

AFL-CIO revives redbaiting



by Felix Martin, Labor Editor

I couldn't stand conservative former AFL-CIO President George Meany. Current President Lane Kirkland I can stand even less. They were and are the enemies of every rank-and-file working man and woman in this country.

Kirkland came out and attacked the unions that were participating in the April 25 demonstrations against President Reagan's policies in Central America and South Africa—because he agrees with what Ronny Reagan the strike-breaker and world outlaw is doing all over the globe!

A UNION ON REAGAN'S SIDE

I am not a bit surprised. What else can we expect from a right-wing president of the AFL-CIO, who stood by silently while President Reagan destroyed the PATCO union in 1981, opening the floodgates for the two-tier wage system and all the takebacks that have robbed workers of all we gained in struggle towards a decent wage and living standard over the last 50 years?

I know that Kirkland and these other conservative labor leaders are afraid of a new labor movement in this country. That's why they're recommissioning their old weapons, taking them out of mothballs—like calling unions and workers who disagree with their reactionary line "Communists" and "Communist dupes."

They want to bring back the McCarthyism of the 1950s, when the CIO expelled 11 militant unions on the grounds that they were dominated by Communists. They were expelling what was left of the real labor movement, so that the CIO could merge with the AFL in 1955. The union movement has gone downhill ever since.

I used to get called a "Communist" in the plant. I learned to see that if they called you a "Communist," it meant you were a fighter and you were getting to them.

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Black World

Struggles in the Delta



by Lou Turner

"If ever America undergoes great revolutions they will be brought about by the presence of the black race on the soil of the United States: that is to say, they will owe their origin, not to the equality, but to the inequality of condition."
—Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*

Mississippi, along with Alabama, is at once identified with the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and stigmatized in the 1980s as a virtual Third World within this "richest land in the world." As against Alabama, economic development, when it has come to Mississippi, has followed a more labor-intensive path. The hot-house style growth of the budding catfish industry in the Delta is an unmistakable signpost along this path.

Despite this, Mississippi's rootedness in the economic remains of its once despotic cotton culture continues to exert its hold, though share-cropping has long since disappeared. And now that the South's uneven course of development has moved it toward larger agricultural and industrial units of production, "a readjustment of the social structure" has brought about "political struggles of an advanced character."* Therefore, it is no accident that the discussions I had when I traveled through Mississippi in April elicited the revolutionary, human factor that continues to emerge from this economic framework.

That is why behind the immediate question of Black civil rights lies the social foundation upon which the backward state of those rights arose and maintained itself, a foundation that can develop now only at the risk of changing the social structure. Although every place I went in the South revealed this, as against what we are fed in the media, it is the ever-developing creativity of the human struggle that I found in the Mississippi Delta, in Tunica and Indianola, that truly highlighted it.

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*See Raya Dunayevskaya's 1944 and 1946 analyses of the Black dimension in the political economy of the South in "Marxism and the Negro Problem," #259-270 and #286-295, in the Marxist-Humanist Archives.

East Europe's masses demand a radical openness from below

by Urszula Wislanka

One year after the Chernobyl nuclear reactor disaster, a long radioactive shadow still hangs over the Ukraine and East Europe. Despite Gorbachev's "glasnost" (openness) and the policy makers' claim that the incident is over—the less damaged nuclear reactors are being put back into production; nuclear plans are going full speed ahead; and, after all, "healthy" babies are being born in Kiev—the future ramifications remain within the earth's

soil, the crops eaten, indeed, in the bodies of the Ukrainian and East European peoples, and most especially in their consciousness.

At the same time, the "fallout" is not limited to radioactivity. The economy in all of East Europe is falling apart. Constant price rises, shortages of the most basic consumer goods (and therefore long lines in stores), borrowing more from Western banks, all leading to further austerity measures—this is the cycle of the deep, perpetual crisis.

This economy and the nuclear disaster have helped give rise to new activities for freedom in East Europe. The real contradictions of life and labor being faced and acted upon by masses in three East European countries today—Yugoslavia, Hungary and Poland—can give us a measure of these new activities from below, in contrast to Gorbachev's glasnost from above.

YUGOSLAVIA: WILDCAT STRIKES

In Yugoslavia "workers' control," a form of "democracy" from above, has been in effect for the last 30 years. That workers do not feel in control is seen in the number of strikes. In 1986 more than 80,000 workers took part in 800 wildcats. In March of this year, by the Yugoslav government's own conservative estimate, 10,000 workers came out in 70 different strikes to oppose a wage freeze, a rolling back of wages to last year's levels and pegging future wage increases to increases in productivity (steps taken to "deal" with inflation and rising foreign debt). The government of the state where workers supposedly have control of the factories is threatening to call in the army against them!

One Yugoslav dissident intellectual told us: "You have a lot of strikes, a huge number of strikes. These strikes are not centralized. They are what you would call wildcat strikes, simply workers in one particular enterprise get mad and walk out. The number of strikes so far in 1987 is double that of 1986. In March, Prime Minister Nikolic wanted to eat lunch in a restaurant in Slovenia, but everybody was on strike. They tried to persuade the workers to at least serve lunch to the Prime Minister but they refused. Where there are strikes, they are not allowed to organize, to join forces with other groups of workers. In most cases the grievance is that the government takes so many taxes from the enterprise that the workers receive nothing."

"The government keeps its own huge apparatus. What was supposed to be self-government for culture, science, health care, etc., all became bureaucratized and professionalized—and one has to pay for all the employees who sit in this bureaucracy. Out of five or six million workers, one-fifth sit in offices and do nothing. Workers are angry because these people have considerably higher salaries than they have."

HUNGARY: 30 YEARS AFTER THE REVOLUTION

Since the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, Communist Party boss Kadar's counter-revolutionary answer has been a little consumerism. Now Hungarians, too, are experiencing the shortages so familiar to other East Europeans. (The most recent shortage is of toilet paper, brought on by lack of foreign currency and resultant cutbacks in imports. Hungary's domestic production can only cover 60% of its toilet paper demand.)

That consumerism has failed to buy off the society is witnessed by the persistent dissident movement. Since the early 1970s people opposing the government have been holding demonstrations on March 15 to commemorate the 1848 revolution. This March 15, 2,000 mostly young demonstrators gathered at the monument of Sandor Petofi chanting from his poem: "We will not be enslaved any longer!" (It was the Petofi Circle that was a

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Free Moses Mayekiso!



Moses Mayekiso, General Secretary of the Metal and Allied Workers' Union (MAWU) and chairman of the Alexandra Township Action Committee, has been charged with high treason by the racist apartheid Botha regime in South Africa. On April 22 Mayekiso and four other Alexandra Township activists—Mzwanele Mayekiso (Moses' brother), Paul Tshabalala, Richard Mdakane, and Obed Bapela—were brought before a judge and presented with a 160-page indictment which included charges of high treason, subversion and sedition. The five could face the death penalty. Moses Mayekiso has been held incommunicado in prison since June 14, 1986—in solitary confinement, and with a 24-hour light on in his cell.

The state charged that the five Alexandra activists sought to "overthrow, usurp or endanger the authority of the state, with seditious intent to defy or subvert the authority of the state." The South African paper, *Weekly Mail*, described the case as the "first in South Africa where people were charged with treason for running people's courts, street, block and area committees, and for forming an action committee." The charge describes these organizations as "organs of people's power," and singles out the rent boycott as proof of treason.

The indictment accuses them of plotting to seize control of Alexandra or "render the area ungovernable by the state." Perhaps they are referring to the mass uprising there in February 1986, in which 60,000 residents attacked police forces after a police assault on a funeral. Or perhaps they remember the self-mobilization of Alexandra residents, their creation of the Alexandra Youth Congress, the Alexandra Women's Organization, the Alexandra Action Committee.

There is no doubt that Alexandra was—and is—in revolt against the Botha apartheid regime, that it is "ungovernable." The state knows very well that the mass revolt is no plot by these five activists. In threatening them with the death penalty, however, they have sought to silence some of the most profoundly revolutionary voices to emerge from within the Black trade union and Black township struggles.

Moses Mayekiso's unequivocal vision of a socialist South Africa challenges all the political organizations within the movement. In critiquing the African National Congress's "Freedom Charter" he declared: "We need a workers' charter that will say clearly who will control the farms... the factories, the mines. There must be a change of the whole society... Through the shop stewards councils people are opposed to the idea that there will be two stages toward liberation... It's a waste of time, a waste of energy, and a waste of people's blood."

The state has set the trial for Aug. 3 in Rand Supreme Court. We appeal to all our readers to protest. Free Moses Mayekiso and his co-defendants!

—Michael Connolly

On the Inside

'Cultural Thaw' in Russia?

Raya Dunayevskaya writes on the latest Russian play, p.5

High School students speak out, p.7



Yesterday, today, tomorrow

The challenge to end sexual harassment

by Suzanne Casey

On April 24, 200 student demonstrators at Princeton University held a Take Back the Night march through the campus, stopping at nine sites where acts of sexual violence had been reported. As they walked past the college eating clubs, where a woman student had recently been sexually harassed and then disciplined for "verbal disrespect" when she fought back, they were jeered by male undergraduates, one of whom was arrested and charged with lewdness. On April 28, 600 demonstrators demanded immediate action by the university against sexual harassment on campus.

While the problem of sexual harassment is not a new one, it has become so widespread in our society that even conservative statistics show that at least 40% of working women have been subjected to some form of sexual harassment. This harassment is not only found, as some would have us believe, in factories and coal mines. It haunts the halls of universities, hospitals and even Wall Street. Nor is it limited to physical advances.

With the economy forcing more and more women into full-time employment, sexual harassment has become so objective that even the Reagan Supreme Court was forced to recognize it as a form of sexual discrimination for which employers can legally be held responsible.

When *N&L* reported on the first Michigan Dept. of Labor hearings on sexual harassment in 1979, brought about by demands of the women's movement, all who attended were overwhelmed by the outpourings of horror stories and the anguish of women workers who testified. (See *N&L*, June 1979.)

The roots of sexual harassment lie deep in our society. In the U.S., they can be traced back to the era of chattel slavery, when the white plantation owner—and often any white man—considered it his privilege to sexually abuse Black slave women.

