

"Cities, Labor, and Culture: Present Crises, Past Documents"

Four 16mm Film Screenings on Labor and Community Organizing
15 Nassau Street April 4, 11, 18, 25 at 7:30 PM

The film and discussion series is an attempt to connect past and present struggles of the labor movement and community organizing, as a way of considering what has changed, what is still the same, and more importantly, what can we learn in terms of past successes or failures"especially questions of how we organize, how we negotiate issues of race, class, gender, different labor sectors, changes in the labor market or housing/urban development issues. The series is also an attempt to counteract historical amnesia: of how we are conditioned to think that any hard-won victory for working people was handed to us on high, rather than being the product of struggles. But also, the films are experiments in participatory documentary filmmaking. The film series is about trying to remember those struggles, and hopefully, to bridge different generations of activists, and allow for discussions between labor and social justice movements and arts communities.

The film series is organized by CAMEL, a NYC collective working around the issues of labor, culture and economics, and, in general, attempting to build bridges between arts communities and social struggles.

All screenings will be held at 15 Nassau St. between Cedar and Pine, are free and open to the public, and will start at 7:30PM
Train: near Wall St, Fulton St and Broadway/Nassau (A, C, J, M, Z, 2, 3, 4, 5)

(please note that the April 18 screening will be held in the LMCC offices at 125 Maiden Lane, 2nd Floor. See listings for more information.)

This screening series is made possible by the LMCC Swing Space Program.

Contact information: info@thewatercarriers.org

Website <http://www.thewatercarriers.org>

With the exception of the April 18th screening, where the print is courtesy of Martin Lucas, all films appear courtesy of the American Friends Service Committee Film and Video Lending Library.

Screening schedule

April 4, 7:30PM

Blow for Blow/Coup pour coup
16mm color film, 1972, 89 mins.
Dir. Marin Karmitz

"Coup Pour Coup" is a film about a worker's strike at a textile plant, and is written and enacted by the actual striking workers. This film was a collaborative and collective effort. Videotapes of upcoming scenes were discussed by the workers, and camera angles as well as dramatic refinements were agreed on before any film was exposed. Given that the film presents the worker's point of view and is a largely amateur effort, reviewers found it surprisingly effective as a dramatic piece. One interesting feature of the film, and of the strike itself, is that it was organized and led by women. While there had been male union leaders, they were bypassed or ousted for their lack of leadership, understanding, or negotiating skills. The screening will be followed by a discussion of the present labor conflicts in France and parallels between the situation there and the one here in the US (for example, are there similarities between the "flexicurity" measures being introduced by the French government, and the "Right to Work" legislation present in certain US states)?

April 11, 7:30PM

Finally Got the News
16mm color/b&w film, 1970 , 55 mins.

An inside look at an auto assembly line. The film focuses on the late 1960's work of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers in Detroit, which formed in response to unsafe working conditions and the UAW's failure to adequately confront racism. It depicts the organizing efforts in the auto plant and their involvement in the surrounding Black community. A good discussion film for trade union, rank and file working, and college classes.

It's Not Working
16mm color film, 1980, 25 mins.

An excellent Bill Moyer's Journal production on the shutdown of the U.S. Steel Plant in Youngstown, Ohio, and the efforts of workers to set up a community-controlled steel plant. Moyers raises basic questions about unemployment, worker control and

the American economic system itself - all with ringing clarity. Good analysis of how big companies actually makes decisions that affect thousands of powerless people. Shows steel workers locals with church and community backing seeking federal support to re-open and renovate the mills under community/worker ownership - a move opposed by U.S. Steel. As other plants in U.S. basic industry continue to shut down, this film can be used to show workers that they can take the initiative in shaping their economic future.

**We're Not Gonna Take It
video, 1986, 16 mins.**

Excellent footage and good background information on the beginnings of the 1985 Hormel strike in Austin, MN, a strike that for a time was transformed into a national social movement in defense of worker rights. This is a story of wage cuts, work speedups, industrial injuries and worker give-backs, all of which characterize other attacks on workers rights across the country. Footage of the National Guard being called in and the vast support infrastructure that workers and their families established as the strike spread to other areas and as the distrust between workers in different unions began to break down. Ends in 1986 while the strike continued.

April 18, 7:30PM

**Tighten Your Belts, Bite the Bullet
video, 1986, 16 mins.**

A film by James Gaffney, Martin Lucas, and Jonathan Miller Focusing on the 1970s fiscal crises in New York City and in Cleveland, Ohio, "Tighten Your Belts, Bite the Bullet" looks at the root causes of fiscal crises in American cities, and the political responses to them. In New York, the film traces the political and economic history leading to the default threat of the 1970s, and the creation of the Emergency Financial Control Board. It looks at what the effect of these developments were - cuts in city services with a devastating impact on city workers and residents.

The film contrasts New York's political response to the crisis with that of Cleveland, where then Mayor Dennis Kucinich, and his supporters, waged "The Battle of Cleveland" over what they viewed as nothing less than control of the city itself.Â Â Using animation, news footage, and exclusive interviews, "Tighten Your Belts, Bite the Bullet" is an enlightening history of a difficult period in recent urban history. NOTE: the April 18 screening will be at the LMCC office

April 25, 7:30PM

**We're Not Gonna Take It
video, 1986, 16 mins.**

Redevelopment

16mm b&w film, 1975, 60 mins.

This film was made as an organizing tool designed to help people understand the link between local organizing efforts and national issues. It was developed over a three-year period by San Francisco filmmakers and local community groups concerned with urban renewal and relocation. Group members received training and research help from the Resolution film group and then produced a series of short films on local problems to be used in organizing efforts. After incorporating criticisms and suggestions from grassroots audiences, the film was edited into Redevelopment . Setting local issues against national priorities, urban political economy and community organizing strategies, the film has been enthusiastically received by community and tenants' groups across the country. It is an effective discussion film for neighborhoods and classrooms.

Troublemakers

16mm b&w film, 1966, 53 mins.

A film about white organizers, led by Tom Hayden, who went into Newark's black community in 1965 to form the Newark Community Union Project. Useful for studying New Left community organizing tactics: how and why they failed.