

# Theory/ Practice NEWS & LETTERS

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

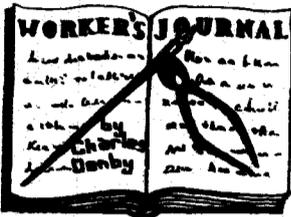
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Reagan, union leaders vs. working people



by Charles Denby, Editor

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

Many workers are wondering what has happened to the trade union that we were so proud to be a member of years ago. Then, the union seemed to have the workers' interest, especially at the point of production, as their number one issue. How could they possibly disregard these issues and what we have gained and come (Continued on Page 8)

In the U.S. and globally

## Deep recession, military build-up and the pulling apart of political alliances

by Raya Dunayevskaya, National Chairwoman, News and Letters Committees

The depth of the economic crisis has sent capitalist ideologues to search for a new expression rather than to face the truth that the U.S. is on the brink of a Depression. The front page of the Business Section of the March 14, 1982

New York Times has come up with the expression, "The Great Depression." It also names "who" is responsible: "The Government caused it." This is an apt description of the crisis both economically and politically, at a time when the genocidal war in El Salvador is being propped up by the Reagan Administration. While the New York Times hardly meant to point to the capitalist system itself as the culprit, it is impossible to avoid confrontation with the irreversible decline of capitalism.

The parallelism between the ever-deepening chronic unemployment, the industrial stagnation, and the political repression — in Latin America, in the Middle East, and indeed globally — characterizes both the U.S. and that other nuclear Titan, Russia, who are fighting for single world domination to the brink of a nuclear holocaust. The determinant that has so far halted their drive to a war that would put a question mark over the very survival of humanity is the global mass discontent — which is seen not only in the Polish rebellion behind the Iron Curtain, and the open revolt of the masses in Latin America, but also in the undercurrent of revolt in the U.S.

### THE MILITARY BUILDUP

The frantic militarization — not just for this year and next, but over a whole five-year period — adds up to the hallucinatory sum of \$1.6 trillion. It speaks loudly and clearly about the co-existence of two total opposites: limitless, unconscionable expenditures for the military, on the one hand; and outright poverty for the millions, on the other. When this "Five-Year Plan" ends, the amount will be \$373 billion for the year 1986, that is to say, 36 percent of the country's total budget that year!

U.S. scientists have pointed to a corollary to this fantastic expenditure: the military has drained no less than 25 percent of all scientific worldwide and 60 percent of overall scientific research. They have also shown that for every billion dollars spent for the military 36,000 fewer jobs are generated than would be generated if that billion were expended in the civilian sector.

A study of "The Global Politics of Arms Sales"<sup>1</sup> shows that a new level of lethal technology has been introduced into Latin America, and has fueled an arms race also in Asia, all with the encouragement of the Reagan Administration. That study reveals that four of the most industrialized countries — U.S., Russia, France, Great Britain — have exported 87.5 percent of the weapons sent to developing nations in the 1970s. The U.S. has exported the most, 45 percent; Russia the next highest, 27.5 percent. Indeed, so quickly did the Reagan Administration lift all bans on U.S. arms sales and engineer sales of what are known as "sophisticated weapons" to the Middle East, Asia and Latin America, that there seems to be no limit to the ambitions of that true "merchant of death," Casper Weinberger.

No wonder that the Middle East (including Saudi Arabia, allegedly the best friend of the U.S.), instead of welcoming the establishment of the Rapid Deployment

(Continued on Page 7)

<sup>1</sup> This study by Andrew J. Pierre was published by Princeton University Press and released by the Council of Foreign Relations, "a non-partisan research organization."

## Begin's terrorism intensifies

Eight Palestinian youths have been killed by Israeli soldiers, 21 others including children were wounded, and another youth was beaten to death by the terrorist religious fanatics of the Shiloh settlement on the West Bank. All this was instigated by the rule of the reactionary Begin government.

Israel violated its own democratic rules when they ousted the duly-elected Palestinian Mayors and Councils of two towns and tried to install puppet regimes in their place. The Arabs responded with a general strike. Resistance is still continuing.

Israeli soldiers roused shopkeepers and civil servants from their homes at gunpoint, forcing them back to work, which they still refuse to do.

The Palestinians complain that the fanatic settlers at Shiloh terrorize the Arab communities at night, raiding through the towns firing weapons, capturing youth, beating them up and then turning them over to the army. "Incidents" such as these reminded all who had lived through the Nazi Holocaust how Nazism got started. No wonder the Palestinians were shouting "fascists" at the Israelis. All this was shown on Israeli TV.

It is widely believed that all this is part of the attempt to annex the West Bank, in clear violation of all existing agreements. Palestinian resistance will continue. It is high time the Israeli people organized a mass movement in the support of Palestinian self-determination on the West Bank.



Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jail.

## UAW strike at U.S. Auto Radiator

### Workers battle scabs, low wages, lead poisoning

Highland Park, Mich. — We have been out on strike at U.S. Auto Radiator since Feb. 16. At first they didn't have scabs, but then they brought them in in the middle of March. The violence started the next Monday when the police came. Everyone decided to do mass picketing because of the scabs getting in.

The police helped the scabs by grabbing them by the arm and taking them in. We tried to talk to the scabs and tell them about the working conditions — how bad it is in the plant. But the police were pulling us away just when we were trying to reason with the scabs.

This plant has workers from many different countries — Arab workers, Yugoslav, Indian — plus a small percentage of Americans, both Black and white. The police threatened all the people from different countries, saying they were going to deport them. Someone said that a man from Immigration was there.

The police began arresting strikers, and one woman was arrested when she stood in front of a car while everyone started yelling, "No Scabs! No Scabs!". The police told her to move or they would arrest her. She said to go ahead. Two workers were beaten up by the police. One was sprayed with mace, and another was held down and hit on the head with a flashlight. All the fighting was mainly because of the police.

The UAW brought some picketers to help us, and after the violence and mass picketing, no scabs showed. Why are we out on strike? The wages are really bad. We are making about \$4.20 an hour. People are asking

for \$5 an hour, which isn't much. In fact we asked for \$5 an hour three years ago, but they broke the strike.

What really bothers me are the conditions in the plant. There is the smoke and the acid. You brush the acid on the radiators and it really smells bad. Just being near the acid makes your eyes water. The company claims that they are going to work on it and put something in the roof to get rid of the smoke.

Or take the break. It is ten minutes, but after eight minutes the buzzer goes off and you must get up and go to your work area. If you take your full ten minutes and don't go to the work area you will be docked. They want you right there, and when you complain about it, they say, well you don't have to work until after ten minutes. But you can't eat at your work station because of the danger from the lead.

They have to take blood samples from you every six months because of the lead. Once that lead poisoning gets to you, and you become pregnant, it is really difficult. Because if that lead poisoning gets to that baby and it has defects, it will suffer for the rest of its life. The women continue working when they get pregnant because there is no maternity leave.

The majority of workers in the shop are women. They have the hardest time getting jobs outside and will stick with this one even with these conditions.

They don't give you a physical when you are hired, so they don't know what kind of troubles you have. If (Continued on Page 2)

## ON THE INSIDE

Essay: Kurds' struggle challenges Khomeini regime	p. 4
Feminists discuss "This Bridge Called My Back"	p. 2

# WOMAN AS REASON

Dear Sisters,

**This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color\*** is a new book that has initiated much discussion within the women's movement including Women's Liberation News & Letters Committees. I found that my view is quite different than that of two Black Marxist-Humanist women, Diane Lee and Bobbie Joyce, and I would like to present all our views in this column, as a continuation of the discussion on racism, women's liberation, and Marx's philosophy that was begun in the November 1981 issue of *News & Letters*.

**This Bridge** is a collection of essays, poetry, articles and conversations by Latin, Black, Asian and Native American women. What struck me was how fearless some of these women are when it comes to critique. They denounce everything — be that society in general, the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) in particular, the Left, the Black, Latin, Asian, Native American movements, and themselves. While almost each entry takes up the male chauvinism of movement men, almost all of these women totally repudiate separatism.

What I appreciated about this book is that these women are feminists. If for no other reason, this book is important because it should finally put to rest the lie that women's liberation is only a white woman's thing. Andrea Canaan says it best: "The buck stops here as it did with a brown woman in Montgomery, Alabama (Rosa Parks). The women's movement is ours."

Throughout the book is revealed a struggle for wholeness. The best example is Merle Woo who writes, "Today, I am satisfied to call myself either an Asian American Feminist or Yellow Feminist. The two terms

\*Edited by C. Moroa, G. Angaldua, Persephone Press, Watertown, Mass. \$8.95.



**women-  
worldwide**

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY MARCH 8, 1982

From Paris, we received the following urgent communication from the feminist weekly, *des femmes hebdo*.

On the evening of March 8, when 12,000 women answered the appeal of the Women's Liberation Movement to strike and demonstrate — a victory without precedent for the political independence of women — we were victimized by a criminal outrage: the destruction of our equipment, our communication facilities, and the offices of our weekly magazine.

There was almost total silence from the press towards this outrage against our journal. They hardly spoke on this occasion, breaking with all traditions of solidarity among the media to inform the people and to communicate.

You can contact *des femmes hebdo* at: 6 rue de Mezieres, 75006 Paris, France.

In mid-December, over 300 working women met in a secret conference in Santiago, Chile to discuss organizing women's unions to oppose new laws aimed at women by the Pinochet regime. The conference included peasant and Indian women, and women from illegal housewives unions. The women denounced the dictatorship and expressed their determination to celebrate March 8 in 1982 in spite of the government's prohibition. (Information from *Courage*)

In San Francisco, 10,000 people celebrated International Women's Day beginning with a march of 5,000 led by striking nurses from San Jose, and ending with a rally attended by working women's organizations, anti-nuclear groups and groups opposing U.S. intervention in El Salvador.

In Chicago, over 1,000 people from 65 different groups attended a celebration which included a discussion of women's liberation activities around the world and a speech by Nellie Hendriks, a member of the Women's Emergency Brigade in the 1937 Flint Sit-down Strike against General Motors.

In Detroit, Women's Liberation News & Letters sponsored a panel discussion which included Suzanne Casey, who spoke on the history of International Women's Day and the importance of Rosa Luxemburg to today's movement; a representative from a group of women railway clerks fighting sexist firings on their job; a member of Black Parents for Quality Education who presented Sojourner Truth as a revolutionary model for fighting both sexism and racism in the schools; Iranian feminist, Neda Azad, who discussed Raya Dunayevskaya's concept of "revolution in permanence" in Marx's philosophy, and Tommie Hope, who spoke on the Black and working class dimension of women's liberation (see Black/Red column, p. 8).

# A dialogue on 'This Bridge Called My Back'

are inseparable because race and sex are an integral part of me."

On the one hand, it seems as if many of these women have had to break with everything — men, the white WLM, the Left, their own national liberation movements. Yet, on the other hand, what absolutely kills you is that here is a great critique of just about everything, but it isn't extended to theory. They didn't break totally with the white WLM. The question of "theory in the flesh" surely didn't originate with women of color. The rejection of theory — particularly Marxism — comes to you directly from the WLM.

Rather than merely exposing the racism of the WLM, as this book does, isn't it necessary to dig deeper to find out how a movement that started out over 10 years ago demanding totally new human relations, that had its roots in the Civil Rights Movement, that challenged the Left on its narrow concept of revolution, is now so racist that a book like **This Bridge** had to be written?

Supposedly we all want revolution, and we know it can't be total unless women are much more than just participants. Then why doesn't the white WLM see Black women that way? Don't women of color have something very unique and important to say about what freedom is? Just as the WLM refused to put off our demands until "the day after revolution," neither can that same WLM expect women of color to stifle their unique ideas until after the revolution.

Isn't this where Marx's method is indispensable? Marx had worked out a relationship to the movements for freedom which he saw arising out of this horrible racist, sexist, capitalist world. Marx saw these forces as Reason whose creativity could both overthrow this existing world and create something new. Throughout his life he never gave up his own vision of a new society where human beings would finally know what it means to "need another human being as a human being" and experience the "absolute movement of becoming."

It is that ground, that methodology, that the white WLM abandoned when they accepted the Left's truncated so-called "Marxism" — the Left whom they didn't trust on any other question. Which road are these committed revolutionary feminists who wrote **This Bridge** going to follow? —Terry Moon

In the introduction to **This Bridge**, I was hopeful in reading the following: "We are interested in the writings of women of color who want nothing short of a revolution . . ." But the book never gives a view of this revolution. There is a lot of talk about analyzing race, class and patriarchy, yet every analysis is limited to a "personal" account that becomes separated from the whole. There is nothing wrong with an individual's account of her struggle, but that individuality needs to be one that involves a subject of revolution—in this case, women of color.

Yet what I find so strange about this book is that the subjective, the concept of "I," really means one individual who has nothing to do with the collective "I." In other words, neither the writers nor the book as a whole begin to encompass the entirety of what Third World women are struggling for.

Much of the history is so reduced to the life experiences of each writer's previous generation that I found a lack of the new in these accounts. Some history is skipped over too quickly. For example, Mitsujie Yamada writes, "Many of the leaders in women's organizations today had moved naturally from the civil rights politics of the '60s to sexual politics . . ." But

## An Iranian woman vows resistance to oppression

Editor's Note: We received the following letter from a young woman in Iran.

I am an unemployed high school graduate. All my efforts were to continue my activities and my studies, and now that is impossible. It is very difficult for me to be looked upon as a woman. They only see women as mothers. I cannot and will not accept this.

The new guidelines for university admissions require "harmony of sex and major," meaning women can't study technical majors, and we are also required to be "Islamic."

In Iran every hardship and every oppression first comes down on women. Women are bearing a double oppression. Just because you are a woman you are barred from doing anything that you want or like to do.

All women these days have to wear the chador or a scarf. A few days ago, I was going into an office when I was stopped and told I couldn't enter unless I wore a veil. "Acid greets all women who are not veiled" is written all over the walls in the streets. The leading cleric here, Ayatollah Dastgheib (recently killed in a bombing) had said in a sermon, "We will force the women in the government offices to wear the veil by

was it so "natural," or was it that there was a great deal of sexism in the Civil Rights Movement and that women had to fight against that, and in the process became leaders and activists in women's organizations?

