

# May Day Shock Waves Resound



Jay Dahl

May 1st march in Chicago.

N.Y. Garment Worker on May 1st:

# “The Only Great Pleasure I’ve Had in Coming to This Country . . .”

In New York City one of the places where May Day has had a profound effect is among workers—many from Latin American countries—who slave in the streets and in the sweatshops of the garment center. Last issue we reported that one Dominican worker said that, to the best of his knowledge hundreds of workers did not go to work on that day. Since then more workers have told of well over 100 workers who stayed off their jobs on that day. Some of them simply stayed home, others went to the doorways of different shops struggling with their co-workers to take up May Day.

One older Spanish-speaking worker told us how he'd never seen this kind of enthusiasm and excitement over May Day before. It is true for a number of foreign-born workers, that May Day is a part of their tradition and of the revolutionary movement of their respective countries. But this was a revolutionary May Day in the USA, where class-conscious workers of many nationalities stood with the working class of the world proclaiming their intentions to whip U.S. imperialism's ass when the time is right and what was especially important for these foreign-born workers was the question of whether the U.S. workers would take up May Day.

300 red flags were sold in the garment center and many were hoisted on top of pushcarts and racks on the streets on Red Flag/Internationale Day. The Internationale was sung in different languages. 700 copies of the *Revolutionary Worker* were sold in the week before May Day.

What has come to light since May 1st itself is that a good number of these garment workers took actions on their own. Leroy, an older Black worker, not yet convinced of the need for revolution, nonetheless struggled with his fellow workers to stage an early exit from work. David, a delivery worker, stayed off the job and joined up with



the march particularly because of the escalating moves toward war by the two superpowers. “I’m against the draft . . . when they call me I won’t go. I’ll fight for every right I have. Nobody’s going to make me go.” A Puerto Rican woman who works in a garment shop downtown came to the rally site early with her homemade flag say-

ing that she just had to come to May Day to build the unity of the working class.

We talked to one brother who had been in this country for less than a year, coming to live in the United States from Ecuador, whose insight and revolutionary understanding of May Day speak well of the impact May Day had

on the working class and on the advances that must still be made right now.

**RW:** Did you get to see the new issue of the *RW*?

**W:** It’s very good. I haven’t read it all yet because I haven’t had much time. I read part of the speech by Comrade

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## Letters About May Day

Dear R.C.P.,

I’m writing to tell you I joined in the May Day march in Oakland. It was my first political rally in my life. I fought all the fears about coming. My Dad told me not to go but I broke ranks and did go. I was there waving my red flag which I made myself, then I bought one at the rally and I bought a *Revolutionary Worker* which a young girl revolutionary asked me to give her to sell to a transit driver. On the bus about 20 RCYB members were singing the Internationale. At the rally I heard a speaker talk about our comrade and brother Damian who was murdered by the pigs. I feel terrible about it but I know his memory will live on because his dream and life was not in vain but was for a cause. I’m not a member of your party. But I feel like one. If May Day was every day I’d be there. I really enjoyed making my stand. The May Day parades in Moscow and Cuba were traitor’s mock May Day. These revisionists must be overthrown. Their oppression will see to this. All I want to say is I was proud to march at your May Day rally. The news media said thousands didn’t come out as you expected. But we know better. We set the example. We made our stand. I fear I might be in jail one of these days so I’ll look back and say, ya, I marched on May Day 1980.

Sincerely yours,  
Dennis

In my personal opinion, and that of some friends, we feel that this year’s May Day had a greater momentum than ever, and I am sure that this year will play a very important role in the international history of the workers and oppressed classes, who are constantly exploited by empires; we must also bear in mind that when you fight against big powers, like the capitalist empire of the United States; only unity can be decisive in order to totally defeat these empires which, like an octopus, are expanding more and more everyday.

For example, the situation of the people of Puerto Rico, where there is

not complete freedom because there, since 1898, the yankee empire invaded our territory, and since then, next to our flag, flies the flag with fifty stars as a symbol of the insulting and shameful colonialism to which the people of the working class of Puerto Rico are subjected; that’s why I am making a call to all oppressed and exploited classes to unite in a coalition, and help us destroy what that flag with fifty stars represents; and raise the flag of freedom and of the working class.

Signed: A Group of Patriotic Puerto Ricans who Marched on May Day

The following message to the Houston May Day Committee 1980 was received from a revolutionary Brazilian doctor, who first heard about May Day 1980 when he bought the April 18th edition of the *Revolutionary Worker* on the streets of Houston:

Brazil is now under a military dictatorship supported by American imperialism, most of the authentic workers’ leaders have been killed, put in jail or exiled in the last 10 years. An incredible machine of death, torture, and repression was created with the support of the U.S.—CIA. The exploitation of the workers, the destruction of our natural resources, the expropriation of the peasant lands by the American imperialist companies, can only occur because the working class and their leaders are brutally repressed.

Millions of Brazilians suffer and die of malnutrition, infectious diseases, occupational diseases, etc., but all these diseases have a common agent—a brutal economic system of exploitation.

The recent strike of 250,000 metal workers in Sao Paulo is only one example of the bravery of these workers fighting the bourgeoisie, even under such hard dictatorship. Helicopters with machine-guns didn’t scare these workers. The assassination of the workers’ leader—Santos Dias—last November brought thousands of workers to protest in the streets of Sao Paulo against such brutal repression.

Today, the Brazilian working class is united in the workers’ day—May 1st. Today is not a day to be commemorated. It is a day to fight, until the end of all exploitation of one nation by another nation, of one man by another man.

