti-nuclear group Citizens' Nuclear Information Center (CNIC) released a statement on Sept. 30 saying, "Radioactive materials are still being released into the atmosphere....Effective measures have not been taken to respond...CNIC demands an absolutely thorough investigation, and demands that the plant be shut down."

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Editorial Temporary stay of execution leaves Mumia in the balance — mobilize now!



From its beginnings as a slave society, "American civilization" has been put on trial and found guilty. Though racism, particularly in its virulent and often genocidal forms, has most often been the charge, the specific facts of the case change according to definite social relations that exist in any given period. Since the 1970s, the quickening cadence of jack-boot government repression of social movements in the U.S. have brought the nation inexorably to the brink of civil war.

In 1977, a power blackout in New York City saw Black and Latino revolt illuminate the social darkness of permanent joblessness and grinding poverty. At the beginning of the Reagan era, this was followed by three consecutive years of urban rebellion in Miami-Dade County's Black communities in response to one police killing after another. Finally an altogether new stage was reached in 1992 when the Los Angeles rebellion, in response to the verdicts exonerating four Los Angeles police officers in the Rodney King beating trial, very nearly became a national insurrection.

Each time, revolt ignited in poor Black communities under siege. Each time, Black resistance to repression had a face: New York had the face of a new class, the so-called "underclass"; as in so many cities today, Miami-Dade County had the local faces of victims of police killings; and L.A. had the pulverized face of Rodney

King. From the high point of the early '90s, however, we've reached a new stage at the end of the decade. Not only is there a new face, but a new voice—Mumia Abu-Jamal.

1990s VOICE OF RESISTANCE

Mumia Abu-Jamal has sat on Death Row for the last 17 years, had the U.S. Supreme Court three times deny his request to hear his appeal of 14th Amendment due process violations in his original case, and on Oct. 13 had a second death warrant signed on him by Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge. Mumia Abu-Jamal is the face and voice of a worldwide movement to free him, and of a growing national movement against the death penalty, prosecutorial misconduct resulting in the wrongful convictions of untold scores of innocent men and women, rampant police brutality, and against America's burgeoning "prison-industrial complex."

Mumia Abu-Jamal is the face, voice, and symbol of these combined movements, so much so that we risk losing sight of Mumia Abu-Jamal, the human being, whose state-sponsored murder by lethal injection was scheduled for Dec. 2 until Federal District Judge William S.H. Yohn granted a stay of execution on Oct. 26.

We in the movement fought powerfully and tirelessly for Mumia Abu-Jamal, the symbol, in 1995 when newly-

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ACTION ALERT!

Mumia's case has been assigned to Federal District Judge William H. Yohn, who issued a temporary stay of execution on Oct. 26 and has said that all sides in Mumia's case can send letters and petitions to him stating their position on the case. International Family

and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal is asking that you send messages in support of Mumia to his attorney Leonard Weinglass: Judge William H. Yohn c/o Leonard Weinglass, Esq. 6 W. 20th St. Suite 10A New York, NY 10011

Alarming setbacks to abortion rights

by Terry Moon

The Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit dropped a bombshell when it voted 5-to-4 late last month to uphold Illinois' and Wisconsin's ban on the late-term DX abortion method, dubbed by anti-abortion fanatics as "partial birth abortion." So poorly written are these laws, so clear was it to those five hypocritical judges that the language of these laws bans all abortions, that they had to issue "precautionary" injunctions to keep them from being used to outlaw every abortion procedure no matter when given. Catherine Weiss, the director of the ACLU, called the ruling—which calls for life in prison for a doctor performing such an abortion even if it is to save a woman's life—"heartbreaking."

The profound setbacks to women's right to control our own bodies was the subject of a News and Letters Committees meeting we had in Memphis last month. There a worker in a clinic that provides abortions said, "Our laboratory, in a little town in Illinois, West Frankfort, was completely bombarded by protesters. They got the landlord to kick the laboratory out and the woman who ran the lab had to flee for her life. They picketed her front lawn and where her 80-year-old parents live. She left in fear of her life and she's still in hiding. That is very scary."

The clinic director said, "It feels like violence is moving in this direction. A guy was caught in Illinois, and in his car he had several explosive devices and different kinds of weapons and a list of clinics in Chattanooga and Knoxville. This lab serviced 17 to 20 different clinics around the country. Now it's closed. We know a lot of young women today who were not around prior to 1973

Thoughts of a lesbian feminist from Belgrade

Editor's note: This is excerpted from a text written by Lepa Mladjenovic for the conference on women in war held in South Africa during June 20-22, 1999.

I am a feminist of the region of ex-Yugoslavia where war started in 1991. I live in a state, Serbia, whose government has caused four wars in this one region (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and last year, Kosovo). I want to formulate a few short notes on my last nine years of anti-war activism as a member of Women in Black Against War in Belgrade, and as a feminist counselor of women who have survived war and male violence.

The war in ex-Yugoslavia is not due to the hatred that each person has for the other, but to a hate constructed by the state. The notions of nationalism and of racism are constructions. It is racism that constructs the race, just as hatred against women fabricates the inferiority of women, and hatred against ethnic difference forms nationalism.

In my case this means that 20 years ago, in the time of ex-Yugoslavia, I had chosen to declare my nationality as Yugoslavian. About 8% of us had then opted for this political and artificial national identity. It was said at that time that ex-Yugoslavia comprised 22 ethnic communities and "Yugoslavian" was not one of them, that it was the name of the state in which the 22 ethnic communities lived. After the army declared war in 1991, under order of the Serbs, and Yugoslavia was broken into six states, I was forced to take the Serbian national identity. "Your name is Serbian, therefore so is your nationality," that is what I was told. I refuse this argument at a political level. **I am a lesbian and feminist from Belgrade.**

Some of us survived 77 days of NATO bombardment. At the same time, martial law was declared and a state project of ethnic cleansing of Kosovar Albanians was set in motion, inside the same state and during the bombardments. I asked myself the following questions: How to resist the role of victim when fear is a constant feeling, daily, coming from other women, from the noise of the bombs, the news put out by the state, the darkness of the streets...How to overcome this fear which pushes me to erase the Other from my mind, who nonetheless suffers also? ...Wasn't the Serbian state using the bombardments in a way to make me think that I am even more a victim than others? Why? To continue its projects of ethnic cleansing and killing? Am I victim or accomplice?

Only some among us, feminists of Belgrade, ask ourselves how to resist this feeling of guilt, knowing that the Serbian regime, in the name of the citizens of Serbia and therefore in my name, are pursuing certain of our fellow citizens whose names sound different (they are Albanian).

Women constantly bring me testimonies of how horrible were the NATO bombings, which is undeniable, but these women never speak of the privilege they have of not being objects of ethnic cleansing since 1991.

In the Autonomous Women's Center against sexual violence, where I work as a counselor, we try therefore to develop a feminist politics which would permit us to take care of ourselves as well as of others. During these 77 days, we did not stop calling women, asking them, "Are you all right?", women with Serbian names, women with Albanian names. After these 77 days of bombardments, activists from our center went out to visit Albanian and Serbian refugees. At this moment we are collecting all these testimonies from women of different social, ethnic and warring milieus, which we will publish as a book. For some of us, working to bring equal rights to everyone, trying as a consequence to overcome concepts of minority and of Other, signifies taking as much care of ourselves as of others.

when abortion was illegal, and don't know what the fight is about. They take Roe vs. Wade for granted. I tell myself if they overturn it women will revolt. But I don't believe it deep inside. They've been told for 20 years it's murder, murder, murder."

This was the mood at the News and Letters Committees meeting held on "Abortion: Propaganda vs. Reality." Three speakers went over the dreary, and by now well-known, statistics on abortion rights: 71 anti-choice laws enacted in 1995; 70% of Governors signed or indicated their willingness to sign anti-choice bills; 38 states enacted parental consent or notice requirements for minors seeking abortions; 84% of counties in the U.S. have no abortion provider.

To me, the most terrifying statistic is that only 51% of beginning college students think abortion should be legal, a 14% decline since 1990. And 53% of women favor severely restricting or banning abortion outright, a jump of 8% in two years. These statistics show that, despite the huge number of women who have had abortions in the U.S., we're losing the fight for women's minds. Part of the blame for that can be laid at the door of the Left, which seems to have abandoned the struggle for abortion rights. Further examples of the Left's abandonment of women's issues are seen right here in Memphis. At demonstrations denouncing the death penalty, signs equating the anti-abortion position to being anti-death penalty were displayed.

What needs to be understood is that taking away women's right to abortion is only the tip of the iceberg. Here is what else is happening to poor and minority women's bodily integrity.

- Norplant, the contraceptive placed in a woman's arm that lasts for six months, is being pushed on teenage Black women—implanted without adequate warnings of side effects—and it does nothing to protect them from sexually transmitted diseases like AIDS. A judge in California required a woman to be implanted with Norplant as a condition of parole.

- The "morning after" pill is one of the medical world's best kept secrets. Wal-Mart refused to sell it at its 2,428 pharmacies until bad publicity forced them to.

- Women, most of them Black, who came for prenatal care to the Medical University of South Carolina's clinic,

were tested for drug use without their knowledge and had their "confidential" medical records turned over to police, who then threatened the women with jail.

- Also in South Carolina, a 27-year-old woman whose 38-week-old fetus died, was charged with killing her "unborn child" because she had smoked cocaine; and another woman was sentenced to eight years in prison for neglect after she gave birth to a baby whose blood had traces of cocaine in it.

- Officials in Chippewa County, Wis., are threatening to place a pregnant woman in custody because her blood alcohol level was over the state limit.

Our right to abortion is never separated from what it flows from: that all human beings must have control over our own bodies for freedom to be a reality. We fool ourselves if we think we will ever get to that place without a total reorganization of society.

Women Worldwide

by Mary Jo Grey

Amid the burgeoning AIDS epidemic throughout Africa, women volunteers in Zambia are fighting a monumental battle to save the orphaned street children. Kwasha Mukwenu was founded in 1991 by 120 women volunteers—many of whom have since died of AIDS. In Zambia's capital of Lusaka alone, 24 women work six days a week, two shifts a day, to provide free meals, school fees and clothing to some of the country's more than 90,000 street children orphaned by AIDS. "We know many of these children," said the group's head, Elizabeth Mwewa Ngoma, "and we keep this center going because someday our own children may need its services." * * *

U.S. federal lawmakers, working in October on a compromise version of a wide-ranging congressional law, dumped the provision that would have expanded the definition of federal hate crimes to include those based on gender, sexual orientation or disability. "That was one elephant too much for this boa constrictor," quipped one of the majority Republican senators who had dominated this bill-writing process.

Emergence of global queer movements

The Left has not always recognized the revolutionary character of sexuality, and, indeed, has often condemned movements for sexual freedom. But the persistence of queer mass movements over the last 30 years, and their development within the space opened by revolutionary thought, demands recognition, not indifference.

A new book, *The Global Emergence of Gay and Lesbian Politics: National Imprints of a Worldwide Movement* (edited by Barry D. Adam, Jan Willem Duyvendak, and Andre Krouwel, Temple University Press, 1999), profiles movements in 16 countries. Each chapter gives a history of the movement's development, including a description of lesbian and gay organizations. As with any collection, the articles are of uneven quality, and the editors have a ponderous style of presenting social movement theory.

Fortunately, this does not debilitate the book. The highlights are found in the voices of the queer movements, their history, organizing, and theorizing. Common themes across countries emerge, revealing shared struggles with women's liberation.

Queer movements have been at their most revolutionary in situations where traditionalism has not only been discredited, but where sanctioned forms like the family and religion are known to be collaborators with capitalism and militarism. For instance, the fall of the military dictatorship in Argentina created a "thirst for new understanding" that allowed for an opening to lesbian and gay activism and thought (112).

A similar dynamic is at work in a chapter on Spain, aptly entitled "Passion for Life," co-written by Ricardo Llamas and Fefa Vila. It starts with the insight that lesbian and gay movements are about self-creation and self-development: "In the struggles of lesbian and gay movements, 'speaking out' has a special relevance as the sole act that allows new social subjects to construct their own history, their own identity...to distance themselves gradually from the identity that has been created by the 'other' through denial, pathologization and prohibition, and, more recently, assimilation and normalization" (214).

They show how sexuality focused explicitly on creating new "social and political relations." Crucially, this development occurred when the onus of Franco's fascism was lifted. Queers were, from the start, internal to revolutionary movements, where their nascent organizations "forged links with the struggle for national liberation and independence" in the Basque region and Catalonia (219).

Similar links between lesbian and gay movements and the Parti Quebecois (14), and the well-known example of queer participation in the ANC-led anti-apartheid struggles in South Africa (272), demonstrate that there is no inherent contradiction between national freedom struggles

and the queer dimension. But many of the same problems that exist for women's liberation under narrow nationalism reappear in relation to issues of sexuality.

When nationalist movements stress family, tradition, and cultural purity, they "create a social and political atmosphere in which all deviance is rejected as treason" (362). President Mugabe of Zimbabwe "urged churches and others to ensure that society not be distracted from traditional values" by gay men and lesbians (278). Paramilitary forces in Argentina and Brazil vowed to "finish off" the homosexuals (112), and to "clean up" what they deemed "immoral behavior" (100): many leaders of gay groups were threatened, "disappeared" and murdered.

Furthermore, such reactionary nationalism prefers women barefoot, pregnant, and always heterosexual. This is certainly one of the "pitfalls of national consciousness" of which Frantz Fanon warned when he wrote "(t)he struggle for freedom does not give back to the national culture its former value and shape."

It raises a pre-eminently Marxist-Humanist question: "What happens after the revolution?" The question of women's liberation cannot wait until "after." Consider a 1960s Black woman's fear that "when it comes time 'to put down my gun' that I won't have a broom shoved in my hands, as so many of my Cuban sisters have" (*Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, 101).