In reading, I found myself asking—what do these writers want a revolution for? A new feminist culture that sees man as "Other"? By equating Marxism with all "isms" including lesbian separatism, as if they are all one and the same, do the women writers thereby dismiss all philosophy? Or do they want to ignore what radical women of color have done and thought throughout history?

I am a Black woman who is insulted by this work—insulted because of its ready-made conclusions, its attempt to search for easy answers, and its frivolous manner of putting forth theoretical categories. This is not a new work for me, nor is it a "first," as many have tried to make it out to be. Rather it is the same old story—one that has no true recollection of the past, no truly radical vision for the future. —Diane Lee

Somehow I had hoped for, if not actually expected, more from **This Bridge**. Attempting to come to grips (Continued on Page 5)

## U.S. Auto Radiator



On the picket line at U.S. Auto Radiator.

(Continued from Page 1)

you are poor, you don't have the money to go to a doctor and find out. And in first aid sometimes they don't even have a bandaid! They give you masking tape. And if you are really hurt, like getting an arm smashed in a machine, they can't do anything.

I hope I don't end up working here when I am old because there is no pension. One woman has been working here 17 years and is getting on in years. When she was there for 15 years, they gave her a gift certificate to Hudson's for \$100 and a tiny pin. All you can get when you retire is Social Security which isn't much money.

When I first came to work at the plant there was very little evidence of people sticking together. But right now there is more sticking together than ever before. We were all on the line together stopping the scabs from coming in. I hope we get something from this contract. —Woman striker, U.S. Auto Radiator

As we go to press, the workers have been forced back to work by the UAW leadership, who negotiated a contract which the workers turned down. After threats from the union president and the regional director that the workers would all lose their jobs, that the union would not back them if scabs were hired, that the company would not negotiate and would close the plant, that a four-year miserable agreement with a small pay increase and no real change in working conditions was a "good" (!) contract, the workers were faced with no choice but to return to work. Many are openly talking of the union's betrayal of the workers.

whatever means, but on the streets, it is the men's responsibility." That means "do anything you want with these women." The guards have also announced they are no longer responsible for the security of women on the streets.

Dastgheib was the same one who, at the beginning of the war with Iraq, told everyone to "spit in the face of the refugees from Abadan who have allowed the Iraqis to invade their city and have fled." In the city of Shiraz, the guards go around looking for unveiled women, arresting them and sometimes flogging them, as if everything else were fine and all that's left to do is to make women wear the chador.

They have taken the right to divorce away from women. A woman who is divorced can keep her child only until it is three years old . . . Nowadays they are closing all day-care centers to force women to stay home.

I really wish to make this the principle of my life: Yes, yes life is beautiful  
life is an everlasting temple of fire  
if you kindle it  
its dancing flames will engulf every land  
if not, it is out  
and darkness is our fault

# Make new beginnings out of plant shutdowns

by Felix Martin, West Coast Editor

March 19 is the last day many of us will ever work at GM South Gate. While we're being thrown onto the unemployment line—1,500 of us—the politicians give speeches, the union leaders call meetings, and the company makes promises. But what are we workers going to do?

Nobody has faced up to the truth that we are going to be out of jobs for good, because we've lost control of production. The company is making noise about transferring 300 workers over to the Van Nuys plant (the only functioning auto plant west of Kansas), as if that's going to soften the blow.

But how are they going to make room over there for 300 more workers—by coming down so hard on the workers there, that anyone who comes in a minute late or talks back to a foreman will be fired. That means Van Nuys will become a real hell-hole.

And why should they give us a few jobs at the expense of the Van Nuys workers? The company just wants to pit worker against worker.

The union is also making promises. They intend to send a delegation to Detroit to talk to GM about keeping the plant open. What's that going to do? GM made up its mind a long time ago to close South Gate, and they're even talking of closing Van Nuys in the Fall. All the union's promises add up to is an excuse for some bureaucrats to take a vacation at our expense.

It's about time everyone realized that neither the company nor the union is doing a thing to get our jobs back. We're being thrown onto unemployment not because of car sales or because we didn't write enough letters to our congressmen, but because we've lost control of production. As soon as we agreed to paragraph 8 in the contract way back in 1948—which gives management complete authority to determine all questions of production including "location of plants"—it was only a matter of time before we'd be on the street.

This time it's not going to be like the earlier lay-offs—we're going to get less compensation and there won't be a job waiting at the end. Two years ago we got TRA that added up to almost \$250 a week, but

## Grocers try to steal wages

Detroit, Mich. — The latest companies trying to cash in on the concessions fever are the Detroit area grocery chains. They are asking employees to take a two to three year wage freeze and a freeze on the annual COLA raise. Despite the fact that Kroger, Spartan and Bormans (Farmer Jack) have all had profitable years they have the gall to make these requests.

Gene Morrison, president and chief executive officer of Spartan Foods (who service most independent grocery stores in the Detroit metropolitan area) said a few months ago, "We have had an excellent year in fiscal 1981."

Worse yet is the "resistance" put up by local 337 of the Teamsters, which has been virtually nothing.

What will the employees receive for these concessions? Nothing in regard to job security, better work rules or conditions, or equality of sacrifice from management too. Already workers at Spartan and Bormans have vetoed round one of management's concession package. Shortly a "modified" proposal will be offered. Hopefully the union brothers and sisters will realize this outrageous scam for what it is and vote it down.

—Warehouse worker

## Unemployed workers speak

Detroit, Mich.—I worked at a small jewelry company, but business was slow because the economy is bad. Many of us were laid off. All women work there (about 70 or 80 people), as shipping clerks, or in production or individual piece work. The company is owned by a husband and wife team. There is no union.

We tried to get a union in, in the past. When we began to have discussions on this, the discussions leaked out, and many of us were interrogated and threatened with losing our jobs.

Although this is a small company, I think Reagan has a lot to do with our problems. He is spending a lot of money on defense and overlooking poor people. They are being annihilated.

—Woman worker

Romeo, Mich.—At the Ford Romeo Tractor factory, half the workforce was laid off, but they are still running 106-126 jobs a day. There will be no new hires there. When they call back, a person will need to have 6-7 years seniority. Every worker that's left in the plant will now have more than one job to do.

Whatever will happen with the labor bureaucracy and its concessions, it will not help the economy. With such high interest rates on cars, who can afford to buy one? Poor people cannot buy cars today—they have no jobs.

—Laid-off Ford Romeo worker

this time TRA will be only \$130 a week. And with Reagan around, the economy will be even worse in a few years, and we'll never get work.

The final fig-leaf was an announcement that Toyota is thinking about buying the plant. They just announced that to prevent workers from tearing up the plant on their last week of work.

It's time we made a new beginning out of the end we are facing. We have to get together to figure out what to do about the crisis of production in this society, beginning with our own plant. That's the only way we'll be able to turn this crisis around.

## Auto workers in Iran strike against mullahs and guns

Tehran, Iran—In December, 1981 more than 8,000 auto workers at the Iran National plant went on strike to oppose the government's attempt to cut their benefits. Khomeini's regime says it wants to "do away with favoritism," because it is "un-Islamic." The workers response was firm and quick: a shutdown of the line and blocking the gates to the plant.

The Minister of Labor and a few local clergy who had gone to the plant at first attempted to persuade the workers by citing the conditions of war, then they threatened the workers with a few lackeys carrying G3 automatic rifles. They threatened to close down the factory since "it has not been making any profits for the government." But the workers refused to budge even under the pressure of the armed guards. The guards opened fire on the workers, wounding many and arresting some for being "U.S. spies."

The attack did not come as a surprise to workers, since this is what the government has been doing in many other factories. Workers who three years ago threw out the Shah and many other capitalists are fighting the enemy at home—Khomeini's theocratic-capitalism.

The Islamic government closed all the universities which were the centers of dissent; that was called the "Cultural Revolution." Now it is pressuring workers, calling it "the Economic Revolution"; the workers call it "work more, get less."

The President goes on TV and tells workers: "It is blasphemy against God if production doesn't increase." The workers' response: 8,000 on strike at Iran National, as well as strikes at three shoe factories and in the industrial city of Alborz. One worker at Iran National had this to say about their demands: "We want to be treated as human beings."

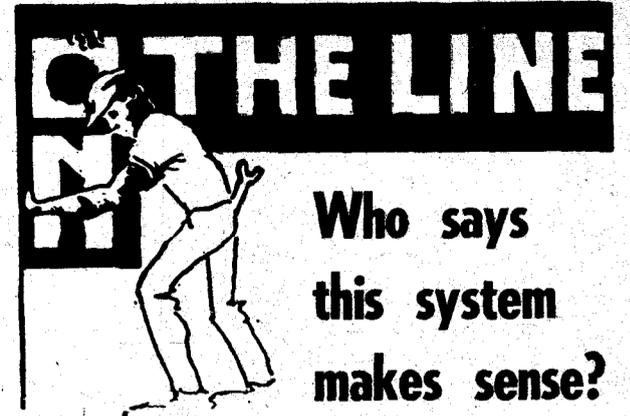
## Transit contract unhealthy

New York, N.Y.—Our new transit contract is definitely a sellout. They give you that garbage that you're lucky to have a job. These give-backs don't work. They had them in England with the Labour Party, before Thatcher, but the businesses just put the give-backs in their pockets. They didn't create new jobs.

In transit, and for all city workers, health insurance coverage is the same as in 1973, except for Blue Cross, which they have to raise. The rest was never updated to match inflation. So you get \$7.50 from your health insurance for a doctor's appointment and then the bill is \$20. Or \$8 for an X-ray when the bill is \$30. They allow \$35 for anaesthetics when it really costs \$200. Since 1973 they've been giving us so-called raises, which are then eaten up by medical bills. And yet the union never even brings this up.

The TWU leaders are a bunch of fat cats. They don't fight for the workers or even back up their own shop stewards. They are corrupt. But when you take them to court, the courts never do anything. Not when they have a labor leader who's selling out for them.

—Transit worker, 207th St.



by John Marcotte

"Seniority doesn't mean a thing anymore. If you have two days or 25 years it's the same. When they shut down, they shut down." So said a textile worker with 25 years in a shop that just closed up for good.

My plant is on a four day work week now. After the last lay-offs the company threatened to lay off 140 more or put everyone on a four day week, so we had to accept the reduced week for now. There is no telling when things will pick up.

Now management is shipping us around like cattle from department to department, trying to get the five days of work out in four. Workers have been saying if the company can get away with it maybe they'll never call back our buddies from lay-off, so we've been trying to work slow.

It's really crazy. The other plant is working two hours overtime everyday on the four day week. The union says it can't do anything about that. Of course that's the kind of "freedom" the company wants, when they don't have to promise any work but can schedule overtime whenever they want it.

Some say they don't believe business is as slow as the company makes out. They think the company is getting its revenge for the work stoppages last year. Whatever the truth is, a lot of workers say the worst thing is simply not knowing. We are not told anything by either the company or the union.

You come to work not knowing if there's going to be a lay-off notice on the time clock at 4:00, or some new plan of the company like the four day week. It gets you disgusted and depressed coming to work like that. That tension and uncertainty week after week can be worse than the lay-off itself. All you get are dozens of rumors.

When you stand back and look at a system where a worker who's put in 30 years doing all the work, who knows every facet of the job inside-out, still doesn't even know where he will be tomorrow or what decisions have been made affecting his livelihood and whole life, you don't know if you want to laugh at the whole stupidity of it or get mad. That a system that's sub-human can have existed this long is a wonder.

Stupidity, inefficiency and powerlessness are not only the mark of the Polish system, though a lot of attention has been shed on it recently because of Solidarity bringing it to light for all to see. But these are the hallmarks of any society based on the factory system. I believe that future generations will look back on the factory system as we look back on chattel slavery, with wonder and disgust that any such system could have existed that long.

## Robots are the new foremen

Chicago, Ill. — A lot of people are concerned about the economy and the talk that Schwinn is going to leave Chicago and move south. But I don't see it that way with all the money they are putting in. The supervisors are pretty well brainwashed into talking up these robots: telling us they don't get sick, they don't take vacations. But they don't need supervisors either. They are thinking themselves right out of a job.

I heard they fired 17 supervisors and were looking to fire even more. It was the supervisors who were in any way friendly with the union or let you alone if you did your work. One of them had over 25 years with the company. In the shipping department they kept a supervisor with 17 years because he's Gerald Chambers' buddy.

The company reset the production in violation of the contract. The way they did it, they didn't even allow for two 15-minute breaks and just added in about 100 bikes which is a half-hour of production. The union sent someone from the International to do our own time study. He had to give them two days notice. But when he came everything was perfect. On a normal day they might run 7 or 8 models together, and you have to keep setting the machine according to the different sizes. But when he came in they ran them one size at a time in perfect order.

—Schwinn worker, Plant One

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# ESSAY ARTICLE Kurds' continuous struggle challenges Khomeini regime

by Cyrus Noveen

Today the Kurdish movement, despite the blockade of Kurdish areas by the Islamic Republican Party (IRP) government of Iran, is by no means crushed. Nor has any blockade yet been able to sever the close bonds of the Kurds with other revolutionary forces of Iran. We have much to gain from a study of those ceaseless struggles as we too challenge the Khomeini regime in its barbaric attempts to transform the great Iranian revolution into its present counter-revolutionary stage.

## I. FROM THE BEGINNING

The year 1978 witnessed historic sustained mass mobilizations that led to the overthrow of the Shah and the stranglehold of U.S. imperialism on Iran. From that beginning, Kurdish revolutionaries were not only active in Kurdistan, but were among the most militant revolutionaries in other parts of the country. The Kurdish areas were bursting with revolutionary activity during that decisive year. Numerous sit-ins burst forth in the Kurdish cities in support of political prisoners who were on hunger strike. In Marivan a sit-in and hunger strike were staged to demand the release of four peasants who were imprisoned for refusing to move off their land as the landlord had demanded. The struggle to be recognized as a people continues to this day.

The determined struggles of the brave and courageous Kurds for national self-determination has been nearly ceaseless ever since their emergence as a revolutionary force in the wake of the successful Russian Revolution of 1917.<sup>1</sup>

The Iranian Revolution has been the latest test both of the Kurdish rebels and of the Iranian Left's commitment to self-determination. It is not accidental that the counter-revolution in Iran took some of its first decisive steps to gain full power by placing Kurdish revolutionaries in front of firing squads shortly after the Shah was overthrown when they refused to bow to Khomeini's oppressive rule. Khalkhali became the hanging judge when he ordered the executions of Kurdish revolutionaries.

