

Theory/Practice NEWS & LETTERS

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

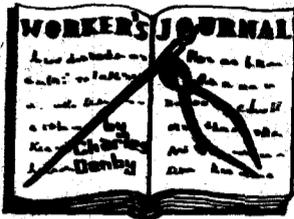
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Class, race divisions in S. Africa, U.S.



by Charles Denby, Editor

Author of *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*

I have been reading a series of articles on South African Blacks by Joseph Lelyveld, which appeared in the *New York Times*. He contrasted the economic advancement and lack of advancement of different groups of workers.

Timothy Zimu of Boksburg, South Africa, has a stereo system, a refrigerator and is about to buy a house. He takes home about \$150 a week. He is near the pinnacle of employment opportunity reached so far by

(Continued on Page 10)

Union leaders' concessions help Reaganomics expand army of unemployed

by Andy Phillips

From Bal Harbor, Fla., where the AFL-CIO leadership was meeting in annual convention, to Detroit, Mich., where UAW President Douglas Fraser and his union leadership was meeting with the Ford Motor Company, the message being sent to rank-and-file workers throughout the nation was loud and clear: the unions, instead of drawing up battle plans to fight company demands for wage and benefit cuts, were declaring a willingness to grant concessions.

The rising chorus of corporate demands for labor

concessions following the UAW's \$1.7 billion give-back to "save" Chrysler Corporation has constantly escalated, and is now sweeping the nation in a roar of reaction determined to wipe out previous labor gains as well as destroy what little power remains of the organized labor movement.

Huge concessions have already been wrung out of the workers in several major industries, such as steel, rubber and transportation, as well as in a growing number of service industries such as health care and education staffed by federal and local government employees.

Meanwhile, contracts covering 4.5 million workers will be negotiated this year. In addition to the auto workers, whose original contract was due to expire in September, others include workers in trucking, rubber, construction, teaching, public employment, agriculture, textiles and electrical equipment.

Although unions represent only one-fifth of the U.S. labor force, they nevertheless set wage and benefit patterns for the overwhelming majority of workers in non-union operations as well. However, non-union workers will be forced to take greater wage and benefit cuts than union employees, since organized workers still possess some power, even though reduced, to moderate the extent of the concessions. With no protection whatsoever, non-union workers will be at the complete mercy of their employers, who will undoubtedly take full advantage of the opportunity to slash employee costs.

(Continued on Page 8)

IN-PERSON REPORTS OF MONTGOMERY MARCH, P. 5



More than 5,000 civil rights activists marched down Dexter Avenue in Montgomery, Ala. to the Capitol completing the 160-mile journey that began in Carrollton and went through Selma.

ON THE INSIDE

- Revolutionary activity of Polish women
by Urszula Wislanka p. 2
- E. European revolt and Marx's Marxism
by Raya Dunayevskaya p. 4

An urgent appeal to readers for your help in continuing News & Letters

A grim winter of counter-revolution grips freedom fighters everywhere: in Poland under martial law; in Iran under Khomeini's whip; in El Salvador under the genocidal, U.S.-supported junta; and at home under Reaganomics, marked by ever-increasing militarization, ever-deepening unemployment and a never-ending drive to destroy every gain won through decades of struggle by rank-and-file workers, the Black Revolution, Women's Liberation and anti-war youth.

- Never was it more important to make sure that the voices of revolution-in-permanence, from below, be heard. The Polish workers have expressed the determination of freedom fighters everywhere in their declaration, defiantly emblazoned on the walls in Gdansk: "The winter is yours, but the spring will be ours!"

- Never was it more important for Marxist-Humanists to increase our organizational activity: in teach-ins on El Salvador and Poland; with rank-and-file workers like those putting out their Blue Sheet at GM South Gate; with anti-militarist youth in and out of the armed forces; with Women's Liberationists, whether as Feminists Against Militarism or making platforms for Marxist-Humanists like Urszula Wislanka to speak out in defense of Solidarnosc. An immediate need is to send out 1,000 copies of the last issue of N&L, in which Raya Dunayevskaya's special analysis of Poland's crisis shared the front page with the shocking article on the Haitian refugees' struggle and U.S. racism's concentration camp at Krome—which Caribbean freedom fighters in exile in Canada have asked us to spread to all we can reach.

- Never was it more important to keep alive a paper like News & Letters, edited by a Black production worker, as the only forum of its kind where workers, Blacks, women and youth speak for themselves—and become integral to the theoretical analysis of the crucial questions of our age of revolt. BUT WE CANNOT DO IT WITHOUT YOUR HELP!

At the very time Reaganomics has thrown so many of our supporters (workers and intellectuals alike) out of work—permanently in many cases—our organizational expenses have continued to soar. Our rent, postage, supplies, and printing bills have never been higher. Many of our readers have spontaneously sent extra donations with their subscription renewals or literature orders. Others have offered to become Sustaining Subscribers, pledging a definite sum on a monthly basis. Now we must ask all of our readers to help keep us alive.

In this issue of N&L you will find the stories of the new Selma marchers; the voices of the youth, determined not to let El Salvador become another Vietnam; an essay on the revolutionary Polish women as our commemoration of International Women's Day; and a Theory/Practice column by Raya Dunayevskaya that discloses the single dialectic upsurging from actual freedom struggles and from Marxist-Humanist thought during the past quarter century.

This year—on the eve of the 100th anniversary of Marx's death—our movement will have new editions of all three fundamental works of Marxist-Humanism: Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Phi-

losophy of Revolution will be published in early Fall; Marxism and Freedom and Philosophy and Revolution, each reprinted with a new Introduction by the author, will be off the press in late Spring. Because soaring prices of serious works like these put them out of the reach of many who would want to study them, we are establishing a special fund to help provide our works to libraries whose budgets have been so severely slashed by Reaganomics that they could not otherwise obtain them.

It is critical that the voice of Marxist-Humanism be heard. We ask you to help keep News & Letters alive. We ask you to help us expand our activities philosophically, politically and organizationally. PLEASE GIVE AS GENEROUSLY AS YOU CAN TO OUR 1982 SUSTAINING-ORGANIZING-PUBLISHING FUND! Clip the form below and send to:

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WOMAN AS REASON

Editor's Note: We are proud to devote "Woman as Reason" for International Women's Day, 1982, to the following essay by Urszula Wislanka, a young Polish feminist activist and Marxist-Humanist, and editor of Today's Polish Fight for Freedom.

by Urszula Wislanka

The celebration of International Women's Day this year may not, on the surface, appear to be directly related to the momentous events in Poland, on which the eyes of the entire world are focused. Yet it is precisely the revolutionary activity of the Polish women that both illuminates the depth and power of Solidarnosc as a movement striving to achieve a whole new society of "Bread and Freedom"—and, at the same time, reveals contradictions that need to be faced, by calling into question whether these women have been recognized as the great revolutionary force they are.

Indeed, none have focused on the women. Yet they have been crucial to the struggle from the very beginning, and remain so in the unyielding resistance to the counter-revolution that began the moment martial law was declared. The general strike in the Lenin Steel-works Plant in Cracow at the end of December was led by Andrzej Chudaszek and Halina Bortnowska—and that it was carried through to the end was attributed mainly to her. At the Wujek mine in Silesia, where one of the bloodiest confrontations occurred, the miners had been given an ultimatum to vacate the mine in one hour. Women immediately blocked the way, some lying down in front of the advancing army tanks. When they were swept away by a water cannon, other women picked up tear-gas grenades and threw them back at the police. In Gdansk, 3,000 women armed with flowers and Solidarity bulletins faced the tanks ready to crush the Lenin Shipyard gates. In Katowice, women blocked the way outside the occupied steel mill. And in the underground, Alina Pienkowska and Joanna Duda-Gwiazda remain among the leading activists, calling for continued resistance and describing events in the detention camps—such as the hunger strike of Anna Walentynowicz.¹

If we follow the dialectic of the events, we will see that, from the beginning of the movement, it is



women-worldwide

A group of women in London has formed a defense group to protest the pre-trial detention of writer-activist Jirina Siklova who has been held since May on a charge of subversion for circulating "opposition literature" within Czechoslovakia and abroad. Siklova, who has written several books and spoken publicly on the role of women, has been continually harassed since 1968 when she lost her job as a university professor for her support of the dissident movement. The Jirina Siklova Defense Group can be reached at Box 11, 130 Upper Street, London, XI, England.

(Information from Off Our Backs)

A group of ten women philosophy students at the University of Athens wants to begin "an independent magazine about the women's liberation movement." They are requesting information and correspondence from women in other countries. Please write Hariklia Tressou, Hrisostoyou Smirnis 90, Moschaton, Athens, Greece.

(Information from Big Mama Rag)

Support is growing among civil rights and women's groups for a young white woman, Kathy Blackburn, who is fighting for custody of her three-year-old son in the small Southern town of Millen, Ga. A judge granted custody of the boy to his paternal grandmother after Ms. Blackburn gave birth to a daughter fathered by a Black man, on the grounds that the town was not ready "for that sort of integration." Ms. Blackburn, who earns \$3.40 an hour in a poultry packing plant, has refused to leave Millen until she regains custody of her son.

The Women's Liberation Movement in Algeria has forced the government to withdraw their proposed "Family Code" which would have legalized polygamy and treated women as minors under the law. Women held mass demonstrations, demanded public debate and presented a 10,000-signature petition to the Assembly. Women who had been active in the struggle for Algerian independence demanded to know how a "socialist" government could propose such a blow to women's rights.

(Information from des femmes hebdo)

International Women's Day, 1982

The revolutionary activity of Polish women



Polish women shipyard workers, Gdansk.

not only as sparkplug or as leader, but as masses in motion that the women have been integral to this revolution—both as workers and intellectuals, and both as Force and as Reason.

FROM SPARK TO MASSES IN MOTION

The birth of Solidarity in 1980 was sparked by a strike at the Gdansk shipyards over the firing of Anna Walentynowicz, a crane operator who, each year, had placed a wreath at the gates where the workers were killed in the 1970 revolt. Throughout the course of the Gdansk strike which created Solidarity, women took part in all the activities.

Alina Pienkowska "thought of everything. She got the rubber stamp, issued passes, collected food from people, opened a place to accept gifts, made sure the Strike Committee had access to the broadcasting center. In a word, she took care of the administration of the strike."²

Joanna Duda-Gwiazda immediately started organizing support for strikers from people around the city: financial help, food, blankets, distribution of information.³ In a textile town, the first act of solidarity was organizing help for the many single mothers, taking care of children while the women were striking, recognizing financial difficulties of single mothers and organizing material help, establishing co-operatives of women taking turns standing in store lines.

In the universal demands formulated in Gdansk, not only did the workers demand the right to organize free trade unions, the right to strike, the end of censorship and freeing political prisoners, but also included better working conditions for health personnel (almost all women) as a way of assuring full medical care for everyone, adequate space in day-care centers and kindergartens, and the institution of three years paid maternity leave. These demands echoed across the country, and often were expanded upon. In Swidnik women demanded that the water pressure be increased so that water would reach up to the fourth floor (it currently stopped at the third floor). In another small town they demanded that the railroad schedule be changed to accommodate shift changes in the factory so they wouldn't have to wait more than an hour for the train. Outraged women not only exposed corrupt party officials and demanded their punishment, but also took over their villas for day-care centers. They challenged the spread of pollution in the cities, and ques-

tioned why day-care centers and schools were placed next to the factories producing toxic wastes.

THREE DECADES OF EAST EUROPEAN REVOLT

Women were also central in working out one of Solidarity's most urgent questions: the form of its own organization. The concept is now known as "horizontal solidarity," and includes all employees from a particular geographic area. The first known instance of horizontal solidarity happened in Swidnik where the women health workers in the local clinic took their demands to the helicopter factory workers saying: Since we're too small to strike—and those who would suffer the most are the patients—include our demands with yours. The workers did, and in the process discovered that there are a lot of issues people raise which affect more than just a particular plant. Thus horizontal solidarity was a way of ensuring that the whole of society was included in the organizational expression of the movement, that was not separated from its political, i.e., democratic character.

The form of organization Solidarity was opposing was the Communist PZPR (Polish United Workers Party), which has tried to rule by enforcing the one "cure" it has for the ailing economy: raising food prices. When the government announced, in July, 1981, that it would need to raise food prices by as much as 400 percent (which they are now trying to enforce again), the women were the first to oppose it. Women in Lodz sat in with massive wildcats and dared to hold street demonstrations. Over 10,000 women, including children and grandmothers, with a cordon of men around the outside for protection, demonstrated for a week. Their banners proclaimed "Hungry of the world, unite!" thus both extending and deepening the slogan that has marked the East European revolt ever since the East German workers first demanded both "Bread and Freedom" in 1953.

That revolt has continued for almost 30 years. In 1956 it became actual revolution in Hungary. In 1968 the demand in Czechoslovakia was for "Socialism with a human face." Protests and massive strikes erupted in Poland in 1970 and again in 1976.

It was in the wake of the 1976 Polish revolt in Radom and Ursus that a new link between workers and intellectuals was forged when a new organization arose called KOR—Committee to Defend Workers. After all of the imprisoned workers were freed, KOR continued its activity, publishing its own uncensored bulletins and helping to publish Robotnik, a paper where workers spoke for themselves. Again, it was three women—Helena Luczywo, Ludwika Wujec and Irena Woycicka—who took responsibility for systematically writing, editing and producing Robotnik.⁴ When Tygodnik Solidarnosc (Solidarity Weekly) interviewed them, here is what Irena Woycicka had to say about working out that relationship: "To help the Radom and Ursus work-

(Continued on Page 3)

1. The Washington Post, Jan. 17, 1982, has an eyewitness report of the events at the Wujek mine. For a description of the most recent events in Poland, which also brings out the new forms of resistance, see "Counter-revolution drives the revolution underground; the resistance continues" by Raya Dunayevskaya, News & Letters, Jan.-Feb., 1982.