The question of "What happens after?" can no more be delayed for queers than for any other group. Scapegoating of lesbian and gay people has emerged in the wake of incomplete liberation struggles in Zimbabwe and Namibia, where, rather than address basic human needs, the governments attack queers as enemies of the revolution: Hadino Hishongwa, a deputy minister, declared that "Homosexuality was alien to Namibian society, and...he did not take up arms to fight for an immoral society" (283).

The response to such anti-human hatred radiates from the struggles of queers and women who are creating new forms of human relating. The feminist organization, Sister Namibia, "committed to the elimination of gender oppression, racism, and homophobia" championed "lesbianism and homosexuality (as)...life-enhancing" (283). In one of their first public marches, Brazilian queers (who had first "come out" by marching with striking workers), chanted, "Down with repression, more love and more desire" (92-93). The Basque lesbians who wrote "we want to change social organization...to bring new elements to our way of understanding the world" are the "unquestionable agents of social change" who are "generating and propelling this process (and) building the future" (222, 236).

—Jennifer Pen



Aster Delgado

Overnite strike spreads nationwide

Memphis, Tenn.—The reason people went out on strike against Overnite Transportation is unfair labor practices. Everybody's treated differently. Money is not the issue. It's decent wages today, but you can get fired tomorrow for something they make up.

When I go to work I can't say when I will get off. They do that because they want to have control over you: "We tell you when to come to work. We tell you when to leave." They often take our time cards out of the rack, so we can't get to them. In this "right-to-work" state, they discriminate against the union workers.

We cannot even bid on a shift we want. You've got someone who's been there three years and they

One-way partnership

Los Angeles—What SEIU's "strategic partnership" with Kaiser HMO management, promoted by now-AFL-CIO President Sweeney, does in practice is make the work harder. The partnership is about cutting to the bone by making people take on new jobs. When they learn something new, it is always a fight to get them their correct pay.

Taking retinal photos for diabetics is a technician's job. Now clinical assistants do it without the \$3 an hour higher pay. Clinical assistants never did invasive procedures. Now we are given a three-day class on injections and signed off by an RN. What happens is a constant process of de-skilling or up-skilling without an increase in pay. LVNs are laid off and jobs reposted as clinical assistants for \$3 less an hour. Some LVNs are then brought back as clinical assistants!

This is not just about money but the quality of care.

—SEIU Local 399 clinical assistant

Reviving union democracy

Los Angeles—Rank-and-file trade unionists from throughout the country met Oct. 9-11 to debate how to build a democratic trade union movement and fight labor-management collaboration deals of the AFL-CIO. Conference participants demonstrated against a local appearance by AFL-CIO President Sweeney and the AFL-CIO Convention itself that anointed Al Gore as the labor bureaucracy's presidential candidate.

Much of the conference focused on the need for simple democratic principles within unions—like "one person, one vote" on all officials, contracts and political funds as well as an end to trusteeships that allow the International to stop rank-and-file initiatives in the locals. As one Filipino worker from the San Francisco Bay Area put it, "Trusteeships are like martial law."

For example, the Carpenters International is trying to expel John Reinmann, an organizer of the recent San Francisco wildcat strike which demanded that rank-and-file carpenters regain their right to vote in light of a sweetheart contract shoved down their throats. A piledriver whose local is fighting trusteeship by the Carpenters said, "A Khadafy, a Stalin or a Milosevic would have no problems living with the constitution and bylaws of my union."

Another dimension of the conference came from the Los Angeles Multiracial Alliance where Latino workers were very vocal about how racism undermines labor unity. There was also a workshop on the growing union-sanctioned use of prison labor used to do jobs reserved for union workers.

Kaiser HMO workers' discussion of Sweeney's top-down labor-management partnership in their workplace showed me that democracy has to be more than the voting booth and rank-and-file takeover of union structures. Marxist-Humanists raised the need for a deeper concept of democracy based on our everyday activity on the shop floor.

We traced the successful struggle of the autonomous nurses of the CNA seeking to control their own work, the quality of care they give. (See "Concrete vs. abstract labor in health care," October N&L) Central to their victories is an uncompromising embrace of the right to strike. That's what the AFL-CIO traded away in company-sponsored partnership meetings.

—Htun Lin

Workshop Talks

(Continued from page 1)

It is not science, or industry, or machines or bombs which should be the goal of society. It is not material things, possessions, commodities that are the measure of society, but instead the power of human beings to create, to be whole, to have both mental and muscle power, to both think and act—in other words, to be total.

The capitalists see working people as commodities when they buy us for a day's work. The system turns us into a pair of shoes, a pair of pants, a car or something to eat. All of this is produced by workers' labor and when finished belongs to the capitalist, who hasn't done anything.

The worker who is still working sees his payday as a shower of rain on a very hot day, but for the worker this rain is really his own sweat. In fact, all of society is built by the sweat of the worker. That is why if this system is ever to be done away with, it will have to be the workers who do it.

Many of the groups on the Left have the same ideas as the capitalist—to do the thinking for the workers, while the workers do the work. Those kinds of ideas don't change anything. To change this system working people have to be the ones to do away with it, with their minds and muscle, and replace it with a system where "Human Power is its own end."

work Monday through Friday, and I've been there 14 years and I have to work weekends.

They want to rush you when you're working, but if you make a mistake they discipline you. We were told if we go on strike our insurance is canceled. But they're still taking it out of our check. That's Overnite.

This strike is stopping freight. Sometimes they send out a whole line of trucks to make you think they're doing business; that's just a psychological thing. Some of them just run empty. There's not much going on in the terminal. We know that from an inside source.

We'll follow a truck to a destination, talk to the customer and explain that we're on strike. We'll ask if they'll sign a paper allowing us to be in front of their business. If they don't, we'll picket that business until that truck leaves. It's pretty effective.

We want the customers to know what we're up against and the kind of inexperienced people who are handling their freight. I followed a guy this morning over to Jonesboro, Ark. He was so lost he was driving out into fields.

We followed a truck to Osceola, Ark. The police claimed we could not be there and we were going to be arrested. The union lawyers got in contact with the police to explain the federal law to them and told them that we can be in front of that business, and we will be back.

The other Teamsters lines, the freight haulers and UPS, have really been showing support. They've been donating money for food and drinks for us on the picket line. Many come out and walk with us. We're all together in this. Labor is people working together for the common interest. We all work for a living, and if we stick together we protect each other. When a lot of people stand up together it gets things done. I really appreciate seeing people come out who I don't even know, sticking up for me. It makes me feel good that these people are worried about me and my family and conditions I have to work under. If they ever need us, we'll be there for them.

—Striking Overnite workers

Cook County RNs picket



Chicago—Registered nurses demonstrated in front of Cook County Hospital Oct. 12 to demand a new contract. Their main concern has been hospital staffing practices which could harm patients under the care of RNs. The Cook County Commissioners have tried to implement policies like "floating" or temporarily transferring nurses between units such as Emergency, AIDS, Intensive Care, and Obstetrics without regard to RNs' training or experience; increasing the ratio of RNs to patients, and tacking on unpaid hours to their shifts, sometimes lasting over 12 hours. The RNs, members of the Illinois Nurses Association, have been without a contract since last year while fighting over these issues.

"We want to work, but we want to work under quality conditions," stated one RN from Obstetrics. "We want staffing ratios that are workable. Why not have a say in what the ratios will be? If I have one patient, I can be a good nurse and do everything I'm supposed to do. Why do we always have to be defined by conditions that are around us? Why not let us define ourselves?" —J.O.

Kosova miners demand return to Trepca

Trepca, Kosova—The biggest company in Kosova is the Trepca company based upon the rich mineral mines in Kosova. Under the constitution of ex-Yugoslavia this company was social property; it belonged to its workers. However, all Albanian employees were locked out of their jobs in 1990.

Throughout these last years our trade union has tried to protect miners' property and assert the right of miners to return to work. For several years this protest was directed at the Milosevic regime. Now we have a new problem: French KFOR (Kosova Force) troops have occupied our mines and metal processing plants and refuse to allow us access.

Over these years the miners have lost everything that we have created by our work. Our families now have nothing. In the last year 33 members of our union have been killed, 11 are missing and many of our houses are destroyed.

We were hopeful that after the war, with the end of the violence organized by Milosevic, we would be able to retake control of our mines and factories, which are our property, and resume work. We have drawn up plans to resume production, including drawing up a budget to obtain necessary machinery, but unfortunately the international community does not seem to recognize our rights and is treating us as tenants in our own property. Even though we have prepared our plan to restart production, which would benefit the whole Kosova community, especially the miners, we are prevented by French KFOR troops from entering the mine, even to try to ensure that flooding does not occur.

We have held meetings with KFOR and UNMIK (United Nations Mission in Kosova) but we cannot get any agreement from them. Therefore on July 27 we held a demonstration outside the mine with the slogan, "Allow us to work and live from our jobs." We are not lazy and do

Walkouts over Ford racism

London—The multi-racial workforce at Ford Dagenham paint, trim and assembly, and engine plants have staged unofficial walkouts involving up to 1,000 workers against management racism. This is in fact the first major multi-racial strike against racism in Britain. The walkout followed exposure of serious acts of race discrimination at an employment tribunal hearing and of an assault on an Asian shop steward involving a company foreman.

Racial discrimination and bullying generally are now major issues for Ford's 29,000 production workforce in Britain, and current attempts by Transport and General Workers Union leader Bill Morris to get strike ballots on this issue called off may not succeed. Ford's global president, Jac Nasser, flew to Essex to put together a "social partnership" deal with union leaders to set up joint equal opportunities committees in all Ford plants in Britain, but workers are yet to be convinced by this move.

Plant management has been deliberately sitting on hundreds of union grievances over racism that are in the pipeline. In some jobs, such as the truck fleet, employment of ethnic minorities is just 2% compared with an average of 45% in the plants. In 1995 the company had to apologize for producing a sales brochure in which the faces of Black workers were wiped and replaced with whites.

In pay talks in Britain, there is a ballot coming up on the company's offer of a measly 2% pay rise with strings attached on use of temps, weekend working at weekday rates. With the racism issue unresolved and Ford bosses worried about overcapacity in the world auto market putting on the pressure for more "productivity" by any means they can get away with, strike action is likely.

—Dave Black

Basic Vegetables strike

King City, Cal.—The 750 workers at the Basic Vegetables plant here have been on strike since July 7 and desperately need your help. Just like the movement to save Mumia Abu-Jamal, this struggle of mostly Latino workers is ignored—or even slandered—by the mainstream press.

This is a dehydration plant where garlic and onions are cooked and ground up for big companies like Kraft. At one point Basic had 25% of the world market, but that has dwindled. Now the company wants to drive the \$11-to-\$12-an-hour starting wages down to \$7, contract out some of these Teamster jobs, and move more of its production out of the country.

They've taken a very hard line with the union from the beginning. The result has been that now, three months into it, there is a great deal of hardship on the part of the workers, and very little mobilization has developed to support the fight.

One worker said, "A couple dozen have turned the wrong way and gone back in because they don't know how else they can feed their children. We just feel like there are so many forces against us. The King City police are very belligerent and the media accuse us of vandalism and staging bomb threats. We're called wetbacks again, which is ironic because the company is the one hiring those without papers to break the strike."

One Teamster organizer told me, "King City might as well be on another planet; most people don't even stop near here unless the highway patrol is pulling them over. The company feels it can take advantage of this isolation to break us. They've really got their boot on our throat, but if every one of your readers could send even just a few dollars to the relief fund, we might help these workers through the winter without losing this." Send contributions, no matter how small, to: Basic Strikers Relief Fund, 207 N. Sanborn Rd., Salinas, CA 93905

—Mitch Weerth

not want to depend upon outside aid. The mines are our property.

Despite our protests we remain locked out. So we want to step up our protests and for this we need international support and solidarity. We are planning more protests marches and if we are not successful we are prepared, eventually, to start a hunger strike outside the mine gates.

Our campaign to demand the rights of miners and other workers is not just for Albanians but for all Trepca employees with the exception of those who have committed war crimes.

Because all communications in Kosova are damaged we ask you to contact our friends in UK at fax 44 (0)161 226 0404, or email work2@workersaid.org

If you can help us financially please send donations to Durham National Union of Mineworkers, PO Box 6, The Miners Hall, Durham. DH1 4BB, UK. For details of international bank transfer fax 44 (0)191 2330578.

—Xhafer Nuli

President of Miners Trade Union

Then and Now —

THE COAL MINER'S
GENERAL STRIKE OF 1949-50
AND THE BIRTH OF
MARXIST-HUMANISM IN THE U.S.
BY ANDY PHILLIPS AND RAYA
DUNAYEVSKAYA



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From the Writings of Raya Dunayevskaya
MARXIST-HUMANIST ARCHIVES

50 years after the revolution

Mao, Hegel, and dialectics in China

Editor's Note

The 50th anniversary of the foundations of the People's Republic of China is the occasion of our publishing the following 1957 letter to a comrade by Raya Dunayevskaya on the significance of Mao Zedong and his Feb. 27, 1957 speech "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People." Written from the vantage point of the dialectical categories of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind*, this early philosophic critique of Mao would later be developed by Dunayevskaya in her works, *Marxism and Freedom* and *Philosophy and Revolution*. (See the ad-educational on this page for these and other writings on Mao and China by Dunayevskaya.) The original letter can be found in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, 12179-12181. The footnotes have been supplied by the editor.

June 23, 1957

Dear Olga:

As I was reading Mao's "revelations" on how contradictions continue to exist under "the people's republic" with even "people" redefined, I remembered Leontiev with his admission that value still operated in Russia, with even "Chapter I" of *Capital* redefined as something of the "past."¹ But while it is true that Mao does with the philosophical concept of contradiction the same thing that Leontiev did with the economic concept of value—somewhere in a footnote in Volume I Marx laughs at the bourgeois philosopher for understanding every sort of senseless contradiction but being a stranger to the Hegelian contradiction which is the source of all dialectic—this is 1957, not 1943, and it is China, not Russia.² What is new in the date and the country is what we have to grapple with. In 1943 Russia was about to win a war and was telling its workers there will be no difference in their conditions of labor. In 1957 the whole world, even the dominant rulers who are aiming for war if that is what is needed for world mastery, are scared senseless that they might all be blown off the earth. In a way it bears a parallel to the rise of Nazism when the depression so shook up the world and the workers were in such violent revolt that even fascism had to call itself *National Socialism*.