And while some revolutionaries did solidarize with the Kurds, including joining them in their territory as fighters against the pasdaran (Khomeini's religious fighters — in actuality, thugs), nonetheless, much of the Left did not see that attack against the Kurds as a measure of the developing counter-revolution and thus failed decisively to raise an alternative banner of freedom. They failed to see self-determination of nations as one of the crucial pathways for the whole Iranian Revolution.

Today, some of the Left, though certainly opposing Khomeini's murderous counter-revolution, have again failed to begin working out the relation of self-determination of nations and full social revolution. They have, instead, begun criticizing the "backwardness" of the masses, including that of the Kurdish struggle, as being a cause for the failure of the revolution.

## II. THE KURDISH STRUGGLE UNDER THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION

After the overthrow of the Shah, the people of Kurdistan refused to allow the new rulers to dictate to them how they run their lives. Less than two months after the overthrow of the Shah, and ten days after the historic March 8, 1979 women's demonstrations in Teheran against Khomeini's order to wear the veil, the pishmarga (Kurdish fighters, "those who give up their lives ahead of everyone") in the Kurdish city of Sanandaj took over the local gendarmerie and set up barricades to defend the city against the army. The city radio station was taken over and people were called on to rise up against the central authorities. Those authorities attacked the city with heavy artillery, and only after hundreds were killed did they take control.

In late March the peasants in Turkeman Sahra, who had taken over the land, were massacred by the pasdaran. Close to 100,000 participated in a demonstration to mourn their deaths.

In the spring of 1979, the Kurdish regions witnessed an explosion of committees formed by workers, peasants, women and youth. The women's committees became the most active in the struggle against Khomeini's "holy war."

The demonstrations were endless. First, they demanded the release of peasants from prison. Then they supported the newly-formed labor union. Next they opposed local landlords who were training the pasdaran. Committees were set up to assist the peasants on water projects, distribution of food to the poor, medical aid to the villages.

In Sanandaj, when the pasdaran attempted to organize a "communist killing day," the pishmarga took over their headquarters and threw them out of the city. When, on July 10, the pasdaran started to shoot at the

participants in a demonstration, almost the entire city responded by burning down their headquarters. When the government attempted to flood the Kurdish cities with pasdaran from non-Kurdish areas, 50,000 Kurds from all over Kurdistan began a march to Marivan in protest. Despite the anti-communist agitation of local landlords, thousands of peasant men, women and children greeted the marchers by bringing them food and chanting: "Long live our brotherhood. Long live our struggle in unity."

On July 20, 1979 the Khomeini government launched a full scale military attack against the populations of Paveh and Sanandaj. The pishmarga fled to the mountains. Just as the women in Teheran had been the first to take to the streets against the Khomeini oppression, so the Kurdish women were the ones who took up the struggle and organized the mass mobilization against the army.

As one Kurdish woman put it: "It began with one



Kurds of the city of Saqqez march in August 1979 in support of Kurds in Marivan who had been encircled by "Revolutionary Guards" on orders from Teheran. Banner reads: "The destiny of the Kurdish people can only be fulfilled in a democratic republic of the masses."

woman who wore a red dress, and with a picture of her murdered husband went to the streets and called on the people to take to the streets and not to sit home and mourn. This led to spontaneous mass demonstrations. In the following days women were the only demonstrators. They organized against Khalkhali. Their activities finally brought the entire town into the streets, and the pishmarga were able to return from the mountains."

During the next two months, the widespread self-organized local committees of women and students in Sanandaj began reorganizing the entire administration of the city, challenging many forms of oppression. They raised the demand for the removal of the pasdaran.

On Oct. 20, the pasdaran once again began shooting people, this time with the backing of the army and with Phantom jets flying low over the city. The next morning the outraged people gathered at the city center demanding that the pishmarga take over the pasdaran headquarters. The pishmarga refused. A sit-in began demanding the unconditional expulsion of the pasdaran. By the next day the entire city was on general strike. Workers from all the factories joined with the bakers union, the seasonal workers union, local committees, women's committees and students. From all over Kurdistan, messages of solidarity along with food and other aid flooded the city. Messages of solidarity came from peasants in no less than 50 villages. Within days revolutionary courts were set up in the streets and many of the Islamic Republic lackeys and local landlords were arrested.

It was only after the almost total destruction of Sanandaj, including a large-scale massacre of the population, that the army was able to retake the city.

## III. SIXTY YEARS OF THE KURDISH MOVEMENT

The Kurds in fact have been the testing ground for revolutions in the region for over 60 years. Over and over again they have been the most revolutionary of forces, but subjected to the most vicious of betrayals:

• In 1919, the Kurdish peasants in the region today known as Turkey rose up against the European imperialists, who, having just ended the holocaust of World War I, were busy carving up the war booty. Through their struggle, the Kurds extended their solidarity with the Russian Revolution and showed their refusal to limit the demand for national self-determination to the bourgeois notion of national equality. Thus, in 1923 when Mustafa Kemal — who a few years earlier had crushed the soviets that the Kurds had been creating throughout Northern Kurdistan under the impact of the Russian Revolution — proclaimed the establishment of a "Turkish State," the Kurds at once took up arms and a general revolt broke out. It took more than a decade and the

revolt. Even today martial law is maintained in four of the six Kurdish provinces of Turkey.

• At the end of World War II — when the Russian army still occupied northern Iran, while the Western-installed Shah held power in Teheran — the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad and the Azerbaijan Republic were declared, independent of Iran. But Stalin's Russia was interested in obtaining oil concessions, not in solidarizing with the struggles of the Kurds and Azerbaijan Turks; nor did the U.S. have any intention of relinquishing anything. Moreover, the demands raised by the Kurdish leadership for recognition as a national entity were so separate from any measures for revolutionizing social relations that in less than a year that leadership agreed to return to a limited autonomy within Iran. Within a few months of this agreement, the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad was occupied by Iranian armed forces.

• In the Iraqi Revolution of 1958, the Kurds were

most horrible atrocities by the regime to put down the a force demanding a deepening of revolution. Qassim, born of a Kurdish mother and an Arab father, had, upon coming to power, declared Iraq to be a nation based upon the association of Kurds and Arabs. He began reforms such as an eight-hour day, reduced rents, lowering food prices and legalizing unions. The masses, especially the Kurds in Mosul and Kirkuk, moved to deepen the revolution. Qassim responded by calling upon his army and the native Communist Party to put down any such mass movement. Soon Qassim too was overthrown by the Baath Party.

Between 1963 and 1975 five conflicts broke out between the Iraqi army and the Kurds. In 1975 a pact between Iraq and Iran ended Iran's supplying of arms to the Kurds. This in turn led to the breakdown of much of the Kurdish movement that Mulla Mustafa Barezani had set up. Hundreds of thousands of Kurds were dragged into the Shah's concentration camps. Many Kurds refused to turn in their arms and fled back into Iraq.

Today, following Iraq's invasion of Iran, Khomeini has often directed his forces against the Kurds, rather than against the Iraqi invasion. But as great a danger to the revolution is the disorientation introduced by the "ideas" of the counter-revolution as if its so-called anti-imperialism was any sort of ground for revolutionaries.

That counter-revolution hit out against the Kurds, against the women who demanded their liberation, and finally against the Left youth who began launching attacks against the Islamic Republican Party. However, much of the Left has argued that the revolution was "diverted" by the fact that women demanded their rights, and that the Kurds "so quickly" fought for self-determination. These actions, they argued, presented an easy target for counter-revolution to mobilize against. But the truth is that a revolution is not an undifferentiated whole marching towards an abstract goal.

Revolution is the concrete, individual passions and movement of a variety of forces — workers, peasants, national minorities, women and youth — towards a new society. Unity is necessary, but it can only be achieved if, at one and the same time, each part of the revolutionary movement is recognized as one of the pathways toward full social revolution. Only then can there be unity—the movement from below grounded to a philosophy of revolution. Such a unity of philosophy and revolution is Marx's Humanism, opposed both to capitalism and "vulgar communism," letting nothing

(Continued on Page 9)

1. There are only a few works available in English on Kurdish history. The most recent is *People Without A Country: Kurds and Kurdistan* edited by Gerard Chaliand. See also Hanna Barakat's *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*.

## Salvadoran writes on revolution in his land

*Editor's Note: Below we are printing excerpts from El Salvadoran exile Francisco Aquino's essay, "El Salvador in Revolution." The full essay is available in Latin America's Revolutions a bilingual News & Letters pamphlet advertised below.*

The biography of Farabundo Marti is the biography of the struggle of the Salvadoran people. Marti, an indefatigable combatant, fought alongside General Sandino in Nicaragua against the invading Yankee troops, and was executed in January of 1932. This shooting marked the beginning of a ferocious repression against the Salvadoran peasantry which cost nearly 30,000 precious lives.

One of the fascinating aspects of this struggle was the manner in which these peasants and Indians fought. With sticks, machetes and defective firearms, they fought against an army that was beginning to organize itself into what constitutes today an authentic army of occupation against its own people, one of the most genocidal in Latin America.

**MAXIMILIANO** Hernandez Martinez, the military officer who headed these operations, became dictator for 12 years until he was thrown out of power in April of 1944, when courageous patriots rose up in arms against him and the people carried out a general strike.

It was in the decade of the 1970s that, in a most brilliant manner, the Salvadoran people began their organized struggle against the oppressors. One of the most outstanding revolutionary youth was the Secretary General of the Popular Revolutionary Bloc, Juan Chacon, who, in the middle of the cruelest political repression and persecution, moved from place to place directing one of the most combative revolutionary movements of the country. In November, 1980, he courageously gave his life, assassinated along with other members of the Executive Headquarters of the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR).

Lil Milagro Ramirez is the revolutionary woman par excellence. A founding member of the Armed Forces of National Resistance (FARN) and the Unified Popular Action Front (FAPU), she is, together with Ana Guadalupe Martinez, one of the most prominent Salvadoran revolutionary women. Ramirez also participated in many guerrilla activities of her organization and is, in fact, one of the initiators of the Salvadoran guerrilla movement. She has been counted as missing and has not been found to this day. Most likely she was murdered by the government, as she was one of the most wanted persons in the country.

**THE CASE** of Ana Guadalupe Martinez is of extreme importance, as she is a member of the Revolutionary People's Army (ERP) and is a former political prisoner, who had to bear torture and rape. She was later liberated as one of the demands for the release of Roberto Pomo, an industrialist and public figure who had been kidnapped by the ERP. Her experiences went into the writing of a book, widely circulated in Latin America at present and soon to come out in English under the title of **Clandestine Prisons**, in which she describes all her experiences as a prisoner.

Furthermore, as for the participation of women, it is to be emphasized that around 30 percent of those fighting in the guerrilla organizations are women. The role of women also made itself felt in the formation of a Committee of Mothers of Political Prisoners and Miss-

### Concentration camps in LA

Los Angeles, Cal.—It's good to see so much attention being focused on the plight of the Salvadoran people, for every day they are being attacked, slaughtered, and mistreated by the agents of U.S. imperialism. But **within** the U.S., mistreatment of Salvadoran exiles is going on every day.

I'm referring to the "detention centers" for "illegal" Salvadoran immigrants rounded up by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). There are two "detention centers" (really concentration camps) in Los Angeles alone. People are brought here after the INS arrests them for not having papers. They are kept in these centers until the U.S. government gets around to deporting them back to El Salvador.

When someone speaks out or complains, they are insulted or even beaten by the guards. Many are intimidated and told that if they complain, INS will round up their friends and relatives next. All this is happening here in Los Angeles, right under our noses.

Over 1,000 Salvadoran exiles are being sent back to El Salvador each month from Southern California alone. Many came here fleeing the death squads, the police, the government's political and economic oppression. Many of them will be arrested at the airport, and some will be killed by the police. This has to stop. Protest the war against the Salvadoran people going on inside the U.S.!

—Salvadoran exile

ing Persons, which demanded the release of their sons and denounced all kinds of abuse leveled against them.

After showing the role of women, we come to the participation of the Church. The assassination of many priests and Christian workers in the community caused Monsignor Oscar Romero to radicalize his position and become one of the most faithful defenders of the people. In his sermons he denounced all the brutalities of the junta, and it was precisely one of his sermons that brought about his assassination while he was officiating at mass on March 23, 1980.

The revolutionary struggle continues in all its might. The attitude of solidarity of all the peoples of Latin America and other peoples of the world is contributing to the success of the objectives of the Salvadoran people.

### LATIN AMERICA'S REVOLUTIONS IN REALITY, IN THOUGHT

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### U.S. out of Central America!

Washington, D.C.—Tens of thousands of demonstrators rallied and marched here on the eve of the phoney March 28 El Salvador elections contrived by the U.S. backed genocidal junta. The election is an attempt to fabricate legitimacy on paper which the junta cannot possibly win in life from the workers, peasants, women and youth who now stand on the threshold of full social revolution.

A group of Latinos marched behind a banner reading "Poland—El Salvador: Workers' Peasants' Power!" In fact the Latinos were a vivid presence, marching independently or in large contingents from Casa El Salvador, Casa Nicaragua, and in Chilean, Guatemalan and Puerto Rican Solidarity groups. The march itself passed through a Latino neighborhood where whole families observed from open windows. Also noticeable were Palestinians linking their demands for self-determination with Latin America's struggle.

Committees in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador brought buses of people from as far away as Ohio, West Virginia, Florida and Maine.

If the mood in the Hunter College bus was any general indication people are talking about a new beginning and deeper forms of unity in which to project a lasting alternative. —Marxist-Humanist participants

### 'This Bridge Called My Back'

(Continued from Page 2)

with my own newly recognized/discovered feminism. I had looked forward to a book written by "radical" women of color on the question of women's liberation. Such a book would certainly help me deal with my growing sense of feminism, as well as my growing distrust of the so-called WLM. I was mistaken.