2. Quoted from "Glos Anny" (Anna's Voice) in Gwiazda Polarna (Northern Star), Nov. 10, 1981. This weekly paper is published in Stevens Point, Wisc. For more of Walentynowicz's own description of the beginning of that strike, see the "Woman as Reason" column by Terry Moon, News & Letters, Jan.-Feb. 1982.

3. See the eyewitness account reported by Ewa Milewicz, a member of KOR and NOWA, in Biuletyn Informacyjny, Aug.-Sept. 1980. This paper was published by KOR outside the censored press.

4. For reprints from Robotnik and other articles, see Today's Polish Fight for Freedom, a bilingual pamphlet which I edited. It was published by News & Letters in the spring of 1980 before events exploded in Poland.

Polish women's activity reveals depth of, contradictions in, Solidarnosc

(Continued from page 4)

ers financially and legally was relatively easy. But to understand each other, to get information—that was much more difficult."

By working out, on the basis of workers' own stories, such documents as the Charter of Workers' Rights, the intellectuals who edited *Robotnik* helped lay the ground for the future development of Solidarity.

PEASANT WOMEN AND RURAL SOLIDARITY

The uncensored press proliferated, the ideas of "social self-defense" spread over Poland. When the government in the summer of 1978 introduced a new retirement tax for farmers, the peasant women took social self-defense in their own hands. First they chased off the tax collectors. Listen to this report:

"On 25 June in Gorny and Ostrowek there appeared a tax collector who took property from the boycotting farmers . . . When he came to Kowalski's farm he saw women from the whole village at the doorstep. They didn't look at him all too favorably and there was some talk about some sickles which each household has. What happened is not exactly known, but what is known, is that though the tax collector got there, he never entered . . ."⁵

Then, to make sure the government heard how angry they were, they organized a milk strike—they refused to deliver milk to the state collection points. The strike was entirely successful and only after that did the women go to their local priest asking him for help in organizing the social self-defense. The peasant movement, crowned with the recognition of Rural Solidarity, had its beginning in the activity of those women.

Modeling their activity on KOR's "flying university," where the intellectuals would go and deliver lectures, wherever and whenever it was possible, on subjects frowned on by the government (such as history), the Farmers' Self-Defense Committee decided to set up the People's University in January, 1979. It was accomplished with the cooperation of intellectuals from Warsaw, particularly Marzena Gorszyk-Kecik, who was a major power behind the initiative and subsequently was charged with organizing the meetings of the university. Rural Solidarity, built on these foundations, has never lost its relation to the workers, so that after the declaration of martial law, they brought food to the workers in occupied factories. That aid to the resistance was given despite the church's repeated calls for "calm."

But then, some opposition to the church has always existed in the workers' and particularly women's activity. In October, 1981, the women textile workers in Zyrardow refused to follow the church's advice to postpone their demands and end their strike. They struck because there was no food—a strike the government declared "political" and therefore illegal. The women refused to recognize any distinction between political and economic despite threats from the government and the church's appeal that they go back to work. They even defied their own leadership, which, fearful of the consequences, had advised them to stop their strike.

Support Korean workers sit-in

San Francisco, Cal. — In mid-January, women textile workers in Seoul, south Korea began a sit-in at their workplace, demanding collective bargaining and the reinstatement of union executives fired in December.

Using the strict anti-labor laws passed by the Chun Doo Hwan government in 1980, the Won Poong Textile Company is attempting to break the Won Poong Textile Union. This textile union is the last democratic union remaining in south Korea.

The owner of Won Poong has ignored all attempts at collective bargaining. On Dec. 8, 1980, 49 members of the union were detained by Korean troops. Fourteen of them were fined and four were sent to military "purification camps." On Christmas Eve, 1981, two women members of the union's executive committee were fired.

This crackdown on the union is only one of many ways that the government, with U.S. aid, is trying to intimidate the workers' movement. Several weeks ago, a group of students, writers and workers were sentenced to life imprisonment and 14 other defendants sentenced to similarly unjust sentences for the "crime" of talking to each other and reading or possessing books such as Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and Erich Fromm's *Socialist Humanism*.

The Korea Support Committee (Bay Area) urges readers to support the Won Poong workers and the "Democratic Labor Federation" defendants. Please send letters and telegrams urging that the south Korean government stop the imprisonment and harassment of workers and intellectuals to: President Chun Doo Hwan, Blue House, 1 Sejong-ro, Chongno-ku, Seoul, Korea.

—Korea Support Committee

FEMINISM VS. THE CHURCH

With the tremendous activity of women there also had arisen the beginnings of a Women's Movement. Sigma was the first of Poland's feminist groups, organized in November, 1980. They intended to publish their own newspaper, telling the history of women and their ideas. Their demands included equal pay, development of social programs for women and increase in men's responsibility for their children. As for abortion, Krystyna Kowalewska, one of the founders of Sigma, puts it clearly: "Many of our demands conflict with the position of the Church. For example, abortion. The Church has clearly spoken against it. We can't accept that."⁶

Abortion has been used as a political weapon between the church and the state with complete disregard for women's freedom. The Church opposes abortion, while the state does not allow any other forms of birth control, forcing women to go through an endless series of abortions. The Russian feminists' description of abortion clinics as "mince-meat machines" is also true in Poland. The feminists made the question revolutionary by making it a question of human choice, opposed to both church and state manipulations.

Although the appearance of so fledgling a group as Sigma is by no means a pivotal point in the Polish events today, it is another sign of the new revolutionary force women represent, and appears "minor" only if we forget history so completely that each time something arises, it appears to be for the first time. The truth is that women in Poland have been both revolutionary force and Reason throughout their whole history. That is seen not only in the fact that the 1863 war against Russia was known as the "Women's War,"⁷ but in the life and work of such magnificent Polish women as Rosa Luxemburg—one of the greatest of all revolutionary internationalists. It was she who so appreciated Mass Strike that she made a category out of it after the 1905 Revolution. And it is her dimension as feminist which has first now been disclosed.⁸

The same kind of blinders that keep some from seeing the importance of Luxemburg's feminist dimension, are also worn by those who do not see what women's participation in today's Polish fight for freedom means. We have to confront what it means that the 18-man Presidium of Solidarity was just that—all men.

CONTRADICTIONS AND CONFRONTATIONS

The women of Poland, as everywhere, know reality in a way that men don't. Listen to a woman from Lodz, interviewed July 30, 1981: "Take my husband: he's always worked on the first shift. He never waits in line. He knows there is nothing (in the shops), I told him. But he isn't really informed. He can only say the refrigerator is empty. Men don't like to wait in line . . . It's like with the salaries. Lodz receives the least because they give us light industry. Which light industry? We work in clouds of dust, in humidity, under an infernal noise! . . . They think that because we're women, they can pay us less! . . . Lodz and the light industry of Silesia have the lowest salaries in the country."⁹

Or listen to Alina Pienkowska: "In August, 1980

5. *Glos* (Voice), Aug.-Sept. 1978. *Glos* was one of the uncensored papers published in the aftermath of the 1976 revolt.

6. *Connexions*, May 1, 1981.

7. "In the (1863) insurrection . . . women proved to be skilled conspirators and comrades-in-arms. . . . For two decades the vestals had been turning into warriors; they demanded recognition not only of their womanly virtues but also their ability to think and to work . . . one of the first mass strikes in Warsaw erupted after women laborers and prostitutes had been ordered by the czarist police to undergo identical hygienic checkups." See *Ezbieta Ettlinger, Comrade and Lover: Rosa Luxemburg's Letters to Leo Jogiches* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1979).

8. A new work by Raya Dunayevskaya, available now only in manuscript form, explores the integrality of Luxemburg's dimensions, as revolutionary, as feminist, as thinker, and its significance for our movement. *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* will be published in Fall, 1982 simultaneously by Humanities Press in the U.S. and Harvester in Britain.

9. *L'Alternative*, Nov.-Dec. 1981.

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the women in Gdansk were very active in building Solidarity and in the strike . . . They fought for the rights of all human beings. Naturally an improvement of the position of women depends on the improvement of the general economic situation. But we have not been able to win our concrete demands that are important to us women . . . Taken all in all, I have come to the conclusion that we must struggle more for the women's cause."

In the course of the Polish revolution, women have certainly been the most active, most militant, most critical, most revolutionary of forces. The present discussion merely scratches the surface of the wealth and depth of women's participation in and contribution to that movement. Yet something is surely missing when women's activity and thinking has remained almost invisible for so long. The shortsightedness to women as force and as Reason shows a shortsightedness to revolution, to seeing precisely who is reaching for completely new relations. That is what must be confronted if we are to capture all the new forms of revolt that are sure to come from Solidarity's underground activities, and that are critical to creating that truly new world.

Kaiser clericals on strike

Oakland, Cal. — Members of OPEU Local 29 at Kaiser Hospitals and facilities in the East Bay narrowly voted down our proposed contract on Feb. 15, and 1,400 clerical workers are now on strike.

It's hard for people to understand, but wages aren't the issue. We've pretty much accepted 11 and 9 percent yearly increases. The major issues are that we want a 21-month contract and better pension provisions.

There are 12 unions at Kaiser, all of them with different contract expiration dates. SEIU Local 250, which represents 7,000 hospital workers, is the largest union, and their contract came up last November. It was clear that we would get the same thing they did. Now we want to break that pattern, and go in together and talk about things that affect all of us. Our employer would rather die than let this happen.

Our pension benefits haven't changed since we won them in a strike ten years ago. We're asking for health and welfare benefits for those who want to retire at 62, with a full pension at 65. Kaiser offered us what we already had — a full pension at 65.

This strike might be difficult for us. Some of our members went home from the strike meeting, to find their husbands had been laid off by the plant closing at GM Fremont. Another problem is that people can't find work through the temporary agencies because of the recession. Even our union hiring hall doesn't have jobs.

The other unions haven't yet given us full support. So far the nurses have left it to a matter of "individual conscience." We are appealing to them because their contract is up next year, and they are very aware of the comparable work strike in San Jose. Next Monday we will have a Solidarity Day and we will ask other unions not to cross our line.

—Striking clerical worker

Publishers' anti-union plots

New York, N.Y.—I was interested to see a story recently in the *Village Voice* about a one-day seminar designed to give advice on how to maintain a "union-free environment" in the publishing field. The fee to attend was \$125 a head, and the press was barred.

For one-and-a-half years, I've worked in a "union-free environment," a company employing 150, that publishes technical journals, ranging in subscription price from \$60 to \$900 yearly.

When they doubled my work-load and increased my responsibilities, I asked my supervisor for a raise. The company decrees wage increases only once a year, with no consultation or negotiation with the workers. I was refused, with explanations ranging from the fact I had taken a two-month leave-of-absence without pay, and would "probably" become part-time to attend school, to the "fact" that business was "bad."

All the men in my department are supervisors; women are at most "assistants." One Black woman has been employed here six years and has no title, yet a man here for one-and-a-half years is now a supervisor.

Why is it that there is about one supervisor for every two or three workers? I, for example, know nearly every procedure in my department, and often have to correct these "managers."

A woman in my department, an ardent worker, sometimes must miss a day of work, or come in late, because she has a small child to care for. Great as she is, this is held against her. She receives no recognition for her efforts, and will never get promoted.

—"Union-free" worker

THEORY / PRACTICE 25 years of East European revolt and of the re-creation of Marx's Marxism

by Raya Dunayevskaya
Author of **PHILOSOPHY AND REVOLUTION**
and **Marxism and Freedom**

(This year—the eve of the 100th anniversary of Karl Marx's death—Humanities Press in the U.S. and Harvester Press in England will publish Raya Dunayevskaya's new work, **Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution**. It will appear in early Fall. In Spring they will also republish **Marxism and Freedom and Philosophy and Revolution**, each with a new Introduction by the author. Below are brief, selected excerpts from a lecture on all three works in relationship to the Polish events, which was presented by the author on Feb. 14, and which she had entitled: "From Revolution to Revolution to Revolution — in Actuality, in Thought, in Vision."—Charles Denby)

It may sound stratospheric to give a talk called "From Revolution to Revolution to Revolution," when we are witnessing a counter-revolution as brutal as that against the Polish people by their own state-capitalist rulers, propped up by Russia, and, on our own continent, the genocide against the Salvadoran people by a junta Reagan is not only propping up but training in that genocide. Nevertheless, it is not stratospheric. The truth is that we cannot forget that, for 18 long months, the Polish workers, women and youth have been creating a union that is not just a union, but combines economics, politics and ideology. Nor can we forget that, before Poland, there was the Iranian Revolution. Between them, they opened so many new doors to the transformation of reality that they have given us a different vision of the future.

Let us take one single district—Silesia—one of the most active not only in 1980, but in 1970. It was there that many lives were taken when the counter-revolution opened its attack on Dec. 13. But you cannot kill the idea of freedom; you can only drive it underground when a revolution is that deep. And it is precisely that depth, and that concreteness, that both allows us to see a bit of the future, and makes it necessary to turn back 137 years, to that same district of Silesia when it was not the miners but the weavers who were in revolt. Because Marx had discovered a whole new continent of thought and of revolution, and named his philosophy a "new Humanism," he was able to see in that weaver's revolt a new stage of revolution that challenged private capitalism.