Moreover state capitalism in an industrial country is one thing and something else again in so vast an underdeveloped country as China—Mao says five million of its six million population is peasant! They must still talk about their bowl of rice and ask the bourgeois intellectual's collaboration, something like some of the Czarist officers who were given a place under political leadership of the CP [Communist Party] in Russia in those bitter communist war years.

Philosophically it is a very great advance indeed for a Mao to put contradiction, even though he makes it mean-

ingless by his application to all so it applies to none, in the center of his speech. Grace Lee Boggs didn't go beyond that in her philosophic section—neither in "Dialectics and the Fate of Humanity" in 1947 when revolution was in the air, nor in 1950 when Hegel got put into our thesis only to have him equivalent to development through contradiction while the age of absolutes remained an abstraction.³

[The new article in the Russian journal of philosophy suddenly took issue with Hegel and claimed Marx considered the unity of opposites as "greater than negativity," denying the Hegelian negation of the negation as central to Marx⁴... I said then, wasn't it peculiar that they all bandy about unity of opposites so freely just in order to evade the resolution of the contradiction and face the Absolute Idea. Mao now says Lenin said some marvelous things on contradictions. It only goes to prove that what was central for Lenin in 1915 is not for us for today, except as methodology.⁵ Nothing, absolutely nothing short of Absolute Idea are the Communists afraid of any more. How we have them beat now!

If you will bear with me, we will, before we reach Mao and the special place Hegel assigned to him in the Spirit in Self-Estrangement, go through the previous stages of alienation:⁶

1) In *Self-Consciousness*, the Unhappy Consciousness or Alienated Soul arises as "a personality confined within its narrow self and its petty activity, a personality brooding over itself, as unfortunate as it is pitifully destitute."⁷ Hegel continues on the very next page, "Through these moments—the negative abandonment first of its own right and power of decision, then of its property and enjoyment, and finally the positive moment of carrying on what it does not understand—it deprives itself, completely and in truth, of the consciousness of inner and outer freedom, or reality in the sense of its own existence for itself."⁸ I have brought this down in a footnote in the book to a description of the ex-radicals who can find no place for themselves either in or outside of the bourgeois fold and end up on the green couch.⁹ You can put in characters you yourself know and get your own illumination.

2) In *Reason* alienation takes the form of "The Law of the Heart and the Frenzy of Self-Conceit": "The heart-throb for the welfare of mankind passes therefore into the rage of frantic self-conceit, into the fury of consciousness to preserve itself from destruction; and to do so by casting out of its life the perversion which it really is, and by straining to regard and to express that perversion as something else."¹⁰ If not [C.L.R. James] then any fainthearted Marxist or labor bureaucrat will do, including Khrushchev.

3) But Mao doesn't appear till "Spirit in Self-Estrangement—the Discipline of Culture" which "constructs not merely one world, but a twofold world, divided and self-opposed."¹¹ And just look how Hegel follows Mao through with his discovery of contradiction so long as there is "unity": "The equilibrium of the whole is not the unity which abides by itself, nor its inwardly secured tranquillity, but rests on the estrangement of its opposite. The whole is, therefore, like each single moment, a self-estranged reality."¹² And two pages further on Hegel continues: "The sphere of spirits at this stage break up into two regions. The one is the actual world, that of self-estrangement, the other is that which spirit constructs for itself in the ether of pure consciousness, raising itself above the first. This second world, being constructed in opposition and contrast to that estrangement, is just on

that account not free from it..."¹³

That is what Mao is blind to—he thinks he can construct two opposite worlds, and as soon as he assures it "100 flowers can bloom," even if he does deny any flower the right to be a second party, which is "bourgeois," thereupon he has assured his poverty-stricken land "unity." Marx, in his "Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic," where he speaks of how many fields of exploration lay hidden in Hegel if only critically understood, points precisely to this spot which Hegel calls "The Noble Type of Consciousness,"¹⁴ [A]t another place [Hegel says], "This type of mind is the heroism of service" and, finally "Such a type is the haughty vassal; he is active in the interests of the state-power": "This estrangement, however, takes place in Language, in words alone, and language assumes here its peculiar role.... [I]t is the power of utterance *qua* utterance which, just in speaking, performs what has to be performed.... Speech, however, contains this ego in its purity; it alone expresses I, I itself."¹⁵

It is equivalent, in economic terms, to the Fetishism of Commodities which

kept even classical political economy, which had discovered labor as the source of value, its prisoner. Throughout that remarkable first chapter in *Capital* Marx keeps talking of the perverse relationship under capitalism where dead labor dominates living labor. In Hegel "this entire sphere of perversion" of the spirit in self-estrangement ends with: "This type of spiritual life is the absolute and universal inversion of reality and thought, their entire estrangement the one from the other; it is pure culture. What is found out in this sphere is that neither the concrete realities, state-power and wealth, nor their determinate conceptions, good and bad, nor the consciousness of good and bad (the consciousness that is noble and the consciousness that is base) possess real truth; it is found that all these moments are inverted and transmuted the one into the other, and each is the opposite of itself."¹⁶

That opposite Mao did not grasp, nor could he, since this state he is leader of has its own dialectic of development, irrespective of the noble consciousness of its leader. Just as every single thing has its own dialectic of development, so the various stages of alienation go through their transformations. Or rather vice versa since "the moving and creating principle" (to use Marx's expression for the principle of negativity) is this very negativity. Neither Khrushchev nor Mao can escape this, but that each has tried a different aspect of it because of the compulsion from the objective movement and the subjective aspirations of their working people denotes the true absolute of our age, the counterrevolution in the very innards of revolution and (and that is the vision) the revolution in the innards of their counterrevolutionary states. Wait till the book [*Marxism and Freedom*] appears and we go to battle.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 513.

14. In the "Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic" in his *Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Marx wrote that "The *Phenomenology* is, therefore, the hidden, still unclear even to itself, and mystifying critical philosophy. However, to the extent that it holds fast the alienation of Man—even if Man appears only in the form of Spirit—to that extent all elements of criticism lie hidden in it and are often already prepared and worked out in a manner extending far beyond the Hegelian standpoint. The sections on 'Unhappy Consciousness,' the 'Honorable Consciousness,' the fight of the noble and downtrodden consciousness, etc., etc., contain the critical elements—although still in an alienated form—of whole spheres like Religion, the State, Civic Life, etc." This is quoted from Dunayevskaya's translation which appeared as an appendix to the original 1958 edition of her *Marxism and Freedom*, p. 309.

15. Hegel, *Phenomenology*, pp. 527, 528, 529-530.16. *Ibid.*, p. 541.

1. Dunayevskaya is referring to the Russian economist, L.A. Leontiev, editor of *Under the Banner of Marxism*, and the journal's 1943 article "Some Questions of Teaching Political Economy," translated from the Russian by Dunayevskaya. With the reversal on the law of value, Leontiev went on to propose beginning the teaching of Marx's *Capital* by skipping Chapter 1 on Commodities. Her translation and rejoinder to the article can be found in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, 192 and 209, respectively. Also see *The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism*, pp. 83-87.

2. Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, trans., Ben Fowkes (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), p. 744.

Selected Writings of Raya Dunayevskaya on Mao & China

In 1975, while Mao was still alive and a new Constitution was being proposed, Raya Dunayevskaya posed the question of "Maoism Without Mao." Nearly 40 years since the first publication of *Marxism and Freedom*, a wealth of research and analysis has been available to *News & Letters* readers. To understand the meaning of Mao, 50 years after the Chinese Communist Party came to power, we call your attention to:

Marxism and Freedom: Chapter 17, "The Challenge of Mao Tse-tung" (1964) and Chapter 18 on "Cultural Revolution or Maoist Reaction" (1971) (Chapter 17 available in Chinese.)

Philosophy and Revolution: Chapter 5 on "The Thought of Mao Tse-tung," including an analysis of the Beijing-Jakarta axis.

New Essays (1977): Essay on "Post-Mao China: What Now?"

Sexism, Politics and Revolution (1977): Includes both "Chiang Ch'ing, Hua Kuo-feng in post-Mao China" and "Alienation and Revolution," an interview with a Hong Kong refugee as the Cultural Revolution erupted.

Mao's China and the "Proletarian Cultural Revolution," written for *New Politics*, Spring 1968, and as chapter in *The Revolution is Dead, Long Live the Revolution*.

Political-Philosophic Letters: Includes "Mao's Last Hurrah" (Feb. 27, 1976) and "Post-Mao China: What is Mao's Legacy?" (Nov. 17, 1976).

All writings are available from
**News & Letters, 59 E. Van Buren, Rm. 707,
 Chicago, IL 60605**



3. This refers to the 1947 essay by C.L.R. James, "Dialectical Materialism and the Fate of Humanity," and the Johnson-Forest Tendency's 1950 thesis, *State Capitalism and World Revolution*. Grace Lee Boggs wrote the final chapter of the latter.

4. The book Dunayevskaya is referring to is *Marxism and Freedom*, first published in 1958; the Russian journal article appeared in a 1955 issue of the Russian philosophy journal, *Questions of Philosophy*. For Dunayevskaya's critique of the Russian attack on Hegel's concept of dialectical negativity, see *Marxism and Freedom*, pp. 39-40.

5. This refers to Lenin's World War I *Philosophic Notebooks* on Hegel's *Science of Logic*.

6. "Spirit in Self-Estrangement" and the following concepts that Dunayevskaya discusses are principal categories of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind*.

7. G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*, trans., J.B. Baillie (London: Allen & Unwin, 1931), p. 264.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 265-66.

9. See *Marxism and Freedom*, p. 347-48, note 11.

10. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 397.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 510.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 511.

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Raya Dunayevskaya
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Philosophic Dialogue

Editor's note: As we approach the end of 1999, the year in which we celebrate the life and thought of the revolutionary activist and thinker, Rosa Luxemburg, on the 80th anniversary of her murder by the proto-fascist Freikorps, we print excerpts from talks by Paul LeBlanc and Olga Domanski given at a forum in Chicago celebrating her life and work.

It is possible to characterize Rosa Luxemburg as one of the finest of the "post-Marx Marxists," and at the same time one with a lively sense of humor. She confessed to an intimate friend that "in theoretical work as in art, I value only the simple, the tranquil and the bold. That is why, for example, the famous first volume of Marx's *Capital*, with its profuse rococo ornamentation in the Hegelian style, now seems an abomination to me (for which, from the Party standpoint, [she joked] I must get 5 years' hard labor and 10 years' loss of civil rights....)"

Yet this was someone for whom—despite her banter about Hegel—dialectical thinking came most naturally. Applying the dialectical approach to her economic studies, Luxemburg understood capitalism as an expansive system driven by the dynamic of accumulation. Capital in the form of money is invested in **capital** in the form of raw materials and tools and labor-power, which is transformed—by the squeezing of actual labor out of the labor-power of the workers—into **capital** in the form of the commodities thereby produced, whose increased value is realized through the sale of the commodities for more money than was originally invested, which is the **increased capital** out of which the capitalist extracts his profits, only to be driven to invest more capital for the purpose of achieving ever greater capital accumulation.

Luxemburg's one-sided emphasis, in her economic analysis, on capitalist expansion into **non-capitalist** areas in no way obscured the inhumanity inherent in the global accumulation process.

Since the German Social Democracy represented the best organized, most powerful, most influential component of the world socialist movement, Luxemburg's comrades encouraged her to become part of it. Almost immediately she had an impact—infuriating the moderate right of the party, delighting the revolutionary Left, and making those in-between increasingly uneasy.

In the German Social Democratic Party she and her revolutionary comrades found themselves trapped in the left-wing of a bureaucratized mass party which, when World War I erupted in 1914, supported the brutalizing imperialist war effort instead of organizing working-class resistance. More than this, its leaders looked with relief upon the imprisonment of Rosa Luxemburg for anti-war activity. In the aftermath of the war, as the working-class radicalization foreseen by Luxemburg gathered momentum, the Social-Democratic bureaucracy was able to divert much of the proletarian militancy into "safe" channels. Luxemburg and the most committed revolutionaries were first blocked and then expelled, left without an adequate revolutionary instrument of their own. Amid the rising proletarian ferment and counter-revolutionary violence of late 1918 and early 1919, they were forced to begin rebuilding an organization.

In 1917 Lenin and the Bolsheviks, thanks to the working-class and peasant upsurge in their own country, and thanks also to years of serious organizational development had succeeded in establishing a revolutionary workers' government in Russia and appealed for the spread of revolutions throughout Europe, but in highly industrialized Germany most of all. Increasing numbers of German workers and war-weary soldiers responded with enthusiasm (so, for that matter, did Rosa Luxemburg who soon was released from prison). This coincided with the collapse of the German war effort, and the collapse of the monarchy. It seemed that Germany was on the verge of socialist revolution—but the only substantial organizational expression of socialism in the country was the German Social Democratic Party which by now was in the hands of the worst of opportunistic bureaucrats who were far more hostile to working-class revolution than to their own landed aristocrats and big business interests.

In order to win the radicalized masses to a genuinely revolutionary socialist alternative, Luxemburg and others formed the **Spartakusbund**—the Spartacus League (named after the leader of the great slave revolt that shook the Roman empire)—which was not strong enough to lead the workers to a revolutionary victory. In a very useful study entitled *The Lost Revolution, Germany 1918 to 1923*, British socialist Chris Harman criticizes Luxemburg's refusal, in the years before World War I, to build within the German Social Democracy something like an organized faction functioning—as he puts it—as "a disciplined body of adherents organized around [a revolutionary periodical], discussing the interrelation between their theory and their practice, establishing criteria for membership." Harman concludes: "Rosa Luxemburg was a great revolutionary. But there was to be a high price to pay for this failure to draw her followers together into a minimally cohesive force."