There are a couple of beautifully written and profoundly moving pieces that simultaneously express an attempt by the writers to see themselves as whole human beings, and to allow their sense of wholeness to direct their vision. At the same time, they express the contradictions, the pain, the anger and, above all, the frustrations experienced by women of color in relationship not only to society, but to the WLM.

While the book as a whole does not go beyond being an expression of rage, it does point out that even among the radical women of color whose self-definition includes "feminist," the concepts of women's liberation and of revolution remain separated. From the absolutely unbelievable mumbo-jumbo of projecting charms and "jujus" as method of revolution; or the self-imposed isolation of shrouding one's self in "magic" and some mystical, narrow nationalistic-type of spiritualism, so as to be able to call on the wrath of ancient goddesses to make the revolution; to the beauty of the vision expressed by M. Woo, including the concrete opening statements laid down by C. Moraga in her preface, it is clear that what is lacking in this anthology is a unifying vision of women of color and revolution.

**This Bridge Called My Back**, by not working out a theory of Third World women's liberation, has unwittingly placed women's liberation and revolution in the context of something to be guessed at. By not placing the anthology in the context of a philosophy of revolution, by not connecting with the intermergence of subject and object of revolution, nothing gets worked out, the original contradiction still remains. **This Bridge** simply exists as a part of the feminist culture. Culture without revolution lacks substance and subject. Indeed, that is the problem with the book. —Bobbie Joyce



### Latina dimension and IWD

New York, N.Y.—On International Women's Day, March 8, a celebration was held in solidarity with the Central American women in revolution. It was sponsored by AMES (Association of Women of El Salvador) and Casa Nicaragua's Women's Organization, plus Committees in Support of the People of El Salvador and Guatemala Solidarity.

The point that came across is that revolution will never be the same again, since Nicaragua and since the Women's Liberation Movement. In Central America, the Left has been forced to learn and grow, especially by the participation of women (and now the Indians, too).

Forty percent of the guerrillas in El Salvador are women; the five-point unification program of the Guatemalan Left has, as one of its points, the equality of women; and women ran the International Women's Program and spoke for themselves — all this, to me, means that revolution can never be the same again in this part of the world. Revolution can never be without women as full and equal participants, or without at least the promise of an equal role in building a new society.

But, if the Left doesn't make a category of women (and of Indian and youth) as Reason, will they be able to achieve not only victory against U.S. imperialism and native dictatorship, but also achieve a new society?

My point is simply that I felt that at this program I attended, the Central American Left has grown a lot and learned a lot from the women and youth, that is, the movement from practice. That is why they won in Nicaragua and are winning today. What Regis Debray wrote 15 years ago in **Revolution in the Revolution**, that there was no room in the guerrillas for "women and children," seems ludicrous today!

I do know that the test is now in Nicaragua, whether the new society can be established.

—Marxist-Humanist

### Japanese Americans focus on war relocation hearings

New York, N.Y.—Last Dec. 9, the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWDIC) completed its hearings in Boston. Since July, hearings had been held in many cities—Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, San Francisco, Denver, Detroit, Chicago, New York—to study the circumstances surrounding Executive Order 9066, issued February 19, 1942 which interned 120,000 Japanese Americans in concentration camps as suspected "enemy agents." (Not a single conviction was ever made on this charge).

The Commission hearings have, for over a year now, been a focal point for the Japanese American community. Testimony by witnesses has unearthed a Pandora's Box and has engaged the community in bitter debate.

The Commission came into existence as a response to persistent efforts by Japanese Americans, particularly along the West Coast, to seek some form of compensation for the Executive Order which resulted in not only the loss of millions of dollars, but as well, destroyed many lives. The Commission hearings have put the Japanese American community in a no-win situation of complicity with its ultimate decision while the hopes for actual monetary compensation are dim. In requesting an adjournment of one year for a report of its findings, the Commission recently has led some in the community to believe that this was done to give the community time to cool out.

The hearings were timely in the sense that they gave the press opportunities to speak of "war exceptionalism." Last July 27, the **Wall Street Journal** published an editorial which asked, "How guilty should we feel?" It answered, "Unpleasant as the relocation camps were, the inhabitants were far safer and healthier than GIs in the jungles of New Guinea or on the beach of Iwo Jima."

At home, the infamous "Loyalty Oath" which was administered to Japanese Americans while in the camps, placed the Japanese—who had been completely stripped of their livelihood and citizenship and threatened by vicious racist campaigns in their home towns—in total jeopardy.

Today, on the 40th Anniversary of Executive Order 9066, there are "Two Worlds" within the Japanese American community. There are those who continue to dismiss the Order as a "mistake" which must not happen again, and those who will not forgive the American government.

This time around, if we do have another limited war—and the question seems more and more to be when, than if—what will stay the government's hand in destroying at once our precious civil liberties.

—Teru Ibuki

## WORKERS' STRUGGLES, IDEAS VS. ECONOMIC CRISIS

I was glad to see the front page article in last month's *News & Letters* take up the issue of the miners. We've all heard how dangerous mining is, and how Reagan is making it even more dangerous with his cutbacks. If you look at California, you'll see that many workers are killed in accidents here too. Out in the desert there's a lot of construction going on, like building septic tanks. They have to dig a trench in the desert, and line the walls with bricks. Workers have to crawl down there 35 feet, and brick it up step by step. A lot of times the walls just collapse from the pressure of the earth, and workers get killed.

**Worker  
Los Angeles**

Like the District 65 UAW member (March N&L), I was disappointed in the message of the AFL-CIO Solidarity Day certificate. As a worker ("unorganized"), I was a marcher who was elated at all that worker power there, and yet I think that the AFL-CIO bureaucrats are out of touch with the working class. Particularly anti-worker (anti-human!) is its sponsorship of the American Institute for Free Labor Development in El Salvador and elsewhere, with its involvement with the Junta and big business. For more information on this, write for "AIFLD Information Packet" (cost \$3) to CISPE, P.O. Box 12056, Washington, D.C. 20005.

**Clerical worker  
Rochester, N.Y.**

I thought that Andy Phillips' article on the economy in the last issue of *News & Letters* made very explicit the need for workers to develop new forms of organization. It gave a synopsis of the "facts" about the economy, but it also never lost sight of the revolutionary subjectivity: the response that workers are making to all these givebacks. You can see signs of that in how the miners are starting to question the wisdom of their leaders like Sam Church.

**New Marxist-Humanist  
Los Angeles**

Several months ago there was a sit-down occupation by workers at the Fraser Shipyards in Superior, Wisc. This is the largest shipyards on all the Great Lakes. Not much publicity has been given to the occupation, for obvious reasons. Several hundred workers took part. One of the major points of objection of these workers was private security-police "like the Nazis."

After the occupation was uprooted, management fired one whole shift as retribution, even workers who had been sick and thus never took part. 300 to 400 workers were fired. After several months of arbitration the state government ordered only about half the workers rehired. And now they have ordered the workers to re-pay any unemployment, welfare, etc., they may have received. But the more important thing is that the occupation did happen.

**Seamas C.  
Cloquet, Minnesota**

Something is going on in management washrooms which never took this form before, I believe. They are talking about "semi-autonomous work groups"; about the "creative energy" of the rank-and-file worker; about "centers for creative leadership"; about "spontaneity," all of this couched in psychological terms and bureaucratic mumbo-jumbo, trying to find some way to harness that energy without destroying the prerogatives of management.

Some see it as a threat to those prerogatives and others say that without the unleashing of that energy, the industrial leadership of the U.S. is doomed. Personnel managers now have Ph.D.'s in anthropology, sociology, psychology, cul-

tural anthropology, etc. — not business administration.

Corporate America sent over 3,000 people to a recent conference I observed — at a cost of \$1,000 to \$2,000 for each person — about \$5 million. They are serious!

**Long-time socialist  
New York**

In response to Andy Phillips' very good article last month, I would like to add a few details on the Ford contract concessions that David Moberg pointed out in a report in *In These Times* (2/24/82):

1) The majority of Ford's outsourcing decisions for the next couple of years have already been made; 2) Ford can still close plants for any other reason it wants, so outsourcing could indirectly close more plants; 3) Besides the 3,000 sure to be laid off due to giving up the 10 paid days off, the \$1 billion savings will buy more robots and displace more workers.

**John Marcotte  
New York**

Supporters of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) held a press conference in Detroit March 12 to announce that, despite the depressed economy, over 20 area Catholic schools have quit Campbell's "Labels for Education Program" in recognition of the farmworkers' grueling four-year-long strike against tomato growers controlled by that company. This effort was part of a national campaign begun in October, 1981 to strengthen the boycott against Campbell's and Libby's by showing how the label collections (23,500 labels must be collected to get an education item worth \$129!) provided free advertisements for a company which is responsible for child labor, dangerous working conditions, and abysmal wages.

For more strike and boycott information, write:

**FLOC  
714½ S. St. Clair  
Toledo, Ohio 43609**

## FROM ENGLAND, AFRICA, USA: DISCUSSION ON 'INDIGNANT HEART' CONTINUES

I have learned from *Indignant Heart*, from your accounts of past struggles and from your ideas. Your clarity about class interests and, in particular, the ghostly nature of middle-class radicalism is a welcome change from the gospels of hopeful leaders. In England we have a difficult problem — "race or class?" You present two arguments which are helpful: 1) Claiming there is no Black question. What that does is blind you to the fact that Blacks have many problems whites don't have, in and out of the shops, and that Blacks are necessarily forced to fight on both race and class lines. 2) Skin color doesn't mean anything where capitalists and working class are concerned. Just as a Black foreman or Black businessman can oppress and exploit the workers, so do the Africans in power oppress their own masses . . .

I am a white working-class man who has been duped and misled by a liberal, middle-class education. Your book has helped me understand something of the nature of my oppression. Many thanks.

**Tom H.  
Stevenage, England**

Your book was assigned to me to read for a Black history class that I am taking at Cleveland State University. I enjoyed it very much. Racism so thoroughly infests this society that it cannot help but touch every one of us. As a white working-class American I feel that the Black man must be freed of the burden imposed by racism in this country before the rest of us can be freed . . .

Also, I believe you answered well the question of who will lead the struggle and what form it will take. It will start

# Readers' View



**POLAND:  
DIMENSIONS  
OF WOMEN  
AND YOUTH**

Urszula Wislanka's essay on women in the Polish movement (March N&L) is one of the most powerful accounts I have read on Solidarity. I don't just mean the fact that other analysts have ignored the Polish women's role, but the scope of Wislanka's presentation of women in the context of the whole movement, from Rural Solidarity to the entire history of East European revolt. You can't deny Solidarity's distinctly proletarian stamp but neither can you escape the truth that it's a many-faceted movement, within which women have forged for themselves a critical role. Wislanka's essay makes all this explicit.

**Supporter of Solidarity  
Oakland, Cal.**

The students in Cracow, Poland issued an open letter March 1 to students worldwide, attacking the martial law. It reminds us that many of those "interned" after the declaration of the martial law were students. Particularly selected for beatings were those students found in the factories with the striking workers. The letter states: "The education in our country has been fettered in the shackles of primitive ideology and terror."

The letter also addresses the soldiers: "We know that you receive orders issued by cruel people, who will never be forgiven what they are doing, but we ask you to remember that your actions are directed also against your fathers, mothers, brothers and all countrymen, whose only crime was that they wanted to live better in a better Poland."

In Warsaw, about 100 Warsaw University students dared to hold a ceremony laying flowers at a plaque commemorating the students' uprising of March 8, 1968. "Flying universities" (underground) have also resumed.

**Urszula Wislanka  
California**

Your comprehensive, beautiful essay on the revolutionary activity of Polish women not only showed the breadth and depth of women's activity in Poland but made me look more closely at the whole issue of N&L last month. With articles on South Korean textile workers, California hospital clericals, a New York publishing worker, and two women voting rights activists in Alabama, it is obvious that there is tremendous creativity among women everywhere. Since it is so explicit, we really do need to know why, as Wislanka points out, none have focused on this creativity. That is something to work out.

**Women's liberationist  
Detroit**

## PRISON FACTORIES

Supreme Court Chief Justice Warren Burger made another hair-raising proposal before a group at the University of Nebraska. He proposed that the nation's prisons be converted into "factories with fences" to take prison costs "off the backs of the American taxpayers."

The AFL-CIO has a long history of opposition to prison labor competing for jobs in the labor market. Many workers look upon their factories today with their guards and fences as a form of prison from which they get to go home at night. All Burger would need is dormitories to "sleep in," and a change in signs from General Motors to GM Prison.

**Former union organizer  
Lynn, Mass.**

when someone like Rosa Parks or the militant Chrysler workers in 1973 lead it. Spontaneous actions such as these drew together the popular support that was necessary for action.

**Cleveland State student  
Cleveland, Ohio**

*Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal* was well received by the class I taught. It's an excellent medium for getting at structural issues in a style that is very accessible, and people enjoy reading it. Everyone in the class liked the first part of the book more than the second. Some people commented upon the latter half of the book occasionally making generalizations which the former half had not laid the groundwork . . . but all in all, it was very much appreciated by the class.

**Sociology professor  
Binghamton, N.Y.**

I have really enjoyed reading *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal* by Charles Denby. I've noticed a change from Part I to Part II. In Part I, I feel there may at times be a bit of sexism, such as in the discussion of Black women and white men in the South in the 1920's. If a Black woman is trapped by the threat of violent retaliation in a sexual relationship with a racist white man, how can Denby be so quick to condemn her and to hate her? In Part II of the book it is clear that Denby has grown and developed on this point, probably because of the Women's Liberation Movement.

**Feminist  
Staten Island, N.Y.**

The situation in the auto plants today is the worst it has ever been in my lifetime. I used to be a real supporter of the union. It was better (at least I thought so) years ago. But now when I see the UAW contracts with first Chrysler, then Ford, and now GM, I get sick of them all. We have no one to defend us anymore. *Indignant Heart* told the truth about the labor bureaucrats. They are nothing more than company spokesmen, and we are paying the price.

**Chrysler worker  
Detroit**

Denby's book is of great interest to me, in presenting a view of class and race in the U.S.A. I especially was drawn to his chapters on the Civil Rights Movement in Lowndes County, Alabama, and his critique of Stokely Carmichael. I was close to Carmichael's position some years ago, but now have major differences with it. When I heard him speak in the U.S.A. of African freedom, there were impressive ideas involved. But after returning to my own country, Nigeria, for just a short while, those ideas seemed irrelevant to Nigerian reality . . . One thing I missed — I wish that *Indignant Heart* had taken up Malcolm X.