Dear Revolutionary Worker,

I watched the Revolutionary May Day marches on TV and I’ve seen the Rich man’s police and reactionary agents of the capitalists attack the working class and their holiday. I will give you an idea of the struggle around May Day in this Ohio prison. On Flag day a brother refused to return to work while he was singing the Internationale on an outside work gang here. He was taken to the hole and shipped to the Columbus Facility where he will stay in isolation for six months. The day before May Day another brother refused to work and he spent May Day in the hole and he’s also on his way to the Columbus Prison. I give my solid solidarity to the comrades that took part in May Day 1980 and demand that they all be freed at once.

A Revolutionary Prisoner  
Ohio Prison  
London, Ohio

## May 1st Mail-In Art Show

# Internationalism—Wall to Wall

San Francisco's Mayor, Diane Feinstein, along with the rich and chic art patrons can usually be found at the openings of cultural events, eyeing not the art, but gossiping about who's who and who's with whom. But they were no-shows at the opening of the Poster Brigade's May Day Mail-In Art Show at the Intersection Gallery.

This gaggle of bourgeois geese, with the Arts Commission fronting for them, had already tried unsuccessfully to sabotage the show by demanding the downing of the billboard advertising it (see *RW* April 25th). But the billboard still stands and thousands see it daily. In fact the Mayor's gang were not only no-shows, they were definitely *not welcome* at this event, because the May Day Mail-In Art Show went right in the face of the ruling class and their culture and shattered the rule that an art gallery is a place for expensive, esoteric, insidious and decadent pictures and people.

From all four walls a wide range of rebel art tears into the imperialist system, rips through its hypocritical brutishness and fights to reach freedom. What an inspiring and liberating place for class-conscious workers and all revolutionary and progressive-minded people to go to. Your sights are immediately lifted far beyond the boundaries of this country as posters from Stockholm, Sweden, with the date "1 Maj" emblazoned like red-hot steel across a black background, call people to the May Day demonstrations. Another one from Paris calls people into the streets for International Workers Day. From West Germany there is a series of political postcards. Woodcuts from Japan depicting workers' struggles after World War 2 and one that hails the last May Day before the war in 1932, as workers carrying red flags clash with Japanese troops. And from Brazil, to beat the government censors, an artist depicts himself surrounded by photo negatives of friends killed by the dictatorship and on his outstretched tongue is a symbol of justice. From Ireland, photographs showing the struggle against British occupation in the north, while right next to them are powerful pictures from England—close-ups of street battles of the Bengalese against the racist National Front. And from punkrockers in Holland, a postcard saying "Rock Against Beatrix," preparing for the coronation demonstrations.

Posters from Australia demand liberation for East Timor and advertise for International Women's Day. Italy, Portugal, Canada, Chile and more grace the walls of the gallery. And certainly the revolution in Iran is captured

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Top: Painting submitted by Iranian student.

### More May Day Reports

# May 1st Erupts Across the Country (Part 2)

In the last issue of the *RW*, we reported on May Day demonstrations in key cities around the country. The following are reports from other areas where May Day demonstrations took place.

#### Atlanta

At the crack of dawn a local DJ noted "reports on revolutionary traffic problems on this May Day morning." Throughout the day TV and radio programming was interrupted with updates on May Day activities. Never before was so much attention devoted to a demonstration. Government buildings were locked, with extra guards posted.

State employees, workers in a department store, and those at a chemical plant received company memos informing that anyone absent May 1 would be fired. At the assembly point for the march, 125 riot control police, scores of motorcycle and mounted police, FBI and GBI (Georgia Bureau of Investigation—"Red Squad") agents and a SWAT team waited. They were joined by a rag-tag collection of creeps, clutching their red, white and blue dishrags,

sporting "Send Commies to Iran" T-shirts. The lines were clearly and sharply drawn. In small groups the slaves broke free from plants, schools and housing projects—some just stayed home, others arrived at the park. Red flags began to be unfurled. Reactionaries launched an attack to seize a red banner and were beaten back, but the police used this as an excuse to ring the demonstrators, at that point numbering about 50, and refused to let anyone else join them.

Outside police lines, debate raged between reactionaries and those who had come to May Day. "Is this the dividing line?" one man asked police, referring to their ring. "Yeah," they replied. "Well, I'll stand here because I'm neutral," he said. Another stepped forward to proclaim, "Then I'll stand inside the ring, 'cause that's my side." "I'm not a socialist, I'm not a communist," one man said, "but this government's gotta be overthrown, it's the worst one that's ever existed in the world." Some press estimated that the crowd had swelled to 2,500.

The march departed, ringed by police

&co. On the side marched about 100 people, who had come to support the May Day march, but who were prevented by police from actually joining the march. Among those who broke through was a white carpenter who said, "I don't know that I'm for everything you're for, but I know I'm against what you're against," pointing at the cops and reactionaries. One white woman, recently laid off from a factory job, drove 20 miles from her home in a small town to join the march after reading about it in the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*. "I'm here because I missed the '60s," exclaimed a high school student. At the march's triumphant conclusion, demonstrators boarded a flat-bed truck, red flags streaming. People lining the sidewalks cheered and raised their fists. One Black man broke into a run and leaped before the truck, grabbing the largest flag. "Let me hold that flag, that's my flag!" he said. A city worker for 19 years, he had met the May Day Brigade in jail. "I marched in Alabama (the civil rights movement—*RW*), I've been waiting for this

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Along the May 1st march in Washington, D.C.

## Erupts

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a long time, I knew this day would come!" he explained.