It is important not to underrate the **Spartakusbund**, which actually compares quite favorably—with a mass base and a daily newspaper—to all left-wing organizations in the United States today, and even to the more impressive Socialist Workers Party of

The todayness of Rosa Luxemburg

Britain to which Harman belongs. Many so-called "mainstream" historians have traditionally been quite dismissive of the **Spartakusbund**, but William Pelz, an historian more to my liking, argues that "by war's end, Spartakus had grown into an organization of thousands with influence in numerous working class areas." Since Pelz has inquired more carefully than most into the nature and dimensions of this movement that Luxemburg led, it is worth considering more of what he has to say in his fine study *The Spartakusbund and the German Working Class Movement 1914-1919*:

Struggling underground, the Spartakusbund was able to grow, propagate its ideas and develop linkages with like-minded revolutionary groups and individuals, based heavily in urban industrial areas. Thus, Luxemburg, [Karl] Liebknecht and the other Spartakusbund leaders directed what was the heart of a growing revolutionary workers movement. Young, active and concentrated in the most modern vital sections of the economy, Spartakusbund members were to prove the revolu-



tionary voice within the ideological vacuum [which the bureaucratized leadership of the German] Social Democracy labored to maintain.

This suggests that if Luxemburg, Liebknecht and other key Spartakus leaders had not met their deaths in 1919, then around them a powerful, self-confident, increasingly experienced leadership core would have crystallized to lead a growing German Communist Party to victory in, say, 1920 or 1923, when genuine revolutionary possibilities emerged. This would have rescued the Russian Revolution from the isolation that would soon generate Stalinism, at the same time preventing the possibility of the rise of Hitlerism in Germany.

From the standpoint of those determined to preserve the old social order, Rosa Luxemburg could not be allowed to live. But Luxemburg's vibrant, passionate life and intelligence are with us still in her writings, which continue to have an amazing relevance to the realities that we face today.

—Paul LeBlanc

Editor of *Rosa Luxemburg: Reflections and Writings*

Prison Letters: 'what it means to be human'

One way I want to show the "todayness" of Rosa Luxemburg is through the question of her prison letters. Nothing more resonates for me with the question "What does it mean to be human?" than those letters.

What suddenly made me look at Rosa's letters from prison with such new appreciation may be because News and Letters Committees recently published a new work called *Voices from Within the Prison Walls*. It was written by a prisoner who asked us to help him distribute to other prisoners throughout the entire land a questionnaire he had composed, so the booklet would represent not just his own but the hundreds of other voices that responded. Since it has begun to circulate, we have received a veritable torrent of letters from all sorts of prisoners raising all sorts of questions about what one could only call "the struggle to be truly human."

Stephen Bronner, who brought out an important collection of Luxemburg's letters with his own Introduction in 1978, estimated that if all of Luxemburg's correspondence were completely compiled, it would amount to at least six huge volumes. It is significant that the first small volume of any of her correspondence to be printed was of her letters from prison which she had written to Karl Liebknecht's wife, Sonja, while Karl was at the front (a favorite punishment for dissenters) and later in jail. They were published a year after the murder of Luxemburg and Liebknecht. I can attest that they were known in the revolutionary movement as what showed Luxemburg to be "human." That is certainly the way I was introduced to them when I joined the movement during World War II.

I recently found the copy of her letters I was given, published in 1946, and here is how those letters are presented: "There are Socialists who regard an interest in anything but the class struggle as treason to Socialism. Poetry, music, art—all are mere forms of escapism, enervating drugs which weaken the will-to-victory of the advancing proletariat. Rosa Luxemburg was not a Socialist of that kind. These prison letters of Rosa Luxemburg may not rank as a 'Socialist classic' in the ordinary sense of the term. But as revelations of the inmost personality of a great socialist who was also a great human being, their place in the literature of the international movement is secure." It was as if it was taken for granted that only the letters in which Luxemburg wrote very nearly lyrically about nature or poetry made her "human." It's as if her wonderful declaration "The revolution is magnificent. Everything else is bilge" was in a different compartment.

It is certainly to his great credit that Bronner stressed that with his collection of letters he wanted to present Rosa as a total person, not separating her political and social views from her personal life. Yet even Bronner, whose important book succeeded in presenting her multidimensionality, seemed to slip into a little downplaying of Luxemburg's role as theoretician in his discussion of her prison years. After describing Rosa's escape from the drudgery of prison life by "looking to the clouds and the multicolored stones ... while she watched insects and fed her birds," he describes how much she suffered from serious physical problems in prison, and then writes: "Still, Rosa remained active throughout those years. It is true that she wrote little during her confinement: there was the Korolenko translation, and the extraordinary *Anti-Critique*, but little more."

It is hard to see how Rosa's theoretical work during her prison years could be called "little more"—not only

because she considered her "Anti-Critique" to be one of her greatest works, but because of all the rest she wrote from her prison cell. It includes everything from the "Junius" pamphlet which she wrote in the first two months after she was imprisoned in 1915, managing to smuggle it out, as a blast not only against the war but against the Social Democrats who had betrayed and voted war credits to the Kaiser—to her "Theses on the Tasks of International Social Democracy" which followed "Junius," all the way to her pamphlet on the 1917 Russian Revolution where her praise for that revolution was not separated from her opposition to anything that would infringe on democracy.

It makes it imperative to put into their proper, revolutionary perspective, what those crucial years represent between February 1915 when she was first jailed and November 1918 when the German revolution came right to her prison and freed her. These were the critical years filled with war and the Russian Revolution. And what you

find in Rosa's writings—whether her formally written theoretical works or her informal letters—is how completely she refused to be isolated from the struggles outside no matter how hard the authorities tried to do just that.

There is no time here to go into much detail on all that Rosa's prison letters mean but what comes through loud and clear is that their manifestation of "what it means to be human" is not just a question of the

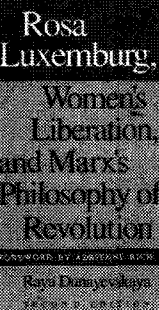
birds and flowers she loved but of how nothing—including that—was separated from the revolution, which was "magnificent" while everything else was "bilge." "Bilge" is most especially what she considered those who called themselves socialists but whom she promised, in the blistering letter she wrote to Mathilde Wurm, "to hunt and harry with trumpet blasts, whip crackings, and blood hounds" as soon as she was free again. It is the letter in which she demands that those who were claiming to be socialists, "stay human." It begins with blasting those who capitulated to the war or made excuses for that betrayal, and then makes it clear that to Luxemburg, "being human" means not giving way to despair but "joyfully throwing your whole life 'on the scales of destiny' when need be, but all the while rejoicing in every sunny day and every beautiful cloud." And then she throws her hands up in frustration because she knows of no "formula" to write for "being human."

When I said that what has illuminated Rosa's prison letters for me may be the experience we are having in News and Letters Committees with the kinds of prisoners' letters we have been receiving in response to D.A. Sheldon's *Voices from Within the Prison Walls*. I certainly don't mean that Rosa's experience of being imprisoned for being a revolutionary is the same thing as becoming revolutionaries out of the prison experience—which is what we are witnessing in such vast numbers today. What I do see Rosa's letters and the prison correspondence sharing in common is the determination not to be isolated from the world, and from the kind of revolution that is needed to not only uproot the old but to build something new on truly human foundations. What we are seeing is such a powerful reaching out for a philosophy of liberation that it seems to reveal nothing less than a new revolutionary consciousness developing within the mind of the most oppressed human beings in society today. You cannot help feeling that Rosa would have recognized that as "magnificent."

—Olga Domanski

Contributor to *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution*

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



by Raya Dunayevskaya

Foreword by Adrienne Rich

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THE MOVEMENT TO SAVE MUMIA AND ABOLISH THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

Mumia's death warrant by the state of Pennsylvania is an attempt to kill an idea that lives beyond the flesh and blood of Mumia himself. In his book, *Death Blossoms*, he says that "If there is one thing we've learned in two thousand years, it's that you cannot kill a book." His essay called "Books" is a powerful anti-death penalty statement that tells us that when you "allow" the state to burn books, it won't be long before it will burn people for their thoughts. That is what is happening in the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Mumia says that one of his favorite films is *Fahrenheit 451* (the point at which paper combusts spontaneously). The film portrays a futuristic society in which books are banned and people who read them are subversive. Books are kept hidden in attics, basements and behind false walls. If a book is found the fire brigade is called and the place is burned down. The subversives flee to a place where people become books. Mumia Abu-Jamal is a book that must be read, heard, and absorbed. You cannot kill a book.

Gene Ford
Los Angeles

I feel too much of the movement to free Mumia is directed as a "supplement" to the legal strategies. There is always one more appeal, one more legal process that we have to wait for. We are never permitted to call for a mass rally at the Pennsylvania prison to get him out!

Educator
California

I've been active in many of the protests against police abuse and the prison system, but what bothers me is why did the protests which erupted over the murder of Amadou Diallo in New York die out without a trace? What was missing in the protests of last spring which explains this?

Activist
New York

I am worried that all the attention being given to Mumia will make it harder for other political prisoners to get the attention they need and deserve. Does anyone even know how many of us are rotting in the jails of Amerikka?

Prisoner
Michigan

If the movement can't save Mumia how is it going to manage to save all the other lesser-known political prisoners rotting in penitentiaries around this country? All movements for freedom will suffer a profound blow if Mumia's life is not saved.

Prisoner
Indiana

Several thousand people, mostly youth, marched on Oct. 16 to save Mumia's life. There was no "business as usual" attitude among any of those present; it was the loudest, fired-up crowd we've been around for a long time in the Bay Area. We felt like our voices meant something too, because the route took us through Union Square where many a shocked shopper at Saks Fifth Avenue was forced to listen to a lot of angry people shouting, "You say death row, we say hell no!" It was also good to see that the youth aren't the only ones paying attention to this battle: Oakland teachers had a contingent, one of whom told us that they were inspired by the example of the Longshoremen's support for Mumia. Nobody had any illusions that this spirited march could by itself save Mumia, but it was clear that this kind of anger, this kind of urgency—if it can continue to grow NOW—could do just that.

Marcher
San Francisco

I came to the Oct. 22 anti-police abuse rally after I heard about it on the radio. I only heard it mentioned once; it was very hard to find out about. My 9-year-old son is in jail—he was framed by the police and his assigned public defender did no investigation. He ended up defending himself. We need help in trying to appeal his conviction. Until this happened to my son I didn't believe the police would lie in court but now I see that they do. Exposing the LAPD in Los

Angeles is very important, but it's only the beginning of what we have to do.

Black mother
Los Angeles

I don't agree with those who say we all have choices and those who are in prison have to take responsibility for the bad choices which got them there. I know a lot of folks grow up poor and Black and never end up in prison. Some become quite successful through their own efforts. But for every one person who toes the line and never gets in trouble, five others who do the same end up in prison because the system is geared against us.

Black student
The Bronx

The work around Mumia and other prisoners has touched a chord like nothing else in recent memory. So many at a grassroots level have come together to protest police brutality and family members (especially young Black men) being railroaded by the criminal justice system. While I do not hold out a lot of hope for a last minute miracle in the case of Mumia, I do have hope that the anger which many are feeling will grow even stronger and open more possibilities to work out a philosophy of liberation in the new millennium.

Erica Rae
Chicago



RUSSIA'S WAR ON CHECHNYA

In Russia today we can see such antagonistic developments as the first beginning steps of a working-class movement—and at the same time the strengthening of a politically reactionary, patriotic, nationalist, anti-terrorist hysteria. The workers' movement is developing even in such provincial towns as Saransk, where there was a strike in July without any control by the yellow trade unions. The protest was against the delay in distribution of wages. Today the wages in that enterprise are paid more regularly. Workers felt their force and now want to struggle for higher demands. They are moving to the left and to the question of workers' power, not of the "great Russian state."

But the dominant moment in Russia today, after the bombings in Moscow and elsewhere, is nationalist anti-terrorism. Already thousands of Chechens have become refugees and Chechnya is being destroyed, with the number killed yet unknown. In Moscow there are mass arrests, deportations and beatings of immigrant workers, especially from the North Caucasus. The Russian bourgeoisie and government want to compel the Russian proletariat to forget that the most putrid terrorist is the Russian bourgeois state itself. Their success will be only temporary. The Russian proletariat is the only social class in modern Russia whose objective interest is against nationalism and for the brotherhood of the exploited of the world.

Correspondent
Russia

The Russian military seems to have studied the situation in the Balkans very carefully. It opened its recent campaign against Chechnya by pushing as many civilians as possible out of Chechnya. Sound familiar? It's just how Milosevic began his war against Kosova. Then Russia launched a rocket assault against a market in downtown Chechnya, which it proceeded to claim was done not by its forces, but the Chechens! Sound familiar? Milosevic made the same claim about Bosnia after Chetniks bombed a market in Sarajevo. The Left may have learned very little about the Balkan wars of this decade, but the same can't be said for the imperialists.

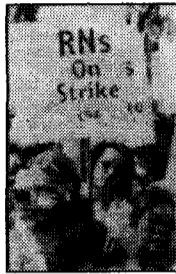
Balkan support activist
Chicago

I thought you would appreciate knowing about a recent declaration by a group of Russian humanists called "Common Action." They see the August-September military actions in Dagestan as the deto-

Readers' Views

nator of a new war in the North Caucasus where a humanitarian catastrophe is developing with a huge stream of displaced people pouring into Ingushetia. They warn that "the tactics of destroying Chechnya through bombing... will literally add thousands and thousands of new fighters to the ranks of the terrorists, force the Russian Command to use rank and file poorly trained soldiers and bring about huge losses, in a war that will be long and bloody and not confined to Chechen territory." In addition to their appeal to the Russian government to stop the escalation, they appeal to the journalists who increasingly talk about the "necessity" of war to: "Stop! The blood of peaceful people can fall on you!"