**Student activist  
Nigeria**

I am glad to hear from friends all over the world who have read my book, *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*. If you write to me at *News & Letters*, I will answer your letters. In that way we can begin a discussion about the direction of the freedom movement today — Charles Denby, Editor.

**STOP NUCLEAR MADNESS!**

Over 1,500 people attended an anti-nuclear rally here organized by the Women's Party For Survival.

The main speaker was D. Helen Caldicott, who presented a very graphic picture of the nuclear madness. Her intention was to shock people out of their complacency and motivate them to do something — anything — recognizing that only mass outpouring of anti-nuclear sentiment will accomplish any reduction of nuclear weapons.

While all of the audience appreciated her speech, some questioned the solution. A member of Women's Party for Survival, for example, felt that while continuing the anti-nuclear fight, she would like to link it to the Latino struggle here. This desire to make the anti-nuclear struggle universal, not by putting all other issues on the back burner but by linking it to other movements is what can give the movement direction and depth to transcend survivalism, and become humanism.

Anti-nuke activist  
San Francisco

**DO WE NEED DIALECTICS?**

When I got to speak to a sociology class at Columbia University on "Cracks in the World System," the main point of disagreement with the students came not over my critique of U. S. imperialism or the other contenders for power in the region, but over the question of dialectics. The students seemed surprised and even amused when, halfway through my talk, I stated that to really wind one's way through the Middle East or the Iranian Revolution, one needed a Hegelian-Marxist methodology. This led to some back and forth over whether Hegel's philosophy had anything to do with revolution and so forth. I emerged with the feeling that while radical ideas may on occasion be taught at Columbia, this is only on condition that the approach be all-American in its empiricism.

Kevin A. Barry  
New York

**PEASANT  
WOMEN IN  
GUATEMALA'S  
REVOLUTION**

I am sending you this information in the hope that women's liberationists will become more active in support for the Guatemalan freedom struggle. In Guatemala, where most people are economically exploited and Indians suffer from cultural discrimination, women are, in addition, victims of sexual oppression. A woman's life in Guatemala's workforce begins, by necessity, during childhood. Child labor makes up 10 percent of the total workforce. Most other girls work long hours at home or as domestics. When a woman becomes pregnant she is automatically fired.

Women have always participated in the Guatemalan revolution. A great majority of these are Indian. In many towns where the men have been kidnapped or murdered, the women have had to take up the defense of their families. Listen to a member of the Committee for Peasant Unity (CUC): "We women fight for better salaries and conditions for the peasants. First we do it with words, but since Lucas' answer is always repression, we mobilize with hoes, we protect ourselves with security measures, we use boiling water, chili and salt to keep the soldiers from abusing us."

For more information contact:

Guatemala Solidarity Committee  
P.O. Box 11101  
San Francisco, CA 94101

**THE EUROPEAN SCENE**

I am still traveling. My first two months were spent in London where I went to most of the meetings of the British Marxist-Humanists and helped distribute leaflets at the big anti-nuke rally in November. The most interesting aspect of life in London was the housing movement co-operatives. It would not be impossible for people — through the various forms of local community government (Labor Councils, Housing Councils, and self-initiated housing co-ops) — to start running the civic aspects of the city in the areas where they live.

The night before I left Amsterdam for Paris the military crackdown took place in Poland. The Krackers (squatters) held a spontaneous demonstration of about 700 people in front of the Polish and Russian consulates and at Intourist, the Soviet travel agency.

The squatting movement seems to have lost some of its energy since they put a lot of work into buildings and then the police come and destroy everything. There are about 50,000 squatters out of a population of 750,000.

Still traveling  
Amsterdam, Holland

**RESPONSES TO OUR APPEAL  
WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

I am an academic, and not an activist (except sometimes), but I try to keep in touch with things. Your journal is more realistic than, say, the *Guardian*, or the SWP's journal, because you keep both theory and voices from practice involved in all your reporting. I am enclosing \$50 to help with your work for the year ahead.

Subscriber  
Cambridge, Mass.

It was great to see the direct reports from the Carrollton to Montgomery march in last month's *N&L*. I was reminded of the way the freedom movement in Alabama and the rest of the South changed the whole face of America from the Eisenhower years of the 1950s to the "stormy/soaring" '60s. Maybe that is where things will really break out again now. Please renew my subscription . . .

Black student  
Detroit

As a whole I like *N&L*, but I have two main criticisms. One, there are too many self-congratulatory letters each issue. Two, some of the articles get too abstract and philosophical, but I guess the latter point is a disagreement with your overall theoretical basis.

Intellectual  
New York

I have heard your Appeal for help. Here's \$50, with \$50 more to come in 1982 . . .

Still with you  
Toronto, Ontario

I am a prisoner, and have very little money, if any at all. But I do enjoy the paper and would highly appreciate it if you would keep it coming.

In human struggle  
Menard, Illinois

I think *N&L* is a great little newspaper. Keep up the good work. I am the editor of a small weekly but cannot write freely as the owners are capitalists and frown each time I write an editorial against the system.

Reader  
Pennsylvania

**Editor's Note:** Our thanks for the contributions from many of our readers to our urgent appeal for funds to carry on the work of *News and Letters* Committees. Every dollar is needed in today's fight against Reagan's barbarism — and for a human world. If you haven't yet sent in your contribution, would you do so now?

**Deep recession, military build-up,  
pulling apart of political alliances**

(Continued from Page 1)

Force (RDF) in the Gulf region, expressed its opposition. John C. Campbell in his article, "The Middle East: A House of Containment built on Shifting Sands,"<sup>2</sup> puts it this way: "Most of the Gulf states view the RDF as a threat to their oil rather than as a protector of their national interests."

Thus, F-16 fighter bombers were sold to Venezuela, the first time any such weapons were sold to Latin America; Pakistan was offered the F-16 bomber; and, of course, we know about the "defensive" AWACS sales to Saudi Arabia. The value of the arms transfers went from \$9 billion in the 1970s to more than \$20 billion in 1980; and 81 percent of the exported weaponry went to the Third World. It is not only that the U.S. is arming itself, but that everything from arms sales to nuclear proliferation has reached such proportions under Reagan that, far from a nuclear holocaust being "unthinkable," that is precisely what the world worries is an approaching reality.

So massive have been the anti-nuclear demonstrations, both in the U.S. and in the West in general, that this opposition is the element that has the government leaders throughout the world, and their ideologues, so concerned that they are trying to hide the relationship between the militarization and the state of the economy.

Clearly, the militarization is hardly only for purposes of "defense" of the U.S. It is for use globally, imperialistically. At present, West Europe is the focus, since the Reagan Administration aims to deploy in Europe 572 missiles capable of reaching Russia. It is true that Russia has just as many missiles and that they are just as lethal for Western Europe and the U.S. Nevertheless, even Helmut Schmidt, the one West European leader who favored stationing U.S. missiles in West Europe, wanted Reagan to first exercise what he called a "zero option," that is, to ask Russia to remove their missiles and thereby have the U.S. not deploy theirs. Russia is presently playing that card, calling for a "freeze." And Reagan is rejecting that play by claiming that Russia would be freezing a superior position.

This kind of imperialist politics is characterized by total fakery on both sides. The fact that both poles of world nuclear power are playing this type of lethal game in order to defuse the massive anti-nuclear war movement throughout the U.S. as well as Western Europe cannot hide the truth that both are preparing for nuclear holocaust.

It isn't only the Reagan Administration but the whole capitalist system that seems to know nothing but how to go from war to depression and back again. We can see the integrality of capitalist economy and actual war not only in general, but very specifically during the last decade. Although the quadrupling of oil prices following the 1973 Arab-Israeli War enabled Western imperialism to blame the whole, deep 1974 economic crisis and soaring inflation rates on the oil sheiks, the truth is that, as much as the quadrupling exacerbated it, it was the Vietnam War that was the main cause of the crisis.<sup>3</sup>

**THE CRISIS DEEPENS IN AGRICULTURE AS WELL AS INDUSTRY**

No one doubts either the stagnation in the world economy or the constant rise in unemployment, which in the U.S. has now reached nine percent nationally. It is higher than at any time since post-World War II and is the most unconscionable in the urban centers. Even so conservative a Republican governor as William Milliken is openly calling the situation in Michigan nothing short of full-blown Depression. Unemployment in that state is over 15 percent state-wide; in Detroit it is over 16 percent. On a national scale, 16 percent would mean 17.5 million human beings.

In New York City unemployment is "just" 12 percent, while a rate of 10 percent characterizes the states of Indiana, Washington, Pennsylvania and Alabama, where Reagan had the gall to deliver a speech defending his mindless budget of endless militarization leading to a deficit of nearly \$100 billion and his "new federalism" which recalls the infamous Reconstruction period after the Civil War and the KKK-based institution of "States' Rights."

Yet none of these statistics tells the whole story, since they include only those still looking for work as measured by those collecting unemployment benefits, not those who have "dropped out" of the job market, the so-called "discouraged" workers and the women who have "returned to the home" (i.e. the kitchen). The most disastrous effects of the slowdown are among Black youth, for whom unemployment stood at no less than 38 percent — at which point they stopped figuring the statistics.

In the search for a villain (other than oil) to hold responsible for the sorry state of the economy, the present target is agriculture. Last year, *Business Week* (June 1, 1981) published a special feature, "America's Restructured Economy," which focused on the downward slide of the country's economy, including agriculture. The rise in the world demand saw U.S. agriculture supplying Japan with 95 percent of its soy bean imports, 82 percent of its corn, and 59 percent of its wheat. Yet, there is no doubt that, without the huge grain sales to Russia, agri-

(Continued on Page 10)

2) *Foreign Affairs* 60(3), "America and the World, 1981."

3) For our analysis of the relationship of the economy to the Vietnam War, showing both that war's degeneracy and its repercussions on the U.S. economy, see the section "U.S. Imperialism-Capitalism in the Throes of Many Crises: Economic, Political, Labor, Racial, Sexist" in our *Perspectives 1977-78*. See also *Marx's Capital and Today's Global Crisis* published by *News & Letters*, 1978.

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# Alabama Blacks stand against bank land grabs

by Gardenia White

Lowndes County, Ala.—I want you to know about the bad situation we have in White Hall, Ala. We are a newly-incorporated town located between Montgomery and Selma, struggling to accomplish independence and progress. But we do not even have a water system in our community. The way it is now we have nothing but wells. I would call it condemned water. We don't have a sewage system. We don't have running water.

We have been seeking to have our own water system owned by ourselves. But the state is determined to tie us in to the Collirene water system, which will cost us more money. If we don't have our own system, we won't be able to bring in industries, to furnish jobs for people who need them, especially our young people. So many are unemployed, or they are in school now asking if they will ever be employed. Many of these same young people were the ones who marched to Montgomery last month.

Another problem that we are fighting against now is the way the banks are foreclosing on Black-owned land. My cousin went to the bank and borrowed \$5,200. She paid back the whole amount, but it was late. She said that they could not accept the \$5,200 because she owed them rent. She had already paid \$500 rent for staying in her own house. She was making arrangements to pay the total amount when they began trying to

evict her from her home. They are still trying.

They have all kinds of ways of frauding you out of your home. They talk about it being a beautiful site for a business and all that kind of stuff. Another man I know has some farmland. He borrowed money on it, not much. Now, with the way times are, they are foreclosing on him, because he is not able to pay the debt off. He is about to lose his land.

It is not just these people. It goes on and on, all over the Black Belt. It is terrible what is happening. That is why we are struggling so hard here. We don't have money we can use, as a town, for what we need because the money is already earmarked by the government. We are also trying to get up a credit union so that we will be able to help people who fall into these kinds of situations.

It's time we learned that white people are no longer concerned about Black people. I don't think they ever have been. It was just your job they cared about, what you could do for them. Now they don't have Black people to do their work, so Black people are unemployed. All the money now is mostly in the white hands.

But I want you to know you have some dedicated people here in Lowndes County. People that are still out here willing to fight and sacrifice to maintain and hold to freedom, to be able to help ourselves and our people. Somebody has got to hold fast and hold steady.

## WORKER'S JOURNAL

(Continued from Page 1)

to the point of giving it all away just to save the companies, especially when the union leaders know that it won't save workers' jobs? It is just a stop-gap. Every company will soon say they need more concessions to keep going just as Chrysler got.

The purpose of these recent negotiations is to ask the union to give back so many of the gains that the union has made. They are saying that GM wants the union to give up five dollars an hour of the workers' pay. This at the same time everything is continuing to go up and up. Nothing is going down but the workers' wages and their way of living.

### UNION SEPARATE FROM COMPANY

There was a time when the union was separate from the company. We were told that the company was our enemy. I know that Emil Mazey once told the membership that the president of the union had accepted two baseball tickets from Briggs, and that was enough for the president to lose the election. But today the president of Ford can give Doug Fraser a sweater on TV for the whole world to see, and there is nothing said. It only shows how far we have gone from what we once were, and you can bet that there won't be any reduction in union dues.

It looks like the "new generation" of UAW leaders coming in after Fraser will be even worse. I heard Donald Ephlin, the head of the UAW-Ford department, speak at a meeting of labor historians. He said that the task for the union in the 1980s was no longer on the shop floor, and not even in collective bargaining so much. On the shop floor, he said, the union had to be much more understanding of the companies, so that they could compete. And in bargaining, he claimed that the corporations did not have the money to help out workers. So the answer supposedly is that unions should be more involved in "politics." His big conclusion was that the UAW should get involved in the Democratic Party before the primaries, instead of after the primaries! And Ephlin is the man they are now saying will be the next president of the UAW.

Many of these companies are moving their operations out of the U.S. to countries where there are no unions and where the wages are very low. They then ship the products back here to sell at high prices. I was

looking at the TV program "60 Minutes" which showed that GE has been making electric irons in Canada for more than 50 years, and now they are just up and leaving. They are going to Taiwan. The company says it was making a profit in Canada, but that it could make more money manufacturing in Taiwan and shipping them back here to be sold.