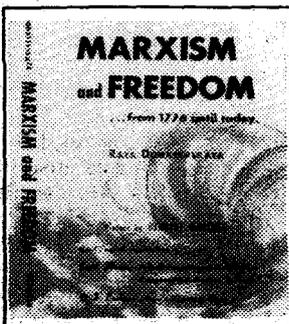
PHILOSOPHY BECOMES CONCRETE for each age in a new way. I had begun to study the nature of the Russian economy as state-capitalism when the world was suddenly confronted with the Hitler-Stalin Pact. By the time of Stalin's death in 1953, the study became not just an analysis of the monstrosity Russia had become but a search for a philosophy of liberation as well as for the struggles that would be fighting against totalitarian state-capitalism. When the 1953 East German revolt brought Marx's 1844 Humanist Essays onto the historic stage with its slogan "Bread and Freedom," it illuminated the struggle against Communist totalitarianism as a struggle against both economic exploitation and political tyranny. Theoretically, too, Marx's new Humanism had to be made concrete for our age. That search, for me, began several weeks before the East German uprising, with three letters on Hegel's Absolute Idea I wrote in 1953.

Their pivotal point was the concept that the Absolute Idea meant not only a new unity of theory and practice, but a movement from practice to theory. It was this breakthrough on the Absolute Idea that presented the challenge for a new relationship of theory to practice and provided the vantage point for the emergence of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S. in two ways:

1) By no means had it first appeared in our age. It had always characterized that relationship of objective to subjective.

Specifically, our analysis of the immediate situation became the form for viewing all historic struggles from 1776 to our day and determined the structure of **Marxism and Freedom**.

2) My translation of Marx's Humanist Essays became the first to be published in English when they were included as an Appendix to **Marxism and Freedom**.



1978

WHAT BECAME MOST exciting in 1979, when the Iranian revolution erupted, was that some of the young revolutionaries not only began to translate into Farsi

Marx's Humanist Essays as they found them presented in **Marxism and Freedom**, but decided to translate also the chapter on "Worker and Intellectual at a Turning Point in History: 1848-1861." They didn't need help in being opposed to Khomeini, but they felt they would not be able to win if their opposition was only activity and not philosophy.

1848 had become a crucial point of reference also for those who participated in the 1905-07 Russian-Polish Revolution. It is this which I deal with in my latest book on **Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution**. Luxemburg saw, through her experiences in that revolution, that it wasn't the leadership of the German Social-Democracy but the masses in motion who transformed her little Polish party of "seven and a half" people into a mass organization of 30,000 overnight. She also saw new forms of revolt: the General Mass Strike of trade unions whose demands were not only economic, but completely political.

In 1907, when the Russian revolutionaries held a Congress in London, it was not only the events of 1905 but their relationship to 1848 that was up for discussion. It was Luxemburg who said: Yes, 1848 was very great, but something was new in 1905. It was not only that politics and economics had been united in the General Mass Strike. It was that 1905 was not the last of the 19th century, but the first of the 20th century revolutions—with many more to follow.

* * *

THE 1960s PRESENTED US with a similar problem: How are the new rebellions of our day—of the youth, Blacks, women, the Third World—related to the Marxism of Marx? As we listened to the new voices from below, we felt a compulsion to "translate" Marx's Marxism for our age. It was the period, also, of the sudden appearance of the Sino-Soviet conflict and of our raising the question: Could there be war between two state-capitalist societies calling themselves Communist?

Just as a new chapter on that Sino-Soviet conflict was added to a new edition of **Marxism and Freedom**—and was preceded by the pamphlet, **Nationalism, Communism, Marxist-Humanism and the Afro-Asian Revolution**—so **News & Letters** published **American Civilization on Trial**, an analysis of American history from its earliest days. There we contrasted the triangular trade of slaves, between Africa, the West Indies and the U.S., to the triangular exchange of the ideas of freedom. At the same time, **News & Letters** published a whole host of new pamphlets—from **Workers Battle Automation to Freedom Riders Speak for Themselves** and **The Free Speech Movement and the Negro Revolution**—where the new voices of the youth, workers, Black revolutionaries in the U.S. as well as in Africa, could be heard.

In a way, all these pamphlets could be considered a "second book" on Marxist-Humanism in the context of an actually developing new revolution from below.

* * *

ONE HISTORIC FACET keeps us returning to the question of Poland. In Marx's day it was the 1863 rebellion which became ground for establishing the First Workingmen's International Association in 1864. When that period came to a climax with the 1871 Paris Commune, Marx did more than just refer to the Poles as the greatest fighters of the Commune. He found further illumination for his **Capital** in the chapter on the fetishism of commodities, even as the Civil War and the struggle for the 8-hour day had led him to restructure his greatest work.

In our day, it is again the Polish struggle for freedom that so integrates the objective and subjective needs that it eliminates the division between theory and

practice. I am especially proud of the chapter on East Europe in **Philosophy and Revolution**, which begins with a description of Poland, December 1970 that reads as if it were describing 1980, including even the city, Gdansk. The reason it can sound so current is because so many East European dissidents helped me to write that chapter. But that is not the point now. The point today is what to do now that the counter-revolution has moved to crush that revolution.

It is easy to express our solidarity with Solidarity in the form of demonstrations or sending food. What is not as easy is to grapple with the also-needed critique. What did it mean for Jacek Kuron to think that, if they had a "self-limiting revolution" then maybe they could win? The counter-revolution will not stay its hand just because you say you don't really mean an all-out revolution. They know that, once unleashed, the masses in motion will move to full freedom. What must be ended is the separation of theory from practice.

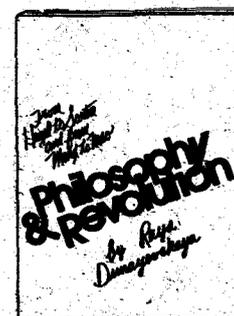
It is such concrete life-and-death struggles as these that make it necessary for us to dig into what Hegel meant by "second negativity" and what Marx meant by "revolution in permanence." It is precisely that which is the thesis of the new book.

WE MUST SKIP A good deal of the new book, both as it concerns Rosa Luxemburg and today's Women's Liberation Movement and concentrate, instead, now that we have all of Marx's major works, on what is not only new but especially unique in Part Three of the work: "Karl Marx—from Critic of Hegel to Author of Capital and Theorist of the Revolution in Permanence." We will see there, for the first time, that two years before Marx broke with bourgeois society, he had, in his doctoral thesis of 1841, already begun the search for where to begin anew when you break with Hegel's idealism and want to create an entirely new unity of idealism and materialism as you turn to the real world and the workers' actual battles.

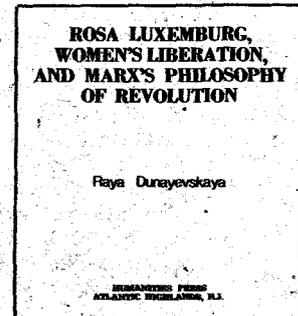
We will also see there, in Marx's study of Ancient Society, not only a fourth form of society, the Asiatic Mode of Production; not only a discovery of Primitive Communism; and not only a new view of Women's Liberation; but so sharp a distinction from his closest collaborator, Engels, as to re-evaluate the whole question of post-Marx Marxism. And for the first time, we will return from Marx to Hegel—on, however, Marx's new ground of movement from below as well as the self-determination of the Idea for one's own age—and see how this means taking on the responsibility for the task of our age: the transformation of reality. Permit me, therefore, to quote my conclusion:

"It isn't because we are any 'smarter' that we can see so much more than other post-Marx Marxists. Rather it is because of the maturity of our age . . . Only live human beings can re-create the revolutionary dialectic forever anew. And these live human beings must do so in theory as well as in practice. It is not a question of meeting the challenge from practice but also being able to meet it from the self-development of the Idea, the deepening of theory to the point where it reaches Marx's concept of the philosophy of 'revolution in permanence.'

"What is needed is a new unifying principle, on Marx's ground of humanism, that truly alters both human thought and human experience. Marx's **Ethnological Notebooks** are an historic happening that proves, 100 years after he wrote them, that Marx's legacy is no mere heirloom, but a live body of ideas and perspectives that is in need of concretization. Every moment of Marx's development, as well as the totality of his works, spells out the need for 'revolution in permanence.' This is the absolute challenge to our age."



1973



1982

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CRISIS IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY
by Raya Dunayevskaya
coming in the April issue of News & Letters

Marchers demand freedom for Wilder, Bozeman; Voting Rights Act extension

Editor's Note: Contingents of Black and white students came from as far away as the University of Pennsylvania and Howard University, as well as from schools in the South such as Tuskegee, Talladega, Alabama State, Augusta and Selma State University to march in Montgomery, Ala. The Afro-American Students Association at the predominantly white University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa was denied permission to use the student government van to take students. Below we print interviews conducted by News & Letters with Gardenia White, a Lowndes County, Ala. resident, and with John Hulett, the first Black sheriff ever elected in Lowndes County. John Alan in his "Black-Red View" column discusses the context in which the march was held.

Gardenia White

Lowndes County, Ala. — We had 5,000 or more marching in downtown Montgomery yesterday. Four thousand at the Edmund Pettus Bridge. I took up with the march in Lowndes County. There were 2,000 to 3,000 in the march in Selma.

It was a beautiful march. It was warm, it was loving and caring, and everybody was fired up. We had whites, we had Blacks, and we had Buddhists who marched from Selma to Montgomery.

WE DID WHAT we wanted to do. Hopefully, our walk was not in vain. We had so many young people and quite a few old. It enthused me to see our young people be about something; to want to do something, cause that's what it's going to take. It's going to take the young people to get out here. That's what we're fighting and struggling for, because if we don't fight now about voting rights then in the future they won't have any voting rights.

Just as important is freeing the two women, Julia Wilder and Maggie Bozeman. We marched from Pickens County (where they were arrested and convicted). We've got to do something. It's so cruel to put them behind bars.

But this is all because they want to stop the Voting Rights Act. Maybe it is intended to wake people up. We're too careless and think we've got it made when we don't have anything. It is time to be revived.

The young people on the march were very enthusiastic. They were concerned about freedom and freeing these two women to continue the voting rights struggle. They were just inspiring. It was similar to the Selma to Montgomery march in the 1960s. I was on that one.

The Klan was trying to frighten us. But they changed their mind about marching. We didn't have trouble at all.

IN LOWNDES COUNTY the unemployment rate has been high. Right now there are a lot of young people walking the streets because they can't find work. If they're hired today, they're fired tomorrow. It's bad and we're going through a lot of changes. I know it's rough on the young people because it makes them do a lot of things that they wouldn't do if they had a job. The sad part is that Black people don't realize that often they aren't even counted in those unemployment figures. We're not even recognized.

We can't even get a water system in the town of Whitehall. Maybe if we could, we could later get in some kind of factories to supply people with jobs. But if we don't have a water system, we won't be able to get any kind of factories in here.

We've got to keep marching and if it takes more marching, I think people are ready and willing to sacrifice whatever it takes. It's not a matter of what we need, we've got to have it.

John Hulett

Lowndes County, Ala. — When the march came through our county I coordinated feeding people, finding places for people to sleep and providing meeting places for them.

On the march itself there were a lot of young people. If the schools were out, we would have had more than there were. We had a lot of school buses that took loads of them to Montgomery yesterday. My daughter who is 13 went.

THE MARCHERS TALKED quite a bit about the two women who had been convicted for voting fraud in getting people to vote for candidates by absentee voting. It was said that what they did was illegal. But 98 percent of the people who bother working elections have been doing the same thing all along, white or Black. If you have a person that can't read or write, you go out and say, "Look, I would like for you to vote for a candidate." They don't know people by name, so they say, "go ahead and do it." I feel strongly within my heart that these people haven't done anything more wrong than the average person who works for the election. To me, it's just one of those political things to stop Black folks from getting involved in politics.

I've known Mrs. Bozeman (one of the convicted women) for years and she's a real strong person. I met her in SCLC (Southern Christian Leadership Conference). She's a school teacher. In Pickens County, it's just like it used to be in Lowndes County. When a Black person tries to move out front, they try to stop them. Nowhere in the state of Alabama would they take a white woman and put her in the penitentiary at



Maggie Bozeman and Julia Wilder

the age of these two women—even if they found them guilty.

LET ME TELL YOU what they've done to these two women. They put them in the penitentiary for a couple of days. Macon County was able to get them out somehow and put them in private living quarters there. One of them is working in a day care center and one is teaching in a senior citizens program.

There is a new group—actually a coalition of all groups—and they want to free the women, and give their complete rights back and to allow them back to their home county. That's what the march is all about. It's for two things—to keep the Voting Rights Act alive and to free those people, total freedom, with no criminal charges against them.

Anti-Reagan protest

Minneapolis, Minn. — Activism against the Reagan Administration is on the rise in Minnesota. We saw a sign of this in early February at the demonstration that took place in Minneapolis when Reagan came here for a \$500 a plate fund-raising dinner for Minnesota's Republican Senator David Durenburger.

Reagan spoke following the dinner, defending his 1983 budget proposal. But the effects of his 1982 cutbacks are being felt by people now, in less social services and higher unemployment in Minnesota. Anger at the Reagan Administration's policies brought out over 4,000 people to stand in sub-zero temperatures for nearly three hours. The rally was endorsed by over 70 organizations. Speakers represented a variety of concerns and talked mainly about the cutbacks that different people are experiencing.

Most did not go beyond the cutbacks to look toward finding solutions to the problems this economic and governmental system has created. But one woman did say that we should remember that simply getting the Democrats back into office won't really change a thing. A lot of the protesters were occupied with booing the Reagan supporters who made the mistake of choosing that route to get into the building where the fund-raiser was being held.

