

NOVEMBER, 1983



Charles Denby, Editor 1955-1983
Author of *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*

Below we print Charles Denby's last statement written for the 1983 *News and Letters Constitutional Convention*.

As you know, I have been ill, and just in case the doctor will not allow me to attend and address this Constitutional Convention, I wanted to say a few words to all of you about my thoughts and feelings at this moment in the life of our organization. I feel very strongly about what this Marx centenary means to me — and what Marxism means to me — a movement to change the world totally. This year we have taken big steps in that direction, historic steps.

First, we have finally in our hands the whole "trilogy of revolution". Anyone can see and read what Marxist Humanism has represented over nearly 30 years since our founding, since our first Constitutional Convention: All my life in the movement we have seen how many parties have turned Marx's philosophy into its opposite. But now we can say to everyone: "Here is Marx's philosophy of liberation," and we know that it is the path to freedom.

Second, we have published an expanded new edition of *American Civilization on Trial*. I was very glad that Raya's new essay in it took up Marx's view of the Black world, and our own work. We have always spoken about and practiced the two-way road between the U.S. and Africa in the ideas of freedom, and it is as clear in *American Civilization on Trial* as it is in *Philosophy and Revolution* and in *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*. But the reason I am most happy that it is being published now, is that it can help the movement reach a new stage.

I am thinking about the March on Washington. I was active in the 1943 March on Washington Movement. It was the greatest thing we had ever tried up to that time. Even though the Communist Party opposed it, the March idea spread everywhere across the country. But finally I was so sad when A. Philip Randolph compromised and called off the March. The March on Washington in 1963 was very different for two reasons: First because we went through with it and held it, with a quarter of a million people, despite a lot of pressure against the march, even from the President. But second, because I carried with me the new edition of *American Civilization on Trial* we had just published, with the true history of this country, including the story of 1943. And I sold it to many people. Now we are going again in 1983, with our new edition, not only because we want to get rid of Reagan, but because we will meet many people who are searching for a totally different way of life along with us.

One reason I feel certain of that is the reaction I experienced to the new edition of my own autobiography, *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*. You know when I was in the hospital I sold 25 or more copies, most to hospital workers. One woman came and visited me at home, and she said it was too bad I had got so old now, just when so much new was coming out of my life and thoughts. She said she had never known about Marx or his ideas before, but she wished she had read my book years ago.

The year coming up is the year our Marxist-Humanist organization will grow, because we will put our shoulders to the wheel. The bourgeoisie understands that idea very well. They push workers to get the most production. Workers understand it too. They have to live with it every day in the plant. But now I think it's about time all of us put our shoulders to the wheel for a different purpose — freedom. And we won't stop until we have a human society in this country and in this whole world. This is what we are all living for.

— Aug. 13, 1983

(Children born today have before them) "the most revolutionary period which human beings have ever had to live through. It is not good to be so old that one is capable only of foreseeing and not of seeing."

— Karl Marx to Jenny Marx, April 29, 1881