In 5:30 rush hour traffic, marchers reassembled to sing the *Internationale*, calling on people to pick up the red flag. About 15 joined, grabbing flags and stacks of *Revolutionary Workers*, calling on others to join too. "This is great! It's what we needed for a long time!" exclaimed a Black youth who had just joined. "Come on!" he called to his friends, "let's go wave our red flags in front of the press and tell them to make sure they put this on TV!" Scowling cops began to gather, including the SWAT team. The flatbed truck and a van were impounded, the drivers arrested. In the face of this attack, a march began through downtown, tailed and soon ringed by the cops. Many who had just joined waved *Revolutionary Workers* and red flags right in the cops' faces and called on others to join. Many bystanders cheered and held up *Revolutionary Workers* and showed support as the march passed. One man defiantly dragged supporters through police lines to buy an *RW*. "Is that all right with you?" he asked the cops, his voice dripping with venom. As cops began to arrest several marchers, three more women joined in response to this attack.

The spark lit on May 1st is still burning in the hearts of the thousands it touched around Atlanta. Debate is still raging. Far from being the actions of a few "isolated malcontents" as May Day was painted in the media, the red

flag was raised last Thursday as the voice of thousands in Atlanta alone who hate this system and are drawn to revolution.

### Cincinnati

While there was no demonstration in Dayton (as attention was focused on May Day events in nearby Cincinnati), it has recently been learned that workers at Dayton Press organized a meeting on Wednesday, April 30, to discuss May Day. This was in response to company-organized meetings designed to intimidate workers from joining May Day. On the day before May Day, 50 workers met and debated about it well past the lunch period, and only stopped when guards and foremen broke up the discussion. One of the meeting's organizers said later: "This May Day accomplished more than this United States has ever seen... these people in the U.S. are congregating now and they are going to get together and did get together, which I wish we had done 5 or 10 years ago. And I want people to hear this." He pointed to the plant and said, "This red flag, the company doesn't want it over there. But I raised that red flag."

On May Day in Cincinnati, as the march of 80 people approached an unemployment office, the cops freaked that more would join in. They formed a solid wall between the march and the office, drawing their clubs to make their point clear. Still some broke through. One unemployed white truck driver jumped in, declaring, "I'm tired of being a closet case, because everything this revolution stands for I've been thinking for years." The effect was electrifying. More people

## Red Flag Flies in Face of Troops—Latin America

In Latin America, where in the last decade the U.S. has imposed one military dictatorship after another to maintain the miserable conditions which have made this continent so profitable for U.S. imperialism, there were a number of very important May Day demonstrations which took place under conditions of strict illegality and fierce repression. They indicate that the flames of revolution which led to the overthrow of the hated Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua last year are beginning to spread throughout the continent.

In Brazil, run by an open military dictatorship which for years now has bragged about wiping out all resistance, 150,000 striking auto workers celebrated May Day by forcing the police to surrender a sports stadium and taking it over. These workers have been waging an illegal strike since the beginning of April against Ford, Chrysler and Volkswagen—companies whose names give an idea of who Brazil is run for. Although the demands are for no more than a 10% wage increase, the strike has become one of the most massive acts of defiance against the military regime in years, and for that reason has won widespread support throughout Brazil, including among prominent forces within the Catholic church and the bourgeois opposition. On May 1, strikers in Sao Bernardo, a suburb of the industrial city of Sao Paulo—which has been described as "the working-class capital of Brazil" since the strike began—held a rally in a church where they decided to march on the city stadium, which had been occupied for weeks by thousands of militarized police with armed cars, mounted patrols, and helicopters. As the marchers neared their goal, the police, who had prohibited all marches and meetings, found themselves faced with the choice of either opening fire on several thousand determined workers while the whole country watched, or retreating. For the time being they withdrew their forces from the area.

In San Salvador, capital city of El Salvador, about 5000 people succeeded in holding an impressive May Day march despite the threat that the Army would prevent it. The demonstrators, "hiding weapons in gym and shopping bags" according to some reports, marched three abreast for 20 blocks and then held a rally in the central market, chanting "Death to the Junta!" and "Down with U.S. imperialism!" and other revolutionary slogans.

In the city of Santa Ana, about 50 miles to the west, fighting between government forces and revolutionaries broke out throughout the night before May Day, leading to the deaths of a number of police and national guardsmen in the storming of a police station.

In Guatemala, which the U.S. companies, whose guns keep banana-picking cheap, have the nerve to call "a banana republic," two men painting revolutionary slogans on the walls were cut down by machine-gun fire. Nevertheless, the main streets of the capital were filled with May Day marchers, many of whom wore scarfs to hide their faces and blankets painted with slogans.

In Uruguay, under military rule since a CIA coup in 1973, May Day marchers also defied a ban on all demonstrations. Apparently fearing a workers' protest, massive numbers of soldiers surrounded an auto assembly plant in the center of Montevideo and forced the workers waiting outside the gates to enter the plant at bayonet point. One worker was shot down in cold blood.

In additional news from Chile (see last week's *RW*), the number of arrests there in connection with May Day has risen to well over 500, overwhelmingly coming before May Day itself. In the days following the street demonstrations and secret meetings which occurred in Santiago May 1, several armed attacks have been carried out against military authorities, including the military intelligence barracks.

started following the demonstration on the sidewalk. One last effort by organized reactionaries to foul up May Day by taking over the town square where the march was to end failed also. The May Day demonstration ringed the square as voices rang out with the *Internationale*.

It has been learned that at a Cincinnati hospital, there was a worker who had told his friends at work that he was going to the march. But when May 1st came, he went to work instead. Eight other workers gave him hell all day long, they wanted a first-hand account of the march from him, they accused him of not being serious. So he ended up criticizing himself, and later called the Workers Center because he wanted help in starting an *RW* network.

### Houston

For weeks the local ruling class was preparing to stop May Day. Nazi scum were unleashed to threaten that Travis Morales (one of the Moody Park 3), stating that he wouldn't live through May Day. "Communist blood will flow on the streets," said the Nazis. City officials denied the parade permit. Assorted reactionaries tried to stop the march before it took off from Moody Park. Slobs in "Comms Suck" T-shirts, openly displaying guns, tried to goad marchers into a confrontation. 49 marked and 12 unmarked police cars were stationed along the march route.