Peace activist
Israel



HEALTH CARE WORKERS AS REASON

The essay on health care by Htun Lin (October 1999 *N&L*) was important to me because it sheds light on Marx's concept that workers "know" the contradiction between their concrete and abstract labor. Htun showed what it means to be a worker through the strange example of doctors organizing. They may still be making over \$100,000 a year, yet Marx was talking about their skills made worthless by the process of production. Shedding light on a Marxian category is important because it illuminates what workers already know.

Mitch Weerth
California

As one who lost several family members to the corrupt nature of the American medical system, I appreciate Htun Lin's critique of the health care industry. However, I'm not sure we should wait upon the day when doctors view themselves as "proletarians." The real laborers in health care are the nurses and hospital staff; most doctors look upon them as their mindless servants.

Uninsured worker
Chicago

One of the most effective ways capitalists are lowering costs is by divorcing a growing lower tier of society from the health care system. There are by now an unprecedented 43 million in this country without access to health care. Even the most basic lessons of public health epidemiology, discovered in the last century are not being heeded. The biggest threat from Russia may not be nuclear bombs but hundreds of drug resistant strains of TB allowed to emerge in Russia's prisons which are sure to show up in the U.S. There's no incentive to develop drugs for TB because those who get it first generally aren't in the paying patient population.

Ron Brokmeyer
San Francisco Bay Area

The article on health care is correct but I would express it differently, since I don't always understand Marxist-Humanist language. The majority of health care professionals of all sorts want to give the patient the best care possible, whether the patient is a worker, on welfare, without any resources or a capitalist. While physicians do like to be well compensated, most accept Medicare and Medicaid, and many give care absolutely free when there is no other way the patient can get it. For the most part, it is the hospital or health insurance organization which denies needed tests and treatment and turns non-paying patients away.

As for unionization, physicians want to be free to manage the care of their patients without being forced to give substandard care. The only way to save the patients is to have enough force to prevent HMOs from denying appropriate care. Doing it lawsuit by lawsuit means the damage is already done. My only question about unionization concerns the question of striking and

whether necessary patient care might be stopped or delayed. Nothing should interfere with the patient receiving appropriate care with deliberate speed.

Retired physician
Virginia

CASE FOR REPARATIONS

I appreciated John Alan's column on reparations (October *N&L*). Black leadership has been trying to address this issue for years. I have often wondered how one determines what reparations one could give for the stealing of freedom, centuries of enslavement, death, torture, broken homes, the theft of language, religion, identity? Like Alan, I wonder who would benefit from these reparations. The truly disenfranchised? Black prisoners? Would every child descendent of a slave get a piece of the pie? Give me my culture back; give me back my history and ancestral home, and only then will you have scraped the tip of the "reparations" iceberg.

Prisoner
Tennessee

One can agree with John Alan's analysis that "capitalist goodies" would not fully atone for the atrocities against African Americans. If we need much more than financial redress, then financial redress should not be an issue. For example, Anthony Porter, who was released from death row in February for a crime he did not commit, is asking for reparations for his stay in prison. Denying him reparations because it will not stop police brutality or the advent of other innocent Black men on death row is a fallacious argument. Reparations is simply a financial acknowledgment to compensate the loss of more than 40 million Africans and the destruction of many African nations.

Although Audre Lorde said we cannot use the master's tool to dismantle the master's house, we should not allow ourselves to be manipulated by antics that keep us from understanding the power of the tools and how they are used to control us. To take back our tools and use them to our advantage is not capitalistic but righteous indignation at injustice.

Samantha
Chicago



EAST TIMOR TODAY

I agree with your views on the East Timor genocide. I am appalled that others in the Left can cross their arms instead of demanding that such a defenseless population as the East Timorese people be helped at once.

Ana Lucia Gelabert
Texas

At a demonstration against police abuse I talked to a former *N&L* subscriber who vehemently objected to its support for Bosnians and Kosovars. East Timor didn't seem to exist for him at all now that Western troops have gone in. Everything he saw in his concept of socialism was an ending, never a new beginning, no matter how heroic a struggle was or what profound new questions might arise. He dealt with this closing trap by closing his mind even tighter. I hope *N&L* will continue to cover ongoing events in East Timor as well as their ramifications in Indonesia itself.

Fred
Chicago

On the women's page in the October issue there's a box on Rosa Muki Bonaparte, who was a revolutionary in the East Timorese movement of the 1970s. Where are the revolutionaries today in East Timor? Is there any sense of whether you can have independence without world revolution, which Bonaparte was for? I missed in the October lead the whole question of revolution.

Latin American support activist
California

CAPITALISM AND 'THE ROOTS OF ANTI-SEMITISM'

Raya Dunayevskaya's 40-year-old article, "The Roots of Anti-Semitism," in the October *N&L* is so contemporary it could have been written about the two youths who shot up Columbine High School. Those youths, too, played around with Nazism's paraphernalia, only this time it was virtual uniforms and symbols on the internet. But their guns, bullets and bombs were all too real. And just as Dunayevskaya points out the "tender feelings" the press displayed for those young neo-Nazis of almost 40 years ago, so the neo-Nazi Columbine killers were treated as poor misguided youths, their political beliefs underplayed and dropped from the news almost as soon as they were mentioned.

**Anti-racist activist
Memphis**

As I read the archives column I thought of a Jewish anti-Nazi activist on NPR who commented on a strong anti-hate speech policy at a college. I thought at first that it was really good to prohibit hate speech, but then decided that it was really a way for the administration to sweep racism under the rug. After all, once hate speech is officially prohibited, there is nothing more the administration has to do about existing racism. Clearly the roots of racism go much deeper than "free speech."

**John G.
Oakland, Cal.**

The editor's note to the "From the Archives" column in October mentioned the Sacramento youths who set fire to two synagogues and supported Milosevic's genocide, but neglected to mention that they also murdered a gay couple. Given that Dunayevskaya's philosophic argument in the column concerned how capitalism chooses to scapegoat different kinds of minorities at different times, her argument transcends the idea that minority status is applicable only on the basis of race or ethnicity.

**Jennifer Pen
San Jose**

I want to thank *N&L* for reprinting a 1960 article on anti-Semitism, since many act as if this problem has gone away. But given the number of anti-Semitic attacks on the West Coast in recent months, I was surprised to find no articles on this in your paper.

**K. Rosenkranz
California**

The root of anti-Semitism is the root of all forms of anti-Other. A lot of problems of racism and anti-Semitism preceded capitalism. But capitalism exacerbates these problems.

**Htun Lin
California**



**PHILOSOPHY
BEHIND
THE PRISON
WALLS**

I was very much educated by Raya Dunayevskaya's letter printed in the August-September issue of *N&L* under the heading, "Marxist-Humanism's concept of Subject." It was remarkable to see the fluid concept of subject and how she used it to amplify the pressing question of organization during Marx's and Lenin's times.

The relationship between the Paris Commune and the Russian Soviets as new forms of workers' control over production does not enjoy its rightful place in present philosophy. Peter Hudis' review of Ute Bublitz's book in the October issue continues this theme in a slightly different context, seeing philosophy as the medium of human liberation from all forms of misery and exploitation. In a similar vein, I was very disappointed to read in *N&L* a few months ago that German students of philosophy consider Hegel a "dead dog" and a reactionary Prussian bureaucrat whose sentences are too long. Notwithstanding the labels, Marxism as the philosophy of liberation would be non-existent without the Hegelian dialectic.

**Prisoner
Colorado**

Two things are fundamental to sustain any struggle for social justice: 1) an organizational force, and 2) the connection of that force to the people.

It appears that *N&L* has learned such lessons of history well. Not only has it been able to meet the fundamental elements of struggle, but it has managed to meld them together. *N&L* provides the agents of struggle with a powerful vehicle from which they can articulate or "con-

cretize" the true nature of their struggle. It has created a truly organic organizational force from which the struggles' "natural" leaders and intellectuals may rise and give voice to the people.

**Prisoner
Connecticut**

**PROTESTS AGAINST
GLOBAL CAPITAL**

Many think of sweatshops as belonging to other times and other countries. How many know that sweatshops exist right here and now in metropolitan Chicago? A group led by the Taylor Institute and the Center for Labor and Community Research has gathered hundreds of surveys from workers on the question, which may lead to some anti-sweatshop organizing. They will be presented at a conference on Friday, Nov. 19, at the UIC Illini Union, 828 S. Wolcott St., from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The conference has been endorsed by 12 community-based organizations and labor unions and is being hosted by the UIC/School of Public Health/Great Lakes Center. Anyone needing more information can call (312) 996-6904.

**Dennis Dixon
Chicago**

Despite widespread opposition, the U.S. Department of Agriculture continues to use taxpayer dollars to support genetic seed sterilization. It renders the seed that farmers save sterile, forcing them to buy at a commercial seed market every year. The original patent is jointly owned by the USDA and a Monsanto subsidiary, Delta & Pine Land Co. This patent is just the tip of the iceberg, since there are dozens of new patents describing a wide range of techniques that can be used for the genetic sterilization of plants and seeds. They will erode farmer control and increase dependence on a handful of giant agrochemical corporations. Over 1.4 billion people, primarily poor farmers in Africa, Asia and Latin America, depend on farm-saved seed as their primary seed source. The Gene Giants will ultimately dictate what the farmer grows, how to grow it and where to sell it. These technologies are very frightening.

**Susan Van Gelder
Detroit**

A mass demonstration such as was "not seen in the last 20 years" in France took place Oct. 16 in Paris. Initiated by the

French Communist Party as a protest "in defense of employment" it drew more than 70,000 and represented more than 20 organizations, including all non-Socialist parties of the "pluralist left" as well as organizations of the unemployed and others. While it showed the possibilities of a united action of the working class, it also showed the rifts. The CP itself is a Janus-like party, on the one hand a "fighting" one and on the other a member of the government which it doesn't want to topple. That is also true of the Greens and the small Citizens' Movement. Two other left Trotskyist groups had their own demands and slogans. A sign that the left unity was not total was the absence of the biggest "left" party, the Socialists, as well as of the CGT which was once CP-dominated but now wants to show its "independence."

The following day two other protests took place in Paris. One rallied around 50,000 members of one of the great organizations of health care workers. The second much smaller one was part of a World Day against Poverty.

**Stephen Steiger
Prague**

**SUPPORT ALI KHALID
ABDULLAH**

Ali Kahlid Abdullah is an important political prisoner, writer and thinker currently incarcerated at the Trump Correctional Facility in Lapeer, Michigan. He is founder of the Political Prisoners of War Coalition and has written widely on the need to transform today's criminal injustice system. He is currently challenging the parole board for its continual denial of his parole AND HE NEEDS YOUR HELP NOW!

Many political prisoners who are eligible for parole are being denied a hearing because of their political beliefs. Ali Kahlid Abdullah is in need of assistance to pay for the legal fees to challenge the parole board. Please send contributions in whatever amount, payable to: **Ali Kahlid Abdullah Parole Defense Fund, c/o Cynthia Ritscher, PO Box 554, Lincoln, MA 01773.**

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Black World Julius Nyerere, African socialist

(Continued from page 1)

(Ujamaa, pp. 84-85).

Nyerere's *Ujamaa* represented the hopes of many in the 1960s who wished to carve out an independent socialist pathway sharply different not only from the acquisitiveness of Western capitalism, but also from the totalitarian forms of Communism in Russia and China. Rather than rapid industrialization, Nyerere aimed for a form of democratic socialism rooted in the village.

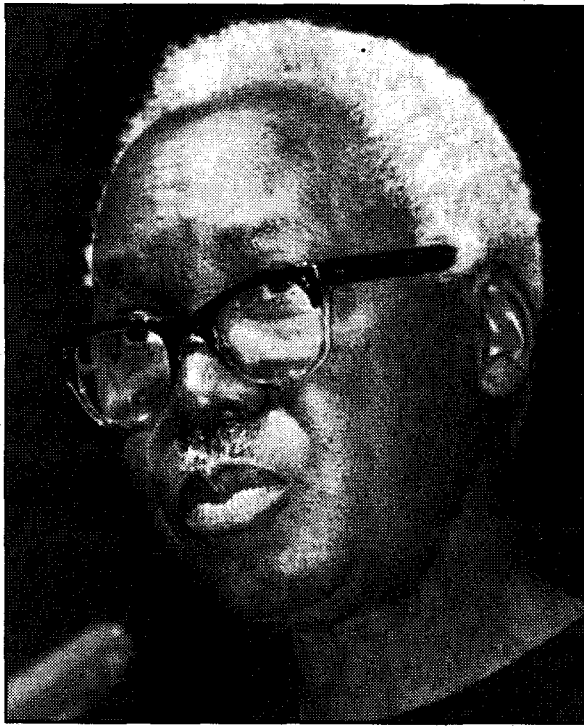
CONFRONTATION WITH SELF-DEVELOPMENT

Raya Dunayevskaya pointed to these developments in her *Philosophy and Revolution* (1973), terming them "a confrontation, not only with the economic realities of Africa, but with the self-development of Africans theoretically" (p. 244).

As these villages developed, Tanzania achieved the highest literacy rate in Africa (83%) and also experienced major advances in health care. The single party system Nyerere founded under the Tanzania African National Union (TANU) was hardly undemocratic, since open debate and competitive candidacies were permitted. Nor did Tanzania experience the pervasive corruption of so many post-independence African states.

Nyerere also took strong and principled international stands. Tanzania was in the forefront of the Frontline African States which supported the liberation struggle against apartheid South Africa, white settler-ruled Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia), and Portuguese-ruled Mozambique and Angola. From early on, Tanzania also supported Congolese revolutionaries seeking to dislodge CIA-installed dictator Mobutu Sese Seko.

Tanzania welcomed Black revolutionaries from the world over, who debated various forms of Marxism and Pan-Africanism. One venue for these discussions was the Sixth Pan-African Congress, held in Dar es Salaam in 1974.