MARX'S VIEW OF THE FAMILY

The solution to this problem requires a delving deep into the Man/Woman relationship which so absorbed Marx in the studies of his last decade. For Marx, chattel slavery was bound up with the man as patriarch of the family, dating back to ancient Greece and Rome. Marx pointed out that the word "family" (familus) originated as the Roman expression for the number of slaves a man owned, and also held woman's status as domestic servant implicit in it.*

But when women left the servitude of the home with the dawn of capitalism, they were again exposed to constant threats of sexual harassment and assault. In the U.S., New England mill girls in the

*See "Marx's 'New Humanism' and the Dialectics of Women's Liberation in Primitive and Modern Societies," by Raya Dunayevskaya, in *Praxis International*, Jan. 1984.



Women-
Worldwide

Argentine women demand justice

At the same moment the Argentine government is desperately seeking ways to give amnesty to those in the army accused of human rights violations that left over 9,000 murdered and 30,000 "disappeared," the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo brought 8,000 supporters into the Plaza April 30 to demand "justice without compromise." That date is 10 years from their first demonstration, when 14 women, with photos of their missing children or husbands pinned to their scarves, marched against the junta demanding their families' return.

This April 30, hundreds of thousands of white scarves reading "Jail to the Killers," sent and signed by supporters worldwide, were tied end to end and crisscrossed the Plaza de Mayo, blowing in the wind. Huge banners read: "We will not pardon. We will not forget."

Juanita de Pargament, a 72-year-old founder of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo had this to say about what she has been fighting for these past 10 years: "...we are hoping all will be better in this country so the youth can dissent and not disappear. We seek liberty without having to fear for our lives. That's what our struggle brings to our country."

In Iceland's general election April 25, the leftist, feminist party, Women's Alliance, doubled their number of parliamentary seats to six, giving them the balance of power in negotiations to form a new government. Women's Alliance representatives said their price for organizing a new government would include higher pay for women and improved social services.

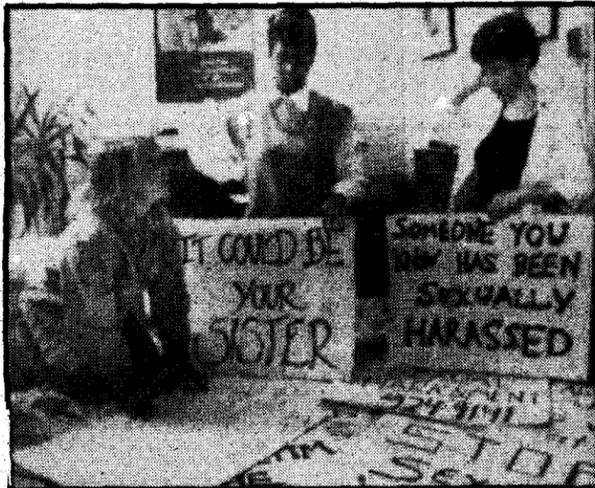
On the heels of militant demonstrations against Pope John Paul II during his visit to West Germany, 29 leaders from U.S. secular and religious women's organizations announced plans for protests during the Pope's fall visit to the U.S. An ongoing protest will be held at the Vatican Embassy in Washington, D.C. from Aug. 26—Women's Equality Day—to Sept. 19, when the Pope ends his U.S. visit in Detroit. On that day a major "Women's Response Rally" in Detroit will challenge the church's position on: right to dissent in the church, ordination of women, abortion, women's rights and gay rights.

1830s—girls as young as 12—were solicited by mill owners and foremen under threat of losing their jobs. I was shocked to learn that Louisa May Alcott, author of *Little Women*, wrote a newspaper story in 1874 on her own sexual harassment at age 18 when she was employed as a companion to the sister of a man whose sexual advances she eventually fought off by brandishing a scrub brush.

While Louisa May Alcott had to brandish a scrub brush alone, last month in Seattle, Washington, seven hair stylists joined a union and went on strike, sparking a national campaign against Fantastic Sam's, a 1,200-outlet beauty salon franchise which forbids its employees to use their real names and forces them to post nicknames such as "Bubbles," "Foxy," or "Peaches" above their work stations.

SOLUTION MORE THAN OVERTHROW

Sexual harassment by a supervisor can destroy a woman's self-esteem, interfere with her relations with her co-workers and eventually even deny her means of



Women at Princeton preparing for a rally against sexual harassment.

livelihood. But because this type of harassment comes not only from "superiors," but from male co-workers, fellow students and even men we pass on the street, the solution is not limited to the "overthrow of capitalism."

The fight against sexual harassment in our daily lives presents a real challenge to men and women revolutionaries to explore the roots of such attitudes and begin changing them as part of the fight to change society. Marx saw certain advantages to freeing women from the home, because he saw tremendous possibilities for men and women working collectively under different historic conditions than capitalism. His challenge to "create a new economic foundation for a higher form of the family and of the relation between the sexes" is one which faces us today.

'Radical thought' meeting

Cleveland, Ohio—A national conference on Radical Thought for Women drew nearly 300 women here April 30 through May 3. The women ranged from students to older women, with many older women present, but, like so many conferences, very few Black women. The concepts of radical thought expressed ranged widely from lesbian separatism, peace activism and women's culture, to socialism. We met, as their brochure stated, "to generate a large number of original ideas...to provide an atmosphere that will encourage creativity and support diversity of thought."

Unfortunately, little of the content of the conference was revolutionary even though women there passionately wanted a new society. One woman, almost in tears, spoke about how none of us have gotten over sexism, no matter who we are in this society. Yet they don't see themselves as active Subjects in the hard process of getting rid of the old, both capitalism as it exists in the U.S. and the state-capitalism of Russia and China.

What brought the 10 women to our workshop, "Marxist-Humanist Women's Liberation," was that they wanted to know what was the relationship of Marxism to feminism. We had a wide-ranging discussion, with women asking what do the theories of the Left have to do with the daily lives of women on the street and on welfare? How can we deal with the immediate problems we face today? Another wanted to know why the Left couldn't all work together, while a third made the point that the Left always puts women last.

What the discussion revealed is that there are no easy answers. I brought out the importance of philosophy within a newspaper where people speak for themselves; what it can mean when we know what women in South Africa are thinking and can communicate with them; the importance of Marx's philosophy to give action a revolutionary direction.

The conference as a whole lacked discussions about actual women's revolutionary transforming of history. I don't see how we can overcome today's world without that discussion or without Marx's profound understanding of capitalist society as well as his vision of a new world, of "human beings realizing themselves in no predetermined form, but in the absolute movement of becoming." I hope the discussion started at the conference can continue in the pages of *News & Letters*.

—Susan Van Gelder

Oscar Mayer workers say: 'We need plant seniority'

Chicago, Ill.—We want to get a rider added to the contract here at our Oscar Mayer meatpacking plant to protect seniority—plant seniority. The way it is now, with job rights, department rights and all that, it gives the company too many ways to lay off, too many ways to bump. What they do is this: a woman has 20 years, 30 years, and the company thinks that they can't work as fast as this person with two years. So they bump her all over the plant, and maybe she'll leave. And then they put the two-year employee in that job.

Suppose you have 29 years. You have one year to go to retirement. They come and tell you: We're laying you off out of this department. It's not your department; you don't have department rights here. The jobs we have for you are trucking, loading on the dock, working in the freezer. You're 57 or 58 years old. You know damn well you can't go sling beef bags. And working in the freezer will kill you, freeze you to death.

These women have to come in to work because they know they have so many days that they have to have that year for retirement. Many get hurt. They work two or three days and they're disqualified. Unemployment won't help out either. This whole thing is constantly done now, with new tricks. They think they're slick.

They were supposed to lay off three older women in one department. If they laid them off, they would have the option to bump open jobs and junior jobs. All the new people they hired for the turnover would automatically have to hit the street because they're not even in the union yet.

So they say: don't lay them off. Find something for them to do for a couple of weeks until the new people get in the union. Then they can lay off these older women and maneuver them to where the only jobs they can have are the hardest jobs in the plant. This is why we can't leave seniority the way it is now. We need plant seniority. It's a matter of life and health for older workers.

—Oscar Mayer worker

Education/demonstrations at Indian women's fair

Rajasthan, India—On April 13-15, 2,500 women, the great majority village and peasant women from Rajasthan, gathered for the Women's Fair, three days in which they were released from the routine of daily work. It was a chance to come out of their villages—many of the women had never been but a walking distance from their homes—and a chance to see different ways of life for women, a chance for celebration and for free expression.

Women who had never met each other were eager for communication and sharing. There was no shyness of any kind, no barriers of caste or class or nationality. The first question that women would ask me was where were my husband and children. How can a woman live without a man?

The peasant women in Rajasthan are married in childhood by family arrangement, though they do not go to live in the husband's house till they reach puberty. There is not any other option in their lives.

FREE TO BE OURSELVES

In the fair we were living in tents. There were different stalls for education. One of these was on the Guinea worm that is a big problem in that area. Guinea worm is spread through women's feet when they go to fetch water from the wells and they put their feet into the water.

Saheli group from Delhi put up a stall on "Fertility Awareness" so that a woman gets a child only when she wants it and is ready for it. That is surely not the case with most peasant women in India. This fertility awareness was also related to the government programs on Family Planning. The government wants us to believe that the root of poverty is population and that the way to reduce poverty is simply to reduce population and the share of the cake will be greater. There was also information on injectable contraceptives.

Besides education there was a real celebration of being women: dances, street plays, games—and a free space to be ourselves, breaking all the laws that society imposes daily on women. It was also an experience in how we would like a new society to be for women.

MARCH THROUGH THE VILLAGES

For two days we went on a rally through the different villages, some women shouting slogans, some singing or dancing. It was a real show of women's power.

The trip back was through Gujarat with 44 degrees Celsius (111 degrees Fahrenheit) and without water. A drop of water is like real gold. The drought problem is more acute every year in the time before the monsoon when all the wells are dry.