Sixty staunch forces defied this show of reactionary force, changing the march route to outwit the pigs. The march approached downtown and proceeded in the shadow of the huge corporate oil buildings. At the Pennzoil building, middle management types

were out front, heckling, saying they were sent down to protect their masters' building. Three secretaries had signs, "Send Travis back to the Ayatollah." A counter-demonstration started, chanting "Down with the Red..."—and a young Chicana added, "...white and blue!" People joined the May Day march, and a former prisoner made up a chant on the spot: "Damian is here! Damian is here!"

Two days later, after May Day, a broadcaster on KPFC radio said, "I saw a sight I thought I'd never see on the streets of Houston. Fifty or sixty communists with red flags and everything, marching right down Main Street. It was an awesome sight."

### Portland

A mural of Damian Garcia atop the Alamo, emblazoned with bright red letters across the sky, "Viva Damian, Viva La Bandera Roja" marked the site where the May Day rally began. Over 100 people gathered at the rally as a Black brother read the poem "I Came Alive" dedicated to Damian (see last week's *RW*). Glaring at a crowd of idiots who had appeared dressed in "Fuck you, Iran" T-shirts, he finished with, "This is International Workers Day, this march isn't going to be stopped by guys like you or anybody else."

With this, 80 marched out of the park and through downtown Portland, drawing hundreds to follow on both sides of the street. Fistfights broke out periodically all day long; at one point, reactionaries tried to block the march. A Gray Panther grabbed for a bigger stick and charged through the middle to make way for the demonstration. May Day could not be stopped.

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# Pigs in L.A. Conspiracy to Stop May Day Exposed

Los Angeles—With every passing day, the conspiracy against May Day in Southern California in particular becomes increasingly exposed. The latest revelation occurred on May 8th, a full week after May Day, when attorneys for the 28 people arrested during the cowardly and unsuccessful police attack on the demonstration, discovered that no charges had yet been filed against any of the defendants. The reason? The city attorney's office hasn't yet figured out what "crimes" the demonstrators are supposedly guilty of—"crimes" that would theoretically justify the clubbings, tear gas, and police charge that attempted to smash the demonstration and arrest all the participants. 16 of those arrested had been booked on charges of "failure to disperse," but even the police were forced to admit, after numerous witnesses and reporters said so, that no order to disperse had ever been given. In fact, one of those illegally grabbed on this non-existent crime had his arm broken in three places. As we go to press, the city attorney in charge of this case-without-a-case has announced that it will take at least two more days of "meetings" to fabricate whatever formal charges will be leveled.

This latest disclosure came out in an L.A. Municipal Court hearing at what was supposed to have been the arraignment of at least one of those arrested. However, the court appearance was turned into an opportunity for some news media and the FBI to refuse to turn over their tapes, notes, etc. on May Day—all items which had been subpoenaed by the defense. (The FBI, putting on their "We don't do that stuff anymore" act, innocently claimed that they had no information. Perhaps their attorneys showed up to advise the media on how to respond to the subpoenas.) Despite the obvious fact that any of this material that is damaging to the police is likely to be destroyed by these organizations, the judge ruled that since there aren't any charges filed yet, there is no legal basis to subpoena the information. "Catch 22"—since there are no charges, you can't have the info; when there are charges, there won't be any info.

In the months and weeks preceding May Day in L.A., 78 arrests were made of people organizing for the demonstration. No matter what part of town the arrests took place in, the comments and threats from the pigs were the same—"You're going to be in jail on May First...and so are your friends." "May First, huh? That's the day when we separate the men from the boys." "I can see we are going to have to do a little attitude adjustment on the whole damn RCP." "People with your attitude often 'commit suicide' in jail." These threats were sometimes accompanied by beatings and other forms of physical intimidation. But instead of driving people away from May Day and the Party, the opposite was occurring, as more people became inspired by May Day actions across the country, including the Alamo takeover, and began to understand the very real fear the bourgeoisie and its enforcers were experiencing. So, the authorities ordered the planned political execution of Damian Garcia by police agents and the attempt on Hayden Fisher's life at the same time.

But still, their conspiracy was not having the desired result. In fact, outrage over Damian's murder was widespread and threatened to be translated into greater action in the streets on May First. Suddenly, after stalling on the question for weeks, the LAPD and the Police Commission loudly announced on April 29 that they were de-

nying the application for a parade permit for May Day. Visibly shaken at the thought of the march going through the downtown area, including the garment district where there are literally thousands of foreign-born workers who love the sight of the red flag flying in the belly of the beast, they whined, "This would be an unprecedented disruption." The police trumpeted the message that any move into the street will constitute an illegal assembly—and everyone will be arrested." The news media echoed the announcement, with some stations trying to give the impression that the march would be cancelled.

When the battle for the permit got taken into Superior Court the following day, the hand of the top circles of the ruling class could be seen. At first, the judge, well-known as a big-hearted liberal, stated with a relaxed smile on his face that "The police commission is being unreasonable," and ordered the police to negotiate with the May Day organizers for a march route. Of course, as soon as the judge left the chambers, the cops refused. When the court reconvened, the judge had undergone a sudden transformation: with a dour expression on his face, and his eyes darting nervously around the room, the judge said, "I have reviewed your moving papers and other factors...the commission has a right to impose restrictions." In other words, no permit. Just what "other factors" the judge was referring to were never spelled out, but it was clear that he had been given the same message as the rest—stop May Day or else.