### BACK TO HOOVER DEPRESSION

When Reagan was first elected he said he was going to turn this government around, back to the days before President Roosevelt's time. What he meant is putting this country back into the days of the Hoover Depression. No one can deny we seem to be headed in that direction. But there is a big difference. During the Depression everything was so low in price that a person could pay for it if he had any money. But today everything is so high you can hardly pay for anything.

It seems that Reagan is in a mad rush to get this country into a war, and the money he is spending on war preparations is enough to feed all the hungry people of this country. He is so opposed to the Black and poor that he hardly mentions their names. He is pushing back all the gains that Blacks have made since the early 1960s.

Now they want the American workers to blame the Japanese workers for all the trouble that is happening here. Nothing could be further from the truth. They are saying the Japanese worker works harder and gets less pay. Our union seems to be buying this statement. We were told throughout the union's history that one of the company's tactics is to divide workers, pitting one worker against the other. This is what is now happening on a worldwide scale. Automation and robotics are taking the jobs of thousands and thousands of American workers. The unions are telling is that this is progress. It may be progress for the companies, but it is not progress for the workers.

## The 'front line' at IRS

They call it the "front line"—where the government and the taxpayer meet. Your ear and mouth are wired to a computer regulating a bank of calls coming in by the millions these days from people who have some combination of fear and anger. You have to have nearly instant recall of a volume of tax law because if you take time looking up too many answers, you miss the work norms of 23 calls an hour.

There are also a number of people monitoring and evaluating your conversations. Often you have to hope someone will stay on the line a few seconds so you can finish writing their name and address because as soon as a call is finished there is a beep initiating a new call. As soon as there are a few seconds between calls some people get a shorter workday and others are laid-off.

The systems analyst makes sure you're plugged-in for every minute except for your two breaks and exactly 30 minutes for lunch.

The price of Reagan's weapons systems and record deficits isn't abstract in the many incidents when poor people break down on the phone because of a tax bill they are unable to pay because everything is going for necessities. It is just that and not the work norms or the military discipline which makes the "front line" a nightmare.

—From the "front line"

## BLACK-RED VIEW

### Black women's liberation

I am pleased this month to have in my column excerpts from an address by Tommie Hope at the celebration of International Women's Day in Detroit sponsored by Women's Liberation-News & Letters. Tommie Hope is a Black woman activist and writer, and has contributed many critiques to the Black and women's movements —John Alan

**TO BE BLACK AND A WOMAN** today in America is to be under attack. Reagan's federal budget plan, and his policies as a whole are nothing less than a war to worsen the lives and destroy the confidence of the poor. It is not only that he wants to take the food from our mouths and the clothes from our backs and spend our hard-earned money on bombs, tanks and missiles. What is worse is that by doing this he believes that he can break our spirit. He does not understand us, and never will understand us.

Throughout the '60s and '70s, we fought for abortion rights, equal education, affirmative action, job training programs, and all the rest. Now the President and the Congress believe that by their laws they can take all we have struggled to win away.

Reagan's cuts in Medicaid will affect a lot of poor Black women, sending them back to back-room abortionists, or forcing them to have children that they cannot afford to support. The cuts in financial aid to colleges will throw out thousands of Black women — and men — who saved and sacrificed to get there.

It is wonderful that we are here today in celebration of International Women's Day, March 8. But March 8 is also the day they have picked to lay off 20 percent of the bus drivers on my job. If you never understood what "last hired, first fired" means, you will learn it there. Ten years ago every driver was a white man. It is really only in the last five years that they were forced to hire Black women as drivers, and many of us have the lowest seniority of all. So tomorrow, in celebration of IWD, they will be laying off many of the Black women drivers.

**WHEN WE ARE SPEAKING** about Black women, we cannot separate America from Africa. Our whole history has been united for freedom. I am thinking of Black women as thinkers, and not just as sufferers, is still not Zimbabwe, where the colonialists have been beaten, and the nation is Black-ruled. Listen to the voices of our sisters there, members of the Zimbabwe Women's Bureau; even though they have won independence, they know that the struggle is not over, the uprooting of the old society is not total.

"It is good to be a woman, but I am oppressed. I am always kicked, as though I am still a child, because women are not yet independent.

"Some men don't want to hear of women organizing or leading anything. Most women are not represented on the councils. Yet women are the ones who know what must be done in the rural areas for them to be developed. After all, it is the women who live there."

These African women think more clearly, more humanly, about all the problems and conditions of life, than the rulers of most nations on earth. Yet Black women as thinkers, and not just as sufferers, is still not understood. But knowing our own history, our contribution to the freedom movement, our ideas — that is what is needed most right now when Black women are under attack everywhere.

In the last year, I have had the opportunity to study that history in a new way, in the manuscript of Raya Dunayevskaya's new book, *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*. You learn about the Igbo women in Nigeria way back in 1929. Tens of thousands of them participated in what the white male historians called the Aba riots, what the Africans called "The Women's War." They organized demonstrations against taxes on women, fighting against both British imperialism and their own African chiefs. It was called "knocking the horns off" the Chiefs.

**IF WE ARE EVER GOING** to get out from under oppression in Reagan's America, if we are ever going to free ourselves as Black women, we need a re-organization of our thoughts and lives. Yes, we need to appreciate ourselves as revolutionary thinkers and activists. But that is not all.

Today I feel that women are ready to take up the challenge to understand Marx as a whole and relate his philosophy to our movement. We will be ready because we have to be ready in the battles we are facing to survive and live as full human beings with our "minds and talents" liberated.

—Tommie Hope

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# Kurds' continuous struggle challenges Khomeini regime

(Continued from Page 4)

interfere with its universalism of freedom and new human relations. Any other unity on the alleged ground of "anti-imperialism" which buries the contradictions within the revolution is a false unity.

The attack against concrete forces who demand their freedom has occurred before from within the revolutionary movement. Revolutionary Marxism has always had to fight such a tendency. Lenin in particular developed, both before and after the Russian Revolution, theoretical and practical aspects of a Marxist position on the self-determination of nations. It becomes necessary to look at his contributions in this area, especially since some parts of the Left, including the Kurdish Left, have been distorting Lenin's position on the relation of the right of nations to self-determination to the process of social revolution.

## IV. LENIN ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION AS INTEGRAL TO THE DIALECTICS OF REVOLUTION

After the outbreak of World War I the "national question" became a central question of the revolution for Lenin, one in which he had to battle other Bolshevik leaders until the last days of his life.

Prior to 1914 all Bolsheviks agreed to "self-determination of nations" as a "principle." With the outbreak of WWI and the betrayal of the established Marxist organization, the Second International, the theoretical ground on which Lenin was standing also collapsed. In search of a new revolutionary perspective he felt compelled to return to Marx's Marxism and its roots in the Hegelian dialectic.<sup>2</sup> It was this reorganization of his own thought that transformed the national question from a general principle to the very life of the revolution when the Irish dared to revolt against the British in the midst of the war.

Lenin now saw a new urgency in the question of self-determination. He saw the national struggles as "one of the bacilli which help the real power against imperialism to come on the scene, namely, the socialist proletariat." Lenin hit out against his fellow Bolshevik Bukharin, who had written "the slogan of 'self-determination' is first of all utopian and harmful . . . as a slogan which disseminates illusions." Lenin called this an "imperialist economism" — which is exactly what Stalin, first, and Brezhnev now practice.

After 1917 Lenin again had to fight his Bolshevik co-leaders who claimed that it was no longer necessary to have the right of self-determination since Russia was now a workers' state. Lenin replied ". . . we cannot deny it to a single one of the people living within the boundaries of the former Russian Empire."

The truth is that revolution is no mechanical question, but one involving living, fighting subjects of revolution determined to make themselves free.

## V. ONCE AGAIN, THE KURDS AND THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION

The pathway for the Kurdish movement and the Iranian Revolution lies through their continued revolutionary interchange. After all, the Iranian Revolution was one of the greatest of the decade. It threw out both

the Shah and U.S. imperialism. It could not have occurred without the Kurdish movement as integral to it. The point for us today is how can we re-establish that unity under the whip of a theocratic counter-revolution which despite its anti-imperialist rhetoric is not anti-capitalist, and is already in the process of welcoming foreign capitalism this time in its state (Russian) form rather than its private (Western) form.

Today only a new revolutionary unity can put a stop to this process. But this unity is not alone a question of activity, of going to the hills and fighting alongside the Kurds, though that too is necessary. Unless the Left grasps theoretically how self-determination of nations is integral to social revolution, and unless the Kurdish movement, in turn, sees that genuine self-determination can only be fully realized within the context of a socialist revolution, then the unity will only be "tactical" and not a genuine social, deeply-rooted unity.

Today the Kurdish revolutionaries continue to demand a vision of revolution that would mean genuine freedom being worked out. What is necessary for us—Iranian revolutionaries, Kurdish revolutionaries, American revolutionaries — is to work out a philosophy of revolution that would help us articulate fully humanity's quest for freedom. There are no short cuts, not from

state-capitalism calling itself Communism; certainly not from western capitalism; nor from the religious reaction of Khomeini's Islamic Republic. And a philosophy cannot be created out of anointing the Islamic Republic with the word "democratic." Religion, even if "democratic," cannot be a substitute for a total philosophy of social revolution, rooted in the movement from practice, from below. It is not the masses who are so backward that they will not grasp such a philosophy, if concretely and totally expressed.

It is rather revolutionary intellectuals who are backward in thinking that such a philosophy must be forsaken in favor of religious trappings, in order for the masses to accept it. Such ground opens the way to counter-revolution whether in today's immediate theocratic state, or in a future state-capitalist one "cleansed" of religion, but having all the totalitarian aspects of today's theocratic state. Self-determination of nations remains a critical pathway toward the Iranian Revolution, freed from the stranglehold of Khomeini's regime. To return to the original goal of freedom of the Iranian Revolution, to deepen the revolution, it must be freed both from the native ruling class and the imperialisms, U.S. and Russian, in the wings. Only in that way will we also light a world path to truly class-less society.

## Israeli war resisters face arrest, threats from police

*Editor's Note: Below we print brief excerpts from a document entitled "Dissent and Ideology in Relation to Peace in Israel 1982" that was sent to News & Letters by the International Movement of Conscientious War Resisters. The document gives a history of the resistance of Israeli men and women to serving in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), especially in the occupied territories.*

Israel — In January, 1982 Israeli Police in Tel-Aviv-Jaffa arrested several young men and women, announcing that they were "suspected of maintaining underground support for deserters from the IDF."

**THE FIRST ARRESTED WAS AVIVITH BALLAS**, 21, daughter of Sim'on Ballas, a noted leftist lecturer on Arabic literature at the University of Tel-Aviv. They searched for her at her parents' house. Not finding her, the police took some possessions of the parents which they "found suspicious," including an address book.

The next day Avivith reported to the police and was arrested and kept in a solitary confinement cell for 48 hours. She didn't cooperate with the investigators and after intervention by her lawyer she was released on bail. Ten days later she was again ordered in for questioning threatened with beatings and re-arrest.

Three years prior to this arrest, Avivith was granted exemption from military service on grounds of conscience. She has been active in political groups seeking a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Arab conflict.

**ELI ABRAHAM, 24, WAS ARRESTED** about a week after Avivith was released. Because his family was from a poor people's section of Nes-Ciona, he was not able to meet a high bail and spent 48 hours and then another two weeks in jail. Eli has been a conscientious objector since he was 22. He said: "Since the state didn't remember me at the neglected poor-people's quarter during 18 years, it should not remember to call me at the age 18 for duty; I have nothing to serve for or pay for."

**OREN BALABAN, 20**, was arrested by the Military Police and was transferred to the civil police. He serves in the IDF Air Force orchestra. When questioned, the police threatened to bring in his girlfriend and rape her in front of Oren. Another policeman beat Oren severely, hitting his head against the wall.

The police suspected the arrestees of supporting IDF deserters by giving them lodging space and money. The offense of desertion is almost impossible to prove without direct confession, as the proof must consist of "intention not to return to the army." Furthermore it is hard to prove that a person who supports an alleged deserter knows of that person's intentions. So it is quite obvious that the police attempts were directed to get "confessions."

A silent movement of resisters started who refused to serve beyond the Green Line, the pre-1967 War boundaries of Israel. None of the Leftist Parties, movements or organizations in Israel are officially supporting any kind of resistance to military service except the International Movement of Conscientious War Resisters which is not a "political organization" as such, but has its own policies on the ground of humane politics.

**THE GROUP OF 27** is the latest publicly known group of resisters in Israel. It started in 1978 with the public statement of 27 high school students who declared that they would refuse military service beyond the Green Line.

The struggle of the Group of 27 took place for almost two years. Some were imprisoned for two to three terms of 35 days, then exempted from service. Others were exempted in silence for "unfitness" and psychiatric grounds. Faddy Elghazi was chosen as the exemplary case. He served almost 200 days in military prison, judged first by officers, then court martialed.

—Yesha'ayahu—Thoma Schick

2. For a study of Lenin's *Philosophical Notebooks* and his attitude to the national question see Raya Dunayevskaya's *Marxism and Freedom* and her *Philosophy and Revolution*. See also Moshe Lewin's *Lenin's Last Struggle*.

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# Deep recession, military build-up, pulling apart of political alliances

(Continued from Page 7)

culture could hardly have survived. Profits have plunged from \$31.5 billion in 1973 to \$13.4 billion in 1980.

It is not only because of the current high cost for energy and the skyrocketing costs for combines, fertilizer and pesticides, but because of the long period of slide in the rate of profit, that we see today no less than 25 percent of the farmers being thrown out of business. Of the 1.8 million farms expected to survive, the largest 50,000 — that is only the top 3 percent — will account for no less than 58 percent of the total cash sales. In a word, once again, the rich get richer and the poor get poorer, and the small family farms disappear altogether.

Business failures in industry are also mounting.

Have you read?

**Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal**  
by Charles Denby

Now they've added a new dimension to automation—unimation . . . What concerns me most about that was how we felt when we first saw automation introduced in the auto shops over 20 years ago, and how workers revolted against this "man killer" . . . While these so-called leaders (such as UAW Pres. Fraser) have been busy capitulating to the capitalist class, the thoughts and actions of the Blacks and workers are being sharpened in the experience of their continuing revolts . . .

