

May Day 1980—Build the unity of the working class!

May Day, May 1, is the international working class holiday. The May tradition began right here in the U.S. nearly a hundred years ago and soon spread throughout the world to become an international symbol of the workers' struggle to free themselves from exploitation.

Ironically, in the U.S. today, May 1 has been forgotten by labor leaders and smeared and discredited by the government and the press. They have tried to make it appear that the historic battles which led up to May Day are strictly a thing of the past.

Key among these battles was the struggle for the eight-hour day, when nearly a half-million workers laid down their tools in the general strike of 1886. In related marches and demonstrations, police openly attacked the workers. In the case of the May 4 protest in Chicago's Haymarket Square, they actually threw a bomb into the crowd.

Editorial

The result was the frame-up and execution of the Haymarket Martyrs, whose tomb in Chicago's Waldheim Cemetery stands as a monument to the cause of working people everywhere:

What has all this got to do with today?

While working people have made progress since 1966, their basic situation remains unchanged. For one thing, the eight-hour day, for which the martyrs of Haymarket sacrificed their lives, is still not a reality.

The very company which was the target of the original May Day protest, International Harvester, is currently the scene of

a strike against, among other things, forced overtime. The six-month-long strike has in fact become the longest ever by the UAW.

In the midst of skyrocketing inflation and a threatened recession, practically everyone of the gains we won through long struggle is now being threatened. In the basic industries, such as auto and steel, tens of thousands of workers are being thrown on the unemployment lines due to plant closings. Carter's so-called anti-inflation plan is nothing but an all-out assault on the living standards of the working class.

Moreover, the main weight of these new attacks is being put on the shoulders of the minorities. Double-digit unemployment is now being coupled with Ku Klux Klan terror in cities across the land. In most urban centers, Black unemployment among youth is somewhere between 60% and 80%.

May Day is a time to bring together the various struggles of working people and unite the people of all nationalities on the basis of their common struggle. It is a day to stand up for the rights of the workers, including their right to organize as in Laurel, Miss., where Black and white workers are fighting for a union at Sanderson Farms and at J.P. Stevens textile mill in North Carolina. The growing struggle of government and service industry workers is paving the way for the whole working class in this effort.

Finally, May Day has historically been a day to fight for world peace and to oppose the threat of war and aggression. The workers hate war most because it is we who pay the heaviest price for it. Today the war danger is greater than at any time since the end of WWII, with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan heightening the danger of superpower conflict even more.

We call on all our readers to commemorate the working class holiday this year by taking part in local activities in their

Buy a space in the May Day Greetings Page

For the first time, *The Call* will publish a greetings page from our readers. It will be one way you and your organization can carry on the proud tradition of May Day—by helping us expand *The Call* in 1980.

For just \$10 per inch (1 inch deep by 1 1/2 inches wide), your community organization, store, newsletter or you and your friends can advertise who you are, and/or what you do. Your ad will be printed in the May 6 issue.

Please enclose a camera-ready ad, or \$5 extra for ad make up along with your message. But hurry. Deadline is April 25.

Name

Name of organization

Address

City/State/Zip

Message or ad to occupy _____ inches by _____ inches deep.

\$ _____ enclosed, payable to The Call, Box 5597, Chicago, Ill. 60680.

cities on or around May Day. Let's use this May Day as a stepping stone to build and unite the movement of the working class and oppressed people around the world. Let's join together to resist the new assault on our rights—to fight for world peace, to demand jobs or income, and oppose plant shutdowns and to smash Carter's attempt to make us pay the price for inflation.

Celebrate May Day, the workers holiday!