Nyerere did not hesitate to take stands against other African leaders and regimes. A recent in memoriam statement by the U.S.-based Black Radical Congress singled out his principled humanism and internationalism: "Nyerere demonstrated that killing Africans in any part of Africa should be of concern to all human beings, especially African leaders" (Condolence Message of Oct. 19, 1999).

INDEPENDENT INTERNATIONALIST

In 1967, Nyerere supported Biafra's war for independence from Nigeria. In 1979, he sent troops to help Ugandans to liberate their country from the murderous Idi Amin dictatorship. More recently, and from retirement, he spoke out forcefully against the genocide in Rwanda and supported Congolese rebels, first in the overthrow of Mobutu, and then in their efforts to oust their authoritarian and corrupt post-Mobutu ruler, Laurent Kabila.

By the late 1970s, Nyerere came into sharp conflict with the International Monetary Fund and other global capital

ist institutions, which wanted Tanzania to adopt "free market" economic policies. Eventually, Tanzania was forced to give up many of its socialist-oriented policies. Earlier than this, however, Nyerere's turn to forced vilagization, which he claimed was necessary for education and other forms of modernization, had begun to alienate many peasants, undermining from within the concept of *Ujamaa*.

As news of his death spread, tens of thousands of Tanzanians converged on the capital, Dar es Salaam, to pay tribute to one of the outstanding leaders of modern Africa. We too mourn the passing and celebrate the life of this unique African thinker and leader, who in his theory of *Ujamaa* developed an African version of socialist humanism.

Environmental racism

Editor's note: A government survey of the Scarborough neighborhood of Oak Ridge, Tenn. found high levels of banned pesticides, mercury, lead and selenium, and radioactive substances strontium-90 and uranium, in some cases higher than those found on the nuclear reservation itself. Here are interviews with two Oak Ridge activists.

Scarboro is a neighborhood within Oak Ridge. We've been told it's the closest residential neighborhood to any Department of Energy plant anywhere. It was created by the army in 1948 as the Black part of town. Oak Ridge was in existence from 1943 on. Prior to 1948 the Black people who worked on the Manhattan Project were made to live in a place even closer to the plant in huts without floors, screens or glass windows. Men lived in separate "hutments" from women, separated by barbed wire. It was very degrading even for that time in the South.

There was no environmental justice group formed until about two years ago, when a series of articles was printed in the Nashville *Tennessean* newspaper. One of the articles was about Scarboro. The reporter had knocked on doors on one street closest to the Y-12 nuclear plant and found that every child on the block had a serious breathing disorder—at least 16 kids. It got a huge amount of attention from the senators and the governor, who brought in from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The article connected the breathing problems with the possibility of the cause being the Y-12 nuclear plant. Yet when the CDC came in, they created a survey to ask questions about indoor air quality. The survey was designed not to focus at all on Y-12 as the cause of the problem. One of the doctors who helped design the study said that they had been told specifically not to look at Y-12 as a potential cause. It was one of these inconclusive-by-design studies. In the course of that year, the people of Scarboro became aware that they needed an organization.

— Jacqueline Kittrell
American Environmental Health Studies Project

I live in Oak Ridge, on the Scarborough Reservation. It is mostly Black. This was where the government built the homes for the Black people in the late 1940s, and this is where all Black people lived until probably the 1960s. There is a feeling that there was a connection between who it was built for and where it was built.

We would like to be empowered in Scarboro. We do not want anyone to take care of us. We would like to be able to do things for ourselves. We would like to get our community cleaned up if it is possible. We have asked and we have been sampled and tested, but still we are not satisfied with the results. We expect the Environmental Protection Agency to come back and retest, hoping that we will get a better understanding of the progress and the procedures.

Scarboro is behind in a lot of ways. We know that it was built on a disposal dump. Either they can buy it out or clean it up. They can set up a place for people to go and get medical attention. I would like them to rectify their mistakes. All of the people in Scarboro feel this way. Some are afraid to talk, and some have lived in it and now don't know what do about it.

We've had so many cancer cases in Scarboro, whole streets of men dying out with prostate cancer, skin cancer. Black people don't get suntans! I have thyroid cancer myself. I also have mercury in my body. I worked at the K-25 and Y-12 plants [on Oak Ridge nuclear reservation], so I am well aware for 16 years that I have been exposed to every chemical that has been mentioned on the list.

I would like to see something done in my lifetime for the people of Scarboro. We're not getting cooperation from the city or anyone else. I would like people to know that we in Scarboro are really trying to come out from under the oppression that this has thrown on the people, the uncertainty about their health, their homes and thinking that we have been overlooked and forgotten.

—Fannie Ball

Black/Red View

by John Alan

In a little more than a month American civilization will enter a new century. This milestone is an opportunity to look at the past in order to become aware of the nature of our present reality. I will attempt to do this by looking at the still unresolved problems and conditions of racism as they existed at the turn of the last century.

In 1900 there were 8,888,000 African Americans living in this country. The overwhelming majority of them were living in the South, working as agricultural laborers and in service industries. Some were small farmers working on their own land.

At the beginning of this century African Americans were legally free citizens of the U.S. Their rights were written into the U.S. Constitution, but in actuality they were a disfranchised, segregated people, living in poverty and terrorized by white lynch mobs.

William A. Sinclair, a former slave, wrote in his 1905 book, *The Aftermath of Slavery*, that the South's attitude to "Free Government" meant to disregard Negro freedom and to cling to "...the traditions of the slave system. [M]obs torture human beings and roast them alive without trial and in defiance of law and order; mobs shoot down women and children who have never been charged with crime, and against whom there is no suspicion, it's enough that they are Negroes."

DISFRANCHISED STATE BY STATE

At that time, while lynch mobs terrorized African-American citizens, neither Congress nor the federal courts intervened to rectify the blatant contradiction between the constitutional rights of African Americans and the way Southern states ignored those rights and eventually took them away. Mississippi was the first to disfranchise its Black citizens in 1890. It was followed by South Carolina in 1895, Louisiana in 1898, North Carolina in 1900, Alabama in 1901, Virginia in 1901, Georgia in 1908 and Oklahoma, a new state, in 1910.

Thus, at the beginning of this century African Americans couldn't find the reason for self-determination in the constitutions of the Southern states. William A. Sinclair saw the ending of Black suffrage as an attempt "to annul [Blacks] as a factor to be reckoned with in American life and civilization."

The proponents of Black disfranchisement gave a number of pernicious arguments for doing this. They claimed that the removal of Black votes would end corruption in elections and prevent Blacks from holding a balance of power between white rivals in an election. And, above all, it would cause Blacks to give up the idea of betterment and make them accept their true place in a dominant white society. As a result, race relations would steadily improve. These arguments were mere political smoke screens designed to conceal the political and economic reasons for the race war against African Americans.

History in the present

The origin of the race war against Southern Blacks during the post-Reconstruction era did not come only from white Southern Redeemers calling for home rule, but from the merging of their goal with the desire of Northern capitalism to open up the South and exploit its labor and natural resources. The political opportunity to achieve their merged interest came during the bitter dispute over the 1876 presidential election between the Republican candidate, Rutherford B. Hayes, and the Democratic candidate, Samuel Tilden.

Hayes won the election by one electoral vote after a joint congressional committee recounted the electoral votes, but everyone knew that a deal had been made. Hayes had won because he had agreed to withdraw federal troops from the South, give the Redeemers home rule and turn the South's natural resources over to Northern corporations. Thus, Hayes gave concessions to both Southern white supremacists and Northern capitalism.

BLACK LABOR RESUBJUGATED

The policies of the Redeemer governments were to create a racially segregated New South and to resubjugate Black labor by imposing upon Blacks a stringent race/class system which erased the fine line between free labor and prison labor. "Broad new vagrancy laws allowed the arrest of any jobless...Laws made it a criminal offense to offer employment to anyone, already under contract or to leave a job before a contract ended."

Meanwhile, Southern criminal laws increased sharply the penalty for petty theft. South Carolina made arson a capital offense and mandated life in prison for burglary. Mississippi's famous "pig law" defined theft of cattle or swine as grand larceny punishable by five years in prison. "It looks to me," commented a Black resident of the state, "that the white people are putting in prison all that they can get their hands on" (*A Short History Of Reconstruction* by Eric Foner, p. 250).

The above quote reveals that the past history of African Americans is related to the ongoing race/class conditions of today. One hundred and twenty years ago the Civil War, the second American Revolution, ended in an unfinished revolution. It went just far enough to end the social form of slave labor without actually freeing African-American humanity from poverty, racism or exploitation. Instead it created a new world for monopoly capitalists with their armies of managers, lawyers and bought politicians. Thus, at the beginning of this century the African-American historian, Rayford Logan, could call the early 1900s "the Nadir" of the African-American experience in America.

Next month I will continue this retrospective by looking at other moments of African-American history in the 20th century.



Rethinking Fanon

The Continuing Dialogue

edited by Nigel C. Gibson

Contents:

- I. Politics and Revolution
- II. Cultural Criticism
- III. Fanon, Gender, and National Consciousness
- IV. Fanon's Quest for a New Humanism

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Making change: Chowchilla women's ideas

Oakland, Cal.—During my last visit to Valley State Prison for Women in Chowchilla, Cal., I noticed a real development as my day progressed. The first prisoner I saw, N., was put in the Security Housing Unit, the "jail" within the prison, for fighting. She was trying to get reassigned to a different cell because she did not get along with another woman in her eight-person cell, and although she appealed to the guards many times, nothing was done until the fight broke out.

Conflicts within a cell arise frequently. Eight women living in very small quarters (the cells were designed for four) creates a lot of friction. N. was telling us that the difference between the guards at VSPW and the guards at Corcoran, who set up human cockfights, is only in gradation of their involvement, not in substance. It seemed to her that they deliberately let the tension in her cell rise until the fight broke out.

ASKING THE POWERS THAT BE

She felt that the only recourse she had was to ask to be moved to a different cell. That is entirely reasonable. It is exactly what we outside do when we ask the powers that be to change some policy. We demonstrate in front of the courts, in front of California Department of Corrections offices or any government building. By demonstrating at such places we are, in fact, saying that the said agency should change its behavior and correct the situation (whatever that happens to be). Since they have the power to do so, it seems reasonable to get them to do it.

However, this very reasonable attitude was challenged later in the day by J., who told me she never asks guards for anything whatsoever. While it is true that they can grant many requests and have the power to ease many situations, they can also make things worse. She said that not knowing whether any particular guard will choose to be reasonable or mean at any particular time creates a lot of stress.

When you don't know what behavior to expect, you have to constantly keep your own guard up. In J.'s experience, guards are very disrespectful. They constantly make sexual advances; they trip on skin color; some revel in harassing the women for the littlest things, disregarding many of the official prison rules.

BUILDING A DIALOGUE

J. said that she is not trying to justify her crime. What she did was wrong. But, she stressed, "I am human; treat me like a human being." She said, "My motivation comes from within. The woman I am becoming all came from me. It did not come from the prison system. There is no 'rehabilitation' here. The compassion, understanding and patience I acquired came from me."

What J. learned goes far beyond not asking guards to help with the tense situations that arise in prison. J. and many long-termers speak of ways they've developed to deal with the concentrated inhumanity of prisons. J. turned to the question that makes a difference: prisoners treating each other with respect, preserving and developing their humanity in relations with each other.

This is exactly the impulse which D. A. Sheldon expressed in *Voices from within the Prison Walls* when he said: "First, prisoners must take it upon themselves to build a dialogue on the issues and the struggles we face.... Ideas are all of critical importance. This does not mean that ideas by themselves can change the world. But winning 'the battle of the mind' is an essential first step in order to prepare oneself for the battles to come."

J. asked us to advocate for more opportunities for women to get together: more programs and more prisoner organizations, like the Long-Termers Organization established at California Institution for Women in Frontera. Yet J.'s request can also be interpreted as a call for all of us to re-examine what "activity" means, whether demonstrations are effective only when they pressure the authorities to "give" something or whether they should be primarily the ways we can talk to each other, to engage in our own "battle of the mind."

—Urszula Wislanka

Prisoners are workers

Those who would not define prisoners as part of the "worker" class perhaps need a history lesson. What is a factory but a prison? What is a mine but a prison? When unions first tried to get footholds into mines, factories and other areas, the practice was criminalized by the owners and the power brokers. Workers were targets for beatings, killings and jailings upon the orders of the owners and, in some cases, the government itself.

What was slavery but a prison? What are reservations but prisons? The greatest prison in the world is not run by the state or the government, but rather exists in the minds of individuals who cannot or will not see beyond the propaganda which they are fed on a daily basis and cannot see that prisons exist everywhere, more so in the so-called free world than in the portions of society which are confined.

When I edited a prison paper, I did a radio interview where a caller spoke about his loss of a job. He didn't think that prisoners should be educated on taxpayers' money nor should they be paid wages while incarcerated. I noted that, though I was sorry about his being out of work, he was wrong in his assumptions.

The prison college program in the state I was in was not financed by any public monies, but rather was financed solely by the work that the men did inside per the corporation which was founded—and run—by prisoners. Though I did get paid, I also paid close to 30% of my salary right off the top to crime victims' funds and to taxes, thus assuring that he got some sort of compensation for being out of work from tax dollars generated from prisoner wages. Yes, prisoners are also workers.

—Prisoner, U.S.A.

Editorial

Mobilize for Mumia!

(Continued from page 1)

elected Governor Tom Ridge signed the first death warrant. Mumia Abu-Jamal just as tirelessly fought through the power of his voice and written words to remind us of what we are fighting for in all these struggles evoked by a racist criminal justice system. Now, like never before, we must fight vigorously, intelligently, and irrepressibly for Mumia Abu-Jamal, the **human being**.

You should know that he's a man whose greatest personal anguish is being separated from his loved ones, and whose family and social background in Black work-



Chicago emergency demonstration to free Mumia Abu-Jamal, Oct. 18.

ing-class Philadelphia made him, as a classmate from junior high school recalled, one of the few youth in the 1960s who radically identified himself as Black "while the rest of us were still calling ourselves 'Negro.'" You should also know that his youthful radicalism never made him anything other than a "gentle spirit." You should know that Mumia Abu-Jamal the **human being** is a father whose bond of love with his children is as strong as his love of freedom for oppressed humanity. You should know that in his mind they are inseparable.

