

Theory/ Practice NEWS & LETTERS

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

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Sweatshops with a union label



by John Marcotte

In the November N&L I wrote about a Latin American worker who had to find a job in one of the thousands of illegal or clandestine factories which cover New York, where she made \$12 a day. Now as relieved as she was to get out of that into a "legal" garment factory with a union and labor laws, here is what even "legal" conditions are for sweated immigrant labor in the U.S.

Her shop is in the Teamsters union. They make 2.5¢ over the minimum! For that they have to pay \$50 initiation fee and \$13 a month dues. No one tells the workers anything. No one seems to have heard of a union meeting. No one knows what is in the contract. When a holiday day, or if they get holiday pay for it, till it shows up in their pay. They live day to day dependent on the whim of the boss. And the cold—they spend 8½ hours every day in numbing cold, their hands wrapped in plastic bags, almost too cold to work.

No human being should have to work like that. You would think the company would take one hour to tape plastic over the windows and fresh air ducts. But no. The office is heated, the boss is in shirt sleeves. He sees those workers freezing out there as just a necessary part of his investment to put his machines to work. He sees

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The real state of the union is the growing pauperization of America

by Michael Connolly, National Organizer,
News and Letters Committees

"Inaugural Weekend," Washington, D.C.: Reagan's second term is launched with some 15,000 present at no less than 32 "special events." The invitees are, nearly without exception, wealthy and white. Reagan's inaugural theme—"We, the People"—is symbolized by his decision to attend in a business suit rather than a tuxedo.

"There is another America out here," reads the picket sign carried by an elderly Black woman marching outside the White House grounds in a "counter-inaugural" demonstration of 2,000 led by Jesse Jackson. The truth of her words could be seen in events all across the country that same weekend of Jan. 18-21, events that both exposed the desperate reality of life in capitalist America today and the diversity of forms of revolt against it:

● 200 unemployed, mostly Black, sat down at the entrance to U.S. Steel's closed South Works mill in Chicago, demanding "Jobs Now." They were joined by workers on strike against concessions at the nearby Libby's plant.

● Women's liberationists occupied abortion clinics in 20 cities, hoping with their physical presence to protect them from terrorist bomb attacks.

● 88 demonstrators, including many students, were arrested at the South African Embassy in Washington, D.C., bringing the total jailed in continuing anti-apartheid protests nationwide to over 800.

● Farmers from across the Midwest, 300 strong, converged on Chicago's Board of Trade, demanding action against farm policies that are driving small farmers into bankruptcy and off their land.

And as the TV news focused on the inaugural galas, the subzero cold forced them also to turn their cameras on the plight of those without heat in their homes, and those without homes at all. The nearly three million now officially estimated as homeless exceeds the number recorded during the Depression of the 1930s. What is new today is that within this viciously class-divided society ever-larger segments of the working class are sinking so rapidly into pauperism that Marx's absolute general law of capitalist accumulation has moved from the realm of far-sighted prediction to the realm of actual description.

The Reagan administration—which is proposing to cut \$50 billion from the federal budget this year, nearly all of it from "social programs," while it feeds a military monster that already drains the economy of all growth in productivity—suggests that "the private sector" and "local charities" should handle the problems of the impoverished. They hope thereby to divorce the streets of human beings living in cardboard boxes on the shtetl of U.S. cities from the structural plagues plaguing the American economy ever since the massive spending for the Vietnam War.

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Protest against apartheid deepened in South Africa and the U.S.

Black World

New American opposition to apartheid



by Lou Turner

The touchstone of American civilization — its Black dimension — once again treads the two-way road to South Africa in a flow of freedom ideas, protest and rebellion. Not a single day has passed since the first "sit-in" on Thanksgiving Eve at the Massachusetts Ave. South African embassy in Washington, D.C., that America has not been reminded of the Reagan Administration's illicit affair with the fascist, apartheid regime of South Africa which it calls "constructive engagement." In city after city where even a hint of a South African presence exists, scores of protestors have marched, rallied and gone to jail.

Meanwhile, as a cynical press finds it "difficult to measure the effect" of the Free South Africa Movement's phenomenal growth, the following events have taken place in rapid succession since it appeared. First, Reagan reversed himself and decided to see Nobel Prize winner, Bishop Desmond Tutu, only to emerge from that meeting to try and take credit for the release of the 11 jailed Black activists by the South African government. Neither Reagan nor South African president Botha wanted to admit that the pressure from the continuous mass protests in the U.S. and the deepening revolutionary struggle of the Azanian masses had anything to do with their retreat.

FREE SOUTH AFRICAN MOVEMENT

Secondly, 35 conservative Republican Congressional members took the unprecedented step of writing a letter to the South African ambassador to the U.S. warning that they would support legislative sanctions against South Africa in this session of Congress. At the same time, a group of American corporations in South Africa issued a statement to the South African government calling on it to phase out apartheid.

Finally, all attempts to ameliorate the situation by asking the deadly apartheid system to "reform" itself under half-hearted threats of American sanctions collapsed in the face of fresh outbreaks of Black mass re-

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Rosa Parks, who was a catalyst for the beginnings of the Civil Rights Movement in 1955 when she refused to move to the back of a bus in Montgomery, Ala., marches at the South African Embassy.

Editor's note: The following are excerpts from a talk given by John Gomomo, vice-president of the National Auto and Allied Workers of South Africa, in Detroit on December 30, 1984.

In 1979, the Federation of South African Trade Unions was formed with 25,000 workers. My union is an affiliate. In 1980, we decided to talk to the UAW because all production of cars in South Africa was for export. We tried to avert multi-nationals from playing workers against each other, because when workers revolt against anything, other products would be made in the South African factories. We decided to negotiate with all three companies (Ford, GM and Volkswagen) at once, who said our demands were unrealistic.

ON JUNE 16TH we called out the managing director to explain why our demands were not met. He would not, and the people went out on strike. We tried to work out a strategy to go to the townships to explain to the people the situation. On the third day of the strike I was taken by the police for "intimidating people from coming to work." They wanted to keep me three



Mass protests have been occurring throughout South Africa and have intensified since the apartheid regime imposed its new constitution denying Black South Africans any voting rights.

days until the people would go back to work, but the people said they would not until they know where Gomomo is...Our demands were met.

This is the first time since the death of Martin Luther King that American people are standing up against apartheid by demonstrating at the South African embassy. U.S. support means that for the first time the South African government has listened to the call to release detainees.

What kind of support do we ask for you? We need
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Women fight Reagan's 'abortion tragedy'

Last month, members of the National Organization for Women and other feminist groups organized 24 hour watches at abortion clinics across the country to protect them against attack. Abortion clinics have been the targets of over 30 bombings in the past year and feminists feared renewed violence around the Jan. 22 anniversary of the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion, and Reagan's inauguration.

And it is not only actual bombings that women have had to face in recent months. Women friends have accompanied their sisters to abortion clinics to protect them from the gauntlet of screaming "right-to-lifers" carrying pictures of aborted fetuses and begging them to accept financial aid and have their babies. Women clinic workers and volunteers have helped evacuate on stretchers women still under the effects of anesthesia after bomb threats have been phoned in, as happens frequently at the Eastern Women's Center in Manhattan. What kind of life are these "right-to-life" hypocrites creating for the women they are subjecting to such inhuman acts?

REAGAN CREATES "TRAGEDY"

President Reagan claims to deplore such violence, but he refuses to allow the FBI to investigate clinic bombings, and as part of his inaugural gala he addressed a mass demonstration of "right-to-lifers" opposed to a woman having rights over her own body. Reagan issued a call to "rededicate ourselves to end the terrible national tragedy of abortion," and he is pushing for an amendment which would again make abortion illegal except to save a woman's life (and who would make that decision?). He would once again consign all but the wealthy to kitchen tables and back alleys.

It is Reagan's devastating economic cuts to all social programs, especially to the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) food program for pregnant women, foodstamps, Medicaid and child care funds, along with his assault on all affirmative action programs that have made it ever more impossible for a woman, married or single, to be able to consider bearing and raising a child.

It is women—not the male leaders of the right-to-life movement, none of whom have ever experienced pregnancy or faced the trauma of a miscarriage or abortion—who must be allowed to make this most fundamental decision regarding their own lives. And it is women who are seeing every day a growing climate of

Iranian women protest

New York, NY—We heard the night before that monarchists (pro-Shah) had called a demonstration for Jan. 7, calling it "a day for women's freedom in Iran." On Jan. 7, 1936, Reza Shah had ordered the unveiling of women in Iran by force. There were feminists at that time, Anjumen Nosvan, who opposed the chador, but also opposed the Shah and his forced secularization of society.

We felt we had to go to the demonstration to protest it because we were afraid that other women who were sensitive to what Khomeini has done against women might come without knowing the implications. The monarchists called themselves constitutionalists and said that other "democratic" groups had co-sponsored the demonstration. But when other groups heard, they said it was a lie and they had nothing to do with it.

We wrote a leaflet to say that Iranian women had chosen March 8 as Women's Day, to demonstrate after the revolution against Khomeini and against dictatorship. We invited women to come March 8 this year and keep alive solidarity with International Women's Day. When the monarchists read our leaflet, they began attacking us physically—we were only three—and all the while they were shouting "long live democracy."

Perhaps we underestimated what other women would think. Only one woman came for the demonstration, and she came over to us after reading our leaflet.

—Iranian Women's Committee, NY-NJ

anti-woman hostility being created by the highest officials of church and state.

NUNS REFUSE TO RECANT

When twenty-four Catholic nuns and four priests signed a published statement that a "diversity of opinion" about abortion exists within the Catholic Church, they were immediately threatened with expulsion. The statement, sponsored by Catholics for a Free Choice, called for an open discussion of abortion within the church. Three of the four priests have retracted their statement, but the nuns have all refused.

In a recent support rally in Chicago, more than 500 Catholics vowed to continue their support for the nuns. One of the nuns, Sister Margaret Traxler, a member of her order for 44 years, spoke for many when she said, "I don't think they (Church leaders) are living on the same planet—they are unrealistic and out of touch with the people...they are not listening to women, particularly poor women and women in underdeveloped countries. They are telling them to have babies, but they are not going to feed them. They are hypocrites." Dominican Sister Donna Quin, another signer of the statement, said, "Our lives are on the line—we're standing in solidarity with women, and we will continue to do so."

The position of the Pope on abortion and birth control is well known, as is his attitude toward laywomen and nuns in the church. He sits alongside Ronald Reagan and his misogynist supporters who refuse to allow women to become anything more than subservient hand-maidens, confined to their homes and their convents.

It is clearer every day that women's liberationists need to do a rethinking on many levels if we are not only to stop this return to "Kinder, Küche, Kirche" (children, kitchen, church), but continue the development of women as full human beings that had begun with the Women's Liberation Movement.

—Suzanne Casey

A unique overview of Marx's dialectic at work—as it develops through four decades of revolutionary activity—and its relevance for today's revolution-to-be:

"Marx's 'New Humanism' and the Dialectics of Women's Liberation in Primitive and Modern Societies"

by Raya Dunayevskaya

"My emphasis on the last decade of Marx's life—which until now has been considered hardly more than a 'slow death'—is because it is precisely in that last decade that he experienced new moments, seeing new forces of revolution and thought in what we now call the Third World and the Women's Liberation Movement."

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Notes from a journal

'My sister's keeper'

by Clara Jones

I have been reading about the history of Black women. One woman, Julia Cooper, addressed the World Congress of Representative Women in 1893, saying that "I am my sister's keeper!" should be the response of every man and woman of the race." The Black women of the nineteenth century were indeed their sisters' keepers.

All of the women at the factory where I work are their sisters' keepers. We must be because what hurts one of us hurts us all. The men are harassed for speed-up, but never in the same way the women are harassed.

I was told I must work faster because I am one of the people in my department with the most years in. Three of the other women workers were also harassed, and told that they must speed up.

Yesterday I almost made what I have to make to keep them off my back. I feel that the capitalist has no feeling for humanity; that he is without any heart or soul.

Before this job I worked at a day care center. The owner was Black and most of the children were Black. The owner made big money from the parents. The food that the children had to eat had very little meat in it, mostly lots of beans and rice and spaghetti; soup with lots of noodles and no meat.

Sometimes the government would come to look at the day care center. On that day the children would get food with meat in it. New toys would be around and the boss' family would act like workers for one day because of the government laws that there must be enough workers to care for all the children. But the owners want the least that they can have, so they will not do as the law says. They only want what makes the biggest profit for them.

Day care centers are needed but we need good ones that will care for the children. They are our brothers and sisters too.



women- worldwide



After more than three weeks of picketing in subfreezing temperatures, 50 striking cleaning women in downtown Detroit ratified a one-year contract, Dec. 8. Joined by nine tradesmen, the women—members of Service Employees International Union, Local 79—walked out over an increased work load. The new contract won higher wages and improved medical benefits and reached a compromise on the question of increased productivity.

The newly formed Aboriginal Women's Coalition, based in Edmonton, Alberta, and the Native Women's Association have intensified their fight for changes in Canada's Indian Act. Seeing a woman only as her husband's property, the Act makes "non-persons" of Indian women who marry non-Indians (and their children)—denying them the right to own or inherit property on their reserve, voting privileges, tax-free status, health care and free post-secondary education. As many as 60,000 women and children suffer this discrimination, while Indian men marrying non-Indians do not. As one Mohawk woman remarked on Quebec's Kahnawake Reserve, "You can bury dogs here, but not Indian women. I guess the dogs are better than us."

Fifty-four women insurance claim processors—down from the 93 employed when negotiations began in 1981—represented by District 925 of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) finally settled a contract with Equitable Life in Syracuse, New York, aided by pressure from feminist groups and other unions. Gains include health and safety provisions, the right to appeal work changes, and to know how VDTs are used to monitor work output. Karen Nussbaum, president of District 925 said: "Automation has revolutionized the work lives of office workers...now, by fighting for union representation, we're revolutionizing the way automation affects us."

Information from off our backs

Women workers at Dunnes Store in Dublin have picketed every Saturday since October to protest the suspension of a worker who refused to handle South African goods. They have been supported by trade unionists, passers-by, and anti-apartheid campaigners, including the South Africa Exiles' Theatre Group.