What impressed me was the wonderful variety of people who came out to this rally — older people as well as children, union members, many other workers including teachers, gays and lesbians, Blacks, feminists, disabled people and Native Americans. In the discussion around me people were talking in much broader terms than just single issues. This was also reflected in many of the picket signs: "Racist Sexist Anti-Gay Reagan Out of Office." "Our Kids Can't Eat Missiles," "U.S. Out of El Salvador, End the Arms Race."

Even though this demonstration was not well organized, it did establish the fact that large numbers of people want an alternative to the people currently in power. A number of new groups are starting here, including Women Against Military Madness. These kind of activities could well be the beginning of protest on a much larger scale.

—News & Letters reader

BLACK-RED VIEW

by John Alan

The conviction of Julia Wilder and Maggie Bozeman on a trumped up charge of forging signatures on 39 absentee ballots of elderly and illiterate Blacks, in 1978 in Pickens County, Alabama, by an all-white jury, and their sentencing to five and four years in prison, respectively, has said more than words can express about the persistence of racism in the USA. Ms. Wilder, age 69, is president of a Pickens County voters group and an officer of the local Southern Christian Leadership Conference, while Maggie Bozeman, age 51, is president of the local chapter of the NAACP, and a schoolteacher who got fired from her position after the conviction.

Alabama's judicial system is well aware that these women are not guilty as charged and that the unprecedented stiff sentences given to them was not for any criminal guilt but as "punishment for their opposition" to the racist policies of their hometown.

PICKENS COUNTY, ALA.

Pickens County is one of Alabama's "unreconstructed" counties, where the overwhelming majority of the Black population toils for minimum wages in the cotton mills and lumberyards, while the seats of power remain lily-white—although 42 percent of the population is Black. It is a county where the whites in power act as if the Voting Rights Act of 1965 never existed and the Civil Rights Movement never happened.

Ms. Bozeman and Ms. Wilder were determined to set the record straight! They organized and encouraged the Black population to vote although no Black has ever been elected. They led protests to get the unpaved roads on the Black side of town paved. The roads got paved. They fought for pay raises for the Black sanitation workers. They got the raise. They organized a boycott of a large grocery chain. Black personnel got hired. In short, they were making the county's business the business of Black people. It is for this reason that these two courageous Black women are in jail. But even there they refuse to remain silent, both are eager to get back to Pickens County and carry on their work, and as Ms. Wilder puts it "... as long as I have my tongue I will encourage people to vote."

The outrageous imprisonment of these motivated women—even under the conditions of the work-release program that Alabama's Governor Fob James negotiated due to pressure from Blacks, protest marches, publicity and voices of indignation from both Black and white—and the attempt in the U.S. Senate to water down or scuttle the Voting Rights Act of 1965, have brought into sharp focus the fact that freedom has to be fought for and defended at every point in history as long as racism and class divisions exist.

That very idea must have been in the thoughts of many of those who marched across Edmund Pettus Bridge in Alabama, Feb. 14, 1982, calling for the extension of the Voting Rights Act and protesting the conviction of Ms. Bozeman and Ms. Wilder. It was only a relatively short 17 years ago that demonstrators for civil rights were brutally attacked by "lawmen" on that very same bridge.

FREEDOM IS NOT A LEGACY

That freedom is not a legacy but that which must be fought for by each generation was expressed concretely by the placards the present day marchers carried: "Bring The Movement Back!"; "Jobs, Justice, Jobs!"; and, "Save The Voting Rights Act!"

There lies a great urgency behind these protests. Reagan's "new federalism" has set out to punish both labor and Blacks. The administration is determined to roll back, as soon as it can be done without appearing blatantly racist, the civil rights that Blacks achieved.

The word is out that this government is "lenient" on racism. The proverbial sheriff was going fishing. The racist attempt to lift the restrictions on tax exemptions for private discriminatory schools was halted by Black and liberal opposition. Reagan tried to wriggle out of that one by some "metaphysical talk" about how he is not a racist, he believes that only the legislature can pass laws against racism.

We Blacks can stop this new wave of reaction by acting as a social force, together with other social forces, as we did in the 1960s. And, it is just because we did act as a social force that we were able to give a new meaning, and a new dimension to the idea of freedom. It caused Martin Luther King to say: "Only when the people themselves begin to act are rights on paper given life blood."

POLISH RESISTANCE — AND IDEAS — CONTINUE

What attracted me most in Raya Dunayevskaya's magnificent analysis of Poland (Jan.-Feb. N&L) and what distinguishes it from all other analyses I've read, was the manner in which she brought in the question of productivity, emphasizing the fact that low productivity is not a sign of the "backwardness" of the workers, but a measure of their revolt. At the same time, she did not leave out the force of revolutionary theory, pointing out that the greatest illusion of all was Jacek Kuron's idea that a "self-limiting revolution" could stay the hand of the counter-revolution. Nothing could be further from the truth. As you pointed out, it ended up being "self-paralyzing" instead.

Intellectual
Chicago

It's surely difficult to give an evaluation of the present situation in Poland, but my friends and I think that the road to socialist freedom (whatever it may be) is now gone. Forever? I don't believe there is any possibility to make the economic and cultural situation there any better without a change in the Soviet Union itself. For the Left in our country the new situation caused a shock. We hoped Solidarity could exist longer and gain more freedom, workers' control, etc.

What to do now? What can we do ourselves here in Holland for the people in Poland? Not much I think. But we are trying in our bookshop to sell pamphlets, books, etc. to make clear the situation in Poland. . . . What are you in the U.S. doing for Poland?

Linske boekhandel de rooie rat
Oudegracht 65,
Utrecht, Netherlands

I liked Raya Dunayevskaya's article on the situation in Poland very much, especially the section on "the fangs of counter-revolution: imperialism and anti-Semitism." My people came from Poland and lived under that vicious system where the pogroms were like the KKK raids in this country. In Poland, hasn't it always been true that the counter-revolution tries to confuse the workers' movement with horror stories about "Jewish plots"? Well that is what the supposed "Communists" are doing now!

It was also very moving to see the article end with Rosa Luxemburg's last writing. Even if things look grim now, it gives hope that the revolution will rise again.

Student
Southfield, Mich.

What is so important about what happened in Poland, is that the entire country went on strike. But don't think for a second that the U.S. would allow us to do the same thing. Reagan is mad at Russia. He doesn't believe in Solidarity. Just think, if every plant went on strike — from GM to Ford to Chrysler — like it happened in Poland. More people would be put down here than anywhere else. About two years ago, six workers walked out of a plant because it was too hot. They were tried in court and are still doing time. You can imagine what it would be like if 6,000 workers went out.

Ex-Chrysler Jefferson worker
Detroit

A meeting was held by Oxford and District Trades Union Council in support of Solidarnosc on Jan. 21. Michael Koslowski, a building worker from Warsaw, represented Solidarity. Koslowski was visibly ill at ease (naturally enough) at having to address such a large meeting in English (about 200 people), but he did say that the Polish regime wasn't socialist in practice, and that the workers wanted a genuinely new society, although they wouldn't necessarily call it socialism. Someone from the magazine *Labor Focus* on Eastern Europe made quite a good speech, the theme of which

was that the East/West division of Europe imposed after World War II was now being challenged from below on both sides of the Iron Curtain — by Solidarnosc and by the West European movement against nuclear weapons.

I put up a motion in my own union branch that we should send messages of protest to both the Polish and the Turkish embassies demanding the release of imprisoned trade unionists and condemning martial law.

Richard Bunting
Oxford, England

The anti-war movement is very strong here now, and there are a lot of demonstrations on Poland in Frankfurt and in Germany generally. But they are demonstrations of all kinds of groups — very right-wing militaristic groups, Trotskyist groups, the spontis, and the unions also. We have some direct contact with Polish people. We say: be strong in the demonstrations, but very careful on the question of economic sanctions.

Friend of Marxist-Humanism
Frankfurt, W. Germany

Reagan let the cat out of the bag about his real attitude to the Polish workers when he explained that he was "not calling anyone to the barricades" over the imposition of martial law. Big surprise! If he went to any barricades, it would be on Jaruzelski's side of them.

Not surprised
New York

We have had a lot of discussion here about one of the points Dunayevskaya raised last issue in her essay on the Polish revolution — that KOR played a great part in creating the 10 million member-strong Solidarity, yet disbanded at the Solidarity congress last summer, saying that they were no longer needed as an organization. Everyone wants to try to understand why KOR would do that, and why someone as great as Jacek Kuron would agree with the disbanding. I am sure it has a lot to do with working out a philosophy of revolution, but I can't say that exactly what is involved is clear in my mind yet.

Supporter of Solidarity
San Francisco



SUPPORT
YELLOW
THUNDER
CAMP!

On April 4, 1981, a camp called Yellow Thunder was set up in the Black Hills of South Dakota by Native American people as part of a movement to re-establish their land rights. Rejecting a 1980 U.S. Supreme Court decision to pay the Lakota people for the illegal seizure of the Black Hills, they declared: "The Black Hills are not for sale!" Yellow Thunder Camp is still holding out at the site they have occupied one year later.

"We're going to occupy permanently," said Elder Loud Hawk, "But it's sub-zero cold in the hills during the winter and we need help with food, clothing, blankets and medicine. The government said they could evict us in 30 minutes, but would not take action to drive us out because the cold winds and snow would do their work for them. But we are going to stay; nothing will stop us."

It was in response to that determination that AIRLIFT was born. AIRLIFT is an operation bringing food, clothing, medicines and tools to Yellow Thunder Camp, and to a Navajo occupation camp at Big Mountain, Arizona. Planes from both Minnesota and California have delivered tons of supplies. The AIRLIFT for Yellow Thunder Camp needs your support. Bring food, supplies or tools. Or send your contributions to:

AIRLIFT
330 Ellis St.
San Francisco, Calif. 94102

Readers' View

THIRD WORLD VOICES FROM INSIDE REAGANLAND

Charles Denby is one of my heroes. I read his book, *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*, and learned to appreciate his life and thought. It is a path to liberation for Black and working Americans. Now I want to thank him also for his column in the Jan.-Feb. N&L on the Haitian refugees. It was horrifying, but that is just what is needed in Reaganland now. Shock treatment—that is what might finally wake up our people to start marching and fighting. If we wait we may be in camps like the Haitians someday soon.

Black student
Detroit

More than 300 students jammed the steps of the UCLA Law School for a spirited rally against the latest steps to undermine minority enrollment here. The strong showing of Blacks, Asians and Chicano students was an attempt to fight further regression on a campus that has seen a steady decline in minorities since 1975. "It's hard to imagine a place being any more lily-white, but many of us simply won't be here," a woman observed.

Community activists from South L.A. and Chinatown also addressed the rally, urging student support against the cutbacks for poor and working people.

UCLA student
Los Angeles

On Feb. 20, I marched with over 4,000 people here to protest the U.S. war in El Salvador. It was a lively march, mostly young and yet also with its veterans of past struggles, some with their children. The crowd along the march smiled, nodded approval, and quite a few shouted their support. This march was very important for Salvadorans to see so many people here aware of what is happening in El Salvador. Before, you never saw in the news what was happening to Latin America. I hope this stops Reagan from sending in Marines. But really it's already another Vietnam, with all those thousands of people killed.

Latina marcher
New York City

I believe there will be a social revolution in this country. What the U.S.A. preaches to the world is not what really exists here. When I came here I saw the racism and the lies. They greet you, but they don't help you.

But what is missing for revolution here is that the people are not prepared. I don't mean university-type prepared. I mean a knowledge of "who am I? Who are we?" The schools are teaching my children about baseball and movie stars.

South American worker
New York

FROM SHOPS, OFFICES: THE REAL STATE OF THE UNION

Five months after I marched in Washington with my union on Solidarity Day, I just received an official "I was there" certificate from the AFL-CIO. Like it's all over, frame it, hang it on the wall and shut up!

Oh yes, it came with a letter from Lane Kirkland assuring us he hadn't forgotten his new mandate and urging us to write our senators and congresspersons not to cut any Social Security benefits. Only that one thing. Not a word of all the other budget cuts — unemployment, food stamps, welfare, school lunches and so on. Not a word on the PATCO strikers.

But Social Security is the only cutback that Reagan was already voted on by Congress this year. "Too little, too late" is too mild to describe this absolute sell-out of the half million who marched on Solidarity Day. And what about El Salvador? Isn't that a "labor issue," when trade unionists are murdered by a government with full U.S. military and economic support?

District 65, UAW member
New York

On a morning news show, there was a Black woman, not a radical, talking about the real situation in the cities of this country. She said "I don't think Reagan knows how people are talking. There will be riots. Even the break-ins are different now; people are stealing frozen food out of refrigerators. You have to watch out when you walk home from the supermarket. They aren't just after your purse, but your groceries too."

Ready for something new
Detroit

I have been laid off for over a year now. My unemployment has run out and I have a young child. For two people, the food stamp benefits are still not enough. At the end of each two weeks — there is no food. We get \$93 for the whole month. How can this benefit anyone? Things are getting worse all the time.

Former General Electric worker
Michigan

There are a lot of interesting conversations on my new job, but the conditions are not so great. My second day on the job, one of the Black women workers asked me how long I thought I was going to stay. I told her I was planning to stay until the depression was over. She laughed and said, "Then you'll be here forever."

Still waiting
Chicago

I don't know if it's fully understood how much the economy is affecting everyone these days. But I could feel it strongly when I tried to get a dental appointment last week. There was no problem getting one right away. So many workers have lost their contractual Blue Cross/Blue Shield since they were laid off, that the dentists and doctors are having far less patients. The dentist must be hurting too. I noticed he didn't replace his dental assistant when she left.