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Detroit, MI 48211

Where, in 1978, there were 24 failures per 10,000 businesses now there are 83 per 10,000. The brink of Depression reveals that militarization of the economy is not only non-productive, but undermines the whole production system. All militarization is good for is the slaughter of millions.

Yet all that seems to concern the capitalist ideologues is that the government and the central banks can absorb 75 percent of all private savings and choke off capital formation and productive growth. So much for Reagan's giveaway to the rich in anticipation of productive investment and the "turnaround" of the American economy. The truth is that even the capitalist ideologues are now pointing to the fact that "as the Orwellian year of 1984 approaches, stimulus has become repression."<sup>4</sup>

## WEST EUROPE AND NATO

The depth of the global crisis is seen in the highest levels of unemployment in West Europe since post-World War II, where 16 million are jobless. That slowdown is now two years old. It is blamed, in large measure, on the U.S. recession and high interest rates. Indeed, the French Minister of Finance, Jacques Delors, called the high American interest rates nothing short of "the third oil shock."

That the U.S. recession could be placed in the same category as what is by now the fantastic 12-fold increase in oil prices since 1974 shows how very interdependent the U.S. economy is with that of the West. Although the U.S. may not be the dominant global force it once was, it is still so very substantial that it is, indeed, a determinant global force. But it is by no means the only reason for the economic crisis in West Europe.

The Common Market — that is, Great Britain, France, West Germany — is both pulling apart and pulling away from the U.S. politically as well as economically. And the truth is that the economic crisis in West Europe is, capitalistically, native-born. The economic slowdown in Thatcher's England has constantly grown worse since her accession to power; industrial production has fallen to the level of 1975, with unemployment soaring to 12 percent from an 8.4 percent level in 1980.

At the same time, though West Europe opposed Russia's invasion of Afghanistan and threats to Poland, they are oppressively aware that they would be the first target in a nuclear war, and what they most resent is such a concentration by the U.S. on the military that the political contentions are neglected. The result has been that, without detente, all these crises from Poland to the Middle East have actually widened the gap between the U.S. and its allies. So dependent are they on trade with Russia, and so opposed to the Cold War rhetoric of Reagan, that even he was convinced he had better let alone the fait accompli of their negotiations with Russia for the gas pipeline.

In a word, short of war, business goes on as usual. Economics remains the gut question, and it helps not a whit that Reagan's ideological twin, Prime Minister Thatcher, also practices "supply-side economics." On the

contrary, in both cases their policy further deepened the economic crises in each country.

As Robert Solomon, the former advisor to the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve Board, put it in summing up the year, "Demand and supply are the bread and butter of the economists, but the supply-siders would like us to ignore the demand effects of tax cuts. This would be myopic . . . The classical remedy is a lengthy recession in which workers accept lower wage increases out of fear of losing their jobs." The labor bureaucracy's bowing to these capitalist demands with the massive cuts in wages as well as hard-won health and retirement benefits, only spells out the beginning of the end of its leadership, even as it points to the disintegration of capitalism itself.

Instead of Reagan's tax cuts unleashing a vigorous expansion of the economy, we are now confronted with a prolonged slowdown in growth. Stockman, in his confessional in the *Atlantic Monthly*, put it most succinctly when he proved that supply-side economics was simply "a cover for the reduction of income taxes in the upper bracket."<sup>5</sup>

## THAT SUPREME COMMODITY, LABOR POWER, AND ACCUMULATION OF CAPITAL

The most massive restructuring of industry since the Depression has brought about the most prolonged period of capital shortage. Capital investment fell so greatly that in the non-energy section there was an under-investment by \$50 billion in 1980. With high technology as the main factor, only the biggest monopolies,

<sup>5</sup> See also John Kenneth Galbraith on "The Budget and the Bust," *New Republic*, March 17, 1982.

## Anti-Reagan demonstrations



Demonstrators mass against Reagan in New York

New York, N.Y.—On March 23, tens of thousands of anti-war youth and other anti-Administration protesters filled the Manhattan streets around the Hilton Hotel here to oppose the eerie, ceremonious spectacle going on inside that included a \$250-a-plate dinner, topped-off with a presentation to Ronald Reagan of a "humanitarian award," by the National Conference of Christians and Jews.

Many of the anti-war youth called it a "dress-rehearsal" for the March 27 national demonstration on El Salvador in Washington, which some said would be a turning point in the struggle to stay. Reagan's hand from more direct military intervention against the Central American revolutions, as well as raise to a new level the opposition to his Administration's policies of oppression at home.

Women's organizations were felt in force, with demands such as immediate passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, and the right of all women to abortion on demand, but emphasizing the incredible hypocrisy of Reagan as any kind of a "humanitarian."

Black organizations and individuals, representing all age groups, unified the demonstration's demands, and their pressure was felt inside the National Conference of Christians and Jews, as Black clergymen spoke out against the award. Organizers of the protest had predicted 5,000 demonstrators, but the actual estimates ran as high as 30,000.

—Participant

Los Angeles, Cal.—When Ronald Reagan came here March 10 to promote his "new" federalism, he was met with a demonstration of 250 at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. Most people there didn't think there was that much new to this proposal to further cut back on people's basic needs.

Those cutbacks are coming down all over, and hitting hardest in Black communities like Watts. "They're putting money into El Salvador and people down here are starving," complained a student nurse at Martin Luther King Jr. Hospital. The hospital was built as a direct result of the 1965 Watts riot.

One woman worker spoke of the need to improve working conditions along with provisions for "child care while you're trying to better yourself." Another woman nurse commented on Reagan's theory: "I'd like to ask him to explain his trickle down theory so we can understand it because we're still waiting for it to trickle down."

—Eugene Ford

whether in agriculture or industry, will survive. This, of course, leads to ever greater concentration and centralization of capital in ever fewer hands. Strange as it may sound to those looking only at the lush profits of the few, there is a shortage of capital to sustain the boom that isn't. But the rate of profit, or what the capitalists call "the average rate of return on equity," declines.

Without acknowledging that capitalism's profits come from the unpaid hours of labor of that supreme commodity, labor power, capitalists see that the more machinery they invest in, and the fewer workers they need to run those computerized machines, the less surplus value do they have. In a word, no matter how lush the mass of profits—and only in oil and high technology are they that lush — the rate is less.

The truth is that so large is the capital needed for new investment for each unit of production, that the amount of output in 1980 shrank 38 percent from what it was in 1978. At present, the average rate of return in industry is just under eight percent, which is hardly more than one-half what it was for all U.S. companies only five years ago. We must repeat that what characterizes the global economy — the U.S. and West Europe, Russia and East Europe — is a permanent lower growth rate.

And, despite all the ballyhoo about how people would be "rehired," as soon as they are retrained in robotics or hired in the service industries, the truth is that manufacturing, even with the economic base having been eroded, is the one that employs one-third of the nation's work-force.

What they call "a wild ride for U.S. capital in the 1980s" is actually a wild ride for the workers into the permanent army of the unemployed and their pauperization. This is what the economists try to hide by evoking the word "total," and speaking of the "total factor of productivity," as if indeed capital was productive. At the same time, these capitalist ideologues themselves call non-productive investments "more like consumption expenditures than an investment."

In a word, when it gets down to the actual facts, so great is the need for capital investment, per machine or per robotic, and so little is the demand for labor, that they fail to anticipate their rate of profit sinking lower. Since it's only from living labor that they get all their unpaid hours of labor, and since they do not want to admit any such thing, the cry for inclusion of capital productivity is just one more way to have the mass of profits hide the decline in the rate of profit.

Over 100 years ago, Karl Marx, who had removed political economy from an intellectualistic debate and centered it on the relations of capital and labor at the point of production, as well as in the political class struggle, had called the decline in the rate of profit the "pons asini" of capitalism: "The real barrier of capitalist production is capital itself."<sup>6</sup>

It is the inescapable result of that absolute contradiction of capitalism: On the one hand, its technological revolutions are always calling for more and more constant capital, and less and less variable capital (workers); and on the other hand, the only source of surplus value is from that supreme commodity, labor power.

Ever since then, even those bourgeois ideologues who build their own business cycle theories on this, have been busy pointing instead to what Marx called "counteracting factors," as if these were not just tendencies but the actual solution, one that would overcome the absolute general contradiction of capitalism and transcend it. The truth is there is no way out of the absolute contradiction.

This does not mean that capitalism will "automatically" collapse. It needs a good hefty determined revolutionary push from the masses of workers. At the present moment, the steel workers in Belgium, who have already been on General Strike for weeks, are showing the way, but the undercurrent of revolt globally, including the U.S., will not be restricted to strikes. With the coming of Spring we are sure to see massive anti-nuke demonstrations, women's liberation struggles, the Black masses' intense opposition to Reaganism, and the outbursts of youth discontent in every field from the unconscionable cuts in education to being thrown into the ranks of the unemployed before they ever had a job. They will surely coalesce not only in expressing their opposition to Reaganism and its immoral minority calling itself the "Moral Majority," but in working out so new a relationship of theory to practice as to become the foundation for truly new human relations.

<sup>6</sup> Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III, p. 293 (Kerr edition). See, indeed, the entire Part III on "The Law of the Falling Tendency of the Rate of Profit," pp. 247-313.

Coming in the May News & Letters:  
**Labor unrest, anti-nuke mobilizations  
sweep West Europe**

<sup>4</sup> See Leonard Silk in *The New York Times* both "The Great Recession" (March 14, 1982) and "World Economy: Pulling Apart," *International Economic Survey*, Feb. 14, 1982.

**YOUTH**

**Salvador book exposes U.S., but ignores Central American masses**

by Peter Wermuth

*El Salvador: Central America in the New Cold War*, ed. by Marvin E. Gettleman, et al., Grove Press, 1981.

Hardly a day goes by without the Reagan Administration getting caught red-handed fabricating some new lie to prove El Salvador's revolution is part of "a Russian-Cuban plot to take over the hemisphere." Now a book has appeared which further shows the hollowness of the entire United States policy in that region.

**El Salvador: Central America in the New Cold War** is a collection of over 50 essays, articles and documents, consisting of statements by architects of U.S. policy (like Haig, Kirkpatrick) followed by leftist critiques by writers and activists inside and outside Latin America. It doesn't take long before the intentions and designs of U.S. imperialism are laid threadbare.

**ARCHITECTS OF U.S. POLICY**

Thus, we hear Jeane Kirkpatrick argue against Carter's "softness" on Communism one moment, only to let the cat out of the bag the next, by saying his real mistake was not to support the bloodthirsty Somoza all the way to the end! We see Roy Prosterman, architect of the genocidal rural "pacification" (read extermination) program of the Vietnam war argue for a similar policy in El Salvador today (calling it "partial land reform") only to argue in the next breath that "the comparison of Vietnam and El Salvador is not quite correct."

We read the State Department's White Paper of last year "proving" Russian involvement in the revolution, only to have several scholars rip it to shreds as a tissue of lies and distortions.

And yet *El Salvador: Central America in the New Cold War* does not tell the full tale of the barbarity of U.S. policy for El Salvador, for in giving so much attention to refuting the lies of the Reagan Administration, it hardly ever allows you to hear the voices of revolt within El Salvador.

We do read a transcript of a broadcast from the guerrilla-run Radio Venceremos which speaks of how the guerrilla forces "have no arbitrary and cruel chiefs in it. All its members see each other as brothers without distinctions in seniority, social position, and rank."

**FMLN STATEMENT**

There is also a statement from the FMLN saying "the revolution on the march is not the work of a group of conspirators... the worker and peasant alliance has proven to be the most solid base for guaranteeing the firmness and consistency of the entire liberation movement." Such statements prove far more powerfully than

can any North American academic how deceitful are State Department claims that the El Salvador crisis is "due to outside interference by Russia and Cuba."

But we never get to read of the participation of women in the revolution, even though women make up a large percentage of the guerrilla movement — something that was not seen in the guerrilla "focos" of the 1960s. Neither do we read about or hear about the youth, so integral to the revolutionary process that the populace has nicknamed the guerrillas "los muchachos" (the boys and girls). And it is left up to a former official of the U.S. State Department to point out how "a real class struggle is going on in El Salvador."

As deceitful and genocidal as the spewings of U.S. imperialism are concerning Central America, we cannot become so concerned with the rulers that we forget to dig into the actual forms of revolt and organization upsurging within Central America today, not only for the sake of the revolutions there, but as pathway to absorbing the lessons they contain for building the North American revolution here at home. For that kind of solidarity will not leave revolt at just refuting rulers, but can inspire anti-war activities by projecting a vision of what we are for — a new, human society, independent of all existing state powers.

**Job in military no solution**

*Editor's Note: While standing in an unemployment line, a young Black ex-enlistee recently spoke of his experiences in the Army.*

Detroit, Mich. — Food stamps are a necessity for people in the military. While I was stationed in Texas, rent was at a minimum of \$340 a month. I couldn't pay for anything besides my rent, clothing and a few necessities.

The situation is now very tough in the military. I believe that young men, my age, would not make it in the service. My commanding officer was shell-shocked. He forced us to walk 35 miles one day. My feet were bleeding. He told me that only "wimps" cry.

They don't care about your health, and when they say they want "higher quality," it means more than having a better education. I have two examples of the racist practices within the military.

On my first day, I was told that I couldn't take a bunk bed with whites. I was told, "We don't want n—rs in this room." They put me in a supply room until they found a room for me with Blacks. We fought this four or five times. The entire military is broken along racial lines.

I went into the army by myself — headstrong. I earned my rank the hard way — classified as cook, 94B. One day, a guy put his hands on me and I defended myself. They confined me to the Correctional Custodial Facility (CCF), and I was then sent to Fort Leavenworth. I lost all my pay and leave time, and when I returned, they put me on KP and extra guard duty. My rank was taken, and I went back to E1, private.

If you asked me today to go into the Army, I would say "no," but with the economy today, it is the only way to get a steady paycheck.

But the problem with the military is a problem for everyone. There is no doubt that Reagan is trying to start a war. We have enough nuclear power to kill us ten times over.

**Closed meetings at U. of M.**

Flint, Mich.—The Student Government Council of the Flint branch of the University of Michigan has been holding meetings closed to the public and to other students during the current school year. The official meetings are then turned into mere ratifications of what is decided behind closed doors.