Information from An Phoblacht/Republican News

British miners' wives: stronger through struggle

I want to share with you some information about the wives of the miners striking in Nottingham, England. One woman in the women's support group wrote me that: "We are all well, no big return to work from Notts despite the crap the media, coal-board and government see fit to spew out..."

"The women in Nottingham seem to get stronger and stronger as the fight goes on. In fact we've got to the stage now where the strike centre consults us now before they make any moves—even down to fundraising. They finally decided that we weren't going to go away, so the only thing they could do was accept us as equals and believe it or not, it's working quite well."

There was a program on the TV that made some of the same points. On the TV one miner's wife said: "What I'm doing now I believe in. I've got a stronger attitude now than before. Now what I want, I'm determined to get." Another said: "We've all found a common cause—all pulling the same way. Now we realize how other women live. We were kitchen sink before. I can give as good as I get now. Greenham Common Women—I can understand them now..."

"Now we're thinking more because we're seeing more. We want a women's organization of mining families to stay on when the strike is over. Then, if this happens again in two years' time, we'll be ready; we'll have funds; we'll be organized; we'll know what to do. There's a lot wants changing and we women have the power to change things."

—Lydia, Britain

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Capitalist "progress" sacrifices miners

by Felix Martin, Labor Editor

The death of 27 miners trapped in the Wilberg Mine in Utah by a fire which started on Dec. 21 was the nation's worst coal disaster since 1970, when 38 miners died in a coal dust explosion in Hyden, Ky. Both of these disasters were caused by speed-up and ignoring safety rules. What was different about the disaster in the Wilberg Mine, operated by Emery Mining Company, is that a new mining technology—long-wall mining—was being employed.

In the long-wall system a machine cuts right through to the other side of the mountain and then cuts back and forth until it has extracted all the coal. Large metal pins in the roof of the mine hold up the mountain as the machine works through, moving with the machine after each section is cut out. With this huge, automated device fewer miners are needed than even with the continuous miner.

NEW TECHNOLOGY IS "MAN-KILLER"

A second major advantage of this system for the mine companies is that 100% of the coal in a mountain can be extracted. When using the continuous miner, up to 20% of the coal has to stay in a given mountain in order to hold it up after the rest of the coal has been removed. But in long-wall mining, as the machine cuts through each section of coal, the pins are removed, allowing the mountain to settle. One miner told me that just this extra amount of coal extracted with the long-wall system is enough to pay the cost of production.

When the continuous miner was brought into the mines of Kentucky and West Virginia 35 years ago, the miners right away called it a "man-killer." With this new technology we have an entire mining operation that is a constant man-killer. Not only does it allow company profits to reach record heights, thereby giving the bosses even greater incentive to work the miners to death, but so few miners are needed to operate the long-wall system that whole mining communities face poverty and starvation.

The constant reduction in the number of miners working thanks to these new technologies means that a higher and higher percentage of miners on the job are suffering death from industrial "accidents." And as the disaster at the Wilberg mine showed, even a small spark can set off enormous destruction. Six of the 27 miners killed in the Wilberg mine were management pushing the miners to break the world record for coal production in one day. Once again it was the drive for "production for the sake of production" that was responsible for this disaster.

FIRST STRIKE AGAINST AUTOMATION

The first strike against Automation was the 1949-50 miners' strike in the U.S. against the continuous miner.

Production takes a life at U. S. Auto Radiator

Detroit, Mich.—In the middle of December, a worker was badly burned by a torch in Plant One. That was one of many accidents recently at U. S. Auto Radiator. Workers were already sad and angry to hear that "Mike" Dimosthenis Kofsanidis died that week. He died after being in a coma for months, which was the result of a severe shock he received while changing a light in Plant One in July. He came to this country for a better life and went back to his own country in a casket.

Mike might have lived if there had been qualified medical help in the plant when the accident happened. Nothing has changed since his electrocution. Management could learn CPR at the Red Cross, but they don't care. When the accident happened, Mike was fixing a lamp so production could keep going. Dangerous working conditions — and U. S. Auto Radiator's thirst for profits — killed him. You can see the truth that production is for production's sake.

It was the same for the man who was burned. He works in the soldering department. When you're soldering you're so close to the next person that you can feel the heat of their torch on your neck. A lot of people in soldering have burns on their arms. This man bent over, and a torch burned him. They threw a coat on him to smother it, then took him to the hospital. U. S. Auto Radiator hates to send people to the hospital, so it must have been bad.

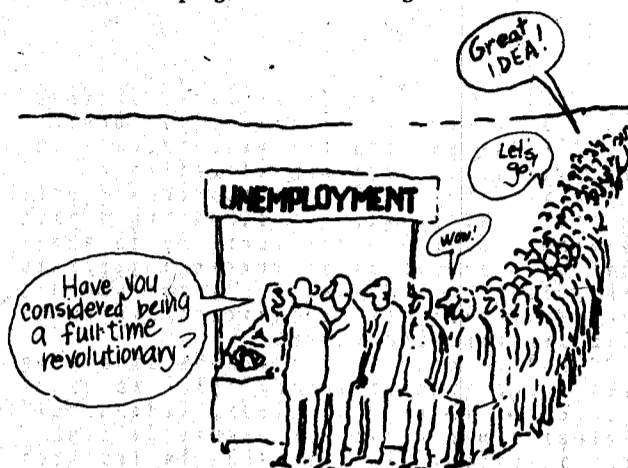
The company won't fix the jigs that hold the radiators while you work on them. They are rusty and worn out. Sometimes while you are soldering, the jig slips out and the radiator falls. Radiators weigh anywhere from 14 to 18 pounds. This happened to one worker three times in one day.

In all departments you work so close together and close to piled up radiators. The company tries to cram as much work into the building as possible. They take up all the space with machines, workers and radiators. It's because of U. S. Auto Radiator's push for production.

—Two women workers

In that strike the miners went against John L. Lewis for the first time, because Lewis considered the continuous miner a sign of "progress." No doubt, plenty of union bureaucrats and bootlickers for this system will now try to argue that long-wall mining is "progress" as well.

But in capitalism the introduction of any new technology can only mean one thing—the sacrifice of labor. That is what is happening today, not only in the mines, but throughout all industry, and not only in industry, but even in the offices. The result is misery and destruction for workers thrown out of work and made victims of disasters like those at Wilberg. The only kind of real progress workers can look forward to is uprooting this whole system of capitalism that has sacrificed workers to its "progress" far too long.



This system is killing us

Oklahoma City, Okla.—When there's a big accident like at the Wilberg Mine, we hear about it on the news, but most people don't know about all the accidents when one individual miner is killed. One coal miner I knew was killed while operating a continuous miner. That machine is cutting coal all the time, putting pressure on the coal, and the vein is splitting on you all the time. What happened was that a lot of coal came out at once and covered him. He suffocated.

I used to mine uranium for Union Carbide in Colorado. Today the world has seen what happened at Carbide's plant in Bhopal, India. I remember how they used to talk all the time about safety — especially when a government inspector was there! But when the government was gone, it was different. There were diesel engines on the machines in the mines, and we were breathing that thick diesel smoke. You could take off your respirator and wring out the diesel oil. Three years after you stopped working those mines you were still coughing up diesel smoke.

I was mining there during the 1950s and Carbide swore that there was no silicone in uranium mines. They finally admitted in the mid-'60s that there was silicone; and of course we were breathing in radon. Some of the older miners could make a Geiger counter click just with their breath. I had two uncles who worked in the uranium mines, and they both died from cancer, of the lungs and the throat.

Another of my uncles and one of my cousins worked on a shaft in the Nevada desert when the government exploded the A-bombs in the '50s. After the bomb went off, the crew was sent down into the shaft to see what effect the explosion had had. There was a crew of 14, and seven so far have died of cancer.

I was in Colorado at that time, and we had scintillators that measured radioactivity. The day before the blast we were getting a back count of three on the radiation scale. The day after we got a count of ten.

President Reagan wants to push the retirement age up to 65 or 70. But a working miner is lucky if he lives till 50 or 60. Mining can be as safe as you want to make it, but in this system it's not safe. We don't have to wait for the bomb to go off. This system is killing us every day.

—Ex-miner

The first Automation strike in American history

"The historic rejection by the miners of Lewis' order to return to work had imbued the old slogan, 'No Contract, No Work,' with new meaning because of the totally new question the miners raised: 'What KIND of labor should man do?'"

A 1980's View

The Coal Miners' General Strike of 1949-50 and the Birth of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S.

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"I shouldn't be harassed"

Detroit, Mich.—On Tuesday, Dec. 11, I had an appointment between 9:30 and 10 o'clock at the unemployment office (MESC). I was almost up to the window at 11 o'clock. All sorts of things ran through my mind. I have been coming to the office every other week for eight weeks. Was I going to get the money today? How was I going to react to what was being said to me?

I finally got up to the window. I handed my appointment slip to the lady behind the window, and she mashed on the computer. She said, "It doesn't say anything. I'm giving you another appointment to come back on the 27th." I said, "On the 27th! No way! I WANT TO SEE SOME SUPERVISOR RIGHT NOW!" I was hitting the counter. I said, "Honey, I'm going nowhere!"

The security guard came up and said, "Lady, what's wrong?" I said, "A lot's wrong. There's nothing you can do for me right now. Just step aside 'cause I'm mad! I'm not going anywhere. I WANT SOME MONEY NOW!" I was still banging. I said to myself, I'm really going to act up this day, even if I have to go to jail. What have I got to lose? My Christmas is just about blown. I have no more money.

Finally the supervisor came. That's who I really wanted to see. She told me to sit down and someone would call me. In about 20 minutes this man came. He said, "What's the problem?" I said, "My problem is I don't have no money. Can you tell me anything?"

The man handed me a piece of paper. "Put your name and social security there, and where you work," he said. "I'm going to see if we can't make up a check for you. It will be after one o'clock. Would you wait?" I said, "Yes, I will wait until five o'clock!" I was still sweating and upset.

When the cashier called my name, he pushed a piece of paper through the cage. On that slip of paper was the redetermination. The reason I didn't get any money before was because when MESC sent forms to the hospital that had unjustly fired me, the hospital never returned them.

That day I was determined to find the reason that I didn't get my money. It was crowded there, but I was determined. I was going to perform if I had to go back with a picket sign. I thought about those 15 years that I had worked for the hospital and the money and taxes they had taken out of my check. I shouldn't have to be harassed, and I think that was wrong.

—Hospital worker

Visit with British miner

South Shields, England—Seventeen hundred miners at Westoe Colliery have been on strike for over a year, at first in a local dispute over shift patterns and since March last year as part of the nationwide miners' strike against pit closures. I visited Gary Marshall, a Westoe miner, at his home and also went with him to the colliery gate, where a picket line has been kept up 24 hours a day since the strike began.

Gary's wife and two children receive 11 pounds 70 pence (\$13.16) in social security and 13 pounds 70 pence (\$15.41) in family allowance per week. In addition, social security pays the interest on their mortgage, although in fact they use this to live on, and a mortgage debt is building up which will have to be paid off after the strike.

Gary told me that they were getting by without "real suffering" with support from the local community and further afield. A neighbor has been bringing them gifts of joints of meat, fruit, cans of beer, etc., since the strike started. A worker at the local hospital buys shoes wholesale, selling some at a profit to fellow hospital workers so that she can sell shoes below cost to miners' families. The children got Christmas toys from a consignment sent in solidarity by French miners. The family has never gone hungry, but they know others who are worse off. A single man gets nothing at all from the state, and some of them are getting really desperate.

The initiative in running the strike has come from rank-and-file miners, not local union officials. Delegations go out to local shipyards and factories to build support and collect money. At some workplaces the convenors refuse to help, but the strikers are able to reach the workers directly, going to the gates with leaflets and collecting buckets.

There were a lot of problems, at first, in setting up a food kitchen, but now it has really taken off, providing meals for about 250 people each day, as well as sending out food parcels. The kitchen is also a center for meeting and discussion, there are a snooker table and other games, and miners and their families are there all day.

Gary reflected that it was a queer irony that he was fighting for a job that he hated, but the strike had broken his feeling of subservience to the pit and built up a sense of community — and awareness that you could be master of your own destiny. He said to stress the need for solidarity between different countries, as even a small amount of support from America would be very encouraging to Westoe miners.

Please send donations and messages of support to: Westoe Miners Support Group, c/o 3 Iolanthe Terrace, South Shields, Tyne & Wear, England.

—Richard Bunting

THEORY / PRACTICE

by Raya Dunayevskaya



We print below Part I of a three-part thesis presented by Raya Dunayevskaya, National Chairwoman of News and Letters Committees, to the Expanded Resident Editorial Board (REB) Meeting of December 30, 1984. The full report is available from News & Letters for 75¢.

As against the annual year-end summation of the period since the Convention Perspectives, this REB meeting will first review what we mean by Marx's Marxism, other than as separate from Engels'. We will do so, not just for this period, but to see what it looks like in the historic mirror when, on the one hand, there is Karl Marx's "new Humanism" and, on the other hand, there is the emergence of what is called Marxist-Humanism for our epoch. We call Part I: **Unchaining the Dialectic**...

The dialectics of revolution is our subject today, which 1) accounts for the reversal of the title of the new book to "Dialectics of Revolution and Women's Liberation"; and 2) will remain the measure of all we have done, whether that be our books or pamphlets or paper—and, though it is implicit throughout the Archives, it will be recorded explicitly. Therefore, we will begin by asking what does the HISTORIC mirror reveal about the whole of post-Marx Marxism? And what does it show about the truly original, historic contribution of Marxist-Humanism?

Philosophically, the concentration will be on "Absolute Negativity as New Beginning" Chapter 1 of **Philosophy and Revolution from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao**. Let's begin by looking at Marx, himself, from 1843 to 1883—in both his relationship to and the break with Hegel. Let us then look at Lenin from 1914 to 1923 and what he encountered in Hegel after a lapse of 31 years. And finally let us look at Marxist-Humanism in 1953 after another lapse of 30 years.