We need to know the **human being** we're so passionately fighting to free as much as the symbol we've made the face and voice of the movement. At the moment, we need to know this more than ever before.

ACT NOW, FREE THIS HUMAN BEING!

Undoubtedly the latest developments in his case have put Mumia Abu-Jamal in his most difficult situation to date. It is no less true, however, that the system that put him there is also in a difficult situation. The face, voice, and written words of Mumia Abu-Jamal are the face, voice, and word of forces of revolt in this country whose resurgence can overnight return the initiative from the forces of repression into the hands of the forces of revolution.

The road ahead is difficult. Mumia hasn't despaired, neither must we. Nor must we ignore the meaning of what Mumia knows is the truth of the struggle for his life, namely that

The various struggles that we are involved in unite around a central core: the freedom of people to resist the stranglehold of the state and capital. All of us struggle for that freedom that is tightly bound with our own, the freedom to resist, fight back that society that increasingly sees us all as unworthy of life. To that end, we must fight.

To that end, we must fight on to free Mumia Abu-Jamal! His life is in **our hands!** America's criminal injustice system is on trial!

Prisoners building a dialogue

publications from News and Letters

"What is arising against the attempt [of capitalism] to destroy the human spirit is a quest for a new humanism. It is proved by two events.... One is our pamphlet, *Voices from within the Prison Walls*, written by a prisoner who elicited our help in achieving a back-and-forth with hundreds of prisoners. The other is the torrent of responses we have received to it, in which prisoners not only describe the oppressive conditions, but raise profound questions of philosophy and politics, history and current events, of the human condition as a whole..."

—Draft for Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, News & Letters, August-September 1999

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Flap over 'Sensation'

New York—New York is at war with its mayor. A succession of major and minor confrontations has taken place, most tragically the months of demonstrations and civil disobedience occasioned by his callous attitude to the murder of Amadou Diallo by four policemen. Prior to that there was "Giuliani time," when police sodomized Abner Louima with a bathroom plunger. We've had class struggles; taxi drivers took actions tying up traffic in protest against the mayor's overly stringent rules of operation. Now His Honor has turned to farce and we are experiencing "the giddy whirl of perpetually self-creating disorder."

Damien Hirst is one of several British skeptics whose art is in residence at the Brooklyn Museum. He is obsessed by death and human decay, conditions which have inspired powerful art in the past: "When forty winters shall besiege thy brow" by Shakespeare and the "Saint John's Passion" of Bach, for starters. Damien Hirst is an in-your-face kind of guy who exhibits animal carcasses floating in formaldehyde.

One of his colleagues is Chris Ofili, a Roman Catholic of Nigerian descent, who portrays the Virgin Mary as a Black woman. What has steamed up the mayor, however, is the inclusion of some unholy artifacts from God's world, in particular, a clot of elephant's dung garnished with black and white pushpin heads stuck to the Virgin's right side. Now the mayor wants to dispossess the Brooklyn Museum from its home on Eastern Parkway.

Unfortunately, Damien Hirst is a celebrity without substance, a Marcel Duchamp without talent. In the past, Dadaism allied itself with proletarian revolution. Today's absurdists thrive under the aegis of "conspicuous consumption" and are bankrolled by Charles Saatchi, an advertising tycoon. The show is called "Sensation" and it is jolly to demonstrate against Rudolph the blue-nosed mayor in this lighthearted departure from the grim business of struggling against a quasi-fascist administration.

—Paul Geist

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Accidents, revolt arise from drive for global nuclear dominance

(Continued from page 1)

At first count, 14 Tokai workers were exposed to radiation. By Oct. 15 the count was raised to 69 after investigators finally bothered to check 20 workers' radiation-monitor badges. Many workers were exposed to radiation levels 50 to 100 times higher than the legal yearly limit. Firefighters, never warned of radioactivity, went in without protective gear. Even 14 workers who shut down the chain reaction were not wearing adequate protective clothing and received high levels of radiation. Furthermore, the JCO plant is adjacent to a residential area. Testing done by independent scientists suggests that several hundred people may have been exposed.

Along with the cascade of radiation came a cascade of official lies, secrecy and cover-ups. Residents point out that most people learned of the accident from news reports and were not told to evacuate or stay indoors until seven or more hours after the chain reaction began. And on Oct. 15, two weeks later, JCO admitted that radioactive iodine gas was still leaking.

On Oct. 18 the Japanese publication *Magpie Country Nukes Headliner* reported that the government knew in the early hours of Oct. 1 that it should expand the evacuation zone but did not for fear of causing panic—the same excuse for deceit used in every nuclear exposure, from open-air atomic bomb testing to the Chernobyl explosion.

PRODUCTION FOR PRODUCTION'S SAKE

The first news reports blamed the accident on "human failure" by careless workers who circumvented safety measures to save time by pouring the uranium solution by hand into a bucket. The truth later came out that the orders to cut corners came from the top. The bucket shortcut took only 30 minutes rather than the three hours required when chemicals were piped through vats as they were supposed to be.

What Marx termed the capitalist drive for production for production's sake has played a part in most major nuclear accidents, such as at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant where workers had been forced to work 40 straight 10-hour days right before that plant's partial meltdown in 1979.

The latest accident follows a series of alarming accidents in Tokai, including just in the last four years a molten metal leak, an explosion, and a radioactive waste leak that was found to have existed for 30 years.

None of that, however, stopped Japanese Prime Minister Obuchi from reaffirming his government's determination to build another 20 nuclear power reactors by 2010. However, the Japanese masses may yet have an impact as forceful as the mass revulsion that Three Mile Island sparked: Not only did that 1979 accident bring orders for new U.S. nuclear power plants to a screeching halt, but all those ordered since 1974 were eventually cancelled. Similarly, the 1986 Chernobyl explosion infuriated the many peoples of the state-capitalist Russian empire at their nuclear victimization and spurred the growth of the movements that would break apart the so-called Soviet Union.

Whitewashing and reviving the U.S. nuclear industry has been a political priority throughout the last 20 years—which is not unrelated to the Senate vote rejecting the nuclear test ban treaty, two weeks after the Tokai accident. What made it easier for the Senate to reject was that Clinton has been pushing the fantasy of a missile defense,

known in Reagan's time as Strategic Defense Initiative, or "Star Wars." The supposedly successful test of an anti-missile defense may sow illusions among the militarists that a technological (read: "magic") umbrella will soon protect them from the results of a new arms buildup.

It is precisely such a growing accumulation of deadly nuclear bombs that our militarists thirst for. They are determined to let nothing—neither the test ban treaty's safeguards against proliferation, nor the improbability of ever achieving a working missile defense—stand in their way. In contrast to their dangerous obsession, just at this moment so conservative a figure as Reagan's own arms control specialist, Paul Nitze, is arguing that there is no reason "why we should not unilaterally get rid of our nuclear weapons" whose very presence "threatens our existence."

NUCLEAR DEATH VS. LIVING LABOR

In truth, nothing is really "accidental" in terms of what happened in Japan, or any other nuclear accident, for that matter. Accidents flow from a specific drive for and concentration of dead labor over living labor, as exemplified in the nuclear arms and energy industry.

The nuclear industry has been discredited not only by spectacular accidents but by its normal practices in which the lives and health of working people are sacrificed to the drive for production through routine exposures to radiation and toxic chemicals.

Amid this growing toll of disease and death, a man nearly 20 years dead took center stage in August. Years before, Joe Harding's exhumed bones had proved that radiation doses at the federal uranium enrichment plant at Paducah, Ky. were far higher than claimed.

For nine years before his death the Department of Energy (DOE) and its contractors denied Harding's reports of radiation exposure. A DOE study in 1981 attributed Harding's death to eating country ham and smoking. Other workers have come forward to support his reports of a dense fog of uranium dust and smoke that would cling to workers' skin and coat their throats and teeth. By 1999 the activity of Joe Harding and other workers and residents around Paducah led to two lawsuits and a Congressional investigation where workers told of conditions such as clouds of smoke from spontaneously ignited uranium fires.

Ronald Fowler, a health physicist at Paducah, testified that management had told workers for decades "that production takes precedence over health." He found documents "showing radiation tens to thousands of times higher than the prescribed action levels for the plant, in areas like the cafeteria, the kitchen, locker rooms, storage rooms, and parking lots." (See stories on community responses to nuclear poisoning, below and page 10.)

This tale of official lies, sacrifice of the innocents on the altar of production, and opposition from below characterizes the entire nuclear weapons complex—from Hanford, Wash., the explosion waiting to happen, whose plutonium leak draws closer to the Columbia River every day; to Oak Ridge, Tenn., created by the Army in 1943 as the secret home of the Manhattan Project to build the atom bomb.

Nor has the end of the Cold War—with or without the test ban treaty—put an end to the drive for production of the most destructive weapons known. It has, however, meant greater awareness of the military's 1,752 toxic chemical dumps and of over 45,000 potentially radioactively contaminated sites in the U.S.

The proximity of many of these sites to communities of Blacks, Native Americans, Latinos and poor whites—as well as the many attempts to dump radioactive waste on Native American land—has also spread awareness of environmental racism.

But the big bucks raked in by private companies involved in the "cleanup" of these sites give little solace to the people who are still suffering and dying from the contamination's effects. DOE officials still repeat the same old lie that the Oak Ridge reservation is safe, even though doctors hired by the federal government concluded in 1997 that something there is making workers sick.

Today, when there is no Cold War enemy justifying the nuclear juggernaut, the all-out war against American workers yesterday, today, and tomorrow has appeared from behind its veil as the casualties among the workers continue to mount.

The demand for justice against the nuclear complex's inhumanity is widespread—from the organizing around all the weapons production sites, to this year's Mothers Day rally of 700 people at the Nevada Test Site demanding an end to the radioactive poisoning of Mother Earth; from the Shoshone and Arapaho protest against a proposed nuclear waste incinerator in Idaho that would release poisons onto the Wind River Indian Reservation, to the 5,000 signatures gathered in three days in Chelyabinsk, Russia, opposing plans to import nuclear waste from abroad.

Energy Secretary Bill Richardson's apology to Joe Harding's family reflects the rulers' fear of that movement from below, and their scramble to deflect it from probing too deeply into the capitalist roots of this system that stockpiles the most destructive force created and uses it against human beings, and in the process of its production sends millions to an early grave.

Neither apologetic officials nor the end of the Cold War should be allowed to conceal the fact that nuclear bombs are only the starkest expression of a social system where the human being serves the process of production, rather than the reverse. The deathly nature of capitalist science will not go away without uprooting of capitalism itself.

India, Pakistan in crisis

The alarming military coup in Pakistan, as well as the recent elections in India, threaten to further heighten tensions between the nuclearly armed countries. In Pakistan, a military coup led by General Pervez Musharraf ousted the corrupt and increasingly unpopular Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. Musharraf declared a state of emergency in Pakistan, put the constitution in "abeyance" and appointed himself chief executive officer of the country.

Evading international pressure, Musharraf refuses to set a time table for new elections. Although many have been lulled into accepting the "moderate" face Musharraf presents, army rule in Pakistan makes the Kashmir issue more volatile than ever.

Musharraf has made a largely symbolic gesture in recent days by withdrawing troops from the international border between India and Pakistan; however, renewed clashes have been reported between Indian and Pakistani troops around the Line of Control between Indian-held and Pakistani-held Kashmir. Neither Musharraf, who was involved in the training of the Afghan mujahadeen forces years ago, nor the jingoistic Indian government is a real assurance against the threat of nuclear war in the region.

In India, the sixth national election in three years re-established a right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led coalition government, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), at the center. The election has further consolidated the power of the BJP, known for its reactionary anti-Muslim and anti-lower caste agenda, while the Congress Party, which has ruled India for the majority of its independent years, suffered a devastating defeat.

It is worth noting that the BJP did not further its own support base, winning about the same number of seats this election as it did in the last.

Although the BJP has put a cap on its overtly fundamentalist agenda, we should not be duped into thinking of it as a "moderate" force reined in by its allies. While it is true that the BJP must contend with and pacify the 24 allies, some professedly "secular," that help make up the NDA, it is equally true that Hindu fundamentalist forces have succeeded in mainstreaming much of their reactionary ideology.

Indeed, the Kashmir conflict with Pakistan, exacerbated by the nuclear adventurism of then and now "moderate" Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, was successful in tapping into the unresolved communalist tensions at the heart of India. And although the BJP avowedly distances itself from more rabidly right-wing groups, BJP rule has made religious zealotry, jingoism and violent attacks on religious minorities, especially Christians who comprise 2.5% of the population, staples of everyday politics in India.

Although it was differences with regional allies that toppled the BJP-led government a few months ago, the BJP's choice to further free market "economic reform" by cutting government subsidies, scaling back price controls and opening up public sectors to foreign investment is sure to stir up protest and revolt. Already two million truckers went on strike to protest a 35% hike in diesel fuel prices mandated by Vajpayee's government. Through negotiations, the strike has been called off for now. What threatens the rulers of both countries the most is the growing discontent of the masses. That is the "destabilization" that both countries would most like to avoid.

—Maya Jhansi

Communities confront nuclear-born diseases

Benton, Ky.—We've had the Coalition for Health Concern since 1985. We have known since the late '80s about the plutonium and neptunium at Paducah, Ky. even though it was denied by the officials.

We see lots of adverse health effects in the vicinity of the plant and extending out from it downwind. It's not only cancer. It's many diverse illnesses. Our objective is to get the senators and the congressmen to assure us that there are clinical testing programs for the workers and the community. And this means testing for the toxic metals and the radionuclides, in other words, the body burden that each person carries. This has never been done around Department of Energy facilities, but it's critical because it's the only way that an individual can determine how much contamination they're carrying.