What struck me most in the Fair was the spontaneity of these peasant women. There was also another interesting aspect, the interaction between a small group of young educated women who had come from towns and the peasant women. There was a real breaking of city/village, intellectual/peasant barriers. Those young women were really concerned about their millions of sisters who live in illiteracy and superstition. There was closeness, solidarity, mutual sharing.

—Correspondent, India

Immigrant workers strike Barrett Foods

Queens, N.Y.—We have been on strike against Barrett Foods, a chicken and turkey food processor, since March 30, when about 30 of us came out. We won union recognition in 1985 (Local 174, United Food and Commercial Workers) but the company has refused to negotiate a contract.

The way Barrett treats the employees, many of us undocumented workers, we are slaves, not people. We start at \$3.60 an hour for women, \$3.70 for men, and the work is hard; it should be much better paid. The rudeness and vulgarity of the foremen as well as the owner is ceaseless. There is no security—if you are sick, there is no way to go to the doctor except with your own money. If you have an accident in the factory, no one will answer for you.

GET HURT—GET FIRED

One worker cut the tendon on a finger. The company didn't even give him a bandaid! He paid the hospital. He's one of the hardest workers on the line, and when he came back from the accident, the foreman wanted to fire him for being out. We told him, "Wait, he's not garbage to throw him out like this—ask why he couldn't come to work."

We have to pay for our knives, gloves, helmets, aprons and so on. All of this comes out of our check. We don't get holidays. Now that we're on strike, instead of paying us decent wages the owner pays goons to oversee those inside and out, threatening people. Now she buys lunch and pays for gloves, knives and helmets, things she's never done before.

We've had three work stoppages—in November, in January, and the strike. We stopped the turkey processing line. The owner told us the union wants to blackmail us, the union can't help us because we're undocumented, they want us to strike so they can replace us with their people. She said that, as "ill-gals," we have no right to go out on strike.

So many of us took this decision to strike because of this. She said, if we stayed we'd get a raise in May. But we knew in May she would lay off many because of the new immigration law. So we decided to strike.

GIVE ALL WORKERS RIGHTS

Many have gone back in, and there are now about 35 working altogether. We recognize the condition of these workers; they are undocumented in this country and they have been under threat from the owner that if they are involved in union activity she will call Immigration on them. Most of the workers inside want the union.

British anti-nuke march

London, England—The anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster was marked by a March for a Nuclear Free Britain on April 25. Tens of thousands of people took part in a lively and cheerful procession from Victoria Embankment to Hyde Park, favoured by beautiful weather. Banners identified contingents from all over Britain, from Kent to the Hebrides, expressing opposition to the nuclear menace in all its aspects, including Thatcher's plans for a fleet of Trident missile-bearing submarines, the presence of U.S. cruise missiles and nuclear-armed F-111 aircraft, Britain's 36 existing—and six more planned—nuclear reactors, and the dumping of radioactive waste.

More strongly than on previous anti-nuclear demonstrations, there was a sense of being against global capitalism and imperialism, and in solidarity with freedom movements worldwide. A group of British Rail workers were collecting money for the railway workers on strike in South Africa, some Middle Eastern participants carried signs denouncing the Iran-Iraq War, and many people wore tee-shirts supporting the Nicaraguan revolution.

Relatively few Labour Party banners were to be seen. Labour's official policy is to rid Britain of nuclear weapons, but the party stresses its loyalty to NATO and its willingness to build up Britain's armed forces and keep U.S. military bases in the country. Recently Labour spokespersons have hinted that cruise missiles will have to remain in Britain pending the outcome of the disarmament negotiations between the USA and Russia.

—Richard Bunting

We undocumented workers do not believe we are doing anything illegal. We are working. To me, if you are going to take a person, ask what they are doing here. OK, throw them out if they are involved in something illegal. But not if they are working. I don't want to live here if I'm going to have to sneak around and hide. If they don't give amnesty to many who need it, it's going to get very horrible.

We are not going to give in now. They can film us, tape us, watch us, as they've been doing. We have opened our eyes. We are not garbage to be treated like this. People must be treated like people. Not animals.

—Barrett Foods workers

Union silence at paper co.

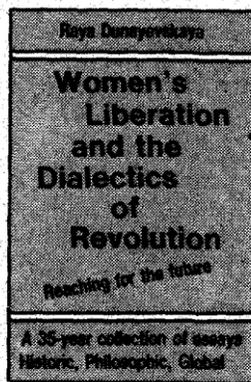
Philadelphia, Penn.—The union has been negotiating our first contract with the Paper Manufacturers Co. (PMC) since August, but there has been a blackout on news about the progress. We have had only one membership meeting, and our negotiating committee members are forbidden to reveal the content of their discussions.

I found out, though, that at the last meeting the company offered a minuscule across-the-board raise, with one exception—a slightly larger amount for the job classification that just happens to be the shop steward's. Why is the union helping the company to hide an attempt to discredit our steward? That kind of ridiculous behavior should be broadcast!

Instead of discussing our concerns, the union local president repeats that we can't get everything that we want in a first contract, that this contract will be something to build on in future negotiations. How can an organization build support except through participation and discussion of its members' ideas?

—Woman worker

Marrist-Humanist Books



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Slowdown at Douglas Air

Long Beach, Cal.—Both our union, UAW Local 148, and the machinists, IAM District 720, have been working without a contract since Oct. 12 at Douglas Aircraft (the McDonnell Douglas unit in Long Beach).

Management lulled the union to sleep with the "team talk" approach. They took us all to the Long Beach Elks Lounge. There were dancers in sequined clothes. They showed us a video with the president and vice-president of the corporation, "Jim and Bill," telling us, in essence: "We're not making as much money as last year; don't look for nothing on your contract."

BONUS GIMMICKS

In the proposed contract they offered us 14% over three years, but that's mostly in "bonuses," not a general wage increase. They've got the retirees scared to death. Their health insurance used to be free; now they would have to pay \$17 a month, and they could end up paying a \$300 deductible and 20% of any hospitalization.

This first contract proposal was rejected by 91%. The company offered the same proposal plus a six-cent-an-hour raise in December. They said: "If you don't take it now, you won't get either the general wage increase or the Christmas bonus this year." The contract was rejected anyway, by 67%, although the strike vote was 66% to 34%, and we need two-thirds to authorize a strike. We lost by 41 votes.

There's a split in the union, with local elections on May 12. The former head of the bargaining committee, Doug Griffith, who is pro-company, is running against the current president, Bob Berghoff. Griffith is author, with the company, of the "Cross-Utilization" program, which means the company can work us out of our classification. If a worker is laid off (and lay-off is by classification, not seniority), they could put another worker over at his or her job, with no increase in rate of pay, even if the first worker received a higher rate.

We're now at an impasse. We've had no contract vote since December. The company is waiting for the union elections. We've been having a general slowdown—work-to-rule—and we staged a half-day walkout. The company is openly admitting that they're suffering from this; production and profits are down.

Current local president Berghoff has accepted the line that strikes don't work in the '80s. The Industrial Union Department of the AFL-CIO published a book called "Winning with Workplace Strategies." In the Reagan era of union-busting, the idea is to avoid a strike at all costs, but hit the company in the pocketbook. I always thought those two went together.

NEED STRIKE TO WIN

I think Douglas Aircraft is eligible for a strike. They've admitted we're hurting them. They're two weeks behind in production. If we went out, they'd be back at the negotiating table in a day.

The company and the union have quit publishing information about what's happening, so rank-and-file workers have begun putting their own thoughts on paper and passing them around.

—Disgruntled McDonnell Douglas employee

Workshop Talks

(continued from page 1)

I'm not talking about the Communist Party (CP) here! The CP is just another side of Kirkland and Reagan, the Democrats or Republicans. Both the CP and the international union bureaucrats have the same attitude to the rank-and-file workers: that we should stay on the production line and let them do the thinking for us. That's true whether in Russia or America. Gorbachev's big aim is to get the Russian workers to work harder, with speed-up and more productivity. Just like GM.

The CP, like the union bureaucrats, doesn't support the strike of the P-9 workers against Hormel. They don't like anything where the rank-and-file think and act for themselves. Kirkland knows that and so do the other bureaucrats, but they still use the "Communist" label to try to make people keep silent.

The problem with the union leaders who supported the April 25 rallies is not with that support, but that, as one of those union presidents said: "We agree with Lane Kirkland on most issues. We are united in the federation on almost all issues, except foreign policy, and we are not going to let those differences split our ranks."

THREAT FROM RANK AND FILE

If they are solid with Kirkland on all other issues—this rank-and-file worker wants nothing to do with them! Where are the voices of the rank-and-file? The leaders don't want to hear the rank-and-file workers, especially those like the P-9 strikers that have travelled all over the country talking to other rank-and-file workers. The "leaders" have never recognized that! Before the 1950s, if a worker did something like that, the CIO organizers would be right there: that was the kind of worker they were looking for. Now they call them "Communists" or "Communist dupes."

The AFL-CIO will not be part of the new labor movement when it comes to the U.S. It will be made up of the young workers like those I have met from meat-packing and other industries. More than one has told me a similar story: "I used to be a right-wing Republican bigot. But since I've been involved in a struggle, my whole view has totally changed. A movement educates a person."

There is a new consciousness among workers in the U.S. that, united with the young anti-war protesters we saw out in the streets on April 25, could be a powerful force for change in this country.

Who We Are and What We Stand For

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.

News & Letters was created so that the voices of revolt from below could be heard unseparated from the articulation of a philosophy of liberation. A Black production worker, Charles Denby, author of *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*, became editor of the paper. Raya Dunayevskaya, the Chairwoman of the National Editorial Board and National Chairwoman of the Committees, is the author of *Marxism and Freedom, Philosophy and Revolution* and *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of 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. These works challenge post-Marx Marxists to return to Marx's Marxism.

News and Letters Committees, an organization of

Marxist-Humanists, stands 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. We stand for the development of new human relations, what Marx first called a new Humanism.

We organized ourselves into a committee form of organization rather than any elitist party "to lead." The world development of a half-century of Marxist-Humanism is recorded in the documents on microfilm and open to all under the title, *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, on deposit at the Wayne State University Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Detroit, Michigan.

In opposing this 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.