SO FAR AS I AM CONCERNED, the new moments in Marx mark not merely the last decade of his life—though that did become the trail to the 1980s—but begin with the very first moment in Marx, the moment of his break with capitalism, its production, its culture, its immediate contenders, from Lassalle on. From that encounter there was the birth of a new continent of thought and of revolution. There was no time for popularization; that had to be left to a collaborator, Engels, so that the founder could give his whole time to concretization of that new Universal—his "new Humanism."

It took nothing short of World War I and an outright betrayal for any post-Marx Marxist to feel a compulsion

Unchaining the revolutionary dialectic

to dig into what that unchaining of the dialectic was all about, not only as class opposition, but as Absolute Method. The period of Marx's concretizations took 40 years both of writings, climaxed by **Capital**; and of outright revolutions from 1848 to 1871; and of critique of the relationship of revolution to organization, his **Critique of the Gotha Program**. When you look now, dive deep to the oceans below and you will find you can swim only if you never discount the constant return to Hegel. Yet, where Marx broke off in his first open critique of the Hegelian dialectic, at paragraph 384 of Hegel's **Philosophy of Mind**, you can understand why he was compelled to break off—because, first and foremost, he had discovered that new continent of thought inseparable from revolution. The revolutionary critique is the beginning of the Marxist dialectic.

I cannot develop this further here. That is why I have brought out for you to see (Raya here indicated the display of the full Archives collection) what it took 40 years and more to develop, in which you will find the elements that were present even before Marx's Marxism got recreated. The question we have to ask ourselves is what happened from 1883 to 1914, concentrating first on Engels from 1883 to 1895, as he was busy popularizing, sincere in thinking that, in his **Origin of the Family**, he was carrying out a bequest of Marx—but actually setting the ground for revision by the Second International.

And you must hold in mind what was happening objectively in the world with the appearance of a new stage in production and the organization of "the Party", while those who listened to the revolutionary unorganized workers—as did Lenin and Luxemburg and Eleanor Marx—held onto the political revolutionary aspect without any concern for philosophy. It took an outright betrayal by the Second International at the onset of World War I to compel Lenin to look into philosophy. Yet he let no one know that he was spending time with that mystical bourgeois philosopher, though he was by then seeing an altogether new type of newness—the same type of revolutionary critique, movement, development in Hegel. That is what he was seeing as he studied Hegel's **Science of Logic** and wrote in his **Philosophic Notebooks**, "Who would believe that this (movement and self-movement) is the core of Hegelianism, of abstract and abstruse (difficult, absurd?) Hegelianism?"

NOW CONSIDER WHAT HAPPENED after Lenin's death when the Stalinists misused Marx's revolutionary dialectical critique of Hegel's dialectic for factional purposes. This period of philosophic void—and of total neglect of Hegel and Marx and Lenin's critique of Hegel—lasted all the way from the early 1920s to our translation of the **Philosophic Notebooks** in 1949. And there was neglect again until the early 1970s when we

saw the publication, on the one hand, of the **Ethnological Notebooks** and, on the other, of **Philosophy and Revolution**. The few who do recognize "new moments" in Marx and who are not Stalinists are now using them to make Marx appear as a Populist or to make the new moments appear as a total break with what Marx had stood for before that last decade. The philosophic void which is still continuing now embraces the **Mathematical Notebooks** of Marx, where Marx made some discoveries because he returned to Hegel and saw that nothing, absolutely nothing, could be found that was new unless it followed the Hegelian second negativity. Here is what Marx wrote:

The whole difficulty in understanding the differential operation (as in the negation of the negation generally) lies precisely in seeing how it differs from such a simple procedure and therefore leads to real results. (Mathematical Notebooks, New Park Publications, London, 1983, p. 3)...

Look at what we have made of the new find,* as we turn to something very concrete—the second paragraph in the Syllabus for our classes, which states: "We aim to become practitioners of the dialectical methodology." To me, being critical means to criticize that aim, too, not because it is wrong, but because the stress has to be not only on methodology, but on the Idea itself, with full recognition that the Absolute Method is the way to get there but is not the place itself. There is no substitute for the Idea itself, and the Idea itself for this epoch is Marxist-Humanism.

By the time philosophy became philosophy of revolution in an actual revolution, and with it Lenin's new theory in **State and Revolution**, the intellectual who didn't want to become a revolutionary and who remains to this day a great philosopher—Lukacs—looked at that same Hegel, but where Lenin singled out "transformation into opposite," pinpointing that as the material ground for philosophy as action, Lukacs chose totality. And by the time the new revolution got bogged down in the international field, the Frankfurt School degraded critique so they could move away from Marxism, using the term "Critical School" only in the sense of so-called open and independent "pre-Marxian Marxism."

Speaking strictly philosophically, the Hegelian Dialectic, instead of being unchained, was once again left a void until May 12, 1953...**

IT IS NOW DECEMBER 30, 1984. The critique extends to ourselves, for that missing link—philosophy, dialectical philosophy—was not fully grasped at the Convention. The third part of the Perspectives was quite a bit rewritten after Convention to stress that Absolute Method was the essence of "not by practice alone." Today I declare that Absolute Method, though it is the goal from which no private enclave can escape, is still only "the road to" the Absolute Idea or Mind. That is still the only answer which transcends method—or expresses it, if you wish. And that needs concretization. That concretization is the name of the Absolute Idea for our age: Marxist-Humanism, further pinpointed as News and Letters Committees in the U.S., but by no means limited to the U.S. It is a world concept, a world concretization. And it is that historic look at it, and the looking at ourselves, that will assure revolution-in-permanence to be.

* A Marxist-Humanist discussion bulletin, entitled "The Fetish of High Tech and Karl Marx's Unknown Mathematical Manuscripts," has just been published by News & Letters. To obtain a copy, see ad, this page.

** The Letters on the Absolute Idea, written on May 12 and 20, 1953 by Raya Dunayevskaya, are included in **Dialectics of Liberation**, available from News & Letters, and in **The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection; Marxist-Humanism, 1941 to Today**, available on microfilm from Wayne State University Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs.

S. Africa protests deepen

(continued from page 1)

support from all the trade unions in these multi-national corporations. Sullivan principles will not bring fundamental changes.

LOOK AT EDUCATION. Even if you go to the university, because of your inferior education you will get less than the white man. So what is the use of pressurizing the company to comply with all these principles, when the education outside the factory is not equal?

So, I want you to understand why the youth are revolting against this education system. It doesn't help them. Inside the factory this can be put into practice, but when I clock out and go home I still carry the apartheid laws with me.

All changes outside shall not come without talking to the people of South Africa. The trade unions do not want people to come over without consulting the relevant organizations in South Africa. It just gives the government a good image.

We support all forms of international pressure, in consultation. Strengthen workers' organizations and international pressure. Continue demonstrations, and consult us. We'll send people to explain our needs.

Marxist-Humanism's discussion of Marx's Mathematical Manuscripts

"The Mathematical Notebooks...one of those magnificent documents from Marx's final decade."

- 600 pages written by Marx in 1881-82
- first discovered in the 1920s
- not published until 1968, in a Russian-German edition
- 120 pages published in English in 1983, but never discussed

Now in 1985 — first Marxist-Humanist discussion:

The Fetish of High Tech and Karl Marx's Unknown Mathematical Manuscripts

"Marx's own digging into mathematics as a separate science in the 1880s, however, casts illumination on problems of today. What Marx was subjecting to critical scrutiny was differential calculus, tracing the root of over 200 years of confusion in Newton's and Leibniz's original creation of calculus...Marx had long before broken with science as 'a priori a lie' when having a basis separate from life, but what he felt compelled to return to criticize near the end of his life was the development of a field most directly based on the force of thought itself..."

—Ron Brokmeyer, in "Marx's Mathematical Manuscripts vs. Computer Consciousness"

"Marx shows that the real method of development of mathematical ideas is transformation into opposite, negation of the negation, in a word, the dialectic — contrast those who insist that their method is 'algorithmic,' or is the method of formal logic, something that can be copied by a computer...How much deeper a creativity could they [the state-capitalist introducers of Marx's Mathematical Notebooks] find, then, if they should shed the pretension that math is an abstraction separate from life and take to heart Marx's analysis of science in 'Private Property and Communism' (all mathematicians know that it's much easier to find teachers, students, positions and funding in fields that have the most direct 'applicability,' i.e. can be used for Automation or the military)." —Franklin Dmitryev, "On the Russian Introduction to Marx's Mathematical Manuscripts"

"I wish to roll the clock back to 1931, to be precise, when Bukharin attended the Second International Congress of the History of Science and Technology in London. I have learned, for the first time, that this Kol'man and Yanovskaya (the editors of the Manuscripts) who evidently worked on them since 1933, were present at that Conference with Bukharin. In a word, as early as 1931 they began looking at the Marx manuscripts they had had since the early 1920s, two years after the five-year Plan was first introduced, and when the whole world was in throes of the Depression, and Plan (with a capital P) was introduced as the answer to capitalist chaos, and philosophy was totally disregarded though Lenin's **Philosophic Notebooks** were first becoming available in Russian only." —Raya Dunayevskaya, on Marx's Mathematical Manuscripts and State-Capitalist Planners' attempt to make them "practical."

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Blacks deepen Brazil's new stage

January, 1985 saw the end of over 20 years of military rule, as moderate opposition politician Tancredo Neves was chosen as the new President by an electoral college. Fearing that a more anti-military figure such as Rio de Janeiro's Mayor Lionel Brizola might win in a direct vote, the military rebuffed a mass movement of millions demanding direct elections last spring. Brizola and Neves were both part of the reformist Goulart regime, overthrown in a fascist coup in 1964 with considerable help from the U.S.

For several years the Left tried urban and rural guerrilla warfare, but this and other resistance was wiped out by a massive military campaign of disappearances, torture, execution and imprisonment. The deepening crisis of world capitalism in the 1970s was being met by a new type of revolution in many parts of the world. In Brazil, the crisis was exemplified by a staggering national debt and a corrupt repressive military regime that was opposed by a new type of mass labor movement. In 1978 a spontaneous sitdown strike was launched at the huge Saab-Scania works outside Sao Paulo. The new type of worker organization behind this and subsequent strikes involving hundreds of thousands was a product of church and neighborhood associations, often connected with Liberation Theology "base communities."

MASS ORGANIZATION

The new movement had from the start a more decentralized and democratic structure than either the guerrilla Left or the older Populist and Communist parties. This was seen in the how ordinary workers such as Luis Ignacio da Silva (Luila) became leaders of the new unions and the New Labor party which they spawned. It was also seen in the movement's international stance: consistent support not only of the Central American and African revolutions as well as the Chilean opposition, but also of Poland's Solidarnosc.

Today the more traditional opposition such as the Communist Party (CP) and the Democratic Labor Party of Brizola are once again legal. But the new unions have formed a United Workers' Federation (CUT) which opposes the "class collaborationist" CP and its links to the old corrupt unions and the liberal bourgeoisie. The traditional Left has swung uncritically behind Tancredo Neves and, according to a recent CUT declaration, "seeks to turn the working class into a mass that can be manipulated to support the aims of a sector of the ruling class."

The newest movement has started not in the relatively liberal and industrialized South, but in the incredibly

oppressive, racist and famine ridden state of Bahia, in the Northeast, where much of Brazil's Black population lives. The new group calls itself Black World.

One of its leaders, Antonio dos Santos, said, "We want people to understand the importance instead of the shame of being Black." Maria Brandao, a sociologist in Salvador, capital of Bahia, said, "Take Salvador for example. It's our center of Black culture and it's run by mulattoes and whites."

Yet most of the Left seems still to agree with the official government line that Brazil is already a "racial democracy." Jorge Amado, whose world-renowned novels offer a searing portrait of the social reality of this part of Brazil, including its racism and the vibrancy of its African-rooted culture, nevertheless states, "Brazil is a racial democracy, the mixture works, all other solutions or positions are racist."

It appears that the Black movement may give all, including the new grass-roots movement, a still newer vantage point on the Brazilian struggle for self-emancipation, as it continues to unfold in the 1980s. The return to civilian rule is not the end, but the beginning of a new stage of that struggle. —Kevin Barry



Black women in poor Rio neighborhood

Farmworkers organize

Editor's Note: N&L obtained the following story from farmworkers from the Sidamar Ranch in Simi Valley, Calif., about their attempts to organize with the United Farm Workers (UFW), as we marched together on the picket line in support of the UFW boycott of Alpha Beta supermarkets, seller of UFW-boycotted produce from Bruce Church, Inc.

Moorpark, Calif.—We have been trying to get the union in for a year and a half, since the boss told us he wants to lower our wages by 20%. We make \$5.29 an hour. As soon as we had started to meet to discuss the union, the boss began laying off the most militant workers. One worker who has been here 15 years was the first to be laid off; he was one of the union organizers.

Another worker was fired and can't get unemployment. The foreman claims that he left 30,000 chickens without food. We say, why is it that one worker is the only one accused? Can you imagine one man in charge of 30,000 chickens? Then they claim that he broke 20% of the eggs. He's been working with the eggs for five years, and all of a sudden, once he starts talking about the union, they claim he is breaking so many!

When we voted in the union, in Nov. 1983, the boss suddenly told us that he was no longer the owner of the ranch. He said that in 1982 he had sold the ranch to a group of 130 people. This is in court now. While we're trying to find out who these 130 new owners are, they keep firing workers.

We work in the egg packing house. It's a dark room with a conveyer belt lit up, and we select which eggs are healthy, which have blood in them. We weigh the eggs, wash them, package them. Management keeps raising our production standards, pushing us for more and more work.

We'll organize another union if the courts don't let us have the UFW. The boss says he'd rather close down than have the union; we say, "Close, then." We know that the 20% that he wants from our wages is to buy machines that will lay off workers.

He wants to fire us and get workers at \$2 an hour. There's a ranch near here with workers from Mexico, El Salvador, Haiti. There's a fence around it and you can't get in. Even the immigration authorities don't go in there. The owner pays a coyote to go to Mexico and get him workers. The workers stay there for two months and are paid \$100.