Woman worker
Detroit

I was struck by the letter you printed in the N&L about the Japanese worker who was murdered by a robot. This is something that could happen anywhere today. I was working in the office of a big mail order publisher when I met my first robot. They called it a Mailmobile: it looked like a post office sorting case on wheels and it ran through the office all day, stopping in each section for us to load on mail for the shipping room. The mail used to be picked up once a day, but the robot came around every two hours and the shipping clerks had to work continuously to keep up.

Everyone hated the robot at first sight, so the company tried to "humanize" it by holding an election to name it. The company name, "Egor," won. Since then I have seen these robots in other offices and they are called Egor too, so I guess the election comes with them and is rigged. The name probably stands for Electric General Office Robot.

Endangered species
Chicago

AIRPLANE CRASHES

I'd like to meet "Engineer, Michigan" who wrote the letter in the last issue of N&L on the Air Florida crash in Washington, D.C. When I first read it I was startled. I never thought that the Reagan scabs in the airport control towers had anything to do with that crash. But he explained that the "re-icing" of the plane was due to the long delay in take-off. The next week all the information came out that proved "Engineer" was absolutely right. And then we had the crash in Boston where the tower forgot to warn the World Airways plane that the runway was covered with ice. I think Reagan will only be satisfied when his policies result in some gigantic mid-air collision.

Furious
New Jersey



**WOMEN AS
THINKERS
FOR A
NEW WORLD**

I spoke with women workers in a shoe factory in a small town in which I lived at one time. These women earned minimum hourly wage for their 40-plus hours a week and to make above that they had to make piece rate whereas the fastest sewers made the most money. There were certain pieces to sew that were easier and therefore quicker to sew. These women said that when the foreman would put out the pieces for the day on the table the actual physical fights that would occur were overwhelming. The workers of this factory instituted a union and went out on strike for more money. Rather than giving the workers a decent existence the company closed the factory down.

From the moment a baby is born it is put into competition with other babies and siblings to be smarter, faster, bigger, etc. The competition continues throughout childhood through sports and scholastic achievements until he or she reaches adulthood where their outlook on life is one of dog eat dog. My real point is that the attitude of the majority of this society will never be humanistic unless the people can build an educational system that gives the rearing of our children back to the people.

A working housewife
Los Angeles

In reply to Michael Connolly's article on Ireland: "Revolution and Theory," Eibhlín Ní Sheidhir writes (Dec. 1981 N&L) that, "there has been no regression" in the women's movement in Ireland and that "genuine acceptance of women as independent thinkers . . . is one of the areas where a lot of progress has been made . . ."

I have no doubt that women are accepted as thinkers when they fight the British alongside the men. The question is, what happens when women's thought takes an independent direction and questions not only oppression of the Irish, but the Irish women in particular. A partial answer was given recently in *Courage*, a West German feminist publication: "The influence of women in recent years has been so significant that even the provisional Sinn Fein, which can hardly be regarded as the avant garde of Women's Liberation, has finally conjured a women's committee into life. But contraception and abortion are still a hot potato for the Provos. The Provo women admit that they have a long way to go to get anywhere in the Sinn Fein as feminists. 'We were all denounced as 'pill pushers,' they said, 'Just because we wanted to finally bring these themes up for discussion inside the organization. Feminism is still a dirty word in IRA circles.'"

Terry Moon
Chicago

ARTISTS FOR SURVIVAL

As artists we are blessed with a special talent to feel and express joy and suffering. To many of us, the terrifying threat of a nuclear war has never before seemed so urgent. Serious work by visual artists dealing with the sacredness of life, and the horrors of an apocalypse, can capture vividly the imagination of the people.

We Artists for Survival must share our concern for humanity by creating compelling work. We must exhibit often, in prominent locations, and to large numbers of people. Viewing space should be secured at town halls, businesses, schools, universities, commercial galleries . . . Mindful of the obvious health aspects of a holocaust, Harvard Medical School's Countway Library will provide several local artists with exhibition space during March . . .

I am eager that we get in touch, share ideas and projects, and organize art events in our own communities and around the world. We have the obligation to use our vision to avoid catastrophe.

Mitchell L. Kamen
Artists West, 144 Moody Street
Waltham, Massachusetts, 02154

AS OUR READERS SEE US

N&L is an excellent collection of articles encompassing world proletarian movements and events. I enjoy both its emphasis on domestic and international developments. I especially look forward to Raya's critiques and editorials. She has great dialectical insight.

Subscriber
Mount Clemens, Mich.

I've had the experience of living in some of the most "underdeveloped" areas of New York City and having attended Kent State University in Ohio. In reading N&L what stood out to me were the stories from people on the unemployment line, and in places like the hospital with its hierarchy, Black youth on the bottom. There are many stories I could write to you about my experience with others facing the Reaganomics 1980s.

Black youth
New York

I was disturbed by the headline "Blind Feminist Speaks" which appeared in the November N&L. I have had many of the same experiences which this woman had, because I am also blind and a woman. I could really relate to what she had to say. Seeing her categorized "blind feminist" felt display-oriented, like the football player on TV asking you to give the "United Way" and help his disabled dad. I do understand that you are showing that there are Black and disabled people, women, etc. in this Marxist-Humanist movement. I respect that and think it is important. Sorry to complain when I don't know a better way to express this either.

In solidarity
Minnesota

I discovered N&L at the People's Bookstore in Madison. I bought it because it looked interesting, and after reading it, I was fascinated by your combination of Humanism and Marxism, as well as the vast coverage of current news events contained in N&L . . . Your Constitution appears to be a genuine effort to place Marxism in the context of the present day and to show that it is not the distorted philosophy of the vanguard groups.

New reader
Baraboo, Wisconsin

Ed. Note: All our readers are welcome to write in for a copy of the Constitution and By-laws of News and Letters Committees, the fundamental statement of Marxist-Humanism on philosophy and organization. Please enclose 20c postage.

EDITORIAL Salvador's revolution versus Reagan's military madness

The daring rebel attack on Ilopango Air Base on the outskirts of San Salvador has signaled a new phase of the El Salvadoran revolution. Not only were millions upon millions of dollars of U.S. supplied aircraft to the military-civilian junta destroyed, but the attack was not an isolated incident. In village upon village, as well as in the larger cities of El Salvador, including around the capital, San Salvador, the guerrilla forces have launched a dramatic series of attacks.

The rebels have shown clearly that in spite of the vicious oppression that they and all the El Salvadoran masses have been subjected to—oppression that has intensified in the year Ronald Reagan has been in office—they will not be stalemated and defeated. They have succeeded not only in attacking the airfield, but dams, power transmitting towers, half of the major bridges in the country, military outposts everywhere. Their communications system, Venceremos Radio, broadcasts news of the attacks throughout the country.

In response to this upsurge in activity, the Reagan Administration, already with the blood of the El Salvadoran people on its hands, has begun its counter-offensive. Reagan proceeded to quickly certify to Congress that the junta was making a "concerted" effort to protect human rights. This, at the very time of new reports of atrocities carried on by the junta. Nineteen civilians were routed from their homes in the middle of the night in a working-class suburb of San Salvador by members of the military and murdered.

A number of relatives of the murdered civilians, including three sisters, aged 13, 14 and 15, were raped. Reports of a major massacre involving hundreds



Salvadoran guerrillas train at a base in Morazan Province.

of civilians in the Salvadoran village of El Mozote last December are widespread. The "certification" enabled Reagan to rush some \$55 million in military aid to El Salvador. Helicopters and other aircraft are already en route to replace those destroyed by the guerrillas.

Reagan's hypocritical statement on improvement in human rights efforts on the part of the El Salvador government is belied by every independent observation. A 275-page report put together by the American Civil Liberties Union and the Americas Watch Committee documents "torture of the most brutal kind," the "arbitrary arrests" and concludes that there is a systematic denial of human rights including dozens of politically motivated murders each week.

And yet the Reagan Administration is:

- 1) Beginning training of some 1,000 El Salvadoran soldiers at Fort Bragg, N.C.
- 2) In the process of requesting an additional \$100 million in military and economic aid for this fiscal year.
- 3) Planning to increase the request to \$300 million for the next fiscal year.
- 4) Refusing any concept of negotiations with the rebel forces, and instead continuing to push for the phony March 28 elections.

What has become exceedingly clear is that there is before us today two El Salvadors: that of a right-wing military dictatorship complete with layers of paramilitary death squads and a small civilian front that is supported in its butchery by Ronald Reagan; and that of peasant masses, urban workers, a front of many forces and a guerrilla movement whose intensification of activity has created this new situation in El Salvador.

We are at a moment that borders on the possibility of full social revolution.

In the United States our solidarity must be with those who have refused to allow Reagan to dictate the course of events in our country. But to stay Reagan's militarist hand, they need our support. Only by our solidarity with the peasants, the working class, and yes, with the guerrillas of El Salvador, can we reverse Reagan's drive toward genocide of the El Salvadoran people.

The revolutionary movement in El Salvador today is part of a new spirit that is not confined to one country, or even to the Central American region, but is manifest throughout the Latin American continent. It is a spirit which has brought forth new forces of revolution—the youth who make up a vast majority of the fighters, the women whose depth of participation as fighters and as leaders runs throughout Latin America, the masses from urban and rural areas, who, even when they do not directly join the guerrillas, participate in many other ways to fight to overthrow the old regime and construct a society on new human beginnings.

And we should not forget the Latino dimension here within the United States—both of refugees from throughout Latin America and the millions of Latinos who live here permanently. Their opposition from within the U.S. no doubt has helped to prevent Reagan from sending U.S. troops.

Our immediate task must be to stop the U.S. military intervention now taking place. No arms to the junta! Self-determination for the El Salvadoran people!

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Union leaders' concessions help Reaganomics expand army of unemployed

(Continued from Page 1)

In auto, the UAW leadership was moving full-speed ahead on granting concessions. The first effort, at GM, was torpedoed by the angry revolt of rank-and-file workers against the plans to renegotiate their contract. Despite the emotional pleading of President Fraser and other union leaders, and open GM management threats of further plant closings and lay-offs, worker opposition to concessions increased during the preliminary negotiations.

GM NEGOTIATIONS, WORKER RESISTANCE

Under the bludgeoning impact of the two-year depression in the auto industry and the resulting indefinite lay-offs of over 250,000 workers and temporary lay-offs of an additional 50,000, all auto managements have stepped up harassment, intimidation and speed-up of workers, and nowhere has this been more vicious than at GM. Heated responses reflecting the bitterness of the rank-and-file against this dehumanized treatment came from many GM local union leaders who accurately gauged the worker sentiment.

"Whatever we got, it would have been very hard to sell concessions to the rank-and-file," said Carl Schmidt, president of a GM local in Tecumseh, Mich. "Most of the time they (GM) don't care how we feel. They'll hand you second-rate materials, tell you that some Mexican plant is already doing your job better, and then yell and moan when the job doesn't come off right." A Detroit-area plant union committeeman, Tillman Green, was even more vehement. "Let 'em shut the plant down if they want," he declared. "Then they can sell it, and we'll give concessions to the new owners. But not for GM. Not a nickel."

Negotiations with GM broke down when it became clear the rank-and-file would reject the proposed contract, which would have granted at least a billion-dollar giveaway to GM. The next week, GM announced a \$333 million profit for 1981, or more than a billion-dollar turnaround from its \$725 million loss the year before.

THE FORD CONTRACT

Following the GM experience, the UAW moved more cautiously in the Ford negotiations. While there was some opposition among Ford workers to concessions, it did not approach the magnitude of the GM workers, and the UAW-Ford concession package was accepted.

The major provisions include canceling a three percent wage increase due this fall, giving away nine personal paid holidays and a special Sunday benefit amounting to two weeks of pay, deferring COLA payments for nine months, cutting wages of new hires to 85 percent of the hourly rate and requiring a year-and-a-half of work before getting full pay (new hires also get reduced benefits in other areas).

In exchange, beginning in 1983 the auto workers get a profit-sharing plan (if the company makes profits exceeding 2.3 percent of sales), an increase in SUB payments, a 24-month period of no plant closings due to outsourcing (moving jobs overseas or to areas of cheaper labor), guaranteed income stream (GIS) designed to provide some income protection for workers

When TWU talks, workers pay

New York, N.Y. — The contract is coming up in April, and the city wants give-backs. There's nothing to give back, John Lawe, president of the Transit Workers Union, already gave everything away.

Koch is offering us at most three percent. People are very demoralized after the last strike. We have a depression, almost like the 1930s, and people are afraid. They see what happened to PATCO. They see how companies have hundreds of millions of dollars to break strikes even though the country is broke.

These are sick people who want to break strikes at any cost. Take Mayor Koch. He'd probably just as soon shut down the subway system as give us anything. This, and John Lawe, is what we're up against.

It's curious to me that the workers all had to pay our Taylor Law fines right away, but the union and John Lawe have paid nothing so far. They lost their dues check-off, \$3, for one week only. Then it was put back. This is a loss of \$150,000 to the union, but John Lawe didn't even bother to try and collect it from us. Their fines are still in the courts. Of course I don't want to see the union broken, but the whole thing is curious.

A token agent died of a heart attack recently at 238th St and White Plains Road. Passengers and the TA police had to watch him die. He was locked up so securely in the booth that no one could get in. This token booth was a trap.

The TA police spend eight hours a day catching three kids for not paying their fare. Sometimes they handcuff them and make it a whole circus, all over 75 cents. Meanwhile people are getting killed on the trains.

—Transit worker, 207th St.



with 15 or more years seniority, an experiment at two plants to try to avoid lay-offs of 80 percent of the work force, preferential placement of seniority workers if plants close and several job training and counseling programs.