The student newspaper, the *Michigan Times*, and Students for Black Action (SBA) are trying to pry open these meetings, because the Student Government Council allocates over \$10,000 in student activity money. Groups considered to be political cannot get student activity money.

Because the Student Government Council handles money which every student must pay at registration, it is probably every bit as subject to Michigan's Open Meetings Act as is U of M's Board of Regents. Yet it continues to disregard the law.

Open meetings are certainly no panacea, but at least they might make it possible to find out why Students for Black Action has been denied any allocation of student activity money. The pretext is that SBA ran over its budget in years past and owes money which it must repay before it can have any more money. However, other groups owing money have been allocated money for this year.

—Dan Bremer

**Don't close Northeastern!**



Northeastern students walk out of school and march on Detroit Board of Education demanding that their school be kept open.

Detroit, Mich.—About 300 of us marched to the Detroit Board of Education (BOE) to demand that Northeastern High not be closed down. This is the first high school to close here since the mid-1950s.

The student council asked for a walkout after our parents received letters announcing the closing of our school. And that is what we did, all of us—sophomores, juniors, and seniors. We walked to the BOE to voice our own opinion to the superintendent of schools, Dr. Arthur Jefferson. We want our school kept open.

Before the march we painted our own signs: "Yeah, we're smarter than Cass (Tech. High School), Yeah, we're so cool, First you took our money, And now you want our school!"

On our first confrontation with the school board, Deputy Superintendent Hopkins "greeted" us, but we were the ones to have our say. We made it known that: 1) We don't have money to go to other schools. Northeastern is just around the corner. 2) Arthur Jefferson graduated from this school. We have had more students graduate from Northeastern than any other Detroit school. 3) We wanted an answer to these questions: Why is the assessment for property surrounding our school being raised? What is the real reason for closing Northeastern High?

Many of us spoke directly to Jefferson when we returned to the BOE meeting that night. But we discovered that Jefferson didn't have his act together. He wasn't able to answer our questions.

The BOE is giving weak excuses for closing our schools. One is the low enrollment of our school. But is low enrollment really a bad thing? And the school we will be sent to, Northern High, has 100 fewer students than we. Another excuse is that the buildings are too old. Still another weak excuse is to blame it on the students. Proficiency tests were given to "prove" our inability to achieve high test scores. But we changed everyone's opinion on that with our scores.

The seniors are facing another problem. Arthur Jefferson is scheduled to speak at the graduation this year. But he will not be welcome. Jefferson thinks he has nerves of steel, but we have not given up.

—Northeastern high school students

**Draft resister speaks**

Los Angeles, Cal.—There aren't many times in our lives when we get the chance to make decisions of much importance. For me, the exception was my decision not to register for the Draft.

It wasn't an easy decision. Until registration came up, I expected to live in a rather secure, well-ordered life in this "home of the free." I hadn't done much to alleviate all the suffering that goes on in this world. Everything seemed to be going on plan, until I realized I was being ordered to register for the war machine, under threat of going to jail. My heart sank. I decided I wouldn't do it.

I don't mind defending my country against Russian totalitarianism, but when it comes to taking up weapons against half-starved Latin American youth defending themselves against the criminals this country supports, that I won't do.

The more I thought of it, the more I saw how registration makes the Draft inevitable, and the Draft makes war inevitable. The secure, well-ordered life I had earlier thought of as ahead, crumbled in the face of my decision. It's helped me to think more about the lives of the masses in the Third World, and about what kind of society we live under here.

As students, I can now see how we are isolated from the rest of society, set apart from the poor and working men, women and children around us. We are alienated from reality and we therefore forget how precious life is. The rulers try to use this in getting us to agree to go off to war. What we have to do is understand what life is really about, by reaching out to the struggles of the exploited masses in the world. Not registering for the Draft was my first step in that effort.

—Resister

**HUNTER COLLEGE  
MARXIST-HUMANIST**  
"Individualism that lets nothing interfere with its  
Universalism - i.e. Freedom"

ISSUE NO. 1 MARCH, 1982

**What is Education?**

According to the Maximalist school, Dictionary College is a school of higher education; extends after high school, that grants degrees upon completion of study.

A teacher is a person who teaches, especially in a school or university.

A student is a person attending a school or university.

So what is school really? It is a perpetuation of the system in which we live. The capitalist idea tells us that those who are clever enough and persevere can make it. The sad truth is that power is in the hands of a few dumb, two-bit actors, and the most brilliant amongst us have to scrap and save to stay alive. So, by preparing us for the job (or should I say cattle) market, colleges sustain this lie. They turn students against one another by grading and testing and saying that one student is better and smarter than the other. Like capitalism, the educational system embraces the idea of social Darwinism to justify its cruelty and destruction of creative, free-thinking individuals. This is the structure they have forced us into.

Below we print excerpts from a new paper appearing at Hunter College, New York. For a sample copy contact Hunter College Marxist-Humanists, c/o News & Letters P.O. Box 196, New York, N.Y. 10163.

**WHAT IS EDUCATION?**

So what is school really? It is a perpetuation of the system in which we live. The capitalist idea tells us that those who are clever enough and persevere can make it. The sad truth is that power is in the hands of a few dumb, two-bit actors, and the most brilliant amongst us have to scrap and save to stay alive. So, by preparing us for the job (or should I say cattle) market, colleges sustain this lie. They turn students against one another by grading and testing and saying that one student is better and smarter than the other. Like capitalism, the educational system embraces the idea of social Darwinism to justify its cruelty and destruction of creative, free-thinking individuals. This is the structure they have forced us into.

Fortunately, at Hunter College there are many students and a few teachers who are willing to break that mold. Hunter is an international meeting place where students have taken the opportunity to exchange experiences and ideas. There are many clubs in which students can talk to and learn from each other. The students have staged political and social events by and for each other. All of these have combined to give Hunter students an invaluable, alternative education that Hunter College as an institution refuses to give.

—Hunter student

## OUR LIFE AND TIMES

by Peter Mallory and Kevin A. Barry

The courageous, defiant actions of Orlando J. Tardencillas, the Nicaraguan youth who, after spending more than a year in the jails of the El Salvador junta, refused to be a pawn in the Reagan Administration's war on Nicaragua, represents the tremendous spirit of the Central American revolutions.

Tardencillas, who the government had brought to Washington to testify about Nicaraguan and Cuban influence in El Salvador, instead announced that he had "obviously been presented for purposes of propaganda," and proceeded to deny that he had been sent by Nicaragua to aid the Salvadoran guerrillas.

"An official of the U.S. Embassy told me that they needed to demonstrate the presence of Cubans in El Salvador. They gave me an option. They said I could come here or face certain death. All my previous

### Navy buildup

March saw the addition of a 93,000 ton aircraft carrier, Carl Vinson, and an attack submarine, Atlanta, to the U.S. Navy fleet. The battleship New Jersey was brought out of drydock and is being fitted out. Is this naval buildup necessary or something the country can afford?

Admiral Rickover was asked how long an aircraft carrier of this type could be expected to last in an all out war, and he replied, "about two days."

The U.S. Navy now has no less than 171 nuclear submarines operational. Its goal is for a fleet of 600 ships. To supervise this navy they have no less than 218 admirals, complete with staffs of captains, commanders, etc., a ratio of one admiral for less than three ships. The U.S. military establishment has more senior officers today than they had at the height of World War II.

Reagan plans to spend \$1.6 trillion for 130 more ships, 3,900 new planes, 8,800 tanks, 14,000 strategic and tactical bombs for the nuclear arsenal—all of which the Russians will meet ship for ship and bomb for bomb.

Rather than embark on this senseless arms race, wouldn't the world be better off providing: jobs for the unemployed, homes for the homeless, roads without potholes, bridges that are not in danger of collapse, food control?

A good start could be made by retiring 50 percent of the top brass, the project hatchers that demand and get more and more expensive arms.

### Haitian refugees

A class action suit against the U.S. government, brought by the Haitian Refugee Center of Miami, began in March. The victims of government persecution are the 3,000 Haitian refugees who are being held in U.S. detention camps, under inhumane conditions, without trial. Over 600 are being held at the Krome Detention Center near Miami. The suit is to free the Haitians while they await their hearings.

The refugees fled from the dictatorship of "Baby Doc" Duvalier in Haiti, where political and economic conditions are so bad that they flee in leaky boats facing death at sea rather than starve to death at home under repression.

The U.S. policy of detaining "illegal aliens" was supposedly abandoned in 1954, when Ellis Island, as well as other detention centers around the country, were closed. Charles Gordon, former general counsel for the Immigration and Naturalization Service, testified that "hundreds of people" who arrived in this country and asked for political asylum had been paroled because the agency decided "incarceration was unnecessary."

The fact that these refugees are Black, not white, seems to be the deciding issue.

### Belgian steel workers

Over 10,000 Belgian steel workers demonstrated in Brussels on March 16 to protest the reorganization of the industry by the government that they feared would eliminate over 5,000 of their jobs. So violent was their protest that 179 police and 22 workers were injured.

Prime Minister Wilfried Martens, who heads the 32nd government in the last 38 years, secured emergency powers to rule by royal decree instead of by parliament, announced an 8.5 percent devaluation of the currency, suspended the indexing of wages to inflation, and announced a plan to spend \$1.1 billion to reorganize the steel industry with 5,000 less jobs.

With unemployment running at 12.5 percent two major unions went on a strike that has lasted for two weeks and has been marked by increasing antagonism toward the government.

## Central America's revolutions intensify

statements about training in Ethiopia and Cuba were false."

Thus another hole was torn open in U.S. fabrications about the revolutionary movement in Central America. But the Reagan Administration is not just attempting to spew out propaganda on Communist involvement and the need for "a global solution."

They are at the same time taking action: 1) Reagan has authorized the Central Intelligence Agency to help put together a paramilitary force from several Latin American countries currently under dictatorial rule which would aim to destabilize the Nicaraguan government by attacking vital economic installations. 2) A second plan calls for the funneling of millions of dollars to support opposition groups within Nicaragua, as the U.S. did in moving to oust Chile's Allende a decade ago. 3) The number of American military advisors in

Honduras now numbers over 100, five times the number in El Salvador. 4) The Reagan Administration is asking for millions in military and economic aid to prop up El Salvador, both directly and as part of the Caribbean Basin program. 5) The U.S. is looking for ways to give aid to the Guatemalan military government which has just had one more right wing military coup.

But the Central American revolutions continue at an escalating pace. The war in Guatemala has reached an intensity equal to that of El Salvador. One of the most important developments has been the decision of the four guerrilla groups in Guatemala to form a common front in their battle against the government. Meanwhile the Nicaraguan government has declared a state of emergency in the face of provocations from the U.S., and the guerrillas in El Salvador continue their offensive including attacks in the suburbs of San Salvador.

### China

Ever since Deng Xiaoping released some intellectuals from forced labor camps, the U.S. media has acted as if this type of thing was only from the "bad old days" when Mao was alive. But new sentences to forced labor camps have multiplied, including youth from the Peking Spring protests. Recently a major Chinese government newspaper wrote: "Practice of more than two decades has proved that education through labor has indeed achieved notable results." The "more than two decades" covers both the mass arrests of hundreds of thousands following the 1957 Hundred Flowers Campaign, and the tens of millions arrested or forced to the countryside during the Cultural Revolution.

## 四五天安門萬歲

'Long live the spirit of April 5 Tienanmen revolt.'

One woman intellectual imprisoned for many years recently gave one of the few detailed accounts, as published by the *Washington Post* (2-12-82). She said: "We used to think the dead ones were lucky . . . It was bitter all the way through. I labored from my 40s through my 60s and there wasn't a moment of hope, not for all those years . . . We were called stinking intellectuals not fit to live."

Food rations were meager and prisoners were forced to work in bitter cold. One difference from Stalin's camps was Mao's Confucian concept of "rectification." The former prisoner continued: "After eating supper, we were ready to fall flat on our backs. But very often we had political study until 10 o'clock. Then sometimes two or three hours after we had gone to bed, they got us up again to cut grass with sickles. There never was any rest." She estimated that 40 percent of her camp died during the 21 years she was confined.

The Hong Kong Association for Solidarity with the Chinese Democratic Movement has news about dozens of workers and intellectuals who have been arrested in the last year alone. The coalition is calling for worldwide protests demanding freedom for those political prisoners, especially around April 5, the sixth anniversary of the greatest demonstration against Mao. The address of the Association for further information or for donations is T.T.M. P.O. Box 60071, Hong Kong.

### Syria

For the past two-and-a-half years, the Islamic reactionaries of the Muslim Brotherhood have been waging a terrorist war against the Baathist police-state regime of Hafez al-Assad in Syria. In February, this reached the level of a full-scale uprising in the country's fifth largest city of Hama. Some 8,000 troops were sent to put down the rebellion.

Assad's government has a narrow base of support in the army and in the Alawite religious sect. The latter religious group, linked to Shi'ite Islam, makes up a mere 11 percent of the population. The Muslim Brotherhood wants to put Sunni Muslims who make up 57 percent of the population in charge and to suppress minority religious and ethnic groups.

So far the Syrian masses have sat out this struggle for the most part, although it is clear that the severely repressive and pro-Russian Assad regime is hardly more popular than was the pro-American Egyptian regime of Sadat. Assad has unconvincedly blamed all his domestic troubles on a U.S.-inspired "imperialist-Zionist conspiracy," but it is clear that Syria's Islamic reactionaries have indigenous roots.

### India

From 15 to 20 million workers held a nationwide general strike on Jan. 19, which brought India to a near-standstill. The strikers were demanding repeal of laws which give the government of Indira Gandhi power to break any strike deemed to affect "essential" services or industries. The strike was particularly effective in principal industrial areas such as West Bengal. It also shut down virtually all newspapers. More than 10 people were killed in clashes with the police.

The fact that the strike did not succeed in shutting down transport or the government itself, except in West Bengal, may have been due to the government's detention of over 25,000 union activists the day before.

Thirty-five years after it inspired the Third World by becoming the first large country to win national independence from British imperialism, India's 670 million people continue to face life in an impoverished, sexist, caste-ridden society. Average income is \$200 per year in spite of significant industrialization plus a supposed "green revolution" in agriculture, neither of which have benefited the masses. Things have in fact grown worse since the economic crises of the 1970s.

### 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.