We have learned that we have to fight for our rights if we want to survive. If we let ourselves be taken advantage of, the boss will do whatever he wants. He'll get people to work for \$2 an hour, just as he said. We've been getting together with other farmworkers to support each other. We haven't been put down. Whether or not we win the court cases, we will still continue the struggle.

Protest food stamp cuts

by Shainape Shcapwe

This is the story I just heard from Alice One Bear, who told it to me from dakota on the Fort Totten Indian Reservation in North Dakota. She has been there since she was arrested at a protest held Monday, Jan. 7.

There are three compounds in Fort Totten with about 350-375 people living together, in a church basement, a town hall, and a big gymnasium. They are living there because the low-cost government housing which was built 7-8 years ago is now falling apart, and they can't survive there in the winter. In the middle of December, social services decided that because they couldn't get straight who was living where, they were going to cut off food stamps for everybody that month.

An emergency tribal council meeting was held in the first week of January, and there they decided to protest at the food stamp office the following Monday. This was into January now, and some of the people who had had their food stamps cut off in December didn't get them for January either.

FOOD STAMP PROTEST

That Monday, it was really cold. Alice said when they started at 8:30, it was only 5 degrees above zero, but about 40 people came and that's a lot for us. The social services people wouldn't meet with them for any reason and told them to come back in the afternoon. But someone at food stamps had called the police at the same time, so just when the people protesting were about to break up and come back later, the police arrived and started throwing tear gas right away. Then they patted people down to see if they had any weapons. They told them to disperse when they didn't find any.

The protestors had been planning on dispersing anyway, but now when the police gave the order, they hung around. Then the newspeople arrived and the police disappeared. When the newspeople left, the police came right back and started making arrests. About six people were arrested. Four got out on bail right away. But Alice decided she wasn't going to be released, because she felt the protest should be carried further.

"We have to go through this every winter," she told me. "We're always scared we're going to lose everything we have. We can't live separately in homes with fuel costs we can't pay. And we're living in the compounds in the first place because the government prefab housing wasn't made for the climate and is falling apart. We've got to live some way."

The food stamp officials finally decided to hold a meeting with everyone who had been cut off. They agreed to bring back the food stamps, but said they'd have to set up a different budget arrangement and know a lot more about people's personal reasons for living together.

GOVERNMENT SCARED

So even though it looks as if the government is giving in, people are giving up a lot of their privacy and are worried about how big the cuts are really going to be. People are generally saying that it's not through the generosity of the welfare system that they're working things out, but because people on the reservation got together to make things happen. You know when folks get together on the reservation, the government gets scared!

Alice's trial is coming up and it looks like they'll just say she was disturbing the peace and let her go. She is staying in jail until her trial date, hoping that if she does, it might be newsworthy enough to get out why they protested.

She told me, "We can only get what we need if we do it ourselves. We always say that the old Indian ways were the best, but what really is the best is that we hold together and wipe this system out. James Watt talked about this socialism among Indians and this terrible communal lifestyle. But God help us, we should have done this a long time ago. That's how we used to live and that's how we have to live now. If that was Marx's way, it was the right way."

Marx's view of American Indian society

"Marx, while singling out how much more freedom the Iroquois women enjoyed than did women in 'civilized' societies, also pointed to the limitations of freedom among them: 'The women allowed to express their wishes and opinions through an orator of their own selection. Decision given by the Council. Unanimity a fundamental law of its action among the Iroquois. Military questions usually left to the action of the voluntary principle.'"

Read more about it in

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

by Raya Dunayevskaya

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Guatemala today

Editor's Note: As the U.S. considers resumption of military aid to the Guatemalan government, a ruthless campaign against Guatemalan freedom fighters, in which Indian villages are either destroyed or "pacified," continues. Below are excerpts from a talk presented in Chicago by Rigoberta Menchu, a Quiche Indian woman who is active in the Guatemalan struggle.

The situation in Guatemala has changed in the past 12 years—especially for the Indians. In one area of the country, many mineral resources were discovered and the Indians who lived there began to be displaced. This resulted in a massive organization of peasants with many peoples coming together. When 600 people took back the land where oil had been discovered, the army opened fire and 119 died. But instead of this stopping the struggle, it brought it together. Many small towns organized agricultural collectives.

Insurgent (underground) organizations grew during this period and members of the mass organizations began to incorporate themselves into the insurgent groups. In 1980 there were strikes in the countryside involving 100,000 people. But when the strike ended, the massacres began. Between 1982 and 1983, 30,000 were killed in 227 massacres. The suffering has been very great but we have not lost our consciousness under this situation. We continue to struggle.

We were very disappointed in the results in the American elections. We never thought that the American government and the American people were the same. But now we are not sure. You will have to show us. What is happening in Guatemala is well known in Europe but not in the United States. Why is this?

Some people have said to us that without U.S. aid, the Russians would govern Guatemala and the other countries of Central America. Why do such people discount the ability of human beings to transform themselves? Why do they make us choose between the U.S. and Russia? During my 10 years in the struggle I have never even met a Russian. This is all just a way to shut off the truth. People will kill in the name of fighting "Communism." Sometimes they kill in the name of God.

We are expecting a much greater intervention soon. We will do anything to keep anyone from being the master of our land. We are ready to die but what we want is life and peace. Many Indians have already given their lives. Still people say that Indians aren't political. Well then, maybe we have just changed history.

An old man said to me, "Yesterday we made the huipil (traditional Indian dress). Today we make history. Tomorrow we will again make the huipil."

LIFE, DEATH, AND REVOLT IN PRODUCTION

John Marcotte's article on strikes (Dec. N&L) drew on sources other than the conventional mass media, which I feel lent it its special air of authenticity and depth. In response, I want to share with you a letter from a brother who works as a logger in Washington state, where speed-up, workforce cut-backs, strikes, and union-busting have been the rule for nearly two years:

"While working our way through the unit, we suddenly stumbled across the exact spot where some months previously one of our union brothers had perished while falling timber... Finding the empty red flares used to signal the rescue helicopters and the leftover rope in which his rescuers had lashed his lifeless body... There would be no help for Jessie that day.

The foreman informed us that a 'widow-maker' (a large branch hung up in a tree or on a line) killed him instantly... One of the helicopters dropped a 200 foot line into the timber so somebody down below could attach it to the stretcher. Away he flew, dangling from the helicopter, with his cork boots sticking out over the stretcher. Jessie's death preceded two other deaths in this most unlucky season of logging at Camp Garvey (Olympic Mountains)... His death makes it easier to recall all my close calls... Life seems too short to spend it in the woods..."

Friend
New York

New York City's liberal unions turned out a mass demonstration last month in support of the copper workers who have been on strike for a year and a half in Arizona and Texas. Although some noted the irony of supporting a distant struggle while doing little for the workers in the sponsoring unions, it was good to see several thousand come out. They were not only members of Dist. 65, 1199 and 37, but also musicians, carpenters, teachers, boilermakers and many more. The speeches were mundane except for one by a participant in the "women's auxiliary" in Arizona, who described the vital work of the miners' wives in keeping up the long and violently attacked strike.

Participant
New York

Every miner who read the reports of that tragedy at the Emery mine in Utah knows the true reason for the disaster: coal-hungry operators who place production above human life. That mine fire and those totally needless deaths occurred because the company was trying to set a production record. It confirms all over again that when production records come through the door, safety goes out the window, and new grave markers appear in mining cemeteries.

Ex-coal miner
Michigan

To say that people are buying into the system—like Reagan wants us to believe—is a joke. I was reading an article that said only six percent of the American population makes \$35,000 a year. Only one percent of the population makes \$100,000 on up. I might be wrong about my figures, but not very many people are making that much money in America. They're just living on credit. In my community college class, a lot of people find themselves having some problems thinking about the future.

Black student
Detroit

I heard from a woman whose daughter works at the GM Truck and Coach plant, UAW Local 653, in Pontiac. She said there is a man there who has been getting harassed. He had been unjustly disciplined three times. He took action by getting a permit from the city to picket in front of the plant by himself. He's a big man; so you can't miss him. The union is trying to calm him down, but he is also accusing the union of not doing its job. He's gotten some media attention, but there's a lot more going

on you don't hear about, in that plant and in others.

Autoworker
Michigan

The horror of Bhopal brings to mind the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. All I can think of is the truth of Marx saying "To have one basis for science and another for life is a priori a lie". To some, Bhopal means that technology has to be under workers' control. I don't think that's enough. It seems to me that there has to be such a total unleashing of mass creativity that technology will be transformed into something entirely different.

Angela Terrano
New York

HOUSING AND THE HOMELESS

Here in Los Angeles, city workers were sent Jan. 2 to take down the two large tents erected in the shadow of City Hall to house the homeless through the holidays. The capitalists had allowed the "Tent City" to be built during Christmas so their conscience wouldn't be bothered. Now the homeless were turned back onto the streets. Some of these homeless people went to City Hall to protest this action. They tied themselves together with rags, but the authorities acted by calling the police to cut them loose and put them in jail. Some said, "At least in jail they will have a meal and a roof over their heads."

An unemployed worker
Los Angeles

I just moved to New York, and I learned it's very hard to live in this city. I just moved into a two-room squalor. It's supposed to be a bargain at over \$300 a month. To me it's a slum. Who lives in this town? Who can afford to pay Manhattan rents? There's plenty of jobs at minimum wage or lower—like \$2.00 an hour sweat shop work—but with those wages you can't live, you can't get a roof over your head. Maybe the only thing you could do is share a roach-infested slum with ten others.

That is life here in the richest city in the world, with gold on the buildings and beggars on the streets...

Furious
Manhattan, NY

I want to express my feeling about Jesse Carpenter, war hero, homeless, who froze to death in front of the White House. I am a veteran of World War II and the Korean War. I am one of millions of war veterans in this country who were told that we were fighting for freedom.

What happened to the freedom of Jesse Carpenter? What happened to the millions of workers who are jobless and homeless and starving in the cities across this nation? I was not fighting for a government that allows the wealth produced each day by the working class to be used to build nuclear missiles that cover this earth and now are among the stars, while its working class, including the veterans, freeze to death.

It seems to me that we fought the wrong enemy. Our enemy is right here at home. Why don't we fight a war for us, against the enemy that causes our buddies to go homeless and freeze to death on the streets?

Veteran
Kentucky

QUESTIONS ON CAMPUS

Mario Savio drew a large audience of '60s and '70s veterans and '80s youth when he spoke here recently at Columbia U. He movingly described how Black freedom fighters like Bob Moses had inspired so many white youth like himself. But he skipped over any serious self-critique of the '60s when he said today's movement to support Nicaragua was the "Civil Rights Movement moved further south." Most disturbing, however, was his view that his genera-

Readers' Views

tion grew up with a "discredited left" [Stalinism] and therefore had no "language" to grasp the Vietnam war.

When I did get the floor, I questioned him on the concreteness of the Black struggle then and now "unchaining" other movements and on the fact that there was a new beginning in Marxism in the '60s. While he did not disagree, Savio said there wasn't "enough time" to go into that; his answer for today was "We need a national organization." You hear that answer all the time today from party-types and independents like Savio. But it is dangerous when you skip over the dialectics of thought as well as action as Savio did.

Central American solidarity activist
New York City

I am taking classes in Physics and Pharmacology this semester, and it is so obvious how these sciences are separate from life. Pharmacology has become so corrupt because of the big drug companies, which are not interested in making people well, but in making a profit. Drug research centers around developing drugs with fewer side effects, but it is hit and miss, without method.

There is very little attempt to look at the whole body. Researchers are specialists who rely on computers to interrelate the masses of information that are being collected. It is reformism... This is not a problem of medical research, but of this whole society. We need a revolution to free up the minds of people so they will look for and create human solutions to problems...

Neurophysiology student
Salt Lake City, Utah

SUPPORT
BLACK
WORKERS
IN SOUTH
AFRICA

We are hereby kindly informing you about our new project called "South African Black Workers Academy." Here is the Preamble we wrote about it:

"We, the Black workers of South Africa realize that we are members of an oppressed Community before we are workers. We find it necessary to articulate the aspirations of the oppressed people in a united and organized manner. Being aware of racial discrimination, lack of job opportunities, traditional colours prejudice, wage disparity between black and white workers, lack of trained, skilled and technical knowledge among black workers, we are therefore determined to: 1) Organize workers nationally so that they could take up their demands for a relevant role in the Society; 2) Organize workers so that they could play a more meaningful role in the community... We therefore resolve to form a project for the education of the workers."

In order to achieve these aims, the South African Black Workers Academy needs some personnel, material and financial assistance for effective administration, organization and education programs. We ask for your assistance to get it off the ground, as we are having much opposition here. Please send your assistance to:

South African Black Workers
Academy
PO Box 9753
Johannesburg 2000, South Africa

I found the article in the Dec. N&L on what is happening with the Azanian labor movement unique, even though it was too short. What was good was that it talked about labor there, not just as labor unions and legislation, but as people struggling.

Black anti-police abuse activist
Los Angeles

By pulling out of South Africa, it would save jobs here—that's what (UAW V.P.) Marc Stepp is saying. I'm in favor of U.S. companies pulling out of South Africa, but I don't see how taking investments out of any country would save jobs here when they're steadily leaving the country. They're not going to bring the money here to invest. They'll go someplace where it's cheaper than South Africa, if there is any such place. I'm sure there is.

When you got (UAW Pres.) Bieber showing up at "Free South Africa" rallies, it sort of co-opts the whole program. I'm sure there are things they could have done against apartheid all along. Usually they don't participate unless the rank-and-file have something going anyway. My local, UAW 600, went on record, sending a letter to the ambassador at the South African embassy in Washington. I thought that was kind of weak for the largest local.

Black worker, Rouge Steel
Detroit

OUR 'ELECTION COVERAGE'

I was surprised when I read John Marcotte's analysis of Reagan's re-election (Dec. N&L), because I didn't see any reference to the small voter turnout. The vote doesn't actually reflect what many people think. I object to the comment, "an actual majority of women voted for Reagan." It should have added, "of those voting." Let's not blame women for Reagan!

Feminist
New York City

Thanks to N&L for treating the election results soberly, but not being overwhelmed with them either. I appreciated the way you focused on the new strikes and the continuous resistance of Black America as strong points for our side. Even more I appreciated that you didn't hide the contradictions of many women and white workers and youth voting for that maniac even while he attacks abortion clinics, smashes unions and prepares for wars. A lot of rethinking is needed.