Editorial

It took more than a week to pull the broken bodies of all 28 construction workers, who had been crushed to death, out of the twisted steel and concrete that fell on them when the apartment complex they were building in Bridgeport, Connecticut, crumbled in a matter of seconds on April 23. It was headline news for a week.

The project developer was quoted as saying that there were "about 15 theories" on the cause of the disaster. Some wanted to know why OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) investigators had not checked the building site since last October. Some wanted to know why it was not being constructed on bedrock as had been recommended. Construction experts agreed that the lift-slab construction that was being used was "a very dangerous procedure"—but said that "all forms of construction are hazardous."

The father of one of the victims did not speak in terms of "theories" but of fact: "They had people in there—saving money. They killed a bunch!"

The same week, on the back page was another story—this one about a Senate hearing into the Wilberg coal mine in Utah, where 27 miners died in a December 1984 fire. The Wilberg miners testified at the hearing that their supervisors had responded to complaints about unsafe working conditions by saying that "if you guys don't like the damn job, you can get out." The mine was cited for 34 safety violations, including nine that contributed directly to the fire, but fined only \$111,000. For two years new regulations have been stymied by the Federal Mine Safety and Health Administration.

In that same week, in still another report—this time about a 70,000-pound truck that crashed into a station wagon, killing eight—we learned that in Illinois alone accidents involving heavy trucks increased from 15,205 in 1981 to 20,289 in 1985. Congress removed controls from the trucking industry in 1980.

SOARING WORKPLACE DEATHS

None of these accidents just "happened." Nor does it only "seem" that they are happening more often. For six years, the Reagan administration and Big Business have waged an all-out, vicious attack on every gain labor had won since the 1930s. The slashing cutbacks in OSHA programs and plant inspections—perpetrated at the very same time that work-rule concessions have been forced on workers in one contract after another—have brought the workplace death and injury rate to soaring new heights. The most recently released figures cite 5.5 million injuries and illnesses for 1985, a 13.5% increase since 1983; and 3,750 deaths on the job in 1985, a 21% increase over 1983. These figures, moreover, are those given by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), which covers only firms with 11 or more workers. A far more accurate picture of the carnage comes from the

Workers' health and safety suffer from Reagan's murderous policies



"If blood is the price of your cursed wealth, good God we have paid in full."

(See Readers' Views below for history of this mural.)

figures reported by the National Safety Council—which reported 11,700 deaths the same year that the BLS reported 3,740.

It is clear that possible death, injury, and occupational disease are a daily fact of workers' lives in every industry—and very few ever make the headlines:

- So horrendous are conditions in the meatpacking industry that the injury rate has been one of the most serious grievances in all the strikes, from Hormel to IBP. At IBP's Dakota City, Nebraska, plant, where workers are now on strike, the injury rate is 135% a year!

- So unknown still are the effects of video display terminals, that millions of women are left worrying that they have been used as a generation of guinea pigs, while the incidence of miscarriage has already been found to be so high among workers who produce microchips that AT&T has been forced to ban all pregnant women from those production lines.

- The Texas Department of Health, in response to recent trenching deaths in the construction industry, checked records and found there had been 93 cave-in deaths in the last ten years—60 of them in the last five, an increase of 66%. Over half were minority workers; and one-third, non-citizens.

NOT ACCIDENTS, BUT MURDER

The same system, of course, that destroys us at work has also polluted our air, poisoned our water, and threatens us with its nuclear waste dumps, asbestos-laden school buildings—the list is endless. And it is not a nameless, faceless "system" we are fighting.

When Reagan revoked the federal OSHA standards, inadequate as they were, in 1981, labor and community groups not only managed to get right-to-know laws about dangerous materials passed in 45 cities and states, but got local prosecutors to bring criminal charges of murder against guilty companies and executives. In 1984

three executives of Film Recovery Systems, Inc. in Chicago were found guilty of the murder of a Polish immigrant, Stefan Golab, for forcing him to work in unsafe conditions. Other criminal indictments have been handed down in Los Angeles and New York City.

Trying executives, not just for "negligence," but for knowingly subjecting workers to lethal conditions, for murder, is certainly warranted, but it is not good enough. The bloodiest hands of all are those of Ronald Reagan, who is presiding over so degenerate and long-outlived a stage of capitalism that it becomes clear that it is that system that must be tried for murder—and totally uprooted.

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THE CHARACTER OF LABOR TODAY HAS CHANGED

Artists and supporters from across the nation merged to express their opinion of the problems facing the working class throughout the world with a 16 by 80 foot mural painted on the Austin Labor Center here in April, 1986. It was inspired by the long strike against the Hormel Company and dedicated to imprisoned South African leader, Nelson Mandela. In October, 1986 the mural was totally defaced by some of Hormel's friends. A state judge issued a restraining order to halt any further destruction, and we want to file a claim in the state courts but, unfortunately, there is a cost for justice.

We are making an all-out appeal to support the rights of visual art. The destruction of this mural must be overturned so the historical battles of all workers can remain in view for generations to come. No corporation (even in a company town like Austin, Minn.) should be allowed to destroy art. We need your help!

Contributions can be made to:
Austin Mural Committee
PO Box 891
Austin, MN 55912

Editor's Note: We have reproduced the Austin Labor Center mural on this page, above. Postcards which have reproduced it in full color are available for \$1 each from the Austin Mural Committee, P.O. Box 891, Austin, MN. 55912.

I have worked in New York for 30 years, and the character of labor here has changed. We are witnessing a stage where the agencies fought for in the '30s and '40s are considered our enemies. At the march in Washington on April 25, I saw a new kind of labor involvement—that is, there was a heavy participation of workers who came from Latin America and who were very aware of U.S. imperialism. That kind of politicization of the proletariat strikes me as very new. We have to take a new look at where American labor and "unionism" is today. Workers are interested in communication with others and in

taking unionism beyond what it has been before now.

Observer
New York

Militant leadership can stop concessions. We saw it at the Pontiac GM Truck plant, where 1,000 grievances were unprocessed. The revolt there forced the UAW bureaucracy to sanction the local strike. We are seeing many new actions by rank-and-file auto workers, such as the picket line of 500 at Solidarity House last month. Their protest against plant closings also brought out how the auto companies are successfully using the tactic of "concessions, or no job." In the UAW today there is virtually no national agreement anymore. Whipsawing one plant against another is the accepted practice. Workers are saying: We've had enough.

Ex-coal miner
Michigan

A quite revealing article recently appeared in the Los Angeles Times, showing that American rank-and-file workers are not so blinded by the racist anti-Japanese propaganda as the government, the corporations, and the union bureaucrats putting it forth might wish. Interviews with laid-off steelworkers in Youngstown, Ohio—where 20,000 have lost their jobs in the last decade—revealed, to the surprise of the pollsters, that "While they do not flatly absolve Japan, Americans in growing numbers appear to blame trade shortcomings on the past greed, inaction and lack of foresight of their own institutions—business, labor and government." Is that what you call "Workers as Reason?"

Thoughtful
Los Angeles

THATCHER'S FAKE MAJORITY

There is a great deal of speculation about the next general election. On the basis of recent opinion polls, we can expect an overall Tory majority in Parliament, and therefore a third term of

Thatcherism, as a 40% plurality of the electorate say they will vote Conservative. This in spite of the 60% who support one or another of the opposition parties. A reform of the electoral system, introducing proportional representation, would make it possible for some of the alternative left to take seats in parliament, like Democrazia Proletaria in Italy and die Grunen in West Germany, as well as depriving Thatcher of her artificial majority.

Kinnock's Labour Party continues its rightward course, with warnings of disciplinary action against the unofficial Black sections within the Party, and the policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament effectively put on ice.

Richard Bunting
Oxford, England

POST-MARX MARXISM

I attended several sessions of a New School for Social Research symposium on "Whither Marxism." Andrew Levine's "analytic" approach denied that dialectics belonged to "orthodox Marxism" and found the labor theory of value insupportable. Mihaly Vajda spoke on "Why it is impossible to be a Marxist in East Central Europe." And Axel Honneth also said Marxism was a "dead" paradigm but wanted to save the "core" of Marxism by constructing a new theoretic model.

Why did they all discard Marx's accomplishments just as new revolutions in the Philippines, Haiti and Central America have emerged to challenge Reaganism? Do they think all revolutions must fail? One woman intellectual, who had been active in Poland's Solidarity, wanted to know "What do your ideas mean in an active movement like Solidarity?" To me, the struggle for a new human society remains the human endeavor, the "goal" which is preserved in the continuous relating of theory/practice in new revolts. What happens after a revolution is inseparable from a projection of Marxist-Humanism.

Ted Rosmer
New York

Reader

We cannot blame the emergence of counter-revolution in Iran on that country's "political backwardness and underdevelopment." All revolutions take place under severe circumstances. What was the attitude of our Left? Instead of reaching out to subjects of revolution, they replaced the concept with "who are our supporters." Anyone who joined them in their "anti-imperialist" struggle was their ally. Both the Majority and Minority of the Fedayeen had the same position on the forces of revolution—utter contempt.

As for a philosophy of revolution, they forgot that a revolution is both to destroy the old society and create the new one. We have to question the Left's attitude to the Women's Liberation Movement. Could we not have foreseen today's fascism in Iran through Khomeini's attitude to the women?

Ex-Fedayee Youth
Chicago



WOMEN'S
LIBERATION

I have been reading Raya Dunayevskaya's *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution*. The 1953 essay "On Women in the Post-War World, and the Old Radicals" seems like it was written for the 1980s. She talks there about the women who were "by-passing the specialized organization of women and looking for a new, a total way out." This seems to me what we need today, as against organizations like The National Organization for Women (NOW) that work within the system. As a Women's Liberationist, I say it's not enough just to patch up the holes; we have to try to create a whole new system. What we need is a whole new relationship of labor to life itself.

Young woman student
Los Angeles

Theory/Practice

by Raya Dunayevskaya

In April in Moscow the journal *Novy Mir* (New World) published a new play by the well-known Russian playwright, Mikhail Shatrov, entitled "The Peace Treaty of Brest-Litovsk," which captured some front-page publicity in the West, the U.S. especially. Because the great historic revolutionaries—Leon Trotsky and Nikolai Bukharin—appear in it as co-leaders of Lenin, when they have been exorcised from the officially re-written Stalinist and de-Stalinist histories, the play is receiving this extraordinary treatment.