But when the open threats connected with their permit denial also proved to be miserable failures, they launched the attack on the march itself, informally announcing to reporters ahead of time that they were going to smash the demonstration before it reached downtown. This also failed, as the march regrouped and victoriously reached its destination. Now, the authorities are having some difficulty summing up the situation and figuring out who to blame and how to counter-attack. A police commission meeting following May Day was the scene of some of this difficulty. Police Chief Darryl Gates defended the action of his pigs, saying, "Our feelings (were) that this may cause a great deal of chaos if this got into the downtown area." One commission member began arguing with him, questioning whether "it might not have been better to allow the demonstration..." claiming that "we did just what the demonstrators wanted, which was violence."

This rather transparent attempt to turn opinion against May Day—that the police attack was "just what the demonstrators wanted"—has been echoed by some of the news media, with some even making the ridiculous assertion that the demonstrators smeared red dye on their faces to simulate blood. (So far, no one has claimed that the demonstrators brought needle and thread to the march to simulate the stitches a number of them received, but that may be next.)

On May 8, as part of the tit-for-tat battle, the RCP and the United May Day Committee announced the filing of a legal suit in Federal Court, as a beginning step in exposing the overall conspiracy to stop May Day on the part of the LAPD and other government agencies. This suit will help turn up the heat even more on the bourgeoisie. The battle of May Day '80 is far from over; in fact, while the ruling class is still feeling the aftershocks, there are some 10-point quakes still to come.



One week before May 1st: Students at Mission Jr. High School in San Francisco reach for red flag.

## May 1st Press Coverage Scandalous Delegation Slams S.F. Chronicle

On May 6th, as reporters, printers, editors and other Chronicle employees crowded over to one side of the office, the myth of freedom of the press was getting another nail driven into its coffin. A 9 person delegation was arrested by San Francisco pigs. A 9 person delegation made up of workers and others who had marched on May 1st or who had supported May Day, along with written statements condemning the media lies, were demanding that the Chronicle's city desk retract the slanders and bald faced lies spewed out in the paper's pages about events concerning May Day. The arrests were the Chronicle's response.

The Chronicle's coverage was truly vile and insidious. For example, prior to May Day one reporter spent a whole day with a squad of May Day Brigaders in the Fruitvale area in Oakland during a period in which over 100 Revolutionary Workers were sold, contacts made and an older woman joined up to march with the Brigade. The article that was finally printed based on the day's activities was nothing but an attack. It called the RCP a bunch of violence prone "middle class radicals" and said that the Brigaders would harass people with their newspapers and that the masses responded in "amusement." The outrageous slander continued. On May 2nd the paper attempted to portray the Bay Area May Day demo as a circus with their front page splash running a picture that made it seem like a skateboarder was leading the march, which they said consisted of only 300—the march was in reality over 3 times that size. Now the

Chronicle's pages have slammed shut in the realization that even their lies were calling a lot of attention to May Day so they decided to bury it in silence.

Some people at the Chronicle had their eyes and ears opened a little wider as a result of the May 6th delegation, as the editor's real page boys, San Francisco pigs, did their thing. Three reporters responded by buying Revolutionary Workers, each saying that they knew the San Francisco Chronicle lied and it was right on to be up there. One asked how he could get a May Day poster. Outside the Chronicle building, crowds gathered and a number of Chronicle employees followed the arrested delegation right to the paddy wagon. Sixty Revolutionary Workers were sold that afternoon.

To dozens of Chronicle employees up there in the editor's office, a profound self-exposure took place before their eyes. The charade of "free press" was shown to be just that—a charade. In case one or two of them doubted it, they could peruse the Chronicle's pages in the next day's issue for some "objective reporting" on news that happened right inside their offices. Would they find anything? Not a word.

(Below are two statements condemning the media attacks on revolutionary May Day 1980)

The aims of the May Day celebration—one expressed by the *Internationale*; "Arise, ye wretched  
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# Erupts

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## Hawaii

"I was so proud of you! I was so proud to be there!" cried a woman who walked eight miles alongside the May Day march. As 50 took to the streets, hundreds came out of houses to watch, listen and follow the demonstration. For the first time, the news on May 1st couldn't focus on "Lei Day" in Hawaii—the fake alohas, "sing and dance your troubles away" holiday. No one could ignore International Workers Day.

The atmosphere was tense as the marchers gathered in the park on the morning of May 1st. The night before, uniformed police following in the footsteps of union goons descended on a small sugar plantation town outside Honolulu. They banged on doors, threatening workers, focusing on some Filipino immigrants without citizenship papers. "Watch out if you want your son's face," an off-duty pig told a young father. Just in case this wasn't enough, the sugar company called in five cops to guard the entrance to the shop from 5:30 a.m. on, afraid that these Filipino workers would dare to join their American-born brothers and sisters on May Day. Their fears were justified—some did join.

A week before May Day, waitresses at the Sheraton Waikiki were setting up for a banquet where Marcos, the dic-

tator and U.S. puppet in the Philippines, was to speak. They drove the Secret Service and Honolulu police up the wall by waving red napkins in these agents' faces. One woman climbed on top of a shelf to hold the red cloth even higher. Another refused to work on May 1st. The company, afraid of a large-scale revolt if they fired her, changed her schedule.

As the May Day march moved from Chinatown to Waikiki, the heart of aloha land, tourists' faces registered shock. A few feebly yelled, "Go back to Russia." At that point, a Hawaiian woman from the march grabbed the mike: "My mother had a job, she worked down here in the hotels and it damn near killed her. The last day I saw her alive, she was trying to get dressed to go to work so she could get food in our mouths. What kind of system does that to people? I'm pissed, I'm really pissed. . . . I won't defend the red, white and blue rag."

## Boston

Fifty people, some from as far away as Rhode Island and New Hampshire, rallied at Blackstone Park to march. One high school youth spoke, proud that he had been suspended for organizing for May Day. (The next day he returned to school, wearing a red armband, his shirt covered with buttons, determined to throw the backward's shit back in their faces.)