Working woman
Illinois

MEXICO'S ECONOMY

Here in Mexico, inflation was about 70% last year, in spite of restraints on the economy (especially in regards to Keynesian effective demand). By Dec. 15, wages had risen only 30%. Worse yet, the annual inflation rate is higher for basic commodities such as corn and rice. Unemployment ranges from 8-12%, without taking into account underemployment, which is really disguised unemployment—people selling things on the street, cleaning car windows, etc.

In 1985 any recovery will be minimal, not to mention the suffering of the working class.

After that, can I tell you Happy New Year?

Friend
Mexico

FROM A TAPE SUBSCRIBER

The new violence law in Washington has resulted in a huge number of arrests. As the jails are already full, this is one more problem to address. We are now facing an initiative which would outlaw abortion funding for poor women. This will be a real setback, since our state is one of the last to provide state funding for this.

I appreciate very much receiving N&L on tape. I enclose a check for a subscription renewal...

Tape subscriber
Walla Walla, Wash.

Ed. Note: N&L is available on tape for the blind, as are most of our other publications. To get a sample tape copy, please write to N&L.

DIALOGUE IN THE DIALECTIC: MARX, MAO AND MARXIST-HUMANISM

Kevin Anderson's review of Norman Levine's book, Dialogue within the Dialectic, revealed a new and original diversion from Marx's Marxism...

not been such lessons in the history of the international Communist movement? Marcia Yudkin says that "demoralized Western intellectuals could well take heart" from what these events prove about the power of ideas...

Observer Berkeley, Calif.

I've learned a great deal from N&L. There are few like you who combine a sincere commitment to freedom and humanism and who also deal uncompromisingly with the nature of class in the world...

Subscriber Oakland

In the shop I read with a worker from the Dominican Republic who was sort of politically active over there. He has read some of our literature in Spanish and we talk about things...

Subscriber Oakland

So I said, "all these revolutions had plenty of 'prepared' intellectuals, plenty of ideologies and theories. But not the right one, not one that listens to the peasants and workers, starts with them..."

Marxist-Humanist worker New Jersey

I appreciated Kevin Anderson's critique of Norman Levine because he pointed out the problem raised with so many Marx scholars: the debris that they have been putting on top of Marx's Marxism for over 100 years...

Marxist Chicago



WOMEN THEN AND NOW

After ten months of constant pressure by various women's groups, Ronald Reagan felt the need to pretend to "condemn" the terrorist tactics of those involved in the recent abortion clinic bombings...

Black mother on welfare Los Angeles

I loved the story on "Revolutionary Women in Chicago's History" (Dec. N&L). I would like to get a story on Detroit revolutionary women. I looked in the library for a book on revolutionary women in the history of Detroit...

Detroit; nothing telling the working conditions. The life of these women working in Detroit factories in the 19th century is what I want to know. I feel there must be many unknown feminists in Detroit's history.

Working woman Detroit

After seven days of jury deliberation, a mistrial was declared Dec. 28 in the Detroit trial of Karen Norman for first-degree murder (see N&L Dec. 1984). The Karen Norman Defense Committee confirmed what press coverage made clear—that the State wants to prove Norman is a vicious murderer...

Support Karen Norman! Money is needed for the new trial—send to: Karen Norman Defense Committee, PO Box 3312, Highland Park, MI 48203.

Susan Van Gelder Detroit

TALKIN' AND SINGIN' UNION

Have you seen a little magazine called "Talkin' Union"? It says that it's out to present the "music, folklore and history of today's labor movement." The most recent issue (#10) carried a feature on "Labor murals in Chicago," a report on the Phelps Dodge strike in Arizona and terrific songs—new labor songs...

Talkin' Union P.O. Box 5349 Takoma Park, MD 20912

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BLACK-RED VIEW

by John Alan

While reading through accounts of the tragic and devastating famine that Ethiopia is currently experiencing, an unusual statement from an anonymous United Nations official popped from the page. This official said: "Africa is always starving." Whatever reason caused him to say this, it was a blunt statement of truth. It placed the present famine in Africa in an historical context that had been almost totally avoided by reports that focused primarily upon Ethiopia, while explaining the cause of famine in terms of climate and population

BLACK WORLD

(continued from page 1)

volt. Nor is it a question that Sen. Kennedy and Jesse Jackson knew that they would be criticized by the Black Consciousness Movement weeks before Kennedy made his trip to South Africa. What is imperative is that the revolutionary aspirations of every sector of Black South Africa, by which is meant so-called "coloured" and Indians as well as Black Africans from the powerful Black trade unions and student movements to the dispossessed masses in the ghettos and rural areas, have set in motion what a Soweto youth proclaimed in 1976 as "the process of Black liberation, which nobody can reverse."

Meanwhile, ever new dimensions of the American protest movement appear with "Free South Africa" coalitions springing up everywhere, from the Black community to the campus. There is no escaping the connections that Black America sees between itself and the Black reality of South Africa. The weekly picket lines in front of the South African consulate on Chicago's Michigan Ave. culminated in some 500 protestors turning out on Martin Luther King Day (Jan. 15) determined to "fight racism from Soweto to Chicago."

Workers laid off at Chicago's South Works steel plant rallied and linked their struggle to U.S. corporate investment in South Africa, pointing to the fact that the recently constructed State of Illinois Building in downtown Chicago was built with South African steel. And no one was fooled by Reagan's hypocrisy in claiming that his "quiet diplomacy" won the release of Blacks in South Africa, at the same time that he carries out his racist attack on Black folk in America.

NEED TO LINK THEORY/PRACTICE

However, it is not the "apartheid connection" alone which links the U.S. to South Africa. For the last 30 years a two-way road of Black freedom struggles has characterized the relationship between the two countries. It was in 1955-56 that the Montgomery Bus Boycott signaled a bus boycott in South Africa. And just as the American Civil Rights Movement was sparked by the resistance of a Black woman — Rosa Parks — so too did the boycott in South Africa emerge out of an entirely new dimension of Black women's resistance when 20,000 women converged on the South African capital of Pretoria on August 9, 1956, forcing the government to withdraw its imposition of the hated pass-books on women. August 9 has since been known as "Women's Day" in South Africa.

Today, when opposition to South African apartheid has become a point of revitalizing the Black mass movement against Reaganism at home, when international solidarity is spelled out in the many-sided activities of American workers, youth, women and Black masses, we need to forge the revolutionary link of a philosophy of liberation.

Is it not true that in following Frantz Fanon, Steven Biko's articulation of the philosophy of Black Consciousness as "not the closing a door to communication...National consciousness, which is not nationalism, is the only thing that will give us an international dimension," has become the point of departure of today's movements? It was the relationship of Biko to the thought of Fanon which we saw anticipating a new stage of the Black movement, not only in South Africa but also in the U.S., when John Alan and I wrote, in 1978, Frantz Fanon, Soweto and American Black Thought.

Neo-colonialism and famine in Africa

growth. The cause of the famine was thus limited to "natural causes" that a whole series of technological remedies could cure.

However, the solution to Africa's chronic food crisis isn't merely the application of scientific means to "control nature," but how to bring to an end Africa's neo-colonial status and its absolute domination by the world market; a condition that has prevented any self-development of the African peasant masses. The absolute nature of this domination has reduced practically all significant labor and thought in Africa to the production of surplus value in order to accumulate capital.

AFRICA'S SHARE-CROPPER STATUS

Africa's domination by the capitalist world market is roughly the relationship of a sharecropper to the company store. Not only is its economy subordinated to produce for the world market, it has to buy its grain and consumer staples from that same market. In such a capitalist situation the slightest drop in the price of the "cash crop" automatically creates a crisis in the amount of food that's available. The result is that millions of Africans are in a constant condition of malnourishment, and poverty remains widespread in the villages of the rural areas causing dramatic migrations from the countryside to the cities.

At the same time, it must be recognized that Africa's

subordinate marketplace position vis-a-vis world capitalism — this includes the Eastern bloc of state capitalist nations, as well — is a reflection of the class divisions that exist both in Africa and within the nations that control the world market. The African elite that rests at the top of the neo-colonial society is as anxious, for their own reasons, to extract the maximum surplus labor from the African masses as world capitalism is.

Herein lies the tragedy of the African revolutions that began so gloriously in the 1960s with ideas of a new path toward revolution and of a new kind of development, only to end in the betrayal by the leadership, who translated development into narrow, capitalist, technological development. This is a development that rests upon the extraction of the maximum surplus-value from the African masses after subsistence.

It took the spontaneous outpouring of support for the famine victims by ordinary people to force Washington and Moscow to recognize that a famine existed and something had to be done. But the "aid" world capitalism has in store will not help the African people.

CAPITALISM'S FOOD WEAPON

Last November, the *Christian Science Monitor* reported that the U.S., the World Bank and the IMF are demanding and are getting economic "reforms" in Africa, "solidly based on capitalism and private enterprise," and that the "weapon is... calibrating and measuring out Western food and financial support on conditions that the donors want to see." Kenya, Ghana, Zaire, Mali, Tanzania, Zambia and other nations have agreed to end or curtail their "socialist practices" and open the door to "free enterprise," which according to this formula will increase food production.

The main features of this so-called reform is that these governments will devalue their currencies from 40 to 90 per cent, de-control the prices of food, release foreign funds to leave the country, and relax the power of marketing boards to fix the price of commodities bought for export.

Not by the most fanciful imagination can these acts be considered reforms. Their ultimate aim is to bind Africa more tightly to the aims of world capital without giving the African masses an ounce of respite from the burden of carrying its rapacious need to accumulate ever more capital.

This current famine in Africa brings us back to the African revolutions of the 1960s because it raises objectively how deep and total the process of revolution must be. Political emancipation from colonialism is obviously only the first step toward freedom. The second step, the creation of a new non-exploitative society, is not a theoretical abstraction, but an absolute necessity to prevent a return to the decaying swamp of poverty and hunger. The creation of a new society in Africa is inconceivable without releasing the creative energy and reasoning of the peasant masses.

Free South Africa

San Francisco, Cal.—The Black movement in South Africa which inspired Longshoremen's Union Local 10 in San Francisco to organize a boycott against unloading South African cargo reflects labor's solidarity. The longshoremen were heavily fined, yet their opposition to apartheid remained unshaken: "No one likes to lose money, but the overriding concern was apartheid." They refused to unload another cargo coming to Oakland a few days later.

At U.C. Berkeley, one of the largest rallies this semester was held against the apartheid system, on Dec. 7. Over 800 students heard speeches from an organizer of the longshoremen boycott and from a South African student. A march with a huge banner "U.C. — South Africa/We see apartheid" followed, as well as a blockade of administrative offices at University Hall where 38 were arrested.

In response, the Pacific Maritime Association sued the union for breach of contract and the Port Authority declared that "money is colorblind" and they will continue to conduct business with South Africa. But a number of towns did pass resolutions condemning apartheid, and one of the first issues raised by the first student representative to the board of regents at U.C. was divestiture.

Martin Luther King Day Celebrations

Chicago, Ill. — On January 15, forty residents of Chicago's Black South Austin community gathered to celebrate the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., at an event sponsored by the South Austin Coalition Community Council and News and Letters Committees. The evening featured a film of a speech given in 1967 by Dr. King to Stanford University students, which he called "The Other America" and in which he not only pointed to the difficulties of moving beyond opposition to segregation to winning freedom but also brought in the international dimension of the movement with one of his first statements of opposition to the Vietnam war.

In addition to the film, "Black World" columnist, Lou Turner, spoke on "The Two-Way Road between the U.S. and South Africa." After the film and presentation a lively discussion followed.

"The film moved me to tears," said one young woman. "What touched me so much was that it is so relevant for today. What Dr. King was talking about is today. He was talking about today way back then."

Another woman stressed the parallels of the international dimension of King's talk and that same dimension today. "We need to realize how things are affecting us internationally. Take the Free South Africa Movement. When dollars go to South Africa, that strengthens apartheid so they can pay their workers so little that many of the U.S. companies go there and put us out of work. The new State of Illinois building was built with South African materials. We can't let that go on. We need to support these kinds of issues and get involved."

Much of the discussion focused on education. Most agreed that education of ourselves, gaining a sense of history to enable us to carry the freedom struggle forward, is what is important.

As an older man put it, "As I grew up I learned how to read. When I studied my lessons I found that I wasn't even a part of history. Nowhere in my school books did I find myself. But I do know I've got common sense and we've got to learn to use what we've got."

— David Park

Salt Lake City, Utah.—Martin Luther King's birthday was celebrated early by the University of Utah on Jan. 14 with a day-long program. Congressman Louis Stokes, one of the originators of the bill for a national holiday (which took 16 years to pass), gave the keynote address. Even Stokes, who is one who believes in "working within the system," said, "Obviously we have made progress, but every time I try to place that progress into its proper perspective, the statistics tell me that the progress has been minimal."

Representatives of the Indian and Chicano movements talked about how the Black movement had inspired their people to a new consciousness of themselves and to act to transform society.

The audience made clear that the struggle wasn't a memory but must go on. A woman from Mississippi said one Black boy was lynched in Mobile, Alabama last year.

Yet, when I asked the administrators who organized the events if I could have a News & Letters literature table at the evening event with Maya Angelou, I was told that they wished to keep the event "apolitical"! Have they forgotten the origins of the Free Speech Movement in the Civil Rights Movement? In exclusively emphasizing the greatness of King's personality and his religious dimension they are threatening to turn MLK Day into its opposite. To me King's legacy includes the mass movement that he participated in and led.

Perhaps it is the ambiguity of King's legacy that allows him to be represented as "apolitical." His non-violent philosophy had emphasized the possibility of reconciliation within existing capitalist society, but in one of his last speeches, "Why I Am Opposed to the War in Vietnam," he pointed to new directions when he said, "Our only hope for today lies in recapturing the revolutionary spirit." The overwhelming rejection of Reagan by 90% of Black voters nationally and the struggle that is deepening internationally around South Africa will yet celebrate his birthday as a "birthtime of history."