The *New York Times* front-page report on this (April 30, 1987) was accompanied by a picture of Trotsky. The emphasis on the phenomenal nature of the play's publication is further stressed by the *New York Times* reporter in Moscow, Bill Keller, who reported that the play had been written in 1962 during the Khrushchev cultural thaw. But it was not then approved for publication, much less given a dramatic production, whereas in 1987 it is not only being published, but its author, Shatrov, announced in an interview that it would be staged in Moscow in November on the 70th anniversary of the Russian Revolution. This too made it sound as if it were a play rehabilitating the two great leaders of the Russian Revolution, Trotsky and Bukharin.

NOVY MIR (NEW WORLD) IS NOT ALL THAT NEW

Nothing could be further from the truth. Since the journal *Novy Mir* has not yet arrived in U.S. libraries, I am at a disadvantage in not having read the play itself and must depend mainly on reviews. It is not true, however, that either the author of the play, Shatrov, or the genre of his plays is a mystery. The English-speaking world can follow the official Russian views on Soviet culture in *Soviet Literature*, which is published in Moscow, in English, for that purpose. The one that is of special relevance to this event is the No. 4, 1983 issue of *Soviet Literature*, which ran an extensive interview with the author and an intellectualistic analysis of all his plays, especially the one then packing them in, "We're Bound to Win." The author himself subtitled the play "Publicistic Drama," which his interviewer, Elena Olkhovich, calls "mono-drama"; it is actually what Shatrov has been writing ever since the de-Stalinization period began in 1957 when he was 24 years old.

What is the new topic every time there is a slight thaw in cultural life, is just a topic, not a new subject—the forbidden history as well as the present direction of Russia. The ghosts from past history appear in this play

Cultural thaw is not restoration of history

Russia's latest play is no freedom road

not only to prove that Lenin was a great revolutionary, a theoretician, a practitioner who won power against Czarism and capitalism; it as well hit out against all other tendencies, including those who had been considered the "general staff of the Revolution."

The chosen crises points in Shatrov's plays show all tendencies—be they Trotsky/Bukharin, or the Workers' Opposition, or the Social Revolutionaries, and so forth—to be wrong and Lenin right. In the play, Lenin is always right, and is the never-ending subject.

In the play at issue, Russia had been fighting a war that all of the people opposed, and enthusiastically followed Lenin to overthrow the Kerensky regime which continued the war; Russia was totally exhausted before it finally succeeded in achieving peace. The German army offered a very humiliating peace treaty at Brest-Litovsk in 1918.

Bukharin in 1918 was considered an ultra-leftist since he wished to go on with a revolutionary war, evidently thinking they could do so until it became a world revolution. He opposed signing the humiliating Brest-Litovsk Treaty which Germany offered. Trotsky was the negotiator and disagreed with Bukharin that it was necessary to go on with the war, but also did not wish to sign the treaty. He had the slogan "No Peace, No War." Lenin pointed to the fact that not only was a pause needed for this newly born workers' state that had called for the end of the war, but that if they didn't sign it then, the conditions would even be worse later. This is exactly what happened, and later they all had to sign.

THE 'RESTORATION'

No one needs to be told that Gorbachev is the present ruler. And the reporter in the *New York Times* promptly linked the April thaw to Gorbachev's February speech to newspaper editors where he said, "there must be no forgotten names, no blank spaces, either in history or in literature."

It is not clear whether Shatrov actually referred to that speech, but the reporter followed his citing of it by quoting Shatrov that "it is only a matter of time" before Trotsky and Bukharin would be acknowledged as historical figures: "Hardly anyone knows these men except at the level of stereotype. We don't need myths. We don't need legends. We need to sort out everything as it really was."

They certainly need to do that. But they have been going in the exact opposite direction for a whole half century. The truth about "The Peace of Brest-Litovsk," is that the very restoration of the names, Trotsky and Bukharin, is limited to just names. It is only because

history cannot be exorcised, no matter how administratively it is re-written that some in the audience may be under the illusion that Trotsky and Bukharin, as two great revolutionaries who with Lenin led the 1917 Revolution, will some day be restored. In truth, here are the words Shatrov, speaking to the audience, puts in Lenin's mouth concerning Trotsky's position: "Only time will tell if this is an act of genius, as you think, or adventure and betrayal, as I think." Now please tell me what the audience, celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Russian Revolution, will think after hearing those words.

DE-STALINIZED STATE-CAPITALISM

The point is that de-Stalinization, be it in the Khrushchev form or now in Gorbachev's trying to claim that he is restoring Leninism, has not changed anything fundamental. Though we did get rid of the gory Moscow frame-up murderous Trials of 1936-38, Russia still has the same fundamental class ground—state-capitalism and single party domination.

The so-called reforms, both those that were initiated by Khrushchev and now in another version by Gorbachev, cannot re-write history. It's for this reason that it's important also to recall the very first reaction of Trotsky's widow Natalia Sedova, after Khrushchev's "secret" speech of 1956, when she cabled him to say that she is ready to come to Russia to testify, and that in fact unless the rehabilitation is one of full restoration of Trotsky, it would mean nothing.

As I put it when Khrushchev suddenly and conveniently selected a few of the crimes of Stalin for criticism: "Khrushchev is the most ungrateful Stalinist that every lived. He is very brave in front of a corpse."

Natalia's statement was by no means just out of loyalty to Trotsky. The objective ground for opposition to Russian state-capitalism that continued to call itself Communism was seen again when the same topic resurfaced in 1961 as a French newspaper, *France-Soir*, brought up the question of Stalin in an interview with her.

Here is what she wrote the editor on Nov. 9, 1961: "The police terror and the calumnies of Stalin are only the political aspect of a death struggle conducted against the revolution by the entire bureaucracy. One cannot therefore expect the re-establishment of the whole working class except by the annihilation of this bureaucracy by the working class which it has reduced to slavery. I don't expect anything from the Russian party nor from its fundamentally anti-communist imitation." (continued on page 7)

Views

NEW VOICES IN N&L

In the *Militant* I found the usual sterile obsession with leaders and reified masses. N&L has articles written by workers, columns turned over to people outside the paper.

When I open an issue I see the world crisis is everywhere being fought on all dimensions and not just in the "official" revolutionary areas like Nicaragua or South Africa. There are reports from all over the globe—Pakistan, Mexico, South Africa, England, France, The Gambia, Brooklyn... giving the lie to the notion that only certain people are revolutionary.

In my opinion, what is important in N&L is not necessarily whether the paper is a monthly or a biweekly, but the multiplicity of voices found in it.

Supporter
Chicago

We sincerely hope you can keep us on your complimentary mailing list. Under the present Republican administration, \$150,000 has been taken back (after having been budgeted) from our book budget. We have been forced to curtail many orders and subscriptions.

No doubt your budget is limited in the extreme, too. But we can only hope that having *News & Letters* on permanent file in a large university library is valuable exposure for you, just as it is important that our students and patrons learn from *News & Letters*.

Librarian, Dissent and
Social Change Collection
Cal. State University, Sacramento

Editor's Note: The need for gift subscriptions—not only for international readers who find it difficult to pay for their own, but for libraries right here at home—is great. Can you help us keep N&L going to them by contributing to our donor subscription fund?

N&L has stories that mean something to us. The stories from high-school kids about the ways authority comes down on them shows you where it all starts. The youth of today are the workers of tomorrow. The institutionalized racism, sexism and oppression this system throws on workers starts on us.

High school student
New York

BLACK WORLD

The "Black World" column of April 24, where Lou Turner quoted a leaflet from the Tuskegee University Black underground, reminded me of David Walker's 1829 Appeal. We have learned from the movements both in South Africa and in the U.S. that being Black is not only a color but is also a way of thinking. As David Walker put it in his Appeal during the slave revolts, speaking out both against meek northern free Blacks who would not support the movement as well as against liberal and pro-slavery whites who considered Black to be an "unfortunate" color: "My color will yet root some of you out of the very face of the earth!" We will find that will be "unfortunate" for the Reagan Administration and their Black flunkies.

Black worker and revolutionary
Los Angeles

In the 1960s I worked on the U. of Michigan campus, and that was after I had gone to undergraduate school at Columbia University in New York. Both campuses were liberal, sometimes radical, then. It isn't that there weren't white racists around. There were. But they didn't feel that they could get away with passing out racist leaflets on campus, or ganging up to attack Black students.

We need to face the fact that Reaganism has sunk deep roots in the country, that the Left is disoriented. Isn't it time for some deep thinking about how to fight Reaganism, rather than just denouncing racism "in general?"

Long-time subscriber
Michigan

YOUTH VS. THE SYSTEM

I was reading the articles in N&L about teen suicide (April 10). My child is in third grade and already is turned off by school. It's so sad. This whole damn system has turned off so many people, young and old, because they can't be programmed to fit in. Then the "leaders" can't understand why people turn to drugs, crime and suicide! It's pretty damn obvious! No one is expected just to be human anymore. The truth shall overcome. I hope in our lifetime we will see workers tear all of capitalism down.

Working mother
Oklahoma

LEFTY MORGAN, LABOR FIGHTER

Soon after *News & Letters* had published *Workers Battle Automation* (Detroit: 1960)—the first-ever pamphlet to give voice to what American workers were thinking and doing about the new stage of production that had descended on the world—a railway worker in British Columbia wrote us:

"I found Charles Denby's pamphlet a graphic, moving presentation of the human problems involved in the issue. It should be of particular value for those undergoing this divisive, animalizing process...Had I not already met workers who were being subjected to this dehumanizing thing, I would have found it hard to believe. Workers' control offers the only solution. If the concept of humanity—which we propose is ever widely adopted, no reform whatever will be considered a sufficient sop. All we can do is to keep plugging, each in his own way, together wherever common ground can be established."

Lefty Morgan, the author of that letter, kept plugging in exactly that way to the day he died, on April 7, 1987, to make that workers' concept of humanity real.