Cancer is just an absolute plague in this area, but also very high numbers of lupus and immunological illnesses, strange illnesses, children that have very rare types of cancer, for instance, cancer behind their eyes where they lose both eyes, acute lymphocytic leukemia, soft-tissue sarcoma. These are rare everywhere else except in this general area. I'm not speaking of just the area outside the fence, but I'm talking about downwind about 50 or 60 miles including Southern Illinois.

We feel that the dioxin on the site has basically been glossed over and ignored and no real attention given to it. Cancer is only one of the horrible health effects that it causes. It affects later generations, sperm count, and has all kinds of adverse health effects.

It seems that the people in Congress do not understand the absolute necessity for clinical testing, or this would have been required years ago around not only this site but other sites in this country.

—Corinne Whitehead

Oak Ridge, Tenn.—I am a nurse and a volunteer with the Oak Ridge Health Liaison, an independent group concerned about health impacts of toxic exposure. What we have seen in documents is that the Atomic Energy Commission's physicians and scientists were identifying

health effects from exposures to various substances from working at these [nuclear industry] sites, but the Department of Justice decided to classify all the health impacts under national security.

They did not want people to become afraid of working in these environments because it would interfere with the agenda of the Atomic Energy Commission. General Groves, who ran the Manhattan Project, actually said that communities like Oak Ridge were expendable.

I was astonished to see how advanced they were in understanding some of the immunological, kidney and hematological effects in 1947–52. At that time they had physicians based in Oak Ridge who were closely following what was happening to workers and were raising medical concerns about the effects of these exposures. For years after that the unions were bringing up concerns. The workers were given no assistance whatsoever. They were seeing increased leukemia and multiple myeloma.

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) is supposed to address the health concerns of the affected community. They've never evaluated the real health impacts on the people. Their original mandate was to address the actual health impacts of acute and chronic exposures to multiple substances, synergism, additive and cumulative effects, and so on. Instead they do a cursory, limited evaluation, often doing inappropriate tests, and claim that they do not show harm.

No one is helping develop diagnosis, clinical intervention and treatment for these people. What they do is look at paper-generated analyses to try to extrapolate back what has happened to these patients. They're basing medical diagnosis on risk assessments instead of the patients' actual condition.

This has been as bad as anything South Africa where I came from. You get so sickened by this stuff and you just want out of it, and something will happen that makes you so angry or is so compelling that you've just got to get back into it again.

—Sandra Reid

Youth Mass protest to greet trade meeting

by Kevin Michaels

This fall has seen a steady pulse of organizing across the country on the part of labor, environmental and human rights activists for an event many are billing as "the protest of the century." Web sites have been launched, teach-ins held and planning meetings convened to educate and strategize for the week-long Third Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization in Seattle, Wash., which will open the last Monday of November. The organizers aim to use the time period of the meeting to raise awareness of what they consider to be an unaccountable and inordinately powerful body which represents everything bad in today's globalized economy.

The WTO has accumulated quite a bad reputation for such a relatively young institution. It has existed only since Jan. 1, 1995, when it emerged as the successor to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the organization which served to develop and formalize the so-called free trade policies of participating countries in the years following World War II.

The power of the WTO lies in its mandate to scrutinize the laws of member nations to determine if they represent barriers to free trade. If a law is deemed inimical to trade by a WTO commission, the organization can impose punitive sanctions to encourage that it be repealed. Environmental legislation has proved particularly vulnerable to this tactic—U.S. laws meant to protect dolphins and sea turtles have been assailed by the WTO, as has European legislation prohibiting the importation of American beef raised with growth hormones.

The purview of the WTO, however, ranges far and wide and it can object to laws concerning labor, as well as laws passed to inconvenience repressive regimes. For example, a Massachusetts law restricting trade with Burma's authoritarian government has invoked the WTO's ire.

As formidable as the WTO may seem, it has provoked a diverse array of forces opposed to it into making a trip to Seattle to confront it. Big Labor—the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, United Autoworkers, and United Steelworkers—as well as Big Environment—the Sierra Club and the World Wildlife Fund—are pledging to bring large numbers of people for the entire week. The

AFL-CIO, however, has balked at fully committing its considerable resources because of its endorsement of Al Gore, a free trade proponent.)

Independent activists from the Pacific Northwest and elsewhere have kept up much of the organizing momentum and perhaps of most interesting will be the presence of international representatives of rank-and-file workers, peasants and indigenous people threatened by mining and hydroelectric projects. Many of the international participants are making stops in cities across the U.S. on their way to Seattle as part of an anti-WTO educational caravan.

There are drawbacks, however, to much of the content of the critiques being made of the WTO by those organizing for the meeting. Some of the more conservative critics charge that the power of the WTO infringes on sovereignty of member states. Others are arguing for the building of provisions to protect environmental and labor laws into the existing WTO structure. Still others are organizing on the basis of "fair trade" as a slogan.

What is absent from the critique of all of the forces organizing against the WTO is even the acknowledgment that what it represents is simply the current organizational form of international capital's drive to level all barriers to its self-expansion. Limits on capitalist accumulation imposed by nation states may help curb the degradation of the environment or ameliorate declines in wages and working conditions, but they can't seriously threaten the international system which is responsible for these things in the first place.

The human forces from around the world who will come together in Seattle are the ones who represent the real danger to the system that drives the WTO and its bureaucrats. Hopefully, these grassroots and rank-and-file activists will initiate cross-border relationships in Seattle that can provide a basis for discussion which transcends the narrow limitations of the official labor and environmental movements once the meeting has concluded.

A large and lively week of protest against the WTO will be an enormous opportunity to raise awareness of one of the concrete manifestations of the current moment of international capitalism. It will be a success if some participating in it come away with an interest in going beyond the limitations of many of the week's organizers.

Oct. 22 marches protest police brutality

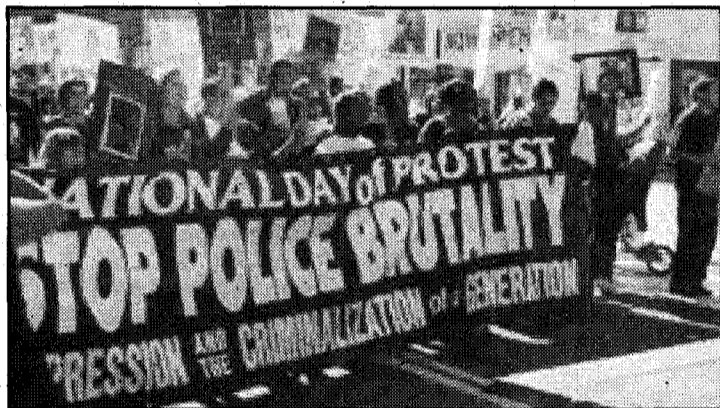
Los Angeles—Around 1,000 to 1,500 people marched and held a rally at Parker Center—police headquarters—here. The crowd was mostly young Black, Latino and white. About 50% of the crowd was made up of members of various left organizations. Family members of those killed by the police gave testimony.

One very important question from the crowd was why were they having this fourth annual demonstration at Parker Center with hundreds of police in riot gear and cameras on all roof tops? Why not down in the Black and Latino communities?

Anyone who has been subject to police abuse or was on probation would be afraid to come to Parker Center. They could be punished for violating parole if their picture was taken. The organizers seem to believe massive demonstrations are what is important and also that they must be held at Parker Center. They would certainly get more people if they were down in the community.

The current exposé of the LAPD Rampart Division where 200 or more cover-ups and lies by the police are clearly only the beginning. Anyone who is poor, Black, Latino has someone in their family who was framed or beaten by the police. It's happening everywhere in the U.S.

—Participant



Marchers in the Los Angeles rally against police brutality.

Chicago—Approximately 400 people attended this year's Oct. 22 demonstration. It was a very mixed crowd—Black and Latino young people from the city alongside many attendees of Amnesty International's regional convention which happened to be taking place at the same time. There were a number of very moving talks by family members who have lost loved ones to police violence, like George Morris and Gwendolyn Hogan.

There was less media present this year, but decent coverage could be found in the Black press and also in the Queer papers—a result of conscious outreach to those communities.

—Gerard Emmett

Pacifica Radio stifles free speech

Los Angeles—On Oct. 8 a spirited demonstration took place in front of listener-sponsored Pacifica Radio station KPFA by longtime listeners, subscribers and fired reporters and programmers.

The demonstration was held to protest the imposition of a gag rule by station management which prevents all programmers from airing grievances against management policies. Programmers are being instructed what to say and what not to say, just as in commercial radio.

In their drive to increase subscriptions and reach a wider audience, Pacifica's national board of directors has centralized power over the last ten years and shut out the voice of local programmers. Many grassroots programs have been replaced with watered down substitutes. Staff members have been fired or forced to quit and have been replaced with part-time, non-union-minded people. The few paid programmers have kept their silence on this issue.

Six months ago, a popular station manager at KPFA, KPFA's sister station in Berkeley, Cal., was terminated, as was a journalist who violated the gag rule. This brought 10,000 protesters into the city streets.

As protest grew within the station itself, management resorted to tactics which made it resemble the status quo Pacifica was founded to oppose.

—Free speech supporter

Youth are human, too

Memphis, Tenn.—I have experienced the revolutionary nature of daily one-on-one connections that we make with one another where we can model what healthy human relations are. For this reason, I have chosen to grit my teeth and obtain a degree in teaching despite my distrust of any so-called "educational" public institution. I just finished eight weeks of student-teaching eighth grade at a lower-middle-class, working-class, and racially mixed middle school.

As much as I disagreed with having 32 to 36 kids in a classroom, making them be quiet and sit for most of the day—I still believe that revolutionary activism can take place within public institutions if the teacher attempts to make it so. I believe it must take place. If the kids are going to be there, then so should we. These are the spaces that define and refine what a child will take on in the world. The more activists articulate their philosophy into action, the more revolution is understood, felt and loved.

I tried to convey to the students the importance of their words—words can change the world. As I encouraged the students to write what they wanted, students started volunteering to read their poetry aloud. A few sang their poems. Some students wrote they had never wanted to be in school in the first place, some wrote about escaping from their "school prison," and most students had a lot to say about the TLC song "Unpretty," because of its feminist message about being yourself and not tied down to your boyfriend's image of you.

I had some reporter friends come to class to discuss the power of newspapers, including Terry Moon from *N&L*. We read aloud the article "Police Harassment at Chicago School" because the same issue had come up in class. One student exclaimed, "Why do I have to read about police brutality in Chicago when the same thing is happening right here in Memphis?" I told him to send a letter to *N&L* and, if they print it, I'll send him a copy so that the students can see that there are people listening to what youth have to say. (see below).

Without me ever saying I was an anarchist, one 13-year-old boy asked me if I was one. Without ever talking about human liberation, one young lady wrote in her evaluation of my teaching: "Thank you for talking to us like we are human." That is what I want to do: treat people as they are—human.

—Kind Lady

I don't think officers should be able to harass students when they feel like it. What have we done to deserve this? Students have the right to walk on the street and not be harassed.

—Miracle

My response to police harassment is that it happens here as well as in Chicago. It happens in our schools, neighborhoods, and streets. On our streets we say: the streets ain't safe no more because of the police.

—Carlos

Tolerance for gays goal of 'It's Elementary'

Memphis, Tenn.—Last month, a public screening of the film "It's Elementary: Talking About Gay Issues in School" was held at the University of Memphis. The screening was co-sponsored by three local groups: U of M Students for Bisexual, Lesbian, and Gay Awareness; Memphis Area Gay Youth; and The Lesbian and Gay Coalition for Justice (LGCJ), a group dedicated to achieving lesbian and gay civil rights and to combating the agenda of the religious right. A special invitation was extended to the media, teachers, and school board members.

The film documented classes at various schools for elementary, junior high, and high school students that aimed to raise the students' consciousness about the humanity of gays and lesbians and to prevent stereotyping and violence. The students learned why it is wrong to use derogatory, anti-gay language and about the accomplishments of gay people. A little girl with two mothers spoke to a class of younger children, and a high school class asked a gay man and a lesbian non-sexual questions about their lives.

The purpose of showing the film, as the LGCJ stated, was "to educate the community about the issue of gay and lesbian youth in our public schools and the need to teach tolerance and respect for diversity in public education." It was also to encourage the public to petition the local PBS station to air the film on TV. Many PBS stations have not aired the film due to pressure from the religious Right, which has referred to both it and the classes that it documents as being "intellectual child molestation" and "an attempt to seduce children into thinking that the homosexual lifestyle is normal."

However, the issue of the right of individuals to hold religious views contrary to homosexuality was specifically addressed by the film. It made it clear that the goal of the classes was only to humanize gays and lesbians in the minds of the students. One teacher in the film stated that parents who morally oppose homosexuality could use the classes as a springboard for discussion with their children.

After the film, questions from the audience were answered by a panel composed of members of the three sponsoring groups, an educator, and a psychologist. Several members of the religious Right in the audience, including at least one who considered himself "ex-gay," said that, although they did not believe in the morality of homosexuality, they did have a positive response to the film.

—Adele

How to contact

NEWS & LETTERS COMMITTEES

CHICAGO	NEW YORK
59 E. Van Buren, Room 707 Chicago, IL 60605 Phone 312 663 0839 Fax 312 663 9069	P.O. Box 196 Grand Central Station New York, NY 10163 212 663 3631
MEETINGS Call for Information	MEETINGS Sundays, 6:30 p.m. Washington Square Church 133 W. 4th St. (Parish House parlor), Manhattan
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P.O. Box 29194 Los Angeles, CA 90029	1910 Madison Ave, PMB 59 Memphis, TN 38104
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FLINT, MI	
P.O. Box 3384, Flint, MI 48502	

INTERNET

Email **WORLD WIDE WEB**
nand@igc.org www.newsandletters.org

INTERNATIONAL MARXIST-HUMANISTS

ENGLAND

BCM Box 3514, London, England WC1N 3XX
http://members.aol.com/THEHOBGOBL/index.html