Ford workers opposed to the concessions pointed out that what Ford got was definite and certain, while the workers got promises. "We gave them a pot full of money and got a hand full of maybes," one worker noted. Moreover, the giving up of the 10 paid days guarantees that some 3,000 Ford workers will be laid off. But, as is the case with every new contract, workers never know all that has been negotiated away until the contract is in force for a while.

COLLAPSE OF NATIONAL ECONOMY

The national economy, meanwhile, continues to collapse even more rapidly. Unemployment rose to 9.5 million in December, up by 1.7 million over a year ago, with unemployment in auto in the same period jumping from 15.8 percent to 21.7 percent. Much is heard about the 300,000 lay-offs in auto, but little about the more than 800,000 laid off in the construction industry, and hundreds of thousands more in the transportation industry, in public service, steel, rubber, aircraft, and many others. The total unemployment is greater than at any time since the depression of the 1930s. And this does not include the more than one million workers no longer counted as unemployed because they have given up on finding a job.

A breakdown of the unemployment figures show that the unemployment rate of whites is 7.6 percent, of Blacks is 14.4 percent and of Hispanics is 11.1 percent. As for youth, the unemployed rate is as follows: white males—20.7 percent; white females—17.6 percent; Black and other males—37.6 percent and Black and other females—41.8 percent.

This, of course, reflects national data. In many inner-city urban areas such as Detroit, youth unemployment in general totals 40-50 percent, with Black youth unemployment up to as much as 80 percent. There are no economic signs whatsoever to indicate anything but a worsening situation under the further cutbacks in social welfare and job training programs targeted by the Reagan Administration's budget. (See article, page 12).

Nor is the economic crisis restricted to the U.S. alone. Western Europe is in the worst unemployment crisis since the Great Depression—with the staggering total of 25 million European workers out of jobs. In a number of European countries unemployment has risen into double digit figures, threatening political as well as economic upheavals of much greater proportions than the serious confrontations of unemployed workers that have already erupted throughout Europe.

Here in the U.S. there is also the potential for confrontation as Reagan's anti-labor and pro-business policies continue to exact their toll in misery, deprivation and even death. Reagan's destruction of the PATCO union is well known, but his intention to cut back on mine safety personnel has met with total resistance from the coal miners.

MINE WORKERS OPPOSE REAGAN ON SAFETY

Cutbacks had already reduced the mine safety enforcement program by 25 percent, and further reductions were included in Reagan's budget. But following a year of 153 mine deaths in 1981—the highest since 1975 and the first year since 1970 that mine deaths in-

creased over the year before—plus a series of mine explosion disasters in Kentucky, Virginia and West Virginia which claimed 33 lives in December and January, as well as other mine deaths bringing the total of mine fatalities for the two months to 54 and producing the threat of a protest strike from the United Mine Workers Union, Reagan suddenly backed down and promised to restore the budget cuts.

The anger of the miners is further reflected in their internal union situation, and a growing resentment against President Sam Church stemming from the contract negotiated last year. Elections for UMW officers will be held this year on Nov. 9, and an opposition slate to Church is gaining strength. Rich Trumpka, a Pennsylvania miner and former UMW lawyer, is challenging Church, whose opponents claim that the defeat of UMW District 17 president Jack Perry, a former Church ally, reveals increased miner hostility to Church. Perry, who had supported Church's giveaway contract rejected by the miners last year and who had been Southern West Virginia's District 17 president for nine years, was defeated by his opponent in a January election. However, Church forces also claim victory, since Perry had announced his support of Trumpka and Church had opposed Perry's re-election.

It is too early to draw any firm conclusions since this is the opening phase of the campaign, but the feeling among many miners is that unless Church can demonstrate much more effective leadership than he has to date, he will have a difficult time overcoming the miners' dissatisfaction with the provisions of his contract that they have to live with every day.

The miners, of course, are not alone in their growing opposition to their leadership's inability to fight for them. This same sentiment is increasing among workers in other industries who also see the divisions between their leaders and themselves growing larger as the economic crisis deepens. Instead of responding to the growing anger and fighting mood of the workers, the so-called leaders are stampeding to give away more and more of the hard-earned benefits workers had won only after long and bitter struggles.

Instead of providing the kind of leadership that would truthfully expose the inability of the system to provide the basic necessities of food, clothing and shelter for workers and their families, the leaders continue to betray the true, historic working class interests, interests that capitalism cannot serve and is totally opposed to.

Of course we are in a deep economic crisis. But so were we during the Great Depression of the 1930s, the time that saw the creation of the CIO and the greatest movement of labor this country had ever seen, a movement that was striving to create a new society based on providing a decent and rewarding livelihood for all. World War II stopped that movement, which in turn became bureaucratized and since that time has negotiated away, in exchange for nickels and dimes, the control over work conditions that workers had won through their early organizing efforts.

Today we have the AFL-CIO, the UAW and other unions, but they are obviously incapable in their present form of providing the kind of leadership that will solve the problems the workers and their families face. It will take long and bitter struggles again, but this time the workers will have to create new organizations to finally achieve their goal of a new human society.

Teamster jobs on the block

Commerce, Cal. — The Teamsters Union opened early contract negotiations with the trucking companies, and two months before the March 31 expiration of our contract they came out with the big give-back—long distance haulers will now be able to deliver local freight directly, without unloading at a local terminal.

I can't understand how the International could agree to this. I can't believe the membership will ratify it. Just when we're being hit with lay-offs as never before, that's when they agree to a give-back that will eliminate thousands of jobs. It makes no sense.

Under the current contract, long haul drivers have to deliver to local terminals first to unload and then transfer it locally, like this Rozay's Transfer dock. What this will do is really knock out our jobs. Since the first of the year almost no freight has moved across country. I've never seen it this bad. Most of us are working one or two days a week—I made all of \$98 last week and still had to shell out \$22.50 for union dues. But if they ram this through, it will go from bad to worse.

It's true that already they're by-passing local transfer companies: a lot of the Carolina freight we never get to touch, and we used to break out eight or ten trailers of it a week. So why sanction unemployment?

—Dock worker

Workers speak out from the unemployment lines

Detroit, Mich.—There is a lot of talk about freezing wages, but the prices keep going up. How are poor people suppose to live with these high food prices? The UAW talks are concerned only with cars and not with people. But people cannot live off of cars. What they need to talk about is the high unemployment. There are more people today that don't work in the factory than ones that do. The machines in the factory put people out of work. They call it modernization, but it is modernizing people out of a job.

I have suggestions on how people can get their jobs back and how the situation can be transformed here in Detroit: 1) Slow the lines down. 2) Take a portion of the automatic machines out. 3) Cut down the overtime of the few people left working in the plant and create more shifts (down to six hours). This way, many people can work and draw a decent pay.

There are many people like myself who are out of a job. I've worked for 29 years and now they say I have no skills. How am I to find work? This country is not for the poor working person.

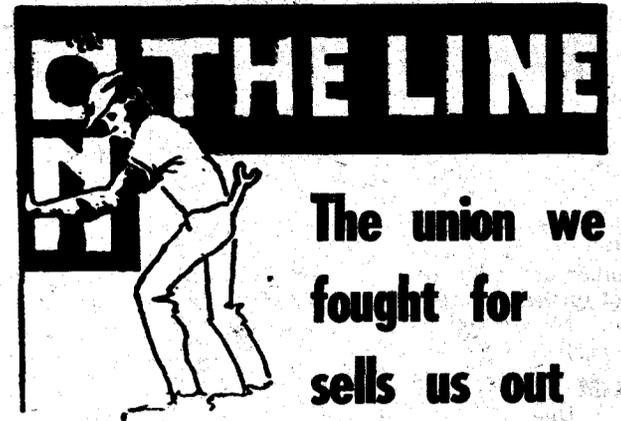
—Permanently laid-off Chrysler Jefferson worker

Detroit, Mich.—Even though we pay union dues, I don't believe in the UAW as it stands today. The contract talks are not really looking after the worker on the assembly line. Both Fraser and management are only concerned with the company's interest. As far as I can see, there is no union. The company is dictating to the union and workers what they want.

What we need is some form of organization for workers so that we can help ourselves—a union like Solidarity in Poland. Solidarity is good, because it helps people cope with the government there. It's important to have someone to help you fight. The government in Poland feels that Solidarity is the enemy. And, both the U.S. and Russia's only interest there is to put that movement down.

Any groups that are effective, government in any country try to put them down quickly. It was the same for the Black Panther Party in the 1960s. Although I didn't agree with everything they did, what they said about the racism here is true. It's important for us to get together and discuss what the government is doing.

—Laid-off Ford worker



by John Marcotte

I received the following report from a worker at Art Steel, which has two office furniture plants in the Bronx:

We've had pretty bad lay-offs in January, cutting back to workers with over four years' seniority. We are blaming Reagan a lot more than the company. "Reagan is fighting inflation with our jobs," is what we say. Of course the company uses these lay-offs and uncertainty to keep pressure on those left working.

But what bothers me is the attitude of our union, District 65, UAW. When we first heard of a one-week shut down, organizer Jose Casanas came and all he had to say was that things looked bad, maybe the plant would close up and move South, and he called us to a union meeting.

But at that meeting, Casanas took up an hour to tell us nothing. So either he knows and he's not telling, or he knows absolutely nothing. But why did he try to put fear in the workers? To soften us up to accept anything the company comes up with, or what?

Not even the shop stewards at the 233rd St. plant had been told about the outside time-study company, Impac, that had been messing with our brothers at 170th St., until the company took the union to court over the four work stoppages at 170th over the past year. That's the only way we get any response from the union.

The simple fact is that the union at Art Steel has become the enemy too. We are not against unions or unionism. We fought twice over the past 30 years to kick out sell-out unions. We brought in District 65. We remember how bad it was before. But we got messed over on the last two contracts.

We've seen a lot of struggles here, we've seen a lot of times we won something, and we've seen a lot of brothers get fired. But still the company and the union are in control. There is something wrong in the very guts and the very thinking of our union. Where do we go from here?

Where do we go from here is indeed the question facing all union members. What this story tells of one union in one plant is true around the country. Labor this year is facing the harshest attack since the industrial unions were formed 40 and 50 years ago.

Whether these unions will continue to exist in their present form is even in question, as attacks from the bosses and their Reaganomics, and challenges from an aroused rank-and-file, destroy or transform them, or replace them with something new. Certainly no one could have predicted Solidarnosc would spring up 10 million strong almost overnight in Poland.

It is not that a similar free trade union movement is around the corner in the U.S. It is that the forms of self-organization the U.S. working class will choose remain to be worked out in the heat of the battles now looming on the horizon.

FROM THE AUTO SHOPS

GM Fremont

Fremont, Cal.—General Motors announced on Feb. 15 that its huge assembly plant in Fremont would be closing. The day following the announced shut-down, local union members turned out by the hundreds for a Fremont city council meeting. The mayor and the city council agreed to set up a Bay Area-wide task force of politicians and community people to put pressure on GM to reopen the plant. A rally is planned a week before the plant is scheduled to close, March 5.

Word had been out for months at Fremont that the plant would shut down. The timing of the lay-offs and the plant closing couldn't have been better from GM's point of view. During the weeks of media publicity and controversy about concessions, one clear demand took shape throughout the UAW rank-and-file: not a single concession to GM without some guarantees

of job security. Our local took a clear stand, sending a telegram to Fraser: No Negotiations, No Concessions.

Opposition within the UAW was so strong—that this was indeed historic—that Fraser had to back down and drop all the concessions maneuvering. Even those being laid off considered this some victory, because we knew that no amount of take-aways would have saved our jobs. At least we maintain our benefits until the contract expires in September.

I was hired in 1972, the year that GM finally got around to hiring women in large numbers. From a total of almost 1,900 women working in 1979, by the first of this year the clock had been turned back so that there were once again no women on the line.

GM has said that the plant is closed "indefinitely," which leaves open the possibility that we can get small truck production brought in. But even if we get full production restored at our plant, automation and speed up will rob many of us of our jobs. But one way or another, we intend to fight for our jobs.

—GM Fremont worker

Union givebacks buy layoffs

by Felix Martin, West Coast Editor

On Feb. 13, the United Auto Workers' Union and Ford Motor Company reached a tentative agreement that will take from the workers about \$1.1 billion over the next 31 months. This shows the ground that the UAW leadership is on. The militancy of the GM workers forced the leadership to back off concession talks in January. Now, they think they have found a weak spot in the Ford workers. Indeed, while Fraser hailed this as a "historic" breakthrough, Ford's negotiator, Pestillo, said: "I don't make dumb deals."

The local Ford UAW leaders in general supported concessions to the Ford Motor Company, where the GM local leaders had already gotten the word from its members—"not one penny will we give up." But Ford like Chrysler is playing "broke."

They want the workers to pay for the robots that will replace them in the next three to four years. This is what Ford and GM learned from the Chrysler settlement two years ago.

At this point, even if the UAW backs off from negotiations now, GM and Ford have still won because it has already laid the ground for the September negotiations. When you go on the ground of management you have lost. This goes all the way back to the first UAW contract when John L. Lewis accepted capitalism's "right" to make a profit. It was then that labor lost.

Nevertheless, there really had to be a lot of pressure from the rank-and-file to pull Fraser away from the negotiating table with GM. When the newspapers said that the International moved the discussion to Chicago because they expected 30,000 protesting workers to show up at the negotiations, it was really because 100,000 workers would have shown up.

This isn't the first time that management has asked labor to take concessions. A retired worker from the building trades told me that ten years ago the housing industry wanted concessions from his union. Management told the union that everything was moving to the South. What the union did was to set up another union, Local 75, which would accept the concessions.

That was ten years ago and look where the housing industry is today. This worker concluded that we cannot fight capitalism with their philosophy. We have to fight with our own philosophy.