As the march wound through several projects, red flags hung from windows, hundreds came out of their houses to march on the sidewalks, with many taking to the streets for blocks—marching

for May Day and the revolutionary future.

Reports reached the May Day Committee that a large fountain at Boston University sprayed red water on May 1st, and a red flag was planted at the entrance to the ROTC building.

Earlier in the morning at a General Electric plant—scene of a debate on company time the day before over the red flag vs. the red, white and blue—workers were given time off to rally in front of the gate for patriotism. So few came that reactionaries had to be imported.

In reaction to the revolutionary ferment stirred up by May Day, four interns at Shaddick Hospital called in sick. They circulated a petition against a doctor active in organizing for May Day, which stated in part that this doctor was unprofessional, mixing politics with medicine, and that those who signed refused to work with him any longer. Their puffed-up plans backfired. The petition had to be withdrawn for lack of signatures.

## Seattle

The local authorities worked overtime to keep workers chained to their machines on May Day. At Bethlehem Steel, beginning the evening before May 1st, guards were stationed around the entire plant. All gates were locked, cars were allowed inside one by one, lunch boxes were searched going inside and outside the plant. Some backward workers were given the job of cutting pieces of rebar (recycled steel) to be used against anyone daring to walk out. In the face of all this, one Black worker

not only declared he was walking out in support of May Day, but did so. Another older worker, confronted by a ring of reactionaries at the time clock, refused to punch out and headed straight for the march. At a meat packing plant, workers who stayed on the job were treated to donuts and coffee—a small price for slavery.

May Day was not kept from the streets of Seattle. As several hundred gathered at Garfield High School, the rally site, provocateurs, klansmen and undercover cops wormed through the crowd, inciting arguments and a few fistfights. A teacher from the high school was sent out to rope the youth back indoors; another Black teacher who had taken the day off called on the students to march. "This is what's going on in the world. You need to be out here." Some in the crowd wavered; others were whipped up by a handful to start throwing rocks and bottles. The marchers formed rank and began the 7-mile route, 110 strong. One older Chicano worker, hit in the nose by a brick, was taken to the hospital. Undaunted, he had his broken nose bandaged, and, holding a bright red banner, was at the Pike Place market to greet the demonstration as it neared the end. A taxi driver who parked his cab for the day summed up the march: "The bourgeoisie looks at proletarian revolution as a disease, they try to isolate and kill it. I look at Revolutionary May Day as a main line to the body. . . . they couldn't stop it. . . . actually I should add it was a real booster shot to the advanced." □

# Pleasure

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Bob and other articles and it's very interesting to see how in every part of this country people have marched and made May First International Workers Day be felt.

**RW:** Well, I wanted to talk to you, to go deeper into what this particular May Day represented to you and what you think it represented to the working class in general.

**W:** Listen, for me it was a tremendous pleasure, in fact the only great pleasure I have had in coming to this country was to find here, too, there are people concerned with the working class. I thought before coming to this country that here I would only find slaves who were not trying to struggle to overcome this situation and for a better life for all, so that the world would not only be in the hands of a few. In terms of May Day, the day of the workers, it is a great day for all workers not only here but around the world. And for me it was a joy to be here when for the first time in history May Day was celebrated in this country, that is the first time it was celebrated on the very day that comrades in Chicago gave their lives to win some betterment for the working class [referring to the Haymarket murders]. And we could sum up that the class-conscious workers in this country have taken it with great joy, much welcome, this May First. The marches were great and have been looked on favorably by the working class, some which joined the marches and others who if they didn't march, they didn't go to work and others, without marching were looking to this day, awaiting the news of this day, this day which was a slap in the face of the ruling class who think that workers should be always submerged in the factories working like slaves and never straightening their backs. It was a great pleasure for me to see that not only here in New York City did people march but that we also have a Party, the Revolutionary Communist Party, our Party, that is organized and that organizes many others in other cities. To me this was tremendous to see how comrades like in the May Day Brigades and others have gone from city to city and called on other workers without fear of repression that this action brings with it. The Party organized different comrades so that they would travel from other cities and organize the workers. This has been a great task that the Party took up. Of this I feel particularly proud although I do not yet belong to the Party, but I feel proud

and satisfied to see that work is being carried out well. . . .

**RW:** When you came to the march what happened?

**W:** Yes, I was at Union Square, in the park. I was there for a moment because I had arranged to meet with a Dominican comrade who it seems also has leftist tendencies. We can work well with this comrade. We had arranged to meet in front of the shop. From Union Square I left to go back to the shop but I got there a little late and the comrade had already gone off to work. So then I went up and made the comrade get off work. I told him, "Look, we have something more important to do than this stuff." So he told the boss that he had "something to do" and the boss said no problem. And everyone gathered together and walked to a place where we used to work on 36th Street where other comrades had also stayed out of work. So we started to talk about this May First and what they thought about it, that it is not only that we do not work today, because this is our day, this is the day that we the working class take up the red flag. I told them this in this way because the comrades had distributed the red flags around here. We can carry the red flag as a sign of protest against so many injustices that are committed in this country, so much malice and that we should change the system. We should march, comrades, and struggle to change this rotten system, and then many comrades were in agreement. There were 4 or 5 comrades there who hadn't gone to work either—Hispanics—for in general in our country this day we do not work. For example, in my country, Ecuador, on that day we march in protest against the injustices which are also committed throughout all Latin America and just to change the subject a little bit, we workers in Latin America are also exploited and we struggle to break this yoke under which we live because our countries are essentially subjugated by U.S. imperialism, this imperialism which is infiltrated into all parts of the world and that we have to get rid of, however we can, as soon as possible. Like another comrade said, "Either we advance to revolution or world war will be upon us." It is true what that comrade said.