Dismissed from his job for political and union activities, Lefty continued his labor activities throughout his life, de-

The same day you were marching in Washington, D.C., we were marching for peace across Canada. Tens of thousands came out in Vancouver. Other thousands marched in Toronto to protest weapons testing here and the tritium export from Canada in nuclear reactors to the U.S. for military purposes. The most striking feature of the Toronto rally was the youth, who made up at least 50% of the total. Their signs, dress and chants were creative, hopeful and critical—all at the same time. The passion of young people for a world free of militarism and nuclear contamination is clear, unambiguous and wonderful!

Marcher
Toronto, Canada

voting much of his energy and talent toward the writing of a manuscript for a book he hoped to get published on the railway workers. He at one time organized fellow radicals into a group he had called "Press." It was this group that ordered and sold to other workers—along with a wide variety of workers' and socialist-humanist literature—much of the material published by N&L Committees through the active '60s, from *American Civilization on Trial to Marxism and Freedom*. And it was Lefty who helped to organize one of the speaking platforms for the author of *Marxism and Freedom*, Raya Dunayevskaya, on tour in British Columbia.

Through the next 25 years, many of his articles and letters found their way to the pages of N&L—whether on labor developments in Canada, the peace marches in British Columbia, or the freedom movement work of the Canadian Native Americans. The week before death finally overtook him, Lefty made sure to send one more contribution, a generous check to help sustain N&L as a biweekly.

Together with his many friends and comrades, we mourn the death and honor the life of this fighter for a new concept of "what it means to be a human being."

Black World

(continued from page 1)

The facts are simple and stark: Tunica County, Miss. is the poorest county in the U.S.; the county hospital is a 22-room facility which only provides primary care and no surgery, making the infant mortality rate the highest in the country; 70% of the population works in agriculture—soybean, rice and cotton; from the end of November to April there is no work, forcing people to live on unemployment compensation and food stamps; and out of a population of 9,000 in the county, 5,000 are on government aid, while more than 900 live in sub-standard housing.

The other side of Tunica is simple and stark as well: this same county is the home of some of the richest landowners found anywhere in the South.

It is in the town of Tunica, however, that the Manichean reality that Frantz Fanon traced in the Third World—"economic substructure is also superstructure...you are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich"—comes to life. For running parallel with the commercial avenue in the town of Tunica is Sugar Ditch alley and its open sewage trench for which it is named. And like the two pillars of the "Southern way of life" that they betoken, there stands the largest white Baptist church in the county at the north end, and the Tunica County Bank at the south end of the Ditch. Both, which are no further than the width of the alley from the shacks that lean along the Ditch, have thrown up high fences at their rear to block any view of the Black life that dwells behind them. Of course, in the Spring, when the rain comes and the raw sewage overflows the Ditch, there's no blocking out the stench.

But Sugar Ditch is not alone a testimony to the depths of the Black condition in America. Listen to one of the militant Black women who lived along Sugar Ditch up until January of this year, whose collective protest with a group of Black women from the Ditch back in January 1984 led to the media attention that brought forth a national outcry:

"Though we are no longer there, things are just like they were when we were on the Ditch. There are still no jobs, and no future for me with nine kids. And it's not that I don't want to work. The last time I worked was last August, for three days. I can't get a job because people around here saw me on TV talking about Sugar Ditch.

"When Rev. (Jesse) Jackson came here it did a lot of good in getting national attention. If he hadn't come here things might still be the same. But it wasn't only him, it was the people of Tunica who were outspoken. No one could have done anything without the people speaking out for themselves. If we hadn't done something, there wouldn't be any changes. I wasn't working for myself, but for my children and the future."

INDIANOLA, SUNFLOWER COUNTY

Finally, we come to Indianola, in Sunflower County, Miss.—home county of Fanny Lou Hamer—where the full measure of the ongoing Black struggle in the Delta can be taken. The Black women workers at the center of that struggle will be heard speaking for themselves in the next issue of News & Letters.

The union drive to organize workers in the catfish industry—unprecedented in the Delta—is actually the culmination of many streams of struggle over the last year. Ever since the Black education boycott, which lasted 30 days back in March and April of 1986 and succeeded in Indianola getting its first Black superintendent of schools, Dr. Robert Merritt, other struggles have come to a head.

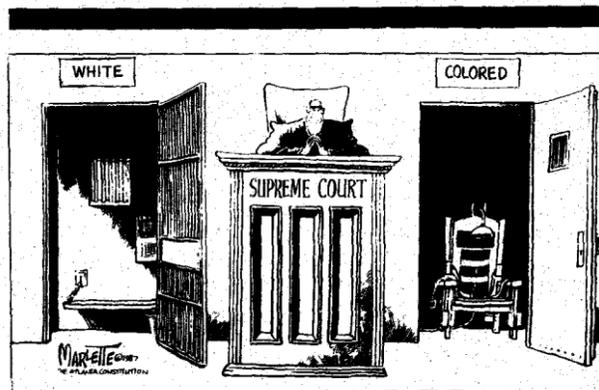
Rev. Michael Freeman, one of the few Black ministers who supported the catfish workers during the union drive, chronicled the succession of struggles in Indianola over the last year: "On March 25, Black students began the school boycott. In June, (Black Congressman) Mike Espy gained a majority in the primary election and in November won the run-off. In October the union was voted in at Delta Pride, 489 to 349. One of Mike Espy's greatest strengths was the labor vote. Workers are the Delta. That's why I say there's been an awakening

Struggles in the Delta

across the Delta. School boycotts have hit Tunica, Aberdeen and Hinds counties, and have gone into Louisiana." The same people involved in the school boycott worked for Espy's election and are now participating in the union struggle.

Although Delta Pride has tried to forestall negotiating a contract with the union by taking the matter to Reagan's National Labor Relations Board, it is by no means out of the question that a strike will be called. The one note of concern that I heard was whether Congressman Espy will risk jeopardizing his electoral base among the Black working people who elected him by procuring Defense Dept. contracts for the catfish industry, at the expense of the workers' struggle to unionize and change their horrible conditions of labor.

No matter what the outcome is, this much is certain: there is a revolution going on in the life of the Black South today that has taken Black thought beyond mere survivalism to a "ruthless criticism" of all half-way measures, as well as all leaders. Once that is united with a full-blown philosophy of revolution, as Fanon concluded, it "cannot do otherwise than define a new humanism both for itself and for others." That is the junction these new struggles in the Black Belt have reached.



Anger over 'Amnesty' law

Los Angeles, Cal.—"I'm here illegally from Mexico. I'm angry at this new immigration law. Why is it that the laboring people always get the short end of things? It makes no sense for them to persecute us, who have been feeding and clothing this country.

"They go down to Latin America and extract our blood there. We come here to try to balance our lives out, and they extract blood from us here. This new law is supposed to 'help' us, but if this is the help they're going to give us, we can see that it's nothing. We have to get together and help each other and help ourselves." So spoke a young man two days before May 5, so-called "Amnesty" day.

Lynn Alvarez, of the Central American refugee center El Rescate, remarked to the press that she hadn't dealt with one family that wasn't being torn apart by the "amnesty" regulations. And not only are the amnesty applications in English only, but each applicant is required to provide the names and cities of residence of each brother, sister, son, daughter, spouse, or former spouse! The INS has "promised" that this information will not be used to deport anyone—but "illegal aliens" are nervous, distrustful, and angry.

Thirteen demonstrators were arrested May 5 at a noon protest at the Federal Building, as they blocked the gate of the wire loading "cage" many undocumented workers pass through as they are deported. "With or without documents, we are workers and we have rights," one demonstrator shouted, as he was arrested, handcuffed, and led away. No one knows what these next weeks and months will bring.

—Michelle Landau and Ana Maillon

'Caravan for the Forgotten'

Today's Guatemalan reality

Los Angeles, Cal.—"Why is it that when you hear a lot of the news about Central America, you hear so little about Guatemala...even though 38,000 people have been 'disappeared' since 1965 and it's still going on? It's because the elected 'civilian' government of Pres. Cerezo hides the fact that the army still controls everything, from agriculture to the banking system." These were the words of Frank La Rue, a spokesman for the caravan of buses and cars that started in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, "with a handful of Guatemaltecos and gringos," and is working its way down the West Coast to deliver food, toys, medical and educational supplies to some 45,000 Guatemalan refugees languishing in camps in Mexico and Guatemala itself.

On May 1, a concert-rally was held to benefit the caravan. The presence of a schoolbus filled with donated goods affirmed the solidarity of the spirited gathering. North Americans of all races joined Central and South American activists, including many of the estimated 200,000 Guatemalans living in Los Angeles. They as well connected this effort to the fight against deportation. The driver of the bus said, "What are national borders? They're just fences to separate workers."

A spokesman for the United Guatemala Opposition (UGO) told of new stirrings in the trade union movement, including strikes by government workers. There are still four surviving guerrilla organizations, and on Thursday, April 30, some 5,000 peasants occupied the main square in Guatemala City, demanding land reform.

This brought a roar of approval from the crowd who hadn't heard this news in the U.S. media. The UGO spokesman added: "Guatemala gets underplayed because its counter-insurgency state isn't concentrated in one U.S.-backed dictator."

But it seems certain now that the importance of the Guatemalan masses as a vital force in revolutionary Latin America will not be underplayed by the movement. This event saw both an outpouring of donations and many people signing up for the "Rapid Response Network," whose public pressure recently tracked a "disappeared" woman and forced her release from a military jail.

—Wayne Carter

Why the protests in Chile?

New York, N.Y.—Your readers may be wondering why the Chileans who came out to hear the Pope on April 2 caused a "riot," when the Pope was denouncing the dictatorship they oppose. I spoke to a relative at home who explained that the anguish and desperation of the people is so intense that it comes out wherever people gather. It may appear to be blind rage, but who can criticize it when they don't have the answers? Nobody in Chile has the answer to how to get rid of that repressive regime.

I also learned that another 8,000 teachers are being laid off by the national government, as part of a plan to reduce public schools by 30%. This will mean the end of general public education, since localities are too poor to sponsor it.