GM South Gate

South Gate, Cal.—We had our regular union meeting soon after they announced that GM South Gate would be closed down. Where a union meeting usually has only a few dozen, this one was the largest meeting they ever held—1,500 workers showed up. The agenda: 1) statement by bureaucrats, 2) information on benefits; SUB; unemployment, 3) discussion.

Workers patiently sat through everything—listening to the politicians and bureaucrats—and expected a discussion. But a union goon cut off discussion.

We are returning to the plant from March 8 to March 25 to build out. The union's message to us on that: Don't steal tools or sabotage the plant when you return to work. For years the company had stolen our labor power, now they are throwing us on the streets, and the "crime" they are worried about is whether a few tools are missing.

—GM South Gate worker

GE closes plant to run away from workers

Ontario, Cal.—The General Electric factory here is going to close in a few days, after almost a century in operation, and I don't see how the workers are going to be able to get another job soon. We make metal irons, but now GE wants to make all plastic irons. They say they have plants in Singapore, Mexico, and Brazil that do that, so they don't need us.

Ontario is not a big town. How are we going to find any work around here? The plant used to employ almost 1,500 people; now we're down to 900. We're still working three shifts even though shutdown is a week away. What gets to me is how the whole thing was decided behind our backs, with no input from us. I don't believe what they're telling us about selling the plant.

A few months ago there was talk around here of the workers buying out the factory so we can keep our jobs. But this morning GE sent a letter around saying a fan company will buy the plant, so that's out the window. Who can be sure it's true? What is true is that it will employ only 200 workers, and instead of paying \$10.40 an hour (what we make now) they'll pay \$3.35

an hour. They're not offering us those jobs anyway.

This plant has been in operation since 1902, and hasn't come up in the red once. So why close it now? It's simple: we make over \$10 an hour, and to make plastic irons in Singapore I hear the workers only get 27 cents an hour. I don't see how any worker anywhere can survive on 27 cents an hour.

A lot of the workers here have been here for 30 or 40 years. They won't be able to find new work. A lot are women. They're closing down the Kaiser steel plant in a few months, and Ontario is not a big place. There just won't be any jobs. If things keep going like this, by the summer a third of the country will be unemployed. Just imagine that, 55 million people out of work.

A lot of people here blame the foreign countries which have such cheap labor, but the real trouble is that the company has never come out and told us the truth. They say they'll try to get us all jobs. I went to the job center, and all I got was a class where I learned how to say yes and no to an interviewer. After 9½ years working there, what can you say? It's a raw deal.

—GE worker

WORKER'S JOURNAL

(Continued from Page 1)

Black industrial wage workers in white-ruled South Africa.

Maria Bam, who says her family was last able to afford meat 13 years ago, has a weekly earning of \$6.83, working at an overalls factory in a "Black state" called Ciskei.

The stark contrast between their lives and prospects is a measure of the South African labor system. The way Blacks are channeled into jobs in white enterprise has divided the Black working force into distinctly legally defined castes. Some have limited opportunities for improvement in their livelihood, while others are consigned more or less permanently to economic backwaters. The whole objective is to regulate the movement of Black workers to proscribed areas—those that white South Africa needs in the cities can be in the "white areas," while there is a rigorous control for all the rest. Unemployment festers. And the prospect of finding a way out of migrant labor on the part of young Blacks becomes more and more difficult.

Only a very few Blacks share the white perception that significant gains are being made. For the huge Black workforce outside of those enterprises which employ a privileged elite, things have hardly changed at all.

Black wages in manufacturing are 30 percent of the average white wage. The employers claim this is because of lack of training of the Black workers in skilled occupations. Blacks in an automobile assembly plant near Pretoria are supposedly paid more than their white counterparts in Britain, and some are being trained in crafts from which they were previously barred.

BLACK CLASS DIVISIONS

What all this shows clearly to me is that the South African government is trying to divide the thinking of South African Blacks along class lines.

This has been the case in the United States. I can remember when Black workers here were divided along class lines. Some factories would hire a few, just a few, on certain jobs that had previously been all white, and these few Blacks would soon come to think that they were better than all the other Blacks, and sometimes resented that other Blacks were coming in where they were and working.

I have been thinking about the troubles we have in the auto union now and what its relation might be to the class divisions created among workers there. I went over to my local union a few days ago to pay my yearly dues and I decided to speak to the vice president who is Black. When I went into his office he was eating lunch with two other officials and it appeared that they had all brought their lunch from home. No one else was around and I asked him, "What is this? Before you guys always had to go out to eat lunch." The vice president said yes, but it is even worse than that. Since all these lay-offs and cutbacks four of the officers and three of the secretaries are laid off. We are just hanging on, he said, and added that where once UAW Local 212 had

18,000 workers it now is down to 1,000. "So who is there to represent? There are not any grievances to settle and there is a sign on the Chrysler Mack plant that the building is for sale," he added. "The company is intent on destroying the union."

RETIREEES' INSURANCE THREATENED

I asked him about our pension checks and what will happen if the company goes broke. He said they were not going broke, just going into a smaller number of plants and as long as that happens our checks were safe. But it may be that our health insurance will be cancelled. Then he started asking me about coming out to the retirees meetings, that those seem to be the only place where there are a group of workers, and many were talking about me and the fights we were always having with the leadership.

The vice president said that he knew that I was always correct in those fights. I said that it was too late for him to admit this now, why couldn't he have supported the workers then. He said he had wanted to go somewhere in the union, and that if he had been agreeing with me it would have killed his chances.

What I am saying is that somewhat the same thing is happening in South Africa. There is this whole concept of dividing Blacks along class lines. And it is a real danger to the movement.

In South Africa you find "the Sugarlands butchery is prepared to pay \$15.75 a week to a Black who is 'clean and bright.' A suburban homeowner bids \$42 a month for a 'houseboy' who 'must be clean and not fat.'"

The labor bureau is the only place where Blacks are legally entitled to look for work, except for private recruiting by authorities for the mines and large sugar estates. The only Blacks who can find work in the white areas are those who have been officially certified. Black workers face a maze of regulations, or resettlement programs, of division of workers into a hierarchy of castes. An important question for the future is whether the South African Black workers will allow these divisions to be used to weaken their opposition to the racist South African regime.

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Latin America

Guerrillas and masses

Editor's Note: Two young Latin American activists—Pablo, who just returned from a visit to his home in South America, and Ana, a Colombian who has lived in New York for several years—had a discussion about the upheavals now taking place in Latin America. Below we print excerpts from their conversation.

Pablo — When I see those macabre scenes on the TV screen of the war in El Salvador, I think that this is our people who are dying and suffering, people like us. It pains you that you cannot join them in their struggle, and it pains you even more to see that these are children as well as adults who are teaching us, are opening up our minds to see our own reality. If it were not for this war maybe we would not understand so well this system we live under.

It strikes one that these people are not crazy, that they would not be dying for no reason. You have to think, why is this man, this child, this mother or daughter—why are they risking their lives? When I visited my home in Latin America, some said they couldn't understand why so many youths were dying in El Salvador. But most of the kids in the poor neighborhoods, they said the struggle was right, and they would repeat, "I hope they win, I hope they win!"

Ana — The youth are fighting because they have a goal, they want freedom. Nobody wants to live as a slave, and the only way you can have a new system is by fighting for it. Liberty or death, that is their cry.

Nicaragua has influenced all of Latin America, has given it hope. Latin America is slipping through Reagan's hands. If El Salvador wins, next will be Guatemala, Colombia, Peru, Panama, and on. Latin America is an erupting volcano.

There are three factors influencing Latin America: hunger, illiteracy, and the brutality of the governments in repressing the masses.

Colombia has a very good guerrilla movement. But with the guerrilla, it was as it says in the pamphlet, Latin America's Revolutions (News & Letters, Detroit, Mich.), about Che Guevara in Bolivia: "The Bolivian peasantry was saying: You come from over there and you want to bring revolution in without developing what we want." But what was missing was philosophy, something to organize the masses as in Nicaragua.

Pablo — What was missing were the masses, the guerrillas getting together with the workers.

Ana — But missing too was something they could also offer to the masses, and the day they have that, the struggle will take off, like in El Salvador. I remember when all the poor people took to the streets, looting. But what was missing was this support.

The students are very, very revolutionary in Colombia. They are driven by hunger. They cannot even study. I remember, one would go to school without breakfast, come home for lunch and there would be no food, and go back to school, but in a rage.

Coming in the April issue of News & Letters

El Salvador in Revolution

by Francisco Aquino, Salvadoran exile

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YOUTH**Trouble for draft registration?**

by Peter Wermuth

The Reagan Administration finally "made up its mind" and decided to continue Jimmy Carter's policy of mandatory draft registration for all 18- and 19-year-old males on Jan. 7, just 15 months after Reagan vowed he would "never institute a peacetime draft." The announcement was hardly a surprise, even coupled with threats to begin prosecuting resisters by March, for ever since taking power, he has endorsed every conceivable scheme to militarize the whole of American society.

What was less expected, however, was the conspicuous absence of significant demonstrations by anti-draft groups to protest Reagan's decision. As one Selective Service official said, "Except for a few demonstrations at a couple of colleges when we first started up registration again, we've had very little organized trouble."

The limited response also contrasts with the fact that American youth are refusing to register in record numbers. Only 47.5 percent of the men who turned 18 last year in nine Northern California counties registered for the draft. And by the government's own admission, over 800,000 have refused to register nationwide thus far. Anti-draft activists point out real non-compliance figures are probably even higher.

CHASM BETWEEN RESISTERS, ORGANIZERS

So why have the various anti-draft coalitions yet to respond in an organized manner? Many would have us think it is due to the "apathy" and "apolitical nature" of American youth — something we heard all through the 1970s. But that hardly explains why more youth have chosen not to register for the draft today than even in the Vietnam War era. Neither can "laziness" explain anything—"they just didn't bother to go to the Post Office to register"—for why have so many chosen to be "lazy" at this particular time?

No, to discover the reason for the difference between the thousands who moved on their own to refuse to register and the groups who thus far have initiated little in the way of draft actions, we need to look deeper, into the chasm of thought separating many anti-draft organizers from the youth they pretend to "organize."

Recently I met with a leader of the Los Angeles-based Resist the Draft Committee at a demonstration in support of the Polish workers. When I mentioned how glad I was to see her at this rally, she quipped, "Well, I'm just here to check out the opposition. You see, I support martial law in Poland." How can anyone think they can inspire American youth to join in anti-militarist actions at home when such "organizers" support martial law and militarism overseas?

It isn't only such so-called radicals whose thought cripples efforts to connect with existing, mass anti-draft sentiments. Just as stifling is the attitude of some leaders of the Committee Against Registration and the Draft (CARD) who vetoed proposals to stage an anti-draft demonstration at the Republican National Convention in 1980 on the grounds that "Reagan opposes draft registration!"

Where many youth in and out of CARD criticized such opportunism and demanded the organization make opposition to militarism a whole part of its platform, CARD leaders argued against taking political positions on the grounds it would alienate constituents. Such de-politicalization simply alienates the anti-draft organizers from their real constituency, the thousands

Out of Navy, into recession

Los Angeles, Cal. — I recently got out of the Navy, and now I'm trying to find my way around back here at home, in Reaganland. I was a member of what they call Special Forces — I was in a group called the "Seal Team" which I guess they call advisors up here, but in reality are sent around the world to protect government interests.

The last place I was stationed was in El Salvador. They had us guarding American businesses and other sorts of institutions. I know of at least three fellow soldiers who were killed down there in fighting — I don't know if this kind of information has made it into the press yet. None of us liked being down there. You can just see that Russia and the U.S. are trying to fight it out over who's going to control the country. The people there have no power over what is going on.

Now I'm back home and I'm trying to get used to it again. I found a job pretty fast but I've been laid off for five days for coming in late too many times. But the worst part is coming back and seeing the economy. I was gone four years, and when I left milk was 40¢ and gas 50¢ a gallon. I can't believe how much worse things have gotten. It's not hard to see why people join up again for the service. But I think I've had enough of that.

—Latino

who refused to register precisely because they want nothing to do with militarism.

MINORITY, POOR RESISTANCE

Just consider a recent poll conducted by Sidney Groenman in Philadelphia of 5,000 16- to 20-year-olds on their views toward the draft. Fully one-quarter of the Black youth interviewed strongly opposed the draft while 15 percent of white youth felt likewise. Where 20 percent of white youth strongly favored the draft, only 10 percent of Black youth did.

And yet CARD has not reached out to the anti-war sentiment of Black youth and has failed to live up to its professed stand against the draft that already exists — the poverty draft which pushes poor and unemployed youth, especially Black and Latino, into the service for want of a job.

One young man told me, "I registered last year because then there didn't seem to be much choice. I didn't know about any of these groups. But now I'm more political. I've been reading Marx. I see what this society uses people for. If I had the chance today, I wouldn't register." There is surely a sea of opposition to Reaganism, the draft, and war among American youth today. The point is to reach out to it in organized action by unfurling a banner of total opposition to war and militarism, in actions, in politics, in thought.

Arrests at war research lab

Berkeley, Cal. — Protesting the nuclear arms race, 171 demonstrators were arrested Feb. 1 as they linked arms and lay down in the street in an attempt to block the entrances to Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. Another 300 people were on hand to support the early morning blockade at the home of the neutron bomb.

Organized by the Livermore Action Group, an outgrowth of last year's Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant blockade, the demonstrators were calling attention to Livermore's participation in arms research and the development of the government's current "first strike strategy." Located 30 miles east of the San Francisco Bay Area, Livermore is administered by the University of California.