—Ted Hill

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Packinghouse workers' struggles

Worker refuses to scab

Los Angeles, Calif.—Members of the United Food & Commercial Workers (UFCW) at the Oscar Mayer plant in Los Angeles have been forced into the position of scabbing against their fellow workers for the past four months. But resistance to this divide-and-rule tactic of management has already occurred.

In October, Local 501 of the Operating Engineers, one of three unions representing workers in the plant, walked off the job rather than accept Oscar Mayer's demands for massive concessions. As soon as that happened Oscar Mayer negotiated a new contract with Local 274, UFCW, calling for a wage freeze.

Both management and the UFCW International union leadership are saying that Oscar Mayer workers must cross Local 501's picket line to keep their jobs. A month ago, however, one UFCW worker refused to cross the picket line. Instead, he joined it and informed Oscar Mayer that he would no longer scab against his fellow workers. As a result he has been fired.

Recently Oscar Mayer workers discovered that their so-called "freeze" contract also includes massive cuts in health and dental benefits. At the same time, sabotage against the company has begun. A \$50,000 machine was destroyed, and during one week in January the company was able to get out only 20% of the normal production. —Supporter of Oscar Mayer workers

Local 100 has a lot of plants in the Chicago area where the negotiations affect us. Right now AMPAC is still paying \$8.92 an hour in the boning department. Some other companies are trying to pay less. The new people in our plant only get \$6.10 an hour. It seems like we should be a strong union able to fight this. But right now the members can't seem to get anything from our union. —AMPAC worker



Boners shoulder-to-shoulder on production line

Back to the 1930s' stockyards?

Chicago, Ill.—We've been on strike against Libby for over two months, and we have the same thing as when we came out. They're not even talking. In 1978 we took a three-year wage freeze. Since then I've had a 90¢ increase. We gave them the cost-of-living in those concessions. Now they want even more.

It's not just the wages. They want to install a Juicy Juice line in our plant and start the employees off at a lower wage. They would have superseniority, so if the meats go down, these guys can still work even though we have 25 or 35 years seniority. I wouldn't have a job in five years, because they want to turn that plant into a juice plant. They'd slowly move us old guys out.

We did it to ourselves. When the negotiations started in May the company told us, "If you don't sign this contract by September, we're going to stockpile and let you go on strike." The local president announced what they said at a union meeting, but the people were working 10 and 11 hours a day. Saturdays are voluntary, but the parking lot looked just like Monday morning. Even the union president worked.

The UFCW International wants us to settle. They're doing it all over the country. If we accept this contract, we'll be going back to the '30s, to the stockyards. We'll have no better way of life than we had 30 years ago, some of the guys were saying. Before this plant was built, we had certain provisions in our contract that were better than this. I'd rather see the plant close than go back under those conditions. —Black worker

Local 100: AMPAC

Chicago, Ill.—We have been having problems at AMPAC ever since I have been working there. We have a contract, but it is like having no contract at all. Several years ago we were killing 160 hogs per hour; now it is about 350 per hour. So you can see the speed-up. The company has been asking for concessions to cut our wages. The last contract, they already cut our wages one dollar. We need someone to back us up in fighting this, but it is very hard when the union (Local 100, UFCW) seems so close to the company.

The people who work at the plant are Polish, Spanish and Black. Some don't know how to speak English, others are "illegals." The company takes advantage of that. If you ever try to complain, right away, you get one of the worst jobs in the plant. The contract says that overtime is supposed to be rotated, but there are some Hispanic and Black workers who are only working four and five hours a day, six hours at the most. But some of the Polish workers are working an average of ten to 12 hours, and some guys work on Saturdays.

When I started working there, people who became ill or were injured got a release from work by a doctor and the company would leave them alone. But now a guy can break his arm today, and tomorrow he would be working. Three weeks ago a guy cut himself, chopped a knife right into two fingers. They let him go home for the rest of the day, but the next day he was working, and the hand was swollen to twice its size. Now there are a lot of injuries where people don't do anything except keep working.

Pay cut, but speed raised

Austin, Minn.—We voted down the \$8.75 Hormel offered. Two weeks later they cut our wages to \$8.25 from \$10.69. They never offered us anything else to vote on. Both the company and the UFCW International union accused our local union president of walking out of the negotiations. An arbitrator ruled that the company could cut our wages, and the union has appealed.

The decision on our right to strike is also before an arbitrator. The union wants a legal strike or they will have to pay the company for what it costs them while we're not working. I don't know why any company should talk to any union while we're still working. Can you negotiate without war? Can you turn it over to the arbitrator and the lawyers in a friendly way?

We have 20% faster chain speeds in Austin. We cut up 831 hogs per hour—6,900 to 7,100 hogs per day—and it's going faster all the time. The pay has gone down, but the speed hasn't. We start work at 6:30 a.m., and today I punched out at 6:10 p.m. Except for breaks, you stand there and continually work. All I do is work, eat and sleep.

I don't know what the International's plan is, if they have one. They keep promising, promising: "We'll get it next time." People are starting to ask when. This whole damned country has got to be turned around. Either we all work or we all sit. If you go to work when someone else is getting beat, you're just stabbing yourself in the back.

—Hormel worker

Local 100: Oscar Mayer

Chicago, Ill.—Piotrowski (secretary-treasurer, Local 100, UFCW) refuses to honor our petitions to call a meeting for a strike vote. He says we made people sign the petitions. He called us communists and said we were a minority in the plant and says that we don't have any rights. We have the right to disagree.

Piotrowski is trying to get Oscar Mayer to start working on us, to harass us, to fire us. He has told them to do this because he can't do anything with us. Piotrowski never, ever spoke for the people in the plant. Everything he says, he says for Oscar Mayer—what the company wants, never what people need or what the company should do for us.

Our picket line shook him up. On Monday we picketed on second shift with 13 people in front of the union hall. The police were standing inside. Our signs demanded the meeting we had petitioned for and said that he was not taking a strong enough stand to get our money back, while he is making \$100,000 per year and what for? On Tuesday more people picketed, and more people were calling Piotrowski to ask why.

On Wednesday we sent a letter to the International that Piotrowski is in violation of the by-laws and we want to start charges against him. On Thursday we passed out a leaflet to support the strikers at the Sherman, Tex., Oscar Mayer plant, and on Friday we started collections. We will collect for Texas all this week. Madison (Wisconsin) took \$30,000 out of their treasury and sent it to Texas. We have \$60,000 in our treasury, but Piotrowski refuses to call a meeting.

You read how long people have scuffled to get their rights, how long people fought to get a fair union. Piotrowski has sold the union down the drain. The more I read, the madder I get. —Oscar Mayer worker

Farmers fight to survive

Chicago, Ill.—Over 300 farmers, from Colorado to North Carolina and from Minnesota to Texas, picketed the Chicago Board of Trade on Jan. 21, carrying signs like "Trade Bushels Not Ink on Paper" to protest speculation that is worsening a farm crisis already driving more and more farmers off the land. The Board of Trade dismissed the farmers' two demands—an end to speculative short-selling in farm commodities, and suspension of trading when any price falls below the cost of production—and instead arrested the first 12 farmers who entered the building.

One Iowa soybean farmer answered the Board's claim that low prices simply reflected overproduction on the farm by saying that trading volume has been 38 times the actual supply of soybeans, making possible an artificial overproduction. A Louisiana farmer pointed out how many hungry people there are in this country alone, yet the government lets food rot in storage and only distributes surplus commodities every four months!

A Kansas wheat farmer said the Board already does suspend trading—but only when prices are rising too fast. He said that with the cost of production of wheat at \$6.00 per bushel, and the current price \$3.10, even the most respected farmers are losing their land.

Farmers from Iowa had just come from a mass protest at the governor's inauguration. The 150 who got into the visitors' gallery stood silently throughout the governor's speech holding white crosses, which have become the symbol of farm foreclosures.

This powerful protest helped propel the Economic Emergency Bill, which would allow farmers to seek a moratorium on foreclosure for up to a year, through the State Senate the next day despite politicians' earlier opposition. Even as farmers marched in Chicago, 10,000 Minnesota farmers and farm supporters demonstrated in St. Paul for a moratorium on foreclosures.

One young Missouri farmer was not a member of any of the farm organizations, but had felt compelled to come to Chicago. He felt the government and agribusiness corporations were backing themselves into a corner by turning a deaf ear to the protests. "These protests now are peaceful, but it will be harder and harder to keep farmers in line." —Bob McGuire

WORKSHOP TALKS

(continued from page 1)

them as objects, because that's what they are in capitalist production—the only commodity the boss can buy for \$3.35 an hour that yields miraculously greater value in every hour of production. And isn't race added to that class relation when it is immigrant and Black workers? My boss let the cat out of the bag when he said he would "treat you like animals."

To the immigrant workers, unions are "all gangsters" or "just another business"—because that's what they are today. Look at District 65-UAW, which prides itself on being so militant. They're so damn militant on the outside. They support every struggle OUTSIDE of them with rallies and office space—the copper strikers, Yale strikers, anti-nuclear—and get representatives of those struggles to speak at union meetings.

They just voted to spend every penny in the strike fund to support 1,100 clerical workers at Columbia University get union recognition at this anti-union, anti-worker, racist, sexist, pseudo-liberal institution. Stewards at the General Council meeting said they supported Columbia U. workers 100%. But what about once you're in the union, some stewards wanted to know. Aren't our problems forgotten? How come we can't get any answers, can't even get our medical bills paid?

My shop has been in District 65 since the 1940s. The starting wage is \$3.60, health and safety don't exist, and the union looks the other way on take-home work and every other injustice. The very same conditions Columbia U. workers are organizing a union against prevail inside many of the union sweatshops. We support the Columbia workers' struggle to unionize, but we know the union's attitude is that the boss is an adversary only till he recognizes the union. Once that contract is signed and the union is getting its share of the wages, the boss is a good customer and must be kept satisfied.

And where are the Black workers? They are in effect barred by racist bosses and collaborating unions from even these sweatshops. Let's not lose sight of that. The bosses certainly want to keep Black and Latino apart.

I point out to my fellow workers the vanguard role of Blacks in all U.S. history. If Latino workers allow their struggle to be separated from that of the Black masses here in the U.S., it will imperil both movements.

Reaganism may fear the mass movements in Latin America as the threat to U.S. corporations' continued plunder—in Nicaragua, El Salvador and so on. But there is as well a Latin America and Caribbean inside U.S. borders, immigrant workers within its sweatshops—who will rise up. Our talk in the shop is of new ways to struggle.

The real state of the union: the growing pauperization of America

(continued from page 1)

The relation of the structural economic crisis and pauperism has been drawn tighter with Reagan's all out drive to militarize the economy, from the multi-billion dollar "Star Wars" scheme and MX missiles to greatly augmented rapid deployment troops, new chemical warfare research and bloated arms sales to Third World countries.

The Reagan administration, of course, ties these huge military expenditures to the current supposed "economic recovery" and thus poses it as a solution for the unemployed and underemployed. The truth, however, was accurately expressed by Univ. of Michigan analyst Terry Adams, observing conditions in the Detroit area. "The recovery is really very shallow as far as employment goes," he said. "Many laid-off people are being replaced with machines... It used to be possible for these people to get a job on an auto line. Now the only jobs are at fast food joints, and they don't pay as much as an ADC grant." When even a very few better-paying jobs have been advertised, the exceptions prove Adams' point with terrible urgency. In Chicago, 10,000 lined up for exams for 133 postal clerk positions. In Detroit, 6,000 besieged offices to apply for 700 jobs at Chrysler, jobs later revealed as "already taken."

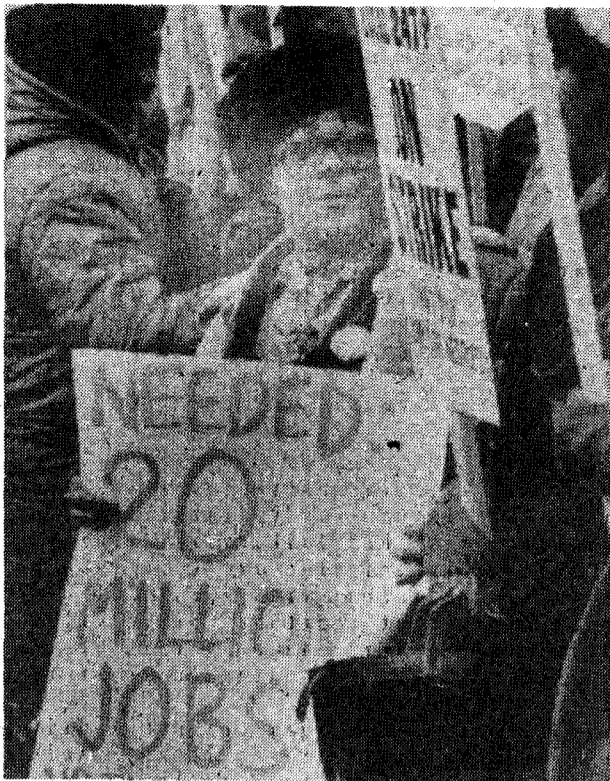
Such scenes stem directly from the fact that there are today 1.2 million fewer manufacturing jobs than in 1979; that the vast majority of the new jobs created are in service companies at minimum wage levels; and that the 8.2 million officially listed as unemployed do not include either another 1.3 million "discouraged" workers (who no longer search for jobs regularly—40% of whom are Black), or the 6 million part-time workers who want to work full-time, but can't find a full-time job.

It is not, however, unemployment alone which has swelled the ranks of the destitute. Even *Newswatch* magazine, which devoted its year-end cover story to the "Year of the Yuppie," had to admit that the new-found power of this relatively small group was obscuring a 14% drop in real income for all families in the 25 to 34 age bracket. Many of these are workers with low seniority, working in non-union shops or in union shops where "concessions" contracts have cut wages and benefits to the bone.

One young woman worker insisted that unemployment and poverty wage jobs went hand-in-hand to turn a factory job income into pauperism: "In 1983 I was working at a meatpacking plant that gave concessions. But I was still taking home \$186 a week, plus overtime. When the plant closed, I was on unemployment, taking home \$129 a week. It took quite a while to find a new job. When I finally got one, it was in a chocolate factory, at \$121 a week, which soon dropped to \$98 when the plant cut to four days. Now I work in a paper products plant, making little more than the minimum wage. If I were laid off now, I'd only get \$70 a week compensation. Each job and each lay-off is a step down."