The Pinochet dictatorship has been destroying the school system ever since the coup of 1973. One of the two unions it destroyed first was the teachers union, because it was so democratic. It included all education workers, from janitors to university presidents, and during the Allende years was militant and creative about education.

The dictatorship replaced it with a top-down organization of teachers. Last year, after much struggle, that organization was allowed to elect its officers for the first time. Even though the dictatorship controlled the group, five of the nine seats were won by people in opposition parties, so now the government is out to destroy it too.

—Political exile

'Those who refused to acquiesce'

"We the people' no longer enslave, but the credit does not belong to the Framers. It belongs to those who refused to acquiesce..." So spoke Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall in critiquing all the hoopla over the bicentennial celebration of the U.S. Constitution. He attacked the "perpetuation of slavery" and disenfranchisement of women that was incorporated directly into the Constitution.

It has been radicals in this country who long ago pointed out the sharp difference between the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Raya Dunayevskaya, writing as a young woman in the 1930s, noted, "They (the 'revolutionary forefathers') utilized the extravagant rhetoric of the Declaration of Independence when they needed to mobilize the masses for the revolution but once the masses accomplished the revolution, they sought to consolidate their power and foisted the adoption of the Constitution upon the masses with all the fraudulent means..." (The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection, microfilm #8772)

Indeed, even that document of revolutionary rhetoric, the Declaration of Independence, dropped a paragraph condemning slavery. As our pamphlet *American Civilization on Trial—Black Masses as*

Vanguard notes, "Upon the insistence of the Southern delegation at the Continental Congress, this paragraph was stricken from the Declaration. In this first burial of full freedom's call lies imbedded the social conflicts of today."

This pamphlet, *American Civilization on Trial*, presents the true, revolutionary history of the United States. It documents the long struggle for freedom, from before the Civil War to our day, of "those who refused to acquiesce." The expanded 1983 edition includes an Introduction, "A 1980s View of the Two-Way Road Between the U.S. and Africa," by Raya Dunayevskaya.



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Youth

High school students aim to broaden anti-war forces

by Laurie Cashdan

The April 25 marches in Washington, D.C., and San Francisco were an impressive outcry against Ronald Reagan's counter-revolution waged on the peoples of Central America and Southern Africa. One young Chilean woman expressed what many youths felt about Reagan's actions: "With the Iranscam, people have seen what Reagan's foreign policy really is, but he hasn't stopped for a minute arming the contras. He has no respect for human lives, especially in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala. And what about Chile?"

The ideas expressed in the participation of many youth also challenged the kind of thinking in the movement that would rely on less than a total alternative to Reagan-Gorbachev's bipolar world. The presence of so many high school and college students at the demonstrations meant more than numbers. The shouting out of solidarity across borders also involved the kinds of critical questions youth are raising about how a freedom movement can develop here.

At a spontaneous meeting three days after the march a dozen high school students in New York, most of them members of "SOS Racism," discussed why the rally organizers had decided not to address the fact that this march took place just a day before the one-year anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in Russia. The organizers had thus shown their tacit acceptance of the idea, common in the solidarity movement now, that this is not the time to criticize Russia because Gorbachev's arms deals and "glasnost" policy are a road to peace.

THE CHERNOBYL CONNECTION

One student said she was glad the march kept the focus on Central America and Southern Africa since the media have been focusing just on the arms deals. Another young woman wished that the march had been linked to the mass anti-nuclear demonstrations in Europe marking the Chernobyl anniversary.

All the students agreed that their SOS Racism group considers itself anti-nuke as well as anti-racist, and that as far as they could tell, most of the students at the Washington demonstration were anti-nuke too. While marching in the youth contingent they had chanted, "1-2-3-4, we don't want your f---g war, 5-6-7-8, we don't want to radiate!" and "Money

for tuition, not for ammunition!"

This discussion shows one way in which the presence of tens of thousands of youth gave the April 25 marches meaning which spilled beyond the lines of the organizing. Equally important was the presence at the marches of thousands of workers, many of them Black and Latino. That pointed to an exciting possibility for creating new relations which defy the way this exploitative society divides us.

IDEALISM OF YOUTH

The coincidence of the April 25 demonstrations and the anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear explosion



Some of the April 25 marchers in San Francisco

made me think about the way so many Third World revolutions that had manifested the emergence of new revolutionary forces—peasants, women, youth and indigenous peoples—later fell back into the bipolar world context of the two superpowers.

Here is how one student posed this concern: "Too often after a revolution one state power has wound up being replaced by another state power. Change

Steinmetz High bars pupils

Chicago, Ill.—We still don't know if closed campus is really going to come to Steinmetz High School. None of us want it, but the school doesn't listen to what we want anyway.

A few weeks ago a student wrote a letter into the school paper saying we should have a walkout over closed campus, just like the students at Lindblom High did last month. (See April 10 N&L, "Closed Campus Walkout.") Just for writing this letter, she has been barred from entering the school. I've heard that some other students who said something about a walkout have also been barred.

This place is like a prison already. You can't even hang around after school with your friends. Any student who gets out before the ninth period (the end of the day) has to leave the area around the school building immediately; the principal comes out and chases anyone away who is within sight of the school. What are they scared of anyway? Don't we have a right to do what we want when we leave?

Everyone is against the closed campus coming here, because there is so much pressure as it is. If we won't be able to go out for lunch, things will get even worse. One thing I think that'll happen is that there will be more fights between students. There have been several fights that have broken out, some of them racial, between Black and Latino especially. But I think that's really stupid. When Black and Latino fight each other, the white man on top just looks down and smiles. He knows he'll win that way.

—Latino student.

has to come from the people up to really mean anything." So here in the U.S. solidarity movement, why do we have to choose sides instead of working out the independent meaning of our ideas of freedom?

As against the decision of the organizers to turn their backs on the larger world context, the students refused to separate their consciousness of themselves as anti-nuclear and anti-racist from their solidarity with the Central American and Southern African people. What this reflects is the idealism of youth, which will not settle for anything less than a total transformation, the creation of a new, human society.

LaGuardia High School prisoners speak

New York, N.Y.—We at LaGuardia High School have sympathetic feelings with the kids who go to Fairfax High in Los Angeles. (See April 24 N&L.) We feel our school is like a jail too.

We have a computerized punch-in that says what time you get in. If school starts at 8:10 but you couldn't punch in until 8:11, they'd say you were late. Our report cards are computer printouts. My freshman year the computer made a mistake and said I was failing everything and should be left back. You don't feel like a person here, you feel like a piece of plastic.

My biggest gripe is that you can't leave the building. At lunch, or during a free period, you can only go to the lunch room or to the library, which turns the library into a social club so you can't work there.

There are cameras all over, and speakers, so you're being watched and listened to. The TV monitor is up on the second floor. One time I was cutting class, in the basement. One of the guards spotted me on the camera, and I heard her voice saying, "Go back to class." It's like Big Brother is watching. Also, the security guards are armed with handcuffs.

You not only have to punch in in the morning, but each teacher takes attendance. You can also get in trouble for cutting lunch! If the Dean sees you and asks why you aren't in lunch, and you say, isn't this my free period, you can get a cut card. They send it to your parents. After three cut cards or other referrals your parent has to meet with the Dean. The Dean calls you everything from stupid to retarded.

If you fail a class, they change your homeroom, to make you feel like you're stupid. I know juniors and seniors in sophomore homerooms. It's really a bad feeling to know you're thought of as less than a person.

LaGuardia High School merged the High School for Performing Arts, and Music and Art High School. Now the teachers try to make their students feel they have to be better than the other departments. The way it should be is that dance, drama, music and art students can do things together.

It's the same as the kind of feelings that are encouraged toward the students at Martin Luther King High School next door. When students from King come over, the security guards keep them away and tell us they're trying to prevent a riot. They tell us there are riots at King all the time, which isn't true. The two schools have different hours for beginning and ending school.

All this oppression in our school is just preparing us to go along with the oppression the government throws on us later on.

—LaGuardia High School students

Theory/Practice

(continued from page 5)

tors. All de-Stalinization will prove to be a trap if it doesn't lead to the seizure of power by the proletariat and the dissolution of the police institutions, political, military and economic, based on the counter-revolution which established Stalinist state-capitalism."

The 1960s and the 1970s were very important in the flowering of the playwright Shatrov as he continued with the single theme of Lenin. The reason I hark back to the 1983 review of his then-most-popular play, "We're Bound to Win," is because it too started with 1918 (we seem never to leave Brest-Litovsk). It goes all the way to October, 1923, the last time Lenin visited his study-office in the Kremlin.

It isn't that the concentration on a single great revolutionary in the many crises of such a crucial, objective, momentous period as 1917-23 is in itself wrong. It is that those great historic events appear as nothing but background, and I would say more for the present than for the past. The masses as well as the co-leaders are nothing but props, ideas; nothing but projection of a single theme of winning; mono-drama remains, not a poetic or philosophic phenomenon, but a publicistic, propagandistic projection.

—May 5, 1987

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Our Life and Times

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

Nicaragua: Reagan's wars kill U.S. citizen

The brutal murder of American citizen Ben Linder by the contras in Nicaragua is already being forgotten by the U.S. press. Linder, Paulo Rosales and Sergio Hernandez were murdered by contras as they sat in a field taking notes on how to dam a stream and bring electricity to the village of San Jose de Bocay in northern Nicaragua.

News of Linder's death spread quickly because the youth was the first U.S. citizen volunteer in Nicaragua to be killed by contras. Linder's family honored their son's request by burying him in Matagalpa. Thousands of Nicaraguans turned out to honor him. In the U.S., over 1,500 attended a vigil for Linder on April 29 in Portland, Oregon, the city in which he grew up.

Linder was a mechanical engineer who, four years ago, went to work in rural Nicaragua. He lived in the village of El Cua, where he had helped on a project to bring electricity to the village for the first time. The contras consider this kind of work a "crime," and it was reported that Linder had been specifically targeted by contras for murder. After wounding him, they shot Linder point-blank. Three days before the attacks near San Jose de Bocay, contras hit a dairy project in the same area and killed two people.