**RW:** What kind of things were the other workers saying?

**W:** Well, they were in accord with the question, they were in agreement with, for example, the march, because let me repeat, they are Latin American and the majority of Latin Americans are conscious that the First of May is a great day for the working class and that we

cannot waste this day and we have to raise our fists in a sign of protest for all the injustices and all the abuses that they have committed against the people. So we talked for awhile and we came to the conclusion that we the workers have to fight to overcome this system and the only way out, which I put to the comrades and with which they agreed, is that we have to struggle for the revolution, that we have to fight to change this rotten system. It is the only way forward, the only way out for us, the working class—millions of workers here die of hunger while these miserable millionaires do what they want with the workers. This can't go on. We see how the two great superpowers, the imperialists, are moving toward war. We talked about this to the comrades making some analysis of how the U.S. wants to sacrifice millions and that revolution is the only way out for us, because we are not going to go to the front lines to sacrifice for a cause which is unjust and this war is not going to benefit us in anything. The only thing it is going to do is bring us a miserable death.

**RW:** Were these workers in agreement with the march?

**W:** Yes, they were in agreement with the march because this was a key day for the working class and that it was a tremendous day and they couldn't believe it; they weren't sure that it was true, that not only we Hispanics would march, but also Americans, English speaking, were marching and they were surprised. Since when? Since when? A march on May Day, here? This has never happened before.

**RW:** Did these workers join with the march?

**W:** Well, I had to leave them, because then we went to XXth street where a cousin of mine works an elevator and talked with him for a while. He had a problem that if he missed work that day he would be fired. So he had that difficulty and I said I was going around with this Dominican comrade and I don't know if the guys I left at 36th Street joined the march or not. When I left them they had agreed to join the march. I don't know whether they did or not later on, but what I like is that these comrades came closer to an understanding, they came to see that our ideas are true, that we have to fight against the common enemy, that is the imperialists. And they said "Good, we didn't go to work because this is our day, that is a way we can protest against so many things, the way is by marching," so I encouraged them to join in the march. They said it was no problem, we'll join up. I'm glad I had the opportunity to

get down with these comrades because it's with this kind of struggle that we're going to strengthen the Party and continue advancing and struggle onwards and onwards because this is our only recourse.

We talked a bit with my cousin. I tried to talk about the First of May and what it means to us, the working class, and he accepted in general agreement. But unfortunately this day he couldn't do anything because he said, "I've been here for so many years and to lose my job now. . . ." He works in a building with four floors and he passes the day easily. He earns a lot of money so for him it becomes a little difficult to lose his job because then he'll have to start new in a factory. So that was his problem. He said "But I'm in agreement" and he talked to people in his building. Anyway, I left him a paper and I told him what you don't read in the yellow press that comes out daily you'll read it here. This is what's true. Things don't come out in the daily papers you'll find in here, what happens in Iran and all the parts that the North Americans try to cover up and put out in a way that they see it. Here you'll find the way it really is.

**RW:** With all the enthusiasm and excitement that did exist in the garment center, what held more workers back from coming forward to the march?

**W:** I think one of the fundamental reasons is that the working class is still not totally conscious, somewhat tremulous, a little bit nervous, a little bit disconcerted. And I say this in talking with other comrades too. For example, when you mention the word "communism" they get scared. Especially among the workers from Latin America, many say, "But look, check out what is happening in Cuba? What do you think about that? What does the paper say about it? Around this the paper has said little." Anyway, they check this out because at the present to them the red dot on the map today is Cuba, which they refer to as communism. When you say the word communism most Latin workers will say Cuba right away. So I think perhaps we have not brought forward more workers from the garment center, it's because they have not yet gotten very conscious. Perhaps we need more work to be done to penetrate more into the questions of the workers, to explain better the situation, to work more with the workers in the garment center to raise their consciousness.

I think that another reason why a lot of workers didn't go was fear of repression. People weren't sure if it was a legal march or not. They feared they

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May 1st rally in New York City.

## Inter- nationalism

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in this exhibit, inspiring a number of artists, both Iranian and non-Iranians alike. One postcard shows Iranian revolutionaries carrying garbage in the American flag while skyscrapers lean

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might be attacked, arrested and deported because a lot of these workers are illegal immigrants.

But next year there will be more marching on May Day. Many more will recognize that if one worker is jailed or killed all that means is that ten more will take his place without fear of repression. It is important for people to see that this is the way we have to fight—without fear of repression. Repression will come whether we struggle or not. We have to struggle without fear of repression and have foremost in our mind the question of revolution. For every act of repression, 10, 20, 100s even thousands will come forward. Look at the example of Damian Garcia.

We have our work cut out for us because workers today have blinders on their eyes, yet there are those who are tired of all this, who see no other way out except for radical change, who want to put forward the red flag and make a kind of system that is just and free of exploitation.

I want to make a call to all my Ecuadorian brothers and sisters to form ranks, and to other Latin American workers, to exert our influence. We have limitations because of our language but we can influence other workers who speak Spanish and call on them to join the revolutionary ranks and to do away with imperialism to work for a bright future.

The tasks ahead are very arduous, but not impossible. We have to find the ways, the formulas, the tactics and plans of how to unite and arm people with consciousness and draw them forward into action. We have to get this across to other workers and transmit to them the need to struggle, the need for revolution. We have to see that now that we've come to this point, especially after May Day, the first May Day that was celebrated in New York City and across the country, that the situation has intensified. The ruling class will find new ways to keep people from seeing their chains and to stop those who see their chains from breaking them. We have to redouble and intensify our work and not bow down to adversity, which is to give up and give in to defeat.

perilously to the side and a billboard beams, "Thanks Iran." And above it a 5' x 3' watercolor shows ranks and ranks of revolutionary Iranians and other nationalities, guns in hand, marching off the paper towards you, behind them a bright red sky with a hammer and sickle sun.