THE WORKER AS PAUPER

She was proving in life what Karl Marx had proved in thought 128 years ago with the declaration: "It is already contained in the concept of the free laborer, that



200 demonstrated for "Jobs Now!" at the U.S. Steel South Works plant in Chicago.

he is a virtual pauper." (*Grundrisse*, p. 604). It is this concept that he developed fully in the climax to Volume I of *Capital*, "The General Law of Capitalist Accumulation." Step by step, Marx traces the "influence of the growth of capital on the fate of the working class," demonstrating that with the domination of machine over worker comes the growth of the "relative surplus population," the "industrial reserve army." He was not speaking about "official pauperism" alone. That was the "lowest sediment," but there was no great wall between life on the bottom and the conditions on the slippery path which led there.

Listen to how Marx described the world of those just above the level of "official pauperism," the "stagnant population": "Its conditions of life sink below the average normal level of the working class, and it is precisely this which makes it a broad foundation for special branches of capitalist exploitation. It is characterized by a maximum of working time and a minimum of wages... It is constantly recruited from workers in large-scale industry and agriculture who have become unemployed..."

That description bears the mark of truth for millions today, whether we look at rural or urban America, North or South. In Pennsylvania, laid-off steelworkers become short-order cooks, with a drop in wages from \$12.00 an hour to \$3.35. In California, immigrants are forced into small plastics shops, where the rate can be

as low as \$12 a day, with no benefits at all. In Michigan, the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) is fighting a federal court ruling that allows six-year-old children to work in the pickle harvest on the grounds that their parents are "independent contractors" exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act. And in Mississippi, those driven off the cotton plantations by sweeping mechanization are prey for under-the-table gang labor operators who know that no family can live on Mississippi's \$144 maximum welfare benefits.

It is not only that U.S. jobs have been "exported" to Third World countries, from South Korea to Haiti to Sri Lanka. It is that Third World conditions of life and labor, with Third World sweat shops, wages and education, are more and more commonplace in the America of the mid-1980s. In this "richest country on earth," hunger and homelessness are now growing at rates not seen in 50 years.

In the South, "Sun Belt opportunity" has turned to misery as more than 2.5 million were added to the rolls of those living below the poverty line since 1979, bringing the South's official total of impoverished to 12 million. In Mississippi today, more than one family in three fits that description, far more than a decade ago.

Nor is the North better off. In Chicago, the Physicians' Task Force on Hunger called the situation "as bad as anything in Third World countries." They described malnutrition of children so bad that they suffered from anemia, hair loss and bloating. And they documented the increase in tuberculosis cases, saying: "In this town that is an objective marker of hunger. People who are nutritionally healthy do not contract TB." Women and children are the hardest hit.

The streets of Chicago now are home to at least 25,000 homeless, and an estimated 7,000 of those are children. Cuts in food stamp programs of \$7 billion since Reagan took office are called the single biggest cause of malnutrition and starvation cases in the city, while the destruction of both jobs and low-income housing, at the same time welfare budgets have shrunk, are said to have contributed to the explosion in homelessness. "Every welfare office is a battleground," one case-worker reported. "We have security guards everywhere now. It seems like at least once a day I see someone who is at the end of her rope; I mean the deadly end of it."

THE ATTACK ON BLACK AMERICA

Despite these grim realities, which continue to fall heaviest on Black America, Reagan contended Jan. 18 that Black leaders were keeping "their constituency aggrieved and believing that they have a legitimate complaint." Reagan's remarks came one day after the Urban League published its annual "State of Black America" report, which called Reagan's civil rights record the worst of any post-WW II president and his social program cuts "Draconian." Worst of all, they charged, was his policy toward Black youth.

In that area, the Administration would evidently prefer to emphasize "control of crime," with the monstrous implication that Black youths are criminals. Publicly, Reagan's staff has applauded 1984's 700% increase in capital punishment sentences carried out, and privately they have added to the accolades for the New York subway vigilante who shot four Black youth, two in the back, who demanded \$5 from him. What they attempt to hide is the fact that an entire generation of working-class youth—and not Black youth alone—is faced upon leaving school with the choice of a life of substandard wages, often negotiated into "two-tier" contracts by labor bureaucrats; minimum wage non-union jobs; or unemployment. In Detroit, every high school student knows he or she will never work in an auto plant; in Youngstown, they know there are no more steel mills to go into. Labor economists have a new word for it; they call it the "marginalization" of youth.

So retrogressive, indeed, is the reigning attitude within the Administration and among its supporters toward those facing pauperization that it is reminiscent of Marx's description of the fate of the laboring class driven off the land at the dawn of capitalism: "History records the fact that it first tried beggary, vagabondage and crime, but was herded off this road on the narrow path which led to the labor market by means of gallows, pillory and whip..." (*Grundrisse*, p. 507). Such means cannot but fail today, no matter what controls are applied to the poor of 1985. When the marchers in the counter-inaugural chanted "The poor won't take it no more," they were voicing an outcry heard abroad as well in food riots this year from Egypt to the Dominican Republic, and, in the past month, to Jamaica.

The "austerity plans" to which the Third World nations have been subjected have brought forth not alone resistance to the superpowers but a profound questioning of the relationship between leaders and ranks at home. And as the pauperization of the American working class deepens, workers, Blacks, women and youth here, too, have shown that resistance to Reaganism is only a part of their fight against a regime so degenerate that it offers only the gutter or the prison to the destitute it has just created and celebrates its second term by calling itself "an American renewal."

The demonstrations this inaugural weekend are only the beginning. In the months ahead the protesters are sure to collide with "leaders" who wish to limit their struggle to union militancy or to one more political party in opposition. What is needed now are new forms of struggle, in the shop and outside of it, forms which challenge every institution and way of thinking that stands in the path of the total uprooting of this murderous society and the construction of a new one that is truly free.

In Memoriam

by Raya Dunayevskaya

Simon Silverman

We mourn the death of Simon Silverman. His title — Director of Humanities Press — doesn't really convey his multidimensional nature, which is better expressed by the concept of founder. His concern was not only with scholarly works but with those of a New Left nature, which is what makes so many young scholars beholden unto him. We, who knew the Depression and Fascism's horrors, know that people die, but History and Ideas live forever. That was the ground for the founding of Humanities Press; that is what he transmitted to the Youth; that is his legacy to us.

Nearly half a century intervened between my first meeting him and the day of his death. I met him when he was the unusual bookseller of second-hand scholarly works that were very difficult to find, and we constantly "fought" over them, because he wasn't sure he really wanted to sell them, and I was poor as a church mouse and couldn't afford them at any price. When next our paths crossed, I was the author of *Marxism and Freedom and Philosophy and Revolution*, looking for a publisher for a new work, *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*. Because it was the eve of the Marx centenary year, he undertook not only to publish that work but to republish my two earlier works, so that I could celebrate that anniversary with what I called a "trilogy of revolution."

Simon Silverman made available to a world of readers not only American scholars but international authors, ranging from Lawrence Krader's transcription of the heretofore unavailable Karl Marx's *Ethnological Notebooks* to *We Are Bosses Ourselves: The Status and Role of Aboriginal Women Today*. The scholarly-artistic mind of this unique publisher made him a true World Person. His memory will be cherished by a legion of readers as well as writers.

Alexander Erlich

The news of the death of Alexander Erlich brings memories of the very difficult and, at the same time, the active and scholarly life that he led. The way the bourgeois press wrote his obituary, as if he pursued only scholarly studies befitting his status as a "professor emeritus of economics at Columbia University," belies his life's goal of a classless society. In the 40 years I knew him I do not remember a single May 1 socialist/labor demonstration that he did not participate in, as the socialist Humanist he was.

His father was the very famous Henryk Erlich, a leader of the socialist movement in Poland, who, at the same time he was fighting Nazism, was critical of Stalinism. The shock that reverberated throughout the Movement, when we heard through the great revolutionary Polish underground that the Stalinists had murdered him as he was escaping from the Nazis, has never left me. Loyalty to his father's ideals characterized Alexander's life. To write as if Sasha (the name by which his Russian friends knew him) had simply "emigrated" to the U.S. is to erase from history his very profound Humanism.

Of course, his objective work, *The Soviet Industrialization Debate: 1924-1928*, is widely and correctly held by all scholars as a definitive work; but that was the nature of his objectivity. He was a scholar who would dig into all facts without any a priori concept. For that matter, he checked carefully all my statistics in *Marxism and Freedom* and chaired one of my meetings at Columbia University after I broke with Trotsky for calling for the defense of Russia as a "workers' state though degenerate." It is significant to me that his colleagues and friends entitled the collection of essays they brought out in his honor in 1983, *Marxism, Central Planning and the Soviet Economy*.

Sasha Erlich enters history because he devoted his whole life to his Promethean vision of a totally new, truly human society.

YOUTH

Chicago's revolutionary roots

by Ida Fuller

When I was in high school, I always had a struggle in history classes to find out about America's real, i.e. revolutionary, history. As a newcomer to Chicago, I have begun to read about the revolutionary history of this city and in speaking to youth here, I find them angry about this system of education which is so silent about Chicago's revolutionary roots.

So many dimensions of Chicago's history remain hidden from us in schools: the labor struggles of the 1870s and '80s, the Black struggle for freedom in the North, the experiences of women and of youth. Chicago even had a direct connection with Karl Marx through the presence of his daughter Eleanor on speaking tour in 1886.

Let's begin a discussion of Chicago's revolutionary history that has been denied us by looking at a recent book on Chicago's Haymarket Tragedy by Paul Avrich. (Princeton University Press, 1984)

THE GENERAL STRIKE

The Haymarket struggles took place at the height of the American workers' battle for the eight-hour day. On May 1, 1886, 350,000 workers nationwide went on a general strike with 10,000 of them in Chicago. The strike was shaking capitalism at its roots, and the police reacted by shooting two striking workers at the McCormick plant (which is today International Harvester). The next day workers gathered at a Haymarket rally to listen to a speech by the anarchist leader Albert Parsons. A bomb was thrown at the police who then began shooting at the crowd. For months the labor movement continued mass protests nationally and internationally to free the Haymarket defendants, four of whom were hanged on November 11, 1887 without a shred of evidence convicting them.

The Haymarket Tragedy reveals that what had made young Albert Parsons a revolutionary were the Black struggles during the Civil War. In 1867, at the age of 19, he had founded the Spectator, to defend Black civil rights in Texas. The paper encouraged Blacks to exercise their voting rights, and questioned whether they had really become free when they were "without an inch of soil, a cent of money, a stitch of clothes, or a morsel of food." Parsons was forced to flee from Texas after

Kicked out of school

Detroit, Mich.--I have been out of school for six weeks now, ever since the end of November when another girl and I were suspended. Starting next week we will be going to a different school. The school has a rule now that if you fight one time you get kicked out for good -- suspended -- even if you have never been in any trouble before.

You can appeal the suspension, but my mother and I wrote the Director of Attendance for Detroit public schools, Mr. Richard Adams, and he didn't write back to give us an appeal date. For three weeks we tried to contact him and were told he was "unavailable." Finally a secretary made a date for us.

If you don't appeal, you have to go to another school, and they don't let you choose which one. If they don't want you, why should they care where you go? I decided to appeal because they might put me in a school far away. And I didn't want to start all over in the middle of the year just because of one fight.

We finally had the appeal hearing, and they were supposed to let us know their decision within 72 hours. That was one week before Christmas. They didn't tell us the decision until January, and they decided we both have to go to a different school, which is not near my house. I'll go ahead with it, just because I don't want to waste any more time out of school.

It's ridiculous. I could see if I were a trouble-maker, who made trouble every day. But I've never been in any trouble before. The last rule said that if you got into a fight three times, then you got suspended. Now, one fight and you're out. Maybe they kick people out because of overcrowding, or maybe they just don't care anymore. A friend of mine was kicked out of school for not wearing her I.D. tag above her waist.

What I want to know is, do they have this policy in fancy suburban schools in Grosse Pointe, or Bloomfield Hills? The school I went to is all Black except for about five white students. Some teachers there are fair, but I had one teacher who just gave handouts every day, and only had discussion before tests. It was really boring. We could only go to the library if we had a pass or if the class went. Plus, they won't let us wait for school in the waiting room anymore -- we have to wait outside, whether it's raining or snowing. This way of treating students is just wrong. Something has to be done about it.

—Black high school student

Study
and
Struggle

he organized a Black band to fight the Ku Klux Klan to follow "the manner of John Brown" and after he started to live with a Black woman, Lucy Parsons. They then left for Chicago.

Two dates stand out in Avrich's description of revolutionary Chicago: 1873, a time of vast depression and unemployment, became a time when thousands of workers marched out and called for their own "Paris Commune"; and 1877, the year Chicago became a center of the nationwide railroad strikes which soon turned into America's first General Strike and reverberated throughout the world.¹ It was this 1877 General Strike which led to the re-emergence of the struggle for the eight-hour day in the 1880s and the call for a nationwide General Strike on May 1, 1886.

ANARCHISM VS. MARXISM

Yet, missing in Avrich's description of 1877 is a critique of Albert Parsons. The Workingmen's Party, of which Parsons was a leader, did not fully support the 1877 General Strike, and indeed tried to put a stop to the workers' daily mass meetings. In much the same way, anarchists did not support the American workers' eight-hour day movement, until a few months before the 1886 historic strike, even though Chicago was the center of that movement.

Marx had long before critiqued that attitude during the Civil War when many American "Marxists" evaded the whole issue of civil war by saying that they were opposed to "all slavery, wage and chattel."² Marx separated himself from these self-styled Marxists and glued his eyes to the American Black struggle and proclaimed that "labor in the white skin can not emancipate itself so long as in the Black skin it is branded." He considered the struggle for the shortening of the working day in revolutionary continuity with the Civil War's abolition of slavery, and witnessed in that struggle a philosophy higher than that of the Declaration of Independence or the Magna Carta.