There has been a divestiture movement at the university for many years, with students and community members demanding that the university not be involved in arms research and development. They argue that the research facility should be converted to peaceful, energy research.

Most of those arrested, including Daniel Ellsberg of Pentagon Papers fame, were released into public service programs. However several women pointed out that they regarded their blockade as the best kind of "public service."

—Blockade supporter

Youth in Revolt

Students in Sudan took to the streets to demonstrate and fought police early in January to protest sharp rises in prices of basic commodities such as sugar and gasoline. The U.S.-supported military regime of General Nimeiry ordered all the colleges and high schools closed and said that "foreign conspiracies" rather than mass domestic discontent was the cause of the student protests.

Any college that recognized or funded campus groups which advocated sexual relations between persons not married to each other would have lost all state funding — had the Bush-Trask amendment in Florida not been declared unconstitutional on Feb. 4. The Florida Supreme Court acted after student governments in many colleges passed resolutions supporting — and students formed organizations solely to endorse — what Bush-Trask opposed. The measure was aimed at suppressing gay and lesbian campus organizations.

Groups opposing the construction of a third runway at Frankfurt International Airport held a demonstration of 2000 in Frankfurt on Jan. 23, protesters clashed with police at the site of the runway on Jan. 25, and 20 squatters were evicted from seven wooden huts in the forest near the runway on Jan. 27. The protesters oppose environmental damage by runway construction.

By attending the big anti-nuclear rally in Heilbronn, West Germany on Dec. 5, Army Specialist 4th class James Bergeron challenged the Army regulation forbidding demonstrating in uniform. Consequently he is facing a court-martial and may receive six months in jail. Send letters of support to Pfc. James Bergeron c/o Resist, 38 Union Sq., Somerville, MA 02143.

Spread of 'Hollanditis' disease against militarism

Baltimore, Md.—When I returned last fall to my native country, Holland, after almost a year's absence, the new anti-war activities were reaching their high point in the November 21 peace march of 250,000 people. While both superpowers are certainly blamed for the arms race, what upsets the Dutch people the most is Reagan's warmonger mentality, which endangers the fragile peace between the superpowers.

Middle class people like my parents, up to now hardly political activists, have joined with young people to demonstrate against the U.S.'s decision to deploy the Pershing II and the Cruise missiles in Western Europe.

People are basically more scared of Reagan than of Russia, especially his doctrine of "limited nuclear war." This introduces the possible use of "limited" Hiroshima-size bombs in Europe by the U.S. as part of "low-level" confrontation with Russia. It is U.S. troops stationed in West Europe who'd decide when and where to use these "tactical nuclear weapons." They would destroy Europe, but not Russia or the U.S.

This mass anti-war movement, organized to a great extent by the Dutch Interchurch Council, a youth organization, has grown into a huge political force. It has already pressured the government into delaying Reagan's new missiles coming into Holland, and wants to pull Holland out of NATO.

This is what General Haig calls "Hollanditis," which he said is spreading all over Europe. In fact, it is the biggest mass outpouring on a political issue since the 1960s or even earlier. Where earlier, NATO and the U.S. "umbrella" enjoyed some popular support in Western Europe, today people are increasingly frightened and outraged by U.S. arrogance and aggressive militarism, coupled with its support for reactionary and murderous regimes in South Africa and Latin America.

Reagan symbolizes this U.S. militarist arrogance for millions of Europeans. That is why Dutch demonstrators responded to Haig by wearing T-shirts saying "I have Hollanditis." It is "Hollanditis" which is healthy and U.S. militarism which is diseased.

—Woman teacher

A READER DISCUSSES**The SWP and Iran**

During the past several months, supporters of the Iranian Revolution have been shocked and appalled by the spectacle of a socialist organization, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), the leading Trotskyist tendency in the U.S., supporting the repression of socialists and workers in Iran by the Khomeini regime.

The SWP's line on Iran began to unfold in the pages of its newspaper, the Militant, after the party's convention last August. It is significant to note that discussion of events in Iran was omitted from the Convention agenda. Was this an oversight, or deliberate suppression of potential dissent on the part of the SWP leadership?

Since the SWP has very little basis on which to say anything positive about the present government in Iran, it has been forced to shift attention away from the repressive Khomeini regime by denouncing all opponents of the right-wing dictatorship as "monarchists," "rightists," and last, but not least, "fake leftists" . . . The real fake leftists are those who continue to support the mass murderers who are maintaining a state of terror in Iran.

The SWP claims that Khomeini is "progressive" because he is anti-U.S. Hitler and Mussolini were also anti-U.S. So according to the SWP's brand of logic, Nazi Germany and fascist Italy could also have been progressive. Actually, Khomeini's rule isn't that different from Hitler's and Mussolini's. All three suppressed the Left, and used armed bands of thugs to terrorize the population. Khomeini's "revolutionary Guards" bear a striking resemblance to the Nazi storm troopers and fascist Blackshirts.

In order for the Iranian Revolution to advance it will be necessary for the workers, peasants, students and unemployed of Iran to overthrow the capitalist dictatorship that now rules, and form a workers and peasants government that is committed to improving the material conditions of the Iranian people, and defending Iran against the forces of counter-revolution, foreign or domestic. The SWP's dismal record, abstaining from defending the victims of oppression in Iran, should make them well advised to remember the basic principle of the workers' movement: "an injury to one is an injury to all."

—Union coal miner and ex-SWP member

OUR LIFE AND TIMES Reagan's proposed budget pumps up war machine

by Peter Mallory and Kevin A. Barry

Reagan's stratospheric \$757.6 billion proposed budget, which includes an estimated deficit of \$91.5 billion, is meeting stiff opposition from all sides including even some conservatives. The drastic cuts in welfare programs, food stamps, health care, education, transportation, housing and veterans' benefits are balanced against a budget of \$216 billion for the military, with nothing short of \$1.7 trillion planned over the next three years!

The contribution of individual taxpayers to federal expenditures amounts to 69 percent in contrast to a mere 9 percent from corporation income taxes. The benefits to individuals in return is only 43 percent, while Reagan's preoccupation with war consumes 29 percent of all federal funds with banks getting 13 percent as interest on the national debt which has grown to over one trillion dollars.

The obsession of Reagan-Weinberger-Haig with their imperialistic military buildup disguises the full objective situation. Such a buildup—as if this country

wasn't already the biggest nuclear power in the world—is a way of robbing the poor with all the reactionary moves at home against the American masses. At the same time, Reagan Administration support for every repressive political regime, so long as it is against Russia, so exacerbates every international incident that the U.S. can find little support even among other capitalistic allies.

Perhaps the most diabolical proposal in the Reagan military budget is the authorization and funding of plants that will manufacture nerve gas weapons. These devices have been outlawed since World War I, when thousands of people died from mustard gas. It is unthinkable that any civilized society would plan to deploy weapons that indiscriminately destroy men, women and children and livestock. But that is the mentality of the U.S. military and the Reagan Administration.

The military budget also includes funding for cruise missiles, the B-1 bomber, MX missiles, additional Trident subs at a billion per copy and battleships whose chief function in Vietnam was to blow

16-inch holes in the jungle floor.

The military plan is to have a Navy in every ocean of the world, nuclear weapons on every continent, an airborne strike force to reach every corner of the globe. The manpower for this force will be drawn mainly from the unemployed population of the United States, white as well as Black, youth who are joining the army because they have no other way to make a living. Another way the Reagan government is trying to move against the youth is by threatening to arrest all who are not registering for the draft.

The most disgusting element in Reagan's budget is his new federalism, which boils down to a return to the dark ages of American politics, returning responsibility for the welfare of the American people to the states. He seems to forget that the reason the federal government has the responsibility now is that the states refused to fund these programs in the past.

Everywhere he speaks for budget support he is met with masses of protesting people, even in sub-zero weather. He better keep running, for his sins are catching up with him, and the rocks are flying.

Romania

When General Haig visited here in February, ostensibly to discuss world peace with President Ceausescu, it was hard to say which of those two butchers was the greater hypocrite. This totalitarian East European regime is run so narrowly from the top that many of the key Communist Party (CP) leaders are relatives of Ceausescu.

Information on protests leaks out so slowly that news on the 1977 strikes in the mines of the Jiu valley took many months to get out of the country. The regime has jailed thousands of striking workers and political opponents, and even tries, Qaddafi-style, to assassinate its exile opponents.

Industry is collapsing in the wake of the drying up of the country's oil fields, while agriculture stagnates due to Stalinist-forced collectivization. Add to that the world economic crisis gripping state as well as private capitalism, and the result is a food shortage for the masses approaching that of Poland. There has been nothing like it here since the devastation of World War II. For years the regime has held on by appealing to Romanian nationalism and by distancing itself a bit from Russia on foreign policy.

But in fact, Ceausescu may be facing the biggest mass protests at home on issues of life and labor in Romania since 1977. In October, a massive strike broke out in the Jiu coal region, and when the militia was sent in, some were killed by the workers. A bookstore featuring Ceausescu's works was destroyed by a bomb. When Ceausescu personally visited one mining town to "explain" his economic policies to the working class, he was greeted with a hail of stones, and had to jump back into his helicopter and fly away. The strikers held the former Minister of Labor, E. Bobu, prisoner for a period of time.

In another town, a local CP official narrowly escaped hanging by local citizens. Earlier in 1981, leaflets appeared calling for free trade unions and factory occupations. The prospect of a Solidarnosc in Romania may cause Ceausescu either to scurry back to Brezhnev or to fall from power, even if the situation does not move to the type of mass labor revolts as in Poland.



More than 1,000 demonstrators, Black and white, marched through Johannesburg in a funeral procession for Dr. Neil Aggett, a 28-year-old white union organizer of the African Food and Canning Workers Union. Before his death, he was held under the Terrorism Act for more than two months. He was the first white person to die under such detention. The last person to die was Steven Biko, founder of the Black Consciousness Movement. Although it is claimed Dr. Aggett committed suicide, the protesters regarded his death under detention to be indistinguishable from the murders that are committed by the apartheid government. More than 50,000 workers in 83 factories, including plants in the industrial cities of East London and Port Elizabeth, that were organized by the Federal South African Trade Union, took part in a 30-minute work-stoppage to protest the death. What the South African government fears most is the movement toward social revolution, and the Black trade union movement is a dimension of that movement.

Argentina

The bloodthirsty military regime in Argentina, which Reagan's Administration has dubbed "only" authoritarian, may be on its last legs after almost six years of terror from above. Even sectors of the military itself and the conservative Catholic Church have started demanding change. The latest military ruler, General Galtieri, the fifth in a year, has a reputation for being even more reactionary than the previous ones.

This has not stopped the growing labor unrest in a land whose labor movement has more experience than most in functioning clandestinely. Late in January, for example, 3,000 workers occupied two Volkswagen

plants outside the capital until the company agreed to rehire 630 workers it had put on lay-off.

Earlier, almost 20,000 workers and other oppositionists marched Nov. 7 to demand "Peace, Bread, and Work" in a demonstration organized by the Peronist labor bureaucracy. This was the largest protest since the military came to power in 1976. The Peronist labor bureaucracy is starting to raise its head after years of virtual silence. They are worried that spontaneous wild-cat strikes and human rights protesters such as the "Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo"—rather than Peronism, or the Church—will set the tone for the growing opposition movement.

The Peronist labor bureaucracy makes no secret of the fact that it would agree to "forget about" the 20,000 "disappeared" in order to regain trade union rights for itself.

Nonetheless, Peronism retains much mass appeal, threatening once again to divert a genuine revolution in Argentina. But as the military regime unravels, everything is up for grabs, including the possibility of a full, mass revolution from below.

Oil rig workers

The disaster which cost the lives of 84 oil rig workers off the coast of Newfoundland Feb. 15 was not the first nor will it be the last in this, the job with the highest fatality rate on earth. In the Newfoundland disaster, the floating oil rig was being operated by Mobil Oil Co. in the stormy North Atlantic. Several days before the rig broke up and sank, killing all aboard, warning had been given that the rig was damaged and listing, but no effort was made to evacuate those aboard. The rig had but three lifeboats for 84 men. The lifeboats were supposed to be unsinkable, but they were destroyed.

In the past five years no less than 512 men have lost their lives aboard off-shore oil rigs world-wide. Another huge rig was lost in the English channel in 1980, killing 124 workers. Helicopters, which bring the men to the rig, sometimes crash, and on-board accidents account for more fatalities. This is the price that the workers must pay to contribute to the profits of the oil industry.

Who We Are and What We Stand For

News and Letters Committees, an organization of Marxist-Humanists, stand for the abolition of capitalism, whether in its private property form as in the U.S., or its state property form as in Russia or China. News & Letters was created so that the voices of revolt from below could be heard not separated from the articulation of a philosophy of liberation. A Black production worker, Charles Denby, author of *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*, is the editor of the paper. Raya Dunayevskaya, National Chairwoman of the Committees, is the author of *Marxism and Freedom and Philosophy and Revolution*, which spell out the philosophic ground of Marx's Humanism internationally as *American Civilization on Trial* concretizes it on the American scene and shows the two-way road between the U.S. and Africa.

News & Letters was founded in 1955, the year of the Detroit wildcats against Automation and the Montgomery Bus Boycott against segregation—activities which signalled a new movement from practice which was itself a form of theory. Vol. 1, No. 1, came off the press on the second anniversary of the June 17, 1953 East German revolt against Russian state-capitalism masquerading as

Communism, in order to express our solidarity with freedom fighters abroad as well as at home. Because 1953 was also the year when we worked out the revolutionary dialectics of Marxism in its original form of "a new Humanism," as well as individuality "purified of all that interferes with its universalism, i.e., with freedom itself," we organized ourselves in Committees rather than any elitist party "to lead."

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