There are many styles of art here. A vast reservoir of paintings, postcards, photos and poetry and more. Graphics opposed to the draft. Even a stained glass replica of the RCYB symbol from West Virginia. There is a whole current that is inspired by the punk movement which nails the hypocrisy of "freedom and democracy." Pieces like the Capitol Building in D.C., bathed in light for a nighttime rally, with swastika streamers hanging from the facade. Or the one with an American eagle with a tiny swastika gleaming in its eye. Or the smiling Jimmy Carter, dressed in Gen. Pinochet's uniform, standing in front of a newspaper headline that reads—"No U.S. Forces in Iran Carter Says." Postcard art and color xerox graphics have become a very popular form for political art. They're cheap, easy to do, and can be sent anywhere and reach thousands. One particularly sharp postcard from England (their version of

"Truth in Advertising") shows a Fiat billboard that says, "If this car were a woman it would get its bottom pinched." Sprayed under it is, "If this woman were a car she'd run you down."

The art is angry, proud, rebellious, indicting and optimistic. And it comes from broad quarters. A number of famous artists have contributed to the May Day exhibit. Ralph Fasanella's primitive style depicts the Lawrence 1912 strike. The German poster artist, Staech sends revolutionary greetings and postcard reproductions of his work. Spain, famous for his underground comics, since the 1960s, sent a drawing of armed struggle in urban streets. And Cliff Joseph sent a commercially done poster from 1972 entitled, "Blackboard." On the blackboard the alphabet signifies the struggle for Black consciousness—like A = Ashanti, X = Malcolm X, N = Nat Turner, F = Freedom, etc. Joseph also sent a recently done poem that concludes: "You're closer to me comrade/Come stand beside me, try to see/The Light./Can't you feel a slight cool breeze./A sudden breath of air?/Lend me your hand, in strength./To move this stone./Look how the light increases/As we labor!"

The contributions of poetry are very

powerful. An epic poem entitled, "To Revolutionaries Who Think of Conforming When \$5 an Hour is Enough" calls out the system on all fronts. Or the verse accompanying a silkscreen from Black Graphics International of Detroit that goes, "To the enemy of the working class.../Time be's running out.../We say/Time running short/For world imperialism/Time on the proletarian side.../walking arm in arm. Comrades by our side.../As time.../We walk this day/May Day/Marching with our class/Men and women/Towards victory!"

There are also a number of works inspired by struggles like the International Hotel, the trial of Bob Avakian and the Mao Defendants, Damian Garcia, and May 1st, 1980. A number of grade school kids have sent in drawings about all these events—budding young revolutionary artists.

One woman, who before May Day had only painted floral scenes on silk, contributed a painting called "The Birth of Freedom." In it a woman is giving birth to a child facing two futures. On the right is the horrors of this system—the Pope, a General, a skeleton holding a bottle of baby formula (like that being exported by U.S. corporations and responsible for tens of thousands of infant deaths). This side is all blacks and grays. The artist chose to direct the emerging infant toward the bright future—depicted by flowers, sunlight, abundance and painted in greens, blues and yellows. "Until this show I always hated the world under capitalism but I never made the connection between my ideas and my art work," she told us. Inspired by the show and other artists' comments on her first political painting she vowed to do many more.

Another young artist, responsible for a number of scathing graphics comparing the U.S. government to Hitler did not put his stuff in the show until after the opening. As he put it, "I've seldom been together with other artists doing political work. I felt isolated. But this is really encouraging."

The opening itself drew between 250-300 people in the three hours that it lasted. The members of the Poster Brigade put a "conservative estimate of 1,000 people" that have seen the show so far—mostly people who are familiar with the gallery or who attend poetry readings or theatre performances there. But gallery staff people themselves have remarked on the unusually high numbers of people who are coming explicitly for the exhibit, especially since the billboard struggle hit the papers and Channel 9 TV.

It is a declaration of war and a declaration of hope for a brighter future. To paraphrase a line from a song by the Clash, "With trenches full of poets and artists, the ragged army fixes bayonets to fight the other line."

## Chronicle

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of the earth...—are ancient and honorable. To attack any of the diverse groups who celebrate this day—whether it be attacks and implicit calls to violence in the press, or right-wing vigilante actions, or *agent provocateur* tactics by the government—is a terrible mistake, of which this great country has an unmistakable and dreadful history, and against which all humanitarians, of whatever political persuasion, must raise loud voices, now and always.

Signed,  
David Fisher, Winner, Poetry  
Society of America  
William Carlos Williams Award  
1978

To the editor,

Your article regarding May Day is an outrageous insult to all workers in this country. You have attempted to depict the Bay Area march as a small group of loud protestors having some kind of gala event on skateboards. You obviously did not want your readers to know the real meaning of these demonstrations throughout this country and throughout the world.

The May Day marches that took place in the U.S. in 1980 were composed of hundreds (thousands throughout) but determined working class marches of all racial compositions who were calling for revolution. We shouted our slogans, made ourselves visible, despite numerous arrests (96 separate arrests for those who built for May Day), despite the murder of Damian Garcia, one of the members of the May Day Brigade. The police, courts, and business throughout this country knew that May Day would sharpen the struggle between classes and they therefore made an obvious public attempt to stop these demonstrations. It is no accident that police were in riot gear, hiding in garages all along the route. Intimidation did not work and never will. When the world crisis sharpens, the class conscious workers are ready to fight.

Your paper would like to depict May Day as a poorly attended, insignificant march. The fact is that it was attended by hundreds more than you wrote, who represent thousands in this country who cannot be bought off or threatened and who will fight for revolution.

Signed,  
Oakland Feminist Women's  
Health Center,  
May 6, 1980







*Marcha del Primero de Mayo en Portland, Oregon*

*May 1st march in Portland, Oregon*