What is as well missing in Haymarket Tragedy is the role of the American Marxists in Chicago who did translate and reproduce a section of Capital, "On the Working Day" and distributed it by the thousands at demonstrations.

It was in continuity with Marx that in 1886 Eleanor Marx visited Chicago. In visiting and defending the Haymarket martyrs, she at the same time separated herself from anarchism and spoke of Marx's concept of an independent working class movement as well as of women's liberation.

Seeing what is involved in a return to Chicago's past and how it speaks to today, it is not surprising that schools hide this history from us. Reaganism's attack on education and its attempt to distort history makes it even more important for us to discover these revolutionary roots ourselves.

1. See On the 100th Anniversary of the First General Strike in the U.S., by Terry Moon and Ron Brokmeyer. Available from News and Letters.

2. See Marxism and Freedom: From 1776 until Today, p. 84.

Youth in Revolt

When most Polish political prisoners were released under last year's amnesty, 22-year-old Maciej Glebocki was not, because he continues his crime of refusing military service. He is now reported to be on a hunger strike. Letters of support can be sent to him at Zakland Karny, Potulice, N/Nakla, Poland.

At Beijing University in China, 2,000 students marched Dec. 10-11 while others put up wall posters and threw torches out of dorm windows, protesting a new 11:00 p.m. curfew. The university not only forces students to live seven to a dorm room, but assigns spies to report on "troublemakers," who are then exiled to remote areas. Students were taking a big risk to join the protest. Beijing University was a site of great student activity during the 100 Flowers Campaign in 1957 which Mao subsequently crushed.

In yet another attack on Black America, Reagan's Justice Dept. argued in court that Norfolk, Va., could halt, court-ordered busing, in the name of "local authority" (a variant of "states' rights"). Many Black students and parents were outraged because this would raise the number of 90% Black schools from none to ten, returning to the pre-busing status quo.

Students at Brown University in Rhode Island rallied in December to support 57 students who had been disciplined by the school for conducting a citizens' arrest of two CIA recruiters on campus. Earlier, 75 students at the University of Michigan held a "people's trial" of three CIA recruiters there, and cancelled all their campus interviews, while at Northwestern University in Illinois, students held a rally against CIA recruiters and are now protesting the arrest of two student demonstrators.

Students reject shakedown

Detroit, Mich.—The U.S. Supreme Court marked a national trend toward increased repression of students in a Jan. 15 decision, when it ruled that students may now be searched without any warrant if there is "reasonable suspicion" that a rule has been broken. In Detroit, youth are already fully acquainted with "search and seizure" tactics being used as a daily threat against all young people.

Mayor Coleman Young and School Superintendent Arthur Jefferson launched the big "shakedown" in late November when Young announced, "We will descend, without notice, on any school in this city, where we have reason to believe guns are in use, and do a shakedown. We will search every student and every locker and any other orifice and opening that has to be searched. We will use electronic devices and whatever other means...we're prepared to be just as hard as we have to be."

"We were talking about the security checks in my current events class, and people don't like it," one ninth-grader told me. "We feel invaded. And when they do security checks, since we have 4,000 students, we'll miss most of the day. We might as well not have school that day. Obviously they don't care."

But the officials certainly didn't wait to hear what the youth thought about the plan. Already students at several schools have been subjected to patting down with electronic metal detectors and locker searches. Not only have additional security guards been added, but police are now working with the guards in "strike forces" — which to date have only turned up penknives. And all parents have been informed by letter that legal actions will be taken against the parents of any youth with a weapon. Mayor Young has expanded the Supreme Court's concept of "reasonable suspicion" so that all students in all schools will be searched.

Far from solving the crisis, the war on youth only exacerbates it. It used to be that Detroit high school youth could plan on getting out of high school and getting a job in the auto shops. Now in Detroit, which is two-thirds Black, Black youth unemployment is well over 50%. In a city like Detroit, it is not hard to see how the youth will move to help reconstruct society on new human beginnings.

—Laurie Cashdan

Strikers firm in Quebec

Lebel-sur-Quevillon, Quebec—"We'll pass the whole winter here splitting wood if we have to, but the company will respect our seniority and stop holding the whole community hostage." These were the words of a striker commenting on the long Domtar-Quevillon work stoppage, which is presently at a precarious stalemate. Two thousand workers at Domtar, a wood products plant, have been out since June 13.

All over Quebec unemployment is at an all-time high, over 20% in some regions. Lebel-sur-Quevillon is a one-industry town of 4,000 where the shutdown has affected most other local businesses. The other big employer in the area, Forex, has just seen its credit rating withdrawn.

In this very serious situation the workers are determined to win. In November, strikers blocked the main highway to Montreal at Val d'Or, Route 117, and lifted the barricade only with the promise of new negotiations. That promise was broken by Domtar, and this was followed by numerous other incidents.

Things are tense. One picket is on trial for \$5,000 and one week in jail for making faces at a supervisor, and another for \$15,000 and one month for using a few well-chosen words! It has been hard to interest the Quebec City government in this far-off conflict, even though Quebec, owns 45% of Domtar shares in Quebec!

There are four issues still under negotiation: 1) an agreement on subcontracted labor, where most work is nonunion, 2) an end to arbitrary lay-off and recall policies and recognition of seniority, 3) group insurance, and 4) a large backlog of grievances. But more than just these are at stake. One worker said, "It's a strike of principle. We are in a worldwide recession. We have seen what give-backs have done to workers elsewhere and we're not going to allow give-backs here!"

—Supporter of Domtar workers

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OUR LIFE AND TIMES

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

So fearful is Socialist France of losing its Pacific colony of New Caledonia that President Mitterrand decided to go there himself. His announcement followed the slaying of Eloi Machoro, who was a leader in the indigenous Kanaka Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS). Machoro was killed by police, and 37 Kanakas arrested at the same time are charged with inciting to rebellion.

The FLNKS, a coalition of 10 parties, was formed after the Mitterrand government said it planned to postpone independence for four more years. FLNKS called a successful boycott of elections in November, and declared the provisional government of Kanaky on Dec. 1. Despite Mitterrand's betrayal, the Kanakas have been open to compromise in many areas—except over the right to independence and self-determination.

The violence of the past period has come from the settler French, allied with the neo-Gaullist Rally for Caledonia in the Republican party, who have escalated their attacks on the independence movement. The home of Jean-Marie Tjibaou, an FLNKS leader, was bombed in December, and two of his brothers were later killed in an ambush.

While the Western press repeats ad nauseam that

Changes in China

China had three shocks for the world in the last four days of 1984. First, on Dec. 28, Russian representative Ivan V. Arkhipov had the most cordial visit a Russian has had there since the Sino-Soviet split. The visit ended with a massive trade agreement, which so startled U.S. imperialism that General Vessey was sent over immediately peddling the newest weapons.

Second, on Dec. 30, it was suddenly announced that 40 top army officers had resigned, sweeping away a whole group that had been originally loyal to Lin Biao but never purged after the latter fell in 1971. This group was presumed to have been resisting Deng's change of direction.

Third, on Dec. 31, 800 writers gathered and issued a call for intellectual and artistic freedom of a type not seen since the brief 1957 Hundred Flowers Campaign. They called for nothing less than an end to political restrictions on literature. The main speech was given by the veteran libertarian revolutionary writer Ba Jin (his name stands for Bakunin-Kropotkin), whose world-renowned 1931 novel *Family* contained a searing indictment of the traditional family and a call for women's liberation.

Ba had suffered greatly under Mao, as had the great feminist writer Ding Ling, also present. Philosophers have also been writing frequently on alienation, Rosa Luxemburg's concept of "socialist democracy" and "Marxist humanism" as seen in the recent collection *Marxism in China* (Spokesman Books, 1984).

A fourth event was much less re-

markable by comparison, although played up much more: Deng's encouragement of a dose of "free market" capitalism within the already-existing state capitalism. *Is anything really changing?* Or will Deng once again crack down on dissent as he did after Peking Spring in 1979? Will he keep sticking close to U.S. imperialism as he did then, despite his hints ever since the 1970s of possibly realigning back toward Russia? We do know that the hints at global realignment are connected to the internal class relations and the political-economic crises inside China.

Polish regime on trial

The unprecedented public trial of members of the National Police for the murder of Father Jerzy Popieluszko has already pointed a finger at officials high up in the Interior Ministry. As against rampant speculations that the murder was an attempt to challenge Jaruzelski, Jacek Kuron notes: "Father Popieluszko's murder was directed against its victim and through him against the clergy, Solidarity and the whole movement of social opposition—not against generals."

Father Popieluszko's open support for Solidarity stemmed from his concern for workers asking his help. He had said, "In my sermons I speak about what people think and what they tell me in private, for often they lack the courage or the means to speak publicly. I speak out whenever I discern in their words a truth I think others should share."

This truth was not only disliked by the Polish government that killed him, but also condemned by the Church which issued a gag order for him and Fr. Malkowski just before Fr. Popieluszko's abduction.

French back settler terror in New Caledonia

Kanakas are only 45% of the population, they fail to repeat that the French are an even smaller percentage, 37%. Many are transient government and military personnel. The Kanakas want them, along with right-wing ex-settlers who fled Indo-China and Algeria when French rule fell, excluded from independence votes.

But numbers alone do not tell the story. For generations the Kanakas have revolted against the racist and brutal French colonial rule. The first rebellion in 1878, which took a year to finally crush, was against the full-

scale expropriation of Kanak native lands. The French drove them to the east end of the island and later forced them onto reservations.

To this day, all wealth is centered in the predominantly French capital of Noumea. There are no secondary schools outside the capital. Among the Kanakas, 60% are unemployed and the rest live by subsistence farming and fishing. The \$210 million that flows from France to New Caledonia yearly does not reach the Kanakas but goes to support the colonial regime in Noumea and to boost tourism.

Mitterrand's in-person trip solved nothing fundamentally. In the meantime, France has over 6,000 police and troops on the island. Besides New Caledonia's mining industry, nationalized in 1982, Mitterrand like his predecessors wants to preserve this outpost of France's nuclear test range in the South Pacific. But this too is being shaken by a growing anti-nuclear movement, which has become another dimension of self-determination struggles in the South Pacific.

At present all parties in the FLNKS are united on the need for political independence now. Their call for an election boycott got overwhelming support from Kanakas. The question of what direction self-determination will take is still being debated. But the driving energy of the movement is coming from below, especially from the 1980s generation of youth.

Aid Yugoslav Marxists

The trial of the six dissidents reconvened in January despite intense opposition ranging from courageous mass petitions and solidarity campaigns inside Yugoslavia to an editorial finally in the *New York Times*. But the Marxist humanists still face long prison terms.

Now is the time to intensify our international protests against this Stalinist-type trial of intellectuals simply for holding political and philosophical discussion meetings. (See December, 1984 N&L.)



Demonstrators in Yokosuka, Japan protest visit of U.S. nuclear carrier Carl Vinson in December—25 years after student protest stopped Eisenhower's visit

Polish authorities are trying to institute Russian methods of dealing with "hardened dissidents." After Anna Walentynowicz was released from prison she continued to participate in the movement to free political prisoners. Since they ran out of false charges to keep her in jail for the lengthy periods of time, and they wanted to keep her away from the shipyard workers, they sent her to a psychiatric hospital "for observation"—the Russian method of dealing with "hardened dissidents." The psychiatrist ordered her to be hospitalized there. As soon as she was released she went right back on hunger strike to free political prisoners.

Terror continues also in the shops. As of Jan. 1, the legal working day has been prolonged to 9 hours (48 hours/week). In addition, the time worked need not be continuous, shifting onto the workers the burden of frequent stops in production because of shortages. For workers, now, "The issue of the length of the working day is worthless as none other—maximum amount of effort." Urszula Wislanka

PEMEX still deadly

"PEMEX guilty—assassins" was the verdict of San Juan Ixhuatepec residents whose lives were ripped apart in the Mexico City gas explosion and fire storm last November. Nearly 500 people died; hundreds are still missing and their families fear they were incinerated.

After the explosion, the community organized meetings to demand answers and reparations from PEMEX's owners, the Mexican government. They were harassed and broken up by thugs from the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party and by plainclothes police.

The continuing outrage finally forced the government to admit PEMEX's responsibility. In January, they began to pay surviving residents for loss of property, but not for injuries and death.

Jamaican unrest

Protests broke out all over this island nation of 2.1 million in January, as Black youths expressed their anger at President Edward Seaga's Reagan-type economic policies. Five were killed and over 20 were injured when Seaga abruptly raised the prices of gasoline and cooking oil by 21%. In the last year under Seaga, food prices have nearly doubled, and malnutrition stalks the land.

A tin of milk costs \$2 and chicken backs are \$1.90/lb. in a country where the average income is only \$50 per week (\$39 for women). Seaga is a favorite of the International Monetary Fund since he cheerfully implements austerity measures which they have to force other governments to do. Despite four years of economic "success" as touted by the IMF and Reagan, Jamaican unemployment stands at 25%, and Seaga plans to lay off 11,000 more government workers of the less than 100,000 remaining.

Today Seaga is faced with a new type of opposition on the streets, at the very time when his popularity has hit a new low. All of this has U.S. imperialism very worried, despite its crowing about the "famous victory" in tiny Grenada. For now Jamaica has followed the Dominican Republic and Haiti in experiencing food riots.

Who We Are and What We Stand For

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 a new human society based on the principles of Marx's Humanism as recreated for our day.

News & Letters was created so that the voices of revolt from below could be heard not separated from the articulation of a philosophy of liberation. A Black production worker, Charles Denby, author of *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*, 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. At a time when the nuclear armed world is threatened with the extinction of civilization itself it becomes imperative not only to reject what is, but to reveal the revolutionary Humanist future inherent in the present.

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. We organized ourselves in Committees rather than any elitist party "to lead." The development of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S., 1941 to Today, is recorded in the documents and on microfilm available to all under the title, *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, on deposit at the Labor History Archives of Wayne State University.

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. Anyone who is a participant in these freedom struggles for totally new relations and a fundamentally new way of life, and who believes in these principles, is invited to join us. Send for a copy of the Constitution of News and Letters Committees.