Many hundreds of Nicaraguans have been killed by contra forces, funded and tutored by Ronald "I'm-a-contra-too" Reagan's government. The White House expressed "regret" over Linder's death, but said he knew what he might be in for.

Despite this shocking murder of a U.S. citizen, the Congressional hearings now underway on the Iran-contra arms deals have not stopped Reagan's wars in Central America for one beat. On May 3 and 4, three U.S. helicopters were used to ferry 300 Guatemalan troops in a two-day airlift to a remote area where they were to attack armed opposition guerrillas. And in Honduras, some 40,000 U.S. troops are scheduled to begin "Operation Solid Shield." During these maneuvers they will stage an operation with Honduran armed forces less

than 100 miles from the Nicaraguan border. Recently, reports surfaced about the CIA's role in training Honduran military death squads who have tortured and killed over 200 leftists since 1980.

As the U.S. military presence and provocations have increased in Central and Latin America, so has opposition. On May Day, 100,000 people—peasants, unemployed workers, students, housewives—marched in Tegucigalpa and other Honduran cities. The demonstration was called by the Federation of Honduran Workers and the rallies demanded an end to U.S. government funding of the contras.

In Ecuador, 6,000 U.S. troops are scheduled to arrive May 15, ostensibly on a mission to rebuild a main jungle road destroyed in the March 5 earthquake. The Socialist Party had called this project endorsed by Reagan's friend, Pres. Febres Cordero, an "open door policy for U.S. military intervention."

These aren't the first U.S. soldiers in Ecuador. Last August, a smaller unit arrived, again for a "lofty" purpose—to build a road in a sparsely populated area of Manabi province on the Pacific coast. But many Ecuadorans felt it was a move to test the tolerance of Latin Americans (as was done in Bolivia) to the presence of U.S. troops on their soil. Quite a few have said the project is really a cover to build a military air strip that can be used in staging an invasion of Nicaragua.

Spanish workers

Reinosa is a symbol in 1987 of Spanish workers' open and growing opposition to the Socialist Party government's economic policies. Earlier this year, the state-controlled enterprises in Reinosa—a steel mill, a truck parts plant, and a locomotive engine plant—announced they would cut the workforce by 25-50%.

In March, workers blocked roads and railways in daily protests, demanding that the government meet with local of-

ficials to discuss the proposed lay-offs. Instead, the government responded by sending in anti-riot units of the Civil Guards in a show of force.

The town has united behind the workers as new battles broke out in April between workers and the 1,000 Civil Guards occupying Reinosa. Many shops put up signs stating that Civil Guards were not welcome inside. Youths joined workers in fighting the Guards.

Local union officials say that unemployment in Reinosa will jump to 47% if government cutbacks go through. The government's economic program is appearing more and more as a social, class question. Since Spain entered the European Economic Community in January, the government has pressed harder to make Spanish capitalism "competitive." Yet three million Spaniards (21%) remain jobless, and only one-third receive paltry state benefits. In Reinosa, many workers on temporary lay-offs have already used up their unemployment benefits.

The government decided to set a hard line with public sector workers during spring wage negotiations by fixing a wage increase of 5%. This in no way keeps up with the cost-of-living in Spain, and social divisions continue to deepen. Most recently, miners and railway and airline workers went out on strike.

Brazilian peasants

One year after the Brazilian government passed a land reform program, little has been done. The situation for landless peasants is worsening in Brazil, where only 1% of the rural population owns 48% of the arable land.

Pres. Jose Sarney announced last year that some 150,000 peasant families would be able to move onto idle farmland, but to date only 15,000 families have received any land.

Thousands of peasants have been taking matters into their own hands by staging land invasions and setting up communities on large landed estates throughout the country. Police on horseback recently broke up one such community of 95 families on a private

farm near Sao Paulo. They had been occupying the farm for over a month.

The peasants have combatted the landowners by organizing themselves into scores of independent local unions. Meanwhile, the government land reform is sinking deeper into a bureaucratic maze while the landowners have banded together to fight any expropriations, in the courts and in the countryside.

Nuclear-free Pacific

As we go to press a new coalition government which came to power in April in the Pacific island state of Fiji has been overthrown by what appears to be a right-wing military coup. Fiji won independence from Britain in 1970 and until the elections was governed by the Alliance Party, which had opened Fiji's ports to U.S. nuclear ships. The new government was elected on a platform which included a non-aligned foreign policy and a pledge to ban nuclear ships from its territory.

Britain, which still holds one colony in the South Pacific (Pitcairn Island) recently refused to sign the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone treaty, promulgated by South Pacific governments.

The treaty bans acquisition, testing and stationing of nuclear weapons, among other provisions, but does not prohibit ports-of-call by nuclear warships. The main target of the treaty was France, which continues to test nuclear weapons on Muroroa, the most recent test being this month.

The U.S. announced in February that it, too, will not become party to the treaty. Russia on the other hand has signed, as part of its campaign to extend political influence in the area.

The Nuclear Free Zone treaty means little in the U.S.-Russia nuclear face-off, since both superpowers use the Pacific as a vast launching pad for nuclear missiles mounted on ships and submarines. The U.S. is using a missile range in the Marshall Islands (outside the treaty zone) to test Star Wars technology.

Nonetheless, opposition and concern continues to grow in this part of the world which has suffered so much from nuclear testing and waste dumping. And it is this pressure from below which brought about the change in policy in Fiji, and earlier, the nuclear ban in New Zealand and a large number of other Pacific island states.

East Europe's masses demand a radical openness from below

(continued from page 1)

precursor to the 1956 Revolution.) The demonstration ended at the place where Lajos Batthany, the leader of 1848, was executed. There Gyorgy Gado, a dissident writer, drew parallels between Batthany and Imre Nagy, Hungarian leader during the 1956 Revolution.

Clearly, Hungary's youth, whom the government treats as "the lost generation," are finding their way to these officially unspeakable historic moments. The 1956 Revolution is the subject of many recent discussions, with the Hungarian underground publishing interviews with leaders of Workers' Councils from that time, renewed calls for withdrawal of Russian troops and discussion of a Hungarian democracy that is inseparable from freedom.

The return to 1956 has another significance. Gorbachev's "glasnost" has been likened to Khrushchev's "de-Stalinization" of the 1950s. Both are supposed to be pioneers. Yet Khrushchev's de-Stalinization came about after the East German revolt had broken out and then been crushed. He knew very well it had only been driven underground, not defeated. Within Russia itself, the Vorkuta forced labor camp had experienced a revolt.

Thus, de-Stalinization was Khrushchev's way of trying to prevent a new revolution, the very one which broke out in Hungary in 1956. (For a discussion of this period see Raya Dunayevskaya's *Marxism and Freedom*, Chapter 15, "The Beginning of the End of Russian Totalitarianism.") That this did not succeed has been shown over and over again in East Europe, in 1968, 1970, 1976 and 1980.

Far from Gorbachev's policy breaking any truly new ground, it is actually far paler than Khrushchev's de-Stalinization, and most crucially, is a measure, not of a pioneering move, but of the tremendous dissatisfaction within the Russian empire and its East European neighbors.

POLAND: SOLIDARNOSC TESTS THE LIMITS OF GLASNOST

One hundred and sixty people signed a petition to Warsaw authorities asking to hold an independent May Day March limited to ten slogans that have appeared in the official press. Permission was denied.

Nevertheless, on May Day Polish workers marched with Gorbachev's glasnost slogan, "We need democracy like we need air," at their own independent

demonstration. A truck driver told the 2,000 people who had managed to slip through police checkpoints that May Day was still not a real holiday of "dignified labor." The signs were immediately pulled down by police who then beat the marchers with the sticks on which their signs were mounted.

Other demonstrations under Solidarity banners were held in Wroclaw and Poznan, while in Gdansk many wanted to march despite tremendous formations of police. As Lech Walesa, one of the leaders of Solidarity noted, the credibility of the "workers' state" is non-existent.

The crisis is not only in credibility. The most obvious, pressing form of it is price increases. The most recent ones, put into effect on March 29 and April 1, will raise the cost of living by 20%. Particularly singled out are

Coming next issue:

South Africa in rebellion



Striking transport workers meet inside COSATU House (Congress of South African Trade Unions)

- The police attack on striking labor
- The mass stay-away during Botha's whites-only election

basic foodstuffs (milk, bread, cheese, grains) as well as coal, gas and electricity. It comes as no surprise then, that Solidarity's leadership is calling for any and all actions, including strikes, to protest the increases.

In their statement condemning growing poverty as the result of ever-rising prices, Solidarity demands automatic cost of living raises, not only for those working, but for those on pensions, as well as other social benefits, so no one would fall below the social minimum. It demands an immediate and radical shift away from production for production's sake to production for people.

The economic crisis is not separated from political or ecological ones. Thus in the struggle for a new society all issues are raised. Just look at the activities of the Freedom and Peace group in March:

- On the 17th, demonstrations in Wroclaw and Krakow called for freeing jailed draft resisters.
- On the 20th, Szczecin demonstrators protested the pollution created by the chemical plant there as well as government plans to expand the plant.
- On the 21st, in Gdansk, in three hours Freedom and Peace activists collected 2,000 signatures on a petition to stop the building of a nuclear reactor in Zarnowiec. (Apparently it's not the radiation itself, but information about radiation that's dangerous. When the news of Chernobyl reached Wroclaw Polytechnic the dean ordered all geiger counters to be "gagged.")
- On the 29th, protesters in Krakow and Nowa Huta called attention to the near-total destruction of the environment there.

What is driving Gorbachev is multifold. There is the super-power rivalry with that other contender for single-world domination, the nuclear-armed, Star Wars-bent Ronald Reagan; the push for production and more production, in nuclear reactors, in weapons, in industrial goods, that is at the heart of all capitalist regimes, be it the "private" capitalism of the West or the state-capitalism of the East, which gives us Chernobyls and Three-Mile Islands. Most crucially, there is the mass dissatisfaction among the peoples of the Russian empire and Eastern Europe whose voices and actions continue to come forth, and which represent the most fundamental challenge to Gorbachev's state-capitalist regime which dares call itself Communist. Their expressions of thought and deed are yet to be fully heard.